

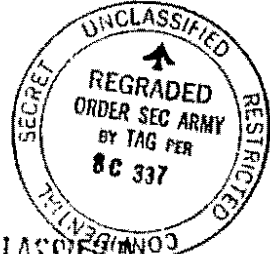
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HISTORY
of
1st INFANTRY REGIMENT
during
THE INVASION OF ITALY
on
THE GULF OF SALERNO

by
Staff Sergeant Robert D. Dieterle, 16062508



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HEADQUARTERS, 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 36, U. S. ARMY

OPERATION "AVALANCHE"

9 - 21 SEPTEMBER 1943

ANNEX #6

141st INFANTRY



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HMS THRUSTER and HMS ORONIES in small landing craft for the invasion of the continent of Europe on a beach in the Gulf of SALERNO north of AGROPOLI, ITALY--the first American troops to carry the fight to the homeland of the Axis. As each boat wave formed it moved off into the night to a rendezvous area to circle and recircle until all the waves were formed. The sky on the left flank in the vicinity of SALERNO was rent with the flashes of bombs and gunfire. Fires of an unknown source could be seen burning on the mainland as the boat waves drew closer to shore.

At 0330 assault waves of the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 1st Infantry landed on BLUE and YELLOW designated beaches two and one-half miles north of AGROPOLI--beaches dominated in front and on the right by high hills from two to four miles from the shoreline. The 1st Battalion was landed approximately 500 yards south of their designated BLUE beach. The first two boat waves proceeded inland towards the battalion objective, but as the third wave landed German machine guns, riflemen, tanks and artillery began firing from well prepared and strongly defended positions. Elements of the 1st Battalion worked their way to the vicinity of the railroad bridge over the SALOFRONE River with the bulk of the battalion between that point and its landing area south of BLUE beach. Here it was cut off from the regiment by German counter-attack which struck the right of the 3rd Battalion. The remainder of the 1st Battalion was immediately pinned to the ground. The beach had been mined and was constantly swept by enemy fire. BLUE beach was abandoned by landing craft and the subsequent waves of the 1st Battalion began landing on YELLOW beach.

The 3rd Battalion landed on YELLOW beach meeting machine gun, rifle and other small arms, tank and artillery fire on the beach which was directed at all boat waves. The assault waves proceeded inland approximately 400 yards where the infantry began to engage the enemy.

The 2nd Battalion landed on YELLOW beach at 0530 and proceeded along the left flank of the 3rd Battalion, meeting the same type of fire from the enemy as the 1st and 3rd Battalions.

Landing craft of the fifth and subsequent waves were shelled by tanks from the plain and a battery of 88's on Hill 78. A number of landing craft were hit but the Navy crewmen displayed great courage and headed their boats into the blistering fire directed straight at them. Several of the boats were hit some distance from the shore and the personnel in the craft abandoned their equipment and swam for shore as the craft sank under them. The boat carrying a detachment of Company "D" led by 1st Lt. Claude D. Roscoe of Brownwood, Texas, was sunk near shore. The men were picked up by a boat returning to its ship from the beach. Upon reaching the ship, Lt Roscoe and his men were hastily re-equipped with sub-machine guns and left the ship on the first landing craft to land on YELLOW beach. Several landing craft hit on the beach or near shore burned or drifted helplessly as the crews were either killed or wounded.

The Regimental Combat Team command group commanded by Colonel Richard J. Warner of San Antonio, Texas, landing at 0550, was just behind the 3rd Battalion. Colonel Warner collected such staff officers as were available and coordinated the attack of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. Colonel Warner went to the beach area, placing Lt. Colonel Andrew F. Price of Fort Worth, Texas, in charge and went forward to contact Lt. Colonel Edward D. McCall, commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion. Upon reaching the forward elements of the troops, it was apparent that heavier fire than that possessed by the infantry would be required.

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HISTORY
of
141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE
from
9 September to 21 September 1943

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On 5 September 1943, the 141st Regimental Combat Team composed of the 141st Infantry Regiment, 131st Field Artillery Battalion, Company "A", 111th Engineer Battalion, Company "A", 111th Medical Battalion and the 1st Platoon, 36th Reconnaissance Troop left ORAN, ALGERIA, in convoy to commence the operation "Avalanche"--the invasion of Italy on the Gulf of SALERNO. The convoy proceeded along the North African coastline to BIZERBA, TUNISIA, and around the extreme western tip of SICILY, heading for the Gulf of SALERNO.

The days the convoy was enroute were calm and sunny--the nights cool and clear. The voyage was a welcome respite from the days of vigorous training and the many hours of detailed planning for the operation. Although the soldiers were to face actual combat for the first time, there was no evidence of fear among them--they gambled, sang, enjoyed the navy food and especially appreciated the shower facilities and stabilized life of the Navy. The extreme heat, cold and dirt of AFRICA was forgotten. The atmosphere was more that of a pleasure cruise until the maps and detailed operations of the invasion were issued to all officers and non-commissioned officers. Then, small groups were observed clustered together all over the ships, planning each minute detail of what each man would do upon landing. The officers checked and rechecked maps, photographs and orders.

The convoy was joined by a British convoy, carrying the British 10th Corps, on 8 September at 1800. Ships could be observed as far as the eye could see--the destroyers being mere pinpoints in the distance as they guarded the ships from attack by submarines. The convoy was not of the gigantic proportions of the Sicilian invasion. It was a concentrated, powerful force depending upon its punch to establish a beachhead for the troops that were to follow. The convoy was attacked by enemy aircraft on the far left flank after dark on 8 September. The Navy sprang to its battle stations as the troops filed below decks to clear the weather decks for action. The attacked flank of the convoy threw heavy concentrations of anti-aircraft shells into the night sky--the tracers forming a wall of red fire. Although the news of the surrender of Italy had been received a few hours earlier and had caused great jubilation among the troops, the finding of the ships by enemy planes eliminated the element of surprise upon which the invasion force depended a great deal.

At 2300 8 September the call to General Quarters was issued. Immediately the sounds of the ships' winches moving landing craft to positions for lowering into the water, the placing of ammunition, weapons, radios and ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ of various military materiel used by a combat force in their designated places for unloading, and troops collecting their packs and weapons, hummed throughout the ships.

At 0001 9 September the first boat teams were ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ by the ships' loud-speakers--the 141st Regimental Combat Team ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ attached units, began disembarkation from the USS GARROLL, USS JEFFERSON, ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ HARA, ~~UNCLASSIFIED~~ ARCTURUS,

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to repel the enemy. Colonel Warner instructed Captain Frederick A. Booth of San Benito, Texas, Commanding Officer of Cannon Company, to return to the beach and locate the naval gun observer, Ensign Alistair Semple, in order to radio a message for naval gun support. While searching for Ensign Semple on the beach, Captain Booth was hit by shell fire and seriously wounded. Colonel Warner then returned to the beach area and was able to locate Ensign Semple. Ensign Semple tried again and again to contact the naval gunboats but they were too far out at sea to establish radio contact.

The enemy counter-attack at approximately 0730, accompanied by eight tanks on the right flank, was fought off by the infantry assisted by the fire of one 40mm anti-aircraft gun. The landing of small craft on both BLUE and YELLOW beaches was stopped by the Navy for several hours due to constant shelling by the enemy. The twelve guns of the 131st Field Artillery Battalion were not ashore as yet. The Dukwa (two and one-half ton amphibious trucks) carrying the artillery put back out to sea due to the shelling except for two 105mm Howitzers brought in by Captain Ross Ayers of Lubbock, Texas, which gave the combat team its first artillery support. Ensign Semple, after many difficulties, finally contacted the naval gunboats and the first naval gun fire was received at 0915. Naval gun fire and artillery began to take effect on enemy positions and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were able to move inland to a point just along the bank of the railroad. The combat team artillery, except for the two guns under Captain Ayers, landed on RED beach to the north and began to move into position.

Patrols were sent out to contact the 1st Battalion from whom no communication had been received, but the patrols were unable to get through due to enemy machine gun and artillery fire sweeping the dunes and beaches. Enemy snipers were very active.

An attack by eight tanks on the 2nd and 3rd Battalion positions was repelled by the infantry with anti-tank launchers and rocket guns and by naval gun fire. Two tanks were knocked out and the remainder retreated to positions in the hills to the east and south.

The Regimental combat team command post was moved 500 yards directly inland from YELLOW beach at 1200. Communications had been established with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions but the 1st Battalion was still out of contact and its exact position was not known. The beaches and dunes were continually swept by artillery fire of the Germans and the landing of equipment and personnel proceeded again on YELLOW beach under extremely hazardous conditions. The command post was bracketed by fire from 88's but no direct hits were made. Patrols from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions continued to inch themselves along taking out sniper and machine gun opposition. The artillery and naval gun fire began to silence enemy fire from Hill 78 and Hill COLINA S. MARCO.

The terrain just in the rear of the beach on which the 1st Battalion landed under command of Lt. Colonel Carlos C. Smith of Gonzales, Texas, was absolutely flat, cut by shallow irrigation ditches bordered by scrub bushes and trees with a few isolated patches of scrub growth scattered through the area. The area was dominated on the immediate right and front by hills only one to one and one-half miles away. The flat area was defended on the beach proper by machine gun positions in depth; on the hills to the right by a battery of four guns; the flat

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artproper guns in depth and two 75mm mortars. The four guns and two mortars were captured. The battalion was met by heavy machine gun fire from both ground positions and from tanks and was scattered and pinned to the ground. The men sought cover in the shallow irrigation ditches whereupon the Germans placed their machine guns to fire directly down the ditches causing numerous casualties. The only other cover afforded was the scattered scrub growth which the enemy constantly swept with fire.

On the beach three 75mm self-propelled cannons of the regimental Cannon Company came in on the 3rd boat wave of the 1st Battalion. One of the landing craft carrying one cannon was turned back by the Navy but the other two cannons were landed under the direction of 1st Lt. Clair F. Carpenter of Omaha, Nebraska, commanding the 1st platoon of the Cannon Company. One cannon vehicle under the direction of Sergeant Guy E. Spencer of Cedar Bayou, Texas, hit a mine before it could clear the beach, knocking it out and wounding Sergeant Spencer, Corporal Alfred C. Reisenwitz of Portland, Pennsylvania, Technician V Jasper O. Reynolds of Smithfield, Texas and Private Bill Bowles, Jr. of Amigle, West Virginia. Lt. Carpenter's cannon vehicle evaded the mines and pulled up into a defile on the dunes. The defile was swept by machine gun fire from both flanks and the gun sight was hit and put out of commission. Lt. Carpenter ran across the beach under enemy fire and obtained the gun sight from the cannon hit by the mine. The sight being undamaged, Lt. Carpenter brought it back to his vehicle. Corporal Edgar L. Blackburn of Garland, Texas, endeavored to place the gun sight in position but was hit by machine gun fire and instantly killed. Lt. Carpenter then tried to adjust the sight and was severely wounded by the same machine gun.

Meanwhile, the flat terrain occupied by the 1st Battalion, being ideal for tank operations, was overrun by five Mark IV tanks. The tanks ran over the position occupied by Company "C" under the command of Captain Henry E. Lehman of San Antonio, Texas. Captain Lehman kept his men in irrigation ditches as the tanks rolled over them on three separate occasions. As the tanks passed the ditches they would open fire with machine guns directly on the men. A Company "B" detachment led by 1st Lt. Eugene H. Ball of Portageville, Missouri, was caught by the tanks in an open field. The tanks fired their machine guns on the men killing and wounding several of them. Lt. Ball was run over by a tank but recovered enough to walk back to the battalion aid station where he died. A Company "B" platoon led by Staff Sergeant James A. Whitaker of San Antonio, Texas, was also caught by the tanks. Sergeant Whitaker emptied a clip of ammunition from his submachine gun into the driving aperture of the tank. The tank lurched as though the driver had been hit and another man was taking his place. Machine gun fire from the tank caught Sergeant Whitaker across the legs. As he lay wounded on the ground, Sergeant Whitaker placed another clip of ammunition in his submachine gun and again opened fire. The tank then turned and moved off in another direction which undoubtedly saved many men of Sergeant Whitaker's platoon.

The 1st Battalion companies endeavored to reorganize but the slightest movement of grass or brush or the snapping of a twig immediately brought enemy fire to bear on them. Three railway guns captured by Company "B" during the night and prepared for demolition by the 1st platoon of Company "A", 11th Engineer Battalion, were destroyed when it became apparent that they could not be defended properly. The Germans would open fire with rifles apparently shooting at no particular target. When our troops would open fire at these scattered rifles, the enemy would observe our positions and lay mortar and machine gun fire on them. This tactic was quickly adopted by our own troops and the Germans gradually began to withdraw. The 2nd platoon of Company "D" led by

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2nd Lt. Stanley Schuyler of Brooklyn, New York, had not been pinned down by the Germans. Lt. Schuyler's platoon operated very effectively and reduced several German machine gun positions. The platoon would observe the machine gun fire, creep in close and fire a grenade with excellent results.

The terrain over which the 2nd Battalion commanded by Major Norman A. Webster of San Antonio, Texas, and the 3rd Battalion commanded by Lt. Colonel Edward D. McCall of San Antonio, Texas, operated consisted of a narrow beach and a low sand dune line with very gentle rolling country beyond. This area was covered by a number of irrigation ditches and one fairly large canal, patches of scrub growth and many rock fences four feet high that separated farms and homesteads. The fences were of advantage to both the Americans and Germans but caused the advance to be slow due to each house and fence having to be taken separately.

Due to the strong enemy fire the 3rd Battalion companies were unable to reorganize after landing. The major portion of Company "L" commanded by Captain Edgar Ford of Rusk, Texas, pressed well forward but the remainder of Company "L" and Companies "I" and "K" were unable to reform and fought their way inland mostly in groups of two or three. The battalion had no contact with Companies "L" and "I" and only a small portion of Company "K". Company "K" was badly disorganized due to the loss of the company commander, Captain Lemert G. Gosch of Flatonia, Texas, who was injured in jumping over a rock wall. Captain Hersel R. Adams of San Antonio, Texas, Operations Officer of the 3rd Battalion, upon seeing Company "K" disorganized, took command of the scattered troops and reformed them. Captain Adams led a charge by the infantry against enemy tanks and successfully broke up the attack although his men had to press forward under mortar, machine gun and small arms fire. Captain Adams was wounded in the leg during the attack and was placed on the side of a canal after receiving medical attention. He directed his troops to leave him and continue the attack. The enemy tanks had reformed and again pressed forward. In this attack Captain Adams was again exposed to enemy fire and was killed.

Aid men of the Medical Detachment performed their duties valiantly under heavy fire from the Germans. Private Thomas J. Dunbar of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Private Vito LaGattuta of Bronx, New York, Private Joseph J. Zetti of Akron, Ohio, Private William Liseock of New Rochelle, New York, Private Joseph P. Maher of Newburgh, New York, and Technician V. Joe A. Salter of Houston, Texas, completely disregarded their own safety to bring wounded men aid while exposed to enemy fire and observation.

Sergeant Leslie A. Wliff and Sergeant Harvey Sellers of Wadler, Texas, and Private First Class Kenneth McKenzie of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, all members of Company "L", displayed great courage when their small detachment was cut off from the main body of their company. The detachment was trapped on three sides by enemy fire. Sergeant Wliff and Sergeant Sellers exposed themselves to the enemy fire in getting their men dug in. Private McKenzie gave aid to the injured and assisted in bolstering the morale of the men besides carrying a wounded man back to safety. Corporal Arthur W. Hunter of Gonzales, Texas, a member of Company "K", was killed when he undertook to flank a machine gun nest that was harassing his company. Staff Sergeant Raymond H. Ehrig and Staff Sergeant Cecil E. Hunter of Gonzales, Texas, both members of Company "K", led a flanking move by their platoons on enemy machine gun positions. After causing

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the Germans to withdraw to new positions, Sergeant Ehrig and Sergeant Hunter built up a defensive line along the side of a canal. While directing the placement of his men, Sergeant Ehrig was exposed to enemy fire and was killed. The machine squad of Company "M" of which Private First Class Edward L. Rookey of Oswego, New York, and Private Lavern Counselman of Saginaw, Michigan, were members, was attacked by four M4 Sherman tanks. Upon seeing the tanks coming towards their position Private Rookey and Private Counselman obtained an anti-tank rocket launcher from a wounded man and crawled within thirty yards of the tanks. Their firing of the rocket launcher was so effective that combined with the efforts of the other members of the machine/squad, the tanks were forced to withdraw. Sergeant Theodore J. Mitchell of Luling, Texas, a member of Company "I" was knocked unconscious by the concussion of an exploding 88mm shell which killed two members of his squad. Sergeant Mitchell was quickly evacuated to the beach and then to a ship. Upon regaining consciousness, Sergeant Mitchell begged the ship's doctor to let him return. When the doctor refused, he asked permission to see the ship's captain who reconsidered his case and sent him ashore on the first boat. 1st Lt. John R. McCain of Yuma, Arizona, Executive Officer of Company "K", took command of a scattered group of soldiers and successfully led them in an assault upon enemy machine gun positions which stood in the way of his battalion's advance.

Captain Ford of Company "L" established communication with the 3rd Battalion by radio and directed mortar fire so effectively that a tank attack was broken and forced back several hundred yards. 1st Lt. William G. Brom of Essex Junction, Vermont, Forward Observer of the 131st Field Artillery Battalion, attached to the 3rd Battalion then crept forward to an observation point and directed naval gun fire on the immediate front of the battalion disabling several tanks and causing the others to withdraw.

The 2nd Battalion, landing fifty minutes late, passed through rear elements of the 3rd Battalion dug in on the beach and proceeded along the left flank of the 3rd Battalion towards its objective. Company "E", commanded by Captain John L. Chapin of El Paso, Texas, was able to reorganize at 0615 approximately 300 yards from the beach, and drove forward until an attack by five German tanks forced the men to take cover. By firing rifles, machine guns, hand grenades and rifle grenades the tank attack was repelled and the tanks withdrew to a distance of 500-600 yards from the beach. Company "F", commanded by Captain Charles H. Hamner of LaFeria, Texas, lost one platoon of his company when the landing craft the platoon was in fell from the ship while being lowered into the water. With his depleted force Captain Hamner reorganized his company by 0700 and went forward on the extreme left flank of the regiment until his men sought cover from an attack by eight tanks running across the front of both Companies "E" and "F". The tanks kept maneuvering across the front line harassing the troops and inflicting numerous casualties with machine gun fire until they were forced to retreat solely through the efforts of infantry weapons. Detachments of Company "G", commanded by Captain Charles M. Beacham of San Antonio, Texas, worked well forward and assisted in repelling the tank attack.

Corporal Benito G. Dominguez of San Antonio, Texas, knocked out an enemy half-track with a rifle grenade. Private First Class Juan R. Padilla of Del Rio, Texas, effectively used his rocket gun against the tanks and as the tanks withdrew he followed them continuing to fire his weapon. Corporal Manuel G. Gonzales* of Uvalde, Texas, in closing in on a tank position, was observed by the enemy and was shot through the legs. As he lay helpless to move, one of the tanks ran over him and killed him. Private First Class F. Carrillo of Rook Springs, Texas, + Cpl. Manuel G. Gonzales is listed in appendix as slightly wounded. Pvt. Manuel C. Gonzalez is listed as KIA. Neither is from Uvalde, Texas.

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tried to remove Corporal Gonzales from the path of the tank, and narrowly escaped being run over. Private First Class Salomon Santos, Jr. of Prement, Texas, and Private First Class Abner E. Carrasco of El Paso, Texas, as gunner and assistant gunner of a light machine gun squad, placed their machine gun on top of a rock wall while under fire from enemy machine guns and fired upon the German tanks menacing the front line position. Their fire was effective in forcing the tanks to withdraw. Private Harold B. Beaver of Ringtown, Pennsylvania, scored a hit with his anti-tank grenade by slipping in closely to an enemy tank. Private First Class Juan Pruitt of Pearsall, Texas, placed his Browning automatic rifle on top of a stone wall and maintained a heavy volume of fire against the enemy until his position was located by a German gunner who opened fire and killed him. Private Raymond G. Gutierrez of Sonora, Texas, was wounded while firing his Browning automatic rifle at the enemy. Two bullets pierced Private Gutierrez' helmet in such a place as not to injure him, but a third bullet caught him in the arm. Private Gutierrez, although wounded, moved forward, located an enemy machine gun and knifed the German gunner to death. 1st Sergeant Gabriel L. Navarette of El Paso, Texas, having been given the mission of reaching the battalion objective and determining the enemy strength if the enemy was encountered, was wounded in the hand when a German machine gun knocked the signal projector from his hand that he was attempting to signal with. Private First Class Alfredo P. Ruiz of El Paso, Texas, a member of Sergeant Navarette's patrol, closed in on a tank and exchanged fire with a member of the tank crew who was firing with a machine pistol from the turret. Private Ruiz approached so close to the tank that he was caught in the camouflage of brush used by the Germans and pulled for about ten yards before being able to break loose. Staff Sergeant Enrique Ochotorena, Sergeant Carlos Irrobali, Sergeant Jesus M. Lucio, Sergeant Rafael Q. Torres, Sergeant Marcelino Valdez and Technician V Manuel I. Madrid, all of El Paso, Texas, exposed themselves to enemy fire on numerous occasions while leading their men and exhibited great courage to bolster the morale of the men facing the tank attacks. 1st Lt. James M. Humphries of Jacksonville, Florida, worked tirelessly and exposed himself to direct fire from the enemy on numerous occasions. Lt. Humphries and all of the above named enlisted men are members of Company "G" which played a vital part in protecting the beachhead against repeated enemy attacks which possessed much greater fire power than that of the infantry. The aggressive action of every member of Company "G" was instrumental in keeping the enemy tanks from driving down to the beach itself.

1st Lt. Parkhurst C. Hough of Fredericktown, Missouri, and 2nd Lt. Ralph J. McMorro of Minneapolis, Minnesota, both officers of Company "F", displayed great courage in fighting off the attack of the eight tanks on the 2nd Battalion front. They exposed themselves almost continuously to enemy fire for forty-five minutes until infantry fire forced the tanks to withdraw. Private Herman R. Remhack of Elmhurst, New Jersey, a member of the Medical Detachment attached to Company "F", advanced through an open field covered by enemy fire to give aid to an American soldier and a German soldier who lay helpless from their wounds. 2nd Lt. Richard M. Manton of Niagara Falls, New York, Staff Sergeant Andrew P. Smythe of El Paso, Texas, Sergeant George C. Potwin of Queens Village, New York, and Sergeant Jack M. Townsend of El Paso, Texas, all members of Company "H", advanced their machine gun section across the beach in the face of intense enemy fire to a position ahead of the front line rifle companies. Their machine guns opened up against the tanks and aided in forcing their withdrawal as well as knocking out two enemy machine gun nests. Corporal Leander Holloway of Brooklyn, New York, led his Company "H" machine gun squad along a stone wall under heavy machine gun fire to a position where the squad could use its weapon against a

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German half-track firing from a sheltered position beside a house. Corporal Holloway's squad so effectively placed their fire on the half track that it was forced to withdraw enabling our troops to advance several hundred yards. Private First Class Edward O. Horstman, Jr. of Big Rock, Iowa and Private Julian C. Dillard of Salem, Virginia, members of the 2nd Battalion Headquarters Company, laid and maintained a wire line to Company "F" from the battalion command post-- a distance of over one mile. Several times Private Horstman and Private Dillard, while harrassed by enemy machine gun, sniper and artillery fire, exposed themselves to repair the line and keep communications established.

1st Lt. Roy M. Bass of San Antonio, Texas, commander of the Regimental Headquarters Company Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, organized scattered troops of several companies immediately after landing and defended the right flank of the regiment throughout the entire day and night. The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon forwarded valuable information to Colonel Werner during this period which enabled artillery and gun fire from the navy to keep the enemy retreating.

At 1900 an attack plan was formulated to move the 2nd and 3rd Battalions to initial objectives on hills to the east and south of the beaches under cover of darkness. Enemy positions in the towns of CAPACUJO and OGLIASTRO and the roads leading up to and beyond them were heavily shelled by our artillery and naval gun fire. The beach was attacked by enemy bombers but heavy anti-aircraft fire made their missions extremely hazardous. The German planes flew in at high speed, dropped their bombs haphazardly trusting to make a lucky hit on the numerous craft unloading supplies and personnel, veer sharply to the east from the beach and make a run through the flak to the mountains. Friendly fighter plane coverage, however, kept the skies relatively clear of enemy planes during the day.

at 0001 10 September the 2nd and 3rd Battalions began their move to positions to the hills south and east of the beaches. The 3rd Battalion moved to Hill COLINA S. MARCO northeast of AGROFOLI, bypassing the 1st Battalion which was still held down by strongly entrenched machine guns and mortars. A small amount of enemy sniper activity failed to slow the movement and the battalion closed in on its position before daylight. The 2nd Battalion, moving east of Highway 18, also bypassed the 1st Battalion positions. Enemy activity could be observed but the march was completed without drawing enemy fire. Patrols preceding the battalions noted signs of a hasty retreat by the enemy--abandoned, burned and wrecked vehicles and quantities of supplies.

At 0750 Colonel Werner received his first radio contact with the 1st Battalion when Captain Selser R. Hamanson of Wharton, Texas, commanding Company "B", radioed that he had approximately 300 men of the 1st Battalion who were proceeding to mop up enemy opposition still remaining in their sector. A detachment of Company "L" led by Staff Sergeant Claude W. Sherry of Flatonia, Texas, and a platoon of Company "B" surrounded a house in the 1st Battalion area from which sniper and machine gun fire was coming. Orders were called in both German and Polish, as several Polish prisoners had been captured, to surrender. Seventeen Germans surrendered and were sent to the prisoner of war enclosure on the beach.

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Remnants of the disorganized 1st Battalion began to drift into the 2nd and 3rd Battalions' and Regimental Headquarter's positions. At 1200 the regimental command post was moved from the beach area to a position at the base of the hills one and one-half miles northeast of AGROPOLI. During the movement of the command post, Colonel Warner contacted Lt. Colonel Smith and Major Minor L. Williams of Robstown, Texas, Executive Officer of the 1st Battalion, and ordered them to reassemble their battalion as the regimental reserve north of the 3rd Battalion position. Patrols were sent into AGROPOLI and OGLIASTRO and found the towns clear of the enemy. The Italians clearly indicated their relief at the arrival of our troops. Italian soldiers still remaining in this area were voluble with their information about the Germans. The populace of AGROPOLI was especially wrought up over German atrocities committed before they retreated and were very eager to assist us. Company "I", commanded by Captain Cecil B. Eubanks of San Antonio, Texas, moved into Agropoli at the request of the people to Major General Fred L. Walker, Commanding General of the 36th Infantry Division.

The apparent withdrawal of the enemy was a welcome respite from the hammering blows the Germans had inflicted the previous day. Since there was no evidence that the enemy would not counter-attack from the south or west and as the combat team defended the entire right flank of the invasion force, every precaution was taken to prepare strong defensive positions and maintain active and alert patrols. Although the men had suffered the severest physical and mental strain and were practically exhausted, they did not rest until they had dug in and established a secure defense.

On 11 September Colonel Warner instructed Major Webster to move the 2nd Battalion to new positions south and east of the towns of OGLIASTRO and FINOCCHIO. Patrols were sent from the Regimental Headquarters Company Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon to CICERALE and TORCHIARA. Lt. Bass established an observation post on Mt. CICERALE which afforded a superior view of the country to the south and east. In conjunction with the Regimental Intelligence Officer, Captain Roswell K. Doughty of Wilpole, Massachusetts, this post afforded excellent information for Colonel Warner on enemy movements or suspicious operations in the large area observed. The terrain in this area was covered by high hills rising into precipitous mountains. The tortuous, narrow road, cratered in many places by our naval and artillery shelling and strewn with the wreckage of German destroyed and abandoned tanks and vehicles, corkscrewed itself out of sight to the south. Mine fields were laid and two bridges blown at vital points on Highway 18 by Company "A" of the 11th Engineer Battalion and the 1st Platoon of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop. 57mm anti-tank guns of the Anti-Tank Company commanded by Captain George C. Guthrie of San Antonio, Texas, were placed in strategic positions commanding approaches from the south and east that might be used by the Germans for tank operations. The Cannon Company under the new command of 1st Lt. Robert T. Henry, Jr. of Fort Worth, Texas, was split into platoons to support the three battalions.

At 1600 Colonel Warner, having received orders from General Walker, instructed Lt. Colonel Smith to move the 1st Battalion to positions in the vicinity of the towns of GIUNGAIO and TRENTINARA. The battalion made a march uphill over a route vehicles could not travel in order to occupy these positions. Vehicles, of necessity, traveled north on Highway 18, cutting back east on the road leading to

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CAFACCIO and winding up to TRENTINARA. The terrain in this area consisted of gentle rolling hills rising in a steep slope to GIUNGANO. At this point sheer cliffs rising to heights of 800 feet jutted skyward causing the foot troops to make long detours to positions they could climb. The town of TRENTINARA was on the crest of a high hill that afforded a commanding view to the east, south and west but was overshadowed on the north by Mt. SOTTANE. The battalion reached its assigned positions at 0245 12 September and attempted to dig in defensive positions. The ground was almost solid rock and only a very small percentage of the men were able to dig positions; the remainder taking cover and concealment in rock crevices and behind parapets built from the rocks.

The 3rd Battalion, except for moving Company "L" to adjust the line with the 2nd Battalion and removing Company "I" from AGROPOLI for regimental reserve, remained in its position.

Captain Claude P. Morgan of Fort Worth, Texas, Regimental Supply Officer, worked tirelessly on the beach with members of the Service Company to maintain food, water and ammunition supplies, collect regimental property strewn for several miles along the landing beaches and establish a dump for resupply of the regiment. The beaches were frequently being bombed and strafed by German planes despite their losses from anti-aircraft fire. The position of the Service Company men on the beach was very hazardous.

On 12 September Colonel Warner and Lt. Colonel Smith inspected the 1st Battalion area and re-adjusted company positions. Anti-tank guns were placed at advantageous positions commanding the roads to the east and approaches from the south. A platoon of Company "A", 11th Engineer Battalion, prepared demolitions at four bridges along the narrow road leading to the east so that the bridges could be blown at the first sign of an enemy attack. The bridges were blown later in the day as a defensive measure. Patrols were sent to MONTEFORTE, Mt. VESOLE and CAFACCIO, but no enemy activity was observed. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions maintained active patrols in their sectors without special event.

At 1015 13 September, Colonel Warner was ordered by General Walker to move the regiment, less the 1st Battalion which was to remain in its present sector and Companies "F" and "K" which would remain in the locations occupied by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions under command of Lt. Colonel Price. At 1350 Colonel Warner contacted Colonel Harold P. Gibson, Chief of Staff of VI Corps, who advised that the regiment, less the units remaining in positions ordered by General WALKER, would be attached to the 45th Division. The regiment was to occupy a sector southwest of BATTIFAGLIA and stop a gap between the American VI Corps and the British 10th Corps on the left flank of the 45th Division. Captain Isadore M. Scott of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, Regimental Adjutant was instructed to contact Lt. Colonel McCall and Major Webster and have them meet Colonel Warner at a rendezvous point in the sector to be occupied, entruck the troops in their present areas and bring them to a detrucking point behind the area to be occupied. Colonel Warner, accompanied by a British liaison officer, went forward to reconnoiter positions after being advised by General Walker that the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion, less one battery, would be attached to the regiment. It was decided to occupy positions selected and surveyed by the 23rd British Armored Regiment who had fought over that area and would be the unit on our immediate left flank. A circuitous route for the movement of motor vehicles was established by the British for our troops entering the area. The troops began detrucking just at dusk. Lt. Colonel McCall and Major Webster had met Colonel Warner and

- 10 -
SECRET

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 BY Rayman NARA, DATE 2/5/78

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completed the reconnaissance of their positions and the troops began filtering into the selected locations under cover of darkness. The 3rd Battalion occupied the front line with the 2nd Battalion in reserve in depth. While the troops were closing in they were bombed by enemy planes and shelled by artillery fire. The regimental command post being established by Major John L. Willmann of San Antonio, Texas, Regimental Plans and Operations Officer, was bombed with numerous anti-personnel bombs followed by an enemy artillery concentration that fell directly upon the command post. At 2200 orders were received from VI Corps removing the 2nd Battalion from regimental control and returning it to the 36th Division control. The 2nd Battalion moved by truck to an area south of the SELE River and east of Highway 18 in the hills to reinforce the 143rd Infantry Regiment which was withdrawing from an attack on Hill 424 above ALTAVILLA. The battalion closed in on its position at 0530 14 September, replacing the 2nd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry Regiment which was pulled out of the lines to reorganize.

At 2100 13 September Lt. Colonel Smith received orders from General Walker to assemble the 1st Battalion and march to a point one and one-half miles north-east of CAPACCIo and assume defensive positions. Positions were dug as well as could be in the rocky ground. The artillery had to blast holes with dynamite to prepare their positions. The battalion encountered no enemy activity in this sector.

Companies "F" and "K" were removed from the OGIASTRO and AGROPOLI areas to reinforce positions threatened by the German thrust from ALTAVILLA. Lt. Colonel Price was placed in command of a battalion of the 531st Shore Engineer Regiment to defend the southern sector vacated by the regiment.

At dawn on 14 September, Regimental Headquarters and the 3rd Battalion were fairly well established in their positions. Company "I" was on the right and Company "L", then under command of 1st Lt. James E. Epperson of Rock Springs, Texas, was on the left. With Company "K" detached from the battalion, the one and one-half mile line was thinly held. The machine guns and mortars of Company "M", commanded by Captain William H. Kaupert of San Antonio, Texas, were placed to cover the two rifle companies. It was necessary to take personnel of the 3rd Battalion Headquarters Company, commanded by Captain Admiral M. McDonald of San Antonio, Texas, to build up a reserve position. The enemy placed scattered rifle and machine gun fire on our right flank which failed to displace any of our troops. Company "B", 751st Tank Battalion, Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company "D", 84th Chemical Battalion were attached for regimental control. The addition of these units was most welcome as they added a great deal of fire power to our force. The eight 4.2 mortars of Company "A", 84th Chemical Battalion, were placed in positions to the rear of the rifle companies. The tanks and tank destroyers were placed in the few concealed positions available.

The area occupied was extremely crowded with British troops and vehicles behind us and on our left flank. Newly landed units pouring in from the beaches added to the congestion. The sector occupied was the narrowest portion of the beachhead, being only one and one-half miles from the shoreline to the regimental command post. Had the Germans realized the small force that was opposing them, they could have attacked with a strong force and split the bridgehead and the two Corps of the Fifth Army. Before the Germans could obtain any knowledge of our positions, two observation posts were established that afforded a fair view of the terrain to our front. These observation posts reported enemy movements so accurately and so quickly that our artillery and naval gun fire prevented the

- 11 -
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Germans from massing a force of sufficient strength to attack our sector in force. Through the fire direction center of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion, an excellent liaison was effected with the British artillery on our left and with the Navy guns through Ensign Sample's radio. A British artillery observation plane operated with this group very effectively. The massed fire power of the guns was of such a superior nature that captured Germans stated the shelling was utterly demoralizing to their forces and had caused many casualties. The Germans, in turn, countered with light artillery that fell on our front lines. Technician V Walter W. Long of Buda, Texas, a member of the Medical Detachment attached to Company "L", was killed by this German shelling. At noontime Captain Eubanks of Company "I" went forward with a British officer to check the company sector. Captain Eubanks and the British officer were placed under machine gun fire by tanks and became separated. The British officer returned to Company "I" and reported that he had been unable to recontact Captain Eubanks. A complete search was made of the area where Captain Eubanks had been, but no trace of him was found. It was later learned that he had been captured by the Germans.

The terrain in this area was absolutely flat but cut up by numerous farms. Hedge rows and trees blocked the vision for more than 300 yards. In many places the ground was swampy with numerous buffalo willows filled with water. Irrigation ditches and culverts through which small streams flowed crossed and recrossed the sector. Mosquitoes abounded in this atmosphere and from dusk to dawn made life miserable for the men. At 2300 an order was received from General Middleton, Command General of the 45th Division, that our line must be held at all cost--there must be no retreat by our troops.

The 2nd Battalion remained in their defensive position to which they had moved on the night of 13-14 September until 18 September. Continual harrassing artillery fire was directed on the battalion positions by the enemy from ALTAVILLA. Company "F" was attacked by ten enemy tanks which were supported by artillery fire and the brush on the crest of the hill above the company was set ablaze. Private Santo Ferri of Danbury, Connecticut, a member of the Medical Detachment attached to Company "F", although threatened by the blaze creeping down towards the company position and exposed to artillery fire and enemy tanks, left the company to render first aid for twenty minutes to a wounded engineer. Corporal Larry V. Fanto of New Brunswick, New Jersey, Communications Corporal of Company "F", repeatedly exposed himself to artillery fire and enemy tanks to lay communication lines and repair them when broken by artillery shelling.

The 1st Battalion received orders at 1200 on 14 September from General Walker to move from its present location to an area east of Highway 18 near the SELE River. Company "A", commanded by Captain Herbert E. Eitt of San Antonio, Texas, was ordered to proceed to N. S. CHIRCO and drive the enemy from the northwest slope of VUCCOLO DI CAFFA SANTA. Major Minor L. Williams, directing the company movement, was injured when seeking cover from enemy artillery shelling the movement of the company. Patrols were sent out from Companies "B" and "C" as far as two and one-half miles in front of their positions. A Company "B" patrol led by 2nd Lt. Martin J. Tully of Chicago, Illinois, brought back accurate and valuable information besides capturing two Germans. The prisoners had been advised by their officers that the Americans always killed prisoners and were in great fear of what we would do to them. When the prisoners were assured that they would not be killed, they talked freely and apparently answered all questions to the best of their knowledge. The company positions of the battalion were continually harrassed by enemy artillery fire but few casualties were sustained.

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On 15 September, Battery "B", 105th Coast Artillery, Anti-Aircraft (Air Warning) Battalion, was attached to the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion under regimental control. The half tracks of this unit were dispersed in the rear of the artillery batteries. Throughout the day medium bombers escorted by P-38's and P-51's bombed the towns of BATTIPAGLIA and EBOLI and the road network used by the Germans. The ground rocked as far back as the regimental command post from this terrific bombing. Besides the terrible effect this bombing must have had on the Germans, the morale of our troops was raised immeasurably by this assistance. The Germans used smoke extensively to cover their withdrawal of certain portions of their forces from our front line. The 4.2 mortars of Company "A", 84th Chemical Battalion, were used to fire on German observation posts. German infantry attempted to dig in on our front line during the night but was forced to withdraw by our artillery fire. The enemy countered with a small amount of mortar and artillery fire on our front line. Small patrols were sent out by the rifle companies but encountered German snipers and machine guns.

The 1st Battalion remained in their position of 14 September. The Germans kept up accurate and effective artillery fire on every vehicle and troop movement. Friendly tanks made a movement 600 yards in front of the battalion command post over a flat unwooded plain. Enemy 88's opened up on the tanks but failed to score a hit. After a brief sortie, the tanks withdrew. This operation afforded the infantry quite a show as heretofore they had not observed any tank activities. The battalion wire crew composed of Sergeant Robert A. Collier of Fredericksburg, Texas, Technician V Cleo W. Hay of Pickwick, Texas, Private First Class LeRoy Richter of Moultrie, Georgia, Private First Class Leonard J. Motz of Edwardsville, Pennsylvania, Private First Class Kenneth Gurnoe of Pine Knob, West Virginia, Private First Class Russell H. Fitzgerald of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Private Fred S. Moya of San Antonio, Texas, and Private Clyde C. Glosch of Toledo, Ohio, worked night and day under extremely hazardous conditions to maintain battalion communications. Time and time again it was necessary to work under enemy artillery fire to repair breaks in the lines.

The 1st Battalion remained in their position until 19 September. The troops soon caught on to the German tactics and tricks and there were few casualties.

On the morning of 16 September, the 3rd Battalion was attacked by enemy tanks and infantry, but the attack was repulsed by British mechanized units and our own artillery. Company "L" knocked out a German half-track with small arms fire and captured one prisoner from the vehicle. American bombers were very active again on our front. American parachutists who had landed behind the German lines sifted back to our positions. They advised that our artillery and naval gun fire had created great destruction and many casualties in the sector northwest, west and southwest of BATTIPAGLIA.

On 17 September, Company "A", 120th Engineer Battalion, less one platoon, was attached to the regiment. This unit was placed in position as the regimental reserve. During the morning, a Company "L" patrol reported enemy activity in their sector and our 4.2 mortars opened fire. Three German half-tracks pulling guns left this area and our artillery immediately laid fire on them. The 45th Engineers replaced the 36th Engineers on our right flank and the British 131st Brigade replaced the 29th Armored Regiment on our left flank. A German medical unit, wearing red shirts, worked most of the day in the sector we had shelled so heavily, evacuating casualties and removing their dead. A British patrol returning at 1435 reported that there were at least 200 German dead in the area we had been shelling. Enemy activity was observed approximately two miles from our front and after dark

--13--
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 BY ESP/brw NARA, DATE 2/3/79

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an artillery concentration was placed on this area resulting in terrific explosions and a large fire. Two other large fires were started in enemy territory during the night by our artillery fire.

Communications men of the 3rd Battalion performed their duties all through these operations under the most hazardous battle conditions. They worked night and day under enemy fire and observation to maintain wire lines. Tech Sergeant Jack J. Dixon, Jr. of San Antonio, Texas, Sergeant George W. Priate of Oxford, Alabama, Technician V Osale Ramo of Lona, Louisiana, Private George A. Jones of Scranton, Pennsylvania, and Private Wilbur T. McCluskey of Anderson, Texas, all members of the 3rd Battalion Headquarters Company, performed their communication duties with great courage and efficiency. Sergeant Carl M. Woms, Communications Sergeant of Company "E" from Cameron, Texas, laid and maintained wire to his company during daylight hours under enemy fire and observation. He exposed himself to enemy fire four times in one day to repair the line broken by artillery shells.

The liaison, intelligence information and communications of the British units on our left flank was of a most superior nature throughout our entire stay in this sector. The men were greatly impressed with the fighting qualities of the British and their comradeship was most apparent. Gifts of food and cigarettes were frequently exchanged between the two groups.

On 18 September Colonel Werner received a warning order from the Commanding General of the 45th Division that Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Company would be relieved sometime during the night. The 3rd Battalion was to remain under control of the 45th Division with all the regimental attached units. At 1730 the 3rd Battalion began its movement forward to positions between BATTIPAGLIA and EPOLI. The troops observed signs of hurried German evacuation--quantities of ammunition, small arms and abandoned and destroyed vehicles. Patrols moved out well in advance of the battalion positions. At 0545 on 19 September the 3rd Battalion was ordered to occupy new positions again and this was accomplished by 0730.

The 2nd Battalion moved from their position to the hill mass just below and to the west of ALTAVILLA.

At 0020 on 19 September orders were received from the 45th Division relieving Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Company from their control and reverting to the 36th Division control. The command post was closed and moved under cover of darkness to a position near the SELE River east of Highway 18 where it bivouaced for the night. Colonel Werner was ordered by General Walker to re-assemble the regiment under regimental control and occupy the area around ALTAVILLA. The 2nd Battalion was to remain in its position. The 1st Battalion made slight adjustments from its location, sending outpost lines up to the CALORE River. The 3rd Battalion was relieved from its sector at 1420 by a battalion of the 179th Infantry Regiment and moved by motor to the assembly area selected by the regiment. Before the 3rd Battalion moved into its assembly area, orders were received from General Walker to relieve the 501st Parachute Regiment occupying Hill 424 above ALTAVILLA. The ALTAVILLA road was narrow and wound in a corkscrew fashion very steeply up to the town of ALTAVILLA which was situated on a high hill commanding observation to the south and west. Hill 424 was still higher above ALTAVILLA and vehicular traffic was limited to jeeps just beyond the limits of the town. All supplies, weapons and ammunition had to be laboriously hauled

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 BY Erasmus NARA, DATE 2/5/98

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up the steep hills by the troops. Three enemy shells fell below the 3rd Battalion area during the night which were evidently fired from a great distance. Otherwise, all sectors were very quiet although patrols were maintained as far as SERRE throughout the night.

On 20 September, other units still occupying positions in the regimental sector were withdrawn. Colonel Warner received orders from General Walker to clear the ALTAVILLA area of dead and wounded and the battalions began searching their areas for bodies. Many were found in the hills above ALTAVILLA--both American and German. All American dead were brought off of the hills and a cemetery was established below ALTAVILLA. So many of the German dead were in such a bad state of decomposition that burial spots were selected on the hills. Many of the German dead bore no identification. The town of ALTAVILLA itself was a shambles. Not one building seemed to have escaped the shelling of both American and German forces. Many houses were utterly demolished. The water line for the town had been broken by shell fire and the entire populace had to use the tap from a small artesian well for their water supply. Troops entered and searched each building in the town, finding dead and wounded civilians. As quickly as possible medical aid was given to the wounded and the dead removed. The stench of death was everywhere. Men, women and children walked the streets and stood in doorways in a dazed manner. The Germans had taken all of their tools and they were powerless to excavate the dead from demolished buildings where they had been trapped. AMGOT officials arrived in the town and civilian police were appointed to help control the populace and endeavor to restore some order. With the assistance of our troops, all available manpower was drafted to assist in removing the dead and clearing the streets. The removal of the military dead took all day, all night and part of the next day. The task of clearing ALTAVILLA went on for days.

On 21 September General Walker ordered the regiment into a bivouac area below ALTAVILLA near the SELE River to re-organize, replace equipment and secure a much needed rest.

Through all of the operations the members of the Regimental Headquarters Company commanded by 1st Lt. Harold S. Dullnig of San Antonio, Texas worked tirelessly to maintain regimental communications, provide reconnaissance and intelligence information, prepare command post protection by members of the Band under Chief Warrant Officer Homer A. Tampke of San Marcos, Texas, and carry on the multifarious details of a regimental headquarters. The communications platoon of Regimental Headquarters Company under 1st Lt. Kelman P. Gomo of High Point, North Carolina, laid and maintained approximately 250 miles of telephone wire since the invasion date and provided radio communications with battalions, divisions and supporting units. Master Sergeant Rex L. Passmore of San Antonio, Texas, Tech Sergeant Cletus H. Baird of San Antonio, Texas, Technician V Viviano Reyes of San Antonio, Texas, Technician V George Meurer of Lockhart, Texas, Technician V Arthur M. Henry of Port Neches, Texas, Private First Class Herman Kutz of Fredericksburg, Texas, Private First Class Lynn Wells of Gilmer, Texas, Private First Class Toy J. McCoy of Vernon, Texas, Private First Class Billie J. Swan of Crowell, Texas, Private First Class Lester H. Lamm of Clinton, Ohio, Private First Class J. M. Karr of Dallas, Texas, Private First Class H. C. Buckner of Boscoe, Texas, Private Willis V. Padon of Liberty, Texas, Private Henry C. Irvin of Skimmet, Texas and Private Walter A. Stoltz of Bronx, New York, all members of the communications platoon, worked night and day under shell fire, enemy snipers and strafing of enemy planes. The work of this platoon

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played an important part in the successful operations of the regiment.

The enlisted personnel of the Regimental staff sections composed of Master Sergeant John D. Kysar of Little Rock, Arkansas, Master Sergeant Thurman O. Clark of Robstown, Texas, Staff Sergeant Robert D. Diaberte of Detroit, Michigan, Technician IV John F. Proesel of Duane, Illinois, Technician IV Richard E. Sanders of Palacios, Texas, Technician V Frank H. Mechler of Scranton, Pennsylvania, Technician V Bridger P. Hobday of Harlingen, Texas, and Private Marvin A. Bennett of San Antonio, Texas, maintained the operations intelligence maps, performed the necessary administrative details, and worked ceaselessly for several days and nights without rest during certain periods of the operation when enemy activity demanded constant vigilance.

The end of the operation "Avalanche" found the regiment in good condition. Morale amongst the men was high. They were proud of their achievement of being the first American troops to land on the continent of Europe--the first troops to meet the Germans on the beaches and drive them back. Their pride was thoroughly justified.

Casualties of the 1st Infantry Regiment for the operation "Avalanche" were as follows:

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN	TOTAL
KILLED IN ACTION.....	3	57	60
WOUNDED IN ACTION.....	8	142	150
MISSING IN ACTION.....	1	41	42
	<u>12</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>252</u>

Enemy casualties, captured and destroyed material are as follows:

	KNOWN	ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL
Prisoners of War.....	40	
Killed.....	85	200
Wounded.....	3 (captured)	400
Mark IV Tanks; Destroyed.....	18	
Knocked out but re- trieved by the enemy.....	2	
Self-propelled armored (type unknown)..	1 (destroyed)	
Command & Reconnaissance Vehicles.....	2 (destroyed)	
	2 (captured intact)	
1/2-Ton Vehicle.....	1 (captured intact)	
Motorcycles.....	2 (destroyed)	
	2 (captured intact)	
75mm Anti-Tank Guns.....	5 (destroyed)	
50 cal Anti-aircraft gun.....	1 (captured intact)	
Mortars.....	3 (captured intact)	
Machine Guns.....	4 (captured intact)	
75mm Gun with ammunition.....	2 (captured intact)	
105/14 Gms (Italian) with 1800 rounds of ammunition.....	4 (captured intact)	
Railway Guns (caliber unknown).....	3 (destroyed)	
Machine Gun Ammunition.....	5000 rounds (captured intact)	
Hand Grenades (Italian).....	3000 (captured intact)	
Carbines (Italian).....	200 (captured intact)	
Miss small arms ammunition.....	5000 rounds (captured intact)	
Barbed Wire in rolls.....	150 (captured intact)	

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BY RS/DAW NARA, DATE 2/5/88

HEADQUARTERS 141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE
APO #36, U. S. ARMY

RJM/rdd

11 December 1943

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Regimental History

TO : Commanding General, 36th Infantry Division, APO #36, U. S. Army

1. Inclosed is the regimental history of the 141st Infantry Regiment covering operations in Italy during the month of November 1943.

2. Operations in this mountainous country indicate a need for certain preparatory measures. There is no need for a large number of specially trained or organized mountain troops. There is, however, a positive need for pack trains, properly organized and trained for each division. This will enable the pack trains to rest when the division rests.

3. There is a positive need for additional engineers who can create trails and mountain roads and assist in hand-carrying supplies where animal trains cannot operate. In the present operations combat troops have been required to do this work.

Richard J. Werner
RICHARD J. WERNER
Colonel, 141st Infantry
COMMANDING

4 Incls:

- #1 - Regimental History (octuple)
- #2 - Casualty List (octuple)
- #3 - Unit Journal (1 copy)
- #4 - Maps (1 set of 5)
 - a. Venafro, Sheet 161 III
 - b. Cassino, Sheet 160 II
 - c. Teramo, Sheet 172 IV
 - d. Caserta, Sheet 172 II
 - e. Casal Di Principe, Sheet 172 III



Regina Cady 24 July

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DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, SECTION 3.3, NND735017
BY esp/ma NARA, DATE 2/5/93~~SECRET~~OPERATIONS IN ITALY, NOVEMBER, 1943
of
141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE

Having left the ALTAVILLA area on 13 October 1943, the regiment moved via motor truck to a bivouac area three (3) miles southwest of GUIGLIANO where the training of replacements was conducted until 31 October. On 31 October the 3rd Battalion left the bivouac area and moved by motor truck to the Island of NISIDA in the Bay of NAPLES to participate in amphibious training preparatory to making an amphibious landing farther up the coast near GAETA. On 1 November, the 1st and 2nd Battalions participated in the same type of amphibious training as had the 3rd Battalion on the previous day.

On 2 November, the Regimental Combat Team, less the Cannon Company, Anti-Tank Company, Co "A", 111th Medical Battalion and Co "A", 111th Engineer Battalion, left the GUIGLIANO bivouac area and were transported to the Island of NISIDA where it was loaded on a number of Navy LCT's (Landing Craft - Tanks) at the wharves on the island. Vehicles, guns and communications equipment had been waterproofed the previous day and was already loaded aboard the LCT's when the troops arrived. The men were in good spirits although many of them viewed the operation from a serious aspect. Ninety-five per cent (95%) of the men had participated in the invasion of ITALY on the Gulf of SALERNO and knew full well the danger of making an amphibious attack against prepared German positions.

The loading of the LCT's was completed at 1430 hours and the troops stood or sat quietly on the craft awaiting the hour of departure which had been set for just after sundown. At 1630 hours, upon orders from the Regimental Combat Team Commander, Colonel Richard J. Werner, O-216665, of San Antonio, Texas, officers in each landing craft, after first advising the men to make no demonstration or outward evidence of any kind, announced to the troops that there actually would be no landing of any kind made. Careful preparations had been made by Fifth Army Intelligence to equip the 141st Infantry Combat Team for an amphibious operation and conduct amphibious training within full view of known German espionage agents. Information as to the place of the proposed landing had also been allowed to leak out. The entire operation was designed to draw German troops from the present front lines to the coastal sector near GAETA, thus weakening their forces in the mountain region for an attack by Allied troops. Fifth Army Intelligence reported that the Germans had already shifted one (1) panzer division to the coastal sector to repel the amphibious landing with the result that the amphibious demonstration was already a success. Prior knowledge to the fact that there actually would be no landing had been restricted to the Regimental Commander, a selected few staff members, each battalion commander and the 131st Field Artillery Battalion commander. All other personnel prepared for the demonstration and loaded on the landing craft strictly on the basis of an actual operation.

- 1 -

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 BY ea/ma NARA, DATE 12/5/78

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The troops aboard the LCT's complied with the order of no outward demonstration upon being advised that no landing would be made, but it was a difficult order to obey. The release from the tension of making an amphibious attack was manifested on the faces of the men and in the low-toned exhilarating talk that hummed through the boats.

However, the entire demonstration was not completed after the announcement was made. The men were to remain on board the LCT's until sundown at which time they were to file off quietly and disperse among the buildings and wharves. Just after sundown when visibility from the mainland was screened, troops, vehicles and equipment were removed from the landing craft and the LCT's moved out into the harbor to meet naval escort vessels, forming a convoy which proceeded north up the coast just as though the entire amphibious force was actually going to take place. Naval warcraft were to shell the beaches shortly before dawn as though fulfilling a prearranged fire mission for an attacking amphibious force.

At midnight the troops left the Island of NISIDA and filed across the pier connecting the island to the mainland where they were loaded into trucks and returned to the bivouac area near GUIGLIANO.

At 2230 hours, 5 November, Colonel Werner was ordered by Major General Fred L. Walker, Commanding General of the 36th Infantry Division, to move the combat team by motor truck to a new bivouac area in the vicinity of PIGNATARO, leaving the GUIGLIANO area by 1000 hours 6 November. All units of the combat team were informed of the move that night and a march order was prepared and dispatched to unit commanders.

At 1000 hours, 6 November, the first serial of the convoy left the bivouac area and the combat team moved to PIGNATARO via a circuitous route laid out by II Corps. British convoys coming south created a great deal of confusion in the march serials, splitting the serials and generally delaying the movement. The roads were very dusty and a thick layer of white dust covered men, vehicles and equipment at the end of the movement.

Shortly after the command post was established on the outskirts of PIGNATARO, General Walker arrived at the OP with orders from II Corps to move the combat team to the vicinity of PIETRAVAIRANO and close into a bivouac area in that region 1400 hours 7 November. Since telephone communication had not been established to the various units as yet, liaison officers were sent to each unit to advise them of the change in plans.

On 7 November, the combat team moved to a bivouac area four (4) miles southwest of PIETRAVAIRANO. Traffic problems again created confusion among the march serials. One way bridges over streams, culverts, and rivers had been put up by construction engineers to meet initial temporary needs of front line troops.

- 2 -

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Although priority had been given to the 141st Infantry on the selected route, II Corps military police had a great deal of difficulty in maintaining the flow of traffic in order for the combat team to close into its bivouac area by 1400 hours.

Prior to the movement of the combat team, a quartering party had been sent to the PIETRAVALRANO area to locate the various battalion and separate company areas. Captain William O. Wottlin, O-404295, of San Antonio, Texas, and Corporal William R. Strong, 32263097, of Brooklyn, New York, members of Headquarters Company 1st Battalion, were reconnoitering for a bivouac area for the 1st Battalion when their jeep ran over a German land mine that had been left by the Germans when they retreated.

An immediate reconnaissance of the area was made by Colonel Werner, Captain Roswell K. Doughty, O-280726, Regimental Intelligence Officer and 1st Lt. Roy M. Bass, O-410459, of San Antonio, Texas, leader of the Regimental Headquarters Company Intelligence & Reconnaissance Platoon. The area was found to have a considerable quantity of German mines placed haphazardly around. Bridges, culverts and roads were blown up and army engineers were working night and day to provide by-passes and temporary repairs. The entire area was a quagmire of mud. Vehicular traffic clogged the roads in every direction.

Just as the 1st Battalion was closing into its bivouac area seven German planes broke through the front line anti-aircraft defenses and strafed and bombed the main highway. No casualties were suffered by the 1st Battalion from this enemy air action.

On 11 November an urgent request was received from the 94th Evacuation Hospital located near the Regimental Command Post for donors of type "O" blood. Over eight hundred (800) men volunteered as donors but due to the length of time required for taking the blood, only ten to twenty per cent (10-20%) of the donors were used. Colonel Lee R. Fries, Commanding Officer of the 94th Evacuation Hospital, wrote the following quoted letter to the Regimental Commander: "It gives me great pleasure to commend your entire unit for its splendid cooperation in helping this hospital maintain a blood bank which has saved many lives and will hasten the recovery of many Allied soldiers wounded in action. A great number of your organization have rendered their services as blood donors at this hospital."

On 15 November, orders were received from General Walker to move the combat team, less the 151st Field Artillery and Company "A", 111th Engineers, to an area in the vicinity of MIGNANO to relieve the 15th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division. The relief of the 15th Infantry Regiment was to be effected on the night of 16-17 November.

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DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, SECTION 3.5, NND 735017
BY Erasmus NARA, DATE 2/13/88**SECRET**

16 November dawned cold, grey and rainy. The men took down their pup-tents and rolled their packs in the mud and rain, making a vain effort to keep their equipment clean and dry under the most adverse circumstances. The Regimental Command Post was closed at the PIETRAVAIRANO area and moved to the HIGNANO area where it opened at 1600 hours. The new command post was situated on the second floor of an Italian farmhouse - a building in which the 143rd Infantry Regiment maintained their command post on the first floor and in which the 15th Infantry Regiment was still functioning on the second floor. The valley, which the command post overlooked, was limited in possible sites for headquarters command posts inasmuch as it was extremely vulnerable to German artillery fire from end to end and afforded the enemy excellent observation from the M. CAMINO hill mass which dominated the valley on the south.

The battalion and separate company troops left the PIETRAVAIRANO area just at dusk and moved by motor truck to a point approximately five miles from the front lines. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions went into bivouac positions in the rear as regimental reserve and the 1st Battalion marched from the detrucking point to a position on the southeast slope of M. LUNGO to relieve the 2nd Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment, about two and one half (2½) miles northeast of the town of HIGNANO.

It had rained almost incessantly all day and it continued to rain throughout the night as the men of the 1st Battalion slugged up the road to M. LUNGO in mud over their ankles, slipping and sliding into pools of water. Upon leaving the road the troops scrambled over the wet and slippery rocks up the slopes of M. LUNGO. The Germans layed harassing artillery fire on M. LUNGO during the time the relief was being effected. As the shells dropped around them, the men would fall to the ground and seek whatever cover was available, becoming covered with mud from head to foot and soaking wet.

While the 1st Battalion was climbing the slopes of M. LUNGO, the 2nd Battalion was relieving the 3rd Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment and the 3rd Battalion was relieving the 1st Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment in the regimental reserve area several miles south of the regimental command post. The 15th Infantry Regiment was relieved at 0030 hours on 17 November.

The area having been officially taken over by the 141st Infantry, Lt. Colonel W. Trimble Brown, 016666, of Leesburg, Virginia, Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, completed plans for patrols and requested the regimental commander to furnish carrying parties to bring in a sufficient supply of food and ammunition to establish a dump for the battalion in the event it was attacked and supplies could not be brought in each day. Arrangements were made for the 2nd and 3rd Battalions to furnish fifty (50) men each to carry supplies on the night of 17-18 November and 18-19 November.

- 4 -
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DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356, SECTION 3.3, NND 735017
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The carrying parties assembled at the farthest point which the supply trucks could safely carry the supplies. From that point the men began the back-breaking task of hand-carrying ammunition, food and water up the rocky slopes of M. LUNGO. Slipping and sliding over muddy and rocky terrain, wading at times through pools of water knee deep, groping in the dark and rain for footing over the unfamiliar ground and gasping for breath from the exertion of climbing, the men went on with their arduous task. The enemy laid concentrations of artillery shells in the path of the carrying parties and the men were forced to drop their supplies and seek whatever cover they could find in rock crevices and shell holes. Private First Class Eugene O. Porter, 20803800, of Port Isabel, Texas, a member of Headquarters Company 3rd Battalion, and Private First Class Arthur W. Weiss 38050832, of Nelmer, Texas, a member of Company "K", were killed by this artillery fire. Private Frank S. Rain, 32222390, of Flushing, Long Island, New York, was seriously wounded and later died of his wounds in a rear line hospital as a result of this enemy shelling. Private First Class Norman F. Sinclair, 36710081, of Conway, Missouri, Private Charles B. Anglin, 34572090, of Bredford, Georgia, Private Hansel Dutton, 36736635, of Hardin, Illinois, and Private Esco E. Shaw, 14116370, of Gainesville, Georgia, all members of Headquarters Company 2nd Battalion, were seriously wounded; and Corporal Manuel R. Rivera, 20802340, of El Paso, Texas, and Private First Class Roque M. R. Gonzalez, 38025610, of Laedo, Texas, both members of Company "E", were lightly wounded during the German artillery concentrations.

Despite the shelling, rain, mud, laborious hand-carrying and unfamiliar terrain, the 1st Battalion was supplied with sufficient food and ammunition on the two nights to establish an adequate supply dump.

On 18 November, Brigadier General W. H. Wilbur, Assistant Division Commander of the 36th Infantry Division, ordered Colonel Werner to relieve the 2nd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry Regiment on M. ROTONDO with the 2nd Battalion of the 141st Infantry leaving their present area at 1730 hours, 19 November; also the 3rd Battalion would relieve the 1st Battalion on M. LUNGO, leaving their present position at 1730 hours, on 20 November. All Battalion commanders were informed of the change and plans were formulated for adequate guides and artillery support.

At 1902 hours 18 November, Lt. Colonel Brown advised Colonel Werner that the 1st Battalion was being attacked by a small German force, that the attackers were being met with mortar and small arms fire, and that artillery support had been called for from the regimental Cannon Company. At 1945 hours Colonel Brown advised that the attack had been repelled. The fire from the Cannon Company, commanded by Captain Leverett O. Hamilton, O-410463, of El Paso, Texas, had been very accurate and effective in breaking up the attack.

Early on the morning of 19 November, the Germans laid several heavy concentrations of artillery fire on the Regimental Command Post area, disrupting tele-

- 5 -

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phone communications to the battalions, separate companies and division headquarters. The wire crews of Regimental Headquarters Company, the battalions and separate companies worked night and day to keep telephone communication open. The almost incessant enemy artillery fire broke the lines almost as quickly as they were repaired.

At approximately 0030 hours on 19 November, a Company "A" platoon led by 2nd Lt. Clarence M. Artymovich, O-129411, of Detroit, Michigan, cut off five (5) Germans who evidently had been on a patrol mission and captured them. Interrogation revealed the prisoners to be from the 9th Company of the 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment which was located on M. LUNGO. The prisoners had recently been given instructions on security and it was difficult to elicit information from them.

At 1600 hours Allied planes bombed S. PIETRO for the first time since the regiment had occupied positions in the front lines. The weather had been cloudy the great majority of the time and a great deal of rain had fallen. Two German planes strafed the positions of the 1st Battalion on M. LUNGO.

At 1730 hours the 2nd Battalion commanded by Lt. Colonel Aaron W. Wyatt, Jr. O-264395 of Ossining, New York, left their reserve position bivouac area to relieve the 2nd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry Regiment on M. ROTONDO. The relief was effected at 0315 hours on 20 November.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions were now situated on hills across from each other through which Highway No. 6 wound through the narrow valley separating the two hills. At the southeast tip of M. LUNGO the highway made a U-shape contour to the west closely following the base of M. LUNGO. The Germans occupied the greater portion of M. LUNGO - the 1st Battalion occupying only the southeast tip. Since both M. LUNGO and M. ROTONDO overlooked the broad valley in which the towns of S. PIETRO, S. VITTORE and CASSINO are located and which hills and towns were important links in the German winter line, both the 1st and 2nd Battalions were subjected to almost constant artillery, mortar, machine gun and small arms fire - the troops on M. LUNGO receiving the brunt of the enemy fire. M. ROTONDO afforded better cover and concealment than M. LUNGO due to its wooded terrain. M. LUNGO was devoid of vegetation in many places and the troops had great difficulty in securing adequate cover. The M. CAMINO hill mass to the west and southwest overlooked both M. LUNGO and M. ROTONDO and the regimental command post area located two miles southeast of MIGNANO. Since the greater portion of M. CAMINO was occupied by the Germans, they were afforded excellent observation of all movements within the regimental area. Consequently, strict discipline had to be exercised on vehicular traffic during the hours of daylight. Vehicles larger than jeeps were not permitted to pass the road junction on Highway No. 6 and the road leading east to FRESENZANO during daylight hours. Then,

- 6 -

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(116)

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only jeeps on urgent missions were allowed to traverse the road. Those units that could receive hot food from kitchens in the field train bivouac near PRESENZANO were allowed to bring it up to their positions in jeeps with trailers.

The observation post maintained by the Regimental Headquarters Company Intelligence & Reconnaissance Platoon on M. CESINA and the 2nd Battalion observation post on M. ROTONDO, having an excellent view to the north and northwest, afforded the regimental staff officers with valuable information on enemy movements on M. LUNGO, M. CAMINO, in S. PIETRO and S. VITTORE, enemy artillery positions observed by gun flashes, German flare activity and vehicular traffic on Highway No. 6. This information coupled with that from the front line companies kept the regimental commander fully apprised of enemy activity in the regimental sector.

Allied artillery against German positions was maintained day and night. Although the Germans seemed to expend as many rounds of artillery during the first few days as our own artillery batteries, additional units of heavy and medium artillery brought into the rear area soon brought the balance of artillery firepower in the favor of our forces. The entire front was a constant rumble and roar. The ground rocked from the force of exploding shells and the noise reverberated from mountain to mountain.

The almost constant rain was a severe strain on the men in the front lines. Forced to remain in their foxholes during the hours of daylight, the holes would often fill up with water. Since movement was constrained due to enemy observation, the men would have to wait until dark to bail out their positions with their steel helmets. Clothing, blankets and equipment became wet and soggy with mud. After several days in the line the first cases of trench feet, familiar to World War I, appeared. Troops were urged and ordered to remove their shoes and wring out their wet socks as often as possible and to massage their feet to stimulate the flow of blood.

At 1730 on 20 November, the 3rd Battalion commanded by Major Robert E. Mohaffey, Jr. O-384193, of Brookridge, Texas, left the regimental reserve bivouac area to relieve the 1st Battalion on M. LUNGO. The relief was effected by 0345 hours on 21 November, and the 1st Battalion went into position as regimental reserve to secure a few days of much needed rest. Just prior to leaving their bivouac area to relieve the 1st Battalion, long range enemy artillery shells landed in the Company "K" area wounding thirteen (13) men.

The Medical Aid Stations of the 1st Battalion commanded by Captain Joel B. Cunningham, O-345134, of Camden New Jersey, the 2nd Battalion commanded by Captain Ralph S. Phelan, O-378415, of Waurika, Oklahoma, and the 3rd Battalion com-

- 7 -

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manded by 1st Lt. Harry Noodelman, O-489167, of Miami Beach, Florida, worked tirelessly evacuating the wounded and dead from the hills. Wounded could not be evacuated during the hours of daylight due to the exposure of company positions. Litter bearers would leave the battalion aid stations just at dusk to climb up to unit positions from which it was necessary to evacuate the wounded. The task of hand-carrying the wounded from the hills was exhausting. Despite every effort to ease the pain of the wounded, litter bearers would slip and fall, jolting their patients. The bearers would arrive at the aid stations dripping with perspiration - their faces white and drawn with fatigue. There was no rest for them during the hours of darkness as German artillery was exacting its toll in dead and wounded day and night. Every effort was made to provide the wounded with hot drinks and cigarettes as they arrived at the aid stations. After administering emergency medical attention, the aid station personnel loaded the wounded into ambulances which moved to the 11th Medical Clearing Station in the rear area over Highway No. 6 which was constantly being subjected to enemy artillery fire.

At 1530 hours on 21 November, an artillery concentration fell on the Regimental Headquarters Company and Regimental Medical Aid Station positions. Major Joseph B. Coopwood, O-260356, of Lockhart, Texas, the Regimental Surgeon, was killed; Captain Seymour Pollen, O-400355, of Scranton, Pennsylvania, the Regimental Dentist, and Technical Sergeant Wesley E. Dalton, 20803863, of Lockhart Texas, were wounded, when a shell exploded outside of the aid tent in which they were working. Private John E. Diehl, 33185674, of Quakertown, Pennsylvania, a member of Company "G" was killed, and Private Henry J. Joubert, 31301745, of Kingston, Massachusetts, a member of Company "D", was so severely wounded that he died in a hospital the next day, as a result of this enemy shelling. Both Private Diehl and Private Joubert were on special duty with the Regimental Headquarters Company special military police platoon.

During the artillery concentration, Technician Grade V Herman J. Ehlinger, 38025560, of Devino, Texas, was on duty at the regimental switchboard. The first shell landed so close to the switchboard that a soldier standing next to Technician Grade V Ehlinger was wounded. During this concentration and two other concentrations that followed, Technician Ehlinger was thrown to the ground from his position at the switchboard by the concussion of the exploding shells. Ehlinger remained on duty keeping the regimental command post advised of what was occurring and handling such incoming and outgoing calls as came through, although the majority of the lines had been broken by the shelling.

At 1420 hours on 21 November, a small force of approximately twenty (20) Germans attempted to attack the left flank of the 3rd Battalion, having previously fired smoke shells in front of Company "I" to cover their approach. Artillery fire was called for from the Cannon Company and with the addition of mortar and small arms fire the attack was promptly broken up.

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During the night of 21-22 November, the Anti-Tank Company Mine Platoon, led by 1st Lt. Harry B. Coas, O-1208010, of Wyncasburg, Pennsylvania laid mine field just west of Highway No. 6 and approximately one-half mile south of M. ROTONDO, covering the most probable approach of enemy tanks. The mine field was laid under very hazardous conditions with enemy artillery shells falling around the platoon.

A 3rd Battalion patrol encountered an enemy pillbox on the southeast slope of M. LUNGO and also located some German mortar and machine gun positions. The patrol was forced to retreat before superior enemy fire power, but at day-break when artillery fire could be observed, shells were placed on the machine gun and mortar positions effectively. The pillbox, however, was so situated that artillery fire could not reach it and the pillbox remained a constant source of trouble.

Fifty (50) Coleman stoves for heating food and drinks in the front lines were issued to the battalions by the Regimental Supply Officer, Captain Claude P. Morgan, O-299958, of Fort Worth, Texas. Also, canned solidified spirits were obtained for issue to individuals who could not afford to leave their positions so that they, too, might have hot food and drinks. The morale of the fighting men was improved immeasurably upon receipt of the heating facilities.

The problem of evacuating Italian civilians from front line areas and from MIGHANO placed a strain on the fighting units. The Regimental Headquarters Company commander, 1st Lt. Harold S. Mullins, O-417598, of San Antonio, Texas, nightly evacuated Italians to the rear areas. On several occasions Italians were taken to the 36th Infantry Division Prisoner of War enclosure for interrogation because of their suspicious activities and attempts to get through the American lines to the north.

On 24 November, the Germans subjected the front line battalions and regimental command post to unusually heavy artillery concentrations. Allied artillery countered with counter-battery fire. The northern portion of M. LUNGO and the town of S. PIETRO were to have been the objects of air missions but due to cloudy weather only a few planes dropped bombs on S. PIETRO.

It was noticeable during the day that the Germans had either reinforced their troops in the M. CAMINO - M. LUNGO - M. ROTONDO area, or they were becoming careless about cover and concealment. Observation posts reported numerous incidents of enemy troops moving about and vehicular traffic on the roads. Prompt passage of this information to artillery fire direction centers brought heavy concentrations of Allied artillery on the enemy.

During the daylight hours on 25 November, repeated attempts were made to knock out the German pillbox on M. LUNGO with artillery fire. Due to its posi-

- 9 -
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tion, however, the artillery could not reach it. A patrol mission from the 3rd Battalion was formulated to go out that night and take the pillbox with small arms and rifle grenades, assisted by artillery concentrations in the general area of the pillbox. Before the patrol could reach the pillbox, however they were engaged in a fire fight with the Germans and were forced to withdraw. Private First Class Frank J. Cinguerra, 3222558, of Corona, New York; Private Carl D. Mitchell, 35033646, of St. Paris, Ohio, Private Obie A. Comber, 34623755, of Philadelphia, Mississippi and Private George W. Kelso, 37371364, of Glasgow, Missouri, all members of Company "L" who participated in the patrol, were missing after the action. Observers and daylight patrols attempted to locate the men or their bodies the next day but were unsuccessful.

A German patrol attempted to enter the position of Company "G" commanded by Captain Charles H. Beacham, O-420093, of San Antonio, Texas, during the night. The enemy patrol threw handgrenades and fired machine pistols but it was quickly driven off.

The Germans used their nebelwerfers a great deal (or "Screaming-Meenies" as the men preferred to call them because of the eerie sound made by the shells as they fell). The troops on both M. LUNGO and M. ROTONDO were subjected to numerous concentrations of shells from this rocket-type gun. The sound of six (6) screaming shells falling simultaneously from a nebelwerfer produced a chilling effect on the soldier in the area where the shells exploded.

On the night of 26-27 November the 1st Battalion relieved the 3rd Battalion on M. LUNGO. During the relief of the battalions from their various positions, prearranged artillery concentrations were planned with the 151st Field Artillery Battalion in the event of an attack by the Germans while the relief was being effected. A screening force from the unit being relieved always remained in position until the relieving force had completely taken over. The screening force, in turn, was then relieved. Reliefs in the line were made one (1) platoon at a time in each company positions.

2nd Lt. Robert A. Baughman, O-436908, of Manson, Iowa, a member of Company "F"; Private First Class Antonio Morano, 38025859, of Falfurrias, Texas, Private Henry R. Bungard, 33277648, of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, Private Raymond L. Huling, 34707314, of Bridgeport, Alabama, Private John L. Hawkins, 33538275, of Culpepper, Virginia, and Private Oscar D. Smotherman, 37395918, of Birchtree, Missouri, all members of Company "G", penetrated the German reserve position on patrol on the night of 26 November. Approaching a house behind the German lines the patrol heard soldiers coming out and the sound of voices. Lt. Baughman led the men up a narrow trail with banks on each side. Hearing the sounds of men approaching, the patrol crept close to the side of the bank affording the most concealment. What appeared to be three (3) German officers wearing trenchcoats came into view on

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the top of the bank. It was decided to try and take the Germans prisoner. Lt. Baughman crept up and hit one of the Germans on the head with the butt of his pistol. Almost simultaneously Lt. Baughman was knocked out by one of the other two Germans. The enlisted men of the patrol opened up fire with submachine guns and either killed or wounded all three officers. The sound of the gun fire brought two other Germans running from the house. As they dove into sight on the opposite side of the bank, they too were shot down. By that time Lt. Baughman had recovered enough to decide that the patrol must retreat since sounds of many voices and running feet could be heard from the direction of the house occupied by the Germans. The patrol split and made a hurried exit. Neither Private Hawkins nor Private Smotherman returned to the 2nd Battalion command post from the patrol and it was believed that they had been captured. From a prisoner of war captured several days later it was learned that one of the Germans wounded by the patrol was the Commanding Officer of the 12th Company of the 15th Panzer Grenadier Regiment.

At 1445 hours on 27 November, a 2nd Battalion patrol observed a number of Germans digging mortar positions who had four (4) American prisoners carrying a fifth wounded man with them. Despite the fact that the Germans had American prisoners, it was necessary to place artillery fire in the area to displace the mortars.

Artillery continued to play the dominant factor between both American and German forces. Vigorous patrolling was made both day and night and the patrols constantly drew enemy fire through their aggressive attempts to determine the strength and positions of the enemy.

After concentrations of 155mm shells had been placed in the general vicinity of the pillbox on the front of the 1st Battalion, a patrol was sent out that crept up to within ten feet of the pillbox. They found that the Germans had abandoned the pillbox and had withdrawn to the northeast slope of M. LUNGO. The patrol could hear sounds of German voices and men digging positions on the mountain.

On several occasions Company "A", 111th Engineer Battalion, was called upon to blast positions in the rock on both M. LUNGO and M. ROTONDO for gun emplacements and shelter for the troops during periods of prolonged enemy shelling. Also, road work had to be performed due to the constant rain which turned roads and trails into bogs of mud. While completing a turn-around for vehicles for the 2nd Battalion on M. ROTONDO, the engineers were forced to work under direct machine gun fire.

Allied planes bombed the area north and northwest of M. CAMINO, M. LUNGO and M. ROTONDO during the day on 27 November, when breaks in the clouds afforded them observation. Sounds of bombing were heard from the direction of CASSINO after dark. The weather permitted only limited air activity but when the weather per-

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mitted, their activities improved the morale of the men in the front lines who were forced to remain in their foxholes day and night under the merciless German artillery shelling.

2nd Lt. Ralph J. McMorrow, O-1311320, of Minneapolis, Minnesota, Sergeant Herman Dowell, 38050610, of Houston, Texas, Private First Class Martin W. Dieter, 32633611, of Brooklyn, New York, and Private Leon P. Eubanks, 34592264, of Leaksville, North Carolina, all members of Company "F", penetrated the German position on patrol. Upon meeting a sentry they challenged him in German but the sentry immediately fired on them, which also drew fire from a German observation post. The patrol returned the fire and either killed or wounded two of the enemy. The patrol began to return to our line when they came to an open field with three rows of brush ten (10) feet apart running perpendicular to highway No. 6. A German sentry behind one of the clumps of brush opened fire on the patrol and the fire was returned. Lt. McMorrow had been slightly wounded in the first exchange of fire, tripped over a wire setting off a booby trap. The entire field seemed to be covered with booby traps as constant explosions occurred as the patrol endeavored to get away from the area. Lt. McMorrow was wounded again and Private Eubanks was wounded by the exploding booby traps. Both Lt. McMorrow and Private Eubanks were able to return to the 2nd Battalion command post through the assistance of Sergeant Dowell and Private First Class Dieter.

At 0905 hours 29 November, General Walker ordered Colonel Werner to have two rifle companies ready to furnish the 1st Infantry as carrying parties for the night of 29-30 November. Arrangements were made to send Company "I" and Company "K" from the 3rd Battalion after dark. The companies moved fully equipped with the exception of their heavy weapons as it was believed they would be used by the 1st Infantry for at least two nights and possibly longer.

On the night of 29 November, a 1st Battalion patrol again went up to the pillbox on M. LUNGO in front of their position and found no one there. Another patrol discovered a group of Germans laying mines. One of the mines exploded while the Germans were placing them in position.

On the night of 30 November, the 1st Battalion received an attack on three sides from a force of approximately one hundred (100) Germans. The main effort of the attack was directed on the right side of the battalion's position. The attack was successfully repelled, mainly by mortar and small arms fire and completely broken up by artillery fire. The attack was believed to have been for reconnaissance in force or to cover reinforcements entering the line on M. LUNGO.

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Casualties of the 141st Infantry Regiment for the month of November, 1943, were as follows:

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN	TOTAL
KILLED IN ACTION	2	35	37
DIED OF WOUNDS	0	7	7
WOUNDED IN ACTION	8	147	155
INJURED IN ACTION	0	1	1
MISSING IN ACTION	0	7	7
	<u>10</u>	<u>197</u>	<u>207</u>

Enemy casualties, captured and destroyed materiel for the month of November, 1943, are as follows:

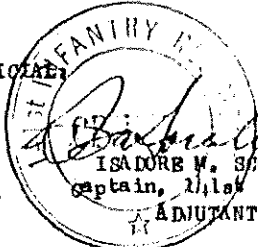
	KNOWN	ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL
prisoners of war	9	
Killed	18	35
wounded	0	56
Trucks (unknown type)	9 (destroyed)	
Half-track Vehicle	1 (destroyed)	
75mm Anti-Tank guns	3 (destroyed)	
Machine guns	2 (destroyed)	
81mm Mortar	1 (destroyed)	

NOTE: No estimate is given as to enemy casualties caused by the combat team artillery fire. Information from prisoners of war indicates casualties to be in great numbers from artillery fire.

END

Report of operations written by:

Robert D. Dieterle
 ROBERT D. DIETERLE, 16062508
 Master Sergeant, Service Co.
 141st Infantry Regiment.

OFFICIAL:

 ISADORE W. SCOTT
 Captain, 141st Infantry
 ADJUTANT

HEADQUARTERS 141st INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE
APO #36, U. S. ARMY

AWW/rdd

11 January 1944

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Regimental History and Conclusions of Operations
TO : commanding General, 36th Infantry Division, APO #36, U. S. Army.

1. Inclosed is the regimental history of the 141st Infantry Regiment covering operations in Italy during the month of December 1943.
2. conclusions based on operations during this period are as follows:
 - a. Supply in mountain operations.
 - (1) Supply for troops engaged in mountain warfare was abund inadequate.
 - (2) To improve such supply it is suggested that supply battalions be activated and trained for the servicing of troops engaged in mountain fighting, such battalions to be available for attachment to combat troops as required.
 - (a) The above organization could comprise a Headquarters and headquarters detachment, four (4) companies of eight (8) platoons, each platoon consisting of two (2) squads of fifteen (15) men with a sergeant squad leader and a corporal assistant squad leader. Our experience indicates that one officer is needed for each thirty (30) men in eight carrying.
 - (b) This unit should be trained and equipped similarly as for special mountain troops.
 - (3) The above would avoid the drain on combat organizations and make more infantrymen available for actual combat operations.
 - b. Training.
 - (1) Additional training with close support artillery is needed. In the recent operation troops did not follow successive concentrations closely enough.
 - (2) Troops must be trained to fire at likely locations for enemy whether or not they see anyone to fire at.
 - (3) More time must be spent in developing physical and mental stamina in all ranks.
 - (4) Disciplinary drills such as calisthenics, battle drill and gun drills are of the greatest value in gaining and keeping control, in securing proper tactical performance and developing efficiency.
 - (5) The average soldier does not understand the proper use of concealment. He frequently exposes himself needlessly by skylining, etc.

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2. b. (6) American troops will rarely "crawl on their bellies" unless forced to. Many needless casualties resulted and many patrol missions failed because of this deficiency.
 - (7) Absolute obedience to orders must be demanded and enforced by commanders of all echelons.
 - (8) More and better training is needed in night operations of all sorts.
 - (9) Greater emphasis must be placed on training of patrols in both day and night operations.
 - (10) Better understanding is required in all echelons of the principles of all around defense.
 - (11) Camouflage discipline must be improved.
- c. Hygiene, sanitation and police.
- (1) Control of foot hygiene must be exercised and followed through by commanding officers of all echelons. It is believed that by enforced foot massage and changing socks twice a day, coupled with the use of vasoline as a skin lubricant, trench foot casualties could be avoided or reduced at least by fifty per cent (50%).
 - (2) Sanitation and area police are even more important in combat than in bivouac. Suitable latrines must be provided and meticulously maintained. Rubbish must be disposed of so as not to afford information to enemy observation.
 - (3) All ranks should be required to shave at least every other day in combat. Clean shaven men feel better and perform better.
 - (4) Hands, feet, and face must be kept clean as insurance against infection.
- d. General
- (1) Officers and NCO's must never feel sorry for men under their command. Men must be made to do what is needed.
 - (2) More appreciation is needed in all ranks of the time--space factor in mountain operations. In mountainous country distances must be measured in time.
 - (3) Evacuation of trivial cases by medical personnel must be stopped.
 - (4) Relief of front line units every ten to fifteen (10-15) days for three (3) or more days would be desirable to permit rest, bathing, resupply, physical examination and consumption of "B" rations.
 - (5) Extra issues of powdered soup and coffee would permit unit operation of permanent "soup kettles" and "coffee pots" with salutary results in morale.
 - (6) Insufficient attention is devoted by combat units to prompt evacuation of salvages.
 - (7) Combat units normally have no personnel available for evacuation of the dead, particularly in mountainous terrain. Additional graves registration personnel are believed to be required.

2. e. Clothing and individual equipment.

(1) Clothing.

- (a) Heavy woolen socks are needed for wear in cold, wet, weather, particularly in the mountains.
- (b) The combat gait should be issued to all infantry personnel.
- (c) The currently issued combat boot is too stiff and uncomfortable for use in the field in rough terrain. The service shoe is superior for ordinary use. A rubber bottomed, felt top boot is suggested for use in winter weather, over-shoes being too heavy and too clumsy for marching.
- (d) The wool-knit glove with a leather palm is excellent; the wool-knit glove without the leather palm is entirely unsatisfactory.
- (e) The currently issued rubberized raincoat is unsatisfactory due to "sweating". A poncho of water-repellant cotton fabric with integral hood is suggested.

(2) Individual equipment.

- (a) Present entrenching tools are inadequate. A combination pick and shovel to be carried by each infantryman is needed.
- (b) Present mess equipment is unsatisfactory. Knife, fork and spoon combination and a plastic canteen cup are needed.
- (c) Weapons crew members should be armed with carbines or pistols.
- (d) Wide strap suspenders, similar to the suspender, medical, are needed for MR ammunition carriers.
- (e) A light, easily carried sleeping bag such as that issued to Special Service Troops would be of inestimable value in reducing illness and disease.

f. Organizational equipment.

- (1) A small electric torch, similar to that used by the field artillery is needed in weapons platoons and companies for night firing. Blackout flashlights are not satisfactory.
- (2) W-130 wire is too easily broken. A strong, light field wire is needed.
- (3) A sound-dampening cover is needed for heavy machine gun water chests.
- (4) A small leather spare parts kit should be issued and strapped on machine gun tripods.
- (5) Each infantry battalion should have switchboard equipment provided with not less than twenty-four (24) drops.
- (6) Each infantry regimental headquarters requires switchboard equipment providing not less than sixty (60) drops.
- (7) Each infantry regiment requires two and one-half (2½) tons additional transportation for signal equipment transportation. A 1½ ton, 6 x 6 truck, with 1 ton trailer is suggested.

2. f. (8) Each infantry regiment should establish a forward signal dump, maintaining a supply level including twenty (20) miles of W-110 wire, two (2) days supply of batteries for each radio as well as miscellaneous supplies and accessories.
- (9) The radio SCR-511 should be modified to permit the entire set to be carried on the chest of the operator. As presently designed, the set is frequently used as a walking stick in the mountains with resulting damage.
- (10) Waterproof covers should be provided for all radio equipment. Each type of radio is very susceptible to inoperation due to dampness.
- (11) The SCR-536 radio cannot normally be relied upon. It is suggested that the SCR-511 be issued in lieu.
- (12) Each battalion requires eighteen (18) additional sound powered telephones for issue to companies as needed.
- (13) As a prime-mover and howitzer mount the half track has proven unsatisfactory. It bogs down easily in soft ground and requires such frequent maintenance and repairing that "deadline" rates are abnormally high.
- (14) Each infantry regiment requires twenty-two (22) additional EE-8A telephones.
- (15) Each infantry battalion requires thirteen (13) additional EE-8A telephones.

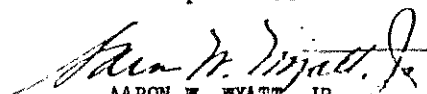
g. Organization.

- (1) Eight (8) ammunition carriers are required for 81mm mortar squad. Four (4) ammunition carriers are required for each 60mm mortar squad.
- (2) Each infantry battalion requires ten (10) linemen with an additional four (4) linemen per lettered company for the proper maintenance of communications; six (6) switchboard operators are needed since two switching controls are usually needed.
- (3) Each infantry regiment requires sixteen (16) additional linemen and four (4) additional switchboard operators.
- (4) Four (4) additional messengers and four (4) additional code clerks are needed in regimental headquarters to operate forward message centers.
- (5) Current T/O for Anti-Tank Company provides sufficient personnel for operation of two platoons of anti-tank guns only. One officer and thirty-five (35) men in addition would be required for proper operation of the third platoon.

h. The above conclusions represent combat observations made within this regiment as well as experiences of other personnel with whom ideas have been exchanged.

4 Incls:

- #1 - Regimental History (nextuple)
- #2 - Casualty List (nextuple)
- #3 - Unit Journal (1 copy)
- #4 - Maps (1 set)


AARON W. WYATT, JR.
Lt. Col., 141st Infantry
COMMANDING

On 2 December, Captain George C. Athrie, O-404607, of San Antonio, Texas, Commanding Officer of Anti-Tank Company, began a reconnaissance for new gun positions in the event of a break-through by Allied Forces into the RAIDAG Valley. 1st Lt. Harry E. Case, O-1288010, of Sayre, Pennsylvania, leader of the Anti-Tank Company Mine Platoon, made preparations for the removal of the mine field laid by his platoon in November between Highway No. 6, the southern tip of M. ROTUNDO and C. SARRWIEHELE in order that armored units might pass through that section.

Captain Leverett G. Hamilton, O-410463, of El Paso, Texas, Commanding Officer of Cannon Company, received initial instructions from Colonel Werner for the support of the 142nd Infantry Regiment in its attack against the Germans on the M. CAMINO - M. MAGGIORE hill mass lying southwest of M. LUNGO.

The M. CAMINO - M. MAGGIORE hill mass with its lofty snow peaked heights afforded the Germans excellent observation of the greater portion of the 36th Division sector. This hill mass completely dominated M. LUNGO and M. ROTUNDO and overlooked the regimental command post situated approximately two and one-half miles southeast of M. LUNGO. Allied artillery units regularly placed white phosphorous shells on its peaks and suspected enemy observation points. The very accurate and effective artillery fire placed by the Germans, however, denoted that the hill mass was occupied by a number of enemy artillery forward observers.

Active patrols were maintained by the 1st and 2nd Battalions. The junction of Highway No. 6 and the road leading into C. OSTRO, known as "W 69", was a point of activity for the Germans, in that each night patrols from positions on M. ROTUNDO endeavored to reach the road junction.

Beginning just at dusk on 2 December, and continuing for hours thereafter, Allied artillery poured concentration after concentration of shells into the M. CAMINO - M. MAGGIORE hill mass. The rumble and roar of the guns echoed from mountain to mountain and the noise of exploding shells reverberated until the ground trembled.

The 3rd Battalion, less Company "I" and Company "K" which were attached to the 142nd Infantry as carrying parties, relieved the 2nd Battalion on M. ROTUNDO under cover of darkness on the night of 2-3 December. Company "F" and Company "E" of the 2nd Battalion remained in position with the 3rd Battalion on M. ROTUNDO. The relief was effected without incident.

The outpost line of the 1st Battalion on M. LUNGO was attacked by a German force of unknown strength at 0430 hours on 3 December, in the Company "J" sec-

OPERATIONS IN ITALY, DECEMBER, 1943
of
141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE

The 1st of December found the 1st Battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel J. Trimble Brown, O-16666, of Leesburg, Virginia, on the southeast slope of M. LUNGO; the 2nd Battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel Aaron W. Wyatt, Jr., O-264395, of Ossining, New York, was on M. ROTONDO; and the 3rd Battalion, commanded by Major Robert E. Mahaffey, O-384193, of Breckenridge, Texas, was in regimental reserve approximately five miles south of MILEAMO along Highway No. 6.

The positions of the 1st and 2nd Battalions were constantly subjected to artillery and mortar shelling both day and night. The bald slopes of M. LUNGO afforded little cover or concealment for the troops of the 1st Battalion. Engineers had previously been called upon to blast emplacements into the rock to afford the men better cover and to provide adequate gun positions. Only the southeast tip of M. LUNGO was occupied by the 1st Battalion. The remainder of the mountain was in the possession of the Germans. Each night patrols from the 1st Battalion and from the Germans would go out and endeavor to penetrate the front lines of each side in an effort to locate positions and determine the enemy's strength.

Wooded M. ROTONDO, although smaller in size than M. LUNGO exceeded it in height. This mountain lay directly east of M. LUNGO. Highway No. 6 - the main arterial road leading to the north - passed between M. LUNGO and M. ROTONDO making a horse-shoe curve into the base of M. LUNGO as it passed between the two mountains.

The weather and terrain was as formidable an obstacle as the enemy. The cold, grey, dismal November days were extending into December. The almost daily rains continued, making the earth a mass of thick mud - the rocks slippery and treacherous to climb. Fighting holes filled with water. The wet and cold pervaded everything on the battle front.

On 1 December, observation posts noted increased enemy activity along the front lines. Small groups of Germans could be seen working, digging and walking around. It was apparent that the enemy had either brought in reinforcements or was becoming careless with regard to cover and concealment.

Colonel Richard J. Werner, O-216665, of San Antonio, Texas, the Regimental Commander, worked with the regimental staff officers on a plan to take M. LUNGO in its entirety in the event Division Headquarters issued an order for its seizure.

tor. The wire line to the outpost went out and when it was checked by communications personnel, they found Sergeant Ora H. Horseman, 35267257, of Winchester, Kentucky, killed; and Private First Class Paul O. Cantu, 38025756, of Brownsville, Texas, Private First Class Balilio B. Delgado, 38025673, of Encino, Texas, Private First Class Chester (CMI) Lounen, 35267322, of Zebulon, Kentucky, Private Charles L. Miller, 33058155, of Bangor, Pennsylvania, and Private Bronislaus (BNI) Jala, 32840655, of Buffalo, New York, missing from the outpost. It was believed that the missing soldiers had been taken prisoners by the Germans.

At dawn on 3 December, the 142nd Infantry, the Special Service Force which was composed of American and Canadian troops, and the British launched an attack against German positions in the M. MAGGIORE hill mass. With the aid of Allied artillery, initial objectives were taken and the units participating drove on to further objectives.

Activity during the day on 3 December, in the regimental sector was confined to patrols which were limited in their scope. The Germans were plainly preoccupied with the Allied attack on M. CAMINO and M. MAGGIORE. A German patrol attempted to penetrate the position of Company "G" on M. ROTONDO but after brief exchanges of machine pistol and rifle fire, the patrol withdrew.

At 0350 hours on 4 December, a concentration of enemy shells landed near the 3rd Battalion ammunition dump on the lower slopes of M. ROTONDO and set it afire. Little damage was done and the fire was extinguished at 0455 hours.

A message was received from Division Headquarters at 1230 hours on 4 December, to the effect that it was anticipated the regiment would be relieved on the night of 5-6 December by the 1st Italian Motorized Brigade. A bivouac area between the 36th Division and 45th Division was reconnoitered for possible use by the regiment.

Active patrols were maintained and all units were alerted for a possible German counter-attack against forces on M. MAGGIORE which had successfully driven the enemy from the greater proportion of the hill mass.

Staff officers of the 1st Italian Motorized Brigade visited the Regimental Command Post to initiate preparations for relief of the regiment. Accompanied by II Corps interpreters, the Italians were shown positions occupied by the regiment from operational maps and visited an observation post on M. OESIMA which afforded fair observation of both M. UNGO and M. ROTONDO.

The Company "B" outpost line was hit by a German patrol at 0300 hours on 5 December. Company "B" opened fire and the Germans retaliated with machine pistol and rifle grenade fire. The enemy force was unable to penetrate into

the Company "B" position and quickly withdrew.

On the morning of 5 December, battalion staff officers of the 1st and 3rd Battalions reported to the regimental command post to receive instructions regarding relief of their battalions by the 1st Italian Motorized Brigade. Until the relief was accomplished, both battalions were instructed to maintain very active patrols to their front and flanks.

Three German Messerschmidt planes roared down the valley at 1227 hours strafing the road in front of the regimental command post. A few minutes later six Focke-Wulf planes attached an artillery observation plane to the front of the 1st Battalion area. The artillery plane, flying low and barely skimming the treetops, successfully evaded the German planes which had become targets for anti-aircraft units. One German plane was observed to be on fire - blazing from the cockpit.

Patrols returned to the 1st and 3rd Battalions, after making daylight reconnaissances of enemy territory, with information regarding machine gun, mortar and artillery emplacements and troop concentration points. This information was passed on to artillery observers in order that they might direct fire on targets of known activity.

Italian civilians reported a tunnel at the southwest end of M. MINGO in which at least 200 Germans were reported to be living. This report was verified by a 1st Battalion patrol. Other patrols endeavoring to penetrate into that vicinity after dark stated the Germans were firing wildly and blindly and there were sounds of increased digging in.

Advance units of the 1st Italian Motorized Brigade arrived at the Regimental Command Post at approximately 1700 hours preparatory to taking over regimental positions on M. MINGO.

On the morning of 6 December, the first Italian troops to enter combat as Allies with American troops moved into the regimental sector to effect relief of the 1st Battalion on M. MINGO. The 1st Motorized Group, 67th Infantry Regiment, 11th Field Artillery Regiment and Bersagliere Battalion comprised the Italian units to enter combat. The Italian headquarters was set up in the same building as the regimental command post occupied. The influx of so much additional personnel required moving part of the regimental headquarters personnel to a rear command post which was selected near the field train bivouac area in PRESENZANO.

An attack plan had been formulated for the Italians to take M. MINGO on

the morning of 7 December, but Division Headquarters advised that the attack had been postponed until the morning of 8 December. The relief of the 1st Battalion, however, would be made on the night of 6-7 December as scheduled.

Division Headquarters ordered the balance of the 3rd Battalion attached to the 142nd Infantry - Company "I" and Company "K" had been with the 142nd Infantry since 29 November, acting as carrying parties. The 3rd Battalion moved tactically complete, leaving their positions on M. ROTONDO just at dusk in order to clear the road for the Italians relieving the 1st Battalion later in the night. The 3rd Battalion moved down the road leading southwest out of MIGNANO to a position east of M. CAMINO where they assembled to perform their duties of hand-carrying supplies over the steep, slippery and treacherous trails of the M. CAMINO - M. MAGGIORE hills mass to the 142nd Infantry Regiment engaged in attacking the Germans.

Captain Admiral M. McDonald, O-407216, of San Antonio, Texas, Commanding Officer of Company "I", was killed on the night of 5 December, by enemy shell fire when his company was climbing the steep trails carrying supplies.

The 3rd Battalion performed its duties for the 142nd Infantry Regiment so well that they earned an official commendation from Lt. Colonel G. E. Lynch, Commanding Officer of the 142nd Infantry Regiment. The 3rd Battalion remained with the 142nd Infantry until 9 December.

The 2nd Battalion, less Company "E" and a portion of Company "H" which remained in the bivouac area as battalion reserve, moved up and took over the positions of the 3rd Battalion on M. ROTONDO. The relief was effected without incident and was completed at 2200 hours.

Guides had been sent to the blown out bridge on Highway No. 6 just north of MIGNANO at 1845 hours to meet the Italian units coming in the line to relieve the 1st Battalion. Highway No. 6 was so congested with vehicles, especially Italian trucks that became stuck in the mud and did not have sufficient power to pull themselves out, that the relief was greatly delayed.

Only part of Company "O" had been relieved at 0425 hours on 7 December. Company "A" and Company "B" were still in position at that time.

Meanwhile, Colonel Werner; the Regimental Plans and Operations Officer, Major John L. Willmann, O-330577, of San Antonio, Texas; the Regimental Intelligence Officer, Captain Roswell K. Doughty, O-280726, of Walpole, Massachusetts, and the enlisted men of Regimental Headquarters were striving to overcome the difficulties of co-ordinating both Italian and American units so that they would work smoothly together. The operators on the Regimental Headquarters

switchboards struggled courageously with the flow of Italian conversation received over the telephone wires until II Corps established a switchboard with interpreters in conjunction with the regimental wire net.

After being relieved, the 1st Battalion moved south down Highway No. 6 to a bivouac area near PIEBENZANO where on the morning of 7 December, they enjoyed their first bath in many weeks and received clean underclothing and socks.

During the afternoon of 7 December, enemy planes were active. Seven German planes strafed the valley and road in front of the regimental command post and eight Messerschmidts strafed positions around S. PIETRO and M. ROTONDO. Four Messerschmidts attacked an artillery observation plane between M. ROTONDO and S. PIETRO but the artillery plane was able to escape to Allied lines.

The 1st Italian Motorized Group was scheduled to launch an attack against German positions on M. LUNGO on the morning of 8 December. At 0230 hours Colonel Werner checked with the Italian commander to determine whether or not additional artillery or other assistance was needed but the offer was declined with thanks. At 0630 hours the Italians launched their attack, climbing up the southeast slopes of M. LUNGO in an effort to take Hill 343 - the highest peak on M. LUNGO. The Italians were met with machine gun, mortar and small arms fire from the enemy on both M. LUNGO and M. MAGGIO E which lay to the west across a small valley. The Italians suffered heavy casualties but they courageously reorganized their depleted units and made another drive against Hill 343 but were again repulsed. Hill 253 on the southern tip of the mountain was taken and held. All of the 36th Division and II Corps artillery was at the disposal of the Italians and concentration after concentration was fired on enemy positions whenever it was called for. The 2nd Battalion sent out a patrol to contact the Italians leading Bersagliere Battalion company which had advanced half way along the west base of M. LUNGO.

Company "E" with a section of heavy machine guns from Company "H" was ordered from the 2nd Battalion reserve position into the front line, filling a gap between the 2nd Battalion position on M. ROTONDO and the Italians on M. LUNGO.

The 1st Battalion was detached from the regiment by Division order and attached to the 143rd Infantry. The 1st Battalion moved by motor truck to positions in the vicinity of VERIAFRO as Division reserve unit.

A platoon of tanks from the 753rd Tank Battalion was scheduled to move to the vicinity of M. ROTONDO on the night of 7 December, but they were unable to get through. The first tank hit a land mine and blocked the route for the other tanks. Engineers worked the entire day to clear another route so that the tanks

might move up on the night of 8-9 December.

General Walker informed Colonel Werner at 1930 hours that either the 3rd or 1st Battalions would be returned to regimental control on 9 December dependent upon the tactical situation.

On the morning of 9 December, General Walker notified Colonel Werner that the 3rd Battalion would be released to regimental control. Arrangements were made to send the 3rd Battalion to the bivouac area vacated by the 1st Battalion near PRESENZANO so that the men could also take a hot bath and obtain clean clothing. The proposed plan was that as soon as one rifle company and the heavy weapons company had taken their baths, they would be prepared to return to the front with a portion of the 3rd Battalion Headquarters Company.

During the afternoon of 9 December, Allied planes were very active over the regimental front line. Twelve A-36 planes bombed and strafed German positions behind S. PIETRO and eighteen Spitfires and A-36 planes bombed main positions on the highway to CASSINO.

The tank platoon, which had failed to accomplish its move on the previous night, finally moved through the minefield blocking its path and took up positions east of Company "F" where its commanding officer indicated they would remain for the night. The tanks fired no missions and took concealed positions.

At 1800 hours General Walker ordered Colonel Werner to leave one platoon of Company "E" on the northwest slope of M. ROTONDO and send the balance of the company to the position occupied by one platoon of Company "E" along the railroad track south of M. LUNGO as protection against a possible counter-attack by the Germans against the Italians and also to serve as security for artillery units in that area.

Company "E" put out security patrols for the protection of Engineers who were working on the tank passage east of M. ROTONDO.

On the morning of 10 December, Division Headquarters advised Colonel Werner that Fifth Army had directed that a reinforced company be placed in a defensive position in the area occupied by the Italians south of M. LUNGO as protection against an enemy counter-attack or break-through.

Before Company "L", which had marched the greater part of the night from M. CAMINO to PRESENZANO, had time to bathe and rest, it was necessary to load the company into trucks, with a section of heavy machine guns from Company "M" and bring them to the front. The company detrucked near MIGLIANO under cover of a thick haze and took positions along side of Company "E" at the southern end of M. LUNGO. When the remainder of the 3rd Battalion had completed their bathing, they were also moved forward and occupied positions as regimental reserve just southeast of MIGLIANO.

The Italians were happy to report that during the night of 9-10 December, American artillery had shelled Hill 743 on M. LUNGO and had hit what apparently was an ammunition dump, as a terrific explosion resulted.

1st Lt. James M. Humphries, O-432691, of Jacksonville, Florida, Commanding Officer of Company "E", reported on 10 December, that a considerable number of German teller mines were found in his company's positions. There was no regular pattern for the mines and quite a few of them were removed. *2/1/85*

The night of 10-11 December was very quiet. There were sounds of occasional rifle fire on M. LUNGO and near S. PIETRO, but very little German artillery shelling occurred. Patrols were limited to the distance which they could move by Division order and went out only about 500 yards beyond their front line positions. Engineers worked on the tank passage east of M. ROTONDO and on the 2nd Battalion supply road.

German planes were again active on 11 December. Eight of them engaged in aerial combat with four spitfires over the front lines. One German plane was observed to be on fire as the fight drifted out of sight of the observers. Five Messerschmidts flew over M. ROTONDO but their strafing mission was unsuccessful. Later four Messerschmidts strafed positions on the high ground north of M. ROTONDO.

Colonel Werner instructed Major Hehloffey to send another unit from the 3rd Battalion to relieve Company "E" which was still serving as security guard at the south end of M. LUNGO. Company "K" occupied the positions vacated by Company "E". One platoon of Company "E", upon being relieved from their former sector, was attached to Company "F" to act as security for the Engineers who were rushing to complete the tank passage east of M. ROTONDO.

Division Headquarters ordered Colonel Werner to send a full company from the 2nd Battalion to the streamline north of M. ROTONDO under cover of darkness to serve as security for a tank destroyer company coming through the tank passage and taking up positions behind the streamline. Company "F" was directed to occupy the position along the streamline.

The 2nd Battalion reported that the tank passage on which the Engineers had worked so long was again impassable and if the passage was to be used on future operations, work would have to begin on it again at once. This information was passed on to Division Headquarters.

During the night of 12-13 December, the 142nd Infantry occupied Hill 72 lying midway between M. MAJICKE and M. MARJO and sent troops to Hill 141 on the northern tip of M. LUNGO.

A German deserter taken by Company "G" advised that the Germans had several companies of tanks north of M. DURGO and that German positions on the mountain were protected by machine gun emplacements, barbed wire and mine fields.

During the night of 13-14 December, observation posts reported large numbers of enemy trucks moving from CASSINO and S. VITTORE were filtering down Highway No. 6 two at a time towards the front. Artillery fire was laid along the road the entire night. A German patrol attempted to penetrate the position of Company "F" but was repelled by small arms fire.

Early on the morning of 14 December the Division attack order was received at the Regimental Command Post. The regimental order was issued by 1000 hours having been co-ordinated with the Division order. The attack on S. PIETRO was scheduled to be launched by the 2nd Battalion at 1200 hours on 15 December.

At 0930 hours on 14 December, eight Focke-Wulf planes, coming from the southeast out of the sun, bombed and strafed the regimental command post. Anti-personnel bombs were dropped on the regimental headquarters building and Colonel Werner and 1st Lt. Roy M. Bass, O-410459, of San Antonio, Texas, Regimental Headquarters Company Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon Leader, were seriously wounded. One Italian officer was killed, another Italian officer was wounded and five Italian enlisted men were wounded as a result of this bombing.

Colonel Werner, although in a great deal of pain from multiple body wounds, requested the medical personnel to bandage his wounds and allow him to remain on duty inasmuch as the regiment was to attack S. PIETRO on 15 December. However, his condition demanded immediate evacuation. Colonel Werner then directed that Lt. Colonel Andrew F. Price, the Regimental Executive Officer, be called from the rear command post at PRESENZANO and that Division Headquarters be notified. After these orders had been carried out, Colonel Werner was evacuated.

Upon reaching the regimental command post, Colonel Price was advised by Brigadier General W. H. Wilbur, Assistant Division Commander of the 36th Infantry Division, that Lt. Colonel Aaron W. Wyatt, Jr., Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, would take over command of the regiment. Colonel Wyatt arrived at the command post at 1150 hours and assumed command. He immediately informed Major Milton J. Landry, O-342179, of San Antonio, Texas, the Executive Officer of the 2nd Battalion, that command of the 2nd Battalion would be taken over by him.

German planes again appeared in the afternoon and bombed the position of the tank units which had moved northeast of M. ROTONDO.

Colonel Wyatt instructed Major Landry to move the 2nd Battalion to new

positions northeast of M. ROTONDO in preparation to attack S. PIETRO on 15 December. Company "p" and Company "q" occupied positions just south of the stream-line which lay approximately three-quarters of a mile north of M. ROTONDO. Company "E" held the reserve position south of these two rifle companies. The 3rd Battalion moved into the positions vacated by the 2nd Battalion on M. ROTONDO.

Colonel Wyatt moved the regimental command post under cover of darkness to a new location at the southern base of M. ROTONDO.

Division Headquarters advised Colonel Wyatt that friendly fighter plane coverage would be given to the regiment during the 2nd Battalion's attack on the 15th.

Despite the promise of fighter plane coverage, fourteen enemy planes bombed and strafed positions south of M. ROTONDO in the vicinity of the regimental command post at 0900 hours on 15 December. At 0915 hours an undetermined number of German planes bombed and strafed the field train bivouac area in PRESENZANO. One bomb dropped ten feet from the buildings housing the 3-1 Section and the Regimental Medical Detachment. The exploding bomb blasted off the roofs, tore off porches, smashed all windows and cracked the walls and ceilings. Approximately fifteen enemy planes bombed and strafed positions around Cannon Company at 0945 hours. A number of anti-personnel bombs failed to explode and the Division Engineers were called to remove them. Two of this latter group of planes were seen to fall and another was seen streaking smoke as it headed south over Allied lines from the anti-aircraft and machine gun fire directed at the planes by all units in that area.

The town of S. PIETRO, which was the objective of the 2nd Battalion attack, was situated on the southern slopes of M. SURIUORO at the extreme eastern end of the RAPIDAN Valley. The approaches to the town were made up of a series of terraces many of which were walled olive orchards. Intelligence information derived from a previous attack by another unit that had failed and from prisoners of war indicated that the enemy's defenses consisted primarily of automatic weapons disposed in depth and placed to cover each terrace on the approaches to the town. The entire area was also heavily protected by mortar and artillery emplacements. In many instances the Germans could call down their artillery and mortar fire directly on their own positions due to the fact that their emplacements were so well dug in and protected from heavy shelling.

In accordance with prearranged plans with higher headquarters, S. PIETRO and its immediate vicinity was placed under intense artillery fire as well as machine gun fire directed from positions in a draw located between M. ROTONDO and G. CANNAVIGALLE. At 1253 hours the 2nd Battalion began its attack to

seize and hold S. PIETRO. The attack was coordinated with that of the 143rd Infantry Regiment and a company of tanks from the 753rd Tank Battalion. The slopes of M. SAINUCRO to the north of S. PIETRO were to be taken by the 143rd Infantry while the tanks approached the town from the southeast. Company "F" and Company "G" were in the initial assault with Company "E" in reserve. It was planned that Company "F" and Company "G" would cross the line of departure abreast, move to the west and seize and hold defensive positions north of S. PIETRO. In the event heavy resistance was encountered, Company "F" was to establish a base of fire from positions south of S. PIETRO to cover the advance of Company "G". Company "E" was to be committed upon the successful completion of the movement of Company "F" and Company "G" with the mission of mopping up S. PIETRO from the east and thereafter to organize a defensive position generally east of the town.

Company "G" crossed the line of departure at 1253 hours, moving west, and soon encountered heavy machine gun and mortar fire. The Germans, seeming to sense the initiating point of the attack, brought heavy artillery to bear on the line of departure from which Company "F" planned to cross. Company "F" then moved westward and crossed the line of departure at a more distant point than originally planned, moving south and west to the position of Company "G". Company "G", then, was to establish the base of fire for Company "F" while it advanced. Thus, Company "F" was to fulfill the mission originally intended for Company "G". However, Company "F" moved out to meet the same intense machine gun and mortar fire as had Company "G".

Due to the superior fire power and excellent defenses of the Germans, the attack could not be carried out as planned. Major Landry ordered both Company "F" and Company "G" to reorganize on their present positions and be prepared to continue the attack on later orders.

During the initial phase of the 2nd Battalion attack, Captain Charles H. Hamner, O-389717, of Garland, Texas, Commanding Officer of Company "F", was killed by rifle fire while leading his company. Both Captain Charles H. Beacham, O-420095, of San Antonio, Texas, Commanding Officer of Company "G", and 1st Lt. Harold F. Bussey, O-1289040, of Roxbury, Massachusetts, Executive Officer of Company "G", were wounded and evacuated from the battlefield.

The Germans maintained a veritable hail of machine gun, mortar and artillery fire from the terrace around S. PIETRO on the right flank of the 2nd Battalion and from positions around the base of M. LUSO on the left flank of the battalion. Heavy casualties occurred in all ranks.

The attack was continued at 1730 hours after Company "F" and Company "G" had made some semblance of reorganization despite their large number of casualties. Company "G" was ordered to hold its position and establish a base of

fire for Company "F" which was moving to the west. Company "E" was committed to the right and ordered to move up the terraced slopes to the southeast of S. PIETRO. With the assistance of artillery and mortar concentrations, Company "E" and Company "F" were able to advance a short distance. Again, however, they encountered the intense enemy machine gun and mortar fire directed at the attacking companies in the initial assault. Heavy casualties again resulted in both officer and enlisted personnel.

At 2000 hours, Major Landry again ordered a reorganization of the remaining elements of the battalion and gave instructions that all personnel was to be ready to continue the attack under cover of darkness. At this time the strength of the companies on position was as follows: Company "E" - one (1) officer and fifty (50) enlisted men; Company "F" - three (3) officers and sixty-five (65) enlisted men; Company "G" - two (2) officers and thirty-four (34) enlisted men. No accurate figure could be obtained of Company "H" personnel as the heavy weapons company was divided into platoons supporting the various rifle companies. It was known, however, that Company "H" losses were high.

Major Landry and Lt. Gile, O-1297580, of Westbrook, Maine, made a personal reconnaissance at 2100 hours to the front of Company "E" and Company "F". After this reconnaissance, Major Landry ordered the attack resumed at 0100 hours on 16 December. When the attack began, Major Landry remained with Company "E" and Lt. Gile remained with Company "F". By this time all communications had been destroyed. Since supporting fires could not be secured from the artillery, an attempt was made to storm enemy positions with grenades, bayonets and whatever fire power could be obtained from the Company "H" mortar squads still remaining with the rifle companies. Despite the well-planned enemy resistance, consisting for the most part of heavy machine guns situated so their fires would criss-cross each other and numerous anti-personnel mines planted throughout the area, the 2nd Battalion continued to inch itself along overcoming enemy resistance until some portions of Company "E" and Company "F" were able to penetrate into S. PIETRO proper. During this attack the 2nd Battalion men besides neutralizing many enemy positions were able to destroy an ammunition dump.

Another reorganization was ordered by Major Landry at 0200 hours with instructions to be prepared to make a fourth attack before dawn. For this purpose Colonel Wyatt attached Company "I", commanded by Captain James E. Esperson (then 1st Lt.), O-389707, of Rocksprings, Texas, consisting of five (5) officers and ninety-seven (97) enlisted men, to the 2nd Battalion. The strength of the 2nd Battalion at the end of the 3rd attack was as follows: Company "E" one (1) officer and forty (40) enlisted men; Company "F" - three (3) officers and fifty (50) enlisted men; and Company "G" - two (2) officers and thirty-four (34) enlisted men, ten of whom were attached to Company "E".

The fourth attack was launched at 0600 hours on 16 December. Company "E" and Company "F" were again in the assault. Company "L" was held as reserve initially with orders to enter and mop up S. PIETRO from the west if the two rifle companies succeeded in knocking out the opposition along the southern terraced slopes. What little remained of Company "G" was ordered to protect the rear of the battalion's effort south of the line of departure. Company "E" the Company "F" managed to get within 200 yards of their objective before being halted by the deadly hail of German machine gun bullets and the anti-personnel mines planted all through the area. At daylight German snipers began to take a heavy toll of the remaining men in the battalion.

Radio communication was re-established at 0730 hours and Major Landry called for smoke shells to cover his exposed positions. Under cover of the smoke, the remnants of the battalion again reorganized and established a defensive position. At 0940 hours Colonel Wyatt ordered the battalion to move back south of the line of departure. The message was received by Captain Lehman, O-323954, of San Antonio, Texas with Company "F" and it was not until 1230 hours that a messenger was able to transmit the order to Major Landry. Due to the incessant enemy artillery, mortar, machine gun and sniper fire, the order for the retrograde movement was not able to be fulfilled until 1530 hours. At this time the battalion strength in the rifle companies was as follows: Company "E" - no (0) officers and twenty-seven (27) enlisted men; Company "F" - two (2) officers and thirty-four (34) enlisted men; and Company "G" - two (2) officers and twenty-five (25) enlisted men. Small groups of men, who had been cut off by enemy fire during the four attacks from their companies, drifted back across the battlefield during the day and night to augment the strength of the companies slightly. During the final phase of action, the 2nd Battalion Intelligence Officer, 1st Lt. William G. Gile, was killed.

As a result of the attack against S. PIETRO the 2nd Battalion suffered casualties as follows: three (3) officers and thirty-two (32) enlisted men killed; seven (7) officers and one hundred and twenty-four (124) enlisted men wounded; and none missing.

In the succession of four attacks against some of the best prepared and strongly-defended enemy positions encountered in the Italian campaign, the officers and enlisted men of the 2nd Battalion never wavered in their determination to seize and hold the objective for which they had received orders to take. Up until the time the order was received for a retrograde movement, the men persisted in fiercely attacking German positions. Often it was necessary for the men to stand upon one another's shoulders to scale the terraces which were criss-crossed by German machine gun fire. Advancing in the face of what appeared to be certain death, these men gathered from almost every state in the Union and molded into a composite and indomitable fighting force displayed the highest type of courage.

The tanks which were to have assisted in the attack were either knocked out by land mines or enemy artillery fire and never were a serious threat against German positions. The narrow passage and road available for their operations was extremely limited. Without terrain in which to maneuver, the tanks were easy prey for German gunners who had the advantage of superior observation. The 143rd Infantry, attacking from the north and driving east, was unable to attain its objectives due to the superb defenses maintained by the Germans in its sector. Enemy planes operating during the afternoon of 15 December, further harassed the attacking troops.

The Regimental Commander, Lt. Colonel Wyatt, directed the operation from an observation post on C. CANNAVINELLE which lay approximately two and one-half miles southeast of S. PIETRO.

On the morning of 16 December, the 142nd Infantry and the Italians launched an attack against the Germans on M. LUNGO. The German fire directed from the northeast slope of M. LUNGO on the previous day had proved very costly in casualties for the 2nd Battalion.

The medical men attached to the 2nd Battalion performed heroically under the most adverse circumstances. Captain Ralph S. Phelan, O-378415, of Waurika, Oklahoma, the 2nd Battalion surgeon, worked unceasingly day and night directing the evacuation of the large number of casualties. It was necessary during the height of the battle to call for assistance in evacuating wounded from the battlefield. A platoon of riflemen from Company "I" left its position to act as litter bearers in response to this request for help. The medical aid men and litter bearers operated so closely behind the forward units that they were constantly harassed by sniper fire from the Germans who seemingly failed to recognize the Red Cross worn by all of the men. A platoon of riflemen from the 3rd Battalion was sent to the 2nd Battalion aid station on 16 December to drive off the snipers who were harassing the aid men in their duties of evacuating the wounded.

In order to evacuate the more seriously wounded from positions in front of S. PIETRO, the valley and hills to the north of the town were smoked with white phosphorous shells. Under this cover litter bearers worked night and day bringing out litter cases.

II Corps advised that the 142nd Infantry and the Italians had taken all of M. LUNGO by 1545 hours on 16 December, and patrols had been sent out as far as RJ 69. The 3rd Battalion furnished a security patrol for Corps Engineers working on Highway No. 6 in the vicinity of the U-bend. Future operations depended on the use of the road and the engineers were working feverishly to knock out road blocks and repair and fill in craters caused by shelling and German demoli-

tions. The 143rd Infantry north and east of S. PIETRO continued to be engaged by the enemy during the night of 16-17 December.

The 1st Battalion which had not been in the line since 7 December, moved into positions on the mountains northeast of S. PIETRO on the night of 16-17 December along the left flank of the 143rd Infantry.

The 2nd Battalion sent strong patrols to the vicinity of S. PIETRO throughout the day of 17 December. The patrols received fire from enemy positions southwest of the town and from a pillbox from the northwest. A later patrol penetrated to the point where the battalion had been stopped on the previous day and found machine gun emplacements unoccupied. The patrol, then, moved on into town.

The Commanding Officer of the 635th Tank Destroyer Battalion reported that he had seen one of our patrols enter S. PIETRO unopposed, but when he attempted to enter with one of his patrols, mortar fire was received from enemy positions on the terraces south of the town.

Meanwhile, a patrol from Company "L", led by 2nd Lt. Thomas A. Lewis, O-1309159, of St. Paul, Minnesota, had outposted S. PIETRO from the east awaiting the arrival of Company "L" which was to occupy positions west of the town. This patrol entered S. PIETRO and found no evidence of the enemy. Two wounded men of Company "J" were found in the town and they reported there had been no activity in S. PIETRO during the entire day.

Under cover of darkness the 3rd Battalion relieved the 2nd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion sent out patrols to contact the 143rd Infantry on the right flank but was unable to contact any units of this organization.

On the morning of 18 December at 0835 hours, the 36th Division G-3 ordered Lt. Colonel Wyatt to send a patrol out towards C. MORELLO to locate and clean up minor German resistance. A battalion was to move forward with its right boundary as S. PIETRO and S. VITTORE inclusive, with the left boundary along Highway No. 6. The battalion was to occupy the southwest ridge of C. MORELLO and organize it for defense. G-3 stated that it was anticipated nothing but light resistance would be met. The 143rd Infantry further to the north would similarly advance and the 142nd Infantry on the left would do like-wise.

Lt. Colonel Wyatt instructed Major McHaffey to be prepared to execute the movement of his battalion in accordance with Division orders. Captain Hamilton, Commanding Officer of Cannon Company, and Captain Guthrie, Commanding Officer of Anti-Tank Company, received orders for the forward displacement of their positions and for a reconnaissance of new positions in order to be able to move upon receipt of later issued orders. A platoon from the 2nd Battalion was ordered to report to Major McHaffey at the 3rd Battalion for instructions to patrol out as far as Hill C. CIGERELLI northwest of S. VITTORE.

At 1645 hours, G-3 advised that the movement of the 3rd Battalion to C. MORELLO would not be initiated until early on the morning of 19 December. The patrol to C. CIGRELLI could be recalled, but C. MORELLO was to be occupied and held. Major Mehaffey informed Colonel Wyatt that the patrol sent out to C. MORELLO had been on their objective but had encountered enemy opposition from what appeared to be a large German patrol. The patrol was instructed to remain on C. MORELLO unless it was hit by a strong German attack. In that event, it was to withdraw.

On the morning of 19 December at 0750 hours, G-3 informed Major Willmann, Regimental G-3, that the 3rd Battalion was to move in echelon well dispersed against artillery fire, to the left rear of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 143rd Infantry. This move was to begin at 0830 hours. Major Mehaffey was informed to prepare his battalion for the movement to new positions.

At 0913 hours, seven German Messerschmitts planes bombed S. PIETRO and strafed the road running east from it.

The 3rd Battalion moved almost to their assigned objective when they hit what appeared to be an organized German defensive position. Company "K" endeavored to make an envelopment from the right but was repulsed. Two prisoners were captured that stated there were two companies on C. MORELLO and at least twenty machine guns placed in defensive positions. The 3rd Battalion was ordered to dig in on point of their furthest advance and establish an all around defense.

The 2nd Battalion was ordered to be prepared to attack on the 3rd Battalion's right flank if the Germans endeavored to counter-attack. Patrols were also to be sent out from the 2nd Battalion to contact the 3rd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry on its right, the regimental 3rd Battalion to the front and the Italian units on the left. The 2nd Battalion also moved to a new position southeast of C. MORELLO approximately 1000 yards from the hill and in the rear of the 3rd Battalion.

The German maintained a constant rain of artillery fire on the 3rd Battalion's positions and as it was proving to be costly in casualties to remain, Colonel Wyatt ordered Major Mehaffey to displace to the rear. At 0710 hours the 3rd Battalion had closed into its new position which was approximately 700 yards southeast of the 2nd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion continued to make a reconnaissance of a route that could be travelled along the southwest slopes of M. SANMUCRO.

The 1st Battalion was returned to regimental control after having been attached to the 143rd Infantry and was given the mission of driving the Germans from the heights northeast of S. VITTORE. One reinforced company was to garrison Hill 730 and protect the supply route through Hill 730 to the area north of S. VITTORE.

A platoon of anti-tank guns was placed west of S. PIETRO in the vicinity of the 2nd Battalion to be prepared for action by daylight.

On the morning of 20 December, patrols from both the 2nd and 3rd Battalions went out to reconnoiter a route for the 3rd Battalion to travel in order to accomplish its mission of attacking S. VITTORE from the northeast. The patrols reported that they encountered German automatic weapons fire on every terrace and on every level and that it was impossible to get through the trail leading up to M. SAMMUCRO. The 1st Battalion was ordered to clean out enemy resistance in the hills northwest of S. PIETRO so that routes might be reconnoitered for the 3rd Battalion. The 1st Battalion also made arrangements to have guides meet the 3rd Battalion on the mountain and show the units the available trails that could be traveled. Patrols were sent out from the 3rd Battalion with instructions to count their paces and identify points so that the battalion would know exactly where it was going during the night. Code names were given to prominent points along the route to be referred to in messages.

The regimental command post was moved from its location at the southern base of M. ROTONDO to a new area one-quarter mile east of S. PIETRO, arriving at the new location at 1330 hours.

At 1730 hours, Lt. Colonel Wyatt, Major Willman, Captain Doughty and a group of enlisted personnel from Regimental Headquarters left the command post to accompany the 3rd Battalion in its move up the M. SAMMUCRO trail.

The field train bivouac moved from PRESENZANO to a new area approximately two and one-half miles southeast of VENAFRO. The move was made in a down-pour of rain which turned the roads into quagmires of mud. The slow movement of the field train bivouac occasioned a delay in supplying rations to the battalions and the 3rd Battalion was delayed approximately one hour until rations could be gotten to the men.

At 2115 hours the 3rd Battalion began its climb up the M. SAMMUCRO trail. 1st Battalion guides met the 3rd Battalion at the junction of the trail and the church in S. PIETRO. The rate of march was very slow as the trail was steep and cratered in many places by shell holes. The almost incessant rain had made the path extremely slippery.

Shortly after midnight on 21 December, the Germans began laying artillery and machine gun concentrations on the advancing 3rd Battalion column. During these concentrations, the column would break and disperse among the rocks affording the only available cover.

Lt. Colonel Wyatt and Major Mohaffey passed the head of the column and went forward to contact the rear elements of Company "B" which had advanced in its mission to clear the trail of enemy forces to Hill 730.

The 3rd Battalion of the 1st Infantry, farther to the north, had met such heavy opposition in their advance that they were forced to withdraw to their starting position.

A carrying party of 120 enlisted men out of a group of 200 replacements sent to the regiment on 20 December, lost contact with their guides leading them up to the 1st Battalion position and returned to the bottom of the mountain.

The 3rd Battalion reached a point approximately 350 yards from Hill 730 at 0220 hours. Hill 730 was still held by the enemy and Company "B" was engaged in a fire fight to drive them off. The trail route was covered by enemy machine guns and the 3rd Battalion found it impossible to continue their march without suffering the heaviest of casualties.

Brigadier General W. H. Wilbur, Assistant Division Commander of the 36th Infantry Division, issued an order at 0325 hours for the 3rd Battalion to withdraw to the point of departure. Communications had been disrupted by the enemy artillery fire and it was not until 0500 hours that Colonel Wyatt received the withdrawal order. The 3rd Battalion column was reversed and an orderly withdrawal began. Company "K" was left on the mountain in positions previously occupied by Company "B" and was attached to the 1st Battalion.

Since the 3rd Battalion could not reach the point of departure before daylight, enemy positions were smoked to cover the battalion's movement. At 0815 hours the battalion reached the bottom of the mountain and dug in concealed positions.

Lt. Colonel Edwin W. Richardson, O-20830, of Westbrook, Maine, reported to the regimental command post at 1020 hours having been assigned to the regiment by Division order. Colonel Richardson was assigned to command the 3rd Battalion with Major McHaffey becoming the battalion executive officer.

The 2nd Battalion sent out patrols to both flanks and to RJ 69 and the 3rd Battalion.

Company "B", commanded by Captain Selzer H. Harmanson, O-354116, of Wharton, Texas, suffered such heavy casualties in attacking Hill 730 that the company was ordered to withdraw. The 1st Battalion and Company "K" occupied positions on the peak east of Hill 730. A wounded prisoner who later died stated that his company, which had a strength of 200 men, was holding Hill 730, and that there were pillboxes on the hill and the trail was covered by machine guns.

The 3rd Battalion sent patrols to their flanking units and established

contact. A patrol that went to C. MORELLO reported no activity between the hill and S. VITTORE.

On the morning of 22 December, Company "K" was detached from the 1st Battalion and returned to the 3rd Battalion. The 36th Reconnaissance Troop was attached to the regiment. Division Headquarters ordered the relief of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 143rd Infantry by the regimental 3rd Battalion beginning at 1700 hours. The 36th Reconnaissance Troop was to move into the positions vacated by the 3rd Battalion. The 2nd Battalion remained in its positions as regimental reserve. Two platoons of Company "C", 753rd Tank Battalion and Company "C" and company "D" of the 2nd Chemical Battalion were also attached to the regiment.

The 1st Battalion was again detached from the regiment and attached to the Special Service Force for their attack on the night of 23-24 December. The battalion was attached for operational purposes only.

The 3rd Battalion completed the relief of the 143rd Infantry battalions at 1159 hours on 23 December. The Anti-Tank Company, less one platoon in position near S. PIETRO, moved from the MIGNANO area to the field train bivouac area.

Due to time and space factors involved, the Special Service Force attack was postponed twenty-four hours.

Division Headquarters advised Lt. Colonel Wyatt that the 2nd Battalion would be relieved by the 1st Battalion of the 143rd Infantry on the night of 25-26 December with the 2nd Battalion occupying the bivouac area vacated by the relieving unit.

During the night of 24-25 December, German patrols slipped through positions on the left flank of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop and laid mines around M 69. Instructions were issued to the 36th Reconnaissance Troop to thoroughly outpost their position to prevent a repetition of German patrols entering this area.

Just at dusk on 25 December, 3rd Battalion patrols moved out to knock out two known enemy machine gun positions. The patrols worked their way almost close enough to use their hand grenades when a third machine gun opened up on them and the patrols were forced to withdraw.

The attack of the Special Service Force which was scheduled to begin between 2300-2400 hours on 24 December, was delayed until 0200-0300 hours on 25 December, due to supply and maneuver problems. After slight resistance, the

Special Service Force took Hill 730 and company "A" moved onto the hill and occupied it. Division Headquarters instructed Lt. Colonel Wyatt that after Hill 730 was taken and occupied by the 1st Battalion, the battalion was not to proceed any further with the Special Service Force. Division Headquarters also advised that the 1st Battalion of the 143rd Infantry would be attached to the regiment upon its relief of the 2nd Battalion.

S. VITTORE was heavily shelled by Allied artillery until 1540 hours on 25 December. After the shelling ceased, one patrol from the 3rd Battalion and one patrol from the 36th Reconnaissance Troop went into the town. A combat patrol from Company "K" moved out to a position northeast of S. VITTORE with instructions to dig in and cut off any German retreat that might come through their position. The patrol reached its objective without meeting opposition and sent smaller patrols to contact the Special Service Force and to investigate S. VITTORE.

Meanwhile the 36th Reconnaissance Troop patrol, skirting the left tip of C. MORRELLO, ran into intense machine gun fire and was caught between the criss-cross fire of two guns. The Germans then opened up with artillery and mortar fire on the patrol from positions south and west of S. VITTORE. Another 36th Reconnaissance Troop patrol went to the base of M. CHIARA west of S. VITTORE and encountered machine gun and light mortar fire. Entering S. VITTORE, this patrol was fired on by machine pistols. From the patrols reports it was concluded that S. VITTORE was lightly occupied but heavily outposted.

The 2nd Battalion was relieved by the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, just prior to midnight and moved back to a bivouac area near the regimental train bivouac in the vicinity of VENAFRO.

The Company "K" combat patrol moved out approximately 200 yards beyond its position and encountered no enemy although the patrol was fired on from C MORRELLO by machine guns and two mortars.

The 3rd Battalion and 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, maintained constant patrols in their sectors, going to and from the outskirts of S. VITTORE and into the town itself. On occasions they would receive no fire and then another patrol moving over the same ground would be fired upon.

Captain Ross Young, O-340457, of San Antonio, Texas, the new Regimental Plans and Operations Officer, visited the 3rd Battalion, 36th Reconnaissance Troops and the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, command posts to make arrangements for the forward displacement of the regimental forces. It was planned for Company "K" to join the combat patrol from that company northeast of S.

VITTORE. Upon arrival of Company "K" at that position, the remainder of the 3rd Battalion would displace forward to positions so that its right flank would be on Company "K" and the left flank would run along the road running northwest from C. MORELLO. At the same time the 36th Reconnaissance Troop would displace forward so that its right flank was on the southwest slope of C. MORELLO and extend down to Highway No. 6. This line was to be outposted day and night. A combat patrol from the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, was to send two patrols out - one to the vicinity of C. CICERELLI and the other to the south entrance to S. VITTORE. Harassing artillery was to be placed north and west of the town and the two companies of the 2nd Chemical Battalion were to place white phosphorous fire on S. VITTORE and its vicinity. One platoon of tanks from Company "C", 753rd Tank Battalion, would take firing positions from their present location to assist the forward displacement, firing on exits and targets of opportunity in S. VITTORE. The 2nd Platoon of the Tank Company was to move into new positions under cover of darkness and continue support of the 3rd Battalion. The 15th Infantry Regiment on the left flank of the regimental sector arranged to send out patrols to contact the 36th Reconnaissance Troop. Active patrols were to be maintained by all units and if their reports reflected that S. VITTORE was unoccupied, Company "L" was to be moved forward to occupy the town. This plan was later altered so that just one company from the 3rd Battalion would outpost the town in the event it was found to be unoccupied.

The combat patrol from the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry moved out and occupied C. MORELLO at 1545 hours, the occupation being made without resistance. At 1635 hours the balance of Company "K" moved out to join its combat patrol northeast of S. VITTORE. At 1737 hours the 1st Battalion completed the relief of the Special Service Force in the mountains north of S. VITTORE which placed the 504th Parachute Regiment on the 1st Battalion's right flank. At 1755 hours Division Headquarters notified Captain Young that Company "B" of the 142nd Infantry was attached to the 1st Battalion. This company was on Hill 1205 and was of full strength. At 1800 hours Company "K" had closed into its position and Company "I" prepared to move forward. The entire 3rd Battalion closed into its new positions at 2245 hours. With the displacement forward of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop the planned regimental advance was completed.

Division Headquarters advised at 0037 hours on 27 December, that the regiment would be relieved on the night of 29 December, by the 135th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Infantry Division, and move to the vicinity of ALIFE. The 1st Battalion was to be relieved by the 142nd Infantry, Company "C" and Company "D" of the 2nd Chemical Battalion were to be released from regimental control and attached to the 135th Infantry Regiment.

Upon receipt of the relief notice from Division, Lt. Colonel Wyatt ordered

the proposed operation against S. VITTORE called off.

At 1015 hours on 27 December, fifteen enemy planes bombed and strafed S. PIETRO, S. VITTORE and the valley between the two towns.

At 1400 hours staff officers of the 15th Infantry Regiment arrived at the regimental command post to coordinate relief of the regiment.

The 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, and the regimental 3rd Battalion kept constant patrols going into and around S. VITTORE. As soon as one patrol would return, another patrol went out.

At 2300 hours Division Headquarters informed Captain Young that the commanding general, II Corps, believed S. VITTORE to be unoccupied because of the enemy bombing of the town in the morning and a strong patrol should be sent into the town to occupy it. Captain Young advised that arrangements had been made to outpost the town thoroughly with one reinforced Company.

The combat patrol of the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, southeast of S. VITTORE and the 3rd Battalion combat patrol northeast of the town withdrew to positions within their respective battalion sectors at 1600 hours.

The 36th Reconnaissance Troop engaged a German patrol at 2200 hours which attacked on its left flank with machine pistols and hand grenades. As the Germans broke away, their patrol was intercepted by a patrol from the 15th Infantry Regiment and a fire fight ensued in which three Germans were killed.

Constant patrols were maintained by the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry and the 3rd Battalion. A 3rd Battalion patrol encountered artillery, machine gun, sniper and machine pistol fire from the west of S. VITTORE.

Large groups of Italian civilians coming out of the hills created a problem to the front line units. All battalions were instructed to evacuate the refugees to the regimental command post area where guards escorted them further to the rear. These civilians advised that S. VITTORE was full of booby traps; that M. LA CHIAIA had pillboxes to the rear of it, machine gun emplacements to the east and between 300-400 Germans in positions north of the hill supported by tanks.

During the afternoon of 28 December, the 2nd Battalion moved from its bivouac area to the rest area near S. ANGELO D'ALIFE, moving in convoy with the 143rd Infantry Regiment.

At 2220 hours on 28 December, a German patrol attempted to push through

the left flank of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop by using machine pistols.

The relief of the 1st Battalion by the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, was effected at 2345 hours, and the 1st Battalion marched cross-country to the vicinity of MIGHANO and entrucked at that point to move to the bivouac area near S. ANGELO D'ALIFE.

Patrols working in and around S. VITTORE on the night of 28-29 December, reported German vehicles moving in and out of the town. The 3rd Battalion and 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, were alerted for the possible reinforcement of the enemy in the S. VITTORE area. A 3rd Battalion patrol received automatic weapons and sniper fire when they approached the town from the northeast at approximately 1000 hours on 29 December.

Division headquarters made plans to coordinate all artillery in the sector to fire on S. VITTORE at 1430 hours. The artillery concentrations were to last until 1450 hours and then shift beyond the town to the north and west and continue for thirty minutes. Both the 3rd Battalion and 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, were prepared to send patrols into S. VITTORE as soon as the artillery "serenade" lifted. If patrols found the town to be unoccupied, one company from the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, was to move in and outpost it.

As soon as the artillery concentrations on S. VITTORE lifted, the patrols left their respective battalion areas to enter the town. The 3rd Battalion patrol reached the edge of town and was hit by machine gun and small arms fire from houses immediately in front of them. The patrol tried to work their way around this opposition on three different occasions but was pinned down each time. Company "B", 143rd Infantry, which was scheduled to follow the combat patrol from that battalion moved towards S. VITTORE two platoons abreast and drew heavy machine gun fire from the edge of the town. Machine pistol and rifle fire were also directed at Company "B". A small amount of mortar fire fell on the company's right flank but was not effective. Against this superior fire power, Company "B" was forced to withdraw.

The relief elements of the 135th Infantry Regiment began effecting the relief of the 3rd Battalion, the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, and the 36th Reconnaissance Troop shortly after dark on 29 December. By 0700 hours on 30 December, the regiment and its attached units were officially relieved and moved by motor truck to S. ANGELO D'ALIFE for a well-earned rest.

Casualties of the 141st Infantry Regiment for the month of December, 1943, were as follows:

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN	TOTAL
KILLED IN ACTION.....	8	82	90
DIED OF WOUNDS.....		5	5
WOUNDED IN ACTION.....	16	280	296
INJURED IN ACTION.....		5	5
MISSING IN ACTION.....		13	13
	<u>24</u>	<u>385</u>	<u>409</u>

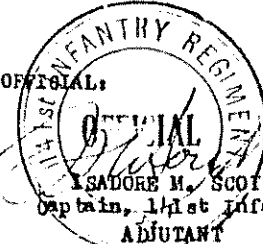
Enemy casualties, captured and destroyed material for the month of December, 1943, are as follows:

	KNOWN	ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL
Prisoners of War.....	12	--
Killed.....	20	41
Wounded.....	0	57
81mm Mortars.....	3 (destroyed)	
50mm Mortars.....	1 (destroyed)	
75mm Anti-Tank Guns.....	2 (destroyed)	
Trucks, unknown type.....	3 (destroyed)	
Ammunition Pumps.....	3 (destroyed)	
Machine Guns.....	2 (captured)	
Rifles.....	4 (captured)	
Carbines.....	1 (captured)	
Sight, Telescopic.....	1 (captured)	

END

Report of Operations written by:

Robert D. Dietzle
 ROBERT D. DIETZLE, 16062508
 Master Sergeant, Service Co.
 141st Infantry Regiment

OFFICIAL:

Isadore M. Scott
 ISADORE M. SCOTT
 Captain, 141st Infantry
 ADJUTANT

DECLASSIFIED PER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12356 SECTION 3.3, NND735017
BY CAF/mon NARA, DATE 2/3/88

HEADQUARTERS, 141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE
APO #36, U. S. ARMY

ARMY/Inf

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECRET

9 February 1944.

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Regimental History and Conclusions of Operations.
TO : Commanding General, 36th Infantry Division, APO #36, U. S. Army

1. Inclosed in the regimental history of the 141st Infantry Regiment covering operations in Italy during the month of January, 1944.

2. From the result of the river crossing operation it would appear to be definitely established that success cannot be assured unless the following conditions are met,

- a. Accurate knowledge of enemy strength and dispositions must be had.
- b. Surprise in the actual crossing be essentially accomplished.
- c. Adequate crossing equipment be made available. Note: The improvised foot bridges made up of Bailey bridge walk-ways lashed to rubber reconnaissance boats were entirely unsatisfactory.
- d. All echelons be thoroughly trained in what each individual and unit is to do, preferably through numerous rehearsals.
- e. Enemy organized dispositions on the far shore must be such that early penetration in depth across the river is possible to permit establishment of a bridgehead to keep small arms fire from the river line and allow crossing of subsequent echelons on foot bridges.
- f. Location of mine fields on the near shore must be known and cleared lanes must be completely cleared;
- g. Crossing locations should provide such concealment near the river for the forward establishment of bridging equipment that long carries are avoided. Note: In this operation it was necessary for troops to carry all equipment across open terrain for distances of more than 700 yards.
- h. Crossings must be made on a broad front.

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TO GAIN THEIR OBJECTIVES OR DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AND DIG IN REFUGES. NIGHT IN SOUND ALL AROUND DEFENSE.

A. J. Stewart
AARON W. WELT, JR.
Lt. Col., 141st Infantry
COMMANDING

- #1 - Regimental History (septuple)
- #2 - Casualty List (septuple)
- #3 - Unit Journal (1 copy)
- #4 - Maps (1 set)

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OPERATIONS IN ITALY, JANUARY, 1944
 of
 141st INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE

On January 1, 1944 the 141st Infantry Regiment was resting in bivouac near San Angelo D'Alife, Italy, following the arduous campaigns of December. Relief of the Regiment had been effected in the early morning hours of December 30, and the Regiment had been moved by truck to the rest bivouac.

Lt. Col. Aaron W. Wyatt (O-264395) of Ossining, New York, was in command of the Regiment, with Lt. Col. Andrew F. Price (O-218892), of Fort Worth, Texas, as Executive Officer. The Battalion Commanders were Captain Erman W. Nowman (O-357207) of El Paso, Texas, for the 1st Battalion, Major Milton J. Landry (O-342179), of San Antonio, Texas, for the 2nd Battalion, and Lt. Col. Edwin W. Richardson (O-20830), of Westbrook, Maine, for the 3rd Battalion.

An intensive training program was initiated during the period spent at San Angelo D'Alife. When the Regiment was withdrawn from the line, 109 officers and 2517 enlisted men comprised the total strength of the Regiment present for duty. A total of 35 officers and 694 enlisted men were assigned to the Regiment at that time, reconstructing it to nearly normal strength. The rest bivouac afforded these new men an opportunity to train with and be absorbed into the Regimental Units.

The afternoon of January 7 the Divisional G-3 notified the Regiment that it was alerted, to be prepared to move January 9. All units were notified, and ordered to have quartering parties consisting of one non-commissioned officer per company, and one officer per battalion at the Regimental Command Post ready to move out at 0830 hours the following morning. Captain Ross Young (O-348457), of San Antonio, Texas, the Regimental S-3, left with this party the morning of the 8th of January, but reported in when they had returned that there was no suitable area for the Regiment within the limits outlined by Division Headquarters. Likewise, sufficient trucks to move the personnel had not been made available, and road clearance hadn't been granted.

The morning of January 9, Captain Young went to II Corps Headquarters, to obtain an area assignment, and reported the result to G-3. Quartering parties were again arranged for, and moved out the morning of the 10th to reconnoiter the area. That afternoon, Lt. Col. Wyatt, the Regimental Commanding Officer, and Captain Young attended a meeting held at Division Headquarters with Major General Fred L. Walker, the Division Commander. The meeting dealt with a contemplated future operation which included a river crossing and subsequent attack.

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On January 11th, instructions were given to the Battalion Commanders for the movement of the Regimental Combat Team. The move was to take place the evening of January 12th.

The initial tactical disposition of the 141st Infantry Regiment in the month of January, 1944, consisted of the relief of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment of the 1st Armored Division, on Mt. Porchia, the night of January 12. The 2nd Battalion was to occupy the actual positions of the elements of the 6th Armored Infantry on Mt. Porchia, with the 1st and 3rd Battalions disposed to the rear in reserve. During the morning of January 12, Lt. Col. Wyatt held a meeting at the Regimental Command Post with all Unit Commanders, giving orders concerning the imminent movements, following which the Commanding Officer moved to the new Regimental Command Post which had been established about 1 1/8 miles northwest of Nigiano, arriving there at 1445 hours.

Mt. Porchia is relatively small compared with the mountainous terrain typical of the central part of Italy. Its significance is derived from its isolated situation commanding the low ground lying between the Mt. Maggiore-Camino hill mass to the south and Mt. Trocchio to the northwest. Highway #6 cuts across the lower northern slopes of Mt. Porchia and the ridge line runs approximately a mile south from that vicinity, forming two humps at the extremities with a shallow saddle through the center. There is little vegetation on the mountain, the surface being extremely rocky in most places.

The Regiment moved up during the first hours of dusk, January 12, to pre-designated detrucking points along Highway #6, the historic Via Roma, and the main arterial supply route to the north. From there they moved by foot into position. The 2nd Battalion, under the command of Major Milton J. Landry, relieved the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment which were occupying defensive positions along the forward slopes of Mt. Porchia.

The relieved units, responsible for the continuity of the defensive plans, furnished guides to their positions, and maintained patrols and screening elements to the front and flanks during the operation. Precoordinated artillery harassing fire was laid down by the 71st Field Artillery Battalion of the 1st Armored Division Artillery. Normal radio activity was maintained to prevent any indication to the enemy of the action taking place. Areas were outposted immediately, and patrols sent out to the front and flanks. Light artillery fire was received intermittently, but otherwise the relief was effected without incident, and was completed at 2322 hours.

The 1st and 3rd Battalions closed into their positions at 2115 hours. Both Battalions were in reserve, and were disposed to the rear of Mt. Porchia and off to the left of Highway #6. The 1st Battalion occupied positions along the northwestern slopes of Mt. Giacomo and the 3rd Battalion was along the

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southwestern slopes of Mt. Lungo. Company 'A' of the 11th Engineer Battalion, and Company 'A' of the 11th Medical Battalion, both attached to the 141st Regimental Combat Team, had moved into position during the daylight hours of January 12, and the Regimental Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies were to move in during the daylight of January 13th.

The 131st Field Artillery Battalion, previously in position, was attached to the Regiment as part of the Combat Team as the Regiment moved into position. The following day a company less one platoon of medium tanks from the 753rd Tank Battalion were attached to the Regiment for pending operations.

The morning of January 13th the Regiment was requested to outpost the area between Mt. Porchia and the British Units on the left flank. Company 'G' was directed to outpost this area and maintain patrols to predesignated contact points.

On the night of January 13-14 the 2nd Battalion engaged in strengthening its outpost line and sending out patrols. Patrol contact with the British on the left was effected. Company 'F', after several attempts had been frustrated by enemy mortar and small arms fire, eventually succeeded in establishing its outpost lines in the early morning hours. The patrols which had been sent out toward the front contacted enemy elements generally to the left front of the Battalion position, in the direction of Mt. Trocchio.

Lt. Col. Wyatt attended a conference held at Division Headquarters at 1100 hours January 14, with the Commanding General, the Assistant Divisional Commander, G-2, the assistant G-3, and the Commanding Officer of the 753rd Tank Battalion. The meeting dealt with the attack on Mt. Trocchio which was to be launched the following morning. That afternoon the Commanding Officer of the Regiment held a meeting at 1400 hours with the Unit Commanders of the Regimental Combat Team to give the orders for the attack.

Mt. Trocchio lies about 3 miles northwest of Mt. Porchia, its long axis following a northeast-southwestern direction. It towers well above Mt. Porchia and occupies a commanding position over the surrounding ground, guarding the Rapido River to the west beyond the mountain, and the southern and eastern approaches to Cassino, several miles northwest on Highway #6. The sides are extremely steep and rocky. La Pietra is a medium sized hill south of the southern slopes of the mountain. The surrounding area, including the low ground between Mt. Porchia and Mt. Trocchio consists of low rolling terrain.

The objective of the attack, to be executed in conjunction with the 135th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Division on the right, was to seize Mt. Trocchio and the area to the south and west including La Pietra and the high ground

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beyond to the Rapido River. The Regimental objective was to take the southern tip of Mt. Trocchio, La Pista, and the high ground to the south and west, and to outpost the Rapido. Air support to include heavy bombings of enemy installations and supply routes around Mt. Trocchio and in the vicinity of San Angelo in Teodice had been requested for the afternoon. The Regimental plan of attack called for the 2nd and 3rd Battalions to attack abreast, the 2nd on the right and the 3rd on the left. The 1st Battalion was to move into a reserve position along the southern slopes of Mt. Porchia. The assault echelons were to infiltrate into position in the low ground between Mt. Porchia and Mt. Trocchio during the first hours of darkness on January 14, and launch the attack at 0630 hours January 15.

During the afternoon of the 14th, the Regimental Command Post was moved forward to a point on the southeastern slopes of Mt. Porchia, about 1 1/2 miles southwest of San Vittore del Lazio.

Available intelligence information concerning enemy dispositions indicated that the Regimental objective was defended by the 134th German Infantry Regiment, occupying positions running generally south from Highway #6 along the southeastern slopes of Mt. Trocchio, across the railroad bed, and past La Pista to the vicinity of Cerna Martina. Additional information indicated that the enemy units were under normal strength, with elements of the Hermann Goering Division as reserves. Inferences were that the enemy would defend along his line as long as feasible, and then retreat to the Rapido River line to defend against a crossing.

Under cover of darkness on January 14, the 2nd Battalion and 3rd Battalion moved into position to launch the attack. The initial objective of the 2nd Battalion was to work its way to the stream line running through the low ground between Mt Porchia and Mt. Trocchio. This was accomplished during the first hours of darkness on the night of January 14. During this period the 3rd Battalion was also closing in and reached its initial position on the left of the 2nd Battalion at 0035 hours January 15. Combat patrols of platoon strength went out from both Battalions to an outpost line 300-400 yards in front of the main positions and dug in. Contact was maintained between Battalions with the 155th Infantry Regiment on the right, and the British Units on the left.

During the night of January 14, the remaining units of the Regimental Combat Team were likewise displaced forward. The 1st Battalion moved up to its reserve position just south of Mt. Porchia. The Anti-Tank Company platoon with 75mm guns moved into the same locality, with its mission to protect against an enemy attack from the direction of the valley south of Mt. Trocchio, or from Highway #6 on the north. Company 'A' of the 753rd Tank Battalion moved up to a forward position on the forward slopes of Mt. Porchia, prepared to support

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the attack by firing on targets of opportunity. The 131st and 132nd Field Artillery Battalions, the latter attached for the pending operation, were to execute fire missions on call. They were to lay down an initial barrage commencing at 0530 hours, January 15, and lifting at 0630 hours.

The attack was launched at 0630 hours, January 15th, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions abreast, with Companies 'E' and 'F' on the right and Companies 'K' and 'L' on the left. Patrols led out, with the remainder of the attacking echelons infiltrating through behind them, gradually increasing the patrols to platoon and company strength. The enemy defenses were well constructed in positions affording them opportune observation of our activities. The difficulty was countered by the use of smoke shells which partially concealed the movements of the foot troops.

Determined resistance was put up by the enemy, especially along the southern sector in the vicinity of La Pieta and south toward Casa Martina. The Regiment succeeded, however, in working through to its objectives. The 2nd Battalion attempted throughout the operation to fully coordinate its activities with the 135th Infantry Regiment which was attacking on the Regimental right flank. At 1050 hours, January 15, the information was received that the 135th Regiment had taken Hill #121, further north on Mt. Trocchio, with little resistance, and had requested that the 2nd Battalion push forward with them. By 1240 hours the 135th Regiment had seized all their objectives on Mt. Trocchio, and the Battalions of the 141st Infantry Regiment were working through to theirs.

The forward movement, primarily by infiltration tactics, continued throughout the afternoon. At 1400 hours, January 15, Lt. Col. Wyatt reported to Division Headquarters that everything was proceeding smoothly. By 1800 hours the forward patrols had crossed beyond their final objectives, and by 0600 hours January 16, the remainder of the units had infiltrated through to the final objectives. Forward patrols from both the 2nd and 3rd Battalions had gone forward to cross the Rapido River, with instructions to look for mine fields, booby traps, routes of approach, possible fording spots, enemy defensive installations, and general terrain features. Patrol contact throughout the night was maintained with the 135th Infantry on the right flank, and with the British Units on the left.

Following the successful operation culminating in the seizure of Mt. Trocchio, the 141st Infantry Regiment was disposed occupying positions defending Mt. Trocchio, La Pieta, and the high ground to the south and west toward Casa Martina. Generally the lines paralleled the course of the

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Rapido River, the next objective of the Regiment. The 1st Battalion moved into reserve position along the southern reverse slopes of Mt. Trocchio. The other units of the Regimental Combat Team, likewise being moved forward, were disposed within the area between Mt. Trocchio and Mt. Porchia.

In preparation for the contemplated crossing of the Rapido River, nightly patrols were organized to cross the River. The course of the Rapido River along the Regimental sector, to the west of Mt. Trocchio from Highway #6 on the north to San Angelo in Teodice at the south, follows a northeastern-southwestern direction. The initial intelligence information secured by the patrols gave some indication of the difficulties to be encountered. The main feature of the Rapido is the swiftness of its current that flowed approximately five miles an hour. As a result, a deep channel had been cut with nearly vertical banks from 3 to four feet high. The average width of the River was not over 15 yards, but its depth, dropping abruptly from the banks to from 10 to 12 feet in the center, presented an additional hazard. Patrols from the 2nd and 3rd Battalions during the early hours of January 16 crossed the River and brought back that information and the fact that the bridge in the vicinity of San Angelo in Teodice had been blown by the retreating enemy.

During the morning of January 16, Lt. Col. Wyatt attended a conference with the Divisional Commander, at 1115 hours, to discuss the next Regimental move. Company 'A' of the 753rd Tank Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 141st Regimental Combat Team. Arrangements were made with Company 'A' of the 111th Engineer Battalion for them to provide the necessary rubber collapsible boats to enable patrols to cross the Rapido River. The plans called for one engineer to accompany each boat, and to search for mines at the embarking and debarking points.

The patrols which crossed the Rapido River the night of January 16-17 were able to bring back information concerning the enemy defensive installations. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions each sent out two patrols to cross at predesignated points, using collapsible rubber boats.

Only one patrol from the 3rd Battalion was able to cross the River, because of the difficulty encountered in using the rubber boats in the swift current. It crossed in the vicinity just north of San Angelo in Teodice. The patrol reported that the trees along the River had been cut back to better the enemy observation and afford him a field of fire, and that there were many enemy automatic weapon installations along the western bank. A double apron of barbed wire fence had been erected several hundred yards inland, running parallel with the River. The 2nd Battalion patrols were more successful, both patrols getting

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across about a mile further north, in the vicinity of the large 'S' bend the Rapido forms. Both of these patrols reported a double apron of barbed wire fence had been strung along the western bank in that vicinity.

On the night of 16-17 January, patrols also maintained contact with the 1st Battalion of the 143rd Infantry Regiment which moved in further south on the Regimental left flank.

During the darkness between January 16 and 17, troops from the 11th Engineer Battalion succeeded in opening the supply route as far as San Lucia, a small village on the lower southern slopes of Mt. Trocchio. The road had been mined by the enemy. By noon of the 17th, Highway # 6 was opened as far north as the southern base of Mt. Trocchio. At 1800 hours, Lt. Col. Wyatt attended a meeting with the Commanding General of the Division to discuss the contemplated river crossing.

Beyond continued patrol activity, tactical movements for the night of January 17-18 consisted of the 2nd Battalion's displacing forward on the low ground to the south and west of Mt. Trocchio. Company 'A' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion, which had been attached to the 141st Regimental Combat Team, moved in to the rear and right of the 2nd Battalion. The Anti-Tank Company of the Regiment also displaced forward, moving into position to the rear of and between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. Harassing artillery fire to tie in with the contemplated patrol activity for the night of January 17th had been arranged with the 131st Field Artillery Battalion.

The 3rd night patrol had gone out to cross the Rapido, the night of January 17-18, Division Headquarters had requested that the activity be concentrated on obtaining information of enemy strong points across the River, identification of enemy units, and possible routes of access along the approaches from the east.

The 3rd Battalion patrol, attempting to cross west of the Regimental southern sector, encountered a great deal of difficulty with the rubber boats and mine fields along the eastern banks of the River. Enemy artillery concentrations further hampered their movements and only one patrol was able to get across the River.

The 2nd Battalion patrol, one from Company 'B' and one from Company 'F', had more success. The initial plan had been to work the patrol across, have them establish a strong point on the far bank by digging in, and then to build them up to platoon strength and send feelers out from that point further inland. The 'E' Company patrol, under Lt. Gabriel B. Navarrette (O-2055833), of El Paso, Texas, crossed and was able to advance nearly 800 yards west of the River.

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They then notified the platoon, remaining along the eastern bank of the River, to cross. As soon as the platoon had crossed, enemy machine guns further inland opened up on the patrol. The platoon tried to maneuver so as to flank the guns and aid the patrol, but encountered heavy small arms and mortar fire. The patrol engaged in a running fire fight which lasted nearly twenty minutes. Several men, including Lt. Navarrette, were wounded, but all our men were successfully evacuated. Lt. Navarrette, although wounded in the shoulder, swam back across the River. Enemy casualties included four killed and eight wounded.

The collapsible rubber boats had again demonstrated that they were inadequate for the task of crossing the Rapido. The current was far too swift, and the boats capsized readily in the swirling water. In addition, small shell fragments easily punctured the rubber, rendering the boat useless. Five of the seven boats used by the 'E' Company patrols the night of January 17 were lost.

The patrols reconnaissance disclosed that the enemy had formidable machine gun installations behind hedge lines running parallel with the River, and that the guns were so emplaced so as to cover each other. The reports also confirmed earlier information that aprons of barbed wire had been strung in the area between the River and the main enemy positions further inland.

During the afternoon of January 18, engineers laid a smoke screen along Highway #6 from the vicinity of Mt. Porchia south to the road junction leading off to San Vittore, to obscure enemy observation of that area, and activities taking place along the road.

Company 'A' of the 11th Engineer Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 141st Regimental Combat Team January 18. During the night of January 18-19, several of the Units within the Regimental Combat Team changed position. The Cannon Company moved into concealed positions in the vicinity of San Lucia and set up their 75mm and 105mm guns. The 1st Battalion displaced forward slightly from their former position. Company 'A' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion moved into the same locality as the Cannon Company.

On the afternoon of January 19th, the Regimental Command Post was moved to the southeast slopes of Mt. Trocchio, about two miles northeast of San Angelo in Teodice. That afternoon, the 2nd Battalion of the 19th Engineer Regiment was attached to the 141st Regimental Combat Team.

Further patrol activity was engaged in during the night of January 18-19, and January 19-20, in preparation for the approaching crossing of the Rapido River. Strong patrols from each of the Battalions were used, and the missions

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were similar to those of the previous nights. The tactical plans called for the patrols to cross the Rapido in rubber boats, establishing strong points on the far side, and then notify the platoons remaining on the east bank and have them work across, building the patrols up to platoon strength. The patrols would then work out from that point. Both nights, severe difficulties were encountered.

The primary difficulty was with crossing in the rubber boats, although the patrols were also hampered greatly by the resistance the enemy offered with strong machine gun, small arms and mortar fire. This increased the difficulties of crossing, and made reconnaissance on the western side of the River extremely difficult. Several of the patrols were able to make their way across both nights, and were able to gather valuable information needed in planning the River crossing. The night of January 19th, the patrols were increased in strength, and a cone of artillery fire directed at the enemy positions, simulating an attack, in order to force the enemy to disclose his gun strength and positions.

The attempt to cross the Rapido River was scheduled for the night of January 20-21. The 36th Division Field Order covering the operation was issued January 18th, containing the orders for the 141st Regimental Combat Team, directing that two Battalions of the 141st Infantry Regiment attack across the Rapido commencing at 2000 hours January 20th. The 143rd Infantry Regiment was ordered to attack in conjunction with the 141st, sending two Battalions across the River south of San Angelo and cooperating with the 141st in the capture of San Angelo the following day by attacking from the south. The 34th Division on the Regimental right flank was to make a demonstration further north, but was not to cross the River. II Corps Artillery was directed to fire preparatory fires to reduce enemy installations along the western bank, preceding the 141st Combat Team Artillery Fire.

The Regimental Field Order was issued the 19th of January at 1400 hours. The 1st and 3rd Battalions were directed to move into a final assembly area, located within the hill defile between the southern tip of Mt. Troochio, and La Pieta to the south, during the hours of darkness on January 19-20, from which point they would move forward to make the crossing. To aid in the attempt the 2nd Battalion, in Regimental Reserve, was ordered to make a demonstration crossing in the vicinity of San Angelo, approximately one mile South of the proposed crossing sites.

The 1st Battalion objective consisted of the high ground due west of the crossing site, 1000 to 1500 yards inland, while the 3rd Battalion, using the same crossing points later were to move to the south about the same distance inland, and take the high ground to the west behind San Angelo.

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The crossings were to be attempted in the vicinity of the 'S' bend of the Rapido River, situated about a mile west of the southern tip of Mt. Trocchio and approximately in front of the middle of the Regimental sector. Companies 'A', 'B', and 'C', crossing first by means of rubber assault boats were to launch the attack at 2000 hours January 20. At 2100 hours the rifle companies from the 3rd Battalion had the mission of coming next, by means of foot bridges to be installed north and south of the 'S' bend. Heavy weapons elements and the Battalion Headquarters Companies of both Battalions were to follow on the foot bridges.

The engineering equipment necessary for the operation was spotted by the 2nd Battalion of the 19th Engineer Regiment. In addition, they were directed to install an 8-ton infantry support bridge by 2400 hours the night of the attack to enable the Regimental and Battalion Anti-Tank elements and vehicular traffic to cross. They also furnished guides to lead the men through the mine fields to the crossing sites, and personnel to operate the boat crossings. The Cannon Company moved into firing positions in the La Picta hill defilade on January 20th, prepared to support the attack on the 21st by direct fire on targets of opportunity. Company 'A' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion was prepared to execute smoke missions on order. The 155th and 175th Field Artillery Battalions had been placed in support of the 151st Field Artillery Battalion, to execute the artillery barrages.

During the daylight hours of January 20th, the 1st and 3rd Battalions moved into the forward assembly area. Engineering equipment was brought forward, and placed in a boat dump near the final assembly area. At 0850 hours Captain Young, the Regimental 3-3, checked arrangements with the Regimental Communications Officer for the laying of wire for the nights operation. Lines from the forward Regimental switch had to be put into each of the Battalion Command Posts, the final assembly area, and the proposed crossing sites at the River. During the morning 3-3 notified Captain Young that the rifle units would use red smoke rifle grenades to indicate spot targets and orange smoke hand grenades with time fuses, placed well ahead of our units, to indicate enemy lines of resistance. These signals would serve as artillery registering points.

An additional communication service was made available for the river operation in the form of carrier pigeons. Light were furnished to the Regiment by II Corps, the pigeon loft being located at II Corps Headquarters. The 36th Division had communication services at the loft to forward and hurry any incoming information immediately. The pigeons were to be used only in case of emergency.

The Regimental Main Line of Resistance ran generally north and south, from the forward slopes of Mt. Trocchio, south across the high ground west of La Picta to the lower ground opposite San Angelo in Tedice. The stream line

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of the rapids ran roughly parallel with this line, the terrain rising gradually toward the east from the river to the forward slopes of Mt. Prochlio, and as Picta farther south. From the final assembly area in the hill defile between Mt. Prochlio and Picta, the 1st and 2nd Battalions had to move through this open terrain to the 'S' bend crossing sites approximately one mile to the west and slightly north.

The ground on the west side of the River was generally low ground rising toward the east. Most of the terrain was characterized by open rolling fields intercrossed with hedge lines and dividing ditches. A thin fringe of trees along the river had been cut back to afford the enemy better observation of the River approaches. Enemy defenses were organized behind the hedge lines running through the open ground, and along the road running through this area north from San Angelo approximately 100 yards from the River, but approaching to within 200 yards in the vicinity of the 'S' bend. Aprons of barbed wire fences were strung across the fields between the road and the River. This was the nature of the terrain the 1st Regimental Combat Team had to attack across and seize from the enemy.

An intense artillery barrage was laid down prior to the attack, by II Corps Artillery and the Artillery units attached to the Combat Team, lifting to deeper targets as the attack progressed. Over 31,000 rounds were poured into the enemy positions, saturating the area with one round for every 6 square yards within the area concerned. At 0515 hours the afternoon preceding the attack, American planes performed a bombing mission on the western side of the Rapids north of San Angelo.

By 1800 hours, January 20, the assault elements of the 1st Battalion, Companies 'A', 'B' and 'C' had cleared the final assembly area and were proceeding to the Engineering boat dump to pick up their coats and guides. During the afternoon enemy shell fire had destroyed several of the boats within the dump, and at the last minute reassignments of boat teams had to be made. This was accomplished and the boat teams proceeded toward the crossing sites at the River, led by the engineer guides. Captain Newman, the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion left the dump at 1900 hours with a wire party to establish the 1st Battalion forward Command Post at the river.

The initial difficulties of the operation were encountered in attempting to get the boat teams to the crossing sites. Company 'C' left the boat dump in a column of boat teams at 1900 hours, proceeding toward the River, and by 1930 hours both Company 'A' and Company 'B' had started on their way. While proceeding from the dump to the crossing site, the engineer guides with 'B' Company missed the proper turning point leading to the 'S' bend, and led the Company several hundred yards past and into the vicinity of the Battalion Forward Command Post. The column had to be turned, and a great deal of confusion resulted, during which an enemy artillery barrage was laid into the

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area. Several men, including Captain Selzer L. Normanson (O-351116) of Wharton, Texas, were killed, and over twenty were wounded, among them Lt. Martin P. Tully (O-1305347) of Chicago, Illinois. In spite of his wounds, however, Lt. Tully was largely instrumental in reorganizing the Company and continuing it on its mission. Finally he collapsed and was evacuated. Several of the boats had been destroyed during the shell fire.

By 2030 hours, engineering guides had reported to Captain Newman that 'A' Company and 'C' Company had reached the river with their equipment. Later reports, however, indicated that 'A' Company had been led into a mine field and stranded, the engineer guides having lost their way because the white tape marking the cleared lanes had been lost or destroyed. Lt. Warren G. Beasley (O-1289029) of Ft. Vernon, Indiana, was wounded while leading the Company to the river, and Lt. Clarence H. Artymovich (O-1294411) of Detroit, Michigan, took over the Company and attempted to contact the Battalion Commander. All his efforts failed, however, and Lt. Artymovich attached his Company to 3rd Battalion elements which had come up to await the installation of the foot bridges.

The Company 'B' guides likewise failed to get their Company through to the crossing sites. Following the earlier disorganization of the Company, two officers were sent to reconnoiter paths through the mine fields to the river. They were unable to locate the paths, however, and at 0230 hours, January 21, Captain Newman led the Company through to the vicinity of the 'B' bend. The men of the Company then attempted to launch the assault boats, but all their efforts were unavailing. The steep banks and swift current made it impossible to get the boats into the river upright and prevent them from capsizing. Shell fragments destroyed two of the rubber boats the Company had, and the men were then ordered to disperse in the area and await the footbridges.

Heavy enemy resistance was encountered throughout these operations, and the artillery and mortar concentrations directed at the crossing sites were the primary disabling and disorganizing factor. Working constantly under the well coordinated enemy fire, the units were unable to proceed as planned.

Periodic reports from the 14th Infantry Regiment received at the Regimental Command Post indicated that it was also experiencing similar difficulties in attempting to cross south of An Loc. One Company had succeeded in crossing by boats, by 2245 hours, January 20, but all attempts to install foot bridges had failed, and they were then attempting to improvise wooden bridges.

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Attempts to use the crossings by means of the foot bridges the 3rd Battalion personnel were to use likewise encountered great difficulty. Of the four bridges which were to be installed, one was defective and never taken from the engineer dump. Another had been destroyed in a mine field en route to the river, and a third destroyed in the vicinity of the crossing site by artillery fire. Hence only one serviceable foot bridge was available at the crossing site, but it was finally installed in spite of the difficulties and the enemy fire falling in the area. Co. 1 in company, the regimental S-3, and Captain Edler Ford (O-338396) of rank. For 3, the 3rd Battalion S-3, were at the crossing and were instructed to direct the installation. Immediately Companies 'A' and 'B' were ordered to cross and were over shortly after 0400 hours, January 21.

Continued and effective enemy mortar and artillery fire continued to obstruct the proceedings. Many casualties were suffered, both wounded and killed. After Companies 'A' and 'B' had crossed, the engineer personnel were forced to abandon the bridge because of the concentration of incoming fire. Subsequent to that time, only a few men from Company 'C' succeeded in getting over.

The 3rd Battalion assault elements had been able to carry their schedule through as far as getting to the river, but none of the elements crossed the night of January 20-21. Only one bridge had been installed, and units of the 1st Battalion were given priority and loaded across first. Attempts by the 2nd Battalion of the 19th Engineer Regiment to construct the eight ton infantry support bridge had been still not completed. At 0400 hours, January 21, it being obvious that the support bridge couldn't be installed that night, anti-tank and vehicular elements that had been scheduled to cross were notified to remain in their former positions.

At 0515 hours, January 21, General L. A. Wilbur, the Assistant Divisional Commander, gave orders that all elements still on this side of the river be withdrawn to the assembly area before daybreak, and that the men who had succeeded in getting across be instructed to dig in at their present positions and hold. This order was given to the 1st and 3rd Battalion Forward Command Posts, and the units at the vicinity of the crossing sites withdrawn. Lt. Col. Edwin W. Richardson, the 3rd Battalion Commanding Officer, and Captain Ford, the 3rd Battalion S-3 were wounded at the bridge crossing and had to be evacuated.

All contact with the men across the rapids was lost by the morning of January 21, and their whereabouts on the western side was never accurately determined. All attempts to establish communications with them were ineffectual. The sound of American small arm fire heard during the morning and day, however, indicated that the men had moved substantially inland from the River toward the West.

- 13 -
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Information received from several wounded men who managed to work their way back during the daylight indicated that the units across the river on the west bank had suffered heavily. Constant shelling of their positions prevented any effectual reorganization of the men or any further progress toward objectives. All communication was hopelessly beyond repair. Casualties included killed, wounded, and some captured; and at 1200 hours January 21, The Regimental S-3 estimated that the Regiment had suffered a 7% reduction in strength.

Lt. Col. Wyatt held a meeting at the Regimental Command Post at 0900 hours, January 21, with the unit commanders of the Regimental Combat Team. Plans were made for continuing the attempt to capture the objectives across the river. Originally the plan was to cross at noon, with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions as assault elements. By direction of the Commanding General of the Division, however, H-hour was not back until 1500 hours, and was later delayed until 2000 hours, January 21, due to failure of crossing equipment to arrive on time and mechanical difficulties.

The crossing was again attempted at 2100 hours, January 21, by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, with similar missions, equipment and plans. The 143rd Infantry Regiment was again going to cross on the Regimental left flank, south of Gun Angelo.

Similar difficulties, both mechanical and due to enemy fire, were encountered that had been experienced the night before. The assault boats were again proved totally inadequate for the task. Many capsized in the swift current, and others were rendered useless by enemy mortar and artillery fires. The engineer foot bridges were likewise unsatisfactory, though some of the personnel were able to cross thereby. The majority of men who crossed did so by means of improvised foot bridges. Mines along the approaches to the crossing sites created additional serious hazards.

In spite of the difficulties, nearly all the units were able to get across the Rapido the night of the 21st of January. By 0055 hours January 22, company 'G' was across and company 'H' followed immediately. The Regimental Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Wyatt had left the Regimental Command Post at 2000 hours, and went to the forward Regimental Command Post to stay in close contact with the proceedings. The 3rd Battalion, then under the command of Major Robert G. Lohffey (O-394193) of Breckenridge, Texas, succeeded in erecting and maintaining a foot bridge across the Rapido south of the 'G' band, and by 0530 hours, January 22, 'G' and 'H' companies had crossed to the west bank. 'I' company encountered great difficulty in turn with the rubber assault boats and a foot bridge they had secured from the engineering dump, and had been able to get only a few of their men across

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Company 'I' was 100 yards delayed, though small elements succeeded in crossing just before dawn.

Elements of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions Headquarters and Headquarters Companies, and Companies 'III' and 'II' crossed late in the night after the rifle companies, shortly after 0400 hours January 22. Enemy mortar and artillery fire had not been quite so intensive or concentrated as it had on the previous night, but was becoming increasingly heavy toward morning. By 0530 hours, Companies 'E', 'G', 'H', 'L', 'K', and 'M', and elements of Companies 'I' and 'F' and of both Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Companies were across.

All attempts to install a support bridge were unsuccessful, and were abandoned at 0230 hours, January 22; and the engineers ordered to bring up and install a Bailey bridge instead. The project was carried forward, preparations begun on the approaches, and the equipment gathered in the vicinity of the 'B' bend of the River by 0430 hours, January 22. Enemy fires, however, frustrated any effectual efforts to complete the installation. At 0630 hours Division Headquarters notified Lt. Col. Wyatt that General Walker wanted work on the bridge continued in spite of enemy fire. This was complied with, but the attempts were ineffectual.

Reports received from the 14th Infantry Regiment throughout the night indicated that they had had little success in getting across. By 0345 hours they reported one Battalion across, and at 0500 hours, that all their units were across and were receiving heavy mortar and artillery fire.

In order to obscure enemy observation of units across the River, arrangements had been made to place smoke pots along the rapids and on Mt. Tracchio, before dawn on January 22. This work was detailed to the elements of the 1st Battalion which hadn't succeeded in crossing the night of January 20-21. Over 200 pots were placed and ignited before dawn, and additional ones set out during the day to maintain the screen. The pots were placed well upwind, so as not to reveal any specific location of activities.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, respectively, pressed forward toward their objectives. Beginning about daybreak, enemy fire of all types began to increase in intensity from the screen defense installations inland from the River. In spite of this strong resistance, the men were able to penetrate the first organized line of resistance, which included breaking through the barbed wire aprons strung through the open ground west of the river. These penetrations varied from 200-500 yards beyond the river. Beyond this distance, because of the curtain of enemy fire and the heavy casualties among the officers and enlisted men, they were unable to proceed, and were forced to dig in on position. The open and exposed terrain subjected the troops to all types of enemy fire, which constantly swept the area.

- 15 -
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Attempts were made during the evening of January 22 to reorganize and continue the attack toward objectives. At 6000 hours, Lt. Col. Price visited the forward Regimental Command Post, and the 2d and 3d Battalion Forward Command Posts on the eastern side of the river to check the situations and expedite any possible reorganization. At 1100 hours Lt. Col. Wyatt sent a message to each of the battalions commanding officers, directing that no one must withdraw across the river, and that continued attempts had to be made to organize, dig in, and bring the river to bear against the enemy.

At noon, the Executive Officer of the 2nd Battalion advised the Regimental G-3 that the majority of the men across were located about 600-700 yards across the river, east of the final barbed wire line, and that the Battalion Headquarters groups were several hundred yards closer to the river. The penetrations were generally east of the 'B' bend, and toward the south. Throughout the day, advantage was constantly taken of hills in enemy firing to effect reorganization, but without substantial accomplishment due to the difficulties of communication, and the increased enemy fire these attempts invariably caused, merely increasing the already heavy casualties. At noon, January 22, the Regimental G-3 estimated that the reduction in strength was approximately 20%.

By 1700 hours, the Commanding Officers and Executive Officers of both the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, together with all the Company Commanders, with the exception of Company 'B', had either been killed or wounded. Telephone communications which had been maintained with great difficulties from time to time during the day had been irretrievably lost. Efforts to resupply ammunition, water, and rations were equally unavailing, since enemy fire completely commanded the river line and the approaches to the east.

During the afternoon of January 22, an attempt to divert enemy fire from the men across the river was made, using tanks from the 750th Tank Battalion. Captain Copeland of that Battalion directed two platoons of tanks to approach the river in the vicinity of the previously used crossing sites, one to head toward the south, and the other toward the north. The tanks during this operation fired into the enemy positions, but failed to accomplish the results desired.

At approximately 1600 hours, January 22, the enemy began a series of counterattacks against units on the west banks. The only information available on these attacks consisted of individual accounts of the survivors, and at best reflect incomplete views. The tanks were laid down to screen reorganization activities, which obscured our own observed any over-all picture, and greatly aided the enemy in his counterattack.

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Those placed together accounts indicate that about 1500 hours, January 22, the Germans began a series of counterattacks by First Pz Div against the exact location and strength of our units, with about two companies of men. This continued until about 1700 hours, when a counterattack of major proportions was brought to bear in the form of an encirclement. Hard bitter fighting repulsed this and several subsequent attempts by the Germans to overrun the Regimental positions. They were unable, however, to gain a well defined concept of our relatively confined positions, and consequently saturate the entire position with repeated concentrations of artillery, mortar and automatic weapon fires. About 2000 hours, our forces were nearly out of ammunition. The last element of the counterattacks had taken a further heavy toll in casualties among the troops, and it is believed that they were largely wiped out or taken prisoner, although American small arms fire was heard until to 2300 hours. It was difficult to estimate the enemy losses, although they were believed heavy.

The severe losses suffered caused an entire revision of plans for operations for the night of January 22. Lt. Col. Wyatt had given orders for continued attempts to install a Bailey bridge across the river, and a covering force from Company 'C' had proceeded to the crossing site to protect the engineer personnel. The urgency was dictated by the need to get armored elements across as soon as possible. At 2240 hours, January 22, however, the engineers were directed to abandon the bridge attempt and the covering force was withdrawn.

Surviving elements of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, supplemented by the men who had been able to work their way back across the rapids effected that organization they could on the east bank of the River.

The 145th Infantry Regiment had encountered similar circumstances in attempting to establish and hold a bridgehead across the river. They had withdrawn earlier, their units being reported back across the rapids during the afternoon.

The afternoon of January 22, about 1500 hours, Pvt. Irving Daniels, one of the medical aid men from Company 'A' returned to the Regimental Command post bearing a note purportedly from the German Commanding Officer, asking for a cessation of artillery fire for several hours to enable the Germans to evacuate the German and 'English' wounded. Pvt. Daniels had been captured the morning of January 21, after the initial attempt to cross, and had been attending the American wounded in a room of a farmhouse within the German positions. He reported that several large groups of fresh German replacements had reported into the area during the day of January 22. He had been released about noon of the 22nd with the note, and had made his way back to this side. Details of the actual nature of the note and the circumstances

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surrounding the transection, the note was interrupted as having been designed only as a ruse to secure relief from our artillery fire.

Ferrying patrols were organized for the night of January 22 to attempt to communicate with the western side of the rapids in order to bring back any men who might have remained in their positions alive or wounded. These were unavailing because of the continued screen control of the River bank and the approach to the east. At 1200 hours January 23, it was estimated that the Regiment had suffered a 27.7% reduction in strength, the estimated strength of the Battalions at that time being as follows:

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted Men</u>
1st Battalion	21	597
2nd Battalion	14	297
3rd Battalion	12	271

Approximately accurate figures on the number of known casualties suffered during the Rapids River operations, compiled after more details were learned are as follows:

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted Men</u>
Killed in action	9	67
Wounded in action	22	511
Missing in action	17	634
Total Casualties	48	1002

The 36th Reconnaissance Troop was attached to the 141st Infantry Regiment during the afternoon of January 22, primarily to execute patrol missions. During the night, they had several patrols out along the River, and had established four strong points along the front of the Regimental southern sector. The 2nd Battalion, under Lt. Col. John C. L. Adams (O-15716), who had been recently assigned to the Regiment, was in defensive position along the western slopes of La Ficta, with the 3rd Battalion, then under Captain Carlhel E. Lorgen (O-342878) of San Antonio, Texas, on their left flank along the lower ground to the south. The 1st Battalion, under Captain Newman, was located to the rear of the 2nd Battalion, in Regimental reserve.

Heavy smoke to screen activities in the vicinity of the 'S' bend in the River was laid down during the daylight of January 23, by Company 'A' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion. If Corps Artillery Units had requested that the area be allowed to clear to increase their observation. After checking with

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General Wilbur, however, the smoking was continued to facilitate the return of any of our men still across the river and trying to get back.

Elements of the 34th Division, including the 141st Regiment, were directed to demonstrate strongly toward the river during the night of January 23-24, to simulate a crossing in that sector. The demonstration was to divert attention from the 34th Division, on the regimental right flank, which was to attempt to capture Cassin from the north. The time set for the demonstration was 2100 hours, and by 2200 hours, the 141st Regiment, the Division, and the 2nd Chemical Battalion were in position. Company 'A' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion was being attached to the 34th Division, effective at once, and that they were to move into the 34th Division sector as soon as possible.

Further attempts to retrieve any men remaining across the river were made as soon as darkness permitted the night of January 23-24. Orders were given to the 1st Battalion at 1400 hours that they would send two patrols out with that mission. Lt. Phillip F. Orban (O-1290804), of Peoria, Illinois, from 'C' Company organized and led the patrol on its mission. They ran into mine fields and small area fire on the opposite bank as they approached the river, and in as much as they had to be back in before the time of the scheduled demonstration at 2100 hours, they did not attempt the crossing. At 2330 hours they again set out on their mission, but with no greater success. Machine gun and mortar fire from the closely guarded western bank prevented any crossing.

The following morning, January 24, a patrol from the 1st Battalion were again sent out under Lt. Orban. In addition to searching out any wounded remaining alive, the patrol was to feel out and locate any enemy strong points. Using the rubber boats, the patrol was able to cross this time with little opposition. Following this success, plans were immediately made to exploit the possibility of establishing and holding a bridge head on the western bank. Foot bridges were spotted by the Engineers, and Company 'C' alerted to be ready to cross.

The initial success that the patrol had encountered, however, was short-lived. They had been able to penetrate several hundred yards beyond the river, and had located many holes and several men still alive. Their activities drew increasingly heavy fire from enemy strong points further inland, and they were forced to withdraw. Artillery fire on enemy positions and smoke screening activities were ordered to aid the patrol in withdrawing. Further attempts to install foot bridges were postponed until after darkness. The patrol returned to the 1st Battalion Command Post at 1600 hours, January 24.

- 10 -
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The 36th Division was again ordered to stage a demonstration of a River crossing the night of January 24-25. The activities of the 34th Division for the night of January 23-24 had been cancelled late the night before, and set for the following night. Three separate demonstrations were staged, between 2150-2230 hours January 24, and between 0030-0130 hours and 0330-0430 hours January 25, in an attempt to contain the enemy in his present position until dawn. Tanks from the 760th Tank Battalion participated in the demonstration, moving toward the river at the previously used bridge sites at the 'S' bend, and firing across into enemy positions.

Owing to the necessity of coordinating activities between the demonstration periods, the night of January 24-25, and increasingly heavy enemy artillery fire, proposed plans to install foot bridges across the River were abandoned. At 1615 hours the Commanding Officer gave orders for the engineer equipment to be dispersed. Patrol activity for that night was confined to maintaining lateral contact, and in establishing strong points of resistance forward from the Battalion positions. A patrol from the 36th Reconnaissance Troop operating along the River bank in front of the 2nd Battalion positions reported at 0320 hours, January 25, that it had located and knocked out a German machine gun along the opposite bank.

Defensive arrangements were strengthened during the night of January 24-25 in anticipation of a possible enemy counterattack because of the activities of the 34th Division to the north. Artillery fires were arranged for defensive tactics, strong points of resistance organized, and patrol activity organized in that light. During the night, enemy planes twice passed over the Regimental forward line positions, dropping flash bombs and probably photographing installations.

All attempts to rescue any wounded men across the River had been thwarted by the complete enemy control of the western bank and the approaches from the east. The morning of January 25, a final attempt was made by sending Medical Aid men under the Red Cross flag to the River. Litter teams from the 1st and 2nd Battalions were sent along as carrying parties. At 1015 hours, all artillery units were ordered not to fire into the area concerned. Across the Rapido and inland from the vicinity of the 'S' bend south to San Angelo, all firing to cease at 1045 hours.

At 1043 hours, January 25, the party headed for the River, under full observation by the enemy positions. They proceeded to the River, crossed in rubber boats, and gained the western bank unopposed. Two German men came down to meet them at 1100 hours, and a short time later, three of the enemy aid men and several of their officers came forward. The Germans requested a cessation of hostilities along the front from north of the 'S'

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head south to San Angelo to enable both sides to evacuate their casualties. A truce until 1500 hours was agreed. This was extended to 1700 hours. Division headquarters, and all artillery units concerned were notified.

Both sides worked feverishly to evacuate as many casualties as possible in the time available. Approximately 50 of our men and an estimated 80 Germans worked side by side within the area. By 1700 hours, the deadline of the truce, 3 wounded and about 50 dead had been brought back across the River. Hostilities were resumed at that time.

The Germans who came out into the area throughout the truce maintained a friendly attitude and were anxious to help our men in any way possible, although they refused to allow them to go beyond the barbed wire aprons strung about 500 yards behind. They appeared well-dressed and fit, and judging from their uniforms, medals and campaign ribbons, were veterans of many campaigns, some as far back as the Sudetenland occupation. The Regimental Observation Post reported that throughout the truce the enemy strongpoints were constantly well-manned. The information our men were able to gather regarding the enemy defenses corresponded pretty closely with that received from patrol activities and prisoners of war.

In their conversation with our men, the Germans couldn't seem to understand why our bridgehead had continued to hold out so desperately. Several of them stated that the Americans who had crossed the river had fought with great determination and courage.

Lt. Col. Wyatt held a meeting at the Regimental Command Post at 1300 hours January 25th with the Unit Commanders of the Regimental Combat Team and the Regimental Staff, to discuss and arrange a realignment of the Regimental defensive disposition, taking into consideration the recent operations, and recent attachments to and detachments from the Regimental Combat Team.

The necessary movements were to be accomplished during the hours of darkness of January 25-26, and Preparatory orders were issued at that time to facilitate unit preparation. The F.O. Order was issued at 1800 hours January 25, covering the disposition of the Regiment together with the units of the Combat Team to which had been attached the 1st Battalion of the 42nd Infantry Regiment, Troop 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron, and a platoon of Company 'C' of the 2nd Chemical Weapons Battalion. Company 'C' of the 760th Tank Battalion and the 2nd Battalion of the 19th Engineer Regiment had been detached from the Combat Team.

The main line of resistance consisted of organized strong points in front of the Battalion sectors. Generally, the line ran parallel with the north-south Rapido River stream line, from Highway #6 on the northern tip to a point opposite San Angelo to the south.

- 21 -
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The 2nd Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment occupied the southern sector, defending the lower ground north of La Fieta and east of San Angelo, extending north in front of the higher ground of La Fieta. On their right the central sector was defended by the 1st Battalion, 141st Regiment, continuing the line north to include the high ground immediately east of the southern slopes of Mt. Trocchio. The northern sector, held by the 1st Battalion of the 142nd Regiment, hinged back toward the northeast, extending along the lower forward slopes of Mt. Trocchio to Highway #6 at a point about two miles southeast of Cassino.

The southern 2/3 of this line ran east to the east of the Rapido River, the northern third curving back toward the east away from the River line. The area between this line and the River was outposted at night immediately adjacent to the River, and strongly patrolled, the outposts withdrawing back to the main line of resistance before daybreak.

The 1st Battalion of the 141st Infantry was placed in Regimental reserve in defile just south of the southwestern tip of Mt. Trocchio, to the rear of the 1st Battalion position. The 25th Reconnaissance Troop was located in the 2nd Battalion sector, and had the mission of outposting and patrolling that sector at night. The Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies continued their former disposition. The 2nd platoon of Company 'C' of the 2nd Chemical Weapons Battalion was directed to a position where they would be able to support the Regimental sector by close defensive fire. They moved in the area to the south of Mt. Trocchio, to the rear of the 1st Battalion area.

Troop 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron hadn't been definitely located by the night of January 25th, but were directed to locate their guns to cover the River line, and the area to the West, and also have patrols out between the outposts and the main line of resistance.

Defensive installations were further strengthened on January 26th by erecting concertina wire entanglements around the Battalion strongholds. There were 15 of these strong points within the Regimental sector. Engineer personnel from Company 'A' of the 11th Engineer Battalion, four men to a Battalion, helped install the wire the night of January 26th. The plan was also to include a wire fence to be strung between the River and the main line of resistance during the nights of January 26th and 27th. Mine clearance was required for this work and arrangements made for the engineer crews, working those nights, to drive sheep ahead of them through the mine fields.

At 1500 hours, January 26th, reconnaissance reports indicated increased vehicular traffic and probably an enemy motor pool near Piedmonte, north of Cassino. Division Headquarters arranged for II Corps artillery and an air mission to destroy the target.

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Colonel Richard J. Werner, (O-216663), of San Antonio, Texas, the former Commanding Officer of the Regiment, returned to duty from hospitalization shortly after noon January 26th, and resumed command of the Regiment. Lt. Col. Wyatt was transferred to the 142nd Infantry Regiment.

G-3 notified the Regiment at 1600 hours that it was to stage two demonstrations to indicate River crossings the night of the 26th, at 2400 hours, and 0200 hours January 27th. Mortar, machine gun, and small arms fire were to be used in conjunction with artillery work, beginning each time with slow sporadic fire, and increasing to a crescendo toward the end of the demonstration. A reinforced squad from each Battalion was to approach the previously used crossing sites at the River, actively firing small arms fire across the River. At 1940 hours, the original plans were changed, and the time finally set for 0550 hours, January 27th.

Patrol activity for the night of January 26-27 was confined to combat patrolling along the Eastern side of the River, and the establishment of outposts up to the River line. The scheduled demonstrations prevented the accomplishment of previously planned reconnaissance missions across the River.

The 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment of the 1st Armored Division replaced the 1st Battalion of the 142nd Regiment in attachment to the 141st Regimental Combat Team on 1500 hours, January 26th. The actual relief into positions was accomplished under the first hours of darkness that night, and all elements were in place by 0140 hours January 27th. They were directed to retain the continuity of the defensive plan and perform the same missions as the 1st Battalion of the 142nd Regiment along the right flank of the Regimental center. Group 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron moved into position along the Regimental southern flank in the low ground south of La Pista behind the 2nd Battalion.

At 0630 hours January 27th, G-2 advised the Regiment that the Commanding General of the Division had ordered contact to be made with the enemy by drawing small arms fire from across the River. Patrols were to approach the River prepared to cross, and to continue until the enemy demonstrated his presence. The purpose was to be prepared for any withdrawal the enemy might make. Three recommended crossing sites, approximately 1000 yards south of the 'B' bend in the River were given.

At 0930 hours, Col. Werner and Captain Young left the Regimental Command Post to observe the Battalion positions. They returned at 1030 hours. At 1105 hours the detail from the 11th Engineers which had been clearing the mine fields and laying fence wire between the Battalion strong points and the River reported the area cleared except for some parts along the southern sector in front of the 36th Reconnaissance Area, which were to be cleared of mines that night.

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During the afternoon of January 27th, German artillery batteries made a determined attempt to destroy the steel bridge on Highway #6, near the road cutoff to the Regimental Forward Post. Several direct hits were scored on the cement foundations, but the bridge remained intact. Further German artillery activity in the area knocked out the Regimental Cannon Company's two M-7 mounted guns. Tanks firing in their area were believed to have drawn the counterbattery fire which did the damage.

The Regimental Combat Team again staged demonstrations the night of January 27-28, one at 2400 hours, and one at 0200 hours January 28th. At 1305 hours, G-3 had notified the Regiment that the plans and execution would be identical with those of the previous night. The constant threatening of the enemy positions along the assigned sector were designed primarily to assist the friendly units further north on the Regimental right flank to close in further behind the German mountain defenses north of Cassino. Patrol activity was again coordinated with the demonstrations scheduled, and confined to active patrolling between the outposts along the River and back to the main line of resistance.

At 0850 hours, January 28th, Colonel Werner and Captain Young visited the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Cavalry Regiment, which was defending the northern sector of the Regimental defense line. Two companies of the Battalion occupied the forward slopes of the northern end of Mt. Trocchio, one was on the lower slopes of the northern tip, and one was organized for defense directly across Highway #6. Arrangements were made with the engineers to furnish and install wire entanglements around the Battalion strong points during that night.

At 1325 hours, G-3 notified the Regimental G-5 that there were no scheduled activities for the Regiment the night of the 28th. G-2 had formerly requested reconnaissance missions for patrol work across the River, to cover the approaches to the River, crossing sites, and the strength and positions of enemy installations. Two patrols from Troop 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron, equipped to make a crossing, attempted to fulfill these missions, but both patrols were forced to revert to exact locations on this side of the River because of heavy fire they drew as they approached the river.

G-2 notified Colonel Werner of a meeting at Division Headquarters at 1150 hours January 28th, to call the Regimental G-5 to attend. During the afternoon, three F-58 planes twice circled Mt. Trocchio, barely above tree level, photographing enemy installations to the north. Patrol missions across the River for the night of the 28th were again thwarted by the complete control the enemy held along the western bank.

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Col. Warner requested one thousand yards of wire from the Division Engineers, at 0900 hours, January 30, for a contact and double apron of wire in front of the Battalion defense positions. The increasing possibility of an attempted German break through the Regimental defense positions in order to cut off the units working on the Regimental right flank north of Cassino made it advisable to make the Regimental defense positions as strong as possible. Three hundred yards of wire were furnished each Battalion, and a working detail from the engineers was sent to help install it.

Fifty-four officers replacements were assigned to the Regiment the 29th of January to offset the losses during the River operations. Twelve officers and 18 non-commissioned officers were also transferred from the 142nd Infantry Regiment, during the 29th and 30th of January.

At 1530 hours, January 30, Major General Keller notified Colonel Warner that the Division had been ordered to prepare to cross the Rapido River on II Corps order. Col. Warner was ordered to be prepared to carry out previously arranged Division plans. Details of a prospective Field Order to cover the proposed operation was issued to the Unit Commanders of the 141st Regimental Combat Team at a meeting held by Colonel Warner at the Regimental Command Post at 1515 hours January 30. The plan contemplated crossing the River in the vicinity of San Angelo, local capturing the town with the 3rd Battalion as the assault echelon.

Three patrols from the Regiment, 2 from the 3rd Battalion, and 1 from Troop 'A' of the 21st Reconnaissance Squadron attempted to cross the Rapido the night of January 30th, in the vicinity of San Angelo. The activities were pointed at feeling out the enemy positions along the proposed crossing site. All patrols succeeded in getting to the River and in locating strong points along the opposite bank, but were unable to cross because of the enemy automatic weapon emplacements along the western banks. Vehicular traffic within San Angelo was reported several times.

At 1145 hours, January 31st, Colonel Warner was evacuated to a hospital. His former command of the Regiment, Lt. Col. Fries, the Regimental Executive Officer assumed command of the Regiment following Colonel Warner's evacuation.

The Regimental Field Order for the proposed River crossing was issued at noon, January 31st. The plan contemplated crossing simultaneously at points about 1000 yards north and south of San Angelo, with the 3rd Battalion as the assault echelon. Company 'L' was to cross to the north, and Company 'R' to the south. These elements were then to attack and capture the town.

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Company 'B' organized, including the supply group. The 2nd Battalion was assigned to cross next and occupy the high ground west of North of San Angelo. Covering squads from the 36th Reconnaissance Troop and Troop 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron were to guard the crossing sites. The 1st Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment, and the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment were to demonstrate strongly to the front of their sectors, and remain in Regimental reserve. As soon as a Bailey bridge could be installed, Anti-Tank, Tank, and vehicle elements were to be crossed.

Preparations for the crossing were made during the day of January 31st. Mortar teams from the 36th Reconnaissance Troop and the 3rd Battalion moved into firing positions from which they could cover the assault. At 1200 hours General Hoss, the Commanding General of the 36th Division Artillery, visited the Regimental Command Post to make final arrangements on firing data. Carrying parties from the 143rd Infantry Regiment were furnished to the 141st Regimental Combat Team to carry the engineer boats and foot bridges to the forward assembly area the night of January 31st. Communications to the forward positions installed, and mine clearance to the crossing sites arranged.

At 1230 hours, January 31st, the Commanding General of the Division called Lt. Col. Price, the Commanding Officer of the Regiment, and told him that there would be no attack until the 34th Division on our right flank had had some success in its attempt to capture Cassino from the north; he also stated that he didn't know just when the Regiment would be officially notified that there would be no attack for the night of the 31st. At 1315 hours, II Corps G-3 notified Lt. Col. Price that the attack would not be made that night.

Following the cancellation of the attack for the night of January 31st, reconnaissance patrols were organized. Similar missions were assigned as on the previous night, in general, to find more detailed information on enemy installations along the Western bank of the River. One patrol from the 3rd Battalion succeeded in crossing north of San Angelo. Heavy fog prevented any accurate observation, however, and the patrol returned to avoid an enemy ambush. During the night, the carrying parties from the 143rd Infantry succeeded in getting the foot bridges and rubber boats to the forward assembly area in readiness for the proposed operation.

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Casualties of the 11st Infantry Regiment for the month of January, 1944, were as follows:

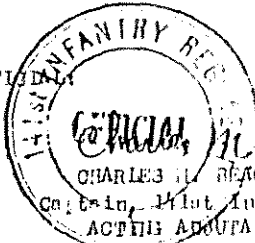
	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED MEN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
KILLED IN ACTION.....	8	49	57
DIED OF WOUNDS.....	1	3	4
WOUNDED IN ACTION.....	22	292	314
INJURED IN ACTION.....	--	22	22
MISSING IN ACTION.....	18	587	605
TOTALS.....	49	958	1007

Enemy casualties, and captured and destroyed materiel for the month of January, 1944, were as follows:

	<u>KNOWN</u>	<u>ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL</u>
Prisoners of War.....	16	--
Killed.....	36	56
Wounded.....	--	128
Machine Guns (knocked out).....	2	6
8mm Mortars (knocked out).....	1	2

Report of operations written by:

Charles G. Schwartz Jr.
 CHARLES G. SCHWARTZ, JR. O-2055729
 2nd Lt., Regimental Headquarters
 11st Infantry Regiment

OFFICIAL

Charles H. Beacham
 CHARLES H. BEACHAM
 Captain, 11st Infantry
 ACTING ADJUTANT

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HEADQUARTERS 36th INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 36, U. S. ARMY

OPERATIONS IN ITALY

FEBRUARY 1944

ANNEX # 6

141st INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE

DECLASSIFIED

DCD Dir. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1958

NMW by [signature] date 10-31-63

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HEADQUARTERS 141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE
APO #36, U. S. ARMY

5 March 1944.

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Regimental History and Conclusions From Operations.
TO : The Commanding General, 36th Infantry Division, APO #36, U. S. Army.

1. Inclosed is the regimental history of the 141st Infantry Regiment, covering operations in Italy during the month of February 1944.

2. From experience during February operations, mostly in mountainous terrain, the following conclusions are derived:

a. The supply problem is the most vital and serious problem necessary to solve for successful operations. The following are the difficulties most usually encountered:

- (1) Shortage of pack mules and the inherent disadvantages of mule pack trains in restricted amounts of supply deliveries and slowness of delivery.
- (2) Man-back transportation even more unsatisfactory than mule-back.
- (3) Trails interdicted and shelled with or without observation, day or night, resulting in men and mules killed, supplies lost, and resulting failures to accomplish deliveries at times required.
- (4) The excessive time required to procure any emergency needs of supplies.
- (5) The necessity of following confined and restricted trails that show up prominently on aerial photos, permitting effective interdiction even when they cannot be observed.
- (6) Extreme difficulty in evacuation of wounded and dead, requiring excessive time, and excessive use of manpower over and above that provided for evacuation purposes.

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Suggested remedies for these difficulties are as follows:

- (1) Mule trains, when available, require that trained mule skinnners be made available and the packers should be mounted in order to increase the rate or march of the train.
- (2) Replacements should not be utilized as mule skinnners nor as man-cargadores if this can be prevented in any manner.
- (3) A workable solution of all the above problems of supply can be suggested, based upon extremely successful experiments and tests that were conducted for various agencies of the War Department in Washington and at Fort Bragg by the present Regimental Commander, Lt. Col. John C. L. Adams. This would involve the assignment of one or more light planes of the Cub observation types, but preferably the slightly larger and more acceptable types that are available, as integral parts of the Infantry Battalion supply set-up. These would become aerial food carts, aerial ammunition carts and aerial evacuation ambulances, making short hops of 10 or 15 minutes duration from and to supply dumps, in which they fly low, avoiding observation and leaving no trail which will appear on aerial photos or which can be interdicted. Deliveries would be almost immediate and could be made by dropping supplies or by actual landings. In the present operation actual landings could have been made on open areas that were available even on the steeply sloping mountain sides and tops. In the exceptional cases when no landings could be made the damage resulting from droppage at speeds of approximately 35 miles per hour into prepared nets or blankets, would be negligible for the majority of types of supplies. Even if landings could not be made the manpower saved by the transportation of supplies would simplify the evacuation problem. Delivery could be made of emergency supplies within 15 minutes, more or less, of receipt of request. The above suggested uses have been amply proven in extensive Army tests, have been proven in active operations by the Russian Army and in supply operations in the Panamanian jungles. These light planes should be infantry-controlled and flown, just as are the supply jeeps and trucks. Suitable pilots are now available in all Infantry Regiments. Two extremely experienced officers

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pilots as well as enlisted pilots were available in the 141st Infantry during this operation and the entire supply and evacuation of the regiment while on Hill 706 could have been handled by the use of three such light planes, even of the Cub observation type, which is not considered the best type available to employ in case this solution is given consideration or test.

b. Experience gained from use of fast driven motor vehicles of all types on supply routes along interdicted roads and across exposed valleys, under enemy observation, indicate that there is much less loss of personnel and transport involved than was the case in the slow moving columns of men and mules, even when the roads were interdicted spasmodically and at times without observation.

c. Infantry must evolve better mine-clearance or mine avoidance techniques and practices for use by them in emergencies when they must, without the aid of engineers, penetrate mine fields or extract themselves with a minimum of losses from mine fields blundered into during battle operations. As a result of investigations and discussions with battle experienced officers it is believed that a suitable solution of this problem can be offered to higher authority by the undersigned. (See attached annex)

d. When men have been required to remain in fighting holes for long periods of time, or have been employed on a purely defensive mission for long periods of time, vigorous measures must be taken to eliminate a "defensive complex" or a "fox hole attitude or mind". This attitude usually takes the form of hesitating to initiate fire action against the enemy or hesitation in promptly returning all enemy fire, due to a fear of provoking further enemy fires, including particularly artillery and mortar fires. This attitude must be replaced by one of returning quick, savage, and overwhelming fire every time the enemy fires or moves. Men can be encouraged in such an aggressive attitude, replacing a purely defensive attitude, by employing all possible weapons in every conceivable manner possible including all innovations that will harass, confuse, startle or destroy the enemy. Methods employed successfully to accomplish these ends are suggested as follows; employing rifle grenades at excessive ranges for harassing, firing 60mm flare shells during the night and covering 50mm mortar fire by fire of heavier mortars to prevent detection by the enemy; immediately reporting the azimuth or sounds or flashes of enemy weapons, by all front line units in order to deliver accurate artillery and mortar fire on every conceivable type of enemy activity at point-targets rather than upon areas; immediately firing of single rounds or salvos by our own artillery to fall immediately in front of any of our front lines that are receiving enemy shell fire, in order to confuse enemy observers into

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lifting their fire in the belief that it is falling short; constant listening posts, ambush patrols, sniper posts and combat patrols, probing and punching at the enemy in order to make his life miserable or terrorize him. Use of such tactics during the February operations definitely established our superiority in aggressiveness over several different enemy units and definitely resulted in decreased enemy activity against us due to their hesitation in starting something that we would finish. In other words the enemy acquired the state of mind that we found necessary to eliminate within our own units.

e. The need for greater use of engineering and pioneering units to constantly improve front line positions, including not only weapons emplacements but even fighting holes for specific purposes such as sniping or observation. Dynamite, TNT, Beehive Mines, and similar explosive aids are not used sufficiently in our attempts to place fighting holes into extremely rocky soil. Battalions and Regiments should have their own personnel trained to employ such explosives to the greatest advantage in organizing a defensive line even when such organization is merely a short interlude prior to resuming the attack within a day or so.

f. Operations during this month included such frequent and heavy shelling of our units by the enemy that it became evident that all possible means must be employed for the definite location of all possible types of enemy weapons with such a degree of accuracy that the counter battery fire upon enemy artillery, nebelwerfer, machine guns, mortars or even concentrated small arms fire, becomes point targets rather than area targets for both our artillery and our mortars.

One method that aided materially in this was to make it SOP for all units and installations, either front line or reserve, to report the direction of sounds, flashes, observed enemy activity of any nature, or the direction of flight of any enemy fire, BY AZIMUTH to the Battalion Headquarters. There this was immediately plotted on a map and in a short time inevitably resulted in enemy targets and areas of enemy activities being definitely located by azimuth intersection methods. Most excellent results were then obtained in destroying nebelwerfer, enemy batteries and enemy ammunition or supply points.

A very important additional need is for the artillery observation planes to be equipped with instruments for night flying as this will contribute materially to reducing enemy interdiction and harassing fire upon our front line units due to the ease with which artillery and similar weapons can be located from light planes either by sound, sight, or flash at night.

g. Our outstanding need at the present in air-ground cooperation is that it should become an habitual practice for ground commanders of units not

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larger than a regiment to be afforded air assistance, together with direct contact from the regiment to the supporting air unit, which will immediately employ light attack bombers to immediately bomb out enemy batteries that fire upon the front line infantry units either in offensive or defensive operations. THIS WOULD IN EFFECT EMPLOY THESE LIGHT ATTACK BOMBERS AS COUNTER-BATTERY ARTILLERY OF THE AIR AGAINST ENEMY BATTERIES. This would normally require only a few, even only one or two, of such light attack bombers being available to each Infantry Regiment but it would be necessary that they be immediately available upon call, flying from some adjacent field not more than 10 or 15 minutes away. Such use would have prevented to a great extent the destructive enemy artillery fires that paved the way for successful German counter-attacks against river crossing units and would have definitely prevented such heavy concentrations of fire as were later encountered in the mountains.

John C. Adams
 JOHN C. L. ADAMS
 Lt. Col., 141st Infantry
 COMMANDING

- 5 Incls:
- #1 - Annex to Letter of Transmittal (septuple)
 - #2 - Regimental History (septuple)
 - #3 - Casualty List (septuple)
 - #4 - Unit Journal (1 cpy)
 - #5 - Maps (1 set 1:50,000 and 1:25000)

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ANNEX -- SUGGESTED METHOD FOR PENETRATION
OF MINE FIELDS BY INFANTRY UNITS

It is a well recognized fact that Infantry is greatly slowed or is stopped cold when they encounter mine fields during an attack or blunder into them during approach marches. A certain amount of hysteria or panic immediately results when an infantry unit finds itself caught in a mine field and several successive casualties result from their attempts to extricate themselves or to penetrate through the mine field. The disorganization is more pronounced when relatively inexperienced replacements are present in the organization. Therefore a method of penetrating the mine field or extricating themselves therefrom should be devised which can be immediately employed by infantry units without any expectation of help from engineer or other mine-clearance units. The method devised should be such as will give the unit the greatest possible chance of getting out of the mine field with the least possible casualties. The teaching of the method evolved should particularly stress this fact to all new trainees, namely that their greatest chance of survival lies in employing the method presented rather than in taking a chance on accidentally blundering through a mine-free path which the following infantrymen may or may not be able to follow. It must be emphasized that the first plan will probably result in no casualties or few casualties while a large number of casualties could be expected from disorganized and individual efforts to extricate themselves. Additionally the plan evolved should be such that it will afford the men who are penetrating the mine field all possible protection from small arms fire that can be expected to cover such fields. The method should be such that it will get the unit through the mine field or out of it as quickly as possible. It should permit following units to readily follow the same path successfully used by a preceding unit in the attack and above all it should put the men to work at once so that they will not be frozen in place, thus becoming a prey to panicky thoughts and fears.

It is suggested that infantry units be taught the following procedure to be applied immediately upon finding themselves in a mine field: each man will immediately squat where he is without moving his feet. Each man will then begin probing with his bayonet or knife inserted at an approximately 45° angle into the ground at intervals of 2 or 3 inches, across a space approximately 15 inches wide directly in front of his feet. As soon as each man has probed a sufficient area he will kneel and continue the probing until he has an area cleared sufficiently for him to lie prone. If any hard substance or suspicious object, that may be a mine, is encountered during any of this probing or during the following instructions the man will immediately avoid that particular point by probing around the mine seeking another path rather than making any attempt to remove it. As

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long as any individual infantryman is prone on the ground anywhere in the mine field, AND IS NOT PROBING AND MOVING FORWARD, he will begin to scrape himself out a shallow "scallop" in the area that he has probed; utilizing helmet, entrenching tools or anything with which he can dig. These shallow scallops then definitely mark safe areas in which there are no mines and it then becomes a matter of merely probing and connecting these in order to form a safe trail through or out of the field. Additionally these scallops afford additional protection from small arms fire that may be sweeping the area. If men remain long enough in that area before being extricated they will have accomplished digging sufficiently to give themselves cover in a shallow scallop fox-hole to the depth of not more than a foot or foot and a half. Then the method of connecting these scallops and proceeding to the attack, or getting out of the mine field should follow the following procedure. Men should be directed to probe with the bayonet in order to join their scallop to that of the nearest adjacent man. Since the unit normally moves in column formations this operation of itself would tend to produce a connected series of scallops following a tortuous but safe trail through the mine field. In order to advance the head of this "trace" that results, the following procedure should be employed. One man should be designated, preferably at the head of the column or at the head of what is to become a column, and it is to be his job to probe ahead along a given direction for a distance of not to exceed three yards. He has then done his share and will roll on his side to one edge of his probed area, permitting the man next to him in the following scallop to come forward across his probed area and himself contribute three more yards of probed and safe ground, following at all times the line direction designated for the advance. Having probed his three yards he too rolls to the side and thus the platoon or other unit continues to advance behind the rotating leaders position of the column, along a trail that can be readily followed even at night because of the scallops and because the probed ground can readily be located by feeling. Meantime all men who are not at the head of the column, taking their turn in probing, will engage themselves in digging the scallop wherever they find themselves. When the scallops have reached a selected or prescribed depth of possibly not more than 12 inches or a foot and a half, according to conditions, the men will then engage themselves in joining their scallops to the one next ahead of them by cutting out the intervening humps along the ground that they have probed while joining themselves to the adjacent man. The final result of this procedure is to produce a snake-like, but safe trace through the mine-field, which has either become a series of scallops and loosened, probed ground or an actual continuous, very shallow communication trench. This extremely shallow communication trench in actuality becomes the trace of a trail which the first unit or any succeeding unit can easily follow by crawling or walking, in accordance with the type of fire being employed or not employed by the enemy to cover the mine field. The adoption of such a procedure as outlined above does give some positive action

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that can be immediately employed upon encountering a mine field and this is vastly more desirable than the total lack of any coordinated plan or effort, which has proven to be the usual situation at present. This method would particularly be of use to patrols or at night. It would not supercede but merely supplement other methods now used. It also should not apply when it is vitally necessary in attack to quickly force a mine field without regard to casualties.

John C. Adams

JOHN C. L. ADAMS
Lt. Col., 141st Infantry
COMMANDING

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The long axis of Mt. Trocchio extends for approximately 2½ miles along a northeast-southwest direction, with the southern tip flanked by La Pieta, a medium sized hill. Between the northeast-southwest base line thus formed and the Rapido River streamline to the west, the rolling terrain lowers gradually to the River. The 141st Infantry Regiment, on February 1, 1944, was in defensive position along this ground, holding the land up to the River.

The Regimental Main Line of Resistance extended southeast, from Highway #6 at the northern tip of Mt. Trocchio, along the lower forward slopes of the mountain, then south across the western slopes of the La Pieta high ground to a point opposite San Angelo in Teodice, a small town along the western banks of the Rapido. The 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment of the 1st Armored Division, attached to the 141st Regimental Combat Team, held the northern sector, along the slopes facing northwest. Where the line curved to the south around the southwestern tip of Mt. Trocchio, the 1st Battalion of the 141st Regiment occupied the defense line, and the southern sector, along the line running south, west of La Pieta, to opposite San Angelo, was held by the 2nd Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment. The 3rd Battalion was in a reserve position to the rear of the 2nd Battalion, along the southern flank.

The Regimental Command Post was located in the vicinity of San Lucia, a small town along the southern reverse slopes of Mt. Trocchio. The Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies of the Regiment in position along the southern sector of the Regimental defensive situation, in the La Pieta hill defilade. The 36th Reconnaissance Troop, and Troop 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron, were attached to the Regimental Combat Team primarily for patrol and outposting functions. Their Command Posts and activities were confined to the southern sector of the defense zone. On the Regimental flanks were the 143rd Infantry Regiment to the south, and the 34th Infantry Division on the right, across Highway #6 to the north.

The 141st Regimental Combat Team was prepared, on February 1st, 1944, under the Regimental Field Order #19, issued at 1300 hours, January 31, to cross the Rapido River on Division Order. Attempts during the latter stages of the January Campaign to cross, in the vicinity of the large 'S' bend the Rapido forms about a mile west of the southern tip of Mt. Trocchio, had proven unsuccessful. The mechanical difficulties of crossing, made extremely hazardous by the swiftness of the current, plus the concentrated fire power the enemy was able to muster against the crossing sites had frustrated all attempts to establish and hold a bridgehead on the western bank.

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The present plan contemplated crossing further south, in the vicinity of San Angelo, in Teodice, with Companies 'I' and 'K' of the 3rd Battalion crossing as the assault echelon. The idea was to bracket the town by crossing Company 'K' about a half mile north, and Company 'I' a half mile south, thus enveloping the town from opposite directions simultaneously. Company 'L' had the mission of following up the initial assault as a mopping-up element.

The 2nd Battalion was to cross later, infiltrating through and occupying the higher ground to the west and north of San Angelo. Armored elements, including tanks from the 760th Tank Battalion, were prepared to cross as soon as a Bailey Bridge could be installed. Squads from the 36th Reconnaissance Troop and Troop "A" of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron had missions of protecting the crossing sites. The 1st Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment, and the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment were to demonstrate within their sectors, and compose the Regimental reserve. Mortar, artillery and chemical weapon fires from units of the 141st Regimental Combat Team were arranged and coordinated.

Battalion forward supply dumps were set up in defilade between La Pieta and the River. The final assembly area for the 2nd and 3rd Battalions was located within the same area, a little south of San Angelo, and the Regimental control point was established forward from the final assembly area, and about 200 yards east of the Rapido, opposite San Angelo.

Initial intelligence information, secured from prisoners of war and previous patrol activity, indicated the position of enemy strong points in the vicinity of San Angelo, the most likely crossing sites, and identification of some of the enemy units. This latter indicated that the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Companies of the 129th Panzer Grenadier Regiment were defending the vicinity of San Angelo.

Two patrols from the 3rd Battalion, and one from Troop 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron were sent across the River the night of January 31-February 1, with specific missions pointed at securing information for the proposed crossing. Predesignated crossing points, and the specific location of strong points to be investigated were given to the patrol. In addition, the patrol was to investigate and locate the hostile outpost line of resistance along the western bank of the River, natural and artificial barriers between the River and objectives, and the strength and disposition of enemy defensive installations.

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The patrol from Company 'L' succeeded in crossing south of San Angelo, and penetrating a short distance inland. Heavy fog prevented any effective reconnaissance, however, and the patrol, sighted by enemy outposts, returned to avoid an easy ambush in the fog. The other two patrols drew machine gun and mortar fire as they approached the river, and were unable to cross. They succeeded in locating enemy machine gun and mortar emplacements, on the western bank. During the night of January 31-February 1, carrying parties furnished by the 143rd Infantry Regiment brought foot bridges and engineering equipment to the final assembly area, to be in readiness for the crossing. Enemy planes twice circled over the Regimental forward line positions during the night, dropping parachute flares.

Major General Fred L. Walker, the Commanding General of the 36th Infantry Division, and the Divisional G-3 visited the Regimental Command Post at 0920 hours, February 1, to discuss the proposed operation. In a phone conversation later in the morning, the Commanding General informed Lt. Col. Price that the attack would not be initiated until every hope of success was apparent. The operation would be contingent on the success of the 34th Division, on the Regimental right flank, which was attempting to cross the Rapido further north and capture Cassino.

Mine clearance parties from Company 'A' of the 111th Engineers, attached to the 141st Regimental Combat Team, had been attempting, during the night of January 31-February 1 to clear paths from the final assembly area to the crossing sites at the river. A cleared lane had been opened to the southern point, but the party working the northern path had drawn fire from across the river, and didn't get through. At 0950 hours, February 1, the Engineers reported that lanes, twelve feet wide and marked with white tape, were open to both crossing sites, and that a second path to each site had been started. The road to the river, at the end of which the Bailey Bridge was to be installed, had not as yet been swept.

At 1500 hours, February 1, a meeting was held at the 3rd Battalion Command Post with Officers from the Regiment, Company 'A' of the 111th Engineer Battalion who were responsible for mine clearance, and Officers from the 2nd Battalion of the 19th Engineer Regiment who were spotting the collapsible rubber assault boats, foot bridges, and the Bailey Bridge to be installed during the crossing. The purpose of the meeting was to accomplish final and detailed coordination of all activities for the proposed attack.

Notification was received from the Divisional G-3, at 1610 hours, February 1, that the attack would not be initiated that night. All units concerned were notified, and reconnaissance patrols to cross the river with the same missions as on the previous night were ordered.

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Again on the night of February 1-2 only one patrol succeeded in gaining the western bank of the Rapido. This patrol, from 'L' Company, crossed south of San Angelo and penetrated 250-300 yards inland, where they contacted an enemy security patrol and were forced to return. The patrol reported that no defensive wire entanglements had been erected south of the town, and that the western banks along that sector were very steep and from 10-12 feet high. The close guard the enemy held along the western banks, and the River approaches from the east, prevented the patrol from Troop 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron from crossing north of the town. The Regimental outpost line of resistance was pushed up to the River line during the night and security patrols maintained from the Main Line of Resistance up to the River.

At 0900 hours, February 2, the Commanding Officers, S-3s, and supply Officers from the 143rd and 141st Infantry Regiments met at the 141st Regimental Command Post to correlate all details for the crossing. The decision was made to have a carrying party of 160 men from the 143rd Infantry Regiment carry the foot bridges to the crossing sites. Four bridges were to be provided for each site, 2 to be installed initially, and 2 held in reserve. It was also decided that the 1st Battalion of the 143rd Infantry Regiment would attack and seize the knoll south of San Angelo, in conjunction with the 141st Regiment's assault on the town itself.

Lt. Col. Arron W. Wyatt, (O-264395) of Ossining, New York, was reassigned to the 141st Infantry Regiment as Commanding Officer, the morning of February 2nd. Lt. Col. Price resumed his former duties as Executive Officer.

The engineers had been working throughout the night of February 1-2 and during the morning of February 2 in an attempt to complete the mine clearance required. By 1330 hours, February 2, they were near the River on the road leading to San Angelo. Twentyone teller mines, apparently newly lain with light brush scattered over them, were unearthed along the nose of the hill immediately across the River from San Angelo. They requested, and were furnished, a covering party of 8 men from the 3rd Battalion for security as they approached the River. Attempts to get through that afternoon drew too much enemy fire, and at 1700 hours the engineers reported that if attempts that night were again frustrated, it would be necessary to use a Scorpion the following day, which would require self-propelled artillery coverage.

G-3 notified the Regiment at 1600 hours, February 2, that the crossing would not be attempted that night. Patrols were again organized and given reconnaissance missions pointed at determining enemy strength and disposition. The 3rd Battalion patrol, from 'I' Company, was increased in strength to enable it to capture a listening post located along the western bank, south

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of San Angelo. The men succeeded in gaining the western bank along the southern outskirts of San Angelo. They then worked their way north along the River, but failed to discover any listening posts along that sector. Moving inland and south along the road south of town, the patrol noted several houses from which they heard enemy voices.

General Walker, the Divisional Commander, notified Lt. Col. Wyatt at 2400 hours, February 2, that the contemplated tactical disposition for the Regiment had been changed. Detailed information concerning the move was not available at the time, but in general, it envisaged tank penetration by tanks of the 1st Tank Group across the Rapido River and through the open ground to the west between the northern end of Mt. Trocchio and Cassino. The 141st Infantry Regiment would function as the infantry unit to exploit and consolidate the armored thrust.

The 1st Battalion was to move into an assembly area behind Mt. Trocchio that night, prepared to jump off on a two hour alert, the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment extending their defenses south to cover the 1st Battalion sector. The 2nd Battalion, of the 141st Infantry Regiment, remained in their present defensive position, and the 3rd Battalion was directed to pull in their crossing installations from the vicinity east of San Angelo, both Battalions to be ready to move on Regimental order. The 36th Reconnaissance Troop were directed to extend their outpost line north to cover the sector to the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment.

Following the notification, the 1st Battalion was pulled back from the line and assembled south of Mt. Trocchio in the hill defilade east of the La Pieta, closing in at 0615 hours, February 3rd. Their defensive sector was occupied by Company 'F' of the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment.

Lt. Col. Wyatt sent the assistant S-3 of the Regiment to the Command Post of the 1st Tank Group, across Highway #6 from the northern tip of Mt. Trocchio, when the Regiment was notified of the proposed move, to get as many details as possible. He reported back the following morning, February 3, with the information that the operation was not imminent, and would not be initiated until the 34th Division had been successful in capturing Cassino from the north. Control of Mt. Cassino, the spearhead of the mountainous salient jutting south into the low land, and the town of Cassino along the southeastern base of the mountain, permitted the enemy to complete a control of the low ground south to Mt. Trocchio and the whole Rapido River line to risk an attack west across the intervening open terrain.

Further attempts to ascertain specific details concerning the Regimental move were made during the day of February 3rd. At 1045 hours Lt. Col. Price visited the Command Post of the 1st Tank Group for that purpose, but nothing was

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definite at that time. Later in the morning the Regiment was informed that the Divisional Commander was going to hold a meeting with the Commanding Officer of the 1st Tank Group early that afternoon, at which time the employment of the 141st Infantry Regiment was going to be discussed. At 1845 hours the Division G-3 had more specific information. The 141st Infantry Regimental Combat Team, including a detachment from the 111th Engineer Battalion and the 131st Field Artillery Battalion, was definitely attached to the 1st Tank Group. All the Battalions were to be in assembly area, prepared to move on two hours notice, before dawn, February 4th. Orders were to come from the 1st Tank Group. At 1920 hours, Lt. Col. Wyatt and Captain Ross Young (O-348457) of San Antonio, Texas, the Regimental Plans and Operations Officer, left the Command Post for a conference to be held at 200 hours at the Command Post of the 1st Tank Group.

Further dislocation along the previous Regimental defense line paralleling the Rapido was caused by the detachment of the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment from the Regimental Combat Team the morning of February 3rd. The Battalion was detached as of 0845 hours, and cleared their previously occupied defense sector at 1310 hours. Troop 'A' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron was directed to extend its outpost area north to Highway # 6 to cover the gap. As of 0900 hours, February 3rd, Troop 'A' reverted to II Corps control, and was given the mission of outposting the entire Regimental area, in as much as the 141st Infantry Regiment, including the 36th Reconnaissance Troop, was scheduled to move.

During the early part of the afternoon, February 3rd, II Corps gave Troop 'C' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron the mission of outposting the Regimental front, from Highway # 6 south to opposite San Angelo, and Troop 'A' was to be employed further south along the 143rd Infantry Regimental Sector. To avoid a dangerous weakening of the defense line. Lt Col. Wyatt directed the 36th Reconnaissance Troop to remain in its outpost position until troop 'C' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron was actually in position.

In as much as the men from Troop 'C' could not be in position before dusk, February 3rd, Company 'I' was alerted to outpost the northern sector until that time, but the units from Troop 'A' which had relieved the 2nd Battalion of the 6th Armored Infantry Regiment when it moved out were held in position to retain the continuity of the defensive plan. At 1830 hours, G-3 notified the Regiment that the 36th Reconnaissance Troop would revert to Division control the following morning, February 4, at 0900 hours. They were directed to establish a strong point during the night along the northern part of the Regimental defensive sector, maintain patrol contact on the right flank with the 34th Division, and then assemble just prior to dawn behind Mt. Trocchio, prepared to move with the 141st Regimental Combat Team, but under Division control.

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Brigadier Parkinson and Major Cooke from the 6th New Zealand Infantry visited the Regimental Command Post at 1215 hours, February 3rd. Two enemy plane attacks occurred later that afternoon. At 1323 hours, 10 came in over the Command Post area from the west, but were driven off by heavy anti-aircraft fire, and headed north. At 1700 hours, 25 came in from the southwest and circled over the enemy lines dropping something believed to be supplies, and then headed back toward the northwest. A platoon of 'A' Company of the 111th Engineer Battalion were attached to the 141st Regimental Combat Team on February 3rd, and reported into the Command Post at 2000 hours.

Reconnaissance patrols from the 3rd Battalion were sent to cross the Rapido the night of February 3-4 in the vicinity of San Angelo. One patrol from Company 'K' worked its way across to the far bank south of San Angelo and inland 250-300 yards. Enemy voices were heard in houses along the southern part of the town. The bright moonlight hampered the patrols activities and it returned without proceeding further. No enemy strong points or vehicular movement were discovered in the sector south of town.

At 1500 hours, February 4, Lt. Col. Wyatt held a meeting at the Regimental Command Post with the Regimental S-2 and S-3, the Commanding Officers and S-3s of each of the Battalions, and the Commanding Officers of the Regimental unlettered units and units attached to the Regimental combat Team. Field Order #20 covering the proposed Regimental employment was discussed. The Order had been issued at 1000 hours, February 4.

The initiation of the operation was contingent upon the capture of Cassino and the establishment of a bridgehead across the Rapido River toward the west, south of Cassino. The 36th Infantry Division, divided into Task Forces 'A' and 'B', with tank support, was to cross through the bridgehead and attack across the open ground to the west and south. Task Force "B" consisted of the 141st Regimental Combat Team and the 1st Tank Group.

The initial objective of Task Force 'B' consisted of objective '1', '2' and '3' along Phase Line 'A', which extended in a semicircle starting about a half mile south of Cassino and swinging west and north with Cassino as the hinge. Secondary objectives consisted in fanning out to the west and south across the open ground to the Aquino River to the west, capturing the town of Aquino to the west, and Pignaturo to the southwest, and trapping and destroying the enemy in the whole Liri River Valley. The 141st Infantry Regiment was also to assist the 34th Division in capturing the town of Piedimonte, further northwest along the western slopes of the Mt. Cassino salient.

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The 3rd Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment was to revert initially to the 753rd Tank Battalion, as a securing force for the II Corps Engineers who were to install a Bailey Bridge for armored crossing of the Rapido River. The Battalion then attacked and seized objectives '1' and '2', and '3' along Phase Line 'A' in conjunction with the 753rd Tank Battalion, both Battalions reverting to Regimental control on arrival at Phase Line 'A', and the 3rd Battalion of the 141st Infantry going into Regimental reserve on the arrival of the 1st and 2nd Battalions at Phase Line 'A'.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions closed in behind this initial penetration, and continued the attack to the south and west beyond Phase Line 'A' on Task Force 'B' order. The 753rd and 760th Tank Battalions were to attack in conjunction with the Infantry Battalions. The Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies remained on the eastern side of the River, prepared to cross and be employed on Regimental order.

The Regiment, in the meantime, remained in assembly areas southeast of Mt. Trocchio and east of La Pieta. At 1530 hours, February 4th, Brigadier Kittberg, Lt. Col. Young and Major Randall of the New Zealand Division visited the Regimental Command Post to reconnoiter the area and arrange the relief of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron elements defending the prior Regimental defense line. At 2140 hours, the 1st Battalion was alerted to move on an hours notice in the event of an enemy attack along any point of the Regimental sector.

Two patrols were again dispatched from the 3rd Battalion, the night of February 4-5, to cross the Rapido in the vicinity of San Angelo. The sector south of the town again proved vulnerable to patrol infiltration and one patrol crossed in that area. The bank further north was too closely guarded with automatic weapons emplacements to allow the patrol any activity, or permit the other patrol to cross north of the town.

During the preceding several days, New Zealand Units had been moving into the area south and east of Mt. Trocchio and east of La Pieta, in the vicinity of the Regimental Command Post and the Battalion assembly areas. This area, open to enemy observation from the high ground to the west, already was occupied by artillery units in nearly every defilade. The resulting confusion and road congestion together with the apparent disregard of comoflague discipline typical of the British Units, drew a great deal of heavy incoming artillery into the area of the Regimental Command Post from February 4 to February 7. The over congested situation was likewise believed responsible for repeated enemy plane attacks. Twice during the afternoon of February 5, groups of enemy planes came over the area. One group dropped anti-personnel bombs along the northern part of Mt. Trocchio, and both groups apparently performed photographic missions.

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New Zealand Units relieved the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron elements along the previous Regimental Defense Sector the night of February 5-6. The New Zealand phones were hooked into the Regimental wire network, and arrangements made to have the New Zealanders make patrol contact with the 34th Division on their right flank and elements of the 2nd Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment which were still outposting the southern flank of the Regimental sector. The New Zealanders were in the area by dusk, and the relief completed during the night. Guides from Troop 'C' of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron led the New Zealanders into position. No patrols were sent out the night of February 5-6 because of the bright moonlight.

At 1100 hours, February 6, Lt. Col. Wyatt held a meeting at the Regimental Command Post with Captain Young, the Regimental S-3, and the Battalion Commanding Officers and S-3s, to discuss the status and mission of the Regimental Combat Team. At the time, the operation remained contingent upon the capture of Cassino and the establishment of the bridgehead by the 34th Division. A 36th Division Directive, issued later on the 6th, confirmed the previously made plans. Task Forces 'A' and 'B' came under the control of the Commanding General of the 36th Division, who was in command of Combat Command 'B' which included both Task Forces.

In order to remove the Battalions from the congested area and resultant incoming artillery barrages laid into the assembly areas along the reverse slopes of Mt. Trocchio and east of La Pieta, and to have the Units in a better position to execute the proposed operation, new assembly areas were reconnoitered during the day of February 6. The area chosen lay to the east of Highway #6, almost due east from the former positions, in the vicinity of Ch. Cicerelle, between San Vittore and Cervaro. Mine clearance was needed, and arranged for with Company 'A' of the 111th Engineers. The Battalions moved into this area immediately after dusk, February 6, in the following order, the 1st, 3rd and the 2nd last, and all were closed in by 2230 hours. The Regimental Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies were notified at 1750 hours to make a reconnaissance of that area the following morning, February 7, and move in.

The Chief of Staff of the 36th Division, Colonel Vincent, with the Divisional G-1, visited the Regimental Command Post at 1105 hours, February 6. At 1500 hours Lt. Col. Wyatt visited the Command Post of the 1st Tank Group to coordinate plans for the operation. The Regimental Command Post area was again subjected to periodic artillery shellings during the afternoon, and two enemy plane groups circled over the area, one group of 10 planes dropping bombs along Highway #6 east of Cassino.

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At 1300 hours, February 7, Lt. Col. Wyatt and Captain Young moved to the advance Regimental Command Post which was established at La Pasternelle, to the east of Highway # 6 as it curves around the northern tip of Mt. Trocchio. At 1500 hours, the Regimental S-2 and Communications Officer attended a meeting at the Command Post of Task Force 'B' concerning their functions in the operation. The Anti-Tank Company moved into the new area in the vicinity of Ch. Cicerele during the afternoon of February 7th. At 1950 hours, Captain Morgan, the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Battalion requested and was given permission by Lt. Col. Wyatt to take the Company Commanders from the 3rd Battalion on a patrol reconnaissance to the vicinity of the proposed crossing site along the Rapido. They returned at 2400 hours.

The site of the Regimental Advance Command Post, in La Pasternelle, was under fairly clear observation by the enemy. Cassino lay straight ahead along Highway # 6 across open ground, and observation positions atop Mt. Cassino afforded the enemy excellent vantage points over the low ground to the south including La Pasternelle. To minimize this risk, a back door jeep trail was prepared through defilade into the town. The 11th Engineers constructed the trail and cleared it of mines. At 1730 hours, the rear Command Post was closed out, and the new opened at 1830 hours, February 7, in La Pasternelle, 2 1/4 miles southwest of Cassino.

All attempts of the 34th Division to capture Cassino had been unsuccessful. They had succeeded in capturing the northern end of the valley formed by the eastern rim of the low ground and the Mt. Caira-Cassino mountainous salient, and had gained a foothold along the eastern ridges and hills of the salient. The enemy, however, was firmly entrenched along the southern and western heights, and held Mt. Cassino, the southern tip. The historically famous Abbey of Montecassino, home of the Benedictine Monks, straddled the very tip of Mt. Cassino, commanding the eastern and southern approaches to Cassino, and dominating the entire area.

The Germans, in flagrant violation of International Law, had occupied the Abbey, using it for observation and defense. Possession of this virtually inaccessible bastion by the enemy rendered any tactical movements through the low ground to the south extremely hazardous. It likewise greatly imperiled the success of an attempt to capture the town of Cassino situated at the base of the Mountain. This tactical situation was the primary obstacle to initiating the proposed employment of the Regiment and Task Forces 'A' and 'B' in a break thru to the west through the open ground south of Mt. Cassino.

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The only apparent means of circumventing this obstacle lay in capturing the Abbey itself or in rendering the position untenable for the enemy by demolishing the structure. The American forces had pursued the former course, hoping to avoid the necessity of destroying the ancient shrine, symbol of the sources of Christianity. Hence the tactical employment of the Regiment was again shifted to the north, this time into the foothold which had been established along the eastern and northern ridges of the Mt. Caira-Cassino mountainous structure.

At 2005 hours, February 6th, G-3 inquired how long it would take to get one of the Battalions on the road to move to the vicinity of Caira, which was situated about two miles north of Cassino along the eastern slopes of the mountainous salient. There had been three serious counterattacks by the enemy in the mountains north and west of Caira, and additional troops were to be moved in. Captain Young informed G-3 that it would take about two hours to put a Battalion on the road. At 2030 hours, Lt. Col. Wyatt was directed to have one Battalion on the road by 2230 hours, February 8. The Battalion was to be under Division control, and possibly attached to the 142nd Infantry Regiment. The 2nd Battalion was alerted to move, and to take their warmest clothing and two blankets per man.

The trail to Caira was a tortuous and hazardous journey. The only means of access to the town and the foothold which had been established in the mountains involved working north along the eastern rim of the low land, from San Vittore through Cervaro and San Michele to Portella, then doubling back toward the southwest into the valley between the eastern rim of the low land and the Mount Caira-Cassino mountainous salient. The route then ran south along the eastern edge of the low land, nearly as far south as Cassino itself, cut west across the valley floor, crossing the Rapido near the Italian Barracks at Villa, and finally north along the eastern base of the mountains to Caira.

The roads leading north through Cervaro, San Michele and Portella were little more than trails, winding and twisting tortuously along the mountain side. The continuous rains of February 8-11 loosened the soft surface of the roads and rendered them almost impassable, some sections with nearly a foot of soft mud on the surface. The entire route, from the time it left Cervaro, was under clear observation from the Abbey of Montecassino and many points, particularly the crossroads in the valley, were subjected to consistent and accurate artillery barrages by the enemy. Where the route ran across the valley floor to the west, it came virtually under the noses of the Germans occupying the Abbey of Montecassino and the surrounding heights.

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The 2nd Battalion, under Lt. Col. John G. L. Adams, covered the trail the night of February 8-9, closing into the area north of Caira at 0530 hours, February 9th. Only a minimum of 20 vehicles were taken along because of the hazardous road conditions. Guides from the 143rd Infantry Regiment met the Battalion in the vicinity of Caira, and guided the men into an assembly area north of town. At 2230 hours, February 8, Lt. Col Wyatt was notified that the previously planned operation was off and that the 2nd Battalion would have the mission of relieving the 1st Battalion of the 135th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Division during the night of February 9-10. The balance of the Regimental Combat Team would move to Caira the night of February 9-10, in Division reserve. Quarters parties were to be sent to the vicinity of Caira early the following morning, February 9th.

At 1200 hours, February 9th, Field Order #21 was issued, dealing with the move from the vicinity of Ch. Cicerelle to position in the mountains in the vicinity of Caira and Cassino. The 2nd Battalion, having moved into the vicinity of Caira the previous night, February 8-9, relieved the 3rd Battalion of the 135th Infantry Regiment, the night of February 9-10, in defensive positions of Hill # 706, along the southern end of the Mt. Castellone ridge. The 1st and 3rd Battalions closed into the vicinity of Hill # 213, along the eastern wall of the mountains between Cassino and Caira, the night of February 9-10, and occupied Hill #593 south and east of the Mt. Castellone ridge, in relief of the 135th and 168th Infantry Regiments of the 34th Division, the night of February 10-11. The Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies of the Regiment were directed to move back to the Regimental Service Train, in the vicinity of San Pietro. The 131st Field Artillery Battalion moved into the vicinity of Portella, prepared to support the 141st Regiment when it moved into position. Company 'C' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion was attached to the 141st Regimental Combat Team, and directed to move into the vicinity of Mt. Maiola, along the eastern wall of the mountainous salient, south of Caira, on February 10th.

The positions which the troops of the 141st Infantry Regiment were to occupy were located in the midst of the Mount Caira-Cassino mountainous structure. The lofty snow-capped peak of Mt. Caira towers well above the other mountains, from the north at the base of the salient. Mount Cassino forms the southern tip. The main feature of the intervening terrain is Mt. Castellone, with its rocky ridge line extending south. The southern part of this ridge is denoted Hill #706, and it was along the southeastern slopes of that hill that the 2nd Battalion was to move into position the night of February 9-10. Mt. Maiola lies southeast of Mt. Castellone, and just north of Mt. Cassino.

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The remaining features of the terrain atop the salient are less prominent, and consist of minor hills and draws, though the features themselves are all cut along rugged lines. Hill #593, onto which the 1st and 3rd Battalions were to move the night of February 10-11, is situated in the midst of the salient, and forms the southernmost hill which had been wrested from the enemy. The American positions atop the salient extended in the form of a semi-circle from the east. The sidewalls of the salient are extremely abrupt, making access to the positions along the top difficult and perilous.

The Regimental assistant S-3, the Company Commander of the Regimental Headquarters Company, and quartering parties from the 1st and 3rd Battalions moved to Cairra the morning of February 9th. Guides from the 135th Infantry Regiment were appointed to meet the 1st and 3rd Battalions when they reached the vicinity of Villa and Hill #213. The contact point was Road Junction #44, near the Italian Barracks at Villa, and the time set at 1800 hours, February 9th. The Regimental Command Post at La Pasternelle was closed out at 1810 hours, February 9th, and opened in the town of Cairra at 1930 hours.

The relief of the 3rd Battalion of the 135th Infantry Regiment by the 2nd Battalion of the 141st Infantry Regiment, on Hill #706, was accomplished the night of February 9-10. Forward elements of the Battalion had worked their way up the mountains, through the draw between Mt. Castelome and Mt. Mailoa, and reached the hill at 2010 hours, accompanied by guides from the relieved units. Ammunition was inventoried and transferred over, and an exchange of blankets arranged between the Battalions, to avoid the necessity of carrying the extra weight up and down the mountains. Mortars from the 3rd Battalion of the 135th Regiment remained in position until those of the 2nd Battalion of the 141st Regiment were zeroed in for defensive fires. The relief was completed by 2300 hours, without incident. The 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 141st Regiment closed in to their assembly area on Hill #213, south of Cairra, at 0205 hours, February 10th. At 2000 hours, February 9th, arrangements were made with the 135th Infantry Regiment to have guides at their rear Command Post, near Cairra, to guide Lt. Col. Wyatt to the forward positions at 0700 hours, the following morning.

At 1300 hours, February 10th, Field Order #22 was issued, covering the proposed employment of the 1st and 3rd Battalions. The initial movement consisted in the occupation of positions on Hill #593, the night of February 10-11, in relief of elements of the 135th and 168th Regiments of the 34th Division. Hill #593, the knoll immediately northwest from the Abbey on Mt. Cassino, forms the southern tip of a minor ridge running north and south, the northern part of which is called the "Snakes Head", because of its appearance on a contour map. The 1st Battalion was to move onto Hill #593, with the 3rd Battalion further north along the "Snakes Head".

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The attack, to be launched at 1100 hours, February 11, would be made in conjunction with the 4th Division. The 1st Battalion was to be the assault echelon, attacking south from Hill #593, to capture Hills # 569 and 374. These latter lay directly south of Hill # 593, Hill # 374 being due west of the Abbey of Montecassino. The 3rd Battalion was to follow close behind, consolidating and holding Hill # 569, and then pushing on to Hill # 374. Elements of the 135th and 168th Infantry Regiments were to assault the Abbey itself, from positions east of Hill # 593, and the 133rd Infantry Regiment had the mission of capturing the town of Cassino. The 131st and 132nd Field Artillery Battalions were in direct support of the attack of the 141st Regiment, and the 155th Field Artillery Battalion was in general support. The artillery barrage on the enemy positions would commence at 1030 hours, February 11, and lift on order from the Commanding Officer of the 141st Infantry Regiment.

At 1130 hours, February 10, Lt. Col. Wyatt and Captain Young attended a meeting at the Regimental Command Post in Cairo, attended by General Wilbur, the 36th Division Assistant Divisional Commander, General Butler of the 4th Division, the Division G-1, G-2, and G-3, and the Commanding Officers of the 142nd and 143rd Infantry Regiments. The attack for the morning of February 11 was the subject of the conference, and final arrangements and coordination were reached. It was decided to have the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 141st Regiment occupy Hill # 593 as a terrain feature in conjunction with elements of the 4th Division, rather than in relief of those elements as originally planned. The 2nd Battalion of the 141st Regiment was to be attached to the 143rd Infantry Regiment for operational purposes only. The French 8th Moroccan Regiment was to attack enemy positions on Mt. Cairo the night of February 10-11, and the 143rd Regiment was to relieve the 142nd Regiment in positions along the Mt. Castellone Ridge the same night.

Lt. Col. Wyatt held a conference with the 1st and 3rd Battalion Commanding Officers and S-3s at the Regimental Command Post at 1830 hours, February 10th, and gave them final coordination for the attack. The need for close coordination of efforts between the 1st and 3rd Battalions was stressed by Lt. Col. Wyatt. The Regimental Commander pointed out that the tactical situation offered the enemy excellent flanking fires against our troops as they moved out to the attack. Heavy machine gun fire would have to be employed, firing over the head and from the flanks of the attacking echelons. The critical supply problem was also discussed, and orders given that the men should carry all possible rations into positions with them.

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One of the most critical elements of the entire operations was the supply problem of getting adequate ammunition, rations and other necessary items to the positions atop the mountains. A forward Regimental supply dump was established near Portella, which was as far along the route to Cairn as it was feasible to use vehicular transport. From that point forward, down into the valley, across the valley floor, and up the mountains to position, supplies were moved by mule trains and, in the initial stages of the operation, a good proportion of the bulk had to be hand carried.

The first stages of the supply axis, - motor transport to Portella - was tied up the first several days by the nearly impassible road conditions caused by the continuous heavy rains. Many stretches along the road were at best one lane wide, and though the traffic had been routed one-way over the worst parts, when a single vehicle bogged down the entire column was held up. On many occasions during the nights of February 10-11 and February 11-12 vehicles slid off the road, or were bogged down in the deeper ruts and tied up the whole stream until clearance could be made. British Units likewise had to use this route, and their bulky and less powerful vehicles, particularly the ambulances, were frequently stopped. The trip from Cervaro through to Portella, or clear through to Cairn could be covered in less than an hour under normal conditions. During the first days of the operation in the mountains, it frequently required 4- 5 hours.

The more serious aspects of the situation concerned relaying the supplies from Portella on. The night of February 10-11, the night the 1st and 3rd Battalions were moving up the mountain into position, the Regiment was unable to get sufficient mules to handle the bulk of the supplies. Of the 150 mules promised, only 46 had arrived at the mule park near the forward Regimental dump, and about half of those had been already walked for 30 miles, and were unfit for duty that night. Every attempt was made to secure more, and some were dispatched from the 142nd Infantry Regiment park. Finally, at 0200 hours, February 11th, a train of 55 mules had been organized, loaded and started on the road.

Any account of the campaign into the mountains above Cairn must necessarily reflect the difficulties and hardships of this supply route. The trails had to be navigated at night, because nearly the entire route, and particularly the part leading across the valley floor, was under clear enemy observation and subjected to consistent and accurate enemy artillery fires. Dispersal of the mule trains was impossible because the single road was the only mine-cleared lane, and the mules couldn't be dispatched singly because of the necessity of guides and maintaining contact along the trails leading up to the mountains.

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The almost inconceivably difficult part of the task lay in scaling the mountain sides. The rains had loosened the thin covering of mud on the rocky trails making them extremely slippery, and along many stretches it was virtually impossible to gain foot holds. The side walls of the Mt. Caira-Cassino mountainous structure are very abrupt, and offer few draws to make the climb easier. In many instances, ropes had to be tied from man to man to pull and guide the succeeding men up, or lead the mules over the worst part. The main supply route led across Hill # 213 from Villa, and up the draw between Mt. Castellone and Mt. Maiola. An alternate route, used to supply the 2nd Battalion on Hill # 706, led up through the town of Caira and up the draw between Mt. Caira and Mt. Castellone, and then south along the eastern side of the Mt. Castellone Ridge.

The nights of February 10-11 and 11-12, the two critical nights of the operation, many of the supplies had to be hand-carried because of the difficulties of getting and organizing mule trains, and because some parts of the trail were nearly inaccessible to mule transport. Several trucks had ventured across the valley to the west, to the base of the mountains, and some supplies had been taken that far. The enemy, through observation and by knowing the only available routes open to our supply was able to pour accurate mortar and artillery concentrations onto the trail. As a result, a great deal of disorganization was inevitable, many men were wounded, and the trail was littered with dead mules. The darkness, and unfamiliarity with the trails the first two nights further complicated the task.

Men to handle these mules and supplies were recruited largely from the Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies personnel, and later, from a group of 200 replacements received by the Regiment the 12th of February. In the initial stages, one trip up the mountain with supplies required from dusk until dawn, and was so arduous that a man could only be counted on to make the trip on alternate days, though in many instances the same men were required to, and did, work ceaselessly at the task. The difficulty of the whole task was augmented by the fact that the type of fighting which occurred atop the mountain required for the most part the heavier grenade and mortar ammunition in large quantities.

A platoon of engineers from Company 'A' of the 111th Engineer Battalion checked into the Regimental Command Post in Caira at 2400 hours, February 10, for duty to work the trails. They were instructed to do what maintenance work they could on the trails, and to begin early the following morning, as soon as daylight permitted. The platoon reported in at 1140 hours, February 11, that they had accomplished what they could on the trail, and that it would possibly hold up for two-three days unless the mules chopped it up too badly. The platoon was directed to return and service the trail further forward, to

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forward, to the vicinity of the Regimental forward Command Post. The artillery barrages had continually interrupted the engineers' efforts.

The 1st Battalion, under Captain Newman, and the 3rd Battalion under Captain Morgan, moved from their assembly area on Hill # 213 and into position in the vicinity of Hill # 593 the night of February 10-11, closing in at 2300 hours February 10, and 0030 hours February 11 respectively. They relieved elements of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 136th Infantry Regiment and the 2nd Battalion of the 168th Infantry Regiment from the most forward positions only, the move not being a relief of those elements. The Regimental advance Command Post was moved from Cairra and established on the northeastern slope of the 'Snakes Head', a little more than a half mile northeast of Hill # 593, at 1700 hours, February 10.

Hill # 593 forms the southern tip of a small north-south ridge line in the midst of the Mount Cairra-Cassino mountainous structure, and is the key terrain feature in the defense from the south, or in an offense from the north directed to take Mount Cassino and the Abbey of MonteCassino. The terrain atop the southern part of the mountainous salient consists of minor hills and draws. A deeper draw extends to the east from south of Hill # 593, across the northern slopes of Mount Cassino.

The impression the Regiment had been given was to the effect that Hill # 593 was actually occupied by elements of the 34th Division, and that the 1st and 3rd Battalions would encounter no difficulty in occupying the Hill the night of February 10-11. Actually, the positions occupied were further north along the ridge, in the vicinity of the 'Snakes Head'. The enemy was firmly entrenched on Hill # 593 itself, and held secure emplacements behind a stone wall running across the top of the Hill which afforded them excellent defense positions.

The occupation of Hill # 593 the night of February 10-11 thus assumed the nature of an attack itself. Before the men reached the vicinity, they had already been required to work their way up the tortuous mountain trails, from Hill # 213 up through the draw to the west between Mt. Castellone and Mt. Maiola, and south along the top of the mountainous structure to the 'Snakes Head'. From that point on, the men encountered heavy opposition from the enemy positions on Hill # 593, and mortar and automatic weapon fires from the surrounding hills to the south and west. Close contact was made with the enemy, to within 20-30 yards in many instances, as the men from the 1st Battalion attempted to work their way south from the 'Snakes Head' along the sides and top of the ridge to Hill # 593. Both sides used large numbers of hand grenades.



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The attack, at 1100 hours, February 11, had to be launched from these precarious positions gained along the ridge south of the 'Snakes Head'. The units were well under strength, with between 45-50% reduction in combat strength previous to the present operation. Casualties suffered during the occupation of positions the night of February 10-11, and a further reduction in strength caused by the unusually large number of stragglers who had been unable to make the perilous ascent, further reduced the on position strength just prior to the attack to nearly a 60% reduction in combat efficiency.

The 1st Battalion, with Company 'C' as the assault echelon, began the attack at H-hour, 110 hours, February 11, coordinated with simultaneous attacks by the 142nd Infantry Regiment on the Regimental right flank to seize Hill # 468 which lay due west across a small draw from Hill # 593, and elements of the 135th and 168th Infantry Regiments of the 34th Division on the Regimental left flank which were attempting a frontal attack on the Abbey of Montecassino across the draw which ran east from Hill # 593. The objectives of the 141st Infantry Regiment consisted of Hill # 569, immediately south of Hill # 593, and Hill # 374, further south and due west from the Abbey. A fairly accurate concept of the relative height of these hills can be obtained from the hill numbers, in as much as the numbers are determined from the contour height of the hill.

The initial attempts of the 1st Battalion to advance south along the ridge to Hill # 593 and beyond to Hill # 569 encountered extremely heavy mortar and artillery concentrations laid into the area, and automatic fires from positions on Hills # 593, 468, and 517, and the Abbey to the south. The primary obstacle blocking the advance consisted of the flanking fire the enemy was able to bring against the shock troops, from their positions on Hill # 468 to the west, and the Regiment had no means available of countering or evading this fire. The units, in their reduced strength, were able to make only isolated and short gains against the firmly established defenses on Hill # 593. In many of the situations, these successes had to be gained by creeping and crawling along the barren and rocky surfaces of the ridge and dislodging the enemy from his positions with hand grenades.

At 1130 hours, Captain Newman, the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, reported to Lt. Col. Wyatt that the Command Post of Company 'C' had been hit, the Company Commander wounded, and all communications with the Company knocked out. At 1205 hours, the 142nd Infantry Regiment reported that their leading company was likewise held up in its attempt to take Hill # 468, Captain Newman reported short gains at 1243 hours, but that heavy casualties were being suffered.

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The fierce close-in struggle for positions on Hill #593 lasted throughout the afternoon of February 11. Hand Grenades, used offensively and defensively by both sides were frequently the only thing that could be employed because of the rocky nature of the terrain and the close contact maintained with the enemy. Over 1500 grenades were used by the 1st Battalion alone during the afternoon. At 1330 hours, Lt. Col. Wyatt reported to General Walker that stiff resistance was still being encountered on Hill # 593, and that Hill # 468, to the west, would probably have to be taken, instead of just placed under fire as the 142nd Infantry Regiment was doing, before the Regiment could succeed in dislodging the enemy from Hill # 593. At 1355 hours, the 142nd Infantry Regiment reported that one company was being slowly advanced south through the draw between Hills # 593 and 468 in an attempt to flank the defensive positions.

The enemy launched two counterattacks during the afternoon of February 11, one of severe intensity at 1200 hours from the positions on Hill # 593 and one at 1600 hours, of smaller proportions. While both these counterattacks were repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy, the total effect was to neutralize the attempt of the 1st Battalion elements to advance, and the positions remained substantially the same throughout the afternoon. The 3rd Battalion, though not in the original assault echelon remained in close support of the 1st Battalion, and likewise suffered heavy casualties from being in the midst of the artillery and mortar impact areas.

By 1645 hours, the strength on position had been reduced to 10 Officers and 66 Enlisted Men in the 1st Battalion, and 12 Officers and 94 Enlisted Men in the 3rd Battalion. Lt. Col. Wyatt at that time notified Captain Newman of the 1st Battalion to combine the elements of the 1st and 3rd Battalions into one unit, using Captain Morgan, the Commanding Officer of the 3rd Battalion as Executive Officer. The men were to be ordered to dig in and hold their present positions, and a strong combat patrol was to be kept south along the ridge toward Hill # 593, to keep in close touch with the enemy disposition. Defensive artillery and mortar fires were arranged. Supplies, with the exception of grenades and mortar ammunition, would probably be adequate because of the reduction in strength.

The large number of casualties suffered during the initial occupation and during the afternoon of the attack accentuated the difficult and hazardous problem of evacuation of the wounded from the mountains. Additional litter teams were recruited from the Anti-Tank and Cannon Company personnel, and, on the 12th of February, from a group of replacements assigned to the Regiment. To bring one wounded man down from the mountain positions, in a litter, frequently took a team from eight to nine hours. The Battalion Aid Stations had been set

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up at the head of the draw between Mt. Castellone and Mt. Maiola, and the Regimental Aid Station at the base of the mountains, near Villa, south of Cair. Stragglers also occasioned difficulties during the operation. Many had fallen out during the march into position the night of February 10-11. Because of the critical shortage in on position strength, frequent attempts had been made to organize these men from the vicinity of the town of Cair and the Aid Stations and return them to their units.

Information received from prisoners of war captured the afternoon of February 11th indicated that enemy units to the Regimental front along Hill #593 were from the 361 Panzer Grenadier Regiment. The prisoners stated that the hills further east were defended by parachute troops and, to the northwest, by mountain troops. Prisoners captured the following day, February 12, on Hill #468 confirmed that information, and identified the parachute troops as the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Companies of the 1st Parachute Regiment. The presence of units of the 36th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and 5 Companies of the 200th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was also indicated.

The Regimental Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Wyatt, and the Regimental S-3 and S-2 operated during the period of the attack and the subsequent days from the Regimental advance Command Post located along the northeastern base of the 'Snake's Head', atop the mountains. This position, although it offered the Commanding Officer and the Staff Operations and Intelligence Officers close contact with the attack, was within easy range of the enemy fires, and was frequently subjected to artillery and mortar concentrations.

The positions along the ridge north of Hill #593 were held during the night of February 11-12. At 1125 hours, February 12, Lt. Col. Wyatt reported to Lt. Col. Price, at the Regimental Command Post in Cair, that no forward movement was possible but that the men were holding the present positions in close contact with the enemy, with the limited strength available. At noon, February 12, the Regimental S-3 estimated that the Regiment was operating under a 75% reduction in combat efficiency. Lt. Col. Wyatt also reported that there had been several localized counterattacks during the night, from the vicinity of Hill #593, which had been repulsed, and that the enemy showed no inclination to offensive activities this morning. Two patrols had been kept forward of the Regimental positions the preceding night, along the ridge toward Hill #593, to keep in close touch with the enemy disposition. The entire area had been frequently subjected to heavy mortar and artillery fire.

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Lt. Col. Wyatt told Lt. Col. Price that there was urgent need of grenades and mortar ammunition, and woolen gloves and socks for the men on position. The continuous rains and cold winds atop the mountains seriously increased the difficult and hazardous conditions for the men on position. In as much as the 1st and 3rd Battalions had been united, the supply echelons of those Battalions were combined and handled as one unit. The 200 replacements which came to the Regiment on February 12th were used by the Regimental S-4 as mule skippers and as litter bearers for the Aid Stations.

At noon, February 12th, the Assistant Division Commander notified Lt. Col. Wyatt, that the 1st and 3rd Battalions had the mission of holding defensively in their present positions along the ridge between the 'Snakes Head' and Hill # 593.

The 2nd Battalion, which had remained operationally attached to the 143rd Infantry Regiment remained in their original defensive positions along the slopes of Hill # 706 throughout the period of the attack. At 1540 hours, February 12, Lt. Col. John C. L. Adams, the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, reported to Lt. Col. Wyatt that the strength of the enemy along that sector was unknown, and that a strong counterattack against their positions might be hard to stop. To strengthen the position, the 143rd Regiment was sending elements of their 1st Battalion into that sector.

At 1840 hours, February 12, Lt. Col. Wyatt notified Lt. Col. Price that there was a possibility that the 1st and 3rd Battalions would be moved back to the vicinity of Hill # 706, near the 2nd Battalions positions, that night. The mule train was held up pending the decision, but finally dispatched to the same position when no word was received. The promised relief did not arrive, and the men held their former positions. A minor counterattack was launched from Hill # 593 about 0400 hours, February 13, but the men experienced no difficulty in repulsing it. Throughout the night the engineers continued their maintenance work on the trails. The constant use by the mules and the surface destruction from the shellings required continuous work.

Lt. Col. Wyatt attended a meeting at the Divisional forward Command Post in the vicinity of Gaira shortly after noon, February 13th. He was notified that the 1st and 3rd Battalions would be relieved from their positions the night of February 13-14 by the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Sussex Brigade. The Battalions would then move north to Hill # 706, along the southern part of the Mt. Castellone ridge, to the same sector the 2nd Battalion had been occupying. That sector would then become the Regimental defense sector.

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- 22 -

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The Regimental Surgeon was directed to locate all the Battalion Aid Stations with the 2nd Battalion Aid Station, at the head of the draw between Mt. Castellone and Mt. Maicla, and the Regimental S-4 notified to group all the Battalion supply echelons to work to and from one dump. Guides were arranged to take the troops of the Royal Sussex Battalion into position, and from the 2nd Battalion to guide the 1st and 3rd Battalions to Hill # 706.

At 1045 hours, February 13th, the Regimental Command Post at Cairo received a direct hit from a 150 mm artillery shell. The shell ricocheted from the roof of the adjoining building and plowed into the sandbag protection across the door of the Command Post room, exploding on contact. Lt. Col. Wyatt was killed and Lt. Col. Price wounded. The entire enlisted personnel of the Regimental Plans and Operations section were wounded and had to be evacuated. Lt. Col. Price, before he was evacuated, notified Lt. Col. John O.L. Adams, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, that he was in command of the Regiment. Lt. Col. Adams notified Captain Ross Young, the Regimental S-3, that he would assume the additional duties of Executive Officer.

The 1st and 3rd Battalions were relieved from positions along the ridge north of Hill # 593 the night of February 13-14, by the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Sussex Brigade. The relief was effected by man to man replacement in the defensive positions, and was completed at 0120 hours. Guides from the 2nd Battalion led the 1st and 3rd Battalions north to the vicinity of Hill # 706, the men closing in at 0600 hours. This sector, along the southeastern slopes of the Mt. Castellone ridge then became the Regimental defensive sector. At 0600 hours, February 14th, the former Regimental advanced Command Post was closed out and moved to the head of the draw between Mt. Castellone and Mt. Maicla, near the Regimental defensive positions. The Regimental forward Command Post and the 3 Battalion Command Posts were then located in the same spot. The Regimental S-2 and S-3 returned to the Command Post at Cairo to continue operations.

A truce was requested by the enemy the morning of February 14, to enable them to remove their dead and wounded from the positions along the mountain tops. A cessation of hostilities and artillery fires was granted to extend from 1030 hours to noon, and later extended to 1330 hours. The truce was arranged through the 142nd Infantry Regiment, and the sector concerned was south of the Regimental positions on Hill # 706, and to the west from Hill # 593. Over 165 dead alone were removed from that sector by the enemy.

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At 1510 hours, February 14, G-3 requested the release of Company 'C' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion from the Regimental Combat Team. The liaison officer from the Company had reported, earlier in the afternoon, that the Company had eight of their 4.2 mortars set up in the draw between Mt. Castellone and Mt. Maiola. Lt. Col. Adams reported that the Regiment was short on organic mortars, and it was decided that Company 'C' should remain attached to the Regimental Combat Team.

Combat patrols worked south from the defensive positions the night of February 14-15, across the draw south of Mt. Castellone to the vicinity of Hill #517, along the southern part of Mt. San Angelo which lies south of Mt. Castellone along the western wall of the mountainous salient. Contact with the enemy was made as the patrol attempted to work to the top of the Hill, and the patrol was unable to proceed any further. Between the hours of 0400 and 0600, February 15, enemy artillery was unusually active, shelling many points intensively, from the front line positions well back. The town of Cairra and the vicinity of the Regimental Command Post was subjected to particularly heavy concentrations, over 700 rounds falling in that area. Heavier caliber, 150mm and 170mm artillery, was used primarily.

Lt. Col. Adams returned to the Regimental Command Post in Cairra at 0900 hours, February 15, and the Regimental advanced Command Post was closed out. Later in the morning, beginning at 1030 hours, American planes began a series of bombings of the Abbey of Montecassino. The Germans had installed gun emplacements and observation posts within the Abbey itself, and the only alternative facing the Fifth Army lay in demolishing the structure. Leaflets advising the religious and civilian occupants of the famous Abbey of the proposed destruction had been propelled into the Abbey by artillery on the previous day. Flight after flight of heavy and medium bombers, over a hundred planes in all, came in from the south, spilled their bomb loads onto the Abbey and enemy emplacements along the slopes of Mount Cassino, and circled off to the west. The ancient structure crumbled into a heap of ruins under the heavy assault. Over 150 enemy were seen wildly trying to get away from the Abbey as the first planes dropped their loads. Artillery and small arms fire took a heavy toll of these men as they exposed themselves across the open terrain.

At 1400 hours, February 15, the Regiment was notified to have a quartering party at the Division Command Post at Cervaro at 0800 hours the following morning, February 16th. The Regimental S-2 and 5 men from each Battalion moved out the morning of February 16th to reconnoiter a rest area for the Regiment in the vicinity of Pratella, back along the Volturno east of Highway #6. At 1500 hours, February 15, Lt. Col. Adams visited the Advance Division Command Post, in the vicinity of Cairra, to discuss the defensive situation with General Stack, the Assistant Division Commander. At 1830 hours the Regimental Command Post in Cairra was closed out and moved to a building about a half mile northwest of Cairra, along the slopes of Mt. Cairra.

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Arrangements were made the afternoon of February 16th to make patrol contact with the British Units to the left of the Regimental positions. The contact point was a house in the vicinity north of Hill #593 which had formerly been used for the 1st and 3rd Battalion Command Posts. A patrol was sent to that point at 1730 hours, and contact made with the British at 2038 hours, and maintained at three hour intervals throughout the night. The following morning the Commanding Officer of the British Units, the 7th Brigade, requested that the arrangements be cancelled because the British troops were Indians and he was afraid they might shoot at the American troops. The British were notified of the location of our listening posts.

The Commanding General and Regimental Commanders of the 88th Division visited the vicinity of the Regimental Command Post and line positions on February 16th. Security and contact patrols operated from the Battalions the night of February 16-17. Toward morning, the British made an attempt to take Hill #593. Intense activity in that area, with a great number of enemy flares, was reported periodically by the Regimental listening posts and defense positions. The British succeeded in working men onto the Hill, but failed to hold any gains, and were pushed back along the ridge toward the 'Snakes Head.'

At 1730 hours, February 17, the 2nd Battalion reported that a security patrol, working forward from the Battalion position, had destroyed an enemy mortar emplacement, and probably a machine gun, with hand grenades. The emplacement was located in the draw south of Mt. Castellone. The Regimental defensive positions had remained stationary from the time the 1st and 3rd Battalions had moved north to Hill #706. The defense line ran generally in the form of a circle, with the 2nd Battalion in a north-south line along the southern slopes of Hill #706 defending primarily toward the southwest and west, and the 1st and 3rd Battalions situated further down the slopes toward the southeast defending south and southwest.

The Regiment was alerted, the night of February 17-18, to be prepared against the possibility of a German counterattack. British Units were attempting wide scales attacks, with New Zealand troops attacking across the Rapido River toward Cassino, and Indian troops attacking south across Hill #593 to seize the Abbey and Mt. Cassino. The Regimental listening posts and defense positions reported intensive activity periodically throughout the night, in the vicinity of Hill #593. The offensive netted possession of Hill #593, but further penetrations toward the Abbey were repulsed, and the bridgehead across the Rapido, which the New Zealanders had extended into the outskirts of Cassino, was pushed back across the River the following day.

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At 1300 hours, February 18, Lt. Col. Adams opened an advanced Regimental Command Post at the head of the draw between Lt. Castellone and Lt. Paiola in the same position with the 3 Battalion Command Posts. General Stack, the Assistant Division Commander visited the Command Post at 1530 hours, and made a tour of the Battalion positions with the Regimental Commander. At 1615 hours, the rear Regimental Command Post was moved back into the town of Cairra. The position outside the town had been located within the French sector, and a higher echelon French Unit claimed the building for its own use. Security patrols again worked forward from the Battalion positions the night of February 18-19, and the Regiment remained on the alert to assist the British in holding Hill #593 in the event of an enemy attempt to recapture that position.

Lt. Col. Charles J. Denholm (O-21293) of Poughkeepsie, New York, was assigned to the Regiment as Executive Officer, February 19th. At 1430 hours, February 19, Lt. Col. Adams ordered a patrol consisting of one Officer and several Enlisted Men to be sent from Company 'I' to contact the British Units in the vicinity of the "Snakes Head". The patrol reported in at 1600 hours that there were no troops on the "Snakes Head", but that the British held their positions further south along the ridge and on Hill #593. At 1610 hours, February 19, the Regimental Liaison Officer to the British Brigade reported in to the Command Post, confirming their hold on Hill #593, and giving the details of a realignment of their forces pointed to renewed offensive activities.

Throughout the night of February 19-20, contact patrols were maintained to the flanks of the Regimental positions, with the British on the left, and the 142nd Infantry on the right. Security patrols were active to the front of the Battalions, and harassing mortar and artillery concentrations fired onto the enemy positions on Hills #468 and #517. Considerable machine gun and small arms fire was reported from the north, along the slopes of Mt. Cairra, throughout the night. The following morning G-3 reported that German patrols had attempted to break through the French lines in that sector, but had been stopped by the French.

During the night of February 20-21, reconnaissance patrols from the 2nd Battalion worked forward from the Company 'F' and Company 'G' positions, to investigate the enemy disposition. The patrols both returned in shortly after 0300 hours, February 21, and reported hearing digging-in activities south of the Battalion positions, in the vicinity of Hill #468. Both patrols went out again, one to work south through the draw between Hill #517 and the "Snakes Head" and attempt to capture prisoners and the other to specifically locate the digging activities. The prisoner patrol drew fire and failed to capture any of the enemy, but remained in the draw as a listening post, and located an enemy mortar position. The other patrol likewise specifically located the enemy digging what was believed to be mortar positions, south of Hill #517. These areas were immediately placed under mortar fire.

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The Germans counterattacked to the east, during the afternoon of February 21, from Hills # 517 and 468, and north through the draw between Hills # 468 and 593. The attempt was apparently aimed at recapturing Hill # 593 and establishing a breakthrough between the British and 141st Regimental defense positions. Heavy mortar and artillery concentrations preceded the attack. The Company 'F' observation Post observed three-four pieces of artillery firing from west of Hill # 468, about 200 yards south of the Battalion position. Mortars from Company 'H' and Company 'M' laid approximately 80 rounds into the area, and reported hearing enemy men screaming following the barrage. Shortly afterwards, about 50 enemy were observed working their way north in the draw between Hills # 593 and 468.

The enemy then fired red flares, following which smoke was laid onto positions on Hill # 593, and a short time later a green flare was fired, at which signal the enemy fires ceased temporarily. Heavy machine gun and mortar fires from the 141st Infantry Regiment and the British Units on Hill # 593 repulsed the attacks, and the enemy efforts ceased shortly after 1330 hours, although localized intermittent activity was noted throughout the afternoon.

A reconnaissance patrol from Company 'I', the night of February 21-22, reported an enemy machine gun emplacement along the northern slopes of Hill # 468, and due south of the 3rd Battalion position. The patrol was unable to reach the position because of the heavy brush. Lt. Col Adams, at 2355 hours directed that either the patrol should return with bazookas and rifle grenades, or that mortars should be fired into the area with the idea of keeping the enemy strong points terrorized. At 0035 hours, February 22, the Regimental Commander notified the 2nd Battalion S-3 to have a patrol work forward from both flanks of the Regimental position to within 200-300 yards of the enemy position, and to have them remain throughout the following day to observe and prevent any enemy mine laying or patrol activity. The men should remain concealed unless they could utilize their fire power profitably, and should take a radio along to relay their reports.

At 1140 hours, February 22, Lt. Col. Adams held a meeting with the Battalion and Company Commanders at the Regimental Command Post. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss means of improving the morale of the men, and changing their attitudes from defensive-mindedness to aggressiveness, to make them anxious to keep harrasing fires on the enemy positions with every means available.

On February 22, the Regimental S-3 requested the Division G-3 for engineering personnel to blast machine gun emplacements to the front of the Regimental defensive positions. TNT explosive charges and fuses to make a 'bee-hive' blaster would be required for the work.

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- 27 -

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The engineers, from Company 'A' of the 111th Engineer Battalion, failed to get through the evening of February 22, but reported in the afternoon of February 23 with the engineering equipment and were led up to the 3rd Battalion positions that night. The work of blasting the emplacements, 12 each for the 3rd and 2nd Battalion positions, was completed the following day. The 4.2 chemical mortars from Company 'C' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion furnished covering fires for the engineer personnel while the preliminary work was being completed.

At 2025 hours, February 23, G-3 notified the Regiment that Company 'C' of the 2nd Chemical Battalion would be detached from the Regimental Combat Team as of 0600 hours, February 26th. Security and contact patrols were again active the night of February 23-24, but no unusual activity was reported from the German positions. On February 24th, the Regiment was notified that its relief would be effected within the next several days, by troops from the 8th Moroccan Regiment, but no specific details were available at that time.

Patrols during the night of February 24-25 engaged in successful activity to the south of the Regimental positions. A security patrol from Company 'F' captured two prisoners who were believed to be from a wire tapping patrol attempting to work their way behind the Regimental lines. Later interrogation substantiated this fact, and identified the prisoners as being from the 2nd Company of the 4th Parachute Regiment. Another 2nd Battalion patrol of one Officer and 3 Enlisted Men worked their way through the draw south of the Regimental positions and onto Hill # 517. They surprised and killed a sentry guarding the ruins atop that Hill, and began searching the body. Before they were able to finish, three enemy rushed them from behind the ruins and in the ensuing close-in fire fight, the patrol disposed of all three without losing a man. The activity apparently alerted German positions throughout the area because several machine gun emplacements opened up on the patrol and a great number of illuminating flares were fired over the area. The patrol was able to silence two of the machine gun emplacements with rifle grenades and kill another enemy before they were forced to withdraw. The men lost contact on the return trip, but all returned in safety. Enemy emplacements located by the patrol were then placed under heavy mortar fire.

The daylight forward patrols previously ordered by the Regimental Commander had been working forward from the Regimental positions each day, leaving early in the morning and reporting in shortly after dusk. Contact patrols with units on the Regimental flanks, and security patrols working in the area to the front of the defense positions were active each night.

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- 28 -

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Relief for the Regiment was accomplished the night of February 26-27, by the 2nd Battalion of the 351st Infantry Regiment of the 88th Division. At 0800 hours, February 26, the command responsibility of the sector was turned over to the French, whose units had relieved the 142nd and 143rd Infantry Regiments.

The Regimental Commanding Officer, Colonel Champy, and reconnaissance parties from the 351st Infantry Regiment visited the Command Post and the defense positions during the afternoon, February 26th, and final details arranged for the relief. The relief was accomplished by units, and completed at 0800 hours, February 27, without incident. Company "E" of the 351st Infantry Regiment relieved the 1st Battalion of the 141st Regiment, Company "F" the 2nd Battalion, and Company "G" the 3rd Battalion. The Regimental Command Post at Oaira was closed out at 0900 hours, February 27 and opened at 1245 hours at Pratella.

The relieved units, after clearing the mountains, moved by foot across the valley to the Regimental supply dump at Portella, and from there by truck to the rest bivouac area at Pratella. All units were closed into the area at 1500 hours, February 27th. On February 28, Lt. Col. Adams held a meeting with Lt. Col. Denholm and the Commanding Officers of the battalions and the Regimental unlettered units to make arrangements for the rest period and entertainment for the men. The rest was badly needed, and well deserved, after the arduous campaigns of February.

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Casualties of the 141st Infantry Regiment for the month of February, 1944, were as follows:

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED MEN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
KILLED IN ACTION.....	2	24	26
DIED OF WOUNDS	3	9	12
WOUNDED IN ACTION	15	190	205
INJURED IN ACTION	0	12	12
MISSING IN ACTION	<u>18</u>	<u>567</u>	<u>585</u>
TOTALS.....	38	802	840

Enemy casualties and destroyed materiel for the month of February, 1944, are as follows:

	<u>KNOWN</u>	<u>ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL</u>
Prisoners of War.....	3	--
Killed.....	31	195
Wounded.....	--	235
Machine Guns.....	6	3
81mm Mortars.....	2	4
75mm Anti-Tank Gun.....	1	--

END

Report of Operations Written by:

Charles G. Schwartz
CHARLES G. SCHWARTZ O-2055789
2nd Lt., Regimental Hq.
141st Infantry Regiment

OFFICIAL:

Isadore M. Scott

ISADORE M. SCOTT
Captain, 141st Infantry
ADJUTANT

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HEADQUARTERS 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 146, U.S. ARMY

OPERATIONS IN ITALY

MAY, 1944

ANNEX # 6

111ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE

336- INF (146)-0.3

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DECLASSIFIED
DOD Dr. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1958
BY gms date 10-31-63

SECRET

16 June 1944

Subject: Transmittal of Regimental History and Conclusions from Operations
To : Commanding General, 36th Infantry Division, APO 36, U. S. Army

1. Forwarded herewith is the Report of Operations of the 141st Infantry Regiment, Rifle, for the month of May, 1944.
2. Three aspects of the operations engaged in during the month of May, 1944, require special comment.

a. The long period of static warfare during the past winter and spring created an attitude of defense which had to be overcome before offensive operations could be conducted with speed and efficiency. Although all ranks were anxious to be moving forward, the greatest difficulty was experienced in increasing the tempo of all phases of supply, movement and issuance of orders. Individuals and units were slow and deliberate when speed should have been the keyword. This attitude of defense accompanied with deliberate, detailed and complete orders gave way to an aggressive attitude accompanied by rapid changes, movements and orders, however, the change was difficult.

b. Communications personnel accustomed to complete wire systems found in defensive operations had failed to maintain a high state of efficiency in radio communications. The operation engaged in prohibited continuous wire communications due to long lines and rapid movement. As a result units were frequently out of communications, and control difficult.

c. Close support of front line Infantry units by anti-tank and tank destroyer units is an absolute essential. During past operations in this theatre the weapons of tank destroyer units were used principally as artillery and anti-tank companies were used for carrying parties. This past employment was the cause of great difficulty being experienced in getting these supporting weapons in forward positions from which they could engage enemy armor before it struck foot troops. Commanders of anti-mechanized weapons initially simply would not push their weapons far enough forward, either through a failure to understand the cross country ability of their transportation or through a misconception of close support. Small local counter-attacks accompanied by a few tanks or armored personnel carriers are frequently made during a general withdrawal to aid in breaking contact. These attacks must be met and stopped by anti-tank weapons which can hit the enemy armor before it reaches the front line Infantry.

4 Inclosures:

- Incl # 1 - Report of Operations
- Incl # 2 - Consolidated Casualty Report for March, April and May
- Incl # 3 - Unit Journal, 141st Regimental Combat Team, May, 1944
- Incl # 4 - Maps, Italy, 1:50,000, Sheets 158 III, 158 I, 150 II

John W. Harmony
JOHN W. HARMONY
Colonel, 141st Infantry
COMMANDING

HISTORY OF OPERATIONS OF
111ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, RIFLE
MAY, 1944

On the afternoon of 11 May 1944, Major General Fred L. Smith, Commanding General of the 56th Infantry Division, spoke to the various units of the 111st Infantry Regiment during a presentation ceremony at which the 1st Battalion was presented with the Silver Star for gallantry in action. The General recalled the divisions exploits in the 111st Infantry's operations during the summer of 1944. He mentioned the 111th Infantry's campaign for the capture of the German West Wall, its participation in the capture of the city of Metz, and the capture of the city of Colmar. He also mentioned the 111th Infantry's participation in the capture of the city of Saarbrücken and the capture of the city of Sigmaringen. The General stressed the 111th Infantry's role in the capture of the city of Metz and the capture of the city of Colmar. He also mentioned the 111th Infantry's participation in the capture of the city of Saarbrücken and the capture of the city of Sigmaringen. The General stressed the 111th Infantry's role in the capture of the city of Metz and the capture of the city of Colmar.

The 111th Infantry Regiment had been ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz.

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On 14 May 1944, the 111st Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the city of Metz. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the company A of the 111th Infantry Regiment. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the company A of the 111th Infantry Regiment. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the company A of the 111th Infantry Regiment. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the company A of the 111th Infantry Regiment. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the company A of the 111th Infantry Regiment. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the company A of the 111th Infantry Regiment. The 111th Infantry Regiment was ordered to move from its current position to a new position in the vicinity of the company A of the 111th Infantry Regiment.

At 1130 hours, 24 May 1944, Col. Harmony (Sidney, Ohio) held a meeting with the Reg-

imental Staff, the Regimental Headquarters Commandant and Communications Officer and the Regimental Surgeon. Lt. Col. James G. Balluff, assigned to the Regiment recently as Executive Officer, would accompany the 1st Battalion during the coming operation, looking forward to his assignment to the 1st Battalion as Commanding Officer with the present Battalion Commandant, Lt. Col. Austin P. Bilmartin being transferred to Regimental Headquarters as Executive Officer. Major Ross (0588157), of San Antonio, Texas, the Regimental S-3, Plans and Operations Officer, would serve as Executive Officer until that time.

During the period 22 - 25 May 1944, the 11st Regimental Combat Team remained in the vicinity of about 3 miles northeast of Anzio, alerted and ready to move at order. In the afternoon of 24 May 1944, arrangements were completed for the further movement, with administrative details for the group remaining behind the forward zone. Each rifle company would move out with 100 men, leaving personnel to be left behind. At 1930 hours 24 May 1944, the Regimental Headquarters called the Division Command Post and was advised that the 11st Division along the entire front was progressing well and over 1000 prisoners had already been captured, but no orders for the 11st Infantry had yet been received.

The order for forward movement to the vicinity of Oysteria was received early in the afternoon of 25 May 1944. At 1545 hours, Major Ross notified the 1st Battalion and Regimental Units of the details for the new unit being sent forward. The Regimental S-1 was sent forward to coordinate the movement and an assignment prepared for movement by 1800 hours. The 11st Infantry moved at 1800 hours, 25 May 1944. Colonel Harmony left to visit the 11st Division Command Post and move forward to the new area. The Regimental Headquarters remained at the 11st Regimental Headquarters and Attached Units. The 11st Infantry Command Post at 1800 hours, 25 May 1944, and was in the vicinity of the movement.

The Regimental Command Post was established at 05433, about a mile north of Oysteria. The Regimental Combat Team Units had closed out of their area by 2100 hours, 25 May 1944, moved by truck to the detaching points at the 11st and 12th Regiments. Due to the Regimental Assembly Area about a mile northwest of the Regimental Command Post, after the troops had been unloaded, the 11th Infantry companies, the 55th AAA (Provisional) Trucking Company and the 11th Tank Company were released from Regimental control. The units moved into their areas between 2400 hours 25 May 1944 and 0230 hours 26 May 1944.

Shortly after the Regimental Command Post had been established, orders were received for the initial commitment of the 11st Infantry. The Regimental Liaison Officer to the Division Command Post reported to Colonel Harmony at 0330 hours 26 May 1944, with the order and details for the employment of the Regimental Combat Team. A defensive position approximately 2-3 miles north of Oysteria and running generally north and south between the Castello and Oysteria River beds was to be occupied as soon as possible. The 2nd and 3rd Battalion Commanding Officers and S-3s and the Commanding Officers of the Regimental Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies were called to the Regimental Command Post immediately for plans and orders for the commitment. Liaison Officers and Forward Observers from the 131st Field Artillery Battalion reported into the Regimental

Command Post at 0340 hours 26 May 1944 and were assigned to operate with the Battalions. As of 0545 hours Company B of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion was to be immediately attached to the Regimental Command Post.

Colonel Harmony directed Lt. Col. Johnson, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion to move his Battalion to the northern sector of this defensive position as soon as possible. Two platoons of the Regimental Anti-Tank Company were placed in support of the 2nd Battalion and ordered into position along the northern and western flanks, and one platoon of the Cannon Company placed in support within the central sector of the defensive zone, south of the 2nd Battalion sector. The 2nd Battalion moved out from the assembly area at 0630 hours, 26 May 1944, and had moved into position by 0900 hours. The 3rd Battalion, under Lt. Col. Edwin W. Richardson, was directed by the Regimental Commander to occupy the southern sector of the defensive line, and moved into position shortly before noon. Company B, 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion closed into position, prepared for defense against mechanized attack, along the southern part of the Regimental sector. The 1st Battalion remained in its original position in the Regimental assembly area, in Regimental reserve.

The position now held by the 11th Regimental Combat Team was primarily a defensive line to block any thrust the enemy might have made in that sector. The disposition of the Regimental Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies and the 8th Washed Company of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion was prepared with an overall anti-mechanized defense in mind along the whole Regimental line. Following the recent capture of Cisterna and the wide spread advances along the eastern rim of the beachhead, the possibility of an enemy counter attack loomed large. Between 1000 and 1100 hours 26 May 1944, Brigadier General Stank, Assistant Division Commander of the 36th Infantry Division, and Colonel Vincent, Chief of Staff of the 16th Infantry Division visited the Regimental Command Post to discuss the situation with Colonel Harmony. At 1230 hours the 2nd Battalion reported that they had established contact with the 3rd Battalion, 113th Infantry Regiment along the left flank of the Regimental sector and the 36th Reconnaissance Troop who were patrolling the area between the 36th Division and the 3rd Division along the right flank.

During the afternoon of 26 May 1944, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 11th Infantry, sent reconnaissance patrols out to the front of their positions. The areas were completely covered, but no enemy forces encountered. At 1650 hours the Regimental S-1 moved forward to make a reconnaissance for the forward displacement of the Regimental Command Post. Colonel Harmony, during the afternoon, visited the 36th Division Command Post, and then the 1st Battalion. Regimental Observation Posts were established about a mile north of the 2nd Battalion positions, in the sector of the 30th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division, along the right flank of the Regimental position. At 1945 hours, 26 May 1944, the Regimental Command Post was displaced forward and opened at the coordinates 013345, about 1 1/2 miles northwest of Cisterna. At 2135 hours Colonel Harmony left the Regimental Command Post to visit the Regimental Observation Post and witness an attack to be made by the 143rd Infantry Regiment along the left of the Regimental sector. He returned to the Command Post at 2400 hours. Between 2100 hours 26 May 1944 and 0030 hours 27 May 1944, enemy aircraft in undisclosed numbers were active over the Regimental areas, dropping bombs and flares but causing no damage.

The 1st Battalion, 111st Infantry, was directed by the Regimental Commander to move from its assembly area into position north and east of the 2nd Battalion positions. The men had closed into position by 1230 hours. Company C effected the relief of 1 platoon of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop earlier in the morning about 1030 hours, 27 May 1944. A liaison officer from the 36th Reconnaissance Troop had reported to the Regimental Command Post at 0630 hours, contacted the 1st Battalion S-3 and the Commanding Officer of Company G and conducted them to the Command Post of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop to make final details for the relief. The 1st Battalion S-3 reported to Major Young, acting Executive Officer, at 1130 hours that the relief had been completed and that the 1st Battalion was moving into position. The sector now occupied by Company G was located along the northern flank of the Regimental sector, in the zone between the 36th Infantry Division and the 3rd Infantry Division on the right flank.

At 1100 hours, 27 May 1944, Colonel Harmony received orders from Major General Fred L. Walker for the advance of the 111st Infantry. The Battalion Commanding Officers, Regimental Staff and Commanding Officers of the Regimental Unlettered Units and Attachments were called to the Regimental Command Post immediately and orientation and verbal orders for the attack issued at that time. The 3rd and 2nd Infantry Divisions, along the left and right flanks of the 36th Infantry Division respectively, were continuing their advance toward the northwest, and the 111st Infantry on the left flank of the 36th Infantry would push northwest toward the town of Velletri with the 111st Infantry. Attached to the Regimental Combat Team for the operation were Company A (Mod. Tks) of the 751st Tank Battalion, Companies B and C of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company A of the 111th Medical Battalion. The 111st Field Artillery Battalion, a Combat Team attachment, would be in direct support.

The advance was to run generally in a northern direction, the Regimental objective consisting of cutting the railroad line and road which ran east from Velletri, and the sector of the advance lay between the Saunella and Crapilla River beds. Initial intelligence information obtained from aerial photography, interpretation and interrogation of prisoners of war indicated that there were no strong forces within this sector, but that defensive strongpoints had been established in the sector by the enemy in his general withdrawal. The Regiment would advance with two Battalions abreast, the 2nd Battalion on the left and the 1st Battalion on the right. Companies B and C of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion would advance by echeloning forward by bounds behind advancing foot troops, one Company with each Battalion. Elements of the Regimental Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies would move forward with each Battalion, with Company "A" (Mod. Tks) of the 751st Tank Battalion moving forward with the left elements of the advance and maintaining contact with the 111st Infantry along the left flank. Colonel Harmony directed the Battalions that no large engagements should be made, and that no attacks against a well established defensive force should be made until so ordered by the Regimental Commander. The primary means of advance would be sending aggressive patrols to the front to cover a sector and then bringing the main elements up to that line and again extending forward with the patrols. The 3rd Battalion would be in reserve, moving north along the limiting line between the two Battalions on the line, prepared to defend the flanks against counterattack. The terrain over which the advance was to move consisted primarily of rolling grain fields, intercrossed with well wooded draws and gullies.

with the capture of the city of Velletri as the objective. The advance was to begin at 1430 hours, 28 May 1944, with the 2nd Battalion on the left and the 3rd Battalion further northeast along the right flank. The 1st Battalion, from its positions east of Velletri would be in Regimental reserve. The 2nd Battalion was directed initially to swing their right flank around toward the north, in order to present a unified line with the 3rd Battalion for the attack. Each of the attacking Battalions would have one platoon of Cannon Company and one platoon of the Anti-Tank Company operating in its sector.

The objective of the attack was to capture Velletri in conjunction with the 143rd Infantry along the left flank which would attack the town from the south. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 141st Infantry, would attack from their positions between two to three miles southeast of the city. The 1st Battalion was given the mission of protecting the right flank of the 3rd Battalion as it advanced on the city. One Company of the attached 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion was to move with the 2nd Battalion and the remainder of the Battalion with the 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry. A fifteen minute artillery barrage commencing at 1415 hours, 28 May 1944, would precede the attack, and thereafter the 131st Field Artillery Battalion would use direct support fires on targets of opportunity.

About 1200 hours, 28 May 1944, and prior to the time the attack was to move out, the enemy forces in the vicinity of Velletri launched a counter-attack toward the southeast, striking directly within the 2nd Battalion, 141st Infantry, sector. Heavy concentrations of artillery were fired into the area preceding the counter-attack, and following closely under the barrage, about two companies of infantry, 4 tanks and several armored personnel carriers struck at the 2nd Battalion. The nature of the well wooded heavily rolling terrain enabled the enemy forces to mask his attack until he had advanced close to the positions of the Regimental Units. Because of the terrain, plus the fact that the supporting Anti-Tank weapons had not moved sufficiently forward to enable the 2nd Battalion to utilize their fires to neutralize the mechanized units employed in the counter-attack, the enemy assault had to be repulsed almost entirely by the infantry units. This was accomplished without serious difficulty, but Companies E and G along the left flank of the Battalion were forced to withdraw several hundred yards to a stronger defensive line. Company F along the right flank of the 2nd Battalion positions bore the brunt of the armored thrust, the enemy tanks being able to make a quick dart through a covered road running southeast through the sector occupied by Company F and get in behind several isolated units of F Company. The attack was repulsed, however it caused a considerable amount of confusion and reorganization was not completed until just prior to darkness.

Colonel Harmony notified the Regimental Combat Team Units at 1420 hours, 28 May 1944, that the attack would be postponed until the 2nd Battalion could complete its reorganization in preparation for advancing, and that the attack would then move out on Regimental order. Earlier in the afternoon, General Hess, the Commanding General of the 36th Division artillery visited the Regimental Command Post to discuss artillery support with the Regimental Commander.

The advance moved out at 1530 hours 27 May 1944, and continued throughout the afternoon and evening. Little resistance was encountered in any part of the sector of advance, and the troops moved forward without interruptions. Patrols were kept to the front of the advancing lines, and the main elements then brought forward. Intermittent reports received at the Regimental Command Post indicated that beyond one artillery barrage, no resistance had been met. During the night of 27-28 May, a line roughly paralleling and less than a mile from the railroad running east from Velletri was held and outposted, with the advance to continue at dawn.

At 1557 hours, 27 May 1944, the Regimental Command Post was closed out and opened in a draw at the coordinates 022380, about 7 1/2 miles southeast of the city of Velletri. At 1600 hours, the Regimental S-3, notified the 2nd Battalion S-3 that the 3rd Battalion should maintain contact with the 36th Reconnaissance Troop which was patrolling the sector on the Regimental right flank, between the 11st Infantry and the 3rd Infantry Division, and that the 3rd Battalion should advance along the right flank of the Regimental sector, behind the 1st Battalion. At 1836 hours, S-3 notified Colonel Harmony that there were as yet no further orders for the 11st Infantry after it had reached the railroad line and road running east from Velletri, and also notified the Regimental Commander that the Commanding General wanted the tanks attached to the Regimental Combat Team to advance along the left flank with the 2nd Battalion. At 1900 hours, General Stack visited the Regimental Command Post to discuss the advance with the Regimental Commander. The Regimental Command Post again displaced forward, at 2100 hours 27 May 1944, opening at the coordinates 022817, about 3 miles northeast of Velletri.

Company A, 66th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the 11st Regimental Combat Team at 1050 hours 27 May 1944. Company E, 66th Tank Destroyer Battalion moved out at 0520 hours, 28 May 1944, and moved forward with the advance of the 1st and 2nd Battalions during the morning. A company of the 3rd Battalion had been attached to the Tank Destroyer Company to serve as security during the night 27-28 May, while the 15 self-propelled Tank Destroyers were positioned for a forward defense against mechanized counter-attack.

During the morning of 28 May 1944, the advance toward the Regimental objectives was continued. Small pockets of resistance were encountered by the 2nd Battalion, but these were eliminated without serious difficulty, and the push continued. The 2nd Battalion, during the morning, captured 18 prisoners from the 3rd Battalion, 6th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division. At 0905 hours, 28 May 1944, The Commanding General notified Major Young that the 2nd Battalion should move to the right of Velletri as it advanced, and move directly into the city. The 1st Battalion, 11st Infantry, had encountered little resistance during the morning, and pushed further north than the 2nd Battalion so that by noon, the Regimental line ran approximately south-west - northeast about 2 1/2 miles from Velletri at the southeast corner of the city.

At 1145 hours, 28 May 1944, the Regimental Commanding Officer issued orders to the Battalion Commanders, Regimental Staff and Commanding Officers of the Unlettered and Attached Regimental Units for pushing the attack forward.

At 1500 hours, the Commanding General of the 36th Infantry Division directed the Regimental Commander to call the attack on Velletri off. The Regimental units should hold the gains they had made, and slowly push forward by making isolated gains and then consolidating the localized advance. Colonel Harmony then issued these orders to each of the Battalions, directing them to keep patrols out in front of the main elements, and move up where the ground was clear.

Following the cancellation of the attack, Company B was assigned to the 2nd Battalion to reinforce its position. Company A of the 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Regimental Combat Team as of 1310 hours, 28 May 1944, and Company A of the 83rd Chemical Battalion as of 1500 hours. To further strengthen the 2nd Battalion position, the attached Tank Destroyer units from the 636th and 805th Tank Destroyer Battalions, and the Regimental Anti-Tank units were directed to move further forward in order to gain greater effectiveness against mechanized counter-attacks by the enemy. At 2015 hours, 28 May 1944, the Regimental Command Post displaced forward and was opened at the coordinates 031422, about 3 miles southeast of Velletri.

Another counter-attack was launched during the night of 28-29 May 1944 by the enemy forces defending Velletri. The main enemy effort was directed against the 143rd Infantry, on the 141st Infantry left flank, but again the 2nd Battalion, 141st Infantry received some attacks, a force about the size of a platoon assaulting the area occupied by Company G. The force was repulsed with great difficulty. Throughout the night security and reconnaissance patrols were active in the front of the Battalion positions. Reports from these patrols indicated that the enemy held positions along a line 300-600 yards to the front of the 2nd Battalion positions. A patrol, dispatched from the 2nd Battalion by direction of the Division G-3, reported in 0230 hours that six tanks they had been sent to investigate along the left flank of the Regimental sector were friendly tanks dug in for protection. At 0130 hours, 29 May 1944, G-3 notified the Regimental S-3 that the Commanding General wanted to be sure that the 4.2 chemical mortars of the Attached 83rd Chemical Battalion were prepared to execute such missions on call. The readiness of the 83rd Chemical Battalion for such a mission was verified.

The advance toward Velletri was resumed the morning of 29 May 1944. Each Battalion had been directed to avoid any major engagement, and to advance as previous directives indicated, by pushing patrols out to cover an area and then bringing the main elements forward. Small pockets of resistance should be eliminated. Throughout the morning, the advance was continued. The 3rd Battalion encountered light resistance from isolated strong points, but experienced no difficulty in forcing the enemy to abandon them. Initial intelligence information on the enemy defensive installations obtained from photo interpretation, observation and interrogation of prisoners of war, indicated that defensive strong points were held to the front of the 2nd and 3rd Battalion positions, and that large mine fields had been placed in front of the 1st Battalion sector.

By noon, 29 May 1944, the Regimental line was about 2 miles from the town along the southern flank, with the 2nd Battalion on the left and the 3rd Battalion further northeast. The 1st Battalion further north and almost due east

Of VELLETRI, was about 5 miles from the town, and were unable to advance very

far throughout the afternoon because of the resistance and mine fields encountered. Some ground was gained, however, once the mine fields had been flanked, and by 1400 hours, 29 May 1944, the 1st Battalion reported to the Regimental Commander that Company C had cut the main road running northeast from Velletri and established a road block about 2 1/2 miles from the town. Artillery barrages held the 2nd Battalion up for a short period during the early part of the afternoon, but the advance continued when the artillery lifted. The 3rd Battalion encountered the only heavy resistance for enemy ground forces defending strong points in the 3rd Battalion sector. At 1530 hours, 29 May 1944, the Assistant Division Commander visited the Regimental Command Post, and discussed the holdup of the 3rd Battalion with Colonel Harmony and Major Youn, and it was decided that K and L Companies should attack the strong points blocking the 3rd Battalion advance. The Assistant Division Commander then visited the Command Post of the 3rd Battalion. At 1800 hours, Colonel Harmony reported from the 3rd Battalion Command Post that the advance had been resumed, and had succeeded in pushing across the railroad line which runs east from the town of Velletri, less than two miles from the city. An enemy thrust by four tanks against the 1st Battalion positions was broken up by artillery fire at 1900 hours, 29 May 1944.

The Commanding General of the 36th Infantry Division directed Colonel Harmony, at 2330 hours 29 May 1944, that the present Regimental lines should be held and outposted throughout the night and following morning, and that the Regimental Commander was to report to the Division Command Post the next morning, the morning of 30 May 1944, at 0900 hours, for a conference concerning plans for the 141st Infantry. Several prisoners were brought to the Regimental Command Post the night of 29-30 May 1944, making a total of over 30 prisoners of war captured in the last several days. Under interrogation, the prisoners, almost without exception, talked freely and willingly, giving all the information they had at their disposal. Among the prisoners brought in had been several Russians who had been captured by the enemy in Russia and forced to work for the enemy in Italy.

At 1135 hours, 30 May 1944, Colonel Harmony held a conference with the Battalion Commanders, Regimental Staff, and the Commanding Officers of the 36th Engineer (C) Battalion and the Regimental and attached units, to discuss the points General Walker had mentioned that morning. The 36th Engineer (C) Battalion had been ordered to relieve the 141st Infantry along the lines then held south and east of Velletri, the relief to be completed by 1800 hours 30 May 1944. Two possibilities were open for the subsequent commitment of the 141st Infantry. One was that the 141st Infantry would be motorized to exploit a breakthrough to the northwest the 1st Armored Division was attempting. The other was that the 141st Infantry would move to an assembly area northeast of Velletri to await further assignment. On completion of the relief, Companies E and G of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion would revert to control of the 36th Engineer (C) Battalion in defensive support.

The Commanding General had discussed several points during his conference. One subject which had caused some difficulty was the control of attached Tank Destroyer and Tank units. General Walker stated that these units were definitely under the command of the Regimental Commander. These supporting weapons

with forward elements of the 1st Infantry, in discussing the counter-attacks encountered by the 1st Infantry, the General stated that enemy counter-attacks were usually made with 3-6 tanks, sometimes with and sometimes without infantry. The infantry units, with their bazookas, anti-tank guns and other support should have no difficulty in repulsing such an attack.

During the afternoon of 30 May 1944, the enemy counter-attacked against the right flank of the Regimental sector, in the area occupied by Company G, with a small force of tanks and infantry. As the attack progressed, the Commanding Officer of Company G called for a shifting of mortar fires and artillery support and these, together with bazookas and anti-tank guns experienced no difficulty in repulsing the attack. Company G at the time was out of communication with the 1st Battalion by wire, and the radio communications for shifting of defensive fires were picked up at the Regimental Command Post and relayed from that point. The attack lasted about 20 minutes. In order to strengthen the defensive position of the Regiment while the relief by the 36th Engineer (C) Battalion was being completed, Colonel Hernoy directed Lt. Col. Gilmarin, Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, to move B Company further south along the left flank of the 1st Battalion sector to organize a position and establish a road block along the road running northeast from Velletri, about 1 1/2 miles from town.

The relief of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 1st Infantry, from their positions southeast of Velletri was accomplished the night of 30-31 May 1944, by the 36th Engineer (C) Battalion. The 3rd Battalion relief, accomplished by Company B of the 36th Engineers was completed by 1800 hours, 30 May 1944, and the 3rd Battalion then moved by foot north to a position along the road running northeast from Velletri, organizing a position and establishing a road block at that point. The position was organized at 0416 hours, 31 May 1944. The 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, was relieved by Company A, 36th Engineer (C) Battalion, the relief being completed by 1930 hours. The 2nd Battalion then moved to the Regimental reserve area at coordinates 017465, about 2 1/2 miles northeast of Velletri, closing into the position at 0600 hours, 31 May 1944. The 1st Battalion remained in its position east of the town. Upon completion of the relief, Companies B and C of the 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company A of the 696th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company A of the 83rd Chemical Battalion were released from attachment to the 1st Regimental Combat Team. During the night of 30-31 May 1944, the Regimental Command Post was displaced about 7 miles north, and opened about 3 miles northeast of Velletri at 0600 hours, 31 May 1944, at the coordinates 031452.

All three of the Battalions were now northeast of Velletri, the 1st Battalion in the position it had previously occupied, the 2nd Battalion in the Regimental reserve area, and the 3rd Battalion blocking the main road running northeast from Velletri to Willemoneta on Highway # 6. The present plan now for the capture of Velletri was to first take the high ground along the ridge of Monte Artemiso north of the town, cover the supply routes from the town, and then attack the remaining elements. On the night of 30-31 May 1944, the 1st Infantry moved north to Monte Artemiso and then west along the ridge behind Velletri.

On the afternoon of 31 May 1944, the 141st Infantry was given the mission of capturing the town of Velletri. Operational instructions issued at 1445 hours, 31 May 1944, detailed the plans for taking the town. The 1st Battalion from its positions east of the town was to advance from the east while the 2nd Battalion from the Regimental reserve was to advance southwest toward Velletri. The 3rd Battalion was directed to remain in its present position until 1600 hours, 31 May 1944, while the 85th Infantry Division on the 141st Infantry right flank crossed its front in its push toward the northwest, and then move west to the Regimental reserve area which the 2nd Battalion had occupied. Company A of the 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion was attached to the Regimental Combat Team for the operation. The advance by the Battalion was to be accomplished by patrolling aggressively to the front and subsequently bringing the main elements abreast of the patrolled sector.

At 1600 hours, 31 May 1944, G-3 notified Major Young that plans for the attack on Velletri had been altered, and that the 141st Infantry would send one Battalion to the west behind the town with the mission of cutting south beyond the town and severing the Velletri-Rome highway running northwest from Velletri. The 2nd Battalion was given this mission, and the 3rd Battalion assigned the mission originally given the 2nd Battalion, of advancing south on Velletri from the Regimental reserve area to the northeast.

The 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry, encountered heavy resistance in its attempts to advance toward Velletri from the east during the afternoon of 31 May 1944. Mine fields had been laid through the sector, and strong points of resistance organized by the enemy prevented the 1st Battalion units from clearing or flanking the mine fields. Beyond initial gains of 400-600 yards, no further progress could be made and the attack was delayed until engineers could clear lanes through the fields. An enemy counter-attack with tanks and infantry was repulsed without loss of ground, and at 1800 hours, Major Young notified the 1st Battalion G-3 that a platoon of engineers was being sent to clear the mines and that Company K, which had been given the mission of holding the 3rd Battalion road block on the Velletri road to the northeast, would be released and attached to the 1st Battalion for reinforcement.

The 2nd Battalion encountered only light resistance in moving west beyond Velletri and then turning south to establish a block on the Velletri-Rome highway running northwest from Velletri. At 2130 hours, Colonel Harmony notified the 2nd Battalion to continue southwest, after blocking movement from the northwest on its first objective, and establish a block on Highway #7, the Rome-Velletri road running east from Velletri. During the early part of the evening, 31 May 1944, the 3rd Battalion closed out of the Regimental reserve area and began advancing south toward Velletri.

Thus, at the end of May, 1944, the 141st Regimental Combat Team was poised for the capture of Velletri. The 2nd Battalion was northwest of the town, blocking the main route of supply and avenue of escape. The 1st Battalion was astride the principal road running east from the town, and the 3rd Battalion was in position north of the town prepared to advance at dawn, 1 June 1944.

S-E-C-R-E-T

During the month of May, 1944

to the following extent:

	<u>OFFICERS</u>		<u>ENLISTED MEN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
KIA - - - -	0	- - - -	0	0
MIA - - - -	0	- - - -	3	3
SWA - - - -	0	- - - -	0	0
DFA - - - -	30	- - - -	5	35
SIA - - - -	0	- - - -	0	0
LIA - - - -	2	- - - -	0	2
TOTALS - - -	32		8	40

The following is an estimate of enemy personnel and ordnance casualties:

	<u>KNOWN</u>		<u>ESTIMATE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
PRISONERS OF WAR - - -	33	- - -	0	33
KILLED - - - -	- - -	- - -	50	50

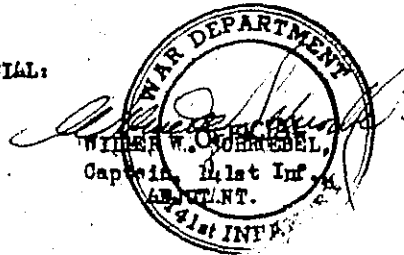
Because of the fast moving nature of the operations engaged in during the month of May, 1944, and the fact that numerous units worked together during combined operations, an approximate allocation of the substantial amount of enemy wounded and ordnance casualties for the month of May, 1944, cannot be made.

END

Report of Operations Written by:

Charles G. Schwartz
CHARLES G. SCHWARTZ O-2055709
2nd Lt., Regimental Hq.
11st Infantry Regiment

OFFICIAL:



S-E-C-R-E-T

SECRET

HEADQUARTERS 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

APO #36, U. S. ARMY

OPERATIONS IN ITALY

JUNE, 1944

ANNEX #6

141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT

PART I (3 Sections) OF THREE PARTS

Section I.....Regimental History
Section II....Casualty Report
Section III...Company Histories

DECLASSIFIED

DOD Dir. 5200.9, Sept. 27, 1962

EXEMPT BY PLS DATE 10-31-63

SECRET

*(Part I) 1st Inf Regt
Report of operations in Italy*

Part II

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS 141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT
APO #36, U. S. ARMY

JWH/rdd

13 July 1944

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Regimental History and Conclusion of Operations

TO : The Commanding General, 36th Infantry Division, APO #36, U.S. Army

1. Inclosed is the history of operations of the 141st Infantry Regiment for the month of June 1944.

2. The operations in June, after the fall of Velletri, brought about a fast-moving pursuit which disclosed the need of:

a. Aggressive patrolling by reconnaissance units, operating well out in front of motorized columns. Experience in this operation from VELLETRI to ROCCASTRADA repeatedly showed a lack of aggression upon the part of the attached reconnaissance elements and an unwillingness to proceed sufficiently far forward to give timely warning of enemy positions. It is recommended that:

- (1) Reconnaissance elements' training stress cross-country movement to prevent being road bound.
- (2) Reconnaissance elements be assigned specific reconnaissance missions.

b. Making use of all types of vehicles to transport troops forward quickly so that the enemy, once forced into retreat, could not stop long enough to make a serious effort at delaying our advance. In several instances the use by our troops of tank destroyers, tanks and artillery primo-movers in getting to objectives brought about the collapse of enemy resistance in positions, naturally strong, but incompletely manned because of the speed with which they were taken under fire.

- (1) It is recommended that a division have additional transportation attached to carry troops due to the fact that use of organic transportation prevents supply installations keeping up with the main body of troops.

c. Dependence, to a great extent, upon radio communication. This was particularly necessary in the cross-country operations of special task forces covering extensive zones where good results were obtained by use of radio relays. The attachment of SCR-193 radios to the regiment by division and task force was of particular help and the suggestion is offered that such radios be made a part of the T/E of each regiment because of their superior power and strong construction.

- (1) It is believed that there is a necessity for a great deal of additional training for all radio operators in the capabilities and maintenance of radios and observance of radio security measures.

-1-

S E C R E T

S E C R E T

2. d. A re-emphasis on the will to attack by all arms. This attitude showed constant improvement as the situation progressed and success bred confidence.

- (1) It is suggested that more emphasis be placed upon indoctrinating troops with the knowledge that pursuing units should not stop to dig in positions while being subjected to artillery fire until their objective is reached.

John W. Harmony
JOHN W. HARMONY
Colonel, 141st Infantry
COMMANDING

1 Incl: History of Operations (soxtupls)
including regimental history, casualty report,
and company histories. Original copy includes
all of above plus regimental unit journal and
1/25,000 maps covering operations.

-1-

S E C R E T