

"FROM FEDALA TO BERCHTESGADEN"



WHITE

COMBAT COURSE of THE
7TH "Light-Foot" INFANTRY
FROM
"FEDALA to BERCHTESGADEN"

worldwartwoveterans.org



GERMANY

18-20 MAR. '45
SIEGFRIED LINE

26 MAR '45
RHINE

NURNBERG



PARIS

NANCY

STRASBOURG

AUGSBURG

ALLUS KAPUT!!

LA MONT JACQUES

COLMAR

MUNICH

SALZBURG

HITLER'S EX-NOMIE

4 NOV '45

BERCHTESGADEN

BESANCON

LOOK AT DOT 7TH INF.

SWITZERLAND

FRANCE

DIORZEE

LYON

GRENOBLE

MONTLIMAR

AVIGNON

AIX

MARSEILLE

TOULON

15 AUG. 44

GENOVA

FLORENCE

ITALY

ROME

24 JUNE '44

ANZIO

VOLTURNO

NAPLES

SALERNO

PALERMO

MESSINA

SICILY

LICATA

10 JULY 43

BIZERTA

TUNIS

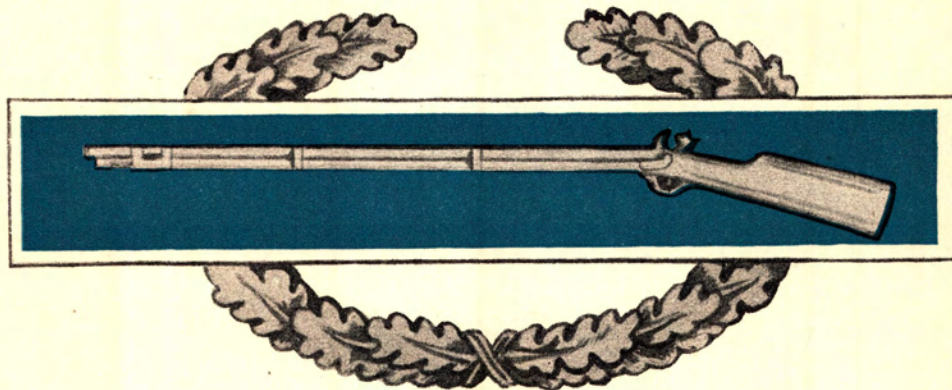
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

ALGIERS

AFRICA

worldwartwoveterans.org

FROM FEDALA TO BERCHTESGADEN



A History of the Seventh United States Infantry
in World War II

Written and Compiled

by

NATHAN WILLIAM WHITE

(A member of the "7th Light Foot" Infantry from 25 May 1944 to 4 February 1946)

MEMORIAL
IN MEMORIAM

COPYRIGHT, 1947, BY
NATHAN WILLIAM WHITE
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

worldwartwoveterans.org

Dedicated to Library Bilalati Moss

The V A center ~~May 15th~~ 1955-
by

Elton Milton

ENGRAVINGS MADE BY
BAUERISCHE GIESSEREI, FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN, GERMANY
AND

BICKFORD ENGRAVING & ELECTROTYPE CO., PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA BY KEYSTONE PRINT, INCORPORATED, BROCKTON, MASSACHUSETTS

940.5
W

IN MEMORIAM

*"Greater love hath no man than this,
That a man lay down his life for his friends."
New Testament: John xv, 13.*

To the memory of the more than two thousand one hundred men and officers of the Seventh United States Infantry, who poured out their blood for the causes of mankind and country, for the glory and honor of their beloved Regiment that it might never fail in its mission from Fedala to Berchtesgaden, and who now repose peacefully in watery graves of the oceans, seas and rivers over which they assaulted, or within graves on the beachheads, in the valleys and plains, the forests and the rugged mountains where they waged the gallant fight, this work is dedicated; and we, the survivors, pledge ourselves to keep faith. Of all creeds, of all walks of life, and, from all States of the Union they came. Though they sleep far from their homes, in the hearts of their loved ones, and in the hearts of their comrades-in-arms, who fought by their sides, their memory will live forever. God grant them a soldier's rest.

*"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking."
Scott, "The Lady of the Lake"
canto i, st. 31.*

worldwartwoveterans.org

Coat of Arms
Seventh United States Infantry



EXPLANATION

The crossed rifles and the cotton bale above the shield commemorate the Battle of New Orleans, 1815, when cotton bales were used as breastworks.

The field piece on top of the mound recalls the action at Cerro Gordo, Mexico, 1847, when members of the Seventh carried the heights, dragging a field piece with them.

The wall represents the famous stone wall on Marye's Heights, Battle of Fredericksburg, 1862, behind which the Confederates were posted.

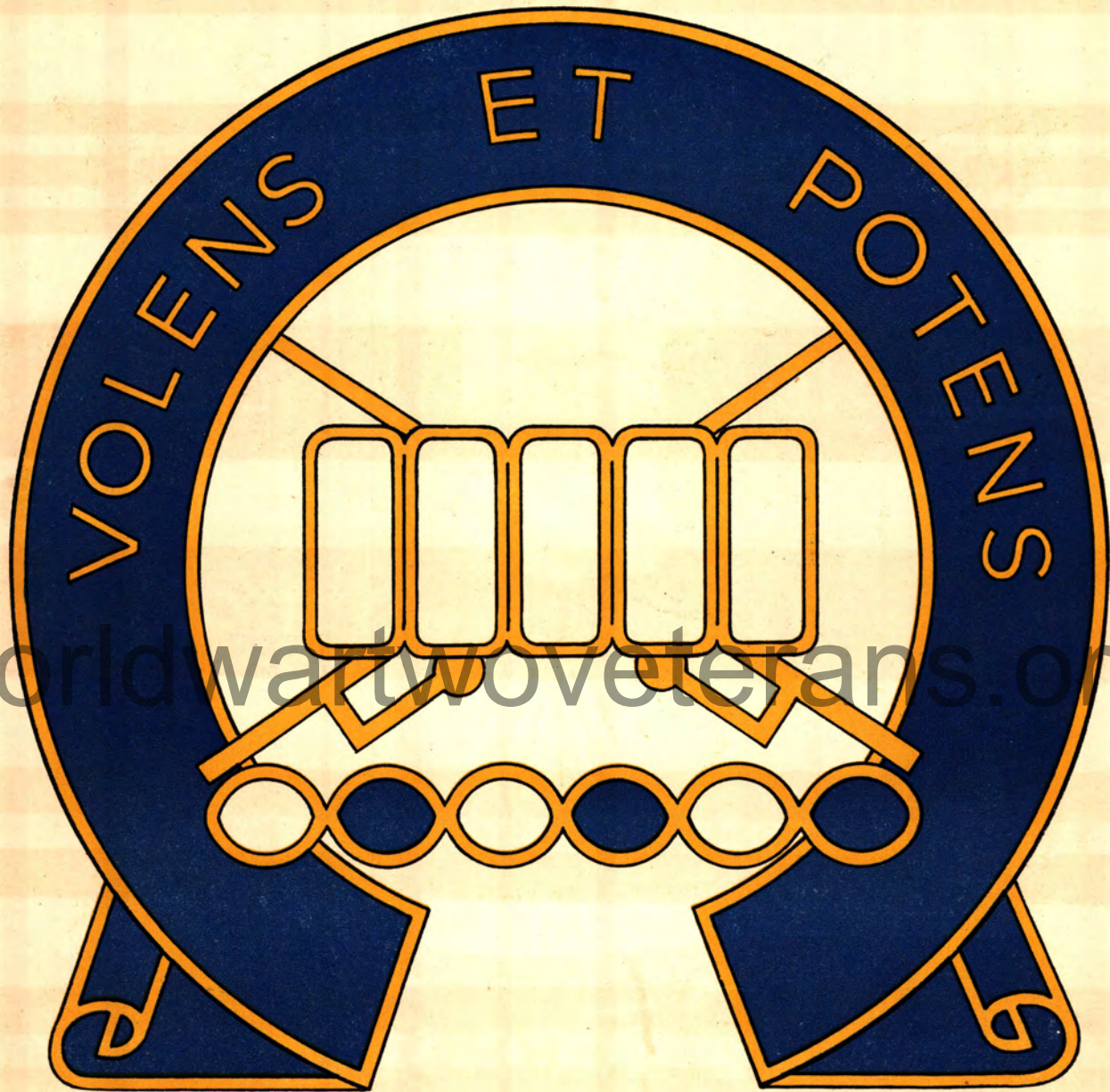
The diagonal stripes on the bottom of the shield are for World War I, the white representing three major engagements, the blue, four minor engagements.

The Croix de Guerre with star was awarded by the French Government for service in World War I.

The motto, *Volens et Potens* means "Willing and Able."



Regimental Colors
Seventh United States Infantry



*Regimental Crest
Seventh United States Infantry*

Campaign and Battle Streamers Attached to the Seventh Infantry Colors

CANADA FLORIDA 1814

NEW ORLEANS 1815

CREEKS SEMINOLES

UTES PINE RIDGE

TEXAS 1846 MONTEREY

VERA CRUZ CERRO GORDO

CONTRERAS CHURUBUSCO

MOLINO DEL REY CHAPULTEPEC

Campaign and Battle Streamers Attached to the Seventh Infantry Colors

NEW MEXICO 1860

NEW MEXICO 1861 1862

KENTUCKY 1862

TENNESSEE 1862

worldwartwoveterans.org

MISSISSIPPI 1862

CHICKAMAUGA CHATTANOOGA

CHANCELLORSVILLE

MURFREESBOROUGH

Campaign and Battle Streamers Attached to the Seventh Infantry Colors

FREDERICKSBURG

TENNESSEE 1863 GETTYSBURG

GEORGIA 1864 ATLANTA

WYOMING 1866

worldwar2veterans.org

LITTLE BIG HORN NEZ PERCES

MONTANA 1872

SANTIAGO

SAMAR 1901 1902

Campaign and Battle Streamers Attached to the Seventh Infantry Colors

AISNE ILE DE FRANCE

CHAMPAGNE

CHAMPAGNE MARNE

AISNE MARNE

ST. MIHIEL MEUSE ARGONNE

AISNE MARNE

CHAMPAGNE MARNE

ALGERIA FRENCH MOROCCO

Campaign and Battle Streamers Attached to the Seventh Infantry Colors

TUNISIA - SICILY - NAPLES - FOGGIA

ROME - ARNO - SOUTHERN - FRANCE

GERMANY

COMBAT INFANTRY REGIMENT

worldwartwoveterans.org

Seventh United States Infantry Banners

Today, while the Regiment is stationed in Kentucky, thirty-seven campaign, battle and citation streamers are proudly flown from the colors of the Seventh United States Infantry. It is believed that the number is correct, but it is possible that the number should be greater.

It will be noted that the streamers for World War II fighting which was probably as severe as the fighting in any previous war for the Seventh Infantry, actually number only four though the Regiment won official credit for eight campaigns. It seems then that the War Department policy in regard to such awards has been an inconsistent one. The second streamer given for this last war is actually for three campaigns while the third and fourth streamers are each for two campaigns.

Information as to how the Regiment's record compares with that of other old regular United States Army regiments is not available at this time but it is believed by the writer that the record of the "Cotton Baler" or "7th Light Foot" Infantry rates among the highest in the glorious record of American arms.

Foreword

The Seventh Infantry Regiment, one of the oldest fighting organizations in the United States military service, with an enviable record in the annals of American military history from the Indian War of 1811 and the War of 1812 to the end of World War I, has in the North African, Mediterranean and European phases of the Second World War added to its long and colorful history. In keeping with its fighting traditions, the "Cotton Baler" Regiment or "7th Light Foot" Infantry, was among the first to see action in the Second World War on 8 November 1942, at Fedala, French Morocco, and entered Casablanca three days later.

Storming ashore in the first assault waves west of Licata, Sicily, 10 July 1943, the Seventh distinguished itself in the whirlwind, thirty-eight day, Sicilian Campaign by capturing Agrigento, Palermo, and Messina.

It was the Seventh Infantry which spearheaded the Third Infantry Division's attack across the swollen Volturno River in Italy, 13 October 1943, in one of the bloodiest engagements of this war and drove the enemy to the heights of Mignano. Its troops were among the first on to the beaches south of Nettuno, 22 January 1944, and won new laurels during the four months of hell on the Anzio Beachhead, during which time German forces tried desperately to destroy the Allied forces. Suffering numerous casualties the Seventh Infantry nevertheless, survived all onslaughts of the enemy and in the break-through, commencing 23 May 1944, drove on to capture Cisterna di Littoria. The Regiment helped drive the Boche from the Albano Hills and was the first to enter Rome, the Eternal City, on Sunday, 4 June 1944.

On 15 August 1944 the Seventh Infantry made its fourth amphibious assault against hostile shores during World War II at Cavalaire-sur-Mer, France. Reducing enemy resistance along the Riviera coast the Regiment then sped up the Rhone River Valley and passed through Aix-en-Provence. North of Montelimar, along a twelve mile stretch of road, "Cotton Balers" first observed and fired upon enemy vehicular and train convoys which subsequently became trapped between Third Division and VI Corps forces, and were destroyed. The Regiment played a principal role in the capture of Besancon on the Doubs. Penetrating the Vosges mountains the inimitable "Cotton Balers" crossed the Moselle, Mosellotte and Mortagne Rivers to engage in some of the bitterest fighting for Les Rouges Eaux and Le Haute Jacques, the "Cross Roads of Hell." The Meurthe River was crossed and the Seventh Infantry was first for the Third Infantry Division to enter the ancient province of Alsace. The enemy's Kehl bridgehead in Strasbourg, the Cathedral City on the Rhine, was wiped out, then the Seventh Infantry maintained its first "Watch on the Rhine" during the Second World War.

When the Third Infantry Division came under the command of the First French Army for the "Colmar Pocket" Operations, the Seventh Regiment successively held defensive positions along La Fecht River and in the Vosges Mountains. Swinging to the attack in the dead of winter, successive assaults were made across La Fecht River and the Canal de Colmar to capture several towns and seal Colmar off from the north and east. The assault was continued between the Rhone-Rhine Canal and the Rhine River, Biesheim was captured in a house to house battle and Neuf-Brisach was sealed off and wrapped up for other forces to enter unopposed. During the three phases of the "Colmar Pocket" attack the Regiment was never in reserve but always in the assault and played the prominent role for Third Infantry Division operations which won the coveted French Fourragere from the French Government and a citation from the President of the United States.

Following a second "Watch on the Rhine" in Alsace, the Regiment led the Third Infantry Division into Germany, participated in the breaching of the Siegfried Line, forced a crossing of the Rhine River in the face of strong opposition, and was first into Nürnberg, first into Augsburg, first into München, first into Salzburg, Austria, and captured Berchtesgaden, Germany, the prize of all military objectives in Europe. The former mountain hideout of Adolf Hitler, the objective of seven armies,¹ was captured on 4 May 1945 by the Seventh United States Infantry alone, and the story of how the "Cotton Baler" Regiment, under the command of Colonel John A. Heintges, outmaneuvered both the enemy and friendly forces, will always be told wherever "Cotton Balers" gather in future years.

What a record! From Fedala, French Morocco, to Berchtesgaden, Germany, in eight campaigns, over a period of two and one-half years against the best soldiers of Italy and Germany. A record unsurpassed.

* * * * *

The chief sources used in writing this history have been the Seventh Infantry S-3 and S-2 Reports; Third

Infantry Division G-3 and G-2 Reports; Seventh Infantry Battalion and Regimental Journals; statements and reports of action made by various commanders; evacuation reports; Third Infantry Division, Army and War Department general orders. Personal interviews were held with survivors of particular actions. For the period May, 1944, to the end of the war in May, 1945, the writer has personal knowledge of the Regimental plans and actions.

More than sixteen thousand men and officers served with the Seventh Infantry from Fedala to Berchtesgaden. The complete and true history of the Regiment for the war just ended would not only tell the story of its action as a unit, but recount that of its component elements, as well as describe the thoughts, feelings, sufferings, privations, heroic actions and shortcomings of each individual member. Needless to say all that has been impossible, nor would one even attempt it. This work is primarily a history of the Regiment. The reader is reminded that it is "a" rather than "the" history of the Seventh United States Infantry.

Work for this volume was commenced in June, 1945, shortly after the close of the war while the Regiment was assembled in Salzburg, Austria, and, was for the most part, completed in January, 1946, in Bad Hersfeld, Germany, where Headquarters were established for the tour of occupational duty conducted by the Regiment. Better results of course would have been obtained had an historian and photographer been assigned the mission of recording the Regiment's action back in 1942 and followed the Regiment through the eight campaigns in which it participated.

The writer is indebted to the many men who have shown an interest in this work and contributed to its completion. Acknowledgment is made of the work of Technician Fifth Grade Milton A. Solomon of Service Company, who collected many of the Signal Corps pictures and others shown in this volume. Technician Fifth Grade Hosea T. Hollis, Chaplain Raymond E. Vint and Captain George W. Yarnall contributed pictures. Photos of deceased members of the Regiment and of medal winners were made available to the author by next of kin or by members themselves. It is regretted that photos of all the dead heroes of the Regiment were not available for publication. Time, Inc., contributed the picture of the military cemetery on the old Anzio Beachhead and the pictures which show scenes of the taking of Cisterna di Littoria.

The writer is particularly indebted to the several map makers who labored long and tirelessly to make the originals of the many maps which accurately show the movements of the Regiment during its World War II service. Redeployment tended to remove skilled men after they had proven their ability but in the end all maps were completed. Technician Fifth Grade Donald Cheperka of the S-3 Section made the combat course map, the original colored drawings for the Regimental colors, crest and battle streamers, and, with the exception of Map No. 1, the tactical maps for the North African, Sicilian and South Italian campaigns. Map No. 1 was made by Mr. John R. Ferguson of Southbridge, Massachusetts. Following Cheperka's departure, Private First Class John F. Fitterer, formerly of Company "I", became the mainstay of the map making department and worked overtime to complete the work. For short periods he was assisted by Private First Class Edwin M. Ebur of Regimental Headquarters Company and Technician Fourth Grade Murray A. Strand of the Third Infantry Division G-3 Section. In the end Herr Walter Nolte, a discharged German officer, formerly of the Luftwaffe, was employed by the writer and helped complete the work. Two maps are reproductions of ones printed in the "Stars and Stripes" newspaper and one other was copied from a French map.

C. W. Van Scoyoc of Orting, Washington, kindly made available a list of "Colonels of the Seventh Infantry" from 1808 to 1941, as well as a picture of Colonel William Russell (1808-1815). Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour supplied information which helped complete the list.

Private First Class Raymond J. Thornburg, a veteran of Company "B" who suffered wounds during action, performed excellent service as typist. Private George Bertoncelli of First Battalion Headquarters Company, Private Olen J. Heroth of Third Battalion Headquarters Company, Private First Class Hugh McDaniel of Company "E" and Private Frank Pirozzi of Service Company all helped to compile the several lists which appear in the appendix.

Any opinions expressed in this book are those of the author and should not be construed as reflecting those of any of the regimental commanders or their superiors.

N. W. W.
Presque Isle, Maine
30 May 1946

¹ The seven Allied armies which closed in on the National Redoubt and Berchtesgaden in early May, 1945, were the First French, British Eighth, Second and Third Ukrainian Armies of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the American Third, Fifth and Seventh Armies. See Map No. 116.

CONTENTS

A Brief History of the Seventh United States Infantry from 1798 to 1941.....	Page xviii
Colonels of the Seventh United States Infantry.....	xx

Part I

FRENCH MOROCCAN AND TUNISIAN CAMPAIGNS

8 November 1942 - 6 July 1943

Chapter 1: The Invasion of North Africa	2
Chapter 2: The North African Interlude and Plans for a Second Amphibious Assault.....	17

Part II

THE SICILIAN CAMPAIGN

10 July - 18 August 1943

Chapter 1: The Landing West of Licata, the Capture of Agrigento and Palermo.....	24
Chapter 2: The Drive Along the North Coast of Sicily and the Capture of Messina.....	32

Part III

THE CAMPAIGN OF SOUTHERN ITALY

22 September - 17 November 1943

Chapter 1: From Palermo, Sicily, to Centurano, Italy	45
Chapter 2: The Crossing of the Volturno	49
Chapter 3: From the Volturno to the Heights of Mignano.....	57

Part IV

THE ANZIO-ROME CAMPAIGN

22 January - 4 June 1944

Chapter 1: Preparation and Plans.....	70
Chapter 2: The Landing South of Nettuno, Italy.....	73
Chapter 3: Attacks and Counter-attacks of 30 January-5 February 1944.....	76
Chapter 4: The Enemy is Twice Thrown Back As the Gallant Seventh Infantry Holds Its Ground	89
Chapter 5: The Seventh Infantry Divides Two Reserve Periods in "The Pines" with Sixteen Days on the Line.....	100
Chapter 6: The Breakthrough from the Anzio Beachhead and the Capture of Cisterna di Littoria	111
Chapter 7: On to Rome.....	117

Part V

FROM THE RIVIERA TO THE RHINE

15 August - 20 December 1944

Chapter 1: The Campaign of Southern France	126
Chapter 2: Bitter Fighting from Grandvillers to Le Haute Jacques in the Vosges Mountains	166
Chapter 3: Crossing of the Meurthe and the Push to the Rhine.....	177

Part VI

THE "COLMAR POCKET" CAMPAIGN

21 December 1944 - 18 February 1945

Chapter 1: Defense	197
Chapter 2: Attack:	
a. Phase 1.....	204
b. Phase 2.....	213
c. Phase 3.....	220

Part VII

THE GERMAN CAMPAIGN

15 March - 8 May 1945

Chapter 1: Preparation and Plans.....	229
---------------------------------------	-----

	Page
Chapter 2: Seventh Infantry Leads the Third Division into Germany and Breaches the Siegfried Line	235
Chapter 3: The Rhine River Crossing and Drive to the East.....	249
Chapter 4: The Battle of Nürnberg	261
Chapter 5: The Battle of Augsburg	267
Chapter 6: The Race into München	273
Chapter 7: The Dash into Salzburg, Austria, and the Capture of Berchtesgaden, Germany...	276

APPENDIX

Appendix I: Summary	283
Appendix II: Glorious Dead of the Seventh Infantry.....	291
Appendix III: Campaign Credits, Citations, and Awards.....	307
Appendix IV: Three Popular World War II Songs.....	319
Appendix V: Biography of the Writer	320

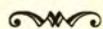
MAPS

Number	Page	Number	Page
		17.	3rd Battalion Protects Division Right Flank from Avellino to Montesarchio, 2-4 October 1943
			49
1.	The North African Landings Planned for Operation "Torch," 8 November 1942... 3	18.	Line Held by American 5th and British 8th Armies, 6 October 1943.....
			50
2.	7th Infantry Assaults Shores of North Africa, 8 November 1942..... 9	19.	5th Army Plan of Attack for Volturno River Crossing, 13 October 1943.....
			53
3.	7th Infantry Advances Beyond the Wadi Melah Toward Casablanca, 9 November 1942	20.	7th Infantry Crosses the Volturno and Reaches Mount Majulo, 13 October 1943..
	12		54
4.	7th Infantry Assaults and Enters Casablanca, 10-11 November 1942.....	21.	5th Army Bridgehead, 13-14 October 1943
	16		55
5.	Combined American-British Force Plans to Assault Sicily	22.	7th Infantry Drives on to Hills South of Dragoni, 14-18 October 1943.....
	23		58
6.	7th Infantry Assaults Sicily West of Licata and Captures Palma, 10-11 July 1943....	23.	7th Infantry Outposts to the Front, 19-21 October, Reconnoiters in Force 22-25 October 1943
	25		62
7.	7th Infantry Reconnoiters in Force and Captures Agrigento, 13-17 July 1943....	24.	7th Infantry Occupies and Defends, 27-30 October 1943
	29		63
8.	7th Infantry Advances from Castronovo to Palermo, 21-22 July 1943	25.	7th Infantry Penetrates Barbara Line and Attacks Mount la Difensa, 30 October-15 November 1943
	31		64
9.	7th Infantry Drives Along the North Coast of Sicily, Captures Hill Di Marco and Advances Beyond Cresto di Naso, 8-12 August 1943	26.	The 7th United States Infantry in the Naples-Foggia or Southern Italy Campaign, 22 September-17 November 1943.....
	36		69
10.	3rd Battalion Captures Barcellona, Meri and San Lucia, 15 August 1943.....	27.	5th Army Plans End Run with VI Corps Carrying the Ball
	38		69
11.	1st Battalion Captures Spadafora and Rometta Station During the Night of 15-16 August 1943	28.	VI Corps Plans to Establish Anzio-Nettuno Beachhead, 22 January 1944.....
	39		72
12.	7th Infantry Captures and Occupies Messina, 16-17 August 1943.....	29.	Disposition of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 22 January 1944.....
	41		74
13.	7th United States Infantry in the Sicilian Campaign, 10 July-17 August 1943.....	30.	Disposition of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 23 January 1944.....
	44		75
14.	1st Battalion is Committed and Assists in Capture of Le Croci di Acerno, 22-23 September 1943	31.	Disposition of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1200, 24 January 1944.....
	46		75
15.	7th Infantry Advances to the North, 24-27 September 1943	32.	Location of 3rd Battalion as of 1200, 27 January 1944
	47		75
16.	7th Infantry Captures Volturara, San Stefano and Avellino, 28-30 September 1943..	33.	7th Infantry Objectives for the Attack of 30 January 1944.....
	48		78

Number	Page	Number	Page
34. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 1 February 1944.....	86	60. Where Convoys of the 19th German Army were Destroyed Along the Rhone River North of Montelimar, France, 29 August 1944	143
35. Location of 7th Infantry Troops During the Period 7-11 February 1944.....	88	61. 7th Infantry Makes Its Longest Move of the Southern France Campaign, 1 September 1944	145
36. Location of 7th Infantry Troops, 11-14 February 1944	88	62. 7th Infantry Motor Marches North Through Lons-Le-Saunier, France, 3 September 1944	146
37. Location of 7th Infantry Troops and Attachments as of 1100, 19 February 1944..	90	63. 7th Infantry Moves North Toward Besancon, 4 September 1944.....	147
38. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 29 February 1944.....	94	64. Nouveau Plan De Besancon Et Ses Environs	149
39. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 1 March 1944.....	94	65. 7th Infantry Clears Besancon, France, 5-7 September 1944	150
40. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 5 March 1944.....	97	66. 7th Infantry Fights Its Way from Besancon to Lure, France, 8-17 September 1944....	154
41. Location of 7th Infantry Troops and Supporting TK, TD, Cn Co, AT Guns, as of 1100, 13 March 1944.....	98	67. 7th Infantry Moves North from Lure and Takes Up New Positions in Vicinity of Faucogney, France, 19 September 1944...	157
42. 7th Infantry Rests in VI Corps Reserve in "The Pines" from 28 March to 13 April 1944	100	68. 7th Infantry Advances Against Determined Resistance and Forces Crossing of La Moselle to Capture Vagney and Sapois, France, in 19 days of Fighting, 20 September-9 October 1944	162
43. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 15 April 1944.....	101	69. 7th Infantry Moves to Bivouac and Training Area in the Vicinity of Eloyes, France, 14-15 October 1944	164
44. Objectives and Scheme of Maneuver for Operation "Mr. Jones"	102	70. 7th Infantry Breaks Bivouac Morning of 20 October 1944 and Moves to the Front....	166
45. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 21 April 1944.....	103	71. 7th Infantry Battles from Grandvillers to Le Haute Jacques in Bitter Vosges Mountain Fighting, 20 October-9 November 1944....	174
46. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 23 April 1944.....	103	72. 7th Infantry Moves to Rest and Training Areas Vicinity of Fremifontaine, France, Night of 9-10 November 1944.....	176
47. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1100, 28 April 1944.....	104	73. 7th Infantry Objectives for Crossing of the Meurthe River in France, 19-20 November 1944	178
48. 7th Infantry Troops and Defensive Fires for Machine Guns as of 1100, 28 April 1944	107	74. 7th Infantry Moves Under Cover of Darkness to Final Assembly Areas, Prepared to Cross the Meurthe River, France, 19-20 November 1944	180
49. 7th Infantry and 3rd Division Objectives for the Capture of Cisterna di Littoria and the Break Out of the Anzio Beachhead, 23-25 May 1944.....	109	75. 7th Infantry Crosses the Meurthe and Leads the 3rd Division into Alsace to Capture Saales and Bourg-Bruche, 20-23 November 1944	182
50. 7th Infantry Moves to the North, 25-27 May 1944	118	76. 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Protects Division's Main Supply Route Along Bruche River Valley, 25-26 November 1944.....	186
51. Location of 7th Infantry Troops as of 1200, 29 May 1944	119	77. 7th Infantry Motor Marches into Strasbourg, France, During the Night of 26-27 November 1944	188
52. 7th Infantry Troop Dispositions and Defensive Fires as of 1200, 30 May 1944....	119	78. Location of 7th Infantry Units in Strasbourg, France, as of 1200, 29 November 1944 and Plan Der Stadt Strassburg Und Umgebung	189
53. 2nd and 3rd Battalions Advance to Palestina while 1st Battalion 7th Infantry Leads all 5th Army Units into Rome, 4 June 1944	123	79. The 7th United States Infantry in the Campaigns "From the Riviera to the Rhine," 15 August-5 December 1944	194
54. The 7th United States Infantry in the Anzio-Rome Campaign, 22 January-4 June 1944	125	80. 7th Infantry Conducts First "Watch on the Rhine" in World War II, 5-20 December 1944. Units on the Line 17 December 1944	195
55. 3rd Division Objectives and Initial Beachhead Lines for the Invasion of Southern France, 15 August 1944.....	128	81. 7th Infantry Dispositions, Blocks, Outposts and Patrol Routes as of 26 December 1944	199
56. 7th Infantry Objectives and Zones of Action for the Invasion of Southern France...	130	82. 7th Infantry Takes Up New Defensive Line in the Vosges Mountains, 30 December 1944-2 January 1945.....	200
57. "The 7th's 'Perfect' Amphibious Invasion"	136		
58. 7th Infantry Drives West Along French Coast Then Cuts Inland to Durance River, 15-23 August 1944.....	140		
59. 7th Infantry Crosses the Durance River and Speeds North to Trap German Forces North of Montelimar, France, 24-29 August 1944	141		

Number	Page	Number	Page
83. The "Colmar Pocket" and Estimated German Dispositions Facing First French Army in January 1945.....	200	102. 7th Infantry Motor Marches to Vicinity of Frankenthal, Germany, 23-25 March 1945	249
84. Plans and Objectives for Raid in Force on Enemy Positions South of Hills 885 and 883 by 3rd Battalion 7th Infantry, 16 January 1945	202	103. 3rd Infantry Division Plans to Force Crossing of Rhine River Between Mannheim and Worms with 7th and 30th Infantries in Assault, 26 March 1945.....	250
85. 7th Infantry Plans and Objectives for Night Crossing of La Fecht and Attack South Between La Fecht and L'Ill Rivers.....	206	104. 3rd Division Smoke Plan for Operation "Rhineland"	251
86. 7th Infantry Plans and Objectives for Night Assault Across the Canal de Colmar, 29 January 1945	215	105. 7th Infantry Plans and Objectives for Rhine River Crossing and Attack to the East, 26 March 1945	252
87. 7th Infantry Fire Plan for Operation "Kraut Buster" or the Crossing of the Canal de Colmar, 29 January 1945.....	217	106. 7th Infantry Fire Plan for the Flak Wagons During the Rhine River Crossing Operation	253
88. Plans and Objectives for Seventh Infantry Attack South Between Rhine River and Rhone-Rhine Canal, 2 February 1945....	221	107. 7th Infantry Fire Plan for the 4.2 Chemical Mortars for the Rhine River Crossing Operation	253
89. 7th Infantry Objectives for the Attack of 4 February 1945	222	108. 7th Infantry Motor Marches from Scharhof to Reichelsheim, Germany, 27-29 March 1945	255
90. Artillery Fire Plan for the 7th Infantry Attack of 4 February 1945.....	222	109. 7th Infantry Advances to the Main River, 29-30 March 1945.....	256
91. 7th Infantry Conducts Its Second "Watch on the Rhine" in World War II, 8-18 February 1945. Map shows Positions of Troops on 13 February 1945.....	225	110. 7th Infantry Troops Cross the Main River Three Times During the Period 30 March-5 April 1945	257
92. Overall View of 7th Infantry Action During the "Colmar Pocket" Campaign, 21 December 1944-18 February 1945.....	226	111. 7th Infantry Minus 2nd Battalion Motor Marches to the Northeast, 6 April 1945...	258
93. 7th Infantry Motor Marches to Rest and Training Areas North of Nancy, France, 19 February 1945	229	112. 7th Infantry Attacks to the Southeast from Gersda to Steinbach, Germany, 7-12 April 1945	259
94. 7th Infantry Leaves Nancy Area and Assembles Near the Front Night of 13-14 March 1945	231	113. Locations of 7th Infantry Units During the Period, 12-16 April 1945.....	260
95. 3rd Infantry Division Objectives and Zones of Action for Operation "Earthquake"....	232	114. 7th Infantry Drives South, 16-20 April 1945, and is First to Enter the Old Walled City of Nuremberg, 20 April 1945.....	265
96. Plan No. 1 for 7th Infantry Attack, 15 March 1945	234	115. 7th Infantry Makes Long Motor March, 24-25 April 1945 and Crosses the Blue Danube	267
97. Plans No. 2 and No. 3 for 7th Infantry Attack, 15 March 1945.....	234	116. East, West, South—Allies Tighten Squeeze on Germans	269
98. 7th Infantry Leads 3rd Division into Germany, 15 March 1945. Advances to Althornbach and Prepares to Assault the Siegfried Line, 18 March 1945.....	237	117. 3rd Division Zone of Action and 7th Infantry Objectives for Attack on Augsburg, Germany, 25 April 1945.....	270
99. Zones of Action and Objectives for Assault on Siegfried Line by 7th and 15th Infantries, near Zweibrucken, Germany, 18 March 1945	242	118. Change of Boundaries and New Objectives for 7th Infantry Attack on Augsburg, Germany, 26 April 1945	271
100. 7th Infantry Penetrates the Siegfried Line and "Sticks Out Like a Sore Thumb" in the Third Division Sector, 18 March 1945...	245	119. 7th Infantry Objectives for the Attack on Munich, Germany, 29 April 1945.....	274
101. 7th Infantry Attacks to the Northeast from Contwig, Germany, and Clears Zone of All Resistance, 21-22 March 1945.....	247	120. 7th Infantry Assembles East of Isar River, 2 May 1945.....	275
		121. 7th Infantry Dashes to the Saalach River, 2-4 May 1945.....	277
		122. 7th Infantry Enters Salzburg, Austria, and Captures Berchtesgaden, Germany, 4 May 1945	282

A Brief History of the Seventh United States Infantry from 1798 to 1941¹



The Seventh United States Infantry was first organized in 1798 but after an existence of less than two years was mustered out of the service on 15 June 1800. On 3 May 1808 the Regiment was reorganized and since has seen continuous service to this day.

The first famous battle engaged in by the Seventh Infantry occurred during the Indian War of 1811. That year Tecumseh, the great chief of the Shawnee Indian Tribe, attempted to band together all the tribes of the Old Northwest, the South and the eastern Mississippi Valley, as the Indians, urged on by the British, were incensed over the approaches of the Americans. General William Henry Harrison led American forces in an expedition against the Indians. On 7 November 1811, on the site of the present town of Battle Ground or Prophetstown, Indiana, the American forces which included the Seventh Infantry broke the power of the Indian military movement in the Battle of Tippecanoe by defeating Tenskwatawa, the Shawnee Prophet and brother of Tecumseh. The Seventh Infantry won honors in that battle which brought great fame to General Harrison and helped elect him to the Presidency of the United States years later.

The Regiment's first battle with a foreign foe was fought during the War of 1812 against the British at Villier's Plantation, Louisiana, 23 December 1814. There and at Rodriguez Canal, 1 January 1815, the Seventh Infantry performed with the conspicuous bravery which has been its custom down through the years. But it was 8-9 January 1815 that the Regiment won undying fame in the Battle of New Orleans. It was in that battle, in which the American forces under General Andrew Jackson practically annihilated the opposing forces, that the Seventh Infantry won its nickname of the "Cotton Baler" Regiment. Using bales of cotton as breastworks Seventh Infantry riflemen shot down hundreds of British "Redcoats." Lord Pakenham, veteran of the European wars against Napoleon and a member of English royalty, with two thousand British soldiers, was killed in the action while the Americans suffered but a dozen killed. From that time the Seventh Infantry has always been known as the "Cotton Baler" Regiment. Its action in the War of 1812 was ended at Fort St. Phillip on 9 January 1815.

From 1815 to 1846, nearly all that time under the command of Colonel Matthew Arbuckle, the Regiment was stationed for many years at Fort Gibson, located above the junction of the Grand and Arkansas Rivers near the present town of Muskogee, Oklahoma, and participated in numerous Indian operations. During the period 1839-1842, it took part in the Florida War against the Seminoles, who were fighting under their celebrated chief, Osceola. The Regiment took part in the following engagements in that war: Fort Drane, Florida, 15 March 1840; Fort King, Florida, 24 March 1840; Martin's Point Hammock, Florida, 28 December 1840; Wahoo Swamp, Florida, 11 May 1841; Fort Wacahoota, 17 May 1841.

As difficulties with Mexico assumed serious proportions in 1846, the Seventh Infantry was concentrated at Corpus Christi, Texas, then moved to the Rio Grande, where opposite Matamoros, Mexico, it helped construct Fort Taylor, named for General Zachary Taylor. While garrisoning the new fort the Regiment successfully withstood a minor siege by the Mexicans, 3-9 May 1846. The fort was renamed Fort Brown in honor of Major Jacob Brown who was killed during the siege.

The Regiment then proceeded to Monterey, Mexico, arriving in time to take part in the Battle of Monterey, 21-23 September 1846, and contributed to the successful assault on the town.

Joining in the siege of Vera Cruz, which ended in Mexican capitulation on 24 March 1847, the Seventh Infantry accompanied the march into the interior. The Regiment performed brilliantly and won recognition for capturing the heights of Cerro Gordo, 17-18 April 1847. The entrenchments of Contreras and Churubusco were carried in August 1847, and finally the great works of Chapultepec, 12 September 1847. Mexico City was entered with colors flying, 14 September 1847.

Returning to the United States the Seventh Infantry remained on the frontier, building posts, making roads, and protecting settlers until 1858, when ordered to assemble at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and to move to Utah for service during the Mormon troubles. In 1860 the Regiment campaigned against Indians in New Mexico.

During the Civil War the Regiment added many battle streamers to its collection and participated in the following engagements: Mesilla, 25 July 1861; Valverde, 21 February 1862; Fort Craig, 14 April 1862; Corinth, April-May, 1862; Fredericksburg, 11-15 December 1862; Murfreesborough, 31 December 1862-3 January 1863; Chancellorsville, 1-3 May 1863; Hoover's Gap, 25-26 June 1863; Gettysburg, 1-3 July 1863; Wapping Heights, 23 July 1863; Chickamauga, 19-20 September 1863; Siege of Chattanooga and Missionary Ridge, 24-25 November 1863; Buzzard's Roost, 9-11 May 1864; Resaca, 13-15 May 1864; New Hope Church, 24 May-5 June 1864; Kenesaw Mountain, 22 June-3 July 1864; Neal Dow Station, 4 July 1864; Utay, Peach Tree Creek and Battle of Atlanta, 20 July-30 August 1864; Jonesboro, 1 September 1864.

The years from 1869 to 1898 indelibly identify the Seventh Infantry with the development of the West, the complete history of which would fill a library. Fights with the Indians were resumed. A battle was fought at Pryor's Fork 4 August 1871. In the Sioux Campaign of 1876 alone the Regiment marched seventeen hundred miles in six months and nineteen days, during which time it fought several engagements and, among other exploits, rescued what was left of General Custer's command, after the massacre at Little Big Horn. On 9 August 1877 the Regiment was engaged at Big Hole Basin, Montana. Its last operation against the Indians occurred in 1891.

During the War with Spain the Seventh Infantry fought in Cuba at El Caney, 1 July 1898, and at San Juan Hill, 2-3 July 1898. In 1901 and 1902 the Regiment fought on Luzon and Samar in the Philippines to help suppress the insurrection. Arduous service was later performed in Alaska.

World War I found the Regiment well prepared. It distinguished itself in the following operations in France: Aisne Defensive, 1-5 June 1918; Chateau-Thierry Sector, 6 June-14 July 1918; Champagne-Marne Defensive, 15-18 July 1918; Aisne-Marne Offensive, 18-27 July 1918; Meuse Argonne Offensive, 3 September-27 October 1918; St. Mihiel Offensive, 12-15 September 1918. A grateful French Government awarded the Seventh Infantry the Croix de Guerre with Star.

After serving in Germany in the Army of Occupation from 18 November 1918 to 12 August 1919, the "Cotton Baler" Regiment returned to the United States. Following brief stays at several posts it moved in September, 1922, to Vancouver Barracks, Washington, where it remained until January, 1941, when it moved to Fort Lewis, Washington.

¹ Sources used in writing this brief history were the battle streamers attached to the Regimental colors and metal bands on the standard which name the campaigns and battles with their dates. The Seventh Infantry Yearbook of 1941 and a typescript bulletin entitled "Through the Years with the Seventh Infantry," issued by Seventh Infantry Headquarters in 1944, were also used for reference.

Colonels of the Seventh United States Infantry



First Colonel after re-organization in 1808
COLONEL WILLIAM RUSSELL



Last Colonel to command during World War II
COLONEL JOHN ARNOLD HEINTGES

worldwarveterans.org

COLONELS OF THE REGIMENT FROM 1808 TO 1946

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Colonel William Russell 3 May 1808 to 17 May 1815</p> <p>Colonel James McDonald 17 May 1815 to 30 April 1817</p> <p>Colonel David Brearley 30 April 1817 to 16 March 1820</p> <p>Colonel Matthew Arbuckle..... 16 March 1820 to 11 June 1851</p> <p>Colonel Henry Wilson 11 June 1851 to 25 February 1861</p> <p>Colonel John J. Abercrombie .. 25 February 1861 to 12 June 1865</p> <p>Colonel John T. Sprague..... 12 June 1865 to 15 March 1869</p> <p>Colonel John Gibbon 15 March 1869 to 10 July 1885</p> <p>Colonel Henry C. Merriam..... 10 July 1885 to 7 July 1897</p> <p>Colonel Daniel W. Benham..... 7 July 1897 to 23 July 1898</p> <p>Colonel Edwin M. Coates 23 July 1898 to 29 January 1900</p> <p>Colonel William S. McCaskey.. 29 January 1900 to 3 February 1900</p> <p>Colonel Lloyd Wheaton 3 February 1900 to 2 March 1901</p> <p>Colonel Charles A. Coolidge 2 March 1901 to 7 August 1903</p> <p>Colonel Daniel Cornman 8 August 1903 to 6 February 1916</p> <p>Colonel Frank B. Jones..... 6 February 1916 to 21 December 1917</p> <p>Colonel T. M. Anderson, Jr... 21 December 1917 to 1 August 1918</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">and from 3 September 1921 to 5 August 1923</p> <p>Colonel Edmund L. Butts 1 August 1918 to 5 October 1918</p> <p>Colonel William M. Morrow.... 5 October 1918 to 18 April 1919</p> <p>Colonel Austin F. Prescott..... 18 April 1919 to 26 October 1919</p> <p>Colonel Mark Wheeler 26 October 1919 to 30 June 1920</p> <p>Colonel Otho B. Rosenbaum 6 November 1920 to 3 September 1921</p> | <p>Colonel Willey Howell 15 August 1923 to 30 June 1925</p> <p>Colonel Frank J. Morrow..... 1 July 1925 to 12 August 1927</p> <p>Colonel Frank W. Rowell ... 29 January 1928 to 19 October 1930</p> <p>Colonel Dwight W. Ryther..... 1 December 1930 to 31 May 1933</p> <p>Colonel Harry A. Wells..... 1 June 1933 to 31 October 1934</p> <p>Colonel Edwin S. Hartshorn ... 1 November 1934 to 28 June 1935</p> <p>Colonel Henry Hossfeld 29 June 1935 to 9 August 1937</p> <p>Colonel Ralph R. Glass.... 19 October 1937 to 30 September 1939</p> <p>Colonel George M. Parker, Jr..... 1 October 1939 to 6 May 1941</p> <p>Colonel Harrison McAlpine 7 May 1941 to.....</p> <p>Lieutenant Colonel Peter T. Wolfe..... to 21 April 1942</p> <p>Colonel Robert C. Macon..... 21 April 1942 to 19 February 1943</p> <p>Colonel Harry B. Sherman.. 19 February 1943 to 17 February 1944</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">and from 27 February 1944 to 11 March 1944</p> <p>Colonel William O. Darby.. 17 February 1944 to 18 February 1944</p> <p>Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro 18 February 1944</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">to 27 February 1944 and from 11 March 1944 to 22 August 1944</p> <p>Colonel Ben Harrell 22 August 1944 to 2 December 1944</p> <p>Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour 2 to 4 December 1944</p> <p>Lieutenant Colonel Clayton C. Thobro 4 to 5 December 1944</p> <p>Colonel John A. Heintges..... 5 December 1944 to 18 June 1946</p> <p>Lieutenant Colonel Jack M. Duncan..... 18 June 1946 to —</p> |
|---|--|

PART ONE

French Moroccan and Tunisian Campaigns

worldwartwoveterans.org

8 November 1942 – 6 July 1943

The Invasion of North Africa

In October, 1942, the Allied situation in World War II was critical. The Germans were secure in Western Europe and, in the east, were inside Stalingrad. In Africa the Germans had reached El Alamein in Egypt. The Japanese were consolidating their newly won gains in the Pacific and there was danger that Hitler's dream of combining forces with Japan would come true. Offensive action against the Axis powers was imperative.

An important offensive action was planned against Germany and her satellite, Italy. It was to be made by American forces in a North African invasion timed with a push by the British Eighth Army from El Alamein. The objective was to free North Africa and destroy the Afrika Korps of the German desert fox, Rommel. Infantry divisions prepared to take the field in this first American offensive against the Axis forces and included the Third Infantry ("Rock of the Marne") Division of World War I fame.

Following the sneak Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941, and the declaration of war by Germany and Italy against the United States of America, the Seventh United States Infantry, as a unit of the Third Infantry Division, participated in extended amphibious training in conjunction with the Marine Corps at San Diego, California, during the spring of 1942. Then it moved to Fort Ord, California. Though many thought the Regiment would soon see action in the Pacific Theatre of Operations, the "Cotton Balermen" in September, 1942, moved east to Camp Pickett, Virginia.

In mid October, 1942, American forces were ready for their first big test and the plans were completed for the invasion of North Africa. Actually war had been waged in Africa for several years commencing with that black day in October, 1935, when Italian troops invaded Ethiopia from Eritrea and Somaliland on the pretext of border incidents caused by the Ethiopians. Addis Ababa was occupied in May, 1936, and the conquest was complete. During the successful German offensives in Western Europe, 1939-1940, which saw Poland, Denmark, Norway, the Low Countries, Belgium and, France herself, all very decisively defeated and overrun, and while the Battle of Britain was waged, only minor military action occurred in Africa but Italy did invade and conquer British Somaliland. Britain assembled troops in Palestine, Egypt and the Near East, from her far flung empire, and prepared for desert fighting. On 13 September 1940, Field Marshal Graziani, with an army of 200,000 men, launched the first Axis offensive from Libya for the Suez Canal and captured Sidi Barrani, but was stopped after a penetration of only seventy miles into Egypt. On 9 December 1940, the first British offensive got underway under the direction of General Wavell. The Italians were driven out of Egypt back into Libya. Bardia, Tobruk, Benghazi and El Agheila were all seized by 9 February 1941. British Somaliland was also recovered and the Italians in Ethiopia were defeated. Haile Selassie returned home again.

Warfare in Africa was suddenly changed when the Germans succeeded in shipping two crack panzer divisions and a division of light infantry to Libya to bolster Italian forces and morale. To command the field troops Hitler sent one of his most skillful field generals, Lieutenant-General Erwin Rommel, who had won brilliant successes for the Nazis in Europe. On 24 March 1941, Rom-

mel's forces opened the second Axis offensive in Libya which overran advanced British forces and by mid-May was at Halfaya Pass within Egypt. Tobruk was not captured during that advance but held out for seven months. With Rommel at Halfaya, Great Britain concentrated men and materiel in Egypt and with a new commanding general for the Eighth Army, General Cunningham, launched their second Libyan offensive on 17-18 November 1941. But in just a few days the British were checked and the situation became critical for them. General Ritchie replaced General Cunningham as Rommel's forces turned to the attack themselves and inflicted heavy losses on British units.

On 26 May 1942, Rommel opened the third Axis offensive in Libya. Maneuvering his mobile forces masterfully he penetrated British mine field positions and when British armor moved against him he attacked their lines of communication. On 13 June 1942, his forces succeeded in ambushing and destroying 230 British tanks which settled the issue of the campaign. The British then withdrew. Tobruk surrendered and the "Desert Fox" drove 120 miles into Egypt, to El Alamein where just sixty miles from Alexandria, he was stopped with great difficulty.

On 23 October 1942, the British Eighth Army, under a new commander, General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, re-inforced and re-equipped with American materiel, opened the third and final British offensive in Libya which broke Rommel's El Alamein line on 3 November 1942, and sent his forces into retreat. While British forces hammered against the Axis troops from the east, American forces were to make one of the greatest overseas invasions in all history and put on a squeeze from the west. The combined operation under the supreme command of Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower of the United States Army, was to bring about the end of the Axis power in Africa. Without the American invasion the see-saw battle might have continued indefinitely.

"Torch" was the code name given to the amphibious operation which was to change the complexion of the entire war. American strategists planned for simultaneous landings on the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of French colonial territory. Of the army of nearly one quarter million men the United States had built up in England and Northern Ireland, 126,000 were scheduled to take part in the invasion, while 65,000 others in America were to make a direct crossing of the Atlantic to strike at North Africa.¹ The forces from the British Isles (designated as Center Task Force) were to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar and land in the vicinity of Oran and Algiers in Algeria. The Western Task Force sailing from America, and under the command of Major General George S. Patton, Jr., was to make a three point landing in French Morocco with Sub-Task Force "Blackstone" on the right in the vicinity of Safi, Sub-Task Force "Brushwood" in the center in the vicinity of Casablanca and Sub-Task Force "Goalpost" on the left in the vicinity of Port Lyautey.² At a later time Eastern Task Force, comprised of British units, would land near Tunisia.

¹ Detzer, "The Mightiest Army," Pleasantville, N. Y., 1945, p. 38.

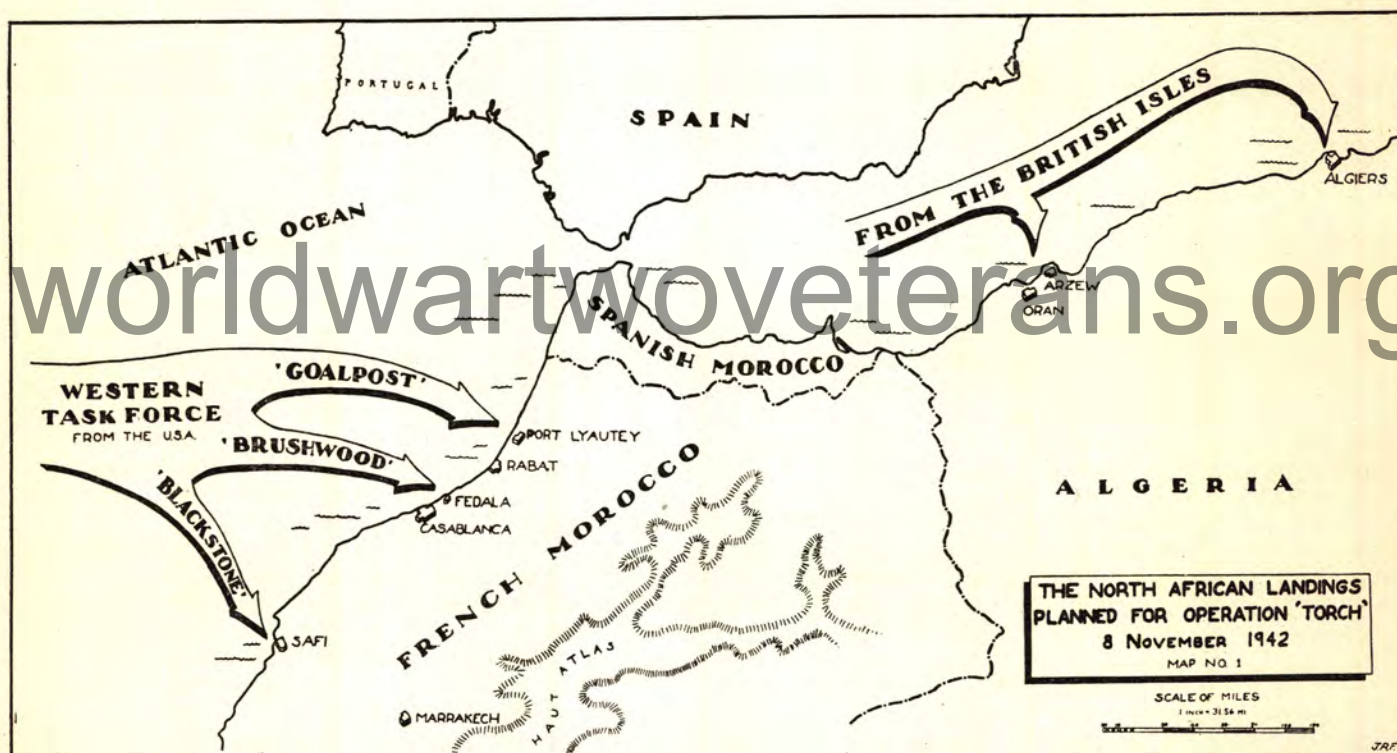
² FO No. 1. Hq. 3d Inf. Div., Camp Pickett, Va., 17 Oct. 1942.

Constituting Sub-Task Force "Brushwood" which was to land northeast of Fedala, French Morocco, on D-Day, H-Hour, to establish a beach-head and advance southwest to capture Fedala and Casablanca was the Third Infantry ("Rock of the Marne") Division, reinforced.

Plans of Major General Jonathan W. Anderson of the Third Infantry Division called for the Seventh Infantry plus attachments, designated as Regimental Landing Group 7, to play the major role in the landing of Sub-Task Force "Brushwood" by landing two battalion teams on Beaches Red 2, and Red 3, at H-Hour. Their missions were to advance inland, attack and seize the town of Fedala, French Morocco, from the east, as well as seize crossings over the Wadi Mellah. One rifle company of a third battalion landing team was to land at H-plus one hour, advance inland and seize a crossing of the Mediouna-Fedala Highway over the Wadi Mellah and the railroad crossing 1100 yards to the south. The 30th Infantry, as Regimental Landing Group 30, was to put two battalion landing teams ashore at H-Hour on the left of the Seventh Infantry on Beaches Blue, advance inland and capture hostile coastal defenses east of Wadi Nefikkh. The 15th Infantry was to be initially in reserve and commence landing at H-plus two hours on

naissance flights over the Casablanca-Mediouna-Fedala area were to be made at daylight. The Naval air group was to be prepared to carry on bombing and strafing missions against enemy troops on roads or railroads approaching the beachhead as well as other targets on call.

Following receipt of the Third Infantry Division plans and orders, Colonel Robert C. Macon, commanding the Seventh Infantry, designated the First Battalion Landing Team commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore to land at Beach Red 2, on the right, at H-hour, advance inland, to attack and capture Fedala from the east. He also designated the Second Battalion Landing Team commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Rafael L. Salzman to land at H-hour on Beach Red 3, advance inland and seize the crossings over the Wadi Mellah. Major Eugene H. Cloud's Third Battalion Landing Team was to land Company "L" at Beach Yellow 2 at H-plus one hour, advance inland and seize the crossing of the Mediouna-Fedala Highway over the Wadi Mellah, and railroad crossings 1100 yards south of it. The remainder of the Regimental Landing Group was to land on the beaches on regimental order. The Third Reconnaissance Troop, to be transported in the same vessel with Company "L", was to land at Beach Yellow 2, advance inland, capture hostile installations in a golf course area and



beaches to be designated. It was then to assemble and be prepared to move on order. One combat team of the 2nd Armored Division and the Second Battalion 20th Combat Engineers were to land on order after H-plus three hours and assemble in the vicinity of Fedala. The 436th Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AW) Battalion was to land on order on a beach to be designated and provide anti-aircraft protection.

Naval fire support groups of an American fleet were to support the attack commencing at H-hour against illuminated searchlights without call and at daylight, on call from battalion landing teams, against defended areas, hostile formations, and routes of advance. Naval air groups were to attack enemy aircraft at the Casablanca (Gazes) Airport and in fields in the vicinity, as well as any enemy submarines in the Casablanca harbor. Recon-

assist the Seventh Infantry in capturing Fedala.

Supporting and attached units were assigned their missions. The 10th Field Artillery Battalion, 10th Combat Engineer Battalion and the 756th Tank Battalion placed batteries and platoons with each landing team. The 443rd Coast Artillery Separate Battalion assigned batteries with each team and the 36th Combat Engineer Battalion attached shore parties to each group, as did the 3rd Medical Battalion.

The enemy situation for the entire operation did not appear too difficult to handle but there were some unknown factors which were puzzling. The known enemy, the German and Italian troops, were quite busy indeed in Libya, backtracking for Tunisia before the British Eighth Army. None were known to be in Algeria and French Morocco. But those places were French territories

which supported the French Colonial Army and off shore were powerful units of the French navy. What would the French army and navy do? Technically they were not our enemies but since the downfall of France in June, 1940, the government of "Unoccupied France" established itself in Vichy and collaborated extensively with the Nazis in power. The French people not yet under the German yoke were divided between the Vichy French and Free French. The commander-in-chief of all French forces in Africa, both army and navy, was Admiral Jean Darlan, a Vichy appointee. It therefore seemed likely that some fighting would result but no one knew how much. Would the French fight to the bitter end, offer only token resistance or let the Americans land unopposed?

The French Moroccan Army was most strongly concentrated in the vicinity of the port areas especially that of Fedala-Casablanca. Two battalions of Moroccan and Senegalese Infantry plus two troops of Spahi Cavalry and one battalion of 75mm French Artillery were located at Fedala. Fixed coastal defenses, consisting of four 138.6mm guns, two 75mm guns, four 100mm guns, and four large guns of unknown calibre, were northeast of Fedala. The French were known to have strong anti-aircraft defenses with 13.2mm, and 90mm guns with searchlights, and guns of other calibre. Systems of trenches were located along the coast and Cape Fedala. At Mediouna, twenty miles away from Fedala, was located a battalion of Moroccan Infantry that could be brought up in a day's time. At other places from twenty to one hundred miles from Fedala were troops that could be brought to the defense of Fedala and Casablanca within a short time.

Many French naval units were in Moroccan ports. At Casablanca were the battleship *Jean Bart*, two light cruisers, eight to ten destroyers, ten to twelve submarines, two motor torpedo boats and twelve navy fighter aircraft. It was estimated the French had an air arm consisting of seventy-four fighters, thirteen reconnaissance planes and eighty-one long range bombers at coastal air-dromes. Long range German bombers operating from French and Spanish Airfields could reinforce the defending air forces. It was expected that French defense would initially be air and naval attacks against the convoys and stubborn defense of Fedala-Casablanca.

The Fedala beaches are divided by rock and are each about one-half mile in length and subject to flanking fire from Cape Fedala. One thousand yards off shore the water is thirty feet in depth and the surf is heaviest between November and March. Port de Fedala is an artificial harbor built in the extreme west end of the Bay of Fedala. Fedala was, at the time of the invasion, the principal Moroccan port for oil and oil products and had a population of 2,500 Europeans and 13,000 natives. At the westward end of the town and projecting one thousand yards northward is the Cape of Fedala. The terrain between Fedala and Casablanca, sixteen miles to the southwest, is gently rolling and generally cultivated. The stream Wadi Mellah, west of Fedala, flows between deeply sloped banks. Northeast of the town is the stream Wadi Nefikh.

Following detailed study of the plans by responsible leaders, final preparations were made, and Regimental Landing Group 7 loaded on four transports in the Norfolk Navy Yard. The First Battalion Landing Team boarded the *U.S.S. Leonard Wood*, the Second Battalion Landing Team loaded on the *U.S.S. Thomas Jefferson*, the Third Battalion Landing Team minus Company "L" stowed its gear on the *U.S.S. Joseph Hewes*. Company "L" and the 3rd Reconnaissance Troop boarded the *U.S.S. Tasker H. Bliss*. Anti-Tank Company, Cannon Company, Service Company and the 7th Infantry Band

were divided among the various landing teams for the crossing. The Personnel Section, some surplus transportation and a number of officers and men temporarily in the hospital remained behind, to join the regiment at a later date.

Steaming out of Norfolk Navy Yard 24 October 1942, the four vessels transporting Regimental Landing Group 7 joined the convoy comprising Sub-Task Force "Brushwood", which in turn as a part of the Western Task Force and the forces from the British Isles represented America's first sizeable offensive in World War II and was the largest amphibious force America had yet assembled. "Never before in history had so much firepower, so many well-armed soldiers, so much materiel of such great variety, such quantities of supplies, been assembled for an attack by sea against an enemy-held continent. The 700 ships carried 22,000,000 pounds of food, 38,000,000 pounds of clothing, 10,000,000 gallons of gasoline, more than 1,000,000 copies of 1,000 different maps. And big guns by the thousand, tanks and bull-dozers, tons and tons of ammunition."³

America had to do overnight, it seemed, what her enemies had taken years to do. The problems of mobilizing, equipping and training the huge forces that were necessary to defeat Germany, Italy and Japan had hardly begun when the forces for Operation "Torch" sped to their task of striking our first blow at the enemy in North Africa.

Confident in its leadership and in the ability of its troops, thoroughly schooled in every branch of amphibious warfare, the Seventh Infantry faced the future without misgivings. Equipment and weapons were modern and their efficiency proved by repeated testings. There was the general belief that the time of "Too little and too late" was past and the members of the Seventh Infantry were proud to be in the van of America's first sizeable attack against Axis forces.

Rough weather was encountered as the convoy followed a tortuous course across the heaving swells of the South Atlantic Ocean. On several occasions German submarines made futile attacks against the convoy but were driven off by powerful protecting naval and air forces.

Cruising time was put to good use as many soldiers received their first instruction in the Army's new rocket launcher, the Bazooka, aboard ship. Orientation lectures presented information as to African climate and the customs and languages of the people. It was emphasized that the French people were not our enemies and that one of our primary objectives in the forthcoming campaign was to strengthen the position of the fighting French units and to stimulate the resistance movement in France. The French were expected to capitulate when faced by a strong, aggressive attack.

All elements of Regimental Landing Group 7 were made familiar with the plan of action, the scheme of maneuver, and the objectives in detail. Orders were given that in the event of dispersal or lack of communication, units should proceed separately to their objectives.

Troops were to wear herringbone twill uniforms for the landing with each soldier displaying an American flag on his left arm. Because of the uncertainty of supply in the initial phase, each man was issued an individual reserve of one and one-third "K" rations to be carried on his person and one "C", one "D" and two-thirds "K" rations for each man were held in initial reserve. Two canteens of water and extra ammunition were to be carried. Orders were given that no rifles were to be fired before daylight, except on order of an officer. Bayonets were to be used to dispose of sentries.

³ Detzer, op ct., pp 40-41

At 2400, 7 November 1942, the ships of Sub-Task Force "Brushwood" anchored about nine miles off the coast of French Morocco, in the vicinity of Fedala Bay, and troops awaited H-hour which had initially been set for 0400 on 8 November, D-Day, but postponed to 0445 because of unavoidable delays. Shortly before that time recordings of a speech prepared by President Roosevelt were broadcast to North Africa. The prepared speech announced the landings about to occur and appealed to the French forces in Africa to join with the Americans and British to expel the enemy from the continent. Those who wished to co-operate were asked to stack their weapons and point searchlights into the sky. Contrary to the highest hopes, however, the troops were to meet opposition, though not too prolonged in some places.

THE LANDING AT FEDALA, FRENCH MOROCCO,

At 0445, 8 November 1942, the Seventh Infantry actively engaged in World War II. At that hour the first troops of the First and Second Battalions began landing northeast of Fedala. As the Poet Burns once said "the best laid plans a' mice an' men gang aft a-gley," so it was with the well laid plans of Colonel Robert C. Macon and his subordinate commanders.

Naval coxwains guiding the Higgins boats to the beaches were not familiar with the coast line and as a result in the black night, which was "darkest just before the dawn," very few, if any, of the boats in the first waves landed on their assigned beaches. Instead they crashed on coral reefs and rocky shores. Men were injured and drowned. Units were broken up and scattered to the winds. Much confusion existed and soon some of the assault troops drew enemy fire. Later on, while moving inland, assault troops were shelled by their own supporting naval guns as well as by French artillery. The Third Battalion Landing Team landed in daylight under machine gun and artillery fire. A few enemy planes strafed the troops. The operation was not executed too brilliantly but in spite of being put ashore in wrong places, and being shelled by their own navy, "Cotton Balers" turned the operation into a success through the determination and aggressiveness of individual members and groups.

FIRST BATTALION CAPTURES FEDALA AND THE CAPE

Company "A" which was to be landed on Beach Red 2 near Fedala, and to move inland between Rue Dela Fey and the beach to the Cold Storage Plant to capture the Point, was landed by the Navy east of Beach Red 2 on sharp coral rocks at about 0445. Some equipment was lost and the company became badly disorganized. Captain Albert Brown, the company commander, did not reach the shore in the first wave because of motor boat failure.

Company "C" commenced landing on the rocks left of Beach Red 2 at 0445. One boat of the first wave developed motor trouble and did not land until 0515 two hundred fifty yards from the beach. Coordination was difficult and the various platoons, operating independently, pushed on for the objectives in Fedala. The Second Platoon of Company "C" commanded by Second Lieutenant Clarence A. Potterfield, organized as left flank platoon in the first wave for the attack on Fedala, experienced difficulty in landing. Its boats crashed against coral rocks east of Beach Red 2. Private First Class Roy W. Wilson lost his life in the water during the landing. Second Lieutenant Potterfield and Sergeant

Glenn S. Foote literally pulled several men out of the water and rapidly organized the platoon for the advance on Fedala. The first friendly units that the platoon encountered were men from Company "A" but it succeeded in joining the company headquarters group on the Rue de Kasba and moved on toward Point Petain where Captain Herman E. Wagner was found reorganizing part of the company.

At about 0500 Private First Class Cecil C. Harrington of Company "A" prevented the Higgins boat in which he was riding from smashing against the dangerous reefs. He jumped overboard into water of unknown depth and with the aid of a rope held the craft from being smashed to pieces against the reefs while his comrades landed in safety.⁴

COMPANY "D" MEN DISPLAY GALLANTRY IN ACTION

Company "D" commanded by Captain Leroy A. Haselwood began crashing on a reef with the first waves at about 0500. Several boats were broken and part of the load of one had to be transferred to another. Two boats slid over the reef and moved on into the beach. Other boats backed off of the reef and later moved to the shore to debouch their loads. Due to the tireless efforts of the officers and men very little equipment was lost. Private First Class Perry Coburn and Private Reino Wayrynen displayed great courage and initiative during this action by recovering a 30 calibre machine gun from the water after their assault boat had struck the coral reef. After scrambling to safety they returned to the wrecked craft voluntarily, wading through deep water under heavy artillery fire. They secured a rope to the wrecked boat and searched the coral bed until the weapon was found and carried back to the shore.⁵

Private First Class Bert A. Rodman of Company "D" voluntarily recovered the machine gun and tripod belonging to his squad from its wrecked Higgins boat, which was beached on the rocks. The boat had sustained a damaged ramp and was filling rapidly with water. The men had landed without equipment and Private First Class Rodman returned twice through enemy fire to the wrecked boat to recover the equipment, wading approximately fifty yards through water over five feet deep.⁶

Second Lieutenant William Tolbert of Company "A" commanded the group in Boat Number 7 of the second wave which careened off one landing boat and hit a coral reef some distance off shore. The men crawled over the bow of the boat onto the rocks but before they could clear the rocks a searchlight from the point flashed skyward and then swept the beach. As the men scrambled for cover a machine gun from one of the landing boats farther up the beach fired on the light.

Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore, commanding the First Battalion, landed with the third wave on the rocks east of Beach Red 2 at about 0530 and spent about thirty minutes climbing over rocks before level ground was reached. Lieutenant Colonel Moore encountered men from both Companies "A" and "C", his assault companies. Finding only one officer in the group, Lieutenant Nielson of Company "A", the Lieutenant Colonel placed him in temporary command of the Company "A" group

⁴ GO No. 7 HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 27 Jan. '43. Pfc Harrington was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵ GO No. 11 HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Dec. '42. Pfc Coburn and Pvt. Wayrynen were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁶ GO No. 11 HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Dec. '42. Pfc Rodman was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

and a non-commissioned officer was placed in charge of the Company "C" men. He then sent scouts out to the front and a three or four man patrol to the left flank. The remainder of the two groups was ordered toward Fedala. First Lieutenant Robert W. Stephenson, the company executive officer, arrived and assumed command of Company "A" which proceeded on its mission. Enemy machine gun fire barely passed over the heads of the men as they moved behind the mask of a low ridge along the beach. Enemy artillery fire searched in the fields to the east. At about 0600 in early dawn as the company proceeded behind the mask, approximately a platoon of Senegalese soldiers were seen outlined against the sky. The two assault platoons of Company "A" hit the ground and allowed the Senegalese to come within seventy-five yards of their position. Lieutenant Tolbert went forward and induced the Senegalese, who had a 60mm pack mortar and a machine gun, besides small arms, to surrender.

The Intelligence Section of First Battalion Headquarters Company landed with the first wave under the command of First Lieutenant Roosevelt Plummer and eventually captured the Telephone and Telegraph Building in Fedala. Private First Class Everett P. Cardullo, of Headquarters Company First Battalion, alone and at the risk of his life halted and effected the surrender of a platoon of Senegalese soldiers while on a mission to the Telegraph office. The troops leveled their guns at Private Cardullo, but were commanded to lower them by their officer. Surrendering their arms, the Senegalese were then held captive by Private First Class Cardullo until he was relieved by an officer. Cardullo then proceeded on to a building where one squad of the Regimental Intelligence Section was held captive by the French. In conversing with the French, Private First Class Cardullo influenced them to release the captive Americans and return their arms and equipment.

The Third Platoon of Company "C" commanded by Second Lieutenant Floyd L. Hardy entered Fedala at about dawn, stopped an enemy passenger car and a truck and captured nine German officers and men who were members of the German Armistice Commission that had fled from the Hotel Miramar. A detachment of the First Platoon and company headquarters moved rapidly forward ahead of the rest of the company and attempted to capture the coast artillery battery at the base of Cape Fedala as soon as possible. Firing positions were taken up about one hundred fifty yards from the battery and there was evidence that the position was going to surrender, when the Navy opened fire with heavy guns. After being subjected to about twenty minutes of the shelling the group withdrew to the balance of the company. Captain Herman E. Wagner then ran to the beach to try to get the Navy to stop shelling the Cape. During his absence the company was subjected to further shelling and suffered casualties. First Lieutenant Virgil W. Smith, Jr., second in command, withdrew the company from the shelled area only to receive machine gun and direct artillery fire from an anti-aircraft battery located at the west edge of the race track. As orders of the Battalion Commander had been for Company "C" to seize the race track before taking Fedala, First Lieutenant Smith launched an attack on the enemy positions. Slow but steady progress was made over the open ground against emplaced enemy machine guns. Second Lieutenant William Tilley commanding the First Platoon and Sergeant Alvin G. White of the Intelligence Section armed with a rocket launcher moved forward to eliminate the enemy machine guns. After several well placed shots were fired, the enemy put up a white flag. Second Lieutenant Tilley and Sergeant White got up and walked toward the enemy but almost immediately were fired upon and wounded. Enraged

members of Company "C" immediately opened fire with a heavy volume from all along the line inflicting casualties on the enemy. Sergeant Talmadge Miller went to the aid of Lieutenant Tilley and Sergeant White, who were mortally wounded. Without hesitation he crossed the open terrain in full view and under fire of the enemy.⁸ The enemy actually surrendered the position the second time. Staff Sergeant William K. Dieleman reorganized the First Platoon.

While this was going on the first squad of the Second Platoon of Company "C" under Sergeant James W. Cowling moved west of St. Jacques Church. Private First Class Bond fired his Browning automatic rifle down Rue de Foch upon an enemy machine gun at Point Pasteur. The squad was ordered to withdraw to Point Petain and in so doing spotted seven enemy soldiers constructing a rock position 150 yards west of the city hall. Sergeant Miller and Private Sanford crawled to within thirty yards of the enemy from the rear, and quickly covered and captured them.

Company "A" continued its advance toward Fedala encountering many armed Senegalese on the way, who offered however little resistance. Near the junction of Boulevard Moulay Youssef and Boulevard Moulay Ismael two enemy machine guns of approximately 50mm calibre, an anti-tank gun of 20mm calibre, and some 60mm pack mortars were destroyed. As dawn was breaking Company "A" reached the edge of Fedala where a company of Senegalese troops were quartered in some barracks. They were quickly captured and sent to the rear.

The First Platoon of Company "A" led by First Lieutenant Robert W. Stephenson and Second Lieutenant E. W. Staible surrounded the Miramar Hotel at 0730 and entered it without resistance. Papers and effects of lately departed Germans were found. At this time both the U. S. Naval batteries and enemy artillery placed heavy concentrations on Fedala with two direct hits scored on the Hotel Miramar. Heavy shells began falling on the troops east of the hotel. One of the concentrations killed Private William H. Marshall and a Senegalese soldier, besides wounding Corporal Charles J. Peters and Private Joseph G. Krumski. Much confusion resulted. The First Platoon became separated from the bulk of the company which managed to become located in some trenches just west of Casino Park.

At about 0900 that exciting morning Private Paul E. Bruns, also of Headquarters Company First Battalion, rescued a fellow soldier, whose legs had been rendered useless by enemy machine gun fire, from drowning in Fedala Bay. At the time Private Bruns was engaged in taking ammunition from the beach to the dumps. He was returning for another load when enemy machine guns from the Cape began firing on the beach. A soldier about twenty-five yards out in the water was hit in the legs and Private Bruns, went to the aid of the soldier and successfully brought him to the safety of the dunes on the beach.⁹

At 1000 Company "A" attempted to move forward again but was unsuccessful due to the heavy concentrations of naval, artillery and machine gun fire. At this time Private First Class Edwin S. Dowling, Jr., of Company "A", exposed himself to enemy machine gun fire to give aid to his wounded squad leader upon whom the

⁷ GO No. 11, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 11 Dec. '42. Pfc. Cardullo was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁸ GO No. 6, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 25 Jan. '43. Sgt. Miller was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁹ GO No. 11, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 11 Dec. '42. Pvt. Bruns was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

enemy was firing. His actions afforded the members of his squad the opportunity of outflanking and capturing the enemy who were only three hundred to four hundred yards distant and had excellent observation. This action reflected great credit on Private First Class Dowling.¹⁰

Company "B" commanded by Captain C. C. Crall, was the reserve company of the First Battalion, and had started crashing on the rocks at about 0525 in the third and succeeding waves. The platoons became separated. However Captain Crall organized as much of the company as possible and started moving it inland at 0545 sending security troops to Rond Point Lyautey, Road Junction No. 2 and the Railroad Station. At 1030 the company was disposed in the vicinity of the Market Place in Fedala protecting the rear of the First Battalion and preventing hostile forces from entering the town. The second platoon was sent forward to reinforce Company "C" and entered in a fight with French Marines on a patrol boat mounting a 75mm gun. The enemy were driven from the boat and retreated. Company "B" (less its Second Platoon) remained in its position during the rest of the day and night. The Second Platoon, following its successful attack on the French Marines, assaulted and captured a warehouse containing arms and equipment.

Also during the landing operations while enemy shell fire was being received, Private Alfred Bowles of Company "D" distinguished himself in action. He braved the enemy shell fire and rescued Corporal Thomas A. Rehak from the water into which he had fallen after debarking from a Higgins boat of the fourth wave. The front end of the boat was damaged when it collided with another craft about 800 yards from shore. The boat proceeded to shore and landed against a coral reef. Corporal Rehak was among the last to debark. As the corporal stepped over the side he slipped off the reef and fell into the water; he was weighted down with his equipment and ammunition and was in a perilous position between the reef and the boat which was being pounded by the waves. In the meantime Private Bowles had taken his equipment and 81mm mortar tube to the beach where the remainder of the company sought shelter. In the face of constant fire he returned to the damaged craft and alone assisted Corporal Rehak out of the water and onto the reef thereby saving the Corporal's life.¹¹

When Company "D" finally reached some degree of organization, sections of heavy machine guns were sent to the Rond Point Lyautey and Rond Point Petain to cover the left flank of the First Battalion and control the streets in the rear of the two assault companies. One platoon of heavy machine guns was attached to Company "B" for defense of the beachhead.

At 1030 the Second Platoon of Company "C", intact for the first time since leaving its transport, took its position on the left flank of the company which moved toward a large enemy encampment south of Casino Park. While the platoon moved on the left flank, across open terrain, a fifteen minute exchange of fire was carried on. At about 1120 an enemy civilian notified Lieutenant Potterfield that the garrison desired to surrender. Wishing to avoid casualties among his men he moved into the enemy lines unarmed, and without actual knowledge that they would surrender. This exceptional bravery brought success and the garrison of fifty men were influenced to capitulate, thus saving the lives of many men.¹² Terms were reached and the American flag was raised over the fortified area.

Captain Wagner in returning from the beach with a few men assumed his company was attacking the coast artillery batteries and moved toward the Cape. Private First Class John L. Cupka of Company "C" employing a rocket launcher for the first time, silenced a 100mm

coast artillery battery on Cape Fedala after advancing through hazardous terrain.¹³

Meanwhile our naval batteries engaged enemy shore batteries in a duel, with shells falling close to Captain Brown's stranded boat. Attracting the attention of a boat returning from the shore Captain Brown's group was towed back to the *U.S.S. Leonard Wood* but the second boat also developed engine trouble just as the transport was reached. Getting into a third Higgins boat the captain finally reached Beach Red 2 at 0930 and with his group headed for Company "A"'s objective. With about thirty men he succeeded in rejoining his company in the trenches near Casino Park at about 1100.

An enemy gun on Cape Fedala continued to inflict serious damage on our small landing craft and on the troops landing at Beach Blue, thereby threatening the entire operation. Lieutenant Colonel Moore ordered Company "A" in conjunction with four attached tanks which had landed about 0830 to attack at 1120 to silence the gun and seize the enemy's fire control station located in a building on a hill and protected by barbed wire. Company "A" attacked on schedule against small arms, automatic weapons and high trajectory fire and successfully passed through the town capturing the Cold Storage Plant and reaching the open field leading to the Cape. Firing positions were taken behind a wall and the company concentrated its fire on the control station. A mortar opened fire and scored a direct hit on the station. Staff Sergeant Robert A. Marvin of Company "A", led an attack which was successful in destroying an enemy machine gun nest. Leaving two men to deliver frontal fire on the position he went alone approximately one hundred yards to the flank, creeping over terrain which was exposed to enemy sniper fire, in order to get within sub-machine gun range of the emplacement. Lying behind a rock only large enough to protect part of his body he fired successive bursts on the enemy until the rounds in his clip were expended. A white flag was raised at the emplacement before he could reload his piece.¹⁴

Captain Brown stepped in front of his company, gave the order to fix bayonets and give assault fire with movement. He led his company across the open field as the enemy opened fire with all weapons. Private Frank D. Leppar of Company "A" distinguished himself during the action on Cape Fedala.¹⁵

Browning automatic riflemen protected men with wire cutters who made holes in the barbed wire for the riflemen to dash through. One tank moved forward to the front through the barbed wire but overturned when attempting to go up the slope of the hill. As the enemy fired from the upstairs windows of the fire control station, Company "A" closed in from all sides in the final assault, killing five enemy, taking twenty-two prisoners of war and capturing three coastal guns and a .50 calibre gun. Snipers were still active on the Cape and Company "A" sent out parties which eliminated them. At 1201 Second Lieutenant Joseph H. Reay called Company "A" to attention as Captain Brown raised the American flag over the fire control station. Lieutenant Colonel Moore

10 GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. Pfc Dowling was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

11 GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. Pvt. Bowles was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

12 GO No. 32, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 26 Apr. '43. 2 Lt. Potterfield was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

13 GO No. 11, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 11 Dec. '42. Pfc Cupka was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

14 GO No. 14, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 21 Feb. '43. S/Sgt. Marvin was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

15 GOs No. 2 & 32, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 8 Jan. & 26 Apr. '43. Capt. Brown & Pvt. Leppar were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

soon arrived at the control station and made plans for an attack at 1300, following a five minute 81mm. mortar concentration, to capture a small calibre battery known to be on the very tip of the Cape but not firing at that time. Company "A" with two tanks attached was assigned the mission. Because one tank became engaged with snipers in a building Company "A" did not attack at 1300 sharp. Captain Wagner of Company "C" with a number of his men arrived on the Cape and joined Company "A". Just as the two companies were about to start their attack a French civilian arrived and stated the enemy forces on the tip of the cape would surrender if given the rights of prisoners of war. Captain Brown went to the Cape's point and accepted the surrender of eighty enemy who piled up their arms and ammunition. At this time some American soldiers opened fire on the group but no casualties resulted. A guard arrived and took charge of the prisoners. Company "A" remained on Cape Fedala during the night of 8-9 November.

SECOND BATTALION LANDS OFF ITS COURSE AND CAPTURES FORT BLONDIN

The boat waves of the Second Battalion Landing Team were directed astray and became greatly dispersed on the way to assault assigned beaches. The first and second waves landed at points east of Mansouriah at 0530, five and more miles east of the assigned beach. The third wave landed off its course about four miles east of the assigned beach and six hundred yards east of the point on which Fort Blondin is situated. The remaining waves were distributed between Beach Blue 1 and Beach Red 3, which was the assigned beach.

With the surf high and the shores rough and rocky the landing boats could approach only one hundred yards off shore in some places. Landing was made in deep water under heavy fire from Fort Blondin which in turn was being shelled by the American naval support vessels. During the landing some casualties were suffered by drowning and gun fire. Sharp rocks made swimming and wading difficult, particularly with the heavy weight of the equipment and extra ammunition the members carried.

Companies "E" and "F" were the two assault companies of the battalion landing team which landed in the first two waves in the vicinity of the Mansouriah railroad station, in the zone of the 30th Infantry. The landing was against rough, rocky reefs and many boats became damaged. Once ashore, however, the companies encountered no opposition on the ground, and moved to the west abreast, along the one metre gauge railway tracks and seasonal road towards Fedala. During the approach march hostile planes strafed the troops but were driven off by massed rifle fire.

Company "G", with elements of Company "H", part of the Medical Detachment and the artillery liaison group landed with the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Rafael L. Salzman, in the third and fourth waves at several places, with only one group landing on the assigned Beach, Red 3.

During the landing when members of Company "H" were in danger of drowning, Staff Sergeant Carl P. Papanek rescued several men and their equipment, bringing them ashore through heavy surf and under heavy artillery fire from shore batteries. His actions saved not only the lives of several men, but also equipment essential to the continuation of the landing operations.¹⁶

The Battalion Commander, his executive officer; S-2; four rifle squads of Company "G"; one section of 81mm. mortars and one section of heavy machine guns from Company "H"; part of the medical detachment, communications section, and two civilian photographers

landed at about 0615 in the vicinity of Fort Blondin which was being shelled by Naval fire. It was necessary to withdraw from the immediate vicinity until the fire ceased.

It was at that time that other elements joined the group and were organized into one force. At 0730 the naval artillery barrage on Fort Blondin ceased, having



KILLED IN ACTION

Three of 15 "Cotton Balers" KIA on 8 Nov. 1942 during the Invasion of North Africa. Above, L. to R., Pfc. John H. Claxton, "M"; Chaplain Clement M. Falter, 3d Bn.; Left, 2 Lt. William M. Tilley, "C".



shelled the fort for one hour and a half. One artillery gun in the fort was still able to fire however, in addition to several machine guns and rifles.

Fort Blondin was not an assigned objective of the Second Battalion but had been assigned to the 30th Infantry. Receiving fire from the fort, Lieutenant Colonel Salzman decided military necessity warranted an attack on the fort by his forces.

The Battalion Commander seeing that the 30th Infantry, whose task it was to take the fort, were nowhere near the area of the fort, ordered an attack on the fort from the south and east. He took personal command of the attack.¹⁷

While mortar and machine gun fire were delivered east of the Fort and the enemy returned artillery and machine gun fire, Lieutenant Colonel Salzman personally led the four rifle squads from Company "G" in a flanking movement to the north and east. The flanking force came under heavy machine gun fire. The Second Battalion leader distinguished himself during action which eliminated the enemy weapon.¹⁸

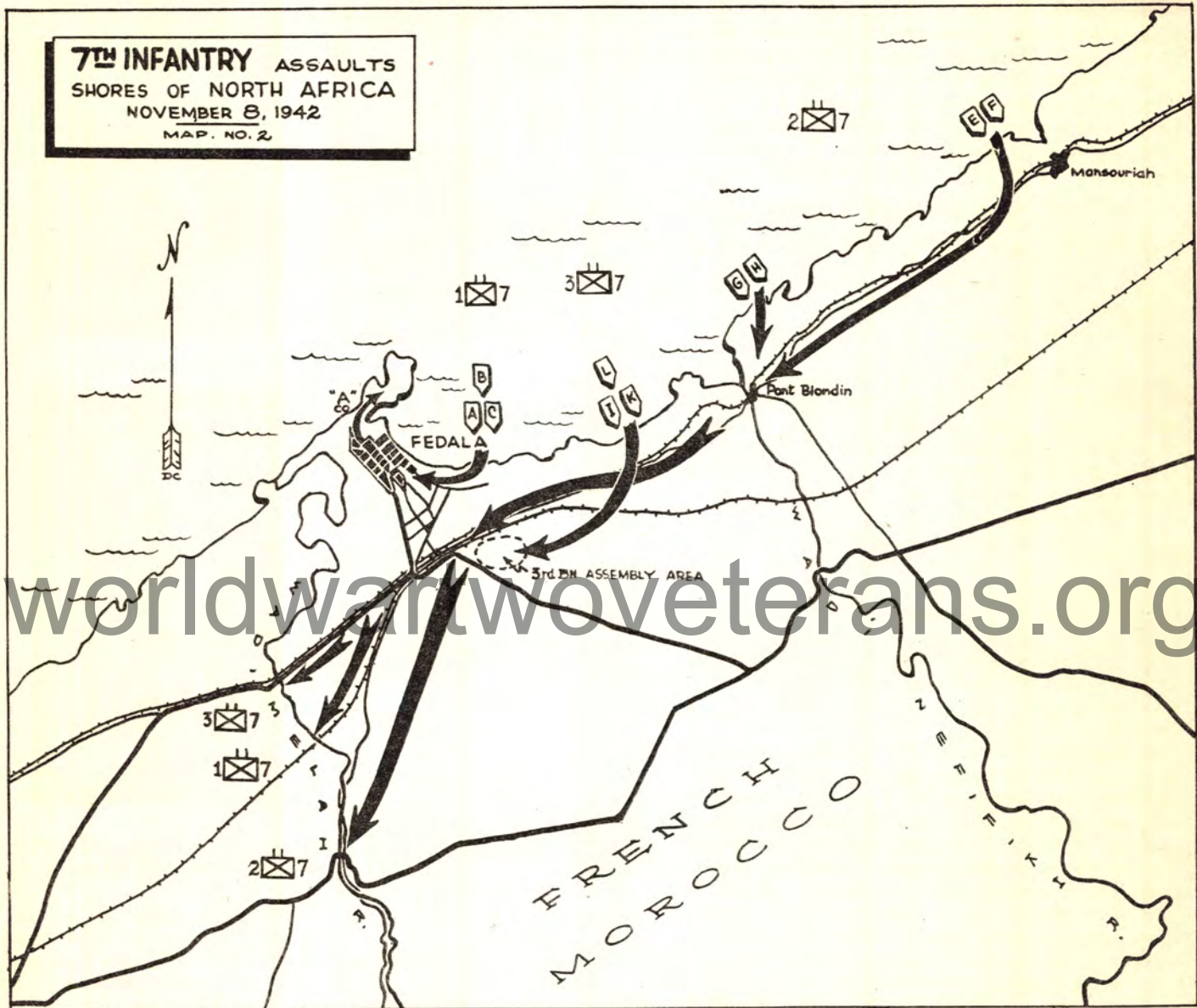
¹⁶ GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. S/Sgt. Papanek was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁷ "Hist. of 2 Bn, 7th Inf., Norfolk-Casablanca Op." p. 1.

¹⁸ GO No. 13, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 20 Feb. '43. Lt. Col. Salzman was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

As the attacking riflemen were within two hundred yards of the Fort the last remaining artillery gun of the defenders was put out of action by a mortar round. Machine gun and rifle fire continued to be delivered at the attacking riflemen of Company "G" as they closed in rapidly, crawled through the barbed wire defenses and started into the enclosures. Several of the enemy had been killed and wounded, and the surviving forty quickly surrendered.

companies were landed far from their assigned zones and were to the rear of the Third Platoon, such a mission could not be performed. Second Lieutenant Perry J. Stockman knew that part of the battalion's objective was the railroad crossing over the Wadi Mellah. He accordingly led the Third Platoon toward that battalion objective. Joined by a section of machine guns from Company "H" under Lieutenant Tietze, the small detachment arrived at the crossing to find detachments of the enemy



The fort was taken after one of our mortars had put the remaining gun out of action and our fire had silenced some of the machine guns. The Battalion Commander was among the first to enter the fort and he received the surrender of the Commandant of Fort Blondin. After the Battalion Commander had received the surrender of the Commandant, the battalion commander of the 30th Infantry came up to the fort with some of his men. After having explained the situation, the Second Battalion Commander moved out of the fort and proceeded to his own objective. The resistance of the French was spirited and the action of the Second Battalion probably saved the 30th Infantry some heavy losses as the French only gave up when our elements were up to the barbed wire.¹⁹

The Third Platoon of Company "G", less one squad, landed on Beach Red 2. Its assigned mission was to gain contact with the First Battalion and protect the right rear of the right assault company. But because assault

guarding the western end. Aggressive action drove the enemy away and the group dug in, set up defensive positions and awaited the arrival of other friendly forces.

After leaving Fort Blondin, Lieutenant Colonel Salzman reported to the Regimental Command Post and then made a motor reconnaissance to, and beyond the Wadi Mellah. He found the two rifle squads of Company "G" under Second Lieutenant Stockman and the section of machine guns under Lieutenant Tietze covering the railroad bridge. The battalion commander continued his reconnaissance and located Companies "E" and "F" and brought them to the Wadi Mellah.

¹⁹ "Hist. of 2 Bn, 7th Inf.," Op. cit. p. 2.

THIRD BATTALION FOLLOWS UP TO THE WADI MELLAH

The Third Battalion Landing Team less Company "L" under the command of Major Eugene H. Cloud also experienced much difficulty in landing. Delays occurred, due to a shortage of landing craft and many boats developed engine trouble. The biggest factor however was opposition from the enemy in the form of artillery and machine gun fire. The Third Battalion Landing Team was unable to follow up the First Battalion landing as rapidly as scheduled. On approaching Beach Red 2 the artillery and machine gun fire was so heavy that the Third Battalion Landing had to give up hope of landing there and was forced to use Beach Red 3. But opposition was encountered there and many casualties were suffered in the water and on the beach. Much equipment was lost and a great number of the landing craft were destroyed.

The Third Battalion Catholic Chaplain, First Lieutenant Clement M. Falter, attempted to aid a wounded soldier but was killed by enemy mortar fire.²⁰ The battalion commander received a slight shrapnel wound but continued on. After crossing the beach the Third Battalion occupied a field where deep ditches offered some protection from strafing enemy planes. An enemy plane dived and strafed Company "M".

Sergeant Amos J. Bemis of Company "K" performed admirably in rescuing Private Gerald R. Howard from the water off the reefs during the landing operations.²¹

Private Francis Slavik of the Medical Detachment remained on the beach to attend wounded soldiers when other personnel were moving across the beach and out of the danger zone as quickly as possible.²²

Company "L" and the 3rd Reconnaissance Troop which units were assigned the special mission of landing on Beach Yellow 2 at H and H-plus 60 to advance inland, secure the highway and railroad over the Wadi Mellah, and capture hostile installations in the golf course area, never did accomplish their mission. The *U.S.S. Tasker H. Bliss* which carried the special force became lost during the night and reached the transport area late. Company "L" did not leave the ship until 0705 in the morning. The advance to Beach Yellow 2 was made in the small boats during broad daylight and was continually subjected to intense artillery concentrations and .50 calibre machine gun fire when within range. Four separate attempts were made to land at Beach Yellow 2 but all attempts were without success. The naval ensign in command of the boats ordered them to return to the ship. Captain Mark L. Cory commanding Company "L" intervened and ordered the ensign to put the company ashore "somewhere," which was done at Beach Red 3 between 1115 and 1130, between artillery barrages. Rapidly clearing the beach the company reorganized in the cane brakes where it was strafed twice by enemy planes and suffered one casualty.

The Third Reconnaissance Troop did not land with Company "L" but returned to the *U.S.S. Tasker H. Bliss* after being in the Higgins boats for about seven hours. The Cavalry troops remained on the Bliss until 10 November when they landed. Company "L" joined the Third Battalion which moved on order to the Wadi Mellah and made secure the highway bridge on Route

Secondaire. No opposition was encountered during this movement. Outposts were set up and defenses prepared to repel any counter-attack.

COLONEL WILBUR WITH HELP OF CORPORAL FORBES PERFORMS MISSION OF VITAL IMPORTANCE

On the morning of 8 November 1942, Colonel William H. Wilbur, not a member of the Seventh Infantry, but with a mission of vital importance, came ashore in one of the boats of the First Battalion Landing Team. He carried letters signed by General Patton, Commanding General of the Western Task Force, and approved by the President of the United States, directed to the Commanding General of the Casablanca Division and to the Admiral commanding the French Fleet at Casablanca. The Colonel had an amphibious jeep especially equipped with a powerful radio and carried an American silk flag and a white flag two feet square. Corporal Sanford M. Forbes of Regimental Headquarters Company, with full knowledge of the great risk involved, had volunteered to drive the jeep and was with Colonel Wilbur. Upon landing, however, the amphibious jeep proved unequal to the task. When one of the successive waves landed a jeep it was commandeered by Colonel Wilbur who transferred the flags to the new jeep and started out for Casablanca with Corporal Forbes driving. Captain Jean Apler of the French Army was picked up in Fedala to act as a guide.

On the trip from Fedala to Casablanca many French elements were passed—groups of two or three French soldiers; one Spahi patrol; one battalion in close formation, without any security units however; as well as guarded road blocks. At one road block the officer in command ordered his Senegalese machine gunners to open fire on the group. Although the order was given three times it was never carried out by the soldiers as Colonel Wilbur also spoke to them in French. He told them the members of his group were Americans who had not come to fight the French but only the Germans. After a delay the jeep with its occupants sped on to Casablanca where some of the people cheered as they saw the American Flag. They drove to the Casablanca Division Headquarters where Colonel Wilbur was told by General Desre and Admiral Ronarch of the French that they had no authority to treat with anyone, and that Admiral Michelier at the Admiralty was in command. Leaving a copy of his letters Colonel Wilbur left and was driven to the Admiralty by Corporal Forbes, guided by Captain Apler, while bombs and shells began to fall in Casablanca, and French anti-aircraft guns fired heavy barrages.

Colonel Wilbur's efforts at the Admiralty met with little success as he was not permitted to see Admiral Michelier or have his letters presented, and finally was told to get out. Returning from the Admiralty along the water front, shells and bombs landed very close to the jeep. Some French sailors with very threatening attitudes were met, so Corporal Forbes increased the speed of the jeep. The return trip from Casablanca to Fedala was made at a high speed. Reporting in at Third Division Headquarters Colonel Wilbur sent the following radio message to General Patton:

Letter to the commanding General Casablanca Division has been delivered to him. I went to the Admiralty in Casablanca, but Admiral Michelier refused to receive me. The French Army does not want to fight. I will report to you on the *Augusta*.

Corporal Forbes then drove Colonel Wilbur toward the beach where the Colonel intended to find a boat which would take him to the *U.S.S. Augusta*. They

²⁰ 1 Lt. Falter was born at Landeck, Ohio, 6 Oct. 1904. He was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on 3 May 1930 and served as a professor at St. Joseph's College in Indiana from 1932 to 1942.

²¹ GO No. 2, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 8 Jan. '43. Sgt. Bemis was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²² GO No. 2, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 8 Jan. '43. Pvt. Slavik was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

came upon the light tanks of the Second Platoon of Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion, which had landed at about 0830 under fire from coast defense guns located on and near Cape Fedala. While the water-proofing was being taken off the tanks, Second Lieutenant John M. Rutledge, in command of the platoon, and Sergeant Ames, had returned to the beach to locate the position of the enemy guns which were firing on the beach. They located some French 75mm guns near the oil tanks in the Port de Fedala. They returned to the tanks shortly after Colonel Wilbur arrived. The two officers talked of the necessity of going into immediate action against the guns. Though the First Platoon of tanks had been assigned the mission of supporting the First Battalion in Fedala and on the Cape they had not yet landed.

Colonel Wilbur commandeered the platoon of Second Lieutenant Rutledge which had been reduced to four available tanks at that time because one had gone astray after landing. Riding on the outside of Second Lieutenant Rutledge's tank, Colonel Wilbur directed the vehicles toward Fedala and encountered Colonel Robert C. Macon who did not object to Colonel Wilbur's riding into Fedala with the tanks but did object to any plans he might have entertained in regard to directing the fight and reminded him that Lieutenant Colonel Moore was in command of the operations in Fedala and that the tanks were to be used in accordance with Lieutenant Colonel Moore's plans. The tanks moved on into Fedala where the First Battalion commander was met and arrangements were made for the tanks to join Company "A" in the attack. One tank became "shorted" out. The remaining three took up defiladed positions behind an hedge and fired on enemy positions. The gun triggers of weapons on another tank went out of action. One tank however eventually crashed in the barbed wire barricade before the control station, but, as previously mentioned overturned.

For performance of his mission to Casablanca and his participation in the battle of Fedala, Colonel Wilbur, on recommendation of higher authority, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. For his bravery in driving Colonel Wilbur through the occupied enemy country and for later driving the unarmored jeep toward the enemy battery on Cape Fedala Corporal Forbes was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, which was the first award of that medal to a "Cotton Baler" during World War II.²³

SECOND AND THIRD BATTALIONS ADVANCE BEYOND THE WADI MELLAH TOWARD CASABLANCA—9 NOVEMBER 1942

At 1600 on 8 November Colonel Robert C. Macon reported to Major General J. W. Anderson at Third Division Headquarters in Fedala and received orders from him to advance the Seventh Infantry to a line south of the Wadi Mellah. He returned to his command post and issued orders for a meeting of unit commanders at the Second Battalion Command Post for 1900. Accompanied by the Regimental S-3, Captain William B. Rosson, Colonel Macon arrived at the Second Battalion Command Post at the appointed time and issued orders for an advance that night by the Second and Third Battalions to a line approximately two miles southwest of the Wadi Mellah, which line would serve as a line of departure for the continuation of the advance, beginning at 0730, 9 November. The First Battalion was to remain in Fedala and on the Cape during the night guarding the vital installations. As soon as relief could be affected by the Second Battalion of the 20th Engineers the First

Battalion was to assemble south of the Wadi Mellah to the rear of the two assault battalions and remain in reserve.

At 1730 an enemy plane attempted to strafe the Second Battalion troops and appeared over the high ground to their rear. A well-placed burst of fire from an anti-aircraft gun manned by Staff Sergeant Haywood M. Wolfen, of a Cannon Company platoon, was seen to hit the plane. A dense column of black smoke emerged from the rear of the enemy craft, which was seen to lose altitude rapidly, disappearing in the wooded slopes beyond the Wadi Mellah. No one doubted that the plane had been destroyed. During the hours of darkness the Second and Third Battalions crossed the Wadi Mellah. The Third Battalion closed into its area at 0130. Beginning at 0130 the Regimental Command Post was moved to a location approximately twelve hundred yards southwest of Si Bu Lanouar, and about one thousand yards behind the front lines.

During the day and night elements of the Regimental Landing Group had continued to land and by 2000 the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, most of the tanks and Cannon Company were ashore. One section of Anti-Tank Company consisting of two mine squads, a platoon of headquarters group, and one gun squad with a one-half ton weapons carrier spent about ten hours in the bay in a landing boat and was not landed at Beach Red 2 until 2300. The troops got little rest or comfort during the night. Clothes were still wet from the landing operations. The chilly wind that swept in from the ocean caused much shivering and sleep was impossible without blankets. Nevertheless the morale of the troops was at a high level.

The advance of the assault battalions on the morning of 9 November, started as scheduled with the Third Battalion on the right and the Second Battalion on the left. Company "D" reinforced the Third Battalion for the purpose of supporting the left assaulting company and filling any gaps that might occur between the two attacking battalions. Companies "I" and "L" made up the attacking forces for the Third Battalion with "L" on the right. Immediately on crossing the line of departure Company "I" received small arms and machine gun fire, and was in contact with enemy forces throughout the day. Company "I" commanded by Captain Clarence H. White, Jr., progressed rapidly, nevertheless, by advancing one platoon and then another. Each platoon assisted the other's advance by flanking fire while mortars and light machine guns supported the riflemen. On one occasion Sergeant Earl J. McCarry's squad was suddenly trapped by Spahi cavalrymen. The sergeant displayed courage and assured the safety and proper deployment of his men. He then inspired an attack which caused the enemy to withdraw.²⁴

Early in the afternoon Corporal Clyde R. Lynch, of Company "I" distinguished himself as a leader by leading his machine gun squad into position near the enemy lines. He exposed himself to the enemy so that he might spot the enemy machine gun positions. This action resulted in the destruction of two enemy machine gun crews and their protecting riflemen which were holding the advance of the right flank platoon.²⁵ Company "L" advanced along Route Secondaire and encountered only delaying actions by mounted Spahi Troops.

The Second Battalion crossed the line of departure with Company "E" on the right, Company "F" on the left and Company "G" in reserve. Wide dispersion was

²³ For authority see GO 19 Allied Forces Hqrs., 23 Nov. 1942.

²⁴ GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. Sgt. McCarry was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁵ GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. Cpl. Lynch was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

made from south of Route Principale to the west of the railroad. The junction of the Mediouna-Fedala highway and Route Principale was reached by noontime when the Second Battalion commander ordered his assault companies to attack an anti-aircraft installation which had been located in the vicinity of Sid Bou Azza and was active against our supporting aviation as well as ground forces. Before the position could be attacked, however, the Second Platoon of Cannon Company commanded by Second Lieutenant William E. Mick, Jr., and attached to the Second Battalion, took up hasty positions, and in its first fire mission of the campaign delivered such accurate fire that the enemy withdrew from the position.



At about 1400 Lieutenant Colonel Ben Harrell of the Third Division Staff delivered orders from the commanding general to Colonel Macon directing that the advance be halted on a line approximately five and one-half miles south of the Wadi Mellah pending the unloading of additional supplies from the transports and the moving up of the 15th Infantry on the left flank. The 15th Infantry had taken over the zone of the 30th Infantry and was to the left and rear. Colonel Macon in turn issued orders to organize on this line in readiness to continue the attack. He then delivered his orders to the Third Battalion in person while Captain Rosson delivered them to the Second Battalion. Accordingly the forward battalions halted their advance at about 1500 and set up defensive positions, being subjected to heavy artillery barrages from French emplacements at Casablanca, El Hank and Oukacha. One enemy plane strafed troops of the Third Battalion but riflemen and machine gunners returned heavy fire, damaging the plane so that it flew out over the Atlantic Ocean with smoke trailing. Cold winds from the ocean continued to chill the troops who had received very little, if any, rest since leaving the transports. At about 1530 Colonel Macon visited the command post of the 15th Infantry and obtained in-

formation of the forward elements of that regiment which was still to the left and rear of the Seventh Infantry.

The First Battalion, which had been relieved of guarding installations in Fedala by the Second Battalion 20th Engineers during the evening of 8 November, had remained in Fedala and on the Cape during the night. Early in the morning of 9 November, it marched without incident, except for one low-flying Italian plane which flew over the battalion and was fired upon, to an area about one and a half miles in rear of the front lines near the boundary of the forward battalions and assembled in regimental reserve.

7th INFANTRY CONTINUES THE ATTACK

10 NOVEMBER 1942

Battalion commanders assembled at the Second Battalion Command Post during the night and received orders from Colonel Macon to continue the advance at midnight to a coordinating line on the outskirts of Casablanca from which an attack would be launched at 0730 10 November. The advance of the assault battalions started as ordered at 0001, 10 November. During the approach march the battalions came under interdicting artillery fire.

SECOND BATTALION CAPTURES

BEAULIEU-AIN-SEBA IN HARD FIGHT

The Second Battalion moved out in a column of companies with Company "E", under the command of Captain John C. Casteel, as advance guard. Companies "F", "G", and "H" followed in order. Men of the heavy weapons company became quite fatigued during the march burdened with the weight of their weapons. Their condition and experiences of that night are best told in the official report and is quoted verbatim.

This time in column of companies, at 0001 of the 10th November Company "H" was again on the move; tired men shifted their loads and groaned very quietly; the silence in which the battalion moved was worthy of real veterans; and the knowledge that we were approaching the objective, with the probability of real action and, incidentally, expending a good part of all that heavy ammunition we had been carrying since early morning of the 8th, encouraged every one.

Tired legs stretched out, bent backs straightened, deep breaths could be heard; and across the Bled (open) country toward Casablanca marched the battalion. After a while we were on the smooth pavement of a highway.

In the darkness of that night, with a thin rain coming down persistently, and a chill wind that penetrated to the very bones, no man could appreciate the smooth walking of a surfaced road, after all that stumbling, shuffling, sinking, on plowed fields, and climbing walls and fences.

All the length of the column, long as it was, and wide, no sound could be heard other than a low rustling of shoe leather meeting asphalt, but off the front and to right and left, hundreds of dogs howled a continuous alert, keeping up with the column, never quite dying down, gaining in volume occasionally.

Periodically, almost monotonously, the batteries of Ain El Diab roared, accompanied by a great flash. The rush of wind and the scream of shells passed over our heads. After a while the men forgot to duck. That instinctive shrinking of heads into shoulders had not been due to fear but to unfamiliarity with the sound.

Now, from time to time, a new noise could be heard; a man would stumble, fall forward on his face, get up, and try to pick up his load again, but though the spirit was strong, endurance had reached its limit. This was particularly true in this company. Heavy machine guns and the corresponding load of ammunition, heavy mortars and their heavy shells, were never meant to be man-carried day after day, night after night, by soldiers who had their own heavy equipment to carry, and their own individual weapons.

They kept up, and they fell, not once, but many times, on that march to Ain Sebah, and always they got up again and walked some more, and were grateful for the rests that had to come more and more frequently now.

We had reached Ain Sebah, and it was still at least one hour before daylight; we were in the midst of houses, walled gardens, factories, and toward the front as well as on all side, a few yards away, complete darkness. Suddenly the formation halted; up ahead, a good distance to the front, there was gun fire; a few shots and then the sound of exploding grenades; soon the firing increased in volume, machine guns joining rifles.

The company extended to right and left and small units sought cover for themselves and weapons; there was no possibility of their employment before daylight, and in that respect the enemy had all the advantage; for it soon was evident that they were firing on predetermined lines and when their artillery joined in the chorus, which it did very quickly, it was also evident that here the enemy was making his real stand, and that we had in front of us a very strong position, amply supported by artillery not only of 75mm, but by the sound, of even heavier calibre. Preparations were made for immediate employment of the heavy weapons at daylight.²⁶

At about 0430 the Second Battalion encountered the enemy. The First Platoon of Company "E", making up the point and advance party of the column, was at the edge of Beaulieu-Ain-Seba and reported obstacles and enemy activity to the front. From the right front came scattered rifle fire and soon afterward fire from small calibre cannon. The troops had orders not to fire rifles or machine guns before daylight but to fight with hand grenades, bayonets and knives in order to prevent confusion and unnecessary casualties on their own units. The advance party encountered a road block composed of overturned ore cars and defended by rifle and automatic weapons fire. Fire from heavier calibre weapons and increasing small arms and machine gun fire was received from the left front. The battalion commander who had been marching with the advance party ordered Company "E" to remain in position, seek cover and wait for daylight while Company "F" could be brought abreast of "E" on the left. Then with support of heavy weapons an assault would be made. At about 0450 enemy artillery and mortar fire began to fall on the battalion. Captain John C. Gasteel of Company "F" was killed and numerous other casualties resulted.

The forward elements had passed a quarry and cement factory. The enemy fire came from the right front and the right rear. In the darkness the men could see nothing to fire at as the enemy were well dug in. The enemy artillery increased but was not too accurate. The battalion commander organized Company "H" and elements of the three rifle companies in the quarry and moved them out at 0555 as in five minutes time the American Navy was scheduled to shell the quarry which was an enemy marine ammunition depot. As the troops moved to the left for a hill shells began to fall in the quarry area.

With the coming of daylight the two assault platoons of Company "F" found firing positions and prepared to assault the enemy. From the left front of Company "E" a battery of 75mm artillery guns fired in the company at a point blank range of three hundred yards. In the first minutes of daylight the battery was located and rifle fire placed upon it. Then Captain Lambert J. Hruska led the first two platoons in an attack on the artillery position. The assault was made over a distance of about seventy-five yards through direct fire of small arms and the fire of land and naval artillery. Private First Class Kurt Steenback and other riflemen closed in to hand grenade range and silenced the battery. First Lieutenant William M. Cheever, leader of the first platoon, was killed during this action and Captain Hruska wounded. Later on Private First Class Steenback voluntarily carried a message through the shelled area to his battalion commander calling for artillery support. Open terrain was crossed under enemy machine gun and rifle fire.²⁷

During the morning two enemy warships, apparently light cruisers or destroyers, about two miles off shore fired rapidly into Seventh Infantry zones of action.

Daylight came, and with it a new sound; that of naval guns, which for a while we thought was our own naval gun fire support; two small warships could be seen close off shore, and they were firing fast . . . but their shells came closer and closer to us; they couldn't be ours . . . and they were not. They were enemy warships, adding to the already preponderant artillery fire which the enemy was delivering on us. The thought came to us: "Where, then are our ships, and the naval concentrations against Ain Sebah?"²⁸

Lieutenant Colonel Salzman made heroic efforts and was greatly assisted by Captain Gilbert C. St. Clair of Company "H" and Second Lieutenant Perry J. Stockman of Company "G" in the execution of the flanking movement and advance to the left against the strong enemy resistance to the high ground near Route 106. Captain St. Clair refused evacuation for treatment of a head wound and continued to lead his company in action. Second Lieutenant Stockman displayed resourcefulness and coolness under the heavy fire and steadied the troops by his example. He assisted in the destruction or silencing of several enemy machine guns that had been firing against his unit.²⁹ The flanking troops moved farther to the left

. . . but from the high ground south of Ferme de La Jonquiere there came suddenly heavy machine gun fire directed at us; two men were wounded by this fire. But this high ground should have been occupied by the 15th Infantry which was to be on our left, eventually it was found that it was not the 15th Infantry, but the enemy, who had installed a number of machine guns, but a long time was wasted in establishing their identity before placing fire on them.³⁰

During the morning of 10 November any movement of vehicles or tanks, was signaled to the enemy by Arabs or spotters. It was believed that the Arabs must have been informed of intended artillery barrages because when the artillery fell there were no natives about, and when conditions were quiet, many Arabs appeared on the road or ran up and down the terrain.

During that dark morning of 10 November 1942, First Lieutenant Perry E. Rowe, Second Battalion Surgeon, located the Battalion Aid Station in an apparently sheltered position and gave medical attention to the wounded. With daylight it was discovered that the location of the Aid Station was very close to the enemy lines, and it came under fire of enemy artillery and small arms. Under trying conditions he treated many wounded and performed emergency operations which undoubtedly saved many lives.³¹

During a temporary cessation of the advance that morning four soldiers of Company "F" and one from the Medical Detachment volunteered to rescue a number of wounded comrades who had fallen well within the enemy lines. On the return trip with the wounded it was necessary for them to defend themselves, against machine gun and rifle fire aimed directly at them. These men made the forward and return journey under constant heavy artillery, machine gun and rifle fire. The conduct of Sergeant Raymond Kotz, Private First Class Raymond Cruz, Private First Class Gordon Shook and Private William Hemmenway of Company "F" with Private Peter Gettman of the Medical Detachment served as an example and inspiration to others of the battalion

²⁶ "Hist. of Co. 'H', 7th Inf., Fedala-Casablanca Op., 9-11 Nov. '42".

²⁷ GOs No. 14 & 18, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 30 Dec. '42 & 24 Feb. '43. Capt. Hruska & Pfc. Steenback were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁸ "Hist. of Co. 'G', 7th Inf., Fedala-Casablanca Op. 9-11 Nov. '42".

²⁹ GOs No. 2 & 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42 & 8 Jan. '43. Capt. St. Clair & 2 Lt. Stockman were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁰ "Hist. of Co. 'H', 7th Inf., Fedala-Casablanca Op. 9-11 Nov. '42".

³¹ GO No. 23, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 18 Mar. '43. 1 Lt. Rowe was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

and reflected great credit upon themselves and their unit.³²

Private Anthony J. Sporacio also of the Medical Detachment distinguished himself at Beaulieu-Ain-Seba by remaining in an exposed position under heavy artillery and small arms fire to take care of several wounded soldiers who could not be evacuated, until the position was cleared of the enemy. His devoted action undoubtedly saved the lives of several of the wounded.³³

First Lieutenant George D. McClelland, Chaplain with the Second Battalion, Private First Class William C. Strickler of Company "E", and Private John H. Martinez of the Medical Detachment ministered to the wounded while under heavy fire.³⁴

THIRD BATTALION REMAINS IN CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY THROUGHOUT THE DAY

The Third Battalion attacked with Company "I" on the left and Company "L" on the right and had advanced about two kilometers when a gap developed between the two companies. Company "K" was committed in the center. Heavy artillery fire was received by the battalion at this time. Company "L" reinforced with a section of 37mm Anti-Tank guns, one section of heavy machine guns from Company "M" and two half-tracks moved forward along the coast road, Route Secondaire, to the vicinity of Point Oukacha. Scouts discovered an enemy position defended by two French rifle companies reinforced with heavy weapons. The company occupied the crest of the only available high ground and a battle ensued until 0300 on 11 November. The First Platoon was sent to the right flank to clear and secure a phosphate factory and other buildings. An enemy cruiser subjected the company to naval gun fire for about a half hour until driven off by friendly aircraft.

PRIVATE BRAY DISPLAYS EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM

Private William H. Bray of Company "L" performed extraordinary heroism against the enemy. Of his own volition and without command, he disregarded his personal safety and advanced under fire to a position where he could obtain vital information concerning the nature and source of the enemy fire that had his entire platoon pinned to the ground. Upon obtaining this information he left the safety of his position to return to his unit and received four severe wounds. In spite of his wounds he attempted to crawl back to inform his platoon leader of what he had learned of the enemy positions. He died later the same day. Such courage and devotion to duty were a profound inspiration to the members of his unit and reflected great credit upon himself and the military service. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.³⁵

Company "L" remained in contact with the enemy until 0300, 11 November, when the French bugles sounded retreat and the enemy withdrew. During the action of Company "L" Sergeant Charles R. Argo and Private First Class Clifton E. Whitley displayed gallantry in action.³⁶

At 1430, 10 November, Captain Marcus D. Biggers of Company "K" ordered the Third Platoon of his company, with one platoon of Company "I", supported by the Weapons Platoon of Company "K" to attack the Mobile Marine Base. The attack was successful and resulted in the capture of sixty prisoners of war, a battery of four 90mm pieces and two anti-aircraft emplacements. One machine gun nest was knocked out by the Third Platoon.

At about 2100 Corporal Clyde M. Conn of Company "K" left his slit trench to answer the call of a wounded soldier who was about fifty yards to the front of his position. It was a clear night when he left his defensive position in open terrain. He went forward into direct enemy fire and carried the wounded soldier to safety and medical aid.³⁷



KILLED IN ACTION

Capt. John C. Casteel, "F", and Pvt. Laverne F. Roberts, "M", 2 of 26 "Cotton Balers" KIA on 10 Nov. 1942 during the fighting for Casablanca.

During the evening of 10 November Staff Sergeant Frank Sobolewski of Company "K" placed an automatic rifle on top of a building which was being strafed by enemy rifle fire, and covered movements of the entire weapons platoon that was being strafed by enemy machine gun fire. Staff Sergeant Sobolewski's fire put an enemy machine gun out of action which enabled his platoon to move to another position.³⁸

FIRST BATTALION ATTACKS CAMP DE LA JONQUIERE

As no report had been received at the Regimental Command Post from the Second Battalion, Colonel Macon took Lieutenant Colonel Moore and Captain Rosson at 0830, 10 November on a reconnaissance to determine the situation in the Second Battalion's area. The reconnaissance disclosed that the Second Battalion was not in its assigned zone of action, and that the forward elements of the 15th Infantry were not sufficiently advanced to protect the left flank of the Regiment. Colonel Macon directed Lieutenant Colonel Moore to attack with his battalion in the zone formerly assigned to the Second Battalion and capture the objective in Casablanca which was the dock

³² GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. Sgt. Kotz, Pfc. Cruz, Pfc. Shook, Pvt. Gettman & Pvt. Hemenway were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³³ GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. Pvt. Sporacio was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁴ GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 2 Feb. '43. 1 Lt. McClelland, Pfc. Strickler & Pvt. Martinez were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁵ For authority see GO No. 33, HQ US 5th Army 24 Mar. '43.

³⁶ GOs No. 8 & 14, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 30 Dec. '42 & 2 Feb. '43. Sgt. Argo & Pfc. Whitley were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁷ GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. Cpl. Conn was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁸ GO No. 8, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 28 Nov. '42. S/Sgt. Sobolewski was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

area. However about thirty minutes later the objective was changed and limited to the Camp De la Jonquiere which was on the edge of the more heavily populated part of the city. Deeming it necessary to make an additional reconnaissance in the zone of action of the left battalion, the Regimental Commander took fifteen tanks that became available and riding in the lead tank, with Captain Rosson in the second, reconnoitered the hostile front line positions. In the vicinity of A El Bouirel the party was subjected to a heavy concentration of artillery fire. The group continued and located the Second Battalion whereupon the Regimental Commander got out of the tank and continued his reconnaissance on foot to the top of a ridge where a second artillery concentration was directed at the group making it necessary for the members to take cover. Learning of the difficulties the Second Battalion had encountered and the exhausted condition of the men, that battalion was ordered to hold its position and reorganize.³⁹

The First Battalion attacked at 1045 with Company "B" on the right, Company "C" on the left. The advance was met with artillery fire and Company "B" drew ahead of "C" whereupon the company held until "C" was able to move up. The company commanders, Captains Crall and Wagner, conferred with each other and plans were made for a coordinated attack. The first platoon on the right of Company "B" was taken under enemy machine gun and rifle fire and moved forward behind a knoll. The objective was but eight hundred yards distant. At this time the entire company was subjected to a devastating mortar and artillery barrage.

Advance elements of Company "C" reached a thirty-foot cliff, about five hundred yards from the enemy positions, where the company was reorganized. Corporal Alton J. McDermid, of Company "C", scaled the cliff in order that he might observe and reconnoiter. While subjected to observed fire in his position Corporal McDermid directed the fire of the mortar squad, which action resulted in the silencing of an enemy machine gun nest and allowed the company to advance.⁴⁰

The Second Platoon of Company "C" was sent to the left flank to cover the enemy with fire while the balance of the company maneuvered and attacked over bare level terrain against direct artillery and machine gun fire.

The Third Platoon of Company "B" entered a walled estate and was later joined by part of "C" Company. The fight was continued with the enemy in the barracks throughout the afternoon. The 60mm mortar section went into action and set fire to a hay stack on the right flank which contained an enemy machine gun that was firing on the First Platoon. The light machine gun of the Third Platoon engaged an enemy gun located in an unfinished, steel-girded building one thousand yards to the right flank. A messenger was sent back to find the battalion headquarters with the request to send tanks or place artillery fire on the enemy mortars and artillery. The Second Platoon, echeloned to the right rear to cover the exposed flank, was forced to withdraw by the heavy artillery fire but moved in good order around a low hill. The force in the walled estate was under constant heavy fire from the enemy but remained there throughout the day.

Sergeant Frederick T. Bear of the First Platoon, Company "C", voluntarily advanced beyond the front lines across the open terrain through the machine gun and artillery fire in an attempt to silence an enemy machine gun. Sergeant Bear's rifle was shot out of his hand but upon recovering it he continued his one man advance toward the machine gun nest. One of our own mortars silenced the gun before he could reach it.⁴¹

The problem of communication between platoons and elements of the company was critical. Private First

Class Vernon C. Perry of Company "C" displayed great courage and tireless effort under the constant fire in conveying valuable information to the various units. He moved on several occasions among exploding shells and machine gun fire over terrain that was devoid of cover.⁴²

At dusk the "B" Company Commander with the communication sergeant and a messenger moved out of the walled estate and re-organized his units during the night. All around defenses were set up with the men using their helmets and hands to dig fox holes in the open flat terrain. A platoon of Company "D" joined Company "B" at 2230. The enemy fired spasmodic machine gun fire until shortly after midnight and snipers were active. Company "C" held its positions during the night. A critical shortage of mortar and machine gun ammunition existed in both the assault companies.

During the day Private First Class George Meyers of Company "C" showed initiative and bravery to facilitate a continuous flow of supplies to the assault troops of his company. He drove a loaded ammunition truck and trailer through the hazardous territory to within 300 yards of the final advance. The company had advanced one and one-half miles over the rocky flat terrain. He drove his vehicle from the rear line to the forward position in the face of a rolling artillery barrage and fire from snipers. His action greatly encouraged the troops in intensifying their efforts.⁴³

Tanks supporting the First Battalion had run out of fuel and were unable to support the forward companies during the attack. At 1600 the regimental commander called the naval dive bombers to attack an hostile battery in the dock area of Casablanca. In about twenty minutes dive bombers attacked but failed to silence the battery. A second request was made and another attack by the bombers completely silenced the battery.

At 2200, 10 November, Colonel Macon issued orders to the unit commanders to resume the attack on Casablanca in the morning, at 0700, following preparations by dive bombers and artillery. The 7th Infantry was to make the main effort with its three battalions abreast supported by Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion, and Cannon Company. Anti-Tank Company was to constitute the reserve. It was to be an all-out attack. Major Cloud was placed under the care of the battalion surgeon and Captain Carroll A. Plaquet was placed in temporary command of the Third Battalion.

7th INFANTRY ENTERS CASABLANCA TRIUMPHANTLY 11 NOVEMBER 1942

At 0500 November 11, Captain Plaquet appeared at the Regimental Command Post with a French major, Commandant Govin, and members of his staff. Commandant Govin stated that he had received orders directing him to cease firing upon our troops. Colonel Macon told him that the Seventh Infantry was entering Casablanca at dawn, and that if the French intended not to fire they should assemble their units, stack arms and be prepared to turn over their ammunition as our troops should advance. Commandant Govin agreed to those

³⁹ GO No. 1, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 4 Jan. '43. Col. Macon was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁰ GO No. 23, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 18 Mar. '43. Cpl. McDermid was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴¹ GO No. 11, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 11 Dec. '42. Sgt. Bear was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴² GO No. 4, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 20 Jan. '43. Pfc. Perry was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

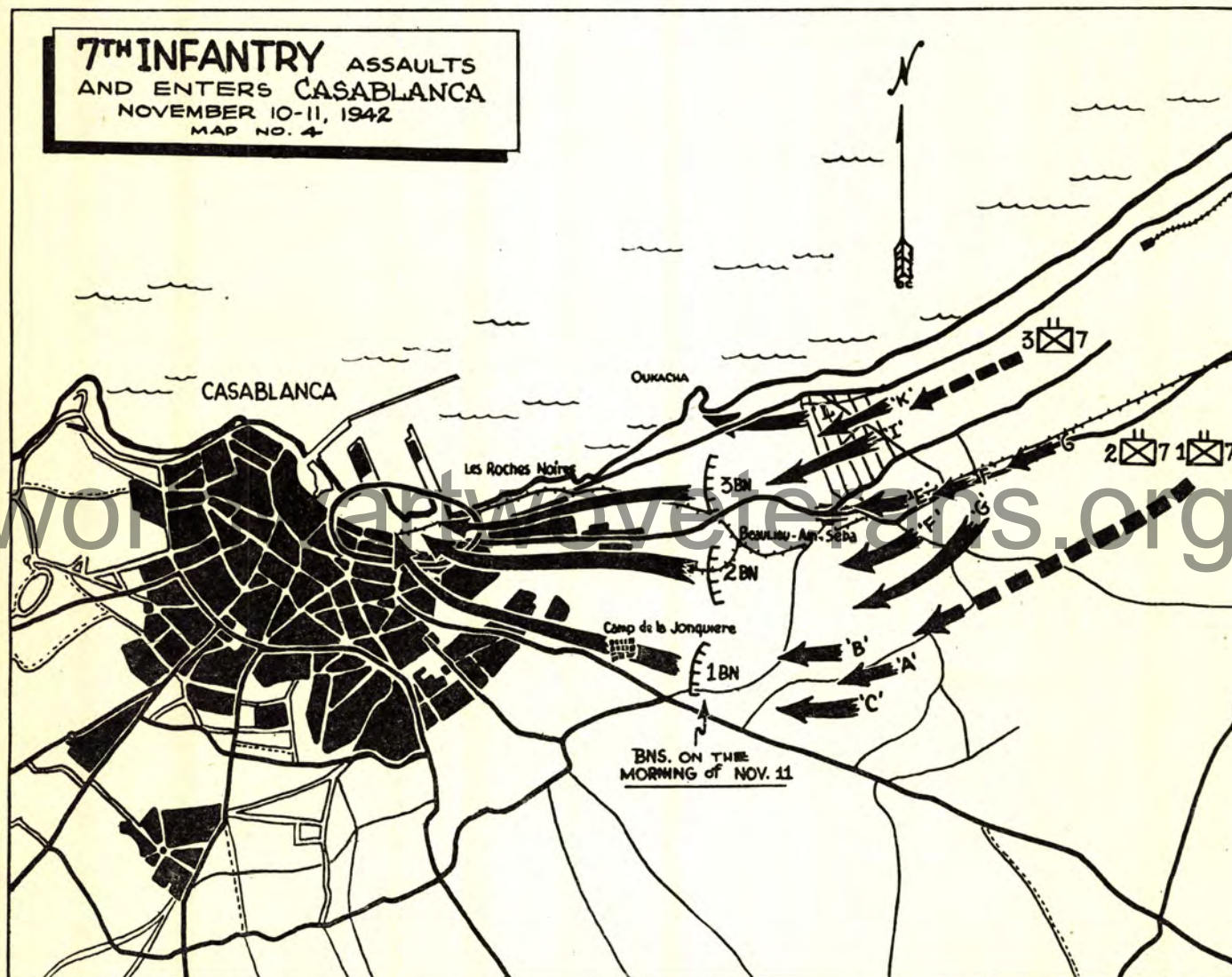
⁴³ GO No. 11, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 11 Dec. '42. Pfc. Meyers was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

terms and sent a message to his command ordering compliance. Colonel Macon then directed that the Seventh Infantry advance at the designated time in accordance with plan, but that fire be withheld unless fire was received.

Then accompanied by Captain Rosson, Colonel Macon took Commandant Govin to the Third Division Command Post where General Anderson was informed of the situation and the French officer reported to the commanding general. The information brought by Commandant Govin confirmed other information obtained by the Division concerning capitulation of the French. General Patton, Commanding General of the Western Task Force, who was present, then ordered "cease firing". Colonel Macon was directed to move the

Troops of the Seventh Infantry marched into Casablanca dirty and tired but satisfied with a "job well done." It was a great victory for the new troops of the Regiment, and they were justified in the feeling of pride that surged through them in having upheld the great traditions of the "Cotton Baler" Regiment. They had assaulted a hostile shore and in skillful fighting, in three days time, had forced the enemy to surrender the largest port of the West African Coast, which was badly needed by the Allies.

Though there was rejoicing among them they were sorrowful for their gallant comrades who had sacrificed their lives. Many men had had little sleep if any since 7 November and, had moved by foot, fighting as they



Seventh Infantry into Casablanca and occupy the Third Division objective without firing, unless fired upon. Together with Captain Rosson and Commandant Govin the Regimental Commander went to the French Command Post in Casablanca and checked the movement of the Seventh Infantry elements into the city. The Regimental Command Post was established in an office building near the dock area. Orders were issued to the battalions establishing areas of responsibility and for the placing of guards over key installations with particular attention to the dock area. All units were kept alert and held ready to attack assigned objectives should any further resistance develop from the dock area or coastal battery positions occupied by French Naval units.

went, with their heavy equipment, as much as twenty-five miles. The resistance of the French to their landing, on Cape Fedala, in Beaulieu-Ain-Seba, the Camp de la Jonquiere, and the outskirts of Casablanca had been spirited and determined. Many in their enthusiasm, after experiencing their first taste of combat, regretted that the French had surrendered, as they wanted to fight to the very docks of Casablanca.

The populace of the city enthusiastically acclaimed the "Cotton Balermen", who had played the principal role of the ground forces in forcing the capitulation of the great port. Casablanca was just the first of many great cities to be entered by the inimitable "dogfaces" of the Seventh Infantry. The capitals of Sicily, Italy, Alsace

and Bavaria, as well as other cities, were to welcome them in future days. Many lessons were learned by the Navy and Army regarding amphibious operations that were to be helpful in the future landings. It must be remembered that there were no LCIs, LCTs, or LSTs⁴⁴ in the Fedala landing, but regular transports debarked the troops into Higgins boats which held on the average thirty-two men. Dispersion of the boat waves had caused much confusion initially. It was difficult to get the armor and artillery ashore and the problem of supply was acute in the initial stages. However in spite of the difficulties, by the determination of all, the operation had been a success.

Cost of the three-day campaign to the Seventh Infantry was forty-eight killed in action, one who died of wounds a month later, four who are still missing from the action, seventy-nine seriously wounded in action

and sixty-six lightly wounded in action; or a total of one hundred ninety-six battle casualties.

The great success of the North African landings was due mainly to the element of surprise and overwhelming power of the attacking forces. An important factor also was, in general, the spotty resistance of the French Colonial Army. Algiers fell to the Americans at seven o'clock in the evening of the first day, Oran capitulated on 10 November, and Casablanca defenses gave up early on the 11th. Total Army casualties for the three-days' campaign in French Morocco and Algeria totalled 860 Americans dead or missing and 1050 others wounded.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Landing Craft Infantry, Landing Craft Tanks and Landing Ships Tanks Vessels.

⁴⁵ Detzer, op. cit., p. 48.

CHAPTER II

The North African Interlude and Plans for a Second Amphibious Assault

On the same day that the Seventh Infantry entered Casablanca Rommel's forces were chased out of Egypt as British Eighth Army troops seized Halfaya Pass and captured 1100 enemy, mainly Italians. The pursuit continued across Libya.

Following the successful American landings in French Morocco and Algeria, British First Army troops landed farther to the east at Bone and Phillipville near the Tunisian border, then, with spearheads of American forces, crossed over the border into Tunisia on 15 November 1942. The Tunisian Campaign was on. Early that month the Germans had seized Bizerte and Tunis.

The Seventh Infantry was not to reach Tunisia until a few days before the close of the campaign there, too late to fire a shot. Until early April 1943 when movement was made to Algeria the Regiment was kept stationed near the Spanish Moroccan border to help meet any possible enemy move from that quarter.

During the period 11-25 November 1942, the Third Infantry Division protected the Casablanca-Fedala ports and the Gazes Airport. The Seventh Infantry, with Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion attached, was bivouaced in the L'Oasis area. The Regiment organized positions within its sector and defended approaches to Casablanca. One rifle company outposted the Mazagan Road while another protected the Gazes Airport. Motor patrols were maintained in and around Casablanca and guards placed in the dock area. The 15th Infantry outposted the Marrakech Road and the 30th Infantry organized defensive positions in the Fedala area. The 436th Anti-Aircraft (AW) Battalion maintained two batteries each in the dock area and airport.

Following the capitulation of the French on 11 November all hostilities in French Morocco had ceased. However, French or German naval task forces continued their attacks. On the evening of 11 November, the U.S.S. *Joseph S. Hewes*, which had transported the Third Battalion Landing Team across the Atlantic, was torpedoed, and the next evening the U.S.S. *Tasker H. Bliss* as well as the U.S.S. *Scott* and the U.S.S. *Rutledge* were torpedoed.

THE MARCH TO RABAT

The Third Infantry Division ordered its organizations and attachments to move by marching to a staging area in the vicinity of Fedala. The Seventh Infantry, with the 10th Field Artillery Battalion attached for movement, moved by battalions via the Grand-Ceinture-Route Principale No. 1 and closed into its area east of the Wadi Nefikh on 27 November. The battalions conducted problems on the 28th. On 29 November at a Regimental formation held at Point Blondin, various members of the command received awards from Major General Anderson for gallantry in action displayed during the three-day campaign.

But a few days were spent in the Fedala bivouac. On 1 December the Regiment led the division on a march for the Rabat area. The Regimental Command Post group with the First Battalion crossed the initial starting point at 0800. Marching fifty minutes and resting ten out of each hour the Regiment took an hour off for chow at noontime and then resumed the march at 1300. At 1445 a bivouac area was reached and the troops put up for the day.

On 2 December at 0800 the march was resumed and at 1530 a new temporary bivouac area in the vicinity of Rabat was reached. During the two-day march many men had fallen out of ranks because of bad feet. On the next morning the troops moved to the race tracks south of Rabat and spent the remainder of the day cleaning up. An order was issued that because of hook worms personnel would not walk around bare footed.

On 4 December the First and Second Battalions, preceded by the Seventh Infantry Band and Regimental Colors, paraded around Rabat to a bivouac area in the Memoura Forest northeast of Rabat, about one mile west of the Rabat-Meknes highway. The Third Battalion placed guards in Rabat and at the airport.

The Seventh Infantry remained in the Rabat area throughout December and January. The battalions alternated doing guard duty in Rabat and vicinity and engaged in a program of training that was to be remem-



Officers and non-commissioned officers of the S-1 Section, 7th Inf., outside a tent in North Africa. L. to R.: Sgt. (later 2 Lt.) Fred C. Taylor; Cpl. Small; Cpl. (later Sgt. Maj.) Ross C. Cox; 1 Lt. (later Maj.) Richard A. Smith, and 1 Lt. David N. Murdock (co-writer of "Stella the Belle of Fedala" and later KIA).

bered for all time. Road marches, speed marches, calisthenics, small units in the attack and defense were the order of the day. The Memoura Forest came to be known as the "Cork Grove" to the troops, who became hardened through the daily training grind. However little incidents and special events offered some change to the daily routine and passes were issued regularly for Rabat. On Sundays divine services were held. One day the Regimental Commander received the report that someone had stolen two bicycles belonging to Mademoiselle Renne Peyer of Rabat. It is not known if the mademoiselle ever regained her bicycles.

It was during this period that legend and song regarding the Fedala landing, and subsequent action, developed and became popular with the troops. Though the Regiment spent eight months in Africa during World War II its fighting was limited to the three-day French Moroccan campaign, the shortest period of actual combat engaged in by the Regiment in this war, but old timers have always liked to tell of it. The Army gag, legend and song concerning the Fedala-Casablanca action has become a part of the Regiment's history. Two examples are presented:

"WHO DOOD IT"

1.

"Come and listen you men, to a strange tale of mine;
'Tis a story of battle that I've put into rhyme.
And it's not the same story, I'm sure you'll agree
That the papers put out for the public to see.

2.

"We left old Camp Pickett and took to the sea
Where we studied about our battle to be,
Or sat near the rail, if it wasn't too cold,
And the gambling on deck was a sight to behold.

3.

"At the crack of the dawn on the eighth of November—
It's a date I am sure you quite well remember—
With our orders to open Morocco's front door,
We went o'er the side and headed for shore.

4.

"We stormed o'er the beach, and no one, of course,
Saw one single man of that big Armored Force.
The artillery was landing—men died with each blast—
They were Infantry men from the first to the last.

5.

"Then for two days and nights we were right on the ball;
Their strafing and bombing didn't stop us at all.
Tho' the Frenchmen's artillery was rather effective,
We kept fighting on to our final objective.

6.

"And then came the Armored Force, rugged and fierce,
Attempting the enemy's front lines to pierce.
Three little tanks went up at one whack,
But a few minutes later came scurrying back.

7.

"As for parachute troops, they were nowhere around,
And for miles and miles not a one could be found.
We got dive bombers once, through lots of red tape.
For a couple of tough spots we alone couldn't take.

8.

"The Navy was there, and they did a fine job
Blasting shore installations as rough as a cob.
And besides that, destroyers, and submarines, too,
They had to contend with out there on the blue.

9.

"Our Air Force was fighting at some other place.
Of the Armored Force, too, there was hardly a trace;
Those "three armored columns," it appears unto me,
Were just three battalions of green Infantry.

10.

"When the battle was over we marched into town
To the cheering of thousands because arms were laid down;
Casablanca was ours—a prize little nut:
The Infantry took it, and nobody but!

11.

"Let the magazines rave! We can talk of the truth
As we fry Arab eggs and drink bad vermouth.
But don't quote me, fellows, that is not my intention;
I'll be court-martialled if this gets too much attention."

Pfc. I. C. Vander Jagt,
Company "M", Seventh Inf.

During the stay in the Memoura Forest the "Memora Publishing Company" published, in mimeograph form, the song "Stella the Belle of Fedala" the words and music of which had been composed sometime after the landing by Lieutenants Tom Marnette and Dave Murdock, both of the Seventh Infantry and who subsequently were killed in action. The song became very popular among the troops and spread to other organizations. The song tells its own story. With the permission of the publishers it is reprinted in the appendix.

On 19 December a parade was held in Rabat by French troops and the First Battalion, after which Lieutenant Colonel Moore's command remained in the city to take over the guard duties. On 22 December the Third Battalion engaged in some air-ground problems with air units. On Christmas Day the Regimental Band played in the bivouac area from eight till ten o'clock in the morning. Boy and girl scouts from Rabat sang Christmas carols to the troops as General Anderson visited the area in the afternoon.

New Year's Day and 9 January 1943, the anniversary day for the Seventh Infantry, were days of rest for the troops. On the 10th the Sultan's band played in the area at 1000 and seventy-five French officers and enlisted men arrived to commence training with American weapons and equipment under direction of the Third Battalion. A regular school was held for the French personnel who were taught the assembly, disassembly and functioning of the rifle, Model 1, Browning automatic rifle, mortars, machine guns, 37mm anti-tank guns as well as the 75mm and 105mm cannons, then given practical work in firing all the weapons. This was followed by instruction in communications, and maintenance of transportation equipment, as well as driving of vehicles. Many demonstrations were conducted for the French in regard to the proper use of American equipment.

On 21 January 1943, Seventh Infantry troops took part in a review of the Third Infantry and Second Armored Infantry Divisions before President Franklin D. Roosevelt on the main highway leading north out of Sale. Accompanying the president were many dignitaries, and high civil and military personages including Harry Hopkins, Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark of the Fifth Army and Major Generals George S. Patton, Jonathan W. Anderson, Ernest Harmon, and Harmon Eddy of the First Armored Corps, Third Infantry, Second Armored and Ninth Infantry Divisions respectively. Following the review the President attended the Casablanca Conference with Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain.

On 25 January Group III consisting of two hundred thirty-nine officers and enlisted men of the two hundred fifty-five left behind in the States, rejoined the Regiment. On 29 January, in a lovely cathedral in Rabat, memorial services were held for Chaplain Clement M. Falter who had been killed in action on D-Day. On 30 January a general review and graduation exercises for the French class were held.

PORT LYAUTEY AREA

(8 FEBRUARY 1943—6 APRIL 1943)

Following Divine Services and recreation on 7 February, the Regiment broke down tents and made preparations to move. At 0700 on the 8th the troops commenced leaving their "Cork Grove" in the Memoura Forest and marched to a new bivouac area in the vicinity of Port Lyautey, French Morocco, which was reached in the afternoon. The Regimental Command Post moved by vehicle and had set up in the new area during the morning.

For the next few days the usual duties were performed. On the 10th a group of officers including Lieutenant Colonel John O. Williams, Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore, Major Robert C. Williams, Major Frank C. Sinsel, Captains Thomas M. Aerial, Albert Brown, John A. Elterich, and Curtis C. Tigard, Lieutenant Leo K. Bustad and Lieutenant Abner D. Kupperstein left for a two week period of training at Fifth Army Invasion Training Center.



- (1) Co. "A", 7th Inf., goes to church near the Spanish Moroccan border. Services were conducted by Chaplain Dyreson.
- (2) Members of I Bn., 7th Inf., take time out from guard duty and swim in the Atlantic near the Spanish Moroccan border, Feb. 1943.

On the 16th of February at 2000 hours in Port Lyautey, French Morocco, the clothes of a truck driver caught fire. Immediately Private Kenneth E. Votruba, of Service Company, who had been conversing with the driver, flung him to the ground and attempted unsuccessfully to beat out the flames with his bare hands. Having no other means available, Private Votruba then threw his body over the driver's legs and succeeded in smothering the fire. Although his own hands were severely blistered Private Votruba drove the badly burned man to the Regimental Aid Station. His quick and courageous action saved the driver's life.¹

February 1943 was a month which saw many changes in the personnel of the Seventh Infantry. Immediately following the sad events in Tunisia when the Germans attacked and overran American forces and broke through the Faid and Kasserine passes to inflict heavy losses on two American divisions, the Seventh Infantry lost many excellent men and officers as replacements to the hard hit divisions. On 19 February sixty officers and nine hundred eighty-six enlisted men were selected to go to the Second Corps as replacements. They departed from the Regiment just a few days later. In future days some were to return to the Seventh Infantry but many of them bade farewell forever to the Regiment they had given their best, while they were members of it.

COLONEL MACON LEAVES 7th INFANTRY AND IS PROMOTED TO RANK OF BRIGADIER GENERAL

On 20 February, as the troops that were leaving the Regiment were being inspected prior to departure, Colonel Macon was relieved of command of the Seventh Infantry and notified of his promotion to brigadier general. In a presentation ceremony at the Regimental Command Post he was presented his stars by Major General Anderson who later was to bid farewell to his own staff and relinquish the command of the Third Infantry Division.

¹ GO No. 108, HQ 3d Inf. Div., 9 June '44. Pvt. Votruba was awarded the Soldier's Medal.

The new brigadier general was born in Washington, D. C., in the year 1890, the son of a coast artillery officer. After completing his high school education in the capital city, he matriculated at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, from which he was graduated with a Master of Engineering degree in 1913. In 1916, he was commissioned in the Infantry, and from 1919 to 1921 he commanded the 13th Infantry in China. He served as a general staff officer with troops in Panama from 1931 to 1933 and with the Fourth Armored Infantry Division in 1941. In April 1942 he had assumed command of the Seventh Infantry.²



Brig. Gen. Robert C. Macon as he appeared after relinquishing command of the 7th U. S. Inf. on 19 Feb. 1943, and receiving his stars.

Colonel Harry B. Sherman, who succeeded Brigadier General Macon as Commanding Officer of the Seventh Infantry, was born on 25 April 1894, in Honeoye Falls, New York. He graduated from Livonia High School in 1914 then entered the United States Military Academy at West Point and graduated with the class of 1918. His first assignment as a Second Lieutenant was with the 45th Infantry. He then served for a period with the old 5th Infantry in Panama before joining the 15th Infantry in December 1941. He served as executive officer of the "Dragon" Regiment until he assumed active command of the Seventh Infantry on 1 March 1943.

On 27 February the Regiment received thirty-three first and second lieutenants from Casablanca and on 1 March the officers who had left for the Invasion Training Center returned. Later other replacements were received and the Regiment was required to carry on a great deal of small unit problems for the benefit of the new members. Intensive training was also conducted with tactical problems held day and night. Troops were put through a battle course, mine course, and wire obstacle course.

MOVE TO ST. LIEU, ALGERIA, AND INTENSIVE TRAINING AT ARZEW AND PONT DU CHELIFF AREAS

Commencing 6 April 1943, the Regiment moved by rail and motor from Port Lyautey to the vicinity of St. Lieu, Algeria, where until 1 May 1943, intensive training was conducted for a second amphibious landing against hostile shores. The training stressed the following:

1. Physical conditioning with road marches at the rate of five miles in one hour, or four miles per hour for a greater distance than five miles. Log tossing, obstacle course running, bayonet training and hand to hand combat also were a part of the physical training program. Those who could not meet the standards required were eliminated.

2. Combined Infantry-Artillery problems during which the troops learned to follow artillery fire closely, sometimes within one hundred yards, and acquired confidence in its accuracy. Overhead mortar and machine gun fire added to the simulation of battle conditions.

3. Mine laying and removal. The troops trained with all types of American, British, German and Italian mines. Demonstrations of booby traps likely to be encountered were given.

4. Embarkation and debarkation from all types of landing craft to be used in shore to shore amphibious operations.

From 25 to 28 April the Seventh Infantry conducted an amphibious landing exercise in the Pont Du Cheliff area. Loading on to LCIs and LSTs on the first two days the landing group teams staged an assault landing under simulated conditions with a reinforced battalion from another regiment playing the enemy's part. Advances were made eight miles inland to objectives and the exercise terminated. Two days of mountain training were then conducted in the Pont Du Cheliff area until abruptly halted by order of Third Division Headquarters.

SEVENTH INFANTRY WINS ITS SECOND CAMPAIGN STAR IN WORLD WAR II WITHOUT FIRING A SHOT

In Tunisia meanwhile Allied forces had made up for earlier disasters and were rapidly forcing the German-Italian forces back to the sea. To exploit the successes of the Second American Corps the high command decided to attach to it a fresh division and the Third Infantry Division was selected. Acting with great speed and coordination the "Rock of the Marne" Division stopped its training on 30 April. During the first hours of darkness on 1 May, the 15th Infantry was on the road in trucks. The Seventh Infantry followed out closely at 1200 on 1 May. By 7 May the Seventh Infantry with other units of the Third Division was concentrated inside the Tunisian border in the Chardimaou-Wadi Melis area and in Second Corps reserve, thus actually engaged in the closing phases of the Tunisian Campaign. However before the Regiment, and the Division for that matter, could fire a shot General Jurgen Von Arnim surrendered his German-Italian forces unconditionally and the Tunisian Campaign was over.

The Regiment moved to the Mateur area. The period from the 10th to 14th April was spent in rounding up prisoners of war and salvage duties. The Regiment suffered five casualties during this period due to enemy action, though not directly. On 12 May, in Porto Farina, Tunisia, an enemy truck overturned, killing in action Private Marion E. Moore of Company "B" engaged in salvage duties. Also on the same day Privates First Class Anthony De Nucci, Edward V. Debнар and Joseph

² Shortly after he relinquished command of the Seventh Infantry Brigadier General Macon returned to the United States and in April 1943 became Assistant Division Commander of the 83rd Infantry Division. In January 1944 he succeeded to the command of that division and led it to England three months later. Promoted to Major General he then moved his division to the continent and commanded it through five campaigns from 4 July 1944 to 8 May 1945.

A. Varriano, all of Company "B", were injured by another enemy truck overturning in Ferryville. The 15th Infantry suffered six casualties, Company "B" of the 10th Engineers three and Troop "A", 91st Reconnaissance Squadron, one casualty during the salvaging period. On 13 May at Ferryville Private Andrew F. Bartlett of Company "E" was killed by an exploding anti-personnel mine.



KILLED IN ACTION
Maj. Eugene H. Cloud, USMA '34, former
CO, 3d Bn., 7th Inf., in Tunisia.

The Tunisian Campaign for the Seventh Infantry was "short and sweet", but, because the Regiment sent so many replacements to the hard hit units before it was ordered to the front itself, it contributed much to the successful conclusion of that campaign. It is believed that many former "Cotton Balers" lost their lives in the Tunisian fighting. Two who are definitely known to have been killed in action in that campaign are: Major Eugene H. Cloud, former commanding officer of the Third Battalion, while serving as aide-de-camp to the Lieutenant General K. A. N. Anderson, commanding British First Army, and Lt. James A. Richey while serving with Company "M", 168th Infantry of the 34th Infantry Division.

On 15 May 1943, the Regiment moved by rail and motor back to Algeria, this time to Phillipeville. Training in the reduction of beach fortifications and plans of maneuver were conducted in the Jemmapes area. The Regiment began training with the objective of an assault landing and an advance inland of five miles. At this time the First Battalion was selected as the assault battalion of the Regiment while the Second and Third Battalions trained to follow up and pass through the assault battalion with the view of capturing inland objectives. Street fighting drew much training time as the battalions conducted many night problems. The Jemmapes area was not suitable for specialized amphibious training.

RETURN TO TUNISIA AND FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR AN ASSAULT LANDING

The Seventh Infantry completed a motor march from Jemmapes, Algiers, on 14 June 1943, and established a new bivouac in the vicinity of Mateur, Tunisia, among the stunted olive trees. Units were dispersed over a wide area as every possible effort was made to prevent enemy air observation. During this time Ferryville and Bizerte and shipping were being raided regularly by enemy planes. Each individual had his own slit trench for protection from air attacks. The heat was terrific, dust a problem and the prevalence of insects and flies necessitated rigid sanitary precautions. In expectation of imminent combat conditions, water and rations were held to a minimum. The troops became thinned and hardened due to constant physical exertion during training hours which were long and irregular.

Specialized training was conducted at Lake Bizerte stressing coordination with the Navy in all phases of landing operations, removal of beach obstacles and mines, attack on real German built pillboxes, mortar firing from landing craft and grapnel firing for the removal of beach wire. As usual speed marches, including daily mile runs, were conducted to keep troops in top physical form.

From 23 to 27 June the Regiment engaged with other Division units in a big dry run or dress rehearsal for the next assault operation. Following this rehearsal the intensive training ended and the troops were given somewhat of a rest. Drill hours were shortened and the men received more time for recreation. Nevertheless speed marches and physical conditioning continued, to prevent losing that physical fitness the troops had acquired. On 3 July General Lucian K. Truscott spoke to all officers of the Third Infantry Division in his fighting manner and the next day, "Independence Day," in a Division review ceremony, gave another fight talk to all troops.

PLANS FOR A SECOND AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT

During the time from March to July 1943 as troops trained faithfully day and night for an amphibious operation, planning boards considered detailed coordinated plans for an operation against enemy forces in Sicily.

Final plans called for an assault by a combined American and British force against the southeastern portion of Sicily on D-Day to capture it as a base for further operations. A general line running from Pozallo on the southeastern coast north to Ragusa and Vizzini was to separate the zones of action of the British Eighth Army on the east from that of the American Force 343, or Seventh Army, on the west. The American Force consisting of the Second Corps on the right and a provisional corps named Joss Force on the left, had the mission of seizing and holding the airfields at Ponte Olive and the one just north of Comiso, the air landing fields at Biscari and northwest of Licata, and the port of Licata. The Third Infantry Division, reinforced to about one-third its normal size and one combat team of the Second Armored Division under the command of General Lucian K. Truscott, constituted Joss Force and drew the mission of seizing the Licata airfield and port.³ The other missions of the American Force were assigned to the Second Corps consisting of the fighting First, Ninth and Forty-Fifth Infantry Divisions. The Eighty-Second Airborne was to drop forces behind enemy lines on D-1.

³ FO 5 Hq. 3d Inf. Div. (Reing.) (Joss) Bizerte, Tunisia, 26 June 1943.



Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, CG, 3d Inf. Div., addresses troops prior to embarkation from North Africa for Sicily 2 July 1943. On the right a close-up of the general.

Joss Force planned to land a battalion from each of the 7th, 15th and 30th Infantry regiments and the Third Ranger Battalion on four beaches east and west of Licata, designated Red, Green, Yellow, and Blue, and to follow up rapidly with other forces to accomplish its mission.

The XII Air Support Command had the mission of providing air support for Force 343 including aerial bombardment of enemy strong points, reconnaissance and fighter cover to protect landing forces against attack by enemy aircraft.

Naval gun fire support was to be furnished by close and deep supporting fires by five support groups of United States Navy cruisers and destroyers including the *U.S.S. Birmingham*, *U.S.S. Brooklyn*, *U.S.S. Buck*, *U.S.S. Ludlow*, *U.S.S. Roe*, *U.S.S. Swanson*, *U.S.S. Edison*, *U.S.S. Woolsey*, *U.S.S. Wilkes* and the *U.S.S. Nicholson*.

The Seventh Infantry commanded by Colonel Harry B. Sherman had made detailed plans for its part in the operation.⁴ Order of battle consisted of the Seventh Infantry with a Detachment 3rd Signal Company, Shore Fire Control Party No. 1 and a Prisoner of War Interrogation Team attached; the 10th Field Artillery Battalion with the 62nd Armored Infantry Battalion, Battery "A", 9th Field Artillery Battalion, and Shore Fire Control Party No. 2 attached; Company "A", 10th Engineer Battalion; Company "A", 3rd Medical Battalion; Company "D", 3rd Chemical Battalion; and Company "G", 66th Armored Regiment. Several other units were attached to the Seventh Infantry for the landing only. When ashore they were to execute missions assigned to them by other headquarters.

Naval fire support "Gaffi" including the *U.S.S. Roe* and *U.S.S. Swanson* was to give direct support to the Seventh Infantry. The Regiment was to land on Beach Red about six miles west of Licata, Sicily, at H-hour, D-day. The First Battalion, the assault battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore, with a platoon of engineers was to reduce the beach defenses to facilitate subsequent landings.

Three mortar squads of the First Platoon, Company "D", 3rd Chemical Battalion, were to precede the assault waves prepared to fire on beach targets, or to smoke the beach in event of a daylight landing. One rifle

company of the First Battalion was to occupy the high ground at "F", on Torre St. Nicola, relieve elements of the Third Ranger Battalion thereon and protect the left flank and rear of the Green Force. Following completion of its task the First Battalion was to assemble in an area behind the Second Battalion.

The Second Battalion under the command of Major Everett W. Duvall was to follow at a half hour interval, pass through the assault battalion in its zone of action, destroy all enemy to be encountered, and seize objective "L", the high ground at Torre Maratta, to hold the enemy north and west of the line O.P. It was also the mission of the Second Battalion to protect the Regimental right flank, establish and cover a railroad in the vicinity of objective "W".

Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges assumed command of the Third Battalion on 4 July just a day before the troops loaded on the invasion craft. Having been a member of the Third Division G-3 Section he had made detailed studies of Red Beach and was well prepared to command the battalion on such short notice. The Third Battalion drew the mission of following the Second Battalion at a half hour interval, to pass through the assault battalion in zone with utmost speed, destroy all enemy to be encountered, and seize objective "K", to hold the enemy north and west of the line O.P. The battalion was to protect the left of the Regiment and destroy the railroad at "T". One rifle company was to be established in the vicinity of "T" to cover the railroad demolition detail, the Anti-Tank Company Mine Platoon and Company "A", 10th Engineers, which units were to lay a mine field in the vicinity. A 57mm Gun Platoon had the mission covering enemy approaches from the west.

Both the Second and Third Battalions were to be prepared, upon the accomplishment of their initial missions, to attack and destroy by-passed enemy positions. Regimental Cannon Company commanded by Captain Charles W. Edwards, Jr., was to commence landing at H-plus 130, assemble and be prepared to deliver fire on the enemy strong point at "V". Anti-Tank Company,

⁴ FO 5 Hq, 7th Inf. Bizerte, Tunisia, 1 July 1943.

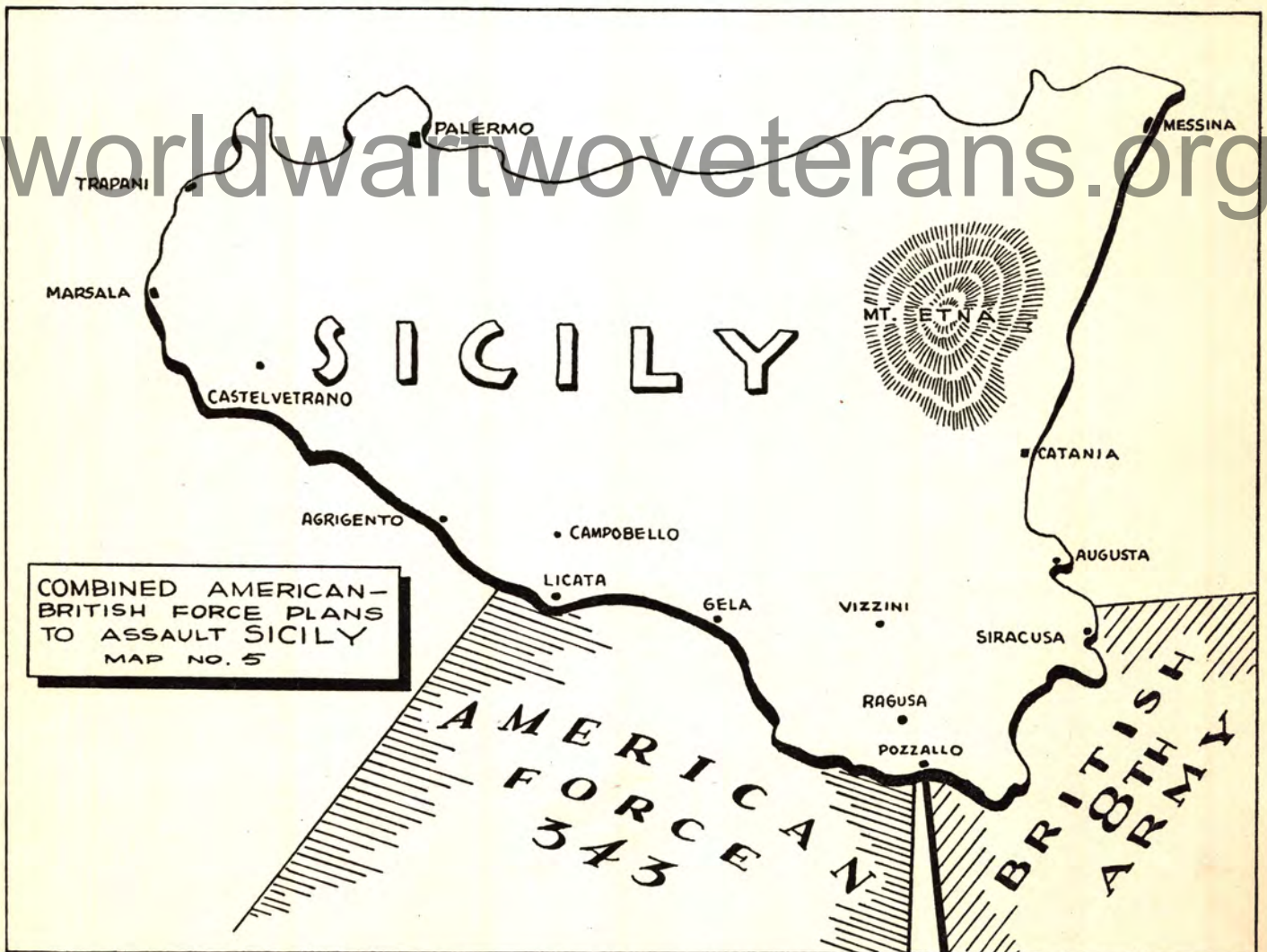
commanded by First Lieutenant Thomas D. Rush, had the missions of clearing beach exits, protecting the beach-head from tank attacks and to be prepared to deliver fire against hostile emplacements.

The zone of action assigned to the Seventh Infantry was in the western third of the Licata plain and the western portion of the broken hill mass which rims the plain in an arc about Licata. The plain is undulating, has an extensive road net and stream net, which is dry in summer, and is largely cultivated with wheat, vine and orchard farmland. In the left of the zone the plain ends and mountains rise to the north and west to average heights of one thousand feet. Monte Durra is the highest with 1540 feet. Highway No. 115 runs parallel to the coast from Agrigento to Licata and Highway No. 123 runs north from Licata into the hills. There are numerous secondary roads and trails. There are two railroad lines which cross the plain in this section. One runs parallel to Highway No. 115 along the coast and the other turns northward from Licata toward Campobello.

Beach Red, on which the Seventh Infantry was to land, extends from Punta di Ciotta on the west to Punta San Nicola four thousand yards east. Width of the beach is from five to twenty yards. Most of the beach is backed

by a steep bluff varying from two to sixty feet high but several breaks occur which could be used for vehicles. The beach was reported firm but had loose sand at the exits. Two stream beds with low banks where the V. Secco and V. Madre Chiesa flow into the sea made two excellent beach exits for vehicles. Trails and breaks in the bluff at several other places made excellent exits for foot troops. Torre Di Gaffe, a tower sixty feet high, and Torre San Nicola, a tower one hundred seventy feet high, were conspicuous landmarks. Off shore from Punta San Nicola stands Rocca San Nicola one hundred feet high.

Enemy forces in Sicily were estimated to be four field divisions, five coastal divisions and two German Air Force divisions, with a total Italian Garrison of 208,500 troops, a total German Garrison of 24,000 troops and possibly 5,000 German field troops left after the fall of Tunis. Enemy locations known just prior to D-day indicated that the 26th Assietta Infantry Division could move up to the assistance of the 207th Coastal Division in the Licata area and attack the Seventh Infantry on the left flank of Joss Force. The enemy's capabilities seemed to be to defend at the water's edge with coastal defense units and to defend or counter-attack from the high ground along the line Palma di Montechiaro-Camastra-Campobello.



PART TWO

The Sicilian Campaign 10 July—17 August, 1943

CHAPTER I

The Landing West of Licata and the Capture of Agrigento and Palermo

Embarkation of Regimental Combat Team 7 was accomplished at Bizerte, Tunisia, 5, 6, and 7 July 1943. The Combat Team was loaded on three convoys; a fast one consisting of the LCIs; a medium one of the LSTs; and a slow convoy of the LCTs. Enemy planes attacked the shipping in Bizerte Harbor at 0400 hours 6 July. During the half-hour attack three of the enemy planes were shot down by anti-aircraft crews. Other enemy air attacks were made but no serious damage resulted or did they materially slow the operations in progress.

The fast convoy left Bizerte on 6 July and stopped at Sousse, Tunisia, 8 July, where troops went ashore for several hours. The medium and slow convoys left Bizerte 7 July. The three echelons were to rendezvous off Gozo Island near Malta 9 July. An unusual wind-storm occurred on that day over the Mediterranean. The fury of the storm rolled and tossed the vessels about. The slow LSTs changed their course. The soldiers thought that their landings would be postponed but by nightfall the storm subsided and the invasion forces approached the shores of Sicily.

THE LANDING WEST OF LICATA, SICILY

At about 0400, one hour and fifteen minutes after H-Hour, 10 July 1943, the first assault waves of the First Battalion, Seventh Infantry, landed in a heavy sea at Beach Red, about six miles west of Licata, Sicily. Of the four assault battalions of Joss Force, it experienced the most trouble. Due to difficulty in assembling the mortar wave in the rendezvous area the three mortar squads did not precede the assault waves as planned. Tactical surprise was accomplished, however, and no fire was received by the first waves until the beach was crossed and the foot of the bluff was reached, but then machine gun fire from both flanks opened up and enemy artillery fire began to fall on our troops. Fortunately enemy defenses were poorly designed, containing few mines within barbed wire entanglements. Combat squads worked swiftly and aggressively to crush hostile strong points with concussion grenades and twelve pound satchel charges. The few pillboxes were soon reduced. Elements ran up the gullies and paths to the top of the bluff which over-looked the beach.

Company "A", commanded by Captain Celon A. Peterson, with one section of heavy machine guns attached, turned right and cleared the beach of obstacles and resistance within its zone of action as far as Torre San Nicola. Leaving one platoon to hold this point the remainder of the company moved over to relieve elements of the Third Ranger Battalion on Beach Green. At one point the company came under direct heavy machine gun fire from a fortified position about two hundred yards away. Private Frederick C. Holcomb and Private William V. Westenheffer, with the help of one other man led an attack on the left flank of the machine gun nest and in so doing they exposed themselves to aimed fire. The machine gun nest was destroyed and twenty enemy were captured. That action cleared the way so that Company "A" could continue to advance without suffering heavy casualties, and contributed materially to the accomplishment of the company's mission.¹

Company "C", commanded by Captain Herman E. Wagner, with one section of 81mm mortars attached, turned to the left and cleared the beach area within its zone of action, as far as Torre di Gaffe, against very strong opposition.

Company "B", under the command of First Lieutenant Jack M. Duncan, swept the center of the battalion zone of action, organized the high ground and set up defensive positions on Hills No. 39, 40 and 53.

Captain Carter C. Crall commanded Company "D". At about 0430 the boat in which Private First Class Frank M. Juarez and Private Carlos C. Asin were riding struck a large rock about two hundred yards from shore and was wrecked. Disregarding their own safety while under enemy machine gun and artillery fire, the two soldiers assisted fellow members of the company who were unable to swim, through the heavy surf to the beach. They then returned to the boat, which was under machine gun fire, three times to retrieve vitally needed equipment.²

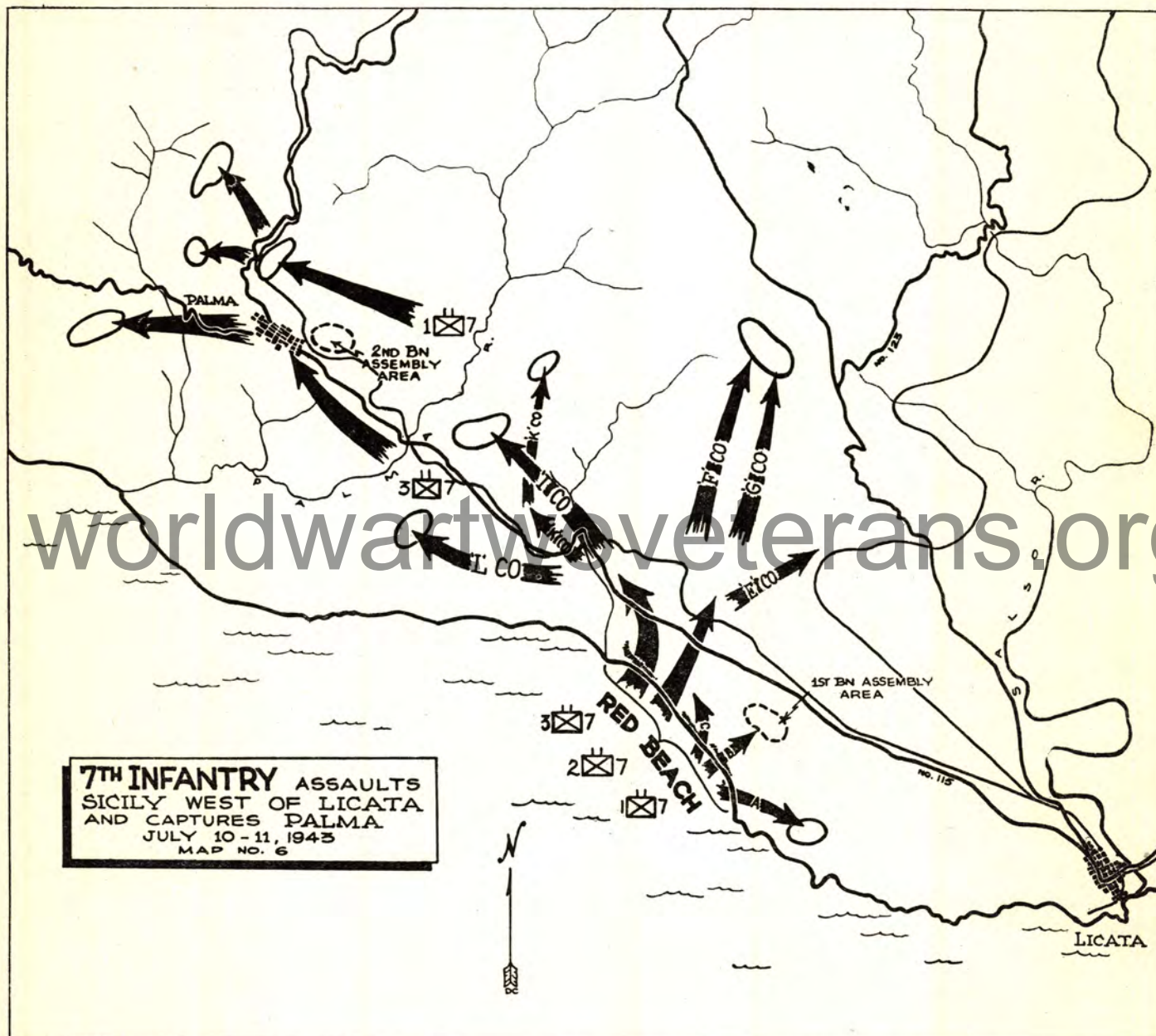
¹ GO No. 79, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 24 Oct. '43. Pfc. Holcomb and Pvt. Westenheffer were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

² GO No. 64, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 9 Sept. '43. Pfc. Juarez and Pvt. Asin were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

About fifty Italian prisoners of war were taken by the First Battalion and a quantity of enemy arms and equipment was captured. Within an hour the First Battalion had cleaned up all resistance in the immediate beach area, with the exception of one enemy 47mm gun on the left flank. This gun continued to harass the landing for approximately two hours, scoring direct hits on LCIs No. 1 and No. 5, the latter being the command vessel of the Regimental Commander, Colonel Harry B. Sherman. Captain James C. Boyd of Company "E", Private Joseph A. Slavik of Headquarters Company, Third Battalion,

locate leading elements of another platoon and to signal his company commander so that supporting weapons might be employed. He located the enemy front line positions and signaled to friendly forces with tracer fire. Supporting 60mm mortars were put into action and seventy-seven enemy quickly surrendered.³

The enemy 47mm gun was finally knocked out at 0615. Direct fire by Naval 20mm gun crews on LCIs was instrumental in silencing the gun. The Naval gunners gave a good account of themselves by also silencing two enemy machine guns above the beach. The co-



and two other enlisted men were killed and six enlisted men were wounded aboard the LCIs by the enemy fire. The Second Battalion landed at 0440 under machine gun, rifle and mortar fire. The LCI with Company "F" personnel was subjected to direct fire from 20mm weapons and machine guns. Company "E" encountered stiff opposition from enemy troops entrenched on their objective. Heavy fire from enemy riflemen and machine gunners from two hundred to four hundred yards distant wounded two men and held up the platoon of Staff Sergeant Lee H. Perkins. With another man he volunteered to cross an open area four hundred yards wide to

ordinating line was reached at 0555 and at 0820 the Second Battalion objectives, Hills 475, 469 and 429 were taken. Communication was established between all companies. Defensive positions were set up and Hills 356, 224 and 363 outposted. At 1400 the Second Battalion was attached to the 15th Infantry.

Last scheduled battalion to land was the Third. Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges directed of the Navy Commander that the Blue Battalion be landed before

³ GO No. 64, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 9 Sept. '43. S/Sgt. Perkins was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

daylight wherever possible. As a result instead of being landed behind the first two battalions the Third Battalion was landed to the left at 0510 on the part of the beach under the bluffs of Torre di Gaffe, which part had not been touched by the first two battalions. Some protection was offered there from artillery fire but vigorous opposition from enemy automatic weapons entrenched on top of the bluffs was received. Sides of the bluffs which the troops had to climb were found to be wired.

The leading elements of Company "L" came under heavy fire from several enemy machine guns and numerous rifles. Sergeant Lawrence B. Rogers, accompanied by three men, moved on through the fire, scaled an embankment and by vicious assault destroyed an enemy emplacement and captured nineteen Italian soldiers.⁴

Private Joseph R. Jojola of Company "L" advanced with the leading elements of his company across an open field. An enemy machine gun which was dug-in and well concealed, opened fire on the lead troops, and caused them to deploy and seek cover. Realizing the danger in the situation, Private Jojola, on his own initiative and without order, crawled forward through the gun fire to a location from which he could throw hand grenades into the emplacement. He succeeded in destroying the resistance thereby allowing his company to continue its advance.⁵

Corporal Richard M. Sparks of Company "L" lost his weapon during the landing operations due to the extremely rough surf and the fact that he had to swim to the beach from his landing craft. Once on shore though unarmed he advanced through woods in the direction of an enemy machine gun which opened fire on the rest of his platoon. Upon nearing the enemy position by skillful maneuver, he caused the machine gunner and additional enemy soldiers nearby to surrender by his presence alone. The gunner was in position and ready to fire but the surprise of Corporal Sparks's presence caused his surrender. Corporal Sparks thus reduced the enemy fire against the remainder of the platoon and enabled it to push on to its objective.⁶

After Company "K" landed and scaled the bluffs it came under heavy machine gun, rifle and mortar fire. Captain Marcus K. Biggers mustered together several small groups and led them against the enemy weapons which were outflanked, destroyed and their crews killed or captured. That action resulted in a speedy reorganization of the company and a continuation of the advance.⁶

Staff Sergeant Carl W. Boone, acting platoon leader of the First Platoon of Company "K", advanced his platoon by covered routes in his zone of action, to within one hundred yards of an enemy pillbox and its surrounding defenses. The leading scout was fired upon and all of the defense opened fire on the platoon. Remaining cool under the enemy fire, Staff Sergeant Boone moved about directing his squads into position for an assault. On his order and under his leadership the platoon's flanking and assaulting forces charged the defenses with grenades and bayonets. The strong point was over-run with but one casualty to the attacking forces.⁶

The squad of Company "K" to which Private Lloyd L. Shipp belonged came under heavy well-aimed machine gun fire, the effectiveness of which caused the squad to take cover. Private Shipp however moved forward with skillful use of cover through the enemy fire. He maneuvered to within seventy-five yards of the machine gun and then fired an anti-tank rocket grenade into the nest which destroyed the enemy machine gun and allowed the squad to advance.⁶

Companies "L" and "I" moved on toward the Third Battalion objectives on either side of Highway No. 115. When Captain James F. Steiner of Company "L" was

wounded, Lieutenant Colonel Heintges led the company toward Objective "K". Second Lieutenant Wilbur V. Hamm, with an eight man demolition detail, advanced ahead of the leading companies and succeeded in blowing the bridge at "T". All Third Battalion objectives were seized by 1000.

As the rifle battalions advanced on their objectives, remaining units of the Regimental Combat Team continued to land. Soft sand on the beach and steep dry streambeds, which were the only exits, made it difficult to clear the beach of transport. By 0930 hours the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, Company "G" of the 66th Armored Regiment, Company "D", 3rd Chemical Mortar Battalion, Anti-Tank Company and Cannon Company were all in position to support the Infantry throughout the day. The beach was screened by smoke to cover the landings of the LCTs. Enemy batteries firing against the beachhead, were finally silenced by naval gun fire. By nightfall the Regiment was firmly established on Sicilian soil at a cost of twenty-two killed and thirty-six wounded in action.

For the landing west of Licata, Correspondent Michael Chinigo of International News Service accompanied the Regiment. As soon as he was ashore he entered an emplacement which had been captured by "Cotton Balers". The Italian field telephone in the emplacement rang just as he entered. Chinigo picked up the receiver and spoke a few words of questioning in Italian. On the other end of the wire an excited officer at the Italian Army Headquarters in Campobello asked if it were true that Licata was being attacked. Speaking fluent Italian, Chinigo assured the enemy officer that the report was false and that the Allies would not attempt such an enterprise. With his fears quieted for the moment the Italian officer hung up and the amusing incident ended.

At 1550 Colonel Sherman ordered the First Battalion to assume defense of some of the positions held by the Third Battalion so that both battalions would be in better positions to spearhead the next day's attack. The necessary moves were accomplished during the late afternoon and early evening as enemy aircraft bombed and strafed troops. Throughout the night the defensive positions were occupied and maintained. Strong reconnaissance patrols were active and brought in thirty enemy.

The Seventh Infantry had no support from fighter or bomber aircraft over the beach on D-Day, but cub observation planes launched from improvised landing decks on LSTs located enemy artillery positions and aided in coordinating the attacking forces. Enemy planes made sporadic attacks on ships and beach dumps. Some ammunition and supplies were landed at Beach Red, but after D-Day that beach was not used because the sea approaches were unsatisfactory and the only exits were the dry, deep, sandy streambeds.

THE THIRD BATTALION CAPTURES PALMA DI MONTECHIARO

On 11 July at 0200 Colonel Sherman received orders for the Seventh Infantry to capture Palma di Montechiaro and seize the high ground to the west. Accordingly he ordered that the Third Battalion attack at 0430. The jump-off was delayed until 0600 when the Blue Battalion forces crossed the stream, Fiaci di Palma, which

⁴ GO No. 62, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 6 Sept. '43. Sgt. Rogers was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵ GO No. 61, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 4 Sept. '43. Pvt. Jojola was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁶ GO No. 53, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 2 Aug. '43. Capt. Biggers, S/Sgt. Boone, Cpl. Sparks and Pvt. Shipp were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

was used as the line of departure. The First Battalion moved from its defensive positions at 0830 to support the attack and protect the right flank of the Regiment.

The Third Battalion encountered resistance which resulted in sharp, brisk fire fights, and street fighting in Palma di Montechiaro itself. To the south and west of the town the Italians were dug-in in trenches. Treacherous ruses were tried by the Italians at this point. White flags would appear at one end of the trenches. As the Americans would advance to accept the surrender, machine guns at other points would open fire on them. This resulted in a greater loss for the Italians. The Third Battalion forces proceeded to slaughter sixty of them and captured two hundred.

While the battle was in progress Private First Class Lenny A. Macklin of the Medical Detachment crawled through the concentrated machine gun fire to give aid to a corporal wounded in both legs and lying in an exposed position. After rendering first aid, he labored to carry the wounded non-commissioned officer to safe cover.⁷

During the attack on Palma di Montechiaro Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges witnessed the ambushing of an advance party appointed to accept the surrender of the town. He immediately assembled and personally led a tank destroyer squad of ten men to their rescue and ordered the building, in which the ambushing enemy were located, to be demolished. Then after directing that two wounded American soldiers be sent to the rear, he continued the attack on the enemy, killing two, wounding two, effecting the capture of twenty-one enemy and causing the remaining enemy to flee the city in disorder into the surrounding hills, where they were subsequently captured. Although the enemy fire was of such intensity that several of his men were wounded, Lieutenant Colonel Heintges continued to lead the attack. The coolness and gallant conduct he displayed inspired the men to successful accomplishment of the mission.⁸

Private First Class Francis A. Slavik and Private Raymond H. Piper, both of the Medical Detachment, also exhibited extreme gallantry in action on 11 July 1943, during the attack of the Third Battalion. Seeing a seriously wounded American soldier in an open street which was being swept by machine gun, rifle and mortar fire the two medical aid men worked their way forward through the fire to the wounded man's side and with great difficulty moved him to a place of safety.⁹

Following the capture of Palma di Montechiaro, the high ground north and west of the town was occupied at 1330. The First Battalion had been halted on Third Division order north of the town. The Second Battalion was released from attachment to the 15th Infantry and rejoined the Regiment.

On 12 July the Seventh Infantry consolidated its positions west and north of Palma di Montechiaro and confined its activities to foot and motorized patrols. Friendly forces were contacted at Naro, to the north, and patrols operating in the direction of Agrigento brought in some prisoners of war. Two jeeps belonging to the First Battalion were disabled by enemy strafing but no loss to personnel was incurred. Naval and artillery guns fired concentrations in the vicinity of Agrigento and friendly planes dropped bombs on the city.

FIRST BATTALION CONDUCTS RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE TOWARD AGRIGENTO

At 2200 on July 12 orders were received directing a reconnaissance in force on Agrigento. The plan provided for thirty-five reinforcing two and one-half ton trucks to transport one battalion west on Highway 115, as far as possible, then the reconnaissance was to be pressed on

foot. At 2330 Colonel Sherman assigned the mission to the First Battalion and directed Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore to entruck his troops at 0500, 13 July, proceed west on the highway to detrucking point in advance of the Third Battalion's positions, and from that point, by dismounted action, to conduct the reconnaissance. One battery of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion and another from the Second Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, were ordered to displace forward during the night, go into position in an area two miles west of the detrucking point, and support the advance of the First Battalion.

The First Battalion moved on time and at 0600 detrucked at a point south and west of Monte Narbone. The troops promptly deployed and initiated their reconnaissance in force, with their route of advance paralleling Route No. 115. The maneuver was carried out in the face of strong enemy resistance in the form of small arms, automatic weapons, artillery and mortars, many of which were located. Counter-battery fire was delivered successfully by the supporting artillery. Several casualties were suffered by the assault forces and were evacuated from the battlefields, some of them under the cover of darkness. Enemy fearful of our artillery fire were made prisoners and expressed the belief that they had been subjected to huge volumes of automatic artillery fire. That was the first indication to Seventh Infantry men of the terrific effect of their supporting artillery.

While Company "A" was participating in the reconnaissance at about 1500, Captain Celon A. Peterson went ahead of the line of scouts under enemy fire to locate enemy heavy weapons which were delaying the advance. He succeeded in locating five enemy machine guns upon which he then directed supporting mortar fire which put the weapons out of action and thus permitted his company to continue the advance.⁹

Sergeant John A. Mayo of Company "B" advanced three hundred yards over open ground while under fire to attack singlehandedly an enemy machine gun which he put out of action with hand grenades and his bayonet. Returning to his platoon while still under fire he dragged a wounded soldier to cover and recovered the wounded man's rifle and equipment.¹⁰

The reconnaissance progressed to a line where the Naro River bends to the northwest to Highway 115 and extended two thousand yards southwest. Having accomplished its mission, the First Battalion, on order of Colonel Sherman, withdrew under cover of darkness to an assembly area west of Monte Narbone and near the detrucking point. The reconnaissance had revealed that Agrigento would be difficult to take by frontal attack, inasmuch as its eastern perimeter was strongly defended by at least twelve direct fire, high muzzle velocity weapons, a minimum of one active battalion of field artillery and a number of mortars. Not too much Infantry was in position but frontal attack was indicated as impracticable. During the reconnaissance in force a mule train operated to deliver ammunition and supplies to forward dumps and assisted in moving the rifle battalion into its assembly area. Medical units set up an aid station underneath a bridge at one place which received much hostile artillery fire but without effect.

⁷ GO No. 94, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10 Dec. '43. Pfc. Macklin was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁸ GO No. 53, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 2 Aug. '43. Pfc. Slavik was awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. Lt. Col. Heintges and Pvt. Piper were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁹ GO No. 55, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 Aug. '43. Capt. Peterson was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁰ GO No. 77, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 22 Oct. '43. Sgt. Mayo was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

SECOND BATTALION TAKES FAVARA WITHOUT OPPOSITION

At 0500, 14 July, Company "E" moved out of the Second Battalion assembly area to determine the enemy situation in Favara, and reached the Naro river. Combat patrols of Company "E" penetrated into Favara without opposition during the day. The remainder of the battalion moved across country at 2030 to catch up with Company "E".

At 2130 14 July, the First Battalion jumped off across country, also in a northwesterly direction, protecting the left flank of the Second Battalion. By dawn the Second Battalion Command Post was established on Hill 533 and the First Battalion was on the high ground south of Favara. Both battalions had traversed over very rugged terrain during the night.

At 0900, 15 July, the Second Battalion attacked with Companies "F" and "G" abreast, "E" in reserve and "H" in support. No opposition was encountered and the troops marched through Favara at 1450 to the high ground of La Montagna to the northwest, which was occupied at 1600.

THE ATTACK ON AGRIGENTO, 15-17 JULY

In the evening of 15 July it was apparent to Colonel Sherman that a rapid aggressive advance would break the thinning outer defenses and uncover Agrigento, the most important city on the south coast of Sicily, as well as Porto Empedocle to the southwest. The First and Second Battalions occupied high ground east of the Naro River and patrolled to the front while the Third Battalion was in reserve northwest of Palma di Montechiaro. The Third Ranger Battalion had become attached to the Seventh Infantry and was in the vicinity of the Second Battalion. Gambling on the speed and endurance of his Infantry battalions and support of attached artillery units, Colonel Sherman audaciously put into play a plan of maneuver that was to bring great success.

The advance was begun with the Third Ranger Battalion and Second Battalion moving around to the north of Agrigento. The Rangers attacked at 1900 and Major Duval's troops jumped off at 2245 for Hill 273 which was taken at 0247, 16 July. The appearance of the Second Battalion on this high ground in the morning was a surprise to the enemy. At 2100 the Third Battalion, in reserve, moved from its position to an area southwest of Favara. Also at 2100 the First Battalion attacked and under the cover of darkness advanced some two thousand yards to the southwest in the direction of Agrigento, setting up defenses on prominent high ground which afforded excellent observation of the route into the city. During that move Company "B" encountered enemy resistance in the form of an outpost with automatic weapons, and destroyed the outpost without suffering any casualties. Twenty-five Italian soldiers were taken prisoners of war. Another outpost was surprised by Company "C" and an additional thirty enemy were captured.

During the morning the First Battalion probed enemy defenses with strong patrols and was subjected to shelling from enemy artillery and mortars. At approximately 0900, 16 July, Company "C" was engaged in aggressive patrolling activities. While working its way forward down a slope enemy artillery fire was directed on the company from positions where the enemy had excellent observation. The fire caught many of the troops in the open without cover and had a demoralizing effect on the company. Observing this, Captain Herman E. Wagner left his position of relative safety at his forward com-

mand post and moved openly to a position from which he directed his men to positions of safety which would not involve a withdrawal from the ground the company held. In this action Captain Wagner was killed by the artillery fire from which he sought to protect his men.¹¹

Corporal Chester R. Swanson left his defiladed position and singlehandedly set up his mortar in the artillery impact area in an effort to observe and destroy an enemy field piece. Ignoring high explosive shells which burst within thirty yards of him, Corporal Swanson adjusted on the enemy weapon twelve hundred yards distant, and succeeded in putting it out of action with a direct hit on his fifth shot.¹²

Private First Class Raymond J. Miller of the Medical Detachment observed the intensive artillery barrage which killed Captain Wagner and severely wounded several men. He left his position of comparative security and advanced over two hundred yards of open ground through artillery fire, remained in the exposed position and administered first aid to the wounded men. Shell fragments flew all about him as he moved from man to man giving first aid.¹³

First Lieutenant Henry H. Hancock of the Medical Detachment observed a soldier of Company "C" who was wounded in the chest by machine gun fire and bleeding profusely. In order for medical aid to be rendered to him it was necessary to move in view of the enemy positions. Lieutenant Hancock worked his way forward and was successful in evacuating the wounded soldier. The speedy rendition of medical aid and the unselfish courageous action of the lieutenant saved the wounded soldier's life.¹⁴

While engaged in a forward reconnaissance mission, Lieutenant Colonel John O. Williams, the Regimental Executive Officer, Sergeant Sanford M. Forbes who had won the Distinguished Service Cross in French Morocco, and Private Maurice Baillargeon were killed in action that morning by ambush. The vehicle was taken by the enemy but on a later day recaptured.

At 1404 Second Battalion observers reported that the enemy was bringing up reinforcements by motor from the Aragona area. Large numbers of the enemy were seen debarking from trucks to the north and deploying for an attack. Artillery was requested which at 1428 commenced concentrating on the enemy forces. Firing ceased at 1537 and was resumed at 1700 for forty-five more minutes. Massed fire from the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, in support of the Regiment, and the 58th and 65th Armored Field Artillery Battalions, and the 77th Field Artillery Regiment, attached to the Regiment for the attack on Agrigento, was very effective, caused one hundred casualties on the enemy, destroyed fifty assorted vehicles and stopped the enemy's counter-attack plans. At 1430 Colonel Sherman committed his reserve battalion, the Third, which attacked astride Highway 115, south of Agrigento.

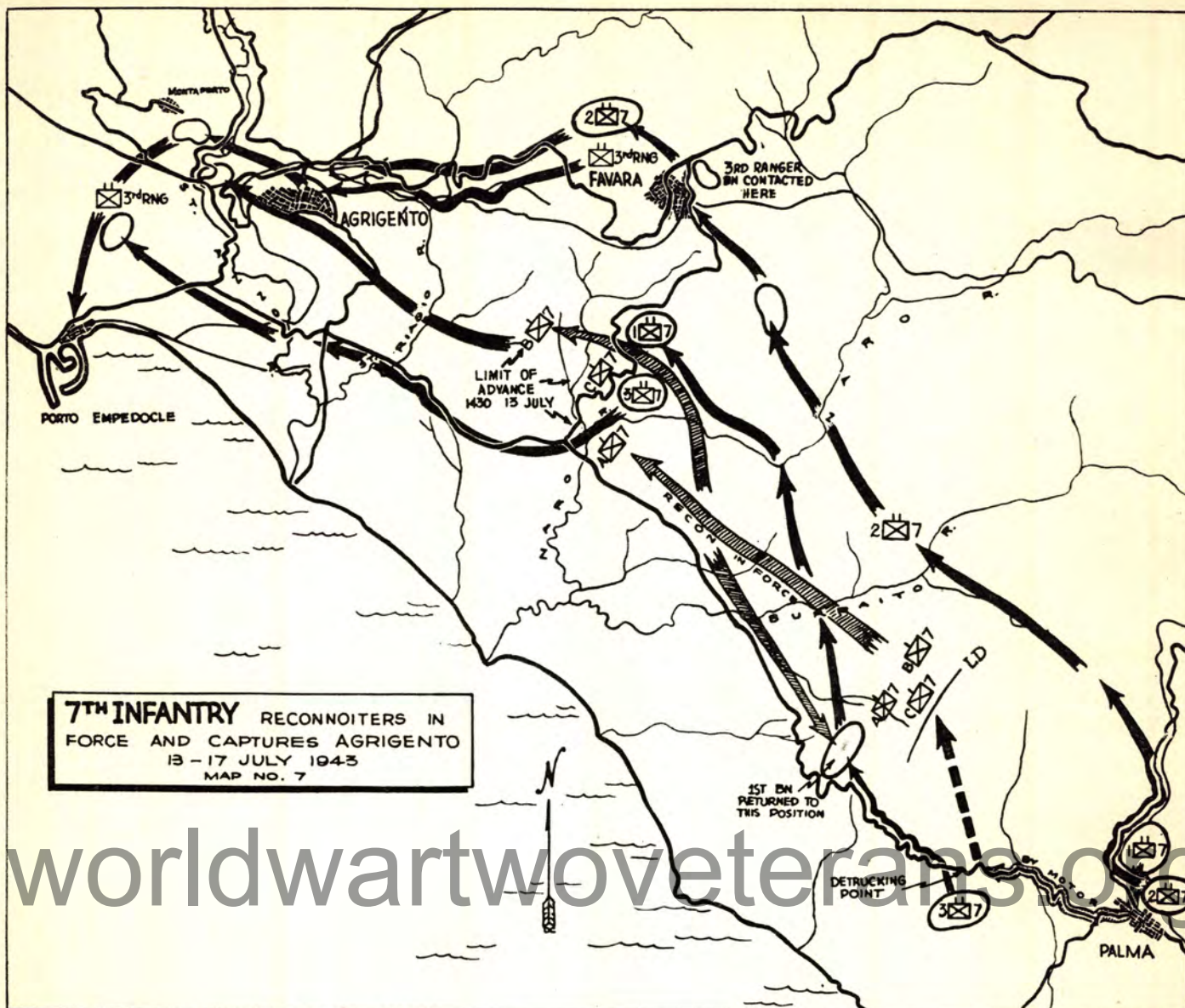
At 1738 Company "G" moved out to attack Hill 333. Staff Sergeant Francis J. Collins led a combat patrol of Company "G" across five hundred yards of open terrain to reconnoiter the hill. Upon reaching the base of the hill he and his men were fired upon by machine guns, rifle fire and hand grenades which wounded one man seriously.

¹¹ GO No. 63, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Sept. '43. Capt. Wagner was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹² GO No. 43, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 26 Mar. '44. Cpl. Swanson was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹³ GO No. 69, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Sept. '43. Pfc. Miller was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁴ GO No. 53, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 2 Aug. '43. 1 Lt. Hancock was awarded the Silver Star Medal.



7TH INFANTRY RECONNOITERS IN FORCE AND CAPTURES AGRIGENTO 13-17 JULY 1943 MAP NO. 7

Under a hail of bullets he went forward to make a reconnaissance and plan an attack. Heedless of the fact that the enemy outnumbered his own force by at least five to one and held the heights of the hill, Staff Sergeant Collins ordered his men to attack with fixed bayonets and grenades. Corporal Bert D. Schiele, leader of one of the squads, repeatedly charged the enemy positions, disregarding rifle fire, machine gun fire and hand grenades, and personally inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. The spirited attack led by the two non-commissioned officers resulted in the capturing of over a company of enemy machine gunners and riflemen.¹⁵

Sergeant Roy Langston, leader of a light machine gun section of Company "G", sighted enemy emplacements and retraced his course by crawling about two hundred fifty yards over the bare hill under a hail of small arms and mortar fire. On contacting the attached 81mm mortar section he personally directed the firing on the enemy targets, assisting materially in causing a disorganized retreat of the enemy, superior in number and weapons.¹⁵

The remainder of the Second Battalion moved for Hill 333 and reached it at 2240. Defensive positions were taken up. At 1800 Colonel Sherman sent the First Battalion toward the city of Agrigento. Moving in combat formation the troops of the First Battalion arrived at the outskirts of the city just as darkness was descending. This move was made in the face of enemy small arms fire which was quickly overcome, and approximately

three hundred Italian soldiers were taken prisoners.

Corporal Forrest L. Smith, Jr., of Company "A", armed with a Thompson sub-machine gun and covered by a companion, rushed into a cave and singlehandedly took eight Italian officers and thirty-four enlisted men prisoners. This feat enabled his company to advance more rapidly.¹⁶

At about 1500 Private Robert J. Green, also of Company "A", spotted a camouflaged enemy pillbox forty yards to his right, and, ignoring a machine gun firing from it in his direction, he dispatched the operator with one round from his M-1. He emptied the clip of his M-1 as he walked towards the pillbox, then fired his .45 automatic pistol. Twelve of the occupants were forced to surrender. He killed four others who refused to surrender by tossing a hand grenade inside the pillbox.¹⁷

Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore ordered his command to enter the city and against heavy opposition from small arms and automatic weapons, the entire First Battalion stormed into Agrigento, engaging the enemy in

¹⁵ GOs No. 61, 62, 63, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 4, 6 and 8 Sept. '43. S/Sgt. Collins, Sgt. Langston and Cpl. Schiele were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁶ GO No. 185, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3 Sept. '44. Cpl. Smith was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁷ GO No. 117, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 June '44. Pvt. Green was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

vigorous street fighting wherever the advances of its troops were challenged. Headquarters Company First Battalion and the Medical Detachment followed the assault closely, being only several hundred yards behind the rifle companies. A call was sent back by an 81mm mortar crew for ammunition which was located on a jeep in the rear of the battalion. As the driver of the vehicle was not present when the call for ammunition was repeated as urgent, Private First Class Claude R. Miller of the Medical Detachment left his position with his unit, which was one of comparative safety, and drove the ammunition vehicle up the street to the mortar position in the midst of heavy sniper fire. His prompt action enabled the mortars to fire on their target and thus permit the column to advance again.¹⁸

Many Italian soldiers were taken prisoners during the advance through the outskirts of the city, and were marched in column immediately behind the assault elements up to the civic center of Agrigento, at which point the Italian General Lauredis technically surrendered his command, including two thousand seven hundred troops, to Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore. The general and his staff were dispatched to Third Infantry Division Headquarters, under escort, at 2300. By 0030, 17 July, the entire city was under control.

In the meantime the Third Battalion advanced rapidly west of Highway 115 against scattered resistance and seized the key terrain commanding Porto Empedocle which it occupied at 1900, after Agrigento had been encircled from the north and west against only minor opposition. During the advance the Blue Battalion forces captured over twelve hundred enemy soldiers including forty officers. Eight enemy coastal emplacements with guns pointed seaward were overrun. A motor patrol from the Third Battalion accepted the surrender of the town of Siculiana, ten miles west of Porto Empedocle on Highway 115, at 0200, 17 July.

At 0145, 17 July, on order of the Commanding Officer, the First Battalion moved around the city and organized a defensive position on the commanding ground on the northern edge of Agrigento. At 0400, friendly reconnaissance discovered an enemy armored patrol approaching Agrigento from the west, and the battalion was alerted and moved higher up the face of the bluffs at the edge of the city. The battalion commander requested the assistance of Cannon Company. A combat squad of Company "B" was dispatched to the scene with anti-tank grenades. As a result of the action on the part of this combat squad, three light Italian tanks were captured, with their crews intact. Additional reconnaissance revealed no more enemy to be active in the immediate area. The First Battalion then moved across country through Monteperto to an assembly area in the vicinity of Gardina.

The advances of the rifle battalions were superb examples of endurance, control and determination on the part of all officers and men and reflected great credit on the units. The capture of Agrigento where the main enemy strength in southern Sicily was located, netted the Regiment six thousand prisoners in all, fifty assorted field pieces and one hundred vehicles, including tanks, trucks and armored cars. Besides, many human casualties were inflicted on the enemy. The Regimental Combat Team was now free to turn inland towards the center of Sicily.

Company "C", which had been dis-

patched to conduct the thousands of prisoners to the rear, rejoined the First Battalion in the vicinity of Gardina. Under cover of darkness of the night 17-18 July the First Battalion moved to positions two miles south of Raffadali. Patrols found the town clear of the enemy. By noon 18 July the Regiment concentrated in the vicinity of Raffadali and conducted aggressive patrols. A platoon of Company "B" supported by artillery fire knocked out a road block five miles northwest of Raffadali. Company "E" moved north along Highway 118 to the Platani River to determine the enemy situation and condition of the roads. The company set up defensive positions on Hill 430 on both sides of the highway. A motor patrol from Company "F" proceeded to San Elisabetta, Angelo Maxara and the Platani River where bridges were found blown.

THE ADVANCE ON PALERMO

On 18 July 1943, Joss Force was dissolved and the Third Infantry Division reverted to its normal strength. Provisional Corps ordered the Division to advance on Palermo. General Truscott allowed the Infantry five days to cover the one hundred miles to the capital city. The Seventh Infantry was placed in reserve as the 15th and 30th Regiments and the Third Ranger Battalion started the Division's drive north from Aragona and captured Casteltermini. San Stefano Quisquina and Castronovo. At 1900, 20 July, the Regiment shuttled the First and Second Battalions forward by motor through Aragona and Casteltermini to a detrucking point four miles north of Castronovo. The two battalions then moved two miles by foot in the direction of Prizzi to assembly areas.

THIRD BATTALION SEIZES PRIZZI AND CORLEONE

At 0605 the Third Battalion jumped off in the main and frontal assault along the highway to Prizzi while at 0705 the First Battalion attacked along the right flank. The advance of both battalions was hindered by spotted resistance and there were several skirmishes, which resulted in the capture of many Italian soldiers. At 0940

¹⁸ GO No. 55, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 Aug. '43. Pfc. Miller was awarded the Silver Star Medal.



"Cotton Balers" march through Corleone, Sicily, 21 July 1943.

the Third Battalion was in possession of Prizzi and had taken a total of five hundred prisoners of war which included an entire Italian cavalry squadron complete with mounts and equipment. Nearly two hundred horses and mules, and two large calibre mobile guns were among the captured materiel. Members of the Third Battalion were happy over their success. Shortly after the capture General Truscott, an ex-Cavalryman, appeared on the scene. While he conversed with Lieutenant Colonel Heintges about a hundred members of the Third Battalion suddenly appeared around the brow of a hill riding and leading their captured animals. The Commanding General exclaimed: "My God, what is that?" When told of the success and booty, he then ordered that the men dismount from the horses, with the remark: "You know, Heintges, we are still Infantry." It was shortly after that that the Third Battalion accomplished one of its great feats of the Sicilian Campaign by covering thirty-two miles on foot in less than twenty-four hours over the rugged Sicilian country.

Company "C" led the First Battalion advance, and was accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Moore. At one point the leading element, the First Platoon under the command of Second Lieutenant William J. Melgard, was suddenly fired on by two enemy machine guns at about three hundred yards range. Lieutenant Colonel Moore ordered Second Lieutenant Melgard to dispatch a squad to destroy the guns, on a flanking maneuver. The First Squad led by Sergeant Richard G. Hofelich was given the mission. Sergeant Hofelich led his squad up a hill in an attempt to flank the positions of the two enemy machine guns that were impeding the company's advance. One gun one hundred yards away suddenly directed intense fire at the group. Instructing his men to take cover Sergeant Hofelich crawled to within thirty yards of the gun and while bullets barely missed him stood up and hurled two grenades, knocking out the gun and killing the crew of two. He then killed two enemy riflemen acting as security for the other gun, and his squad after a short fire fight captured nine more riflemen. Led by Sergeant Hofelich, the squad charged the second machine gun nest fifty yards distant and forced the crew of six to surrender.¹⁹

The Second Battalion which moved from the entrucking point at 0130, 21 July, was in mobile reserve during the advance of the assaulting battalions and joined the Regiment in Prizzi at 1145. At 1400 the Third Battalion again took up the advance and moved along Highway 118 for Corleone. The First Battalion followed at 1500 and the Second Battalion continued to be held in mobile reserve. During these moves the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, with the 58th and 9th Field Artillery Battalions attached, leapfrogged forward and delivered fire ahead of the Infantry battalions as needed. Enemy resistance was weak and disorganized and by 1840 the Third Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Heintges, had seized Corleone and two thousand enemy soldiers.

¹⁹ GO N 1, 215, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Oct. '44. Sgt. Hofelich was awarded the Silver Star Medal.



SECOND BATTALION SEIZES MARINEO

From Corleone Major Duvall's Second Battalion assumed the Regimental lead and by a forced night march against only slight resistance seized Marineo during the early hours of 21 July and halted on order about a mile north of the town at 0915.

The First Battalion moved by truck out of the Corleone assembly area at 0730 on the 22nd to a point beyond Marineo and detrucked. Lieutenant Colonel

Moore's troops pushed through the Second Battalion and marched at a forced pace up Route 121 to Misilmeri. Reorganization was effected on the northern outskirts of the town.

Cannon Company after protecting the move of the First Battalion through the Second Battalion at the road junction of Highways 118 and 121, departed on a forward reconnaissance mission. It encountered a road block two miles north of Misilmeri on Highway 121, where it knocked out two 88mm, high velocity weapons and one 179mm gun, thus clearing the way for the advance of the Infantry. At 1230, 22 July, the First Battalion deployed and started an advance over the high ground to the northwest in the face of small arms and automatic weapons fire which was delivered by the enemy defending positions on the heights. Aggressive action overcame the resistance and the battalion captured the objective with some fifty German soldiers and a like number of Italian soldiers, a large quantity of war materiel, ammunition and explosive dumps and some new and recently installed large bore coastal defense guns.

The Third Battalion had in turn entrucked and motor marched north through Misilmeri to Villabate where the troops detrucked at 1400 hours. The battalion established itself in strong defensive positions and sent out patrols which encountered sporadic rifle and mortar fire from enemy occupying defensive positions and from other enemy groups attempting to escape along the coastal highway toward Messina. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy in killed, wounded and captured and the Third Battalion forces penetrated the city limits of Palermo at 1619 hours to be first into the capital city. At 1840 hours organized resistance in Palermo ceased with

the surrender of the Sicilian commanding general to Captain William R. Hicks. At 2030 hours the Second Battalion moved into the city and took over the dock area to prevent damage to installations. During the day's advance 3,500 enemy were captured, the majority by the Third Battalion, and much valuable enemy materiel was captured.

22 July 1943, was another great day for the glorious Seventh Infantry when it captured Palermo, the capital city of Sicily. It was another first to the long record list acquired by the Regiment down through the years. Will Lang, the war correspondent, in writing of it, had this to say: "As the various American forces approached Palermo, Patton defined a blue phase line just four miles short of the city beyond which no Infantry, excepting patrols, were to go. Patton's tanks had been chosen to make the victorious entry into the island's capital. This they did, with banners flying and cameras, grinding. But inside the city they found the Third Division's Lieutenant Colonel John Heintges and his entire battalion quietly patrolling the streets."²⁰

It is said by some that General Patton was displeased to find that Seventh Infantrymen had stolen Palermo so to speak. It was not defiance to orders that led to capture of the city by the Third Battalion, Seventh Infantry, but a military necessity. Because of the aggressiveness of the Seventh Infantry one of its units was in the most advantageous position to capture the important city. Lieutenant Colonel Heintges was unaware of it but destiny was to have him figure most prominently in even a more important "military steal" nearly two years later when the great "Cotton Baler" Regiment would end its combat days for World War II.

worldwartwoveterans.org

CHAPTER II

The Drive Along the North Coast of Sicily

Following the capture and occupation of Palermo, the attachments to the Seventh Infantry which had assisted in the drive of the Regiment reverted to their parent organizations. The Second Battalion remained on guard duty in the city until relieved on 26 July, when it joined other units of the Regiment in the Villabate bivouac. On 24 July Company "L" was detached to the control of Third Infantry Division Headquarters and moved to the Prizzi Prisoner of War Inclosure for guard duty. Two days later the entire First Battalion was detached from control of the Regiment and relieved Company "L". Activity of the remainder of the Regiment during the period consisted of re-equipping and normal duties. Rest and relaxation were enjoyed.

On 25 July Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore assumed the duties of Regimental Executive Officer and a former "Cotton Baler", Major Frank M. Izenour, destined to become one of the greatest battalion commanders the Regiment has ever seen, assumed command of the First or Red Battalion.

Ordered to move to a new bivouac in the vicinity of Altavilla Milicia, the Seventh Infantry minus the First Battalion closed out of the Villabate bivouac at 0600 27 July. During the course of the movement the Third Battalion was ordered by higher headquarters to proceed to an area five miles east of Termini Imerese. The Second Battalion and separate units closed into the Altavilla Milicia bivouac area at 1000 and the Third Battalion continued on to its assigned area, closing in at 1300.

The Third Battalion was given the mission of patrolling to the east on Highway 113 to contact the 45th Infantry Division, and to patrol the beach area in its vicinity.

On 30 July 1943, the Third Battalion engaged in a scheduled recreational swimming period near Termini Imerese, following a mountain climbing exercise. Second Lieutenant Charles L. Treadway, Staff Sergeant Jim L. Dudley and Private Moran, all of "I" Company, got out into deep water and in attempting to return to shallower waters became exhausted and nearly drowned while combatting the undertow. The three exhausted men were rescued by Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges, Technical Sergeant Joseph Punska, Private First Class Elbert T. Worthington and Private William H. Miller.¹

Regimental activities in the Altavilla Milicia area consisted of routine guard duty, replacing and refurbishing equipment lost and damaged during the stress of battle, and, basic training exercises including combat firing. Athletics were featured and all possible recreation was provided to assist in maintaining morale and physical condition at a high level. Chaplains Dyreson and Horne were zealous in spiritual matters, holding church services at

²⁰ Lang, "Lucian King Truscott, Jr.", Life Magazine, 20 Oct. '44, p. 106.

¹ GO No. 118, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 14 June '44. Lt. Col. Heintges, T/Sgt. Punska, Pfc. Worthington and Pvt. Miller were each awarded the Soldier's Medal.

every opportunity. Music and singing were enjoyed as many of the men had acquired Sicilian accordians and guitars.

At Prizzi, the First Battalion improved and extended prisoner of war enclosures on barren, easily guarded hills, with emphasis on cleanliness and sanitation. Utilizing prisoner labor, a guard area was developed in a grove on the banks of a clear mountain stream. Thousands of women gathered outside the cages searching for loved ones and joined with their men in a spontaneous demonstration of relief and happiness when erroneous grapevine reports, that Italy had surrendered, spread through the camp like wildfire. The Second Armored Division units relieved the battalion on 31 July and it entrucked for the eighty-mile ride to the Altavilla Milicia assembly area and rejoined the Regiment on 1 August.

During the week the Seventh Infantry bivouaced in Villabate and Altavilla Milicia, and other units of the Third Infantry Division also rested, the 45th Infantry Division had pushed off to the east toward Messina but encountered heavy resistance. By the time the 45th had reached San Stefano Camastra the high command decided to relieve it with the Third Infantry Division.

On 1 August 1943, the Seventh Infantry commenced movement to the front once more and at 1630 was assembled in the vicinity of Pollins. Initially the Seventh Infantry was in reserve as the Third Division committed the 15th and 30th Regiments. During the night of 3-4 August the Regiment displaced forward by trucks to a new assembly area in the vicinity of Caronia where it remained in readiness on the 4th to pass through the 15th Infantry, then operating on the Furiano River line. Forward reconnaissance was also accomplished on that day. Forty-seven replacements consisting of two officers and forty-five enlisted men joined the Regiment.

The enemy fought a strong delaying action and progress of the Division was slow along the coast road. During the night 4-5 August the Second Battalion took up defensive positions on high ground west of the Furiano River directly behind the positions of the 15th Infantry, which regiment was experiencing considerable difficulty with the enemy. At 0930 hours on 6 August the First and Second Battalions of the 15th Infantry crossed the Furiano River and succeeded in gaining a foothold, only to encounter mortar and artillery fire of such severity as to make their positions untenable. During the afternoon a counter-attack by the enemy forced these units of the Third Infantry Division to the west bank of the river. The Second Battalion of the Seventh Infantry covered the withdrawal of these forces which was accomplished by 2200 hours, when the Second Battalion reverted to the control of the Regiment.

Strong opposition across the entire front held up the Third Division advance along the coast. The enemy used heavy concentrations of artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. A local counterattack by the enemy north of San Fratello prevented any further advance during the day.

To dislodge the stubborn enemy from San Fratello and the ridges, higher headquarters planned to commit the Seventh Infantry, as the Second Battalion, 30th Infantry, reinforced, would make a behind-the-lines amphibious landing three miles east of San Agata.

On 7 August Colonel Sherman received orders for the Regiment to attack through the 15th Infantry across the Furiano River and continue the advance east on Highway 113. Accordingly the Third Battalion was moved forward to the vicinity of the Second Battalion during the evening.

Enemy strength was concentrated in the narrow coastal plain sector through which one good highway

paralleled the coast line. A short distance inland mountains rose precipitately to commanding heights surmounted in many instances with fortress-like ancient towns. Adding to the strength of enemy defenses were the rivers, which ran north to the sea every few miles. While dry at this season of the year, each could be a formidable obstacle when the stream beds and approaches were heavily mined and covered by mortar, machine gun and artillery fire.

To screen the movements of the Seventh Infantry, for the attack on Fratello ridge, arrangements were made for a smoke screen five hundred meters in length, but it was not needed. After a thorough artillery preparation which aided in softening up the enemy for the foot troops, the Second Battalion jumped off at 0600, 8 August 1943, stormed across the Furiano River and was followed one hour later by the Third Battalion. Knocking out enemy strong points the Second Battalion troops plunged into Acquadolci at 0753 where a number of Italian and German soldiers were taken prisoners, and at 1115 seized Sant'Agata. There the advance was halted on order of Division until artillery units could displace forward.

Shortly afternoon the Third Battalion passed through the Second Battalion and proceeded east following Highway 113 to the Rosmarino River which was lightly defended, though the bridges crossing it were demolished. The Third Battalion contacted troops of the Second Battalion 30th Infantry at 1605 and crossed the Rosmarino at 1915 encountering accurate machine gun,



Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., commanding U. S. 7th Army, looks at Pvt. Frank Read, 7th U. S. Infantry, at the Agrigento Airdrome on 25 July 1943. Pvt. Read suffered from shrapnel wounds and with others waited for evacuation by air to Africa for medical treatment.

mortar and artillery fire in effecting the crossing. The battalion set up defensive positions on the high ridge to the east. The Second Battalion advanced to an

assembly area adjacent to the highway, on the west side of the river. Both battalions conducted active patrols along the roads and to the beaches. San Fratello fell to forces of the 30th and 15th Regiments.

The pressure placed on the enemy by all units of the Third Infantry Division compelled him to withdraw from the road south of San Fratello and east of Di Zappula River. The enemy defenses had been bitter and determined and it was only after the full weight of superior fire power and maneuvering was brought to bear, that he withdrew. Patrol reconnaissance showed the presence of enemy tanks and Infantry formations to the south and east. To counter such a threat Company "G" and a platoon of Anti-Tank Company established a road block at Militello Rosmarino at 1700 hours. Motorized patrols southeast to Alcera Li Fusi captured sixty Italian soldiers after a brief skirmish.

The enemy was conducting a continuous rear guard action along the entire front. At this time the Third and Ninth Infantry Divisions were consolidating elements in preparation for a coordinated attack against known enemy positions.

At 0200, 9 August the First Battalion moved forward from its Caronia area in organic transportation and at 0530 detrucked in Sant'Agata. At 0700 the First Battalion supported by heavy artillery preparations crossed the Rosmarino River and passed the Third Battalion on its ridge positions, continuing the attack of the Regiment east along Highway 113. Progress was slow due to accurate hostile machine gun, mortar and artillery fire. Local envelopments featured the advance.

At one place Company "B" was held up by enemy behind a stone wall, after the leading scouts had become wounded. Company "C" maneuvered to the left into the sea in water chest high and together the two companies assaulted and knocked out the enemy opposition.

The First Battalion pursued the withdrawing enemy and engaged the foe in delaying positions, suffering medium casualties. Opposition was overcome and several German and Italian soldiers were captured. When contact with the retreating foe was lost the Red Battalion assembled east of Terranova and sent strong patrols forward to regain and maintain contact with the enemy.

At 1240, 9 August, the Third Battalion left its ridge position east of the Rosmarino River and attacked to the northeast via the rugged hills north of San Marco D'Alunzio. Only slight resistance was encountered initially by the troops who advanced so rapidly over the rugged terrain that Regimental Headquarters was not always informed of their exact location. Once that day three battalions of our own American artillery laid in on the battalion and caused much havoc. The radio belonging to the forward observer from the 10th Field Artillery Battalion was knocked out and the observer himself became a casualty. The Commanding Officer of the Third Battalion succeeded in getting a "cease firing" order back to the Regimental Command Post where an officer had been directing the fire by map only. At first Lieutenant Colonel Heintges was censured for stopping the artillery shoot but being on the spot he knew where the shells were falling and being in command there he was obliged to save his men from slaughter by their own supporting weapons. After a reorganization was effected the Third Battalion drove on and crowned the heights of Monte Baebuzza, one mile east of Capri Leone, at 1830. While located there four German 88s and mortars firing on First Battalion troops were observed and taken under fire. The enemy returned fire and inflicted a number of casualties on the Blue Battalion forces which included Second Lieutenant Wilbur V. Hamm. The battalion also became engaged with enemy machine gunners and snipers on both flanks.

At 1625 the same day the Second Battalion pushed across the Rosmarino River and occupied San Marco D'Alunzio an hour later. Patrols from the White Battalion contacted a platoon of the 30th Infantry whose location on a ridge one mile northeast of the town was not known by its parent organization. The Second Battalion remained in San Marco D'Alunzio during the night.

The Third Battalion overcame its resistance and at 2100 moved from its positions on the northwestern slopes of Monte Baebuzza. At 2215 the troops occupied the high ground astride the unimproved road from Capri Leone to Highway 113 overlooking Di Zappula River. The troops had to be supplied by mule train and during the attempt four of the animals fell over a cliff when they lost their balance. After many very trying hours the Third Battalion entered Capri Leone then sent a reinforced platoon to Mirlo. Both towns were found clear of the enemy. In Capri Leone the dog-tired thirsty men found water.

CROSSING OF DI ZAPPULA RIVER AND CAPTURE OF HILL DI MARCO

The First Battalion attempted to cross Di Zappula River before daylight 10 August but failed in its initial attempt when a concealed trip wire discharged, in a series of blasts over a wide area, about eight German Teller mines which had been prepared as booby traps. These explosions killed seven men and wounded fifteen of the First Platoon of Company "B", the assault company, and threw the rest of the company into disorganization.

Private Bernard W. Heidemann of Company "B" was seriously wounded but refused to be evacuated and remained behind to cover the withdrawal of Company "B". He remained under the heavy fire for several hours and greatly assisted the other elements of the battalion in establishing the bridgehead and seizing the objective, as well as enabling Company "B" to withdraw.²

Private First Class Durward H. Moore of Company "B" voluntarily rescued four of approximately thirty casualties inflicted on his company by heavy enemy artillery fire. Although he was wounded in the arm after performing his third rescue, he led a litter squad to another casualty, and then picked up still another wounded soldier unaided on his way back.³

After regrouping and clearing a path with mine detector equipment the First Battalion effected a crossing at 0500 in the face of concentrated mortar, artillery and automatic weapons fire and drove across the flat terrain to the base of Hill Di Marco. The forward elements of Staff Sergeant Glenn S. Foote's platoon of Company "C" were crossing a wall when a loud explosion occurred which killed one man and wounded several others. Without hesitation Staff Sergeant Foote climbed over the wall into the mine field to find safe passage for the remainder of the platoon. In his reconnaissance he discharged another mine trap and lost his life. His courage and devotion to duty reflected the highest traditions of the military service.⁴

From commanding and well prepared positions the enemy poured withering fire down on the attacking troops, inflicting heavy casualties. Intense enemy shell concentrations nullified the heroic efforts of wire crews

² GO No. 64, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 9 Sept. '43. Pvt. Heidemann was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³ GO No. 29, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 29 Jan. '45. Pfc. Moore was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴ GO No. 73, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 17 Oct. '43. S/Sgt. Foote was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

to maintain telephone communications. Because radios were out of order, no artillery support could be summoned, and, due to lack of ammunition, suitable positions and observation, Company "D" could render only limited support with its heavy weapons. Nevertheless, the assaulting rifle companies, "A" and "C", finally wrested positions on the summit of Hill Di Marco inflicting casualties on the enemy. Company "B" took up positions to the northwest of Highway 113 opposite Hill Di Marco and reorganized.

At 1000, 10 August, before Companies "A" and "C" could fully organize defensive positions, the enemy subjected the two companies to heavy machine gun, mortar and artillery fire, then launched a strong counter-attack with two hundred Infantrymen, which forced back the "Cotton Baler" riflemen, whose supply of

Wendt of the Medical Detachment left his position of comparative safety and crawled across an open space swept by machine gun and small arms fire to render first aid to a wounded man. Leaving the casualty in a position of cover, he returned to his former position only to observe that the man had been wounded again by a sniper. Again he crawled across the bullet swept area and was engaged in rendering first aid a second time when he lost his life due to the sniper's fire. Private Wendt's complete disregard for his own personal safety in performing his act of heroism was an inspiration to all and contributed much to the morale and determination of the "Cotton Baler" troops. Private Wendt was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁷

Technician Fifth Grade Frederic R. Geer, Private First Class Orville L. Gunderson and Privates Curtis G. Hagen



Four of the 93 "Cotton Balers" killed in action during the period 9-11 August 1943, the Regiment's worst days in Sicily. From left to right: 1 Lt. Daniel L. Dunkelberger of Co. "L", Pvt. Linn W. Hallett, Jr. of Co. "F", 1 Lt. John E. Putnam of Co. "M" and 1 Lt. Paul C. Murphy of Co. "I".

ammunition was nearly exhausted. The troops resisted the enemy desperately and gave ground slowly and stubbornly as personnel of the Battalion Headquarters Company and heavy weapons crews assisted in building up a line of resistance. Continued enemy pressure forced the riflemen back about five hundred yards from their point of farthest advance. On the lower slopes, in exposed positions, the "Cotton Balermen" held firm.

Corporal Emanuel F. Wadkins of Company "C" so inspired six other men with him by his determined courage that the group held off, for twenty-four hours, a superior enemy force supported by three machine guns. Four of the group became wounded but all enemy counter-attacks failed. Corporal Wadkins personally knocked out one of the machine guns, killed the gunner and wounded three other members of the crew with rifle fire at about one hundred yards range. He also ran twenty yards through small arms fire in order to rescue a wounded comrade.⁵

Corporal Arnold G. Nelson of Company "B" and Corporal Alan H. Wellingham of Company "C" displayed heroic actions during the counter-attack and after, when movements among enemy positions indicated preparation for another counter-attack. Rifle and machine gun fire was striking heavily about the friendly positions when the two men volunteered to stand up exposed to act as observers for their companies. They stayed at their posts, refusing to take cover, and after some two hours in the positions were killed by enemy machine gun fire. Their heroic, unselfish actions were an inspiration to all.⁶

During the height of the battle Private Herman A.

and Charles T. Pearson, all of the Medical Detachment, rendered rapid and competent care to wounded personnel during the progress of the battle.⁸

Private Phillip T. St. Pierre of Company "D" on one occasion volunteered to get an ammunition mule which ran out into an open field when its leader was shot. The distance covered by Private St. Pierre was about two hundred yards. The ground was exposed to enemy observation and was covered by enemy machine gun and sniper fire. He succeeded in catching the mule and delivered its load of ammunition, which was badly needed, to his platoon while under heavy fire.⁸

A messenger with fresh radio batteries reached the artillery liaison officer who directed the first friendly artillery fire of the day at 1245, which fell in heavy concentrations to the front of the First Battalion and broke up the counter-attack.

Such a volume of fire was delivered by American batteries into German positions on Hill Di Marco that "dog-faces" who participated in the battle called the hill the "Million Dollar Ridge" from their own estimate as to the cost of the shells expended and casualties incurred.

⁵ GO No. 185, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3 Sept. '44. Cpl. Wadkins was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁶ GO No. 73, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 17 Oct. '43. Cpls. Nelson and Wellingham were both posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁷ For authority see GO 37, Hqrs., 7th Army, 16 Nov. '43.

⁸ GOs No. 63 & 64, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 & 9 Sept. '43. T/5 Geer, Pfc. Gunderson, Pvts. Hagen, Pearson and St. Pierre were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

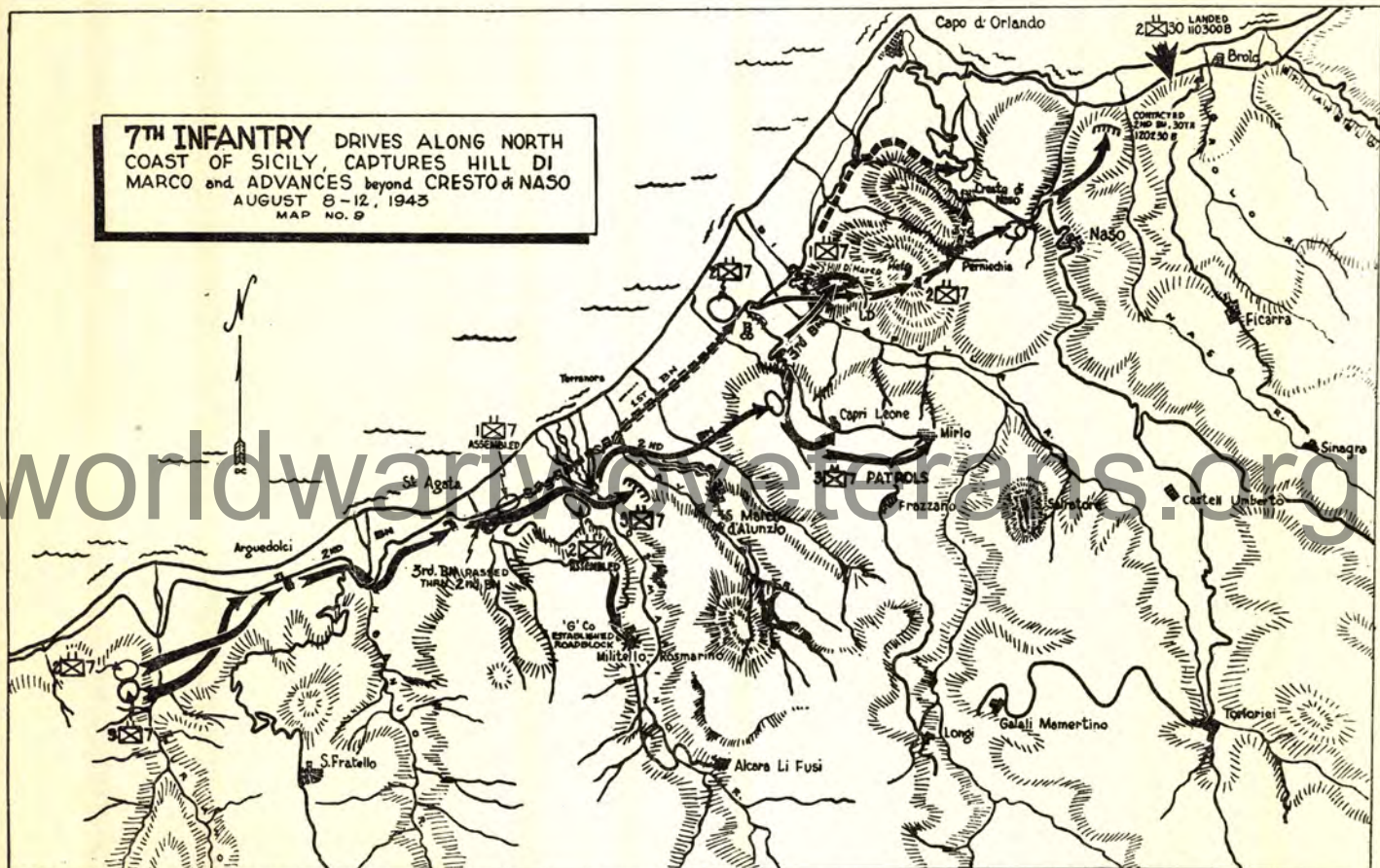
The situation of the First Battalion improved throughout the afternoon when supplies of ammunition and rations arrived, through the combined efforts of motor transportation, mule trains and hand carrying parties, all of which suffered casualties in negotiating the exposed routes. Planes dive bombed enemy observation posts and reduced the effectiveness of the hostile artillery fire. Heavy machine guns and mortars exacted a heavy toll of casualties among the enemy.

The Third Battalion which had been forced to stand enemy mortar concentrations which killed First Lieutenant John E. Putnam of Company "M" and wounded several others, was ordered by Colonel Sherman to retake Hill Di Marco. A sharp engagement was fought but the Blue Battalion forces accomplished their mission at 1945.

While the fight for Hill Di Marco was going on the Second Battalion moved from San Marco D'Alunzio to Highway 113, then east on the highway to a forward

Hans Larsen of Service Company lost his life while distributing supplies. Staff Sergeant Richard C. Winans, Technician Fifth Grade Teddy E. Theodore and Private August F. Fetto, all communications personnel of Regimental Headquarters Company, and Privates Lewis C. Riley and Leonard R. Grimes, a command post runner and a field train cook respectively of the First Battalion Headquarters Company, all distinguished themselves.⁹

At 2330, 10 August, the Third Ranger Battalion was attached to the Seventh Infantry and was ordered to join the First Battalion near Di Zappulla River. Plan of action for 11 August called for a move on the part of the Second Battalion from its assembly area to a line of departure on the eastern slope of Hill Di Marco occupied by the Third Battalion, from there the Second Battalion was to jump off in an attack at 0600 and capture the towns of Malo, Pernicchia and Cresta Di Naso. The Third Battalion was to follow the Second in the attack



assembly area one mile west of Di Zappulla River, closing in at 1100. Company "G" and the Second Platoon of Anti-Tank Company (57mm) were relieved at the Militello Rosmarino roadblock and joined their parent units.

Throughout the day of 10 August the enemy subjected Highway 113 to very accurate shelling that made vehicle passage difficult. Casualties were sustained by troops in the rear echelon as well as the front line troops. Company "A", 3rd Medical Battalion, nevertheless maintained ambulance runs to and from the forward battalions throughout the day and night, despite the heavy shelling which knocked out three ambulances. Service Company, and the bulk of the battalion and separate unit transportation, displaced forward in spite of the shelling. The 10th Engineer Combat Battalion constructed by-passes which aided the advance considerably.

Several members of the service forces of the Regiment performed gallantly to serve and supply the front line riflemen and the heavy weapons crews. Staff Sergeant

and the First, with the Third Rangers, was to re-occupy Hill Di Marco.

SECOND BATTALION CAPTURES MALO AND PERNICCHIA, 11 AUGUST 1943

The Second Battalion commenced its movement at 0300 as planned but due to delays imposed by rough terrain and darkness was unable to jump off until 0730. The troops advanced rapidly and aggressively, capturing Malo at 1030 despite accurate machine gun and mortar fire in its zone. Pernicchia was taken at 1145 following

⁹ GOs No. 61, 63, 64, 113 & 22. HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 4, 8 & 9 Sept., 29 Dec. '43 & 16 Feb. '44. S/Sgt. Larsen (posthumously), S/Sgt. Winans, T/5 Theodore, Pvts. Fetto, Grimes and Riley were each awarded the Silver Star Medal. Pvt. Grimes was also awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal.

which the Second Battalion checked its advance to reorganize. The Third Battalion pressed forward to the rear of the Second Battalion.

At 1410 in accordance with orders from Third Infantry Division Headquarters, the Second Battalion was ordered to discontinue the advance on Cresta Di Naso, and to push with utmost speed against a hostile counter-attacking force threatening the Second Battalion of the 30th Infantry, which had effected a landing one mile west of Brolo behind enemy lines at 0300 that day. The battalion commander received the order at 1500 by artillery liaison plane, and fifteen minutes later initiated the advance from Pernicchia. After a forced march leading elements of the Second Battalion reached Highway 113, two miles west of Brolo, at midnight, without contacting the enemy. The battalion patrolled to the east and west on Highway 113 to gain contact with the "Friscan" Battalion which was accomplished at 0230. However other elements of the "Friscan" Regiment attacking from Orlando had already reached the Second Battalion of the 30th Infantry.

Following the Second Battalion jump-off from Pernicchia the Third Battalion initiated an attack on Cresta Di Naso and captured it at 1830, 11 August. During the attack First Lieutenant David N. Murdock, commanding officer of Company "I", was killed and First Lieutenant Charles L. Treadway was wounded in the shoulder. Lieutenant Treadway refused to be evacuated and



KILLED IN ACTION

Pfc. Forrest L. Wimsett, of Company "I", on 12 August 1943.

took command of the company. Largely due to his aggressive leadership the company took its immediate objective. At dawn the following day his leadership again enabled the company to defeat an enemy counter-attack.¹⁰ The Third Rangers, who were ordered at 1410 to move forward from Hill Di Marco and assist the Second Battalion in the rescue mission toward Brolo, were late in receiving the orders, due to failure of communications. The Rangers, who did not leave Hill Di Marco until 1725, reached Malo at midnight and at 0400, 12 August, were in a position one mile northeast of Naso, astride the Naso-Orlando road.

The First Battalion marched during the night from Hill Di Marco to high ground between Orlando and Cresta Di Naso.

During the morning while the Second Battalion was in its assembly area it was covered by an intense heavy calibre artillery barrage of more than forty-five minutes duration. Almost coincident with the first burst of shells in the area came the cry of wounded. Although the Battalion Aid Station was near the wounded, Technician Fifth Grade Emerald M. Smith and Private First Class Rudolph R. Ritter, both of the Medical Detachment, left the safety of their fox holes and fearlessly ran two hundred yards through a rain of shell fragments and

falling debris and rendered medical aid to the wounded, as shells continued to burst in the immediate vicinity. As the barrage rolled forward and another company came under fire the two men again ran into a shelled area and assisted the wounded.¹¹

During the days of 12 and 13 August, the Regimental Combat Team devoted its efforts to reorganization in the vicinity of Cresta Di Naso. The Second Platoon of Anti-Tank Company (57mm) was attached to the Third Reconnaissance Troop on the 12th, going into position on Highway 116 five miles south of Naso. The next day the platoon was released from attachment and rejoined its company.

While the Regiment reorganized and remained in division reserve sister regiments advanced on Cape Calava and Patti. On 14 August the Seventh Infantry and attachments were ordered to assemble in the vicinity of Falcone and be prepared to pass through the 15th Infantry then engaged in the vicinity of Furnari. Cannon Company embarked on LCTs in the vicinity of Brolo at 1600 on the 14th and the remainder of the combat team moved by reinforced transportation at 1715. The truck convoy passed through stone walled towns where crowds thronged windows, from which white sheet-flags fluttered. Leading elements reached Oliveri at 1900 hours and by 2230 the Regiment was completely closed in. From Oliveri the troops marched through Falcone to an area about one mile west of Furnari, where it went into position at 0230 hours on 15 August. The highway and area were subjected to intermittent artillery and mortar fire during the night. Company "B", 753rd Tank Battalion, (less one platoon), was attached to the Regiment.

THE COASTAL DRIVE TOWARD MESSINA

Commencing with daylight on 15 August, the Seventh Infantry threw its full power into the final drive for the city of Messina. In two days and two nights it advanced forty miles to crowd the last of the Germans off the island of Sicily. The general strategy was the same as in the capture of Palermo, where the attack was made astride a main highway with a spearhead of Infantry supported by artillery, armor, anti-tank and engineer units, as needed, to eliminate or assist in overcoming enemy resistance. Additional Infantry battalions took care of enemy strong points on the flank or enveloped positions too difficult to capture by frontal assault. They also relieved lead troops so that assault elements went into reserve after a battle. Every effort was made to restore highways to service with the least possible delay so that motor transportation could be used for shuttling troops forward, and a constant stream of supply could be maintained. In the Messina drive one flank was protected by the sea and the task of securing columns from counter-attack was less arduous.

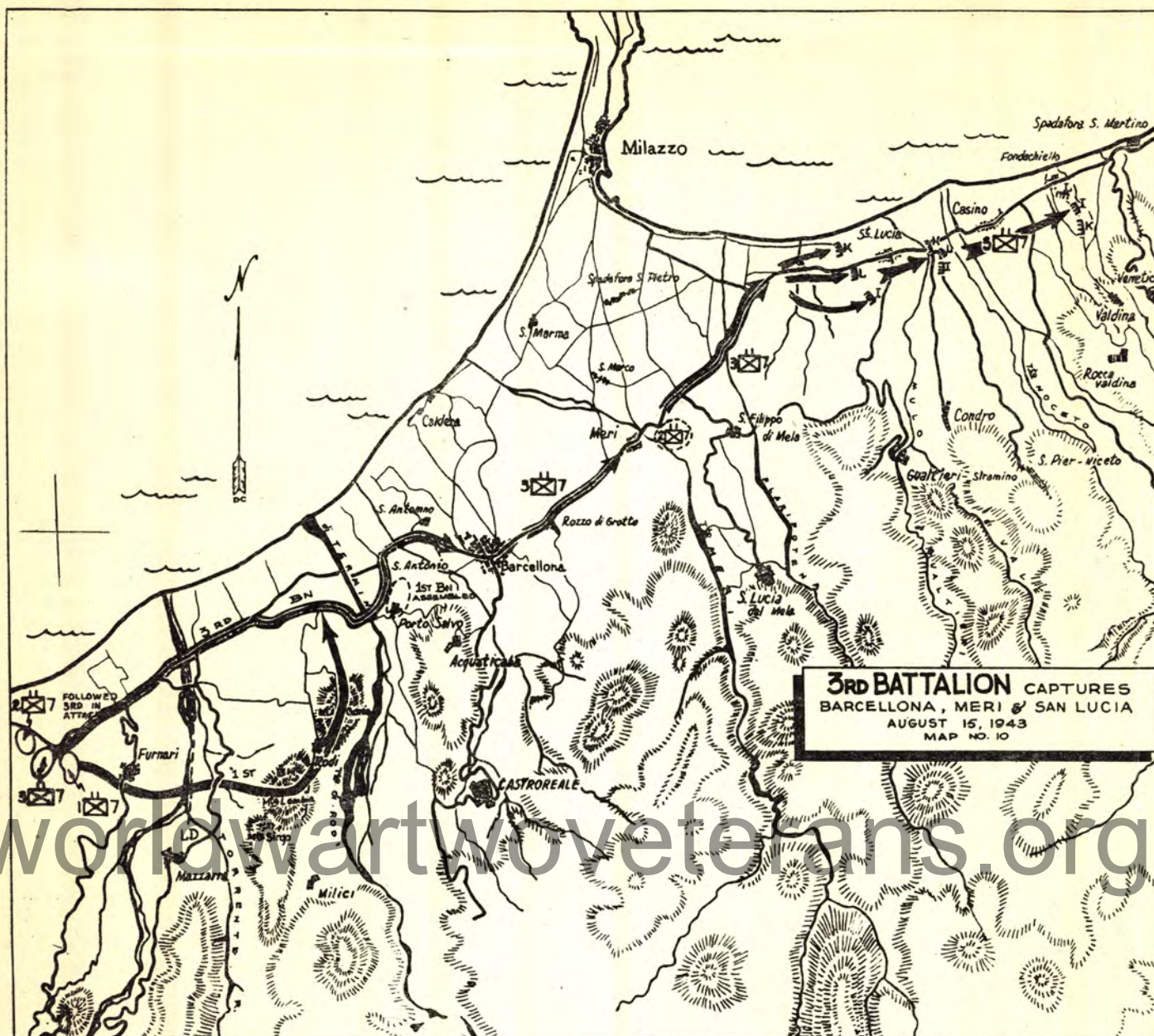
At 0600, 15 August, the Seventh Infantry launched its final drive of the Sicilian Campaign. At that hour the Third Battalion on the north and the First Battalion on the south crossed the river line east of Furnari which was the line of departure.

THIRD BATTALION CAPTURES BARCELLONA, MERI AND SAN LUCIA. 15 AUGUST 1943

The Third Battalion, spearheading the attack along Highway 113, punched its way into Barcellona and

¹⁰ GO No. 240, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 22 Oct. '44. 1 Lt. Treadway was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹¹ GO No. 61, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 4 Sept. '43. T/5 Smith and Pfc. Ritter were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



captured the place by 0930. Driving on steadily, despite determined enemy resistance, the battalion seized Meri just an hour later.

In the meantime the First Battalion drove across the territory south of Highway 113 between the Furnari and Termini Rivers and seized the hilltop towns of Monte Lombardia, Rodi and Monte Gonia. From Monte Gonia the battalion drove north to Highway 113 and followed the Second Battalion which had trailed the Third east along the highway.

The Third Battalion continued its rapid pace and overran a series of strategically placed road blocks defended by machine guns and mortars, and seized San Lucia with a quantity of enemy materiel at 1410. Still driving on, the Third Battalion captured the key ridge line south of Highway 113 two miles west of Spadafora at 1800.

At this point the First Battalion, which had moved by vehicle to San Lucia, thence by foot along Highway 113, passed through the left flank of the Third Battalion at 1945.

FIRST BATTALION CAPTURES SPADAFORA IN A HARD FIGHT

The First Battalion continued the attack and met very

stubborn resistance from enemy in Spadafora and on the high ground south of the town. Company "C" led the advance along Highway 113 and was taken under heavy fire by enemy 88mm guns. Captain Hugh V. Carico led the company off the highway to an area of temporary safety, but at about 1700 a heavy enemy artillery concentration began falling into the Company "C" area inflicting numerous casualties. Captain Carico, quickly recognizing the gravity of the situation, left his position and began moving the members of his company to positions offering greater protection. While so engaged, Captain Carico was killed by the fire from which he was saving his men. He became the second commander Company "C" lost, killed in action during the Sicilian Campaign. Company "C" following Captain Carico's orders moved to the position indicated by him and had no further casualties in that area.¹²

First Lieutenant Edward V. Busby assumed command of "C" and the company resumed the advance on Spadafora, returning to Highway 113. At about dark Company "C" entered Spadafora and received a most unwelcome reception. Staff Sergeant William K. Dieleman led

¹² GO No. 63, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Sept. '44. Capt. Carico was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

the advance guard which was followed by two files of riflemen. First Lieutenant James R. Kilburn led the file on the left edge of the road and Sergeant Richard G. Hofelich led the right file. Immediately an enemy tank and four machine guns fired straight down the road. One man was hit in the mid-section and blown to bits, as those who could, jumped for cover in buildings on either side of the road. Just as Sergeant Hofelich dashed into a building on the right side of the highway he heard some

a heavy enemy artillery barrage. Rapidly, but coolly, he led his squad out of the area, only to discover that his gunner together with others had been seriously wounded. With disdain for the flying shell fragments and falling debris he voluntarily crossed two hundred yards of open terrain to retrieve the equipment of the fallen soldiers. He then led the remainder of the squad into the attack.¹³

In the course of the attack Sergeant Clarence W. Beaty of Company "G" was leading his squad in the advance. A nest of machine guns believed to be three or more in number, at a distance of about two hundred yards to his right oblique, opened fire, wounding Sergeant Beaty in the left shoulder. Although suffering from loss of blood he directed his squad to envelop the position from the right flank while he personally assaulted the position to the front, drawing the enemy fire, until his squad enveloped the emplacement. As a result of his orders and the actions of his squad the machine gun nest was destroyed. Sergeant Beaty continued to command his squad in the attack for about five minutes until he was forced to the rear because of his wound.¹³

While friendly artillery units saturated the road junction and strong points in the sector of the Second Battalion, a platoon of Company "B", 753rd Tank Battalion, pushed through Bauso to devastate enemy positions near Divieto destroyed a Mark IV tank, an 88mm and two 77mm field pieces as well as an enemy pillbox. It was this Mark IV tank which had caused considerable damage on Highway 113, including the burning of at least fourteen freight cars loaded with ammunition in the Rometta Station yards, where the bursting shells from the flaming cars impeded traffic for several hours.

The Third Battalion was moved to Rometta Station at 1430 and advanced to take over the Regimental lead. Passing through Bauso, Company "K" was detached and sent southeast to capture Serro, which was accomplished at 1730. The remainder of the Third Battalion continued on to the junction of Highways 113 and 133, then moved east on Highway 133, to pass through the Second Battalion and seize the heights overlooking Messina from the west. Following the capture of Serro, Company "K" rejoined the battalion by a cross country movement. The First Battalion followed up the Third.



KILLED IN ACTION

Capt. Hugh V. Carico and 1 Lt. James R. Kilburn, both of Company "C", on 15 August 1943.

one crash to the ground behind him. Turning, he saw it was Lieutenant Kilburn who had been killed instantly by a bullet through the head. Those who escaped being killed by this sudden burst of fire were extremely fortunate. The strongly defended enemy road block supported thus by automatic weapons, tank, mortar and artillery fire exacted heavy casualties on the company.

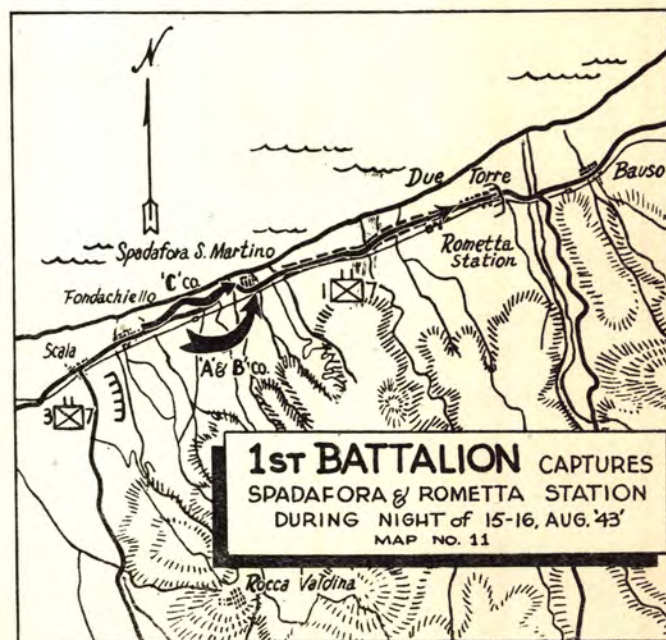
While Company "C" became heavily engaged in the fire fight the remainder of the First Battalion executed an envelopment via the high ground to the south of the town, in an effort to relieve the situation. In spite of complete darkness caused by an eclipse of the moon the maneuver was successful and Spadafora was in complete possession of Seventh Infantry men at 0030, 16 August.

Driving on in the night the First Battalion captured Rometta Station at 0430 and arrested its advance at that point.

SECOND BATTALION TAKES OVER THE LEAD

The Second Battalion which had trucked from Meri to Spadafora passed through the First Battalion at Rometta Station at 0600, 16 July. Shortly after leaving Rometta Station the Second Battalion encountered heavy small arms, machine gun, mortar and artillery fire from an estimated company of hostile Infantry, artillery and armored units making a determined effort to defend the junction of Highways 113 and 133 in the Bauso-Divieto area. The battalion moved to the south of Highway 113 and pushed its advance forward steadily, during the afternoon, over rough terrain and under occasionally heavy fire. It cut Highway 133 two miles west of Gesso at 1700. Cannon Company, from positions between Spadafora and Rometta Station, rendered effective fire support to the advance.

While leading his machine gun squad in action Corporal Laverne E. Wang of Company "E" was caught in



¹³ GO No. 62, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 6 Sept. '43. Sgt. Beaty and Cpl. Wang were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

FIRST ENTRY AND CAPTURE OF MESSINA

A patrol consisting of Lieutenant Johnson and six men from Company "I" probed the highway leading into Messina. About five hundred yards from the top of a hill overlooking the city, a well defended road block was encountered. Enemy sprayed the patrol with machine gun and rifle grenade fire which wounded the leader and forced the patrol to return. Lieutenant Colonel Heintges then organized a re-inforced platoon from Company "L" under the command of Second Lieutenant Ralph J. Yates and sent it astride the highway for Messina. The platoon quickly overcame the resistance and drove into Messina at 2000, 16 July. Sporadic sniper fire and a few determined do-or-die members of Hermann Goering Division, were quickly overcome. Second Lieutenant Yates and his men received official credit for being first into Messina, as they had for the first entry into Palermo.

At 0830, 17 August, Colonel Sherman issued orders for actual capture and occupation of Messina. One hour later Companies "B", "F" and "I" and a composite company of the First Battalion, 157th Infantry, marched into the heavily bombed city. At 1000 General Patton accompanied by General Truscott entered the city under a strong motorcycle escort. Thousands of civilians returned to their homes from caves where they had hidden for protection. All were glad that the Germans were gone. By 1330 hours the troops were bivouaced in lemon groves along Garibaldi Avenue, and the Regimental Command Post was established in the Messina City Hall. British patrols entered the city from the south.

During their entry and stay in the city occupation troops were harassed by light shelling from the Italian mainland. Two thousand prisoners were rounded up in the city and in the hills west of it.



Lt. Gen. Patton looks at the road sign pointing the way to Messina, the last enemy stronghold on the Island of Sicily.

During the night the last German forces embarked from the island abandoning a large amount of undestroyed materiel, supplies and a large body of Italian troops. In the Messina area, except for small scattered groups of enemy snipers, organized resistance was at an end.

Shortly after midnight the Third Battalion was completely assembled on the ridge overlooking the city of Messina, ghostly in the moonlight. Planes were buzzing overhead and the last boats were slipping across the strait to temporary safety. Troops that entered the city encountered no resistance other than an occasional sniper. Before daylight the engineers constructed a by-pass around the last demolished bridge and artillery battalions were setting up their 105s, ready to fire into the city or across the strait to the mainland of Italy.

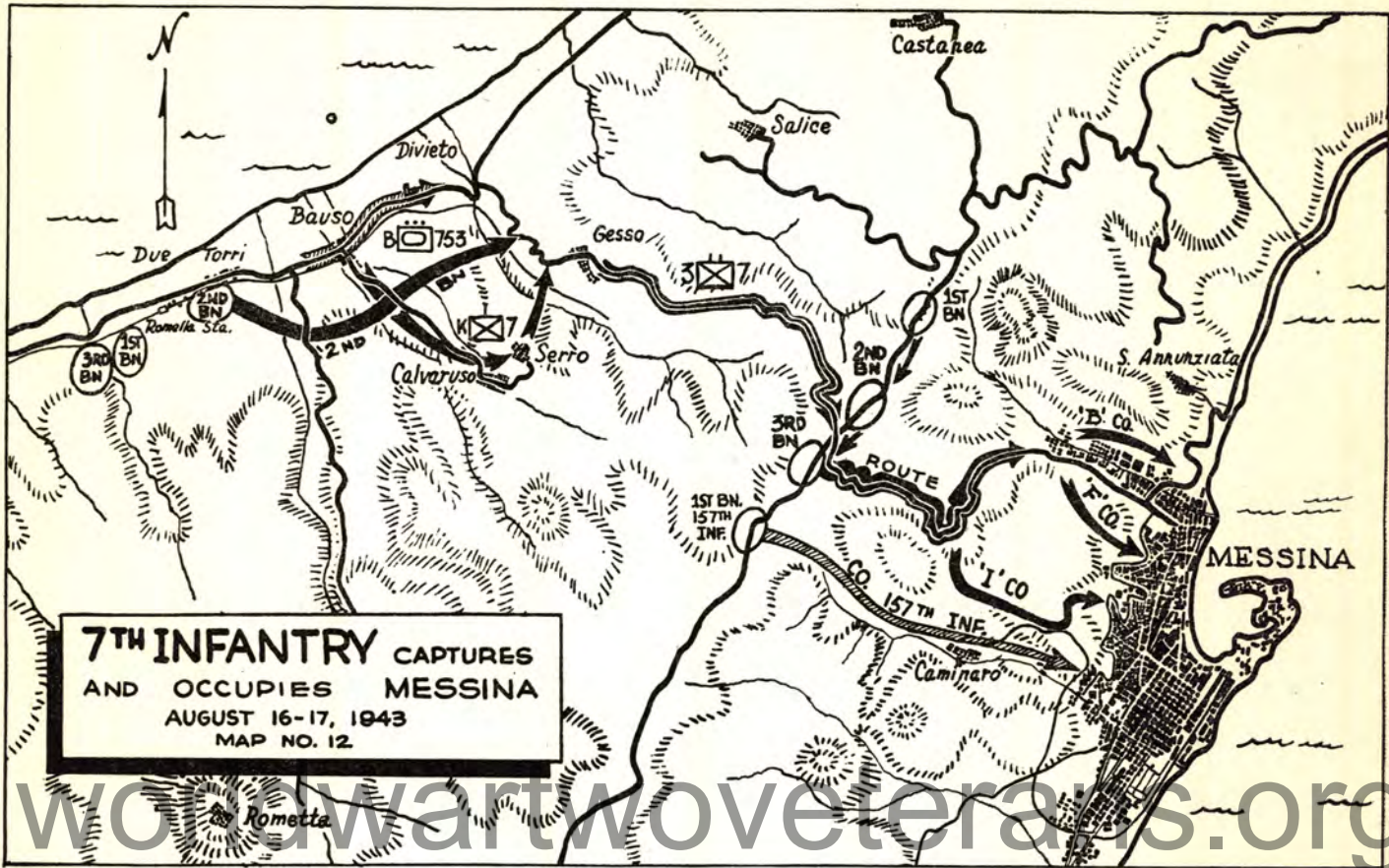
SUMMARY OF THE SICILIAN CAMPAIGN

The Sicilian Campaign was a whirlwind affair for the Allied forces. The rapid conquest of the island hastened the end of Italy in the Second World War. Italy's capitulation came shortly after the capture of Messina by the Seventh Infantry. Following the successful amphibious landings the ground forces conducted the campaign almost exclusively, as enemy air activity was almost nonexistent and practically complete air superiority was enjoyed by the Allies. With Italian forces resisting only lightly in many places the Germans on the island fought stubborn, rearguard and delaying actions, and withdrew as rapidly as possible. Infantry played the important role in the pursuit action of the campaign. Terrain and the limited road nets kept the armor playing a minor part to the "dirt Infantry". Artillery in general gave only limited

support while the Service Forces experienced much difficulty and were unable always to supply the troops adequately.

All American and British forces engaging in the campaign contributed to its successful conclusion but an out-

talion, each in less than a day's time. Those rapid advances put the Regiment in the most advantageous position to capture Palermo, or steal it rather from the tankers of the Second Armored Division, driving on the capital from the west. The capture of Palermo high-



standing role was played by the Third Infantry Division which landed in a superb manner, captured Licata and Agrigento, then crossed the island in four days and captured Palermo. After a brief rest the Division overcame stubborn resistance along the north coast road by hard fighting and two behind-the-lines landings, then ended the campaign by capturing Messina.

Each team of the Third Infantry Division played its part in the campaign and played it well, but none surpassed the work of the old and tried Seventh Infantry, which accomplished every mission assigned to it by the commanding general. For the Regiment the operations were divided into two periods. During the thirteen days of fighting and marching in the first period from 10-22 July 1943, the "Cotton Balermen" performed brilliantly. Landing on the left of the entire invasion force they encountered the most opposition but quickly overpowered the enemy. Following a reconnaissance in force toward Agrigento the "Cotton Balers" captured the city in a beautiful maneuver of all battalions. Time and again the troops demonstrated their ability to withstand excessive physical strain and conducted rapid advances, without the aid of normal vehicular support in many cases. The sixty mile move the Regiment made from the assembly area near Castronovo to Villabate in thirty-seven and a half hours, by a combined foot shuttle-motor march, using only organic transportation and displacing supporting units as required, was an accomplishment which included the foot marches of thirty-two miles by the Third Battalion and thirty miles by the First Bat-

lighted the entire campaign and brought to a close the first period of actual combat engaged in by the Regiment in Sicily. Results of the operations for the first period were the capture of twelve thousand enemy including five hundred Germans, one hundred fifty assorted field pieces, two hundred assorted vehicles, four ration dumps and eleven ammunition dumps of size warranting reports.

During the second phase, 1-17 August 1943, the Regiment once again demonstrated its superior ability as a fighting organization. On Hill Di Marco, the "Million Dollar Ridge", its roughest and costliest battle in Sicily was fought and won. The determination and aggressiveness on the part of the First Battalion in advancing at night against stubborn enemy resistance was another highlight of the campaign. All the difficulties of night fighting confronted the battalion on the night of 15-16 August 1943 when Spadafora was captured. With one company battling in a strongly defended urban area the remainder of the battalion enveloped the town from the south across stream beds and intervening ridges defended by automatic weapons and mortars. The Seventh Regimental Combat Team forced the enemy to retreat eighty miles and captured 5500 Italian and 180 German soldiers as prisoners of war. The crowning achievement of the Regiment was the capture of Messina. Materiel captured during the last phase included 249 assorted vehicles, 96 tons of ammunition, two arsenals, guns of all calibre, and numerous dumps of various kinds.

During the entire campaign the "Cotton Balers" displayed magnificent fighting spirit, coordination and

stamina. It required a superb "esprit de corps" and great physical endurance for the troops to operate so swiftly over the mountainous Sicilian country in the hottest months of the year. Only by relentlessly maintaining its powerful pressure, despite the formidable handicaps of terrain, climate and extended supply lines, did the Seventh Infantry inflict its crushing blows on the enemy. The Third Infantry Division cites the capture of Licata, Agrigento, Palermo and Messina as the highlights of its action in Sicily and is grateful to the Seventh Infantry for the taking of three of those four places.

Excellent leadership, the aggressiveness of the individual soldier, superiority of arms and equipment, superiority in numbers and capabilities of supporting weapons and branches of service, and the high degree of physical and moral fitness of the troops were the important factors contributing to the whole and very complete success of the campaign for the Seventh Infantry.

Cost of the entire campaign to the Seventh Infantry was a total of 645 battle casualties; 149 killed in action, 6 missing in action, 336 seriously wounded and 144 lightly wounded in action. Number of enemy killed and wounded is unknown but is believed to be heavy.

In a biennial report as Chief of Staff of the United States Army, General of the Army George C. Marshall,

Catania the east coast bastion which had held up the advance of the British Eighth Army, fell early in August. The Germans and Italians were already withdrawing across the Strait of Messina under heavy air bombardment and continued pressure by our ground forces. On 16 August patrols of our 3d Division entered Messina from the west simultaneously with British units from the southeast and the next day organized resistance ceased. In 39 days the Sicilian campaign had ended. Through use of a heavy concentration of antiaircraft guns the Germans managed to extricate thousands of their first-line panzer and airborne troops as well as a considerable amount of light equipment over the Strait of Messina to the mainland. Nevertheless, for the Axis the loss of Sicily was a major military disaster. Their casualties totaled 167,000 of which 37,000 were Germans. Our casualties totaled 31,158 killed, wounded, and missing.¹⁴

On 18 August, Company "B", 753rd Tank Battalion and the First Battalion, 157th Infantry were released from attachment to the Seventh Infantry and returned to their parent organizations. Both units had contributed materially to the successful operations of the Regiment against Messina.

On 19 and 20 August, the Seventh Infantry conducted patrols on the road nets and hills west of Messina, and in the city itself, and located much salvage materiel. A small number of dead were collected. Vehicles in running order or capable of towing, were assembled at collecting points in Messina and Divieto.



German and Italian prisoners of war are shown near Messina after they were captured by the 7th U. S. Infantry.

described how the fall of Italy in World War II was brought about and summed up the Sicilian Campaign. To inform the reader of the accomplishments of the first two days of the campaign by the Allies and give total casualty figures for both the Allied and Axis forces, but also to show that the entry into Messina was considered by higher headquarters to be a "simultaneous" entry by Third Infantry Division patrols and British units, the report is here quoted in part. As already stated the Seventh Infantry claims first entry into Messina.

In the first two days of the invasion more than 80,000 men, 7,000 vehicles, and 300 tanks had been landed; several small ports had been placed in operation; at least six airfields had been captured and were being prepared for use.

By 16 July the battle line ran from a point just south of Catania on the east to Porto Empedocle on the west; about one-quarter of the island was in our hands. By 22 July, General Patton's forces in a rapid thrust across the western end of the island occupied the key port of Palermo. Further east the troops forged steadily ahead through rugged mountains stubbornly defended by the enemy. By the end of July only the northeastern corner of the island remained to the enemy.

Until relieved on 19 August, the three rifle companies "B", "F" and "I" had a very enjoyable time combining their occupation duties with social activities. Enemy artillery from the mainland of Italy shelled the city methodically inflicting no casualties on the battle-wise troops however, though the medical units were kept busy patching up some of the civilians. The three rifle companies rejoined the Regiment on the hills west of Messina late in the day of 19 August.

MOVEMENT TO THE WEST

On the morning of 19 August 1943, orders were received from Third Infantry Division outlining movement of the Division from the Messina area to the Trapani area. On that day track laying vehicles of Cannon Company moved to an embarkation point in the vicinity of Falcone for movement by LCT.

¹⁴ General Marshall's Report "The Winning of the War in Europe and the Pacific," Simon and Schuster, 1945, p. 16.

On 20 August other elements of the Seventh Infantry moved from positions on the ridges west of Messina to a bivouac area adjacent to Highway 113 in the vicinity of Bauso and Divieto where they remained for a few days.

Movement by motor convoy, involving reinforced transportation, was initiated from an initial point in Spadafora early on the morning of 23 August. The convoy moved west on Highway 113 through Barcellona, Palermo, Partinico and Calatafimi to a new bivouac area in the vicinity of Paceco. The two hundred forty mile move was completed in the afternoon of 24 August.

TRAINING IN PACECO AREA

The Paceco bivouac area was located in olive groves a few miles inland from the port of Trapani. The rail-

eral Patton. Officers' schools were conducted three times weekly and the commanding officer of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion directed a school for forward observers. Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies held gun drill for crew served weapons while rotation instruction was given in other Infantry weapons.

While the Seventh Infantry was engaged in guarding and salvage duties in western Sicily, Italy had signed an armistice with the United Nations on 3 September 1943. The terms of unconditional surrender accepted by the Italian government were announced on 8 September by General Dwight D. Eisenhower. When news of the Italian surrender reached Third Division Headquarters the Seventh Infantry was placed on two-hour alert and then dispatched to guard several airports in the vicinity of Trapani. It was thought that major units of the Italian air force might fly in to surrender and it was desired that the airports be heavily guarded.



Messina was pounded in her final days. An Axis vessel sunk by the Allies in the aerial bombardment that preceded the capture of the city lies alongside the bomb-shattered docks.

road yards in the village of Paceco were filled with wrecked equipment and twisted rails. Elsewhere demolished buildings and bomb craters gave mute testimony to the battles fought and won by American forces.

Inspections of all individual and organizational equipment were held and a program of training was initiated. Battalions conducted mounted and dismounted patrols with emphasis on gaining information, and the technique of patrolling. Communications personnel conducted command post problems. Cleanliness and sanitation were stressed in the bivouac area and measures for the control of flies were instituted to prevent the spread of disease. Church services and movies were held in the Regimental area and for the first time in Sicily passes were issued to the troops to visit neighboring towns. On the afternoon of 29 August all units made an eight-mile march at four miles per hour to the beach for swimming. The next day, in the morning, all officers and non-commissioned officers from sergeants up attended a talk given by Gen-

In the afternoon of 8 September the Regiment moved to the vicinity of Castelvetro. The First and Second Battalions established defensive lines north and west of Castelvetro and the Third Battalion guarded the Mazara airfield. Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies patrolled the roads south and east of the town. The First Battalion also conducted patrols on Highways 115 and 119 to the coast from Campobello and north on Highway 119 to San Ninfa. A Platoon of the Third Reconnaissance Troop was attached to the Seventh Infantry and also conducted patrols.

Patrolling activities continued with no unusual happenings until September 11 when the Regiment, less the First Battalion, returned to the Paceco bivouac area. The First Battalion remained in the vicinity of Castelvetro conducting patrols and salvage duty until relieved on 14 September. On 15 September the Seventh Infantry closed out of the Paceco bivouac area and moved to a staging area in the vicinity of Palermo.



Two Allied soldiers look over the city and harbor of Messina, Sicily, to the mainland of Italy.

worldwartwoveterans.org



PART THREE

The Campaign of Southern Italy

CHAPTER I

From Palermo Sicily to Centurano, Italy

(19 September to 12 October 1943)

Following the conquest of Sicily, American and British armies lost no time in pursuing the German forces. On 3 September 1943, the British Eighth Army crossed the Strait of Messina to the Italian mainland and drove up the Calabrian peninsula. 9 September saw new landings with the American Fifth Army invading the continent of Europe at Salerno and Paestum. On the same day the British First Airborne Division invaded at Taranto in the heel of Italy.¹

In the Salerno landing the British Tenth Corps, including three American Ranger Battalions, landed on the left, and the American Sixth Corps, with the 36th Infantry Division making the assault, landed on the right on the Paestum beaches. The river Sele was the boundary between the two Allied corps.²

The 36th Infantry Division encountered considerable German resistance and was subjected to German tank attacks shortly after the landing but succeeded in its first assignment of the war by taking initial objectives. The 45th Infantry Division followed up the 36th and on the second and third days the beach-head was expanded against stiff opposition. The 82nd Airborne Division and the British 7th Armoured Division also took up positions.

German reinforcements gathered in the mountains to the east of the beach-head and during the period 12-14 September launched savage counter-attacks. Attempting to drive the American Fifth Army into the sea before the British Eighth Army could come up from the south, the Germans attacked fiercely. The situation was critical for the Allies and people on the home fronts of Britain and America watched the proceedings with great anxiety. The Sixth American Corps was on the defensive.³

On 13 September 1943, the Third Infantry Division received word from 15th Army Group that it was to be moved to the Salerno beach-head as soon as possible. General Truscott took a small staff to Salerno and preparations were begun for movement of the "Rock of the Marne" Division to the battle areas once more. The 30th Infantry was the first Third Division regiment to sail from Palermo for Italy. The Seventh Infantry departed from Palermo harbor by nine LCIs and three LSTs, at 1400, 19 September, and landed without incident around noontime the next day. The LSTs unloaded in the vicinity of the Sele River and the LCIs debarked personnel opposite Battipaglia where, at 2100, the Regiment was assembled.

By the time the Third Infantry Division arrived in Italy the Salerno beach-head was secure and contact had been established with the British Eighth Army by patrols. However it was planned for the Third Division to be committed immediately and to drive inland to the east and north. As the enemy withdrew to his mountain defenses the 30th Infantry led the Division advance, engaging only in minor skirmishes until Acerno was reached where an attack was launched at 0800, 22 September.

The Seventh Infantry moved to a forward assembly area in the vicinity of Martino during the night of 21-22 September 1943. The Third Battalion moved forward and occupied the high ground north of Montecorvino and sent a platoon to the blown-out bridge west of the town. Patrols from the Third Battalion contacted the 30th Infantry on the east and patrols from the Second and Third Battalions contacted the British force on the west.

FIRST BATTALION IS COMMITTED

22 September 1943

On 22 September 1943 the First Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour was committed on the left of the 30th Infantry, then engaged at Acerno, and the Seventh Infantry was actively entered in the Naples-Foggia Campaign. One mounted cavalry platoon and one pack platoon were attached to the Regiment and in turn attached to the First Battalion. At 1655 Captain Baker commanding the Provisional Remount Troop reported to the Command Post and told Colonel Sherman that the forty mule pack train would be ready in approximately one hour.

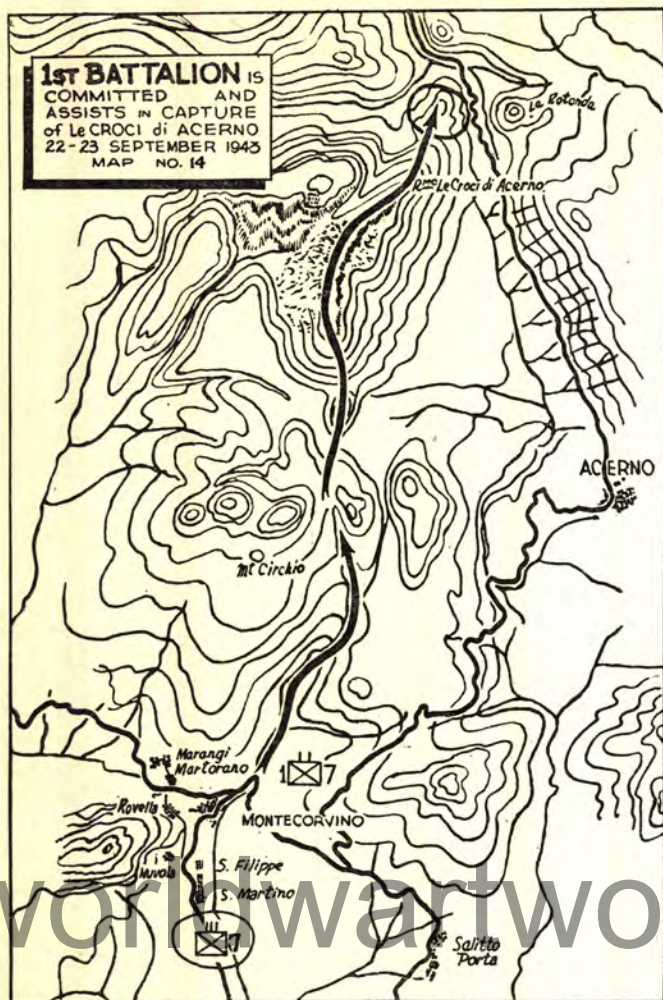
The First Battalion moved north by over-land route on foot, at 1815, and was followed by the Remount Pack Train. At 1250, 23 September, the First Battalion had not made contact with the enemy and was advancing over difficult terrain. The mules were unable to take all the battalion's ammunition and part of the loads had to be dumped on the hills. At 1850 the battalion seized its objective and assisted the 30th Infantry in the capture of the village Le Croci Di Acerno. During the night of

¹ "Salerno, American Operations From the Beaches to the Volturno," Military Intelligence Division, War Dept., Wash., D. C., 26 Aug. 1944, pp. 1-2.

² *Ibid.*, pp 7-8.

³ *Ibid.*, pp 17-74.

23-24 September the remainder of the Regiment moved from the vicinity of Martino to an assembly area north of Acerno.



SEVENTH INFANTRY ATTACKS TO THE NORTH

At 0230, 24 September 1943 the Third Battalion advanced along the unimproved road leading north from Acerno and was followed by the Second Battalion. The Third Battalion passed through the 30th Infantry at 0600 and resumed the Division advance on the Acerno-Montella axis. Small arms fire was received from the left flank as the battalion advanced. Seven bridges were found blown which delayed the advance. Artillery began to fall on the battalion. The unimproved road followed the Calore River north in a deep valley between high mountains, which were occupied by numerous enemy snipers and delaying forces. Company "I" left the road to the right and advanced toward Mount Sovero as a platoon of Company "K" under First Lieutenant Donald G. Taggart advanced on the left of the road up the deep valley and the remainder of the company followed. At 1815 Company "I" had cleared Mt. Sovero but Company "K" was held up by three enemy machine gun nests and a motorized machine gun in the mountain to the left of the valley.

While the Second Battalion was moving forward behind the Third Battalion and along the highway, it came under a withering enemy artillery and mortar bombardment which halted its advance. The troops suffered casualties and the forward and rear elements became separated. Colonel Sherman, who was marching with the Second Battalion, Sergeant Andrew A. Michak of Com-

pany "E", First Sergeant John L. Butcher of Third Battalion Headquarters Company, Staff Sergeant John Thomas, Technician Fourth Grade Glen E. Converse and Technician Fifth Grade Anthony C. Pontarelli, all of the Medical Detachment, performed distinguished and gallant service during the bombardment by rendering assistance to the wounded personnel, and helping in the work of reorganization.⁴

The Second Battalion cut inland along a trail and followed the stream F Di Acera. When the enemy with tanks and reconnaissance cars counter-attacked Company "F" positions on a hill, Staff-Sergeant Everett L. Dean advanced and fired rocket grenades at the enemy vehicles, disabling one reconnaissance car and killing two enemy. Although subjected to heavy enemy fire, he continued firing and caused the enemy to abandon one medium tank and made the rest of the attackers disperse.⁵ A patrol of the Second Battalion entered Bagnoli during the night and received small arms fire. It reported back at 0400. The Germans withdrew from the town and blew the first bridge north as they departed.

The next day the battalions conducted aggressive patrols as the Second Battalion received shelling from long range enemy artillery. Fontana and Piazza were penetrated and the Third Battalion reported five different bridges blown in its area. A Third Battalion patrol captured a castle in its zone after a sharp engagement and secured an enemy motorcycle, armored car and jeep in good condition. The Third Battalion Observation Post was set up in the castle. Company "K" drove an enemy platoon off the mountain on the left of the valley.

The First Battalion, 30th Infantry, was attached to the Regiment during the day and given the mission of protecting the right and rear of the Regiment. At 1745 the battalions were ordered to send out reinforced platoons to seize objectives and patrol to the north. The First Battalion was ordered to send out three such forces to seize Hills 1257, 1123, and 1213. The Second Battalion temporarily commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Theodore F. Bogart, was ordered to capture Hill 606. The Third Battalion was directed to seize Cassano. Two mounted platoons were attached to the Second Battalion for patrolling purposes.

The First Battalion reached Hill 375 and found the bodies of several dead Americans, members of an ill-fated reconnaissance platoon which had been ambushed. A patrol from the Third Battalion entered Piazza and was later shelled by the enemy. A Company "K" patrol contacted Company "A" and met no enemy.

On 26 September the Seventh Infantry supported by Division Artillery continued its vigorous patrolling activities. The three battalions each sent a patrol into Piazza. One First Battalion patrol contacted six American paratroopers between San Leucia and Avellino and encountered one German patrol. One patrol went to the high ground east of Volturara and the Third Platoon of Company "C", which went to Hill 1213, engaged a platoon of Germans in a fight with small arms, machine guns and mortars which lasted all day.

Private First Class Harold Conway, company runner, requested permission to try to contact the platoon on Hill 1213. Permission was granted by First Lieutenant Irving R. Wyeth, commanding Company "C". Private

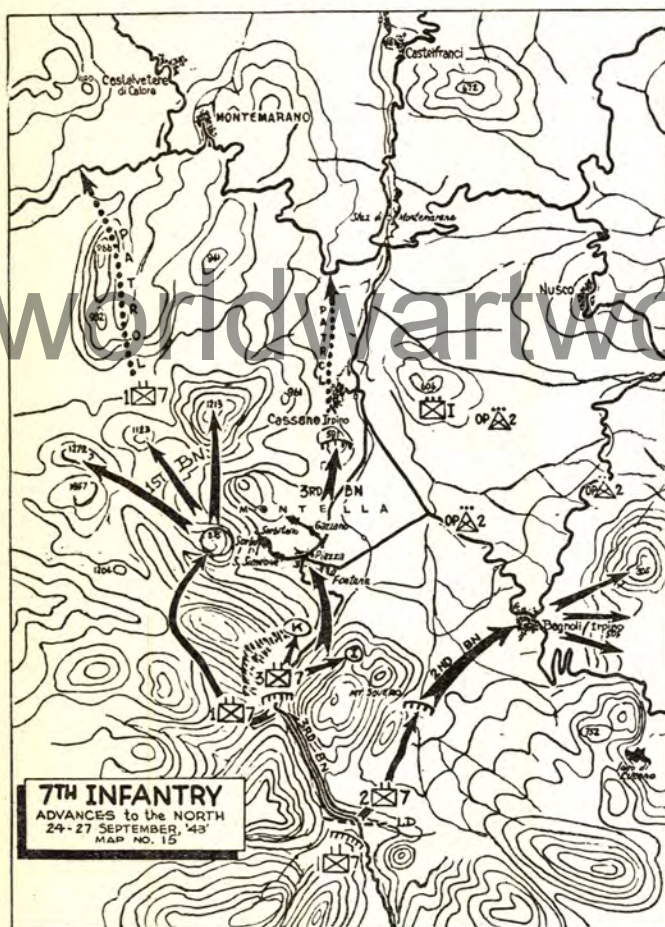
⁴ GO No. 8, HQ, U. S. 5th Army, 17 Jan. '44 and GOs No. 85, 88, 102 and 175, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 15 and 23 Nov. and 17 Dec. '43 and 8 Aug. '44. Col. Sherman was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. 1 Sgt. Butcher, S/Sgt. Thomas, Sgt. Michak, T/4 Converse and T/5 Pontarelli were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵ GO No. 246, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 28 Oct. '44. S/Sgt. Dean was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

First Class Conway crawled thirty-five yards through machine gun and rifle fire that was directed on him from an enemy position about two hundred yards distant. He made two round trips during the next two hours, and then later, of his own volition, took a very important message through, but on the return trip was listed as missing in action. His heroic deeds added immeasurably to the success of the company's mission.⁶

During the afternoon the First Battalion sent out three route reconnaissance patrols, one to the west along grid line fifty to Hill 1407 and beyond, two others to the north where they branched off with one going to the right and the other to the left of Mt. Costa. Second Battalion patrols reported Bagnoli clear at 0700; went three and a half miles beyond Nusco and occupied Hill 606. The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon penetrated to Nusco and returned by midnight.

The Third and Second Battalions were ordered to move and the Third commenced advancing to the north at 1503, passing through the villages of Montella, and occupied Hill 591, near Cassano Irpino at 2140. No resistance was encountered along the way. The Second Battalion started moving at 1630 to concealed positions east of Bagnoli. At 2205 the battalion was in Bagnoli



and received intermittent artillery fire. Strong outposts were established on Hills 505, 601 and 752. During the night the Third Battalion was ordered to send, at daylight, a reinforced platoon to Hill 1213 to assist the First Battalion platoon engaged in the fight there. The First Battalion, 30th Infantry, was detached from Seventh Infantry control during the day.

During the night of 26-27 September a heavy rain preceded by an electrical storm of astounding intensity washed out many of the mountain bridges that had been hastily constructed by engineer battalions. The supply

of water ceased to be a problem for from that time on rain fell almost continuously, day and night, causing much misery among the lightly clad foot troops, many of whom had discarded their packs during the hot dry period.

Early on 27 September the First Battalion reported Hill 1213 taken as the Third Battalion reinforced platoon approached against no opposition. Vigorous patrolling continued, as on preceding days, toward Montemarano and along the routes to Volturara. The First Battalion patrols encountered light enemy resistance. Late in the afternoon the battalions began wheeling to the northwest. The First Battalion was ordered to move to Hill 1272 and patrol to Volturara and Montemarano while the Third Battalion was to move to Hill 1213. The Second Battalion was to leave Company "F" in Bagnoli and one platoon at the river crossing, and then move to the old Third Battalion positions near Cassano. The Third and Second Battalions began executing their movements at 1800 and closed into their new positions at about 2400. The First Battalion jumped off at 2055, and closed on to its objective at 0400.

At 2110, 27 September, the Division Commander, General Truscott, called the Regimental Command Post and ordered Colonel Sherman to prepare to move the First Battalion on Volturara, the Third Battalion to Mount La Foresta and the Second Battalion to follow in the center. The next morning General Truscott visited the Command Post. Receiving the report that the battalions were ready he set the time of H-hour at 1200. The 10th, 39th and 9th Field Artillery Battalions took up positions and registered during the morning, and supported the advance of the battalions, which started at the arranged time.

The advance on 28 and 29 September was over the most rugged mountains yet encountered. Scattered pockets of resistance were located and eliminated. A number of enemy soldiers who had secured civilian clothes attempted to infiltrate the forward lines with the many refugees moving south through the mountains. Mines and booby traps caused casualties, whose cases were aggravated by the difficulty of evacuation.

The weather and difficult terrain combined to delay the advance of the Third Battalion but at 1500 that unit approached Mount La Foresta. At 1540 new orders from Division directed the First Battalion to continue on after capturing Volturara and seize San Stefano, and for the Third Battalion to proceed to Hill 922 north of Highway 7. The First Battalion encountered mines outside of Volturara and captured the town at 1725 only after a determined fight in which foot troops were supported by a pack howitzer company of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, whose 75mm weapons aided in knocking out strong points. Many civilians were injured when it became necessary to shell the church in which they had taken cover. The enemy was using the steeple for an observation post. Forward elements of the First Battalion drove on for San Stefano.

The Second Battalion after hard going over the rough terrain was one and a half miles outside of Volturara at 2330. Patrols were sent into town to contact the First Battalion. Company "F" moved up to join the battalion. Forward elements of the First Battalion entered San Stefano at 0130, 29 September, and reported the town clear. At 0700 some of the battalion was located on slopes east of the town but the bulk of the battalion was scattered from Volturara to San Stefano. The men were wet and cold and had not eaten for twenty-four

⁶ GO No. 111, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 28 Dec. '43. Pfc. Conway was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

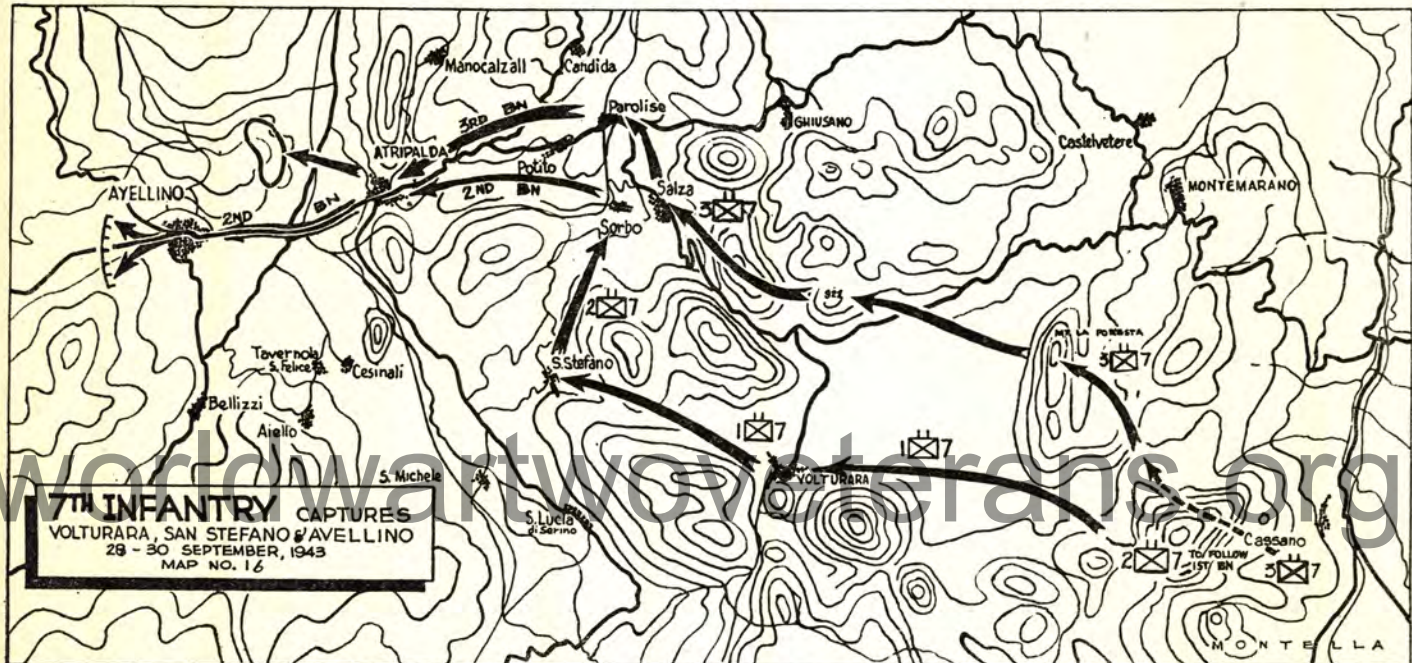
hours. Many had straggled behind during the advance over the rugged terrain. During the morning the First Battalion outposted San Stefano with one reinforced platoon and concealed the rest of the troops in a bivouac area east of the town. Patrols were sent to Potito, Atripaldi and Cesmali. During its advance the First Battalion contacted twenty paratroopers of the 509th Parachute Battalion forces which had been dropped behind enemy lines nearly two weeks previous. They told how the Germans had been withdrawing methodically to the north bank of the Volturno River. The First Battalion had sustained only two casualties during its advance but the troops were greatly fatigued by their march over the mountainous terrain.

The Third Battalion also experienced a most difficult time with the terrain but succeeded in crossing Highway 7, seized Hill 922 and advanced to the west toward Salza. In addition to the difficult terrain the Blue Battalion⁷ en-

the 15th Infantry. Defensive positions around Avellino were secured as the enemy commenced shelling the troops with artillery.

THIRD BATTALION PROTECTS DIVISION RIGHT FLANK TO MONTESARCHIO

On 1 October 1943 the battalions were engaged only in patrolling action and the Regimental Command Post moved to Atripaldi. The First Battalion sent a patrol to Montefredan and found the town occupied by fifty to seventy-five Germans. The Second Battalion patrolled Highway 7 to the west and found booby traps along the way. Reports were received of an estimated German squad withdrawing to the west, killing all animals as it went. A White Battalion patrol moved to Ospedaleto without enemy contact. Blue Battalion patrols reported



countered heavy enemy machine gun, mortar and artillery fire. The battalion was held up by the enemy fire in the morning of 29 September north of Highway 7. Enemy armored cars on the highway, which makes several sharp bends, fired on the Blue Battalion troops. Company "L" maneuvered and at 1435 was on the high ground north of Salza breaking the enemy resistance. Third Battalion troops controlled Salza at 1545 and pushed on for Parolise which was seized by nightfall.

The Second Battalion which had trailed the First Battalion to San Stefano passed through the Red Battalion and moved north, seizing Sorbo, then moved west along the left of Highway 7. On 30 September the Second Battalion on the left of Highway 7 and the Third Battalion on the right advanced toward Avellino. Potito was overrun and at 0415 the battalions were closing in on Atripaldi. At 0800 the Third Battalion was ordered to swing north and seize the high ground north of Avellino. At 0900 the Blue Battalion left Atripaldi and the White Battalion, followed by the First, pushed down Highway 7 and into Avellino, the Third Division objective, at 1021 against no opposition. The Germans had withdrawn in the night. The First Battalion then sent a reinforced platoon north to seize Candida and a patrol to Manocalzati. Another patrol went south and contacted

three bridges blown and found a castle which was heavily booby trapped.

The 30th Infantry continued the advance to the northwest through the Campanian Apennines at daylight 2 October, a comparatively easy task as the enemy was falling back rapidly to the natural barrier offered by the Volturno River.

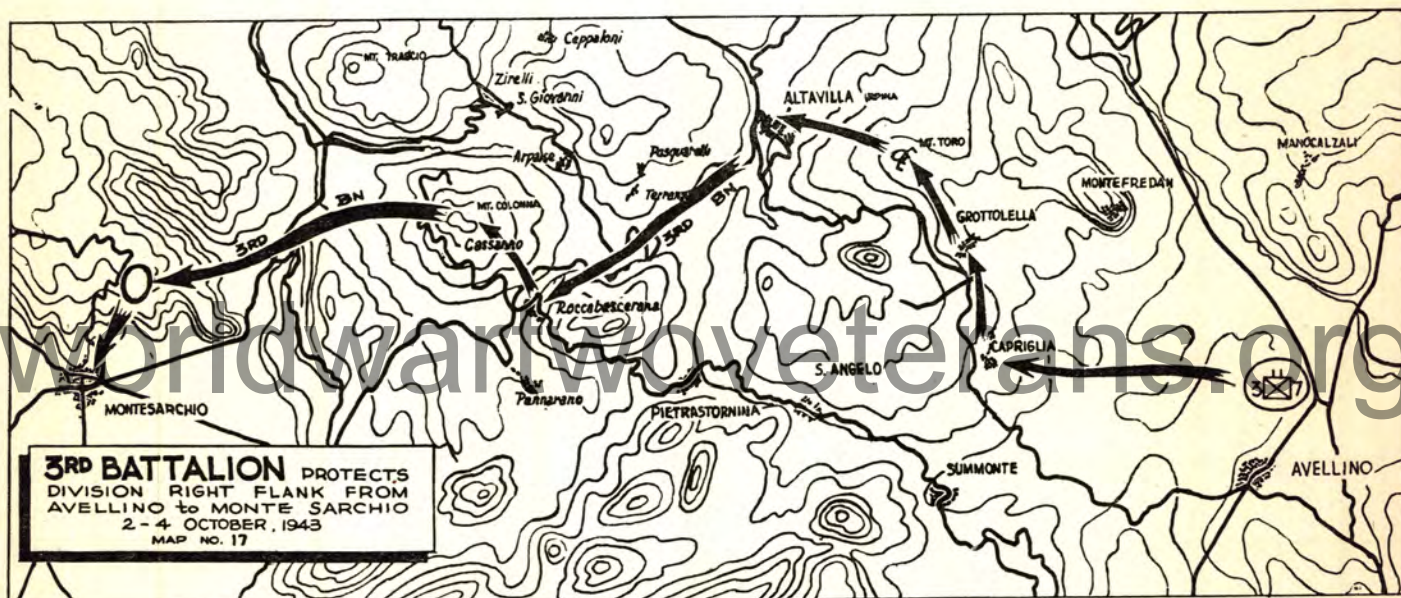
The Third Battalion was recommitted 2 October to protect the Division's right and advance between the 34th Infantry Division on the right and the 30th Infantry on the left. The battalion advanced through Grottolella and toward Altavilla. As the 30th Infantry shelled the Blue Battalion's original objective the troops held up on Monte Toro. Messages were sent to the 30th Infantry reminding them of the Third Battalion's plans and directing them to cease firing on the objective. Early 3 October the Third Battalion occupied Altavilla then

⁷ The First Battalion was called the "Red" Battalion, the Second Battalion the "White" Battalion and the Third Battalion the "Blue" Battalion. Later in the history the 7th Infantry companies are also referred to sometimes by their code names, i. e., Company "A" as "Able" Company, Company "B" as "Baker" Company, Company "C" as "Charlie" Company, etc.

swung west to Roccascerana. Contact was maintained with the adjacent units. Several blown bridges were encountered and small skirmishes occurred. Monte Colonna was occupied at 1730. The Third Battalion had been constantly on the move since the night of 1 October and movement was continued in the night of 3-4 October 1943. A torrential storm raged during the night and made movement across country all the more difficult. At dawn 4 October first contact with enemy in sizeable numbers was established. At the base of the mountains east of Montesarchio casualties were sustained by the Third Battalion caused by fire from enemy tanks and flakwagons. Enemy troops occupied Montesarchio and were supported by three tanks and two flakwagons. The Third Battalion succeeded in occupying its objective northeast of Montesarchio. As the 30th Infantry approached, and Third Battalion, Seventh Infantry patrols entered Montesarchio, the enemy withdrew. The only escape route for the enemy was taken under artillery fire directed by the Seventh Infantry Third Battalion. The enemy was compelled to abandon two tanks. The 30th Infantry then occupied Montesarchio.

Late in the day of 4 October the Third Battalion moved into Montesarchio and relieved the 30th Infantry. The next day the remainder of the Regiment moved by reinforced transportation from Atripaldi to the vicinity of Montesarchio where at 1500 the dispersed truck column was bombed and strafed by a group of enemy planes which caused several casualties and destroyed two trucks. During the night of 5-6 October the Regiment moved to a concealed assembly area in the vicinity of Centurano just east of Caserta. Tents were again pitched with the Regiment greatly dispersed and each man digging-in for individual protection. Kitchen and baggage trains joined the Regiment. Though it still rained steadily the soldiers now had their pup tents and blankets. Clean uniforms, field jackets and raincoats made the wet weather more tolerable. New men joined the companies to replace those lost in action up from Montecorvino.

During the period 6-12 October reconnaissance for crossing the Volturno River was carried out by the Regiment as other troops of the American VI Corps and British X Corps got into position to commence the second phase of the first Italian campaign.



CHAPTER II

The Crossing of the Volturno

From 3 September to 6 October 1943 the British Eighth and American Fifth Armies had seized the heel and toe of the Italian boot and advanced up the ankle to a line "across the peninsula running south from Torre Petacciato on the Adriatic Sea for some sixty-five miles, then west to a point on the Tyrrhenian Sea just south of the Volturno. Along this line of rivers and mountains the Germans clearly intended to make a stubborn stand, hoping to delay, perhaps to stop, the northward advance."⁸

Prior to 6 October 1943 the American Fifth Army under the command of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark had been instructed "to cross the Volturno River and drive the enemy some thirty miles northward into the mountains which extend from Sessa Aurunca, near the Tyrrhenian Coast, through Venafro to Isernia, the point of junction with the British Eighth Army."⁹ "In reaching the Volturno, the American VI Corps had made

its way through difficult terrain. The main advance had been made by the 3rd Infantry Division, which had advanced along the axis Canello-Maddaloni and was in the mountains above Caserta."¹⁰

Following the successful establishment of the Salerno beach-head by the American Fifth Army, troops of Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's German Tenth Army consisting of the 3rd and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, the Herman Goering Division and elements of the 26th Panzer Division had fought delaying actions in terrain and weather which gave them many advantages though they were outnumbered by the Allies.

⁸ "From the Volturno to the Winter Line", Military Intelligence Div., U. S. War Dept., Wash., D. C., 11 Dec. '44, pp. 1-2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 2-5.

¹⁰ "Road to Rome", HQ, U. S. 5th Army, p 11.

On 7 October Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark issued his orders for the attack on the Volturno. The American VI Corps, with three of the finest battle tested Divisions in the United States Army, the 3rd, 34th and 45th Infantry Divisions, was instructed to force a crossing of the river on the night of 9-10 October 1943 in the vicinity of the Triflisco Gap and drive along the ridge line running northwest from Triflisco, in the direction of Teano. The British 10th Corps was to attack the next night. Major General John P. Lucas of the VI Corps planned to assault with the 3rd and 34th Infantry Divisions.



On the afternoon of 8 October 1943 Major General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., commanding the Third Infantry Division, held a meeting of his regimental commanders and outlined his plan of attack for the division forces. He selected the Seventh Infantry to make the main effort for the division and to be accompanied in the attack by the 15th Infantry. Careful studies of the obstacles presented by the river and the enemy, and of the terrain, were made by the commander. His appreciation of the situation and his plans for the attack have been described in a study prepared by the Military Intelligence Division of the War Department as follows:

The critical terrain feature in the Third Division zone was the ridge line running northwest from Triflisco. The ridge is actually an extension of Mount Tifata broken by the narrow gap formed by the Volturno River in forcing its way through the mountains to the coastal plain. The gap is so narrow that troops of the First Battalion, 15th Infantry, dug-in on the northern slopes of Mount Tifata, were exchanging small-arms fire with enemy troops hidden in the stone quarries and olive orchards on the north side of the gap. As long as the enemy held the ridge line, he would be in position to dominate the valley lying to the east and to command the best site for a bridge in the Third Division zone. Highway 87, running northwest from Caserta along the east and north sides of Mount Tifata, crosses the river within the Triflisco Gap and then cuts east across the valley toward Caiazzo. The natural site for the

engineers to build a bridge for heavy vehicles was somewhere within the gap where the road parallels the river on both sides.

Of almost equal importance with the Triflisco ridge was the hill mass to the east, Mount Majulo and Mount Caruso. It overlooks the Volturno Valley stretching two miles south of the river and dominates the narrow valley leading northwest along the Third Division's axis of advance. Just north of the river on the Division's right flank are two smaller hills, Mount Monticello and Mount Mesarinolo. Rising from the level valley like solitary outposts, they serve to guard the approach to the Mount Caruso hill mass. Air photographs indicated that these two hills, as well as the nose of the ridge at Triflisco, were strongly defended by the enemy. Almost surrounded by the hills, the fertile valley of the lower Volturno, through which the river follows its winding course, presents a peaceful scene of cultivated fields and pink or blue farmhouses. It is a beautiful valley, but for the soldier trying to work his way forward under the fire of enemy machine guns and mortars there was only an occasional stone wall, sunken road, or stream bed to offer protection. A rapid advance into the hills overlooking the valley was therefore essential to the success of the Third Division attack.

Aware that the enemy would be well prepared for any attack made across the Triflisco Gap, General Truscott planned to fake an attack on the left flank while making his main effort across the valley in the center. To effect this deception, the First Battalion, 15th Infantry, and the heavy weapons companies of the 30th Infantry were to concentrate all their available fire power on the enemy defenses across the gap. The demonstration was to start at midnight, two hours before the main assault, and continue for the remainder of the night. If the enemy showed any sign of withdrawing, the Second Battalion, 30th Infantry, was to cross the river, but, until such time as the enemy could be cleared from the ridge line, it was to be kept blanketed with smoke. While the enemy was being diverted by the demonstration on the left, the big push was to be made in the center by the Seventh Infantry, under the command of Colonel Harry B. Sherman, crossing the river at 0200 and attacking through the valley with Mount Majulo as its first objective. Company "A" of the 751st Tank Battalion and Company "C", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, were to cross the river at daylight to support the Seventh Infantry attack. Sufficient materials were available to waterproof the tanks and tank destroyers of these two companies, and it was expected that they would be able to ford the river. On the division right flank, the 15th Infantry (less the First Battalion), under the temporary command of Brigadier General William W. Eagles, was to attack north from Mount Castellone. Its first objectives were the German strongpoints on Mount Monticello and Mount Mesarinolo. Once these hills were taken, the Regiment was to capture the high ground above the village of Piana di Caiazzo, secure the division right flank, and move west behind the Seventh Infantry.

The key to the strategy of the Third Division attack was surprise. Only the 15th Infantry had units along the front chosen for the division attack. The Seventh Infantry had been kept in its concealed bivouac area east of Caserta, and the 30th Infantry had been in contact with the enemy only in the area now assigned to the 34th Division. The strength of the artillery, which was to fire a massed concentration for an hour before the Infantry jumped off, was also unknown to the enemy. Instructions were issued on 9 October that the artillery was to fire each morning for an hour but that not more than half of the guns were to be used. Every effort was being made to keep the enemy from knowing where the blow would fall and the amount of punch behind the blow. Once the attack was started, however, there was to be no pause. As General Truscott expressed it to his officers, "This is undoubtedly going to be our first real battle—we must have the men imbued with the idea that they have to get to their objective and they won't stop."¹¹

The 30th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division which had been in VI Corps reserve, and the British 10th Corps needed more time than what was allotted them to effect reliefs and shift troops for the attack. Difficulties of rain, mud and poor roads slowed the work considerably. Therefore General Clark postponed the attack to the night of 12-13 October.

The Seventh Infantry took advantage of the delay and continued reconnaissance of the river and terrain. Air photos were valuable in making the studies but invaluable information was secured by the reconnaissance

¹¹ "From the Volturno to the Winter Line", pp 13-16.

patrols which operated nightly. Each night the Regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and reconnaissance groups from each of the battalions reconnoitered for possible routes and crossing sites. Not all patrols were successful. The night of 8-9 October both First and Second Battalion patrols were fired on by enemy machine guns and mortars. The Second Battalion patrol succeeded in crossing the river and returning. The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and the battalions established observation posts. The First Battalion O-P was fired on by enemy artillery on the 10th and two men were killed and two more wounded.

Patrols were unsuccessful in their attempts to cross the river the night of the 10th and 11th. Blue Battalion patrols attempted at three different places and failed each time, encountering enemy machine gun fire and one large enemy patrol, which had crossed to our side of the river. The enemy patrol fired machine pistols and flares at the Third Battalion patrol. A Second Battalion patrol

reached the river but did not cross when enemy fired on it with pistols and grenades. Red Battalion patrols encountered no enemy that night but failed to cross. American artillery caused one casualty among our troops.

The following night both Red and White Battalion patrols completed crossing missions assigned to them, finding the current swift, water chest deep, and steep firm banks with brush on the far side. A patrol from the Second Battalion which went out that night may be described as typical of the many others which probed the river for crossing points.

After reaching the river a short distance up stream from the hairpin-shaped loop in the center of the Division zone, the men waded out into the dark, swirling stream. Although the water was not over chest deep, the current was very swift, and the men found it impossible to get rope across. The bank on the south side was sloping. The bank on the north side was ten feet high, straight up, and lined with bushes and trees. Moving downstream to the bend in the river just below the hairpin loop, the patrol again waded out into the river. Before the



The Hairpin Loop, Volturno River, Italy.

men were across, enemy troops on the far bank opened fire. One man fell. The patrol succeeded in getting back to the south bank, and a fire fight ensued between our machine guns and enemy machine guns and mortars located on both sides of the hairpin loop. Nevertheless, the bend in the river appeared to be a good place to cross since vehicle tracks leading to the water suggested that the enemy had once operated a ferry or a raft there. Although two possible crossing points had been tested, the patrol moved farther down the stream and made yet a third effort to cross. The patrol report states simply that "one man was across when fired on point-blank. He did not return but crossing by wading is possible." Seven members of the patrol were casualties, including three missing in action.

The men who patrolled were the real heroes of the Volturno crossings: men who waded alone across a flood-swollen river two hundred feet wide, never knowing when they might sink over their heads in the icy water or when the crack of an enemy rifle would spell sudden death; men who had to lie helpless and shivering on a muddy bank and watch a comrade be shot as he struggled with the current and who could then themselves move downstream and wade out into the river. It was grim work, but for every man who lost his life searching for crossing points and probing the enemy defenses the lives of hundreds of other men were saved when whole battalions had to fight their way across the river.¹²

Private First Class Russell E. Brannon and Private Olegario L. Valenzuela of Company "E" had to swim the Volturno to search for a suitable crossing site. The two soldiers made two crossings and on the second crossing were challenged and fired upon. Private Valenzuela escaped and returned but Private First Class Brannon was either killed or captured.¹³

Back in the bivouac area the battalions were busy assembling their equipment and making final plans as supporting engineers also gathered boats and bridging material. Company "C", 84th Chemical Battalion, Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, and Company "C", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, were attached to the Regiment to support the operations and also made preparations.

The night of 12-13 October 1943 found the Seventh Infantry ready to make the main assault for the Third Division once more. Colonel Sherman had a trio of veterans to command the rifle battalions. Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour, Major Everett W. Duvall and Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges commanded the Red, White and Blue or First, Second and Third Battalions respectively. In the assault across the Volturno and in the drive to the heights of Mignano each was to display outstanding leadership.

On the north side of the Volturno German troops of Field Marshal Kesselring were waiting for the impending battle. While the Seventh Infantry had reconnoitered and made ready, and other troops in the Fifth Army had swung into position the enemy had worked hard at laying mines, digging gun pits, and organizing systems of machine gun emplacements to cover the river banks with interlocking bands of fire. Enemy artillery was ready to go into action. The enemy knew an attack was impending. It was no secret but the enemy did not know the exact time or in what places the attack would come. The Fifth Army had numerical superiority but the German Tenth Army had defensive advantages behind a swollen raging river.

The postponement of the attack had enabled the Fifth Army to plan a coordinated assault by the American VI and the British 10th Corps, each with three divisions (see Map No. 19). While the 3d and 34th Infantry Divisions were to attack across the Volturno the 45th Infantry Division on the right flank was to attack enemy defenses down the Calore River Valley toward the Volturno. In the British 10th Corps zone the assault was to be made with one brigade (equivalent to a U. S. Regiment) of the 56th (London) Division attacking on the Corps right flank at Capua, one brigade of the Seventh Armoured Division in the center at Grazzanise,

and two brigades of the 46th Division on the left at Cancellò. An amphibious tank landing with tanks loaded on LCTs was to be made north of the river mouth.¹⁴

7th INFANTRY CROSSES THE VOLTURNO BREAKTHROUGH AT THE HAIRPIN LOOP

Like many big Infantry operations, the assault across the Volturno was initiated at night. At 0200 on 13 October the riflemen started out to wrest the west bank of the river from the enemy's control. Many there were who were not destined to see the light of the next day. The Military Intelligence Division study described the Seventh Infantry crossing as follows:

On the evening of 12 October 1943 as darkness settled over the Volturno a full moon rose, lighting up the sharp peak of Mount Tifata and spreading an eerie glow over the open fields in the valley. At midnight the uneasy silence which had settled over the Volturno Valley on the Third Division sector changed suddenly to an inferno of fire and noise. All along the northern slope of Mount Tifata within the Trifisco Gap, rifles and machine guns spouted lead at German positions across the river, and exploding mortar shells covered the slope with puffs of smoke. With the assistance of all the heavy weapons companies of the 30th Infantry, the First Battalion, 15th Infantry, dug in just south of Highway 87, was "demonstrating vigorously" on the Third Division left flank. An hour later, at 0100, the Third Division artillery opened fire against the north bank of the river. The targets were enemy machine gun and mortar positions which had been spotted during the days of preparation. For an hour shells plowed up the dirt and crashed into farmhouses all along the division front. Then, at 0155, smoke shells were mixed with the high explosives to screen the crossing areas. Five minutes later the Infantry began the attack against the German river line.

The Seventh Infantry which was spearheading the Third Division attack crossed the river at the hairpin loop: the First Battalion crossing just down stream from the loop, the Second and Third Battalions crossing upstream from the loop. At midnight, when the diversion on the left commenced, the First and Third Battalions were occupying a forward assembly area concealed in a deep gully on the eastern slope of Mount Tifata. The Second Battalion and the Regimental Command Post were on the east side of Mount San Leucio hidden along a dirt trail which the 10th Engineer Battalion had improved to get the tanks and tank destroyers down into the valley.

The First Battalion started pulling out of their assembly areas at 0045, the men carrying their guide ropes, rubber pontoons, and improvised rafts. Off in the distance, looming out of the misty, smoke-wreathed valley, was the rocky mass of Mount Majulo (Hill 502), their objective. Slogging across the muddy, plowed fields, they reached the river bank. While carrying parties struggled to get the boats and heavy rafts down the slippery bank to the water's edge, assault parties waded and swam the bitter-cold, rushing stream to anchor guide ropes on the far bank. Tracer bullets from enemy machine guns formed a criss-cross pattern of red flashes over the heads of the men as they worked feverishly to shuttle boats and rafts across.

Crossing by boats on a narrow front, the First Battalion encountered many difficulties. Many of the trees used for anchoring the guide ropes pulled out. The improvised rafts broke up, one by one, in the swift current; and the engineer party from the First Battalion, 39th Engineers, had trouble in keeping the rubber boats from drifting downstream. Fortunately for this operation, the enemy bank was higher than the south bank, and in the darkness and smoke the enemy machine gunners fired too high to hit the men as they crossed the open fields to the river. Dawn was breaking before all the men had crossed. With the morning light the accuracy of enemy fire improved. Shells began landing all along the river line, and the last boat to pull away from the south bank was the target for a direct hit.

As fast as the men crossed the river, they gathered along a sandbar under the cover of the north bank and then moved upstream in column, clinging to the river bank for protection against the enemy machine guns. One man was killed by a

¹² *Ibid.*, pp 17-18.

¹³ GO No. 83, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 5 Nov. '43. Pfc. Brannon (missing in action) and Pvt. Valenzuela were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁴ "From the Volturno to the Winter Line", p 25.

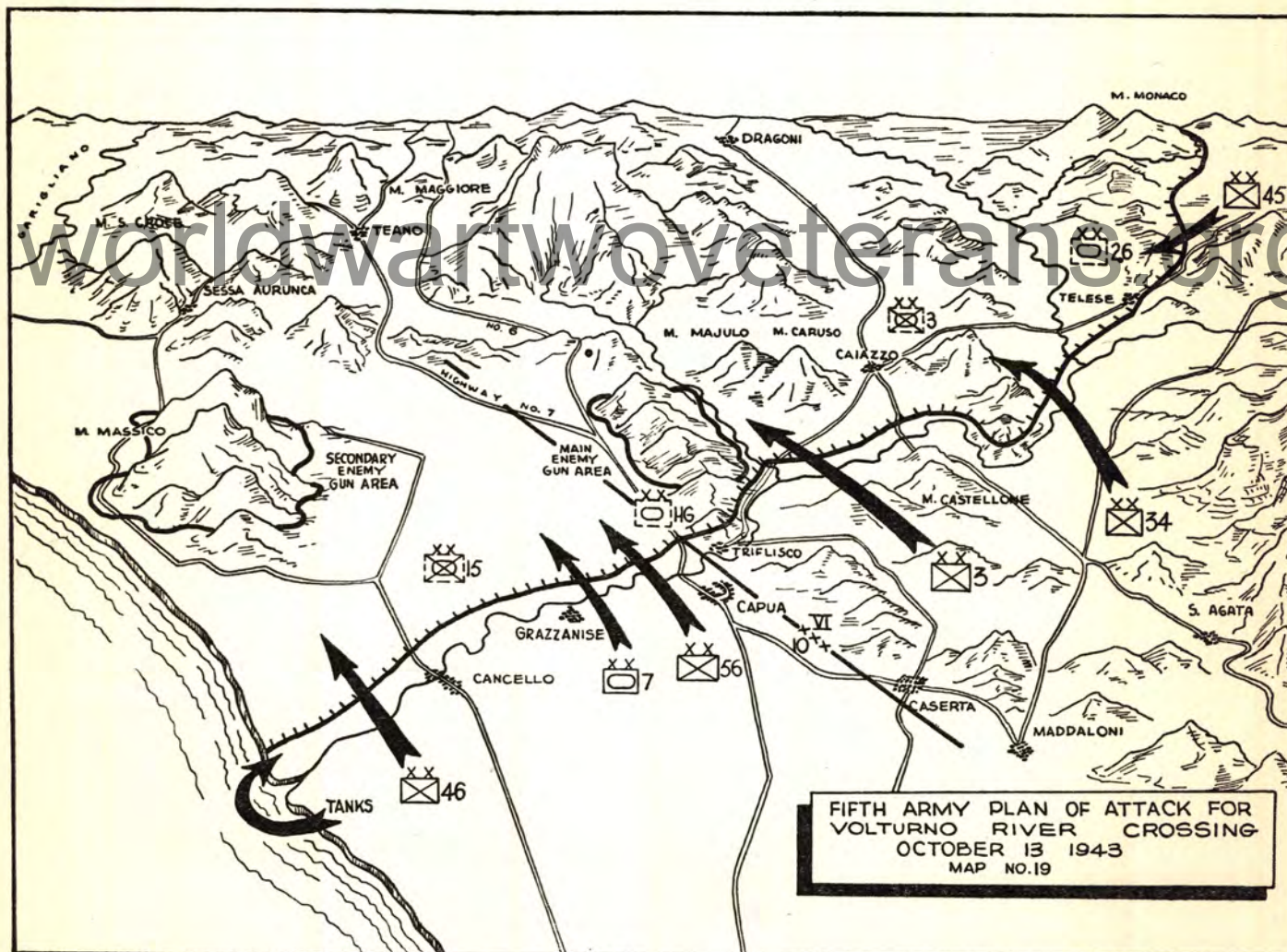
mine. Several other men stepped on mines which threw up small geysers of sand and mud without doing any damage. The artillery fire was more serious. Shells splashing into the river hit a number of men as they worked their way along the bank to the point where a small stream enters the river on the west side of the loop. Here they left the river and deployed across the field south of Highway 87.

While the First Battalion was crossing on the west side of loop, the Second Battalion, followed by the Third Battalion, crossed on the east side of the loop. The men waded the river holding their rifles over their heads with one hand and clinging tightly to the guide ropes with the other to keep from being swept off their feet by the current. Scrambling up the muddy bank, they went after the enemy machine gunners. In the darkness and confusion of the crossing it was not easy to locate every machine gun nest. Enemy snipers were still firing along the river until late in the morning. Without waiting to mop up these pockets of resistance, the Second and Third Battalions pushed on across the valley toward Mount Majulo, following the general line of the stream which flows south to enter the river at the north end of the loop. By 0800 the forward elements of the Second Battalion had almost reached the mountain, and the Third Battalion, under heavy artillery fire, was working slowly across the fields behind it.¹⁵

Just after crossing the river Staff Sergeant Raymond L. Oliver of Company "C" led his eight-man squad four hundred yards along the river towards an enemy machine gun that was temporarily stopping the company's advance with withering fire. When an enemy threw a hand grenade that wounded two men, Staff Sergeant Oliver charged and killed him with fire from his

cluding an officer. Elimination of this obstacle enabled the company to advance.¹⁶

At about 0230 hours on 13 October 1943 Sergeant Bennie L. Guffey of Company "C", while leading his squad in the assault on the enemy side of the Volturno River, stepped on a mine in the dark and from the resulting explosion suffered four wounds. He refused to go to the rear for medical aid and continued to lead his squad. As the attack progressed his platoon leader, Second Lieutenant Jack M. Tatum, was killed by enemy machine gun fire and Sergeant Guffey immediately braved this murderous fire, which was coupled with withering mortar fire, to assure himself that each man of the platoon had suitable cover. Sergeant Guffey, suffering greatly from his wounds, continued the attack until he was again wounded, this time severely, by enemy shellfire. Still refusing to be evacuated he rallied the remainder of his squad who were not wounded, yelling, "Come on men, we've still got a machine gun to knock out up there." His men followed but Sergeant Guffey's wounds would not allow him to go further. By then our own artillery prevented further progress, but a gallant attempt at continuance was made by Sergeant Guffey before he fell exhausted from his many wounds and finally was evacuated. For his extraordinary heroism he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.¹⁷



carbine. He then led the squad to within fifty yards of the enemy gun, and directed his men in a twenty minute soldier suddenly arose from a concealed position and fire-fight which knocked out the gun, wounding two of the enemy, and enabled the capture of three others in-

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 26-31.

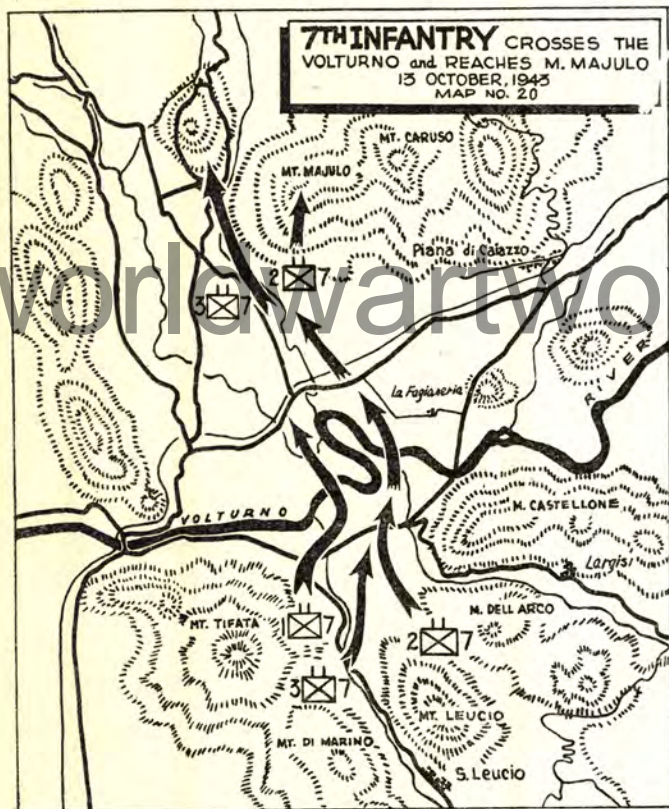
¹⁶ GO No. 175, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Aug. '44. S/Sgt. Oliver was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁷ For authority see GO 48 Hqrs. Fifth Army 24 March 1944. Sgt. Guffey officially was transferred from the 7th Infantry on 18 Oct. 1943.

Second Lieutenant Murlan F. Smith of Anti-Tank Company led a group of fifty men to assist the First Battalion in crossing the Volturno river. Corporal William C. Foley, who was killed by enemy machine gun fire, Private First Class Francis C. Sereno and Second Lieutenant Smith performed gallantly while under enemy fire to stretch ropes across the river, secure broken cables and rafts, transport heavy weapons and other equipment across the Volturno, directing isolated groups to cover and rendering assistance to wounded riflemen.¹⁸

At 0500 Major John A. Elterich of Headquarters Second Battalion plunged into the Volturno in an effort to find a suitable exit for the Heavy Weapons and Headquarters Companies of the Second Battalion. The companies burdened with their heavy equipment were unable to leave the stream at the point used by the rifle troops because of the steep, vine-tangled banks, and were being subjected to enemy machine gun fire as they jammed together in the water. Despite the close range machine gun fire which wounded twenty of the men and struck the water all around him, Major Elterich led the men to a more accessible path up the bank.¹⁹

After crossing the river the platoon of Company "H" to which Private First Class Eugene T. Muskey belonged was caught in an artillery concentration and was also being fired on by enemy tanks. A member of the



platoon was severely hit and dazed, and although losing large amounts of blood from his wound, got up and was running around, exposing himself to more artillery and tank fire. Private First Class Muskey left his place of cover and ran approximately forty yards through an enemy artillery impact area, caught the injured soldier who had by this time lost consciousness, bandaged his wounds and carried him to a place of safety.²⁰

While enemy machine gun fire inflicted casualties on his platoon and threatened the remaining elements crossing the Volturno, Sergeant Stanley R. Dombrowski of Company "K" led his squad into the enemy lines and delivered a bold assault on the flank of the enemy positions. Though wounded severely by an enemy rifle grenade, he continued the attack, hurling grenades and direct-

ing his men until the position had been taken, the enemy gunner killed and the weapon destroyed.²¹

While leading another flank patrol, Sergeant Arne J. Holst's squad, also of Company "K", came under heavy flanking fire from an enemy machine gun position. Sergeant Holst directed his squad into firing positions, and though wounded as a result of the action, personally directed the fire of grenadiers sent to his support, refusing medical attention until the enemy position had been overcome.²²

Just after Company "K" had crossed the river the squad leader of Private John R. Archabal's squad fell wounded and enemy fire disorganized the remainder of the squad. Realizing the situation Private Archabal, although only a few days in combat, assumed command, reorganized the squad and continued the attack on the enemy position. He inspired the men by his courage and initiative under fire. In subsequent action he was killed.²²

About fifty members of Company "I" were attacked by eight enemy tanks shortly after the river was crossed and eleven men were wounded by the attack. Private First Class Lenny A. Macklin crossed seventy-five yards of open terrain which was being swept by the tank fire to render aid to the wounded. Under the heavy fire he personally administered aid to many men and helped evacuate five of the more seriously wounded.²²

Captain Glenn E. Rathbun left the security of his observation post and went to the aid of the trapped group. Running and crawling four hundred yards across the open and flat field Captain Rathbun made his way through the aimed tank and machine gun fire to reach the isolated group. Crawling from one man to the next he directed each to where the battalion was reorganizing. During his search for the troops Captain Rathbun was directly fired at by a tank only fifty yards away and two machine guns one hundred fifty yards distant.²³

Daylight improved the accuracy of the enemy machine gun, rifle, mortar and artillery fire but it also enabled Third Division observers to call for artillery fire on enemy guns and tanks in the valley. Tank destroyers of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, firing from dug-in positions in the valley below Mount San Leucio, added the deadly fire of their high velocity shells. Bull dozers sought to break down the river banks so that tanks of the 751st Tank Battalion could cross to support the Infantrymen but heavy enemy fire from 150mm guns, or heavier, and machine guns drove the bull dozers back from the river. At 0730 a radio message was received at the Regimental Command Post from the 751st Tank Battalion which said that thirty-three enemy tanks were forming by some houses at the base of one of the hills. First Battalion skirmish lines moved north toward the railroad. When they were severely shelled by enemy artillery and tanks, the advance slowed as the enemy counter-attacked with Infantry. Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour moved forward with the artillery falling all around him and drew machine gun fire upon himself. Though he was directly fired on by enemy rifle-

¹⁸ GOs No. 84 and 131, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Nov. '43 and 27 June '44. Cpl. Foley (posthumously), 1 Lt. Smith and Pfc. Sereno were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁹ GO No. 91, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 May '44. Maj. Elterich was awarded an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal.

²⁰ GO No. 106, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 21 Dec. '43. Pfc. Muskey was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²¹ GO No. 84, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Nov. '43. Sgt. Dombrowski was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²² GO No. 84, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Nov. '43. Pvt. Archabal (posthumously), Sgt. Holst and Pfc. Macklin were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

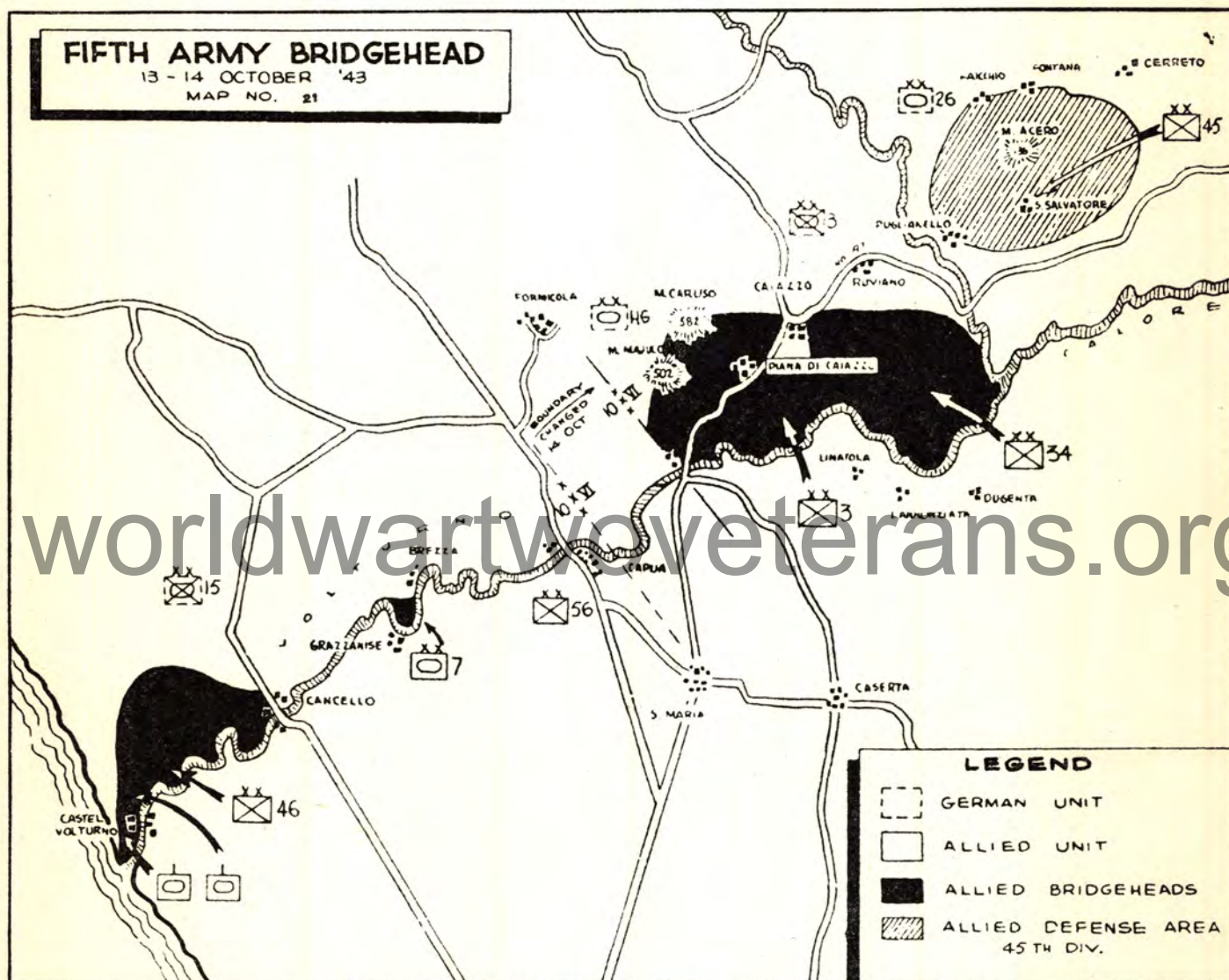
²³ GO No. 108, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 9 June '44. Capt. Rathbun was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

men and automatic weapons, he continued to expose himself to command better the situation and skillfully to maneuver flanking fire on the enemy, breaking up their counter-attack and inflicting heavy damage. His actions were an inspiration to all men and his exceptional command made possible a successful assault.²⁴

Private First Class Ernest Snead of Company "C" noted a wounded man lying exposed to the enemy fire sweeping the valley. Of his own volition he made his way from a position of cover to the side of the wounded soldier, in full view of the enemy, and dug a slit trench for the man's protection until he could be reached by aid men.²⁴

had been halted and broken up, before this however, by the gallant Infantrymen, artillery and tank destroyer fire. Cannon Company was credited with having knocked out two enemy tanks and the artillery three, as well as some machine gun nests.

As Major Everett W. Duvall's troops of the Second Battalion occupied Mount Majulo the Third Battalion of Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges was in serious trouble throughout the afternoon. At 1620 the tanks and tank destroyers had not reached the battalion and the following message was sent to the Regimental Command Post: "Our tanks and TDs no earthly use to me. Do not know their location. M-4s open up on Battalion



Orders were sent to the First Battalion by radio to reorganize and hold its ground to protect the Regiment's left flank until the tanks and tank destroyers could cross the river and render direct support. At this time the Blue Battalion received fire from eight enemy tanks and numerous enemy machine guns and requested tank destroyers.

Men of "Company A", 10th Engineer Battalion, worked heroically. Using picks and shovels they tore down the river bank, at a site below the goose neck, sufficiently enough to allow the tanks to move to the water's edge without tipping over and to cross the river. At 1240 fifteen tanks and three tank destroyers of the supporting companies were across the river and moved to the support of the rifle battalions. The counter-attacks

whenever movement begins. Our own artillery, Cannon or tank fire falling in our area 235860."²⁵

The enemy launched several counter-attacks against the positions which had been captured by Company "K".

Private First Class Arthur J. Hulsey of Company "K" was on an outpost while his unit was being reorganized. He observed and intercepted an enemy counter-attack. After sending back a man with word to the unit, he opened fire with his Browning Automatic Rifle causing

²⁴ GOs No. 106 and 95, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 21 Dec. '43 and 13 Dec. '44. Lt. Col. Izenour and Pfc. Snead were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁵ Unit Journal, 7th Infantry HQ, 13 Oct. '43.

many enemy casualties. Although the machine pistol, grenade, mortar and artillery fire was of such intensity that it drove back several adjacent outposts, Private First Class Hulsey refused to withdraw, thereby allowing his unit time to move in and repel the enemy attack.²⁶

From a forward observation post which was under enemy machine pistol fire, First Lieutenant Frank Petruzel, commanding Company "K", directed his mortar section's advance. He led his men in a skillful employment of rifles, machine guns, mortars and grenades. By personal example under an enemy artillery and mortar barrage, his under-strength company was greatly encouraged to successfully repel the attacks.²⁶

Sergeant Garlin M. Connor, also of Company "K", left a covered position to direct fire and place men in a gap in the line. These men, at the time, were separated from their own platoon and were under the heaviest fire from the enemy who were attempting to infiltrate through our lines. Even though a communication sergeant, Sergeant Connor on his own initiative took control of the situation, giving orders and making successful placements of men in the weakened lines and giving invaluable first aid to many of our wounded, who were unable to be evacuated at the moment.²⁶

An enemy tank opened fire on Company "L" killing four men and seriously wounding five others. Private First Class Leonard H. Wood, of the Medical Detachment, left his position to brave the enemy fire and render first aid to the wounded, remaining with them until they were safely evacuated. His quick action and disregard for personal safety was directly responsible for saving the lives of at least two of the wounded.²⁶

The fire of the enemy platoon wounded Corporal Harold J. Besonday's section leader, knocked out his machine gun and inflicted casualties within his squad. Corporal Besonday moved into a forward position and returned fire with his rifle, killing five of the enemy and causing the remainder to withdraw. He then took command of Company "K" section, disposed his men on the left flank of the enemy, and directed fire until the entire enemy attack was repulsed.²⁶

While Second Lieutenant Ben W. Neville of Company "K" was disposing his weapons platoon on the flank of the company, heavy enemy rifle and machine pistol fire knocked out a machine gun squad and inflicted several casualties, among them the section sergeant. Second Lieutenant Neville without a moment's hesitation, dashed twenty-five yards across an open field in full view of the enemy to drag the wounded sergeant into the cover of a nearby shell hole while enemy machine gun bullets were striking three to five feet from him. He then directed a heavy covering fire of rifles and machine guns while he dragged the helpless soldier back across the open field. In subsequent action Second Lieutenant Neville was wounded and later died.²⁷

Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore, Regimental Executive Officer, accompanied by Second Lieutenant John D. Foulk, went forward from the Command Post during daylight to reconnoiter. He used a route within the field of fire of two enemy machine guns that were already crossfiring at a party forward about two hundred yards. When he was two hundred yards further towards the river, the same machine gun fire was aimed directly at him but he continued to go forward, until he located the exact position of the two guns and brought a 75mm gun to bear on the enemy positions, knocked out the guns and made possible safer crossings for the Regiment.²⁸ In early evening the Regimental Command Post displaced forward.

Company "L", commanded by First Lieutenant Donald G. Taggart, maneuvered during the night toward the Blue Battalion's objectives but encountered enemy

machine gun and tank fire and made no headway. Lieutenant Taggart was wounded during the action. Throughout the night of 13-14 October the enemy tanks, machine guns and artillery continued to hammer at the Blue Battalion forces.

ACTION ON THE RIGHT AND LEFT OF THE SEVENTH INFANTRY

On the right of the Seventh Infantry two battalions of the 15th Infantry successfully crossed the Volturno



Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark, Commanding General U. S. 5th Army, congratulated the "Cotton Balers" after their successful crossing of the Volturno River in Italy.

against strong opposition, captured Mount Monticello, Mount Mesarino and Piana di Caiazzo, and drove on for Mount Caruso. On the right of the 15th Infantry

²⁶ GOs No. 84 and 85, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 and 15 Nov. '43. 1 Lt. Petruzel, Sgt. Connor, Cpl. Besonday, Pfc. Hulsey and Pfc. Wood were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁷ GO No. 113, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 29 Dec. '43. 2 Lt. Neville was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁸ GO No. 111, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 28 Dec. '43. Lt. Col. Moore was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

two regiments of the 34th Infantry Division had pressed forward and won a bridgehead across the river.

On the immediate left of the Regiment the situation was not so good. The British 56th Division had failed to effect a crossing of the Volturno at Capua and suffered heavy casualties. Thus the area west of the Triflisco ridge was not cleared that day and the Seventh Infantry received the full shock of enemy pressure to the Third Division's left flank. The Second Battalion of the 30th Infantry attempted in early afternoon to cross at the Triflisco Gap and succeeded in getting two platoons of one company across. A hail of machine gun fire was encountered and the platoons withdrew across the river. A second attempt, following artillery and mortar preparations, failed, when the 30th Infantry troops reached the river only to be pinned down by the deadly enemy fire which inflicted severe casualties. At the mouth of the Volturno the attack of the British 46th Division was a great success. Two squadrons of Sherman Tanks completed their amphibious landing just north of the river mouth and assault battalions successfully crossed the river. In the center the 7th Armored Division met determined opposition and had to make three attempts before securing a small foothold on the north bank.²⁹

Though the enemy continued to harass troops of the Seventh Infantry throughout the night, no more attempts were made to drive back the "Cotton Balermen" who had driven forward so swiftly and relentlessly, giving the enemy no opportunity to reorganize his shattered defenses. Recognising the superb work of the Regiment,

Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark called Colonel Sherman by phone, and through him, commended and congratulated each member of the Regiment. "The cold water-soaked men on the brush-covered slopes of Mount Majulo deserved to be congratulated. In one day's fighting they had crossed the Volturno and had won the commanding height, Mount Majulo (Hill 502) in the center of the Third Division front."³⁰

Severe losses were suffered by the Regiment on 13 October 1943. Forty-one members were killed and ninety-six wounded in action. Five were taken prisoners by the enemy and three had become missing in action.

While the battalions had battled forward to their objectives Company "A" of the 10th Engineer Battalion constructed a jeep bridge across the river, at the bend just below the hairpin loop. Harassed initially by enemy machine gun fire, and artillery throughout the day, the engineers completed the bridge at 2000 hours. Other engineers completed an 8-ton bridge in the 15th Infantry sector at 0100, 14 October, and during the night combat vehicles of the Regiment and Company "C", 84th Chemical Battalion, crossed by the two bridges.

During the night the 30th Infantry troops and the remaining battalion of the 15th Infantry crossed the river. The 30th Infantry occupied the nose of Triflisco Ridge as the enemy withdrew from the knoll under the cover of darkness. The sweeping advance of the Seventh Infantry had laid the enemy left flank open and he did not wish to remain in that dangerous position the following day.

CHAPTER III

From the Volturno to Mount La Difensa

Early on 14 October Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion moved north, followed by tank destroyers, to assist the Third Battalion, but failed to reach the battalion before it jumped off in the attack at 0930 for Mount Fallano, Objective 6. The Second Battalion moved to the north slopes of Mount Majulo and the Red Battalion moved up along the Pisciareello stream.

Encountering small arms, machine gun and some mortar fire the Third Battalion overcame enemy resistance and at 1130 was on its objective. The officer commanding the tanks evidently misunderstood his orders as at 1030 he called the Regimental Command Post for a clarification and was told the armor was to move north and clear out enemy tanks in the valley. The Second Battalion moved over to Objective 6.

Early in the afternoon the Regiment stood ready to attack to the west and capture Pontelatone as patrols were sent toward the town to determine the enemy situation.

At 1530 Division Headquarters ordered the Regiment to advance on a new axis, along the road to Liberi, the initial objective, and then to Dragoni, the final objective. Colonel Sherman chose to attack in a column of battalions with the Third, Second and First in order, with hopes of capturing Liberi by dark.

In mid-afternoon tanks of Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, reached the Blue Battalion. Enemy tank concentrations were reported in Liberi and enemy troops were in Cisterna.

Moving out on schedule, at 1645, the Third Battalion immediately encountered enemy resistance in the form of machine gun, small arms and anti-tank fire.

Corporal Warren B. Williams, of Company "I", which was leading the Third Battalion advance, moved

his squad under enemy machine gun and anti-tank fire up to within fifty yards of the enemy, killing five and wounding two of the Germans. This brave and well directed action cleared the way for the company to move safely into position and helped assure a successful assault.³¹

Overcoming the resistance along the way, heavier resistance was encountered in the little stone village of Cisterna on the forward slopes of Mount Fallano and the battalion was detained in an all-night fight. Tanks and tank destroyers of the supporting units supported the attack initially and reached Cisterna, where one tank was knocked out by enemy artillery fire. The armor was forced to withdraw.

Company "I" moved to the north nose of the hill on the left and Company "L" was moving to the right of the town with intentions of by-passing the enemy. Two batteries of artillery were firing on the Blue Battalion troops. The efforts to flank Cisterna were unsuccessful and at 0540, 15 October, the Third Battalion was still held up near Cisterna by intense artillery and machine gun fire.

Private First Class Clement F. Merrill was a member of a forty-man group attempting to penetrate into the town. He advanced ahead of the group over open terrain that was swept by the intense enemy machine gun fire and he opened fire on the enemy positions. Private First Class Merrill knocked out one of the enemy guns but

²⁹ "From the Volturno to the Winter Line", pp 52-54.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p 32.

³¹ GO No. 83, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 5 Nov. '43. Cpl. Williams was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

was badly hit himself. On the following day he became missing in action.³²

The Second Battalion moving up behind the Third was also shelled by the enemy and at midnight by-passed the Third on the left. Advance over the rugged stony terrain was slow during the night. At about 0430 Company "G", the advance guard of the White Battalion, suddenly encountered stiff resistance from an enemy strongpoint consisting of three Mark IV tanks, supported by entrenched machine guns, near Mount Mizzola, and was cut off by the by-passed machine guns.

Sergeant Mike Hess of Company "G" quickly realized the situation, left his place of cover and crawled two hundred yards through the withering machine gun fire to aid the advance men. He located an enemy machine gun nest and braving its fire from an exposed position, knocked it out with hand grenades but he was mortally wounded during his act of heroism.³³

First Sergeant Buren V. Reynolds of Company "G" braved the enemy fire and moved forward to take control of the situation. Dispatching one platoon to the left flank, First Sergeant Reynolds personally took command of a squad and attacked two enemy machine gun nests from the right. His aggressive action in the heavy automatic fire at only fifty yards range, promptly knocked out the two enemy machine guns, killed two Germans, wounded three and caused the capture of eight others.³⁴

Staff Sergeant Forrest W. Goercke of Headquarters Company Second Battalion was unable to fire from his position and moved about fifteen yards to an exposed firing position suitable for his rocket gun. Although wounded in the shoulder he stood his ground in the face of enemy fire and launched three rockets at an enemy tank, disabling it. The crew and supporting Infantrymen immediately fled when the tank was crippled.³⁵

Closing in on the other enemy tanks and machine guns with bazookas and grenades, the White Battalion forces compelled the enemy armor to withdraw and knocked out more enemy weapons. Private First Class James L. Hale scored a direct hit on an enemy machine gun with a rifle grenade. He and Norman E. Raymond of Company "H" contributed largely to the rout of the enemy.³⁶

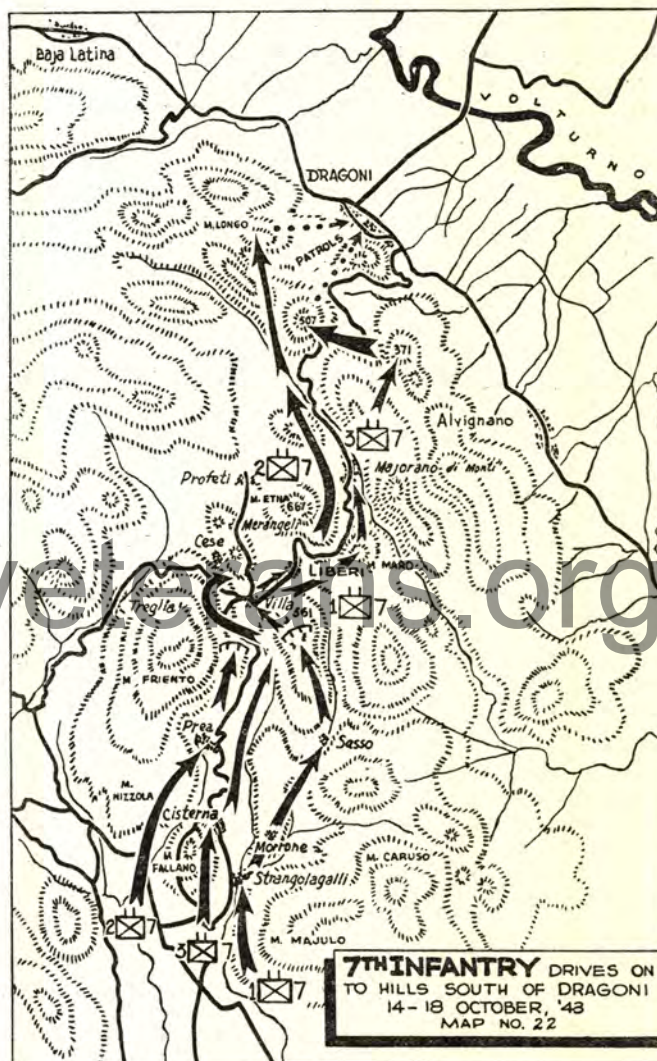
The Second Battalion pursued the enemy and knocked out two heavy personnel carriers. Prea was seized and the spearhead troops of the battalion moved rapidly up the road toward Liberi against small arms, machine gun and artillery fire, striving to catch up with the main enemy body. Corporal Richard H. Dana, of Second Battalion Headquarters Company, received credit for knocking out one of the enemy personnel carriers, with his rocket gun, and assisted in destroying the other. Immediately an enemy tank supported by riflemen swung into position and opened fire on the "Cotton Baler" non-commissioned officer and his men. Corporal Dana crawled forward for twenty-five yards under direct small arms fire to within ten yards of the enemy tank. With the use of rifle and hand grenades he killed one and wounded several of the enemy. The remaining enemy riflemen sought cover in the tank. The rocket gun squad brought its fire to bear on the tank and caused it to withdraw.³⁷

At 0930, 15 October, the First Battalion left its reserve positions and attacked north, by-passing the Third Battalion on the right, seized Strangolagalla and directed artillery on Sasso, where enemy tanks were reported rendezvousing. Meanwhile the enemy continued to shell the Blue Battalion. Lieutenant Colonel Heintges, though slightly wounded by a shell fragment, continued to command and asked that artillery smoke be placed on Cisterna. The enemy finally withdrew and yielded the town to the Third Battalion, which then reverted to Regimental reserve.

Pushing on during the afternoon the First Battalion

seized Morrone and Sasso, while on the left the Second Battalion advanced to a point about one thousand yards south of Villa and on the east slopes of Mount Friento. During the evening the First Battalion attacked Hill 561 and in turn received a small sized counter-attack which was repulsed, but the Red Battalion troops continued to receive enemy small arms and mortar fire throughout the night. Reconnaissance patrols made little headway during the night.

The Second Battalion advanced during the night of 15-16 October against enemy machine gun and mortar fire to a point southwest of Villa, overrunning an enemy six inch gun and a 20mm anti-aircraft gun, before being ordered to rest the advance. On one occasion First Lieu-



tenant Malcolm F. Phillips of Company "F" crossed an area exposed to concentrated enemy artillery, tank and mortar fire to direct the fire of his 60mm mortar section. The enemy had moved machine guns to within

³² GO No. 84, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Nov. '43. Pfc. Merrill was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³³ GO No. 13, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 20 Jan. '44. Sgt. Hess was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁴ GO No. 51, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3 April '44. 1 Sgt. Reynolds was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁵ GO No. 50, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 2 April '44. S/Sgt. Goercke was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁶ GO No. 102, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 17 Dec. '43. Pfc. Hale and Pvt. Raymond were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁷ GO No. 111, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 28 Dec. '43. Cpl. Dana was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

twenty-five yards of his position and several of his men were killed and wounded as a result. Staff Sergeant Robert B. Vogel singlehandedly set up one of the 60mm mortars. Although the mortar was hit by enemy machine gun fire as he set it up and bullets whizzed all around him as he fired, Staff Sergeant Vogel continued to operate his mortar until an enemy machine gun was knocked out, eight enemy killed and others caused to flee.³⁸

Private First Class Nevin R. Ulmer and Private Onofrio Mistretta, both of Company "H", performed gallantly during the action. Private First Class Ulmer left a position of comparative safety to advance through the mortar and machine gun fire to rescue his wounded squad leader. The two soldiers and others braved the enemy fire to salvage a machine gun and ammunition which had been left by casualties. While the group moved forward it came under artillery fire and all members became casualties, except Private Mistretta who continued on through the heavy concentration for seventy-five yards and retrieved the weapon and ammunition which was immediately put into effective use against the enemy. Private First Class Ulmer died of wounds incurred in the action.³⁹

The Second Battalion had suffered heavy casualties, which included sixteen of its members killed, and was ordered to hold up, dig-in and direct artillery fire to its front. The battalion was sorely in need of rations and ammunition.

The Third Battalion also made a night advance from Cisterna that night and at 0345 attacked toward Hill 524, the knob of which rises out of the tableland just north of Villa. Temporarily stopped twice by enemy artillery and mortar fire the battalion was on its objective at 0700 encountering enemy resistance, as American artillery fire also fell on the troops. The enemy then counter-attacked.

During the enemy counter-attack Second Lieutenant Joseph F. Rosplock of Company "K" rallied his men while under enemy machine pistol, grenade and mortar fire, and moved them forward, in some cases individually, to more advantageous firing positions. His ceaseless visits to his men insured the organization of the company's left flank. On countless occasions he personally joined the fire fight with an M-1 rifle. By these acts he inspired the confidence necessary to sustain his platoon's combat efficiency, and was materially responsible for the success of his unit against the heavy enemy assault.⁴⁰

Private Louis M. Scheppard of Company "M" though seriously wounded by shrapnel in the back, head and legs from enemy mortars and grenades, secured a rifle and crawled approximately fifteen yards to a firing position to defend the exposed and vulnerable company flank which the enemy counter-attacked.⁴⁰

The First Battalion attacked Hill 561 and again was counter-attacked at 0835 following an intense enemy artillery and mortar barrage. Second Lieutenant William J. Melgard of Company "C", moved forward for approximately two hundred yards to establish a forward observation post. Regardless of the fact that the best position was one utterly exposed and without protection, Second Lieutenant Melgard chose that position from which to direct his 60mm mortar section's fire. Although artillery shells were breaking within fifteen yards of him he remained exposed and brought such effective fire to bear on the enemy, it was a major factor in the repelling of the enemy counter-attack.⁴⁰

Company "C", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, were released from attachment to the Seventh Infantry because of the impossibility of maneuvering over the rough terrain. The work of the battalions during the night advances against enemy opposition was worthy of commendation and

General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., called the Regimental Command Post and praised them for their outstanding achievements.

At 1045 and 1120 the First Battalion repulsed two more strong enemy counter-attacks on its positions with heavy losses to both sides. The terrain favored enemy defenses as higher ground provided better positions for enemy automatic weapons and better observation for artillery firing. The crest of Hill 561 changed hands several times during the day.

COMPANY "D" STOPS FIERCE ENEMY COUNTER-ATTACK ON HILL 561

The second enemy counter-attack of great fierceness and determination overran the rifle companies of the First Battalion and was finally stopped by the heavy weapons squads of Company "D". The commanding officer of that company was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in action that day and eight enlisted men of his command were awarded Silver Star Medals for their gallant actions performed on Hill 561.

Company "D", commanded by Captain William P. Athas, was attacked on that day by a superior force of enemy infantrymen supported by artillery fire. Although his depleted company was outnumbered three to one, Captain Athas immediately organized a defensive position to stem the attack. Having no riflemen to support him, he organized the ammunition bearers and company staff into a mobile rifle team, and after making a reconnaissance under heavy enemy fire, he led his riflemen into action. Disregarding enemy artillery shells falling within thirty yards of him and small arms fire directed at him, he moved among his men, checking their fields of fire and shifting them to positions from which to deliver more effective fire. When an automatic rifleman was wounded, Captain Athas took the weapon, joined in the fight and killed at least three Germans. Finding that only two of his machine guns were still in operation, he shifted these remaining weapons to fill gaps in his line. Four times he braved the fierce enemy artillery and small arms fire to reconnoiter for positions, and each time he led the displacement to these new positions, to prevent an enemy break-through. By his well planned tactics the enemy attack was stemmed. His courageous example of coolness under fire inspired his men to hold the valuable terrain feature and saved the battalion from probably severe losses.

Private Clayton C. French moved his machine gun from a covered emplacement to an exposed position on the right flank in order to have better observation to prevent a breach which was imminent, and where, despite the artillery and small arms fire striking close around him, he laid down a band of fire across the right flank which was a major factor in breaking the attack. Private First Class Carlos C. Asin and Private First Class Alvard R. Buelna crossed an open area under the heavy enemy fire during the counter-attack and secured a machine gun after their own had jammed. They used the new gun to effective advantage against the enemy under the extremely hazardous conditions. Private First Class Buelna then exposed himself several times to locate and carry

³⁸ GOs No. 7 and 22, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 12 Jan. and 16, Feb. '44. 1 Lt. Phillips and S/Sgt. Vogel were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁹ GO No. 83, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 5 Nov. '43. Pfc. Ulmer and Pvt. Mistretta were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁰ GOs No. 87, 90 and 110, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 23 Nov., 1 and 27 Dec. '43. 2 Lt. Rosplock, Pvt. Scheppard and 2 Lt. Melgard were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

up ammunition. Private Dave F. Scott, an assistant machine gunner, on the right flank, served his weapon in an open position under the heavy enemy artillery and small arms fire, supplying ammunition all the while. This was a great factor in stabilizing the right flank of the line and in repelling the attack. Private Charlie T. Tijerina, as machine gun ammunition carrier, delivered all his ammunition chests while under heavy enemy fire and then placed himself in an exposed position under the artillery and small arms fire, serving as a sniper protecting the company's right flank.

Corporal Hilman V. Crews, and Corporal Carl A. Stoessel, both squad leaders in the 81mm mortar section and Private First Class Weldon G. Thompson, mortarman, performed gallantly. They kept the mortar crews in action under the concentrated enemy artillery fire until the supply of ammunition was expended, when abandoned enemy mortar shells were found and used until also expended. The squads were then withdrawn and the mortar weapons placed in a cache under guard with instructions to destroy the weapons if the position were lost. The three men then armed themselves with rifles and Browning automatic rifles and joined the riflemen where their line was weakest and where the enemy fire was heaviest remaining there until the attack was successfully repelled.

The brave actions of these individuals so inspired others that the advancing Germans wilted under the deadly accurate fire, suffered heavy losses, and were repulsed.⁴¹

The Third Battalion started advancing from its positions south of Villa at noontime and also ran into an enemy counter-attack. Members of Company "M" on a flank position distinguished themselves through gallantry in action. Corporal Barney P. Gillard, Private First Class Regino B. Sanchez, Private Ira B. Garrett and Private Earl L. Shank were killed by the intense enemy fire while Sergeant Frank Kamadulski and several others were seriously wounded.

Private First Class Peter Locascio and Privates James C. Brier and William W. Webb stood by their machine gun and kept up a steady fire against the heavy opposition. Although supporting riflemen had been forced to retire due to lack of ammunition the machine gun squad remained alone on a flank position. Although they were fired upon by small arms and machine guns from a distance of twenty yards they held the position until the line was reformed and the enemy repulsed.⁴²

Under the intense machine pistol and grenade fire Second Lieutenant Raymond D. Ewing, of Company "M", reorganized a machine gun crew after one of its members was killed, repaired the gun and resumed fire. He then discovered the enemy re-assembling on the flank. He directed mortar fire and remained in an exposed position to observe the effects of the firing. His initiative and brilliant direction under fire were great factors in successfully repelling the attack.⁴³

As the enemy commenced rushing reinforcements from Liberi one platoon of Company "C", 84th Chemical Battalion, started firing in support of the Regiment.

Pressure of the Seventh Infantry impelled the enemy to withdraw from Villa and troops from the First Battalion occupied it at 1500.

16 October 1943, was a costly day for the Seventh Infantry with forty-five of its members killed in action, sixteen from the Second Battalion, sixteen from the Third Battalion, eleven from the First Battalion and two from the Medical Detachment. A total of eighty-five were wounded in action on that bloody day.

7th INFANTRY RESUMES THE ADVANCE 17 OCTOBER 1943

At 0600, 17 October 1943, the Seventh Infantry resumed the advance with the First Battalion, and the Third Battalion of the 15th Infantry, which had become attached the night before, making the assault.

The Red Battalion seized Mount Maro, its initial objective at 0715, then pushed on north. At 0939 the battalion was at Majorano di Monti. The attached battalion from the 15th Infantry seized the little town of Cese against no opposition. At 0835 the Second Battalion pushed through Villa and its two assault companies entered Liberi at 1000. By that time the Third Battalion, 15th Infantry had taken Mount Etna, Hill 667, and was detached in the afternoon.

Enemy resistance to the First Battalion stiffened toward noontime and the enemy counter-attack south of Majorano di Monti. In the afternoon the enemy hurled tank and machine gun fire at the Red Battalion forces. The Second Battalion became engaged in a heavy fire fight to the left of Majorano di Monti on the forward slopes of Hill 667.

Captain Leroy A. Haselwood, S-3 of the First Battalion, entered the town of Majorano di Monti in an effort to locate and direct artillery fire on an enemy tank. The tank, supported by a large body of Infantry had halted the advance of the First Battalion temporarily. Close range machine gun fire barely missed him, but he advanced four hundred yards to a building where he established an observation post and attempted to adjust fire on the enemy tank. Although he provided a constant target for aimed enemy machine gun fire, Captain Haselwood remained nevertheless in an exposed position and continued his efforts for three hours. Because of its defiladed position, the enemy vehicle could not be reached by artillery, and Captain Haselwood retired from his observation post at dusk. Determined to eliminate this obstacle to his battalion's advance, Captain Haselwood located a bazooka crew and six riflemen whom he formed into an assault group to lead against the tank. At a point within fifty yards of the objective an enemy rifleman twenty yards from him opened fire. Captain Haselwood calmly dropped to one knee and shot the German with his carbine. This exchange of shots drew fire from seven hostile automatic weapons, and Captain Haselwood was fatally wounded. Despite his wounds and the massed automatic fire, he maneuvered his assault group so effectively that the tank was disabled in the ensuing fire fight. Captain Haselwood's courageous determination and inspiring leadership enabled the removal of an obstacle to the battalion's advance. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁴⁴

Late in the afternoon the Blue Battalion moved north up the winding road, and passed through the First Battalion for Dragoni, which the commanding general wanted by morning. The troops advanced along the ridge east of the road, against light opposition. At midnight the battalion was on Hill 371 south of Dragoni and sent out patrols.

The Second Battalion after overcoming enemy resistance west of Majorano di Monti drove on during the night, seized Mount Longo west of Dragoni and sent

⁴¹ For authority for DSC award to Capt. Athas see GO 8 Hq. 5th Army 17 Jan. 1944. For authority for Silver Star awards to Cpl. Stoessel, Pfc. Asin, Pfc. Buelna, Pfc. Thompson, Pvt. French, Pvt. Scott and Pvt. Tijerina see GOs 83, 84, 92 and 94 Hq. 3d Inf. Div. 5 and 11 Nov., 8 and 10 Dec. 1943.

⁴² GO No. 93, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 9 Dec. '43. Pfc. Locascio, Privts. Brier and Webb were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴³ GO No. 84, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Nov. '43. 2 Lt. Ewing was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁴ Ltr. Announcement of Awards, Hq. 3d Inf. Div. 8 June 1944.

out elements which cut the road to Baja e Latina. The Third Battalion advance elements crossed the road, encountered machine gun and mortar opposition but seized Hill 507 or Mount Pidoglaro southwest of Dragoni. The 168th Infantry of the 34th Infantry Division advancing from the east fired artillery on San Marco and the hills south of Dragoni which hindered the Blue Battalion forces. Patrols from the Third Battalion pushing on for Dragoni later contacted elements of the 34th Division and sent a patrol into the town. The Second Battalion from Mount Longo also sent a patrol into the town but the battalions were ordered to stay their advances.

General Truscott called Colonel Sherman and once more praised the inimitable "dogfaces" of the Seventh Infantry, saying, "You have done a damn good job with those battalions and I don't want them to go any farther. They are within reach of that road, and if they can put up their mortars where they can interdict it, then that will be all I want from them."⁴⁵

On 19 October, the Seventh Infantry assumed the mission of providing right flank protection for the Third Infantry Division along the west bank of the Volturno River, which was established as the dividing line between the 3rd and 34th Infantry Divisions. The first move sent the Second Battalion to positions on dominating ground south of Latina, a small village on a poorly constructed road, a few miles northwest of Dragoni. The Third



The German shown in civilian clothing was captured near the front on 21 October 1943 by Capt. Richard A. Smith, 7th Infantry S-1, who overheard him address the dog in German. The dog was used for messenger service by enemy troops. Left to right: Sgt. Roy Biehn, Capt. Smith and Lt. Col. Roy E. Moore.

Battalion relieved the 168th Infantry elements in Dragoni then moved on to establish an outpost line supported by armor, from Latina to the Volturno River. The Second Battalion sent patrols to Statigliano and Baja e Latina.

The following day the First Battalion and the Regimental Command Post assembled in and near Dragoni, as did Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies, which companies had followed the attack closely from the Volturno River but had seen no action.

Second Battalion patrols were very active, captured sixty-two enemy during the night and on the 20th succeeded in ambushing some Germans with tanks in Latina. Six of the enemy were killed and fourteen, including one officer, were taken prisoners of war. The battalion reported the road to Moncioli mined, and requested artillery fire on Baja e Latina where an enemy battalion and tanks were reported located. The enemy intermittently shelled roads out of Latina.

On 21 October tank destroyers reported an enemy counter-attack coming down the road from Baja e Latina. The battalions were alerted and a platoon of Cannon Company was attached to the Third Battalion but the counter-attack never materialized. The Second Battalion moved to the high ground south of Baja e Latina and the outpost line was moved up between the town and the river. The Third Battalion moved over to positions in Latina vacated by the Second, as scattered enemy artillery fire was received.

Patrols from the Second and Third Battalions were active on the 22nd and continued to feel out enemy positions. White Battalion patrols reported Baja e Latina clear as Blue Battalion patrols followed a course parallel to the river and brought in one captured enemy. The Regiment lost a jeep that day blown up by an enemy mine. The Blue Battalion occupied Baja e Latina as the Red Battalion forces came out of reserve and occupied the high ground northwest of the town.

FIRST AND THIRD BATTALIONS RECONNOITER IN FORCE

During the night 22-23 October 1943 reconnaissance in force was initiated by the First and Third Battalions against the M Degli Angeli hill mass. Tanks and tank destroyers supported the advances but in the early morn-



Capt. Hal Ferguson, the "Fedalaman," and Cpl. Robert Riddle, of Company "A," 3rd Medical Battalion, work over the leg of a "Cotton Baler" on 26 October 1943.

ing were held up due to heavy fog. At 0930 the bulk of the Third Battalion was in the draw south of Hill 180 as patrols received small arms fire from Hill 167 while artillery passed overhead into the flat. Request was sent to Division Headquarters for an artillery observation plane to reconnoiter enemy positions. At the same time Red Battalion patrols were just short of Hill 350 receiving enemy small arms and mortar fire and resistance from one machine gun. At 1000 the Blue Battalion had cleared Hill 180. The First Battalion received heavy small arms fire from Hill 450 and the road block which was established received heavy mortar and long range machine gun fire. The two battalions received heavy artillery fire throughout the afternoon. Contact was maintained by patrols with the 135th Infantry on the right.

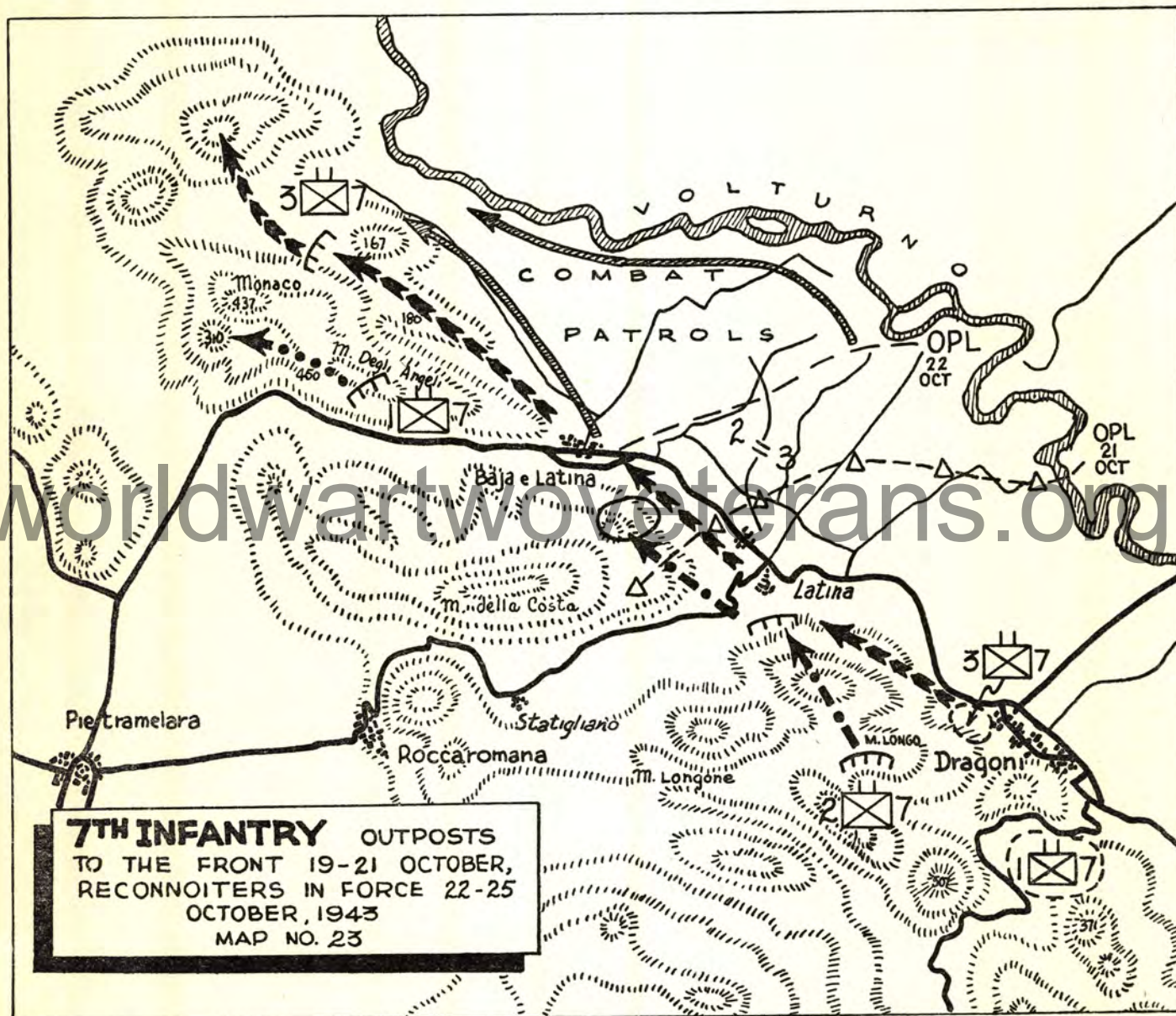
When a platoon of Company "C" was assigned the mission of attacking and securing one of the hills Ser-

⁴⁵ "From the Volturno to the Winter Line", p 65.

geant James C. Farguar and his squad were given the mission of securing the left half of the platoon's objective while Corporal George R. Dill's squad was given the right half of the objective. During the engagement the platoon was fired on by enemy artillery wounding several men. Although wounded in the face and being partially blinded from the close shell burst Sergeant Farquar refused to be evacuated and continued to lead the squad in the assault on an enemy machine gun. The assault resulted in the destruction of the machine gun, killing four of the enemy and capturing two prisoners. Corporal Dill was wounded in the right arm and shoulder. Despite his pain Corporal Dill led three men in a frontal assault on an enemy machine gun in his sector, although bullets

objectives and made preparations to support an attack by the 30th Infantry on the Pietravairano hill mass the next morning. During the night and morning the battalions screened the movements of the 30th Infantry and then the Third Battalion gave supporting fire to that regiment.

At 0600, 27 October, the First Battalion was attached to the 30th Infantry to occupy the high ground northeast of Pietravairano. The remainder of the command moved to the vicinity of San Felice and Riardo during the afternoon and relieved elements of the 15th Infantry in that sector. The troops were disposed to protect the division left flank with outposts established and patrols conducted. The First Battalion returned to regimental control at San Felice on the 29th. On that day enemy



were striking the ground and bushes around him, missing him by inches. Through Corporal Dill's leadership and bravery, the men eliminated the enemy machine gun, took four prisoners and drove off the remaining enemy. Not until the objectives were successfully taken and their squads reorganized did Sergeant Farquar and Corporal Dill consent to be evacuated for medical treatment.⁴⁶

By daylight 24 October 1943, despite active enemy resistance by delaying detachments, all objectives were in the possession of the two battalions.

On 25 October the two battalions occupied their

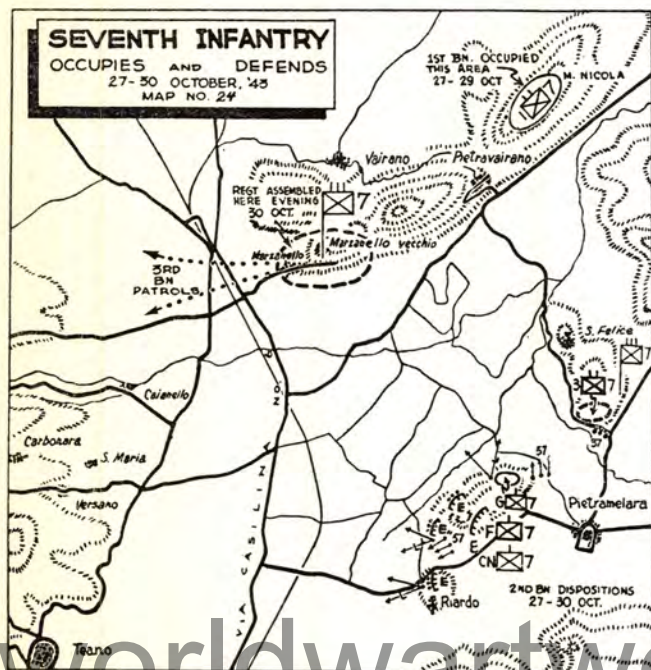
planes bombed and strafed the Regiment's positions causing several casualties. On the evening of 30 October the Regiment's guarding mission ended and the troops displaced to an assembly area in the vicinity of Marzanello during the night.

The Third Battalion which led the move to the assembly area immediately conducted reconnaissance and made plans for an attack to the west, sending out two

⁴⁶ GO No. 113, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 29 Dec. '43. Sgt. Farquar and Cpl. Dill were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

patrols towards the initial objectives. The First Battalion established a road block on the road to the west and sent out one patrol, while the Second Battalion established a road block, with a reinforced platoon and a platoon from Anti-Tank Company, at Caianello Vecchio, and sent a patrol to Versano and Casate. Another road block was established north of Caianello and a small patrol was sent toward Teano.

Following a one-half hour artillery preparation the Blue Battalion supported by Company "B", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company "B", 751st Tank



Battalion, jumped off in the attack at 0800, 31 October. In sixty minutes time the troops of one company were on their initial objective encountering no opposition. Hill 250 was seized, then at 1418 the Third Battalion had seized Tuoro Furnaro, Terra Corpo and all the commanding ground of Marzano Appio without enemy contact. Patrols were sent out to the front and to the south two miles, where they contacted elements of the British 56th Division, thus eliminating the break that had existed for several days between British and American forces.

The Second Battalion which patrolled the roads throughout the day encountered numerous demolitions and brought in six Germans. It moved during the night to the triangle caused by the meeting of the roads near Madonna di Costantinopoli then moved across country to the northwest and by 0415, 1 November seized Civitella and surrounding high ground west of Via Casilina No. 6, against no opposition. Patrols immediately pushed on northwest to Picilli where the road through the town was found to be completely blocked by demolished buildings.

The Third Battalion attacked to the northwest from the vicinity of Terra Corpo at 0700, 1 November. Enemy machine gun fire was encountered. At 1255 forward elements were on the objective just east of Viapiana receiving small arms fire. Artillery started to drop on the troops. In the afternoon advance elements trapped two hundred Boche in the vicinity of Conca Della Campania, captured the group, with several vehicles, including one American half-track and two jeeps.

The First Battalion moved to an assembly area behind the Third Battalion during the day. At midnight one Third Battalion patrol was fired on by a large calibre

tank, or armored car weapons, and machine guns two hundred yards northeast of Roccamonfina as the enemy controlled the road from Roccamonfina to Vezzara.

Early on 2 November the First Battalion moved from its assembly area abreast of the Third Battalion on the left and at 0915 the two battalions jumped off to the northwest in the attack.

The Blue Battalion forces headed for Mount Friello and encountered small arms, machine gun and mortar fire. One enemy machine gun nest was knocked out with two enemy killed and two more captured. At 1715 Company "I" was on Hill 380 with the remainder of the battalion coming up behind through Conca della Campania. Late in the afternoon Company "I" was just south of Mount Friello receiving artillery fire from the north. The Red Battalion also encountered enemy small arms and machine gun fire but advanced steadily.

The following day the First and Third Battalions continued their attacks and Company "E" of the Second Battalion was committed. The Blue Battalion attacked Mount Friello following an artillery preparation. The two forward companies, "I" and "L", met resistance from infantry units and artillery weapons. Company "K" was committed on the left of "L".

The enemy threw a heavy counter-attack against Company "L" which was repulsed with casualties to both sides. During the action Private Leo Lahna kept his machine gun in constant operation, in spite of heavy shelling, until it jammed. Then he acquired an M-1 rifle and joined the front line. In the action that resulted in the successful rout of the enemy, Private Lahna was killed.⁴⁷ Several casualties were sustained from German Schu mines but in spite of all resistance encountered the Blue Battalion seized the mountain top. Outposts were established and a patrol sent to the road junction south of Mignano.

Company "E" continued to occupy Hill 335. A patrol sent out from the company on 2 November reported back to its parent organization with a highly satisfactory report. The patrol which contacted the First and Third Battalions on 2 November had continued on to San Clemente where it engaged two enemy machine guns on the outskirts of the town which were protecting enemy demolition squads at work. The riflemen knocked out the enemy machine guns and stormed into San Clemente killed several German engineers and engaged enemy fleeing the town. Four members of the patrol were wounded but returned with the group.

A squad which was part of a combat patrol from Company "G" on 3 November had received heavy machine gun fire from a German out-post. After placing his squad in a favorable firing position Sergeant Earl Corbin moved forward alone, opened fire on the enemy with his sub-machine gun, killed eight of the enemy and thus enabled his squad to complete its mission. Although seriously wounded in this action Sergeant Corbin refused medical aid and continued leading his squad until the mission was completed. His skillful and direct action in handling the enemy machine gun nest undoubtedly saved the lives of his squad members.⁴⁸

The next day, the 4th, the Blue Battalion remained in position on Mount Friello and patrolled toward Mignano as the First Battalion continued the attack for the important road junction south of Mignano. One platoon of Company "B" secured the road junction as Company "C" seized Hill 205. One platoon of Company "C" moved to establish a road block with bazookas at Anno-lise.

⁴⁷ GO No. 97, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 15 Dec. '43. Pvt. Lahna was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁸ GO No. 111, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 28 Dec. '43. Sgt. Corbin was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

On 1 November the Seventh Infantry had reached the Barbara Line, the German defense line confronting the entire Fifth Army from the heights overlooking the upper Volturno through Mount Massico Ridge to the sea. In front of the Seventh Infantry it was a well defended line on bald and rugged mountains and was designed to delay attacking forces until the Winter Line with Monte Cassino as the strong point should be completed to the northwest.

The American VI Corps planned to attack the German Barbara Line with the same three divisions, 3d, 34th and 45th. The 34th, and the 45th which had been in Corps reserve since 20 October and was fresh, were to cross the upper Volturno while the Third on the left was to continue driving back the Herman Goering Panzer Division.

The enemy tactics and the Fifth Army actions from the Volturno to the Barbara Line have been described as follows:

Between the Volturno and the Barbara Line the enemy had planned his actions to gain the greatest amount of time with the least expenditure of force. Outnumbered by the Allies and facing superior air and fire power, the Germans had to depend on their skill in using the advantages of the terrain. The nature of the operation, a planned withdrawal, enabled them to make a careful study of the areas which they expected the British and Americans to occupy. In defiladed or densely wooded ground, their effective shelling showed that they had precise registrations on likely approaches, gun positions, and troop locations and could fire on these targets without direct observation. Whenever the Fifth Army might move or bivouac, the enemy placed mines and booby traps, across roads and railways, blocking the way around demolitions, in streams and river banks, and in towns and villages. Anti-personnel mines lay concealed along hedges and walls, and booby traps were set in haystacks, ravines, and olive groves, and on hillsides and terraces.

To counteract the limitation in strength caused by commitments to other fronts and by previous losses, the Germans had primarily used small, mobile infantry units for these rearguard actions, reinforcing them with heavy weapons. Self-propelled guns, which could be hidden again walls or among trees and quickly moved back after covering the Infantry's withdrawal, were effective and economical weapons. Along the coast in the British zone, where the open plain offered few natural defensive positions, the enemy had concentrated his strength in the towns. Inland, his troops had held on to the heights above the villages, from which they could command Allied approaches and cover their own escape. If they were driven from these heights, they counter-attacked only when there was a chance of imposing further delay; otherwise they withdrew to selected positions, waiting always until darkness hid their movements from Allied air patrols.

Against these tactics the Fifth Army had, in twenty days of fighting, secured its bridgehead along the entire length of the lower Volturno River and had advanced fifteen to twenty miles along a forty mile front. Despite the bad weather, Allied fighter-bombers had struck the enemy again and again in the area at the head of the valley. The Fifth Army had not engaged the main enemy forces, but the fact that its advanced elements had overrun several enemy gun positions indicated that the Germans were withdrawing faster than they had intended.⁴⁹

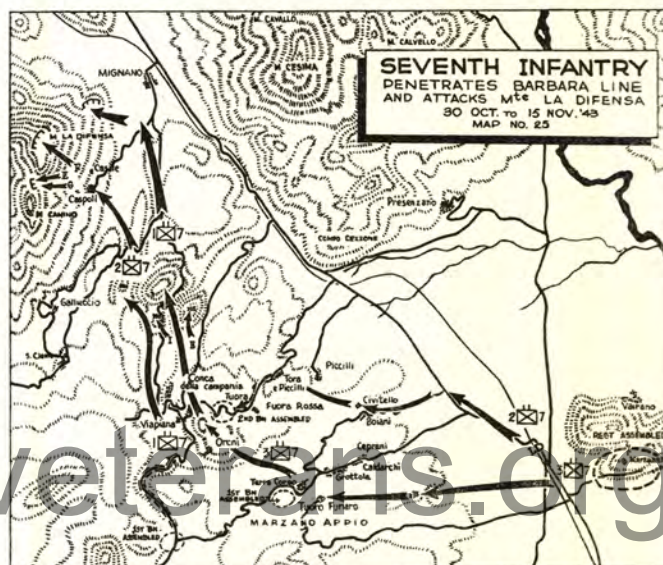
7th INFANTRY ATTACKS THE BARBARA LINE. 5-15 NOVEMBER 1943

On 5 November the Third Infantry Division was poised to make its attack on Mignano situated in the wide gap of mountains where the Germans had established their Barbara line. A communications and defensive center, Mignano was of tremendous value to the Germans. The Third Division must gain the mountains on the flanks before the gap could be controlled. General Truscott sent the 30th Infantry, which had been in reserve, after Mount Rotundo and Mount Lungo on the northwest. The Seventh Infantry was to attack Mount Camino and Mount la Di Fensa to the southwest. The 15th Infantry which captured Mount Cesima was to advance from the east.

On 5 November the Second Battalion moved up to the front with the First Battalion. Moving out of its assembly area at 0530 the battalion crossed the line of departure, the road junction held by Company "B", at 0900. Encountering only light mortar fire initially the battalion overran Caspoli. Casale was seized early in the afternoon one enemy machine gun was knocked out on the right flank.

Two platoons of Company "E" moving into the saddle which separates Mount Camino from Mount la Di Fensa encountered machine gun, mortar and grenade fire from the saddle and the right of the saddle. Numerous casualties were suffered from the enemy fire.

Staff Sergeant Jean C. Davis and Sergeant James P. Goodwin moved forward to exposed positions to locate several dug-in enemy positions, which were holding up the progress of the platoons and inflicting damage. While so doing they became targets for intense small arms fire.



They remained in their exposed positions and directed fire from both Cannon Company and the chemical mortars, which reduced the enemy's fire to a minimum, making it possible for the platoons to organize successful defensive positions and evacuate wounded personnel.⁵⁰

Staff Sergeant Floyd S. Casey of Company "E" went into the midst of the concentrations, administered first aid to the wounded men and then moved many of them to a place of comparative safety.⁵¹

The First Battalion on the right jumped off in the attack toward Mignano at noontime. Encountering small arms, machine gun and direct artillery fire the Red Battalion troops advanced to a point about five hundred yards southwest of Mignano where they held up for the night and prepared defensive positions. Intensive patrolling was carried on. One patrol entered Mignano.

During the night the Second Battalion strove to reach its objective but failed due to enemy hand grenade and machine gun fire. A Company "C" outpost killed four enemy and wounded others during the night.

Early on 6 November the Third Battalion was placed in Division reserve while the Second continued to push forward. Companies "E" and "G" rushed the Mount Camino hill mass striving to gain observation on the

⁴⁹ "From the Volturno to the Winter Line", pp 81-83.

⁵⁰ GO No. 97, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 15 Dec. '43. S/Sgt. Davis and Sgt. Goodwin were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵¹ GO No. 102, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 17 Dec. '43. S/Sgt. Casey was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

heights dominating the saddle. Mortar and artillery fire were received. One reinforced platoon succeeded in nearing the top of Mount Camino as a platoon of enemy infantry and six machine guns strategically located held up the Second Battalion. In the afternoon the commanding officer was convinced that it was practically impossible to reach the mountain top in daytime because of direct observation on the part of the enemy on any route of approach.

All attempts to take the mountain and saddle that day ceased. Approximately twenty-five casualties were suffered by the White Battalion that day. The wounded lay in their exposed positions until darkness when some were evacuated as enemy snipers fired on the litter squads.

The Red Battalion remained in position during the day and sent out a reinforced platoon to establish an observation post to view to the northwest. Vigorous patrols were maintained encountering enemy machine gun fire. The battalion supported an attack of the 15th Infantry during the day. Enemy observers were seen in houses near the top of Monte Cassino. Artillery and Cannon Company fire were directed on the mountain.

Early on 7 November the First Battalion Platoon was counter-attacked and driven from its position while the Second Battalion continued the attack on Mount Camino and Mount la Di Fensa. Troops nearing the top of one of the ridges encountered enemy fire from machine guns and Infantry troops. Company "F" progressed slowly up la Di Fensa against stiff resistance from enemy machine guns located on the rocky slopes above. As "F" approached the top mortar fire was mixed in with the enemy machine gun fire and a bitter struggle ensued. The enemy had direct observation on all routes of advance and many casualties resulted. At 1610 Company "F" won a great victory by crowning one of the heights of Mount la Di Fensa. The company then dug-in as best as possible. Meanwhile troops of Company "E" and "G" became locked in a terrific struggle for the saddle separating the two peaks, which became drenched in blood shed by casualties suffered by both sides. The enemy continued to control the saddle at the close of the day.

The First Battalion continued its attack for Hill 358 and at 1330 Company "A" was on the hill with Company "B" on the nose. One hundred Germans made a fierce counter-attack on Company "A" and succeeded in regaining the hill top. Company "C" was pulled in from its mission of patrolling the 15th Infantry left flank.

The evacuation of casualties that day was extremely difficult due to the terrain and accurate enemy sniper fire.

A platoon of 75mm cannon and a platoon of 105s of Cannon Company took up firing positions to support the Second Battalion.

Early 8 November Companies "A" and "B" attacked Hill 385 and made very slow progress due to the difficult terrain and enemy opposition. During the night 8-9 November intermittent artillery was received. The companies continued their slow progress the following morning. Machine gun fire from the slopes above hindered the advance. In mid-morning the troops became engaged in a heavy fire fight. The supplies of water and ammunition were dangerously low. The commanding officer reported it was impossible to advance further until the supplies were replenished.

The Second Battalion moved one company at a time to join Company "F" on Mount la Di Fensa and was opposed by the ever present enemy machine gun fire. At 1440 Company "E" had joined "F" while "G" and "H" were half way up the mountain. During the night the Second Battalion attempted further advances and

was intermittently fired upon throughout the night. More casualties were suffered.

Shortly after noon 9 November Companies "A" and "B" found themselves between two groups of Germans and received a strong counter-attack. The brisk fight that ensued was won by the Red Battalion troops. After sixteen of their comrades had been killed and one wounded in the hand-to-hand, close-in fighting on the sharp, ragged heights, twenty-four members of the 8th Panzer Grenadiers including two officers surrendered to the victorious "Cotton Balermen."

The Second Battalion troops also won a great victory that afternoon in a fire fight that lasted several hours. It was estimated that the White Battalion riflemen killed from fifty to seventy of the enemy on both flanks.

On 10 November both the Red and White Battalions remained generally in position with only local attacks. Both battalions waited the arrival of ammunition, water and rations but were in contact with the enemy throughout the day.

That day Staff Sergeant Richard L. Fisher of Company "G" on his own initiative left his covered position and scaled a high rock ledge to within fifteen yards of the enemy. Although he faced severe fire Staff Sergeant Fisher remained in observation for ten minutes, and definitely located the enemy positions. He then returned to the company command post and personally directed mortar and cannon fire on the enemy positions with good results.⁵²

Evacuation of casualties from the mountains was difficult. A minimum of six hours was required to bring litter cases to the base of the mountains. Supplying the troops was a great problem. Everything had to be hand carried or dropped by plane. A man could only manage with a small amount since both hands were required to make the heights.

The Second Battalion had enough rations that day to feed only one meal to one company. To make matters worse high wind kept grounded the cub plane that was loaded with supplies.

Enemy patrols continued their harassing action, one infiltrating through the First Battalion front lines before being detected and driven off.

Though still suffering from lack of food and water the Second Battalion asked that no further use be made of the supply planes as it did not wish to disclose its positions and thus draw additional fire.

**PRIVATE FIRST CLASS FLOYD K. LINDSTROM
WINS CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR
FOR CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY ON
MOUNT LA DI FENSA**

On 11 November the Second Battalion was subjected to a severe concentration of mortar, machine gun and rifle fire which caused casualties and some disorganization among the troops. Because of their exposed positions and low supplies the troops withdrew to positions affording more protection but held.

Realizing the seriousness of the situation Lieutenant Colonel Everett W. Duvall left the battalion observation post, advanced through heavy machine gun fire, and proceeded to reorganize the battalion to positions of greater safety. During this action he received a serious leg wound, but remained at his position refusing medical attention until the reorganization had been completed and the

⁵² GO No. 246, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 28 Oct. '44. S/Sgt. Fisher was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵³ GO No. 13, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 20 Jan. '44. Lt. Col. Duvall was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

situation brought under control. His bravery and cool leadership under fire were an inspiration to his men.⁵³

The Second Platoon of Company "H" which was depleted to fourteen men and two serviceable guns was attached to Company "E" to furnish machine gun support. Private First Class Floyd K. Lindstrom was one of the gunners.

At about 0900 approximately forty enemy launched a counter-attack against the left flank of Company "E" and forced the riflemen and half the machine gun section to retire to a defensive position.

"... The enemy, from his position on the commanding heights," said Pvt. Marvin D. Crone, Assistant Gunner, "had excellent observation and when he opened fire on us he was deadly accurate. The bulk of the enemy were two hundred yards above us when he attacked. 'E' Company withdrew about one hundred fifty yards, because there was not enough cover for them at this point, leaving our machine gun section out in front.

"Even though he saw the rifle company withdraw. PFC Lindstrom nevertheless instantly and without orders immediately set up a defensive position and opened fire with his machine gun. The enemy fire became intense as they started dropping a great number of mortar shells in our 'section' area and commenced to rake our positions with machine gun, machine pistol, and rifle fire.

"... Lindstrom insisted on moving forward alone another ten yards for a better field of fire. He picked up the machine gun bodily and moved up hill over the rocky ground with his one hundred twelve pound load. In doing this he became the direct target of machine gun and small arms fire from some of the enemy who weren't more than fifteen to twenty yards away... At least thirty-five hand grenades of the concussion variety were thrown at PFC Lindstrom in an attempt to silence his gun.

"Lindstrom was aiming for one German machine gun and crew in particular when he singlehandedly carried his heavy machine gun forward, because he saw that it was the chief supporting weapon in the German counter-attack. Despite the heavy fire from their mortars and machine pistols, he moved to within about fifteen yards of this machine gun even though it was firing at him and missing him only by inches.

"I could hear the Jerries yelling at him in pidgin English, 'American soldier—you give up—we treat you fine—you no surrender, plenty trouble—we got you surrounded!' This was repeated time and again and each time Lindstrom answered, 'Go to hell!' and gave them another burst of fire from his machine gun...

"When Lindstrom saw that the attack was likely to succeed if the enemy machine gun were not put out of action, he yelled at me to cover him with my rifle, that he was going to 'get that machine gun,' and armed only with the .45 caliber pistol which he always had at his hip, he frontally assaulted the machine gun in a mad up-hill dash. The Germans saw him coming and let go a continuous stream of fire which kicked up the dirt inches behind his heels as he ran at them. Somehow he miraculously escaped being hit by the continuous chain of automatic fire from the machine gun, got right on top of the gunners and shot them to death with his pistol. He then returned, dragging the German machine gun behind him, after which he braved more enemy fire to go back to their position and return with two full boxes of ammunition which he directed us to emplace and put to use in countering the enemy attack. We received no support from our other machine gun during the counter-attack because it was unable to fire on the enemy from its position..."

Said Corporal Nicholas Alfier: "Lindstrom gave the gun to me telling me to use it on the German Infantry,

and he immediately went back to his gun and opened fire.

"Lindstrom's spectacular action and withering machine gun fire completely demoralized the Germans and their counter-attack seemed to disintegrate..."

"The rifle company and the other machine gun of our section attempted to come to our aid while the attack was going on," said Private Sam G. Rohan, "but PFC Lindstrom so effectively handled the situation that it was all over before they could get into action..."

For this conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty Private First Class Lindstrom was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest valor award.⁵⁴ He was the first "Cotton Baler" to win the award in the Second World War. Later he was killed in action.

Corporal Alfier performed gallantly on that day also. Once when nine casualties occurred in the section including First Lieutenant Russell W. Newberry and Sergeant John D. Elmes killed in action, Corporal Alfier braved the heavy fire to rally the remainder of the section, crawling from man to man over the bare terrain, devoid of cover and in full view of the enemy, giving orders and encouraging each individual. By his brilliant example, he inspired the men to withstand the determined counter-attack. He was later promoted to the grade of technical sergeant but was killed as a result of subsequent action.⁵⁵

Major John A. Elterich, of Headquarters Staff, Second Battalion, climbed to an observation post fully exposed to enemy observation and heavy small arms and mortar fire and personally directed the fire of Cannon Company and the chemical mortars, which aided greatly in stopping the enemy thrust.⁵⁶

Cannon Company performed a fine job 11 November supporting the rifle battalions and received counter-battery fire. Casualties were sustained by the company and a jeep was destroyed. A platoon from the Second Chemical Battalion was attached to the Regiment and given the mission of supporting the Second Battalion.

Shortly before dark a platoon of Company "B" stealthily attempted to take a small knoll but was discovered and beaten back with heavy losses. Second Lieutenant Lewis S. Gregory was killed.

After Cannon Company and artillery laid-in with several concentrations and the 4.2 chemical mortars thoroughly smoked the area the Regiment was able to evacuate some of the casualties that had been lying for days, unable however, to be carried down the precipitous mountain sides. Private Warner W. Pye of the Medical Detachment performed gallantly during the November days of 1943 on Mount la Di Fensa, crawling from one wounded man to another and administering first aid to all he could reach. He performed his errands of mercy while under intense enemy artillery, machine gun, mortar and grenade fire and while enemy snipers fired at the wounded.⁵⁷

The Third Battalion was in division reserve twice during the period 6-12 November and also assisted the attack of the 30th Infantry by occupying strong defensive positions. Several moves were made by the battalion and throughout the period it patrolled vigorously. One patrol was out three days before it returned.

From three observation posts the First Battalion could

⁵⁴ For authority see GO No. 32 War Dept., Wash., D. C., 20 April 1944.

⁵⁵ GO No. 212, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 6 Oct. '44. T/Sgt. Alfier was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵⁶ GO No. 48, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 1 April '44. Maj. Elterich was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵⁷ GO No. 92, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Dec. '43. Pvt. Pye was awarded the Silver Star Medal. Medal GO 92 Hq. 3d Inf. Div. 8 Dec. 1943.

watch enemy movements in the valley beyond, leading to Monte Cassino, but 12 November passed with each attempted thrust forward stopped by the enemy forces. Civilians reported that the Germans had spent two months preparing defensive positions along the Cassino line.

Following an artillery, cannon and mortar concentration the Second Battalion attempted another push forward to gain control of all of Mount la Di Fensa. However one knob of the mountain could not be cleared that day. A perpendicular cliff sixty feet high confronted the troops and was the main obstacle. The preparation put on by the artillery, Cannon Company and the mortars took its toll of the enemy however, as German aid men were seen cleaning up casualties.

Tanks and tank destroyers tried to get through the flats in the vicinity of Mignano but only one got near enough to deliver several rounds before it became bogged down in the slimy mud of the flat bottom.

The battalions remained in position 13 November but patrolled vigorously. The artillery, Cannon Company and chemical mortars were unusually busy that day and kept the enemy fairly quiet.

During the night 13-14 November the Second Battalion left Company "G", reinforced, on Mount la Di Fensa and withdrew the rest of the battalion. The following day Company "K", reinforced, relieved Company "G". The White Battalion troops who had suffered much from exposure, the enemy, and lack of food, assembled in the vicinity of Casate.

The artillery observers fired missions on Cassino targets throughout 14 November. The Third Battalion sent out security patrols and patrolled in the flats west of Mignano.

The First and Third Battalions held their positions until 16 November, made local attacks and patrolled extensively as the artillery, Cannon Company and the 4.2 mortars plastered enemy positions, but the enemy returned fire. Many of the patrols were long overdue in reporting back to their units. Corporal Harold L. Fernald, Jr., and Private Charles F. Niles, both of Company "K", performed gallantly on one occasion while members of a successful combat patrol on a mission into enemy territory.⁵⁸

During the action of those days gallant deeds were performed. Staff Sergeant Chester B. Barnes, himself wounded, rescued his seriously wounded platoon leader, Second Lieutenant Joseph F. Rosplock of Company "K", then assumed command and continued the fight. Second Lieutenant Victor D. Reynolds of Company "A" displayed great leadership while under machine gun, rifle grenade and heavy rifle fire.⁵⁹

While leading an important reconnaissance patrol near Mignano, Second Lieutenant Howard V. Gebing, of Company "I," placed his men in a position of cover, and advanced alone to investigate a suspicious building. When he was about seventy-five yards from the building he was fatally wounded in the chest by rifle fire. Ordering his platoon not to evacuate him but to bring fire on the enemy he retained control of the situation for about two hours, issuing instructions verbally and by hand and arm signals. Staff Sergeant Frank W. Bolson carried out the instructions of his wounded platoon leader. The heroism and fortitude of the dying officer and the gallant conduct of the non-commissioned officer saved the entire platoon from destruction and caused the elimination of the hostile strongpoint.⁵⁹

During the attack against Mount la Di Fensa the Seventh Infantry had suffered much but took a terrific toll from the enemy. Having advanced steadily since 22 September across rugged terrain, crossed the Volturno and advanced over more rugged terrain against strong

opposition to the Barbara Line, "Cotton Baler" ranks were depleted when this last attack was launched.

During November 1943 the troops suffered severely from cold and exposure, many having little more clothing than they had worn in Sicily during the extreme summer heat. Supplying the troops was very difficult and the problem was never solved satisfactorily due to the treacherous terrain cut by the deep gorges and precipitous ridges. Carrying parties could bring only limited amounts of



Fifteen of the 278 "Cotton Balers" who lost their lives during the southern Italy Campaign: 1. Cpl. James W. Fairchild, Co. "C". 2. Lt. Lewis S. Gregory, Co. "B". 3. Pvt. Kenneth R. Ackley, Co. "E". 4. Pvt. Alonzo Allen, Co. "H". 5. Sgt. John C. Mitchell, Co. "I". 6. Pfc. Edwin McCrea, Co. "H". 7. 1 Lt. Alexander H. Russell, Co. "F". 8. Pfc. Delmar R. Fortin, Co. "M". 9. Cpl. William C. Foley, A. T. Co. 10. 2 Lt. John R. Banks, Regtl. Hq. Co. 11. 2 Lt. Vernon W. Young, 1 Bn. Hq. Co. 12. 1 Lt. Clarence S. Parrish, Co. "I". 13. 1 Lt. Edmund Wroe, Jr., 3 Bn. Hq. Co. 14. Capt. Coy L. Morgan, Co. "E". 15. Pfc. Russell B. Lautenschlager, Jr., Co. "K".

⁵⁸ GOs No. 94 and 102, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10 and 17 Dec. '43. Cpl. Fernald and Pvt. Niles were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵⁹ GOs No. 94, 111, 113 and 168, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10, 28 and 29 Dec. '43 and 20 May '45. 2 Lt. Gebing (posthumously), 2 Lt. Reynolds, S/Sgt. Barnes and S/Sgt. Bolson were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

food, ammunition, and equipment on the backs of the men as hands were needed in climbing. Mules could not negotiate the cliffs. Only a little supply was dropped by planes as they were often grounded because of inclement weather and then, after initial attempts to drop supplies, commanders requested no further use be made of the planes as they gave away troop locations to the enemy. Medical aid men and litter bearers worked heroically under the worst conditions they had ever experienced, made worse by enemy snipers.

The soldiers who fought there and endured such hardships will never forget Mount la Di Fensa. Since 5 November sixty-three of their buddies had been killed in action and one hundred sixty wounded. Five were missing in action and two had been taken prisoners by the enemy.

Other forces of the Allied Fifth Army were as exhausted, and in some cases more so, than the "Cotton Balermen." On the left the troops of the British Tenth Corps were badly in need of rest.

The 201 Guards began to show signs of exhaustion by 10 November. The weather was becoming colder and the rains more frequent. Enemy counter-attacks and probings disturbed the troops constantly. The two forward companies, attacking Hill 819, suffered sixty percent casualties, almost all their officers were killed or wounded. During five nights and four days they had a 24-hour haversack ration, an emergency ration, and one water bottle per man. Their wounded lay on the ground without blankets, in cold that was almost freezing.

The VI Corps was everywhere held up by bad weather, mountainous terrain, and stubborn enemy resistance. The enemy had strengthened his left flank again on 9 November by bringing in the 26th Panzer Division . . . Soldiers suffered from the rain and cold and from lack of hot meals. The divisions needed rest and replacements if they were to maintain efficiency and high morale. General Clark considered these circumstances and stopped the advance on 15 November.⁶⁰

On the right of the Regiment the 15th and 30th Infantry regiments were busy digging in for protection from enemy mortar and artillery fire and tried to keep warm. On the right of the Third Division the 34th and 45th Divisions had been through some fierce fighting crossing the upper Volturno and pushing on into the mountains. The 133rd Infantry had suffered four officers and eighty-one enlisted men killed, twenty-four officers and two hundred sixteen enlisted men wounded,

and six men missing in crossing the river. Casualties of other regiments were not light.

Seventh Infantry men were glad to turn over their positions to fresh laughing troops of the 36th Infantry Division many of whom entered the lines for the first time with ample supplies and heavy clothing not knowing what was in store for them.

The First Battalion Command Post received a direct artillery hit at 1630 killing Privates Thomas J. Anderson and Gilbert D. Tomes. Staff Sergeant William A. Niemeyer and Private Glen E. Hardeman were wounded.

Relief for the First Battalion and Third Battalion (Company "K") was commenced early 16 November and completed that afternoon. Company "K" was relieved during the night and assembled with the two battalions in the vicinity of Baja e Latina. On the 17th the Second Battalion moved from Riando to the Baja e Latina area.

The Campaign of Southern Italy was over for the Seventh Infantry. As far as the "Cotton Balers" were concerned the campaign fell into four distinct phases, namely, (1) pursuit action from Montecorvino to the Volturno River, (2) the Volturno River crossing in the face of a strong well entrenched enemy, (3) pursuit action from the Volturno River to the Barbara Line, the outer defenses of the German Winter Line hinged on Cassino, and (4) assault on the Barbara Line.

The enemy, a most difficult terrain and miserable weather had not stopped the Seventh Infantry in its relentless drive, but the troops needed a long rest. The accomplishments of the Regiment were not won without heavy cost. A total of 278 lost their lives during the campaign, 33 were listed as missing in action, 672 were wounded in action and 41 were taken prisoners by the enemy. The roughest days were 13 and 16 October 1943 when 41 and 47 members, respectively, were killed in action.

While the fight had raged on Mount la Difensa in November, 1943, one "Cotton Baler" from Anti-Tank Company composed verse which praised the Regiment. The poem is here published:

⁶⁰ "From the Volturno to the Winter Line", pp 106-111.

Willing and Able

We left the States a year ago,
Fedala saw us land;
And so when Casablanca fell,
The Seventh was on hand.

We marched the highway to Rabat,
But rest I will assure;
Was not in line for "Andy's men,"
We hit the road—5 per!

We bade our Anderson farewell,
He'd gained the victor's realm;
But the mighty Third held true to faith,
With Truscott at the helm.

We drilled and drilled for many days,
And then we travelled east;
But Tunis and Bizarte fell,
Before we joined the feast.

It wasn't long before we sailed,
The Mediterranean blue;
And took the shores of Sicily,
With colors flying true.

We fought our way through rugged hills,
We saw the Jerries flee;
Then came the great Palermo dash,
A feat in history.

'Twas there we gained a breathing spell,
Then, to the fight again;
To take the dry and rocky steeps,
Where others fought in vain.

The battles raged for many days,
We conquered hill and vale;
And took each city in our stride,
Till Hitler's troops turned pale.

We fought and died as fearless men,
We went through earthly hell;
But still we were the front line troops,
When old Messina fell.

The Third Division did their share,
The grand Fifteenth's "Can do";
Were in the thick of many fights,
But held their motto true.

Then too, the Valiant Thirtieth,
Hit twice behind Herr's line;
"Our Country, not ourselves," they cried,
They're truly soldiers fine.

'Twas only then we took a rest,
Which justly we deserved;
But knew indeed the day would come,
We'd fight again unswerved.

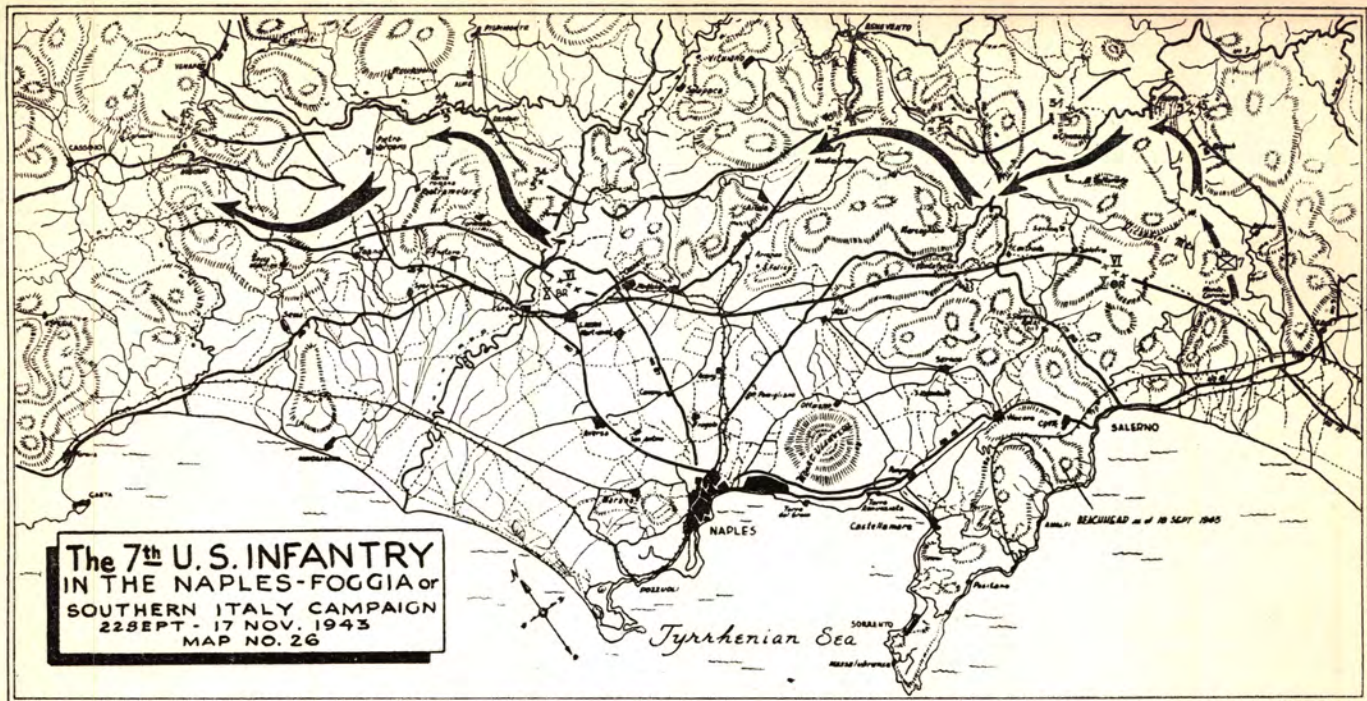
The day is here, we're fighting on,
We're now in Italy;
But you can always count on us,
Till final victory.

First Avellino fell to us,
As cities met their doom;
Then soon Volturno's bed we crossed,
And headed on toward Rome.

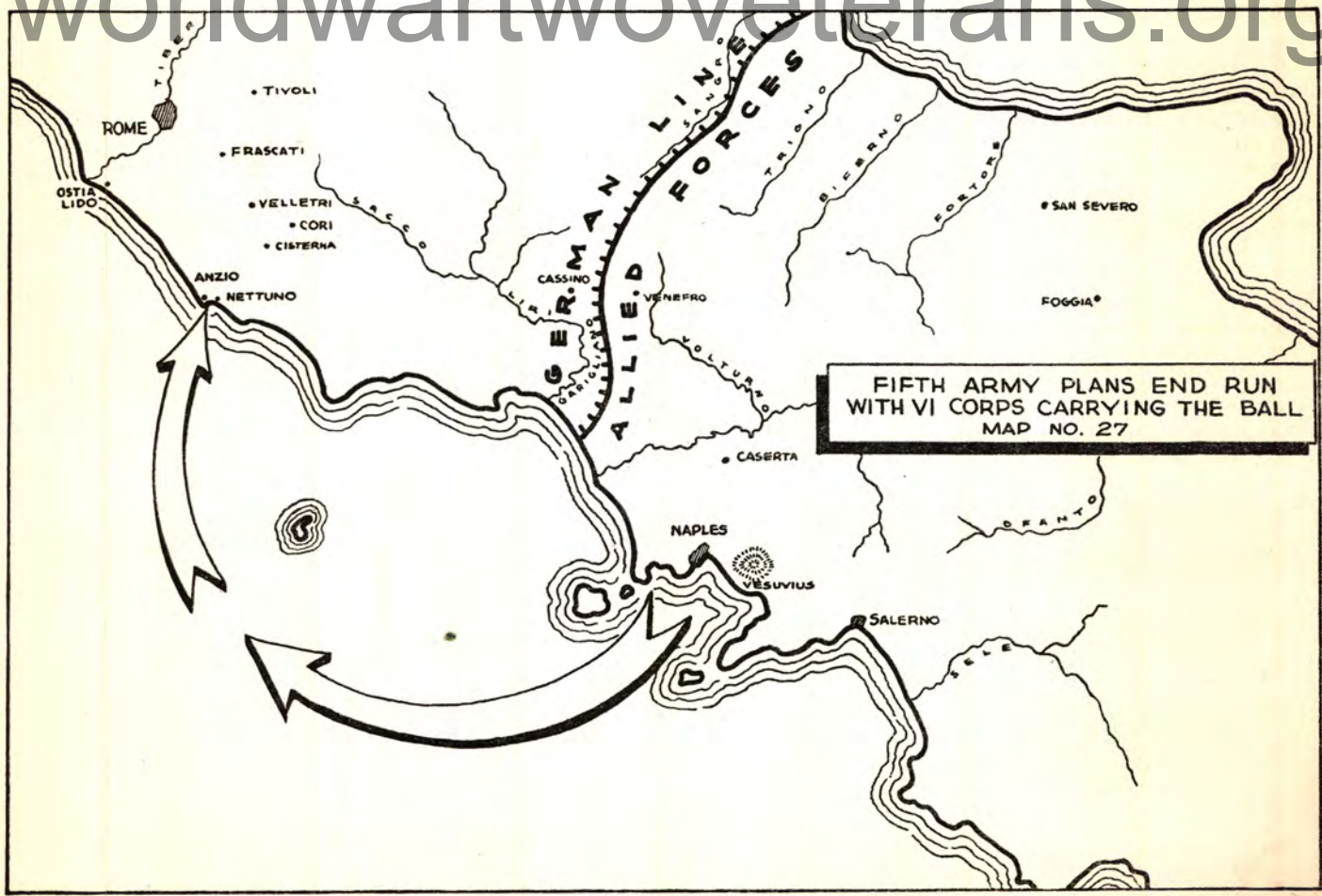
And so the battle rages on,
Our motto still we cry;
"Willing and Able" to the last,
We'll fight on—do or die.

Just read the history comments and
I'm sure you will agree;
That there is none which can compare
With the Seventh Infantry.

Sgt. Wilmer Feldman,
Anti-Tank Company,
7th Infantry.



worldwartwoveterans.org



PART FOUR

The Anzio—Rome Campaign

CHAPTER I

Preparation and Planning

From 18 November to 30 December 1943 the Seventh Infantry bivouaced around Baja e Latina, Italy. After a few days of rest and recuperation for the men and officers who survived the previous campaign, replacements refilled the ranks and training schedules were undertaken to prepare the Regiment for new combat. As the training continued its pace accelerated and the men engaged in many night problems, long speed marches and practice river crossings. On 28 December the commanding officer was notified that the Regiment would participate in an amphibious operation known by the code name "Shingle", which had been under consideration by higher military authorities for some time.

Training activities in the Baja e Latina area were suspended and during the last days of 1943 the Seventh Infantry shifted to a new locale, the Piano di Quarto area about ten miles northwest of Naples. The new area was a great improvement over the muddy flats of Baja e Latina, as the ground was sandy and well drained, with gravel surfaced connecting roads. A vigorous training schedule, calling for a minimum of twelve hours in the field and night amphibious exercises, was conducted. Physical conditioning was stressed with the speed march an important feature of the program.

The First Battalion was designated as the regimental beach assault battalion and trained separately from the rest of the regiment in the passage of beach obstacles, unloading of both personnel and equipment, combat firing and general orientation. Anti-pillbox squads were organized in the assault battalion and received special training in the reduction of strong points and pillboxes, using rifle and hand-grenades, bazookas, pole charges, and other expedients. The First Battalion commenced its training with a speed march to the beach, followed by day and night landings from invasion craft. As a result of an unfortunate accident twenty-six enlisted men and one member of the Medical Detachment were injured and required hospitalization, and replacements were brought from the Naples depot. On 5 January, the battalion moved five miles to a bivouac area nearer the sea, so that less time would be required in marching to and from the beach. Troops spent as much time on the water as on land, becoming experts at landing under any conceivable condition. Beach defenses were constructed by other units and the assault troops practiced their destruction by a variety of methods. Instruction was given on mines and booby traps in an endeavor to hold down casualties from those weapons.

Anti-tank gun crews mounted their weapons on specially constructed platforms on DUKWS and fol-

lowed the foot troops ashore practicing firing from both water and land.¶ Cannon Company divided its time between physical conditioning and gun drills.

The Second and Third Battalions placed more emphasis on the reduction of secondary defenses which they might expect to encounter after passing through the assault wave and started off with gun drill, speed marches and one mile runs, which distance was soon increased to two miles. Exercises were conducted in reducing pillboxes and storming strong points. A great deal of ammunition was expended in simulating combat firing to assure accuracy with all weapons. Troops practiced infiltrating enemy lines under cover of darkness for the purpose of creating confusion in enemy rear areas. Reconnaissance had shown that the proposed terrain was suitable for enemy employment of armor, and methods were devised to combat them successfully with Infantry weapons.

Service units conducted classes in demolitions, mines and booby trap detection, bridge building and organization of beach parties and groups. Plans were made for waterproofing vehicles, appointing TQMs, and storing equipment.§

The Regimental S-3, Major Frank C. Sinsel, joined a planning board conducted by Fifth Army at Caserta, while the Regimental S-2, Captain Lee L. Dymock, prepared a sand table project of the beach to be assaulted. The commanding officer discussed the plans and scheme of maneuver with the battalion commanders while briefing in turn was carried out with smaller unit commanders and responsible non-commissioned officers. A high level of security was maintained throughout the training and planning period.

On 9 January, the entire Regiment participated in a twenty-five mile tactical march, carrying combat loads over terrain similar to that expected in the vicinity of the enemy beach. The next day the Regiment prepared for a two-day landing exercise. This problem was conducted to iron out loading details previous to participation in the division problem which was to climax the training period. Most of the day was required to insure that each unit was in its proper station. In the evening, the convoy moved out to sea, standing off Coroglio Beach early the next morning. Troops swarmed ashore in a simulated attack against other division units defending the area. As vehicles were not yet waterproofed they could not be unloaded under tactical conditions. On the

¶ DUKW was an official Army designation for the 2½-ton amphibious truck. The popular pronunciation was "duck".

§ TQM was an Army abbreviation for Transport Quartermaster.

completion of the problem, the troops hiked ten miles to their bivouac area.

Additional classes were held during the next two days, with all units in the field perfecting attack technique. Sand tables were studied by officers and non-commissioned officers until all terrain features and landmarks were firmly in mind. Some units organized defenses for another regiment's landing. Running and speed marches continued in the training program.

Two days prior to the loading, vehicles were water-proofed and spotted. Trucks were loaded with rations, ammunition and equipment, for once aboard they were to remain aboard, following the divisional problem, until the actual landing. Vehicles were assembled in the vicinity of Baia, Nissida and Pozzuoli and were put aboard one day prior to the loading of the troops.

On 15 January, a division formation was held for the purpose of presenting awards to personnel who had distinguished themselves by valor and devotion to duty. Troops passed in review before the Commanding General of the Third Infantry Division, who made an address relating to the imminent conflict. Commending the troops for their past achievements he emphasized that the way home lead through all of the Axis capitals.

From 16 to 18 January 1944, the Regiment participated with other division forces in the full scale rehearsal



Top: Left to right, Pvt. Abraham Nadler and Sgt. Bernard Nadler, brothers serving with Co. "A", check their light mortar before loading on landing craft for the "Webfoot" play exercise. Bottom: Chaplain (Capt.) Delmar Dyreson leads a song with his accordion in the Baia area on 16 January 1944.

known as the "Webfoot" play exercise carried out on the beaches south of Salerno. It followed as closely as possible the routine for the actual landings to follow. Because of many naval deficiencies in landing the troops, faulty command arrangements, and an extremely rough sea, the problem could not be carried through to completion, and many losses were incurred, especially among DUKWS carrying field artillery, 105mm howitzers. The conduct of the exercise was a very important part of the training program and, as proved later, was extremely beneficial to the Navy personnel, who took full advantage of the exercise to perfect their technique and correct all basic defects.

The troops of the Regiment returned to Piano di Quarto by land in a fleet of trucks assembled for that purpose. The next day, 19 January, preparations were made for breaking camp. Pyramidal tents were taken down, barracks bags assembled for storage and all of the equipment that the troops were to take with them was carefully checked. On 20 January, personnel were loaded at Baia on LSTs while LCIs were loaded at Pozzuoli. Some LCTs and a few LSTs were loaded at Nissida. Rear echelon units that remained behind completed policing of the bivouac areas.

PLANS FOR ANZIO-NETTUNO LANDING

While the Regiment was in bivouac at Baja e Latina and trained arduously in the vicinity of Piano di Quarto, plans were finally decided upon by higher headquarters for the "behind-the-lines" landing to take place shortly after 20 January 1944.

During the latter part of November and the month of December Allied forces had battered at the stubborn defenses hinged on the abbey of Monte Cassino without succeeding in effecting a penetration. Cold, rainy weather, coupled with high winds, had prevented effective employment of air forces and reduced activity on the front line to a minimum of patrolling. With the accumulation of necessary stocks of war materiel and the prospect of more favorable weather, the American Fifth Army planned to end the stalemate by an "end run" and continue the advance northward by an attack by land, sea and air.

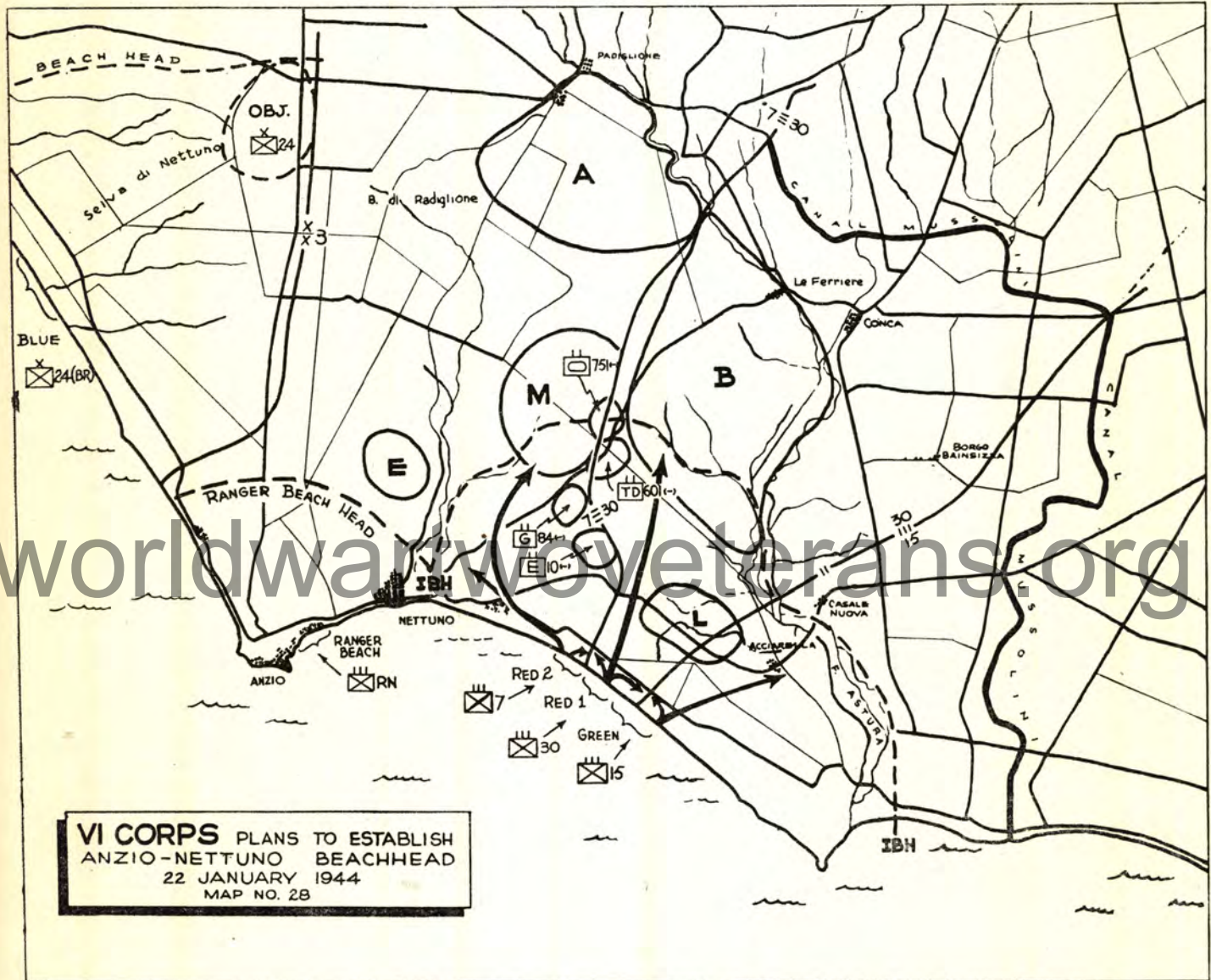
The amphibious landing planned for the VI American Corps was designed to secure a beachhead about twenty-five miles due south of Rome, around Anzio and Nettuno, seize the high ground of Colle Laziale, cut Highways 6 and 7, the routes of communication and supply of the German Tenth Army, and trap enemy forces holding up the allies before Cassino. Major General John P. Lucas, commanding VI Corps, had at his disposal for the landing, the Third Infantry Division (Reinforced), the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 1st, 3rd and 4th Ranger Battalions, the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion, the First British Division and some British Commandos. Other forces were to eventually reinforce the beachhead.

Plans for the landing called for the American Third Infantry Division (Reinforced) and one brigade of the British First Division to land on the beaches north and south of Nettuno, Italy, with the remaining elements of the British First Division held in floating reserve. The Third Infantry Division was to land on "X-ray" beaches south of Nettuno while the British First Division was to land on "Peter" beaches north of Anzio (see Map No. 28).

The mission of the Third Infantry Division was to land, destroy enemy beach defenses and capture an initial beachhead extending generally to the line of the Canale Mussolini and its northwest branch. The division's left boundary was the main highway between Anzio and

Albano. The assault plan called for landing of assault battalions of all three regiments simultaneously, as well as a battalion of Rangers just east of Anzio, the Rangers to be tactically attached to the division as soon as contact was to be physically established ashore. The mission of the beach assault battalions was to clear the immediate beach area of enemy defense and enable the follow-up battalions to land and pass through toward the regimental objectives. The order of landing was to be the 7th, 30th and 15th Infantry Regiments from left to right and the assault battalions were the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry, and the

30th Infantry were to advance to the northwest, north and northeast and clear and occupy the beach-head in the division sector. The 15th Infantry, on the 30th's right, was to relieve elements of the 3rd Reconnaissance Troop on crossings over the Canale Mussolini, protect the right flank of the division and be prepared with remaining forces to pass to the west behind the 30th and 7th Infantry and assist the Rangers in capturing Nettuno. Elements of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion and 751st Tank Battalion, were attached to the regiments, to be loaded on LCTs and landed before daylight. It was believed vital to have powerful support



3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry. The assault battalions had objectively trained to attack and destroy pillboxes, fortifications and coast defense weapons, to cross beach wire and mine fields. The beach assault battalions were to be loaded on LSTs and to disembark and land in LCVPs, taking nothing but foot elements ashore. The Third Reconnaissance Troop and elements of the Third Provisional Reconnaissance Troop (MTD) were to land with the assault battalion on the right, proceed to crossings over the Canale Mussolini as far north as Bridge 5, blow the bridges and hold the crossings with light forces until relieved by the 15th Infantry.

Following the assault battalions, the other two battalions of each regiment were to be landed in column from LCIs. These follow-up battalions of the 7th and

and anti-tank weapons ashore before the enemy could stage a counter-attack with armored support. The 441st Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion was likewise to land elements from LCTs prior to daylight and provide anti-aircraft protection for the beach pending arrival of corps anti-aircraft artillery units, after which the 441st Battalion would resume its normal role of anti-aircraft protection for division artillery positions.

Naval gunfire support from two light cruisers and four destroyers was to be available to the division for the operation. Shore fire control parties were provided for each regiment and a naval liaison officer was attached to division artillery to provide naval gunfire support as long as it could be used effectively. Alternate channels of communication were set up to assure good communication

in any probable contingency. The navy was prepared to fire a preparation in case enemy shore defenses opened on our forces prior to the actual landing, however the preparation was cancelled during the operation in favor of obtaining surprise. Two rocket boats were to accompany the convoy however and fire rocket barrages on the division's beaches at H-10 minutes.

Prearranged air photo and armed reconnaissance flights were scheduled by the XII Air Support Command to cover the beachhead and adjacent areas on D-day and some attack aviation was to be available on call for close support of the division. Air liaison sets with each regiment and with division headquarters, under control of the division air liaison officer, were provided. The system, which was used successfully in Sicily, of launching the division's own artillery cubs from a flight deck on an LST was also planned for the operation. Originally the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (Reinforced) was to drop a parachute task force thirty-five minutes before H-hour, about eight miles north of Anzio, but that mission was cancelled and the parachute regiment was scheduled to follow the Third Infantry Division landing, in LCIs, as Corps troops.

DESCRIPTION OF LANDING BEACH

The X-Ray beach, arbitrarily divided into two equal beaches, is 2860 yards in length and from ten to twenty-five yards in width. From information obtained it appeared to be entirely satisfactory for personnel, with possible exits for armored vehicles. The entire beach was suitable for LCVPs with probable places for LCTs and LCIs to beach; however, it was believed that pontoons would be required for the LSTs. The sand appeared to be rough. Immediately to the rear of the beach proper a sand dune formation, interspersed with loose boulders and rocky out-crops (possibly lava) rose gradually in some places, and rather abruptly in others, for two hundred fifty yards, to a low plateau at road level. The terrain lying between the sand dune formation and the metalled two-way road, five hundred yards in rear of and paralleling the coast was flat. The number of existing trails indicated that the ground was firm. The topography of the land did not permit rapid drainage there and the naval approach to the beach was not entirely satisfactory. A sand bar about one hundred fifty yards off shore reached the entire length of the beach with the exception of a gap of some four hundred yards, located approximately in the center of the beach. It was thought the weather might cause considerable shifting of the bar but a minimum of six feet of water over the bar was

expected. Inside the outer bar the approach was unobstructed up to a point about fifty yards from the beach where another bar reached the entire length of the beach. The water depth over the inner bar was about two feet and did not deepen inshore of the bar. The composition of the sea bottom was not confirmed but was believed to be firm. The beach was exposed to both the south and west.

Conclusions drawn from the study were that the beaches would be difficult to locate accurately at night, that an on-shore wind would make landing operations hazardous and that there was a definite, or strong possibility, that the inner bar, lying fifty yards off shore, would not allow the passage of landing craft beyond that point. Information concerning the depth of water inside the bar indicated the possibility of one hundred fifty feet of wading toward the beach in water knee-high and in some instances chest-high. The outer sand bar would not permit passage of LSTs at night though gaps might be found in daylight and passage permitted. Pontoons would still be needed, however, because of the poor gradient. On either side of the beaches the sea bottom was rocky and dangerous for landing craft. It was known that adverse weather would cause difficulties in motor movement off the road-net over the plateau in rear of the beach.

SEVENTH INFANTRY IS READY TO MAKE ITS THIRD AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT IN WORLD WAR II

D-Day was set for 22 January 1944 and 0200 was set as the time of H-hour. The Seventh United States Infantry was ready for its third amphibious assault against a hostile shore in this war. For the "Shingle" operation there were many new "Cotton Balers" in the forward line of the rifle companies that were to make the assaults, but the commanding staffs were practically the same as those that operated in Sicily and Southern Italy. Colonel Harry B. Sherman, assisted by Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore, still directed operations and still had Lieutenant Colonels Frank M. Izenour and Everett W. Duvall of the famous Izenour-Duvall-Heintges trio of commanders. At the close of the Southern Italy or Naples-Foggia Campaign Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges was absent sick and returned too late to assume his old command for the "Shingle" operation. Major William B. Rosson, former S-3, was to lead the Third Battalion. Great changes were to be made in the personnel of the "7th Light Foot" Infantry in the days that lay ahead.

CHAPTER II

The Landing South of Nettuno, Italy

22 JANUARY 1944

Late in the afternoon of 21 January 1944 the invasion craft bearing the amphibious, web-footed, "Cotton Balermen" set sail from the ports of Naples with the entire invasion convoy of VI Corps. While at sea the weather for D-day was announced by radio from Algiers. The troops could expect a light wind, no sea swell and a light haze with visibility of six miles diminishing to one mile by morning. Air reconnaissance by the XII Air Support Command reported that the only craft to be expected between Gaeta and the mouth of the Tiber River would be small fishing craft.

On 22 January 1944 with a calm sea and a light wind in their favor the "Shingle" assault waves hit the beaches on schedule at 0200. The actual landing was accomplished with great ease and was the easiest one participated in by the "Cotton Balermen" during this war though some mines were encountered and the Regiment suffered some casualties.

Had it not been for the rocket barrages which were fired ten minutes before H-hour, the enemy would have been caught wholly by surprise. However, as it was, the Germans had very few troops on hand to oppose a land-

ing in the Anzio-Nettuno area and the operation went off about like a rehearsal.

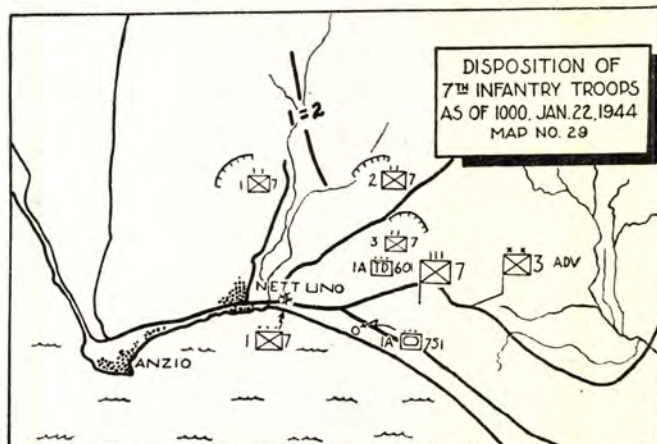
The first wave of the Seventh Infantry, consisting of First Battalion troops, landed without much difficulty at Red Beach 2 about three miles south of Nettuno. The Red Battalion troops cleared the beach of defenses and advanced on for objective "E". At 0240 the Second Battalion troops hit the beach and twenty minutes later the Third Battalion troops followed.

Casualties on D-day for the Third Infantry Division included twelve killed in action and fifty-six wounded in action, a very small number when compared to other operations. Surprise of the operation kept the figures down. Of the twelve killed in action eight were from anti-personnel mines, one from drowning and three from gunshot wounds.¹ Most of the Third Division casualties were suffered by the Seventh Infantry. A platoon of Company "C" sustained a boat accident while unloading. Also troops of the Red Battalion and later some of the Blue Battalion encountered a mine field. Ten of the twelve dead were "Cotton Balermen." The Regiment had a total of ten seriously wounded and nineteen lightly wounded that day.

Pushing forward the troops secured the initial beachhead by 0800 within their zone of action and captured the assigned objectives against very light resistance. The Red Battalion captured thirty enemy on objective "E". A patrol from Company "A" contacted the Rangers in Nettuno while the First Battalion established road blocks and put out mines. The Second Battalion established a strong defensive position on objective E-1 with particular emphasis to the north and northwest defending against a possible mechanized counter-attack. Aggressive combat patrols to the front brought in sixteen prisoners of war while a strong reconnaissance patrol went to objective "D". The Third Battalion occupied objective E-2 and

Some enemy aircraft appeared over the area with one falling into the Third Battalion area. The pilot was killed.

At 1800 the Blue Battalion troops began moving north to an area southwest of Casale Torre Di Padiglione and thirty minutes later the White Battalion troops moved for Objective "D". Blue closed in on its new position at 2315 while the White forces closed in on objective "D" at 0400, 23 January. Both battalions organized strong defensive positions to counter any enemy attacks. The White Battalion contacted the British 24th Brigade on the left. At 2000 the Red Battalion moved to reserve positions. The Regiment had estab-



lished its positions according to plan. During the night three friendly vehicles struck mines that had been laid by our own troops.

Early 23 January the enemy had observation planes over the beachhead and in early afternoon enemy artillery coming from the direction of Cassino began to fall just north of the Third Battalion positions. In early afternoon a Second Battalion patrol had a skirmish with a German tank and fifteen enemy. Two casualties were suffered but the engagement was won when the tank and enemy withdrew. Late in the afternoon the Seventh Infantry, less the Third Battalion, reverted to division reserve. During the night the first two battalions moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of the Tre Cancelli road junction. One platoon of Anti-Tank Company and one platoon of Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, remained attached to the Third Battalion.

The other regiments of the division were as successful as the Seventh Infantry in obtaining their objectives on D-Day and the following day. The Third Reconnaissance Troop and the Third Reconnaissance Troop (MTD) reached and prepared for blowing all bridges along Canale Mussolini from the sea to bridge 7. Bridges 1, 3, 4, and 5 were blown. Guards were placed on all bridges. The Rangers on the left of the Regiment and the British brigade on the extreme left had also been successful in reaching their objectives.

Though the enemy had only one under-strength battalion of inferior troops on beach watching duty to oppose the Third Division landing, his reaction to the landing was swift and every effort was made to rush troops to the area to meet the emergency which threatened the safety of the Tenth Army, Rome and its important airfields. Aided by bad weather which interfered with the bombing of his communication lines, the enemy was able, with amazing rapidity, to move troops into the line. Elements of the Herman Goering Division which was spread from Littoria to Frosinone were the first



Four of ten "Cotton Balers" who lost their lives on 22 January 1944. Top row, 1. to r., Pvt. Fred W. Cooley, Co. "B", and Pfc LeRoy N. Nelsen, Co. "C". Bottom row, 1. to r., Pfc Walter F. Rooney and Pfc Andrew J. Yusko, both of Co. "B".

sent contact patrols to the other battalions, the Rangers, parachute infantry troops and the 30th Infantry.

The armor of Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, and Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, landed within a short time after the foot troops. Unable to follow the foot troops initially because of the muddy terrain strewn with mine fields, the armor took up positions close to the beach. Some became mired in the mud and blocked the roads. It was necessary to get bulldozers and tank dozers to extricate them. Anti-Tank Company debarked at 0420 while Cannon Company did not land until in the afternoon.

As the troops pushed steadily inland the XII Air Support Command provided cover and the 15th Strategic Air Force struck at German rail and road communi-

¹ Surgeon's Report Section V Report of Operations Hq. 3d Inf. Div. 22-31 Jan. 1944.

enemy elements encountered after D-day on the Third Infantry Division's front. During the first two days following D-day, reconnaissance, anti-aircraft and engineer battalions of the Herman Goering Division put in an appearance, followed by Panzer Grenadier Regiments



KILLED IN ACTION
Pfc Albert K. Schryver, of Co. "C", on 23 January 1944.

1 and 2 and the Herman Goering Armored Regiment, the latter fighting as infantry in some cases. The enemy drew motorized and reconnaissance battalions from the Cassino or southern front, troops from northern Italy, from the Balkans and from France to oppose the beachhead forces. Every small element that could be jarred loose was moved rapidly to the area of the beachhead to stave off a real breakthrough.

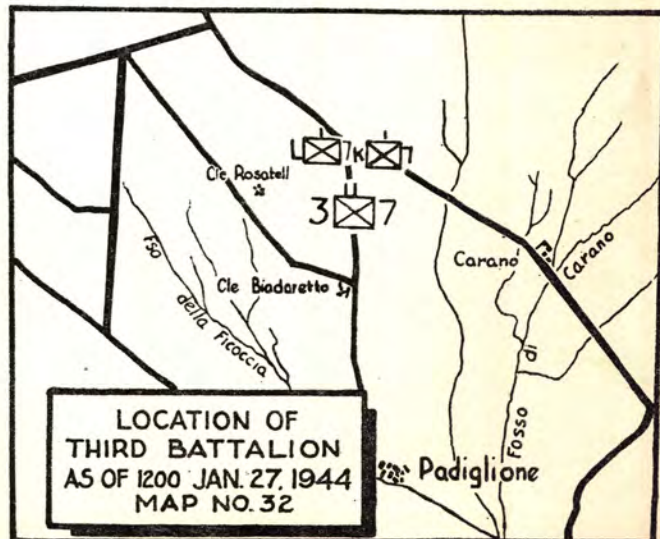
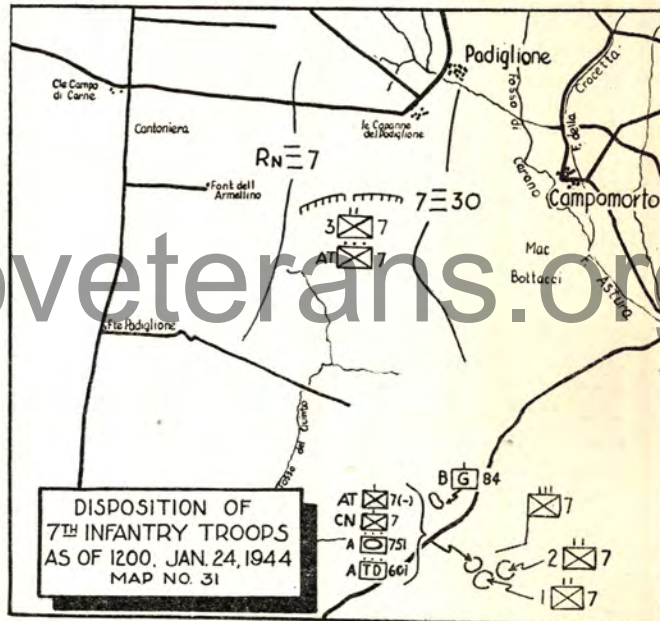
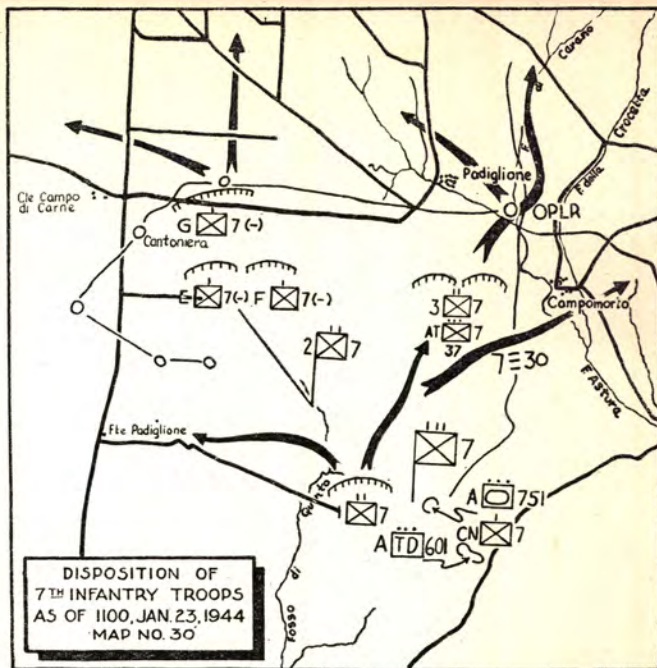
The first elements to arrive were successful in retaking some of the bridges over the Canale Mussolini on 23 January. Enemy crossed the Canal at Bridges 2, 5, 6 and 7 with strong combat patrols supported by tanks. During the evening Third Division forces on the right of the Seventh Infantry began attacking these enemy bridgeheads which were cleared on the following day. The enemy started to harass the beachhead forces with strong combat patrols, frequent strafing and bombing raids in the beach area. Defensive positions were built by the enemy around houses south and west of Cisterna di Littoria.

On 24 January the Third Battalion held its position and conducted intensive patrols. One patrol went in search of two enemy artillery pieces, which had been reported, and found them destroyed. Contact patrols were maintained with the 30th Infantry at regular intervals day and night. The contact point was in the vicinity of Campomorto. One patrol from Company "L" had a sharp fight with an enemy patrol about eight hundred yards north of Padiglione and captured one prisoner. About fifty enemy appeared one thousand yards to the battalion's front. Mortar fire was directed on the enemy.

LIMITED ATTACKS OF 25-28 JANUARY

On 25 January the Third Infantry Division put on an attack. While the Fourth Ranger Battalion and the Third Battalion, Seventh Infantry, advanced and occupied defensive positions, the First Battalion, 30th Infantry, the Second Battalion, 15th Infantry, and the 504th Parachute Regiment attacked on the right. Heavy resistance was encountered by the battalions from the 30th and 15th Infantries about a mile and a half north of the Canale Mussolini.

The Blue Battalion of the Seventh Infantry advanced at dawn on the 25th about one thousand yards and occupied its objectives against only light artillery fire. While on outpost, near Carano, Private First Class Milo V. Bliss of Company "K" observed the approach of an armored half-track vehicle about three hundred yards from his position. In order to be certain of a direct hit, he left his covered position and moved twenty-five yards across open, flat terrain to the edge of the road, where he was exposed to machine gun and machine pistol fire which barely missed him. Just as the vehicle came within ten yards of him, Private First Class Bliss fired his rocket



gun from a standing position and registered a direct hit which halted the vehicle and seriously wounded the driver. As a result, other men were able to close in and destroy the enemy personnel who had dismounted from the vehicle. In subsequent action Private First Class Bliss was killed.²

As the left flank of the 30th Infantry was held up by the enemy, the Third Battalion was ordered to send one reinforced company to the assistance of the Friscan Battalion to bring more fire on the enemy.† Company "K" received the assignment and advanced early in the afternoon. In the vicinity of Torre di Padiglione, Company "K" dug in and sent a strong patrol to maneuver behind the Germans who were holding up the Friscan Battalion. Major Rosson and the S-3 of the 30th Infantry decided that the patrol was to make an attack in conjunction with Company "L" 30th Infantry at 1830 for the Pte Della Croceta road junction. The platoon of Company "K" succeeded in reaching the road junction where it encountered extremely heavy small arms resistance supported by tank and flagwagon fire. The fire-fight lasted throughout the night. Meanwhile a contact patrol to the 30th Infantry Command Post found out that authorities there had no information of the battle in progress at the road junction. Later a telephone conversation, at 2000, between the two regimental command posts revealed that the 30th Infantry still had no information in regard to the fight. Due to poor radio reception little communication was maintained with the platoon during the night. Early the next morning, Company "K" launched an attack which extricated its platoon and seized the road junction. One enemy tank and a half-track were knocked out and two enemy taken prisoners. At 0945, 26 January, the road junction was turned over to Company "L", 30th Infantry.

An enemy patrol approached and attacked a Company "K" outpost the night of 26 January. Private First Class John R. Harrington singlehandedly forced back the patrol which had opened up with intense machine gun

and rifle fire. He exposed himself by stepping out into the open but fired his rifle with such rapidity and accuracy that he killed one and wounded another of the enemy causing the remainder to withdraw.³

At 0300, 27 January, the Third Battalion was ordered to attack and take Spaccassassi and the road southeast to Carano. The battalion, less Company "K", crossed the line of departure at 0530. Company "L" ran into a strong enemy outpost at Spaccassassi and after a long fight occupied the objective at 1030. Technical Sergeant Robert W. Aemmer, who led his platoon in an assault on two enemy machine guns performed gallantly. The enemy guns were destroyed, five enemy killed and two captured.⁴ The Third Battalion came under heavy enemy artillery fire during the afternoon. Private First Class Anton V. Costa rescued a wounded comrade during the height of the bombardment.⁴

The Regiment, less the Third Battalion which came under Third Division control and remained in place, moved to a new area in the vicinity of Cle S Antonio. The Second Battalion then moved to Borgo Montello and established a semi-defensive and semi-assembly area. The First Battalion moved to Road Junction 47 and Company "G" was detailed to the 15th Infantry to guard bridges. After making its move "George" Company became involved in a fight. Staff Sergeant Joseph A. Domingo, Jr., located an enemy machine gun which was delivering a large volume of fire on his men. Jumping to his feet Staff Sergeant Domingo fired his "Tommy Gun" and advanced on the enemy position shouting for his men to follow. He was fatally wounded during the fight but his own fire enabled his men to reach a covered position from which they gave effective fire and forced the enemy to withdraw.⁵ The following morning Company "G" rejoined its battalion.‡

The night of 28-29 January, the Third Battalion was relieved by the 509th Parachute Battalion and assembled northwest of Cle Campomorto.

CHAPTER III

Attacks and Counter-Attacks

30 JANUARY—5 FEBRUARY 1944

On 26 January, the British on the extreme left repulsed a strong counter-attack by two hundred fifty Germans supported by twenty-five tanks. In the action on the right the 15th and 30th Infantries failed to advance but held their ground. A battalion of the 504th Parachute Regiment had been attacked during the night and withdrew from Borgo Piave.

The Anzio-Nettuno landings of 22 January were very successful and alarmed the enemy, who feared that forces confronting the American 5th Army would be attacked from their rear or a drive on Rome was in the offing. Neither developed because the landing force was insufficient in size. Field Marshal Albert Kesselring who commanded the enemy forces in Italy soon discovered that the landing force was only a "half measure" and gave orders to wipe it out. The Germans would have succeeded in doing that had not the initial forces fought with great stubbornness and had they not been reinforced. It is believed by the writer that Major General John P. Lucas, commanding the VI Corps, gave the correct order when he instructed the landing forces to dig in during the morning of 22 January and prepare defensive positions. The troops could have fanned out

into the Albano hills and probably even reached Rome twenty miles away, but it would have been their doom as the Germans were then marshaling forces to attack

² GO No. 76, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 20 Apr. '44. Pfc Bliss was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³ GO No. 131, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 27 June '44. Pfc Harrington was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴ GOs No. 34 & 63, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10 Mar. & 7 Apr. '44. T/Sgt. Aemmer & Pfc Costa were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵ GO No. 76, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 20 Apr. '44. S/Sgt. Domingo was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

† The 30th Infantry was stationed for a long period at the Presidio, San Francisco, California, and was often referred to as San Francisco's own. The 30th Regiment or its units are often referred to as "Friscan".

‡ Hereafter in the text the units of the 7th Infantry may often be referred to by their code names. The change in designation should not confuse the reader if he will remember that the first letter of the code name corresponds to the letter designation of the rifle or heavy weapons units; i.e. "Able" equals Company "A", "Baker" equals Company "B", "Charlie" equals Company "C", "Dog" equals Company "D", "Easy" equals Company "E", "George" equals Company "G", etc.

them. The result of the strategy employed by the commanders of both sides and the great struggles fought was that the Anzio Beachhead remained a beachhead for four months.

On the third anniversary of the Anzio-Nettuno landings Daniel De Luce of the Associated Press interviewed Field Marshall Albert Kesselring, former commander-in-chief of all German forces in Italy, in a special prison camp near Marburg, Germany. The field marshal made the following statements concerning the bloody battles fought on the Anzio Beachhead and also of the strategy employed:

Anzio was the enemy's epic of bravery, just as ruined Cassino was ours. During the whole battle of four months, I had losses of 40,000 men. Of these, 5,000 were killed.

I held the hills and you were exposed on the low plain by the sea, so your sacrifices were greater. But I can say this, if you had never pitted your divisions in the Mediterranean, as at Anzio-Nettuno, you would not have won a victory in the west. You profited by your experiences. We did not.

It would have been the Anglo-Americans' doom to over-extend themselves. I was quickly gathering my first five divisions to attack. The landing force was initially weak, only a division or so of Infantry, and without armor. It was a half-measure as an offensive that was your basic error.

I knew something was coming but did not know where. Spezia, Genoa, Gaeta. It could have been any of these. The more I looked at a map, the more danger spots I saw. But my commanders said, "Der Kessell has made our men alarm weary." So I gave no alarm that night.

By 10 o'clock in the morning I knew the true venture was a feint and that it was of such a modest size that I might proceed to wipe it out. I had strong artillery—altogether 500 guns. I had two 280mm railway guns, two more that were 240mm, and a number of 210mm batteries.

The flanks were swamp fields but the main road from Campoleone to Anzio offered the possibility for armor. To the right I had the Fourth Parachute and the 67th Infantry Divisions, and in the center and left, the Infantry Lehr Division, the Third Panzer Grenadiers, the 362nd Infantry, the 714th motorized elements of the Hermann Goering Panzers, and some Italian battalions. I had the 29th Panzer Grenadiers and the 26th Panzers as reserve behind the center.

Rain made the ground too muddy for effective panzer operations. The troops of the Infantry Lehr Division, not up to standard because not accustomed to battle conditions, lost their poise, broke and fell back when they encountered very stubborn enemy resistance. The excellent coordination of the enemy air force and naval gunfire with the forces on land created a decisive effect.

We felt we were opposed by equals. Our enemy was of the highest quality. (#)

An official 5th Army publication discloses the aims of the Anzio-Nettuno landings and tells of the speed with which the enemy acted to check the Allied forces:

The enemy had reacted quickly to the landing and was becoming stronger every day. The success of the landing operation and the surprise that attended it gave rise to much unfounded optimism on the part of people who were not fully informed as to just what the situation was. It must be remembered that our landing was a "calculated risk". It took into consideration the known factors, and it was anticipated that the enemy would weaken his southern front in bringing troops up to oppose the beachhead.

Although the German force opposed to our initial landing was small, the enemy reacted quickly by rushing troops from all directions to meet the grave emergency which confronted him. By the end of D-Day (22 January) he had twenty thousand men to oppose our thirty-six thousand. Our superiority was not great enough to warrant a hasty, extensive advance inland before we had secured a suitable beachhead. By the end of D-plus-3, his number had risen to forty-one thousand while we had only fifty-six thousand and the enemy buildup was steadily increasing.

With amazing rapidity, the Germans brought in one division from France, one from the Balkans, three from Northern Italy, two from the Eighth Army front, but only a division and a half from the Fifth Army Southern front.

Fifth Army's main front operation during December and January had been designed to maneuver the enemy into a position that would permit our forces to cross the Rapido River and

break into the Liri Valley before the Anzio landings. Bad weather and insufficient forces prevented the accomplishment of this operation, but our continued offensive effort in the Rapido area caused the Germans to reinforce his troops opposing our Anzio landings by bringing divisions from other areas rather than from the main Fifth Army front. This was a tribute to the Fifth Army's offensive spirit. However, the retention of so many German divisions on our main front slowed down the Fifth Army's mid winter advance toward the beachhead.⁶

The VI Corps, after establishing its beachhead and reinforcing the initial forces, planned to resume the offensive and attack to the north with the mission of seizing the Albano-Velletri area and continuing the attack to disrupt the enemy's communications to the Fifth Army front. The First British Division in conjunction with the First Armored Division was to attack along the axis of the Anzio-Albano road and seize the high ground in the vicinity of Albano. On the right, the Third Infantry Division (Reinforced) was to advance to seize Cisterna di Littoria then prepare to continue the advance to seize the high ground in the vicinity of Cori and Velletri. The time was set for early 30 January.

The Third Infantry Division (Reinforced) planned to send out two Ranger Battalions, the First and Third, followed by the Fourth, one hour before H-hour to infiltrate into Cisterna di Littoria and seize the place. At H-hour the 7th and 15th Infantries were to jump off in the attack. The Seventh Infantry was assigned objective "A", northwest of the town on Highway 7, then was to be prepared to attack Cisterna di Littoria from the northwest or to advance in the other direction on Velletri. The 15th Infantry on the right of the Seventh was to advance on objectives southeast of the town on the highway. The 509th Parachute Battalion was to protect the flank on the left of the Seventh Infantry while the 504th Parachute Regiment was assigned objectives on the division's right and the mission of holding the enemy southeast of the Canale Mussolini. The 30th Infantry was to be in reserve. H-hour was set for 0200, 30 January.

The G-2 estimate of the situation of 29 January 1944, was quite inaccurate and did not anticipate the great struggles that lay ahead. Accurate information of German dispositions and movements was lacking. Due to the speed and secrecy of the enemy in bringing up reinforcements accurate estimation was not made. Because of the very light opposition during the first few days it was not thought that the enemy could mass enough forces to halt a major attack at that time. The estimate as given to the troops was as follows:

The enemy at present disposes Herman Goering Division on our right flank and front, and scattering of units from various larger formations, probably now under command of Third Panzer Grenadiers Division, on our left front. The enemy's attitude on our front is entirely defensive. He has maintained a rather loose and poorly organized line of outposts well to the east of the Canale Mussolini, south and southwest of Cisterna di Littoria, and south of the railroad embankment which runs northwest from Cisterna. His patrolling has not been aggressive, as it has seldom penetrated to the point of seriously harassing our outposts; rather, our patrols have normally contacted German security patrols near or within his own outpost line. His outpost line of resistance, or defensive line backing up his

Because Major General Lucas was later replaced by Major General Lucian K. Truscott as commanding general of the beachhead forces, it has been presumed by many that he was replaced because he had exercised too much caution on the first days after the landings. The writer does not know why he was replaced but feels that he exercised the correct strategy because his forces were insufficient for a drive inland. The commander of the German forces believed that the Allies had used the best strategy in consolidating their positions and stated that had not the Allies landed at Anzio-Nettuno and other places in the Mediterranean they would not have won victory in the west.

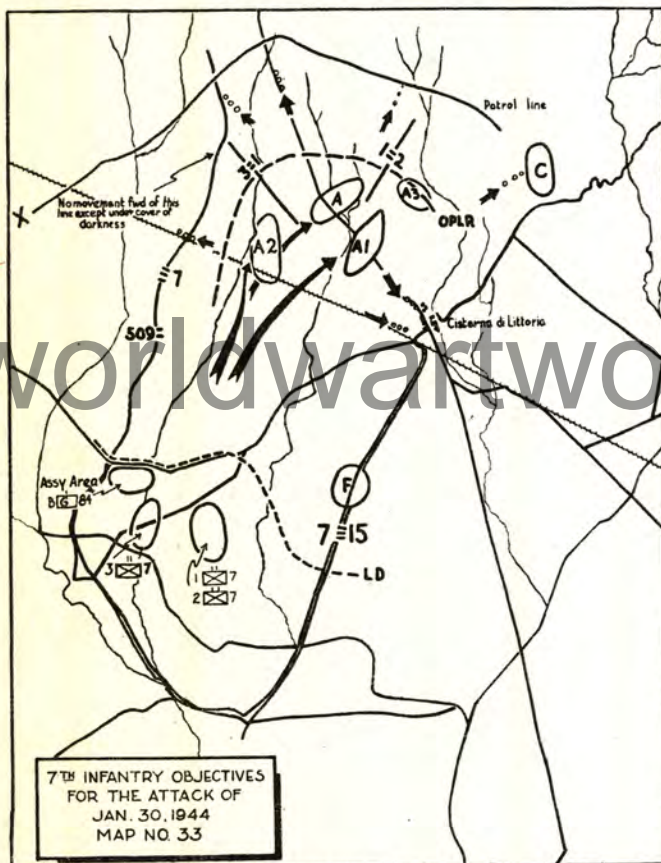
New Britain Herald, New Britain, Connecticut, 22 January 1947, p. 15.

⁶ "Road to Rome", Hqs. Fifth Army, pp 27-30.

outposts, is believed to lie along the railway track itself, and may well be tied in with slight terrain eminences which begin to appear to the northeast and north of Cisterna. His main line of resistance will undoubtedly be found on true high ground to the east and west of Velletri. Since we now effectively interdict Highway 7 with artillery fire, the Germans would hardly interpose a main line of resistance on less favorable ground this side of Velletri, especially in view of the fact that he must use all available time to complete and man a system of defensive works if he is to keep us off the Colli Laziali and Highway 6.

The enemy's immediate situation with respect to tanks and artillery is not too good, and there have been many evidences that he is losing this precious materiel at a much higher rate than we; nevertheless, he may be expected to support his ground defenses at any point by counter-attacks by small units including two or three tanks, and to employ light and heavy anti-tank guns, self-propelled artillery and dual-purpose weapons on any or all the useable roads now under his control. The enemy's definite superiority of observation must not be overlooked, and this superiority will become more marked as we approach the Cori-Velletri areas.

The enemy's position regarding reserves is difficult to assess. His use of the 356th Fusileer (Rcn.) Battalion, 120th Reconnaissance Battalion and 26th Reconnaissance Battalion in the immediate battle zone indicates that some or all of the 356th Division (L. of C.), 26th and 29th Panzer Grenadier Divisions may be earmarked for the Anzio-Nettuno beachhead. To date, however, the enemy has fed units into the line piecemeal



as they have arrived, and there is no definite indication that he will depart from this practice by throwing one or more divisions entire against our positions in an organized counter-attack. Even if he were to do so, it is likely that the division's proximity to the line would be discovered by air reconnaissance, prisoner of war or civilian reports before the counter-attack itself could be delivered. He is known to have in immediate reserve an SS Regiment in the Velletri area and probably the bulk of a newly-formed parachute division (4000-5000 troops) north of Velletri; it seems likely, however, that the mission of these units is to prepare and man defenses on the main line of resistance rather than to be used in a counter-attack against the beachhead, as they are now actually occupying the ground where he can be expected to put up his stiffest defense.

Two terrain features dominate the field of battle: the Colli Laziali and the northern peaks of the Monti Lepini. Controlling heights in both cases are roughly three thousand feet, with the Monti Lepini, directly northeast of Cisterna being somewhat higher. Both these features give excellent observation over the Cisterna-Velletri area, and the possession of either would enable

the holder to block traffic both on Highway 6 and Highway 7. Between Colli Laziali and Monti Lepini is a gap about six miles wide. The only serious terrain obstacles, besides the hill masses themselves, are Lago di Nemi and Lago Albano, occupying extinct craters in the southwestern portion of Colli Laziali. There should be fairly good standing for vehicles anywhere above Cisterna after a short dry spell. The road net north of Cisterna is not nearly so dense as on the flat ground to the south, the terrain being broken by many stream lines, but there are at least two roads which run through the gap between the two hill-masses.

The quality of troops available to the enemy must be considered in discussing his capabilities. While there is no reason to minimize the ability of his higher commanders, and the high level of training and discipline which are still to be found at battalion and company level, there is evidence that platoon and squad leadership has begun to deteriorate, and at least in the present operation, small enemy groups have not shown the excellent soldiery which we have come to expect of the Germans. For this reason, our own actions, if carried through with particular vigor and firmness, whether in attacking or defending, may enable us to attain success which would not have been possible against old-type, all-German formations. This same fact also bears on the enemy's ability to counter-attack strongly enough to drive us into the sea: to date his containing actions and close-in defensive build-up have not been particularly successful, and he may be compelled to feed in forces previously intended as a counter-attack force, merely to delay our breakthrough into his main positions.

To sum up, it does not now seem probable that the enemy will soon deliver a major counter-attack involving units of division size; on the other hand, the enemy will probably resort to delaying action coupled with small-scale counter-attacks in an effort to grind us to a standstill, as on the Cassino Line. If he fails to do this on Colli Laziali, he will probably evacuate the Cassino position, fight a rear-guard action across the Tiber and start over again on a consolidated line across the peninsula.⁷

TWO RANGER BATTALIONS ARE ANNIHILATED

At 0100, one hour before H-hour on 30 January 1944, the First and Third Ranger Battalions crossed their line of departure and started moving on their objective, Cisterna di Littoria. Initially no opposition was encountered and it was thought that matters would go well. At 0200, H-hour, the 7th and 15th Infantries and the Fourth Ranger Battalion crossed the line of departure and advanced on their objectives.

The enemy, anticipating an attack on Cisterna di Littoria, had the preceding night, unknown to the Americans, reinforced his numbers in and around the town. The infiltration of the two Ranger battalions became known to the enemy and he allowed it to continue during the hours of darkness until practically the entire force had entered the triangular area just south of Cisterna di Littoria with the lead elements in the town itself. The zone had been completely surrounded by the Germans and commanded by their weapons. Suddenly concentrated hostile fire was delivered on the exposed Rangers who were taken completely by surprise. Those outside the town were without cover, concealment or even escape. For the terrain, typical of the entire beachhead, was flat, barren, farmland. The Germans lost no time in closing the trap they had so beautifully laid and in the course of eleven hours or less proceeded to annihilate the hapless Rangers.

Communication with the two leading Ranger Battalions was non-existent for more than seven hours after their jump-off. The commanding officer of the Ranger force, Colonel William O. Darby, and the commanding general of the Third Infantry Division, Major General Lucian K. Truscott, were then uninformed of the true situation.

At 0235 machine gun and machine pistol fire were heard but it was not certain if it came from in front of the Rangers or the First Battalion, 15th Infantry.

⁷ Annex 2, FO 3, Hq. 3d Inf. Div., 29 Jan. 1944.

At 0340 Third Division Headquarters received a report from Colonel Darby's headquarters that the Fourth Ranger Battalion was meeting fire from a road junction north of the line of departure. No word had been received from the First and Third Ranger Battalions.

Regular reports were sent to Third Division Headquarters from Colonel Darby's headquarters at 0415, 0450, and 0610. Each time it was reported that the Fourth Rangers were meeting tougher resistance and that there was no news of the First and Third Rangers who, strangely enough, were believed to be doing well.

At 0835 the real situation became known. A radio call from the First and Third Ranger Battalions in the south edge of Cisterna di Littoria was received. The two battalions were completely surrounded. The commanding officer of the Third Rangers had been killed while the commanding officer of the First Rangers was seriously wounded and unable to command. Colonel Darby ordered the Fourth Rangers to drive on to the rescue. The Germans did not intend to lose their prize, however. The Fourth Rangers, already in serious trouble, never reached their comrades. The enemy poured heavy concentrations of automatic fire into the Fourth Rangers from both flanks and they had to fight for their own lives, let alone rescue anyone else. Armor, rushing to the rescue, encountered strong blocks, then maneuvered to



KILLED IN ACTION

Six of 42 "Cotton Balers" who sacrificed their lives on 30 January 1944. (1) Pfc Edward G. Campbell, Co. "C". (2) T/Sgt. James W. Cowling, Co. "C". (3) Pvt. Russell C. Gunsallus, Co. "C". (4) Pfc James V. Viola, Co. "C". (5) 2 Lt. Alvin W. Weakley, Co. "F". (6) Pvt. Robert Lee Weaver, Co. "L".

outflank them, but ran into heavy German artillery fire and minefields. Losses were sustained and the armor never got through. With no help the outcome was inevitable though a battle ensued from early morning till midday.

At 1215 that day Colonel Darby talked by radio with his old sergeant major who was in Cisterna di Littoria with the beleaguered remnants of the once two fine battalions of Rangers. It was the last conversation held with any American in the town and the record of it tells more than anyone can describe.

Sergeant Major: "Nobody is giving up."

Colonel Darby: "Shoot them if they come any closer. . . . Issue some orders but don't let the boys give up. . . . Who's walking in with their hands up? Don't let them do it! Get the officers to shoot. . . . Don't let them do it. . . . Do that before you give up. . . . Get the old men together and lam for it. . . . We're coming through. . . . Hang on to this radio until the last minute. . . . How many men are still with you. . . . Use your head

and do what is best. . . . You're there and I'm here, unfortunately, and I can't help you, but whatever happens, God bless you. . . ."

Colonel Darby then spoke to the commanding general of the Third Infantry Division and said, "They came and got them at the last minute. My old sergeant major stayed with the last ten men. It apparently was too much for them."

A few days later, information as to how the Germans destroyed the once proud Ranger battalions was secured from a prisoner of war, a lieutenant of the German 14th Company, Parachute Training Regiment. He stated that the Rangers had gotten into Cisterna di Littoria and that the Germans then counter-attacked down the road from the northeast. He admitted that his company and troops of the Herman Goering Division were present and the troops used were motorized, in addition to having 20mm flak wagons, neblewerfers and anti-tank guns which were employed as Infantry support weapons. The Rangers were forced to withdraw south and southwest. The Germans fanned out on the roads south of Cisterna di Littoria and then cut cross-country on unimproved roads. One segment after another was cut off. The German lieutenant stated that he was present when the American prisoner of war count was taken and that there were nine hundred American Rangers held by the Germans. Actual wounded and killed casualties then were not very heavy. The interrogator expressed skepticism (of the casualty report) and suggested that the Germans fired compressed air grenades from their neblewerfers. The German admitted that the neblewerfers had been fired but said he did not know what type of ammunition had been used.⁸

But eight members of the two assault Ranger battalions escaped from the trap. Some had been killed and wounded but the bulk of the two battalions was forced to surrender to the enemy when the members saw the situation was hopeless.

SEVENTH INFANTRY BECOMES LOCKED IN A BITTER STRUGGLE

While the Ranger battalions were being destroyed, the Seventh Infantry became involved in a fight that was to last four days and be the toughest engagement the "Cotton Balermen" had yet encountered in this war. Initially only one battalion was committed, but by the end of the day, all three had been thrown into the conflict.

The First Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour jumped off at 0200 to infiltrate to its objective northwest of Cisterna di Littoria. The same tactics were used as was planned for the Rangers. Almost immediately the Red troops ran into machine gun fire and were temporarily held up. As Company "A" was being harassed by heavy machine gun fire, Sergeant Lawrence E. Knox voluntarily led his platoon one hundred twenty-five yards, to within fifty yards of an enemy gun in an attempt to knock it out. In a fire fight that lasted one hour, he constantly exposed himself as he ran from man to man deploying them and building an effective base of fire, which finally forced the enemy to withdraw. Just before the enemy gun was silenced, Sergeant Knox suffered wounds about the eye, which subsequently caused its loss.⁹

⁸ Letter Report of the CG 3d Inf. Div. to CG VI Corps entitled "Battle Casualties, 6615 Ranger Force for period 29-30 Jan. 1944," 6 Feb. 1944.

⁹ GO No. 175, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Aug. '44. Sgt. Knox was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

The Red Battalion pushed on, then became temporarily stalled in the vicinity of the road junction northwest of Cle Pratone at 0400, receiving heavy enemy fire from artillery, mortars, tanks and automatic weapons. Company "B" suffered heavy casualties and became disorganized. Despite the heavy fire, Sergeant William W. Mehl led his light machine gun section from the comparative safety of a ditch to an effective but exposed firing position, in order to engage two enemy machine guns. Although a third of his section became casualties and one of his guns was destroyed, Sergeant Mehl directed such accurate fire that both enemy weapons were silenced. Private Jesse A. Dean and four other men volunteered to relieve pressure preventing reorganization of the company. Despite enemy machine gun fire from a flanking position four hundred yards away that killed his four companions, Private Dean crawled fifty yards more to the crest of a small knoll and took cover in a shell hole. He then spotted four Germans seventy-five yards away putting a machine gun into action and quickly killed them all with accurate fire from his M-1 rifle. Although enemy artillery shells landed close to his position Private Dean continued firing at other enemy positions until he emptied one bandolier and one belt of ammunition. Company "B" succeeded finally in setting up strong defensive positions and repelled an enemy counter-attack.¹⁰

Driving on through artillery fire, the First Battalion reached the thirty-one grid line at about 0500 and became heavily engaged in a machine gun and small arms fight as the enemy prepared to counter-attack.

At that time, Sergeant Robert A. White of Headquarters Company First Battalion acted without orders and crawled fifty yards down a draw in an effort to destroy one of the machine guns which had temporarily halted the advance. Although he was subjected to intense machine gun fire which barely missed him, he nevertheless made his way to a point within thirty yards of the enemy weapon and dispatched the crew with his rifle. The daring action took nearly forty minutes to accomplish and was a major factor in enabling the battalion to advance.¹¹

Captain Kenneth W. Wallace of Company "A", who knocked out an enemy machine gun crew with bursts of fire from his "Tommy Gun", and Technical Sergeant James H. Crawford of Company "D", who mustered a machine gun squad and several riflemen and led them one hundred yards over the flat and open terrain to bolster the battalion's vulnerable flank were two others of the many "Cotton Balers" who performed gallantly that day. They were both wounded in the action.¹²

During the early morning darkness small elements of the First Battalion penetrated the enemy's lines and eventually united. A group of about forty in number which included First Lieutenant Edward V. Busby, Second Lieutenant Charles W. VanScoyoc, First Sergeant Cole L. Miller, Corporal Quenton E. Thomas and Private First Class Dorsey Frazee found itself behind the enemy's lines at dawn, and it was not until the following night that the group, after splitting into two sections, successfully returned to friendly lines. Many narrow escapes were experienced and a total of nine enemy machine gun nests and mortar emplacements had to be eliminated before the members effected their return.

The enemy and the Red Battalion continued to throw everything they had at each other and progress was slow for the "Cotton Balermen" against the strong opposition. The Regimental Commander endeavored to get the armor up to support the attacking battalion and give it added defense against counter-attacks as well as extra power in the attack. Reconnaissance by officers of the 751st Tank Battalion, however, reported it impossible to advance armor over the existing roads and terrain.

To relieve the pressure against the First Battalion, Colonel Sherman committed the Second Battalion and ordered the tanks and tank destroyers to get up behind the troops. The artillery and chemical mortars laid in preparatory barrages, following which, the White Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Everett W. Duvall, attacked at 1045 to the northeast parallel to the Cisterna di Littoria road and headed for Hill 83. The battalion advanced satisfactorily until shortly after noon time when it was hit by a terrific concentration of artillery, and counter-attacked by German Infantry. The White Battalion troops were driven back to the stream where they sought to reorganize and hold.

Sergeant Elbert Hudspeth and Private First Class Paul Anderson, both of Company "H", were two of several soldiers who remained at their posts and covered the withdrawal. Sergeant Hudspeth crawled to a firing position and for fifteen minutes pumped round after round into enemy ranks but seventy yards away. His bold action so distracted the enemy that they were staved off until his comrades improved their positions. Private First Class Anderson remained at his machine gun and for two hours singlehandedly engaged a large group of Germans and silenced one enemy machine gun. Private Lewis O. Lowery, though suffering from five fragment wounds, kept carrying ammunition to the gunners of automatic rifles and machine guns when other bearers were wounded and removed from the fight¹³

Throughout the remainder of the day the White Battalion received artillery, mortar, small arms and machine gun fire. Casualties were heavy and nearly all cases had to be hand carried to the rear after nightfall.

As the Second Battalion failed to relieve any of the pressure and instead suffered a setback, the fight of the First Battalion carried on into the afternoon with the troops catching it from the front and flanks. The enemy increased his fire from artillery, tanks, self-propelled guns and automatic weapons, inflicting many casualties. At 1705 the Germans launched another counter-attack which was repulsed after a hard fight.

Early in the morning of 30 January the great leader of the First Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour, was seriously wounded but held on throughout the day and maintained control. His executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel James E. Breth, was also wounded. In the evening of that day Major Frank C. Sinsel, the Regimental S-3, and Major Lloyd B. Ramsay, who was sent up from Third Division Headquarters, relieved the two wounded colonels of their duties and had them evacuated to the rear. Captain Jack M. Duncan assumed the duties of S-3.

Company "G" of the 30th Infantry had attacked to the left of the First Battalion at 1515 on 30 January in an attempt to relieve the pressure on the Red Battalion but failed in that mission. At 2000 the Friscan company was over fifteen hundred yards west of the First Battalion's westernmost elements.

With his First Battalion fighting its heart out, his Second Battalion rocked back on its heels and also battling for life, Colonel Sherman had been forced to commit his reserve battalion, the Third, on 30 January and to continue the battle with every unit at his disposal.

¹⁰ GOs No. 161 & 189, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 July & 10 Sept. '44. Sgt. Mehl & Pvt. Dean were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹¹ GO No. 106, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 June '44. Sgt. White was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹² GOs No. 158 & 206, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 July & 2 Oct. '44. Capt. Wallace & T/Sgt. Crawford were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹³ GOs No. 51, 215 & 295, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3 Apr. & 8 Oct. '44 & 9 Aug. '45. Sgt. Hudspeth, Pfc Anderson & Pvt. Lowery were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

The Third Battalion, commanded by Major William B. Rosson, attacked for Ponte Rotto Road Junction, at 1645, 30 January, following a half hour artillery and mortar concentration. Withering machine gun fire was encountered from both flanks as the troops advanced. During the advance of the Third Battalion, First Lieutenant Frederick J. Phillips, Private First Class Arthur J. Costa and Private First Class Elaon O. Meredith, all of Company "M", helped pave the way for the rifle troops by repairing communications and bringing accurate fire on the enemy and thereby contributed to the destruction of enemy strongpoints.¹⁴

Some enemy of the 356th Reconnaissance Battalion were taken prisoners and gave the information that a counter-attack was to be launched that night from Bridges 12 and 13. Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies reconnoitered forward positions and shortly after dark were moved into them to support the rifle troops.

The Third Battalion captured the road junction, advanced two hundred yards beyond and cleared out two more machine gun nests. Progress was slow but the Blue Battalion troops kept pushing for the objectives near Ponte Rotto. At about 2200 that night Staff Sergeant Warren B. Williams of Company "I" disregarded a painful neck wound and remained standing after others in his platoon took cover. Using his sub-machine gun he shot it out at twenty yards distance with a German soldier armed with a machine pistol and succeeded in wounding the enemy and putting him out of action.¹⁵ At 2305 strong determined resistance was encountered and the Third Battalion was engaged in the toughest night fight it had yet encountered in this conflict. Burning hay stacks illuminated the area and exposed the troops.

Captain Glen E. Rathbun, First Lieutenants Lucius S. Davis, Frederick J. Phillips and John S. Raney, all of Company "M", employed the machine gun and mortar sections of the heavy weapons company so effectively that five machine guns were destroyed and heavy casualties were inflicted on the Germans. First Lieutenant Raney, who was killed in subsequent action, killed two Germans with pistol fire in a close-in engagement.¹⁶

The Third Battalion staged a brilliant fight throughout the night under the leadership of Major William B. Rosson. At 0100 hours when Company "L" was disorganized and temporarily halted by severe machine gun and rifle fire and was silhouetted in the light of several burning haystacks he ran forward and reorganized the two foremost platoons and directed their combined firepower very effectively. The advance was pressed until the assault company was ambushed by a large enemy force. Major Rosson then made a reconnaissance and maneuvered Company "K" so successfully that the enemy ambushing force was flanked and routed and the battalion secured the Regiment's right flank and captured its objectives which included Hill 83.

During the attack of Company "K" at about 0200 hours near Ponte Rotto, sudden and severe machine gun fire from fifteen to twenty-five yards range isolated a squad of eight men and caused several casualties among the rest of the company. While Staff Sergeant Howard L. Patterson led a squad in a flanking maneuver to within twenty-five yards of the enemy, First Lieutenant Clifford G. Gordon rushed the enemy machine guns and destroyed one with a hand grenade. The rapid action resulted in the killing of one three-man machine gun crew. Two enemy armed with machine pistols, and a second machine gun crew, were forced to flee. In subsequent action, Lieutenant Gordon was killed.¹⁷

The Germans had fortified the houses, barns and even the haystacks while their other positions were uniformly dug-in. Captain Frank Petruzel and Technical Sergeant

Garlin M. Connor led assault groups on strongly fortified houses which blocked the advance of Company "K". Four men had been previously wounded by fire from the houses. Taking a bazooka team and two rifle grenadiers with him Technical Sergeant Connor led his group across fifty yards of the exposed terrain and openly directed effective fire on the enemy. Result of the concerted action was that one machine gun and two machine pistols were silenced and the crew of a fourth automatic weapon routed. Company "K" continued its advance.¹⁸

Other members of Company "K" performed gallantly. Private First Class Andy S. Barko, who was killed in subsequent action, and Private First Class Sterling Reno destroyed an enemy half-track motorcycle, containing six Germans, with "Molotov Cocktails" and rocket gun fire. First Lieutenant Paul V. McGhan, the weapons platoon leader effected a reorganization once of the company's left flank and was instrumental in the success of the company. Private First Class James H. Rosloof kept his machine gun in action against the enemy and won numerous fire fights.¹⁹

SERGEANT TRUMAN O. OLSON PERFORMS CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY AND SACRIFICES HIS LIFE

At 0045, 31 January, the Red Battalion was the target for still another counter-attack coming from the north and northeast. The attack was heavier than the preceding one. The enemy used mortar and small arms fire and tried to infiltrate through the "Cotton Baler" positions. The fight was continuous throughout the night with heavy losses sustained by both sides. With no thought of surrender or relaxation against the enemy, the Red Battalion troops lived up to the finest traditions of the "Cotton Baler" Regiment. It was kill or be killed and the feats of heroism performed at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty will always be remembered and revered.

Sergeant Truman O. Olson, a light machine gunner of Company "B", elected to sacrifice his life to save his company from annihilation.

That night, following almost sixteen hours of continuous assault on the entrenched enemy positions in the course of which over one-third of Company "B" became casualties, the survivors of the company under the command of First Lieutenant Jon Capron, dug-in behind a horseshoe elevation. This placed Sergeant Olson and his crew with the one available machine gun then in the company, forward of their lines and in an exposed position to bear the brunt of the German attacks. Although he had been fighting without respite since the original jump-off, Sergeant Olson stuck grimly to his post all night while his six-man gun crew was cut down one by one, by the accurate and overwhelming enemy

¹⁴ GOs 34 & 38, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10 & 17 Mar. '44. 1 Lt. Phillips, Pfc Costa & Pfc Meredith were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁵ GO No. 39, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 20 Mar. '44. S/Sgt. Williams was awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁶ GOs No. 101, 118, 125 & 143, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 7, 14, 18 & 28 June '44. Capt. Rathbun, 1 Lt. Davis, 1 Lt. Raney (posthumously) were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁷ GOs No. 101 & 185, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 7 June & 3 Sept. '44. 1 Lt. Gordon (posthumously) & S/Sgt. Patterson were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁸ GOs No. 38 & 87, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 17 Mar. & 7 May '44. Capt. Petruzel & T/Sgt. Connor were each awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁹ GOs No. 34, 39, 41 & 76, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10, 20 & 23 Mar. & 20 Apr. '44. 1 Lt. McGhan, Pfc Barko (posthumously), Pfc Reno & Pfc Rosloof were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

fire. Weary from over twenty-four hours of continuous battle and suffering from a leg wound, received during the night engagement, Sergeant Olson manned his gun alone, meeting the full force of an all-out enemy assault by approximately two hundred Infantrymen, supported by mortar and machine gun fire, which the Germans launched at daybreak on the morning of 31 January. After thirty more minutes of fighting, Sergeant Olson was mortally wounded, yet knowing that only his weapon stood between his company and complete destruction, he refused evacuation. For an hour and a half after receiving his second and fatal wound, he continued to fire his machine gun, killing at least twenty of the enemy, wounding many more, and forcing the assaulting Germans to withdraw.

Technical Sergeant John H. Earl brought the Medics to Sergeant Olson and later said: "He had serious shell fragment wounds in his back and left leg and was just about done for when we arrived to evacuate him. His wounds were so severe that he died while being carried to the rear. It is only because he carried on when he knew that his life was slowly ebbing away from his grievous wounds that others of us are alive today."

Corporal Elmer Angel described the carnage wreaked in the area by Sergeant Olson. "Dead enemy were lying everywhere," he said. Sergeant Olson had personally killed at least twenty and wounded many more. He had fired all but fifty rounds of thirteen chests (250 rounds per chest) of machine gun ammunition."

For his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity, Sergeant Truman O. Olson was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the second to be awarded to a "Cotton Baler" in this Second World War.²⁰

When First Sergeant John H. Mayo of Company "B" was killed in action, Sergeant Merrill L. Busk assumed his duties and helped reorganize the company under fire. In preparation for continuation of the attack, Sergeant Busk crawled from man to man with bullets barely missing him on numerous occasions. In the assault, during which he was wounded, Sergeant Busk moved forward aggressively setting an example for others in the company.²¹

During the attack as the enemy machine gun and rifle fire inflicted severe casualties on the battalion, Second Lieutenant Norris M. Teague of Company "B" exposed himself to the constant fire, rallied a sizeable striking force and rushed forward, leading his men to a small knoll fifty yards from the enemy. The position was important in repelling the enemy counter-attack.²¹

During the night the Blue Battalion was continuously in contact with the enemy receiving machine gun and small arms fire with intermittent artillery and tank fire. At 0500, 31 January the Battalion encountered strong, determined resistance.

Staff Sergeant Nicholas F. Valentino of Company "M" displayed extraordinary heroism that day. He seized a heavy machine gun, together with its tripod and box of ammunition, and carried it forward one hundred yards through intense 77mm, machine gun and machine pistol fire which had halted the advance of his battalion. Staggering under his one hundred twelve pound load, Staff Sergeant Valentino reached a point within seventy-five yards of the enemy. Although he was fatally wounded as he put his weapon into position, he nevertheless engaged the enemy as his life ebbed away, and succeeded in killing six of them. Then, intent on supporting his battalion to the very last, he shifted his fire to an enemy-held house three hundred yards away, delivering effective fire until his death two minutes later.

Second Lieutenant Herbert R. Gilman of Company "M" was fatally wounded by mortar fire after he and an assistant had retrieved a heavy machine gun tripod

and forced fourteen enemy to surrender. In spite of his fatal wounds the lieutenant was able to get his assistant to safety and place the prisoners under guard.²²

At about 0530, the Third Battalion was on its objective, Hill 83. Many enemy had been killed, twenty-five taken prisoners, six machine guns, one 75mm gun, twenty-five rifles and large amounts of ammunition captured. Receiving fire from three sides, the battalion dug-in and fought the enemy who blew the bridge in Ponte Rotto.

The Third Battalion was ordered to stay where it was and take up defensive positions. The advance of the battalion against very stiff opposition at night was an outstanding accomplishment. For their extraordinary heroism that night Staff Sergeant Valentino, posthumously, and Major Rosson were each awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.²³ Heavy enemy artillery fire fell on the battalion and disrupted all communication. Second Lieutenant Edwin G. Johnson and Private First Class Robert D. Maxwell, who was wounded, restored vital communications.²⁴

During the night of 30-31 January, the Second Battalion moved to the road junction northwest of Pratone and took up defensive positions. During midmorning on the 31st, Companies "G" and "H" had several fights with isolated groups of enemy that had been by-passed during the night by the Red and Blue Battalions. Early in the afternoon, Company "G" attacked between the First and Third Battalions to bridge the gap that existed and to clear out all enemy sniper action.

FIRST BATTALION RESUMES THE ATTACK 31 JANUARY

In spite of all it had been through, the Red Battalion continued the offensive and attacked at 1400 on the 31st. With determination to achieve the objective, the troops advanced in the face of withering fire laid down by the enemy. It is impossible to understand how anything that moved could survive through that fire. Firing their weapons while running in a half-crouched manner, at times creeping and crawling in the slimy ooze that made them blend indistinguishably with the surrounding terrain, the advance elements overran two enemy 105s in the orchard that was to become famous. A group of men under the command of Captain William B. Athas of Company "D" turned the weapon around and used it to good effect on the enemy. Shortly thereafter the Red Battalion assault troops crossed the railroad tracks northwest of Cisterna di Littoria, an outstanding accomplishment that day that was not to be repeated until four months had passed. This was the farthest advance made by any unit on the beachhead during the attacks of 30-31 January 1944, and testifies to the superb fighting ability of the "Cotton Baler" troops. After reaching that exposed position, the battalion stuck out like a sore thumb and was counterattacked from the rear. As the First Battalion troops fought fiercely to beat off the enemy, the Second Battalion moved up behind the First and established contact near midnight with First Battalion Headquarters Company.

The Red Battalion troops fought with grim determination against enemy on all sides. The spirit of Sergeant

²⁰ For authority see GO 6 War Dept., Wash. D. C., 24 Jan. 1945.

²¹ GO No. 125, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 June '44. 2 Lt. Teague & Sgt. Busk were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²² GO No. 41, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 23 Mar. '44. 2 Lt. Gilman was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²³ For authority see GO 129 Hq. 5th Army 30 July 1944 and GO 110 Hq. 7th Army 17 Nov. 1944.

²⁴ GOs No. 38 & 41, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 17 & 23 Mar. '44. 2 Lt. Johnson & Pfc Maxwell were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

Olson, and others who had died with him, kept the survivors fighting on to death rather than to put up the white flag.

At 0140, 1 February, the Second Battalion reported back to the Regimental Command Post that it was not in contact with the Red Battalion's rifle companies, and, only parts of the First Battalion Headquarters Company and Company "D" were left. At 0510, the Second Battalion reported receiving small arms fire from the left flank accompanied by flares. Telephonic communication did not exist between the two battalions during the night because of a scarcity of wire. Thirty-five minutes later another report came back from the White Battalion that the First had only one hundred twenty men left and that the whereabouts of the rifle companies was unknown. These reports gave rise to fears that the First Battalion rifle companies were no longer in existence, but this was not true as later found out. Having been cut to ribbons and torn to bloody fragments the rifle companies still existed, though with an average strength of twenty effectives. How even these few were able to survive can never be fully told. Their courage and bravery in the face of almost certain death is unsurpassed in the bloody sacrifices made by "Cotton Balermen" down through the years. There was fear of another enemy counter-attack that night. The Second Battalion got set for it while Anti-Tank Company brought mines forward and Cannon Company took up firing positions. Brigadier General John W. O'Daniel visited the command post at 1638 and issued the order from the commanding general, Major General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., to pull the First Battalion, or what was left of it, back from the exposed salient it occupied. Two minutes later the commanding general called the command post by phone and discussed the situation. At 1645 communication from the First Battalion came in giving the effective strength of the companies. Company "A" had only eighteen men, Company "B" two officers and twenty-three men, Company "C" two officers and sixteen

men, Company "D" one officer and thirty men, Headquarters Company four officers and thirty men, a total of nine officers and 117 men for the battalion remaining of the more than 800 who launched the attack early 30 January. However the Second Battalion reported twenty-five or more men from the Red Battalion located in its area. The First Battalion troops held in place then and after being relieved by White Battalion troops, withdrew to regimental reserve positions behind the Second Battalion.

Though the Red Battalion troops suffered many casualties they had taken a terrific toll from the enemy. It is estimated that two hundred of the best German soldiers were killed by the First Battalion in one afternoon alone. Reports say the enemy bodies were piled one on another in some areas.

Many feats of heroism, besides those already recounted, were performed on the field of battle during those last two days of January 1944. When Major Frank C. Sinsel took over command of the First Battalion it had been reduced from over eight hundred to two hundred forty-two officers and men. He reorganized it while under fire and led his men in a resumption of the attack. Exposing himself fearlessly to small arms fire at point blank range, and devastating shell fire which inflicted many casualties among his men, Major Sinsel directed the fire of supporting armor on enemy machine guns, destroying many of them and thus facilitated the battalion's advance. During the attack, because of the shortage of officers, Major Sinsel moved from company to company through intense machine gun and rifle fire, which killed and wounded men at his very side, directing the movements forward and encouraging his troops. After gaining a mile and a half of ground and crossing the tracks, he again reorganized his battalion and they dug in against the expected counter-attack. During the attack by the enemy, Major Sinsel left the cover of his foxhole to personally direct, amid automatic fire and bursting hand grenades, a successful defense by his troops.



KILLED IN ACTION
Eighteen of the 53 "Cotton Balers" who were killed by enemy action on 31 January 1944.

(1) Pfc James K. Adkins, M.D.; (2) Pfc Raymond R. Baker, Co. "A"; (3) T/Sgt. Theodore C. Bansemer, Co. "A"; (4) T/5 Stephen T. Barbara, 1 Bn. Hq. Co.; (5) 1 Lt. Elmer J. Bendigo, Co. "A"; (6) Pvt. William J. Bumbarger, Co. "A"; (7) Pfc Steve P. Danko, Co. "D"; (8) Pvt. George H. Davidson, Co. "D"; (9) Pfc Charles M. Drury, Co. "K"; (10) S/Sgt. Walter W. Dziak, Co. "D"; (11) S/Sgt. Orville D. Egy, Co. "B"; (12) 2 Lt. Herbert R. Gilman, Co. "M"; (13) Pfc Frederick J. Matris, Co. "K"; (14) 1 Sgt. John A. Mayo, Co. "B"; (15) Pfc John E. Reynolds, Co. "D"; (16) Pfc Gordon W. Roberts, Co. "K"; (17) Pfc John V. Wagoner, Co. "F"; (18) 1 Lt. Clifford G. Gordon, Co. "K".

Inspired by their commander's fortitude the small number remaining clung to the ground they had bought so dearly, until they could be relieved by the White Battalion that night. Major Sinsel was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.²⁵

During the attacks of 30-31 January Private First Class Charles P. Bornwasser of Company "B" effectively operated his radio despite the fire of enemy machine guns and mortar shells bursting within thirty-five yards of him and his radio. He was seriously wounded but refused evacuation and continued to operate his radio. Later he died of his wounds.²⁶

The calm leadership and disregard for personal safety, displayed by five Company "D" men served as incentives for their fellow men and were material factors in aiding the First Battalion's advance. Corporal Alfred V. Tucker, who was twice wounded, eliminated an enemy machine gun nest with hand grenade and carbine fire. When his mortar section was ambushed and he was wounded Sergeant Orve J. Troyer reorganized his group as riflemen and conducted a winning fire fight in which he personally killed three Germans. Sergeant Everett E. Barr was thrice wounded by artillery shell fragments but successfully directed the fire of his machine gun section and once disposed his men as riflemen. On separate occasions Private First Class Thomas D'Angelo and Private Eldred B. Clark each operated heavy machine guns alone and knocked out German machine gun nests.²⁷

Captain Harold H. Haines, of First Battalion Headquarters Company, was wounded in action and displayed gallantry on several occasions while helping to organize the troops and direct their fight. Technician Fifth Grade Quentin C. Thomas, a code clerk of the same company, displayed courage and skill with a carbine when he silenced an enemy mortar crew and also knocked out one of two enemy machine guns which were firing on a group of thirty-three men and an officer who became separated from their company and were within enemy lines for a time. Private Urbine A. Bailey, Private Charles L. Tester, who became wounded while administering first aid to a wounded machine gunner, and Private William B. Summers, who treated the wounds of Lieutenant Colonel Izenour and evacuated many wounded soldiers, were three medical aid men who performed outstanding work on the battlefield.²⁸

FIRST BATTALION 30th INFANTRY BECOMES ATTACHED

The First Battalion of the 30th Infantry was attached to the Seventh Infantry at 0545, 31 January. It was located in the vicinity of Pontan di Amici and the commanding officer said it could assemble within an hour's time. Plans were made for the Friscan Battalion to attack from the southeast and south of the Blue Battalion at the same time as the "Cotton Baler" Red Battalion jumped off at 1400. At 1525 the Friscan troops had not yet crossed their line of departure. Finally they crossed the line at 1620, passed through the right of the Blue Battalion and encountered heavy small arms and artillery fire. The battalion reported its position to be near Ponte Rotto where it dug-in and prepared to defend. A patrol sent toward Cisterna di Littoria received heavy small arms fire and was unable to accomplish its mission. Another patrol to the north of the road was able to get two-thirds of the way to the town and reported armored vehicles and enemy troops along the road. The Battalion continued the attack at 0730, 1 February. Slow progress was made against small arms, machine gun and fire from two Mark IV tanks. At night the Friscan Battalion withdrew to the right flank of the "Cotton Baler" Blue Battalion.

SEVENTH INFANTRY GOES ON THE DEFENSIVE, REPELS COUNTER-ATTACKS 1-2 FEBRUARY

The large scale attack of VI Corps initiated 30 January 1944 failed to accomplish its objectives. The British divisions had failed to seize the high ground in the vicinity of Albano while the American Third Infantry Division (Reinforced) failed to capture Cisterna di Littoria and cut Highway 7 as directed. For the first time in World War II the "Rock of the Marne" Division was stopped. Not thinking the enemy had massed enough forces to halt a strong drive, but occupied only strong points in a forward defensive line, the division sought to infiltrate through those defenses in the hours of darkness early 30 January. The infiltration tactics were not suitable for attacking a strong line held by large numbers of the enemy who expected an attack and were laying traps to ensnare spearheads. Attacking in daylight over the flat, treeless terrain was suicide without dense smoke screens, and overwhelming air and artillery support. The result had been the elimination of the First and Third Ranger Battalions, the bad mauling of the Fourth Ranger Battalion and the weakened efficiency of the 7th, 15th and 30th Infantries due to heavy casualties. Though the assigned objectives had not been seized, the forces of the Third Infantry Division (Reinforced) took a terrific toll of the enemy and offset its own losses. Magnificent fighting was displayed by all units and attached organizations that will live forever.

On 1 and 2 February 1944, the Germans repeatedly counter-attacked as the Seventh Infantry adjusted its positions and went on the defensive.

During an enemy counter-attack which began at 0600 hours 1 February, Staff Sergeant Frank H. Vanderbilt of Company "E" stuck to his machine gun post for twelve hours under heavy fire. Enemy infantry three hundred yards away directed small arms fire at him and artillery shells burst within ten yards of him as he repeatedly crawled from his position to obtain ammunition from



Two of 16 "Cotton Balers" killed by enemy action on 1 February 1944 were left to right: Pfc Melvin D'Angelo, Co. "F", and Pvt. Edward J. Rake, of the Med. Det.

casualties in order to keep his gun in operation. His tenacity and courage were an inspiration to the men around him and contributed materially to the repulse of the enemy. In subsequent action he became missing.²⁹

When an assault platoon of Company "G" unexpectedly came under the withering fire of enemy mortars, machine guns and machine pistols which confused and disorganized its members, Staff Sergeant Ned E. Dively,

²⁵ For authority see GO 107 Hq. 7th Army 11 Nov. 1944.

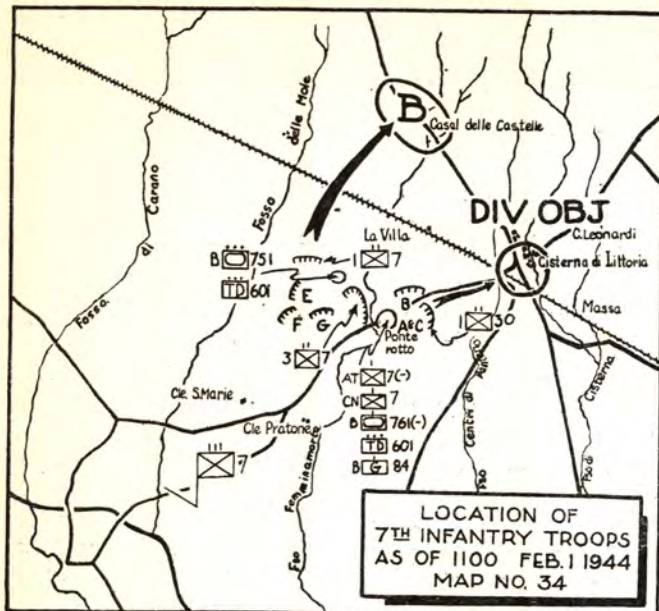
²⁶ GO No. 148, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 4 July '44. Pfc Bornwasser was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁷ GOs No. 41, 43 & 158, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 23 & 26 Mar. & 18 July '44. Sgts. Barr & Troyer, Cpl. Tucker, Pfc D'Angelo & Pvt. Clark were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁸ GOs No. 39, 108, 143, 158 & 196, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 20 Mar., 9 & 28 June, 18 July & 26 Sept. '44. Capt. Haines, T/5 Thomas, Pvts. Bailey, Tester (posthumously) & Summers were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁹ GO No. 87, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 7 May '44. S/Sgt. Vanderbilt was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

platoon guide of the support platoon, rushed forward and organized effective resistance. Though the enemy



was only a short distance away and the terrain was open and flat, he moved around from man to man encouraging them and directing their fire. He then shifted the platoon three hundred yards to where enfilade fire was placed on the enemy and was an important factor in repulsing the attack. In subsequent action he also became missing.³⁰

Privates First Class Michael S. Balogh, Stephen J. Nemeth and Fred S. Romero of Company "H" were escorting approximately thirty prisoners to the rear when suddenly two enemy machine guns, which had been previously by-passed fired at them at about fifteen yards and killed Private First Class Romero. Balogh was captured by the enemy but Nemeth managed to escape to the safety of a ditch twenty yards away. When the former prisoner group started to march off with Balogh, Nemeth killed one enemy and wounded another with rifle fire. At the same time friendly mortar crews laid down a concentration in the area which pinned the enemy down and gave Balogh the opportunity to seize a machine pistol and escape to the ditch occupied by Nemeth. When the concentration lifted the two men opened fire on the enemy, killed one and recaptured forty-three Germans.³¹

Bright and early on 2 February, the Germans launched powerful attacks against the Second and Third Battalions. The "Cotton Baler" troops held and a bitter fight raged throughout the morning. Company "G" gave a good account of itself and captured forty-nine enemy. The Germans dumped heavy artillery and mortar concentrations on the White Battalion along about noon-time. Tanks of Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, went up into the front lines and flushed out many enemy from their holes. In one instance twelve Germans came in waving white flags. Small patrols from the Second Battalion rounded up 131 of the enemy. At 1740 the enemy followed up with his second attack of the day against the Second Battalion. Heavy artillery concentrations and a great volume of small arms fire and automatic weapons fire were used against the left elements of the battalion.

Staff Sergeant Donald J. Poorman, of Company "G", and Private James A. Goodwin, of Company "A", fought heroically firing at enemy machine guns and snipers. Private Charles M. Lanier, who was wounded in action, and Private Elmer V. Shepherd, both of the Medical Detachment, evacuated numerous casualties during the attack. Private First Class John W. Seely, of

Company "K", had been one of the first to observe the enemy approaching early on 2 February and reported the impending attack, then killed several Germans and contributed to the repulse of the enemy. Staff Sergeant John T. Partin, of Company "K", delivered accurate fire data to the mortars which helped stop the attack. Private First Class Peter Hudock, who was killed in action, and Private Joseph Di Mattesa, who were also from "King" Company, repaired and restored communication between the outpost line of resistance and the company command post.³²

First Lieutenants James H. Ellis and Louie R. Van Hoy and Privates Matthew F. Bielski and Norman M. Cyr, all of Company "F", played an important part in breaking up the enemy attack which threatened to wipe out their company. The two lieutenants coolly and skillfully deployed their men to meet the attack then fought beside their men. First Lieutenant Van Hoy personally inflicted about fifteen casualties on the enemy though his own platoon was cut down to ten men. Private Cyr, who was killed in a subsequent action, and Private Bielski killed twelve Germans between them and forced twenty-eight others, who had infiltrated into their company's positions, to surrender.³³

The daring and skillful leadership of Staff Sergeant Geran W. Russell, of Company "E", who was killed in a subsequent action, enabled his rifle squad with an attached mortar squad to hold at bay for forty-five minutes an enemy force of company strength supported by artillery and mortar fire. Despite intense enemy fire at close range he constantly moved from man to man and directed the fire of his squad so effectively that many casualties were inflicted on the enemy and others were pinned down.³⁴

With the assistance of the artillery, tanks of the 751st Tank Battalion and destroyers of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, the attack against the Second Battalion was repulsed after a two hour fight with heavy losses to both sides. Lieutenant Colonel Duvall asked for friendly troops to be sent up on his battalion's left flank as the battalion's strength began to run low.

The attached First Battalion of the 30th Infantry remained in its defensive positions throughout the day and the "Cotton Baler" Red Battalion remained in Regimental reserve, licking its wounds and recuperating. Both battalions were subjected to enemy artillery fire.

Company "F" of the 30th Infantry moved during the night of 2-3 February for the left flank of the Second Battalion to occupy defensive positions, reinforce the left flank and assist in the event of a counter-attack. Contact was broken at times due to heavy enemy artillery fire.

SEVENTH INFANTRY (REINFORCED) HOLDS GROUND GAINED

The four days of fighting, two in the attack and two on the defense, cost the Regiment 158 members killed in

³⁰ GO No. 158, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 July '44. S/Sgt. Dively was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³¹ GO No. 294, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 20 Dec. '44. Pfc Balogh & Pfc Nemeth were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³² GOs No. 51, 91, 101, 108, 117 & 125, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3 Apr., 13 May, 7, 9, 13 & 18 June '44. S/Sgts. Partin & Poorman, Pfc Hudock (posthumously), Pfc Seely, Pvts. DiMattesa, Goodwin, Lanier & Shepherd were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³³ GOs No. 48, 134 & 185, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 1 Apr., 27 June & 3 Sept. '44. Pvt. Cyr (posthumously), 1 Lt. Ellis, 1 Lt. Van Hoy & Pvt. Bielski were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁴ GO No. 185, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3 Sept. '44. S/Sgt. Russell was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

action; 79 from the First Battalion, 51 from the Second Battalion, 19 from the Third Battalion and 9 from the Medical Detachment. Four hundred sixty-eight of the wounded were evacuated during that period while others suffered their wounds until later days to be evacuated. An unknown number received slight wounds and continued in action. All the rifle companies of the First Battalion and Company "F" were hard hit. (For a complete list of men killed in action on those days see the Appendix). The combat efficiency of the Regiment had been greatly reduced.

All battalions of the Regiment plus the attached First Battalion of the 30th Infantry remained in position during the period 3-4 February and held the ground gained. Local counter-attacks were repulsed. At about 0730 hours 3 February when an enemy machine gun crew, with several supporting riflemen, attacked his mortar section's position Private Juan E. Garcia of Company "H", crawled from the safety of his foxhole to secure better observation, and engaged the machine gun nest at about sixty yards range with his rifle. After a half hour fight, during which bullets hit about two feet from him, Private Garcia killed six of the enemy and silenced the machine gun.³⁵

One of the Regiment's great heroes of this war, and of all time, was killed in action during the enemy attack against Company "H" on 3 February. Private First Class

Floyd K. Lindstrom, who had won the Silver Star Medal for gallantry displayed in Sicily, and, then displayed heroism on Mount la Di Fensa in the Southern Italy Campaign, which was to merit the nation's highest valor award, the Congressional Medal of Honor, was among those killed. During the time the Regiment trained in the Piano di Quarto area, Private First Class Lindstrom was given an opportunity to work on the baggage detail that was to remain in the Naples area with the Personnel Section of S-1 rear and not make the Nettuno landing. It was suggested that he stay back until it was definitely known if the recommendation for the Congressional Medal of Honor, which was then being forwarded to Congress for consideration, was to be approved. Private First Class Lindstrom refused this opportunity saying that his place was with his company. He need not have faced the enemy again, but like Sergeant Olson and hundreds of other heroes of the Regiment he entertained no thought of quitting the fight until it should be won.

Replacements were received by the First Battalion, in regimental reserve, and it began to regain some of its strength. Patrols were active and brought back information that the enemy was fortified in all the houses along the road to Cisterna di Littoria. One patrol found several

³⁵ GO No. 175, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Aug. '44. Pvt. Garcia was awarded the Silver Star Medal.



Twenty-seven of 54 "Cotton Balers" who were killed in action on 2 February 1944. (1) Pvt. Marcel R. Beaudet, Co. "B"; (2) Pvt. Edward J. Bugaila, Co. "B"; (3) 1 Lt. George H. Carstens, Co. "F"; (4) Pvt. Stanley A. Ceberek, Co. "B"; (5) Pfc Laverne E. Ditsworth, Co. "B"; (6) Pvt. John Eazor, Co. "A"; (7) Pfc Lloyd M. Fisher, Co. "B"; (8) Pvt. Richard C. Gabrynowicz, Co. "A"; (9) Pvt. Kenneth J. Garvey, Co. "H"; (10) Pvt. John C. Gilmore, Co. "A"; (11) Pfc Clarence Godsey, Co. "E"; (12) Sgt. Frank Grabarek, Co. "E"; (13) Pvt. Arthur F. Harlow, Co. "H"; (14) Pfc. Paul F. Harrell, Co. "A"; (15) Pvt. Charles L. Jamison, Co. "F"; (16) Pvt. Calvin C. Jennings, Co. "E"; (17) Pfc Walter D. McKeel, Co. "B"; (18) Pvt. George V. McVay, 1 Bn. Hq. Co.; (19) S/Sgt. Joseph Miazga, Co. "F"; (20) Pvt. Edgar A. Nichols, Co. "E"; (21) T/Sgt. William Schwab, Co. "A"; (22) Pvt. Carl J. Snyder, Co. "A"; (23) Pvt. Philip L. Thomas, Co. "B"; (24) S/Sgt. Robert T. Wilson, Jr., Co. "B"; (25) Pfc David M. Yingling, Co. "B"; (26) Pvt. Albert W. Zdimal, Co. "A"; (27) Pfc Jake E. Zinda, Co. "A".

American packs, rifles, carbines, and two 81mm mortars and one heavy machine gun. Other patrols reported the enemy digging in. Enemy artillery was active and pounded the front line positions. Mines were laid in all likely avenues of enemy approach to increase defenses against further counter-attacks.

At midnight 3-4 February, the battalions were alerted to keep awake and prepared for any enemy counter-attack as the British on the left were meeting one. However there were none on the Seventh Infantry front during the night. Rain continued to fall and there was danger friendly armor would become bogged.

On 4 February 1944 at 0600 hours, Staff Sergeant Jesse Stratton of Company "E" took three enemy soldiers prisoners and was directly responsible for the capture of thirty more. Part of a larger force, these enemy soldiers were attempting to infiltrate through "E" Company's outpost line of resistance. Staff Sergeant Stratton rushed alone across fifty yards of exposed terrain covered by mortar, machine gun, and rifle fire and surprised the three Germans taking them prisoners. Summoning eight comrades, he led them around a bend in a ditch and captured thirty more of the enemy who were demoralized by the unexpected appearance of Staff Sergeant Stratton and his men. In subsequent action Staff Sergeant Stratton was killed.³⁶

Colonel Sherman held a meeting during the afternoon of 4 February with his staff, the battalion and separate unit commanders. The battalions were praised for their good work, then the regimental commander outlined the work to be given priority. Thorough reconnaissance of the ground then held was to be made with the view of setting up as strong defensive positions as possible. The men were to be well dug-in. The outpost lines of resistance were to be manned by one-third of the Second and Third Battalions while the remainder of the Regiment was to withdraw by infiltration methods under cover of darkness to assembly areas, then be prepared to occupy any defensive position on the main line of resistance.



Two of 8 "Cotton Balers" who were killed in action on 3 February 1944. L. to R.: Sgt. Orlando L. Hjetland, Co. "A", and Pvt. Gerard E. Rynka, 1 Bn. Hq. Co.

Double wire lines were laid to all assembly areas and made as secure as possible. No ground was to be abandoned by the one-third holding force unless absolutely necessary. Forward areas and the stream bed were to be strewn with all available mines. It was stressed that commanding officers left in command should be the best. The artillery liaison and forward observers were to remain with the holding forces.

The battalions were shelled by enemy artillery throughout 4 February and sustained casualties. Anti-Tank Company lost three vehicles and Cannon Company suffered four casualties from the enemy artillery fire. The Regiment less the holding force, which became attached to the 30th Infantry, commenced its withdrawal at 1840. During the movement, a strong enemy force broke through the front line units at about 2000 hours and threatened the Second Battalion Observation Post. Private First Class Edward C. Gupton of Company "E" silenced, with carbine fire, an enemy machine gun attempting to cut off the observation post group. With fire from an enemy machine gun one hundred fifty yards

to the right, cutting off the rear exit of the OP building, Private First Class Gupton, a company runner, engaged the crew of the closest weapon with his carbine. Although enemy artillery shells blasted the building and the machine gun shifted its fire to him so that bullets missed him by inches, Private First Class Gupton silenced the crew in a half-hour duel. Meanwhile the entire OP group was able to withdraw in safety.³⁷

On 5 February Private First Class Jack Miller of Third Battalion Headquarters left the cover of a foxhole to go forward and repair a broken line. To do this required crossing four hundred yards of terrain saturated by enemy artillery. Crawling and running with shell fragments landing within inches of him, he traversed approximately one hundred yards until concussion from a shell knocked him down. He got up and continued until about fifty yards further when he received a shell fragment wound in the back. Still undaunted he continued forward until he reached the broken wire which he repaired, and then returned over the same route to cover.³⁸

The Regiment minus the holding forces reverted to Division Reserve in areas south of LeFerriere. The two tanks that strengthened the outpost in front of the First Battalion 30th Infantry withdrew without orders and were sent back to their positions.



Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore commanded the First Battalion, Seventh Infantry, from 10 July 1942 to 12 February 1943 and from 1 March 1943 to 25 July 1943. He served as the Regimental Executive Officer from 25 July 1943 to 7 January 1944 and from 11 January 1944 to 5 February 1944.

Late in the afternoon of 5 February, an estimated company of enemy attacked the Third Division outpost line following an artillery preparation. The holding forces from the White and Blue Battalions which were left in the line received much of the shock and suffered some casualties. Enemy supported by three Mark III tanks were stopped before Seventh Infantry positions and withdrew under cover of their own artillery.

³⁶ GO No. 125, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 June '44. S/Sgt. Stratton was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁷ GO No. 185, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3 Sept. '44. Pfc Gupton was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁸ GO No. 38, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 17 Mar. '44. Pfc Miller was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

SEVENTH INFANTRY IMPROVES DEFENSIVE POSITIONS ALONG CANALE MUSSOLINI

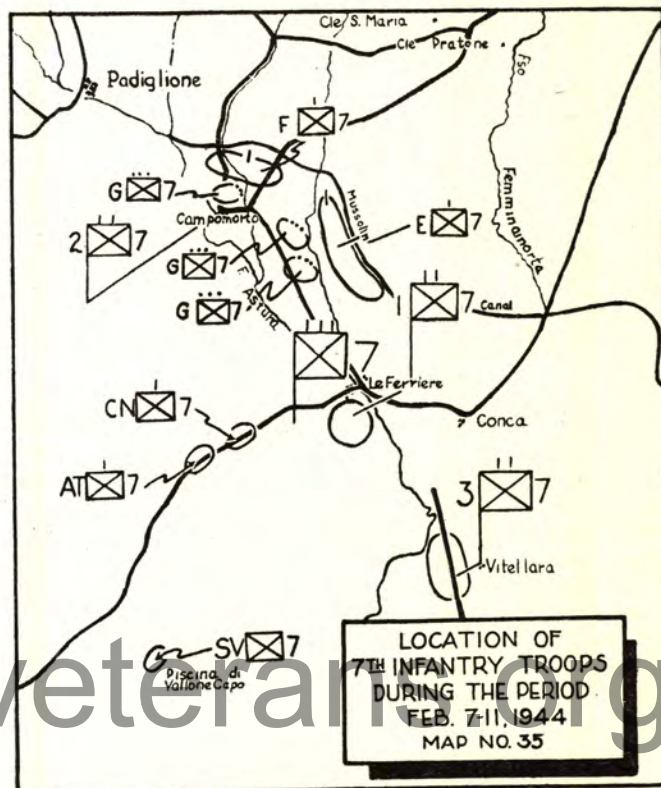
On 6 February, the holding forces in the division outpost line of resistance were relieved of attachment to the 30th Infantry and rejoined their battalions late in the afternoon. That evening the Second Battalion occupied defensive positions on the main line of resistance along Canale Mussolini. The Third Infantry Division going on the defensive for the first time in World War II was establishing a defense in depth. The following night, the Third Battalion also took up defensive positions on the canal.

During the period 7-14 February, the regiment continued to improve its defensive positions along Canale Mussolini, which was the main line of resistance. The Second and Third Battalions worked on the defenses at night and remained in assembly areas during the daytime. The First Battalion was on a half-hour alert at all times. Anti-Tank Company was responsible for the anti-tank defense of the entire canal and was reinforced by the anti-tank platoons of the battalions. Cannon Company was prepared to go into position in any defensive area or to accompany any battalion with assault guns.

During this period, Lieutenant Colonel Roy E. Moore, who had served the Regiment well as Commanding Officer of the First Battalion in French Morocco and Sicily and then as Regimental Executive Officer, left the Seventh Infantry to assume command of the 15th Infantry. He was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Ashton G. Manhart who served in the executive's capacity for only a few days, however, before transferring to the 45th Infantry Division. Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges, former Blue Battalion Commander then assumed the duties of second in command.

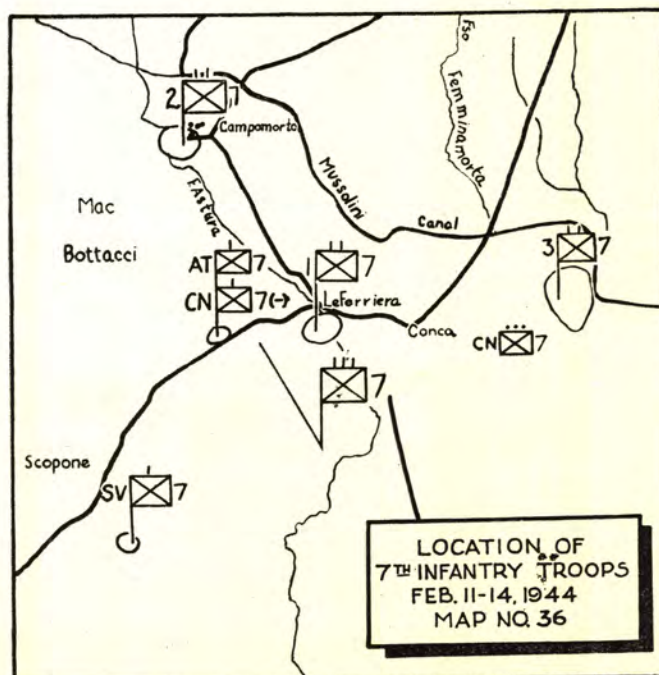
On 7 February, the Regiment received 9 officers and 510 enlisted men as replacements. Four additional officers also joined for temporary duty. Then on the 9th, 13 more officers and 307 additional enlisted men became "Cotton Balermen." With 63 hospital "returnees" returning a few days later, the Regiment was back at normal strength.

Enemy air activity over the beachhead increased during this period. Beginning the night of 12-13 February, low flying enemy planes would drop anti-personnel bombs and flares on the front lines while the German ground forces also lighted the ground with white phosphorous. Casualties were suffered and the troops began to make coverings for their foxholes whenever possible.



Three members of the 7th Infantry who died of wounds on 7-8 February 1944 were left to right: Pvt. Daniel R. Bastian, Co. "A"; Pfc Vernon A. Drury, Co. "K", and Pvt. Henry J. Tomaka, of Co. "A".

During the entire period of 7-14 February, the Regiment was subjected to enemy mortar and artillery fire which caused most of the casualties which were sustained. But on the night of 8 February, one man was killed and four wounded in our own mine fields in the Blue Battalion area. As the skies were overcast, that night an enemy attack was expected and all the battalions were placed on the alert. The Seventh Infantry was spared of heavy combat that night, though the enemy did attack the British forces in their section of the beachhead and a battle ensued for three days.



The Enemy Is Twice Thrown Back As Gallant Seventh Infantry Holds Its Ground

15 FEBRUARY TO 28 MARCH, 1944

Following reconnaissance of the 30th Infantry sector on the front line, the Seventh Infantry commenced relief of that organization. The First Battalion relieved the reserve battalion of the 30th Infantry during the night of 14-15 February 1944; the following night the Second Battalion relieved the left flank elements. Enemy air activity was unusually heavy that night and the Regimental Command Post moved from the CP tent into a bomb shelter. Due to enemy activity on the entire front, the Third Battalion was not able to go into the right flank positions and relieve the 30th Infantry elements there, until the night of 17-18 February.

GERMANS COUNTER-ATTACK 16 FEBRUARY 1944

Because of the increased German air activity, shelling of our positions and continuous feeling of our front lines by patrols, it was felt by everyone from the front line "dogface" to the commanding general at Division Headquarters that the enemy was to throw a major attack at the "Rock of the Marne" Division. The "Cotton Baler" Regiment had returned to the front line in time to meet it. The enemy had increased his troops, armor and artillery on our front. To spoil the enemy's plans, VI Corps put on a big "shoot" early 16 February, the biggest "shoot" up to that time on the Anzio Beachhead.

As expected, the Germans made a strong attack against the beachhead forces, the main effort of which was against the 45th Infantry Division to our left, along the Albano-Anzio road. Lesser attacks were made in the Third Infantry Division sector, one of which caused a penetration between the Second Battalion, Seventh Infantry and the Third Battalion 30th Infantry.

Early the morning of 16 February, a strong enemy force succeeded in making a penetration between Company "K", 30th Infantry and Company "E", Seventh Infantry. A detachment of Company "E" was driven from its position, but Company "G" moved over and quickly retook the ground. Company "E" engaged in rough fighting and suffered quite heavy casualties. One officer and fourteen enlisted men of Company "E" were killed that day.

When an enemy platoon broke through the outpost position of Company "E", Private First Class Nelson C. Edwards, in spite of the intense machine gun, machine pistol and rifle fire, hurried to intercept the enemy pla-

toon. Singlehandedly he held up its advance for several minutes until the remainder of his squad could take up the fire fight. Thereafter, when the German riflemen withdrew, he rose up in view of the gunner of a hostile machine gun and for five minutes fired such a heavy stream of bullets in his direction that the gunner had to take cover. That heroic action allowed the evacuation of two wounded comrades.³⁹

When a group of enemy soldiers infiltrated to within fifty yards of his platoon's position after an artillery preparation had caused disorganization, Sergeant Rex E. Wilson of Company "E" personally shifted one of the machine guns seventy-five yards and poured such rapid fire into the enemy ranks that sixteen casualties were inflicted and his platoon was given a chance to recover from its temporary disorganization. Sergeant Hubert L. Aaron gallantly led his "E" Company squad through heavy machine gun and rifle fire against an enemy force of company strength and forced it to give ground. Private First Class James F. McGinnis of "Fox" Company successfully directed artillery fire by radio and destroyed an enemy tank.⁴⁰

In the afternoon Company "C" attacked through Company "K" of the 30th Infantry and in fierce fighting drove the enemy back. At midnight all positions were restored. Nine Company "C" men were killed by the enemy during the fighting. Staff Sergeant Weldon E. Bloom and Private First Class Andrew Crapo displayed bold leadership and gallant actions. Private Lloyd S. Cooper sacrificed his life to enable an officer to free himself and organize an assault which inflicted fourteen casualties on the enemy and captured a position with sixteen prisoners of war. When the officer had become caught on concertina wire Private Cooper stood up and fired his M-1 rifle at the enemy. Just as he emptied his clip Private Cooper was killed by enemy fire.⁴¹

The enemy continued his attacks on the 17th and succeeded in penetrating the 45th Infantry Division lines by three thousand yards which was a serious threat to

³⁹ GO No. 134, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 27 June '44. Pfc Edwards was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁰ GOs No. 91, 189 & 256, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 May, 10 Sept. '44 & 15 July '45. Sgt. Aaron, Sgt. Wilson & Pfc McGinnis were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴¹ GOs No. 43 & 202, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 26 Mar. & 30 Sept. '44. S/Sgt. Bloom, Pfc Crapo & Pvt. Cooper (posthumously) were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



Six of 28 "Cotton Balers" killed in action on 16 February 1944, were left to right: 2 Lt. William E. Bushby, Sgt. Walter A. Dec, Pvt. Clifford O. Hebert, Pvt. Walter G. Karschnia, Sgt. Edward J. Miller, and Pvt. Leroy V. Tagler, all of Company "E".

the beachhead. On a smaller scale the enemy forced a penetration between the Seventh Infantry and the 509th Parachute Battalion, which was beaten back however.

On 17 February, between 0800 and 1000 hours, Private First Class Raul M. Martinez, by his fearless operation of a machine gun in the face of fire that inflicted seven casualties among his comrades, played an important role in repelling an enemy attack. Although the other machine gun in his section was knocked out by a direct hit from a Mark VI, or Tiger Tank, at one hundred fifty yards range, Private First Class Martinez continued to engage several enemy machine guns and to mow down enemy foot troops.⁴²

Private First Class Donald A. Alto of Company "F" virtually wiped out with machine gun fire an enemy force of about thirty-five Germans who infiltrated toward his position. Ignoring the advice of several nearby riflemen, Private First Class Alto waited until the enemy were approximately fifty yards from him before he opened up. With a terrific burst of fire, he killed or wounded about twenty of the enemy. Near the end of the two-hour fire fight, a group of about eight more Germans crawled through deep bushes to a point some twenty-five feet from Private First Class Alto, and threw hand grenades at him. Tossing several grenades in return, Private First Class Alto killed two, wounded one and forced the surrender of the other five.⁴³

At midnight, 17-18 February, Company "B", 751st Tank Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Hobbs; Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion commanded by Captain Miner; Company "B", 84th Chemical Battalion, Commanded by Captain Butts and the 509th Parachute Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Yarbaro became attached to the Regiment.

Throughout the night Companies "E" and "F" engaged enemy in small arms fights. Two tanks moved up behind Company "E" to give support in daylight. Company "F" reported four parachutists dropping in its area while the Blue Battalion troops saw a plane burst into flames and two other parachutists coming down. Patrols were unable to make any progress that night due to the heavy enemy artillery, mortar, small arms and machine gun fire.

In the morning of the 18th, planes bombed to the rear of our lines and there was doubt as to their true identity. Enemy artillery fire became intense and one shell hit "the castle" in Campomorto. Just a few days previous a rest camp for the men had been established in "the castle", where a number of them could withdraw each night to have a dry place to sleep, eat a hot meal, shave and change clothes before returning to the front the next morning. Five men were wounded at "the castle" including Jack Sweeney, the American Red Cross representative.

At 1115, a platoon of Company "E" was counter-attacked while Company "A" was being hit by heavy artillery. The 509th Parachute Battalion reported our own American planes had strafed and bombed our troops. The left flank was the danger spot and as it was impossible for the armor to move up behind the Second Battalion because of the mine fields. Company "A", 10th Engineers, commanded by Captain Swift, were put to work cleaning a path for the tanks. The situation on the left grew more serious as the line from the 509th Parachute Battalion to the 180th Infantry of the 45th Infantry Division withdrew.

The enemy attacked the left flank positions of the Regiment held by the attached 509th Parachute Battalion and the Second Battalion. Company "C" was maneuvered to give support to the parachute battalion and Com-

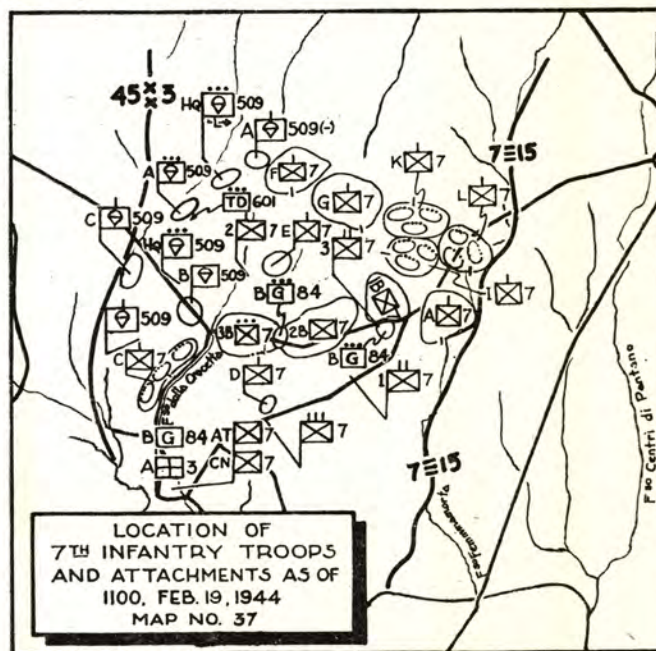
pany "G" relieved Company "E" during the night. As the 180th Infantry fell back on the left and Third Division Headquarters warned all units to be on the alert for enemy parachute landings, the situation became more tense. The 509th Parachute Battalion asked for anti-aircraft units to be placed in its sector. Company "I" was ready to move to any area in the Regimental sector to assist in repelling the enemy. It was discovered that Channel 274 on the 609 radio was being used by the Germans so Warrant Officer Claude O. Keough, assistant communication officer, busied himself monitoring all messages.

Enemy armor maneuvered around in front of Company "F" positions during the night and artillery was brought to bear on them. Three enemy trucks unloaded personnel in front of Company "F". Artillery and small arms fire were received in the morning. Then at noontime on 19 February, following heavy concentrations of mortar and artillery fire, a battalion of enemy attacked the



Three of 17 "Cotton Balers" who lost their lives in action during the period 17-19 February 1944 were left to right: S/Sgt. John M. Lees, Co. "F"; Sgt. Joseph M. Grady, Co. "F", and 2 Lt. John G. Murphy, Co. "K".

Second Battalion and the 509th Parachute Battalion. Friendly artillery replied to the enemy with devastating barrages, while the Paratroopers and the White Battalion troops poured withering fire from rifles and automatic weapons into the enemy ranks. At 1330, the enemy were stopped, but two hours later, another enemy force with three tanks attacked Company "F" and the 509th



⁴² GO No. 206, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 2 Oct. '44. Pfc Martinez was awarded the Silver Star Medal.
⁴³ GO No. 11, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Jan. '45. Pfc Alto was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

Parachute Battalion. In the two hour fight that followed, Company "F" was pretty badly beaten up but one enemy tank was knocked out and the enemy beaten off. As the engineers cleared paths, tanks moved up to support the Second Battalion. The First Battalion, minus Company "A", moved to the left, behind the 509th Parachute and Second Battalions. Companies "E" and "F" each sent out four patrols during the night.

On 20 February, one of our bombers was set aflame as a result of enemy action in the vicinity of the Regimental sector. Five tiny buds quickly mushroomed into parachutes as the men made their way out of the flaming hulk. Slowly they descended, all eyes were aloft; would they be able to make the sanctuary of our lines protected by the fire from Company "F"? Only one was successful; the others landed in enemy territory and were quickly captured. The rest center at the castle at Campomorto had to be discontinued on 20 February, because of enemy air and artillery action.

During the period of 20-28 February, the Regiment held its lines always on the alert for a counter-attack, spending most of its time improving its positions, stringing wire, laying mines and repulsing enemy patrols that showed stubborn intentions of infiltrating through the outposts to reach the rear areas. Enemy concentrations of fire were severe and caused most of the casualties. Other units in the vicinity received counter-attacks which were invariably preceded by heavy concentrations of artillery and mortar fire over the entire sector. Artillery and mortars counter-battered each other regularly. Numerous patrols were sent out to wipe out German nests of resistance. The brush was infested with German soldiers and many of the patrols failed to return and usually were prevented from accomplishing their missions. A patrol from Company "B" engaged enemy in a brisk fight the night of 25-26 February and Second Lieutenant Cleveland A. Warren was killed by the enemy.

Private Dorsie S. Wells, of Company "M", who was wounded in action while restoring and maintaining vital communications between his platoon command post and the machine guns, and Private Richard M. Lowman, of Company "H", who once dueled an enemy tank and riflemen with his machine gun, were gallant in their actions. Private James A. Groenveld, of Company "D", was severely burned while rescuing an officer from the flaming wreckage of a United States Army fighter plane which crashed near his position.⁴⁴

Lieutenant Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro joined the Regiment during the closing days of February 1944 and assumed the duties of executive officer to the commanding officer and Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges returned to his old command of leading the Third Battalion in action. Major William B. Rosson transferred to G-3 Section of VI Corps Headquarters.

WITH SEVENTH INFANTRY IN THE CENTER THE THIRD DIVISION REPULSES GERMANS' STRONGEST BID TO WIPE OUT THE ANZIO BEACHHEAD—29 FEBRUARY - 3 MARCH 1944

The front line of the American Third Infantry Division (Reinforced) the night of 28-29 February 1944, on the Anzio Beachhead, was held by the Seventh Infantry in the center, the 509th Parachute Battalion on the left and the 15th Infantry on the right.

The Seventh Infantry sector stretched from the Fosso Femminamorto on the right, near Ponte Rotto, to the Fosso della Crocetta on the left. In the left center the Fosso delle Mole cut through the sector. From left to right the Second and Third Battalions had disposed Company "E" commanded by Captain Frank L. Wil-

liams, Company "G" commanded by Captain Edgar H. Poinsett, Company "K" commanded by Captain Frank Petruzel and Company "L" under the command of Captain John W. Blaikie. Companies "F" and "I" occupied reserve positions for their respective battalions. Company "A", under the command of Captain Robert L. Crozier, occupied right flank positions behind Company "L".

The night of 28-29 February 1944, on the Anzio Beachhead, was quieter than usual until just before dawn. In the Seventh Infantry sector the "Cotton Baler" companies carried on as usual. Company "A" maintained its motorized parachute patrols. Companies "E" and "G" had work details laying out more wire. Lieutenant Colonel Duvall reported that six hundred yards of wire had been strung in the vicinity of Company "G's" right platoon and two hundred yards of wire in the vicinity of Company "E" 's right platoon. Parachute trip flares were attached to the wire and were also placed in the mine fields which had been laid on previous nights. Double concertina wire had also been laid to the front. The Third Battalion maintained patrols. However, before long, it was reported that the Germans were laying a smoke screen to the front and advancing troops behind it. The new Third Division Commanding General, Brigadier General John W. ("Iron Mike") O'Daniel, called the Regimental Command Post and warned Colonel Sherman to be on the alert for an enemy attack. It was too quiet. The Second Battalion reported that the Commanding Officer of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion wished to withdraw his tank destroyers in the event enemy Infantry should push through our lines during an attack. It was stated the tank destroyers would not be able to move over the soggy terrain. Colonel Sherman ordered that the tank destroyers would remain in position if for no other purpose than to support the morale of the "dogfaces" and in case of an enemy tank break-through they could repel the enemy tanks. It was not the intention of the Seventh Infantry to give ground.

Just before dawn 29 February 1944, the unusual stillness of the Anzio Beachhead was rudely broken when the enemy opened up with heavy concentrations all along the Third Infantry Division front. The German 362nd Infantry Division, supported by forty Mark IV and Mark VI tanks spearheaded an assault against the "Rock of the Marne" Division and was reinforced by elements of the Herman Goering Division, the 15th and 26th Panzer Divisions, and the 715th Infantry Division. The fight was on and the magnificent stand put on by the American Third Infantry Division in repelling elements of the five German divisions in the four-day battle that followed, proved to the world once more that "Rock of the Marne", pinned on the division after its gallant stands on the shell-swept banks of the Marne in 1918, was a name fully justified.

In the center of the Third Division line the Second and Third Battalions of the old Seventh U. S. Infantry Regiment were heavily blasted from Fosso della Crocetta to Ponte Rotto. Enemy tanks and Infantry followed the concentration and began clearing paths through the mines and wire that had been so carefully laid by our men on previous nights. The first German Infantry to hit the Third Division line struck between the two front line "Cotton Baler" battalions but was stopped cold by murderous, withering fire. The enemy followed this up with another strong force attacking the Second Battalion left flank but was again stopped as Company "F" com-

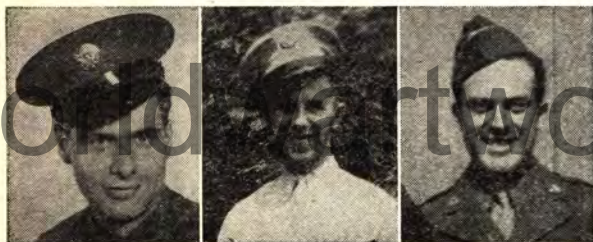
⁴⁴ GOs No. 91, 155 & 185, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 May, 15 July & 3 Sept. '44. Pvts. Lowman & Wells were each awarded the Silver Star Medal. Pvt. Groenveld was awarded the Soldier's Medal.

manded by Captain James N. Pearman, Jr., was shifted to back up Company "E". About twenty enemy succeeded in penetrating between Companies "L" and "A" on the right flank but were quickly mopped up.

On the left of the Seventh Infantry the Germans succeeded in breaking through the lines of the 509th Parachute Battalion and drove on. The situation was extremely serious. Had the enemy known, he could have turned left and advanced on the Seventh Infantry Command Post practically unmolested. At 0737 the following radio message from the 509th Parachute Battalion was received: "Enemy has broken through. Need light tanks. Urgent." The platoon of light tanks of Company "D", 751st Tank Battalion, attached to the Seventh Infantry, was sent to the aid of the parachute battalion which also requested air missions. Company "C", commanded by Captain William B. Stewart, moved up the draw behind Company "F" as a safety measure. Company "B" also moved to the left flank.

In the fight that day the enemy used his neblewerfers, or six-barreled mortars, to fire unusually heavy concentrations on the Seventh Infantry troops. Following the breakthrough in the 509th Parachute Battalion sector the Second Battalion was quickly hit on both flanks. Fierce hand to hand fighting took place. More and more of the enemy came over from the left. Even an anti-tank platoon had to leave its guns and deploy as riflemen to stem the attack.

In the early afternoon the enemy laid in a concentration of neblewerfer fire and under cover of smoke attacked between Companies "G" and "K" with tanks



Three of 34 "Cotton Balers" killed in action on 29 February 1944 were left to right: Pvt. Clarence J. LaPierre, Co. "K"; Pfc. John D. Perkins, Co. "K", and Pvt. Raymond W. Ritter, Co. "F".

and infantry and on the Third Battalion right flank. Company "C" under the command of Captain William B. Stewart attacked up the Fosso della Crocetta on the left of the Second Battalion and one platoon of Company "F" filled in the gap between Companies "E" and "G". A house occupied by some enemy was leveled to the ground by tank fire of the 751st Tank Battalion. The Third Battalion directed artillery on a group of two hundred enemy forming in front of the Second Battalion and killed many Germans.

In spite of the fierce resistance displayed by the "Cotton Balermen" the enemy continued equally fierce attacks throughout the day. In some cases platoon positions were overrun and it seemed that the battalions would have to withdraw, but they did not. Every fresh wave of the enemy was thrown back with heavy losses to both sides as a result of the furious fighting. The Second and Third Battalions led by their great leaders, Lieutenant Colonels Everett W. Duvall and John A. Heintges performed magnificently that day.

"The attacks against the Seventh Infantry were heaviest, but nowhere did the enemy gain ground."⁴⁵ While the "Cotton Balermen" held their ground during the furious fighting and Company "C" attacked up the Fosso della Crocetta the Second Battalion of the 30th Infantry

was committed by Division Headquarters and attacked through the 509th Parachute Battalion on the left to recover the lost ground.

The situation on the left flank improved during the afternoon as the Second Battalion got increased artillery support and American planes strafed and bombed enemy to the front of the White troops. On the right however the situation grew more critical. Company "K" and "L" were having a hard time and contact with Company "A" sometimes became broken. The Third Battalion reported five Mark IV tanks in the vicinity of Bridge 5 and four "Tigers," or Mark VI tanks, in the vicinity of the Ponte Rotto road junction. The artillery forward observer with the Blue Battalion became a battle casualty. At 1717 the entire Third Battalion area was covered by "Screaming Meemie" or neblewerfer fire followed by dense smoke concentrations. Then the enemy attacked again and the fight carried on through the night.

Enemy tanks overran some of the forward platoons of the companies and fired direct into the "Cotton Baler" foxholes killing many of our men. There was no retreat or withdrawal by the Blue Battalion forces, those groups that were passed fought on to the bitter end. Flares threw a lurid glow over the area and the skirmish lines of the German infantry closely supported by their tanks could be discerned making their way toward the battalion lines. Only by the most determined efforts of all were the attacks beaten off. The right squad of Company "L" was overrun with seven of the men killed outright. At places the enemy succeeded in making penetrations but were driven back. Companies "K" and "L" were weakened but asked no quarter. The reserve platoon of Company "I" and a tank destroyer squad and mortar squad from Company "A" moved to the vicinity of Bridge 5 and succeeded in killing some enemy and capturing prisoners. Bazooka teams went into position along the Ponte Rotto road. Engineers of Company "A", 10th Engineer Battalion went beyond the front lines that night, blew a crater in the road and put mines around the crater.

Many were the acts of gallantry and heroism displayed on the battleground of the Anzio Beachhead on 29 February 1944. Private First Class Charles Siwek, a Browning automatic rifleman of Company "L", engaged six enemy in a skirmish which was the prelude to the big attack. Wounded himself, he inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy as he emptied several magazines of ammunition with rapid fire. Private First Class Gilbert H. Stein, of Company "G", relayed vital intelligence to Captain Edgar H. Poinsett which enabled friendly artillery and mortars to place accurate concentrations on the enemy. When Second Lieutenant Clarence J. Grant, of Company "E", at early dawn observed that two machine gunners were seriously wounded he manned their gun and killed 32 enemy and effected the capture of 26 others.



Pvt. Roger M. Dillman, Co. "K", and 2 Lt. John C. McDaniel, Co. "G", were killed in action on 29 February 1944.

⁴⁵ "History of the Third Infantry Division"

Technical Sergeant Ole M. Martinson, of Company "E" coolly directed the fire of his platoon and personally killed fifteen enemy with fire from his sniper's rifle. Private Ralph F. Hedden, of "Easy" Company, once engaged eight Germans in a fierce duel and was badly wounded but he inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy in killed and wounded. Private First Class Walter H. Boomer and Private Alexander Sosnowski, both members of the Anti-Tank Platoon of Second Battalion Headquarters Company, manned their 37mm anti-tank gun while under fire and shot it out with a German Mark IV tank and destroyed the hostile vehicle.

Technical Sergeant Floyd W. Adams, of "Fox" Company, displayed coolheadedness and contempt for personal danger while directing his men in the fire fight. Sergeant Thomas J. Strange, Jr., of the same company and missing as a result of a subsequent action, was unusually brave while directing the fire of his 60mm mortar section.

Private First Class Patrick Cullen, 81mm mortarman, and Private First Class Aubrey D. Miller, machine gunner, both of Company "H", remained steadfast at their weapons through pounding artillery concentrations and hails of machine gun fire, to send round after round into enemy positions.

Private First Class Wayne O. Cole, of Company "G", displayed such great shooting skill with a rifle and in directing other riflemen that the Germans singled him out as a leader and directed heavy fire at him which somehow missed. He killed several Germans and was responsible for the capture of about thirty-five enemy.

Although seven of his eight man patrol were killed outright and the other wounded, First Lieutenant Ralph M. Flynn, the Third Battalion S-3, adjusted friendly artillery fire by radio on nine enemy tanks and knocked out four of them.



An air photo of Le Ferriere roads junction on the Anzio Beachhead.

Private First Class Robert O. Walker, of Anti-Tank Company, killed six Germans with his rifle and covered the withdrawal of his comrade from a gun position which enemy compelled them to vacate.

Staff Sergeant Martin J. Rubicky, Private Frederick R. Drayton, Jr., Private Albert Flinner, Jr., all of "Charlie" Company; Private First Class John J. Jordan and Private First Class Vincent J. Lutterman, both of "Dog" Company; First Sergeant Budd Rice of "Easy" Company; Staff Sergeant Charles R. Bennett of "Fox" Company; Sergeant Earl P. Vowell of "George" Company; Technician Fifth Grade Joseph Medeiros of "Howe" Company; Private First Class Mays G. Overton of "Item" Company; Private First Class Albert L. Nel-

son, Private First Class Clarence E. Rall and Private Dane V. Caulkins all of "King" Company; Technical Sergeant Owen L. Jeffs and Sergeant Morris F. Snyder both of "Love" Company; Technical Sergeant Matt J. Churack and Private First Class Oscar F. Fuhrman of "Mike" Company, all played important roles in stemming the enemy counter-attack.⁴⁶

Companies "G" and "K" were in continuous contact with the enemy throughout the night. An attempt to knock out enemy tanks in the vicinity of Bridge 5 failed. A First Battalion mortar squad fired flares while tank destroyers attached to the 15th Infantry fired on the enemy tanks, but no hits were scored as visibility was poor.

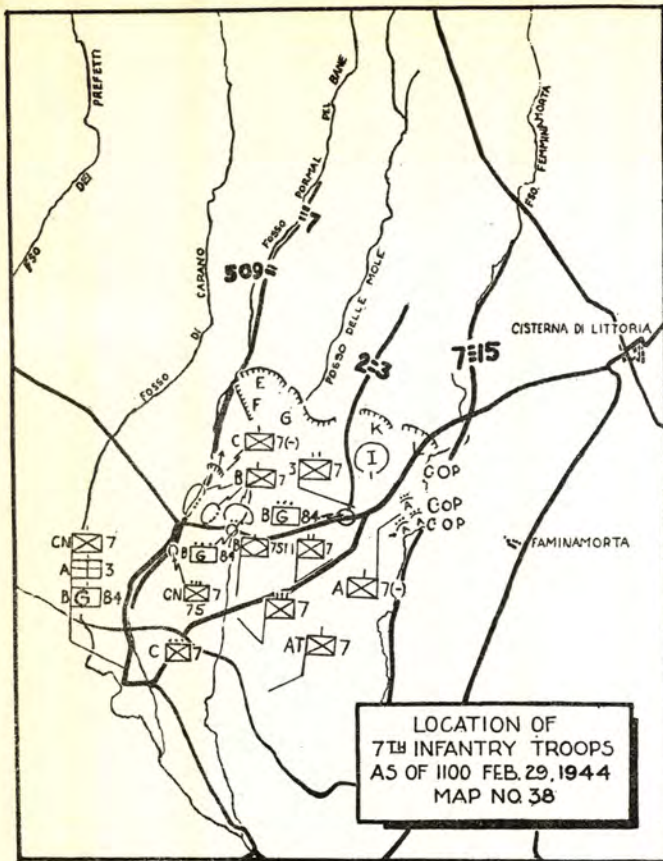
At 0325, 1 March enemy tanks and Infantry hit Company "K" again and enemy Infantry were reported infiltrating through Company "L" positions. First Lieutenant Jerry C. Conrad, commanding "I", sent a platoon to assist "Love" Company. The Company "K" situation cleared up for a spell but at 0630 the enemy threw in heavy artillery concentrations and then attacked the "King" Company positions with seven tanks and numerous Infantry. Enemy were forming in front of Company "G".

The forward positions of the Second Platoon, Company "K", were overrun by the enemy. Staff Sergeant Edward A. Sobuta covered the withdrawal of his squad by drawing attention of the enemy to himself by hurling hand grenades and firing his sub-machine gun. Private First Class Albert L. Nelson crawled four hundred yards to the rear of the company command post and personally directed the fire of friendly artillery with such efficiency that three German tanks were driven into our own mine fields and shortly thereafter were put out of action. The four remaining enemy tanks were forced to withdraw. Private First Class Timothy J. Rice, also of Company "K", and Staff Sergeants William L. Bailey and Augustus Nastari, both mortar section leaders of Company "M", braved the enemy artillery, tank, machine gun and small arms fire to re-establish communication with forward observation posts. Sergeant Bernard Shapiro, of Company "L", led an attack on one of the enemy tanks, which was destroyed after the Germans had abandoned it. Private First Class Alex J. Dietz, also of "L", led a three-man group to a position which extended the right flank of his company. When eleven Germans advanced on the group, wounded one man and forced the other two to flee, Private First Class Dietz remained alone and shot it out with the enemy, killing three, routing four and capturing four. Second Lieutenant Jack B. Lehman effectively directed friendly artillery on advancing enemy.⁴⁷

The artillery and mortar fire dumped on the enemy in front of Company "K" was mainly responsible for breaking up the attack. Four enemy tanks north of Bridge 5 were knocked out by fire directed by the Third Battalion forces.

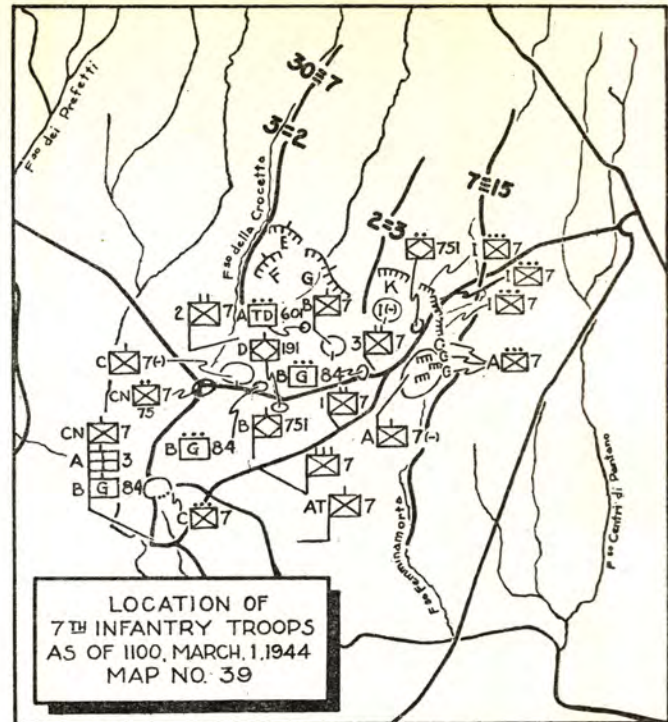
⁴⁶ Gos No. 34, 37, 39, 48, 50, 51, 76, 83, 108, 148, 163, 168, 175, 198, 226, 256, 304, 306, 316 & 370, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10, 15 & 20 Mar., 1, 2, 3 & 20 Apr., 1 May (9 June, 4 July, 8 Aug., & 31 Dec. '44; 7 & 24 June, 15 July, 20 Aug., 1 Sept. & 4 Oct. '45. 1 Lt. Flynn, 2 Lt. Grant, 1 Sgt. Rice, T/Sgts. Adams, Churack, Jeffs & Martinson, S/Sgts. Bennett & Rubicky, Sgts. Snyder, Strange & Vowell, Pfc's Boomer, Cole, Cullen, Fuhrman, Jordan, Lutterman, Miller, Nelson, Overton, Rall, Stein & Walter, Pvts. Caulkins, Drayton, Flinner, Hedden, Siwek & Sosnowski were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁷ GOs No. 37, 39, 60, 94 & 108, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 15 & 20 Mar., 6 Apr., 21 May & 9 June '44. Pfc Nelson was awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. 2 Lt. Lehman, S/Sgts. Bailey, Nastari & Sobuta, Sgt. Shapiro, Pfc Dietz & Pfc Rice were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



Shortly after noon 1 March approximately two hundred Germans were seen coming toward Company "E". Several of them were waving white flags and appeared to be unarmed. However, another group approached on their right flank with no white flags and were apparently heavily armed. The situation was most mysterious, but in order not to be caught in a trap artillery fire was laid on the heavily armed group which seemed intent on attacking the Second Battalion's left flank. In short order the entire group, including those with white flags, was dispersed. Sergeant Herbert R. Davis, of Company "G", alone stopped an enemy attacking force of about twenty-five men with his machine gun, inflicting eight casualties and forcing the remainder to withdraw. Second Lieutenant Charles R. Durkee, of Company "C", attacked a pair of enemy machine guns that had killed two scouts and wounded several other members of his platoon. He knocked out one of the weapons with a hand grenade which killed two Germans and wounded three others. As he prepared to throw a second grenade a nearby sniper shot and killed him.⁴⁸

Artillery and mortars continued counter-battery fire on 2 March but supporting 81mm mortars had fired so much that their supply of ammunition ran low. The heavy mortars were then limited to thirty rounds daily



until another reserve was built up. The Air Corps bombed the enemy lines. Fourteen officers joined the Regiment as replacements on that day. The enemy concentrated on and plastered Company "E" positions with artillery and mortars as a small arms fight was going on. When all officers of his platoon became casualties, Private Malon L. Whitlow, a rifleman of "Easy" Company, took command of the platoon and courageously directed a successful defense.⁴⁹

Shortly after midnight 2-3 March 1944 enemy tanks were heard on the east side of Bridge 5 and mortars and artillery were dropped in that area. Company "K" heard tanks to its front. Neblerwerfer fire started to fall in the Third Battalion area and at 0105 Company "L" received a heavy artillery barrage. The Second Battalion reported vehicular traffic to its front. All indications were that the enemy planned another attack. The First Battalion was notified to make plans to counter-attack, and the chemical mortars of Company "B", 84th Chemical Battalion, began to interdict the roads leading into enemy territory. Patrols to the front engaged in fire fights.

At 0520 Companies "K" and "L" began receiving artillery fire, then enemy tanks and Infantry commenced advancing on Company "L". Two of the German tanks

⁴⁸ GOs No. 206 & 212, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 2 & 6 Oct. '44. 2 Lt. Durkee (posthumously) & Sgt. Davis were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁹ GO No. 185, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3 Sept. '44. Pvt. Whitlow was awarded the Silver Star Medal.



Seven of 35 "Cotton Balers" who were killed in action on 1-2 March 1944 were: (1) Pfc Andy S. Barko, Co. "K"; (2) Pvt. Elwood S. Blizzard, Co. "A"; (3) 2 Lt. Charles R. Durkee, Co. "C"; (4) Pvt. Robert R. Hartman, Co. "C"; (5) Pvt. Sam T. Haskew, Co. "K"; (6) Pfc Dominick S. Ascolese, 1 Bn. Hq. Co.; (7) Pvt. James M. Kline, Co. "K".

succeeded in penetrating "Love" Company's positions and got behind one of the platoons. The reserve platoon of Company "I" moved to the assistance of the embattled "Love" Company. Casualties were suffered by the already weakened platoons. The Germans forced elements of Companies "L" and "I" to temporarily withdraw. At the close of the morning the Company "I" platoon attempted to regain its lost ground but failed as the fighting was severe.

Staff Sergeant Harry J. Lawlor of Company "L", accompanied by another soldier armed with "Molotov cocktails", advanced five hundred yards through the impact area of an artillery and mortar concentration toward a German Mark VI tank, which had been placed in hull defilade and was guarded by a machine gun nest and a force of dug-in riflemen. Proceeding with his suicide mission, he by-passed the German machine gun and reaching a position fifty yards from the tank, opened fire with his light machine gun in a successful effort to draw the full volume of enemy fire upon himself and thereby enable his comrade to approach the enemy vehicle undetected. He continued his hopelessly, uneven fight against the entrenched riflemen and against the tank crew while his associate threw Molotov cocktails at the tank. When the gasoline bombs failed to set the tank ablaze, Staff Sergeant Lawlor crawled to within twenty yards of the tank, hurled sticky grenades and silenced its fire while covering the withdrawal of his comrade. He was mortally wounded by fire of the enemy riflemen. For his extraordinary heroism Staff Sergeant Lawlor was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

COMPANIES "A" AND "B" COUNTER-ATTACK THE ENEMY 3 MARCH

At 1330, 3 March, Companies "A" and "B" launched a counter-attack astride the Ponte Rotto road, following smoke concentrations. Company "A", advancing on the right of the road, received terrific enemy neblowerfer, self-propelled, artillery, small arms and machine gun concentrations. "Able" Company became completely disorganized and withdrew to initiate a reorganization. Captain William P. Athas, who commanded the company in the attack, was killed during the action. The cover was so limited and the shelling so intense that many casualties were suffered. After nightfall Company "A", reorganized, regained the ground lost by the Company "I" platoon. Company "B" had also received heavy fire but pushed on to its objective and reconsolidated some of the lost ground. Staff Sergeant Morris Kalamowitz, of Company "A", who was severely wounded, First Lieutenant Leslie E. Stiles, of First Battalion Headquarters and who was killed in a subsequent action, and Second Lieutenant Joseph S. Ancavage, of Cannon Company, were cited for actions performed that day.⁵⁰

The First Battalion companies were engaged throughout the night of 3-4 March. At 2150 it was reported

that thirty-three men of Company "A" were missing and that the company had but thirty effectives to fight with. The Company "L" platoon along the stream had only nineteen men left. First Lieutenant Arnold M. Reeve, of Company "L", killed ten to twelve enemy with machine gun fire from a position he manned alone for a period of three hours.⁵¹

Though the First Battalion companies absorbed some severe punishment during their counter-attacks (Company "A" had thirteen killed by mid-morning 4 March) the right flank of the Regiment was re-organized and in fair shape. Plans were made for the First Battalion to relieve the Third during the following night. At 2135 4 March the enemy threw a heavy artillery preparation at Companies "L" and "B" on the right flank in the Third Battalion sector, then followed up with a company sized Infantry attack. Due to the weakened condition of the companies the line there was thinly held and the enemy succeeded in penetrating to the houses located along the Ponte Rotto road. A bitter fight lasted until 0600, 5 March, when the houses were again in our control and the enemy driven back. Eighteen Germans were captured. Company "B", 751st Tank Battalion, lost one tank during the night's engagement. Company "E" had also been called on to repel a small enemy attack that night. Company "C" relieved Company "K" on the front line. Company "B", 84th Chemical Battalion, assisted the tank destroyers by firing smoke on Bridge 5 to mark it as a target. The tanks, tank destroyers and cannons maneuvered to better positions to assist the rifle units on the right flank of the Regiment.

After his major attempt to wipe out the Anzio Beachhead was broken by the reinforced Third Infantry Division between 29 February and 4 March 1944, the enemy resorted to defensive warfare. The Seventh Infantry in the center of the Third Division line, where the attacks were heaviest, once more had played a major role for the "Rock of the Marne" Division. With their flanks exposed and attacked fiercely the "Cotton Balermen" held their ground in the face of devastating and powerful opposition. Five officers and 105 enlisted men were killed during those days and a total of 254 members of the Regiment were wounded. Besides those already mentioned, Private First Class George R. Socie, of Second Battalion Headquarters Company, Private Frank Caradonna of Company "B", and Privates Howard R. Dawson and Arthur C. Gabriel, both of the Medical Detachment, served with distinction during the period.⁵²

⁵⁰ GOs No. 121 & 294, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 16 June & 20 Dec. '44. 1 Lt. Stiles, 2 Lt. Ancavage & S/Sgt. Kalamowitz were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵¹ GO No. 121, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 16 June '44. 1 Lt. Reeve was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵² GOs No. 37, 198, 264 & 339, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 15 Mar. '44 & 7 June, 19 July & 17 Sept. '45. Pfc Socie & Pvts. Dawson, Caradonna & Gabriel were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



Six of the 20 members of the 7th Infantry who were killed in action on 3 March 1944 were left to right: Pvt. Albert B. Cummins, Co. "L"; Pvt. James V. Glosner, Med. Det.; Pfc Donald R. Levan, Co. "I"; Pvt. Roland J. Mailhot, Co. "K"; Pvt. Fred J. Petto-grassia, Co. "I"; and Capt. William P. Athas, 1 Bn. Hq. Co.

7th INFANTRY REMAINS ON DEFENSIVE 5-28 MARCH 1944

Unable to make any headway against the Seventh United States Infantry and other units of the American Third Infantry Division on the Anzio Beachhead during his major attack of 29 February-3 March 1944, the enemy then reverted to a definite attitude of active defense. He kept outposts strongly manned and was active with both reconnaissance and combat patrols that attempted to infiltrate through the lines of the defending forces. The Allied beachhead forces had themselves been weakened by the attacks and were also content to keep up an active defense.

From 4 to 28 March the Seventh Infantry (reinforced) remained in its positions and improved them with the assistance of Company "A", 10th Combat Engineer Battalion. Much time and effort were given to the improvement of the positions by erection of wire obstacles, installation of mine fields, digging-in of towed anti-tank guns, and the establishment of alternate lines of communication. Movement was restricted to the hours of darkness with certain exceptions in the rear areas. The rifle battalions alternated at being in reserve. Contact was maintained with the enemy through patrols while the attached and supporting weapons harassed the enemy daily and nightly, as did the enemy artillery, mortars, and self-propelled guns harass the Seventh Infantry. Each day during the period from one to nine members of the Regiment were killed through the patrolling activities or enemy artillery action and about an equal number were wounded.

The engineer detail, working in front of the Third Battalion the night of 5-6 March, was harassed by active enemy patrols. Some wire and obstacles were installed but after sustaining four casualties the detail was driven from its work by the enemy. Long range enemy machine gun fire was received by Companies "E" and "F" during the day of 6 March and six enemy tanks pulled up on the left of Company "C" but no flare-up occurred.

During the night of 6-7 March, Company "G" shot up an enemy patrol attempting to come down the Fosso della Mole. Company "A" absorbed some heavy shelling by enemy artillery and small arms fire flared up on the Second Battalion front. One White Battalion patrol was fired on by First Battalion troops and suffered four casualties. Regimental Headquarters and Service Companies furnished personnel for the motorized parachute patrol. The First Battalion relieved the Third Battalion during the night and covered all of the sector formerly held by the two battalions. The Blue Battalion assembled in reserve. The attached tank destroyers knocked out two enemy vehicles in front of Company "G" early on the 7th, while enemy artillery scored a direct hit on one of Anti-Tank Company's 57mm guns. The Third Battalion in reserve reported its strength as 30 officers and 486 enlisted men; 14 new officers joined the Regiment on that day.

Comparatively speaking, the situation on the Seventh Infantry front was quiet during daylight hours of 8 March with the enemy intermittently shelling the area. The German artillery scored hits on the Seventh Infantry ammunition dumps in and near the castle of Campomorto. Private First Class Ernest J. Vaillancourt displayed heroism while extinguishing blazes caused by the shelling.⁵³ Company "L" moved to a rest camp in the rear areas of the beachhead. Prisoners of war were priced at a premium those days. Third Division Headquarters asked that a special effort be made to capture a German from our front. There was some enemy activity in the 180th Infantry sector to our left and VI Corps Headquarters

believed the enemy might have something planned for the Seventh Infantry front as well. The battalions were notified and as an inducement or incentive, which probably the "dogfaces" considered not very attractive at all, it was promised that any patrol which captured a German that night would get a one-grade increase in rank for each member participating up to a technical sergeant. In



Five of 27 "Cotton Balers" who were killed in action on 4 March 1944 were: Top row, left to right, Pvt. Nathan H. Brin, Co. "E"; 1/Sgt. Omer S. Byers, Co. "L"; S/Sgt. Arthur B. Berkshire, Co. "C"; Bottom row, left to right: Pvt. Archie Rigsbee, Co. "I", and 2 Lt. Charles W. VanScoyoc, 1 Bn. Hq. Co.

spite of the "inducement" no prisoner of war was brought in that night. The comparative quietness was broken at 2300 when a small enemy force attacked Company "B", and Company "C" reported tanks to its front. Artillery, mortar, machine gun and small arms fire were poured on the enemy who were dispersed. By 0100, 9 March the situation had cleared and all enemy were repulsed.

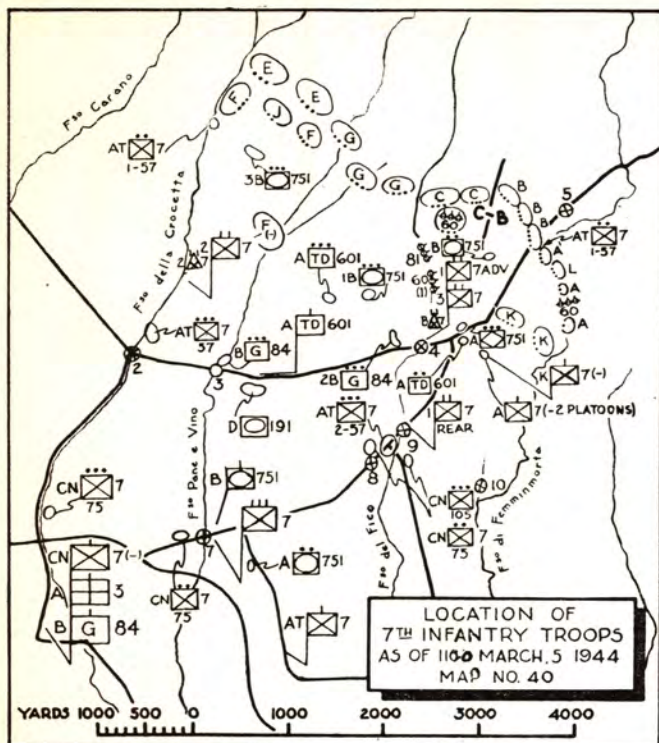
An ambush patrol from Company "F" went deep into enemy-held territory the night of 11-12 March and observed several Germans meeting in a centralized locality where they appeared to be changing guard. By stealth, three members advanced to a canvas-covered dug out. Slowly and carefully the leader pulled back the canvas and saw six Germans sleeping. It was their intention of making the sextet their prisoners, but the Browning Automatic Rifleman became excited and fired his weapon into the hole. Of a necessity the others opened fire and threw hand grenades. The fire awakened Germans at nearby posts and forced the patrol to withdraw to the safety of its own lines.

In the early hours of 13 March a patrol from Company "A" ran into serious trouble. The leader, Second Lieutenant Chauncy L. White, Jr., was killed, one man wounded and five were missing as a result of the action.

Though the actions of those nights and days may seem to some to have been minor, they nevertheless were of vital importance and the actions of many individuals were outstanding. Actions of Technical Sergeant Arthur J. Blackwood of Company "H", Private First Class Frank J. Doris of Company "E", Private First Class Maurice L. Williams and Private First Class Joe Wilson,

⁵³ GO No. 158, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 July '44. Pfc Vaillancourt was awarded the Soldier's Medal.

who was severely wounded, both of whom were from Company "K", Private Jesse C. Babincsak of Company "H" and Private James T. DeLacy of Company "G" were recognized.⁵⁴



CHANGES IN PERSONNEL

The month of March 1944 saw many changes in various commands of the Regiment. On the 4th Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges relinquished command of the Third Battalion to Major Clayton C. Thobro and went to the Third Division G-3 Section.

On the 11th Colonel Harry B. Sherman passed the command of the Regiment to Lieutenant Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro. Colonel Sherman, better known as "Ash Can Harry" to the boys because of his pet aversion to that receptacle during periods of inspection in bivouac and non-combat, went to Fifth Army Headquarters. Through the campaigns of Sicily and Southern Italy and through the rough stuff on the Anzio Beachhead he had commanded the Regiment with distinction. Infantry as a stepping stone to the grade of general.

The new commanding officer of the Regiment had seen much service and had advanced from the grade of private. Born on 26 November 1894 in Galatia, Illinois, he received his early education in Missouri grade schools. At the age of nineteen he enlisted in the regular army and began his long military career on 12 January 1914 at Jefferson Barracks, then went to Hawaii where he served with the Second Infantry, advancing to the grade of sergeant. He obtained a reserve commission and was called to active officer duty direct from the enlisted ranks on 8 September 1917 and served with the 25th Infantry until 1923. In 1920 he had received a regular commission. From 1923 to 1927 he served as an instructor with the Louisiana National Guard. In 1928 he graduated from the Army Tank School and then served as the commanding officer of the First Tank Company, First Division. For five years from 1931 to 1936 he served with the 28th Infantry and then spent some time serving in the Philippines.

During Lieutenant Colonel O'Mohundro's early career as an enlisted man and officer he specialized in competitive

rifle shooting, being an expert with rifle. In 1922 and 1923 he fired on the Infantry Team in the National Matches, the latter year placing second in the National Individual Rifle Match. From 1924 to 1934 he coached various teams which competed and in 1935 and 1936 he was captain of the Infantry Rifle and Pistol Team.

In 1940 and 1941 Lieutenant Colonel O'Mohundro was an instructor with the Toledo, Ohio, Reserves. In 1941 he joined the First Armored Division and came overseas with that organization in 1942. He was relieved as commanding officer of the 6th Armored Infantry in August 1943 to assist in organizing and moving Headquarters Mediterranean Base Section to Oran, Algiers. He then was detailed to Fifth Army Invasion Training Center in North Africa. Lieutenant Colonel O'Mohundro landed at Salerno with the 36th Infantry Division and from October 1943 to February 1944, when he joined the Seventh Infantry as executive officer, he served with the Amphibious Planning Group, Fifth Army.



Colonel Harry B. Sherman commanded the Seventh United States Infantry from 19 February 1943 to 17 February 1944 and from 27 February 1944 to 11 March 1944.

On 13 March Lieutenant Colonel John J. Toffey, III, a true "Cotton Baler", joined the Regiment. He was born with the Seventh Infantry at Fort Wayne, Detroit, Michigan, on 31 August 1907, as his father then a captain in the regular Army served as adjutant of the Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Toffey spent practically

⁵⁴ GOs No. 67, 114, 148, 189, 326 & 345, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 15 Apr., 12 June, 4 July & 10 Sept. '44 & 5 & 25 Sept. '45. T/Sgt. Blackwood, Pfc's Doris, Williams & Wilson, Pvt's. Babincsak & DeLacy were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

all his life with the Army in one way or another and had started his formal military career by attending Honolulu Military Academy. Later he graduated from Cornell University where he was active in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. In 1941 he attended the Infantry School and in 1942 the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He made the invasion of

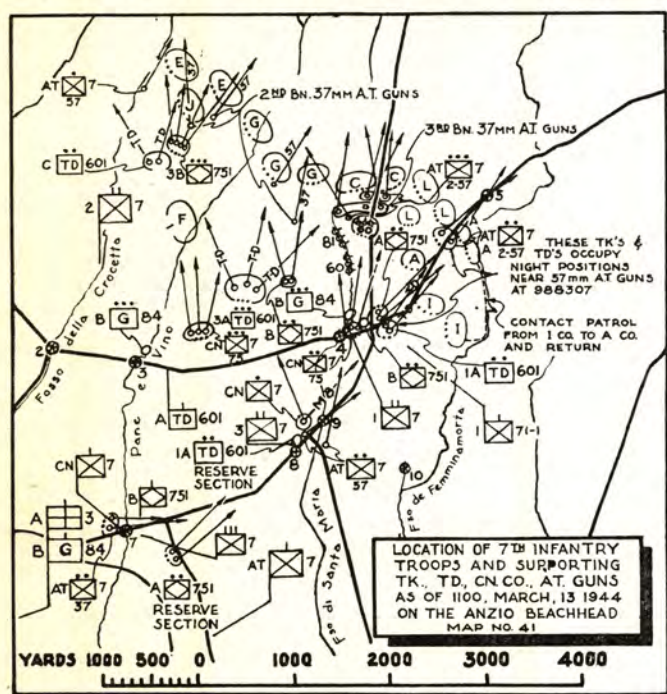
William A. Weitzel joined the Regiment on 26 March and assumed command of the Third Battalion to be the third commander of that unit during the month.

SEVENTH INFANTRY BATTLE PATROL COMES INTO BEING

By the middle of March a static condition existed on the front and position warfare developed accompanied by nightly reconnaissance and combat patrolling. Being on the defensive, troops lived for long periods of time, without relief, in wet muddy foxholes, existing on cold rations. It was the Italian rainy season and the men suffered intensely from exposure to the elements, many of them developing "trench foot" and diseases of the respiratory system. Indiscriminately and haphazardly patrols of every type and description were selected and sent out. All too often plans miscarried as orders were briefed too hastily and were not understood. The men had scanty knowledge of the terrain to be covered and were not acquainted with each other. Fatigue and exposure numbed the sensory perceptions of the men.

In order to alleviate conditions and to increase the effectiveness of its intelligence work, upon the suggestion and under the guidance of Lieutenant Colonel John J. Toffey, III, the Regiment on 19 March organized a body of volunteers known as the Battle Patrol. Four officers and forty-five enlisted men commenced a short period of training in the vicinity of Service Company. Captain Frank Petruzel of Company "K" was in charge of preliminary training. First Lieutenant William K. Dieleman, a rifle company veteran who had won his commission on the battlefield, became commanding officer of the Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol, which was organized along the following lines: forty-five enlisted men were divided into three groups each led by an officer. Each group was further subdivided into three five-man teams, the first for reconnaissance, the second for assault and the third to put down a base of fire. The teams were to be led by sergeants and being small compact groups, they would be well coordinated and controlled.

The members of the Battle Patrol were to have the advantage of hot meals, dry clothing and a comfortable place to rest and sleep so their mental and physical condition would be greatly enhanced. The Battle Patrol was



North Africa as the commanding officer Third Battalion, 60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division and fought through the African campaigns until wounded at Maknassy, Tunisia, on 23 March 1943. After discharge from a hospital he fought through the Sicilian Campaign, then transferred to the Third Division in September 1943 and commanded the Second Battalion, 15th Infantry through the Southern Italy Campaign and the Anzio fighting. He assumed the duties of executive officer and, as fate would have it, he was to be killed in action serving with the famous regiment with which he was born.

Also on 13 March 1944 the able Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour returned to the Regiment and once more assumed command of the First Battalion. Major Frank C. Sinsel served as his executive officer for a short period before returning home to the U. S. A. on rotation. Major Lloyd B. Ramsay was assigned to the command of the Third Battalion and Major Clayton C. Thobro remained with that unit as the second in command. Two other officers who returned from hospitals at this time were Captains Kenneth W. Wallace and Irving R.



Pvt. Elmo Bertram, left, of Co. "L", and S/Sgt. Robert F. Holtzman, right, of Co. "I", were killed in action on 5 March 1944.

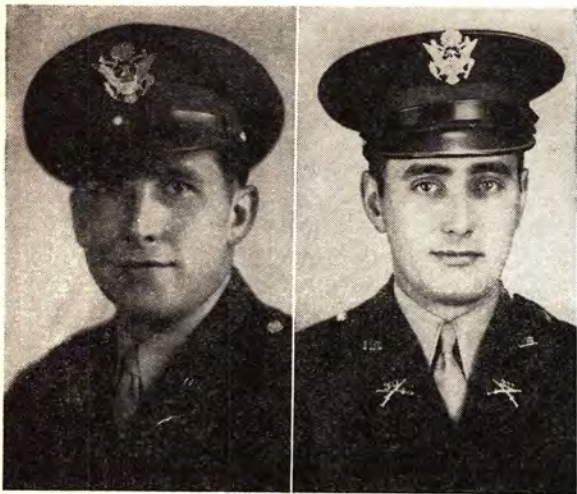


First Lieutenant William K. Dieleman joined the 7th Infantry as a squad leader on 7 April 1941. He advanced to platoon sergeant and made the Fedala landings and the invasion of Sicily with Company "C". He received a battle field commission on 11 September 1943 and served with distinction in the Naples-Foggia campaign and on the Anzio Beachhead. On 18 March 1944 he was selected to be the first commander of the Regimental Battle Patrol. Known for his ability and courage he was called "Fighting William K. Dieleman".

Wyeth. Captain Wallace replaced Captain Robert L. Crozier, of Company "A", who was wounded and evacuated. Captain Wyeth assumed command of Company "B" but remained only three days when he was wounded again and evacuated. Lieutenant Colonel

to supplement routine patrols of the rifle companies and battalions, and not supplant them. All personnel were to be equipped and trained in the use of knives, grenades, bayonets, and the latest combat weapons. A patrol was to be sent out nightly, alternating between the three groups, thus providing the other two with ample rest and

sufficient time in which to prepare and plan for their forthcoming operational patrols or limited objective attacks. Nearly all missions were to be known at least thirty-six hours in advance, to allow plenty of time for briefing, planning, discussion and study of maps and aerial photographs. Every mission was to be thoroughly



2 Lt. Chauncey L. White, left, of Co. "A", and 1 Lt. Walter A. Klausman, of Co. "K", were killed in action on the Anzio Beachhead during March 1944.

reconnoitered in advance. Thus a highly trained, organized, closely-knit group of men motivated by a superb "esprit de corps", specifically trained, and whose sole function was to patrol, came into being and produced superior results.

The military situation at the time did not permit the Battle Patrol to undergo a lengthy period of training and indoctrination as a unit before it was put to the iron test. On the night of 25-26 March, the Battle Patrol was ordered to attack, seize House "Y", an important terrain feature west of Ponte Rotto, and hold it until relieved by a holding force from Company "K". The house had changed hands a dozen times and was the scene of many fierce skirmishes. It was employed as an enemy observation post and was a troublesome sore-spot, being situated on the crest of a ground rise which permitted enemy tanks to emerge suddenly from defilade, fire a number of rounds at our lines only three hundred yards away and then take cover before friendly fire could adjust on them.

Acting on information secured by reconnaissance the night before, a group of fifteen men from the Battle



Pvt. Robert H. Lussy, left, of Co. "F", and Pvt. Norman A. Hebert, of Co. "G", were killed in action on the Anzio Beachhead during March and April 1944.

Patrol crawled from our front lines to the house. At 0200 hours 26 March Staff Sergeant Eric F. Leitner crept within thirty-five yards of the objective and surprised an enemy machine gun nest, dispatched one enemy, captured

a second and assisted in killing three others as they attempted to escape. Sergeant William S. Cucciniello materially assisted in the capture of the objective. Staff Sergeant Leitner shouted out false orders in German which confused the enemy soldiers. Though outnumbered the Battle Patrol group caused the enemy to retreat.⁵⁵

At daybreak the enemy counter-attacked the Battle Patrol and the holding force of Company "K" and re-captured House "Y". Five members of an outpost were wounded. Staff Sergeant Eric F. Leitner again displayed gallantry in action. He covered the evacuation of the five wounded members and led four men across three hundred yards of exposed, bare terrain on the double, at the same time wounding an enemy who was firing point blank at him. Then in a duel, using his M-1 against a machine gunner and an enemy armed with a machine pistol who were firing at him from ranges of fifty and thirty yards respectively, he killed the man with the machine pistol, silenced the machine gun, and enabled the successful evacuation of the wounded.⁵⁶

Two officers and three enlisted men of Company "K" were wounded in the dawn counter-attack by the enemy. The area was smoked to cover the evacuation of the Battle Patrol and Company "K" casualties. As the enemy had regained House "Y" the night's sortie failed but the Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol had passed its initial test by giving an excellent account of itself.

135th INFANTRY OF 34th INFANTRY DIVISION RELIEVES 7th INFANTRY

The 135th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Infantry Division, which reinforced the beachhead forces, commenced the relief of the Seventh Infantry on the line the night of 26-27 March and completed the work at 0400, 28 March 1944.

The Regiment assembled in the vicinity of Pineta de Tre Astura southeast of Nettuno which was to become known as "The Pines." The remaining days in March were spent in improving the bivouac area and digging living and working quarters deep into the ground with coverings of at least twelve inches of earth, for the Germans were well aware of the position and strafed and shelled it regularly.

From 0200 hours 22 January 1944 to 0400 hours 28 March 1944 the "Cotton Baler" Regiment had spent an unbroken string of sixty-seven days in the line, the longest stretch the Regiment had fought, up to that time in the Second World War. Fifty percent of the officers and forty-two percent of the enlisted men who made the landing on 22 January were with the Regiment on 31 March.⁵⁷ Four hundred twenty-eight "Cotton Balermen" had given their lives to their country's cause during the period.

On 31 March Captain Jack M. Duncan left the Regiment and was assigned to the Third Infantry Division G-3 Section. Major Clayton C. Thobro assumed the duties of Regimental S-3.

⁵⁵ GOs No. 91 & 94, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 & 21 May '44. S/Sgt. Leitner & Sgt. Cucciniello were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵⁶ GO No. 91, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 May '44. S/Sgt. Leitner was awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal.

⁵⁷ Report of Operations for 1-31 March 1944, Hqrs. 7th Infantry, 4 April 1944, p. 2.

Twelve Days at "The Pines" and Seventeen Days In the Line

During the period 1-12 April 1944, the Regiment was in VI Corps Reserve and located in "The Pines". Training was conducted in combat and known distance firing, night problems involving limited objective attacks and rapid reorganization. Problems for the rifle squad and platoon in the attack were stressed. Anti-tank and anti-personnel mine laying and removal, reduction of pill boxes and bunkers, the laying of tactical wire and the training of snipers were subjects that drew much attention. Special instruction for rifle company personnel in radio and wire technique, and the use of flame throwers was given. All the usual Infantry subjects were covered. Housekeeping for foxholes, military courtesy and discipline were also stressed. Beach defenses were manned continuously.

7th INFANTRY RETURNS TO THE FRONT

On 11 April 1944 orders were issued for the Seventh Infantry to relieve the 179th Infantry of the 45th Infantry Division on the line. The relief was conducted in an orderly manner by the three battalions, one battalion each night commencing the night of 12-13 April when the Third Battalion went into the line. The First Battalion followed the night of 13-14 April. The relief was completed without incident at 150050b by the Second Battalion which started the new combat period in Regimental reserve.

The 6th Gordons (British) and later the 1st Loyals (British) were on the left flank and the 30th Infantry was on the right of the Regiment during the period 13-29 April 1944. Company "B" and one platoon of Company "C", 83rd Chemical Battalion, were attached to the Regiment during the period while the 160th Field

Baler" positions. In the right half was Cle Torre di Padiglione, a small clump of buildings. The Fosso delle Canucce, Fosso del Leschione, and Fosso della Ficocchia joined the Fosso Spaccasassi just west of the little settlement. The railway bed cut diagonally through the Seventh Infantry sector.

During the seventeen days that the Seventh Infantry spent in the lines during the month of April 1944, enemy operations remained strictly defensive, except for limited objective attacks in which they attempted to retake critical positions which the Seventh Infantry had taken. As a result of the increased activity in the sector of the Regiment, their patrolling was greater and on four days there was marked increase in the use of their artillery.

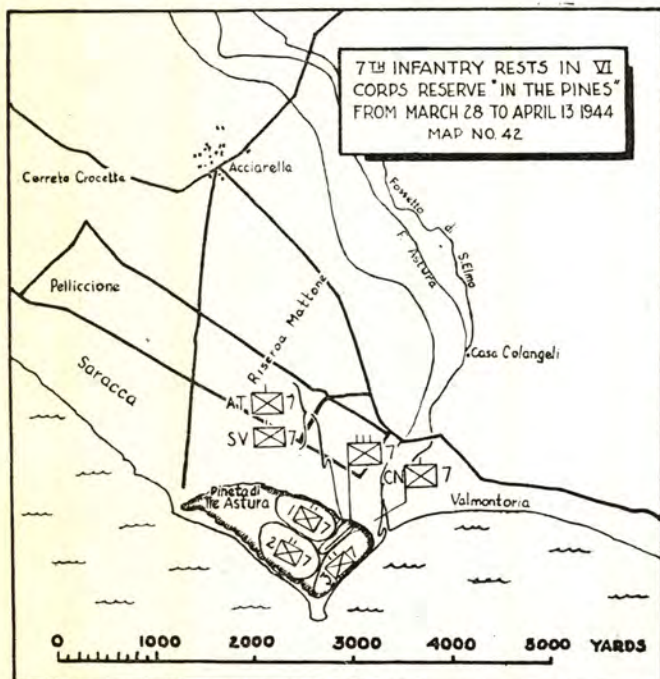
Since the first relief of the Seventh Infantry on 28 March and up to 12 April, when it went back into the lines, the over-all pattern of the enemy activity did not change, nor did his order of battle change to any great extent. He continued construction and organization of a strong defensive line generally one thousand to fifteen hundred yards beyond the furthest outposts of the Regiment. He occupied houses organized as strong points, utilized mines, wire, semi-fortified machine gun posts and dug-in rifle pits. Artillery of light, medium and heavy calibres were used. His attention was centered on the Padiglione road junction, southwest of the town by the same name. Enemy patrolling was not aggressive, nor did he deliver any attacks, even of small size.

The enemy used the road net Albano-Velletri-Carrocceto and the extensive secondary net, particularly along the Albano-Carrocceto route for supply and administrative purposes. Supply installations, bivouac areas and command posts of larger units were located principally north of the railroad which passes through Campoleone, and south of Genzano. The enemy made no movement or concentration of troops which would indicate any change in his attitude or activity.

It was expected that improvement in weather and drying out of the terrain would work to the disadvantage of the enemy. Our superiority in armor and aircraft would be abetted by clear weather, dry ground and longer hours of daylight; thus making enemy operations more difficult and costly, while it would be easier for our troops to take the offensive. The change was expected to be gradual, for April was still to be a wet month.

Since the enemy succeeded in stopping the attack at Cassino, at least temporarily, he was expected to continue the strong defense there. At the same time any large scale attacks against the positions held by the Allied Forces would prove so costly to the enemy that he was not likely to attempt anything more than limited objective attacks or small scale efforts to reduce and occupy forward positions. This fit in well with a picture of prolonged defensive activity on the part of the foe, coupled as it was by the absence of any large scale troop movements or build up of artillery which usually preceded a major offensive action.

During the period 15-18 April 1944 the Regiment remained in defensive positions with the First and Third Battalions on the line and the Second Battalion in Regimental reserve. Defensive positions were improved and contact was maintained with the enemy. Outposts were maintained during the hours of darkness and withdrawn during daylight. The Battle Patrol and companies oper-

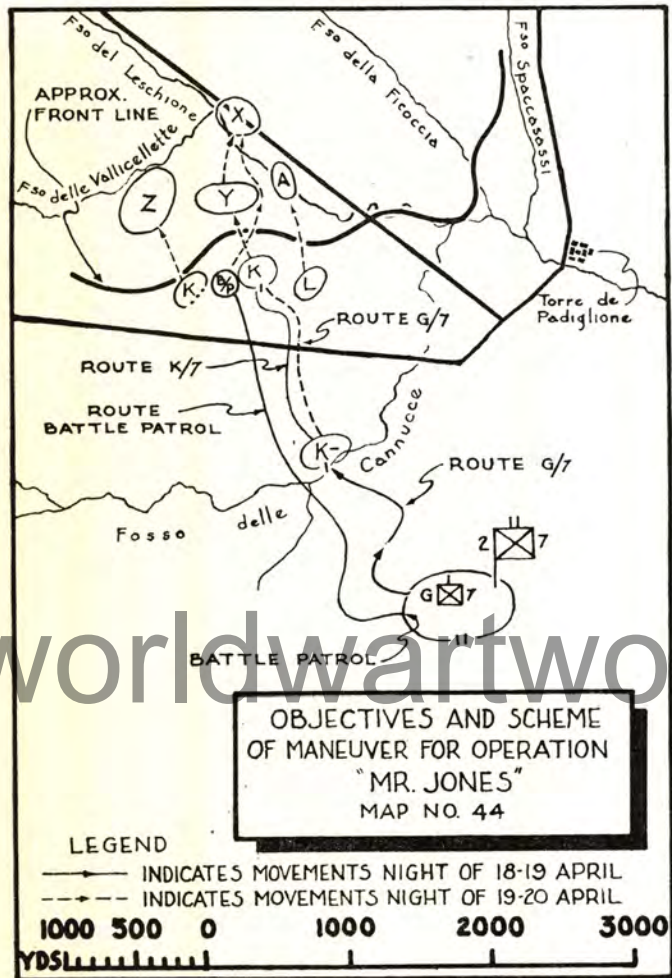


Artillery Battalion, Company "C", 191st Tank Battalion, and Company "B", 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, gave direct support to the "Cotton Baler" troops.

The area occupied by the Seventh Infantry was wooded in the left half and cut by draws affording the enemy good opportunity for infiltration into the "Cotton

completely encircled by the enemy troops. In fact, in one instance, a German unwittingly stepped upon the hand of a member of the Patrol. With ammunition dwindling, outnumbered by a force five times as strong which was reinforced with machine guns, the Battle Patrol broke contact to effect a reorganization.

During the three hours of battle, the Battle Patrol captured six prisoners, killed sixteen and inflicted at least thirty casualties upon the enemy; at a cost of one man killed and another wounded. Upon return to friendly lines, artillery and mortar fire was called for and laid down on the scene of the fight.



The same night a twenty-four man patrol from Company "C" contacted an enemy patrol, estimated to be of at least twenty men, when it was about fifty yards from the windmill. It engaged the enemy in a fire fight forcing the foe to withdraw, with the combat patrol in close pursuit, until the enemy reached some of their dug-in positions 400 yards to the left, where they were supported by two machine pistols and other riflemen. In utter disregard for its own safety, the patrol continued the fight until all of the ammunition was exhausted. It then withdrew and upon receiving a new supply of ammunition returned to re-engage the foe. The enemy, however, had withdrawn from the positions and the patrol continued west until it was about 600 yards from the windmill, where it was halted by a machine gun emplacement and a strong force of enemy.

An eight man patrol from Company "B" moved out for the windmill, where it intended to remain until daylight to ambush any of the enemy who would be vacating the position at the time. However, it ran into an estimated platoon of Germans. A fire fight ensued with the patrol expending its ammunition. Upon replenishing

the same, it returned only to be forced to withdraw because of excessive enemy artillery fire.

During the daylight hours on 20 April, contact was maintained with the enemy. After dark and until daylight of the 21st, the Seventh Infantry successfully extended its lines to the right of the railroad bed and east of Padiglione. The enemy became apprehensive over the situation and fired many flares and increased the use of his artillery. Shortly before daybreak a formation of enemy planes passed over the Regiment dropping flares and propaganda leaflets. Two bombs were dropped in the vicinity of the Command Post of Anti-Tank Company, causing no damage. The Seventh Infantry held and consolidated all of its positions and started to wire the front lines so that the enemy would be kept out of hand grenade range. All of the tactical wire was covered by automatic weapons sighted to fire along the enemy side of the wire. Cannon Company fired twenty-five rounds at a house on the road to the east of Aprilia, scoring fifteen direct hits, and successfully dispersed a large number of enemy personnel in the vicinity. Other targets of opportunity were also fired on. The 10th Engineers began preparations to install wire, but because of the extremely heavy enemy harassing fire, were unable to do so.

The night of 20-21 April two squads of Company "E" furnished local security for two tanks of the 191st Tank Battalion. Company "E", minus the two squads, moved over behind the First Battalion along the Fosso Spaccasassi. Company "C" (minus one platoon), Company "I" and the right platoon of Company "L" maneuvered to new positions. The Company "L" platoon encountered an enemy patrol and a small fight resulted with one of the enemy getting killed. The Battle Patrol was attached to Company "I" during the night, until 0400 when it moved to the vicinity of the Second Battalion.

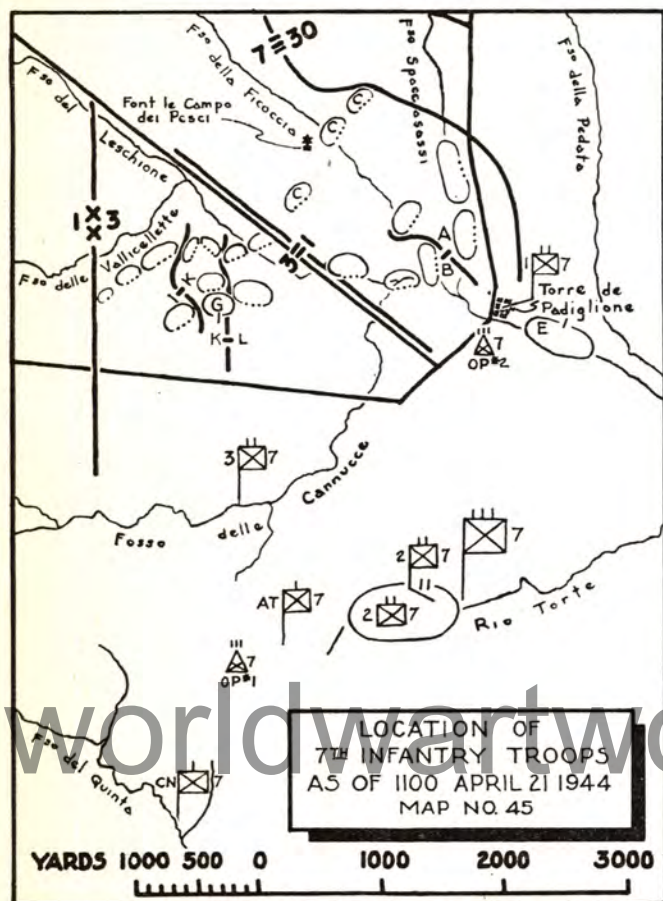
On 21 April near Padiglione First Lieutenant James H. McCracken of Company "K" left the cover of his command post during an artillery concentration to adjust friendly artillery fire on an enemy mortar battery. While others were in their foxholes, First Lieutenant McCracken crawled one hundred yards forward over the flat and exposed terrain and silenced the mortar battery in thirty minutes, during which time he was the direct target at seventy-five yards range, of machine gun and rifle fire that missed him by inches. Approximately one hour later,



An air photo of some of the flatland of the Anzio Beachhead. Isola Bella is in the foreground and Cisterna di Littoria is in the background.

First Lieutenant McCracken again crawled about one hundred yards out in the open, and successfully adjusted 60mm mortar fire on an enemy gun. At this time he was exposed to enemy artillery shells which burst twenty-five to thirty-five yards from him. He was killed in subsequent action.⁵⁸

Four enemy machine guns located themselves between Companies "K" and "L" during the night of 21-22 April. Three combat patrols were sent out to engage the enemy weapons and later an additional squad was



sent to reinforce the patrols. All efforts to destroy the enemy weapons that night failed. Early in the morning Private First Class Virgus C. Thomas of the Medical Detachment crawled forward under the fire of two enemy machine guns and small arms and treated three wounded "Cotton Balers" and in so doing was severely wounded.⁵⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Arthur J. Smith, Jr., replaced Lieutenant Colonel William A. Weitzel as the commanding officer of the Third Battalion on 22 April 1944.

COMPANY "G" CONDUCTS LIMITED ATTACK 22-23 APRIL 1944

Under the command of Captain Edgar H. Poinsett, Company "G", supported by four tanks of the 191st Tank Battalion, conducted a successful, limited attack on enemy positions west of Torre di Padiglione, north of the railway bed. Companies "K" and "L" of the Third Battalion supported the attack by fire.

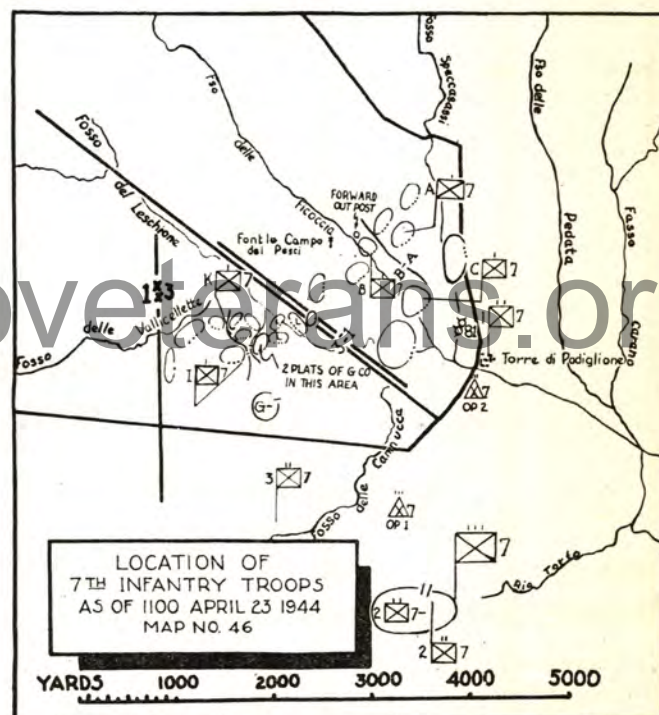
Preceded by a heavy artillery preparation, the attack jumped off at 2200 hours 22 April. Creeping and crawling over the barren muddy ground, the company was but three hundred yards from its objective two hours later, when it was forced to call for supporting fire from the tanks, which was delivered effectively until the tanks exhausted their ammunition and had to withdraw. At 0100 hours on 23 April, less than one hundred yards

separated the men from their objective and they began slugging it out with machine guns. Ammunition became low, but was replenished before it was all consumed.

Captain Edgar H. Poinsett abandoned his cover in the face of heavy automatic fire at one hundred yards range and took up an exposed position to direct the attack of his company upon the important enemy position. When his two assault platoons lost contact with each other, Captain Poinsett ran forward twenty-five yards to a knoll, and coordinated the attack by means of his radio. Although he was the direct target of enemy automatic and grenade fire which tore up the earth around him, Captain Poinsett remained at his elevated and exposed position and guided his troops forward to within fifty yards of the enemy.

Shortly after daylight an enemy strongpoint was taken with thirteen prisoners, two dozen machine guns and machine pistols, and a large quantity of other arms. Company "G" continued its limited attack on the 23rd to clear the enemy from between the positions of Companies "K" and "L".

Heavy mortar fire fell on the "George" Company men as they mopped up, but the enemy pieces were quickly located and silenced. A smoke screen was laid down by the 83rd Chemical Battalion to aid the advance. Finally



the men came abreast of the positions of Company "L". Enemy small arms fire ceased. Company "G" had, in its limited attack, closed the gap between the two Third Battalion companies. In addition to the thirteen prisoners captured the first night, Company "G" took fourteen other prisoners and one of them remarked that because of our intense artillery and mortar concentrations, and constant patrol activity they had not received food or water for three days. Company "G" was relieved at 0520 24 April and returned to the control of the Second Battalion. Five men had been killed and twenty six seriously wounded during the assault.

became distinguished in action during the attack. Private

⁵⁸ GO No. 161, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 July '44. 1 Lt. McCracken was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵⁹ GO No. 257, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Nov. '44. Pfc Thomas was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

Besides their leader several "George" Company men became distinguished in action during the attack. Private First Class Ernest N. Ross, wounded and missing as a result of the action, voluntarily had braved machine gun and sniper fire to cut gaps in wire entanglements laid by the enemy. Private First Class Lewis H. Robinson, a Browning automatic rifleman, silenced an enemy machine gun by killing and wounding all of its crew. Sergeant Frank J. Grasso maneuvered his squad in a masterful fashion which was an important factor in the rout of the enemy. Staff Sergeant Wilfred F. Guimont, who was wounded three times, manned an exposed observation post and successfully adjusted fire on enemy positions despite heavy fire received. Staff Sergeant George E. Wood restored communications between the forward platoons and was wounded in the action. Private First Class Frank Acker personally routed six Germans with grenade fire and captured them.⁶⁰

Also during the attack Private First Class Theodore F. Thompson of the Medical Detachment suffered wounds while treating other wounded. First Lieutenant John S. Raney of Company "M" and Private First Class Thomas J. Werbie of Company "L", both of whom were killed in subsequent actions, rendered valuable assistance to Company "G". First Lieutenant Raney directed machine gun fire and adjusted the fire of friendly mortars. Private First Class Werbie killed five Germans with rifle fire and three with hand grenade fire. Staff Sergeant Herbert H. Longcrier of Third Battalion Headquarters entered a booby-trapped enemy minefield in which four men had been killed and six wounded and disarmed twelve teller mines while under the direct fire of enemy machine guns.⁶⁰

BATTLE PATROL CAPTURES THE WINDMILL

The night of 23-24 April saw the capture of a small but very important objective which had been a target and objective by various units for quite some time. The windmill, an object usually associated with peaceful rural scenes, was here the Font le Campo dei Pesci, northwest of Cle Panfilo in Italy, the object of many furious battles and skirmishes. The enemy had used it for weeks as an outpost and the Allies had tried many times to take it without success.

At 2330, 23 April, a group of the Battle Patrol left the Company "B" Command Post, on the mission of capturing the windmill. A small enemy detachment held the much desired objective that night and were driven off after a fierce fire fight. The patrol then dug-in and drove off enemy who attempted to infiltrate the positions. The enemy suffered four killed during the engagement. The Battle Patrol sustained five casualties. After Second Lieutenant John J. Greene of the Battle Patrol had led the patrol in the successful assault upon the enemy strong-point, six riflemen and two machine gun crews of Company "B" sent to take over the position were disorganized by fire from previously zeroed-in mortars and prepared machine gun fire, which wounded nine members of the outpost group. By skillful and courageous leadership, Second Lieutenant Greene reorganized the outpost and thus enabled it to hold its position.⁶¹

The Battle Patrol was finally relieved at the windmill and withdrew. At the request of the Commanding General, the windmill was made a part of the main line of resistance. The outpost in its vicinity thereafter consisted of one officer, eight riflemen and a section of light machine guns.

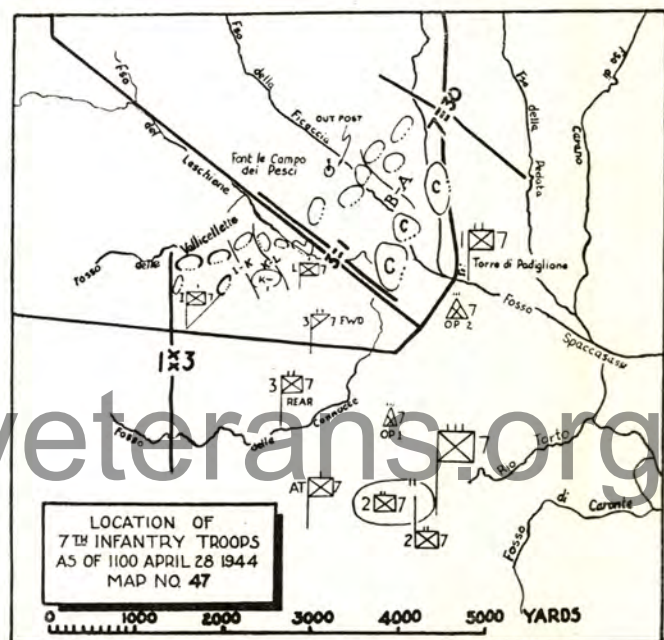
The enemy tried to retake the windmill the following day and night but failed. The First Battalion established outposts on the right and left of the windmill outpost to provide flank protection. On the night of 24-25

April 1944, Private First Class Forrest W. Hendrix of Company "C" was chiefly responsible for the defeat of a fifteen-man enemy combat patrol that crept within twenty-five yards of his platoon's outpost position near Torre Di Padiglione.⁶²

The Third Battalion received unusually heavy artillery fire all along its front lines with Company "K" sustaining twenty and Company "L" two casualties. Under cover of a dense smoke screen, the British on the left flank successfully relieved the 6th Gordons with the 1st Loyals.

During the afternoon of 25 April, three enemy appeared suddenly in front of the Third Battalion. As they ran forward, they yelled "Kamerad." Seventh Infantry troops fired on them and some men were sent out to kill or capture them. After a search by the patrol from Company "I" no bodies were found, although an enemy machine gun was brought back.

At 1000 on the 26th, at the height of a terrific rain-storm, a forward outpost of the Third Battalion manned



by Company "K" and Company "M" personnel was ambushed by the enemy with one man being killed and six captured. Only two men saw the incident. They opened fire and killed one enemy but were unable to prevent the other enemy from taking the six "Cotton Balermen" prisoners. The Commanding Officer of the Regiment considered the incident a disgrace to have some of its members captured and so directed the commanding officer of the Third Battalion to inform all his officers and men. An enemy shell hit the First Battalion Headquarters Company kitchen, killing one man and wounding seven.

The Seventh Infantry remained in position on the 27th and 28th, maintained contact with the enemy, conducted patrols and continued to improve its defenses. On

⁶⁰ GOs No. 91, 103, 106, 108, 117, 161, 166, 187 & 206, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 May, 8, 9 & 13 June, 18 & 27 July, 5 Sept. & 2 Oct. '44. 1 Lt. Raney was posthumously awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. Capt. Poinsett, S/Sgts. Guimont, Longcrier & Wood, Sgt. Grasso, Pfc Acker, Robinson, Ross, Thompson & Werbie were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁶¹ GO No. 103, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 June '44. 2 Lt. Greene was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁶² GO No. 134, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 27 June '44. Pfc Hendrix was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

the 27th enemy elements displaying a Red Cross flag were fired on by our troops when they advanced to within two hundred yards of the windmill and the enemy returned the fire. The reason for such conduct was that the enemy were believed to be using trickery.

In addition to those already named as having been cited for actions performed during April 1944 on the Anzio Beachhead Staff Sergeant Arthur E. Cuny of Company "D", Private First Class Raymond C. Uschhold of Company "B", Private Alfonso M. Hernandez of Company "G" and Private Michael J. Valek of Company "B" were commended.⁶³

GERMANS TRY PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE ON 7th INFANTRY TO NO AVAIL

After unsuccessful attempts to drive the Seventh Infantry and the other American and British units on the Anzio Beachhead into the sea the Germans tried their

hand at psychological warfare and fired battle field propaganda leaflets at the defending troops by means of special artillery or mortar projectiles and occasionally dropped some by airplane. Daily broadcasts were made by "Axis Sally" over "Jerry's" radio and occasionally loud speakers were brought to the front lines themselves and broadcasts were made to the Allied troops. The aim of the program was to discourage the defending troops, to split the Allies and destroy the soldier's faith in the home front, his country, officers and even his girl friends. The Jews and Wall Street barons were favorite targets and "Rich man's war, poor man's fight" was a favorite slogan. Except in a few cases probably the propaganda had little effect on the morale of individual soldiers and it had practically no effect on the morale of the Beachhead forces as a whole. A few of the leaflets are here reproduced.

⁶³ GOs No. 215, 59, 306 & 370, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Oct. '44 & 23 Feb., 20 Rug. & 4 Oct. '45. S/Sgt. Cuny, Pfc's Hernandez & Uschhold & Pvt. Valek were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



It was a year ago when she met him...

THE MOMENT SHE DREADED

Forgotten are the days when shopgirl Joan Hopkins was still selling ribbons in a 5 and 10 cts. store in New York City. As private secretary to slick Sam Levy, big money maker in the war business, she rose to be a near daddy's darling.

Sam didn't have any cash when he got started, and he doesn't like to be reminded of his early days on the lower East Side. The war was just the right thing for him. Like many other home-warriors he made the grade, piling up dough and growing fat on the sacrifices of those young American boys fighting on foreign battlefields.

At heart Joan is not a bad woman. For over two years she had not seen her fiancé, dear old Bob Harrison, but she cared for very much. Bob was shipped to Europe in both for the cause of Sam Levy and his kind.

Two years is a long time for any girl. For more than half a year she had not heard from Bob. He seemed to be among the missing.

Some sunny afternoon, however, just when Joan and Sam were stepping out of fashionable Bowler's shop on Fifth Avenue, she was struck speechless by the sight of a man in uniform.

It was a rude awakening for her. And it was also a dreadful blow to Bob, for it was he, who suddenly stood opposite her - on crutches, one leg amputated.

Two lives - lost to one another forever.

Look for the other pictures of this series.



For the girl who thought Sam was...

SAM KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS

Two years ago, comely Joan Hopkins was still a salesgirl behind the ribbon counter in a New York 5 & 10 cts. store getting 12 dollars a week.

To-day she is pulling down 60 bucks as the private secretary to Sam Levy. Business is excellent and Sam's making a pile of dough on war contracts.

FOR HIM THE SLAUGHTER CAN'T LAST LONG ENOUGH.

Sam has no scruples about getting a bit intimate with Joan. And why should he have any? Tall and handsome Bob Harrison, Joan's fiancé, is on the front, thousands of miles away, fighting for guys like Sam Levy.

Joan loves Bob, but she doesn't know WHEN HE WILL COME BACK.

Look for the other pictures of this series.



Poor little Joan! She is still thinking of Bob...

THE WAY OF ALL FLESH

When pretty Joan Hopkins was still standing behind the ribbon counter of a 5 & 10 cts. store on 3rd Avenue in New York City she never dreamed of ever seeing the interior of a duplex, Park Avenue apartment. Neither did young Bob Harrison, the man she loved. Bob was drafted and sent to the battlefields in Europe thousands of miles away from her. Through Lazare's Employment Agency Joan got a job as private secretary with wily Sam Levy. Sam is piling up big money on war contracts. Should the slaughter end very soon, he would suffer an apoplectic stroke.

Now Joan knows what Bob and his pals are fighting for.

Joan always used to look up to Bob as the guiding star of her life, and she was still a good girl when she started working for Sam Levy. But she often got the blues thinking of Bob, whom she hadn't seen for over two years. Her boss had an understanding heart and was always very kind to her, so kind indeed, that he often invited her up to his place. He had always wanted to show her his "apartment". Besides, Sam wasn't stingy and each time Joan came to see him, he gave her the nicest presents. Now, if women like beautiful and expensive things, but Sam wasn't the man you could play for a sucker. He wanted something, wanted it very definitely....

Poor little Joan! She is still thinking of Bob, yet she is almost hoping that he'll never return.

Look for the other pictures of this series.

LIFE a party.

A CONTRIBUTION BY OUR SOCIETY REPORT

It was a charming idea of Mr. Levy, the munitions manufacturer, to invite those of his favorite employees who have a friend or fiancé at the Nation's front. He had considerably called it a "Noblesse Party". A large number of fortunate manufacturers was also present.

At first the girls, of course, were somewhat reserved, but the whisky and the other drinks were so excellent that even everybody was having a grand time. There was only one embarrassing incident - when one of the girls suddenly left the party, exhibiting...

"Excuse me, but my fiancé (from in Europe) is not going to be so dumb as to risk his life or health for you profiteers and scoundrels!"

Apert from this "slip of the tongue" nothing else spoiled the fun of the party.

It is very comforting for the boys at the front to know that their girls - when they see party - are well taken care of.



Look for the other pictures of this series.



AMERICAN AND BRITISH SOLDIERS!

OF COURSE, you have been in Italy for some time, and you know by now that good old Neptune is called Nettuno in Italian. Already thousands upon thousands of your pals visited him and preferred to stay with him forever.

This time, however, the god of the sea was ticked to death that you did him the honor of calling on him in the very place that was named after him.

Neptune was just starting a new collection of American and British ships, tanks, planes and guns for his armory. He was just about to start the collection of the Tyrrhenian Sea and was disappointed with your simple treatment of him. He decided to give you the types of your equipment that you once uniforms of your fellow soldiers. The Germans were kind enough to sweep the beaches of his beloved Nettuno.

So, good terms with the old guy. Use terms to settle down with him.

NG ASIDE, BOYS.
The British-American landing at Nettuno is developing into a hell of a business for your forces.

You and your pals will have to bear the consequences!



THE BEACH-HEAD

is going to be the big blow against the Germans.

Wasn't that the slogan when the Allied troops landed at Nettuno on January 21st?

TODAY

exactly three months of hard fighting have passed and you can now celebrate this event. But it is still merely a beach-head, paved with the skulls of thousands of British and American soldiers!

The Beach-Head has become a Death's Head!

It is welcoming you with a grin, and also those who are coming after you across the sea for an appointment with death.

Do they know what they are in for? Yes, they feel that they are landing on a

DEATH'S HEAD



SALLY, the RADIO-GIRL
from station

"JERRY'S FRONT"

invites you to a
FREE RETURN TRIP TO AMERICA
via
GERMANY

Sally says **YOU CAN LIVE IN PEACE** and **COMFORT** at one of the camps operated under the auspices of the International Red Cross. She thinks you ought to take along a woolen blanket, some underwear and an extra pair of pants.

DON'T HESITATE to make good use of this offer while there is a chance.

"SUMMER IN GERMANY IS THE PERFECTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL."
(MARK TWAIN)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In case you are taken prisoner, you will very likely wish to have your relatives informed with as little delay as possible that you are alive and out of danger.

JERRY'S FRONT RADIO

has arranged to announce the names and addresses of prisoners of war and their serial numbers. The announcements will be made three times daily.

You will understand how valuable this service is when you consider that your relatives are spared the dreadful feeling of anxious suspense concerning your fate.

Be prepared and fill in this blank. It will be useful to you if you should be captured.

FILL IN THIS BLANK AND KEEP IT

USE BLOCK LETTERS.

TO BE TRANSMITTED BY JERRY'S FRONT RADIO:

Name: _____
Rank: _____
Serial Number: _____
Address: _____ Street
Town: _____
Country: _____

In this space write a short message of not more than 15 words which will be transmitted by radio.



The leaflet which we are showing you

in the original and in translation on the reverse side was dropped over our lines by order of your command.

Allied divisions landed near Rome?

"There are many roads that lead to Rome," but none for you.

German coastal positions broken through?

Do you still think so to-day?

Main fighting line outflanked?

You don't mean by chance our lines? Numerous of your units have been cut off from their lines of communication and taken prisoner.

Big encirclement battle is starting?

Who is fighting with his back to the sea, surrounded on all sides by a powerful opponent?



AMERICAN SOLDIERS!

Remember those happy days when you stepped out with your best girl "going places and doing things"?

No matter

whether you two were enjoying a nice juicy steak at some tony restaurant or watching a thrilling movie with your favourite stars performing, or dancing to the lilt of a swing band **you were happy.**

WHAT IS LEFT OF ALL THIS?

Nothing! Nothing but days and nights of the heaviest fighting and for many of you

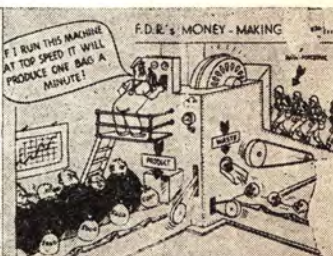
NOTHING BUT A PLAIN WOODEN CROSS IN FOREIGN SOIL



A STATEMENT
 by
 U.S. Brigadier General Fred H. Osborne, A
 Special Service Div. in the Dept. of War, VA
 published in the "Saturday Evening Post", following the German
 capture into the hands of the American troops in Europe
 "Many Americans in uniform do not know WHY
 they are in this war. In many cases they frankly
 admit that they do not know who they should
 not rather fight against the Soviet Union instead
 of Germany."
**BUT THE GERMAN SOLDIER KNOWS
 WHAT HE IS FIGHTING FOR!**
 He is defending his country,
 his family and his home
AND YOU?
WHY are you in Europe?
WHY are you in uniform instead of in your office or business suit?
WHY are you huddling along on the non-watered mountain peaks of
 Italy, whose death is being toward every corner?
WHY are you stomping across bullet-swept battlefields being killed
 hundreds of dead and wounded each day?
BECAUSE the war-machine, led by Roosevelt, Beach, Morgenthau, Frank-
 linter and operators concealed themselves with their rascals and
 propagandists. Now they are reaping colossal profits from THEIR war.
 For this is
THE RICH MAN'S WAR and THE POOR MAN'S FIGHT!



**SOLDIERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN ITALY
 PROUDLY DYING FOR WALL STREET!**
 This diploma is presented with portraits of prominent
 Americans for whom you are absolute in the least sense,
 are sacrificing your health and life. It shall not be the
 only reward that Wall Street is granting you!
 For this diploma is also to receive leading recognition in
 the shape of the huge monument depicted below and
 created by one of America's best sculptors.
 It will be placed at the foot of Wall Street as an eternal
 expression of gratitude for the willingness of those soldiers
 who patriotically fought and died for Wall Street, although
 they had the choice to spend the War in a Camp in
 Germany and imprisonment!



Another weapon which the Germans used against the Beachhead was a large railroad gun of very heavy calibre, probably of 370mm, and which the Americans dubbed "The Anzio Express". Daily shellings were made by the gun and on many occasions much havoc was caused in Anzio and Nettuno. One "Doggie" composed verse about the monstrous shells fired by the gun and is here quoted:

THE WHISPERING RIDERS

Come listen you Doggies, to a battle-worn tale
 Of a monstrous shell with a wearisome wail.
 All through the day and all through the night,
 You can hear this strange Rider, that whispers in flight.
 I crawl in my dugout to keep out of the way
 Till the Rider has ended his ride for the day.
 Then the challenge is taken, guns roar in a row
 In revenge for the shelling of the Port Anzio.
 And the whispering song, going the opposite way,
 Are the hard-hitting Riders . . . made in U. S. A.

Lester Yost, Pfc.
 Hq. Co. 3rd Bn.
 7th Infantry

**7th INFANTRY IS RELIEVED BY ELEMENTS
 45th INFANTRY DIVISION**

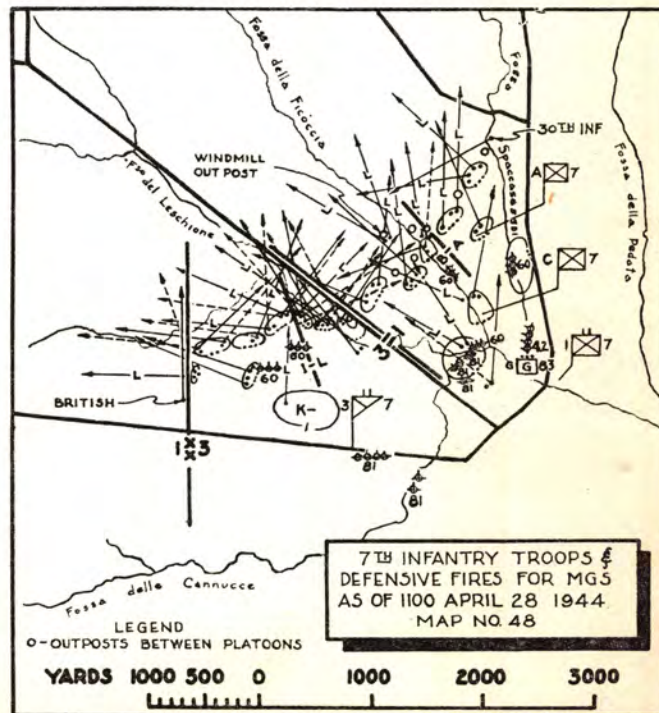
The Second and Third Battalions were relieved the night of 28-29 April by the Third Battalion 157th Infantry and the Third Battalion 179th Infantry. Two men of the 179th Infantry were wounded by enemy artillery fire during the relief. The First Battalion, Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies were relieved during the night of 29-30 April and closed into a rear area. Enemy artillery and mortar fire caused more casualties. The 179th Infantry suffered one man killed and three wounded while the Seventh Infantry had four men wounded.

On 1 May the Regiment closed into the beach area of "The Pines" once more and remained there until the

21st all the while getting ready for a return to actual combat.

PLANS FOR THE BREAKTHROUGH

In early May 1944 the VI American Corps made plans and issued orders for a general attack to break out of the Anzio Beachhead, to seize the high ground in the vicinity of Cori and be prepared to continue the attack to seize Orenta and cut Highway 6 in the vicinity of Valmontone. The Third Infantry Division, to be flanked by the First Armored Division on the left and the First Special Service Force on the right, was ordered to capture Cisterna di Littoria which had been successfully defended by the Germans during the ill-fated attacks of 30-31



January. The XII Tactical Air Command was to support the attack by neutralization of enemy artillery, destruction of concentration areas, communication centers and dumps, and disruption of enemy movements, particularly armor. The VI Corps artillery was to support the attack by prearranged fires, observed fires, counter-battery, interdiction and harassing fires. Naval gun fire support was also to be given by prearranged observed fires.

The Third Infantry Division issued orders to attack on D-Day, H-Hour, to reduce La Villa, isolate and reduce Cisterna di Littoria, seize and hold Line X-Y in its zone, to destroy all enemy in its zone and maintain contact with the First Armored Division on the left and First Special Service Force on the right.⁶⁴

All three regiments of the Division and the attachments, consisting of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, 751st Tank Battalion, 84th Chemical Battalion (less two Companies), 441st Anti-Aircraft Artillery (AW) Battalion and the 24th Armored Field Regiment were assigned missions. Each of the three regiments was ordered to attack with not less than two rifle battalions.

Two phases were planned for the attack, (see Map No. 49). For the first phase the Seventh Infantry was assigned the mission of attacking in the center of the Third Division line with not more than two battalions, and seizing and holding objectives "H", "I", "J", "K" and "L." Then Cisterna di Littoria was to be attacked by the fire of all available battalion weapons from Objective "L". One battalion was to be maintained in Area II to be committed in Phase II or on Division order. All enemy in the zone were to be destroyed and contact maintained with the adjacent units. Company "B", 84th Chemical Battalion, and Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, were attached to the Regiment for the operation.

On the left of the Regiment the 30th Infantry was ordered to attack at the same time and seize Objectives "A", "B", "C", "D", "E", "F" and "G." The 15th Infantry on the right was ordered to seize and hold Objectives "M", "N", "O", "P" and "Q". The orders to destroy all enemy in zone, maintain contact with adjacent units and hold one battalion in reserve applied to the two sister regiments, as well as the Seventh, and they were also given attachments.

In Phase II the Seventh Infantry was to attack on Division order with the reserve battalion, and seize and hold Objectives "R" (La Villa), "S" and "T". Upon the seizure of Objective "T", the Regiment was to reorganize and with not more than one battalion hold the enemy north and west of Line "X-Y" in zone, with particular attention to defense against an enemy armored attack from the northwest. On Division order the Regiment was to attack with remaining forces and destroy enemy forces in Cisterna di Littoria. Contact was to be maintained with the First Armored Division on the left and elements of the 15th Infantry on the right, south of Cisterna di Littoria.

For the second phase the 30th Infantry was to attack in zone with its reserve battalion, seize and hold Objective "U-1", then assist by fire the attack of the Seventh Infantry on La Villa, Objective "R". Upon the seizure of Objectives "R", "S" and "T" by the Seventh Infantry, the 30th Infantry was to pass through the Seventh Infantry seize and hold objectives "U-2" and "V".

The 15th Infantry in the second phase was to attack in zone on Division order with not more than two battalions, seize and hold Objectives "W", "Z-2", and "Z-1". Upon seizure of their objectives the 15th and 30th Infantries were to reorganize and give particular

attention to defense against enemy armored attacks from the north and west along the Velletri-Cisterna di Littoria axis.

Task Force "A" to be commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John J. Toffey, Executive Officer of the Seventh Infantry, was to be ready to assemble on Division order in the vicinity of Isola Bella and be prepared to exploit any breakthrough toward Valmontone or Cori. The components of Task Force "A" were the Third Reconnaissance Troop; a company of tanks and a company of tank destroyers to be designated by the commanding officers of the 751st Tank Battalion and 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; one battalion of field artillery (105mm Howitzers) as designated by the Commanding General, Third Infantry Division Artillery; the Reconnaissance Company, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; the reserve battalion of the 15th Infantry or 30th Infantry as designated by the Command General, Third Infantry Division; and one platoon of engineers. Forty 2½-ton trucks were to be loaded with ammunition, rations and gas for a four days' operation and held available on call by the Third Infantry Division Quartermaster. Detailed orders were to be issued prior to employment of the task force.

The Third Infantry Division Artillery with the British 24th Armored Field Regiment and 441st Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion attached was to fire preparations as directed by VI Corps Artillery and support the attack by successive pre-arranged concentrations on call.

On receipt of the Division order Lieutenant Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro and his staff perfected plans for the important part to be played by the Seventh Infantry. On 15 May the "Buffalo Plan", as it was called, was issued.⁶⁵

In accordance with the plan the Second and Third Battalions were to form the assault wave for the first phase of the attack. The Third Battalion on the left was to have attached one platoon of Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion. One platoon of Company "C", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and one squad of Company "A", 10th Engineers, were to be in support of the Blue Battalion. Thus reinforced, the Third Battalion was ordered to attack at a time to be announced and accomplish the following: (1) Advance in its zone of action in a column of companies and capture objectives "H", "I" and "J"; (2) Upon reaching objective "J" push strong combat patrols to seize the railroad line in its sector; (3) Use tanks with tank-infantry assault teams to reduce enemy resistance; (4) Gain and maintain contact with the 30th Infantry on the left and the Second Battalion on the right; (5) Protect the Regiment's left flank; (6) Destroy all enemy in its zone.

The Second Battalion on the right was to have a few extra attachments and supporting units for its missions. One 37mm gun platoon of Anti-Tank Company; one platoon of Company "A" and two light tanks of Company "D", 751st Tank Battalion, were to be attached to the battalion for the operation, with one platoon plus one tank destroyer of Company "C", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and two squads of Company "A", 10th Engineers, in support. With these attachments and supporting units the Second Battalion was directed to attack on D-Day, H-Hour and accomplish the following: (1) Advance in its zone of action with two rifle companies in the attacking echelon and capture objectives "K" and "L"; (2) Drive the enemy from Fosso dell Battagone in its sector with a special force consisting of

⁶⁴ FO No. 9 Hq. 3d Inf. Div. 9 May 1944.

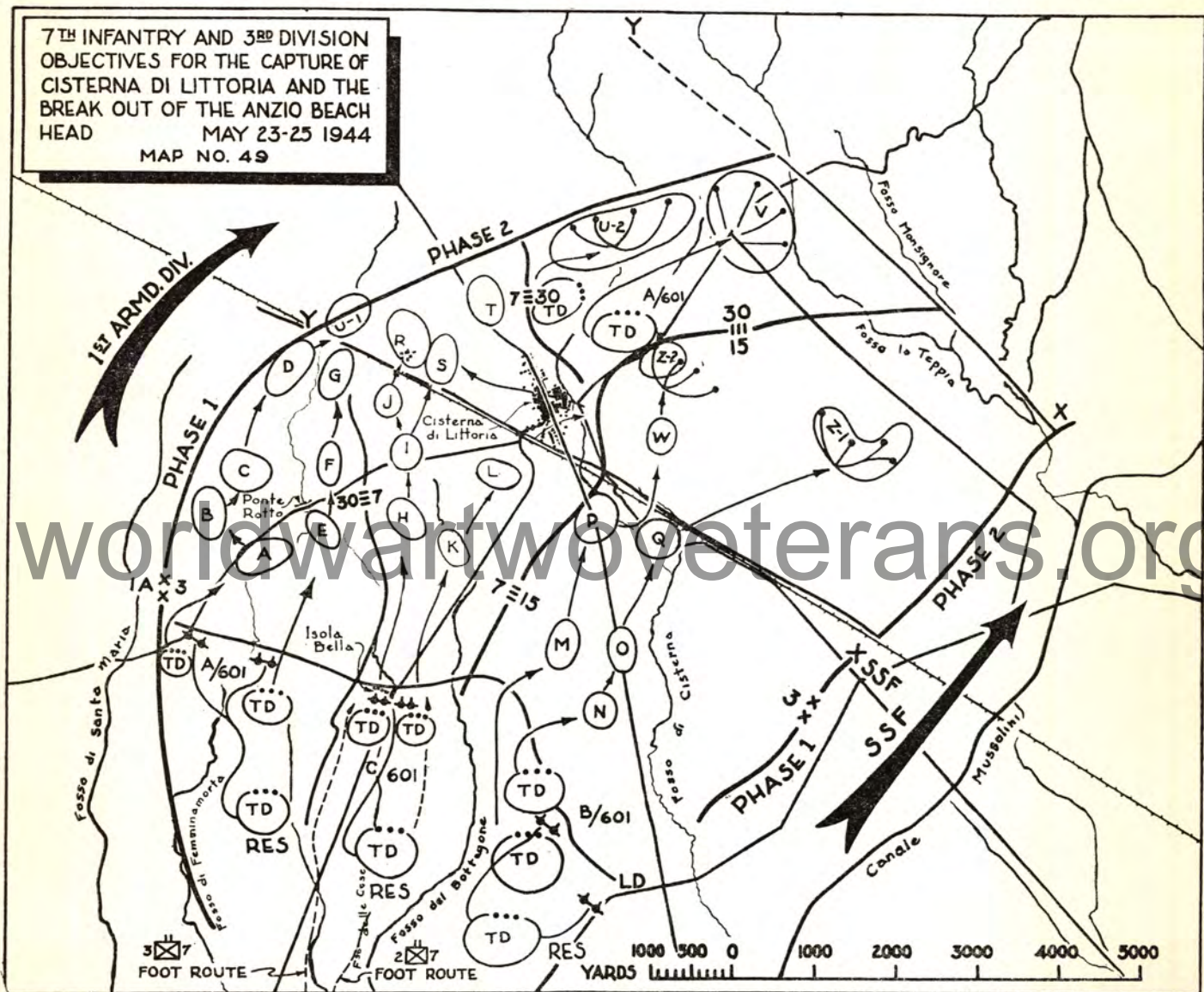
⁶⁵ FO No. 8 Hq. 7th Infantry 15 May 1944.

one platoon of infantry, one squad of engineers, two light tanks and one tank destroyer; (3) Reduce enemy resistance with four infantry-tank assault teams; (4) Upon reaching Objective "L" push combat patrols to seize the railroad line in its sector; (5) Attack Cisterna di Littoria by fire of all available weapons from Objective "L"; (6) Maintain contact with the 15th Infantry on the right and the Third Battalion on the left; (7) Protect the Regiment's right flank; (8) Destroy all enemy in zone.

For the initial phase the First Battalion was to remain assembled in Area II in Regimental reserve. Cannon Company was to support initially by fire the advance

high explosive and smoke concentrations on call. One platoon of Company "C", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, was to remain in concealed positions covering the line of departure against enemy armored attack. Company "A", 10th Engineer Battalion, was ordered to construct two "battle sleds" devised by the Commanding General and to be used for carrying infantrymen by dragging the sleds behind tanks. The two "sleds" were to be moved into position on D-1. The engineers were to support the Regiment's advance by clearing mine fields, and repairing and maintaining supply routes.

In the second phase of the planned attack the First Battalion was to move to an assembly area in the vicinity



of the assault battalions. Anti-Tank Company (—) on the night of D-2/D-1 was to establish one platoon along the line of departure to support the advance of the attacking echelon. From positions south of the Dairy Farm it was to maintain two platoons on alert status prepared to move forward on order to support the advance of the assault battalions. Positions for one platoon were to be prepared in the vicinity of the Dairy Farm.

One platoon of Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, was to assist in seizing and holding the line of departure until released by Division Headquarters. Company "D", 84th Chemical Battalion, was assigned the mission of supporting the advance of the assault battalions with

of Objective "J" on order, and attack in a column of companies in zone, on Division order to seize and hold Objectives "R", "S" and "T". Upon seizure of Objective "T" the Red Battalion was to reorganize and hold the enemy north of Line "X-Y" in its zone with particular attention to defense against enemy armored attacks from the northwest. Contact was to be maintained with the First Battalion, 6th Armored Regiment on the left and the Second Battalion in the vicinity of Cisterna di Littoria. The Red Battalion, like the others, was to destroy all enemy in its zone.

The Second Battalion in the second phase was to attack on Division order and destroy all enemy forces in Cisterna di Littoria. Its four tank-infantry assault

teams were to be used to reduce the enemy resistance on order of the battalion commander. Contact was to be maintained with adjacent units. The Third Battalion for the second phase was to pass to Regimental Reserve in the vicinity of Objective "J" and be prepared to assist the First or Second Battalion efforts on order.

Cannon Company was to initially support the advance of the First and Second Battalions by fire and on order attach one platoon of M-8 tanks to the First Battalion for defense of Line "X-Y" and a similar platoon to the Second Battalion for defense of Cisterna di Littoria. Anti-Tank Company was, on order, to attach one platoon to each the First and Third Battalions for defense against possible enemy armored attacks from the northwest.

It was known that the German 362nd and 715th Infantry Divisions were responsible for the defense of the Cisterna di Littoria sector. They were believed to be greatly understrength but had attached to them units like the 362nd Fusilier Battalion, battalions from the 9th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and the 1028th Grenadier Regiment. A battalion of Milizia Armata (Italian SS) was believed to be supporting the 1028th Grenadier Regiment. One battalion of the San Marco Marines was reported en route to the sector. The 725 IR, 735 IR, 715 Engineer Battalion were other components of the defending divisions.

In general reserve the enemy was believed to have the 26th Panzer Division in the Velletri-Valmontone area undergoing complete reorganization. The division had four infantry battalions all presumably brought up to a strength of four hundred men each following their terrific beating at the hands of the American Third Infantry Division in the Cisterna di Littoria sector in February and March. The 29th and 90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions each with their six battalions were believed to be in the Rome area with possibly the 555th, 556th and 612 Ost Battalions. The 162nd Turcoman Division, recently arrived in Italy from the Balkans and not highly regarded as a fighting formation, was also believed to be in the Rome area. The 103rd Reconnaissance Battalion, a unit of the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division was reported in the Terracina-Sabaudia area. It was possible that the enemy might decide to abandon his policy of defense on the southern front and initiate a delaying action there. He might well withdraw additional divisions for employment against the beachhead forces, since his historic strategy had been to defend or even counter-attack against flank threats until his rear elements were out of danger.

The general enemy defensive plan consisted of his strongest line nearest the Third Infantry Division positions, lying generally from 300 to 1000 yards beyond the friendly line depending on the terrain features or buildings upon which it was based. The line consisted of a series of platoon positions on strong points averaging 500 yards apart, each containing four to six machine guns and covered by fire of automatic weapons in supporting positions. There were usually small outposts between the strongpoints held by squads or even smaller groups. The enemy's system of wire and anti-personnel mines was fairly complete especially in the vicinity of the strongpoints and all principal routes of tank approach were mined.

Back of the enemy's first line 300 to 500 yards were his reserve companies generally occupying dugouts closely spaced along ditches. In those reserve positions all the company's automatic weapons, totaling six or more light machine guns were set up in pits conveniently reached from the dugouts. The layout of the enemy's regimental reserve areas was inferred from a study of aerial photographs, but it was known that the enemy was making

every effort to rest and train his troops to the maximum extent. Hence the fairly dense system of weapons pits and gun positions which were found as far north as the railroad track and running 2000 to 3000 yards east of, and parallel to the Fosso di Cisterna were believed only partially occupied, while the bulk of uncommitted divisional troops were billeted in such areas as Sezze, Cori and Velletri.

In addition to the defenses described, which constituted the actual beachhead defensive zone, the enemy was known to be constructing defensive works running generally north from Littoria, and in the vicinity of Velletri. Those defenses were not manned by the 19th of May but were to be quickly occupied by reserve units at any time a particular sector was threatened.

The enemy was reported to be stressing anti-tank defense in view of the hardening terrain and the known American strength in armor. The enemy was not particularly strong in the primary anti-tank weapon, the towed gun, but he had recently equipped some of the heavy companies with 75mm Infantry guns. His artful and liberal use of teller mines was well known. The enemy was prepared to demolish culverts and bridges over ditches and to erect road blocks in defiles. The enemy's strength in tanks, especially heavy ones, and self-propelled artillery largely offset his weakness in anti-tank units. The enemy was employing special groups of "bazookamen" very effectively.

Enemy artillery had shifted generally to the western half of the Beachhead during early May. The 715th Divisional artillery was believed to be between Sezze and Cori, with tanks and self-propelled guns only in the vicinity of Littoria. The enemy's total combat tank strength was estimated at 110 Mark IVs and from 40 to 90 Mark VIs.

The terrain over which the Americans were to make their attack consisted of a gently sloping, cultivated land cut by many streams which run south from the high ground of Monte Lepini and Colli Laziali. The two key terrain features, the Colli Laziali to the northwest and Monte Lepini to the northeast, provided the enemy with excellent observation covering the entire operation. The immediate approaches to those terrain features were steep and the ground generally unsuitable for the use of armor. Though some enemy artillery was thought to fire from positions on the high ground of Colli Laziali, the difficulty of supply, necessarily restricted to poor mountain roads and trails, precluded the use of any amount of artillery in the Monte Lepini area. Movement of vehicles off the few roads was impractical and the ground not suitable for the use of armor. Culture on the rocky, brush-covered slopes was limited to olive trees.

The terrain approach to Velletri from Conca through Cisterna di Littoria followed the typical lava-flow cross-section of a gradually increasing slope as one neared the volcanic hill mass of Colli Laziali. From Conca to Cisterna di Littoria the ground was almost flat, rising only 150 feet in ten kilometers, or fifteen feet per kilometer. From Cisterna di Littoria to a point three kilometers south of Velletri the ground rises 370 feet in nine kilometers, or forty-one feet per kilometer. In the last three kilometers south of Velletri the ground rises over 300 feet, or over 100 feet per kilometer.

Back of Velletri the ground rises sharply to the summit of Monte Peschio (about 3050 feet). Travel on the road net could be expected to be restricted by demolitions. The stream line, running south to the canals and ditches of the plain around Cisterna di Littoria, would generally canalize the movement of armored vehicles. The ground was generally rolling with a slight up-grade to the north. Cover was afforded for infantry troops moving north

within the corridors formed by the streams in the covered avenues of approach along the streams and ditches. From Cisterna di Littoria to Cori the rough terrain, north of the highway, provided good cover for advancing as well as defending troops. On the paths of advance the wooded areas were limited to scattered patches of fair-sized trees and low brush along most of the stream lines. Heavy woods on the east slopes of Colli Laziali offered concealment for large numbers of troops.

The primary obstacles to be overcome during the Third Infantry Division attack were the town of Cisterna di Littoria and the railroad bed running through the town in a northwesterly direction to Campoleone.

Cisterna di Littoria had numerous large caves and subterranean passages which were reported to have a capacity of several thousand persons. The main entrance was on the Piazza di Monumento and large subterranean passages were said to connect this cave with the west bank



Religious services were held in "The Pines" for Seventh Infantry personnel on the days preceding the "Push on Cisterna di Littoria". Top photo shows Catholics and the lower photo shows Protestants attending services.

of the Fosso di Cisterna. The cave was believed to have a capacity of 5000 persons. Other caves and interconnected subterranean passages existed under dwellings in the zone of Cisterna Vecchia. One other cave was estimated to be about two kilometers long and terminated in a zone called "Le Castelle", three kilometers northwest of Cisterna di Littoria. Those caves obviously provided shelter for a considerable number of troops and because they were in many instances connected with dwellings, they would be excellent shelters should the enemy decide to fortify and defend the houses. Prisoners of war had reported that all civilians had been evacuated and the tunnels were being used by the German troops.

South of Highway 7 and the Cisterna di Littoria-Ponte Rotto road the ground was continually soft, cut by numerous drainage ditches about five feet wide and four feet deep with a soft and muddy bottom. Except on the roads and few tracks that existed it was not practicable for armor. East, north and northwest of Cisterna di Littoria the ground was very hard, consisting mostly of pasture land with very few trees or bushes. The terrain was considered practicable for the employment of tanks, half-tracks and even trucks operating cross-country. German tanks had been observed operating cross-country in the area at all times of the year even after many rainy days. East and northwest of Cisterna di Littoria there was little good cover. Northwest of the town the ground was hard and suitable for the movement of armor, though in general it would be canalized in a north-south direction between the stream lines. Though the stream lines were formidable tank obstacles in some places they could be crossed in some places with little engineering work. In that area the many scattered buildings would provide good cover and concealment for vehicles and Infantry.

All crossings of the Mussolini Canal under enemy control below Highway 7 had been destroyed, though there was no evidence of destruction of crossings on or above Highway 7. To be useful as protection against a tank threat from the southeast the crossings would have to be brought under control and the canal itself covered with fire for it was possible that with a little work enemy tanks would be able to cross at many points.

The enemy was believed to have in stockpile enough supplies to fight a heavy offensive or defensive action for several days, but to be unable to fill the requirements of a protracted campaign because of the serious and continu-

CHAPTER VI

Seventh Infantry Breaks Out of the Anzio Beachhead

During the morning of 20 May a Regimental formation was held in the bivouac area. The Commanding General, Third Infantry Division, and the Commanding Officer, Seventh United States Infantry, made talks to the men. Following the formation religious services were held for Catholic and Protestant groups of men who wished to prepare themselves spiritually for the impending battles. The afternoon was spent in preparation for movement to the front.

The Regiment remained in "The Pines" until the early evening of 21 May when the units moved to area "H" in the vicinity of Acciarella. When the motor elements cleared area "H" at 2137 the march was resumed to Area "Y". The battalions closed into Area "Y",

Borgo Montella or Conca, shortly after midnight of 21-22 May. Camouflaging and entrenching was initiated immediately. The Regiment remained in its concealed bivouac during daylight hours on the 22nd. Some shelling was received and "Love" Company suffered one man killed and four wounded.

During the night of 22 May the Regiment was notified by "Iron Mike" that the big day was at hand. He sent the following message to Colonel O'Mohundro: "D-Day Tuesday 23 May 1944—H-Hour 0630B. Be prepared to push on beyond final objectives (line X-Y) on Division Order—No movement forward tonight prior to 2130B. Good luck and pour it on." Signed, O'Daniel, Commanding.

The Second and Third Battalions plus attachments moved out of Area "Y" at 2230 followed by the First Battalion a while later, and all troops closed into the forward areas in the vicinity of Isola Bella a little while after midnight. The Seventh Infantry was ready to break out of the Anzio Beachhead and capture Cisterna di Littoria. The line-up for the big operation presented some new names but it was equal to the ones that brought the Regiment ashore in French Morocco, and Sicily, crossed the Volturno and landed south of Nettuno. Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro assisted by Lieutenant Colonel John J. Toffey, III, was to direct the operations. The veteran battalion commanders, Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour, and Lieutenant Colonel Everett W. Duvall, both of whom had been wounded on previous occasions and hospitalized for a time, were to lead the First and Second Battalions. A newcomer to the lineup, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur J. Smith, Jr., was to lead the Third Battalion into the attack. Captain Jack M. Duncan was the Regimental S-3.

At 0545, 23 May, the old stand-by of the Seventh Infantry, the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, with Division and Corps Artillery opened up with a devastating forty-five minute concentration. A total of ten battalions of light, medium and heavy artillery poured high explosive ammunition into enemy fortifications and gun positions. Bombers of the XII Air Support rained their cargoes of bombs on the forward enemy positions. At 0630B the Third Battalion crossed the line of departure in the attack. Twenty minutes later the Second Battalion jumped off and the Seventh Infantry, in the rain-shrouded mists, moved generally along the axis of the Isola Bella road and struck savagely toward Cisterna di Littoria, astride the Appian Way.

The Third Battalion attacked in a column of Companies with "L", "I" and "K" in order. The machine guns of Company "M" covered the flanks. Enemy resistance was light until House 251, where heavy machine gun, mortar and artillery fire were encountered. Company "L", under the command of Captain John W. Blaikie, engaged the enemy in a stiff fight and captured House 251 with sixteen prisoners of war at 0815.

Company "L" pushed on and seized Objective "H" at 1110 in the face of heavy resistance, sustaining severe casualties. The Second Battalion had difficulty jumping off. Enemy artillery, which answered friendly artillery, dropped on the White Battalion causing some casualties. At 0650 the troops of Companies "E" and "F" commanded by First Lieutenants Eugene F. Bacon and Joseph E. Martin, respectively, crossed the line of departure. Two hundred yards beyond the LD stubborn enemy resistance was encountered with intense automatic weapon and tank fire from two enemy strong points. One was in a group of three buildings west of the Isola Bella-Cisterna di Littoria road and the other was organized around one house east of the road. The tank-infantry assault teams, 60 and 81mm mortars, heavy and light machine guns of the battalion poured heavy fire at the strong-points which held out stubbornly.

Heavy artillery and machine gun fire continued to fall on the White Battalion troops. Two 37mm anti-tank guns of Anti-Tank Company and two medium tanks of Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, supporting the Second Battalion were disabled by the severe enemy artillery and tank fire. One platoon of Company "E", which was attacking the strong point west of the road, maneuvered to the left and flanked the strong-point but progressed with great difficulty. Two hours later the objective was reached but the platoon had but eighteen men left of its original thirty-four. Staff Sergeant Virgil J. Kohrman, Private First Class Napoleon E. Cloutier

and Private First Class Daniel T. Lilly performed in such a manner during the action that they were cited in official orders.⁶⁶

When his seven-man patrol was attacked without warning on 23 May by machine gun fire from a German dug-out one hundred yards to his front, Private First Class Emery Brooks, of Company "E", rushed forward, while three of his comrades fell wounded around him, to close with the enemy. Taking his Browning Automatic Rifle to the exposed crest of a ground rise, he set up his weapon and engaged in a lone fire-fight with the hostile machine gun. Then, while bullets grazed him, Private First Class Brooks jumped to his feet and charged into the withering fire, killing the German gunner with one burst of fire. As the patrol continued forward with Private First Class Brooks in the lead, a German automatic weapon opened fire from a distance of fifty yards. Private First Class Brooks was knocked to the ground with both of his thighs penetrated by enemy bullets. In excruciating pain, he crawled ten yards to a small shell crater, dragging his Browning Automatic Rifle with him. Though alone and critically wounded, he engaged in a ten to fifteen minute duel with the German gunner, finally silencing the hostile weapon. He was reported missing in action from that engagement. For his extraordinary heroism Private First Class Brooks, though missing, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁶⁷

Company "F" attacked frontally the strong-point east of the road, with its troops widely deployed, and eliminated all enemy resistance there. A task force consisting of a rifle platoon reinforced by one light tank, one medium tank and one tank destroyer continued on toward other enemy points of resistance. Enemy self-propelled artillery fire knocked out the destroyer and the medium tank became mired in the mud and water of a creek. With only the light tank remaining the platoon progressed slowly against strong resistance. The two assault companies continued to receive enemy mortar, artillery and small arms fire and advanced slowly. At 1540 Company "F" took Road Junction 53 and Company "E" was a little ahead of "F" on the left. Private First Class Milton J. Hall, who was seriously wounded, received credit for personally killing three enemy and destroying a machine gun nest.⁶⁸

At 1445 Company "I" commanded by Captain Dan C. Easterday attempted to pass through Company "L" to continue the Third Battalion attack on Objective "I". At 1535 the company was receiving heavy machine gun and artillery fire and had not succeeded in passing through. Casualties were suffered and confusion existed. Technical Sergeant William R. E. E. Burgess and Private First Class Wallace G. Drill were outstanding in the work of reorganization.⁶⁹

At 1545 on 23 May Colonel O'Mohundro ordered the Second and Third Battalions to make a coordinated attack and commit their reserve companies. Two battalions of light and two battalions of medium artillery from the 10th and 9th Field Artillery Battalions and the British 24th Field Regiment supported the attack which jumped off at 1645.

Company "K" commanded by First Lieutenant James H. McCracken attacked between "Item" and "Love" Companies and encountered severe enemy fire from the

⁶⁶ GOs No. 175 & 289, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Aug. '44 & 5 Aug. '45. S/Sgt. Kohrman, Pfc Cloutier & Lilly were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁶⁷ For authority see GO No. 147 Hq. 7th Army 16 April 1945.

⁶⁸ GO No. 263, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 Nov. '44. Pfc Hall was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁶⁹ GO No. 189, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10 Sept. '44. T/Sgt. Burgess & Pfc Drill were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

vicinity of the railroad tracks. First Lieutenant McCracken was killed in action and First Lieutenant Ralph Rocchiccioli took over command of the company. Company "K" reached the vicinity of 31 grid and remained there for the night. The Third Battalion did not capture Objective "I" on the first day of the attack.

Company "G", commanded by the veteran Captain Edgar H. Poinsett, made the main effort for the Second Battalion, passed through Company "F" and came abreast of "Easy" Company. Enemy resistance to the White Battalion was very heavy and determined and a severe fight continued throughout the afternoon and night. Second Lieutenant Charles W. Webb, of Company "H", and Staff Sergeant Edward A. Rivera, of Company "F", and who was killed in a subsequent action, personally killed some of the enemy and displayed gallantry. For Company "M" of the Third Battalion, Corporal Thomas K. Mills, who was later killed in action, Private First Class Phillip R. Potts and Private First Class Howard U. Tatro, both machine gunners, and First Lieutenant Morton H. Perry performed with distinction.⁷⁰

The White Battalion troops persisted and at 2222 Objective "K" was taken. Supply was effected during the night and the Battalion prepared to continue the attack early the 24th. Cannon Company materially aided the advance 23 May by silencing an enemy four-gun battery.

The Regiment suffered heavy casualties on the first day of the breakthrough. Fifty-four "Cotton Balers" were listed as killed on that day. The Regimental Aid Station reported early in the afternoon that 150 men had already been evacuated. It will never be known exactly how many casualties were suffered by the Regiment on 23 May 1944 as many of the wounded of that day were not evacuated until later days and some of the dead were probably not discovered till later. The Third Infantry Division records indicate that the "Rock of the Marne" Division sustained a total of 995 casualties, the most suffered in a single day up to that time. The medical personnel aided and evacuated the wounded. Litter bearers were insufficient in number.

Seven enemy tanks appeared before Company "L" during the night and fired into Seventh Infantry lines as approximately fifty enemy attempted to infiltrate Company "L's" positions. The Third Battalion was unable to move during the night and early in the morning gave its combat strength as 81 for Company "I", 153 for Company "K", 32 for Company "L", 100 for Company "M" and 131 for Headquarters Company.

7th INFANTRY CONTINUES THE ATTACK 24 MAY 1944

Because of the very stubborn enemy resistance on 23 May the Third Battalion captured only one of its assigned three objectives and the Second Battalion took one of its two objectives that day. Colonel O'Mohundro decided to commit the First Battalion and ordered Lieutenant Colonel Izenour to bring up his Red troops. At 2200 on the 23rd the First Battalion left its assembly area and reassembled in the vicinity of Cle Monaco at one hour after midnight. At 0300 on the 24th the Red troops started moving through the Blue line.

Company "B", under the command of Captain Gerald A. Desrosier, passed through Company "L", the most forward company of the Third Battalion at 0555, and with not too much difficulty captured Objective "I" at 0658. Driving on, "Baker" Company seized Objective "J" at 0730. "Charlie" Company, under the command of Captain William B. Stewart, better known as "The

Spider", passed through Company "B" on Objective "J" and drove on for Objective "R", La Villa. Shortly before reaching the railroad track Company "C" ran into fierce enemy fire and was halted at about 0930. The enemy was dug-in all along the railroad bed and on the high ground to the rear. The railroad bed itself was criss-crossed by enfilade fire from machine guns, rifles and 88mm guns while the approaches to the railroad were covered with anti-personnel and anti-tank mines.

When two enemy machine guns one hundred yards away halted the advance of their platoon Privates First Class Calvin T. Bradshaw and Joseph F. Lindsay of Company "C" inspired the three men remaining in their squad to follow them in a continuation of the attack. Reaching the railroad cut despite bullets that barely missed, the two soldiers opened "Tommy" gun and rifle fire on one of the machine guns less than thirty yards to their right. Their daring conduct impelled both machine gun crews to take cover in a nearby dug-out. Covered by his companion, Private First Class Lindsay tossed two hand grenades into the dug-out forcing the eight occupants to surrender.⁷¹

By working one platoon across the railroad track at a time Company "C" overran German positions and was reported in La Villa at 1116. Company "A", under the command of First Lieutenant Tyler Campbell, was committed to the right of Company "C" and seized Objective "S" at about the same time that "C" took La Villa.



German soldiers surrender near Cisterna di Littoria on 24 May 1944.

Two members of Company "D" greatly assisted the advance of the riflemen of the First Battalion. Second Lieutenant Paul H. Hollon killed two enemy snipers with M-1 rifle fire and displayed cool leadership while directing the fire of his section. Private Chester A. Cummings was one who inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy with his machine gun.⁷²

The Second Battalion continued its attack the morning of May 24 the same time that the First Battalion

⁷⁰ GOs No. 168, 187 & 257, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 5 Sept. & 8 Nov. '44 & 20 May '45. S/Sgt. Rivera & Cpl. Mills (both posthumously), 1 Lt. Perry, 2 Lt. Webb, Pfc. Potts & Pfc. Tatro were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁷¹ GO No. 299, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 27 Dec. '44. Pfc. Bradshaw & Lindsay were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁷² GOs No. 202 & 345, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 30 Sept. '44 & 25 Sept. '45. 2 Lt. Hollon & Pvt. Cummings were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

jumped off. Companies "G" and "E" received heavy artillery and machine gun fire. At about nine o'clock the White Battalion troops were in possession of Objective "L" and sent strong combat patrols to the railroad. Severe casualties had been suffered by the battalion and it remained on Objective "L" the remainder of the morning. Sergeant Harry L. Dooley of Company "E", Sergeant Carl R. Hall of Company "G" and Staff Sergeant Aubrey L. Williamson of Company "H" were three non-commissioned officers of the Second Battalion forces who displayed leadership qualities while under fire.⁷³

The Third Battalion, after being passed through, followed in the wake of the First Battalion and supported the advance by fire. It was subjected to enemy artillery and mortar fire. Captain John W. Blaikie of Company "L" was wounded and evacuated and First Lieutenant Ralph J. Yates assumed command of the company. Casualties sustained continued to be heavy the morning of 24 May and at 1020 hours 342 wounded personnel had passed through the Regimental Aid Station. Lieutenants William A. Dunn, Irving Fajans, William R. Jones and Charles W. Webb were among those evacuated.

At 1530 Company "B" jumped off in the attack from Objective "R" and against relatively light opposition seized Objective "T" at 1620. Patrols were sent toward Cisterna di Littoria and drew heavy machine gun and artillery fire. The First Battalion established contact with the Sixth Armored Infantry and remained on Objectives "R", "S" and "T" during the night of 24-25 May.

Private First Class John N. Megown of Company "A" served with extraordinary heroism in action on 24-25 May near Cisterna di Littoria. A gunner of a Browning Automatic Rifle he organized and led a five-man patrol for one hundred fifty yards across open terrain in broad daylight to a firing position about fifty yards from an enemy machine gun. During this movement, he was fired at directly by the machine gun which killed one and wounded a second member of his patrol. In a brief fire fight, all three members of the enemy crew were wounded. As two more enemy came out of a ditch approximately twenty yards beyond the machine gun and ran toward it, Private First Class Megown charged them alone, killing both with hand grenades just as they reached the weapon. At once, he became the target of intense machine pistol and rifle fire from the ditch. Without waiting for his three remaining comrades to catch up, he assaulted the ditch, firing his Browning Automatic Rifle from the hip, thereby forcing a group of thirty-eight enlisted men and one officer to surrender.

On the 25th Private First Class Megown led his squad in an attack against an enemy machine gun that had halted digging-in operations of the company. Abandoning the cover of a building, he charged the machine gun nest, approximately one hundred yards away. He was killed after taking several steps. For his extraordinary heroism Private First Class Megown was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁷⁴

First Sergeant Merrill L. Busk, of "Baker" Company, openly guided a tank up close to an enemy position and flushed out a sniper, who took cover in a cave. The tank then fired into the cave and forced out three enemy soldiers whom First Sergeant Busk killed with carbine fire from a position atop the tank. A group of about twenty-five other enemy soldiers then abandoned a ditch behind the cave. Firing the tank's .50 calibre machine gun First Sergeant Busk killed and wounded the entire enemy group. Private First Class George Palyszeski, an aid man from the Medical Detachment, though severely wounded, treated many other wounded personnel on the battlefield that day.⁷⁵

SECOND AND THIRD BATTALIONS ATTACK CISTERNA DI LITTORIA NIGHT OF 24-25 MAY

Early in the afternoon of 24 May the Third Battalion moved to Objective "J" and prepared to attack Cisterna di Littoria from the northwest in conjunction with an attack by the Second Battalion from Objective "L" on the railroad, and a feint toward Cisterna di Littoria. Enemy artillery fire increased. At 1825 a total of 521 wounded personnel had passed through the Regimental Aid Station since the beginning of the attack on 23 May, and were evacuated.

With Companies "E" and "G" in the assault, the Second Battalion began its attack on the railroad at 2125. At 2200 the Third Battalion jumped off towards Cisterna di Littoria. The advance of the White Battalion assault companies met slight resistance initially but when the troops were near the railroad line enemy resistance increased with heavy machine gun, artillery, mortar and self-propelled artillery fire being received. Anti-tank and anti-personnel mines were also encountered to further slow the advance. The work of the Second Battalion troops while advancing in the darkness against such strong opposition was outstanding. The troops crossed the railroad tracks on a wide front in six different places and attacked German troops from the rear, killing large numbers of the enemy. The Second Battalion was then ordered to push on to the edge of Cisterna di Littoria and hold. Company "F" passed through Company "G" at 0520, 25 May and one hour later the two companies were in Cisterna di Littoria fighting from ruined house to ruined house.

The Third Battalion moved slowly during the night and suffered heavy casualties. Once the Blue Battalion reported being shelled by friendly artillery batteries as well as the enemy. At 0435 the battalion observation post was located in the cemetery northwest of Cisterna di Littoria as the companies swung southeast to attack the town. Company "K" was on the left and Company "I" on the right of the Appian Way and about two hundred yards from the cemetery. Company "L" followed. Two enemy pill-boxes and numerous machine guns and snipers held up the forward companies from entering the town that morning, as an extremely heavy fight was waged.

Meanwhile the Second Battalion engaged stubborn, determined enemy in hand to hand, house to house conflict that will stand for all time as a tribute to the best fighting traditions of the battalion. Technical Sergeant William E. Brown and Private First Class Dillon D. Brooke shot two enemy snipers in a hand to hand struggle and took fifteen others prisoners of war from a house in Cisterna di Littoria. Private First Class James T. Phillips, Jr., of Company "E" singlehandedly cleaned out a sniper's nest. Staff Sergeant Orie H. Tilseth of Company "F" made a daring reconnaissance in the town

The pictures on the opposite page, which show scenes of the capture of Cisterna di Littoria, were taken by LIFE Photographer George Silk. Copyright TIME, Inc. In the center photo may be seen Capt. William B. Stewart of Co. "C". In the lower left photo 2 Lt. Henry S. Prario, and T/Sgt. LeRoy E. Hamilton watch an unidentified Co. "C" soldier kill one of the last enemy snipers in the town, on 25 May 1944.

⁷³ GOs No. 175, 187 & 202, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Aug., 5 & 30 Sept. '44. S/Sgt. Williams, Sgts. Dooley & Hall were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁷⁴ For authority see GO No. 8 Hq. 7th Army 4 Nov. 1944.

⁷⁵ GOs No. 175 & 187, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 Aug. & 5 Sept. '44. 1 Sgt. Busk & Pvt. Palyszeski were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



which led to the capture of thirty-eight Germans. Staff Sergeant Wallace K. Bah, a heavy machine gun section leader of Company "H", singlehandedly captured eighteen snipers in a building. When his squad was caught in the crossfire of two enemy machine guns Sergeant Leo Iadarola of Company "E" attacked and eliminated one of the hostile weapons but was killed by the fire of the second one. Sergeant Clifford I. Clark of Company "F", who had been wounded three times before in the combat, personally assaulted an enemy position and killed three Germans before he was killed himself. Technician Fifth Grade Anthony Ferraro of Company "F" was wounded in the neck but he killed two and wounded three others of the enemy and completely wiped out a sniper's nest. Private First Class John J. Marella of Company "G" silenced two of the enemy's automatic weapons. Private First Class William J. Lyons of Company "F" was another who killed enemy snipers.⁷⁶

TWO MEMBERS OF COMPANY "F" WIN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSSES

Sergeant Samuel W. Pollard an acting mortar section leader of Company "F", on his own initiative, organized a nine-man patrol to clean out sniper nests in Cisterna di Littoria. Instructing his men to cover him, he assaulted the first house with a Thompson sub-machine gun and took four prisoners. Sergeant Pollard then proceeded to search every house on the street, braving intense point-blank machine gun, machine pistol and rifle fire each time he exposed himself. Aware that an enemy force was delivering heavy fire from the last house on the street, Sergeant Pollard nevertheless charged toward it across

approximately twenty yards of open space, shooting his gun as he ran. With streams of bullets barely missing him, he entered through a large hole in the house and wounded three enemy soldiers downstairs. Putting a new magazine in his weapon, he fired through an open doorway, mounted a flight of stairs and captured twenty more of the enemy. After turning these prisoners over to guards, Sergeant Pollard led four men on another check of the street. As he came to the last house, again, he observed three enemy soldiers descend a ditch and disappear into a large tunnel dug into the far bank. Going forward to the mouth of the tunnel alone, Sergeant Pollard fired into it and called on its occupants to surrender. One hundred seven enemy soldiers filed out and surrendered, bringing Sergeant Pollard's grand total of prisoners to one hundred thirty-four. For his extraordinary heroism that day Sergeant Pollard was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁷⁷

Enemy held out in the large Castle in the center of the town to the last. There was only one entrance to the Castle, which was covered by an enemy anti-tank gun. Company "G" maneuvered around the south side of the Castle with two platoons of tanks. Company "F" placed a machine gun on top a house across from the Castle and placed accurate fire on the enemy anti-tank gun, which succeeded in keeping the crew away.

⁷⁶ GOs No. 89, 171, 175, 187, 282 & 299, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 30 July, 8 Aug. & 5 Sept. '44 & 9 Mar., 24 May, 1 & 15 Aug. '45. Sgts. Clark & Iadarola & Pfc Brooke (each posthumously); & T/Sgt. Brown, S/Sgts. Bah & Tilseth, T/5 Ferraro, Pfc's Lyons, Marella & Phillips were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁷⁷ For authority see GO No. 115, Hqrs. 7th Army 24 Nov. 1944.



Twenty-two of the 180 "Cotton Balers" who were killed in action during the period 23-31 May 1944 were: (1) Pfc Coy Blalok, Co. "I"; (2) Pvt. Sol Blandeburgo, Co. "L"; (3) Pfc Steve L. Buran, Co. "M"; (4) Pfc Howard F. Cornelius, Co. "M"; (5) 1 Lt. Louis H. Durkee, Co. "M"; (6) Pvt. J. C. Flanagan, Co. "I"; (7) Pfc Frederick Gleich, Co. "I"; (8) Pfc Bryan G. Hunt, Co. "A"; (9) Pvt. Charles Martz, Co. "I"; (10) S/Sgt. Edward A. Rivera, Co. "F"; (11) Pvt. Ordway K. Rich, Co. "L"; (12) Sgt. Clarence Stillwell, Co. "I"; (13) S/Sgt. Ernest H. Snead, Co. "C"; (14) Pvt. Glenn M. Wallace, Co. "L"; (15) S/Sgt. Warren B. Williams, Co. "I"; (16) 1 Lt. Edward L. Maher, Co. "K"; (17) 2 Lt. William J. Davis, Co. "G"; (18) Pvt. James E. Koonce, Co. "I"; (19) 1 Lt. Ralph Rocchiccioli, Co. "K"; (20) 2 Lt. Edgar R. Giffin, Co. "F"; (21) 1 Lt. Clarence P. Goodwin, Jr., Co. "L"; (22) Pvt. Rudolph A. Sannicondro, Co. "I".

Technical Sergeant Earl E. Swanson of Company "F" acted with extraordinary heroism in leading his platoon in three successive assaults against the enemy entrenched in the Castle. Charging one hundred yards over ground swept by grazing machine gun fire he battered his way into the massive stronghold and in a brisk fire fight killed two and captured forty of the enemy. Entering a cellar he fought singlehandedly in darkness, against an enemy force of one hundred, compelling their surrender with hand grenades. Earl E. Swanson later received a battle field promotion and advanced to the rank of captain. In subsequent action he was killed. For extraordinary action performed 25 May 1944 he was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁷⁸

A medium tank of Company "A", 751st Tank Battalion, roared through the entrance to the Castle grounds and destroyed the enemy anti-tank gun. Other troops of Company "F" then stormed the Castle. A total of two hundred fifty Germans were routed from the cave beneath the Castle. Included in the batch of prisoners was the commanding officer of the 955th Infantry Regiment and his staff.

Company "G" continued to mop up and took an additional one hundred prisoners in other caves. At 1255 on 25 May the First Battalion got into the fight once more by attacking on the right of the Third Battalion. Companies "A" and "C", supported by armor, entered Cisterna di Littoria at 1515 and assisted in cleaning up the town. At 1720 the Third Battalion continued its attack and entered the embattled town at 1920.

Company "B" joined the bulk of the Red Battalion in Cisterna di Littoria at 2025 and all the fighting companies of the Regiment were in the town. The battalions contacted each other and all enemy resistance was wiped out. At last Cisterna di Littoria was captured. Though only a small town of seven thousand people normally, it was the toughest nut the Third Division had to crack in World War II. Like Casablanca, Agrigento, Palermo and Messina the Seventh Infantry Regiment had taken it for the "Rock of the Marne" Division.

The Regimental Battle Patrol maintained contact with the 15th Infantry on the right flank during the three-day engagement. While the Seventh Infantry fought for Cisterna di Littoria the sister regiments of the Division by-passed the town and sped on for Cori which was captured about the same time Cisterna di Littoria fell to the "Cotton Balers".

During the three days of fighting the American Third Infantry Division sustained heavy casualties, approximately 1400 killed and wounded. But the enemy suffered heavier casualties; 1600 prisoners were taken by the Third Division alone and probably an equal number killed and wounded. The German 362nd Infantry Division, which was ordered to defend in place, was

wiped out by the American Third Infantry and First Armored Infantry Divisions while the German 715th Division lost about half its strength.

For the Third Division the "heaviest fighting was done by the Seventh Infantry."⁷⁹

Casualties to the Seventh Infantry during the three days fighting were severe. The Regiment lost 116 members killed in action during the three days and had 556 wounded personnel evacuated through the Regimental Aid Station for a total of 682 battle casualties, nearly one half the Third Division casualty figure. Company "K" lost two commanding officers killed during the action. During the fighting for the town Lieutenant Colonel Arthur J. Smith, Jr., commanding officer of the Third Battalion, was seriously wounded and evacuated. Captain Glenn E. Rathbun, former Company "M" commander, assumed command of the Battalion.

Of the 1600 prisoners taken by the Third Infantry Division 931 were brought in by the "Cotton Balermen", over two thirds of which were ratted out of Cisterna di Littoria. The Second Battalion captured a total of three hundred fifty prisoners in Cisterna di Littoria while the First and Third Battalions got about one hundred fifty each.

In addition to those already named Private Carl C. Egebergh and Private First Class Lloyd L. Cummins, both of Company "I", Private First Class James H. Draper and Roger C. Hommel and Privates Albert Miceli and Gilbert E. Vasquez, all of Company "M", displayed gallantry in action during the attack on Cisterna di Littoria.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ For authority see GO No. 172 Hqrs. 7th Army 5 May 1945.

⁷⁹ Third Infantry Division History.

⁸⁰ GOs No. 175, 177, 185, 212 & 299, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 8 & 9 Aug., 3 Sept., 6 Oct. & 27 Dec. 44. Pfc. Cummins, Draper, Hommel & Pvts. Egebergh, Miceli & Vasquez were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



The ruins of Cisterna di Littoria.

CHAPTER VII

"On to Rome"

During the night of 25-26 May the Seventh Infantry assembled in an area about two miles northeast of Cisterna di Littoria and formulated plans for continuing the attack. On 26 May the American VI Corps continued the offensive to seize the high ground between Launuvio and Campoleone with the Third Infantry Division (Reinforced) advancing on Artena.

The enemy did not hold a definite front line in the Third Infantry Division zone of advance but was expected to delay the advance with units of platoon to

company size with his resistance becoming stronger until the line Velletri-Artina was reached. There he would be capable of defending with elements of the 334th Infantry Division and the Hermann Goering Panzer Division and possibly elements of one or more of his mobile formations then on the Southern Front, such as the 29th, 15th, 26th or 90th Panzer Grenadier Divisions.

It was appreciated that the enemy's principal desire was to keep the Americans out of the Valmontone Valley and away from Highway 6 while he attempted to effect a

reunion between his southern and northern forces and establish his Velletri-Valmontone-Avezzano line. To do that he was expected to fight for the back side of the high ground overlooking Valmontone, even to the extent of infiltrating or counter-attacking any forces placed on that ground.

Eventually his line would probably run from the eastern slope of Colli Laziali to Genzano, which could be made into a miniature Cassino and which would protect the last gap separating the American forces from the

Division and elements of the Hermann Goering Panzer Division in reserve.

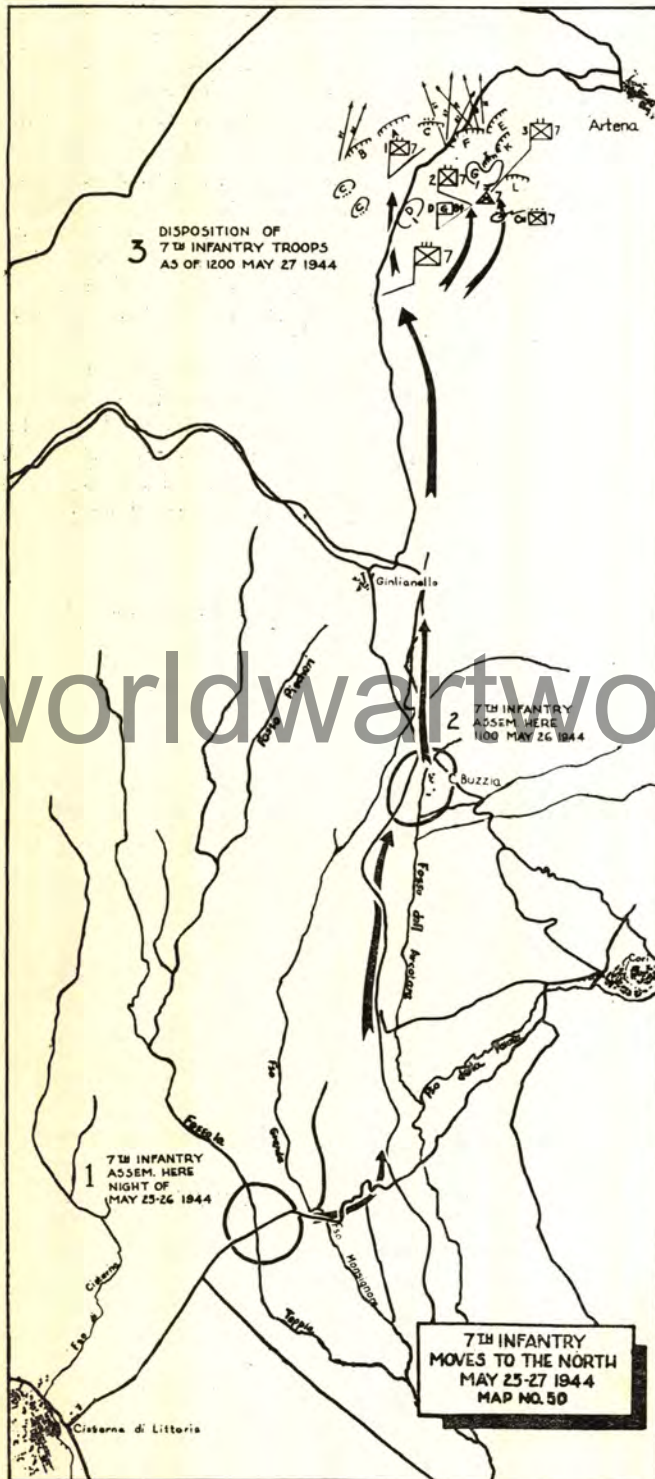
With a battalion of the 15th Infantry in the lead the Third Infantry Division advanced along the Cori-Giuliano road. Shortly after noon five American P-40 fighter-bombers bombed and strafed the head of the Third Infantry Division column and killed and wounded over one hundred "dogfaces". Seventy casualties were caused to the Second Battalion of the 15th Infantry alone.

The Seventh Infantry moved by bounds, following the 30th Infantry, to Giulianello. A limited objective attack was launched by the Regiment from Giulianello that night. The high ground west of Artena in the vicinity of Pfe del Colle and Colle Rotundo was captured. Small enemy holding groups were encountered.

Company "K" engaged approximately twenty enemy in a fire fight during a meeting engagement which lasted about a half hour. Four of the enemy were killed, three wounded, three captured and the remainder caused to withdraw. Temporary defenses were installed during the night of 26-27 May.

On the 27th the Regiment readjusted its lines with the Second and Third Battalions moving to new positions. The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon established a listening post on Hill 305 prior to the arrival of Company "L".

First Lieutenant Victor Crepeau of the Battle Patrol led a fifteen-man patrol in a daring and successful raid to Tre Are, a village three miles west of Artena, Italy. Two Germans were killed, four captured and valuable information obtained. Despite the fire of two machine guns, three machine pistols, and rifles from a force of approximately forty enemy soldiers, placed in five houses fifty to one hundred yards away, First Lieutenant Crepeau led his patrol forward, ignoring small arms fire. He personally tossed two grenades through a doorway, then sprayed it with "Tommy" gun fire and thus forced the surrender of the four enemy soldiers. Those Germans who were not killed or captured fled from the village.⁸¹



SEVENTH INFANTRY MOVES FORWARD 28 MAY 1944

At 1400 on 28 May 1944, the Seventh Infantry and attachments moved forward to new positions with the three rifle battalions abreast. Each had two rifle companies abreast and one in support. All the battalions encountered strong enemy resistance consisting of small arms, machine gun, mortar, artillery and tank fire.

During the offensive which broke through the enemy strongholds that day, Staff Sergeant Rudolph B. Davilla of Company "H" risked death to provide heavy weapons support for the beleaguered riflemen of the Second Battalion. Caught on an exposed hillside by heavy grazing fire from a well entrenched enemy force, his machine gunners were reluctant to risk putting their guns into action. Crawling to the nearest machine gun, Staff Sergeant Davilla set it up alone and opened fire on the enemy. Shooting from a semi-erect position in order to observe the effect of his fire over the waist-high wheat, he disregarded enemy fire which struck the tripod and even passed between his legs. Ordering a gunner to take over, he crawled forward to a vantage point and directed the fire-fight with hand and arm signals until both hostile machine guns were silenced. Bringing his three remaining machine guns into action, he drove the enemy to a reserve position two hundred yards to the rear. When he received

Rome Plain. Available to the enemy to oppose the Third Infantry Division attack were three or four battalions of the 334th Infantry Division in line, remnants of the 362nd and 715th Infantry Divisions in delaying positions, two or three battalions of the 334th Infantry

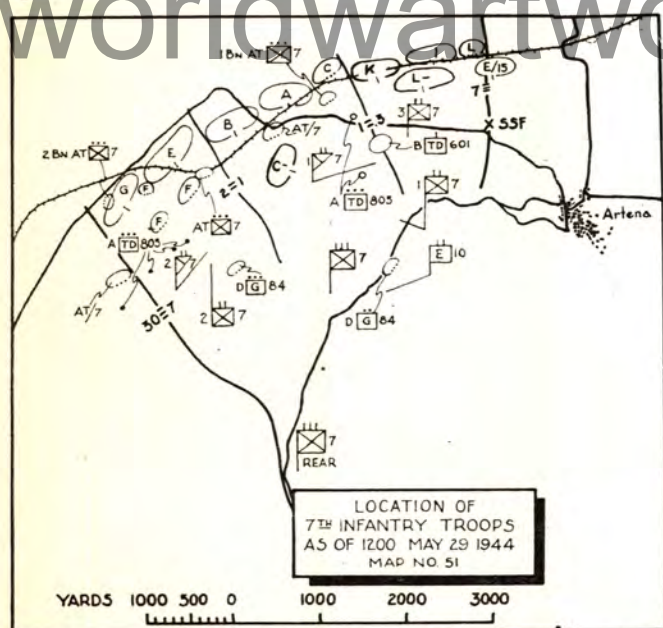
⁸¹ GO No. 146, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 30 June '44. 1 Lt. Crepeau was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

a painful shell wound in the leg, he dashed to a burned tank and, despite the crash of bullets on the hull, fired at a second enemy force from its turret. Dismounting, he advanced in short rushes, crawled twenty yards and charged into an enemy-held house to dispatch the defending force of five with hand grenade and rifle fire. Climbing to the attic, he straddled a large shell hole in the wall and opened fire on the enemy with a borrowed .03 rifle. Although the walls of the house were crumbling, he continued to fire until he had destroyed two more machine guns. His intrepid actions brought desperately needed heavy weapons support to the hard-pressed riflemen and silenced four enemy machine guns, forcing the enemy to abandon their prepared positions. For his extraordinary heroism he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁸²

The enemy gave ground stubbornly and the riflemen encountered much difficulty. Many small actions stood out prominently. When a hostile machine gun killed two and wounded eight of his buddies Private First Class James P. Wils of Company "B" crawled forward and engaged the weapon. With grenades he killed both enemy gunners and knocked out the weapon.

A group of approximately fifteen German soldiers attempted to deploy around a road block which was covered by a machine gun section from Company "D". The enemy group launched an attack on the blocking section but was driven back with heavy losses. Private First Class Chester W. Bitak and Private First Class Paul E. Helms displayed gallantry during the action.

Staff Sergeant Winston R. Nelson of Company "B" was seriously wounded by enemy soldiers who had advanced forward under a smoke screen. In spite of several wounds he engaged the foe and killed all three Germans with "Tommy" gun and rifle fire after a fierce fight.



Private First Class Carrollton L. Brown of Company "B" led a squad of eight men to the Velletri-Valmontone Highway and commanded them throughout a five hour fire-fight in which approximately one hundred Germans were killed. The squad ambushed several enemy groups including one of platoon size.

Staff Sergeant Robert A. Higgins of Company "E" rallied his light machine gun section despite artillery and mortar shells landing no more than twenty-five yards away, and led his men in an assault on an enemy-held hill. He boldly directed his men forward in a series of

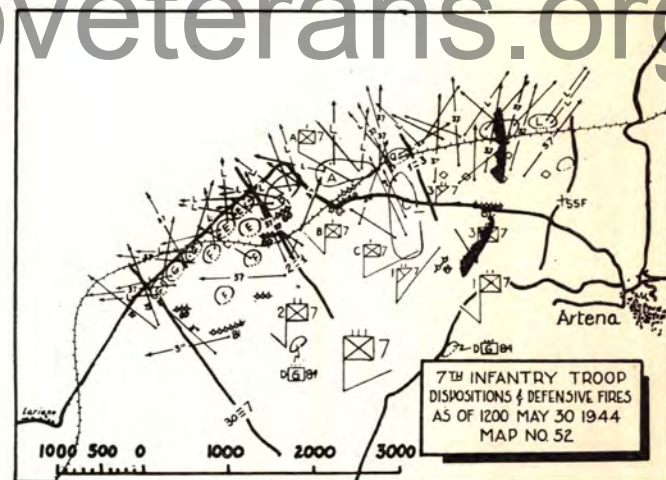
rushes and engaged the foe, personally killing four with M-1 rifle fire. The assault was successful.

Private Arthur J. Hack of First Battalion Headquarters led eight tanks forward through continuing hostile shell fire. Technical Sergeant Bert A. Rodman of Company "D" was severely wounded but continued to fight the enemy and killed approximately forty Germans with very effective fire from a machine gun. Staff Sergeant Otis O. Fottenbury and Private First Class Howard U. Tatro, both of Company "M", and Private First Class Frederick J. Bassett of Company "C", Private First Class Cleatus E. Henderson of Company "D" were also cited for actions performed.⁸³

Cannon Company and the 10th Field Artillery Battalion supported the advance by fire. The one platoon of Company "C", 751st Tank Battalion, and two platoons of Company "A", 805th Tank Destroyer Battalion, followed the attack in close support of the advancing battalions. The advance of the Regiment continued until all objectives were taken at 2055 and temporary defenses were again installed. Security and contact patrols were active during the hours of darkness.

The Regiment remained in position on the 29th and 30th and continued preparing defenses, being harassed by enemy tank and artillery fire throughout the area. Several enemy were killed by Third Battalion snipers and machine gunners. The Regimental Battle Patrol continued its patrolling activities.

At about 0100 hours, 30 May, Sergeant Herbert R. Davis and Private First Class Dale E. Cessna of Company "G" were engaged in a furious fire-fight against an enemy machine gun which was harassing their platoon. A hail of enemy bullets wounded Sergeant Davis in the back. However, the two men continued firing until the opposing gun one hundred yards away was silenced. Moments



later, when their gun jammed, they ran one hundred yards to the rear through a heavy enemy concentration of artillery and mortar shells which burst as close as twenty-five yards to them, obtained another gun and returned. The new weapon was immediately set up and fired so effectively that they dispatched the crews of two other enemy machine guns.⁸⁴

At 0345, 31 May, Company "A" seized Hill 317

⁸² For authority see GO No. 10 Hq. 7th Army 16 Jan. 1945.

⁸³ GOs No. 66, 152, 175, 187, 206, 235 & 257, HQ. 3d Inf. Div., 8 Aug., 5 Sept., 2 Oct. & 8 Nov. '44 & 25 Feb., 4 May & 29 June '45. T/Sgt. Rodman & Pfc Wils were each awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. S/Sgt. Fottenbury, who received a battle field commission and was killed in a subsequent action, S/Sgts. Higgins & Nelson, Pvts. Bassett, Bitak, Brown, Helms, Henderson, Tatro & Hack were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

against no resistance. The relief of the Second Battalion by the Third Battalion, 338th Infantry, 85th Infantry Division, was completed at 0700 and the battalion reverted to reserve. Early that morning Private Allen H. White of Company "M" directed artillery fire by telephone which knocked out an enemy battery of eight mortars and silenced a Mark VI tank.⁸⁴

SEVENTH INFANTRY MAKES LIMITED OBJECTIVE ATTACK, 31 MAY 1944

At 1400, 31 May 1944, the Seventh Infantry made a limited objective attack with two platoons of Company "C" and one platoon of Company "L" in the attacking echelon. Company "I" supported by fire the attack of the "Love" Company platoon and Company "K" supported the attack of Company "C". "Charlie" Company encountered scattered but strong enemy resistance which was overcome and the platoon captured Hill 331 west of Valle Pera at 1530. The First Battalion moved up and occupied a defensive line from Valle Pera to Hill 332.

Staff Sergeant Dwight R. Thierolf and Sergeant Gerald T. Hennings, both of "Charlie" Company, together captured thirty enemy soldiers in a ravine near Labico, Italy. Second Lieutenant Henry S. Prario and Staff Sergeant Leroy E. Hamilton, also of Company "C", captured two enemy snipers after a fire fight and then attacked a German artillery fire control center on the strength of information received from the snipers. After suffering five casualties, twenty-one of the enemy, including four officers, surrendered. Enemy artillery which previously knocked out three American tanks and inflicted casualties ceased firing.⁸⁵

The platoon of Company "L" commanded by First Lieutenant Clarence P. Goodwin, Jr., succeeded in reaching its objective, a hill on Colle Nascaso, just twenty-five minutes after jumping off in the attack. However, a short

cover the withdrawal of the platoon. Three were destroyed by enemy fire before the platoon of Company "L" was able to withdraw with its nineteen remaining men of the forty-two which started out.

On 29 May the Third Infantry Division had passed from the VI Corps to the II Corps which planned to resume the attack on 1 June to capture the high ground north of Valmontone and continue the attack to the northwest to capture high ground southeast of Rome and cut Highway 5 east of Rome. The Third Infantry Division was assigned the mission of capturing the high ground north of Valmontone following which the 85th Infantry Division was to attack on the left. The Third Infantry Division planned to attack at 0500, 1 June to capture the assigned objectives and be prepared to attack to the northwest on Corps order. The attacking echelon consisted from left to right of Task Force Howze, with the First Battalion Seventh Infantry attached, the 30th Infantry, 15th Infantry and the Special Service Force. The Second Battalion Seventh Infantry was assigned the mission of following closely the attack of the 30th Infantry, then at the opportune time pass through that regiment and attack Valmontone, to destroy all enemy forces therein.

The Seventh Infantry minus the First and Second Battalions was to constitute Division reserve. Accordingly at 0500, 1 June, the attack jumped off and elements of the 15th and 30th Infantries passed through the positions of the First and Third Battalions whereupon the Red Battalion became attached to Task Force Howze.

The Second Battalion was committed at 0800 crossing the railroad line just west of the Artena-Valmontone road. Companies "E" and "F" made the assault and "G" was in reserve. Enemy artillery fire caused



Pvt. Donald J. Peoples, left, and Pvt. John H. Silvia, both of Co. "K" were killed in action on 31 May 1944.

time after taking the objective the platoon was subjected to a terrific enemy artillery barrage and then attacked by German Infantry. First Lieutenant Goodwin was killed when his foxhole received a direct hit from enemy artillery. The same shell killed the radio operator which ended communication with the Company Headquarters. A desperate struggle ensued and six more members of the platoon were killed and three members were captured by the enemy. Four tanks went out at four o'clock to



Left, Capt. Harry E. Levy of Co. "H", who died of wounds on 1 June and 1 Lt. John S. Raney, of Co. "M", who was killed in action on 3 June 1944. Picture of Capt. Levy shows him as a second lieutenant and was taken in Rabat, French Morocco, in Dec., 1942. He was inducted into the Army as a private in Sept., 1941 and after completing the Infantry officers' candidate course was commissioned in Sept., 1942. He made the Fedala landings with the Regiment and was wounded during the invasion of Sicily. He was promoted to a captain in January, 1944. Wounded on 29 May he died three days later. Capt. Levy was a graduate of Fourteen Holy Martyrs parochial school and the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute.

⁸⁴ GOs No. 171 & 246, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 30 July & 28 Oct. '44. Sgt. Davis was awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. Pfc Cessna & Pvt. White were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁸⁵ GOs No. 161 & 208, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 July & 4 Oct. '44. 2 Lt. Prario, S/Sgts. Hamilton & Thierolf & Sgt. Hennings were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

eighteen casualties to "Fox" Company. Engaging enemy rear-guard elements the Battalion overcame resistance consisting of self-propelled guns and flak wagons. Enemy planes dropped anti-personnel bombs on the Battalion during the night but at 0500, 2 June, in the face of small arms fire and neblewerfer fire the White Battalion cut the railroad and Highway 6 just west of Valmontone.

Company "F" seized the high ground west of Valmontone as White Battalion patrols entered the town and suffered some casualties. The Second Battalion soon cleared the town then drove for the high ground five thousand yards north of Valmontone. The high ground was seized from small enemy forces armed with automatic weapons. Following a resupply of the rifle companies Company "G" took up the battalion advance at 1800, 2 June, and advanced in two hours time against medium opposition to the cemetery about seventeen hundred yards southwest of Palestrina. There considerable tank and self-propelled fire from the crossroads south of the town was received. Companies "E" and "F" deployed to the left of "G" and the battalion remained in position the night of 2-3 June.

The Third Battalion in division reserve was committed at 0230 on 2 June and moved toward Valmontone in advance guard formation. By daylight a position on the flat ground southwest of the town was reached. The battalion moved farther north to a new objective where it halted at mid-day. At 1615 the Blue troops started for a crossroad to the southeast of the Second Battalion's objective. Company "I" supported by tanks, and followed by Company "K", led the advance. Company "L" was attached to Task Force Ellis. Company "I" encountered a great deal of artillery and tank fire while about 2000 yards short of the objective so the Battalion took up the attack formation with Company "K" on the left of "I". Intense fire from hostile machine guns and two Tigers, or Mark VI tanks, was received as the troops advanced slowly.

On 3 June the Second and Third Battalions continued their limited attacks to take two crossroads south of Palestrina. As the Third Infantry Division did not desire that the battalions attack and capture Palestrina their tactics were really aggressive defense with limited objective attacks. Their mission was to prevent an enemy

Without regard for his own personal safety, Lieutenant Colonel Toffey went to the forward elements to coordinate the action of the friendly forces. While at a forward observation post directing the action Lieutenant Colonel Toffey, and First Lieutenant John S. Raney, commanding Company "M", were killed instantly during an enemy artillery and tank barrage when the enemy scored a direct hit on the observation post. Lieutenant Colonel Snyder, the tank battalion commander, was seriously wounded by the same shell. Second Lieutenant Thomas H. Scully of Company "K" also met his death on the battle field that day.

Though he was killed in the final phases and unable to see the action through to its end the soundness of Lieutenant Colonel Toffey's plans and the example of his personal bravery assured the accomplishment of the important missions.⁸⁶

Company "I" seized the Third Battalion objective while Company "G" supported by fire from two tanks, three tank destroyers and two battalions of artillery stormed the Second Battalion objective and seized it that afternoon. One enemy flakwagon and one Mark IV tank were destroyed, six enemy were killed, five taken prisoner and the rest forced to withdraw into Palestrina.

During the action of 1-3 June 1944, First Lieutenant Robert W. Smitherman of Company "G", Private First Class William F. Morton of Company "F", and Private First Class Zoilo F. Rivera, both of Company "F", Private Edward H. Kukkan of Second Battalion Headquarters and Private Joe Spain of the Medical Detachment were outstanding among their units.⁸⁷

Task Force Howze which was organized for the operation beginning 1 June had the mission of providing a large mobile striking force and to protect the gap between the Third and Eighty-Eighth Divisions. It consisted of the First Battalion Seventh Infantry, Third Battalion 13th Armored Infantry Regiment, one unit of the First Armored Division, and a company of tank destroyers. At 0500, 1 June, with two tank companies abreast, the Force jumped off in the attack. The First Battalion



"Cotton Balers" killed in action on the way to Rome await burial.



A Cannon Company M-8 makes a halt on the Road to Rome. The Nazi flag was picked up in Cisterna di Littoria. Left to right: 1 Lt. George Guckert, Pfc McDonald, Pfc Vendetti, T/5 Wheelchel, Cpl. Sheridan, and S/Sgt. Hugh Lilevjen.

attack that would cut Highway 6 and cut off forward elements of the Division. But the two crossroads were considered important and Lieutenant Colonel John J. Toffey, III, expertly planned and directed the coordinated attack of the two battalions supported by armor, which overcame the stubborn enemy resistance and captured the two important features near Palestrina, which closed the last avenue of escape to enemy in that area.

⁸⁶ GO No. 131, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 27 June '44. Lt. Col. Toffey was posthumously awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal.

⁸⁷ GOs No. 22, 29, 40, 161 & 175, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 July & 8 Aug. '44 & 22 & 29 Jan. & 9 Feb. '45. 1 Lt. Smitherman was awarded the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. Pfc Morton & Rivera, Pvts. Kukkan & Spain were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

Seventh Infantry followed the right tank company straight north for Labico then swerved over to the left as it neared the highway.

A platoon of Company "B" went on the mission of contacting the 88th Division on the left and the remainder of the Company became engaged in a stiff fight in the hills. As the Task Force was held up, Company "C" was committed in the afternoon and the battalion was engaged throughout the night against enemy using machine guns, grenades and rifles.

When his company was fired upon from a brushy area thirty yards away, Private Charles T. Borelli of Company "A" led a seven-man squad in an assault against the enemy force consisting of an estimated heavy weapons company plus rifle attachments. Although four members of his squad were fatally wounded as they entered the brush, Private Borelli continued to advance until a hand grenade fell at his feet. As he leaped backwards and threw himself to the ground, the enemy opened fire from well camouflaged emplacements a few yards away with machine pistol and rifle fire. Private Borelli then crawled to a foxhole and reached down to make the occupant prisoner. When the enemy soldier attempted to throw a grenade Private Borelli shot him. He then proceeded further into the brush and succeeded, during a fierce fire-fight, in completely clearing the position of the enemy. As a result of his aggressive action and outstanding bravery, Private Borelli personally killed fifteen enemy soldiers and was responsible for the destruction of a strongly defended enemy position. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁸⁸

Captain William B. Stewart (who was known as "the Spider", and several Company "C" men, fought admirably. The captain displayed daring leadership that inspired his company to break the enemy's line in its sector. Second Lieutenant James C. Lynch set up a roadblock with half a squad of riflemen and audaciously ambushed an enemy convoy. Three men were killed, six wounded, forty captured and fifteen vehicles seized. Second Lieutenant Walter M. Rice led his platoon in a courageous attack on an enemy-held hill which was very successful. Private First Class John H. Zawacki alone assaulted an enemy



Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour commanded the First Battalion, Seventh Infantry, from 25 July 1943 to 30 January 1944 when he was wounded in action and evacuated. He again assumed command of the battalion on 13 March 1944 and won distinction by ably directing it in the "breakthrough" operations and on to Rome. The First Battalion, Seventh Infantry, was the first full Allied military unit to enter the Eternal City on Sunday, 4 June 1944.

machine gun and put it out of action. Staff Sergeant George C. Pletzke rescued five members of his squad who became separated from the company and were in danger of their lives.⁸⁹

By noontime 2 June, against scattered sniper, mortar and artillery fire, the First Battalion reached the railroad tracks west of Labico. During the afternoon it crossed the highway to an assembly area where it remained until the morning of 3 June.

On 3 June Task Force Howze preceded all units of the Third Infantry Division and Second Corps and attacked to the left on Highway 6 toward Rome. All enemy pockets of resistance were cleaned out. The First Battalion troops knocked out a series of enemy strong points protected by automatic weapons and bagged large numbers of prisoners with only a few casualties suffered itself.

At 1700 hours the Red Battalion was ordered to establish three road blocks between Highways 6 and 5, each to consist of a company of infantry and a company of tanks. Company "B" moved to its position by riding on the tanks and established its block without trouble. Company "A" encountered some difficulty. Riding on its tanks "Able" Company was ambushed by an enemy road block which allowed the first two tanks with infantry to pass then hit the third with anti-tank gun fire. One man was killed and thirteen wounded. Company "A" deployed from the tanks into the field and drove off the enemy, then set up its own block.

Company "C" enjoyed great success. Riding in the dark on fourteen tanks to set up the third block it ambushed an enemy convoy of almost thirty vehicles. All the vehicles were captured with one hundred thirty enemy, including a battalion commander being taken prisoner. Two mobile 88mm guns were included in the loot. Company "C" suffered no casualties but the enemy had four killed.

FIRST BATTALION SEVENTH INFANTRY BECOMES FIRST FULL COMBAT UNIT OF THE ALLIED ARMIES TO ENTER ROME 4 JUNE 1944

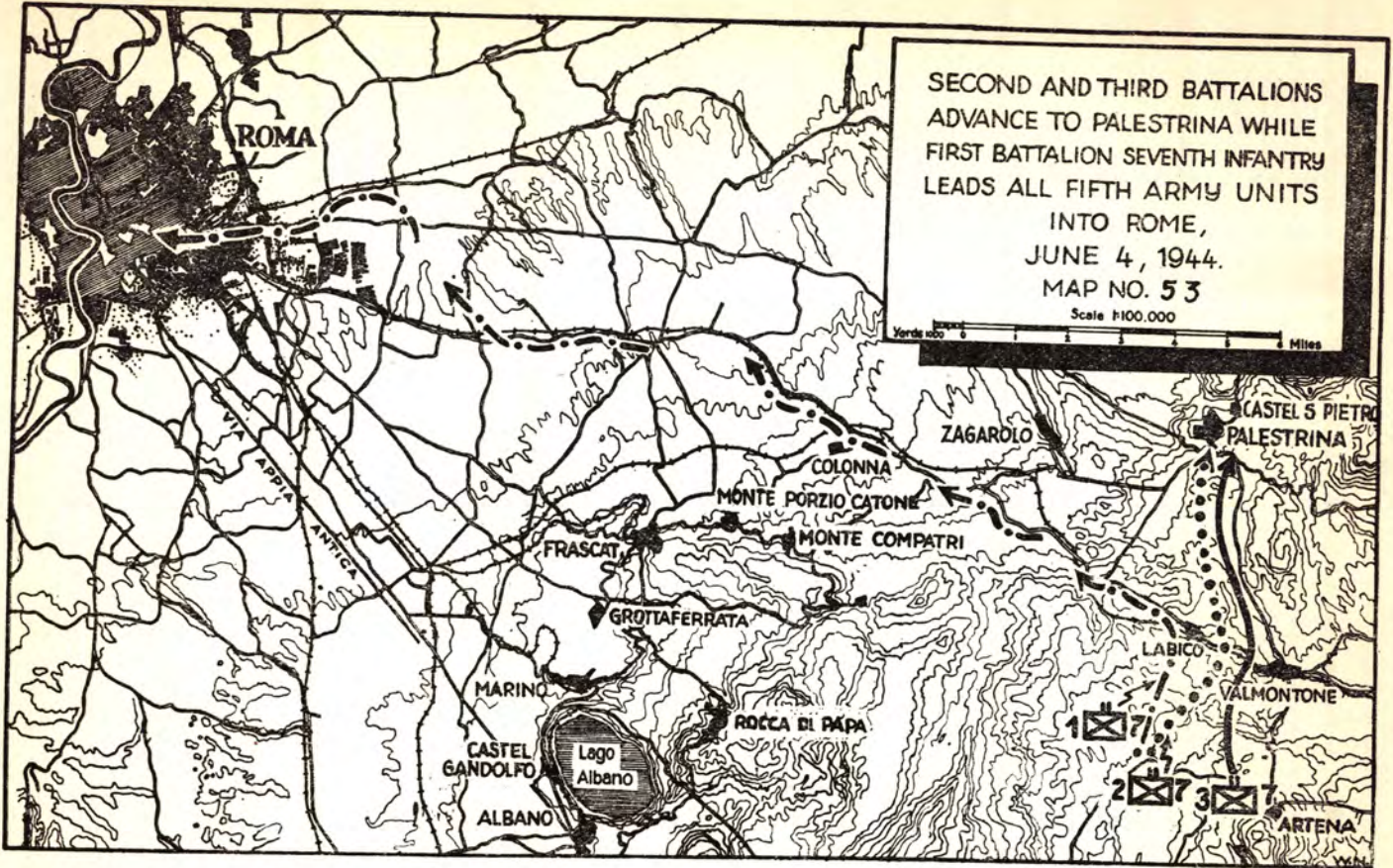
As Task Force Howze was dissolved the First Battalion, Seventh Infantry, moved on foot to Tor Sapienza in the morning of the 4th and at 1400 was ordered to move into Rome with the Special Service Force on its left. An enemy force was encountered at the outskirts of the Italian capital and the Special Service Force was held up, but the First Battalion, Seventh Infantry, outflanked the enemy and moved ahead into Rome. Thus it was that Seventh Infantrymen were the first Allied soldiers into Rome and the First Battalion, Seventh Infantry, was the first full Allied combat unit into the Eternal City. Elements of the 85th Infantry Division also encountered enemy who delayed their advance. Whenever large cities or objectives are taken as a result of the combined action of many units and organizations, claims and counter-claims have always been made by various units concerning the capture. However, the great city of Rome was not captured by one battalion, or regiment, or division, or corps, but by the coordinated efforts of all the combat units of the Fifth Army. Therefore no unit can claim the capture. However, it is a matter of military record that the first full Allied combat unit to enter Rome on Sunday, 4 June 1944 was the First Battalion, Seventh Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour.

Without opposition, the First Battalion reached the San Lorenzo railroad yards at 1600. After setting up a defense in the streets about the railroad station the troops remained in the vicinity for the night.

Once again the "Cotton Balermen" had led all units and chalked up a first that stands out in the long and colorful history of the Regiment. Rome, the Eternal City,

⁸⁸ For authority see GO No. 137 Hq. 7th Army 27 Dec. 1944.

⁸⁹ GOs No. 185, 187, 199 & 11, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 3, 5 & 27 Sept. '44 & 11 Jan. '45. Capt. Stewart, 2 Lt. Lynch, 2 Lt. Rice, S/Sgt. Pletzke & Pfc Zawacki were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



had been added to the long list of names which begins with New Orleans.

The First Battalion troops were showered with gifts that night. The commanding officer had difficulty keep-

ing his units intact as the wine, vermouth and cognac poured down dry throats. The Second and Third Battalions, which were relieved by French units at 0800, 4 June, and entrucked for Rome, spent the night at Tor

worldwartwoveterans.org



Top left photo shows His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, as he stood on the central balcony of Saint Peter's Basilica at 6:00 P. M. on 5 June 1944 and addressed the large throng (partly shown in lower left photo). Photo on the right shows a close-up of the Pope.

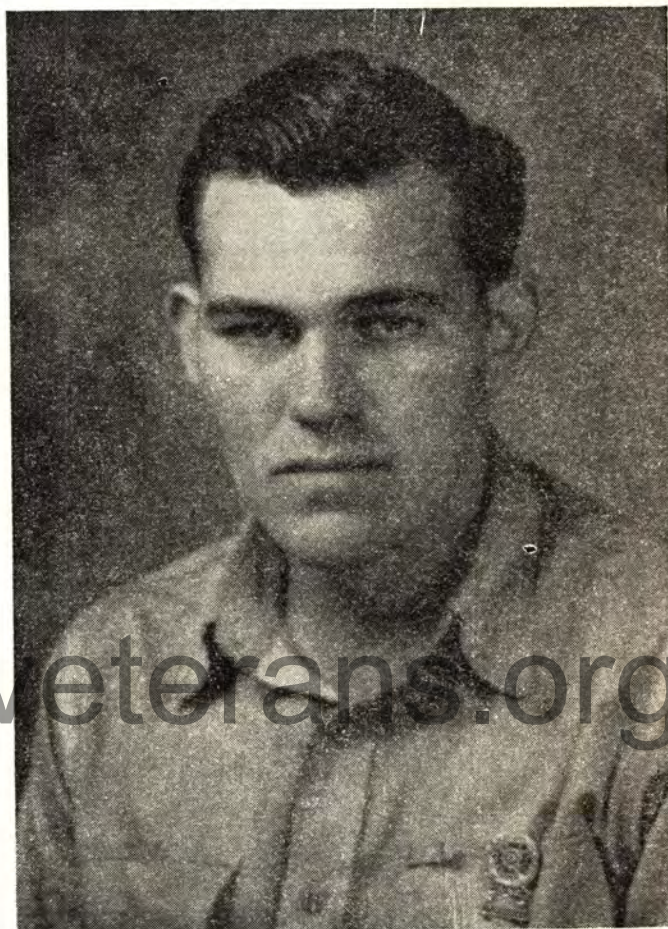
Sapienza on the outskirts of the city. The morning of the 5th the White and Blue Battalions moved into the Eternal City by vehicle.

The welcome received by the "liberators" in the first axis capital to be freed was tumultuous and overwhelming. It was an experience never to be forgotten by those who made the entry. The Romans lined the streets by thousands. Nuns lined the little children up in front of the churches and schools and led them in waving greetings and blessings to their liberators. Dusty and weary "dog-faces" of the Seventh Infantry after months of fighting

mand of all troops in the city. In reward for its great part in the two long Italian campaigns, and for the fact that one of its great battalions had been first to enter the city the "Rock of the Marne" Division was selected to be the first garrison troops of Rome while bitter fighting was still being waged along the Tiber River and the Mediterranean, between the British and Germans. Heavy fighting was still taking place to the east near Highway 5 where the British Eighth Army was making steady progress. In the fall of Rome the German Army had suffered one of its greatest defeats.



Born with the Seventh Infantry on 31 August 1907, Lieutenant Colonel John J. Toffey, III, served as Executive Officer of the Regiment on 3 June 1944 when he was killed in action.



Staff Sergeant Montie P. Noble of Company "A" died of wounds on 7 June 1944.

and living in the filth and squalor of North Africa, Sicily and Southern Italy, and in the water-filled foxholes of Anzio were then back in civilization; Rome for a long time the very center of civilization itself. Instead of wading across treacherous waters or through mine fields and barbed wire in the face of deadly hostile fire, "Cotton Balers" waded through throngs of wildly demonstrating, enthusiastic Romans who showered flowers and friendly greetings on the liberators. For the first time since leaving home the men saw a clean, well-kept city with beautiful homes, parks, and boulevards.

While the 15th and 30th Infantry Regiments passed through the "Cotton Baler" Red Battalion and secured all bridges in the city over the famous Tiber River the Seventh Infantry went into bivouac in the lovely Villa Borghese gardens near the Porto del Popolo.

At 1000 hours, 5 June, the American Third Infantry Division took over all of Rome and at that time its commanding general, Brigadier General John W. "Iron Mike" O'Daniel, assumed responsibility for the com-

Pope Pius XII came out on the central balcony of the great Saint Peter's Basilica and addressed a throng of 200,000 in the Piazza San Pietro, composed mostly of Roman civilians and a handful of American Infantrymen.

The period of occupation in Rome was short-lived for soon the "rear echelon Johnnies", the allied military government, peninsula base section and countless sundry, miscellaneous and extraneous units invaded the city and literally took over. Many Seventh Infantrymen in their joyousness and enthusiasm of occupying Rome thought that the combat days of the "Cotton Baler" Regiment and the Third Infantry Division were over for World War II—but that was not to be. It was a great disappointment to the "dogfaces" to have to leave the Eternal City.

During the short time spent in the Eternal City the "Cotton Balermen" took full advantage to see the great sights which may be found nowhere else in the world. Catholics of the Regiment, and others too, visited Saint

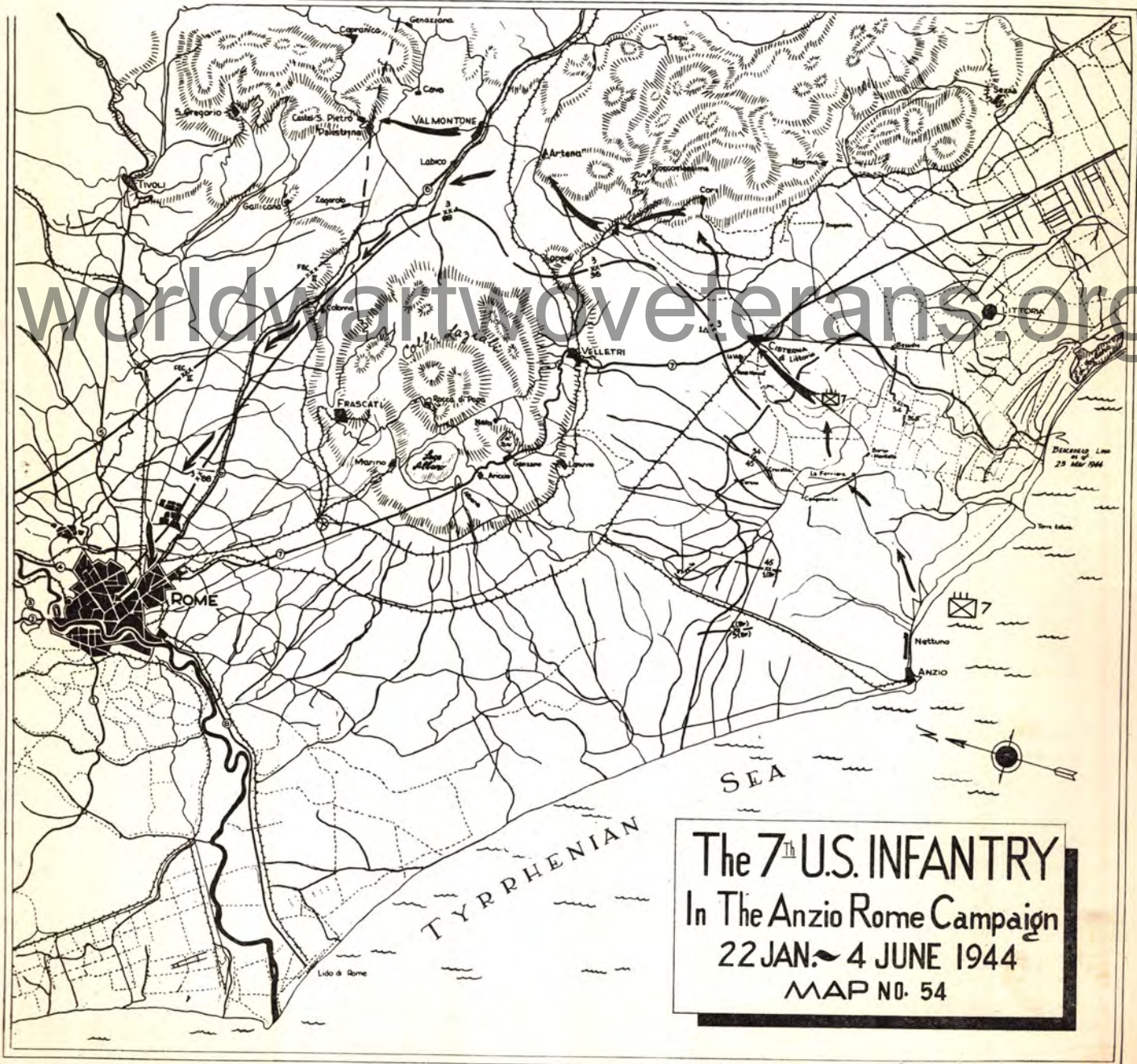
Peter's and Vatican City, had audiences with the Pope, and visited the other great basilicas of Santa Maria Maggiore, San Paolo and San Giovanni Laterano. The Colosseum, the Catacombs, Castle San Angelo and Hadrian's Tomb, the Forum and countless other attractions of the old Roman Empire were seen. The beautiful public buildings of Rome and the parks were a main attraction. Some went to see Mussolini Stadium. Then there were those who cared not for the past attractions of Rome or visiting the beautiful churches, their interest was in the hotels, wine, women and song and they enjoyed themselves to the utmost.

On 14 June the garrison duty was but a memory, for once again the Seventh Infantry moved, and everyone knew it was back to the wars once more. Bidding farewell to the Eternal City the Regiment moved by motor to a temporary bivouac area at Lido di Roma on the Mediterranean. Preparations were made immediately for another move and on the 20th the troops moved by vehicle to Anzio, the scene of former great struggles. From there the Seventh Infantry returned to the Naples area by water and land transportation.

SUMMARY

The Anzio-Rome Campaign was the costliest campaign engaged in by the Seventh United States Infantry in World War II. Over 3,000 battle casualties were suffered by the Regiment, a complete turn-over of the organization. A total of 729, practically all killed in action, gave their lives; 1950 were wounded in action; 92 were missing from the action and 262 had been taken prisoners by the enemy.

The campaign itself consisted of (1) an amphibious landing which was practically unopposed and was the easiest one of the four participated in by the Regiment in World War II; (2) the major attack of 30-31 January 1944 to break out of the beachhead which was stopped by the enemy with heavy losses; (3) almost four months of defensive and stationary warfare during which time enemy attempts to wipe out the beachhead were repulsed; (4) the breakthrough from the beachhead and the drive into Rome.



The 7th U.S. INFANTRY
In The Anzio Rome Campaign
22 JAN. ~ 4 JUNE 1944
MAP NO. 54

PART FIVE

From the Riviera to the Rhine—15 August-20 December 1944

CHAPTER I

The Invasion and Campaign of Southern France

June 1944 was a month in which the German armies were harder pressed than ever before in World War II. The major Allied offensive launched in Italy the month before was in full swing. Shattering blows which liquidated several divisions had been struck against the enemy in Italy. Rome had been captured for the first time in history from the south. An all-out pursuit of the enemy was being made north of the Tiber when on 6 June the Allies launched the long-awaited, cross-channel invasion at Normandy. While fighting raged in France and Italy, the Soviet armies commenced a massive attack across the Pripet Marshes on 22 June. Defending against major attacks on three fronts the German armies faced defeat in World War II.

By the end of June, however, the Germans had halted the Allied advance in Italy and had thrown the invasion forces in northern France off schedule. The Allies then decided to launch their fourth major assault within three months by a second invasion of France. The time was set for 15 August and the Riviera coast was selected for the point of attack. About six weeks elapsed between the time of decision and the time of execution for the second invasion, and during that time the Allied armies in Italy were confronted with the defenses of the Pisa-Rimini line. The Allied armies in France were breaking the resistance of the German 7th Army. On the east front the Russian forces were driving the Germans back, had separated the Baltic countries at Riga, reached the borders of East Prussia, and were in Warsaw in Poland.

Although the invasion of southern France was not ordered until 2 July 1944, plans for such an operation had been formulated quite some time previous. The tactical situation had not permitted an earlier execution of the operation. Even then, it has been stated, some of the strategists favored another operation:

As far back as 1 April 1943 the eyes of the Allied forces in the Mediterranean were focusing on a possible landing in southern France. By December 1943 the scheme had reached the point of decision, and a directive was issued to General Eisenhower to the effect that it would take place during the following month of May. Intensive planning began at once in accordance with an Allied Force Headquarters directive of 29 December. On 4 February the combined planning staffs of Air, Army, and Navy met to compare views and on 31 March the first Provisional Outline Air Plan was issued.

Shortly thereafter, however, the stalemate in Italy forced a recasting of plans, and it was decided to shelve the plan and concentrate on a decision in the battle for Rome. The battle began on 11-12 May and almost immediately inflicted a shattering defeat upon the German armies. The Allies had just captured Rome and were in all-out pursuit of the disorganized enemy during early June when the Normandy assault began; it was clearly inadvisable to halt in the middle of success (in Italy) to invade southern France.

Not until the end of the month was the decision to execute the program finally made. By then the Allied armies in Italy had largely exploited their success and were slowing down in front

of the formidable Pisa-Rimini defense line. And in Normandy, though Cherbourg had been taken and the beachhead secured, the Allied armies were temporarily stalled and had fallen definitely behind schedule. Action was wanted and wanted quickly. Most of the high command in the Mediterranean would have preferred to concentrate on advancing the rest of the way up Italy and thence into the Hungarian plain. However, on 2 July invasion was decided upon, with direction that it be launched on 15 August.¹

The American Seventh Army, this time under the direction of Major General Alexander M. Patch who came from the Pacific Theatre of Operations, was assigned the mission of executing the operation against southern France which was known as "Dragoon" and was the sixth operation aimed as a whole at southern Europe.² The Seventh Army had not seen action since the Sicilian Campaign, after which all its combat divisions had been assigned either to the Fifth Army or sent to England to await the Normandy invasion.

The amphibious and airborne invasion was preceded by air attacks on southern France. The air operations really began on 28 April 1944 when heavy bombers attacked Toulon. Between that date and 10 August the Mediterranean Allied Air Force flew more than 6,000 sorties and dropped 12,500 tons of bombs on southern France. Not all those operations were designed specifically to precede the 7th Army assault but they contributed to the success of the operation. While those operations were conducted the XII Tactical Air Command, which was assigned the air assault missions for the actual invasion, established itself in Corsica by constructing airdromes and bulding up supplies and personnel on the island.³

The plans for the invasion of southern France were nearly cancelled altogether. At the eleventh hour practically, on 10 August 1944, Allied Force Headquarters asked the G-4 Planning Section of Headquarters, Services of Supply, North African Theatre of Operations for comments on a proposed plan "to take the whole 'Dragoon' assault force and strike at the southern coast of Brittany. That would have involved a shift of 1,560 miles in the point of attack. Because of uncertain logistics of such an operation, G-4 did not concur."⁴ With the assault troops already loading landing craft vessels no more thought was given to a change in plans.

1 "The AAF in the Invasion of Southern France", Hq. Army Air Forces, Wash., D. C., 1945, p. 3.

2 The first five operations were (1) "Torch" against North Africa; (2) "Husky" against Sicily; (3) "Avalanche" against Italy; (4) "Shingle" for the Anzio Beachhead, and (5) "Brassard", the all-French attack on Elba.

3 "The AAF in the Invasion of Southern France", op. cit. p. 4.

4 "American Enterprise in Europe, the Role of the SOS in the Defeat of Germany", I & E Div. USFET, Paris, 1945, pp. 77-78.

The major purposes behind the "Dragoon" operation were (1) to assist the Normandy attack by engaging German forces that might otherwise be used in northern France; (2) to capture a major port through which large scale re-inforcements could flow; (3) to liberate France; and (4) to join up with the cross-channel invasion for the decisive battle with the German armies of the west. The initial assignment of the American Seventh Army, as stated in its Field Order No. 1, was to assault the south coast of France, secure a beachhead east of Toulon and then assault and capture Toulon. Thereafter its intention was to advance toward Lyon or Vichy or westward to the Atlantic as determined by developments, eventually joining up with the Allied armies in northern France."⁵



The three 7th Infantry chaplains and their assistants assembled in the Piano di Quarto bivouac area on 2 August 1944. Standing, l. to r., were T/5 Albert F. Solarz, T/5 Fred L. Shorey, T/5 Isaac Van Der Jagt. Chaplain Raymond E. Vint, Chaplain Didrick Mydland. Front: Pfc Elisee A. Dutil. Regtl Hqrs Co., and Chaplain Chevis F. Horne.

Seventh Army assigned the VI American Corps the mission of making the assault against southern France with three crack American Infantry divisions abreast, namely, the 3rd, 36th and 45th Divisions, which had all been relieved of fighting for Fifth Army in Italy and placed in assembly and training areas.

From 28 June to 7 August 1944 the Seventh Infantry Regiment conducted a vigorous training schedule which brought its ranks of green and veteran troops to the highest state of physical fitness and psychological readiness for the new combat mission. For the very few who had come all the way with the Regiment it was about the same kind of conditioning and amphibious training engaged in in the States, North Africa, and Italy for the



Colonel O'Mohundro speaks to the members of the Seventh Infantry in the bivouac area on 3 August 1944.

other big operations, but with some new features. To many the amphibious training was all new. Training was divided into six day periods. It was an arduous program with twenty-five mile hikes under the broiling Italian sun and through billowing clouds of the Italian dust. Practice amphibious landings were made and the Regiment participated in a division problem.

During the amphibious training several men were rescued from drowning in the Tyrrhenian Sea. Private Arthur D. Case of the Regimental Battle Patrol, who was later killed in action, Technical Sergeant John H. Earl and Private John P. Wall both of Company "B", and Private Harry Levy of Service Company were among those who at various times performed rescue missions.⁶

On Sunday, 2 August, a meeting of all officers of the Third Infantry Division was held. The VI Corps commander, Major General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., and the Third Division commander, Major General John W. O'Daniel, spoke to the officers. Major General Truscott, with pride reviewed the record of the Third Infantry Division, and in reference to the forthcoming operation stated: "There is no such thing as being pinned down by enemy fire. I will relieve any officer who sends in such a report."

The next day Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro gave a "fight talk" to all members of the Seventh Infantry. Many considered his speech better than those of the generals the day before. He informed the men of the big operation ahead but let them know they would not be alone in the assault. He told something of the great size and strength of the attacking force to which they belonged, and mentioned the great power of the supporting naval and air arms.

On 4 August a review of the Third Infantry Division was held before the new Seventh Army commanding general, Major General Alexander M. Patch. Major General Patch made several awards to members of the division and then made a brief talk. In the course of his remarks he stated that a short time before he had met the King of England, then said that he considered it a greater privilege and honor that day to review the troops of the Third Infantry Division who were about to embark on a great adventure.

On 7 August the Seventh Infantry commenced breaking bivouac in the Piano di Quarto area and on the 8th and 9th loaded its personnel and equipment on LCTs, LSTs and LCIs at Baia, Pozzuoli and Nisida near Naples.

PLANS FOR THE INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE

The plan of the VI American Corps⁷ was (1) make a daylight assault on the beaches from Cap Cavalaire to Agay employing three divisions abreast; (2) advance rapidly inland to contact the Provisional Airborne Division in the Le Muy area; (3) extend the beachhead and outpost the high ground north of St. Raphael and Frejus with sufficient forces to secure the airfield sites in the Argus Valley between Frejus and Le Muy; (4) seize Le Muy with a mobile striking force; (5) thereafter advance to the northwest maintaining contact with the First French Corps on the left after it was to be established ashore and in its subsequent attack on Toulon.

Prior to daylight on D-Day the First Special Service Force was to land on the islands of Port Gros and Levant and reduce all resistance thereon while a French Groupe de Commandos was to land in the vicinity of Cap Negre to destroy enemy defenses there, block the coastal highways and seize high ground two miles to the north.

⁵ "The AAF in the Invasion of Southern France", op. cit., p. 3.

⁶ GOs No. 113, 252 & 304, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 1 Aug., 5 Nov. & 31 Dec. '44. S/Sgt Case (posthumously), T/Sgt. Earl, Pvt. Wall & Levy were each awarded the Soldier's Medal.

⁷ FO No. 12, Hq. 3d Inf. Div. (reinf.) Naples, Italy, 1 Aug. 1944.

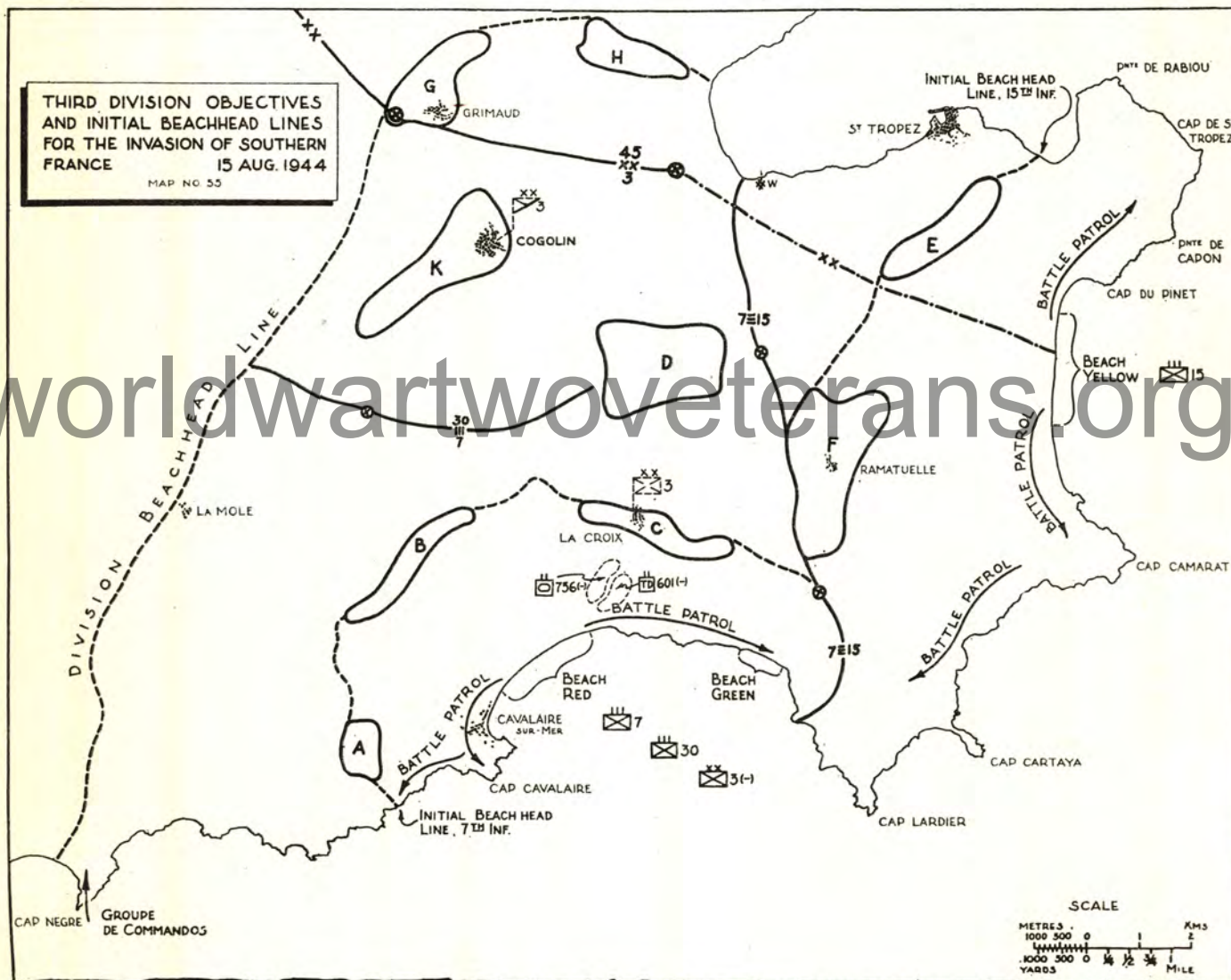
The Provisional Airborne Division was to land on the high ground north, west and south of Le Muy with the primary mission of preventing the movement of enemy forces into the assault area from the west and northwest and with the secondary mission of assaulting enemy defenses from the rear.

The assaulting echelon of the three crack American Infantry Divisions was the 3rd, 45th and 36th from left to right. The mission of the Third Infantry Division which was given the tactical code name of "Alpha Force", "Alpha" meaning first, was to land on the beaches designated as Red and Yellow and clear them of all enemy resistance; to capture San Tropez, Grimaud and Cogolin and clear the San Tropez peninsula with all possible speed, to advance rapidly and aggressively inland coordinating all elements at the earliest possible moment and to continue the advance with utmost speed to the Corps beachhead line, prepared to advance west on Corps order; to destroy all resistance encountered; to employ

As in all its major amphibious assaults the Third Infantry Division designated the Seventh Infantry Regiment to be in its assault wave. The 15th Infantry was named as the second assault regiment and the 30th Infantry was named the reserve regiment. The "Cotton Balers" were given Beach Red to land on while the "Can Do's" were assigned Beach Yellow.

Providing naval gunfire support for the Division were one battleship in general support of both beaches, and six light cruisers and five destroyers assigned to support individual beaches. Smaller craft carrying guns or rockets were also given missions of firing on beach defenses. Primary mission of the warships was to neutralize enemy land-based artillery. No important enemy interference from the sea was expected.

A prearranged bombardment of known battery positions was to begin at H minus 90 and continue until H plus 15 minutes, when the warships were to take over certain sectors of responsibility in support of the landing



mobile armored reconnaissance detachments landing with the leading elements, to reconnoiter all roads in its zone and to gain contact with the French Groupe de Commandos in the vicinity of Cap Negre; to protect the Corps left flank and coordinate its advance with the 45th Infantry Division on the right. When passed through by elements of the First French Corps in the left of its zone the Division was to regroup the elements passed through for continued offensive action in the right of its zone.

and fire on targets observed by spotting planes and shore fire control parties. There were nine of these parties, tied-in not only with their respective ships but also with the naval liaison officer at Division Artillery Headquarters. This arrangement in effect gave the division a naval fire direction center, by which the fire of all supporting warships could be massed on suitable targets.

The Corps Air plan provided for a detailed schedule of attack for two days preceding the operation by a

powerful force of planes, as well as strong general support on D-day via counter battery missions, pre-H-Hour bombardment of enemy beach defenses and attack of nearby enemy airdromes. Available were the following air units: 4 fighter groups, 5 fighter-bomber groups, 7 medium bomber groups, 21 heavy bomber groups, 3 tactical reconnaissance squadrons and approximately 200 carrier-based planes.

The air effort before D-day was to be directed against enemy air forces, lines of communication, and coastal defense batteries between Genoa and the Spanish border. Offshore of Red Beach, air reconnaissance had revealed that the enemy was in the process of putting concrete tetrahedra in the water; however, it was not believed that there were enough in position to interfere seriously with the landing.

Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro's plans⁸ were for the Second and Third Battalions, with the Second on the right, to assault Beach Red at H-Hour and reduce all beach defenses in the Regimental zone of action. The remainder of the Regiment was to land in accordance with a landing schedule, advance rapidly to the initial beachhead line and destroy all enemy forces in the zone of action. The initial beachhead line in the Regiment's zone of action was to be occupied with particular attention to Areas "A", "B" and "C" to hold enemy forces beyond that line. Upon the seizure of Objective "C" a rapid advance was to be made on Objective "D" which was to be seized and held. The Regimental Battle Patrol and the attached 30th Infantry Battle Patrol were assigned missions to assist in the clearance of the beach defenses. Contact was to be established and maintained with the 15th Infantry on the right and an aggressive reconnaissance made toward Cap Negre to establish and maintain contact with the French Groupe de Commandos. The Regiment had the mission of protecting the Third Division's left flank and on order to advance in its zone from Objectives "A", "B" and "D" to seize and hold the final Division beachhead line. It was to be prepared to continue the advance to the west along the axis of Highway 98, west through La Mole.

The Second Battalion, with the 30th Infantry Battle Patrol, two tanks of Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion, and one tank destroyer of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, was directed, after destroying all beach defenses in its zone, to reorganize along the coordinating line X-Y (see Map No. 56) and then advance rapidly to the initial beachhead line destroying all enemy encountered. A strong combat patrol was to be sent generally along the route shown to Point Z to establish and maintain a road block at that point until relieved by the 15th Infantry, at which time the patrol would return to the battalion. The White Battalion was to employ the 30th Infantry Battle Patrol to assist in clearing beach defenses east of Beach Red to the Regimental beachhead line and make contact with the Third Reconnaissance Troop Battle Patrol at Point C-1. Upon reaching the contact point the patrol was to continue the advance if contact had not been made. Following establishment of contact, the patrol was to return along the coast line to assemble and join the Second Battalion on order. The key terrain features of Objective "C" on the initial beachhead line were to be occupied by the battalion troops. A strong combat patrol supported by the battalion's attached armor was to advance along the road to La Croix and when the objective was to be taken establish Road Block No. 1. All enemy in La Croix were to be isolated and destroyed. Following the capture of Objective "C" the battalion was to be prepared to advance on Regimental order to seize and hold the key terrain features of Objective "D" and then establish Road

Block No. 2. Enemy forces in Gassin were to be isolated and destroyed. Following the capture of Objective "D" the battalion was to be prepared to support the 30th Infantry by fire from all its available weapons. When passed through on Objective "D" by the 30th Infantry and when fire support could not longer be given, the battalion was to reorganize and be prepared on order to assemble in Regimental Reserve or to attack to the west.

The Third Battalion, with the Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol, two tanks of Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion, and one destroyer of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, was directed, after destroying all beach defenses in its zone, to reorganize the battalion less one company along the coordinating line M-N (see Map No. 56) and then advance rapidly to the initial beachhead line and destroy all enemy in its zone of action. One company was to be sent along the route shown to seize and hold Objective "B". All enemy in Cavalaire-sur-Mer were to be isolated and destroyed and the battalion was to seize Objective "A", then send a strong combat patrol to clear resistance between Objectives "A" and "B" and to establish contact at the contact point "Texas" with the company from Objective "B". Road block No. 3 was to be established. The battalion was directed to employ the Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol to assist in clearing beach defenses west of Red Beach along the coast to the Regimental beachhead line and to establish and maintain contact with the French Groupe de Commandos in the vicinity of Cap Negre. The Third Battalion was to be prepared to continue the offensive action to the west to seize and hold the Division Beachhead Line with particular attention to Objectives A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5 and A-6. It was to protect the Regiment's left flank.

Upon the capture of their objectives both of the assault battalions were to patrol aggressively to the front and flanks.

If no underwater obstacles were encountered or if obstacles would not prevent the beaching of LCVPs the assault battalions were to discharge red smoke grenades immediately on beaching. When enemy defenses in the immediate beach area were neutralized assault troops were to discharge violet smoke grenades on the order of the battalion commanders only, however. Yellow smoke grenades were to be used to indicate the presence of friendly troops to friendly airplanes. In the event underwater obstacles were encountered that would prevent LCVPs from beaching, a green parachute flare was to be discharged from each LCVP encountering difficulty.

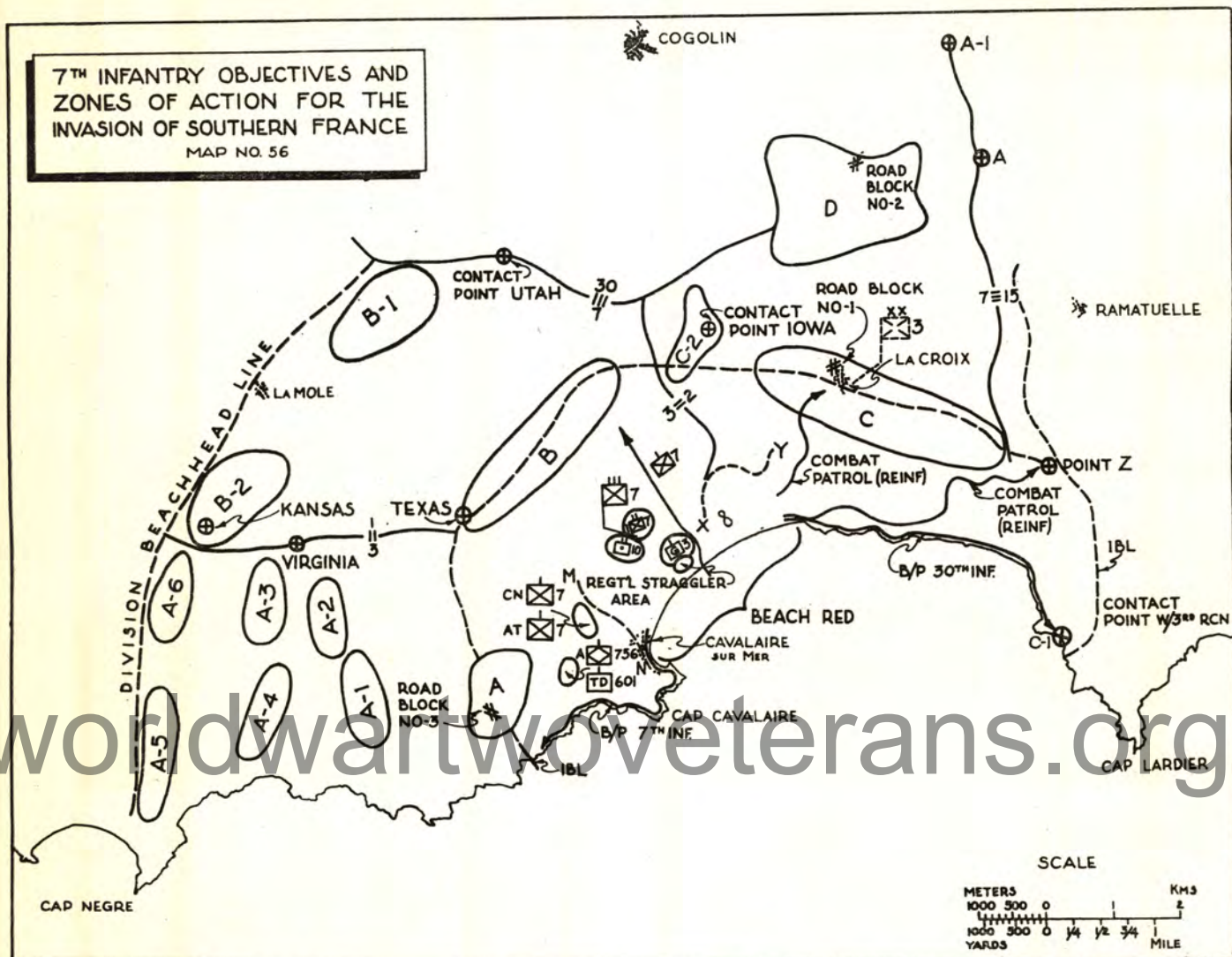
Should enemy opposition interfere seriously with the landing of craft other than LCVPs the naval commander was to order "Treadmill" executed, at which time craft would circle off shore until the opposition would be reduced. Craft carrying tanks or self-propelled weapons were to be so loaded as to permit maximum delivery of fire against the beaches.

The First Battalion was scheduled to land at H + 30 and to clear the beach of any remaining resistance. It was to assemble with utmost speed in Regimental Reserve (see Map No. 56) and send a strong combat patrol to seize and hold Objective C-2, destroying all enemy encountered and make contact with the Second Battalion at contact point "Iowa". The Red Battalion was to be prepared to move to meet counter-attacks from any direction or, on order, to assist in the capture of Objective "B", or to pass through that objective and continue the offensive action to the west along Highway

⁸ FO No. 12, Hq. 7th Infantry (reinf.), Naples, Italy, 2 Aug. 1944.

98 through La Mole to the Division beachhead line, with particular attention to Objectives B-1 and B-2. It was to be prepared to continue the advance to the west, maintaining contact with the 30th Infantry on the right at contact point "Utah" and the Third Battalion on the left at contact points "Virginia" and "Kansas".

begin sweeping the road of mines southwest to Cavalaire-sur-Mer and the other to clear the main road northeast through La Croix. As soon as the 10th Engineer Battalion should be established ashore Company "A" would revert to battalion control and be in support rather than in attachment to the Regiment.



Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies were to land on Beach Red on call. Upon landing, Anti-Tank Company was to attach one platoon (57mm) to the Third Battalion in the vicinity of Objective "A" and a similar platoon to the Second Battalion in the vicinity of Objective "C". Cannon Company was, upon landing, to immediately assemble in its assigned area (see Map No. 56) and be prepared to assist the battalions by fire and to occupy direct fire positions for anti-tank defense. Both of the company commanders were to report to the Regimental commander when their companies were assembled.

The 10th Field Artillery Battalion with the 634th Field Artillery Battalion minus one firing battery and Battery "C", 36th Field Artillery Battalion, were to land commencing at H + 100, reconnoiter and occupy positions in the area shown, be prepared to support the Regiment and place fire on Highway No. 98.

Company "A", 10th Engineer Battalion, attached for the initial phase, was to be in direct support of the Regiment for the clearing of mines, repair and maintenance of such roads and bridges as the situation might require. Two mine detector parties with three mine detectors each were to land with the Infantry. One party was to

Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion, and Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, were to land the remainder of their companies not attached to the two assault battalions on call, assemble in areas shown and be prepared on Regimental order to move with utmost speed in any direction to meet enemy counter-attacks.

Company "A", 3rd Chemical Battalion, was to land on call, assemble in its assigned area, reconnoiter for and occupy positions and be prepared to support the Regiment by fire.

The Regimental Medical Detachment and Company "A", 3rd Medical Battalion, were to establish aid stations and execute evacuation missions.

Service Company, Seventh Infantry, was to land on call to establish and operate the rear echelon of the Regiment in the vicinity of inshore dumps.

Regimental Headquarters Company with a Detachment of 3rd Signal Company and a Prisoner of War Interrogation Team was to land behind the Red Battalion as desired by the Regimental Commander to establish and operate the Regimental Command Post. A traffic control platoon was to patrol the beach and collect and guide all Seventh Infantry personnel to the assembly

areas and assist in guiding Cannon Company, Anti-Tank Company, the attached tanks, destroyers and chemical mortars to their respective assembly areas when they should land. Assistance was to be rendered to the Regimental S-4 and Service Company Commander in the handling of vehicles. All battalions and separate units were to provide guides at the Regimental Straggler assembly areas.

Study of the terrain in the Third Infantry Division zone of action showed that the general topography consisted of a low mountainous area with a few small plains where the large streams enter the bays. The mountains generally rise directly behind the beaches to an altitude of 1,000 to 1,500 feet in elevation. In the western sector there is a small plain about three miles long and two miles wide, southeast of Bormes. The largest plain, about six miles long and two miles wide, lies at the head of the Golfe de St. Tropez. The peninsula bounded by the Golfe de St. Tropez and the Baie De Cavalaire is generally a low plain, which rises from sea level to an elevation of 300 feet. The coast line is irregular with rocky headlands and small beaches at the head of sheltered caves.

the coast to Cavalaire-sur-Mer and to St. Tropez. A small branch of the same railroad runs to Cogolin. The main railroad, a double-tracked, standard gauge railroad from Toulon to St. Raphael runs through the Toulon-St. Raphael Corridor and is about fourteen miles inland. There is a limited network of good roads in the beach-head area. The principal road is Route 98, a good two-way, tar-macadam or surface-treated macadam road. Route 559 turns off Highway 98 about two miles west of Bormes and follows the coast line to a point one mile northeast of Cavalaire-sur-Mer, where it goes up the valley to La Croix and St. Tropez.

The mountain slopes are covered with scattered woods of evergreen, oak, maple and holly. The lower mountain slopes are usually terraced and cultivated primarily to vineyards and olive groves. The Baie De Cavalaire, a C-shaped bay open to the south, is four miles wide at its entrance between Cap De Cavalaire on the west and Cap Lardier on the east. The bay has two beaches, one on the east between Pointe Vergeron and Pointe Dubrevil and one on the west from Pointe de Cavalaire to la Bouillabais. The west beach was the one designated as Red Beach upon which the Seventh Infantry was to



Views of the Third Infantry Division review on 4 August 1944 in Italy.

The drainage is generally south to the sea and north to the La Mole and Grande rivers. Drainage is good due to the slope of the terrain and the porous soil. No surface water would be found.

There are two ridge systems in the area, one of which rises between the coast line and La Mole River Valley and runs generally from Bormes. The other ridge line lies about eight miles inland between La Mole River Valley and the Toulon-St. Raphael corridor. The valleys run generally southwest-northeast, and are narrow with little flood land.

For the communications system in the area a single track narrow-gauge railroad line runs from Toulon along

land. The town Cavalaire-sur-Mer stands directly behind the southwest end of the beach.

At 400 yards off shore in six fathoms there was good anchorage anywhere with a bottom of mud and weeds and good holding ground. Red Beach itself is about 3,900 yards in length and from 20 to 50 yards in width, and is a sand beach backed by a narrow belt of tree-covered dunes, behind which is the coast road and railway. There are suitable exits for personnel anywhere and a number for vehicles. In the southwestern half the beach is backed by wooded slopes and the outskirts of the village of Cavalaire-sur-Mer. In the eastern half the hinterland consists of cultivated fields.

It was expected that the enemy would have the beach moderately defended with minor beach defenses consisting of three casements, eight definite pillboxes, one probable pillbox. At least seventeen machine guns were thought to cover the entire beach with their fields of fire. In the western quarter of the beach was a battery of two light anti-aircraft guns and at its western extremity were two three-gun light, anti-aircraft batteries. A searchlight was reported at about the center of the beach and there was also one fixed single gun at the western end. Beach mines were reported along the eastern three-fourths of the beach and in several places at the western end, some of which were confirmed by aerial photographs. Barbed wire extended 800 yards parallel to and in the center of the beach. Offshore, the Baie De Cavalaire was reported mined between Pointe De Cavalaire and "La Bouillabaisse Restaurant" at a maximum depth of ten fathoms.

THE ENEMY SITUATION

Though the Allied threat to the Riviera had been obvious for months, the hard-pressed Germans had been obliged to pull away a sizeable proportion of the forces they had allocated to defend it. In the area of southern France, south of the Loire River, there were believed to be thirteen identified divisions on 28 July. Of that number nine were classified as limited employment divisions and four as offensive or field divisions. The group of nine limited employment units consisted of four Infantry divisions and five reserve divisions. The four offensive divisions included two panzer formations and two newly arrived Infantry divisions which were reported in a depleted state. In addition, the 341st Assault Gun Brigade, consisting of an estimated thirty assault guns, was located in the Narbonne area.

In addition to the divisional armor there was estimated to be about fourteen general headquarters tank battalions in France and the low countries. It was considered reasonable to assume that at least three of the tank battalions would be found garrisoned in southern France. About sixteen Ost or Russian Battalions had been located in various parts of Southern France. Also there had been identified several battalions of Tartars, Armenians, Hindus, Turcomans and Czechs. Some foreigners, notably the Ukrainians, had been organized under the supervision of the German SS and performed police duties in the area.

The combat efficiency of the limited employment divisions was considered quite decreased because of the apparent deficiency in heavy armament, a general deficiency in both horse and motor transport was a consequent lack of mobility, plus the possibility that a greater number of older model weapons would be found in that type unit. The increased percentage of "Volksdeutsche" found in the units also made for decreased combat efficiency. However, the fact that many troops were young and fresh, and the fact that the Germans had been retraining a number of seasoned troops returned from active fronts, and convalescents, was considered.

The offensive divisions would probably be of a fairly high calibre, due to an increase in equipment, plus the fact that the veterans from previous campaigns constituted more than a mere backbone of the unit.

Depleted was the German Air Force in southern France. It was estimated the Germans might be able to scrape together 150 long range bombers, 30 bomber reconnaissance and 100 single engine fighters and fighter bombers.

No major enemy naval forces were considered to be active in the Western Mediterranean, the German naval defenses were considered to be but a handful of destroyers

and torpedo boats, escort vessels or corvettes, and minor units.

For the invasion the "Allies had marshalled a force with a clear-cut and overwhelming superiority in every respect. Against the weak German divisions the United States Seventh Army could throw in a stronger force of crack United States and French Divisions, plus an assortment of paratroop, commando, and special service forces. Against the Luftwaffe's 280 furtive aircraft the Mediterranean Allied Airforces mustered 5,000. Against the dinky German naval units was assembled 450 United States, British, French and Italian warships, including five battle ships and ten aircraft carriers."⁹

LINE UP OF THE 7TH INFANTRY FOR ITS FOURTH MAJOR AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT

For the impending invasion the Seventh Infantry was to be led by wily Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro, who had successfully directed the operations out of the Anzio Beachhead and into Rome. His executive officer was Lieutenant Colonel Victor E. Sinclair and the Regimental Staff consisted of Captain Irving R. Wyeth as S-3, Captain Lee L. Dymock as S-2, Major Richard A. Smith as S-4, and Captain Richard T. Young as S-1, Captain Reubin H. Brown was Assistant S-3, First Lieutenant Eric A. Sturley Assistant S-2, and the Liaison Officers were First Lieutenants John D. Foulk and Joseph E. Shepard and Second Lieutenant Nathan W. White.



Lt. Col. Everett W. Duvall commanded the Second Battalion, Seventh Infantry, for five separate periods during World War II, or for a greater total of days than any other commander. The periods during which he commanded the White Battalion were: (1) 13 April to 29 June 1943; (2) 4 July to 24 September 1943; (3) 5 to 18 October 1943; (4) 23 October to 11 November 1943, and (5) 10 January to 16 July 1944.

Leading the battalions were the veteran Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Izenour of the First, Lieutenant Colonel Clayton C. Thobro who had replaced Lieutenant Colonel Everett W. Duvall¹⁰ as commander of the Second, and Lieutenant Colonel Lloyd B. Ramsey of the Third, who had returned from the hospital.

Company commanders were Captains Tyler Campbell, Wright Hitt and William B. Stewart of "A", "B", "C", respectively and First Lieutenant Michael Miliska of Company "D" for the Red Battalion; Captains Frank L. Williams, Robert D. Marsh and Edgar H. Poinsett of "E", "F" and "G" respectively, and First Lieutenant John H. Jarvis Jr., of Company "H" for the White Battalion; Captains Francis J. Kret, John W. Blaikie and

⁹ "The AAF in the Invasion of Southern France", op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁰ Lt. Col. Duvall transferred to the 45th Div. 16 July 1944 and assumed command of the 180th Infantry.

Ralph J. Yates of "I", "K" and "L" respectively and First Lieutenant Lucius S. Davis of Company "M" for the Blue Battalion.

Separate unit commanders were First Lieutenant William K. Dieleman of the Battle Patrol and Captain Henry C. Goulette of Anti-Tank Company, Captain Robert V. Horton of Cannon Company, Captain James N. Pearman Jr., of Regimental Headquarters Company and Captain Winston G. Whall of Service Company. The Medical Detachment was led by Major Ralph W. Isaac. Captains Chevis F. Horne, Didrik Mydland and Raymond E. Vint were the chaplains.

THE INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE

On 9-10 August, 1944, the craft bearing the Seventh Infantry pulled away from the ports of Naples and rendezvoused in the Gulfs of Naples and Salerno. Many of the men swam in the warm waters of the Mediterranean during daylight hours.

On 12 August the mighty invasion armada sailed out of the bays and began the voyage that was to take it to the shores of France. Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain circled the line of craft in a speedy launch and waved "Good Luck" to the assaulting troops.

On 13 August the ships passed through the historic Bonifacio Strait that separates Sardinia from Corsica and entered the harbor of Ajaccio, Napoleon's birthplace, for another rendezvous that night, where many of the men again swam in the warm, blue waters of the Mediterranean.

While on the vessels pamphlets and maps were broken out and the men were briefed for the forthcoming operation against southern France, which was exactly no secret to them, except the actual landing places and time of D-Day and H-Hour. Currency was changed from Italian Lire to French Francs.

Lifting anchor on the 14th the vessels began the last lap of the journey and during the night of 14-15 August 1944 maneuvered into assigned areas off the coast of France. D-Day was dawning and H-Hour had been set for 0800.

The assault troops were alerted, given a light meal and went into the waiting LCVPs. Lazily the big guns swung shoreward and at exactly 0630 hours all hell let loose as the combined guns of the fleet blazed away. Overhead, thousands of bombers, in formation, disappeared into the mist. Then adding to the fury of the big guns, came the sound of exploding bombs. Dense, billowing clouds of smoke hid the shoreline. In the morning haze, the assault boats looked like doodle bugs as they darted hither and yon circling off shore, waiting for the naval guns and rocket launchers to lift their fire from the shore batteries and installations. The enemy made no answer to the naval gunfire.

Shortly before H-Hour the assault craft commenced darting shoreward and at 0800 the web-footed "dog-faces" of the Seventh Infantry hit Beach Red.

The Second Battalion with Companies "F", "G" and "E" and the 30th Infantry Battle Patrol, from left to right, swarmed ashore. Company "G" had two of its craft hit floating mines and blown to bits with forty men missing and "Fox" Company lost one boat with twenty of its men missing.

During the landing operations Staff Sergeant Hubert L. Aaron of Company "E", Private Jerome W. Geissler of Company "G", First Lieutenant Lawrence C. LaFevre, Staff Sergeant Addison L. Ross, Corporals Kenneth J. Clark and James R. Shipp, and Technician Fifth Grade Edward A. Bultrewicz, all of Company "H", performed with distinction.¹¹

Once ashore the Second Battalion moved rapidly through the beach obstacles and mine fields. At 0825 the battalion reported small arms and mortar fire from the right flank and enemy artillery fire was received. At 0850 the White Battalion troops were on the Line X-Y and a violet grenade was thrown signifying that the enemy defenses in its zone had been neutralized. Objective "C" in the vicinity of La Croix was taken at 1025 and the battalion awaited orders to move on "D", which were soon received. Contact was effected at Point C-1. Small groups of enemy were encountered on the objectives but quickly overcome. The 30th Infantry passed through the White Battalion shortly after noontime and at 1420 the Second Battalion was on Objective "D" and



"Cotton Balers" wait their turn to load on the vessels that will take them on their "great adventure" to the shores of France. Capt. Frank L. Williams, veteran commander of Company "E", is shown in the photo at the left.

¹¹ GOs No. 29, 145, 228, 256, 263, 289 & 304, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 Nov. & 31 Dec. '44 & 29 Jan., 29 Apr., 26 June, 15 July & 5 Aug., '45. S/Sgt. Aaron was awarded the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. 1 Lt. LaFevre, S/Sgt. Ross, Cpls. Clark & Shipp, T/5 Bultrewicz & Pvt. Geissler were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

contact was established with both the 15th and 30th Infantry.

The Third Battalion with the Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol, and Companies "K", "L" and "I", in order, from left to right, also hit its section of Beach Red on time and, except for the Battle Patrol, encountered little opposition. Company "I" took Objective "B" as the remainder of the battalion seized "A" with Road Block 3 established, and Company "K" drove on for Objective A-1. A patrol of Company "L" went to contact Point "Texas" to meet a patrol from "Item" Company.

The Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol encountered the only stubborn enemy resistance that invasion morning while clearing Cavalaire-sur-Mer and the cape, which was its mission. The cape provided the enemy the best positions in the Seventh Infantry zone of action from which to hamper the landing operations and there the enemy had his only sizeable force in the area.

Sergeant James P. Connor of the Battle Patrol displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty that memorable day. As the patrol moved inland from the water a hanging mine exploded and killed one man and knocked Sergeant Connor to the ground, wounding him seriously in the neck. He ignored his wound and led his unit across the mine saturated beach through fire from mortars, 20mm flakwagon, a machine gun and snipers. En route to the cape he personally shot and killed two snipers and in turn an enemy sniper wounded him, with a shot in the left shoulder which penetrated his back. A platoon sergeant was killed and Sergeant Connor assumed command of his group. He reassured and prodded the hesitating men of his decimated section forward through the mortar concentrations. Emphasizing the importance of their mission he impelled the remaining men toward a group of buildings honeycombed with snipers and enemy machine guns. There he received his third grave wound, that time in the leg, which felled him to the ground. After unsuccessful attempts to stand and continue he gave orders from a prone position and directed his men in assaulting the enemy. Finally, because he was unable to continue, he relinquished command of his section to Sergeant Herman F. Nevers. Infused with Sergeant Connor's dogged determination the remainder of the section reduced to one-third of its original strength, outflanked and rushed the enemy with such furiousness that seven were killed and forty taken prisoners. Sergeant Connor was awarded the nation's highest valor award, the Congressional Medal of Honor.¹²

Staff Sergeant Albert J. Tetreault singlehandedly knocked out two enemy machine guns, killed one German and captured six others. Second Lieutenant John B. Leas by himself captured eighteen enemy soldiers in a dry wash. Private First Class Edward G. Collins, who killed three Germans and destroyed an enemy gun emplacement with grenades, and Private First Class James C. Eoff, who led a three-man mortar crew in the destruction of an enemy anti-tank gun and the killing of ten Germans, were two other members of the Battle Patrol who distinguished themselves.¹³ The Battle Patrol seized all its objectives and completed its mission.

Following the capture of Objective "A" the Third Battalion continued the attack along the coast road. By 1325 Blue troops had contacted the French Commandos in the vicinity of A-5 and A-4. The First Battalion which was in reserve landed on Beach Red forty-five minutes after the assault troops and moved rapidly to its assigned assembly area. At 1400 the Red troops moved for Objective "B" to relieve Company "I" as

the Third Battalion minus was on the Division Beachhead Line.

Major General O'Daniel called the Regimental Command Post from Division Headquarters at 1700 and ordered Colonel O'Mohundro to move the troops on to Highway 98, then west along the highway to the Corps Beachhead Line, which was generally along the twenty-one grid. In accordance with instructions the First Battalion attacked from Objective "B" and advanced north to Highway 98, then west and took La Mole.

During the night of 15-16 August 1944 the Third Battalion advanced west along the coastal road while the Red Battalion advanced west along Highway 98. Company "K" and the Battle Patrol, which was attached to the Third Battalion, led the advance and encountered strong, stubborn enemy delaying forces along the coastal road. Captain John W. Blaikie moved out ahead of his company in an effort to determine the enemy's positions. After cutting five trip wires attached to anti-personnel mines, he was wounded and stunned by a hand grenade that landed and exploded a few yards from him. Bullets from enemy machine guns raked the area. Captain Blaikie crawled back about one hundred yards to a friendly tank and directed fire which knocked out one enemy machine gun. The Germans retaliated with heavy rifle grenade, bazooka and machine gun fire and crippled the tank, and disorganized "King" Company. Around midnight Captain Blaikie rallied his company and led it through mined terrain in an assault that destroyed three enemy machine guns and inflicted heavy casualties. The little settlements of Le Rayol, Le Canadel, Cavaliere and Villa Adah were over-run but in the early morning of 16 August Company "K" and the Battle Patrol were held up by an enemy strong point in the vicinity of Pointe de Layet.

With his leading elements subjected to heavy machine gun, machine pistol, panzerfaust and rifle grenade fire Lieutenant Colonel Lloyd B. Ramsey decided to flank the enemy position with his reserve units, Companies "I" and "L". The enemy's position on Pointe de Layet, a small peninsula, was left of the coastal road. To the right was high ground which commanded the area but it was heavily mined and zeroed-in by enemy mortars and artillery. Despite fire from the enemy weapons and the exploding mines the flanking forces accomplished their maneuver by about 1000 hours and nearly had the enemy forces sealed off. A heavy fight ensued then the enemy forces sought to escape through the claws of the pincers formed by Company "K" and the Battle Patrol on the left and Companies "I" and "L" on the right. A few enemy succeeded in escaping the trap. Three members of the First Mortar Squad (60mm) of Company "I" were sent across the road to fire at the enemy from behind a stone wall. The mortar men had no better luck than the riflemen as the numerous boulders in the area protected the enemy. Private First Class Juland A. Aaron then made a one-man assault on the enemy with hand grenades and succeeded in driving the Germans from behind one boulder after another and drove one group into a cave before it surrendered to him. When he captured a German captain and eleven enlisted men he broke the back of enemy resistance in the area. He had personally killed four Germans and wounded seven

¹² For authority see GO No. 18, War Dept., Wash., D. C., 15 Mar. 1945.

¹³ GOs No. 47, 59, 199 & 212, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 27 Sept. & 6 Oct. '44 & 12 & 23 Feb. '45. 2 Lt. Leas, S/Sgt. Tetreault, Pfc Collins & Eoff were each awarded the Silver Star Medal. S/Sgt. Tetreault later received a battle field commission and was killed in action.

others who were picked up as prisoners by his comrades. For his extraordinary heroism and gallantry he was recommended for the award of a Distinguished Service Cross.

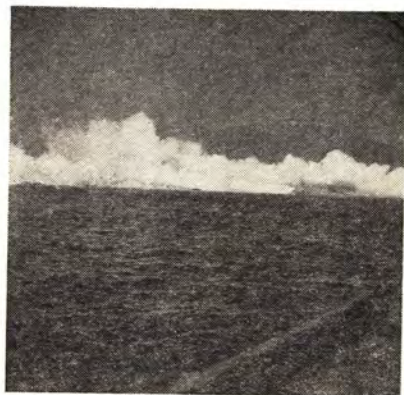
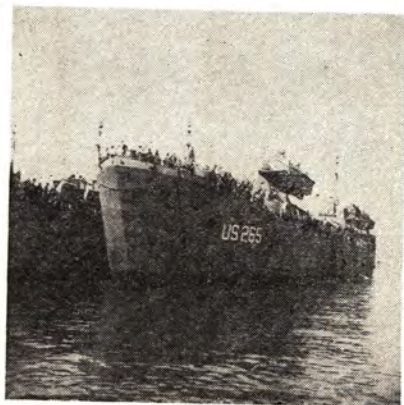
Within fifteen minutes after Private First Class Aaron had captured the German officer and men, enemy resistance collapsed on the little peninsula and a total of eighty enemy were made prisoners. During the action of that morning Second Lieutenant Joe B. Jones of Company "I", Staff Sergeant Herman F. Nevers of the Battle Patrol and Sergeant James W. Brookshear of Company "K" were outstanding.¹⁴

The First Battalion encountered only small enemy groups until a strongly held road block was met at the Gratteloup Road junction at 0800 on the 16th. A blow-out in the road prevented the attached armor from advancing on the block until the engineers could get a

dozer up to fill in the huge crater. The Red Battalion rifle companies maneuvered about as heavy small arms, machine gun and mortar fire, as well as artillery fire, were received. An all-day battle was fought with little headway being made. Staff Sergeant James H. Chandler of Company "C" alone destroyed one enemy gun emplacement by killing three machine gunners with "Tommy Gun" fire.¹⁵ By nightfall Company "C" had seized Hill 247 as Company "B" was experiencing great difficulty to move on its objective, a ridge north of the road.

¹⁴ GOs No. 13, 35, 212, 256 & 299, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 6 Oct. & 27 Dec. '44 & 13 Jan., 4 Feb. & 15 July '45. Capt. Blaikie, 2 Lt. Jones, S/Sgt. Nevers & Sgt. Brookshear were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

¹⁵ GO No. 11, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Jan. '45. S/Sgt. Chandler was awarded the Silver Star Medal.



Top photos show loading scenes at Nissida, Baia and Pozzuoli, Italy, on 8-9 August 1944. Center photos show scenes on board the vessels en route for France. Bottom photos were taken invasion morning, 15 August 1944.

The Second Battalion, which moved west along Highway 98 behind the First Battalion, dispatched Company "F" with one tank and a tank destroyer and an artillery liaison officer, at 1415 on 16 August, in an attempt to break the enemy resistance. The force proceeded to the unimproved road which connects the Grattleoup Road Junction with Bormes and the Coast Road. Early in the morning of the 17th the Second Battalion (minus) pushed through the First Battalion and removed the block at the Grattleoup Road Junction as most of the enemy had pulled away. The battalion advanced to Le Ferriere Road Junction.

Meanwhile the Third Battalion advanced along the Coast Road through St. Clair, Le Lavandou and the many small settlements south of Bormes to contact the Second Battalion at Le Ferriere Road Junction. After Le Lavandou had been passed through Captain Anderson, commanding officer of Battery "B", 10th Field Artillery Battalion, was captured by a group of by-passed enemy. His driver was injured but escaped the enemy. Company "F" moved south from Bormes but found no trace of the enemy and Captain Anderson.

The Second Battalion continued the attack along Highway 98 against small arms, machine gun, mortar, tank, anti-tank gun and artillery fire. Company "G" absorbed heavy shelling. As Company "E" approached

the Maravenne River one of the supporting tanks of the 756th Tank Battalion was knocked out by a well concealed enemy anti-tank gun.

Staff Sergeant Stanley Bender, Company "E", climbed on top of the knocked-out tank, in the face of withering machine-gun fire in an effort to locate the source of the enemy fire. Although bullets ricocheted off the turret at his feet, Staff Sergeant Bender nevertheless remained standing up-right in full view of the enemy for over two minutes. Locating enemy machine guns on a knoll two hundred yards away he ordered two squads to cover him and led his own squad down an irrigation ditch, running a gauntlet of intense enemy machine gun fire which completely blanketed fifty yards of his advance and wounded four of his men. While the Germans hurled hand grenades at the ditch, Sergeant Bender stood his ground until his squad caught up with him, then he advanced alone in a wide, flanking approach to the rear of the knoll. He walked deliberately a distance of forty yards, without cover, in full view of the Germans and under a hail of both enemy and friendly fire, to the first machine gun and knocked it out with a single short burst. Then he made his way through the strong-point, despite bursting hand grenades, toward the second machine gun twenty-five yards distant, whose two-man crew swung the machine gun around and fired two bursts at him.



Map No. 57, "The Seventh's 'Perfect' Amphibious Invasion." Stars and Stripes Newspaper, 15 August 1945.

but Staff Sergeant Bender walked calmly through the fire and, reaching the edge of the emplacement, dispatched the crew. Signaling his men to rush the rifle pits, he then walked thirty-five yards further to kill an enemy rifleman and returned to lead his squad in the destruction of the eight remaining Germans in the strong point. His audacity so inspired the remainder of the assault company that the men charged out of their positions, shooting and yelling, to overpower the enemy road block, knock out two anti-tank guns, kill thirty-seven Germans and capture twenty-six others. Staff Sergeant Bender had sparked and led the assault company in the attack which had overwhelmed the enemy, destroyed the road block, seized three bridges over the Maravenne River, took the town of La Londe and captured the commanding terrain which dominated the area. For his conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity he was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.¹⁶

At about 1400 hours 17 August, near Hyeres, France, Private Edward S. Horyt of Company "E" boldly led an assault platoon through a shoulder high ditch, though shells exploded almost at its rim. When two enemy machine guns opened fire from a wooded hill seventy yards away, he walked across thirty-five yards of exposed ground, disdaining available cover and disregarding the chain of enemy automatic and sniper fire which

pursued him. Advancing to within ten yards of the nearer machine gun, he was mortally wounded. Although in excruciating pain, he hurled a grenade into the hostile emplacement, knocked out the gun and killed its four-man crew. For his extraordinary heroism Private Horyt was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.¹⁷

Sergeant Jerry T. Zoppa of Company "E" was another "Cotton Baler" who won battle honors on 17 August 1944.¹⁸

The First Battalion moved by vehicle on the winding, narrow road north out of Gratteloup Road Junction to the road moving west out of Collobrieres and arrived in the vicinity of Pierrefeu at 1745 on 17 August. Company "A" moved out of Pierrefeu on the road to Hyeres and established a road block. Company "B" moved to Cuers.

The Third Battalion moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of the Second Battalion near La Londe the night of 17-18 August and at 0615 on 18 August at-

¹⁶ For authority see GO 7, War Dept., Wash., D. C., 1 Feb. 1945.

¹⁷ For authority see GO 185, Hq. 7th Army, 10 May 1945.

¹⁸ GO No. 47, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 12 Feb. '45. Sgt. Zoppa was awarded the Silver Star Medal.



Twenty-eight of the 58 "Cotton Balers" who were killed in action on 15 August 1944 during the Invasion of Southern France were: (1) Sgt. George Arsenault, Co. "A"; (2) Pvt. John L. Bartelson, Co. "H"; (3) Pfc Charles R. Bills, Co. "G"; (4) Pvt. Chester H. Bollen, Co. "D"; (5) Pfc Selwyn S. Casper, Co. "F"; (6) Cpl. Robert O. Cook, Co. "F"; (7) Pvt. Francis X. Coughlin, Co. "A"; (8) Pfc Harry L. Davenport, Co. "G"; (9) Pvt. Wyman Eidson, Co. "G"; (10) Pfc Francis J. Fitzgerald, Co. "A"; (11) Pfc William J. Kafka, Co. "F"; (12) Pvt. Robert Kersey, Co. "F"; (13) Sgt. Clarence L. Marengo, Co. "F"; (14) Pfc Orren J. Miller, Co. "B"; (15) Pfc Sven R. Norling, Co. "H"; (16) Pfc John S. Organig, Co. "G"; (17) Pfc Frank Pacion, Co. "G"; (18) Pfc Ernest N. Ross, Co. "G"; (19) 1 Lt. Harold A. Schultz, Co. "D"; (20) S/Sgt. Robert H. Shaffer, Co. "F"; (21) S/Sgt. Simon P. Shelton, Co. "F"; (22) Pfc Robert E. Smith, Co. "G"; (23) Pfc Stanley Stawiariski, Co. "A"; (24) Pvt. Adrian J. St. Hilaire, Co. "G"; (25) Sgt. Robert J. Swayne, Co. "G"; (26) Pvt. Robert E. Tauriainen, Co. "E"; (27) 2 Lt. John J. Creagh, Co. "K"; (28) Pfc Thomas J. Durando, Co. "D". For list of others killed that day see the Appendix.

tacked along the high ground north of Highway 98. At 1200 the battalion encountered heavy resistance in the vicinity of Le Caioupet receiving mortar and artillery fire. A small enemy force attempted to advance between Companies "I" and "L" but was repulsed.

A French Groupe de Commandos numbering approximately 800 was attached to the Regiment at 0930 on 18 August and relieved the Second Battalion at 1445. Sixty of the French fighters proved their ability by attacking and capturing an enemy position just north of Mauvanne which was also being attacked by Company "I" from the right. "Item" Company received very heavy enemy artillery, mortar and anti-aircraft artillery fire and progressed slowly. The French group assaulted the position, captured it, then was driven off by an enemy counter-attack. Attacking a second time the commandos recaptured the position and held on to it.

Twenty-five casualties were suffered by the French but the attack was very successful. Eight block houses with walls six feet thick and four artillery pieces of 105mm. calibre were destroyed, 60 enemy killed and wounded and 100 taken prisoners. Another company of French Commandos with two tanks and two tank destroyers was led by liaison officer, Second Lieutenant Nathan W. White, 4000 yards up the road north from La Londe then west over an unimproved road through the three little villages of Borrel Bastides to fill a gap in the line. The French company then seized the high ground west of Borrel Premiere Bastide. First Lieutenant Jack Ivester of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion accompanied the French as forward observer for the artillery.

The Second Battalion, following relief by the French Commandos, moved by vehicle under Division control via the Gratteloup Road Junction, Collobrieres, Pierrefeu, northeast to Pignans, Gonfaron and then northwest to Flassans-sur-Issole.

Two French agents passed through the enemy's lines and entered the Regiment's positions with valuable information concerning the situation in Toulon. One was badly wounded. Three flares were fired to notify fellow agents, still behind the German lines, that the two agents had managed to reach the American positions.

The First Battalion remained in position on the 18th and conducted patrolling activities. The Second Battalion remained under Division control during the morning of the 19th, then occupied defensive positions in the vicinity of Meounes and Forcalqueiret.

While French units were relieving our units heavy shelling from enemy artillery and mortars was received. The French and Company "M" sustained casualties and our "Mike" Company was a little disorganized. Second Lieutenant William S. Van Wey and Private Rene Deltieure of Company "M" and Private William F. Begenwald of the Medical Detachment, who administered first aid to both American and French casualties, were cited for actions performed.¹⁹

The French Commandos were relieved of attachment to the Regiment on the 19th. Company "A" and the Third Battalion were relieved of their positions at 1405, 19 August, by elements of the First French Division. The Third Battalion then shuttle-moved by vehicle to the vicinity of La Celle near Brignolles. Company "K" plus a platoon of Company "M" and a 57mm gun platoon of Anti-Tank Company moved to the vicinity of Bras during the night and established two road blocks. Company "I" with an anti-tank platoon moved to the vicinity of Escarelle and blocked.

Early 20 August the First Battalion shuttled from the vicinity of Pierrefeu and Cuers to the vicinity of La Celle while the attached armor of the Third Battalion

moved up from St. Honore. Company "K" moved to establish a block in the vicinity of St. Maximin-la Ste-Baume.

The entire Regiment, except the Second Battalion which remained in Division control and Company "K", moved to assembly areas between Pourrieres and Trets on 20 August as the Regimental Command Post opened in the first named place. The Second Battalion was relieved in the vicinity of Meounes and Forcalqueiret and reverted to Regimental control. The troops commenced moving out at 1945 on the 20th and closed into an assembly area in the vicinity of Lavillone, between Rougiers and St. Maximin-la-Ste-Baume, at 0500 on 21 August. Elements of the battalion relieved Company "K" on position.

The Red Battalion was attached to the 30th Infantry during the night and at 0605 on 21 August closed out of its assembly area and moved by vehicle to an area east of Aix-en-Provence. At the same time the Third Battalion commenced marching and shuttling to an area in the vicinity of Chateauneuf-le Rouge and Beaurecueil.

The First Battalion attacked north and then along Highway 7 encountering only slight resistance. At 1555 the battalion returned to Regimental control and established defensive positions. The Third Battalion moved by vehicle to Aix-en-Provence, then marched northwest



Buddies in Italy both were killed in action in France. Pfc Orren J. Miller, on the right, lost his life during the Invasion of Southern France and Pfc Reno A. Martini was killed in action on 4 January 1945 in Alsace during the "Colmar Pocket" operations.

¹⁹ GOs No. 257 & 304, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 31 Dec. '44 & 15 July '45. 2 Lt. Van Wey, Pvts. Begenwald & Deltieure were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁰ See GO No. 120, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 6 April '45. 1 Lt. Richard L. Burkhardt, killed in a subsequent action, was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal for actions displayed on 21 Aug. '44.

along Highway 7 and set up blocks and defensive positions. Vigorous patrolling was maintained but no enemy contact made.

The First Battalion attacked north and then along Highway 7 encountering only scattered resistance.²⁰ At 1555 the battalion returned to Regimental control and established defensive positions.

The Third Battalion moved by vehicle to Aix-en-Provence, then marched northwest along Highway 7 and set up blocks and defensive positions. Vigorous patrolling was maintained but no contact with enemy was made.

The Second Battalion was re-attached to Division and moved by vehicle to a Division reserve assembly area southeast of Aix-en-Provence as the First and Third Battalions were on the main line of resistance between the 180th Infantry on the right and the 30th Infantry on the left.

While in the vicinity of Aix-en-Provence 21 August 1944, Colonel O'Mohundro relinquished command of the Regiment to Brigadier General Shepard and departed for home on rotation. He was later to be assigned to the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, as chairman of the Staff Committee, Tactical Section.

The Third Division protected the attack of French forces on the ports of Marseille and Toulon by occupying defensive positions north of Marseille. Vigorous patrolling was conducted on 22 August to St. Cannat, Lambesc and Rognes.

The Third Battalion moved by vehicle the night of 22-23 August north from St. Cannat through Rognes to the Le Barcot Road Junction near the Durance River. During daylight 23 August one platoon of Company "I" moved to La Roque-d'Antheron and another to Charleval de Provence. Patrols contacted the 15th Infantry in the vicinity of Cadenet.

At 0700 23 August the First Battalion advanced from its defensive positions. Company "C" occupied Alleins and Company "B" Ballemort. Patrols were sent out. One motorized patrol reinforced with two M-7s proceeded to the road junction at Senas-les-Martins and drew heavy machine gun, mortar, small arms and anti-tank fire. A fight ensued and the patrol lost one man killed and one other became wounded before it withdrew.

At 1115 23 August Colonel Ben Harrell, once S-3 of the Regiment while it was on garrison duty in the States, a native of Oregon and a graduate of the United States Military Academy, assumed command of the Seventh Infantry.

The Second Battalion less Company "G" reverted to Regimental control and rejoined the Regiment on the 24th. During the night of 23-24 August the First Battalion was relieved on position by elements of the Second Battalion, 30th Infantry.

The enemy continued his rapid withdrawal along the front on 24 August 1944 moving northward along the Rhone River Valley. Only enemy in Marseille and Toulon held but French forces were given the task of cleaning them out. The American forces pursued the retreating enemy who blew bridges and installations to cover the retreat.

24 August 1944 saw the Seventh Infantry battalions at widely separated points. The Seventh Infantry crossed the Durance River, relieved the 157th Infantry and advanced west seizing assigned objectives.

The Second Battalion, minus Company "G" under Division control at Aix-en-Provence, but reinforced by one platoon of Anti-Tank Company and one platoon of Company "A", 3rd Chemical Battalion, entrucked at 0600, and with Company "F" leading, advanced by bounds along the road parallel to the Durance River

on the north. At 1330 forward elements of "Fox" Company were in Merindol and at 2230 the Company occupied Cavaillon, establishing blocks to the north and northwest.

The First Battalion with a platoon each from Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion, Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, Anti-Tank Company, Company "A", 3rd Chemical Battalion, and Company "I" from the Third Battalion closed into its assembly area in the vicinity of Bonnieux at 2030. The units then commenced advancing west and at 0530 on 25 August, "Baker" Company was at Menerbes with a platoon at Maubec. Company "I" was northeast of Bonnieux at Dessane.

The Third Battalion also moved by vehicle at 0600 24 August and relieved the Second Battalion of the 157th Infantry. Cannon Company, and platoons of tanks and tank destroyers were attached to the battalion. Villemus was occupied and Company "K" went to Forcalquier to the northeast. Patrols went to Sault-de-Vaucluse and reported no enemy contact.



Three officers who were killed in action in France during the period 17-22 August 1944 were: (1) 2 Lt. John Chilensky, Co. "A"; (2) 2 Lt. Richard C. Sime, Co. "L", and (3) 1 Lt. Paul V. McGhan, Co. "K".

The First Battalion continued moving north on the 25th and shuttled into Pernes at 2015. At 1600, 25 August the Second Battalion advanced north out of Cavaillon and established blocks at Entraigus, Beddarides and Courthezon St. Dominique. A continuous advance was made and at 0920, 26 August, Company "F" seized Orange. The bridge was seized over the Aigues River, a tributary of the Rhone, and one platoon of Company "F" engaged an enemy detachment in a fire fight and captured 124 enemy.²¹ Company "G", which reverted to Regimental control, joined the Second Battalion forces in Orange. Company "L" moved to the vicinity of Sault de Vaucluse 25 August while the Third Battalion minus moved to the vicinity of Apt. At 0600, 26 August the battalion less "Love" Company moved to Pernes.

The Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol moved along the axis of the Regimental advance and one patrol went into Avignon. The First Battalion moved from Pernes to the quarry area in the vicinity of Bedarrides and contacted the Second Spahi Regiment (French) in the vicinity of Avignon.

The lead platoon of Company "F" continued its aggressive action north out of Orange and at 0145, 27 August the Second Battalion entrucked and began movement north along Highway 7 to Pierrelate. Company "G" passed through "Fox" Company to take over the lead and engaged enemy in a small arms fight. Company "G" advanced slowly and fired artillery on enemy vehicles north of Donzere. At noontime 27 August the Company was ordered to hold, while elements of the 15th Infantry should pass through.

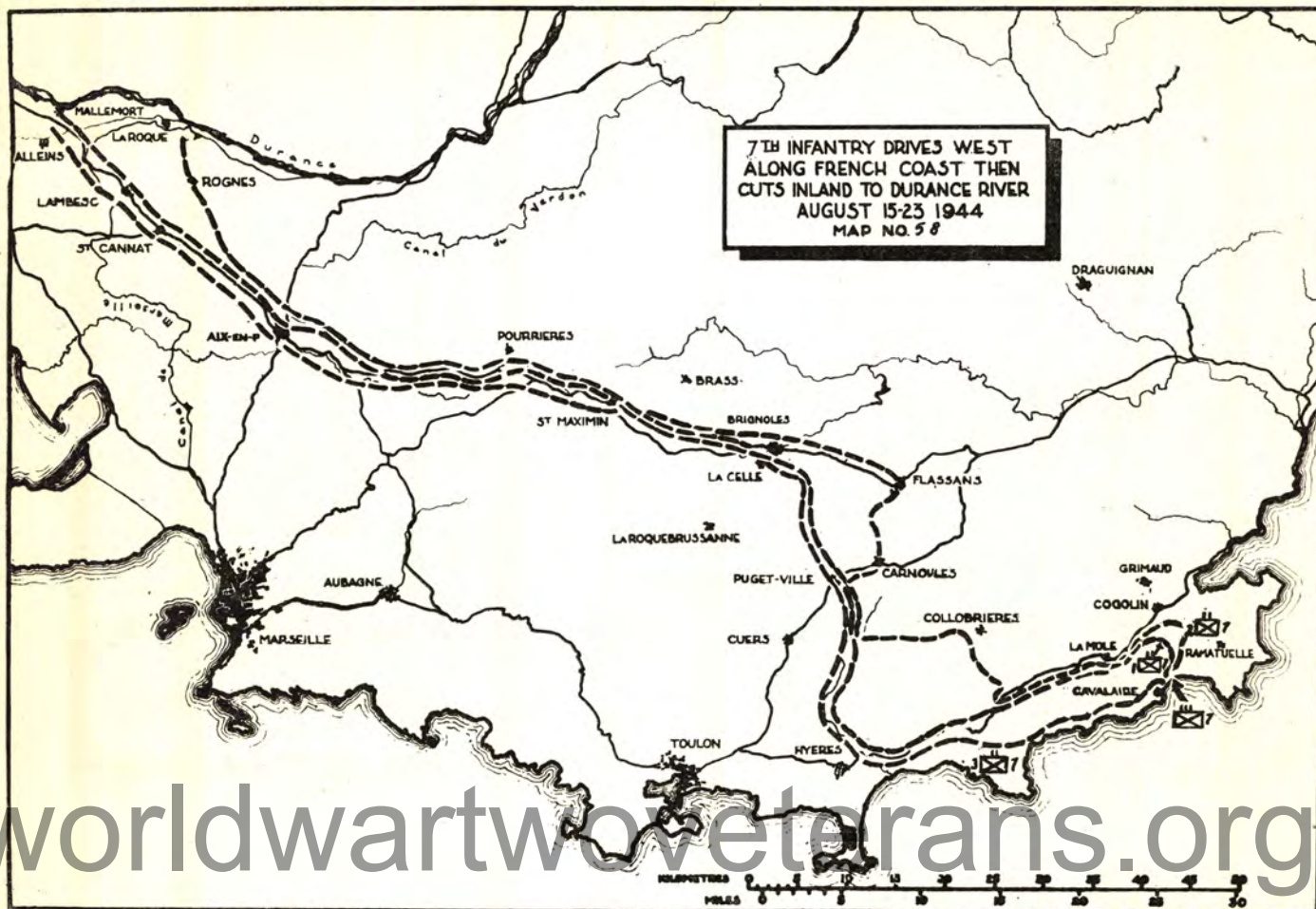
²¹ See GO No. 11, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Jan. '45. 1 Lt. Harold K. Toomer, Co. "F", was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

The First Battalion closed into the Pierrelate area at 0900, 27 August, and constituted Regimental Reserve.

The White Battalion was relieved by the First Battalion, 15th Infantry at 1925, 27 August, while being intermittently shelled by heavy artillery and tank fire.

At 2300 the reinforced Second Battalion moved by organic and attached vehicles east to the vicinity of Delaye and Grillon and went into Division reserve.

The Third Battalion closed into an area in the vicinity of La Begude-de-Mazene at 0630, 28 August, and one



worldwartwoveterans.org



Colonel Wiley H. O'Mohundro commanded the Seventh United States Infantry from 18 to 27 February 1944, and from 11 March to 22 August 1944. The above photo of him was taken at The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Ga., where he later served as Chief of the Tactical Section.

hour and a half later attacked to the northwest. Company "K" encountered enemy machine guns and artillery fire going into La Batie Rolland. Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion, had one medium tank supporting the Blue Battalion knocked out. Resistance was driven back and Company "K" took La Batie Rolland. One platoon pushed to St. Gervais-sur-Roubion and established blocks. The Blue Battalion continued on in the afternoon and night and at 0330, 29 August, reached Villard and Ruti and searched the Roubion River for crossing points.

When one of his scouts was seriously wounded by machine pistol fire, Second Lieutenant Patrick H. Adams of Company "I", who was afflicted with a severe knee injury, crawled forward and jumped into the enemy's foxhole, seized him by the throat and took him prisoner. Inspired by his example his platoon went into the attack. Under his relentless, aggressive leadership, the men of his platoon, although exhausted from incessant marching and fighting, overwhelmed three successive German strongpoints, killed six and captured approximately fifty of the enemy. For his extraordinary heroism Second-Lieutenant Adams was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.²² Wounded in a subsequent action he later died in a hospital.

The Red Battalion which had moved by vehicle to the vicinity of Le Bridon and Le Jas the night before, advanced west and passed through the right flank of the Third Battalion by Bonneville. The battalion made a

²² For authority see GO 77, Hq. 7th Army, 3 Mar. 1945.

continuous advance against enemy delaying actions and received machine gun, mortar and artillery fire. At 1610, 28 August, the Red troops had advanced to La Robertiere with "Baker" and "Charlie" Companies on line and "Able" in reserve. Company "C" advanced rapidly to Le Pavon and at 0130, 29 August, Companies "A" and "B" passed through "Charlie" Company.²³

The Second Battalion returned to Regimental control and moved from its assembly area in the vicinity of

THE SLAUGHTER NORTH OF MONTELMAR

As the Seventh Infantry battalions and the First Battalion 30th Infantry drove west toward Montelimar and the Rhone River and the 15th Infantry drove north into Montelimar to clear the city, long convoys of enemy moved north on the highway and railroad parallel to the Rhone River. In the advance north from Montelimar the Seventh Infantry was on the Division's left.



Grillon to a new area in the vicinity of La Begude de Mazene and Chateauneuf, and closed in at 2030, 28 August. The White Battalion remained there but a short while then continued on and at 0245, 29 August, closed into the vicinity of Chaton and prepared to attack at dawn. At 0700 the White troops had crossed the line of departure and were in Les Cardineaux. Company "E" entered St. Mareel-les-Sauzet at 0830.

Troops of the Second Battalion Seventh Infantry first observed the convoys and fire from all the battalion's organic weapons was placed on them. First Lieutenant

²³ GOs No. 59, 175, 304 & 339, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 31 Dec. '44 & 23 Feb., 24 May & 17 Sept. '45. 1 Lt. G. E. Guckert, Cn Co., Sgt. U. Di Pasquale, Co. "A", Pfc W. J. Small, 1 Bn. Hq Co., & Pvt. J. E. Brohel, Co. "I", were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

Jack Ivester, forward observer from the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, called for artillery fire, which the 10th Field Artillery gave, and he called for more, all the Third Division had, plus the 69th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. There was delay in getting the extra artillery as higher headquarters thought the convoy might belong to the 36th Division which had suffered a set-back some time previous and whose location was unknown. Finally the fire of all the Third Division's organic guns and attachments was brought to bear on the convoys with the observation and adjustments made by the Second Battalion. It was a slaughter that those who watched will never forget. The enemy convoys stretched for about thirteen miles through La Coucourde, Les-Tourrettes and the many other little towns to Pergnans. The convoys had stopped as the enemy thought the road to the north had been cut. The convoy on the highway consisted practically of every type of enemy vehicle and hundreds of stolen French vehicles, trucks, ambulances, and passenger cars. An estimated 1200 horses, some tied to the vehicles and others pulling carts were in the convoy which became banked two and three deep. The railway convoy a few hundred yards to the left of the road consisted of an assortment of flat cars carrying four of the enemy's 280mm guns and two 380 mm giants, boxcars with stolen foodstuffs and supplies and passenger cars.

The enemy was trapped with Seventh Infantry troops to the right and rear of them and the Rhone River on the left. Heavy concentrations were placed at the head of the column. There was no way out. Artillery of the 36th Division finally joined in the shoot and eventually friendly fighter-bombers of the air support got in on the work of destruction. It was veritable hell for the trapped enemy as bullets and shells dropped on them, smashing the vehicles and trains, killing the horses, men and women, there were a few present, and setting fire to the vehicles.

The Second Battalion was harassed by continual enemy small arms and flak wagon fire but prevented any enemy from escaping to the right.

Company "F" contacted the First Battalion, then the White Battalion troops assembled near Grange Baumer. At 0640 the Seventh Infantry advanced north without any opposition through the wreckage and destruction, to Manoude, Le Fougere and Mirmande. "Cotton Balermen" saw their worst sights of death and destruction that day. One thousand horses and hundreds of human beings lay dead, in the wreckage, and fields off the road. Fires still burned. Clothes had been burned from the bodies of the dead which were blackened beyond recognition. The dead horses lay in the most fantastic shapes, some with



2 Lt. Otis O. Fottenbury, of Co. "M", who had risen from the ranks and received his commission on the field of battle, was killed in action on 29 August 1944.

their legs in the air, others resting on their heads, some had been split wide open by shells and their guts and entrails were scattered about the area. Eight horses lay huddled together in the main intersection of La Coucourde. Dead Germans could be seen dangling from the vehicles or in them. As the sun shone brightly and the heat of the August day increased, a terrible stench arose and many took sick and could not pass through. Traffic on the road was impossible and eventually engineers

drove bulldozers up the road to plow a path. Dead humans and horses and the debris were mixed together and scraped aside.

The ambush of the enemy in the Montelimar pocket by the speedy and aggressive Seventh Infantry and other units brought 2000 live enemy into the prisoner of war cages. Hundreds were killed, 1000 horses were killed and nearly 2000 vehicles were destroyed or captured. In the booty was included the big railway guns, 300 trailers, 12 dreaded 88mm guns, 24 guns of lesser calibre, 30 tanks and an unestimated amount of lesser materiel.



The 11th Century castle at Condillac, which was used as the 7th Infantry Command Post on 30-31 August 1944.

The "dogfaces" of the Seventh Infantry picked up many souvenirs especially from the train, as only a few of the cars had been burned. Some of the boys got rich as one car was used by the German finance department. Thousands of dollars were gained by a number of individuals in the form of French and Germany currency. Later Division Headquarters ordered all captured enemy money turned in but somehow when the order came down no one had any to turn in. Much food stuff was



Charred body of a German soldier lies amongst the debris of the enemy convoys destroyed north of Montelimar, France.

found, some with American Red Cross markings on the boxes and the boys replenished their food supplies. German weapons, uniforms and equipment were found. The Colonel, not to be outdone, got himself a case of the best liquor. In many ways the ambushing of the German convoys was one of the most profitable enterprises ever accomplished by the inimitable and incomparable "7th Light Foot".

The Regiment remained in the vicinity of Montelimar, Mermande and Condillac, where the Regimental Command Post was set up in an eleventh century castle, until 1 September, devoting the time to rest, care and cleaning of equipment and personal hygiene. Countess and count somebody or other still lived in the old castle which had

a beautiful view of the surrounding country. The Commanding Officer and his staff were accommodated in the castle and enjoyed the opportunity to clean up and sleep in huge four-post beds.

SEVENTH INFANTRY MAKES LONG MOVE 1 SEPTEMBER 1944

The German 19th Army suffered a disastrous blow at Montelimar. On the first of September 1944 the enemy continued his process of withdrawing as many of his forces as rapidly as possible out of southern France, and the Americans were in all-out pursuit of the enemy.

The Seventh Infantry made its longest move of the Southern France campaign on 1 September 1944. Movement instructions which were issued on 31 August by Colonel Harrell were put into effect. The Regiment with the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, Company "A", 10th Engineer Battalion, Company "A", 3rd Medical Battalion, and Company "A", 3rd Chemical Battalion, attached, crossed Initial Point 1, in the vicinity of Sauzet, at 1215, and in seven serials, motor marched through Crest, Chabeuil, Bourg-de-Peage, St. Marcellin and Tullins for Voiron.

During the move orders were received from the Commanding General to continue on, and the Regiment drove on through Les Abrets and Morrestel for an area near Trepts, but before the Regiment could assemble there, it was decided to continue even further. Driving on through Lagnieu, the Regiment assembled in the vicinity of Leyment, just south of Amberieu-en-Bugey and St. Denis-en-Bugey, at 2400.

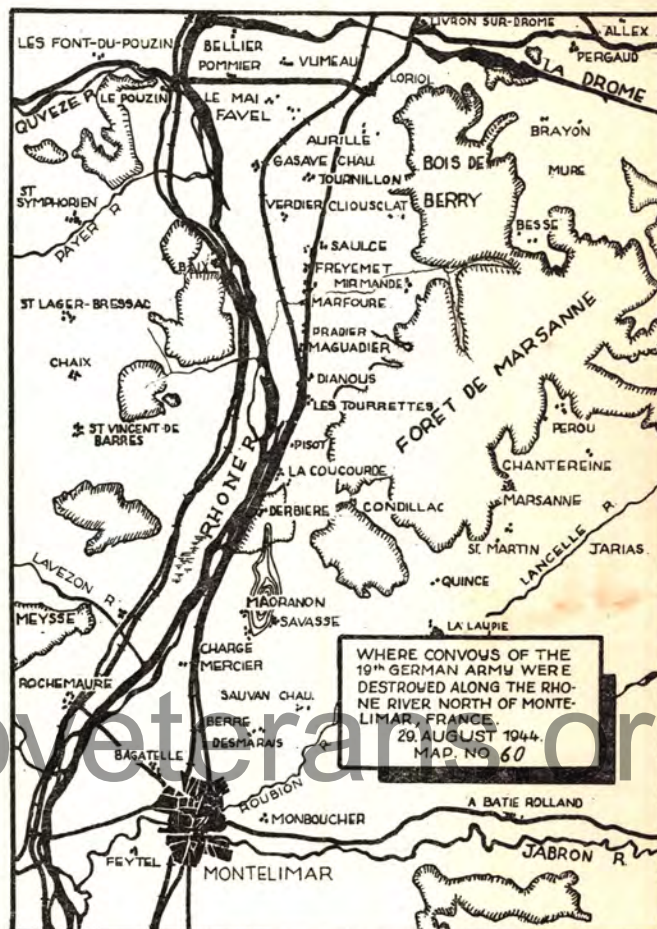
It had been a clear beautiful day and the drive through that part of France was beautiful. In many places civilians lined the streets and roads and waved greetings and threw kisses to the handsomest soldiers in Uncle Sam's army. Strict march discipline had been maintained with air guards on all vehicles, proper intervals between vehicles and regulated speed maintained. There was no dropping out of the convoy much to the regret of many. At one place a beautiful blonde, with outstretched arms, cried, "Stop, I love you." And there were wild unsuccessful efforts by all to get out of the moving vehicles.

Rain commenced to fall during the night and a miserable time was spent by most of the troops in the woods of Leyment. Only a few had been successful in finding billets. The Regimental Command Post set up in the ruined old Chateau de la Servette where a group of FFI (French Forces of the Interior) were located.

On 2 September 1944 the Regimental Battle Patrol conducted a reconnaissance north of Amberieu-en-Bugey through Neuville-sur-Ain to Bonas where the Third Reconnaissance Troop, tanks and one battalion of the 180th Infantry were located. Continuing north a bridge was found blown near Cormorand. Detour was effected and the Patrol continued northeast to Grand Corent, then northwest to the main road at Simanore-sur-Suran and up to Montfleur at which point French Maquis were contacted. The French reported the road clear for six kilometers past the town to the north and also that their forces occupied Treffort and Cuislat. Information was also gained of the enemy using the two roads running north and northeast along the railroad from Bourg-en-Bresse as escape routes. The patrol leader brought his report to the Command Post at 0100, 3 September. Another group from the Battle Patrol went to Priay. Sergeant Herman F. Nevers, the leader, reported all roads north, northeast and northwest out of that town clear for several miles. At Mas Gragez civilians reported that the enemy withdrew there at night but in daylight hours occupied positions.

ADVANCE TO LONS-LE-SAUNIER

The VI Corps continued its advance in pursuit of the enemy on 3 September on the general axis of Amberieu-en-Bugey-Belfort. The French 3rd DIM on the Corps' right reported its leading elements in St. Claude and Clairvaux close to the Swiss border at 1100. The 45th Infantry Division on the left was given the mission of capturing Bourg while the "Rock of the Marne" Division was directed to advance at once, maintain liaison with



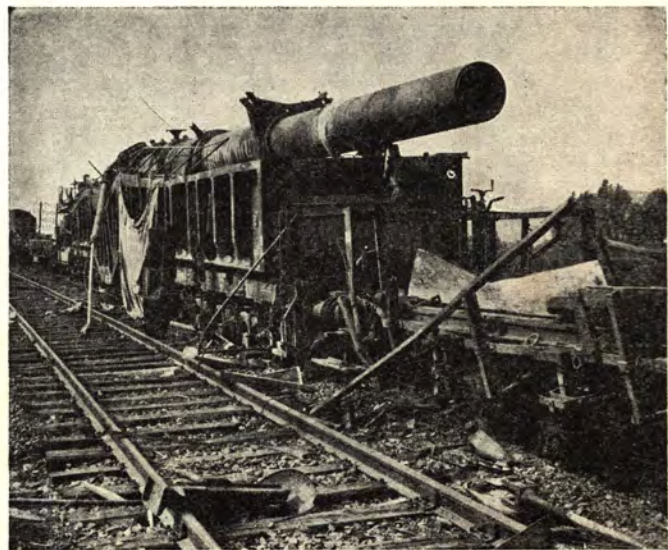
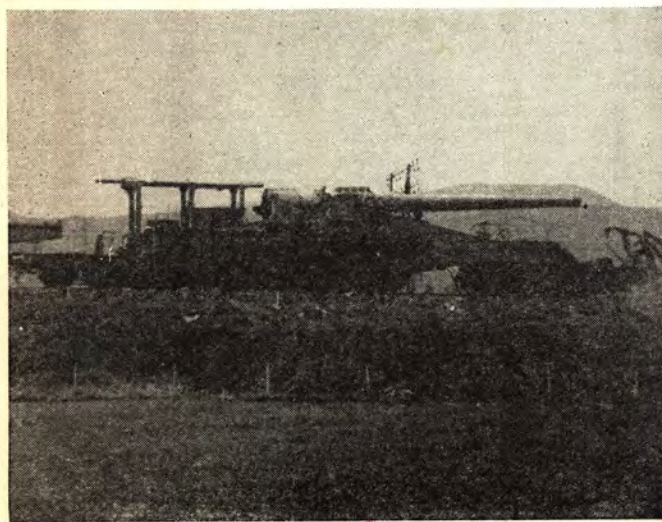
the French Combat Command and seize Lons-Le-Saunier and be prepared to continue on Corps orders.

The Third Infantry Division ordered the 7th and 15th Infantry to advance in east and west columns.²⁴

The Seventh Infantry was ordered to advance along the main road on the left. The Third Reconnaissance Troop, Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion and Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, were attached to the Regiment while the old stand-bys, the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, with the 9th Field Artillery Battalion attached, Company "A", 10th Engineer Battalion, and Company "A", 3rd Medical Battalion, were to be in direct support of the Regiment.

Colonel Harrell called all unit commanders to the Command Post and issued orders for the move which was initiated at 1545. With the Third Reconnaissance Troop in the lead followed by the Third Battalion, the Regiment passed through Neuville-sur-Ain, Meyriat, Villerversure, Chauvannes, St. Julien, Augisey and the many other small villages to Lons-Le-Saunier. Advancing north from Lons-Le-Saunier, the Regiment closed into defensive positions after midnight, the night of 3-4 September. The Regimental Command Post set up in Plainoiseau.

²⁴ FO 13, Hq. 3d Inf. Div., 3 Sept. 1944.



Top photos show how some of the bodies of dead Germans appeared after destruction of the enemy convoys north of Montelimar. Center photos show the highway after bulldozers plowed a path through the wreckage. Two of the large enemy railway guns are shown in the lower photos.



Liaison Officer, 2 Lt. Nathan W. White and Cpl. Richard L. "Tex" Richardson, M.D., compare "handlebars" near the ruins of the Chateau de la Servette, Leyment, France, on 2 September 1944.

The Battle Patrol brought in information gathered from the French FFI that two to three companies of enemy were at Dole with no transportation and that from 5000 to 6000 Germans were in Dijon. There was an estimated enemy force of 200 at Mont-sous-Vaudrey, 800 to 1000 in Arbois, 13,000 in Besancon. Two enemy reconnaissance planes had been seen patrolling over the road between Arbois and Poligny that day and the previous day. Six different bridges were reported blown. The French leader in Poligny was contacted and reported the town clear of enemy.

The Third Reconnaissance Troops with a platoon of tank destroyers reconnoitered toward Arbois and reported enemy there. A combat patrol with a platoon of guns from Cannon Company moved to engaged the enemy but no battle resulted as the town was reported clear at 1150.

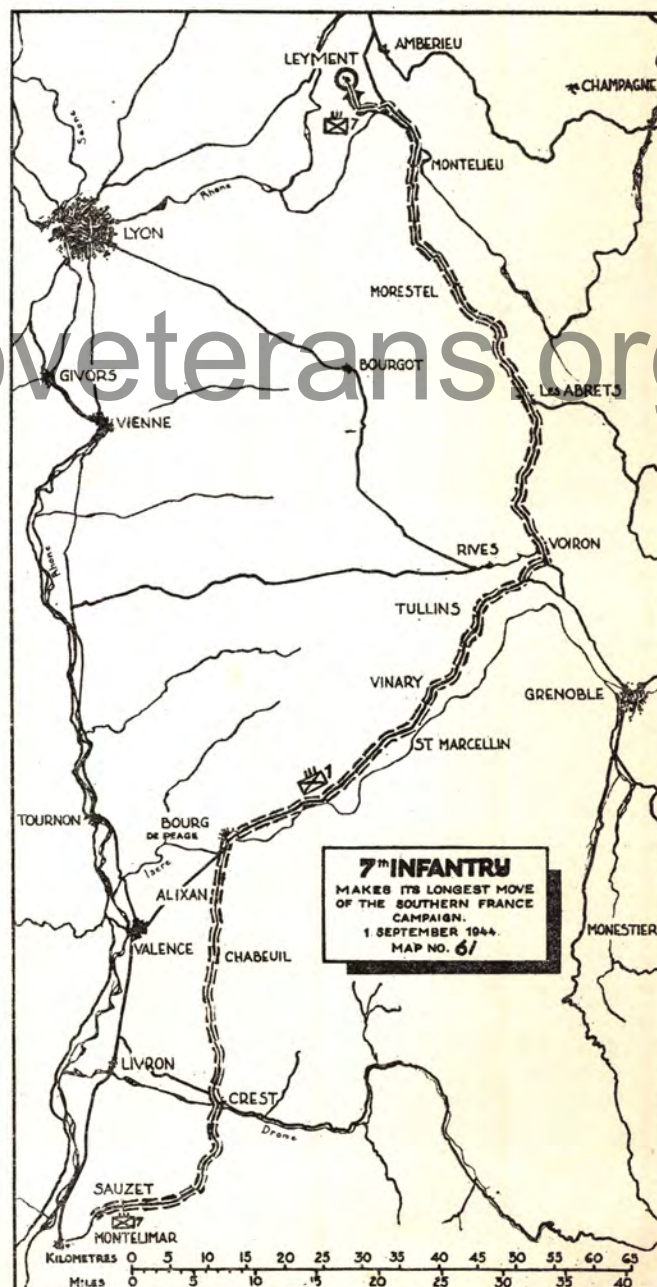
At 1310 the White Battalion moved to Arbois and one company advanced to Mouchard. The Red Battalion closed into Poligny at 1845 and one company moved on to Arbois. The Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol moved to Mont-sous-Vaudrey. The Third Battalion remained in position in the vicinity of Loubous and protected the Regiment's exposed left flank. At 2100, 4 September, the White Battalion plus Anti-Tank Company, 10th Field Artillery Battalion, two platoons each from Company "A", 756th Tank Battalion, and Company "A", 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and a platoon of Company "A", 10th Engineer Battalion, moved by vehicle to positions between Larnod and Arguel south of Besancon.

THE BATTLE OF BESANCON 5-7 SEPTEMBER 1944

Following the debacle at Montelimar the remaining German columns swung northeast for the Belfort Gap and the Rhine. At Besancon the Germans decided to make

a stand and hold until the middle of September so that their forces in the Dijon area would be able to pass through the Belfort Gap. But again their plans were to go awry. The Third Infantry Division was hard on their heels and in three days was to reduce and drive away resistance in the fortress city.

Besancon, a key communication and road net center, as well as an important industrial city of approximately 80,000 people, was located for the most part in a big loop of the Doubs River. When the Germans overran Besancon in 1940 they seized the watch factories and turned them into the manufacture of fuses and artillery shells. Besancon was a natural fortress city and had been improved through the years by French military engineers since the Middle Ages. The bottleneck opening was well fortified by the Citadelle in the center, and Fort Tousey and Fort-des-Trois Chatels to the southeast. South of the loop is Fort Chaudanne and Fort Du Petite Chaudanne (see Map No. 64). Farther south are the old French forts of Mont Rognan, Rosemont, Planois and Fontain. Northeast of the loop are located Fort Bregille and Fort Beauregard les Mandeliers, near Bregille. Just northwest of the loop is Fort Griffin and the Caserne





enemy's escape route northeast along Highway 73. The pelled guns. The high ridge running from the southwest to the northeast was occupied by German Infantry, supported by tanks and artillery in order to protect the d'Infanterie. West of the loop is the medieval prison and Caserne d'Artillerie. All of the forts, which are several hundred years old, are extremely thick walled, utilize moats and are situated on high ground commanding all avenues of approach. The Germans garrisoned them with from 50 to 200 Infantrymen each, equipped with small arms, machine guns, mortars, flak wagons and self-pro-

enemy established road blocks south of the city and a good job of bridge demolition was accomplished over the Doubs. According to an FFI report 13,000 Germans were in the city, but when the attack opened there were not that many there.

Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch, Commanding General of the Seventh American Army, visited one of the Third Division observation posts and agreed Besancon would be a hard nut to crack. But the crack Third Infantry Division under the command of Major General John W. O'Daniel took it in three days' time, utilizing all three rifle regiments to assault and outflank the fortress city.

In instructions issued 5 September 1944, the Third Infantry Division ordered the 15th and 30th Infantries to attack from the south and east.²⁵

The 15th Infantry, minus its Second Battalion, but with the Second Battalion Seventh Infantry, a company of tanks and a company of tank destroyers attached, was to protect Highway 83 from the west, seize Monts des Buis, Fort Rosemont and Fort Chaudanne south of Besancon and be prepared to cross the Doubs, enter and clear Besancon in zone. The bridge at Avanne was to be protected and a strong block maintained at Le Chateau Farine.

The 30th Infantry, with the Second Battalion 15th Infantry and a company each of tank destroyers and tanks was to attack from the southeast, seize the high ground east of the Doubs, including the little villages of Morre Montfaucon and the Fort de Montfaucon, then be prepared to cross the Doubs, cut the roads north of Besancon and clear the city of enemy in its zone.

The Seventh Infantry, minus its fighting Second Battalion, upon being relieved in the vicinity of Mouchard by elements of the 36th Infantry Division was to move to an assembly area behind the 30th Infantry and be prepared for any contingency.

SECOND BATTALION ATTACKS FOR OBJECTIVES SOUTH OF BESANCON 5 SEPTEMBER 1944

The Second Battalion (Reinforced), which was initially attached to the 15th Infantry, jumped off in the attack at 0530, 5 September 1944, to clear high ground south of Besancon. The battalion became engaged in heavy small arms fights but seized the bridge at Avanne intact as three large explosions in Besancon were heard. Company "F" encountered strong resistance at Beure but seized the bridge there. Company "E" progressed against enemy small arms and machine gun resistance and cut Highway 73 at St. Ferjeux at 1205.²⁶ The supporting tanks, tank destroyers and 10th Field Artillery Battalion took under fire enemy truck convoys, and ten to twenty Mark IV and VI tanks detouring the city to the north.

On 6 September the Second Battalion left Company "E" in place and assembled the remainder of the battalion in the vicinity of Avanne as it reverted to Regimental control and as the First and Third Battalions assembled in the same vicinity.

New instructions were issued by the Commanding General on 6 September 1944.²⁷ The mission of the 30th Infantry remained the same. The 15th Infantry was to protect from the west with attached reconnaissance elements, assemble its third battalion in Division reserve.

²⁵ O. I. No. 69, Hq. 3d Inf. Div., 5 Sept. 1944.

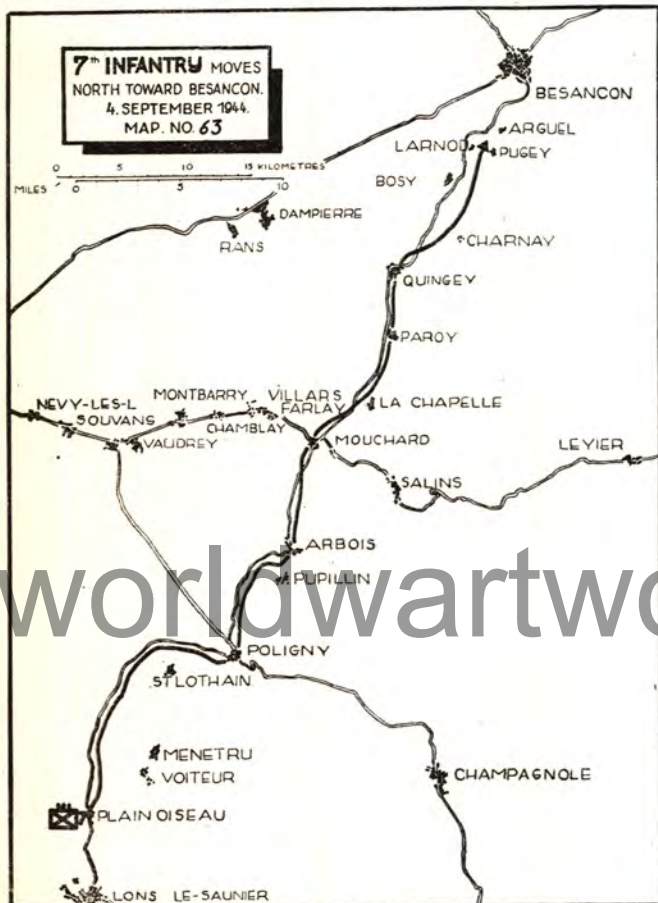
²⁶ See GO No. 256, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 15 July '45. Pfc K. R. Van Demark, Co. "H", was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

²⁷ O. I. No. 70, Hq. 3d Inf. Div., 6 Sept. '44.

and with the remainder, seize and hold Fontain and Monts des Bois southeast of Besancon before the entrance of the bottleneck. The Seventh Infantry with all its battalions under its control was to seize without delay and hold a goose egg from Le Chateau Farine to Ecole which included Bois les Dames, La Chaillee, Le Chene du Sage and Les Montboucons.

At 1250 the White Battalion jumped off in the attack from high ground just north of Avanne. Company "G" was in the assault with "Fox" Company following. The First Battalion jumped off in the attack from the high ground north of Avanne at 1430 in a northwesterly course for the high ground above Le Chene du Sage.

At 1515 "George" Company seized Fort Rosemont and received mortar and artillery fire.



A GERMAN GENERAL IS KILLED BY A "COTTON BALER"

The Red Battalion, with "Baker" Company on the right and "Able" Company on the left, reached the road by Le Chateau Farine. The Third Battalion followed the first and relieved Company "E" which returned to the White Battalion. The Red troops engaged enemy in a small arms fight above Le Chene du Sage as Company "B" was across the road while "C" and "A" were astride the highway. The battalion asked for tank destroyers as enemy convoys were seen pulling out of Besancon to the northwest. A roadblock established by "Able" Company on the Saint Dizier Highway in the vicinity of Le Chene du Sage ambushed a four vehicle convoy escorting the German General-Major Max Schmidt who was killed by the rifle fire of a "Cotton Baler". All four vehicles were destroyed. The general's orderly was taken prisoner and sent to the cage, with the general's papers, where he gave the information that the general was fifty-six years of age, had fought in Russia and had commanded an artillery school at Autun before the rout, and was then

on his way to take command of the newly committed 159th Division in the Besancon area. Souvenirs were gotten from the general's cars and his complete wardrobe was given to Lieutenant Colonel Izenour as a present from the "Able" Company riflemen and as a token of their esteem.

Red Battalion patrols operated between the St. Dizier Highway and Route Nationale. The Second Battalion meanwhile combatted strong enemy resistance throughout the afternoon and night of 6-7 September in attacking Fort Chaudanne. As all rifle companies were committed at 0850, 7 September, the ancient fort was surrounded.

The Third Battalion which initially followed the First, began advancing through the Red troops at 1900, 6 September, to encircle Besancon, from the northwest. Scattered enemy resistance was encountered at first but close-in fighting was engaged in during the hours of darkness.

At 2000, 6 September, new orders from the Commanding General were received which directed the Seventh Infantry to push on and take Besancon immediately. "Iron Mike" wanted the city by daylight. All resistance in the pocket of the Doubs was to be cleaned out, so that bridges could be constructed across the Doubs and thus permit VI Corps to move through the city. Colonel Harrell informed "Iron Mike" of the Seventh Infantry situation and further informed him that if the Third Battalion should encounter very much resistance along the railroad line it would by-pass it and enter Besancon from the rear, which was what happened. The battalion commanders were then informed of the commanding general's instructions and the pressure was put on the enemy throughout the night.

Fort Chaudanne, which the Second Battalion was attacking, had a low silhouette, three feet thick walls and concrete emplacements. An estimated company of enemy were entrenched behind its durable walls and continued to fire flak wagon, machine gun and small arms fire down upon the attacking troops. Reconnaissance of the fort revealed two possible escape routes. It was believed that the enemy would attempt to abandon this position during the night. Companies "E" and "F" worked their way slowly up the hill, employing hand and rifle grenade fire. Taking advantage of the darkness, soldiers climbed the walls of the fort and fired at the enemy within. At one time, the enemy came out apparently to surrender, but continued the fight after an excited soldier fired his Browning automatic rifle.

It was not until after daylight that tank destroyers were in position to fire point-blank fire at the doors, battering them apart. A wooden bridge leading into the fort was not sturdy enough to bear the weight of the armor and First Lieutenant George E. Stripp of Company "E" displayed courageous leadership that resulted in the fort's capture with nineteen enemy taken prisoners. Ignoring point-blank machine gun fire that ricocheted off a tank destroyer and barely missed him, and grenades which burst within ten yards of him, First Lieutenant Stripp arranged a plan of assault on the fort with the tank destroyer's commander. When the gate to the fort was smashed by the tank destroyer's fire, First Lieutenant Stripp inspired his platoon to follow him through a concentration of small arms fire in a rush across seventy-five yards of exposed terrain and across the wooden bridge into the fort. The aggressive charge took the fight out of the remaining enemy troops in the fort, who surrendered after firing several scattered shots and rifle grenades.²⁸

²⁸ GO No. 304, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 31 Dec. '44. 1 Lt. Stripp was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

During that night of 6-7 September 1944 near Besancon the forward observation and command post of the Third Battalion came under attack by a platoon of German Infantrymen. The enemy had infiltrated through the battalion's forward companies and attacked the command post with machine guns, machine pistols and grenade fire at ranges as close as ten yards. Lieutenant Colonel Lloyd B. Ramsey, the battalion commander, and members of his staff who were present were in great danger of being captured or killed. In telling of the happenings that night, Lieutenant Colonel Ramsey said . . . "A rupture of communications with the assault companies, which were then meeting strong resistance, might easily have been disastrous."



Three "Cotton Balers" killed in action during the period 6-11 September 1944 were, left to right: T/5 John F. Alexander, 3d Bn Hqrs Co., Cpl. James H. Draper, Co. "M", and Pfc Dominick J. Trupiano, Co. "F".

Technician Fifth Grade Robert D. Maxwell, a wire corporal, radio operator Private James P. Soblensky, wire chief Technician Fourth Grade Cyril F. McCall, and wireman Private First Class James P. Joyce were in the post with the battalion commander. The enemy platoon, supported by 20mm flakwagon and machine gun fire virtually surrounded the post and came within ten to fifteen yards of the building. They raked the doors and windows with a hail of bullets. "Through all this fire," said radio operator Private Sablensky, "There was one man who just sat there calmly observing out into the darkness, taking pot shots at every Kraut he saw. It was Technician Fifth Grade Robert D. Maxwell, one of the wire corporals. He was the coolest customer I've ever seen. Tracer bullets were just barely clearing his head, yet he didn't seem to notice it."

Despite the hail of fire from the enemy's automatic weapons and grenade launchers Technician Fifth Grade Maxwell aggressively fought off advancing enemy elements and by his calmness, tenacity and fortitude, inspired fellow soldiers to continue the unequal struggle. Lieutenant Colonel Ramsey realized that his small force could not hold the post against the enemy superior in numbers, so ordered a withdrawal to another location. When suddenly an enemy grenade came over the wall and landed in the midst of the group, Technician Fifth Grade Maxwell unhesitatingly hurled himself on it, using his blanket and his unprotected body to absorb the full force of the explosion. Private First Class James P. Joyce said: "I lay still for a few seconds partially stunned by the concussion, then I realized that I wasn't hurt. Technician Fifth Grade Maxwell had deliberately drawn the full force of the explosion on himself in order to protect us and make it possible for us to continue at our posts and fight." Technician Fifth Grade Maxwell was severely wounded and maimed but his act of instantaneous heroism saved the lives of his comrades and facilitated the maintenance of vital military communications during the temporary withdrawal of the battalion's forward headquarters. For his actions of that night Technician Fifth Grade Maxwell was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Private First Class Wilbur D. Springer, machine gunner of Company "M" and his assistant Private First Class Paul D. Clever, Jr., knocked out an enemy machine gun and killed several supporting riflemen after a duel at one hundred fifty yards range. When a second enemy machine gun and about twenty-five riflemen thirty-five yards away suddenly opened fire on them, the two men held their ground and returned fire. Despite bullets that kicked dirt over them and hand grenades that exploded ten yards away, the two soldiers killed the remaining riflemen in the first group and forced the second enemy group to take cover in buildings. The tracer bullets they then directed at the buildings guided the fire of a friendly tank, and enabled Blue Battalion riflemen to seize them.²⁹

The lead elements of the Blue Battalion pressed their advance. At 2145 Company "K" knocked out a 20mm flakwagon and an ammunition truck with bazooka fire. Seven enemy were killed and the battalion continued to advance. At 0110, 7 September, Company "K" ran into an enemy convoy in the process of forming by a road junction on the northwestern outskirts of the city. Again a bazooka round knocked out a truck, setting it afire. Enemy activity became intense and "King" and "Love" Companies went into defensive positions. The fire fight continued until about 0400 hours. The enemy used two self-propelled guns and a flakwagon as well as small arms, grenades and machine guns. At 0400 hours 7 September, Lieutenant Colonel Ramsey ordered a withdrawal of the companies to more advantageous positions and directed a heavy shelling on the vacated positions. At 0700 the Blue troops jumped off in the attack again and skirted the city. At 1130 hours the battalion motor pool personnel engaged in a fire fight that lasted for an hour and resulted in the capture of eighteen prisoners. By 1530 the Blue troops were at A la Baraque and road junction northeast of Besancon, having skirted around the city. An hour and a half later the battalion less Company "K" progressed to the hill northeast of the city between the railroad and highway and made ready for another assault. The battalion then pressed forward against small arms and mortar fire and entered Besancon at 2015, 7 September. Fifteen minutes later the battalion was assembled near the railroad station in the city just northeast of the loop.

The Red Battalion which was relieved of positions at 0600, 7 September by the Second Battalion, 15th Infantry, advanced to the east from the vicinity of Ecole at 1230, in a column of companies with "A" leading. An enemy column was engaged in a brief fire fight, many killed, many driven off and fifteen captured. La Chanle was seized and as "Able" halted temporarily to reorganize, with a platoon on either side of a dirt road, a column of sixty enemy unwittingly marched between the two units and was wiped out. At 1600 the forward elements of the Red Battalion were at the A la Baraque road junction.

Following the capture of Fort Chaudanne by the Second Battalion the Seventh Infantry greatly assisted the attack of the First Battalion, 30th Infantry, through the bottleneck for the Citadelle. Cannon Company did a particularly fine job of rendering support.³⁰

At 1730, 7 September as the attack on the Citadelle was still in progress orders were received from Division Headquarters directing that the Seventh Infantry clear the city including the part in the loop. VI Corps sent a 110-foot Bailey bridge to the Regimental Command Post.

²⁹ GO No. 304, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 31 Dec. '44. Pfc's Springer & Clever were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁰ See GO No. 265, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 15 Nov. '44. Capt. R. V. Horton was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

The Second Battalion moved northwest from Fort Chaudanne and cleared the part of the city west of the loop and was at the railroad station. The Commanding General called Lieutenant Colonel Clayton C. Thobro at 1900 and personally issued instructions for clearing the island as far as the Citadelle and assaulting it from the rear. One rifle company then started immediately over a partially destroyed bridge as the engineers started putting in the Bailey Bridge.

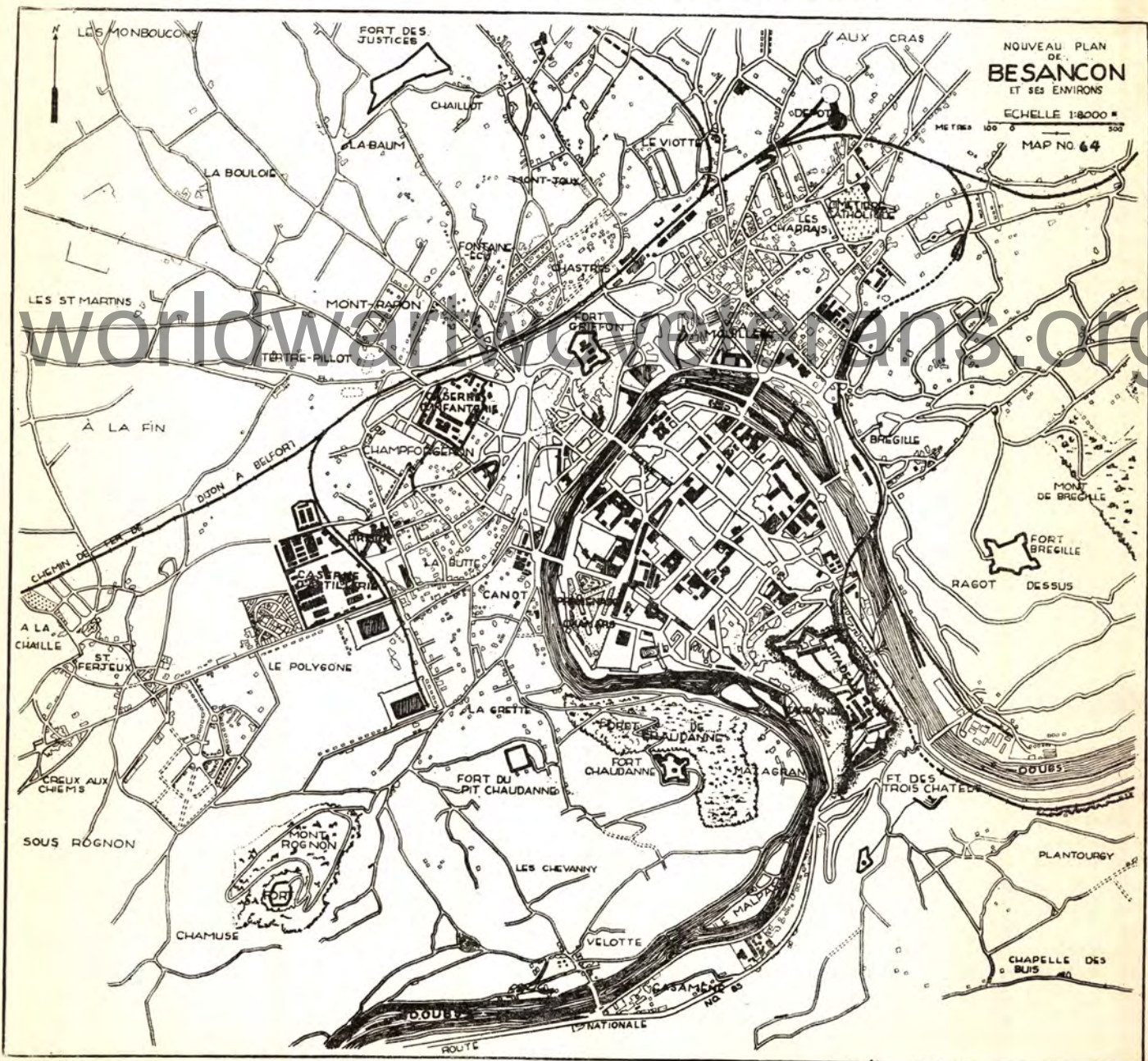
At 1920, 7 September, Cannon Company reported a white flag from the Citadelle which was actually taken by the First Battalion, 30th Infantry, assisted by the Seventh Infantry. All resistance had ended except for sniper fire. All of the city of Besancon excepting the Citadelle and the two forts guarding the entrance to the bottleneck had been cleared by the "Cotton Balers".

The Third Battalion withdrew from Besancon early 8 September and at 0930 near Montarmot attacked an enemy convoy. The 57mm Anti-Tank Squad of Third Battalion Headquarters led by Staff Sergeant Willard F. Wagner played an important part in smashing the convoy. The fire of the squad blasted nine trucks and caused

fifteen more to be abandoned, destroyed a 76mm anti-tank gun, inflicted fifteen casualties and was responsible for the capture of fifty enemy soldiers. Staff Sergeant Robert A. White and Private First Class Albert F. Hoffner captured between 80 and 100 members of the wrecked convoy and were indirectly responsible for the release of a similar number of friendly troops. Included in the bag of prisoners was the commanding officer of a German regiment and his staff of six officers. Sergeant Frank L. Freeland captured nineteen enemy soldiers.³¹

The captured German colonel and a major were brought before Colonel Harrell at the Regimental Command Post. The German colonel gave the appearance of a professional soldier and accepted his humiliating position without any outward display of emotions and gave due respect to the Seventh Infantry commanding officer. He used a cane as the artificial legs he procured, following amputation of his natural legs after injuries sustained in

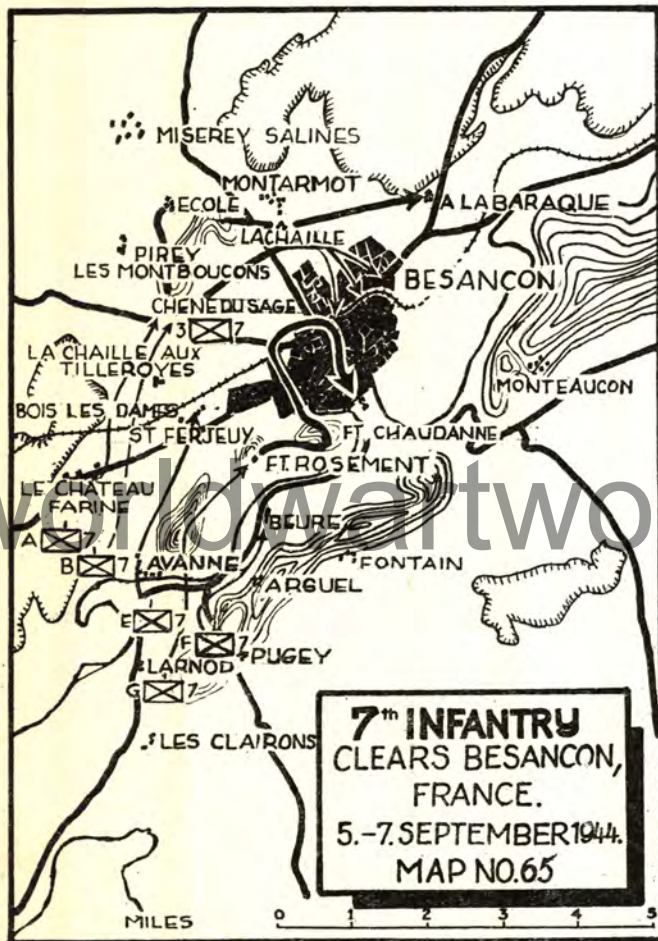
³¹ GOs No. 11, 202 & 206, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 30 Sept. & 2 Oct. '44 & 11 Jan. '45. S/Sgts. Wagner & White, Sgt. Freeland & Pfc Hoffner were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.



Map No. 64, "Nouveau Plan de Besancon et Ses Environs."

minefields during the short German campaign which brought the downfall of France, were not too satisfactory. His subordinate officer, the major, was sullen and gave the appearance of the typical Nazi officer. Some "Cotton Baler" had taken his nice binoculars and he was put out no end.

Other "Cotton Balers", besides those already mentioned, who displayed gallantry in action during the Battle of Besancon were Private William E. Krovchuck of Second Battalion Headquarters Company, who was killed in action, Technical Sergeant Alexander Bucsa of Company "F", Technician Fifth Grade Robert D. Maxwell of Third Battalion Headquarters Company, Private First Class William F. Simokauskas of Second Battalion Headquarters Company, Private First Class Ernest H. Burns of Company "G" and First Lieutenant Warren M. Solomon of First Battalion Headquarters Company.³²



As at Montelimar, the Seventh Infantry received little recognition from higher headquarters for its performance in the Battle of Besancon.³³ However, a year later the French Army commander at Besancon, on the occasion of the anniversary of the city's liberation, in a letter to Brigadier General W. T. Sexton, then commanding general of the American Third Infantry Division, cited the Seventh Infantry while expressing appreciation for the part a detachment from the division played in the anniversary celebration exercises. His letter is here quoted:³⁴

I wish to convey to you the deep gratitude of the French Army and of the City of Besancon for the honor you have done them in permitting a detachment of your division to take part in the celebration of the anniversary of the Capital of Franche-Comte. The French Army and the City of Besancon are joined also by the leaders of the Franche-Comte Resistance Movement, who had the signal honor of returning to their city a year ago at the side of your troops, notably the Seventh Infantry Regi-

ment. Permit me, General, to add my personal thanks in my capacity as Chief of the Headquarters of the Franche-Comte FFI.

The pages of history written in September 1944 by your division will long remain in the memory of all residents of this place of battle, who will faithfully continue to demonstrate each year at this time the same feeling of gratitude for the American Army and our own Franche-Comte Maquisards.

Permit me finally to ask you to convey to your troops our complete admiration of the magnificent appearance and military conduct of your detachment which made a profound impression on the population of the City of Besancon.

I wish to extend to you, General, an expression of my sincere and devoted sentiments.

Signed:

BRIG. GEN. FOURNIER

French Army

At 1145, 8 September, the Red Battalion resumed the advance to the northeast from A la Baraque, encountered some small arms resistance but at 1815 was in Rigney and in possession of the bridge over L'Ognon Riviere. The Red Battalion sent patrols to Moncey, Venise and Rioz. The one to the last named place encountered enemy tanks. The battalion advanced to Vandelans.

After the Blue Battalion cleaned up the enemy convoy in the vicinity of Montarmot it advanced, parallel to the Red Battalion's course, through the Foret De Chailluz to Vieilley, Venise and Moncey where the bridge was secured. Cirey was seized at 2240. Company "K" moved to Bonnay southwest of Vieilley. A liaison officer led four M-8 tanks across country to Bonnay. At daylight 9 September "King" Company supported by the tanks and the 69th Field Artillery Battalion attacked for the bridge over L'Ognon River south of Voray. Enemy resistance was encountered along the north-south highway and just before the "King" Company riflemen reached the bridge, it was blown by enemy demolition squads.

The Second Battalion moved to the vicinity of Cirey the night of 8-9 September and attacked northwest toward Rioz. At 0835 the White Battalion was at Bellevaux Chateau where it directed artillery fire on an enemy convoy north of Rioz. The troops pushed on to Neuves Granges and engaged in a fire fight. At 0935 a small enemy attack at Traitiefontaine was defeated and fourteen enemy taken prisoners. Company "G" drove on to Hill 308 as Company "E" was on Hill 337 and "Fox" Company occupied Hill 283.

On 9 September the Red Battalion sent out patrols from the vicinity of Vandelans and contacted groups of enemy on both sides. One enemy patrol infiltrated "Baker" Company's positions near Rignosat but fared badly against the "Cotton Balermen" who killed eleven of their members. The Red Battalion set up road blocks to the northeast. A patrol north from Vandelans contacted enemy in the woods. An M-8 from Cannon Company was hit by enemy panzerfaust fire.

³² GOs No. 40, 59, 120, 264 & 282, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 9 & 23 Feb., 6 Apr., 19 July & 1 Aug. '45. Pvt. Krovchuck (posthumously), T/Sgt. Bucsa, T/5 Maxwell, Pfc Simokauskas & Burns & 1 Lt. Solomon were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³³ On recommendation of Div. Hq. a battalion of the 15th Infantry received the Presidential Unit Citation for the capture of Montelimar while a battalion of the 30th Infantry received a similar citation for the taking of Besancon. Failure of the Div. Awards Section to recognize the excellent work of the 7th Infantry in the destruction of the German convoys north of Montelimar and its great part in the capture of Besancon displeased the CO and other personnel of the 7th Infantry. However tardiness of the 7th Infantry's own awards section in making recommendations probably was one reason for lack of official recognition.

³⁴ As printed in "The Front Line", Vol. 1, No. 52, Korbach, Germany, 29 Sept. 1945.

At 1805, 9 September, Company "G" continued the advance from Hill 308 and encountered slight resistance just north of Rioz, capturing six prisoners. Patrols entered Rioz and found it clear. Two companies of the 15th Infantry occupied the town during the night. Following relief of Company "G" by the 15th Infantry it rejoined the rest of the Second Battalion.

On 9 September, First Lieutenant James C. Jernigan and men from Anti-Tank Company established a road block and ambushed an enemy force. Eight vehicles were destroyed, 30 Germans killed and 118 others taken as prisoners of war.³⁵



Capt. Lucius S. Davis, commanding Co. "M", was killed in action on 9 September 1944.

Company "K", reinforced, was attached to the 15th Infantry and advanced north from Vorays. At 2100, 9 September it reverted to Regimental control. The remainder of the Third Battalion remained in Regimental reserve 9 September, guarded the bridge at Cirey and conducted patrols to Beaumotte, Cenans and Loulans.

7th INFANTRY ATTACKS NORTH 10 SEPTEMBER 1944

At 0600, 10 September Red Battalion forces relieved the Blue Battalion guard at the Cirey bridge and the Third Battalion assembled in the vicinity of Loulans.

The Regiment attacked north 10 September 1944. As the Red Battalion held in place for awhile the Second and Third Battalions pushed on.

At 1000 the White Battalion attacked north from Neuves Granges toward Authoison and Filain. Advancing through Les Grand Bois de Bellevaux strong enemy resistance was encountered south of Aubertans. The battalion received heavy artillery fire and the observation post was hit. Captain Thomas P. Board, battalion surgeon, Lieutenants Hart and O'Connor were wounded by the enemy fire. "Easy" Company moved to the left flank of the town. Heavy small arms and 88mm fire slowed the advance of the battalion.³⁶

The Blue Battalion attacked north from Loulans and defeated strong resistance in the vicinity of Ormenans. Driving on against stiff opposition Fontenois-les-Montbozon was captured. The two platoons of Company "I", with tanks, on the battalion's left flank in Roche-sur-Linotte received heavy shelling. At 2020 the main Blue Battalion forces seized the road junction south of Dampierre-sur-Linotte and sent a platoon on the road southwest to contact Company "I", but "Item" Company, overcoming the enemy strongpoint in Roche-sur-Linotte left one platoon at Sorans and joined the Blue Battalion at 2235.

7th INFANTRY PRESSES THE ATTACK 11 SEPTEMBER 1944

The First Battalion minus Company "C", left to guard bridges at Cirey and Rigney, moved by vehicle

from Rigney to Loulans the night of 10 September 1944. Company "C" was relieved of its guard duties by a company of the 30th Infantry at 0530 on 11 September 1944, and moved to join its battalion near Loulans.

The Red Battalion minus Company "C" attacked from the road junction near Loulans at 0600 and headed for Filain as Company "G" of the White Battalion was advancing on Authoison.

Company "G" encountered heavy resistance from four enemy machine guns and a platoon of enemy riflemen in the woods south of Authoison. "Fox" Company took Villers Pater while "Easy" Company seized Aubertans. The roads to Villers Pater were mined.

The Red Battalion encountered small arms resistance and engaged in fights but overcame resistance and drove on to the outskirts of Filain at 1315.

The Third Battalion moved at 0730 and seized Dampierre-sur-Linotte at 0920 as all the Seventh Infantry battalions pressed the advance. Leading elements encountered resistance north of the town in the form of flak wagon, rifle, artillery and machine gun fire. Self-propelled gun fire was received from as close as 800 yards. Companies "K" and "L" were engaged throughout the day.³⁷

Meanwhile the Second Battalion seized Authoison and swung northeast to seize Vy-les-Filains, after which it followed the First Battalion which had cleaned out Filain and drove to Hill 405 and Baa-du-Vaux.

The First Battalion swung northeast to seize the hill south of Bois-de-Belle Cote near Les Belles Baraques and the Second Battalion occupied Hill 418.³⁸ The battalions sat tight during the night of 11-12 September 1944.

Early on the 12th the Third or Blue Battalion continued its advance and occupied its objective, Hill 397, as the Red and White Battalions sent patrols to Les Belles Baraques and the road to Vesoul. The Blue Battalion drove straight on for Noroy-le-Bourg where a fight was had. When the advance of Company "L" was halted, Staff Sergeant John H. Stanton singlehandedly charged a strongly emplaced machine gun, moving in long rushes across 125 yards of flat, exposed terrain through enemy fire. He hit the ground about 25 yards from his objective and, with deadly rifle fire, destroyed the entire enemy gun crew. He then dashed to a barn 25 yards to his left front where a flak wagon was in position. He shot and killed one of the crew and put the rest to flight. Continuing his solitary attack he advanced down a street of Noroy-le-Bourg under sniper fire, to a barn held by a numerous enemy group. Hurling a hand grenade through a door he forced ten Germans to surrender and wounded several others. Again continuing his one-man assault he almost collided with a German as he rounded a street corner. Wrenching the rifle from the startled German's grasp he killed him as he attempted to flee. Then firing his M-1 rifle into a cellar where the enemy was lodged in considerable force, he compelled fifteen more Germans to yield. Having killed and captured at least 25 of the enemy and eliminated two gun positions Staff Sergeant Stanton waited until his company caught up with him. For

³⁵ GO No. 264, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 19 July '45. 1 Lt. Jernigan was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁶ See GOs No. 316 & 345, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10 & 25 Sept. '45. Capt. Board & Pfc R. D. Graham, A.T.Co., were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

³⁷ See GO No. 11, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Jan. '45. 2 Lt. G. M. Connor, Co. "K", & Pvt. R. Deltieure, Co. "M", were awarded the Second & First Oak Leaf Clusters respectively to the Silver Star Medal.

³⁸ See GO No. 120, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 6 Apr. '45. Pvt. J. Blackburn, Co. "C", was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

his extraordinary heroism he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.³⁹ Company "L" accounted for 100 of the 150 prisoners captured by the Third Battalion in Noroy-le-Bourg.⁴⁰



French women accused of collaboration with the Germans had their hair clipped. Above photos show scenes that occurred in Orange and Besancon.

7th INFANTRY SWINGS TO THE NORTHEAST FOR LURE

As friendly troops on the left seized Vesoul the Seventh Infantry swung northeast on 13 September 1944 toward Lure.

At 0915 the First Battalion left Company "B" on Hill 452 and attacked Hill 430 with Companies "A" and "C". "Charlie" Company received some artillery fire while advancing on the objective. Company "A" moved to the south flank of the hill.⁴¹



The remains of Lt. Col. Thobro's jeep after it was blown up by a mine.

The Blue Battalion seized Hill 410 northeast of Noroy-le-Bourg and prepared to continue the attack. The Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol conducted successful missions. One reconnaissance patrol to Villers-le-Sec captured nine prisoners and killed several more enemy. Above Grande Vaire two enemy vehicles were destroyed by the patrol and all occupants killed but one. At 2100, 13 September, another patrol passed through Company "K" and conducted raiding parties to maintain enemy contact. Strong enemy automatic weapons and small arms fire prevented the patrol from entering the town of Autrey-les-Cerre. A jeep was destroyed by a mine, killing two and wounding one.

The Second Battalion which was in Division reserve for a time reverted to Regimental control and assembled south of Cerre-les-Noroy at 1900, 13 September 1944.

At 0400, 14 September 1944, the White Battalion moved to its assigned line of departure, the railroad line south of Hill 430, and at daylight, 0630, jumped off in the attack to the northeast. Company "G", under the veteran company commander, Captain Edgar H. Poinsett, entered Borey at 0915 and drove on. Lieutenant Colonel Thobro's jeep ran over a mine, his orderly was killed and the driver seriously wounded.

The Blue Battalion attacked from Hill 410 at 0715 and the Red Battalion joined in the attack at 0835. The Red forces seized Autrey-les-Cerre and at 1120 both the Red and Blue Battalions had troops in Montjustin. Company "K" with anti-tank protection was sent to Llevans as the Commanding General wanted some troops there as a protective measure.

The Second Battalion passed through Arpenans at 1250 and continued the advance for Gouhenans, directly east. At 1600 the north-south road was reached and Company "F" encountered enemy infantry, mortars and artillery fire south of Hill 332. Twenty enemy were killed and twenty more taken prisoners as a result of the fighting. During the hours of darkness "Easy" Company preceded by strong patrols, advanced to the vicinity of the stretched-out village of Les Aynans. At daylight a strong fire fight ensued as the battalion sought to seize the bridges over L'Oignon River.

Private First Class Michael J. Smerillo of a machine gun section from Company "H", ran forward fifty yards through a hail of enemy bullets, carrying his heavy machine gun tripod. Selecting an open firing position, he waited until his assistant gunner arrived with the machine gun barrel, then set up the weapon and engaged one of three enemy machine guns. In a twenty minute fight, while streams of automatic fire were directed at him and rifle grenades exploded fifteen yards from him, he knocked out the weapon and killed its three man crew. He then dragged his ninety-five pound weapon forward to a new and more exposed position and engaged the other two enemy machine guns. Bullets came so close to him that they perforated the field jacket he carried on his belt. Despite the enemy fire he traversed his machine gun and fired upon one enemy weapon then the other and wounded four members of the two hostile crews, forced a fifth to surrender and compelled the others to with-

³⁹ For authority see GO 85, Hq. 7th Army, 9 Mar. 1945.

⁴⁰ See GOs No. 13, 163, 177 & 228, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 Jan., 16 & 23 May & 26 June '45. 1 Lt. J. J. Greene, Co. "L", (posthumously), & S/Sgt. D. R. Thierolf, Co. "C", were each awarded the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. Pfc R. E. Pinard, 3 Bn Hq Co., (posthumously), & 1 Lt. D. J. Lostumbo, Co. "L", were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴¹ See GO No. 66, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 25 Feb. '45. Capt. Tyler Campbell, Co. "A", (posthumously) was awarded the Silver Star Medal. 1 Lt. G. E. Guckert, Cn Co., was awarded the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal.

draw. His actions were mainly responsible for the capture of the objective. For his extraordinary heroism Private First Class Smerillo was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁴²

Company "I" entered Arpenans at 1615 for the Blue Battalion and two hours later the entire battalion assembled in the town in Regimental reserve.

The Red Battalion continued its advance the morning of 15 September 1944 and at 1150 the forward elements of "Baker" Company entered La Granges du Veau without opposition. The battalion left Company "B" in La Granges-du-Veau and launched an attack for high ground 2000 yards to the northeast. Resistance was strong and the enemy had to be routed from their fox-holes by bayonets and grenades. The high ground was taken and the troops remained there the rest of the night.

On 15 September a ten-man motor patrol from the Battle Patrol observed two enemy vehicles rounding a bend in a road less than seventy-five yards ahead. All except Private First Class Bruce A. Aven, a jeep driver, took cover in a nearby ditch. Slipping quickly behind



Three "Cotton Baler" officers killed in action on 14-15 September 1944 were: (1) 2 Lt. Joseph S. Ancanage, Cn Co.; (2) 2 Lt. Frank Strehle, Co. "A"; and (3) 2 Lt. Arthur J. Blackwood, Co. "H".

the .50 calibre machine gun mounted in the rear of his jeep, Private First Class Aven delivered such accurate and intense fire that he destroyed both enemy vehicles and killed all six occupants before they could fire a shot in return. So frightened was the crew of an enemy flak wagon two hundred yards away by the ferocity of Private Aven's attack, that the Germans fled in disorder.⁴³

The Third Battalion came out of reserve at Arpenans on 15 September 1944, assembled in the woods to the northeast and made preparations to go into the attack by sending reconnaissance patrols out toward Vy-les-Lures.

At about 1330 the Blue Battalion launched its attack with Companies "I" and "L", and attached machine gun platoons from Company "M". "L" was on the left. "King" Company followed in reserve.

Advancing across open, rolling ground the assaulting companies, as they neared Vy-les-Lures, encountered determined enemy resistance supported by a large amount of machine gun, artillery and mortar fire. Enemy artillery shells exploded between the two assault companies, caused several casualties, destroyed communication between them, and prevented a coordinated attack.

Besides the artillery fire, six machine guns inflicted heavy casualties on Company "I", which included the Company Commander, First Lieutenant Arthur M. Dunn, and some of his communications personnel, as well as all but five members of an assault platoon. First Lieutenant Hugo J. Mondelli assumed command of the company.⁴⁴

COMPANY "L" WINS PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE AT VY-LES-LURE

When the heavy enemy artillery barrages exploded between the Blue Battalion's two assault companies on 15 September 1944 near Vy-les-Lures, Captain Ralph J. Yates quickly commanded "Love" Company to strike off due left of the battalion's axis of advance. After proceeding several hundred yards in the new direction masked from the enemy fire by a ground rise, the company turned right and continued parallel to its original course. By changing the route Captain Yates saved his company casualties from enemy artillery and also out-flanked the enemy's outpost line of resistance before Vy-les-Lures.

While Company "I" fought off the powerful enemy counter-attack Company "L" continued its advance with both flanks exposed. As the riflemen crossed a pasture toward a secondary road leading into the town, the enemy laid heavy artillery and mortar fire on them. The squad leaders quickly cut gaps in a barbed wire pasture fence and the company swept forward through the enemy fire, and, reaching the secondary road plunged into a drainage ditch to its side. They then faced right and moved along the ditch toward the outskirts of Vy-les-Lures.

To the immediate front approximately seventy-five yards and on the right of the secondary road, was the first of several houses. On the opposite side of the road, at a slightly shorter range, was a cemetery surrounded by a five-foot stone wall. Beyond the cemetery and the first houses, the secondary road effected a junction with the main north-south highway at an oblique angle. Just south of the junction of the two roads was situated a large house.

"Love" Company became temporarily halted by very heavy artillery, mortar, machine gun, machine pistol, and rifle fire. Captain Yates seized the Browning automatic rifle of a wounded man and sprayed enemy in the first house with intense fire from a standing position.

Lieutenant Samuel J. Selvog led elements of the First Platoon in a rush, along a hedgerow on the south side of the road, toward the first house. A rifleman in the drainage ditch raised himself to fire at the enemy and received a burst of bullets from a machine gun firing through a hole in the cemetery wall. The terrific power of this point blank fire almost tore the rifleman's arm from his shoulder.

Captain Yates, followed by members of his command post group and several others, crossed the road and jumped into the ditch next to the cemetery wall. Company "L" then became engaged in a very heavy fire fight as creeping enemy mortar and artillery fire reached and encompassed the embattled company. Exposed and facing an enemy of unknown strength, Captain Yates and a number of other men crept under the muzzles of the enemy guns in the cemetery and paused beneath the stone wall facing the road.

Sergeant George A. Grando, who was behind his commanding officer, crawled forward several yards almost to the corner of the wall, and lobbed a fragmentation grenade over it. Cries of pain and the abrupt cessation of automatic fire from that source indicated that the ser-

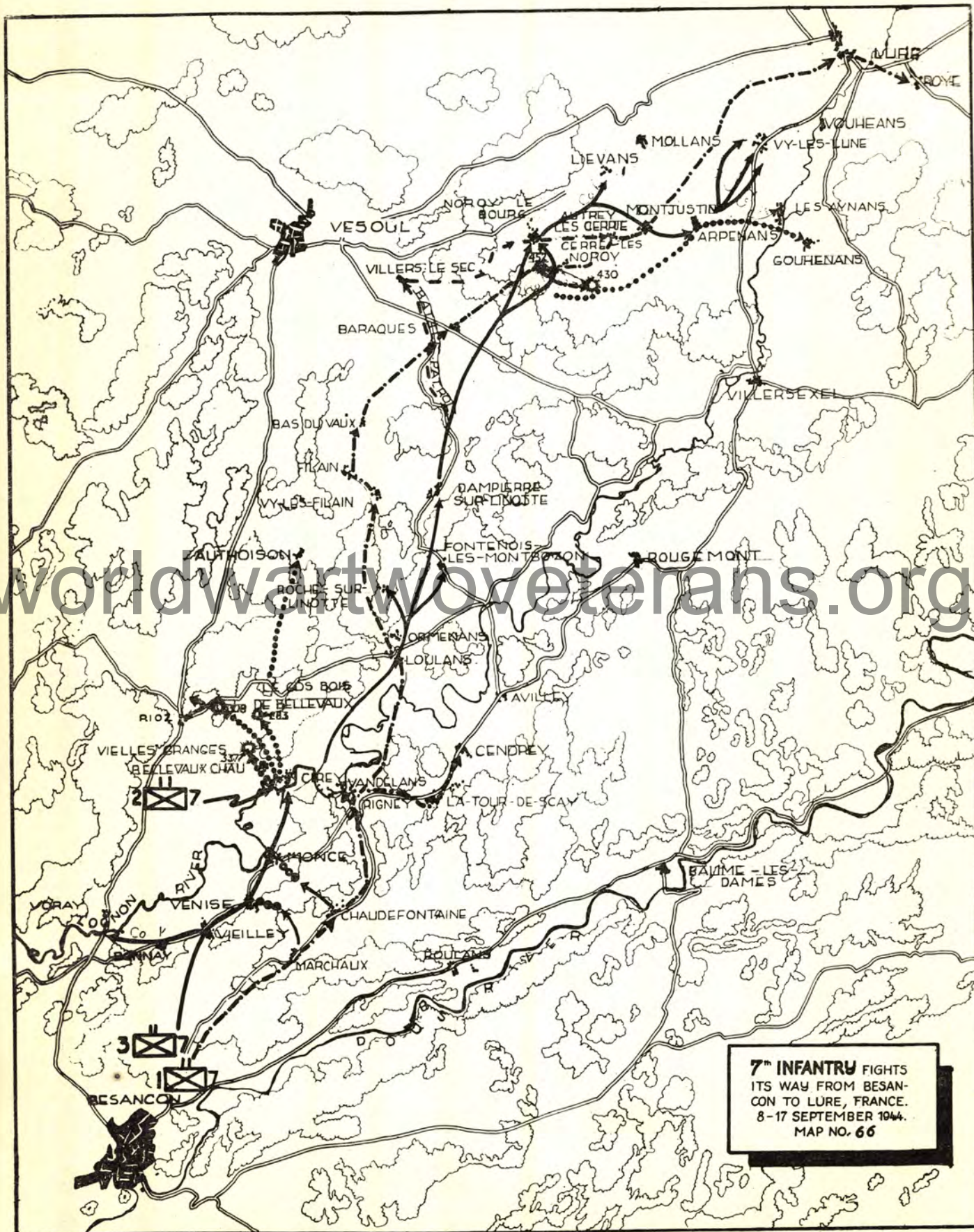
⁴² For authority see GO 55, Hq. 7th Army, 17 Feb. 1945.

⁴³ GO No. 13, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 Jan. '45. Pfc Aven was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁴ GO No. 11, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11 Jan. '45. 1 Lt. Mondelli was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

geant had hit the mark. But the respite was only temporary. Several moments later the enemy retaliated from the cemetery with "potato masher" grenades. One grenade landed beside Sergeant George A. Grando. Sergeant Dean W. Barnette, the communications sergeant, picked it up and tossed it back.

Raising himself to his full height of over six feet, Captain Yates lifted his Browning automatic rifle over his head and fired into the cemetery, at the same time shouting to his men to charge the first house. In quick rushes a group crossed the road and entered the gate of the first house.



Private First Class Herbert H. Hirzel, Jr., the company radio operator received a burst of machine gun fire in the groin, hips and stomach, from dugouts on the far side of the road.

Sergeant Dean W. Barnette crawled to the side of Private First Class Hirzel and unstrapped the radio which was riddled and useless. As he started to drag the operator to the front door he, himself, received a burst of machine pistol bullets in the legs. Although wounded in six places, Sergeant Barnette continued to drag the stricken radio operator to the doorway when another burst of enemy fire sprayed his face, shoulder and arm. Still conscious, but completely dazed, the communications sergeant left the doorway and crawled to a haystack in the yard. As another soldier pulled Private First Class Hirzel inside the house, Sergeant Barnette, bleeding from nine wounds, recovered from his initial shock, ran towards the house and dived through a window.

Several minutes later Second Lieutenant Selvog, followed by about a dozen of his men dashed through a hail of fire and into the house. A search of the house uncovered three Germans who were attempting to hide. One was killed and the other two captured. Rallying about eight men, Second Lieutenant Selvog led them in an assault on a house about seventy-five yards to the right rear, located on the north-south highway and which was found to be empty.

After laying down covering Browning automatic rifle fire for his men, Captain Yates crossed the road and safely entered the first house where he established his command post.

The Germans north of the secondary road did not fire at every man who attempted to reach the cover of the Command Post. Some soldiers were permitted to enter the house without drawing fire. But most members of the company were subjected to terrific volleys. Six or seven were wounded near or in the doorway, on which the enemy had his guns sighted.

The rear elements of the company, particularly the Weapons Platoon and the machine gun platoon from Company "M" suffered severely from the enemy's mortar and artillery fire, and not any of them succeeded in reaching the cover of the house. A mortar gunner and a mortar ammunition bearer were each twice wounded by shell fragments before they managed to reach the Command Post with nothing but their personal arms. One heavy machine gunner and his assistant brought their weapon intact to the Command Post, but the ammunition bearers were unable to get through. Thus, except for a few Browning automatic rifles, no automatic weapons or mortars were available.

Private Ned Finch, a rifleman, voluntarily led four men forward under intense automatic fire in an attempt to seize the house on the southwest corner of the road junction and thus strengthen the company's hold on the town. Encountering a high wire fence, Private Finch placed his men in concealment and began cutting through the wire despite the aimed fire of one enemy machine gun and two machine pistols at 150 to 200 yards range. Although bullets tore his pack, he completed his task and led his men forward to a house 200 yards ahead of the main elements of his company. His party then inflicted seventeen casualties on the enemy, knocked out one machine gun, silenced a second and materially helped his company hold the town against the superior enemy force.

At the same time, Staff Sergeant Manuel N. Esparza organized a group of half a dozen men in the Command Post and led them in a dash for the house Lieutenant Selvog had seized shortly before. With his party, he

passed through this house and into another one joined to it by an archway. As the group assembled in a glass-enclosed porch at the rear of the house, they heard two Germans calling upon them to surrender. Upon investigation, Sergeant Esparza found the enemy in a hole dug beside the house and shot them both with his carbine.

The enemy opened up on these two houses from all sides with volleys of small arms fire. Every window pane in the two houses was shattered.

At about 1530 hours, enemy troops were discovered moving up toward the rear of the Command Post. Despite multiple wounds, Sergeant Barnette, who was armed with a .45 calibre pistol, and several riflemen left the Command Post and took up positions below an embankment to engage the Germans.

The enemy replied with intense artillery and mortar fire. Sergeant Barnette was wounded for the tenth and eleventh times by a shell fragment which hit him in the head.

Despite their overwhelming numerical and fire superiority, the enemy resorted to treachery. A squad of Germans, one of them holding up a Red Cross banner as a shield, approached the houses held by Lieutenant Selvog and Sergeant Esparza, and shouted, "Surrender!" Sergeant Andrew Letnianchyn, a German-speaking squad leader, called on the enemy force to capitulate. No sooner had he spoken than the Germans dropped to the ground and all opened fire with machine pistols. A few minutes later, under the cover of machine gun and shell fire, the enemy squad withdrew.

Shells set fire to the house occupied by Lieutenant Selvog, forcing him to move his men into an adjoining building. Under the intense and furious concentration of artillery fire, two more houses were set ablaze. Lieutenant Selvog led the occupants through enemy fire to the large house at the road junction which was undamaged. He attempted to contact the OP with his 536 radio, but failed. Posting men at the windows and doors, he organized an all-around defense.

Three men stationed in an upstairs room observed an 88mm gun barely 100 yards down the highway to the right and began sniping at the crew with their rifles. The crew quickly retaliated and was joined by another 88mm crew on the other side of the highway and at a greater range, which opened fire on the two houses. Two rounds from the nearer 88mm gun hit the large house squarely, wounding three of the men.

The Command Post bore the brunt of the enemy's mortar, artillery, and anti-tank fire. A man standing in the doorway of the house was knocked flat on his back by the concussion of an anti-tank shell that hit the side of the house. While the steel fragments of shells bursting near the Command Post pockmarked the building, direct hits pounded and rattled the house until it was a wreck. A 170mm shell tore through the roof and dropped into a hayloft less than ten feet from a rifleman. That round failed to explode, but six other shells completely demolished a porch and an attached shed, and blasted and shook the house with deafening power.

A wooden shack near the Command Post, in which Staff Sergeant Walter F. McCoy, Third Platoon Guide, and two other men were stationed, sustained a direct hit from a shell that blew it apart. Stunned by concussion, Sergeant McCoy led his men through enemy machine gun fire, which gashed his neck and shoulder, to the Command Post. Bleeding profusely, he nevertheless defended the Command Post with rifle fire against the savage enemy attacks.

Between the continual shellings, groups of enemy soldiers persistently attempted to infiltrate across the

road and assault the Command Post. Sergeant Grando and Private Virgil Wilson, a rifleman, who were stationed at an upstairs window, killed and wounded at least half a dozen of the enemy. Despite all their efforts, German assault elements crawled into the drainage ditch on the lower side of the road and hurled hand grenades at the house. The defenders fought back with hand grenades.

Men posted in the attic, at the back of the house, at the windows and near the doors, were continuously on the alert, keyed up for counter-attacks. There was not much ammunition available, and they had to fire sparingly and effectively.

Thwarted in his attempts to infiltrate up to the Command Post, the enemy attempted at about 1600 hours to set up machine guns across the secondary road scarcely seventy-five yards from the Command Post. Private First Class James H. Goldsmith, a rifleman in the First Platoon, made this a costly venture.

Posted in the attic of the large house at the road junction, Private First Class Goldsmith kept picking off with M-1 rifle fire the Germans attempting to set up the machine guns. He destroyed two crews, killing or wounding seven of the enemy. His deadly shooting drew return fire from enemy machine guns and machine pistols in positions farther back from the road. Despite bursts of fire coming through the window at which he stood, Private First Class Goldsmith remained steadfast until several bullets wounded him fatally in the groin.

At about 1930 hours, following an intensive artillery and mortar preparation, approximately one hundred enemy soldiers launched a counter-attack under savage covering fire from numerous automatic weapons. The assaulting troops, heavily armed with machine pistols, threw the greatest weight of their attack against the house occupied by Lieutenant Selvog's small group.

Some enemy elements gained the drainage ditch running along the lower edge of the secondary road, while other Germans opened fire from behind a cement wall a short distance to the rear of the Command Post. The enemy also set up a machine gun in the gate of the cemetery and directed point-blank fire at the Command Post across the road.

Hand grenades thrown down into the drainage ditch and at the cement wall prevented the Germans from pressing closer. Every man who could fire a weapon took part in repelling the attack. Captain Yates, after checking his positions on the lower floor of the Command Post, climbed up to the hayloft and joined in the struggle, firing a borrowed rifle. Here he received frequent reports from Private First Class James L. Ruggiero, an ammunition bearer, as he moved fearlessly in and out of the house, checking on positions.

The all around defense was so unyielding that the enemy withdrew after a half hour fire fight, suffering approximately ten casualties.

Upon reorganizing, the men in the Command Post divided rifle ammunition equally. There was an average of two and a half clips per man. When a call was made for grenades, no one responded as there were none left.

The company was dispersed, some elements had lost contact with the Command Post, the wounded were in imperative need of medical treatment. His ammunition almost spent, Captain Yates called for a volunteer patrol to attempt to contact the Battalion headquarters. (On three separate occasions, the Battalion sent out combat patrols to establish contact with Company "L". Despite determined efforts to get through, these patrols were stopped and beaten back by a withering hail of enemy

fire. It was assumed that Company "L" had been surrounded and wiped out.)

Private Bennett A. Walker and two other men volunteered to contact Battalion. As Private Walker stepped out of the rear door of the house, he was greeted with a blast of small arms fire that made him recoil back into the doorway. Captain Yates instructed him to wait until dark. At dusk, he and his men left the Command Post, rushed through the fire of at least four automatic weapons and made their way across open terrain. In the vanishing light, the patrol lost its way to the Battalion, but made contact with Regiment.

But reinforcements did not arrive. Company "I" on the right was suffering heavy casualties and was fighting for survival. Company "K" was committed in a wide flanking movement that carried it to high ground slightly west of Vy-les-Lure early the following morning.

Sergeant Esparza observed a small group of Americans walking down the secondary road. He called out, directing them to the Command Post. The soldiers heard him, but they waved him back urgently from the open Command Post window where he was standing. He then noticed that they were bare headed, that there were walking enemy wounded with them, and that several Germans, armed with automatic weapons, were bringing up the rear. No one in the Command Post dared fire at the guards for fear of reprisals against the prisoners.

This group was also observed by Sergeant Andrew Letnianchyn from the other house. Although completely out of ammunition, he left the building to rescue the prisoners. As he rounded a corner of the house, a large group of Germans jumped on him and took him prisoner.

At about 2100 hours, the enemy once more laid down severe mortar and artillery concentrations on the two houses held by Company "L", rocking both to their foundations. Two prisoners in the Command Post begged their captors to surrender, declaring that otherwise all would be killed. But the men of Company "L" had no thought of surrender or of abandoning their desperate positions.

Several minutes later the enemy launched another counter-attack. It was almost completely dark. At short distances, the silhouettes of advancing Germans could be distinguished, but that was the limit of visibility. While part of the enemy forces attacked frontally, another element swept around to the left of the Command Post, across the road and into the open field to its rear.

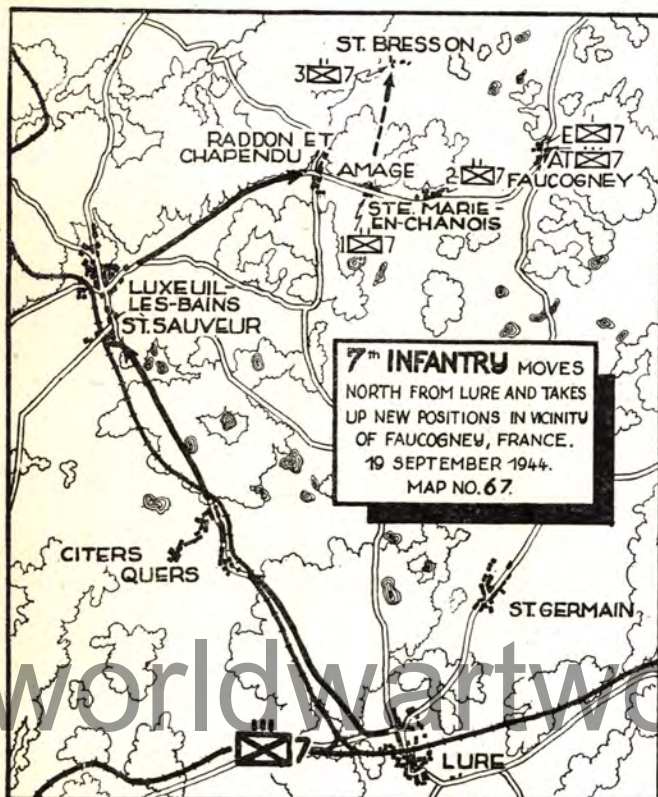
In the deep twilight, the size of the enemy force could not be determined. Judging by the volume of fire, it must have been at least as strong as the previous one. Volleys crackled into the two houses from every direction. Tracers streaked and crossed through the darkness. Rifle grenades and bazooka rockets bored into the houses occupied by the Command Post and Lieutenant Selvog's group.

In these houses, the mixed elements of the company fought desperately, knowing that it would be almost impossible to hold out against an extended attack. Riflemen and machine gunners, mortarmen and the wounded, fought back with M-1s, carbines and pistols, firing carefully in order not to waste a single shot. The ammunition supply of Lieutenant Selvog's force was no larger than that of the Command Post group. The men were instructed to conserve every round.

The right wing of the enemy counter-attack overran scattered elements of the company lying in the ditches along the secondary road and in the open fields beyond. A number of men, several of them wounded, were taken

prisoners, despite desperate attempts by their comrades to hold the Germans back. The impact of the enemy's envelopment was too great for these small groups of men who had already been subjected to artillery, 88mm, mortar, grenade and small arms fire for more than seven hours in open positions without adequate cover.

Again the enemy reached the drainage ditch on the lower side of the secondary road, but he could advance no further. The defenders beat the Germans back with well aimed volleys. After about ten minutes of heavy pressure, the enemy began to withdraw.



Approximately half an hour later, the enemy gathered his forces for a last, desperate attack and surged forward to overrun and destroy the remnants of Company "L". As the fanatical German force advanced, round after round of friendly artillery fire pounded the area. Shells burst within ten feet of the Command Post, their concussion shaking the earth. The German assault force almost reached its goal only to be cut to pieces by this withering concentration of fire. Thirteen Germans, all of them clutching hand grenades, lay dead when the massed artillery fire ceased. Some of these Germans were within twenty feet of the Command Post.

Approximately four hours later, at 0150 hours, a patrol from Company "K" and the Battle Patrol, Seventh Infantry, broke through the enemy cordon and reached the Command Post of the surrounded company. Although many of the men were completely out of ammunition and the rest averaged a rifle clip each, Company "L" had held on grimly to the toe-hold of Vy-les-Lure which had been won at such a heavy cost in blood. The weary, gallant men of the company remained on the alert all night, their bayonets fixed, waiting for another counter-attack which the defeated enemy was too weak to deliver.

Throughout the night, members of the company and the attached machine gun platoon, who had been unable to reach the Command Post by daylight, drifted in singly or in small groups. Every effort was made during the night to keep the wounded alive. Every available first aid packet was used to staunch the bleeding of a dozen

men, and every drop of water was given them. Men ventured outside, fully cognizant of the danger, in order to procure abandoned blankets for the wounded. But elementary first aid was not enough. Four men died during the long night.

Shortly after dawn, a patrol sent out by Captain Yates reported that the enemy had withdrawn completely from Vy-les-Lure.

Company "L" had withstood determined and repeated attacks for seven hours by a fanatical and well-armed enemy, which outnumbered the company three to one. Killing 18, capturing two and wounding an estimated 70 Germans, the men of Company "L" repelled and routed the enemy, driving him from a position which he had been determined to hold at all costs.

Company "L" went into the engagement with four officers and 121 enlisted men, and had attached 29 enlisted men from Company "M" under Technical Sergeant Edward P. Walsh, Jr. Losses sustained were seven killed, 16 missing and 14 wounded in the action.

For its outstanding performance at Vy-les-Lure Company "L" received the Presidential Unit Citation.⁴⁵

Enemy mines and road blocks disabled a tank and jeep that day injuring two persons. The Third Battalion reorganized at 0150 on 16 September and the remaining forces of the Third Battalion entered Vy-les-Lure at 0900.

The Second Battalion meanwhile was engaged in a fight around Hill 383 as patrols reported enemy in strength in Gouhenans. Blocks were established. During the night Company "A" of the 30th Infantry was contacted. At 0635 Company "G" advanced and entered Gouhenans.

At 0715 the Red Battalion continued its advance to the east from La Grange du Veau as the Commanding General ordered the Regiment to maneuver into position for an attack on Lure. The Seventh Infantry was assigned the section of the town south of the railroad tracks while the 15th Infantry on the left was assigned the northern half. At 1350, 16 September the Red Battalion continued the advance against extremely heavy artillery fire which increased when the battalion entered the southern part of Lure and cleared it. Companies "A" and "C" attacked the road junction to the east encountering resistance.⁴⁶

The area around Vy-les-Lure was heavily mined and numerous enemy roadblocks, consisting of fallen trees, were booby-trapped. An anti-tank mine platoon removed mines and road obstacles. After the Third Battalion entered Vy-les-Lure in force 16 September it pushed on northeast to Vouhenans.

Company "A" moved to the north edge of Lure at 0240, 17 September and prepared to establish a road block after the 15th Infantry passed through. Companies "B" and "C" also blocked. The Red Battalion sent Company "C" after the road junction east from Lure at the junction of the 15 and 06 grid lines. The junction was occupied at 0600, 18 September, when the Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol passed through and found the town of Roye clear of enemy.

The Second Battalion was relieved in the vicinity of Les Aynans at 0835, 18 September 1944, and moved to assembly areas in the vicinity of Vy-les-Lure. The

⁴⁵ GOs No. 152, 199, 208, 215, 233 & 326, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 27 Sept., 4, 8, & 17 Oct. '44, 4 May & 5 Sept. '45. Capt. Yates, Pvt. Finch & S/Sgt. Esparaza, Co. "L"; Sgts. G. P. Grabner & D. C. Jividen, Co. "I"; & Pfc L. S. Fajkowski, Co. "M", were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁶ See GO No. 35, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 4 Feb. '45. Sgt. J. G. Balkovitz was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

Blue Battalion remained in the vicinity of Vouhenans during the day and sent patrols to Moffans. At the close of 18 September 1944 the Red Battalion assembled in the vicinity of Magny-Vernois.

On 19 September 1944 the Regiment was relieved of positions by elements of the First French Armored Division and moved by vehicle through Luxeuil-les-Bains to the vicinity of Raddon-et-Chapeneu where the Regimental Command Post was set up. The Second Battalion relieved elements of the 142nd Infantry in the vicinity of Ste Marie-en-Chanois while the Third Battalion relieved elements of the same regiment in the vicinity of St. Bresson. During the night Company "E" and a platoon of Anti-Tank Company moved to the vicinity of Faucogney. The First Battalion assembled in the vicinity of Amage.

the next morning attacked to the northeast for Hill 373, as the White and Blue Battalions continued their attacks.

The Red troops encountered strong resistance in the vicinity of Hill 753 and did not overcome it until on the 22nd when the battalion began advancing on the fort to the northeast.

During the period 20-30 September 1944 weather was inclement each day. The heavy rains increased the hardships of the men.⁴⁸

The White Battalion seized La Longine without any trouble. "George" Company then moved north for Hill 753 as "Fox" Company moved north along the highway.

The advance of the Blue Battalion was halted in the vicinity of Le Martenot due to heavy small arms,



"Cotton Balers" march through Faucogney, France.

SEVENTH INFANTRY ATTACKS TO THE NORTHEAST 20 SEPTEMBER 1944

At 0630, 20 September 1944 the Seventh Infantry attacked northeast with the Second and Third Battalions, reinforced, on the line. Company "E" advanced along the highway northeast from Faucogney. Both battalions advanced against scattered enemy small arms and mortar fire on the first day but on the second day of the attack resistance became stronger with heavy concentra-

machine gun and mortar fire. Constant contact with the enemy was maintained and numerous attempts to infiltrate and penetrate his lines failed. All three battalions pressed their advances 22-23 September 1944 and defeated stubborn enemy resistance.

The White Battalion advanced slowly through Corravillers-le-Plain encountering enemy small arms fire and some artillery.

The Blue Battalion consolidated its positions on 23 September 1944 and the Third Battalion, 15th Infantry, became attached to the Regiment, late in the day, to protect the right flank.



Capt. Tyler Campbell, Co. "A", and 1 Lt. Leonard Buschel, Co. "L", were killed in action on 21 September 1944.

SEVENTH INFANTRY FIGHTS ITS WAY ACROSS LA MOSELLE RIVER 24 SEPTEMBER 1944

By its continuous drive the gallant Seventh Infantry reached another river in France, the night of 23-24 September 1944. This time it was La Moselle and the enemy hoped to destroy all bridges over it and use it as

tions of artillery received.

The Second Battalion took Hill 59 with "Easy" Company seizing Effrency and "Fox" Company taking La Rochette.⁴⁷ The Blue Battalion advanced across country.

The night of 20 September 1944 the Red Battalion moved to an assembly area about Effrency and at 0630

⁴⁷ See GO No. 262, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 18 July '45. Pfc Harry E. Frank was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁴⁸ See GOs No. 35, 47, 59, 208 & 219, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 10 Oct. '44 & 4, 12 & 23 Feb., & 12 June '45. Capt. R. D. Marsh, 2 Bn Hq Co., S/Sgts. F. W. Clark & M. A. Pyatt, Co. "A", & Pvt. E. W. Pixley, M.D., were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

holding line but the Seventh Infantry, driving without let-up, seized two bridges before the enemy could blow them and fought its way across.

At 0110, 24 September 1944, Company "B", under the command of First Lieutenant William K. Dieleman, secured a bridge at Rupt-sur-Moselle and defeated numerous enemy attempts to destroy it. The bridge had been prepared for demolition with nineteen cases of TNT but the "Baker" Company boys had struck so swiftly that the Germans, whose assignment it was to blow the bridge, were never able to accomplish their mission. A strong enemy force attempted to retake the bridge but was repulsed by the "Baker" Company "Cotton Balers."

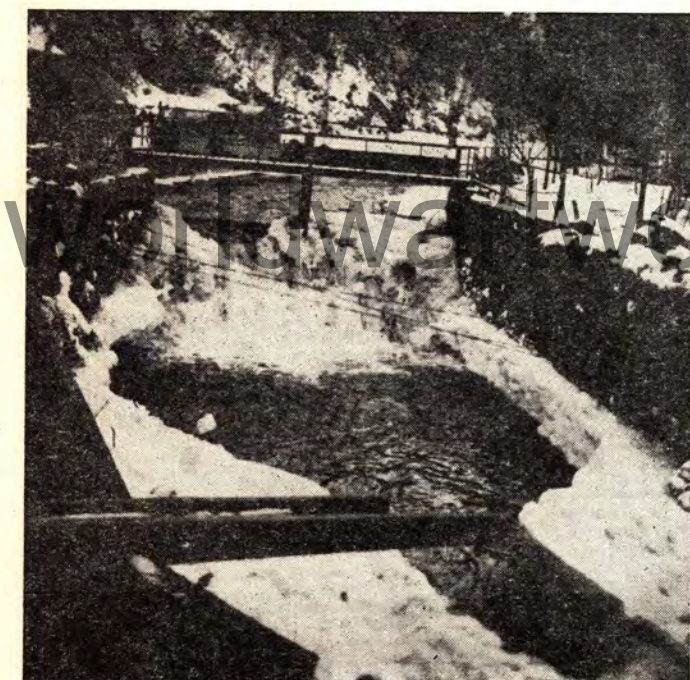
At 0445 the entire First Battalion crossed the Moselle by the bridge secured by Company "B" and engaged enemy in a heavy fire fight in Rupt-sur-Moselle. Private Jakob L. Beber of Company "D" displayed gallantry.⁴⁹

About one mile north of Rupt-sur-Moselle, at Maxonchamp, was a small, open, iron bridge, barely wide enough for a jeep to pass over. It was about sixty feet in length and exposed along its entire length to intense enemy machine gun and sniper fire.

Company "K", under the command of First Lieutenant George W. Lauderdale, drove on for the bridge.

While one officer misbehaved before the enemy at Maxonchamp, another and an enlisted man performed gallantly, effected the seizure of the bridge and led Com-

pany "K" over La Moselle. After three men had become casualties from the enemy fire across the river, First Lieutenant Lauderdale called for volunteers to follow him over the bridge. Four men responded and followed their commanding officer as he dashed over the bridge. On the other side First Lieutenant Lauderdale called back to another officer to lead his platoon across, but the platoon leader refused.



After the fighting had passed in Rupt-sur-Moselle some members of the Regiment received soup from French nuns.

pany "K" over La Moselle. After three men had become casualties from the enemy fire across the river, First Lieutenant Lauderdale called for volunteers to follow him over the bridge. Four men responded and followed their commanding officer as he dashed over the bridge. On the other side First Lieutenant Lauderdale called back to another officer to lead his platoon across, but the platoon leader refused.

that act, he was killed by enemy machine gun fire. The intrepid actions of Technical Sergeant Jones and First Lieutenant Lauderdale resulted in the establishment of a firm bridgehead over La Moselle and enabled



Two views of the bridge at Maxonchamp, France.

pany "K" over La Moselle. After three men had become casualties from the enemy fire across the river, First Lieutenant Lauderdale called for volunteers to follow him over the bridge. Four men responded and followed their commanding officer as he dashed over the bridge. On the other side First Lieutenant Lauderdale called back to another officer to lead his platoon across, but the platoon leader refused.

Technical Sergeant Leonard A. Jones then re-crossed the open bridge amid the enemy machine gun and sniper fire at ranges of 30 to 150 yards, to persuade the rest of the company to make the hazardous crossing. His fearless action made the men forget their fear and to follow him over the bridge to establish themselves on the far side of La Moselle. Having accomplished that important

the remainder of the Blue Battalion to cross and continue its mission.⁵⁰

The Red Battalion cleared Rupt-sur-Moselle of enemy and continued the attack for Hill 867, which was reported captured by "Able" Company at 1700, 24 September but the report was false. "Baker" Company moved southeast along the river toward La Roche and established blocks.

⁴⁹ GO No. 316, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 1 Sept. '45. Pvt. Beber was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

⁵⁰ GOs No. 290 & 11, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 14 Dec. '44 & 11 Jan. '45. T/Sgt. Jones (posthumously) & 1 Lt. Lauderdale were each awarded the Silver Star Medal. The disgraced officer departed from the Seventh Infantry.

Meanwhile the White Battalion combatted stubborn enemy resistance in its drive for La Moselle. A coordinated Infantry-tank attack drove the enemy from his positions and the battalion advanced to the river. At 0125, 25 September the White, or Second, Battalion assembled north of the river.

7th INFANTRY ADVANCES NORTH AND SOUTH ALONG LA MOSELLE—COMPANY "F" WINS PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION AS SECOND BATTALION REPULSES STRONG COUNTER-ATTACKS 25-30 SEPTEMBER 1944

At 0630, 25 September 1944, both the Third and Second Battalions launched attacks. The Blue forces attacked to the north along La Moselle and encountered enemy small arms and machine gun fire. At 1125 Hiele and Vecoux were taken. At 1340 forward elements of Company "K" defeated small groups of enemy and had advanced to Dommartin-les-Remiremont. At 1445 Company "I" seized Hill 722. One patrol contacted elements of the 36th Infantry Division near Remiremont.

The White Battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Clayton C. Thobro, attacked southeast parallel to La Moselle river. For the next few days the battalion, in continuous rain and fog, which prevented support from the air arm and attached armor, with green and untried men, engaged in very hard fighting and beat back strong enemy counter-attacks, to capture its objectives. Company "F" fought brilliantly while the great leader of the battalion displayed extraordinary heroism in leading his troops during the action of those days.

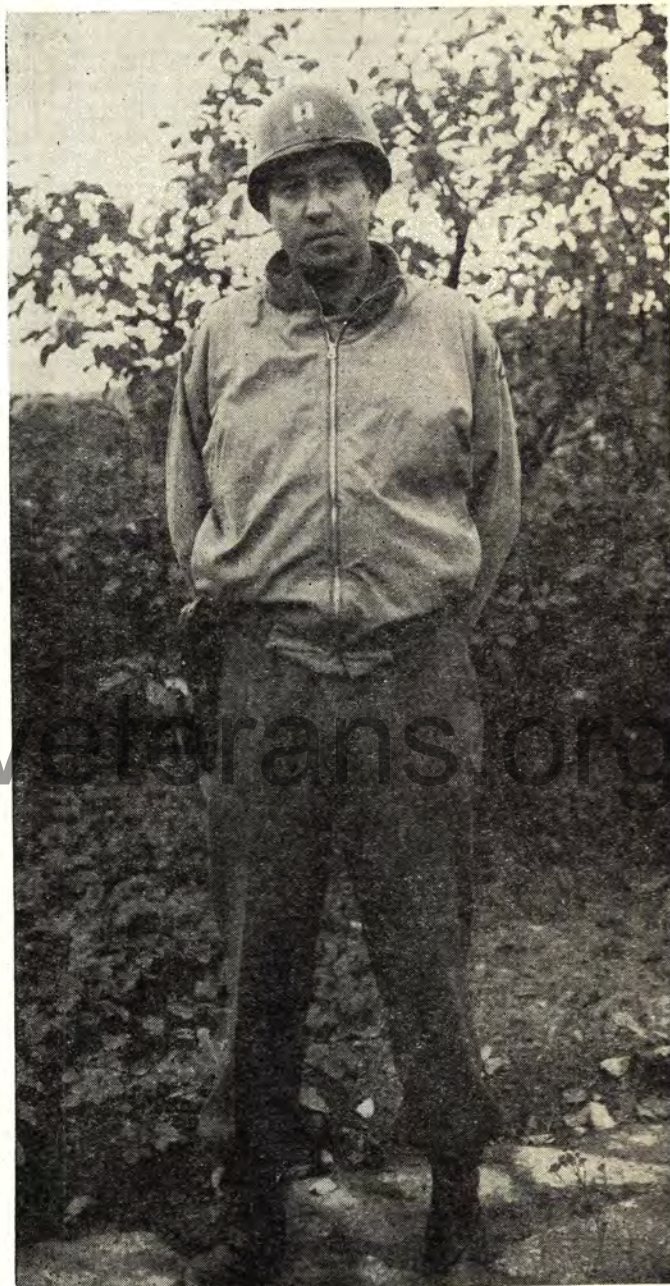
Almost immediately after the jump-off the White Battalion was stopped by heavy enemy machine gun, mortar and small arms fire from enemy dug-in positions on Hills 867, and 868 north of the highway. Before the advance could be continued the enemy on the hills had to be removed.

The Second Battalion attacked in a column of companies over the muddy, cleared ground toward the wooded slopes of Hill 867 through heavy concentrations of 150mm fire. Entering the woods, the troops were obliged to inch forward through thick underbush into a dense pine forest where many enemy elements lay concealed and waiting. The ground was too soft for tank support and the rain and fog made artillery and aerial observation ineffective.

Lieutenant Colonel Thobro immediately joined the forward elements in order to press the attack. Although everyone else was lying flat on the ground, taking whatever cover was available, the Second Battalion leader walked fearlessly from man to man directing fire and helping the new replacements to overcome their fear. Machine gun bullets, fired from approximately one hundred yards, barely missed. Shells with point detonating fuzes exploded on contact with tree branches and caused heavy casualties. When darkness finally came the assault companies were able to dig in on the lower slopes of Hill 867.

On the morning of 26 September 1944 the slow, upward advance was resumed through the fog and cold rain. Lieutenant Colonel Thobro remained with his forward companies, deliberately choosing the most exposed positions and inspiring the men with his scorn of danger. The woods were becoming denser, enabling the enemy to fire his machine guns, automatic pistols and rifles from concealment at distances of 30 to 50 yards. Due to the extremely close range, the Germans were unable to continue shelling the assault companies with artillery.

In the final stages of the attack on Hill 867, the men were obliged to proceed single file over the crest, which was swept by fierce enemy fire. When a platoon of Company "F" was halted by fire from two machine guns only 50 yards distant, Lieutenant Colonel Thobro ran forward through sniper fire to the platoon and standing behind a four-foot embankment, directed artillery and mortar fire on the enemy for forty-five minutes with devastating effect. Having paved the way with the bar-



The veteran Captain Edgar H. Poinsett commanded Company "G" during the Anzio Beachhead fighting and through the Southern France campaign.

rages, he directed the assault elements in a final attack on the hill, which knocked out two machine guns, killed thirty of the enemy and gained undisputed possession of the entire crest.

With Hill 867 firmly in the possession of his battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Thobro ordered "George" Company, still under the command of Captain Edgar H. Poinsett, to descend its eastern slope, cross a north-south road and assault the neighboring Hill 868 as possession

of the two hills would ensure command of the disputed stretch of La Moselle River Valley and the town of Ferdrupt.

As "George" Company went down into the valley between the two hills, Lieutenant Colonel Thobro took six men with him to a position approximately 75 yards beyond the crest of the Hill 867, where he could observe the progress of the assault on Hill 868.

About one hour later as the battalion commander observed the progress of Company "G", much shouting and yelling from the left flank of the battalion's position could be heard. It was the beginning of an attack by about two hundred fifty Germans to regain Hill 867 and cut off Company "G". Machine gun fire traversed the area around where Lieutenant Colonel Thobro stood and mortar shells began exploding in the area. An officer suggested to the battalion commander that he withdraw or take cover, but preoccupied with the progress of Company "G" on Hill 868, he refused.

Soon wounded and withdrawing soldiers singly, or dragging other wounded, began streaming by the commander's position, trying to regain safety behind the crest of the hill. Lieutenant Colonel Thobro received the report that the platoons on the left flank of the battalion were being overwhelmed by the German counter-attack in great strength and that all but a 60mm mortar squad had been killed, wounded or dispersed, and the mortar squad was then in the progress of withdrawing in pairs.

Realizing that the whole flank was crumbling, Lieutenant Colonel Thobro directed that the reserve company send two platoons to the crest of Hill 867 to fight the enemy. The battalion commander then started toward the northern crest of Hill 867 and encountered men running from the scene of battle in disorder. He pulled his .45 automatic pistol and threatened to shoot any who retreated further, saying: "Now, God damn it, this is as far as you go."

By brandishing his pistol Lieutenant Colonel Thobro was able to get several men back in the fight. He placed them in position behind the ridge and ordered them to stay there and beat off the attack. At that time all hell let loose as the nearest enemy groups were from 30 to 35 yards away throwing everything they had at the White Battalion troops. Lieutenant Colonel Thobro remained standing through it all as his troops took advantage of whatever cover there was available and returned fire. A steady stream of automatic fire grazed the slope of the hill and a man close to the Lieutenant Colonel was killed by the fire, as another nearby was killed by a mortar shell. As the enemy advanced relentlessly Lieutenant Colonel Thobro moved from man to man, walking up and down the firing line without the slightest cover. He ordered the heavy mortars of Company "H" set up right on the crest of Hill 867 and fired at a maximum elevation. As a large number of advancing Germans were within 100 yards of the positions, the 81mm mortar rounds exploded behind and around them causing much confusion.

At a crucial time two platoons of riflemen from the reserve company reinforced the force on Hill 867 and in a savage fight the German attack was beaten off. As the enemy withdrew Lieutenant Colonel Thobro ordered a counter-attack which was successful and resulted in the capture of several of the enemy including an officer.

Meanwhile Company "G" completed its mission and captured Hill 868. Bitter fighting ensued around Hill 867 until the 28th when the enemy was completely overcome. The battalion resumed the attack from Hill 868 at 0730, 28 September and again became engaged in heavy fighting, but the town was completely in hand

by mid-afternoon. A heavy amount of enemy artillery fire harassed the battalion throughout the remainder of the day and Company "F" once again repelled a counter-attack. Company "G" moved through Ferdrupt to a position about 500 yards to the east in spite of enemy ambushing tactics in the woods.

While the Second Battalion was attacking for Ferdrupt, 25-28 September 1944, the First Battalion cleared Rupt-sur-Moselle, advanced toward La Moselotte River, and protected the left flank of the Second Battalion. One platoon of Company "A" advanced toward Thiefosse on the 26th and sought to fire artillery on the main highway from Vagney to Saulxures-sur-Moselotte but poor visibility prevented accomplishment of the mission. On 27-28 September Companies "A" and "B" supported the advance of the Second Battalion.



Capt. C. Henry Goulette, A.T. Co., and 1 Lt. Paul J. Tron, Co. "A", were killed in action on 30 September and 1 October 1944.

On the 27th while supporting the advance of the Second Battalion Company "A" received the full shock of an enemy counter-attack and two of its members displayed unusual heroism. When the company fell back under the impact of the formidable and unexpected German onslaught Private First Class James M. Haught set up his machine gun and singlehandedly engaged the foe in his sector to prevent a German breakthrough. While disorganization spread among the withdrawing elements, Private First Class Haught withstood a continuous chain of automatic fire at a range of thirty yards, killed seven Germans and, although assaulted from both front and flanks, remained at his post until he was killed.

When his isolated mortar section was attacked by a German company, Staff Sergeant Virgil D. Fisher engaged the numerically superior enemy with M-1 rifle fire to cover the withdrawal of his men. Though two men were killed by his side and bullets chipped the rocks beside him, he fought on practically singlehandedly repelling every enemy assault, killing nine and wounding twelve of the enemy.

The extraordinary heroism of Private First Class Haught and Staff Sergeant Fisher held the Germans at bay until Company "A" was able to re-organize and, with re-inforcements, shatter the enemy counter-attacking force.

Company "C" advanced through the Foret de Longe-goutte for La Moselotte River and Company "B" moved abreast of "C" on the 29th.

During the period the Third Battalion continued to clear its sector. Company "L" remained in Vecoux as Companies "I" and "K" cleared Franould and the woods between La Moselle and La Moselotte rivers, southeast of where they join. Enemy small arms, mortar, artillery and flak wagon fire were encountered. On the 27th a patrol of Company "K" directed artillery on Vagney across La Moselotte. Aggressive patrols were maintained on the 28th as the Blue Battalion remained in position.

During the period 29 September-1 October 1944 the Regiment for the most part remained in position between La Moselle and La Moselotte rivers, but was in continuous contact with the enemy. Heavy artillery concentrations fell on Ferdrupt and Company "F" again repelled an enemy counter-attack.

For outstanding fighting performances during those last days of September 1944 Company "F" was cited by the President of the United States and all its surviving members were later authorized to wear the Distinguished Unit Badge. The extraordinary heroism displayed by Private First Class Haight, Lieutenant Colonel Thobro and Staff Sergeant Fisher merited an award to each of the Distinguished Service Cross (posthumous award to Pfc. Haight).⁵¹ Several others had performed gallantly.⁵²

The re-inforced Regiment continued to hold and clear its sector of enemy resistance on 1-2 October 1944. An ammunition jeep belonging to the Second Battalion was ambushed by the enemy and destroyed, with two men being killed.

While the Third Battalion (re-inforced) remained in position conducting active patrols and screening missions to the front, the Second and First Battalions withdrew from their positions during the nights of 2-3 and 3-4 October 1944, assembled in the vicinity of Rupt-sur-Moselle and moved by vehicle to the vicinity of St. Ame, France. Both battalions then conducted reconnaissance and formulated plans for an attack toward Vagney from the northwest, in conjunction with an attack by the Third Battalion from the west. The First French Armored Division came up on the right of the Regiment, while the 15th Infantry took up positions on the left.

On one occasion Private First Class Harold L. Blackman, a Browning automatic rifleman of Company "A", abandoned a position of cover and surprised a group of twelve enemy soldiers who were armed with machine guns and machine pistols and planned to establish a road block. In a brief fire fight he killed six and captured four of the enemy. Staff Sergeant Hugh A. Lilevjen of Cannon Company and Private First Class Albert J. Marchunsky of Company "D" eliminated enemy weapons and captured German soldiers.⁵³

7th INFANTRY CAPTURES VAGNEY AND SAPOIS—4-11 OCTOBER 1944

In the afternoon of 4 October 1944, the Second Battalion moved to a position northeast of Le Syndicat and east from Bemont and at 1705 opened the attack for Vagney by moving northeast for Hill 828, which was seized fifty minutes later against small arms and machine gun fire. Eleven enemy were taken prisoners. At 1905 Companies "E" and "F" received heavy artillery fire and then were harassed throughout the night by the enemy artillery.

At 0415, 5 October the enemy attacked Companies "E" and "F" and an all-morning battle ensued as the Germans tried to retake the hill, but to no avail.

The Red Battalion moved from St. Ame through the woods to the right flank of the White Battalion during the morning of the 5th and at 1330 launched an attack through the woods due east, and in turn repulsed a counter-attack.

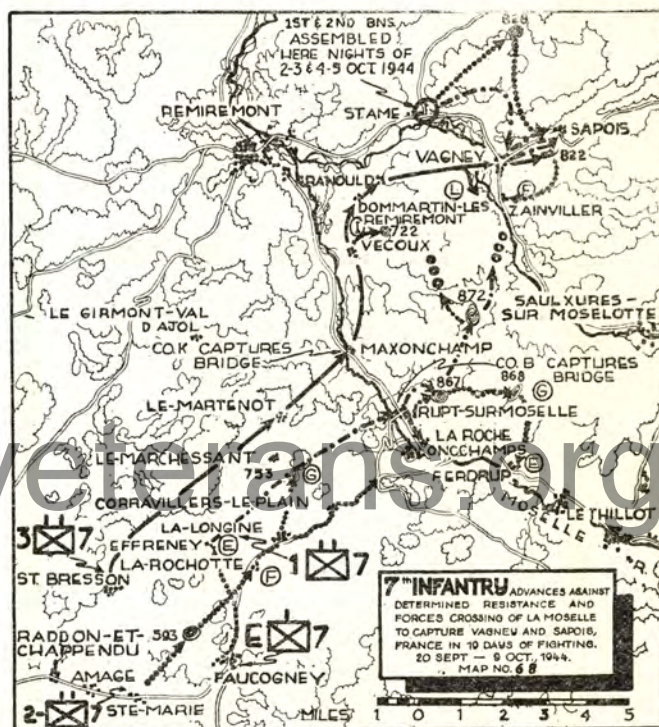
At 2017 the Second Battalion left Company "E" on Hill 828 and moved south behind the First Battalion. Company "E" also left the hill at 0205, 6 October and rejoined its battalion. The Second Battalion followed the First until 1020, 6 October, when it pulled up on the right flank and the two battalions attacked together towards Cremanviller.

The Third Battalion had remained in position conducting vigorous patrols until 0400, 6 October, when it too attacked toward Vagney, but from the west. Company "K" crossed La Moselotte against little opposition two hours later. Three houses were seized on the edge of Vagney and resistance became stronger as an enemy

self-propelled gun began firing down the street and our artillery took it under fire. Company "I" following "K", was delayed from crossing the river, by intense enemy flak wagon fire. "Item" Company did not completely cross the river until 1840 that day as the enemy fire was continuous and very heavy. "King" Company repulsed an enemy counter-attack supported by tanks in the meantime, and fought a house to house battle with the enemy.

The First and Second Battalions moved rapidly during the initial stages of their attack and captured Cremanviller and Hill 822 but were slowed by intense enemy mortar, artillery, machine gun and small arms fire when they approached the Vagney-Sapois road.

The units remained in contact with the enemy during the night of 6-7 October and early on the 7th continued the attack. Companies "I" and "K" fought to gain control of Vagney, which was accomplished before noon-time. Company "L" proceeded southeast along the west side of La Moselotte to seize the bridge at Zainvillers.



The Red and White Battalions cut the Vagney-Sapois road against strong resistance as the White Battalion sped on southeast from Hill 822 for the high ground east of Zainvillers. The Red Battalion sent Company "A" east of Vagney on the south side of the road while Company "C" and a platoon of Company "B" moved east, on the north of the road, to Hills 692 and 760. The remainder of Company "B" went into position at the edge of Vagney where the First Battalion set up its command post.

⁵¹ For authority see GOs 24, 176 and 181, Hq. 7th Army, 29 Jan., 6 and 7 May 1945.

⁵² See GOs No. 11, 13, 22, 59, 70, 145, 175, 226 & 256, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 11, 13, 22 Jan., 23 & 26 Feb., 29 Apr., 24 May, 24 June & 15 July '45. 1 Sgt. G. O. Lindert, Sgt. E. R. Rothermund (posthumously), Pfc. S. F. Bieslada, R. D. Easter & G. R. Orr, Co. "F", P. P. Guanci & Pvt. N. J. Frega, Co. "H"; S/Sgt. C. K. Seifarth, B.P.; Pfc. W. Frecentese, M.D.; 1 Lt. F. J. Nisi, 2 Bn Hq Co.; & 2 Lt. J. P. McConnell, 1 Bn Hq Co., were each awarded the Silver Star Medal. Pfc. J. H. Zawacki, Co. "C", was awarded the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal.

⁵³ GOs No. 40, 235 & 294, HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 20 Dec. '44 & 9 Feb. & 29 June '45. S/Sgt. Lilevjen, Pfc. Blackman & Marchunsky were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

When his unit of Company "B" was temporarily halted near Vagney, Private First Class Walter E. Halley voluntarily advanced eighty yards through blistering machine gun cross-fire to kill a two-man crew with hand grenades. He then shot two support riflemen and crawled fifteen yards toward a second enemy machine gun, then jumped to his feet and silenced the enemy weapon with "Tommy Gun" fire. By his fearless assault he destroyed two enemy machine guns, killed five and wounded one of the enemy, and disorganized German resistance in his unit's sector. For his extraordinary heroism Private First Class Halley was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.⁵⁴

Following the capture of Vagney, Company "K" sped east for Hill 822 as Company "I" moved to the south edge of Vagney and "L" Company still remained on the west side of La Mosellotte opposite Zainvillers. The Regimental Battle Patrol moved southeast along La Mosellotte on the east side of the river for Zainvillers and closed in on the town as a platoon of Company "E" came in from the Second Battalion positions to the east.

Vagney had been a hard town to take and as it turned out was still a hot spot. While the fighting was still in progress and enemy shell fire dropped in the area the Regimental Command Post displaced into the northern section of the town. Colonel Ben Harrell, who was known to keep his command post farther forward than



"Cotton Balers" cross over a destroyed bridge in Vagney, France.

any other regimental commander in the Third Division, deliberately sacrificed the security of his War Room to remain in constant contact and control of the combat units. The command posts of the First and Third Battalions were also located in Vagney.

At about 1600 hours, thirty enemy riflemen and a flakwagon were spotted firing on the command post and the town of Vagney. A tank destroyer of the 601st

Tank Destroyer Battalion was quickly brought to the side of the building, which housed the War Room and an observation post was established on the second floor of the building. Members of the command post gave fire orders to the tank destroyer, which fired seventeen rounds. Not a shot was wasted. The house, beside which the flak wagon was seen to have taken cover, was demolished and when the smoke cleared, not a German could be seen and it could definitely be said that the Nazi lost another flak wagon and several more of their men.



Aid men remove the body of a tankman of the 756th Battalion from a knocked-out tank in Vagney.

In the late afternoon and hours of darkness on 7 October the enemy threw powerful attacks at Vagney and all the battalions of the Regiment. Weather conditions conspired to help the enemy with fog and the blackness of the night.

The right flank of Company "I" was penetrated and an enemy force broke through between Company "E" and other Second Battalion elements. Two enemy tanks penetrated the Third Battalion's positions and approached the vicinity of the Third Battalion Command Post. Efforts to destroy them proved unsuccessful.



Vagney, France, as seen from the air in October 1944.

An enemy tank supported by riflemen succeeded in entering Vagney at 2022 and caused much havoc and alarm. As the enemy tank boldly entered the town by the road from Sapois many of the First Battalion forces paid no heed as they thought it a friendly tank withdrawing. However when the tank began shooting up the First Battalion Command Post with direct fire there was no mistake as to its true identity. A direct hit was scored on the Red Battalion Headquarters destroying the switchboard and causing casualties.

⁵⁴ For authority see GO 585, Hq. 7th Army, WMD, 6 Oct. 1945.

A supporting tank platoon of the 756th Tank Battalion was in Vagney at the time. Second Lieutenant James L. Harris, in command of the friendly tanks, went forward to investigate the shooting. Machine guns mounted on the enemy tank began spouting lead and the first burst caught Second Lieutenant Harris squarely, knocked him to the ground and killed another man. The Lieutenant then displayed extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty by crawling back thirty yards through the hail of enemy fire and ordered his first tank to move into a firing position into a covered archway, but before the friendly tank could go into action direct hits from the enemy tank set it aflame. As all the First Battalion elements were alerted and assisted in repelling the attack, fierce fighting ensued. At 2250 the attack on Vagney was repulsed.

Medical personnel attached to the First Battalion rushed to the aid of the wounded tankers of the 756th Tank Battalion but Second Lieutenant Harris refused attention until the sole survivor of his tank crew had received aid. "After I had evacuated the enlisted men I returned to help Lieutenant Harris," said medic, Private Burton B. Roberts. "He asked me if I had taken care of his men and I told him I had. He seemed relieved. He told me he was done for and I saw that his right leg had been cut off at the crotch, apparently by the flying pieces of armor plate from his tank. He was in bad shape. I don't see how he lived as long as he did."

Colonel Ben Harrell later paid tribute to the dead tanker who had sacrificed his life for the glory of his country and the military service.

"The Germans had struck at the heart of a vital command area," commented Colonel Harrell. "As a result of Lieutenant Harris's heroism and single-minded devotion, the force of their blow was warded off; the battalion command post was saved from possible destruction and an interruption of offensive operations in that sector of the Vosges was averted." Second Lieutenant Harris was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Fierce close-in hand to hand battles ensued with enemy in various sections of the Regiment's sector. Company "K" sent two platoons to the assistance of "Item" Company. After bitter fighting the enemy was beaten off. Company "L" destroyed a truck load of enemy but was unable to secure the Zainvillers bridge which was blown by the enemy.

At daylight, 8 October, Companies "A" and "C" began attacking to the northeast. The advance was delayed by heavy enemy small arms and mortar fire.

The Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol and the platoon from Company "E" succeeded in overcoming enemy small arms and machine gun fire in Zainvillers and seized the town at 1030, 8 October.

Company "A" drove to Sapois in the afternoon and at 1830 had captured a section of houses on the edge of the town with twenty prisoners. The bridge on the outskirts of Sapois was blown by the enemy.

Company "L" moved into Vagney then attacked to the east to establish contact on the right flank of Company "K". Heavy artillery and small arms fire were received as the company advanced. One platoon went along the main road for Lejole.

The Second Battalion was relieved of its positions by Company "I" during the morning of 9 October, then assembled in Vagney. Company "A" continued to clear Sapois of enemy who resisted stubbornly. Company "C" occupied Hill 760 and patrolled vigorously.

During the heavy fighting for Vagney and Sapois many "Cotton Balers" displayed gallantry.⁵⁵ Private

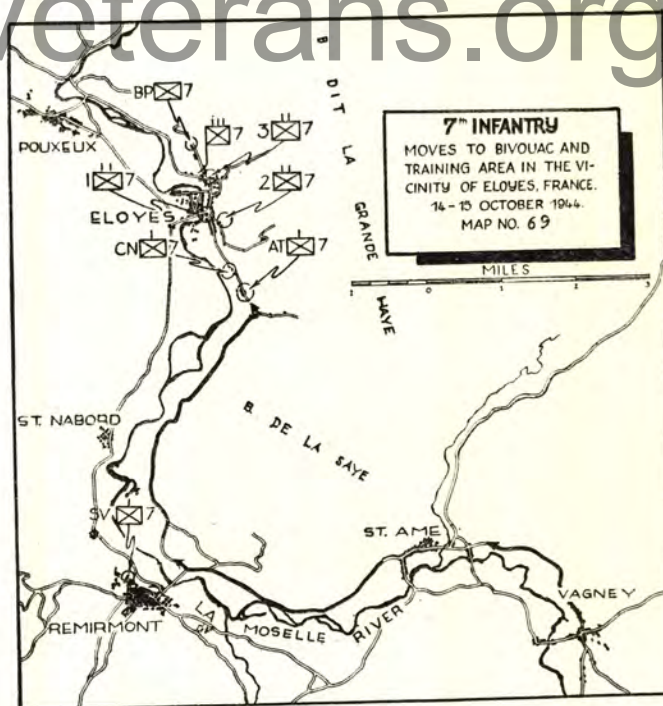
First Class Orville L. Miller, Private First Class Russell J. Soyster and Private George E. Shinnamon, all of Company "C", on separate occasions killed enemy and eliminated machine gun nests holding up the advance. Private First Class Melvin C. Strickland of Company "B" also eliminated a German machine gun nest and a bazooka crew.

Private First Class John F. Leassner, Private Paul L. Castanon and Private John A. Henrich of Company "D" repelled three enemy attacks of platoon strength against their heavy machine gun position.



An air photo of Sapois, France.

Mortarmen Sergeant Robert J. Sneckenberger, who was killed in a subsequent action, and Private First Class Harold I. Palley, of Company "G", First Lieutenant Charles L. Treadway of Company "M" and Technician Fifth Grade Laverne P. Fotsch of the Medical Detachment were among those who performed gallantly. First Lieutenant William D. Anthony of Company "I" was particularly skillful and courageous while leading his rifle platoon.



⁵⁵ See GOs No. 11, 13, 59, 89, 163, 171, 187, 257, 263 & 299. HQ, 3d Inf. Div., 13 Nov. & 27 Dec. '44, 11 & 13 Jan., 23 Feb., 9 Mar., 16, 22 & 30 May & 15 July '45. 1 Lt Treadway & Pfc Blackman were each awarded the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star Medal. 1 Lt. Anthony, 2 Lt. Sigel, S/Sgt. Fanelli, Sgt. Sneckenberger (posthumously), Sgt. Stage, T/5 Fotsch, Pvts. F. C. Gullet, Leasaner, Miller, Palley, Soyster & Strickland; Pvts. Castanon, Henrich & Shinnamon were each awarded the Silver Star Medal.

Sergeant Shirley E. Stage, machine gun squad leader, and Private First Class Lewis W. Gullet, a Browning automatic rifleman, both of Company "E", and Staff Sergeant Michael C. Fanelli, light machine gun section leader of Company "F", were also outstanding.

In the first fighting for Sapois, Second Lieutenant Franz Sigel and Private First Class Harold L. Blackman, both of Company "A", displayed bravery and good leadership.

During the period 9-14 October the Regiment conducted only limited operations, rehabilitated troops and engaged in some light training.

The Third Battalion cleared its sector of small arms and machine gun resistance and established a series of blocks. During the night of 9-10 October Company "K" effected the relief of the First Battalion which assembled Companies "A" and "B" in Vagney and Company "C" north of the town.

French forces assumed defense of Blocks 4, 5 and 6 and Company "I" reverted to Third Battalion reserve in Vagney on the 10th. The Second Battalion moved by foot from Vagney and closed into St. Ame at 1700.



An air photo of St. Ame, France.

The battle to clear Sapois continued with the Seventh Infantry Battle Patrol continuing on where Company "A" left off and finally occupying the town on 11 October. Company "K" elements relieved the Regimental Battle Patrol at 1030 and only the Blue Battalion and Anti-Tank Company, which manned one block, were in the lines.

Companies "B" and "C", 48th Engineer Battalion, became attached to the Regiment and manned Road Block No. 7. A platoon of the Third Reconnaissance Troop maintained patrols between blocks.

Late in the day of 11 October, the two attached companies of the 48th Engineer Battalion relieved the Third Battalion on position and Company "B" took over the

road block formerly manned by the engineers. Company "C" relieved "Baker" Company on the 13th.

The French finally gathered enough Infantry to assume responsibility for the sector and passed through the Regiment to continue pressure against the enemy. The Seventh Infantry was relieved of all responsibility and in turn relieved all attachments, 14 October.

During the night and morning of 14-15 October, the Regiment moved by vehicle from the vicinity of Vagney, St. Ame and Remiremont to the vicinity of Eloyes, France.



Three of 7 "Cotton Balers" who lost their lives on 7 October 1944 were: (1) Pfc Paul K. Huston, Co. "E"; (2) Pvt. Robert D. Patton, Jr., Co. "C", and (3) 1 Lt. Marwood S. Taylor, Co. "G".

During the two months' campaign (15 August-14 October 1944 inclusive) the Seventh Infantry fought, marched and rode its way from the Riviera to the foothills of the Vosges mountains. The Campaign of Southern France⁵⁶ was reminiscent of the Sicilian Campaign and consisted of an amphibious landing then pursuit of the enemy. Highlights of the campaign were the amphibious landing on invasion day, ambushing of the German convoys north of Montelimar, the Battle of Besancon, the fighting for Vy-les-Lure and the fighting for Vagney and Sapois. As always, gains of the Regiment were made at a cost in lives: 286 "Cotton Balers" are definitely known to have been killed during the action, the wounded numbered about three times as many. The costliest days were 15 August and 15 September when 58 and 20 "Cotton Balers" respectively were killed. Though contact at times was broken with the enemy because of his rapid withdrawal first actual relief from combat came the morning of 15 October when the French passed through the Regiment's lines.

From 15 to 19 October 1944 inclusive the Seventh Infantry conducted an extensive training program in the vicinity of Eloyes, France and stressed combat in wooded and mountainous terrain, discipline and physical conditioning. Replacements were received. The troops were billeted in buildings, or slept in pyramidal tents.

⁵⁶ The Southern France Campaign as determined by the War Dept. was for the period 15 Aug.-14 Sept. 1944. In this work, for the 7th Infantry the campaign is considered to have lasted throughout the period 15 Aug.-14 Oct. 1944 as actually the first relief from operations in France came on 15 Oct. 1944.