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111 Med Bn
Bx 29468

EX

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111th MEDICAL BATTALION
A.P.O. #36
U. S. ARMY

"OPERATIONS IN ITALY"

DECEMBER 1943

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CONFIDENTIAL
BY TAG-PA
RH Kruger
LCCAC
18 May 46

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HEADQUARTERS
111th MEDICAL BATTALION
A.P.O. #36

8 January 1944

SUBJECT: "OPERATIONS IN ITALY" 1st through 31st December 1943.

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

1. Transmitted herewith Historical Data of the 111th Medical Battalion for its "OPERATIONS IN ITALY" for the period 1 December 1943 through 31 December 1943.

2. It is recommended that the control of attached litter bearers be placed with the Medical Battalion Commander in future operations so that the relief and replacement could be coordinated with the requirements of the Collecting Companies. I believe that the approved plan whereby each Medical Battalion has an authorized overstrength of 100 litter bearers will work very satisfactorily. It is the plan of the Battalion to divide these men equally among the three Collecting Companies.

3. The system employed by Collecting Company "A" during recent operations worked very well because of the narrowness of the pass in the mountains, and the fact that the forward Ambulance Loading Post was under constant enemy artillery fire. No suitable place was available within the pass for establishing a complete Collecting Station. It is my opinion that all casualties during normal operations should stop at the Collecting Station for checking of dressings and replacement of hastily applied splints before they are sent to the rear for more definitive medical treatment.

Jay W. Pickens
JAY W. PICKENS,
Lt. Colonel, Med Corps,
Commanding.

Encls - 1
Historical Data.

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HEADQUARTERS
111th MEDICAL BATTALION
A.P.O. #36

***** OPERATIONS IN ITALY *****

1st THRU 31st DECEMBER 1943

Continuing in its operations of evacuating casualties, which started 17th November 1943, of the 36th Infantry Division and its attached units, in terrain which is almost impassable because of the rugged mountains, mud, and rainy weather, the 111th Medical Battalion did its utmost to maintain its high standard of evacuation by employing its men where they were most needed, and stayed as close to the actual fighting as possible without endangering its capacity for the processing of casualties and their eventual evacuation to a rear hospital. The location by coördinates as of the 1st December 1943 of the three (3) Collecting Companies, the Clearing Station, and Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, which comprise the 111th Medical Battalion were as follows:

HEADQUARTERS	)	
HEADQUARTERS DETACHMENT	:	066033 - Map Italy - 1:100,000
CLEARING STATION	)	Sheets No's 161 - 172
COMPANY "A" ----------	)	049054
COMPANY "B" ----------	)	095030 Same Maps as above.
COMPANY "C" ----------	)	032065

One platoon of the 11th Field Hospital, consisting of three (3) General-Surgical Teams and one (1) Orthopedic Team was attached to the 111th Medical Battalion and was located approximately twenty five yards to the right of the Clearing Station for the purpose of doing highly specialized surgical work for which we have no facilities. This unit is very efficient and in all probabilities has saved many lives by their skillfull and delicate operations, such as amputations and operations on abdominal and chest wounds.

The weather for this period has been very inclement, having rain storms, high winds, and cold weather. The rains made the terrain very muddy and sloppy, hindering our ambulance routes and jamming traffic along the highways to such an extent that traffic moved along routes at a snail's pace. The ambulances held up very well under the conditions,

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although, because of the rough roads several ambulances were disabled due to broken springs, the replacement of this critical item has proved very difficult. All other types of vehicles are holding up very well with little or no trouble at all.

Communication by messenger is very good, but the telephone communication during inclement weather has been poor, due to wire that has been blown loose by the high winds and catching on the vehicles wheels and breaking. This could be remedied very easily by making wire more secure on poles and trees to which they are tied when laid. The need for more telephones and a switchboard by this unit is imperative for the efficient operation and a system of quick communication, other than messengers and runners. A recommendation has been submitted to higher headquarters for approval of additional telephones and a switchboard.

The evacuation of casualties has been very difficult in this operation due to the mountainous terrain and weather, causing litter-bearers to become physically exhausted. The need for additional litter bearers in each collecting company became apparent early in the operation. Several groups of litter bearers were obtained from Corps units and were attached to our collecting companies for rations only. Their primary purpose being to relieve litter bearers at the infantry Aid Stations. This did not solve the litter bearing problem for the collecting companies as the attached litter bearers were placed under the control of the infantry Regimental Surgeon, and supervised by an officer from the Corps units which furnished the litter bearers. Much confusion was encountered when attached litter bearers were sent back for relief and were replaced by another group usually of less men than were sent back. Because of this it was impossible to determine the exact number available in each Collecting Company. A solution has been reached by which each Infantry Medical Battalion will have assigned 100 extra litter bearers. A requisition for this personnel has been made but as yet the replacements have not been received. During the past operation a number of litter bearers were procured from other than Medical Units and as result the Collecting Company Commander would have to hold a short class of instruction for each group prior to sending them forward.

A temporary system of evacuation has been tried by Collecting Company "A" due to the terrain conditions and enemy artillery fire. The Collecting Company is eliminating the stop at the Collecting Station and are evacuating patients direct from the ambulance loading post to the Clearing Station, with the exception of badly injured patients, who are in need of immediate medical attention, such as blood plasma, and changes in splints and bandages. The ambulance loading post is comprised of one (1) Medical

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Officer and two (2) Medical Technicians, and this duty is rotated among the medical officers and medical technicians who are located in the Collecting Station at the rear.

The type of fighting in this particular sector, which in our opinion is more of a holding action, has been one of the reasons for the small amount of enemy Prisoners of War being processed through our Clearing Station. Of the fifteen or twenty Prisoners of War processed through our Clearing Station in this months operations, all have been willing talkers, but the need of qualified interpreters has hindered us a great deal, but in spite of this we have been able to get a great amount of information. Most all of the prisoners have been German with a few of Polish extraction, and all seem to be very happy to be in American hands.

Battle casualties sufferred by this Battalion have been exceptionally light considering the terrain, having only eleven (11) casualties, but casualties due to illness have been very great, thus contributing greatly to the shortage of critically needed litter-bearers.

The morale and spirit of cooperation within this unit is excellent. The cold, rain, and dampness do not, or has not as yet, dampened the spirit of aggressivness and the urge to help others within or outside of this unit. Battle casualties are processed and evacuated just as quickly and efficiently in rainy weather as in fair weather. Men work daily on muddy and rough roads to keep these roads open and smooth for ambulance routes and the convinience of patients.

CASS J. KNIGHT,
Captain, Med Adm Corps
Adjutant.

Annexes - 5

#1 - Daily Journal
#2 - Maps and Overlays
#3 - Casualties sufferred by 111th Med Bn.
#4 - Consolidation of casualties processed through Clearing Station.
#5 - Commendation from II Corps Commander

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DAILY JOURNAL

(2; 1 typed)

111th MEDICAL BATTALION

ANNEX NO. 1

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1 December 1943

Weather clear and cold. Heavy artillery fire. Increased tempo of air activity over the front noted with the clearing of the weather. Medium and fighter-bombers doing the work. Casualties continue to be proportionately light. No change in location of units.

2 December 1943

Weather mild and clear. Heavy artillery fire throughout the day and night. Medium bombers and fighter-bombers exceptionally active on front line installations and troop concentrations. Casualties still very light. Collecting Company "B" moved to new location (See attached overlay).

3 December 1943

Weather clear and warm. Heavy artillery barrages during early hours of day gradually abating towards night. Slight air activity. Casualties somewhat heavier.

THESE SPACES FOR MESSAGE CENTER ONLY

TIME FILED | MSG CEN NO. | HOW SENT

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

No. 1 DATE 3 DEC 1943

To C. O. Co B 111 Med

CONTACT OFFICER IN CHARGE OF MED UNIT OF THE SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE TONIGHT AT DEAD END ROAD THIS COORDINATE 972085 REGARDING AMBULANCES.

OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER: CO 111 Med | TIME SIGNED: 1800

AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR | SIGNATURE OF OFFICER | SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER: Pickens, Pvt

MESSAGE SENT

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Authority NND 735017

The 36th Division Archive

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4 December 1943

The "Rains" fell again, and the bog continues to pile up making the delivery and evacuation of patients from the Clearing Station a bit difficult. Sposmatic artillery barrages during the day. Air activity very light. Casualties rather heavy.

5 December 1943

More rain and cool weather. Things were comparatively quiet on the front today, that is, if our surrounding artillery batteries can be considered as a determining factor. The customary air patrols. Casualties fell off to very light.

6 December 1943

Weather, cloudy and rain. Collecting Company "A" is experimenting with a new system of evacuation by eliminating the stop from the ambulance loading post to the Collecting Station by proceeding directly to the Clearing Station except in the cases of badly wounded men in need of immediate medical attention. Very little artillery fire, and the customary air patrols.

THESE SPACES FOR MESSAGE CENTER ONLY

TIME FILED | MSG CEN NO. | HOW SENT

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

No. 1 DATE 6-Dec 1943

To. C.O. Hq Det

All Traffic exept ambulances will be kept off of High way 6 North of Div Hq Today between hrs 1700 - 2100

OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER: Adj

TIME SIGNED: 1430

AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR

SIGNATURE OF OFFICER

SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER: Knight Cpl.

MESSAGES SENT

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Authority NND 735017

The 36th Division Archive

7 December 1943

Cloudy with frequent showers. Collecting Company "B" received a direct hit on their advanced aid station. No serious injuries occurred. The acute shortage of litter bearers has caused us to draw personnel from the Clearing Station and Headquarters Detachment. Fifteen enlisted men were sent from the Clearing Station and five from Headquarters Detachment to help the acute shortage of litter bearers. Artillery fire light. Casualties were rather heavy. Artillery batteries surrounding our area seemed to have moved up, as most of the firing has been from the front of our position.

8 December 1943

Weather fair and warmer. Enemy artillery fire heavy. Several shells landing in our immediate vicinity - no casulaties incurred. Casualties are very heavy; mostly shell fragment wounds.

9 December 1943

Weather cloudy with frequent showers. Casualties heavy. The need for litter bearers is almost acute. Litter bearers are becoming physically exhausted from the long litter hauls in the mountains.

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

No. 1 DATE 9 DEC 1943

To MO & OF OFFICER, 111TH MED BN

AT ANY TIME 3 OR MORE VEHICLES TRAVEL OVER CONCA-MIGNANO ROAD IN EITHER DIRECTION A CLEARANCE MUST BE OBTAINED THROUGH SPEEDY

BRITISH MP'S ARE IN CHARGE OF ROAD

Recd - Harold C. Nelson
1ST Lt

OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER | TIME SIGNED

AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR | SIGNATURE OF OFFICER | SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER

MESSAGES SENT

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10 December 1943

Weather clear and warmer. Casualties light. Personnel of the Clearing Station and Headquarters Detachment are continuously working on the road from Highway No. 6 to the clearing station draining and grading the road.

11 December 1943

Weather cool and fair. Casualties light. The usual artillery exchanges. No change in location units. Enemy air activity unusually heavy.

12 December 1943

Weather continues to be cool and fair. Enemy shelling rather heavy. Casualties light. Need of more litter bearers continues. No change in location of units.

13 December 1943

Weather clear and warm. Artillery action heavy. Routine air patrols. Road to the Clearing Station in excellent condition - thanks to the persistent labors of the crews of Clearing Station and Headquarters Detachment. Collecting Company "B" moved to new location (See attached overlay).

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

Recd. Clr Co - HQ
No. 0950 DATE 13 DEC 1943
To SURGEON, 141st MED BN

MESSAGE RECEIVED

REQUEST 504 PARLNE BE SHOWN ON CASUALTY REPORT IN SPACE NOWISED BY 47 QM. 47QM CAN BE SHOWN ON BACK OF REPORT AS THEIR MED. SERV IS USUALY LIGHT. 504 WAS ATTACHED AS OF SAT 11 DEC 43. PROV. PACK TR CAN BE SHOWN IN SPACE ALLOTTED TO SPECIAL CO, HOWEVER THOSE MEN ARE SUPPOSED TO BE ASGD TO THE REGTS. SOON.
SURGEON 36th DIV

0900
TIME SIGNED

OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER

AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR

SIGNATURE OF OFFICER

Salutat L Sloa WO
SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER

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SECRET

14 December 1943

Weather fair . Casualties light. Friendly planes are very active, bombing enemy front line positions.

15 December 1943

Weather clear and fair. Enemy artillery shells landed within our bivouac area during the night; no casualties were incurred. Casualties are very heavy, with a few German Prisoners of War being processed through the clearing station.

16 December 1943

Weather cool and clear. One half of Collecting Station, Company "B" moved to establish advanced aid station (See overlay). Casualties rather light. Exchange of artillery throughout the day. Collecting Company "B" using litter shuttle effectively on long rough haul.

THESE SPACES FOR MESSAGE CENTER ONLY

TIME FILED	MSG CEN NO.	HOW SENT
		Runner

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

No. 1 DATE 16 Dec 1943

To Surgeon, 36th Inf Div.

MESSAGE SENT

LOCATION OF COLLECTING COMPANIES, 111th MED BN ARE AS FOLLOWS:

COMPANY "A" - 997109 - 1,100,000 - sheet no. 161
COMPANY "B" - 975093 - 1,100,000 - sheet no. 161
COMPANY "C" - 039198 - 1,100,000 - sheet no. 161

B. M. Prince

Adjutant	1020
OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER	TIME SIGNED

AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR — SIGNATURE OF OFFICER — Capt Wright — SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER

SECRET

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17 December 1943

Weather cool and clear. Artillery light. Much air activity. Medium and fighter-bombers making runs on front line installations, roads and troops. Casualties about average.

18 December 1943

Weather fair. Practically no evidence of artillery except for a short while before dusk. About the average air activity. Casualties rather heavy.

THESE SPACES FOR MESSAGE CENTER ONLY

TIME FILED	MSG CEN NO.	HOW SENT

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

No. _____ DATE 18 Dec 43

MESSAGE RECEIVED

To Rodeo B.

When you are relieved leave all attached litter bearers with unit which relieves you —
Primer.

Cpt Jones - 1735
Telephone

OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER | TIME SIGNED

AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR | SIGNATURE OF OFFICER | COL. PRIMER SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER

19 December 1943

Weather clear and cool. Light artillery fire during latter part of afternoon. Medium and fighter-bombers-missions over front line increased. Light casualties suffered by enemy bombings. Other casualties rather heavy.

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20 December 1943

Weather overcast followed by heavy rains in the evening. Artillery exchanges light during day increasing towards night. Average air activity. Casualties light.

21 December 1943

Weather cold with rain. Light artillery fire. Casualties light. Artillery has been moved up and is quite a distance from our area now.

MESSAGES SENT

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

No. 1 DATE 21 Dec 1943

To Capt. Behrens, 36th Div. Replacement center.

Captain Behrens you will report to forward CP 36th Div in the morning in an ambulance furnished by Co. "A" 111th Med Bn. You will relieve Capt Fiegel.

MESSAGE RECEIVED

MESSAGE

(CLASSIFICATION) (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE)

No. DATE 21 Dec 43

To Lt Col. Pribens. 111 MED BN.
Would like to see you at fwd. C.P. this AM if possible

Surgeon
OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER

TIME SIGNED

Benjamin M. Palmer
SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER

SECRET

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22 December 1943

Weather cold and rain. Sposmatic artillery fire. Casualties light.

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

No. 1 DATE 22 December 1943

To CO, Co. "A" 111th Med Bn

It has been reported that ambulances are using lights. This is a violation of traffice in the black-out zone. Company Commanders will correct this immediately.

Salvador Gutierrez

Adj 111 Med Bn — OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER

1140 — TIME SIGNED

AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR — SIGNATURE OF OFFICER

1st Lt Capt — SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER

MESSAGES SENT

23 December 1943

Weather cold with rain. Artillery fire light. Casualties comparatively light.

MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)

No. 13 DATE 23 December 1943

To CO, 111th Med Bn

The area along road 037200 - 001168 is presenting a serious traffic problem. You will post guards on entrance to, and on road in front of, your area and will permit only essential vehicles to leave. You will see that traffic is kept moving and moved off road in your area without delay.

CG 36th Inf Div — OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER

1300 — TIME SIGNED

AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR — SIGNATURE

Rambo — Maj. Asst G-4 — SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER

MESSAGE RECEIVED

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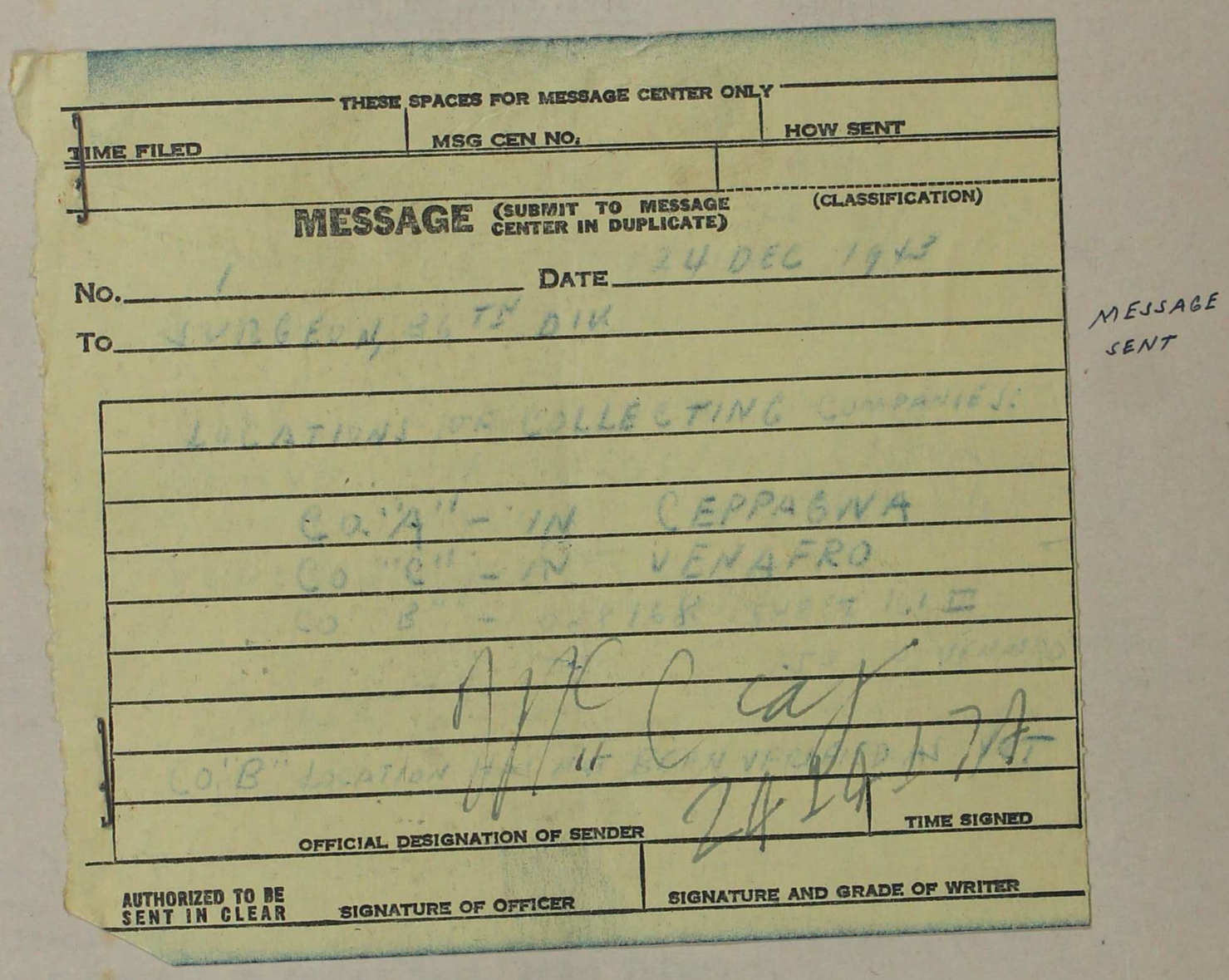
24 December 1943

Weather cloudy with showers. Very quiet day. Moderate number of casualties.


THESE SPACES FOR MESSAGE CENTER ONLY
TIME FILED | MSG CEN NO. | HOW SENT
MESSAGE (SUBMIT TO MESSAGE CENTER IN DUPLICATE) (CLASSIFICATION)
No. 1 DATE 24 DEC 1943
To SURGEON, 36TH DIV
LOCATIONS OF COLLECTING COMPANIES:
CO "A" - IN CERRASNA
CO "C" - IN VENAFRO
CO "B" - [illegible]
CO "B" LOCATION [illegible]
OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF SENDER
TIME SIGNED
AUTHORIZED TO BE SENT IN CLEAR
SIGNATURE OF OFFICER
SIGNATURE AND GRADE OF WRITER

MESSAGE SENT

25 December 1943

Weather fair and warm. Rather quiet day. Some artillery fire in distance. Casualties somewhat heavier.

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26 December 1943

Weather cold and overcast with high winds. Light artillery fire, during day becoming more frequent and intense toward night. Casualties light.

27 December 1943

Weather fair. Casualties light. 1st Platoon of the Clearing Company are on the alert for a move.

28 December 1943

Weather cold and clear. Casualties rather light. 1st Platoon of the Clearing Company and Collecting Company "C" moved to rest area in the vicinity of Alife, Italy. (See attached overlay).

29 December 1943

Weather cold and clear. Collecting Company "A" moved to rest area in the vicinity of Alife, Italy (See attached overlay)

30 December 1943

Weather cloudy and cool. 2nd platoon of the Clearing Company and Headquarters Detachment and Headquarters moved to rest area in the vicinity of Alife, Italy (See attached overlay)

31 December 1943

The 111th Medical Battalion is together once again in the rest area in the Vicinity of Alife, Italy, with the exception of Collecting Company "B" which is still in combat attached to their respective combat team, 142nd Infantry.