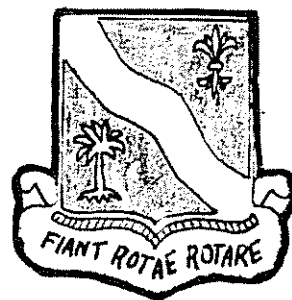


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# 132 PASS IN REVIEW

The 132nd Field Artillery Battalion  
in World War II



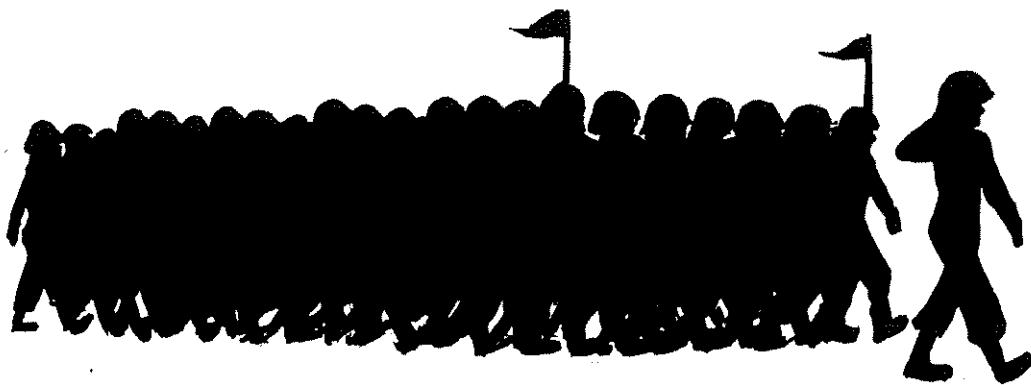
by  
CWO JOHN (Jack) V. HAWKINS SR.  
AUS Retired

PROPERTY OF  
TEXAS MILITARY

**CALL YOUR  
BATTALION  
TO ATTENTION**

**1\*3\*2\***

**PASS IN  
REVIEW**



**Fiant - Rotae - Rotare**

JACK HAWKINS

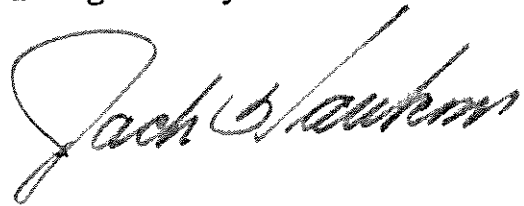
(CWO John V Hawkins Sr)  
160 Christiana Road  
New Castle Delaware 19720

Here is our History.

I personally appreciate your long patience  
and cooperation in waiting so long after  
commitment to interest in our project.

Finally - lets keep the net of communication  
open - dont let the fine relationship of  
old friends and cherished memories fade and  
die for want of a few lines on a letter.

Would appreciate hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack Hawkins". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed text.

This narrative was prepared in order that we might have a record of the achievements of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion from which to refresh our memories in future years.

We have each of us been a part of a great fighting unit. We have never failed to accomplish our assigned mission. Nothing which the future holds for any one of us should be too difficult. We have done so much the hard way.

I am humble in the privilege of having commanded such good soldiers.

For now and all time I would quote a prayer:

*"Dear God, give us strength to accept with serenity the things which can not be changed. Give us courage to change the things which can and should be changed, and give us wisdom to differentiate the one from the other."*



JOHN N. GREEN  
Lt Col Field Artillery  
Commanding

## P R E F A C E

There was always a real sense of belonging when I stood in formation with the old Unit. Many years have passed since the days of formations with the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion; but in the spring of this year (1969) I once more stood in a formation with representatives of the Texas National Guard and veteran members of the 36th Infantry Division.

A delegation from Texas had flown to Washington to participate in a special ceremony of placing a T Patch plaque at the Memorial Shrine of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

General Walker, former commander of the 36th Infantry Division headed the formation of civilians and military-dressed participants to the Tomb. General Dahlquist who also commanded the 36th Division after General Walker was present.

General Walker made the presentation address and I know that the thinking and memory processes of those who served were going back over the years.

I could recall many past fine associations; however the thoughts in my mind were this: "These associations and friendships are so worthwhile nothing should dim or mar them. It is true we are all separated by miles and other present interests—it is true that we all change with age—and we all finally pass through transition—it is also true that some try to keep alive the spirit of such organizations—and sometimes these torchbearers grow tired and feel tried-upon by lack of enthusiasm around them. Paul the Apostle urged "Be not weary in well doing." There is not a lost end to all these things. If you will observe correctly around you, the only permanent thing is the Human Spirit—material things all wear and change—but the Spirit remains. This thing is eternal. It is kept alive within everyone who so wills it. I recall in General Walker's new book, "From Texas to Rome" how he points out the importance of personal discipline—something you work on day in and day out and never let go of. Oh, sometimes it slows down and sometimes is dormant—but it is never lost of each individual—if you so will it."

These thoughts are not unique to me alone; but I use them as a sort of prelude in presenting a history of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion. This is mainly an historical narrative of a very close-knit military unit. This organization shone with the pride of many States—carried forward under the banners of the traditions of the great State of Texas.

The narrative is taken from the Unit Journal of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion—written by members of the Battalion. The pictures are from the personal collections of members of the Battalion.

The book project has been financed by order subscriptions from members of the unit and friends. The publication is a non-profit project.

My sincere appreciation to my good wife Marjorie and my son John Victor Hawkins Jr. for their support of my undertaking in so many ways. There were many who encouraged and supported this publication in many ways. My sincere thanks to the following: Major General Fred L. Walker and family, Col and Mrs. John N. Green, Col Oran Stovall, Lt Col John Gabbert and Mrs. Gabbert, CWO Archie McDugal and Mrs. McDugal, President Amil Kohutek and Mrs. Kohutek, Dr. Alex Mintzer and Mrs. Mintzer, Joe Justice. My gratitude to the following ranks from World War II: Captain Louis N. Quast, M/Sgt Billy K. Skidmore, 1st Sgt Raymond E. Turquette, S/Sgt John V. Campbell, S/Sgt John A. Grigsby, S/Sgt Francis J. Hennie, S/Sgt John F. Nelson, Sgt Walter S. Johnson, Sgt William R. F. Morris, Sgt Robert R. Simonetti, Tec-4 Pietro R. Pologruto, PFC William H. Eldridge, PFC Albert Puntelli.

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## 'Fight With the Rammer Staff'

In the first days at Salerno that were as packed with drama as the last stand at the Alamo, reports arrived at the battalion that the Germans had smashed their way through a flank of the 142nd Infantry and were charging on toward the positions of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion.

Part of the infantry held a line adjacent to one of the gun batteries. It was during this critical situation that one of the Battery Commanders phoned the Battalion Commander, Lt Col John N. (Pete) Green, and asked for orders. Colonel Green's grim reply was "Put out local security, and if necessary, fight with the rammer staff." This order, picked up in the heat of battle, will go down in history with that other famous Texas battle cry, "Remember the Alamo," as being the spirit of the unit and the same spirit for the men of this unit to pass on to those who follow them.



"Altavilla" The Germans held this high ground and were able to look down our throats when we heard: "Fight with the Rammer Staff!"



## Chapter I

### Early History, Mobilization, Preparation and Training - In the United States

The coat of arms of the 132nd Field Artillery, Texas National Guard, as approved and recorded in the files of the War Department is as follows:

Shield: Gules abend unde' or Chief, a fleur-de-lis and in base a palm tree eradicated argent.

Crest: That for the regiment of the Texas National Guard—on a wreath of the colors (or/and gules) a mullet argent encircled by a garland of live oak and olive proper.

Motto: *Fiant Rotae Rotare* (Keep the Wheels Rolling).

The shield is red for Artillery. The bend wavy symbolizes service on the Mexican Border in the Big Bend District of Texas along the Rio Grande River. The yellow indicates that the 132nd Field Artillery is descended from an old Cavalry organization and that it was a Cavalry organization during its service on the Mexican Border. The Palm Tree denotes fleur-de-lis World War I service.

The 132nd Field Artillery was organized in 1880 as the 1st Regiment Cavalry and Texas Volunteer Guard. In 1888, the Regiment was reduced to a Battalion and designated 1st Battalion, Texas Volunteer Guard. In 1890, the Battalion was disbanded, but its companies were retained as unattached Cavalry companies. In 1891, the Battalion was organized with the same companies. New units were added in 1892; the Battalion was expanded to a Regiment and designated 132nd Regiment Cavalry, Texas Volunteer Guard. It remained in State service until mustered into Federal service for the Spanish American War in May, 1898. This Volunteer Regiment was mustered out of service in November, 1898. The 1st Regiment Cavalry, Texas Volunteer Guard, was reorganized in the State service as the 1st Squadron Cavalry, Texas Volunteer Guard. In 1903, the designation of the Squadron was changed from 1st Squadron Cavalry, Texas Volunteer Guard, to the 1st Squadron Cavalry, Texas National Guard. The unit was in Federal service during the disturbances on the Mexican Border and served in the Big Bend District from 1 July 1916 to March 1917.

The 36th Division was organized for World War I by a War Department Order, dated 18 July 1917. The Texas troops were mobilized at Camp Bowie, Texas, along with troops from Oklahoma. The 132nd at

this time was known as the 132nd Field Artillery Regiment and was made up of two battalions with a regimental headquarters. The Division at this time was a square division—a much larger organization than the later-devised triangular or streamlined division.

The 132nd Field Artillery Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Battery were from Corsicana; Regimental Service Battery, from Dallas and Waco; and the Regimental Band, from Paris. The 1st Battalion consisted of four batteries: Headquarters Battery from Bonham, Battery "A" from Paris, Battery "B" from Cleburne, and Battery "C" from Weatherford. The 2nd Battalion also had four batteries: Headquarters from Italy, Battery "D" from Corsicana, Battery "E" from Kerens, and Battery "F" from Marshall.

On 15 July 1918 the 36th Division sailed overseas and on 31 July landed at three ports: Bordeaux, Brest, and St. Nazaire in France. The Artillery landed at Brest and proceeded to the little town of Redan, not far from its landing. The Division Artillery underwent intensive training at Redan and Coequidan and remained in the latter city until the end of the war. The Artillery, along with the rest of the Division, was demobilized 26 February 1919.

In May of 1922, when the National Guard of Texas was reorganized, the 132nd Field Artillery Regiment again came into being. Few people in the whole country at this time realized the importance of these men who studied military science in their spare time and attended summer camp once a year to practice. It took the drastic blow in 1941 to make us realize the contribution which these men, who played soldier, were making to our very existence as free people. During the year of organization and the year that followed, the Regiment studied artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, using borrowed equipment. By 1924, they had acquired their own artillery pieces—1897 horse-drawn French 75mm guns. The 1924 and 1925 training was taken at Camp Stanley, San Antonio, Texas. In 1926, the regiment made its first encampment with the complete National Guard organization at Camp Hulen, Palacios, Texas. The next eleven summer encampments were made at Camp Hulen. In 1938, the summer encampment took on a bigger meaning with the Texas troops taking part in Third Army maneuvers with the 2nd and 45th Divisions at Camp Bullis. Cravens, Louisiana, became the center of a three-weeks' maneuver in 1940.

A War Department Order called the Texas Guard into Federal service on 25 November 1940. All units remained at home stations awaiting completion of Camp Bowie, Brownwood, Texas. It was no longer the Texas National Guard, but again the 36th Division. During the months of November, December, 1940, and January, 1941, military training went on a full-time schedule—an active recruiting campaign was conducted. During the latter part of January, 1941, the Division began movement to Camp Bowie, which became the home camp. In the beginning it acquired the name "Camp Gooley" due to the wide expanses of sticky mud prevalent. Here the army-required basic training was given and picked non-commissioned officers were sent to the Dodfield training school. It

does not seem possible that there is anyone who has not heard of the famous Louisiana Maneuvers. The 36th Division was right in the thick of it—Mansfield and Friesport—for six long, rugged weeks.

During the first of November, 1941, the 132nd Field Artillery Regiment relieved the regular school troops at Fort Sill Artillery School. When this assignment was completed, the Regiment was highly commended by the school. The training which the gun crews received at Fort Sill was destined to have far-reaching effects.

The Regiment was still at Fort Sill when the attack on Pearl Harbor came. After this, the war that had been going on around us became our fight, and training took on a more important meaning than ever before. There were many speculations as to how soon the Regiment, along with the Division, would be committed to action against either the Japanese or German forces. The rumors ran from one extreme to another. A part of the 132nd Regiment was to go with the force that sailed for Java shortly after the declaration of war. This was changed and elements of the 131st Field Artillery Regiment went instead. This group was caught in the Japanese drive through Java. In the latter part of December, gun crews were sent to the Armed Guard Center at New Orleans for training on Army transports.

Just prior to Pearl Harbor, the streamling of army divisions started; then the 36th Division became a triangular division. The original four infantry regiments were cut down to three infantry regiments with a battalion of light artillery in support of each regiment. The 132nd Field Artillery Regiment became the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion with a battalion staff, headquarters battery, three firing batteries and a service battery. The 132nd became the artillery support of the 143rd Infantry Regiment.

Around the 16th of February, 1942, the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion, with the rest of the 36th Division, found the travel by motor to Camp Blanding, Florida, very cold and stormy. Even after arrival in the sunny clime of Florida, the wearing of cottons was postponed due to the cold weather.

Intensive training took place in Florida where there were many Division and Corps tests conducted. Toward the middle of May when the weather was really getting hot, the largest number of replacements yet received poured into the ranks of every unit in the 36th Division. Before any of these replacements were actually assigned to permanent organizations, they were divided into training companies and received a very thorough period of basic training conducted by cadres from the Division. It was not until the Division was well through the Carolina maneuvers in the early part of August that the new recruits joined the ranks of the 36th Division. By this time those new men were not only well prepared for the rigors of army life, but they were also well aware of the pride of the 36th Division. No one at that time realized just how far the Division was to travel in the next three years. Even at this time there were a lot of growing pains for the Division which was destined to become one of the great fighting units of World War II.

In the latter part of August, the Battalion entrained and moved from North Carolina to Camp Edwards, Mass., to the winterland of Puget Sound. However, the weather was still warm in Massachusetts, and there was even a little swimming done before cold weather set in. If there were training schedules in Florida, there were more at Edwards. Remember tent city? Corps tests? Washburn Island? The invasion of Martha's Vineyard? The Ranger course? Obstacle courses? Specialized schools? Mountain warfare? Winter warfare? Cold feet? But, there were good times, too. Do you remember the furloughs, week-end passes, Onset, New Bedford, Boston, New York, the USO, dances, shows?

During the period at Edwards, the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion became the support artillery of the 142nd Infantry Regiment. The 143rd and 133rd joined forces as did the 141st Infantry and the 131st Artillery. The 132nd became part of the 142nd Regimental Combat Team.

In the latter part of February, the Battalion, with some other units of the Division, left Camp Edwards for the Piney River area in Virginia to take part in mountain maneuvers. This particular adventure was a foretaste of mountain maneuvers to come, although extreme cold suffered here was more severe for the short period than anything that happened afterwards. Anyone who was on this little expedition will testify to the truth of this statement. Shortly after this, camp was set up at the A. P. Hill Military Reservation near Amhurst, Virginia. This was the beginning of preparations for going overseas. Clothing property checks were begun; vehicles were turned in; our howitzers were shipped to Staten Island for combat wheels; and other operational equipment that was to go with us was packed and crated. This was no easy task since everything had to be listed and checked, and the weight had to be given; and some of those crates were awfully large. Although most of the time was given over to movement preparations, firing technique was not neglected. The firing batteries took service practice with 75mm mountain pack howitzers.

After two weeks at A. P. Hill, the Battalion traveled by train to Fort Dix, Port of Embarkation Staging Area. After arrival there, we were virtually prisoners because each and every man was part of the big military secret that the 36th Division was preparing for shipment overseas. New clothing was issued; all records were brought up to date; everything was done to put the complete Battalion in a state of perfection before leaving the United States. We were schooled and reschooled in military security; even such operations as boarding a ship in the proper manner were given.

On the morning of 27 March 1943 Company "M", 142nd Infantry Regiment, and our Battery "A" moved by train to the port of embarkation as advanced details to assist in arranging for loading of the 142nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team. Four days later the remainder of the units left Fort Dix and headed for Staten Island, New York—Pier # 13, to be exact.

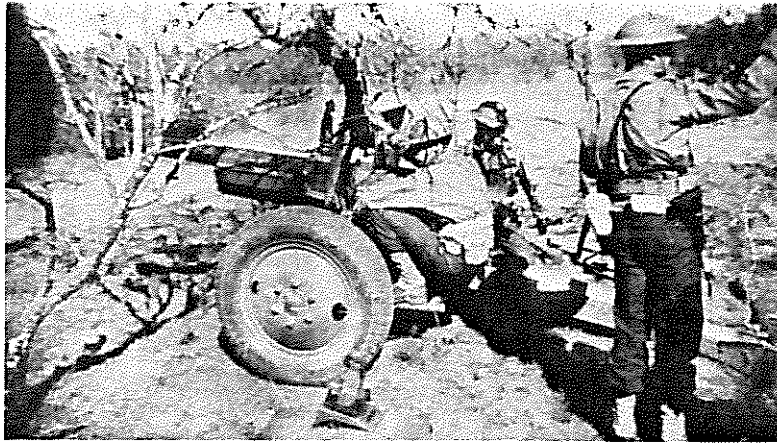
**Bowie, Texas**

**Blanding, Florida**

**Edwards, Massachusetts**



**Battery Details**

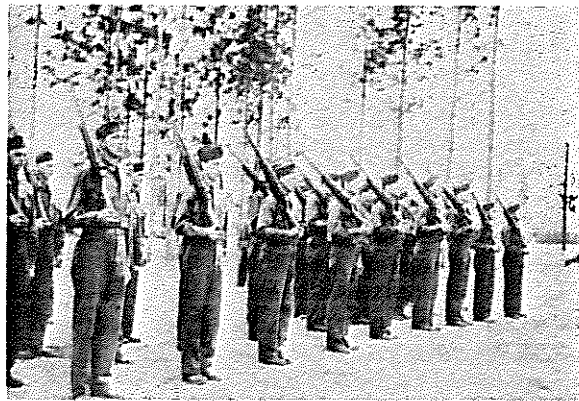


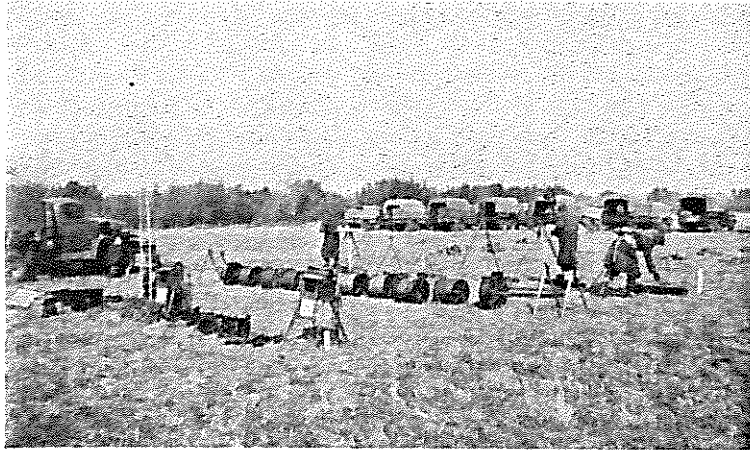
**Old Artillery**



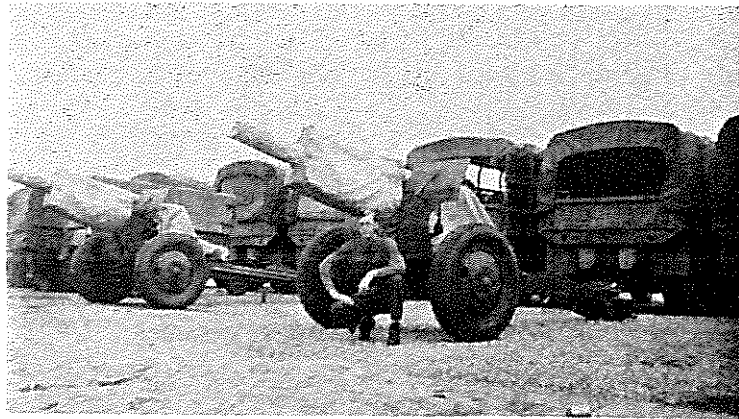
**Capt. Gabbert, Capt. Brown, and Who?**

## Those Rookies





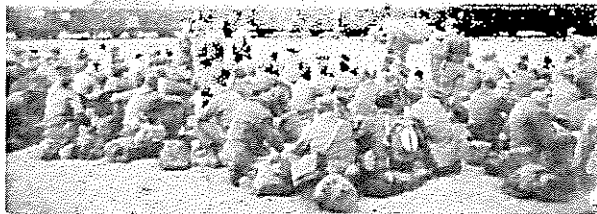
**Problems**



**New 105's**



**Field Layout**



**Hurry-up and Wait!**



## Chapter II

# OVERSEAS, AFRICA

April 1943

The first of April found the battalion at Staten Island along with the rest of the 36th Infantry Division loading aboard the ships that were to take us overseas. At 0001 hours, 2 April, the battalion was officially considered overseas. This was the big moment—what we had trained for, talked about and thought about—there were many thoughts going on inside of each of us as we headed out to sea. The 132nd Field Artillery Battalion was loaded aboard the *S.S. Argentina*. We were not idle on board ship. From the very beginning we began to learn the rules of living at sea. The enlisted men's quarters on board were very crowded, and it was necessary to keep details constantly busy to maintain cleanliness and sanitation. Every day we had inspection in ranks and very rigid quarters' inspection, and the least let-up in discipline or sanitation would have been a serious matter because of the crowded conditions. Such military training as could be carried out on board ship was performed. There were early morning calisthenics and classes such as airplane recognition and fire direction procedure. About the third day it was generally accepted that our destination would be North Africa, and classes in Arabic then became part of the daily program.

Our twelve-days boat ride passed rather quickly and without incident. Morale remained high. There was a strong undercurrent of emotion because we were going into something new and no one knew exactly what it would be like. It may be recalled that at the date of our passage the war in North Africa was still going on; however, the progress was in favor of the Allies. On approaching Oran, ammunition was passed to all individuals for their small arms. Everyone wondered how soon they would get into the fight. The convoy arrived at Oran Harbor on 13 April. Debarkation of personnel was begun immediately. Our battalion was put ashore in the late afternoon and evening; then we were taken by truck to a bivouac area near Ossi Ben Oakbar, some fifteen miles southeast of Oran. Here, we found ourselves on a barren rock hillside where we were to bivouac for five days while our equipment was unloaded from the transport. During this time, long hikes were taken through the country to get rid of our sea legs and to get in physical shape. This was our introduction to North Africa and to the Arab natives. The country turned out to be better than we had expected and the natives, worse.

It may be recalled that our transportation had been turned in when

we left the States; we were, therefore, without any vehicles at this time. After considerable confusion, our organizational equipment was unloaded and assembled in the battalion area. Inasmuch as we were without trucks, our first movement was made by rail in World War I 40-and-8 cars. This move took us about a hundred miles south to Magenta. We stayed in the Magenta area for one month; during this time, extensive military and physical training were carried on to make ourselves ready for combat. The battalion was issued its vehicles; howitzers and equipment were put in first-class shape.

During the early part of May, the war in North Africa was brought to a successful conclusion. This was somewhat of a relief to us as there was always the possibility, although remote, that we would join the conflict. During the last weeks of the Africa campaign, some of our officers and enlisted men—personnel from the forward observer and liaison sections—were sent to the front to observe and gain the experience of actual combat. It was during the early part of May that we were introduced to our friend (?) Atabrine. Atabrine is a little yellow pill taken as a preventive against malaria. At first, it was doubtful whether the disease itself could be any worse than the effects of the preventive. Initially, almost everyone got sick; however, our systems quickly became accustomed to the drug, and we continued to take it until November, when we were in Italy.

During the last week in May, we moved from Magenta to the vicinity of Rabat, French Morocco, on the northwest coast of Africa. This movement took three days and covered five hundred miles. This trip which was made in our own trucks gave us real opportunity to see a great deal of North Africa. Upon arrival at Port Lyautey, the battalion set up bivouac in the cork forest about five miles south. During our six-weeks stay in this pleasant area, extensive training was carried on in simulated combat conditions and in infantry artillery combat team operations. The stay at Port Lyautey will be remembered by all ranks for the enjoyable times spent swimming in the Atlantic, the trips to town, sight-seeing tours to Rabat, and the American Red Cross clubs.

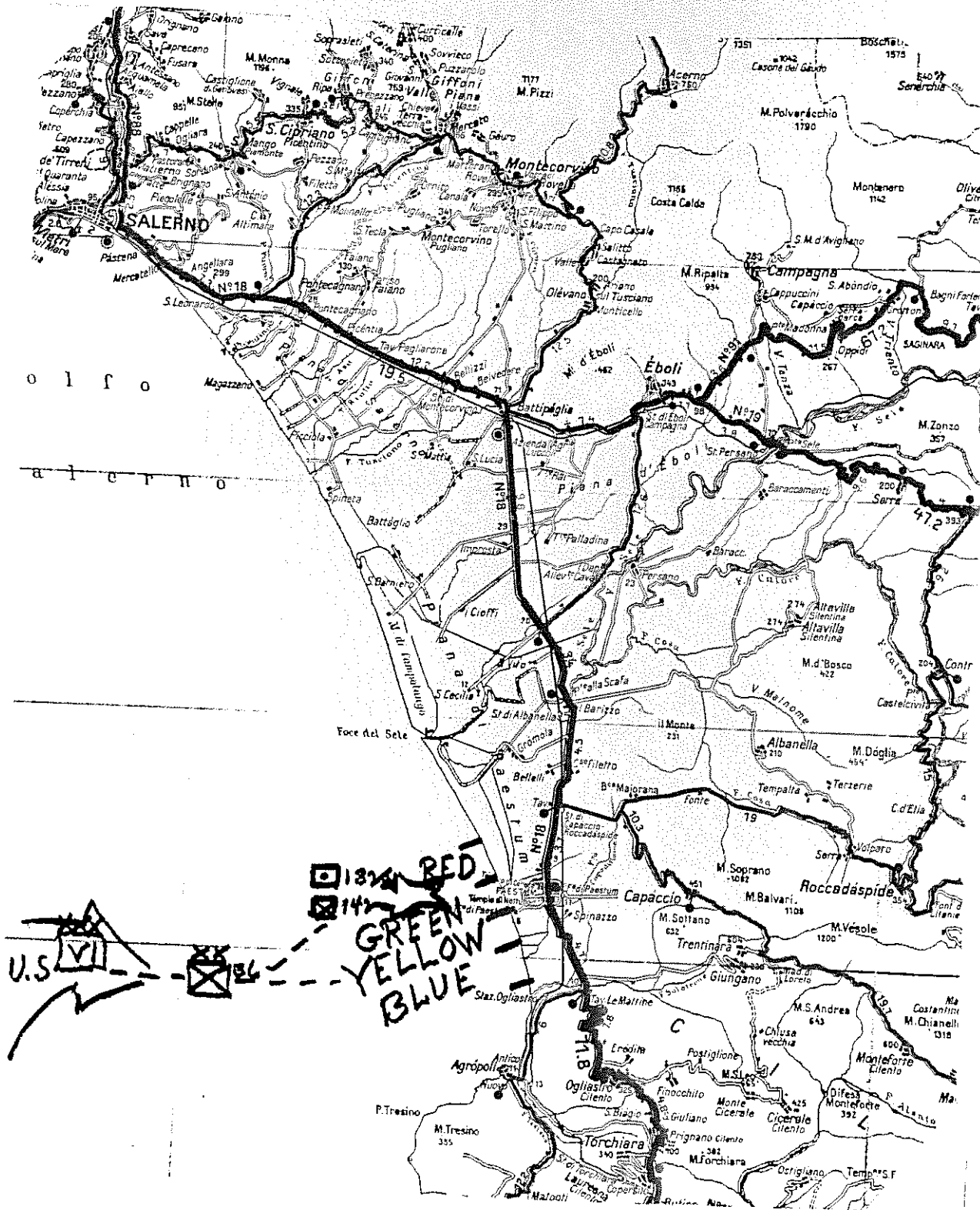
Early in July the division returned to the Oran area, and our battalion arrived at the Arzew area on 4 July after an uneventful two-days motor march. In this area the battalion was bivouaced in tents on the sand dunes just off the shores of the Mediterranean. During the month of July, we participated in various types of combat training such as street fighting, hand-to-hand combat, mines and booby traps, rifle firing, and obstacle courses.

The battalion made another move at the end of July, this time to the vicinity of Slissen, some eighty miles south of Arzew. At Slissen we participated in the Fifth Army battle training, a special battle indoctrination course which attempted to simulate battle conditions as closely as possible, including the firing and being under the fire of many calibers of friendly and enemy weapons. This course was drawn to a hasty conclusion on 6 August. The next day we again moved back to the vicinity of Arzew.

It may be recalled that the invasion of Sicily had taken place a month prior to this date, and conjectures were being made as to the "who, when and where" of the next major operation. The month of August was spent in training and planning for amphibious operations. The training began with the work of individual teams and the loading of guns and trucks into LCVPs and also on DUKWs. Later the work was coordinated into battalion problems and then into combat teams and division problems. The tempo of our activities increased from day to day as our training and preparation were brought to a conclusion. By the end of the month, although no official information was released, it was generally accepted that we would participate in an amphibious invasion somewhere on the European continent in the not-too-distant future. The final step and preparation were the waterproofing of all guns, trucks, radios and other equipment. This was done in a very thorough manner and, of necessity, immobilized all of our rolling stock and equipment. The emotion of the time was heightened by visits from Lt. Gen. Clark and finally by Gen. Eisenhower. After these visits we all knew that we were to participate in something BIG.



**"Comrades Maroc"**

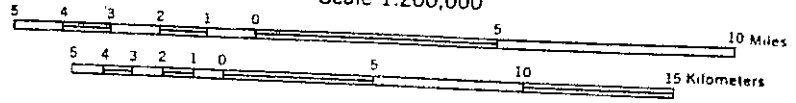


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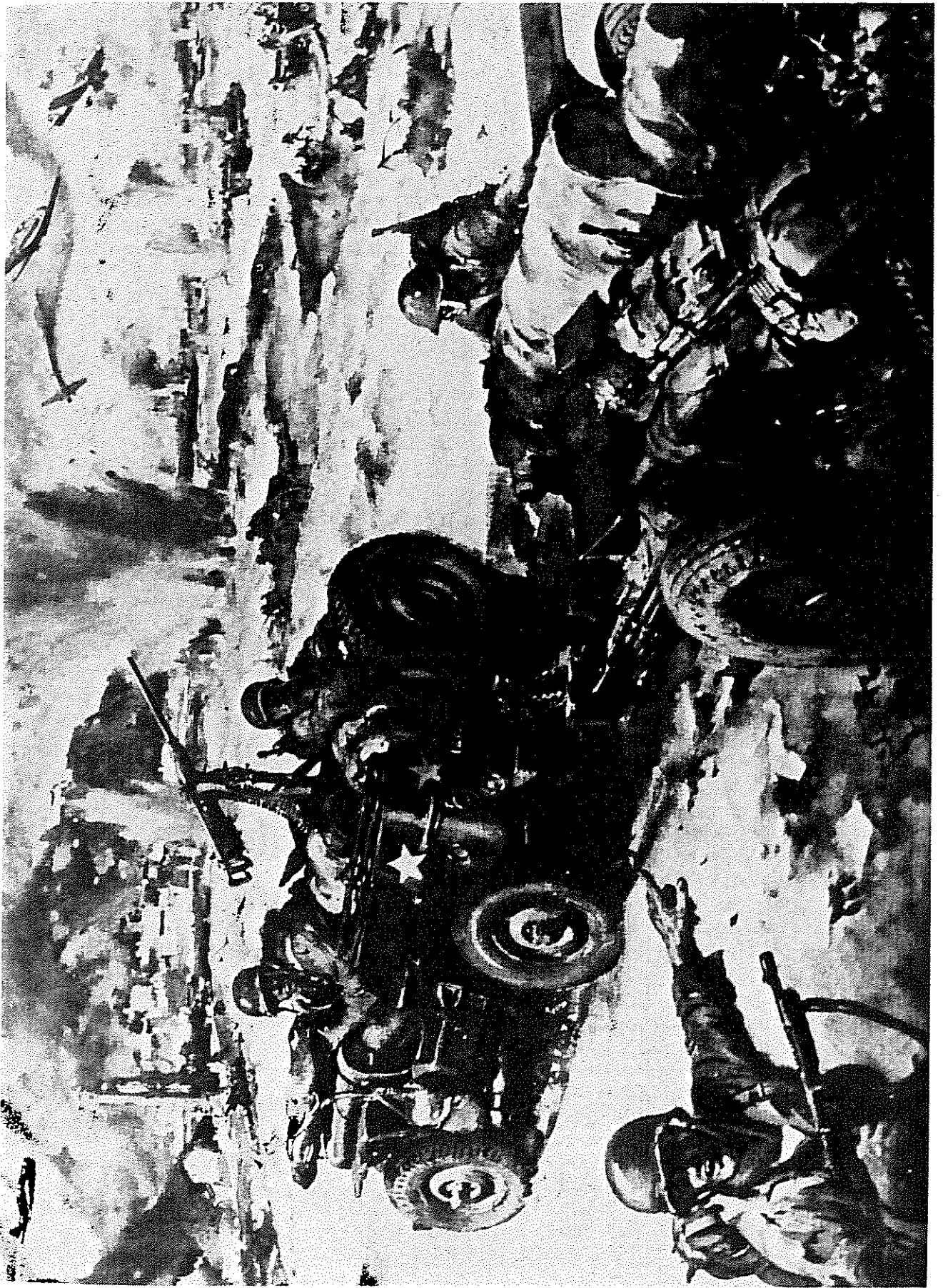
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10

## Chapter III

# Invasion of the Continent of Europe and Establishing a Beachhead

September 1943

The 132nd Field Artillery Battalion was assigned the mission of direct support of the 142nd Infantry Regiment reinforced in Ship-to-Shore Operation. This operation was to be *Invasion of Italy* in Agropoli Area near Paestum. The mission of the 36th Division was to seize and hold a beachhead for landing of other American Forces—141st Infantry reinforced on the right; 142nd Infantry reinforced on the left; 143rd Infantry reinforced in reserve. Naval gunfire was allotted to each regiment for artillery support prior to landing of howitzers. Two naval liaison officers, Ens. Woodmore and Guthe, were assigned to the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion. Forward observers of each battery (A, B, & C) were trained in conduct of naval gunfire. Six shortwave radio sets were furnished this battalion, in addition to TBA, for direct communication with firing ships.

The 132nd Field Artillery Battalion, under command of Lt. Col. John N. Green, embarked from Mers El Kebir, Algeria, North Africa, on 3 September 1943. Loaded plan follows: howitzers and howitzer sections (on DUWK's) from Batteries A, B, & C, and Battery Executives—1st Lt. Robert W. Plunkett, Battery A; 1st Lt. Estes B. Griffith, Battery B; 1st Lt. Willemotte S. Curtis, Battery C—all under command of Maj. Clifford M. Snow, Battalion Executive, aboard LST-HMS Bruiser. Capt. John R. Gabbert, Battery Comander of Battery "A", and party; 1st Lt. John F. Shirk, F.O. of Battery "A", and detail; 1st Lt. Dalton Y. Medlen, L.O. No. 1, and detail; Capt. Harold B. Golding, Battalion S-3; 2nd Lt. John J. Wickham, Asst. Executive and Motor Officer of Battery "A"; and Battery "A" D-Day vehicles aboard USS Lyons with 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry. Capt. John D. Bennett, Battery Commander of Battery "B", and party; 2nd Lt. Stanley Chapman, F.O. of Battery "B", and detail; 1st Lt. Charles L. Hearn, L.O. No. 2, and detail; Ens. Alfred D. Guthe, Naval Liaison Officer No. 1, and detail; Capt. Floyd D. Gattis, Battalion Asst. S-3 with Fire Direction Survey party; 2nd Lt. Royal H. Seward, Battery "B" Asst. Executive; and Battery "B" D-Day vehicles aboard USS Dickman with 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry. Capt. Mark L. Hodges, Battery Commander of Battery "C", and party; 1st Lt. James A. Stout, F.O. of Battery "C", and detail; 1st Lt. Gaines M. Boyle, L.O. No. 3, and detail; Ens. George R. Woodmore, Naval Liaison Officer No. 2, and detail;

Lt. Col. John N. Green, Battalion Commander; 1st Lt. Louis N. Quast, Battalion Asst. S-2 and FDC, Survey party; and Battery "C" N-Day vehicles aboard USS Barnett with 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry. Headquarters battery under command of Capt. Joseph T. Brown, and Service Battery under command of Capt. Herbert C. Bishop, and Medical Detachment under command of Capt. Lloyd M. Southwick, Capt. Richard L. Ellegood, Battalion S-2 aboard HMS Marnix. Convoy sailed from Mers El Kebir on 5 September 1943.

Maps and orders were distributed after sailing. D-Day was announced as 9 September 1943, and H-Hour set as 0330 hours. Rendezvous point, routes, and gun positions were directed in battalion order as selected from maps and photos. Men were instructed in duties after landing and were instructed by maps and photos on nature of terrain and routes to follow. Landing craft loading was practiced several times enroute. Forward observers were organized to conduct naval gunfire.

On the evening of the 8th radio loudspeakers on the ships gave the announcement of the surrender of Italy. There was great rejoicing over this news. This was a sort of relief to the anticipation of the fight for the morrow. Regardless, the German enemy had not decided to withdraw from Italy. This fact was not fully realized by many until after debarkation on the 9th when the full force of this fact hit us hard.

Debarkation commenced on schedule, and the first waves of the 142nd Infantry hit beaches, Red and Green, at 0330 hours, 9 September 1943. Battery commanders, liaison officers, forward observers, naval liaison officers, field artillery battalion commanding officer, Battalion Asst. S-3, and Battalion Asst. S-2 landed in first four assault waves with infantry battalions of 142nd Infantry Regiment. The naval Liaison Officer No. 1 SCR 284 set was damaged and lost in debarkation when one of the landing craft fouled on the dabit. This same accident caused Lt. Col. Graham, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, to change boats and to land in boat No. 32 in third wave with our Asst. S-3. The assault waves landed under severe and punishing machine gun cross fire, mortar and artillery fire. The Germans had the sand dunes filled with machine gun positions and many mortar positions. When the landing craft began hitting the beaches, the Germans sent up flares and by that light began shooting at our troops and landing craft. At frequent intervals they would send up veri lights or flares to locate our troops in the dunes and then renew fire, actually potting at our troops with mortars as we moved through the dunes. Tec-5 William R. Lentz was wounded by mortar fire while making his way through dunes with the survey party. Enemy reinforcements arrived in trucks and moved out into position. During the hours of darkness before dawn, the enemy artillery kept firing into the beach area; after daylight artillery fire of the enemy was placed on observed targets and areas. Some of our infantry landed and crossed cultivated fields under a time-fire concentration of apparently one battery. 88mm guns fired on single targets such as DUWK's and vehicles. The forward observers and liaison officers made their way through the fire to join their respective infantry organizations. During

a tank attack in Paestum about 0825 hours, Capt. Hodges was severely wounded and Pvt. Salvatore Alfano was killed by machine gun fire.

Howitzers and sections in DUWK's landed on Red Beach under command of battery executives about 0830 hours. They were due to land at 0500 hours, but were held offshore because of the heavy hostile fire on the beach. Even when the DUKW's were coming in, heavy artillery fire was raking the beach. Direct hits on three DUWK's carrying howitzers were seen, but turned out to be from another battalion. Our howitzers were all landed together, except two from Battery "A" and one from Battery "C" which separated in the boat assembly area about one mile offshore. The four Battery "B" howitzers and Executive Officer, three of the Battery "C" howitzers and Executive Officer, and two of the Battery "A" howitzers landed together on Red Beach, unloaded from DUWK's; and Lts. Curtis and Griffith organized a position as one large battery about 300 yards inland from the beach. They established radio communications with division artillery and with 1st and 3rd Liaison Officers. The German artillery tried unsuccessfully to adjust on this position. One howitzer from Battery "C", 4th Section, under Sgt. Janak, landed and was put into position with Battery "C", 133rd Field Artillery Battalion, and remained in action there until Lt. Curtis learned its location, sent for the section, and had it rejoin the battery at the second position. The two Battery "A" howitzers landed, under command of Lt. Plunkett, farther to the north and went into a position with two guns of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion. There, the Battery "A" guns received tank warning and prepared for it; but the attack did not materialize. The two guns rejoined the battalion about 1400 hours in the second position.

The battalion was placed in position at the rendezvous area and commenced firing about 1300 hours. Initially, there were four howitzers from Battery "B", three from Battery "C", and two from Battery "A", organized in one position under Lts. Curtis and Griffith. Fire Direction center was set up in vicinity of gun positions and functioned at once.

Lt. Medlen, L.O. No. 1, reported over radio a tank casualty by one of his detail, and so Lt. Seward was sent out to join the Ln. Detail and to replace Lt. Medlen. The fourth howitzer of Battery "C" and the two from Battery "A" joined the battalion about 1500 hours. We fired nine missions in this position expending approximately 470 rounds of 105mm ammunition. Forward observers, liaison officers, and the two naval gunfire liaison officers accompanied the infantry battalion F.O.'s and conducted naval gunfire in support of the infantry. Both Ln. Officers and F.O. Officers conducted fire of the battalion. Smoke was used for first round of each adjustment to facilitate sensing for the observer. Targets were designated by map coordinates and by location with respect to reference points which had been picked and numbered prior to landing. Adjustments were made with one piece, pending adequate supply of ammunition. The various elements of the battalion joined the unit at the rendezvous point as they landed from ships and made their way to the rendezvous.



Forward observers (Lt. Shirk, Battery "A"; Lt. Chapman, Battery "B"; Lt. Stout, Battery "C") accompanied 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions of 142nd Infantry and rendered support with naval gunfire and with howitzer fire of this battalion. Lt. James Stout, Battery "C" F.O., with his party landed with 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, north of the proper landing beach and made his way under heavy fire through drainage canals and fields to the Main Coastal Highway No. 18 about 1500 yards north of Paestum. There, the unit turned north on the highway and enemy mortar fire and artillery fire got plenty hot. Six German Mark IV tanks got into their rear; the individuals were ordered to separate by about 150 yards to avoid offering a profitable target to the enemy tanks. After the attack, they reassembled and moved about a mile to the east toward the objective of 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry. Here, Ens. Woodmore and a radio detail stayed behind with a shortwave radio and established contact with their ship. Lt. Ashcroft of 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, operated the radio. Lt. Stout's party laid wire forward from the radio to the command post. Lt. Stout brought naval fire on about twenty-five scattered German tanks in vicinity of target-55 (a road junction near the base of Mt. Soprano). Thirty minutes later, more tanks approached the same spot; and Lt. Stout conducted another mission with naval fire against them. About this time Lt. Boyle informed Lt. Stout that artillery shells fell on Ens. Woodmore's position, killing Ens. Woodmore, Pvt. Sidney P. V. Webb and Pvt. Jack Lindley while they were operating the radio which conducted the naval gunfire. The 3rd Battalion remained on its objective hill (Defissa Monte) until noon of the next day.

Lt. Chapman was with the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, and landed on Green Beach under heavy hostile fire. Their landing craft had to slow up three times before reaching shore because of flares. They landed and made their way with the F.O. section about 0430 hours to the coastal road where the section was pinned down by artillery fire and machine gun fire. Cpl. Wilfred S. Clunk was killed here. The section scattered and became disorganized. Lt. Chapman tried to gather the men together. Unable to do so, he continued by himself to the railroad station at Paestum and met Capt. Spence, Co. "F", 142nd Infantry. Together they started with seven infantrymen to the objective of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, which was high ground at the western end of Mt. Soprano. They found two artillerymen from 133rd Field Artillery Battalion with a shortwave radio. An infantry captain pointed out the location of an enemy gun battery which had been putting effective fire on our troops. Lt. Chapman fired on the battery with the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion with good results. Lt. Chapman, Tec-4 McGinnis, and Pfc. Veal of Battery "B" got a shortwave radio about 1400 hours. They rejoined the 2nd Battalion at their objective and received instructions from its battalion commander, Lt. Col. Graham. They established observation on the high ground to the north of the infantry position and turned the radio over to Ens. Guthe for conduct of naval fire.

Lt. Shirk and party landed in an LCM about 0500 hours as part of

the reserve battalion and made the landing under heavy machine gun and mortar fire. They moved inland about 600 yards from the beach. Sgt. Berry set up their radio, but could not contact the firing ship. They moved on and set up the radio again near a railroad station and this time were able to contact the firing ship. Lt. Shirk got two salvos on the mountain to orient himself. Observation was bad, so he moved on, and met five German tanks. Though he tried to get fire on them, they managed to escape. The party met Lt. Col. Barron and Capt. Sprague in an apple orchard near Paestum and went with them to the mountain north of Paestum. They set up their radio again about 1100 hours, but could not contact their firing ship. They did contact the Edison, however, and commenced firing on tanks and enemy batteries. Lt. Shirk fired until about 1800 hours, expending approximately 1000 rounds. Results of firing were extremely good. He positively knocked out two enemy gun batteries of 88's and crippled or knocked out a minimum of fifteen tanks and an indefinite number of troops and vehicles. To quote the words of Sgt. Berry, Lt. Shirk's radio operator, "Lt. Shirk told me that we positively knocked out two gun batteries and fifteen tanks. In my own estimation, I think that Lt. Shirk saved the day with his firing. That night we dug in and it was quiet for the rest of the evening."

The liaison officers, Lt. Medlen, Ln. Officer No. 1, Lt. Hearn, No. 2, and Lt. Boyle, No. 3, accompanied their respective infantry battalions. Lt. Medlen and his party landed alone on Green Beach under heavy fire from German mortars and 88's. They crossed the beach on the double and set up communications in a ditch near a bridge while Lt. Medlen and Sgt. Mansell worked forward up a wooded draw to find a place where they could have observation for naval fire. They encountered fire from snipers and ran into German Mark IV tanks; Sgt. Mansell was wounded in the leg by fragmentation from the tank fire. A nearby infantryman threw Lt. Medlen's maps to Pvt. Lloyd and told him to leave. Later, Pvt. Lloyd and Pfc. Davidson went back to where Lt. Medlen was last seen, but no sign of him could be found. Sgt. Mansell was taken back to an Aid Station for treatment.

Liaison Officer No. 2, Lt. Hearn, landed with the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry. "We were about 75 yards offshore. The beach was quiet and we thought the invasion was going to be relatively simple. Then the first wave landed and all hell seemed to break loose as all types of enemy fire opened up. Two artillery shells burst near my boat—no casualties." On the beach the party was split up. Sgt. Dahlberg was wounded about 0340 hours by mortar fire. Lt. Hearn and one of his party made their way toward Paestum with some infantrymen they met on the highway, but were held up by enemy machine gun fire and snipers. They saw a battery of artillery, which turned out to be the 151st Field Artillery Battalion, occupy a position near the road. Almost immediately there was a tank attack from the southeast. The battery fired point blank at the tanks at a range of 400 yards. The first round was a direct hit. About four tanks were knocked out during this attack. Lt. Hearn met Pfc. Malizia from his detail and learned that Battery "B" was at the

DUWK unloading point; so they went there to get the part of the radio that Sgt. Dahlberg had left behind. When they started forward they heard of a tank attack and went to the highway to investigate, but no tanks were seen. They continued to the first objective of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, and arrived there about 1500 hours. They then set up and registered our Battery "B" on the check point which was a road north of Mt. Soprano.

The 3rd Liaison Section under Lt. Boyle became separated under the fire at the beach; and four of the men, Cpl. Lisdero, Pvt. Ritter, Pvt. Wacker, and Pvt. Morris, found Lt. Col. McDonald, Commanding Officer of 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, near Paestum. They stayed with the colonel, carrying their section's radio when 88mm fire began falling on them. Pvt. Morris was wounded and, after rendering first aid to him, the section left him behind while they followed the infantry commander. Tanks attacked their position, and at 1300 hours they sent in coordinates and requested a fire mission. (Nature of target: 7 tanks.) They got fire on these tanks; and later reports proved that two of them were disabled. The section moved to a new position under a tank attack and continued to send in fire missions on enemy tanks and infantry. Results were that firing ceased. Lt. Boyle was contacted at 1700 hours; and they stayed in position overnight.

The battalion displaced at 2300 hours, 9 September 1943, under cover of darkness. The CP and FDC were set up in a farm house. Twelve missions were fired, using 1195 rounds of 105 ammunition. A request was received for fire on the town of Altavilla from 142nd Infantry. This was beyond our range, so the request was forwarded to division artillery, and the mission was fired by another battalion. Lt. Quast reported by radio that he was unable to contact liaison detail because they kept moving. Lt. Seward was equipped and sent out as Liaison Officer No. 1. Lt. Quast did not return to the battalion until noon 10 September after trying all the while to find the radio and remainder of Lt. Medlen's section. Lt. Shirk's detail, with 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, moved up to a hill near Altavilla about 1100 hours. He registered batteries on a check point. There was not much activity that day in Lt. Shirk's sector other than intermittent shelling by 88's.

Lt. Seward joined the liaison detail replacing Lt. Medlen. He and his men contacted Lt. Col. Barron's 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry. They advanced and set up a CP on high ground north of Altavilla about 1430 hours. About an hour and a half later they were in the midst of a tank attack of approximately twenty-five German tanks. Lt. Seward adjusted artillery fire on them; and the effect must have been good, because it drove the tanks off.

Lt. Chapman with 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, moved up the ridge to the crest of Mt. Soprano and on to Mt. Vesole, meeting no resistance except snipers. They established observation at many places as the infantry moved forward to positions above Rocca D'Aspide. Upon arrival at this position, they found that the Germans had blown the bridge across the Calore River. Rocca D'Aspide was being shelled, and enemy

vehicles were observed leaving and taking cover. Lt. Chapman called for fire on them, adjusted it, and observed good effect. He was ordered at dark to 2nd Battalion CP for instructions.

Lt. Stout and his section, Cpl. Mecinski, Cpl. West, and Pvts. Adelsperger, Patterson, and Walker, with 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, remained in position of Defina Monte until about noon of 10 September when the 3rd Battalion began to move to the east with orders to take Albanella. Men in the detail were very tired from carrying the heavy radios. They encountered no opposition until they reached the foot of the hill near Albanella where sniper fire was encountered. They stopped to determine the strength of the enemy. Lt. Boyle began giving fire missions on targets around Albanella, but his radio began to get weak. Lt. Stout took up his missions at about 1700 hours. This firing was effective for it routed the enemy. After our artillery fire lifted, the infantry advanced without opposition and reached the top of the hill nearly exhausted. They stayed here for the night.

The battalion displaced at 2345 hours, 10 September 1943, under cover of darkness to a new position. Coordinates of positions and base angles were determined by the survey section. Eight fire missions were fired in this position, using 867 rounds of 105 ammunition. Lt. Seward adjusted the fire of this battalion on a concentration of German tanks. There were eight tanks destroyed or disabled and the balance were driven back and dispersed. Snipers wounded two men in Battery "C" position.

Lieutenants Seward and Shirk with the 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, moved into Altavilla about 1100 hours and then to the hills beyond, seeking O.P.'s. Lt. Shirk's detail was subjected to time fire. They tried to get to Hill 424, but met small arms fire. Lt. Seward established an O.P. on the forward slope of the hill above Altavilla. Lt. Shirk left Pvts. Brooks and Godbey outside of town with his radio, while he and Sgt. Wade went up to establish an O.P. on the hill. They were accompanied by Company "A" and ran a line up under heavy enemy fire. Lt. Shirk called to the 132nd F.A. Battalion CP twice during the night and had batteries laid on coordinates awaiting further observation. The telephone line was broken between him and the radio and no contact was made with him after that. Lt. Shirk and Sgt. Wade were missing in action during the night 11 September and early morning 12 September 1943.

Lt. Chapman and Lt. Hearn with 2nd Battalion advanced without opposition. Lt. Hearn advanced with part of the 2nd Battalion around the north edge of Mt. Soprano. Apparently they were the first Americans there, because a wild reception ensued. They were kissed and cheered by the civilians who told them that there had been 600 to 700 Germans in that vicinity but that they had pulled out to the north. Lt. Chapman established an O.P. on top of Mt. Soprano.

The battalion displaced at 2000 hours under cover of darkness to positions below Altavilla. The FDC was initially set up in a small house during the night; at dawn the CP and FDC were moved to a creek in good defilade, and a dugout construction was begun.

The balance of the night, 11-12 September 1943, was spent in com-

parative quiet after the move to the new position just south of Altavilla. Spasmodic communications were held through the night with 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, whose area was rapidly becoming the center of interest. The 2nd Battalion had met little or no resistance and had moved out of range of our light field pieces; and reassuring reports of all quiet came from Lts. Hearn and Chapman. The 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, had attained their objectives and were quietly holding their ground. Jerry seemed to have more interest in the high ground that the 1st Battalion held. In the rapidly expanding beachhead the battalion of infantry had occupied a large area of high ground and, in fact, had bitten off more than it could hold. The morning of the 12th brought loss of contact with Lts. Shirk and Seward. Lieutenant Shirk's telephone line was broken; and Lt. Seward's line was blown out by the shelling in the town. Since about 0200 hours, Lt. Seward's radio was out because it had to be destroyed when his party was surrounded by German patrols. This was done under orders of an infantry officer in order to prevent capture and use of equipment by the enemy. Sounds of machine gun and rifle fire were heard from all parts of the hill. Various reports began to dribble in to the CP, and the situation became rather cloudy. A liaison officer from 151st Field Artillery Battalion was assigned to us since the 151st was to reinforce our fires. Also present was a liaison officer from the 151st Field Artillery Battalion for the same purpose. Our positions received enemy artillery fire all day from various calibered guns. At times the shelling got extremely heavy; and it seemed the men spent half the time falling to the ground to avoid stopping shell fragments. The whine of approaching shells got to be familiar, and the ability of each person to judge where they were going to hit improved to a surprising degree of accuracy. After a few hours one didn't bother to duck in a hole nor fall flat after cocking an ear to the sound and deciding a shell was going over. But always in case of doubt a fellow did a belly-flopper into any nearby slit trench. The men by this time were really trench-conscious, and none of them needed encouragement to dig in at each and every pause of enough duration to unslung a pick or shovel.

We learned that a battalion of the 143rd Infantry was in reserve on a hill to our south about a mile away. Also our tanks began to mill round us, and the tank commander came into the CP to get the situation. The tanks drew down more fire on us so his presence was not so welcome as one might think. We began sending observation parties up to the infantry to get observation and fire on the Germans. We sent out Capt. Joseph T. Brown and Lt. Oscar B. Colley in a radio car to the hill about 1300 hours. Their orders were to contact the 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, and to establish observation and communications. No word was heard from the party after it left the CP. Their car and equipment were later found well up on the hill. Capt. Brown, we later found out, had been captured; and Lt. Colley had been killed. Lt. Quast organized a detail and went out about half an hour later with the mission of establishing liaison with the infantry CP. He found the CP and checked in over wire communications and tried to extend the wire to Hill 424 where

observers were supposed to be in place. When he and his detail got within 300 yards of the objective, he was stopped by machine gun fire. The line would not test back from this point, so the detail ran the line back only to find the infantry CP and switchboard abandoned. Lt. Quast said, "Got up to a few hundred yards of Capt. Brown and Lt. Colley and we were fired on by MG 34's. Found our wire was dead, so traced back to town to find the cause. Here we found that our troops had pulled out of the town. Not one soldier could be seen. Fired on again by the Germans so we also took out from town down the mountainside and back to our lines. Feared the worst for Capt. Brown and Lt. Colley."

Capt. Bennett was sent up with a detail to establish observation about 1330 hours. On the way up he met Lt. Seward and together they found observation. They got two infantry radios from D Company to relay commands to their other radio and went up to hill above Altavilla around to the left (Hill 424) flank. Capt. Bennett said, "Advanced to hill above Altavilla to left flank. I was using an infantry radio. Instructed Sgt. Prater, Cpl. Gideon, Pvts. Shepherd and Wade to take our radio and one infantry radio back down to a safe place while Lt. Seward and I went forward for observation. Enemy infantry advanced on the hill from all directions at the base, when our calls for artillery fire pinned them down. Meanwhile a small group of our troops went to the top of the ridge. On top of the ridge, unable to observe due to small arms and MG fire, we shifted artillery fire to right where the enemy was coming. Being unable to communicate with our radio, Lt. Seward, party, and I tried to make it back to ammunition dump with infantry ammunition carriers to get ammunition. We went for our communications in town. Enemy advancing rapidly. We found Battery "A" jeep with a radio that was in working order. Enemy shell fire began. I said to the group with me, 'We cannot leave this jeep and radio in town'. Pvt. John R. Lloyd of Headquarters Battery said, 'Captain, I'm game to drive this vehicle down the hill if you go with me'. We got in the jeep and started down the hill. Artillery shells were falling all around us. We came between two wrecked buildings on the right of us which blocked the road. A shell hit within twenty yards of the vehicle. Every one except Pvt. Lloyd went over the wall on the right side. Lloyd was last seen still going down the road."

Capt. Gabbert from Battery "A" went out and established a battery O.P. Lt. Wickham went up the hill laying wire as he went with the mission of getting wire communication to Capt. Brown. He made it up the hill where he found Capt. Brown's car, but Capt. Brown was missing.

The Germans launched an attack in force about 1700 hours after previously shelling the hills and town all day with artillery and mortars. The 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, was forced to withdraw, and the men were somewhat disorganized as they came down the hill under intense MG fire from the now familiar ripping MF 34's. The infantry formed up for a stand along the line of gun positions of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion; and the 3rd Battalion, 143rd Infantry, started up to stop the German advance. Truck convoys were called to haul in other doughboys'

units to plug up the hole. The situation got very hard on the nerves as shelling of positions and CP became heavier. News of a big tank battle to our west began to trickle in, and the sound of heavy guns in that direction did not ease the situation. Jerry each day at dusk was giving the beach a bombing; and an occasional dogfight and a flamer lit up the sky. Capt. Bennett and Lt. Seward returned to the CP, and Lt. Quast came back.

Plans for a counterattack were made and finished during the night. Prearranged fires were completed just in time to fire the preparation at 0545 hours on the morning of 13 September 1943. This preparation was fired by 132nd Field Artillery Battalion, 151st Field Artillery Battalion, 155th Field Artillery Battalion and lasted until 0600 hours. The fire was laid on hills above Allavilla. The fire was lifted at 0600 hours. The range was increased about 200 yards and kept up until 0639 hours at which time the fire was lifted another 200 yards and kept up until 0700 hours. A volley of smoke was fired as the last volley of preparation, and several volleys of smoke were fired in other preparations. The infantry assault troops were the 3rd Battalion, 143rd Infantry; 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry; and the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry. We sent Lt. Quast as our observer with the 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry. Lts. Boyle and Stout were with the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry. We lost contact for awhile with the infantry, but observers from 133rd Field Artillery Battalion were with their infantry, 3rd Battalion, 143rd. We had a radio car of 133rd Field Artillery Battalion at our CP to maintain communication with their two observers, Capt. Giles and Lt. Richmond.

We kept continuously busy handling missions for the six observers who were up on Altavilla. The attack was successful in the main since high ground above Altavilla was taken and Lt. Quast observed and adjusted fire from there with very good results on parts of the 16th Panzer Division. However, Hill 424 to the east was held by the Germans who were not dislodged. Lt. Quast said, "I set up my radio on the front line where I had good observation on the valley to the north. I had a good time adjusting fire on the Panzer Division as they came down a road on which I had good observation. The 15th Grenadiers took the hill to our right and gave us hell from that quarter." Lt. Quast adjusted fire of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion and 155th Field Artillery Battalion on those troops and vehicles. He also adjusted fire on Hill 424 at dusk that evening—a hill known to be held by the Germans.

At 1240 hours, 13 September 1943, a hit was made in Battery "B" gun position while that battery was firing a mission, and Chief of Section, Sgt. Stewart Clark, was killed by fragments. Brig. Gen. Cowles, 36th Division Artillery Commander, spent the night of 12 September and most of the day of 13 September in the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion CP. He had with him part of his staff and issued his orders from there. He told us that ours was definitely the hot spot of the battle.

All that day the fighting was heavy on the hills and our infantry seemed to be making no headway. About dusk all battalions began to withdraw. The 133rd Field Artillery Battalion observers were withdrawn

about dusk. The artillery received orders to prepare to displace positions. Positions were reconnoitered on the south side of Defissa Monte, and at 0100 hours, 14 September 1943, the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion moved under cover of darkness. We learned that a defensive line was being formed extending northwest to Hill M. S. Chirko and southeast to high ground around Albanella. All the artillery of the division successfully displaced positions to our flanks and rear. All of our infantry began a withdrawal to that line except the 3rd Battalion, 143rd Infantry, which held fast the ground to the northwest of Altavilla. Lt. Quast remained with the 3rd Battalion, 143rd Infantry, and his radio proved to be the only communication which this isolated unit had with the division. The Germans had closed around them. Paratroopers landed that night and began to organize on the high ground, putting out several O.P.s. The paratroopers turned out to be the 82nd Airborne. We remained in this position for five days.

Our observation was organized on high ground, putting out several O.P.s. Officers on these O.P.s were: Capt. Bennett, Lts. Curtiss, Wickham, Ruffin, Chapman, Stout, Boyles, Hearn, and Seward. Direct telephone lines to each officer were laid. This communication was in addition to radios that observers had. The battalion was kept busy day and night shooting missions for our observers and for division artillery. Lt. Quast escaped from Altavilla on the night of 14 September 1943, with 3rd Battalion, 143rd Infantry, and rejoined the battalion on the morning of 15 September 1943. We were subjected to intermittent shelling in our position, and on one occasion an accurate counter-battery was delivered against Battery "A". We moved Battery "A"'s position that night; the old position received another good shelling early the next morning. Lt. Seward spotted the enemy battery firing and neutralized it. We fired numerous missions on tanks and vehicles. The enemy kept sending out roving tanks that kept up a constant harassing fire against our positions. We in turn sent tanks against him or crashed down on his vehicle concentrations with division artillery or battalion concentrations. During this period, two problems were observed and adjusted by infantry officers, their sensings relayed through artillerymen who could not observe the targets. We had excellent results on both missions.

On 16 September, the 505th Airborne moved out with the mission of retaking high ground around Altavilla. Our observers with the Airborne were Lts. Quast, Wickham, Hearn, Ruffin, and Boyle. The 505th attained their objective against hard enemy resistance. Jerry brought everything down on them. Our artillery observers had some good shooting in this action. Lt. Hearn, for example, got a very good counter battery adjustment on a German battery with the 36th Field Artillery Battalion's 155mm rifles. He adjusted singly on two of the guns that were plainly visible; and, as best he could observe, he destroyed the pieces and many of the gun crews. He ended up firing a battery volley of the 155's in the position. He did this using a German B.C. scope captured at his position. Lt. Wickham registered one gun on a locality where he planned a concentration to cover the advance of the Airborne troops. About half



an hour later on a time schedule, we laid in a battalion concentration for three minutes. We received a gratifying report on the results of this fire. A direct hit on a mortar position scattered Germans all over the place. After the Airborne troops successfully occupied the ground, meeting very little resistance, they found many German casualties—machine gunners and riflemen. All were very well pleased with this short concentration. Lt. Hearn's party got two German mortar shells right in their O.P. at 1115 hours, 17 September 1943. Pvt. Lehew was wounded in the leg by a fragment. The whole party was badly shaken up by the concussion and hastily retired from the position. Lt. Hearne found cuts and holes made by fragments in his web equipment and in his field glass case.

On the night of 18 September about 2000 hours, the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion was placed in support of the O'Daniels force on the left of the division sector and furnished the following officers with them: Lts. Stout, Seward, Reed, and two observers from the 131st Field Artillery Battalion. (Mission of 131st was to reinforce the fire of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion.) The 132nd Field Artillery Battalion displaced at 2230 hours to new positions; but we fired no mission at all from this position, not even registration. The 36th Division Artillery informed us about 0630 hours on the morning of 19 September that we would not fire without clearing with division artillery. All was quiet in all sectors. Our troops occupied the high ground around Altavilla. Lts. Quast and Hearn reported enemy gun positions far to the north near Serre. These were taken under fire by the 155mm guns using Air O.P.s.

During the night of 19 September, the 141st Infantry Regiment relieved the O'Daniels force in the Altavilla area. Arrangements were made with Col. Werner for our observers to contact the 141st elements to give them artillery support during the relief of the unit at the front. No enemy artillery or activity were encountered. The enemy was out of range of our artillery.

On the afternoon of the 19th, Lt. Plunkett relieved Lt. Quast at his O.P.; and Lt. Griffith relieved Lt. Boyle at his O.P. All observers reported all quiet and no enemy in range. Several activities were reported far to the north and northwest. No firing ensued.

Our troops remained in their same position, maintaining observation until 1550 hours Tuesday, 21 September 1943, when the battalion was ordered to a bivouac for rest and replacements.

The bivouac area was within eight miles of Altavilla. On the 25th a training program was started. This training program included physical conditioning and training of all sections of the battalion. Stamina runs and forced marches made up the major portion of the physical conditioning, and most of the training was devoted to the technique of firing artillery.

The purpose of training and working as part of a big team was now very clear to us. Our baptism of fire had not been very long, but it had been severe, and everyone was well aware of the necessity of hard training and preparation for the tough work ahead.

## Chapter IV

### Rest, Reorganization, Training, and the One Hundred and Twenty Days of Combat That Followed

#### October 1943

The battalion remained in the bivouac area north of Altavilla, conducting normal training, until 13 October when, along with other units of the division, it moved to another division bivouac area northwest of Naples. The move to this area was a pleasant journey, because everyone was anxious to see Naples and it seemed that the majority of the civilians were happy to see us. However, we did not get to see much of Naples that day. On the 15th the battalion started sending ten per cent on pass to Naples twice a day. Before the end of October, everyone in the battalion had been to Naples at least twice. All the while a busy training schedule was carried out, and the battalion conducted several firing problems.

#### November 1943

On 6 November 1943, the battalion moved under cover of darkness to the 36th Division assembly area generally north of Capua, Italy. The division movement was by combat team, the 142nd Regimental Combat Team, making the movement between 1700 hours and 2100 hours. Attached for combat operations and making the march with this battalion was Battery "B" 443 Anti-Aircraft. Movement of the battalion was preceded by a battalion quartering party on 3 November 1943.

From 2300 hours, 6 November, until 1815 hours, 16 November, the battalion remained in the division area north of Capua. Camouflage, maintenance and discipline were stressed throughout this period. Training consisted principally of physical conditioning of the men and practice in river crossings. River crossing training took place on the Volturno River east of Capua. On 13 November instructions were received that units of the 142nd Regimental Combat Team would relieve units of the 7th Regimental Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, in the Mignano area.

The following morning the battalion commander, Lt. Col. John N. Green, accompanied by battery commanders, left to make a reconnaissance of routes and positions and to make contact with the units of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion which we were to relieve. The party returned to the battalion area around 1130 hours, 15 November; and it

was learned that units of this battalion would relieve units of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion in two groups during darkness on the nights of 16 and 17 November. Liaison Officer No. 1, 1st Lt. Remus L. Jones, and party, with 1st Lt. John J. Wickham and 2nd Lt. Paul V. Reilly, Battery "A" Forward Observers, with their parties, left at 1345 hours to make contact with the respective groups they were to relieve and who were to orient them on the ground as to enemy installations, locations, etc., prior to the arrival of the battalion. The remaining liaison forward observer parties were to leave at 30-minute intervals—Liaison Forward Observer Group No. 2 composed of 1st Lt. Charles L. Hearn, 1st Lt. Virginius O. Ruffin, and 2nd Lt. Donald C. Gilpin, Battery "B" Forward Observers, with their parties; Group 3, 1st Lt. Gaines M. Boyle, Liaison Officer No. 3, with party, 1st Lt. James H. Stout and 2nd Lt. Bernard F. Reed, Battery "C" Forward Observers, with parties. Plans were made for movement of the batteries.

At 1000 hours, 16 November, Lt. Col. John N. Green, Capt. Floyd D. Gattis, Asst. S-3, Headquarters Battery Commanding Officer, and party; Battery "B" commanding officer and party; Battery "C" commanding officer and party left the battalion command post for the advanced position to organize battery areas for the arrival of "B", "C", and Headquarters Batteries after dark. At 1845 hours the convoy left for the new location. Several days' rain had made all roads in the Mignano area next to impassable and mud chains were put on all vehicles before departure. The march was completed without incident but with considerable delay en route caused by bypassing blown-out bridges and traffic supplying front-line units. The route followed was Highway No. 6.

The convoy arrived in the new position around 2240 hours and went into surveyed positions. An attempt to put "B" Battery in an advanced position failed, because it was impossible to take vehicles more than a few yards off of established roads, the mud being so deep. As it was, it was necessary to use a tractor to put our "B" and "C" Battery howitzers into position and to remove the howitzers of "B" and "C" Batteries, 10th Field Artillery Battalion, which were pulled out that night. By 0300 hours, 17 November 1943, Batteries "B" and "C" were in position, laid and ready to fire. Each battery was registered shortly after dawn, using an observer from the 3rd Division Artillery Air Section. The relief of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion was completed after dark on the night of 17 November with the arrival of Battery "A" and Service Battery. It was again necessary to use tractors to place the Battery "A" howitzers in position and to remove the howitzers of Battery "A", 10th Field Artillery Battalion. Battery "A" was placed in surveyed position, and completed occupation of the position was laid and ready to fire at about 0545 hours, 18 November. The Battery "A" position was an advanced position with nothing more than slight defilade from enemy observation on Mt. La Defensa and Mt. Lungo. For this reason it was decided that Battery "A" would not be used during the hours of darkness on harassing and interdiction fires, but would be used during darkness only on emergency missions. Relief of the 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, by the

142nd Infantry was accomplished during the hours of darkness on 16-17 November.

In general, operations from 17-30 November, inclusive, may be summarized briefly. The situation throughout this period remained fairly static with little activity on either side, other than constant patrolling by our infantry units and a constant change of artillery fire. The relative inactivity during these days may be attributed to several factors: first, the seemingly never-ceasing rainfall which restricted movement to a minimum and comfort to something that could only be remembered, particularly by the men in the line; second, the bringing up and installation of supporting artillery units and other troops and the planning of future operations; and third, the difficulty in maintaining suitable communications. Wire lines, including those most carefully laid, were constantly going out or being broken by enemy shell fire, by vehicular movement in the mud (particularly tracked vehicles), and sometimes apparently for no reason at all. One instance was reported of a wire shorted to the ground by means of a phonograph needle, evidently work of some German sympathizer. Never-ending servicing of all wire was required to keep wire communications properly functioning. The constant rain and the difficulty in keeping moisture away from the radios and batteries, combined with a supply of batteries not up to standard as far as quality was concerned, hampered radio communication to a considerable extent and made more difficult the job of supplying our liaison officers and forward observers on the mountains with this essential item. During this two-weeks period, there were not more than two days when it did not rain—and it probably rained during the night on those days too. Resupply of ammunition throughout this period also presented a problem, greatly enhanced by the continuous rain. Long supply lines with next-to-impassable roads made each ammunition haul a twelve-hour trip. The battery positions could only be supplied at night, and then each round had to be carried by hand some 300-400 yards to the gun position, requiring many hours each night.

Throughout the two-weeks period, one liaison officer and two forward observers were in position with each infantry battalion. Initially, the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 142nd Infantry, were in position on the north-eastern ridge of Mt. La Defensa sloping toward Mignano, with the 2nd Battalion on the right. Mission of the 142nd Infantry was purely a defensive mission—i.e., to hold the ridge installation. Third Battalion, 142nd Infantry, was in reserve in position near the foot of the mountain. With British units on our left, with a mission during this period also on a defensive nature, it was necessary that all defensive fires, harassing and interdictory fires, and patrol activity by our infantry units be closely coordinated. As a result, many harassing and interdictory missions, as well as observed missions on targets picked up by our observers, were fired upon in the British sector. In turn, Royal Artillery units assisted in fires on targets in our sector. During this period, too, we had our first introduction to what the British mean by the term, "Drum-Fire," with reference to their use of the twenty-five pounder. The phrase is very descriptive.

Since the Germans had only recently occupied the area in which we were now in position, it is only reasonable to suppose that they had fairly accurate locations of most of the probable gun positions we could occupy. This fact, coupled with the perfect observation they had from Mt. Camino, Mt. La Defensa and Mt. Lungo, overlooking the entire valley area, made us certain from the beginning that we would receive our share of harassing fire and counter-battery. This proved to be the case since Battery "B" position, Battery "C" position, and the Headquarters Battery and command post installations were subjected intermittently to harassing fires, usually by one or two guns.

Our first casualties during this operation were received on 22 November 1943 when a shell burst in Battery "C" area at about 1920 hours. Three men walking guard were slightly wounded. On 23 November a shell burst in the Battery "C" gun position, killing two men, seriously wounding one, and slightly wounding another. On 24 November two members of Battery "A" forward observer party were killed instantly when a shell made a direct hit on the radio tent in which they were sleeping. Two additional casualties were counted on 26 November when two Battery "C" wiremen who were servicing wire lines a mile south of Mignano were slightly wounded when a shell burst nearby. Much could be written concerning the near misses.

Under cover of darkness on the night of 30 November, Batteries "B", "C", and Headquarters displaced to advanced positions in the vicinity of Battery "A" position.

#### December 1943

In general throughout the month of December, the same difficulties were encountered as those discussed in the narrative covering November operations. The almost continuous rainfall restricted vehicular movement, principally to established roads, and necessitated the use of tractors or bulldozers to move the howitzers in or out of any position. Also, because of this factor, all howitzer positions were restricted to areas adjacent to established roads.

The battalion position area was an exposed area with nothing more than sight defilade from enemy observation from Mt. Camino, Mt. La Defensa, and Mt. Lungo. Necessarily all installation and movement of supplies had to be at night. On the night of 30 November all of Battery "B" howitzers were placed in position, but by daylight on 1 December only two of the Battery "C" guns had been installed. This was due primarily to the availability of only one bulldozer to assist in the occupation of the new positions. Occupation of the Battery "C" position was completed after darkness on 1 December. Throughout occupation of the new area from about 1900 hours, 30 November, until about 0400 hours, 1 December, the command post area and the adjacent Mignano Highway were shelled intermittently, approximately 55 rounds landing in the area. These were mostly 105mm rounds, although some were 150mm and about three were 160mm. There were eight or ten duds in the group.

Little firing was done by the battalion on 1-2 December because of

the lack of flash defilade and also in order that all plans for the operation "Raincoat" could be coordinated between the units participating. Our mission throughout the operation was to support the attack of the 142nd Infantry, which at 0620 hours, 3 December, was to seize and hold the Mt. La Defensa Ridge 368 and the Mt. Maggoire Hill masses. Also, in direct support of the 142nd Infantry (as a groupment under command of the commanding officer, 132nd Field Artillery Battalion) was the 131st Field Artillery Battalion (105mm), with the 155th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm) reinforcing our fires on call. The attack of the 142nd Infantry was coordinated with the attack of the 1st Special Service Force which was to seize and hold Hill 960 (Mt. La Defensa) initially and the British 56th Division which was to take Monastery Ridge and Mt. Camino Peak on the left, the whole constituting the operation.

In preparation for the operation many preliminary fires, close direct support concentrations, and defensive fire plans to be used when the final objectives were attained were all worked out by personnel of the combat team. Throughout this operation, as in all operations, two forward observer groups and one liaison party functioned with each of the infantry battalions. In addition two battalion observation posts were maintained, as well as command liaison with infantry regimental commander at all times, either by the presence of the battalion commander, Lt. Col. John N. Green, at the infantry command post, or his representative in his absence.

The success of the operation and of the next subsequent operation, insofar as this battalion is concerned, can best be attested to by reference to the letter of commendation initiated by Col. G. E. Lynch, Commanding Officer, 142nd Regimental Combat Team, and the indorsements thereto.

The following is a true copy of the letter of commendation and indorsement:

1st Ind

HQ, 36th INFANTRY DIVISION, APO 36, U.S. Army, 23 December  
1943

TO: Commanding Officer, 36th Division Artillery, APO 36, U.S.  
Army

1. The Division Commander has noted, on many occasions, the firm, aggressive, active personal leadership of Lt. Col. John N. Green, Commanding Officer, 132nd Field Artillery Battalion, and is also aware of the very effective manner in which all of the resources of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion have been devoted to the close support of Infantry units with which it has been associated. The strong personal leadership of Lieutenant Colonel John N. Green is principally responsible for the fact that the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion has been able to effectively support the Infantry with which it has been associated.

2. The magnificent work of the observation personnel, communications personnel, transportation personnel and gun battery personnel, working in cooperation under most difficult conditions of terrain, weather and hardship, has earned for the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion the highest compliments for efficiency in battle.

3. I wish to add my commendation for the splendid service ren-

dered by the officers and men of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion and its Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel John N. Green. Their fine spirit, devotion to duty and excellent teamwork is a real contribution to the efficiency of the Division as a whole.

/s/ FRED L. WALKER  
/t/ FRED L. WALKER  
Major General, U.S. Army  
Commanding

2nd Ind.

HEADQUARTERS, 36th Inf. Div. Arty, APO 36, U.S. Army,

25 December 1943

TO: C. O. 132nd F.A. Bn., APO 36, U.S. Army

1. The Division Artillery commander has noted with extreme gratification the commendation originated by Lt. Col. G. E. Lynch, 142nd Infantry, and 1st Indorsement thereto by the Division Commander.

2. I wish to add my comendation and congratulations on the splendid work of your battalion and for your personal devotion to duty and exemplary leadership.

/s/ WALTER W. HESS JR.  
/t/ WALTER W. HESS JR.  
Colonel, Field Artillery  
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS, 142nd INFANTRY

APO 36, U. S. ARMY

20 December 1943

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO : The Commanding General, 36th Inf Div, APO 36, U.S. Army

1. The work of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion during the engagements of this Regimental Combat Team with the Germans on Mt. Maggiore and Mt. Lungo during the period December 3 to December 19, 1943, was of such outstanding calibre that I feel honored in being able to report its achievements to the Division Commander, with the request that those achievements be made a matter of record and unit history.

2. The Combat Team had swift and complete success in its efforts. The part the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion played in attaining these successes cannot be measured; however, it can be said that without the support of that Battalion, the results would not have approached those actually reached. Enemy counterattacks were destroyed in the assembly phase; enemy truck columns were destroyed by surprise fires; positions were softened by close direct support fires, and in every step of the action, from planning to completion, the personnel of the battalion were completely one with the 142nd Infantry Regiment in forming a true combat team.

3. It is worthy of note that the probable reason for the success attained by this battalion is that the commander himself, on his own initiative, was present with the 142nd Infantry Regimental Commander from the opening of the action until the close of the battle. He visited Infantry Battalion Commanders and his own OP's at times when the situation warranted his absence from the Regimental CP. To further the efficiency of our team-work he has initiated in his unit the practice of having Battery Commanders, Staff Officers, and Battery Officers operate as forward observers with the Infantry Companies, and firing battery personnel taking turns in functioning as

OP parties. This has resulted in a keen appreciation by the men who operate the guns, of the urgent necessity for quick, accurate fire when called for by the Infantry.

4. Too much credit cannot be given to Lt. Col. John N. Green, Commanding Officer of the 132nd Field Artillery, for the successful functioning of the Artillery in this Infantry Artillery Team.

/s/ G. E. LYNCH  
/t/ G. E. LYNCH  
Lt. Col. +142nd Inf.  
Commanding

By 8 December the operation "Raincoat" had virtually been completed. In passing, the comment could be made that the weather seemed to typify the name of the operation, since it rained almost every day. During the period, all types of targets were engaged. Preparation fires, in which all artillery units, both British and American, in the sector took part, were probably the heaviest in the Italian campaign. The extent of casualties caused by the fire is of course not known. Because of the caves and the well-organized positions held by the Germans, the probabilities are that they were not great. Most prisoners of war taken, however, testified to the demoralizing effect of the heavy concentrations of artillery fire, and many were undoubtedly influenced in their decision to give up rather than face the intensity of Allied artillery fire again.

From 8-15 December the situation remained fairly static with only the normal activity—harassing and interdiction fires at night, observed fires on targets of opportunity during the day. Several times during this period, targets were marked for Air Corps bombing missions by the use of smoke. Throughout this period there was considerable air activity, both by the enemy and our own, with occasional enemy raids strafing and bombing in the vicinity of Mignano. On these occasions it was heartening to see the sections of our attached anti-aircraft artillery unit, Battery "A", 443rd AAA, go into action. It seemed to welcome each enemy plane and always gave a good account of itself. It was quite successful too in discouraging the close approach of enemy planes; no unfriendly plane came close enough to the battalion area to do damage. A number of enemy planes were shot down although we could never tell who got in the good work. Intermittently throughout the period, the command post and the battalion area could be subjected to harassing fire by German guns of various sizes. After he lost his observation from Camino-Defensa and Monastery Ridge however, no sizeable concentrations were laid down. One incident, worthy of note as being unusual for a field artillery battalion, occurred on the night of 5 December when Battery "C" reported that it was being shelled by enemy mortar fire. Investigation disclosed that the Germans had retaken Monastery Ridge from the British (temporarily) and that the mortar fire was originating from that vicinity.

By 15 December plans had been completed for the attack of the 142nd Infantry to seize and hold Mt. Lungo—the attack to jump off at 1700 hours on that day. Our fires were to be reinforced by the fires of the 155th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm). The operation was speedily and successfully concluded, the infantry taking some prisoners on Lungo



but meeting little opposition. By the afternoon of 16 December units of the 142nd Infantry had been relieved by elements of 15th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division. Because of damaged bridges and an impassable road, the 39th Field Artillery Battalion, the direct support artillery unit of the 15th Regimental Combat Team, which was to relieve this battalion, was unable to move into position. Our liaison officers and observers had been instructed to remain in position for twenty-four hours after relief of the 142nd Infantry had been accomplished in order to orient on the ground the observers and officers of the relieving unit. Delay of the 39th Field Artillery, which did not occupy position until the night of 21 December, made it necessary that observers and liaison officers remain at their positions until the afternoon of 22 December.

Preceded by two days of labor or working parties from each of the batteries which were organizing the new position areas, the battalion moved on 22 December to new positions in the Venafro sector. Surprisingly enough the weather had been good for several days, and a few of the men, at least, had begun to think that there was something to the proverbial expression "Sunny Italy." However when it became evident that we were to displace, the rains came. Movement to the new area and occupation of the positions were accomplished during a steady rain that lasted throughout the night. By the time the weather improved and visibility was good again, we were well camouflaged. There had been no enemy shelling of the area during occupation; no enemy air activity. Ducks wouldn't even fly in weather like this. The new positions were on a ridge on the southern slopes of Mt. Sammuero about 2000 meters east of San Pietro. As the battery positions were on a pronounced slope, each howitzer section was at a different elevation. The area was one of the few areas available for occupation that could be occupied. Again it was as necessary to require the assistance of a bulldozer to occupy the position as it had been to remove each howitzer from the position vacated. Because of the limited area and the exposed position, all prime movers and vehicles not needed were sent back to the service battery area near Venafro, and only the gun crews and the minimum personnel necessary to operate remained in the forward area.

The position was occupied until 28 December. The situation during this period remained fairly static and little firing was done, a few targets of opportunity had been engaged and several harassing missions fired. Christmas Day differed from those preceding by reason of an excellent turkey dinner and a cheery "Greeting of the Season" passed from one man to the next. Many men attended church services in Venafro. For many it was the first Christmas spent away from home—and there was much letter writing. Late in the afternoon the battalion commander adjusted fire from an air O.P. on two enemy gun batteries—the battalion's Christmas greeting to the Nazis.

On 27 December it was learned that our position area would be taken over by the 151st Field Artillery Battalion, the artillery units of our division being relieved by the artillery units of the 34th Infantry Division. On the same date it was also learned that this battalion, as part of the

142nd Regimental Combat Team, would not be relieved but would occupy positions in the vicinity of Coppagna, then occupied by the 376th Field Artillery Battalion. The move was made the following day by echelon. The command post and fire direction center were installed in a rock enclosure formed by some old ruins on the left flank of the Battery "B" position. We were again in direct support of the 142nd Infantry, detached from the division and attached to II Corps, as of 1500 hours, 30 December 1943. Mission of the 142nd Infantry was to take over the areas of Hills 1205 and 687, relieving the 504 Airborne Infantry and the First Special Force. This was effected by daybreak on the 29th by our observers and liaison officers with their respective battalions.

Our first casualty during the month occurred on 1 December when a member of the service battery ration detail was seriously wounded by a shell fragment as rations were being delivered to the Battery "B" area. Death resulted on the 14th. On the 2nd a member of the Battery "B" forward observer group was slightly wounded on Mt. La Defensa. On 5 December a shell burst near the doorway of a house on the Battery "B" CP area, instantly killing three Headquarters Battery men and slightly wounding one. Fragments from a shell bursting nearby slightly wounded a member of the Battery "B" forward observer group on Hill 960 on 6 December while he was sleeping. On this same date 1st Lt. Virginius O. Ruffin, Battery "B" Forward Observer, was slightly wounded by machine gun fire on Hill 510 during a German counter-attack. On 16 December a member of the Battery "A" forward observer section was seriously wounded when a shell from an enemy battery burst near his position near Mt. Giacomo.

On 7 December 1st Lt. William P. Ellermeyer with a detail of two Battery "B" men was sent to man the observation post of 1st Lt. Virginius Ruffin, evacuated because of wounds, on Hill 510. These three men were last seen about 1600 hours on that date in the vicinity of 510, shortly before a German counter-attack and were captured. Many men have been praised and commended for work well done. That all could not be listed is regrettable, for there are many heroic actions that go unknown or unnoticed during the excitement of battle and much essential work well done that could never be outstanding. It is these things that constitute war and battle: rain and mud, cold and discomfort, digging and sleepless nights and tiring days, being afraid and being hungry, repairing roads and building bridges, being lonely, and endless numbers of little things—that, principally, is of what war consists. All men then who are soldiers, are good soldiers, because all men experience all of these things.

The month and the year ended in a fitting fashion. The 31st brought a day of rain and toward dusk high gusty winds which achieved gale-like proportions. In Texas the wind might have been termed a "rip-snorter." It succeeded in pulling one of the cub planes from its moorings shortly after dark, carrying it some twenty yards and setting it down, bottom-side up. The plane was badly damaged.

Throughout the month a total of 21,069 rounds of ammunition had been fired.

## January 1944

Mr. Weatherman was not very considerate in his welcome of the New Year. With the passing of 1943 and the arrival of young 1944, we were being greeted with an 80-mile wind mixed with rain, sleet, and snow. Those of us who were not on a tour of duty were huddled in blankets attempting to keep warm. A welcome to the New Year was far from our thoughts at the time.

Since the beginning of a new year, the battalion occupied positions about 3000 meters south of Venafro with the mission of direct support of 142nd Infantry. The command post and fire direction center were located in the walled enclosure of an old ruins about 200 yards to the left flank of Battery "B". The rear echelon of the battalion was in position on the old olive grove slope about one mile west of Venafro and on the north side of the Venafro-Coppagna road. The mission of the 142nd Infantry was to maintain garrison on Hills 1205 and 687 and the high ground east and north of San Vittore.

The 142nd Infantry had the mission of holding until elements of the 34th Division could get into position and attack in the direction of San Vittore and the high ground to the north and northwest. As direct support, our activity during the period was confined to harassing fires, defensive fires, and a few observed missions where observation would permit. The 6th Armored group reinforced our fires during this period.

On 3 January the battalion was assigned the mission of direct support of the 2nd Regiment of the Special Service Force. Their mission was to seize the high ground generally north of San Vittore and along the boundary of the 45th Division. The ground was to be occupied by elements of the 34th Division. To furnish direct support of 2nd Regiment, Special Service Force, liaison was established with the regimental headquarters and forward observers were sent out to accompany the assault units.

On 4 January this battalion passed to control of 6th Field Artillery Armored Group. During this period, 4 January to 13 January inclusive, our mission was direct support of 2nd Regiment, Special Service Force, when actively committed and reinforcement of the fires of the 131st and 93rd Field Artillery Battalions which were in direct support of the 1st and 3rd Regiments of the Special Service Force, respectively.

The plan for support was to maintain close liaison and to keep forward observers up close with assault elements of the Special Service Force, 2nd Regiment. In the plans for the attack no preparation fires were included, as none were desired by this force. The support consisted of observed missions, close-in defensive fires during the night and during periods of reorganization, together with unobserved harassing missions and interdiction fires. To enable the battalion to accomplish its mission, the battalion displaced forward to positions in the valley approximately 1000 meters northeast of Copagna on the morning of 9 January 1944.

At 1500 hours, 7 January 1944, the battalion took over the mission of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion, supporting the 133rd Infantry, also continuing support of 2nd Regiment, Special Service Force. The 131st

and 155th Field Artillery Battalions were assigned to reinforce this battalion. The mission of the 2nd Regiment of the Special Service Force was accomplished on 13 January 1944, and it was relieved by the 133rd Infantry.

On 11 January we received notice that the 36th Division would return to combat and that this battalion would be relieved of the present assignment as soon as the mission of the Special Service Force was accomplished.

On 12 January 1944, reconnaissance was made for new positions in the area between Mt. Lungo and Mt. Trochio from which positions we were to be assigned the mission of general support of the 36th Division and the reinforcement of fires of the 131st Field Artillery Battalion which was to be in direct support of the 141st Infantry. The mission of the 2nd Regiment, Special Service Force, was accomplished on 13 January; and at 1500 hours this date, we were relieved of the mission of direct support of this force in order to move to new positions for which previous reconnaissance and preparations had been made. The battalion moved as a unit under cover of darkness to the new positions and was in position and ready to fire by daylight 14 January 1944. On 14 and 15 January the battalion was occupied with registration, improving positions, establishment of observation posts, harassing fire, and a few observed missions and coordination of fires with the 131st Field Artillery in support of the attack of the 141st Infantry on the southern portion of Mt. Trochio. The mission of the 141st Infantry was accomplished on 16 January with little resistance. During the period 17 January to 20 January inclusive, the battalion resumed harassing missions assigned by division artillery and such observed missions as were possible during the limited periods that observation would permit. Our general target area was the valley west of the Rapido River, extending from Cassino to the Liri River. During most of the day, this area was covered by fog and haze which permitted very little observation. On the night of 19 January the battalion displaced to positions along the railroad between Mt. Porchia and Mt. Trochio.

On 20 January we were assigned the mission of general support of the 36th Infantry Division and the reinforcement of the fires of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion. The mission of the division was to establish a bridgehead over the Rapido River in vicinity of St. Angelo. The mission of the 143rd Infantry, with the 133rd Field Artillery in direct support, was to cross the Rapido River to the south of St. Angelo and envelop the town from the south and southwest. To support this mission with artillery fire, a heavy thirty-minute preparation and heavy concentrations to be fired beginning with "H" hour were planned, lifting from phase line to phase line on a time schedule. The plans of fires for this battalion were closely coordinated with the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion and the division artillery. The time of the attack was announced at 1930 hours, 20 January 1944. For the preparation and supporting fires for the period up to 2400 hours, 21 January, this battalion expended approx-

imately 3500 rounds of ammunition on prearranged observed missions in support of this attack.

On 26 January the 142nd Combat Team was attached to the 34th Infantry Division and assigned a mission of occupying the high ground that had previously been taken by the French about two kilometers east of Terelle, attacking to the south, and securing the high ground in the vicinity of Mt. Castellone. To accomplish this mission, the 142nd Infantry moved to an assembly area in vicinity of St. Elia, and on the night of 27 January this battalion displaced to positions in vicinity of Cevaro. The 935th Field Artillery Battalion took over the mission of direct support of the 142nd Infantry during the night of 27 and 28 January, until this battalion could complete organization of positions and complete installations to render direct support to 142nd Infantry which was to move into assembly areas during the night 28 January preparatory to attack the following morning. The initial objective of the 142nd Infantry was Hill 875.

Due to heavy opposition, the regiment was unable to reach its assembly position preparatory to attack until 29 January. The attack was launched the early morning of 30 January and the initial objective was secured 31 January, 1944.

In support of the operation, this battalion was assigned the 935th Field Artillery Battalion and the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion to reinforce its fires. No preparation fires were ordered by the infantry, and the plan for support consisted of close-in observed missions by forward observers who accompanied the assault companies. Counter battery and extensive harassing missions were fired on enemy supply routes, probable enemy gun positions, assembly areas, and known enemy installations.

Due to limited fire possibilities in the positions in vicinity of Cevaro, new positions were selected in vicinity of St. Michels, and one gun per battery was displaced forward and registered during afternoon of 30 January 1944. Displacement was made under cover of darkness on night of 30 January 1944 by batteries, and at all times there were at least two batteries in position to fire. Displacement was completed by daylight 31 January, and all batteries were in position to fire either observed or unobserved missions. Upon reaching its final objective, our forward observers with leading elements of the infantry began immediate adjustment of defensive concentrations on likely avenues of approach of the enemy and conducted fire on observed missions while units were in process of reorganization.

Thus with the end of January we were very actively engaged on a mission of direct support and doing our best to give the "doughboys" everything possible in the way of artillery support.

#### **February 1944**

With the opening of February, the battalion occupied positions in the vicinity of St. Michele with mission of direct support of the 142nd Infantry. The infantry at this time occupied positions on the high ground east of Terelle in vicinity of Hill 875. Their mission was to con-

tinue the attack to the south, make contact and relieve the 135th Infantry which, at that time, occupied Mt. Castellone. To support our mission, we were assigned the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion and the 935th Field Artillery Battalion to reinforce our fires.

The rugged mountainous terrain over which the attack was to be made created a problem in planning supporting fires. During the attack toward Mt. Castellone, many observed missions were fired. This attack was successful and relief of the 135th Infantry was accomplished by the 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, the night of 1-2 February.

Immediately upon occupation of Mt. Castellone, our forward observers registered the battalion on defensive concentrations on avenues of approach and likely assembly areas to this position. Our firing during the period of 2 to 10 February, inclusive, consisted of close-in supporting fires, harassing missions, and observed targets for the 142nd Infantry whose mission was to occupy and hold the high ground from Mt. Castellone to Hill 706. With the advantage of good observation from this high ground, many targets of opportunity were fired upon with excellent results.

The battalion with the 142nd Infantry reverted back to control of the 36th Infantry Division on 8 February, and plans were made for a joint attack by the 34th and 36th Divisions on Cassino and the high ground west and northwest. This attack was planned for the morning of 11 February. To increase our fire possibilities and to enable the battalion to support attack on the town of Piedmonte, a new battalion position was selected about 1500 yards west of St. Michele. Displacement was made during the night of 9-10 February, and registration was completed 10 February in preparation for this attack.

The mission of the 142nd Infantry was to seize Hill 486; and we were assigned the mission of direct support. Artillery support of the division for this operation required close coordination and planning between the infantry and artillery due to the limited objectives and limited sectors for maneuvering. A sixty-minute preparation was planned, consisting of battalion concentrations on known enemy strong points and installations. Accompanying fires consisted of observed missions and repetition of preparatory fires on call by forward observers and liaison officers with the assault battalions.

The 142nd Infantry was successful in seizing Hill 468 although the resistance was very heavy. Limited advances were made by the remainder of the division and the 34th Division due to heavy casualties and enemy resistance developed by the attack. At approximately 1800 hours, 11 February all units were ordered to organize and hold the ground they then occupied.

On 12 February the 36th Division was assigned the mission of organizing and defending the ridge extending from Mt. Castellone through Hill 706 to Hill 593. The mission of the division remained the same for the remainder of the month until relieved.

On the 15th the battalion had a ringside seat for the bombing of the famed Abbey Montecassino that started at 0900 hours. The following

extract is taken from the battalion Unit Journal written during the bombing: "The Abbey—Benedictine Monastery of Montecassino. The link between the dark ages and the age of light—The headache to All—all its splendor from where we are situated. What a picture! More and still more bombers come—Flying Fortresses, Marauders, and Mitchells." Another extract taken from the Unit Journal at 2400 hours states: "By this time Allied bombs have reduced the Abbey of Montecassino to a shell. This sanctuary was spared Allied shelling to the limit. Many Americans' lives were lost while this building stood. Each one of those lives was a sanctuary. This house of learning was built in 528 AD and since that time has been destroyed four times, but never so completely nor quickly as today. This writer watched the expression of the old civilians who saw the destruction. There was no outward show of remorse. In fact they viewed the bombing with about the same feelings as the GI's." From then on artillery shot up anything that the Air Corps had left living on the Monastery Hill.

The 142nd Infantry was relieved the night of 27-28 February at which time this battalion, along with other units of the 36th Infantry Division Artillery, was assigned the mission of general support and reinforcement of the fires of the 1st Battalion, 67th Group C.E.F. Artillery.

#### **MARCH 1944**

March found the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion still in the line—now in a mission of general support reinforcing the fires of 1st Battalion, 67th Group, D.I.A., French Forces. The battalion maintained an O.P. on Mt. Castellone near Hill 706 and furnished liaison officers to the French: Lt. Blanchet at French Division Artillery Headquarters, Lt. Buckley at 1st Battalion Headquarters. Capt. Gabbert was on liaison job with British New Zealand Corps.

Battery positions remained the same except for Battery "A" whose position was moved on 5 March due to counter battery fire received. The new position which in itself took plenty of work was prepared. A bridge was to be built across a stream, fields of fire cleared through some trees, and an exceptionally muddy road improved, under the able direction of Capt. Bennett. The dozer from the engineer battalion was very helpful in the night move. One gun was not put completely in position, because the small bulldozer could not handle the gun on a muddy slope. A larger bulldozer aided the completion of this very difficult position on the second night. It would be noted that this very difficult position was occupied because of crowded units in the general area. There were many artillery units in the valley before Cassino so that nearly every suitable artillery position was occupied.

The battalion O.P. on Mt. Castellone proved to be a very hot spot. The ridge was barren—very little cover and concealment existed. Our O.P. party occupied a cave which was evidently an old cistern, and successfully lived through heavy artillery and mortar concentrations. Maintaining and operating the O.P. were made more difficult by the fact that French infantry occupied the ground, resulting in a difference of language

and tactics. The observers at times found that this O.P. constituted the most forward element of the line in that sector which proved to be rather disturbing on occasions. The Germans frequently gave the ridge a thorough going over with mortars and artillery when movement was observed from the ridge. It is also interesting to note that when the Germans suspected observed fire was being conducted from the mountain, they showered it with fire. Actually when unobserved fires were being delivered on the Germans, they in turn would plaster the mountain. Another fact that is very unusual is that the mountain was exposed to fire from enemy artillery located back on both right flank and left flank. We found that German self-propelled artillery or tanks would move up on Abbey Hill (Abbey de Montecassino) and fire into the infantry positions. Also on the north toward Bellmonte Castello, and even farther east than that town, the Germans had artillery that fired into positions on Castellone. These fires from the flank and rear caused many reports of "friendly" artillery to hit the mountain. The O.P. proved its value, however, when observers there adjusted successful and damaging observed fires on German mule trains, infantry, and installations. One afternoon Capt. Jones observed and fired on three mule trains and an infantry column on one mountain trail. Harassing fires were fired on this concentration every night thereafter, and no further daylight activity was observed on the trail. Capt. Curtis fired on two mule trains on another mountain trail, then observed extensive activity in the town of Piedmonte, and brought down a division artillery concentration on the town. Visibility was nearly always undependable in these mountains. Weather changed rapidly from clear to fog or to rain and snow; then just as unexpectedly clouds and fog would clear away. Wire lines from the O.P. through Cairo across the valley to battalion were almost constantly under heavy fire and were difficult to keep in and serviced.

In the battery position areas several things of interest occurred. Battery "C" reported mortar shells falling about 300 yards to its left front. Fragments recovered were identified as Italian 81mm mortar shells with range of 5000 yards. The mortar concentrations were heavy, approximately 100 rounds each in two of the concentrations, and the mortar fire was moved about a little. The concentrations were repeated several days. The location of the mortar was never definitely discovered, but was thought to be the town of Cassino. The Germans intermittently delivered harassing fire on the road passing the battalion area. Some of the fire came from the north toward Bellmonte Castello, some came from the direction of Cassino and some from the Piedmonte area. Weapons being fired were thought to be 105mm and high velocity tank guns of about 75mm or 77mm. On 5 March Battery "A" received a heavy counter battery concentration that killed two men, wounded on seriously, and damaged one howitzer by gouging the tube. The fire was observed and adjusted as indicated by rounds of smoke and over and short ranging rounds of H.E. The conclusion was reached that actually the target was a cross roads (that is, where a much-used road crossed a stream bed that was also used as a road) that became a busy thoroughfare after Battery "A" moved in. Nevertheless the battalion commander decided

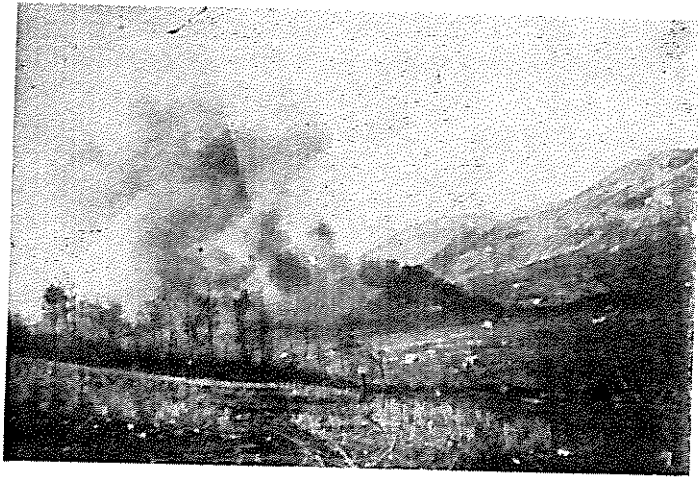


to move the battery and selected an area some 300 yards to the rear and slightly to right of Battery "B".

On 6 March this battalion detached a single howitzer and section from Battery "A" to act as a roving gun. The first position for the gun was between St. Michele and Cervaro. The gun was moved four days later to a position just outside of St. Michele. While in these positions, the roving gun was used for observed harassing missions. The majority of the targets was in the valley to the south and west of Cassino. Fire was conducted from the division artillery O.P. in Cervaro.

The very forward disposition of the artillery can be judged by receiving mortar fire near one battery. Actually the position area and battalion command post—fire direction center were about 4000-5000 yards from "downtown" Cassino. Our position was near the valley floor on the eastern forward slopes of the mountains of Cassino. This forward disposition made possible adjustments from the battery positions, establishing of a good local O.P., and the window O.P. at fire direction center. Fire was successfully adjusted from these points on various enemy activity both on Montecassino Hill and in the valley to the south. We also had a vantage point position for witnessing the division artillery five-volley salute fired in honor of the 108th anniversary of Texas Independence on 2 March 1944.

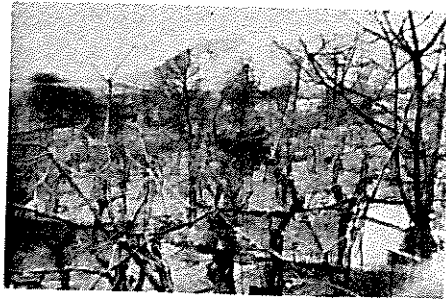
On 12 March 1944, the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion began its march out of the combat area. The battalion had gone into combat on 16 November 1943, near Mignano, Italy. Advance parties from batteries and headquarters of 131st Field Artillery Battalion arrived, preparatory to their relieving us on the night of 12-13 March 1944. During the day most of the personnel and equipment were made ready, and the rear area at service battery was used as the assembly area. After dark the guns were pulled out by bulldozer (where necessary), and march units assembled in rear area. Head of the battalion column left the assembly area at 2030 hours, 12 March 1944. The 132nd closed into bivouac area near Maddaloni, Italy, about 0400 hours, 13 March 1944.



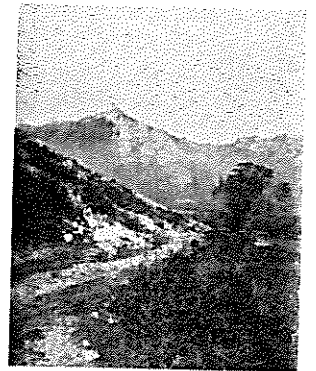
**Piper Cub burning after being hit by German artillery  
between San Vittore and San Pietro**



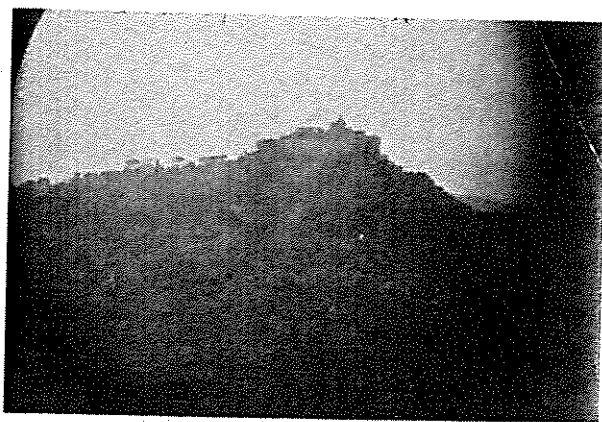
**Mt. Cairo from the river bed.**



**Artillery falling on Cassino**



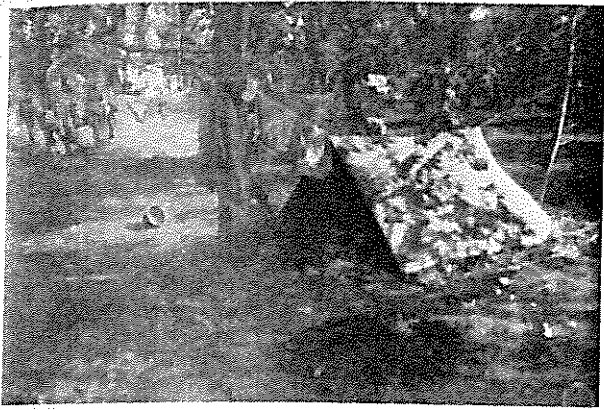
**"Another Hill"**



**Looking at Cassino Monastery through a BC scope.**



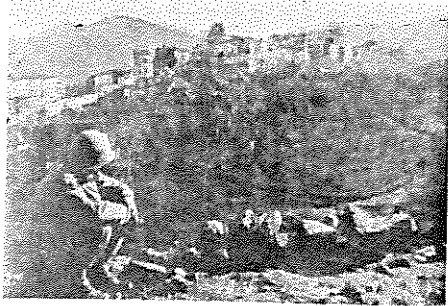
**Bombing of the Monastery  
by Allied aircraft.**



**Aversa Bivouac, October 1943**



**Chow near Mt. Lungo, Italy**



**San Vittore, Italy**



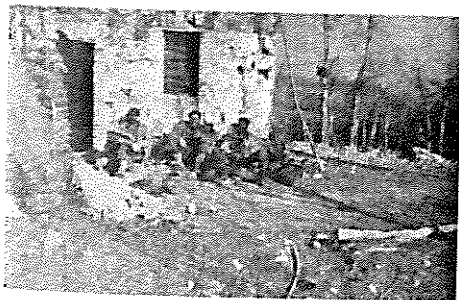
**San Pietro from Hill 205**



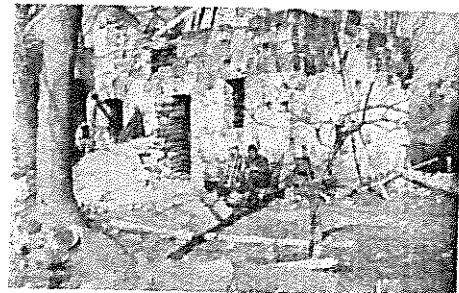
**The Venafro Home**



**German grave at Mt. Lungo**



**Home below Mt. Lungo**



**Switchboard and Message Center**

## Chapter V

# More Rest and Preparation, Operations at Minturno, Anzio, the Break-Through to Rome and Beyond

### April 1944

During the remainder of the month of March and the first eight days of April, the battalion remained in the bivouac area near Maddaloni. During this time, there was an active training program in progress, but a great deal of the period was given over to rest and recreation. Trips to Naples and Pompeii were conducted regularly, and movies and traveling shows were frequent.

On 9 April the battalion left the area near Maddaloni and moved to another bivouac area approximately four miles southwest of Avellino. Here, the battalion began extensive training in conduct of artillery. Our fire direction center during this period conducted a school in fire direction for the benefit of the 142nd Infantry Cannon Company. A forward observer school was being held every day; and the battalion participated in several firing problems.

### May 1944

The first of May, 1944, the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion was still bivouacked near Avellino, Italy, undergoing training in mountain operations and service of the howitzers. On 3 May the battalion was moved to an area near Qualiano, Italy, where all of the howitzers were calibrated. Maj. Clifford M. Snow had left the first of May as liaison officer for the 36th Division Artillery with the 85th Division Artillery. Areas were assigned in the Minturno sector for the artillery battalions, and on 3 May battalion and battery officers with details made reconnaissance of battery positions. These were selected and work was begun on them. This preparation was done at night with the utmost secrecy. Preparations on positions were completed on Saturday, 6 May 1944. On 8 May plans were presented to the division artillery for operations in support of the 85th Division and also for a proposed amphibious operation—presumably Anzio. On Tuesday, 9 May, march-order instructions were received for movement to the prepared position in the vicinity of Minturno. Movement was made the night of 9-10 May with the battalion in position at 2310 hours.

At this time the friendly front lines were 3400 yards northwest of

our position. This front was in a static state, having been the same for the past three months, and at this time was exceptionally quiet. The mission of our battalion was in general support of the 85th Division Artillery. The battalion area was to the rear (southeast of the Minturno Hill) and the battalion CP was located in an orange grove which was heavily laden with ripe fruit—there was no lack of vitamin "C" on this operation. An O.P. was established in the castle in the town of Minturno at which place the O.P. personnel had excellent observation in our zone of action and they were comfortably situated except for occasional enemy artillery fire. Firing was limited to registration with one gun. Only three rounds were fired, proving excellence of the survey. Secrecy was rigidly enforced with radios silenced and movement held to a minimum. The "front" area was exceptionally quiet with only occasional exchanges of artillery fire. An air of expectancy prevailed which was noticeable as everyone was set for big things to happen.

Thursday, 11 May, plans were brought from 36th Division Artillery for preparation fires for the 85th Infantry Division and "H" hour was announced as 2300 hours. During the afternoon, messages from Gen. H. R. Alexander, Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark, and Maj. Gen. Keyes were received congratulating the troops in Italy on their past performances and encouraging them to even greater efforts. Gen. Clark stated in part that, although in terms of territory gained, progress in Italy was slow, the campaign in Italy was a major operation since it had drained the enemy's reserve strength.

Heavy artillery preparation was fired and the attack jumped off at 2300 hours. By 0600 hours, 12 May, 2472 rounds had been fired by the battalion on unobserved missions. The attack was reported to be progressing favorably across the whole southern front. Throughout the day the battalion continued firing in support of the 85th Division Artillery and by 2400 hours had fired 3396 rounds.

The 85th Division Infantry was advancing in the face of determined enemy resistance. Our artillery fire was said to be devastating, and all battalions were concentrated in a small area. Enemy artillery fired counter battery on a 240mm howitzer battalion to our right but none of the rounds fell in our area, although shell fragments were heard striking the building which housed our command post and fire direction center. The next two days we continued our supporting fires, firing 1543 rounds on the 13th and 1447 rounds on the 14th. By the 15th the action had moved away from us to the northwest. The battalion fired only 157 rounds on unobserved missions. That night at about 2200 hours enemy planes flew over our general area and dropped many flares; all artillery fire was halted. No bombs were dropped, however, and the action was described as a fake air raid with the object of silencing our artillery during the withdrawal of enemy troops.

At 0440 hours, 16 May, orders were received from 36th Division Artillery to be prepared to move at 0800 hours. At 1030 hours this move was canceled and our batteries remained in position, although out of range. Everyone got a much-needed rest—our action was characterized

by reading magazines, playing cards, and eating oranges. The following day at 1300 hours orders were received to be prepared to move back to the Qualiano bivouac area. This move was made between the hours of 1500 and 1930 and performed by infiltration. That evening warning was given of an impending amphibious move. This period was one of the few times in which the battalion acted in a general support role. Compared with the customary direct support missions it was found that the general support role was exceptionally easy for all personnel in that the battalion did not have to displace or employ its liaison officers and forward observers.

The latter half of the month will be called "the Anzio operation" which began on the morning after our return from Minturno when we received orders to be ready to leave for the embarkment staging area by 1600 hours. Extensive plans concerning personnel and material had already been made; and preparation, movement, and loading on the LSTs was executed quickly and efficiently. The convoy left the port of embarkation, Bagnoli, Italy, at 1715 hours, 18 May 1944. The sea was quite rough, and rain fell periodically during the night. It was still misty and drizzly when our ships docked at Anzio at 0830 hours. The poor weather was a godsend for us as it restricted the enemy's observation of our arrival and subsequent motor movement from the port to a bivouac area. Gun pits had already been prepared and wire lines had been laid by personnel of the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. The latter installations were improved during the night of 20 May and occupied under cover of darkness the next evening. It was very quiet on 22 May with little activity on either side. One gun of the battalion was registered during the afternoon.

"H" hour for a large-scale attack on the beachhead front was announced for 0600 hours, 23 May. The mission of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion was direct support of the 39th Field Artillery Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. 1st Lt. Louis N. Quast, who had rejoined the battalion as S-2 on 18 May, was sent to the 39th Field Artillery Battalion as liaison officer. A heavy preparation program was fired commencing at 0545 hours, and other unobserved missions were fired during the day expending 3790 rounds. In addition, 341 rounds were expended on observed missions. Supporting fires were continued the next day till 1900 hours when preparations were made to move. The guns were coupled up, and all equipment was loaded at 2400 hours when orders were received to reoccupy the position and to fire that night and the next morning.

The front lines became very fluid, and advances quickened the necessity of displacement of the battalion four times in that many days. These movements were so frequent that batteries became expert at fast displacements. Only the necessary operating personnel were carried along, the remainder being left in a rear bivouac area. A bulldozer attached to the battalion from 11th Engineer battalion aided greatly in these moves by digging the gun pits and other necessary installations. Many times the gun crews were so exhausted from their continuous service of the piece and displacements that it would have been extremely difficult for them to have had to dig their own gun pits.

Our mission of general support of the 39th Field Artillery Battalion was changed on 27 May to general support of 27th Field Artillery Battalion. On 28 May our mission was again changed to general support of 133rd Field Artillery Battalion, and observed missions were fired on call. On 30 May we began direct support of 142nd Infantry. Up to this time, although the attack had been progressing satisfactorily, there was no indication of a break-through, but strong resistance was encountered all along the front except for the right (southern) flank which had pushed south to join forces with the "Southern Front," thereby eliminating the beachhead as such. The month was a very interesting one as far as the battalion was concerned since it contained a variety of action, including the Minturno drive and also participation in the Anzio attack.

### June 1944

The beginning of June found the battalion in the vicinity of Velletri, Italy, where it had gone into position very close behind the front lines. The mission of the battalion was to support the 142nd Infantry in the attack of the hills to the north. Although Allied forces on the beachhead were making a concerted effort at this time, no real break-through was apparent. It was not until the morning of 4 June, after the battalion commander and battery commanders had gone on reconnaissance, that it appeared that the enemy had withdrawn completely. This was the beginning of the pursuit of the enemy through Rome and on into northern Italy. Part of the infantry in our combat team was motorized; and the mission of our battalion was to remain motorized and to follow the infantry until contact with the enemy was established. Our regimental combat team column, reinforced with reconnaissance troops, tanks, and tank destroyers, proceeded on the road toward Rome and reached a point on the outskirts of the city at about 1600 hours. At this point enemy rear-guard action was encountered and the convoy halted. Our artillery moved into an assembly area with the primary mission of anti-tank defense.

Early the next morning orders were received to march through Rome with the objective to cross the Tiber River and go into a defensive position five miles northwest of the city. Many of the infantrymen were loaded on artillery vehicles, thus enabling as many troops as possible to be motorized. No enemy opposition was encountered in the drive through Rome, although traffic was impeded by thousands of citizens who were out in the early hours to welcome us as we came through.

The first determined rear-guard action of the enemy was encountered about four miles northwest of the city. The column was halted, the infantry deployed, and our Battery "A" was quickly brought up and put into a position of close support. Registrations were made on points less than two thousand yards away. The enemy strength was estimated to be about two companies of infantry supported by anti-tank guns, mortars, and automatic weapons. Fire was placed on the primary defense positions of the enemy and artillery fire was placed on these points until the infantry was observed to be ready to close in on them. By 1500 hours all

organized enemy resistance had been overcome, about thirty prisoners were taken, and nine anti-tank guns destroyed.

During the remainder of the month, our battalion continued in pursuit of the enemy, generally along Highway 1 to the northwest. This pursuit covered a period of twenty-one days between 5 June and 26 June. During this time, a total distance of about one hundred and fifty miles was covered by our advancing troops. This necessitated frequent displacements of the battalion—often two or three positions were occupied in a single day.

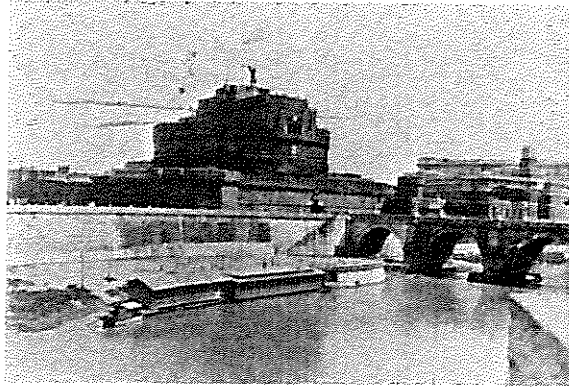
During the early stage of the pursuit, resistance encountered was very small, and often the positions occupied were merely assembly areas from which no firing was done. However the rear-guard resistance increased during the last two weeks and at these times our artillery was more active. At times the battalion was in the role of direct support, during which time all of our personnel—including liaison officers and forward observers—were extremely busy. At other times the mission of the battalion was that of reinforcing fires of other artillery units. The movement was so rapid that in order to keep continuous artillery support of battalion strength for the attacking infantry, the direct support and the reinforcing unit had to coordinate their movements very closely. In order to accomplish this, the direct support battalion sent a radio and a liaison officer to the reinforcing unit which would take over the missions while the former was displacing forward. Another characteristic of the fast-moving situation was the effect on the battalion communications. Due to the rapid and frequent displacement, wire communications, outside of a simple battalion net, were virtually impossible; therefore, it was necessary to rely on radio for communications with the infantry through liaison officers and forward observers with reinforcing artillery units and division artillery.

During the period, situations have often occurred where targets of opportunity of the retreating enemy were observed. In most cases these could easily be taken under fire due to the close artillery support. On more than one occasion columns of infantry and horse-drawn artillery were observed along the road and fired upon. In one case, near Grosseto, nine 150mm howitzers and many dead horses and some live ones were found in an area that was fired on by our artillery.

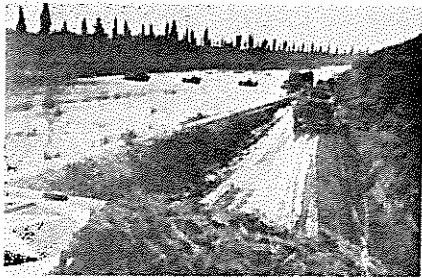
Sunday, 25 June 1944, the battalion was preparing to displace to a forward position when the order to remain in place, prepare to be relieved in the morning with the rest of the division, was received. On the 26th the battalion moved out of the area around Montiano and proceeded to an assembly area near Grosseto to await further orders. At 2150 hours the battalion moved out of this area and moved to a bivouac area nine miles north of Rome. This was just what everybody was waiting for. We had seen Rome in the dark of the morning and had passed on, chasing the Germans. The rear echelons had been having the gravy; now it was our turn for awhile at least. Shortly after we arrived in the new area, regular passes to Rome were started. Everyone got the chance to visit Rome at least twice. The end of June, while giving us a much-needed rest, held that certain air of "what happens next?"



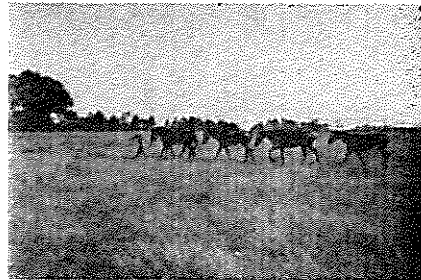
**ITALY**



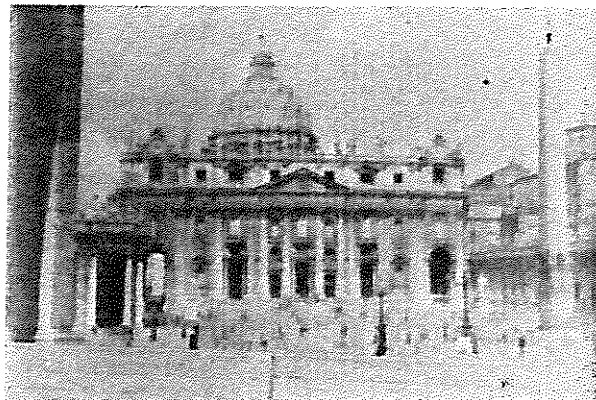
**The Tiber River, Rome**



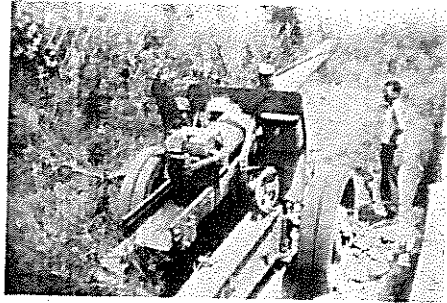
**River Crossing at Grosseto**



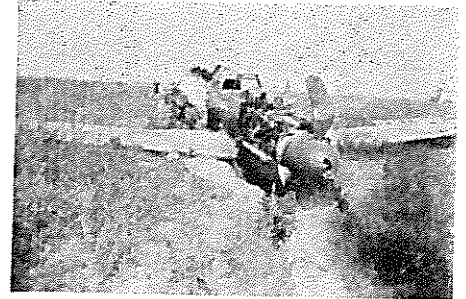
**German horses left behind north of Rome**



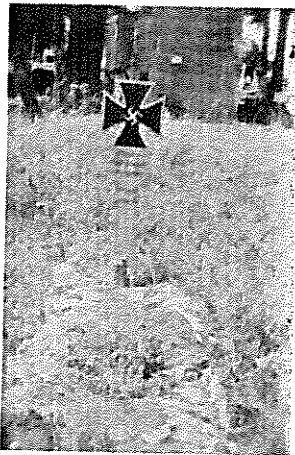
**St. Peters, Rome**



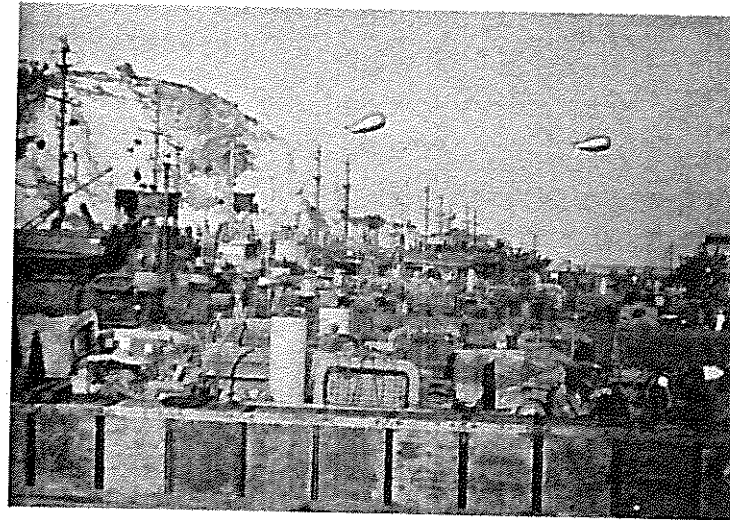
German artillery left at Velletri



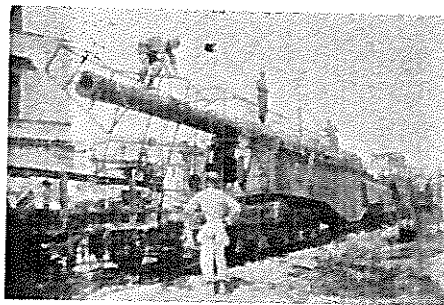
Another German bit the dust, at Civitavecchia



His name was "Adolf"



Preparation for movement to Anzio



The Anzio Express



Germans quit at Anzio

## Chapter VI

### Preparation for Another Invasion, Southern France, and the Months of Continuous Combat That Followed

July 1944

The battalion remained in the bivouac area north of Rome until 5 July when the motor movement to Salerno began. The convoy moved out early the morning of the 5th and stopped at Grosseto during the afternoon. That night we moved out again and proceeded to our destination. We moved into a bivouac area near Paestum in the early morning hours of 6 July. The surroundings were very familiar to us. The last time we had roamed these grounds, it had been a very unhealthy place. It was a strange feeling to take in the now very quiet Salerno Beaches while remembering "Bloody Salerno." We all got to go swimming in the Mediterranean again. Parts of the beaches were still marked with warnings about mines that had not been uncovered.

On 13 July we moved to a new bivouac area north of Salerno to what was then known as the "Invasion Training Center." It was in the "ITC" area that we underwent a review of amphibious training. However, it was not all review; many new things were learned about ship-to-shore operations.

The 26th of July found the battalion again on the move—this time to the Qualiano area north of Naples. We were to remain here until the time for the next water movement. Amphibious training continued; and the speculation as to where we were going was terrific—Southern France was the popular guess.

August 1944

Having participated in the landing at Salerno, Italy, the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion was experienced in ship-to-shore invasions. It may be recalled that the battalion began its invasion training at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, in the fall of 1942. It was also given a second training period in Africa prior to the Italian landing. Therefore, the next two weeks intensive training period, prior to the present invasion, was more or less a review of past experiences. Approximately sixty per cent of the personnel of the battalion were veterans of the Italian invasion. Our activities, therefore, were greatly benefited by this experience.

With the exception of liaison and forward observer officers and par-

ties who accompanied their respective infantry units, the mass of the battalion was loaded on an LST near Naples, Italy, on 10 August.

The landings of the 36th Infantry Division began at 0800 hours on Tuesday, 15 August 1944, in the vicinity of St. Raphael, Southern France. The 132nd Field Artillery Battalion landed at "H" plus 153 minutes on the beach established by the 143rd Infantry Regiment and had the mission of reinforcing the fires of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion.

The initial landings had little or no resistance; and everything went according to plan with the battalion landing at its designated time. On landing, the battalion went into an assembly area about one hundred and fifty yards from the beach, at which time the howitzers were unloaded from the DUKWs which then became prime movers; and the battalion continued on to a position area about one mile away. The guns were in position and ready to fire within one hour after hitting the beach.

The 142nd Infantry Regiment landed at 1530 hours in the afternoon, and at that time our battalion went into direct support of this regiment. With the 142nd Infantry Regiment, the battalion had one liaison officer attached to each infantry battalion, one liaison officer with regimental headquarters, two forward observer officers with each battalion, and two naval liaison officers with each infantry battalion (especially trained for conducting naval gunfire).

Since the initial resistance was light, very little observed fire was conducted on "D" day. The battalion sustained only one casualty who had been slightly wounded by artillery fire shortly after landing. All other personnel and equipment landed safely.

On "D" plus one, first serious resistance was met by our infantry, and many observed missions were fired. This resistance was quickly overcome; and by nightfall we had penetrated ten miles inland.

Our infantry in its advance, during the night of the 15th, by-passed many small groups of enemy infantry. On "D" plus one, our battery commanders and survey section picked up thirty-nine prisoners while on reconnaissance for a forward position area.

The following day and for the next week, the campaign became very fluid. The regimental combat team took the form of a task force which moved quickly to the northeast and northwest to exploit the route of the enemy and to destroy him. This required the battalion to travel many miles each day, at times covering a hundred miles in a single day's march. This took us to the northeast near the Italian border at Guillestre and as far west as the vicinity of Montelimar.

As an example of the operations during the month, let us examine the period of the 24th, 25th, and 26th. At noon on the 24th the battalion was at the town of La Roche St. Secret after a seventy-mile road march from Rosans. During the afternoon, the men had a chance to relax a little. At 2000 hours orders were received to move into the vicinity of Cleon d'Andran, a distance of fifty-four miles. For this move the battalion, less Battery "B" which had been left at St. Clement, was to haul the 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, less one company, in addition to its own personnel, equipment and over one thousand rounds of ammunition

per battery. The battalion arrived in its defensive position at 0500 hours, complete with "B" Battery which rejoined us at that point. A large part of the division had come to this vicinity, east of the Rhone River and north of Monutelimar, in an effort to trap elements of the Nineteenth Army moving up the Rhone Valley to the north. It was here that a pitched battle took place when the enemy attempted a break-through. The 1st Battalion of the 143rd Infantry Regiment, attached to the 142nd Infantry Regiment, received the brunt of the attack which was reported to be of regimental strength. The 1st Battalion of the 142nd Infantry counterattacked and was subsequently pushed back. However, our forward observers were in position to fire observed missions on tanks, heavy weapons and enemy infantry. Forty observed missions were fired between 1500 hours and 2000 hours. We are credited with knocking out four Mark VI tanks with indirect fire. Although our units were pushed back—the artillery at one time firing at a range of two thousand yards—the enemy was repelled and subsequently withdrew. By the time the worst of the attack had passed, our ammunition supply was a critical item—only twenty-five rounds per gun were on hand at nightfall. This was due to the fact that ammunition dumps were approximately one-hundred miles to the rear. The resupply was made even more difficult by the fact that six of our ammunition trucks had been taken from the battalion for special duties elsewhere. It was common practice in our motor movements for our organic transportation to haul a battalion of infantry, as well as three thousand rounds of ammunition. This made it necessary to overload our vehicles two hundred to three hundred per cent. However as yet no major maintenance difficulties had been encountered.

On the 28th the combat team made another flanking movement to the north and west in an effort to cut off the enemy again. This time our action met with considerable success; and by the next morning, one infantry battalion was in possession of high ground overlooking the Rhone River in the vicinity of Livron-sur-Drone. Our artillery, reinforced by the 155th Field Artillery Battalion (medium), was in position to cover the area to the west, including the river itself.

First Lt. James W. Darden, our liaison officer with the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry Regiment, fired both our battalion and a medium battalion on many targets of opportunity. These consisted of convoys of vehicles and horse-drawn artillery and wagons. It is estimated that at least five hundred vehicles, fifty artillery pieces, and countless enemy personnel and equipment were destroyed by this action as the enemy attempted to escape through the bottleneck. This resulted in complete disorganization of the enemy and many hundreds of prisoners taken by our infantry.

The end of the period found the greater part of the German Nineteenth Army destroyed or captured with the remaining disorganized elements in rout to the northeast.

Much credit for the success of this operation should go to the drivers and the service elements of the battalion. Many hundreds of miles were covered in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. This required our drivers and supply personnel to be on the go both day and night.

Even though the situation was fast-moving and the front was fluid, there was not much danger from snipers or surprise attacks since the French Forces of the Interior and Marquis (guerrilla forces) were much in evidence. These people were of great value in supplying important information, as well as taking care of straggling enemy.

### September 1944

The first part of September was much like the last week of August—long moves in approach march formations with infantry riding on all available vehicles.

On 1 September the battalion had the opportunity to fire from the hip, so to speak. Our observers picked up some enemy who were moving out while the 132nd was just pulling into position. Fire commands were computed at "B" and "C" Battery positions from map locations by inspection while the battery was being laid. Effective fire was delivered with observers communicating directly to the batteries by radio and fire commands being relayed to guns by voice over a 300 yards' battery front.

The period 2 to 7 September consisted of motor movement to get into position to cut off the enemy again. The battalion with the combat team marched 213 miles from 1 to 7 September, inclusive. Much time was lost and the distance added, due to enemy destruction of bridges.

The 8 September found the battalion in position near Lyons, and the infantry crossing the Doubs River under said protest from the enemy. The battalion displaced to the northeast near the town of Bouseleres, still on the left bank of the Doubs, about noon in order to adequately support the regiment in its mission of securing the bridge site and blocking the roads from the south and west into Besancon.

During the day of 8 September several observed missions were fired on hostile troops and weapons. Enemy resistance was stubborn for a few hours at several points. The attack was carried on during the night and the battalion displaced forward during the early morning hours of 9 September.

The new positions were in the vicinity of Villera-Buzon about twelve kilometers west of Besancon. We crossed the Doubs on a bridge constructed by the 11th Engineer Battalion at the site of a destroyed bridge. These positions were occupied in the early morning hours in an area that had not been patrolled by the infantry, but no enemy was encountered.

These moves in the early morning following a night attack kept one on the alert. It sometimes took days to mop up the small groups of enemy that were by-passed or scattered during the night by our infantry. As an illustration, on this morning the battalion made an effective road block and captured a German officer and his driver who came speeding up to a road junction, having driven through our front, just as a prime mover and howitzer filled the road making the corner. The Jerry had to stop; the road was filled. Later Maj. Snow, commanding officer, 155th Field Artillery Battalion, while reinforcing our fire, came up on reconnaissance. The commanding officer of 132nd suggested that he have a

platoon of the reconnaissance troops precede him or accompany him. This was arranged, and the platoon found approximately 200 German soldiers in the proposed position area. They were mostly Turcomen ready to give up and were brought in. There were not many dull moments when one was in pursuit.

Resistance in this area ceased by the 10th. From the 11th to 14th, inclusive, our activities consisted of moving and waiting to move, the regimental combat team being in division or corps reserve. The division, during this time, captured Vesoul and moved on toward Luxueil and St. Loup.

On 15 September the battalion was in position in the vicinity of Betoncourt, supporting the 142nd Infantry in the mission of cutting the roads leading into Luxueil from the south and east. The 141st Field Artillery Battalion was reinforcing our fires. Considerable resistance was developed on this mission, but was cleared up; and Luxueil was occupied by 16 September. The battalion displaced for short distances three times during this period.

On 15 September Battery "C" received counterbattery fire from an enemy tank. Eight men were wounded and one died that day. Three guns were damaged slightly, but only one had to be replaced. This tank was with a force that had not been discovered during the advance of the previous night. It fired from a concealed position and then moved out.

The bathing in Luxueil Les Bains was short-lived. After the resistance in the vicinity of Madden was cleared up, the battalion moved northeast on the evening of 19 September, carrying the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, on its prime movers. The mission was to seize Remiremont, as some reports had been received that it was occupied by the enemy. Upon contacting elements of reconnaissance troops of the 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion and getting the latest information first hand, the infantry was dismounted and the battalion put in position in that area. The infantry battalion proceeded on foot approximately 4000 yards toward Remiremont that night without contact and organized for the night. Road blocks were set up around the artillery positions.

On the morning of 20 September the remainder of the regimental combat team moved out, and the attack on Remiremont was on. The 3rd Battalion advanced from west to east; and the 1st and 2nd Battalions, from the north. The 131st Field Artillery Battalion supported the 1st Battalion, principally, and reinforced the fires of the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion, generally. The distance between the 3rd Battalion and the other battalions and the 132nd and 131st Artillery Battalions made for independent action during the early phases of the attack.

Stubborn enemy resistance was encountered at well-placed road blocks by all three battalions, and bitter fire fights developed in the woods adjacent to the road blocks.

On 20 September the battalion displaced forward that night in order to be in better position to fire on enemy convoys, believed moving in or out of Remiremont and to improve our position from a communication standpoint.

Remiremont fell on 22 September. The 141st Infantry had previously forced a crossing over the Moselle about four miles north of Remiremont.

The bridge of Remiremont was completed early on 24 September and the battalion displaced to positions in the vicinity of Eloyes still in direct support of 142nd Infantry which continued the attack to the northeast.

The enemy contested bitterly the enlargement of the bridgehead over the Moselle throughout the remainder of the month. Our infantry engaged in bitter small arms fights for each important piece of terrain or road junction. On some days during this period, our troops were under extremely heavy fire. The Germans also launched several local counter-attacks, one at least in regimental strength. All were beaten back.

#### October 1944

The first of the month found the battalion still in position in the vicinity of Eloyes, France, on the east bank of the Moselle River. All three infantry battalions of the 142nd Infantry were engaged with the enemy; and action in all sectors was characterized by stubborn resistance, including heavy artillery and mortar fire. The fighting in the dense woods of the Vosages Mountains was very difficult for the infantry; and, because of the poor observation, our observers could give only limited support.

On 4 October the front lines had become fairly well defined. Our battalion displaced some four thousand yards west of the front lines to positions previously occupied by the 131st Field Artillery Battalion. Our mission was direct support of the 142nd Infantry Regiment whose mission was to form defensive positions in the vicinity which the battalion now occupied. Our battalion remained in this position until 13 October. During this time, the infantry improved and consolidated its defensive positions. Our battalion did very little firing, due to lack of suitable targets and the curtailed ammunition allowance.

Replacements for the infantry battalions were brought in, and the battalions were relieved one at a time to assimilate and train its new men. This lull in the action of our regiment gave men of our battalion an opportunity to get cleaned up and to take advantage of what recreational facilities were available. Small groups from each battery were transported daily to bathe and to see a moving picture.

On the 5th the liaison officers, who had been on continuous duty with the infantry battalions, were relieved by battery commanders of Battery "A", Battery "C" and the regimental liaison officer, respectively. Two of the liaison officers took over temporary jobs as battery commanders, the third going to regimental liaison.

On 13 October the battalion displaced to the northeast about seven miles and occupied positions three hundred yards northeast of Houx. This position was about twenty-five hundred yards behind the front lines; but the battalion had both sight and flash defilade from the enemy. The occupation of this position was made necessary when the 142nd Regimental Combat Team relieved the 143rd Regimental Combat Team posi-



tions in addition to its present positions. At this time an eight thousand meter defensive front was being held by the 142nd Infantry Regiment.

Although our battery positions had good defilade, our nearness to the front lines made it possible for the enemy to determine our approximate location by sound; thus occasional light harassing fire was received. This fire was very ineffective—we had only one slightly wounded casualty in this area for the whole period. However the town of Houx, through which all of our communications and supplies had to come, was under enemy observation. This restricted our movement into and out of the battalion area as the town was subjected to intermittent harassing fire almost every day. As time was available, gun pits were improved and all gun sections constructed elaborate underground shelters for the gun crews.

On 22 October an additional forty-five hundred meter defensive sector was taken over by the 142nd Infantry when it relieved the 30th Infantry of the 3rd Division on our right flank. The 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, with Company "B" 111th Engineer Battalion, 36th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troops, Reconnaissance Platoon, 636th Tank Destroyers Battalion and Regimental "I" and "R" Platoon occupied this sector. To accompany this force, we sent out an additional liaison officer and two sergeants, experienced as forward observers, to man two additional observation points. A liaison officer was also sent to the French Artillery Headquarters on our right and an observer sent to man an OP in the French sector as protection for our right flank.

At this time we had four liaison officers and nine forward observers (two of whom were sergeants) with the infantry. During the latter part of the month, the amount of firing that was done was governed by the daily ammunition allocations which were very small—as low as ten rounds per gun per day. However as the action on the front consisted only of patrolling, very few fires were necessary.

The battalion motor maintenance sections made the most of this period of relative inactivity. An excellently situated motor maintenance shop was set up, and a program of six-thousand-mile maintenance checks was begun on 4 October. The battalion motor maintenance section worked in conjunction with the battery's maintenance sections at the battalion shop. During the next twenty-seven days, seventy per cent of the vehicles in the battalion had received a six-thousand-mile maintenance inspection. The battalion maintenance section received special commendation from the division artillery commander for its excellent work.

In general, the action of this period can be characterized as a transition from the fast-moving pursuit of the previous months to a situation in which the front lines were well defined with stubborn resistance along the full front. Artillery action was limited by the poor observation possibilities in the wooded terrain in which the action took place and, further, by the restricted ammunition supplies.

#### November 1944

The beginning of the month found the battalion in position in the

vicinity of Houx in direct support of the 142nd Infantry Regiment which was holding a twelve thousand, five hundred meter defensive front. These battery positions had been occupied since 13 October 1944; but due to relative inactivity of the front and restricted ammunition allowances, little firing was done.

The remainder of the division, including the 442nd Infantry (attached to the division), was engaged in an aggressive action to the east of Bruyeres and considerable gains were made in this sector.

On 3 November plans were initiated to employ the 142nd Regimental Combat Team to relieve elements of the 141st and 442nd Infantry Regiments in Le Foret Domaniale de Champ region. Reconnaissance was made for battery positions in the vicinity of La Rouge Eaux, and occupation was completed the night of 3-4 November. There was really little choice in the selection of battery positions. Most of the terrain was heavily wooded hills with only a narrow wet valley which was already occupied by a light battalion and a battery of mediums. Gun positions were made possible by laying boards on the soft ground and building up emplacements around them.

The 142nd Infantry Regiment began its attack the morning of 5 November through the difficult wooded terrain in the face of rain, sleet and snow. The progress was slow, but satisfactory; and by 10 November the enemy had been cleared from Le Foret Domaniale de Champ. The Regiment was then ordered to attack to the south and reconnaissance for new positions was made farther up the valley in an area just recently cleared by our troops. The objectional features of this position were the extensive enemy mine fields in the area and the front lines only one thousand, five hundred yards to the east. However there was plenty of time for the preparation of the positions; and the mine fields were cleared with the aid of the engineers. The positions were occupied the night of 13-14 November. Only the necessary equipment and personnel were taken to this position because of the limited space. The remainder of the battalion remained in the La Rouge Eaux area.

The attack of our infantry to the south met very little resistance. It was soon apparent that we would have to displace again, and so a reconnaissance was made on 14 November in an area southeast of Bruyeres. Meantime the battalion was given the mission of reinforcing fires of the attack on our left flank toward St. Die. This required our guns to be shifted to enable us to fire to the northeast, whereas previously we had been firing to the south. The 93rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion took over the direct support of the 142nd Infantry Regiment.

On the morning of 16 November our battalion assisted in firing a preparation for the 103rd Division and at noon, its reinforcing mission accomplished, the battalion began displacing to positions south of Biffontaine. The new area afforded the batteries good gun positions and also contained enough houses so that most of the men could get inside, away from the elements, part of the time.

The action during this period had been bringing us closer and closer to what was considered the German Winter Line. Many of the villages

and farms immediately in front of this line had been destroyed by demolition and burning; mines and booby traps were in profusion.

On 19 November reconnaissance was made east of Corcieux, in which area care was taken to search for mines and booby traps. These positions were occupied on 20 November when the battalion's mission was reinforcing the fires of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion and the 131st Field Artillery Battalion. The 142nd Infantry Regiment had withdrawn to a rest area. Our liaison and forward observers returned to the battalion for a short rest during this period.

The remainder of the period was concerned with the push through the German Winter Line and the throw-back of the enemy to the Rhine Valley. The situation in the Vosages Mountain sector on 20 November consisted of the French army breaking through the Belfort Gap in the south and reaching Mulhouse and the Rhine River. In the northern part of the sector the 3rd and 103rd Divisions had broken through the German Winter Line and outflanked St. Die. The forces to the north of these units were making favorable gains to the east toward Strasbourg.

The combination of the successes to the north and south threatened the entire enemy defenses in the Vosages, and a general enemy withdrawal was anticipated. Plans were initiated for hasty pursuit of the enemy by motorizing the 142nd Infantry Combat Team. Our battalion was to accompany this motorized task force and render continuous support by leap-frogging the batteries. The detailed plan had Battery "A" accompanying the 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, which had been chosen to spearhead the attack.

The motor movement began on 23 November with Battery "A" accompanying the 1st Battalion. This included the prime movers, one wire truck, the fifth section, and two extra ammunition trucks. In addition, a skeleton Fire Direction Center crew in a 608 radio car accompanied this battery. The remainder of the battalion, including Battery "B" (self-propelled 105s) from the 753rd Tank Battalion which was attached to us for this operation, remained in the present position east of Corcieux.

The column advanced to the vicinity of Mandray, a distance of five miles, where it encountered heavy mine fields defended by ground troops, artillery and flak wagons. Our troops were forced to detruck and advance by foot in an effort to drive out the enemy. Battery "A" was put into position in the west edge of Mandray early the morning of 24 November. During the morning of the same day, the battery commanders of the other batteries were brought forward, and a position was selected for one other battery. Battery "B" occupied this position during the afternoon; and, at the request of the regimental commander, the other batteries were not brought forward at this time because of the poor road conditions and the scarcity of battery positions.

During the day, the foot troops made very good advances; and a forward displacement of the artillery was in order. However, the only route forward in our sector could not be used due to mine fields, enemy artillery and snipers. Late in the afternoon a route through the sector of the unit on our left was found in a reconnaissance made for positions in the

vicinity of Ban de Laveline. The batteries were all brought up and put into position the night of 24-25 November.

The progress of the infantry was fairly rapid. However, the scattered resistance and road blocks made continuance of the motorized movement impractical. One such road block was encountered where the highway passes over the peak of the Vosages Mountains. This consisted of a strong physical block of timber and rocks, defended by approximately one hundred troops with automatic weapons and two anti-tank guns. Artillery fire was adjusted on this block, preceding the attack of our infantry—about 350 rounds were dumped on this one target. After this preparation, the road block was overrun and easily cleared. About forty prisoners were taken, and one of the 77mm anti-tank guns had been destroyed by a direct hit. This opened the way for another quick advance by our troops. These advances were not made on the highway, but by forced marches on the ridges parallel to the north of the highway. In this manner the enemy in Ste. Marie aux Mines and Ste. Croix aux Mines (a distance of eight and ten miles, respectively, from the road block) was outflanked and surprised. Ste. Marie aux Mines was completely cleared the same day and fighting continued in the eastern half of Ste. Croix.

Early the morning the 26 November Batteries "A", "B" and "C" moved forward five thousand yards to positions in the vicinity of Wisembach; Battery "X" with skeleton Fire Direction Center crew moved up to Ste. Marie aux Mines. During the same day, the remainder of the battalion moved up to the latter town. Due to the scarcity of positions, one battery found it necessary to set up "parade style" in the town square. Battery "C" of the 155th Field Artillery Battalion (medium) was attached to the battalion and put into position in the same vicinity. This battery was fired through our Fire Direction Center with the aid of one of their computers.

During the afternoon, action flared up in Ste. Croix aux Mines when our troops attempted to clear the town. This section was centered around two tanks and forty-four enemy infantrymen. An infantry company commander, using telephone communications, adjusted the fire of one of our guns on the tanks which were about two hundred yards in front of him. About thirty rounds of HE, hits and near misses, although not destroying the tanks, forced one of the crews to abandon its tank. The officer adjusted the fire, then called for a couple of rounds of white phosphorus smoke while he brought up his own armor. The scheme worked perfectly with our tank moving up under the smoke screen and knocking out the enemy tanks at point-blank range. The afternoon of the same day our infantry moved into position on the high ground north of Musloch about one mile east of Ste. Croix. Our forward observer, accompanying this group, observed approximately one hundred enemy personnel and some vehicles in the vicinity of Musloch. One battery was adjusted on the target, and the battalion fired a total of 475 rounds for effect. This caused the enemy heavy casualties and completely disorganized the remainder, enabling our troops to occupy the village and to take some seventy prisoners.

On 30 November another leapfrog movement was made by displacement of Battery "B" and Battery "C" of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion (attached to us) to positions in the vicinity of Liepvre. Another skeleton Fire Direction Center crew was sent forward with this group. The primary mission of these two batteries was to support the 2nd Battalion of the 143rd Infantry which was operating in our sector.

The end of the month of November found us on the eastern slopes of the Vosages Mountains with observation points looking across the Rhine River into Germany.

### December 1944

The action during the month of November had been a very rapid push through the Vosages Mountains; and for the last two weeks, the enemy had not presented any well-planned defense. This action carried our people as far east as the town of Selestat which was occupied on 3 December 1944. However since the terrain east of the town for about five hundred yards was under water, no further progress could be made in this direction and, therefore, defensive positions were set up. The plan at first had been to continue the attack east and southeast to the Rhine River—meanwhile our battalion had moved up to the west edge of Selestat—which would enable us to support the attack to great depth. During the second week of December, there was little activity in our sector; however on the division southern flank around Colmar, the fighting was quite intense as our forces attempted to close in on the latter city. On 12 December 1944, a surprise attack was launched on Selestat from the east and northeast. The enemy achieved limited success in the initial stage of this attack; but, during the afternoon, friendly reinforcements were brought up and most of our positions were restored. During this time, our battalion was firing both observed and unobserved fire. Most of this was done with charge one. At one time we were firing at a range of twelve hundred yards. About twenty-two hundred rounds were fired during the day. About one hundred of these rounds were fired between 1800 hours and 1900 hours along a railroad track to the northeast of Selestat. It had been reported earlier in the day by a prisoner of war that an attack using this route was to be launched at 1830 hours. The attack never materialized. Inspection of the area next day by patrols found the bodies of about two hundred German soldiers in that vicinity.

Although the attacks had been beaten off, the battalion moved west some three thousand yards to the vicinity of Chatanois to be in a better defensive position in case the attack were renewed in the morning. The enemy did not continue the attack the following morning, however. This was probably due to the fact that he had suffered heavy casualties in dead and wounded and some three hundred had been taken prisoner.

At the same time the southern flank of the division was attacked by an enemy force, estimated to be fifteen hundred. Special enemy mountain troops were sent out to infiltrate into the artillery positions. These succeeded in two cases—getting into the positions of the 131st and 133rd Field Artillery Battalions. In the case of the latter, two vehicles and one

howitzer were damaged by enemy armed with bazookas. The enemy was beaten off and the original positions held.

After the attack of the 12-13 December, the area of the 142nd Infantry Regiment around Selestate became quiet again. However, due to the activity on the division right flank, the 142nd Regimental boundary was shifted south to include more frontage in this direction. Since this additional territory could not be covered from our position, it necessitated the shifting of one battery about five thousand yards to the south to cover the regiment's right flank. This displacement took place on 18 December 1944. Defensive fires were adjusted by our liaison officers and forward observers the following morning. As most of the activity was in the southern sector, this one battery was kept quite busy both day and night, especially on the regiment's extreme right flank where the enemy counterattacked repeatedly. No ground was lost by our troops, the enemy being beaten off in all cases.

During the third week of December, the 36th Division changed positions with the 3rd Infantry Division. On 22 December the 142nd Regimental Combat Team was relieved in its sector in the vicinity of Selestat and the same day closed into positions in the vicinity of Strasbourg along the west bank of the Rhine River. This was an extremely quiet position with its action limited to an exchange of small arms and artillery from either side.

~~XX~~ The battalion's initial mission in this position was the direct support of the 141st Infantry Regiment. However this was soon changed to direct support of the Linden Task Force when the 36th Division (less 132nd and 155th Field Artillery Battalions) was withdrawn to a reserved rest area. This gave us the responsibility for artillery fire over a front which had previously been covered by an entire division artillery. The batteries were put into position to cover a twenty-six thousand meter front. To augment our fires we had three cannon companies, two companies of tanks with 75mm guns, one tank battery with 105mm guns and two 90mm A.A. batteries. To control this artillery, two fire direction centers were set up—one, north of Strasbourg and the other, south of the town. However, little firing was done. Our three liaison officers went to each of the infantry regiments and the forward observers were employed, one with each battalion. This did not allow them to do much observing, but merely to act as battalion liaison officers. Most of the observing in these positions was done from stationary observation points, augmented by the cannon companies, mortar and outpost observers.

Since we took a sector that had already been occupied, many of our wire lines were already in. However, the installation of new wires and maintenance of the already extensive existing ones taxed our wire sections to the utmost. The battalion spent both Christmas and New Year's in these relatively comfortable and inactive positions.

The end of the year, 1944, found the battalion on the west bank of the Rhine River after one hundred and forty days of continuous combat duty, its action from this position limited to throwing an occasional round of artillery into Germany.

## January 1945

The beginning of the year 1945 found the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion in the vicinity of Strasbourg, on the west bank of the Rhine River. The mission of the battalion was reinforcement of the fires of the 33rd Field Artillery Brigade. The general situation was defensive; and the sector all along the Rhine was quiet. All of the infantry regiments of the 36th Division were in a rest and training area to the rear; and our battalion was on a six-hour alert to rejoin the division. Although there was little activity in our sector, there were plenty of rumors circulating concerning the German advances in northern Alsace; and many civilians were already evacuating the city of Strasbourg.

On 3 January 1945, at 1330 hours, the battalion was ordered to rejoin the 36th Infantry Division in the vicinity of Saverne or Saarebourg. At 1530 hours we were on the road and arrived at 1730 hours at Saverne where we were instructed by military police to proceed to Saarebourg. After some delay in the latter town, an officer, who had been sent ahead, contacted us and informed the battalion commander that the division was moving to the vicinity of Montbronn in the Bitche sector, and gave us the route which we were to follow. At 0200 hours the march was resumed to Montbronn. This difficult march through darkness and cold was completed about 0530 hours. The assistant S-3 met us in the vicinity of Montbronn and took the battery commanders on reconnaissance of positions which he had selected. These positions were actually an assembly area; but the guns were put in firing position since the enemy was well within range. During the morning, another position area was assigned in the vicinity of St. Louis les Bitche, and reconnaissance was completed by noon. During the afternoon, the batteries occupied these positions. Our present mission was that of reinforcing the fires of the 131st Field Artillery Battalion since the 141st Infantry Regiment was the only infantry regiment in the lines. The activity on our immediate front was negligible; but the front was more or less "on the edge," because the enemy was putting strong pressure to the north and southeast of us.

The preparation of the gun pits was made difficult by frozen ground and hilly terrain in our area. Further, in two of the battery areas there were no buildings nor shelter of any kind. However with the aid of some dynamite, logs and a great deal of pick and shovel work by the gun crews, excellent dug-in gun pits and dugouts with overhead cover were soon constructed.

On 6 January the 142nd Infantry Regiment relieved the 141st Infantry Regiment, and our forward observers were committed with the infantry. The sector remained quiet until 8 January, 1945, when the 1st Battalion made a limited objective attack to improve the positions. The attack was successful and the anticipated counterattack, which developed the next morning, was beaten off with heavy casualties to the enemy. The 142nd Infantry Regiment was relieved by the 143rd Infantry Regiment; and our mission changed to reinforcing the fires of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion.

The plans for an attack to the northeast were prepared. However,

before any action could be taken in either direction, the 142nd Regimental Combat Team was alerted to move to the sector of the 103rd Infantry Division in the vicinity of Sarreguemines. The plans, including the route and destination to an assembly point, were drawn up on the night of 13 January 1945; and the march was begun on the next morning at 0400 hours. The battalion was given the mission of general support and reinforcement of the fires of the 383rd Field Artillery Battalion, while the mission of the 142nd Infantry Regiment was that of reserve. Reconnaissance was made in the vicinity of Metzling where we were to occupy positions vacated by the 382nd Field Artillery Battalion. The battalion got a break this time since the positions were already prepared, wire installations were in and enough houses were in the area to accommodate the personnel. The front, generally between Saarguemines and Forbach, was very quiet, and few missions were fired.

The 103rd Infantry Division was being relieved by the 70th Infantry Division which was supported by the 69th and 93rd Armored Field Artillery Battalions. On the night of 16 January 1945, the 383rd Field Artillery Battalion (103rd Infantry Division) was scheduled to move. However, the 93rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which was to relieve them, had not been released from its mission in the Haguenau area. This necessitated the displacement of our battalion on very short notice to take over the positions and direct support missions of the 383rd Field Artillery Battalion. This was done between 2100 hours and 2400 hours the night of 16 January 1945, and included bringing up our liaison and forward observer parties to the supported infantry, 276th Infantry Regiment. The next day the 93rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion arrived and relieved us of the mission and positions during the late afternoon. Batteries moved back, as they were relieved, to their previous positions at Metzling.

At 0100 hours, 18 January 1945, warning orders were received for the battalion to be ready to move at 0800 hours to a destination in the Haguenau area. A quartering party was sent out the next morning; and the route to Saverne, where a guide was to meet us, was announced. The motor movement began at 1140 hours under the command of the battalion S-3. The battalion commander and the battalion S-2 rode ahead. Upon arrival at Fenetrange ahead of the battalion, Lt. Col. Green was informed by the military police that the destination of the 142nd Regimental Combat Team had been changed from Saverne to Durstel. The battalion was rerouted and taken to an assembly area in the vicinity of Bettewiller, where it was pulled off the road to await further orders. At first, it was thought we would occupy our old positions in the vicinity of Montbronn which was nearby. However, at 1800 hours the orders were received to continue the march to Haguenau at 2400 hours. Lt. Col. Green proceeded immediately to the 36th Infantry Division Artillery command post, where he was given orders to occupy immediately positions in the vicinity of Camp-de Oberhoffen. Lt. Col. Green, with the battery commanders, left at 0330 hours; and the battalion, under the command of the battalion executive, followed at 0400 hours. At 0600 hours the battalion was in posi-



tion and ready to fire, having just completed an eighteen-hour march. The Haguenau sector into which we had just moved was an extremely active one. Since the first of the year, the enemy had exerted considerable pressure on the northern Alsace sector, forcing withdrawals on the part of our troops. As we entered the sector, the situation was somewhat confused.

On 20 January 1945, one infantry regiment, the 143rd Infantry Regiment, was in line in the corps right flank between Rohrwiller and Weyerheim. Our mission was reinforcing the fires of the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion. On the same day plans were made to carry out a major withdrawal from north of Haguenau. This necessitated a hasty displacement on our part. During the afternoon, the battalion displaced to positions in the vicinity of Geudertheim. In our sector three infantry battalions were in the line, and each had a battalion of artillery in direct support of it. In addition, there were from one to three light artillery battalions, as well as a medium battalion, reinforcing these fires. Therefore, when the enemy reacted to our withdrawal and began making probing attacks to test the strength of our front, we were able to crack down on him quickly with a large mass of artillery fire. After making two or three probing attacks and suffering heavy casualties, the enemy troops secured a temporary bridgehead across the Moder, northwest of Haguenau. This was also counterattacked, and the enemy was driven back across the river with heavy casualties.

The strengthening of our front, combined with the allied successes on the other fronts, seems to have changed the enemy's intentions in our sector. During the remainder of the month, he appeared to go on the defensive, and from all indications his panzer divisions were withdrawn from our front. As soon as this was realized by our commanders, we again became aggressive, and at the close of the month the battalion occupied positions in the vicinity of Bischwiller in preparation for an attack to the north and east. At first appearances, the month would be characterized by the old army expression "SNAFU." However, on closer inspection and considering the role played by the 36th Infantry Division, the 142nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team in particular, it can be seen that our army commanders were engaged in a mighty game of military chess in which the 36th Infantry Division played the role of "Queen." Most of the period, we were in corps or army reserve, subject to action on any part of the army sector. At the first of the month, we saw action on the 7th Army right flank at Strasbourg, then to the middle of the front in the vicinity of Bitche, later to the left flank in the vicinity of Saarguemines, and finally back to the right flank again southeast of Haguenau. The fact that all of these difficult moves and operations were made without detering incidents, despite the hardships of winter, was a credit to all personnel of the command.

#### **February 1945**

The beginning of the month of February found the battalion in position southwest of Bischwiller, France, with the enemy front lines about

1500 yards to the north and east. This relatively "close-up" position was occupied in preparation to support the attack of the 142nd Infantry Regiment. In reviewing the events of the previous months, it will be recalled that, during the month of January, the units of the VI Corps had withdrawn in the face of enemy troops and armor. At the end of the month, a defensive position, running generally east and west, south of the Moder River, had been defended successfully against strong enemy attacks. The fact that these attacks failed, coupled with the Allied successes on other fronts, made it apparent that enemy troops were being withdrawn from our sector. As a result, it was believed that the enemy had given up the offensive in our sector and would, therefore, be on the defensive. The attack, in which the 142nd Infantry Regiment participated, had the object of straightening out our line and also testing the enemy's strength and defenses as well as establishing a bridgehead across the Moder. This attack jumped off on 1 February with the primary object of seizing Oberhoffen with one battalion. The attack was initially successful; and two companies were in the town the next morning. However, these companies did not have any supporting armor with them as the bridge over the Moder River had not yet been completed. During the morning, the enemy counterattacked with infantry, supported by tanks, and succeeded in getting into the town and disorganizing our troops. During this time, our ground observers, as well as the air OP, expended some 1500 rounds on observed missions of tanks and infantry. Late in the afternoon, the town was again attacked from the south by the 1st Battalion against stiff opposition. The attack was resumed the next morning and, by slow and steady progress, succeeded in clearing out most of the town during the day. The next few days, although the town had been cleared, it was made almost untenable for our people by enemy self-propelled and tank fire from the woods, 300 to 400 yards to the northeast.

At this time the continuation of the attack to the east of Oberhoffen was taken over by another unit of the division. The 142nd Infantry was given a sector, including Kaltenhouse. This made it necessary for us to move west to be in a better position to cover our regimental sector. Things quieted down again for a few days, during which time our artillery fires were very much restricted by ammunition allocations. Observed targets were always available due to the aggressive enemy; and although we fired on most of the missions, the proper fire for effect could not always be given. On 11 February the enemy launched a battalion-size attack on Oberhoffen, supported by at least two self-propelled guns. With the help of darkness and an early morning snowstorm, they succeeded in getting into the center of the town without much opposition. However, when daylight came and the snowstorm stopped, the enemy's route into town was sealed off with artillery fire, and our troops in town converged on the enemy from the north and south. By nightfall two hundred prisoners of war had been taken, including one battalion commander and two company commanders, and one of the self-propelled guns was knocked out. The failure of this attack, as well as the previous counterattack, apparently proved to the enemy that we were determined to hold Oberhoffen, so

no further attacks were launched against us. Having established a bridgehead across the Moder River, we, too, went on the defensive. This situation continued with the center of activity on the front around Oberhoffen where considerable self-propelled and tank fire was exchanged. Our ammunition allowance of approximately twelve rounds per gun per day allowed us to make only weak efforts to combat the enemy's self-propelled guns, mortars, and automatic weapons which incessantly harassed the town.

On 15 February the 142nd Infantry Regiment was relieved by the 143rd Infantry Regiment; and our mission then became one of general support. The third week of February was a rather quiet and inactive one for us because of the nature of our mission and the ammunition restrictions. However, we were comfortably situated, and showers and movies were available. Near the end of the week the division sector was changed to include more frontage to the west and to be relieved of all the sector, including Oberhoffen to the east. The 142nd Regimental Combat Team was to relieve elements of the 101st Airborne Infantry Division in a sector east of Haguenau. On 22 February our battalion occupied positions in the vicinity of Huttendorf. Our initial role in this position was general support of the 101st Airborne Infantry Division Artillery. However, since this was an extremely inactive front, we did little more than to register on a number of check points.

On 26 February the 142nd Infantry came into the lines; and we again took over the direct support. Two battalions of infantry and the Anti-tank Company were put in the line, and we had five observers in position with those units. Because the flat terrain and forest offered poor observation, it was necessary for some of our observers to occupy positions in dugouts with the front line infantry. Although there were no major targets fired on, every day found us firing on small groups of infantry, mortars and machine guns.

The month ended with the 142nd Regimental Combat Team in this inactive defensive position.

### March 1945

The beginning of the month found the 132nd Field Artillery Battalion in position in the vicinity of Huttendorf in direct support of the 142nd Infantry Regiment. The general situation was of a defensive nature with only patrol action by either side. The front was defined by the Moder River which ran northwest and southwest through Haguenau. The front was generally quiet all along our army sector with the main action in the theater taking place farther north where the First, Third, and Ninth Armies were attacking.

From 6 to 13 March the battalion was out of the line and in a training area. It was quite a relief, after over two hundred continuous combat days, to be out of the lines away from the noise, danger and tension of combat. Our training during this week consisted mainly of toning up for combat. During this time, one day was devoted to the calibration of the twelve howitzers which brought out the fact that several guns in the

battalion consistently fired as much as two hundred yards shorter in average range than the rest of the guns. Corrections were made for these guns in subsequent firing with better results reported by the forward observers.

On 13 March orders were received and plans made for our return to active combat. Positions were selected in the vicinity of Dauendorf, about fifteen hundred yards from the front lines. These positions were to be occupied in preparation for an attack in which our division, as well as other divisions of the Seventh Army, were to participate. On the night of the 14th these positions were occupied. Our mission was that of direct support of 142nd Infantry Regiment; the mission of the division was to breach the Siegfried Line which began some twenty miles north, and then to push east to the Rhine.

This attack all along the Seventh Army front jumped off the morning of the 15th with no artillery preparation in our particular sector. The initial resistance at the river crossing was quite strong, but lacked depth. After this crust had been penetrated, resistance was spotty or nonexistent. However, the infantry and tanks were delayed by mines and demolition abatis.

Early on the morning of 17 March the battalion displaced forward a distance of four miles; and alternate plans were made for rapid pursuit with the infantry riding on our artillery vehicles. However these plans were not carried out due to demolitions; and the battalion again displaced four miles, later in the evening. Since there was little or no resistance, very little firing was done by our battalion from these intermediate positions. On noon of 18 March we again moved forward a distance of fifteen miles to positions in the vicinity of Lobsann where the batteries went into temporary positions. The battalion commander and battery commanders went forward another four miles to the vicinity of Drachenbronn where the battalion was brought up at 1900 hours. These positions were occupied in preparation for an attack on Wissembourg, where it was believed that the enemy would stand. However, with the exception of mines and demolitions, only light resistance was encountered and the town was quickly cleared. The advance continued through the next day until our infantry ran into the outer defenses of the Siegfried Line, about five miles north of Wissembourg. At this time our battalion had moved to positions about two miles north of Wissembourg and inside the German border. We were then in position three thousand yards from the first "Dragon's Teeth" and pill boxes of the Siegfried Line and prepared for an attack against it. Enemy opposition became more intense. This included artillery and nebelwerfer fire, as well as machine gun and small arms. On the 20th the infantry began its attack on the line, but advances were made only through the hilly, densely wooded country on the left of our sector, and here the going was very difficult. Our battalion did a great deal of firing against machine guns, nebelwerfers and artillery; but our light, or even the medium artillery, was ineffective against the enemy pill boxes. It was only the infantrymen with demolitions who could clear them out.

On 21 and 22 March the job of capturing the pill boxes continued with slow, but steady, progress. In one instance, one of our forward observers, adjusting an eight-inch howitzer, found it to be very effective and knocked out four pill boxes.

While this was taking place, the armored units of Gen. Patton's Third Army had broken through the Rhine at a point eighty miles north of our front. From there they had pushed on to the south and by 22 March were reported to be only twenty miles north of our position. This threat to the enemy's rear, plus the fact that our infantry had penetrated the line in some points, made any further opposition in our sector unwise.

The night of the 22nd we were subjected to very heavy artillery and nebelwerfer fire as the enemy withdrew. Our infantry was quick to follow the retreating enemy. With infantry riding on tanks, spearheading the pursuit, our battalion, with an infantry battalion, on our vehicles followed after the retreating Germans from noon until the next morning (24 March), when we went into position in the vicinity of Rulzheim about five thousand yards west of the Rhine. This rapid advance of twenty-five miles through the completely disorganized enemy found many small groups by-passed. The morning of the 24th found our batteries capturing small groups of from six to ten enemy soldiers. About seventy-five prisoners were taken by the battalion in two days.

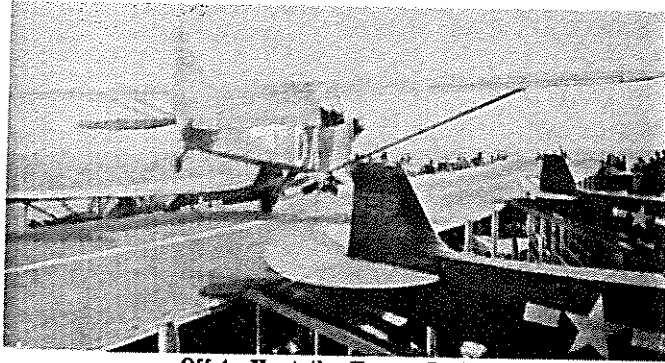
Our occupation of the town of Rulzheim is an example of American versatility. We moved into the town early in the morning while the infantry was still clearing it. An occasional round of enemy artillery came in until about noon. The evening of the same day a picture show was given for the battalion in the auditorium of a hotel used as the battalion headquarters.

This completed our mission of breaking through the Siegfried line and taking all of the ground up to the Rhine River. The only activity in the sector was policing up of the small groups of enemy that failed to get over the river.

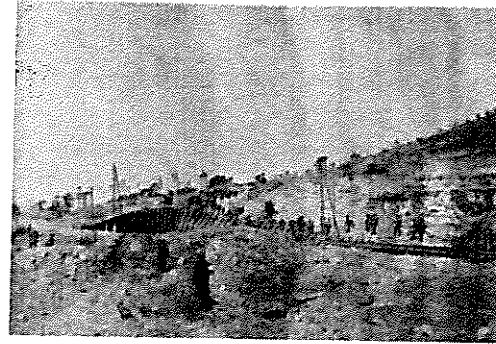
The battalion remained in this position until 29 March. During this period, the only activity that was observed was a few individuals around pill boxes on the opposite side of the Rhine. There was little artillery firing done from either side during this period.

The last three days of the month the division was withdrawn from the line and moved into an assembly area in the vicinity of Landau, sweating out our next mission.

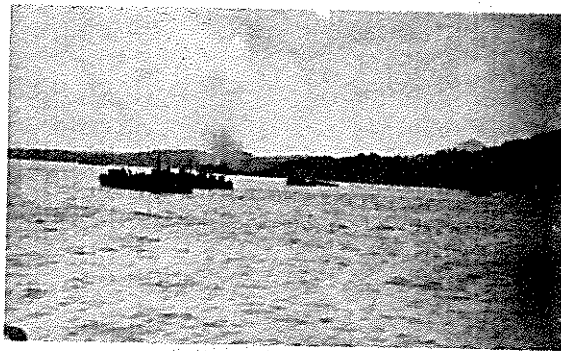
## SOUTHERN FRANCE



Off to Hunt the Enemy Positions



Heading Inland



An LST Hit by a Radio Controlled Bomb



The Way the Burning LST Appeared From the Battalion CP



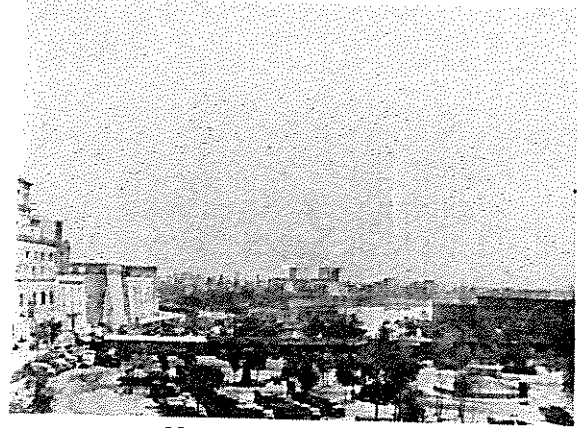
Exploding Ammunition



This Went On All Night



Looking at Naples Harbor Before Invasion of Southern France



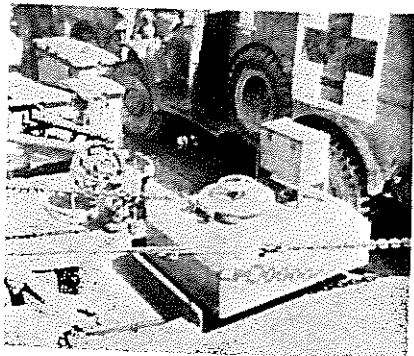
More of Naples Harbor



DUKW at Qualiano, Italy



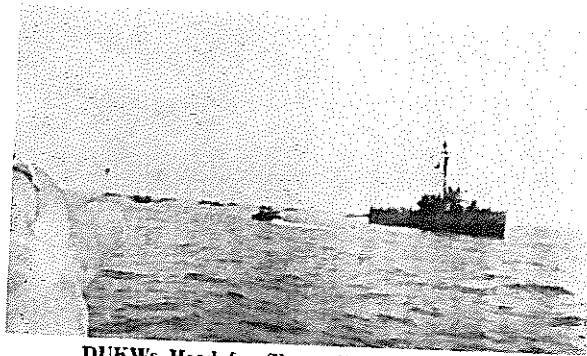
Riding at Anchor Off Pompei, Italy



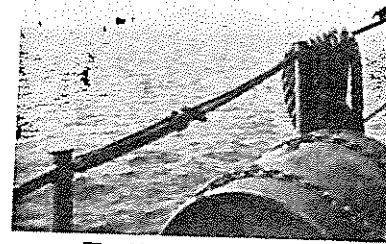
Deck Space on LST



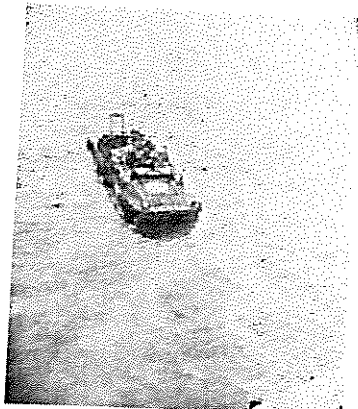
"The Skipper"



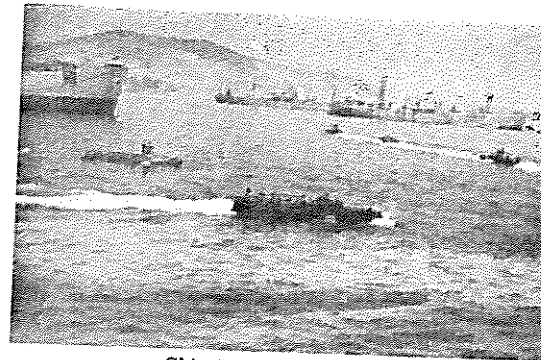
**DUKWs Head for Shore, Southern France**



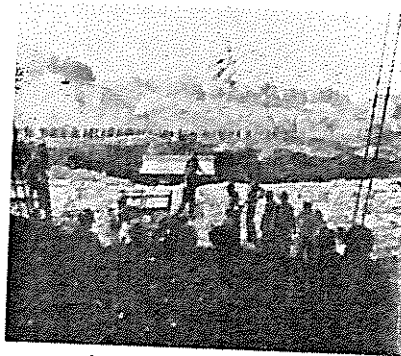
**The Shores of the Riviera**



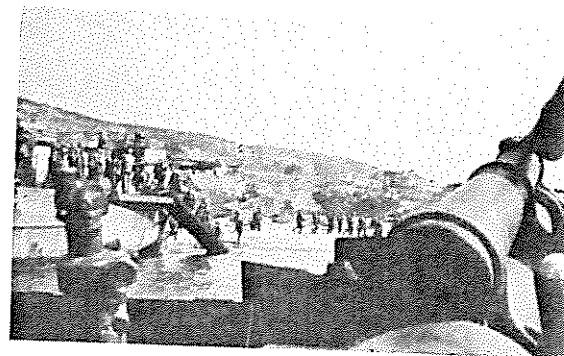
**Battalion Commander and Party Leaving LST for Beaches**



**Ship-to-Shore Operations**



**Unloading from LST**



**Infantry and Artillery**



**Prisoners**



**An LST Takes Them Away**