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**Title:** Interview with COL Robert B. Hutchins – Sicilian Campaign and Initial Phases of the Italian Campaign: Tactical Section, Part 1.

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**Abstract:** This report is an interview by COL Robert B. Hutchins on the Sicilian Campaign and the initial phases of the Italian Campaign. This is Part 1 titled: The Tactical Section.

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TACTICAL SECTION

INTERVIEW WITH COL. ROBERT B. HUTCHINS

(Sicilian Campaign and Initial  
Phases of Italian Campaign)

6 April, 1944.

- Q. I am interested in how you used intelligence and reconnaissance  
platoons.
- A. We had a very extensive training schedule for our intelligence personnel within the regiment before going overseas. Classes were held in which the regimental S-2 under the supervision of the DW G-2 gave instruction to both the regimental intelligence section and battalion section so that we were uniform in training throughout the regiment. In the combat area the S-2 sent out patrols and did everything in connection with intelligence upon division order and my own. The battalions would question the prisoners captured very casually and send them back to the regimental S-2, where we had interpreters among the enlisted men who could speak either Italian or German.
- Q. Is there anything in particular that you used the reconnaissance platoon of the unit for, as a unit?
- A. I used the reconnaissance platoon on patrols, establishing OP's, defense of OP and anything of special nature regarding intelligence that came up.
- Q. Were they useful to you as eyes and ears?
- A. Yes, I made great use of my section and relied on them to a large extent.
- Q. How many of these people did you lose, either killed or captured, were casualties heavy?
- A. Not very heavy. We did lose some but not very many. My S-2 was captured. He was interested in seeing what happened at Persona and when the Germans counterattacked, was captured, together with his orderly. His draftsman was killed by falling flak.
- Q. Did you have announced the essential elements of information in a situation; could you give us something on that - how the S-2 went about analyzing it?
- A. Very seldom did I announce the essential elements of information. I gave them to the S-2 and he handled them, obtaining the information by employing the I & R Platoon and the battalion S-2's. He included them in any written orders. An S-2 submitted a report to division every day. I didn't ordinarily give the essential elements of information. The orders were verbal mostly and I talked over the whole situation at the time with the commanders.
- Q. Prior to making the attack, did you have an opportunity to find out certain things - whether this hill and that dale were occupied or not and to definitely make plans to arrive at answers?
- A. Very seldom - we moved quickly and without very much information. We had very little opportunity for detailed reconnaissance or even limited reconnaissance. The information we

received was sketchy and not detailed enough from division. We seldom knew what strength or force was opposing us or what line they were on. We usually had to start right off moving forward without much information or reconnaissance at all.

- Q. As to the mechanics of the command post operation, how did you keep your situation map and how did you furnish your supply of acetate?
- A. Ordinarily when we started out I left the CP in place, took a forward CP consisting of the S-3 and S-2, a communications officer, surgeon and representative of the S-4, together with liaisons from attached groups with me. We would move forward and follow closely behind the leading elements, maintaining wire and radio, and wire communication with rear CP. The S-3 carried an S-3 map and one of the folding maps. The sergeant kept the S-3 map under supervision of the S-3. The S-2 had a draftsman with him who kept the enemy situation on a map of his own and would from time to time check with the S-3 as to our situation and also give the S-3 his situation. They worked very close together in the CP. It was a constant interchange of information between the S-3 and the S-2.
- Q. Were any trick methods used?
- A. We had a map case similar to one sold at The Infantry School that folded in the middle. We used this almost exclusively, with acetate covering on map and pencils (colored). This worked very satisfactorily. For overlays we kept a separate work map so that we always had the S-3 map to refer to.
- Q. Are these things available once exhausted?
- A. We never ran short. We had a good supply and were able to get more from division when we ran short.
- Q. Using overlays, how did you come out in wet weather? I'm thinking of transmission of overlay from regiment to battalion by messenger. Would they get wet?
- A. Usually we had a conference of commanders first and the overlays were issued to the S-3 right there. They conferred with the regimental S-3 to be sure everything was correct. After that we never sent overlays.
- Q. Did you use base lines?
- A. We did on occasion but not extensively.
- Q. What scale maps did you have?
- A. 1/200,000 or 1/100,000, reproduced from the British maps, not contoured but hashured, elevations in meters, with mile scale on the bottom of the map. In landing we used the jan grid system with the Navy. In the division we employed the thrust line system for coordinates.
- Q. In the regiment, do you think it possible to keep a situation map on one map?
- A. We did very easily, but in addition had a work map. The S-2 kept a map in detail showing the enemy situation, patrols, etc. This information he transferred from time to time to the S-3 map. The sergeant kept the situation map and the S-3 used it for planning and other purposes.

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- Q. I am interested in the training of the S-3 sergeant; when preparing to give a verbal order, how much time did you have to allow him to prepare the accompanying overlay?
- A. It varied from a half hour to an hour, depending on how much you had on it. He was an excellent man and had an assistant with him, a draftsman who assisted him. They could do it quickly - it depended on the amount of information I wanted on it.
- Q. Do you find it desirable to put as much of your order as possible on that operations overlay?
- A. I tried to get everything on it.
- Q. If you had that information on the overlay, did you repeat it in your verbal order?
- A. Yes, always for emphasis, and to be sure we all understood each other.
- Q. How about map distribution, did you have them down through battalions?
- A. We had an ample supply of maps - one per company commander. We never got much below the company commander.
- Q. What scale maps did you have?
- A. 1/100,000 and 1/200,000.
- Q. Did you have aerial photographs at any time?
- A. Only in the initial operations. We had air photographs of the beaches - 1/20,000 - they were excellent. They were taken about a week before the invasion of Sicily and Italy.
- Q. It is advantageous to have air photographs for all operations isn't it?
- A. Yes, especially if you were unable to get reconnaissance.
- Q. Which did you use most, overlays or sketches, and what were the relative advantages?
- A. The regiments used overlays mostly. No sketches were employed to my knowledge.
- Q. The battalions used overlays also?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What are the relative merits of the two in your opinion?
- A. I would much rather have the overlay than I would the sketch. I can put it right on the map.
- Q. Still continuing with sketches, we have emphasized panoramic sketching lightly, did you find occasion where such sketching would be an advantage?
- A. Not over there. We never used them.
- Q. Information was copied on acetate by the greased pencil? If the information became obsolete, what happened to it if it was erased?

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- A. We had the information in the Journal.
- Q. You didn't bother to make a copy of your situation?
- A. No.
- Q. Did you keep a copy of every overlay to higher quarters?
- A. Yes, and to lower headquarters too.
- Q. You must have had a master overlay in headquarters?
- A. In regimental headquarters we did. Our orders were mostly verbal from division. The regimental commander would usually be called to the division CP and from the division map the S-3 made an overlay.
- Q. Did you have any trouble with interception of 'phone messages?
- A. No. I don't recall any instance when the Germans tapped our lines. They came in on the radio quite a bit.
- Q. Did you have the 300 radio?
- A. We had the 284 and the 288, plus the 511 and the 536. I had a 610 set at my headquarters to communicate with the battalion commanders. We operated on a wide front and it was impossible always to keep wire in. You don't get as much service out of wire as you think you will. We found this voice radio set of great importance and used it in the clear with a prearranged code.
- Q. The code was handed down by division?
- A. No, made up in the regiment.
- Q. Did you get better service from the 610 than from the 284?
- A. Yes we did.
- Q. How about the 536, was it satisfactory?
- A. It was very satisfactory, except the batteries issued were old and had to be changed frequently.
- Q. Did you use messengers to advantage?
- A. No more than we had to - they were the least desirable means.
- Q. Did they get lost, killed and wounded?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was it normal procedure to send by more than one means or rely on one means?
- A. If we had anything especially important we had liaison officers - three in the regiment and I would use them. They were sufficiently informed to answer any questions the battalion commander might want to ask.
- Q. How did you choose these liaison officers?
- A. I choose those who would make assistants for the S-1, 2 and 3. They were picked officers.

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- Q. Did they fill in?
- A. Yes. I always had replacements in mind for them too. I selected officers for their education, training and ability to fill these particular positions. That's very important. You should have a staff selection two or three deep - four if possible - within regiment.
- Q. Did you rotate them?
- A. Yes, as much as I could.
- Q. Along that same line of questioning, how deep did you try to keep radio operations - 2 or 3 deep?
- A. I always had two deep and tried to keep three deep. We would train a man, let him go back to his outfit and bring in another man.
- Q. Did you use radios for anti-aircraft warning?
- A. We had a warning system in division in which they reported any air attacks.
- Q. You got that in regimental headquarters, how did you assemble it?
- A. There was a certain code letter in SOI that meant anti-tank or air attack.
- Q. Was your warning effective for air attack?
- A. No it was not. They usually slipped in before you could get it. If it came over regimental CP we couldn't get it to division in time. For your own benefit, it didn't work - especially for air attack. We had no mass attack of tanks. The tanks were always with infantry when they came in.
- Q. Was plane identification as taught effective?
- A. It was not very effective. It's hard for anyone to tell whether it's a friendly plane or otherwise. If a plane actually strafed us the men opened fire; otherwise they had orders not to fire. We had a lot of fire on friendly planes.
- Q. Did the men fire when it started to make its run?
- A. When it was coming down.
- Q. What is the longest march you made?
- A. One we made was between 25 and 30 miles; that was over mountains.
- Q. What were your orders to your motors in case of air attack?
- A. They would stop and personnel would try to get out of the way. A couple of times they came in before anyone saw them. They fly low - hedge hopping. You can't hear the motors and it's hard to see them.

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- Q. What distance did you have between vehicles?
- A. No closer than 50 yards and normally 75 to 100 yards.
- Q. Did you have anti-aircraft security - detachments out ahead in what you deemed the critical areas?
- A. Yes. We used our heavy weapons machine guns for anti-aircraft protection and on every fourth 2½ ton truck we had 50 calibers in addition to security detachments.
- Q. How about anti-tank and mechanized security?
- A. The same way.
- Q. What can you tell us on advance guard formation?
- A. We usually moved at night, anywhere from 15 to 20 miles into enemy territory, and used the normal advance guard formation supplemented with patrols. The battalions covered quite a distance on the road. The 2d battalion in column was over an hour's march from the head of the leading battalion.
- Q. That was at night?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did you maintain contact from one unit to another?
- A. Connecting files and radio. I usually followed behind the leading battalion.
- Q. Do you mean foot or motor patrol?
- A. We used a platoon of the Division Reconnaissance Troops out ten miles in the daytime; at night we used foot patrols, leading and on the flanks.
- Q. They didn't go out very far?
- A. No.
- Q. One reason for this question about advance guards and protection against aircraft, there is a division of Paragraph 264 of 100-5 in which under anti-aircraft protection they say motor columns will continue to march, not halt and disperse.
- A. That's a good thing.
- Q. For the first time in these problems we are going to teach to continue to march.
- A. Our order was that we were to halt and get out but that isn't what happened. You didn't have time to halt and get out. The times we were strafed the planes flew over and the vehicles didn't stop. Nearly all the shells landed between the trucks - we didn't lose a man.
- Q. Did they come over you?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What distance over the column?
- A. I am unable to state, but you could see the pilot easily.

- Q. Did you knock any out?
- A. We knocked out one plane with small arms fire.
- Q. Do you feel it would be well to continue to march?
- A. Yes, I think so, if in vehicles.
- Q. Do the planes make only one trip?
- A. In this instance they did. Ordinarily they come back two or three times.
- Q. How many planes would you get as a rule?
- A. We had air superiority but the Germans came in threes and sixes.
- Q. What deviations from the standard T/O of equipment did you adopt within your unit - any trick elements?
- A. We had to organize a mine detecting platoon which we added to the mine platoon in the anti-tank company. We were issued 18 detectors and formed 3 squads of 6 detectors each and whenever the battalion moved out we attached a squad with the battalion. If the battalion wanted more we attached two or three squads. They operated under the anti-tank platoon leader. We took the men from the rest of the regiment. We went over 15% over-strength, which helped out but men were taken from the rifle companies for this platoon.
- Q. How did you organize your bazooka teams?
- A. We didn't have any bazooka teams as such. They were issued to the men by the company commander, as he saw fit, within the company.
- Q. That detector is the only special one you had?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What did you do about protection of your CP?
- A. I think the CP should have a defense platoon in it. We used the band and a platoon from the reserve battalion to protect the regimental CP.
- Q. You found it necessary in both cases to organize the defense guard from the combat troops?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did you attempt to organize your operating personnel into improvised tactical groups for your command post personnel?
- A. We used what we could on guard to supplement the defense.
- Q. The radio and visual sections, were they organized into groups for purposes of combat?
- A. Not for purposes of combat.
- Q. Was the CP ever attacked?
- A. We got a tank scare which we stopped before it got to the CP but every man in regimental CP was deployed in this instance for its defense.



- Q. Did you run into any plastic mines?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Your detectors worked on these?
- A. No. We had to prod. The Germans didn't have many of them. Most of the ones we ran into were Bouncing Betties and Teller Mines.
- Q. Did you run into any new type mines? The ones that you can run two or three trucks over and the fourth will set it off?
- A. No, but some of the Teller Mines will do that.
- Q. Did you suffer many casualties from anti-personnel mines?
- A. No great percentage. As soon as you got casualties you would search that area.
- Q. Did the detectors pick up anti-personnel mines?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Does the fear of mines slow up the advance?
- A. It slows it up quite a bit. Detectors are usually behind the leading group, searching along the road - nevertheless, it still slows you.
- Q. Would you run into minefields during night movements?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What distance did you make at night?
- A. That varied according to the resistance we ran into; the bridges that were blown; the bypasses that had to be fixed. I know we started usually around dark and never got to the objective some 15 or 20 miles until sometime the next morning - it was an all night proposition. A good 12 hours.
- Q. What was the length of time from the time a prisoner was captured until he was interrogated?
- A. As soon as he was reported by battalion to us we had him on the way back to the stockade for questioning either under battalion guard or regimental guard. We never brought him in the regimental CP. The battalion S-2 used a battalion vehicle if available; if not, the regimental interpreter would go for him. The battalions didn't hold him at all.
- Q. Did you find in asking questions you would get information you could use immediately?
- A. Not very often. General information as to the company the person was with, what he was doing or something like that. As the interpreter became more experienced he got more information.
- Q. What was the interrogation team made up of?
- A. We had a 1st Lieutenant and a sergeant for questioning German prisoners and a similar team for questioning Italian prisoners.

Q. They were part of the division interrogation team?

A. Yes.

Q. In a situation as it existed in Italy was it a matter of an hour or seven or eight hours before prisoners got back? I noticed in one report that it took 18 hours to get back, is that unusual?

A. Very unusual. I'd say within an hour normally, depending on the route they had to go back.

Q. They were brought back by the troops?

A. Usually they were brought back to the battalion CP and from there the battalion S-2 handled them, or asked regiment to send for them.

Q. He didn't have any regularly assigned troops for that purpose?

A. He had to take what he had there. We had MP's.

Q. You mentioned the S-2 being some place near the CP, did you have any name for that place?

A. I think it was "Prisoner Collecting Point," a point where we had them brought in.

Q. How much of a going over were they given there?

A. Very little at the battalion.

Q. Were they searched again?

A. Yes. I believe they were searched. They would turn in anything they had to the battalion S-2 who turned it over to the interpreter.

Q. Tagging was done in that division?

A. Yes. Close to the regimental CP we had a prisoners' stockade, about 200 yards from the CP.

Q. What did you call that?

A. Regimental Stockade.

Q. Operated by MP's?

A. Yes, a detachment with us.

Q. Under control of the regiment?

A. We had one of our own officers trained at MP school in the division. He was trained and sent back to the regiment with a detail of division MP's. They had transportation and operated this collecting point for prisoners, guarded them, and were used to take prisoners back to the division so we wouldn't have to use our own men. The MP's were also used to guard the CP, as guides on the move and as guides to regulate traffic. This worked better than having the MP back at division.

Q. What size MP outfit did your division have when you left?

A. It was authorized 68 men. I don't know how big it got afterwards.

- Q. It did get bigger?
- A. I'm sure it did. I think they sent 15 men and an officer to each regiment. Most of the burden for the MP work was placed on regiment. Going in a town we had to operate with this detachment.
- Q. Did you have an officer with the group?
- A. We did - an officer from the regiment - a 1st Lieutenant from one of the rifle companies.
- Q. At the close of the Sicilian campaign, the prisoners were taken in mass, were they not? Were they handled differently?
- A. We brought them back the same way - 500 to 1000 at a time.
- Q. How about civilians, were they any trouble?
- A. They gave us very little trouble. Sometimes we had to leave a platoon in a city as guards until the MP's took over.
- Q. Were there any arrests of civilians?
- A. No. We questioned everybody; they were required to carry identification cards.
- Q. What kind of counter intelligence measures did you take and how were they arrived at?
- A. We seldom employed any counter intelligence; we moved so rapidly, I can't give a specific case. However, the regimental S-2 was given about \$1000 to expend any way he wanted to, i. e., giving it to civilians for information, etc. He would turn in what he didn't use. If he needed more he would get it.
- Q. Do you have any idea from where he got this information?
- A. We got a lot from civilians, some from prisoners, some from the regimental OP observing; principally from civilians and prisoners.
- Q. How about from your own artillery, did you get information from artillery?
- A. Not very much - some - not a great deal.
- Q. Was there ever a case you know of where you requested artillery to use a plane to get information for you?
- A. They had a liaison plane but I didn't ask for information. If they were up they would report in.
- Q. Was it your practice to make prisoners comfortable or uncomfortable when questioned?
- A. We gave them something to eat and cigarettes before questioning by the interrogation team.
- Q. How about before the intelligence officer got them?
- A. I don't think they did that.

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- Q. We are teaching that the companies will make very simple reports and that battalions will make unit reports, consolidating those other reports, did you find that could be worked?
- A. Ordinarily that's the way we did it.
- Q. How frequently did you require these reports?
- A. Several times a day. It should be frequent.
- Q. You would require an immediate report on any special change in a situation? Did you have a periodical report or summary for the past two or three hours?
- A. I had no summary report. They reported frequently, the situation and immediately, any special change.
- Q. What sort of reports were you required to send to division?
- A. We had to send an S-2 report at a certain time and also an S-3 report at a certain time each day - one a day.
- Q. Anything unusual, of course, you reported right away by telephone?
- A. Yes, by telephone, radio or liaison officer. The liaison officer took notes of instructions issued, overlay position and reported the information to division in the morning. In the afternoon he came back to the regiment and brought information on what had happened at division.
- Q. In addition to the two reports that were in?
- A. Yes.
- Q. As I understand it, you had S-1, 2 and 3 in your forward command post?
- A. That's right.
- Q. Did you have a telephone in your forward CP from the rear CP to the forward CP?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Where did you keep your personnel?
- A. At the rear CP. The messages that came in were filed by the sergeant and his assistant at the forward CP and collected by the chief clerk during the day for entry in the journal.
- Q. Did you attempt to keep a record of instructions you used?
- A. Yes. A clerk took down everything I said and that was incorporated in the journal.
- Q. How far in the rear was your CP?
- A. It varied with the situation but on occasion was five or so miles in the rear. At night we would move it up.
- Q. Did you have a train bivouac there?
- A. Our field train bivouac was at another place. However, at times it was in the vicinity of the rear CP.



- Q. I was wondering why it wouldn't have been as well to have the executive officer up front and a few more clerks and the company clerks back with division.
- A. In the first place, it was difficult to find cover for so many men and in the second place, we found this spot in the headquarters to work more efficiently.
- Q. Was your personnel officer in the rear CP?
- A. Back with division.
- Q. Your executive officer wasn't able to keep apprised of the situation was he?
- A. Yes. A map was kept back at the CP and he made frequent trips to the forward CP.
- Q. Every night?
- A. Day and night.
- Q. Did you have your staff organized so that some worked daytime and some night time?
- A. Yes, but we used the principle of one duty officer on duty at a time with a limited number of clerks. This worked very successfully.
- Q. In effect, you had a duty officer?
- A. That's right.
- Q. And your clerical forces were divided into shifts?
- A. Yes.
- Q. What use did you make of the headquarters commandant?
- A. He was charged with the defense of the regimental CP - establishing the CP and commanded headquarters company.
- Q. What did you have at regimental for gas officer?
- A. A lieutenant and NCO.
- Q. Where did you get them?
- A. Out of the headquarters company; also the regimental officer.
- Q. Do you think that the supply sergeant has any time to function as gas NCO?
- A. Under our circumstances he could very well. We had no gas.
- Q. Under normal conditions?
- A. I don't think so. The supply problem is too much to handle.
- Q. Who was responsible for laying out protection?
- A. The headquarters commandant.

Q. In connection with enemy situation, did you know enough of the enemy situation to make any study of the enemy's capabilities as we teach them here?

A. Not very well. I did work my S-2 hard on this but our information was so meagre that I wasn't able to determine the strength or intentions of the enemy.

Q. Did you capture any prisoners?

A. Yes.

Q. You did study what the S-2 had and tried to estimate what force they were in and what they intended doing?

A. From questioning of prisoners you could get some information on that - not much.

Q. Colonel Holland told us that 25 minutes are usually needed to reorganize battalion and continue back, what was the average in your case?

A. I can't answer that. We were on the move and I don't recall any time when we had a time limit in which to reorganize. That came up later - after I left the regiment when the Germans took a stand.

Q. What use did you make of standard operating procedure?

A. We had standard operating procedure for the CP setup; for movement on roads and for movement by vehicles, and certain things within the bivouac area such as guards, outposts, etc.

Q. You had no SOP for attachments to battalions?

A. No we did not.

Q. Did you have much of a problem with replacements?

A. Yes we did. However, we seldom got replacements until quite awhile after the campaign. Our replacements after Sicily came the day before we went to Italy. We received replacements in Italy irregularly and at no stated times. Usually they were received at the most inopportune time for us.

Q. Do you get officers the same way?

A. Yes.

Q. How were they as to quality for replacements?

A. Individually the men were all right but they lacked training. Some were supposed to be trained as riflemen but they weren't riflemen. Thirteen weeks aren't enough before a man goes into combat.

Q. How about the junior leaders?

A. They came in the same way. If we could have had them for awhile before going into combat it would have been better.

- Q. In other words, when the untrained was doing it, you kept him uncomfortable and when the trained man was doing the questioning, you gave him all the trimmings?
- A. That's right.
- Q. In this questioning directed by regimental S-2, did they try to get particular pieces of information?
- A. The interpreters had certain division instructions and then I gave them the questions I wanted answered. They would supplement this according to their own experience to get the information desired.
- Q. Did you have success in determining enemy intentions?
- A. We tried to do that in the questioning and had success in it.
- Q. Did you make it a practice to give EEI's to your S-2?
- A. I tried to. We seldom received EEI from division in the first place, then we more or less covered EEI in the verbal order.
- Q. These could be classed as EEI's; this continuing process through the whole operation?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you know how the battalion S-2 was generally employed? Were they used as reconnaissance officers?
- A. We made the mistake in the beginning of sending them out with patrols but I stopped that. They got separated from the CP for a long time and were unable to furnish me with information. I required them to stay close to the CP and not go with patrols; when they were out with patrols they got out of touch with everything.
- Q. Did you find that officer patrols were necessary to confirm information that you had gotten by some other patrols?
- A. No I didn't. I sent officers on patrols but not to verify what other patrols had brought in.
- Q. Is it true that the battalion commanders are prone to use him because he is a junior officer?
- A. They are prone to use him; and also not listen to his suggestions. The result was it was hard to get information.
- Q. Do you think if the battalion S-2 were a captain it would help any?
- A. He should be a captain and should stay close to the CP. The battalion commander gets so involved he forgets to send back information. I look to the S-2 for information rather than the battalion commander.
- Q. Your company combat reports, were they successful in giving you information or were they irregular?
- A. We had trouble getting them and they were spasmodic. I would rather they go to battalion and let them furnish us with what is happening. I think that the battalion commander should see that those things get back to regiment.

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- Q. Do they assume responsibility readily?
- A. Yes, from my observation. There were no more nervous cases among the replacements than there were among the older men.
- Q. Did you have much trouble with faked cases?
- A. No. We didn't as I saw them. You can usually tell whether a man is faking or not.
- Q. Did you have any trouble in disciplining them?
- A. Not any more than is normal within a regiment. I didn't do anything while fighting. In the assembly area we cracked down on them.
- Q. Discipline is a good way to control that reaction isn't it?
- A. The doctors usually gave them morphine and kept them around the regimental aid station for a couple of days. A little rest usually helped some of them. The worse cases were sent back to a collecting station and stayed there for about a week. Then if there was no improvement they were evacuated to the rear.
- Q. In regard to replacements, did you have replacements of field officers?
- A. I tried to have no replacements above second lieutenants - that's a big morale factor. I never received any replacements higher than a second lieutenant, except one captain.
- Q. Did you find your liaison officers to be of great value to you?
- A. Yes I did, for the reason that you have two deep in your staff to start with. They are also invaluable when you need to transmit information. They have to know tactics. My liaison officers in the beginning were not so experienced but after their Sicilian experience proved exceedingly helpful and valuable to me.
- Q. In giving your order, do you give a signal for the lifting or shifting of supporting fires within the regiment or was that SOP?
- A. I never did give any. It was in the SOI. Our artillery setup was such that we didn't find a signal necessary to have fires shifted.
- Q. Did your battalion commanders issue the orders?
- A. If they wanted fires shifted they did.
- Q. All heavy weapons were observed fires?
- A. Yes.
- Q. You say you didn't issue instructions for artillery firing?
- A. Yes, I did to commence the attack and from there the artillery battalion commander handled it on call from the battalions.
- Q. How far back was the forward CP from the line of attack?



- A. Ordinarily, close up - around 1000 yards in an attack. When in defense at Salerno - around 1500 yards.
- Q. At that time how large a front would you cover?
- A. A three mile front at that time.
- Q. How about frontages?
- A. Ordinarily we had nothing on the right or left and were usually in column of battalions.
- Q. What was your frontage in Salerno in defense?
- A. Three miles.
- Q. These delaying forces, were they of considerable strength usually?
- A. It varied from a company on up.
- Q. In a long approach march across country, did your heavy weapons company carry weapons?
- A. They carried them, yes.
- Q. Did you feel you should have had animal transportation?
- A. On occasions, yes.
- Q. Did you go across country?
- A. Yes. Sometimes along the road - spread out.
- Q. Where did you get your light machine guns?
- A. We got them through division.
- Q. Did you use pack-boards?
- A. Yes. We had the mountain pack-boards. They are very good. I have seen the new standard, but we didn't use them.
- Q. Was supporting artillery generally an integral part of your GP?
- A. No, but closely associated with it. I released the artillery battalion commander and kept a liaison officer with a radio with me. He kept in touch with the S-2 and S-3, and relayed to the artillery battalion commander any instructions from me.
- Q. This maintaining contact with the enemy drawing out, is that as easy done as said?
- A. No. We didn't do it so well either. I don't know what was wrong. We sent out patrols but lost contact. The Germans were successful. They seemed to have some group that held on to us at all times.
- Q. Did they ever break clean and take the pressure off the front?
- A. Yes they did, except for contact patrols.

- Q. What happened at night in the advance guard formation?
- A. We used the normal advance guard formation at night, supplemented with patrols to the right and left. The first aid men followed behind to administer first aid.
- Q. Do you have any idea of the discipline of the American soldier when captured?
- A. All that I know is that a German bulletin that was captured, cited the American soldier as an example for German troops to follow when captured.
- Q. Was the German soldier fairly willing to talk?
- A. Some were and some weren't. The older Germans, around 38 or 40 were about fed up with things and were willing to talk. However, the younger Germans were reluctant to talk. They are surly and cruel.
- Q. It would be a good idea to separate them.
- A. That's what we did.
- Q. Did you separate the officers and non-coms?
- A. Yes.
- Q. If you had to train a regiment again, is there anything in particular you would emphasize?
- A. I think I would emphasize scouting, patrolling, terrain appreciation and more firing; giving every man a good course in every weapon and map reading.
- Q. On scouting and patrolling, everybody says that, and I want to know whether it is a question of whether we don't have enough patience to accomplish scouting and patrolling.
- A. I think we have the mechanics all right but our patrols lack aggressiveness. Also, they weren't very good on knowing the information of interest for the higher commander in reporting back the situation.
- Q. These other people are willing to take a day to crawl across a piece of ground and I don't think we are - is that the fault?
- A. No. I think our patrolling is too casual. It's hard to put your finger on the fault.
- Q. They don't appreciate what they can accomplish - what I'm trying to get at is whether it is our doctrine or our American temperament.
- A. I think it's a lack of good grounding in the junior officers of scouting and patrolling. I think our teachings are all right but where the fault lies is in whether the officers themselves have the proper appreciation.
- Q. Do you place great importance on marksmanship?
- A. From the standpoint that it gives men confidence in their weapons.

- Q. It might be more advantageous to teach more scouting and patrolling and less marksmanship.
- A. I would hesitate to decide between the two. It isn't so much what we teach as how it is carried out.
- Q. You mentioned terrain appreciation, would you give us some suggestions as to how to put that across to the junior officers?
- A. By constantly having officers actually take positions with their units.
- Q. In your attacks, your battalion objectives were critical points, where you expected the enemy to be?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do you think in teaching terrain appreciation you could teach it well by having them use maps and giving them the advantage of using photo maps, or do we stress that too much?
- A. I advocate maps. It is hard to tell what the country looks like from photo maps, other than woods and streams.
- Q. Do you think that terrain appreciation can be taught best in actual problems on the ground?
- A. That's the only place it can be taught.
- Q. If only an introduction to it, you might teach a large class by use of the model and save a lot of time?
- A. No, I'd rather have them get out on the terrain itself.
- Q. You haven't always time to teach it on the ground - we have two hours for a conference and then some practical work. We have a 9' x 18' sand table, 1' to 1000', a contour map for the same area, everything - do you think the sand table has any value where time is limited, in teaching terrain appreciation?
- A. Yes I do. You can see what it looks like, but if you can supplement it by actually placing troops on the ground, it would be better.

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TACTICAL SECTION

INTERVIEW WITH COL. ROBERT B. HUTCHINS

(Sicilian Campaign and Initial  
Phases of the Italian Campaign)

7 April, 1944.

- Q. I believe that your regiment took up sustained deliberate defensive positions twice, once to the right, east of Persano (about two miles) between the Sele and Galore Rivers, once to the left (west) of Persano (about eight miles). At the latter defense, you had tanks attached and tanks attacking - can you give us a brief description of these two defense actions to include frontages, depths, formation, use of tanks, plan of employment, 37 AT guns, hostile tanks, use of the bazookas, rifle grenades, tactical and protective wire, use of AT and AP mines, use of 60 and 81mm mortars, use of reverse slope position or forward slope.
- A. (Description given by use of diagram).
- Q. Is the terrain there so that you could have interlocking fire?
- A. Within battalions interlocking fire was possible, but between battalions it was not.
- Q. Could you use machine guns in depth or did you use them all in front?
- A. I can't answer that exactly but they were employed I am sure in depth and covered wide sectors.
- Q. Did the Germans attack that position?
- A. They did not attack the position north of Persano, but did attack the position at Salerno Beach.
- Q. Was your cannon company self-propelled?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How did you use it?
- A. One platoon of 75's was attached to each assault battalion and the 105's in support of the left north battalion.
- Q. Some of the boys speak about indirect firing, did they do that?
- A. Not to any extent. Most of our fire was direct fire.
- Q. What did you do with your tanks in defense?
- A. At Persano the German counterattack came before the tanks were able to join the rest of the regiment and as a result, they were not used in the defense.
- Q. Did you ever use tanks in defense?
- A. Yes, at Salerno.

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- Q. When you got up on Highway 19 did you make contact with the British?
- A. No, the British were ten miles to our west and had been unable to advance. This left a gap between my position and the British which the Germans took advantage of by sending in tanks and motorized infantry to attack my rear. (Further description by diagram.)
- Q. What direction did you come from?
- A. (Diagram). We went through Persano, with two battalions.
- Q. Were the British tied up in such a manner that they couldn't go in and hit the Germans?
- A. They were pinned down on the beach. (Diagram).
- Q. Your OP was with the two battalions on the left?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How long was your supply line out?
- A. For about thirty-six hours.
- Q. I wonder if your knowledge of defense as taught here was a hindrance or help.
- A. It was a big help to me and I think it is absolutely correct.
- Q. Should we teach the principles of defense in the hope that the men have good sense enough to fit their knowledge to the situation or should we teach these particular situations?
- A. I think you should teach as you are doing here, and rely on the good sense of the officers to fit their knowledge to the situation. I think you should give more consideration to tanks in defense. They should be employed in a better way than they are at present. I think there are other things they can do. They have so much fire power, it is a mistake not to use it where it can be used to save lives.
- Q. In my talks I say that a platoon of medium tanks is equivalent to an artillery battery in the rear for artillery fire and also to bring tanks up in the forward line.
- A. I agree with that. The Germans are using it.
- Q. Did the Germans ever employ two or three tanks?
- A. Always. 3, 4 or 5 tanks....a few scattered here and there.
- Q. How about your bazooka and anti-tank guns?
- A. We had the bazooka and anti-tank rifle grenades. The bazookas were effective and caused considerable worry to the Germans. A number of prisoners we captured asked what kind of electric rocket we had. They weren't so fearless in coming in with tanks when we used the bazookas. The bazooka will knock a tank out - so will the anti-tank rifle grenade, if you hit it any place except in front, where the tank is well protected. We assigned bazookas to different squads and different headquarters. There wasn't any prearranged position for the men carrying them.

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Q. Did you cover your mines with anti-tank fire when you laid them on the ground?

A. I can't answer that definitely. At Salerno we made a very elaborate sketch, giving the exact location of these mines and how many were in the field. I am sure we did cover them with anti-tank weapons, because my anti-tank commander was responsible for laying the field. We were fortunate in having attached to the regiment a battalion of engineers. We used them with the anti-tank company commander in laying out and placing these mines. They were definitely located, definitely placed and definitely covered with reference to wire and approaches.

Q. Was your position at Salerno attacked?

A. It was attacked for three straight days, the 13th, 14th and 15th of September, by the Germans, supported with tanks.

Q. Did you lose any of your tanks?

A. We didn't lose a tank. The tanks were placed in defilade behind the front line to support the Infantry.

Q. Was that a forward slope?

A. Yes. A forward slope.

Q. Your positions were forward?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you have 57's?

A. We had 57's in the regiment; 37's in battalion.

Q. Where were they with reference to the front lines?

A. They were placed where they could fire to the front, located by the anti-tank commander, coordinated with the battalions. He fitted his guns to augment the defense throughout the whole area - just where I can't remember.

Q. Were they pretty well forward?

A. Pretty well forward.

Q. What success did the 57's have against German tanks?

A. They were very successful - knocked out several of them, but they are limited in range to 1000 yards. Within its range it is a very fine gun.

Q. Do the battalion commanders state whether they would rather have the 37 or 57 in battalions?

A. They never stated. They didn't use the 57 - only the anti-tank company had them in the regiment.

Q. Was artillery under your control or in support of you?

A. Artillery was in support of me. (Described by diagram)

- Q. Here again the principles of defense were followed?
- A. Yes, as you teach them here.
- Q. We give 1000-2000 yards frontage to a battalion.
- A. My battalion had about 3000 yards, but the country was open.
- Q. Did you have an opportunity to observe or learn the workings of your platoon leaders; were there any shortcomings?
- A. My organization had been inducted in 1940 and had had two and a half years training before we went over. Prior to going over we eliminated all platoon leaders who were unsatisfactory. We had fine field training and special training in mountain warfare; also shore to shore and ship to shore amphibious training. The weakness in platoon leaders was in their selection of terrain.
- Q. They lack evaluation and use of terrain?
- A. That's right.
- Q. Had most of your officers been through a service school?
- A. Everyone of them was either an OC or ROTC graduate.
- Q. Did you receive replacements over there?
- A. Yes. We received replacements several times but had very little time to know what the men or officers were to do before we got in combat.
- Q. Did they have much training?
- A. No. They had thirteen weeks, which I don't think is enough. They should have a year's training.
- Q. Col. Miller stated that he got some who didn't even have the thirteen weeks' training. Did you occupy the forward slopes? Did you ever try to keep the bulk of your platoon, companies on rivers and slopes and have a few scattered machine guns?
- A. My position was not much of a slope. The terrain was rolling, with very little slope.
- Q. Where were the platoons of your cannon company in that defense?
- A. A 75 platoon was in position in each battalion sector for firing on targets of opportunity. The 105 platoon was in general support of the entire sector.
- Q. All direct fire?
- A. The 75 platoons used direct fire. The 105 platoon, indirect fire.
- Q. How were the men dispersed in these areas? Was there any attempt to follow out the all-around idea?
- A. We insisted on all-around defense.
- Q. Did you get this all-around position by use of foxholes or were the men in each platoon exposed in the perimeter?
- A. They were scattered out to the front and used the alternate foxholes, if necessary.



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- Q. Did you usually get the majority of your fire power to the front?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did you have much trouble in that situation of infiltrating forces of any size slipping in?
- A. No. They never did penetrate our line.
- Q. Were any of your front line platoons over-run?
- A. No.
- Q. Did you say those tanks were dug in?
- A. It depended on the defilade they could get. Some were dug in and others were not.
- Q. Do you think if you used a reserve company to counterattack you would have employed tanks?
- A. I certainly would have.
- Q. What would determine whether the tanks <sup>led</sup> left the infantry or vice versa?
- A. I don't like to see the tanks <sup>lead</sup> leave the infantry. I would like to see the infantry go along with the tanks, using the leapfrog method. We did that in Sicily in an attack there, and it worked. I sent the tanks up with the infantry following close behind. I had only five tanks but these five tanks knocked out eight German tanks and you can imagine the difficulty the infantry would have had without those tanks. We lost one tank but not a tank man was killed. It was the company commander's tank. Three shells went through it.
- Q. How did you find communication between them?
- A. They had none. That has to be ironed out. The tanks we had were not equipped for liaison with any other unit. The only thing they used were some hand signals.
- Q. What did you bump into there that you considered the most effective weapon the Germans had and what means did you have to combat it?
- A. The 88 gun. They also have a light machine gun, a machine pistol, that they use effectively. These two are outstanding weapons. However, we have much better ones than any the enemy have.
- Q. As far as the front line units are concerned, would you say mortars are the most effective against those?
- A. Yes. The mortars and the Browning automatic rifle.
- Q. Is the six barreled mortar a long range weapon?
- A. I think they said it could be fired 8000 yards. I am not sure.
- Q. When going into a defensive position and making a tentative plan, reconnaissance, was that employed?
- A. I always sent reconnaissance out.



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- Q. Besides reconnaissance parties, does it depend on the situation?
- A. Yes. I followed what you teach here reference to advance parties and reconnaissance, etc.
- Q. What security did you have to the front, if any, with outpost line?
- A. We had an outpost line (not initially) when we could. We put it out one kilometer.
- Q. From your front line units?
- A. Yes. They had an outpost to the front but no organized outpost line until later.
- Q. Local security?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did you use any anti-personnel mines?
- A. We didn't have any. We used hand grenades, and booby traps.
- Q. How did the engineers function during the three days in which your position was being attacked?
- A. Very well. The battalion had had experience in North Africa and they knew how to fight.
- Q. Were the engineers from the same regiment attached to the 45th?
- A. No. I think they came from the corps. I hadn't seen them before. I am a firm believer in what you teach here. From the standpoint of defense the greatest weakness I experienced was the officers not being able to fit their strength properly to the terrain. They just didn't get what I considered the best position.
- Q. Was that due to too broad a front?
- A. No. Just their own lack of familiarity. They don't seem to place their units properly to get the best effect of their weapons.
- Q. Do you recall some specific instance and what kind of position did they take up?
- A. They took a position normally in depth.
- Q. We have had a slant from the combat reports on where the enemy will come and one officer has a rule O'thumb that Patterson gave them - to come up the ridges. Our defense will cover the ridges but in the counterattack we made at least three plans for penetration - have you anything on that?
- A. That depends on the terrain. In Italy with mostly mountainous terrain you have to stick to the ridge lines. You can't get in a draw. Ordinarily I would say that the Germans like us, take the covered route.
- Q. Pretty much our expectations?
- A. Yes. Pretty much our expectations.

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- Q. Did your unit or any part of it make any type of retrograde movement and what plan was followed?
- A. The one retrograde movement was the withdrawal from the north of Persano. We did that practically the same way as you teach it here. (Diagram)
- Q. Was the battalion out to the front in contact with the enemy?
- A. Yes. We didn't get any shell fire. It was done at night. Other than spasmodic fire, they didn't know you were there.
- Q. They didn't know you were making this withdrawal?
- A. I don't think they did. Artillery pulled out first, followed by vehicles.
- Q. Did you attempt to simulate your activity?
- A. No, we didn't. Generally the Germans were quiet and we sneaked out.
- Q. Did you hear what happened to the battalion that relieved you?
- A. They were completely annihilated.
- Q. How much later was this?
- A. The very next day.
- Q. In that position you had a wide front? What was the depth you had for the regiment?
- A. Around 2000 yards in depth.
- Q. Did you ever get your other battalion?
- A. Not until the morning we pulled out.
- Q. So you never had a regimental reserve?
- A. We never had a regimental reserve.
- Q. Would you mind repeating the position of those tanks in defense?
- A. I had two companies of tanks attached to me and two companies of tank destroyers. Instead of keeping them in reserve I put them in position behind the first defilade in rear of the front line. They were behind the battalion lines; one company behind a battalion, (Used diagram at this point.) and two companies of tank destroyers behind the engineer battalion. (Used diagram) They were usually in a line behind this defilade camouflaged and sunken in. We never lost a tank. The Germans were on the hills and could see everything that moved.
- Three 88's at
- Q. We have some people suggesting that we bring the anti-tank guns further back but we are trying to keep them up there.
- A. I would rather have them up front than further back.
- Q. Did you have 4.2's attached?
- A. Yes.

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- Q. Shooting HE?
- A. HE and smoke.
- Q. How did they use them?
- A. I used them by platoons with battalions.
- Q. In Sicily, some of your battalions did a little amphibious operation on the north shore?
- A. That was the 15th Infantry; we didn't do that.
- Q. With the observation you had, how did the Italians use mortars, by battery?
- A. I never heard any report. I don't think so.
- Q. Did you find you had enough communications to control all your units?
- A. No. I instituted something that I hadn't seen before but which I found helpful. I obtained about six of the artillery GLO sets, which are voice sets, and issued one to each battalion commander and I think one to the cannon company, so that when we went out I always had communication with the battalion. Moving forward I could contact the battalion commander wherever he was. Wire is fine when it's in but it is subject to so many interruptions. Tanks, vehicles and artillery fire will cut it and it takes time to find the break.
- Q. Did you have 300 radios?
- A. We had 284's and 288's.
- Q. Did you have 536's?
- A. Yes, we had 536's and they worked very well, except for a lack of batteries and deterioration of batteries. Sometimes batteries would last only an hour. We had to keep replenishing them. We ran short several times.
- Q. Did the battalion commanders have any trouble bringing down final protective fires?
- A. I'm sure they didn't. They were pretty well set at Salerno.
- Q. Do you know whether the battalions had any trouble with artillery forward observers not wanting to fire targets and not having observers?
- A. No, we didn't have any trouble. I must commend the Artillery for the support they gave us. Their system of forward observers and liaison is certainly the answer to our situation. It worked. We were using artillery where we should have been using other weapons. Artillery had a lot of their forward observers killed because they were up taking chances.
- Q. We had some reports from Africa that an officer would call for artillery fire and they wouldn't cooperate.
- A. I didn't have any trouble that way.

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- Q. I understand that there are two pages of criticisms of forward observers by artillery themselves, circulated from General Mac Nair. In two or three instances we had reports of an artillery observer trying to get information and they didn't see him again. He may have been killed.
- A. We lost several of them. My battalion commanders were enthusiastic about the support and accuracy they received.
- Q. Was there any instance where an officer directed the fire?
- A. Yes, and he did a good job. We operated a good deal with combat teams before we went over and all officers got to know the artillery officers who were supporting us. In addition to that, the officers had grown up in Oklahoma.
- Q. Was it possible for the tanks to communicate with artillery to bring down artillery fire?
- A. They haven't any extra equipment or personnel to use for communication and liaison and they can't communicate with anyone except by signals. I insisted they keep a liaison officer with me.
- Q. How about the commander of an attached unit?
- A. The battalion commander stayed close to me.
- Q. Did you get any air missions in front of your area?
- A. No. I asked for them several times and in the later stages did receive one or two bombing missions.
- Q. Did you have Naval liaison?
- A. I didn't in Italy. We had Naval liaison in Sicily but we didn't use the planes.
- Q. Would they have been of any benefit to you?
- A. No. Not with me.
- Q. How effective did you find the 37 anti-tank gun?
- A. They were effective against machine guns that they picked up and against tanks within close range. They were very good. I didn't hear any criticism one way or the other.
- Q. Do you think it advantageous to have 37's or would it be better to have 57's?
- A. I believe we should have the heavier gun.

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TACTICAL SECTION

INTERVIEW WITH COL. ROBERT B. HUTCHINS

(Sicilian Campaign and Initial  
Phases of the Italian Campaign)

10 April, 1944.

- Q. What I would like to know is, when you took off in Sicily, was an artillery battalion attached to your regiment?
- A. It was.
- Q. Was the commander with you on the trip over?
- A. Yes, on the same boat.
- Q. How about the artillery liaison officer, were they with the battalion commanders?
- A. I am sure they were.
- Q. What kind of artillery was used?
- A. 105's.
- Q. Did artillery use ducks?
- A. We used LST's.
- Q. Did they have them in the vehicle?
- A. They were unloaded on the beach by their prime movers.
- Q. How long did it take you to get this artillery connected up under your control and get rid of the battalion landing team?
- A. Not very long. We landed at 10 o'clock in the morning and early that afternoon (3 o'clock) the regiment was in its assembly areas and artillery was practically in position.
- Q. Did you break up the teams to centralize artillery?
- A. Yes.
- Q. At what stage of the operation?
- A. When we went in to our assembly area.
- Q. You didn't meet any resistance?
- A. No. In Sicily we had to fight our way and it was quite awhile before we got all the artillery together. We landed at 3:30 in the morning and it was 3:30 PM before the artillery was operating as a battalion.
- Q. You did it as soon thereafter as you could?
- A. Yes.

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- Q. I got a report that the 45th Division - Artillery - put out an order that the artillery liaison officer wouldn't accompany the battalion commander, did that come out?
- A. I never saw such an order.
- Q. I mean they wouldn't accompany them.
- A. As far as I know they went along with battalion commanders.
- Q. When artillery went in position on the day you landed in Salerno, did you actually make any reconnaissance with battalion commanders to indicate the places to fire?
- A. No. We had a very limited area in which we could reconnoiter and our objective was some twenty miles from the shore. We made a road reconnaissance until we ran into resistance. I went over with Col. Lawson and discussed the situation, including which support we were to have when he got in a certain position.
- Q. There was actually need for artillery support before you moved from the assembly area?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In this assembly area that first night, did you have any artillery fires planned for protection of the assembly areas?
- A. No, we got in at 1000 and pulled out that night at 1830.
- Q. This was a night march, in the face of the enemy?
- A. Yes. 20 miles.
- Q. Did you call for any artillery fire during the night?
- A. No. We had one engagement but they were able to knock it out without artillery fire.
- Q. Do you know what methods they were going to use in case you wanted artillery during the night?
- A. By observer.
- Q. They would probably put it away out?
- Ax Yes.
- Q. You had one road to go up?
- A. Two roads. One battalion combat team went on the right road and the rest of RGT on the other road. Maps were sufficient. Artillery supported us to our objective. During the night displacement was made forward.
- Q. To positions he had never seen before?
- A. Yes.
- Q. He was going to positions he never saw during daylight?
- A. That's right.

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- Q. How long was it before you really needed or got any artillery support?
- A. We went all night the day of the landing, moving and fighting and at 0900 the next morning, ran into German resistance around Highway 19. The artillery moved up and supported the battalion in this fight.
- Q. Where were the 155's at that time?
- A. They were way back.
- Q. They were the ones that got into a bad tank attack, weren't they?
- A. Yes. The Germans broke through a day later.
- Q. Did they stave off the attack?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In this attack you described, did your battalion commander take sufficient time for reconnaissance, and plan fires?
- A. No. The action developed quickly.
- Q. Did the artillery commander take time to plan and have the liaison officer transmit the plan?
- A. I'm sure they did.
- Q. In this particular action that you mention, as regimental commander, did you attempt to restrict your battalions as to whether or not they would have fire?
- A. No. We were in column at that time.
- Q. Did you make a regimental coordinated attack in that position?
- A. No.
- Q. Did they give artillery support for the reserve battalion?
- A. No. They didn't fire.
- Q. How long did that shortage of ammunition last?
- A. About twenty-four hours.
- Q. They went in with full loads?
- A. Yes. Supply trains were going up with ammunition when a heavy German concentration, plus some infantry fire, stopped them from getting through Persano.
- Q. They had just what they had on the prime movers?
- A. I don't know. They may have had the ammunition vehicles initially with them and then went back for a re-load. They fired more than 40 rounds per gun.
- Q. Did they furnish smoke?
- A. No smoke at that time.

- Q. In this whole campaign, you did have regimental action, either defense or attack, did you not?
- A. Defense at Salerno Beach and in two or three engagements afterwards.
- Q. In those defenses, did you have to fire your final protective fires?
- A. No. We never got an attack at night on our position.
- Q. Most of the artillery was targets of opportunity?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In your counterattack in defense, did you have your plan of fire made out ahead of time?
- A. We had no reserve battalion. We had all three battalions in line.
- Q. Could that artillery battalion cover another front?
- A. I don't think so.
- Q. Your own battalion couldn't have covered it?
- A. No. It was three miles. We had another battalion in there, self-propelled.
- Q. When you had that other battalion, were you still running the show or was it under division control?
- A. Under division control, although the 160th was in direct support of my regiment.
- Q. Did you give the commander any particular areas you wanted him to cover?
- A. I pointed out to him certain things I wanted him to cover, particularly the front which the 38th engineers occupied. I told him I wanted him to concentrate his attention on that area.
- Q. You had a battalion attached to the regiment?
- A. One attached to the regiment and division took one battalion. I had three battalions. The third battalion had been moved by division to stop the break through. We had a portion of the front held by the 38th Division.
- Q. Did your direct support artillery have any reinforcing for its fires?
- A. I believe so.
- Q. Was the artillery command post near yours?
- A. Very close. About 500 yards. I didn't keep the battalion commander at my CP. He gave me a field officer with a radio, as liaison officer and I transmitted my instructions through him to Lawson and at times Lawson came up to the CP to discuss matters with me.
- Q. That staff officer stayed all the time?
- A. Yes.



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- Q. What percentage of time was the battalion commander with you?
- A. Very little.
- Q. Was his executive officer with you a major?
- A. Hewwas a major, his name was Jones. I think we monopolize the battalion commander too much. Whenever I issued orders the Artillery Battalion Commander was there and from then on he came back and forth.
- Q. Did the information between the two staffs percolate back and forth?
- A. This liaison officer kept in constant touch with the battalion and kept his battalion constantly informed on the regimental picture and my staff acquainted with what the artillery was doing.
- Q. Did you operate roughly the same with relation to the two CP's on attack and defense?
- A. On the attack they got farther apart.
- Q. This wire communication, that was not the wire that went through your switchboard?
- A. It came right in my switchboard.
- Q. They didn't have a second line?
- A. No. That line was entirely for the liaison officer.
- Q. Did he have to use your 'phone for communication to artillery?
- A. That's right.
- Q. We got a lot of reports criticizing them for not using their own supporting weapons - what is the reason for that?
- A. Initially we used artillery for practically everything. They tried to get them to fire on point targets. Instead of the battalion commanders getting their own weapons in position they utilized artillery. After our experiences in Sicily we understood things better and we began to employ our own weapons with more success.
- Q. Did you ever have the cannon company operate as part of artillery?
- A. No. I had the Cannon company work closely with the artillery but never as a part of the artillery.
- Q. That employment is more applicable on defense?
- A. In our case it was. We were operating pretty widely separated. The LOS's were always back and rendered support to either battalions and operated close with artillery.

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- Q. Have you any recommendations to make on the way we employ artillery, with particular reference to contacts we make with the infantry commander, the way the forward observers work and our communications setup?
- A. No. I have a great deal of respect for the artillery and the way they operated.
- Q. Were your company and battalion commanders informed that this communications system was available for their use in case theirs went out?
- A. I am sure they were. They used it a lot.
- Q. Did they have forward observers with their companies?
- A. Yes.
- Q. How about on defense? When you moved at night and you wanted your artillery to do certain firing, what information did you give artillery about roads, time of withdrawal, etc.?
- A. We kept them informed of all movements. We would give them an overlay or tell them the times patrols would be out and routes being used - we were very solicitous about that.
- Q. Were there any instances of artillery shooting on your own troops?
- A. Not that I remember.
- Q. How close did you push your troops up?
- A. About 200 yards. Closer on some occasions.
- Q. Did you have any preparation preceding your attack?
- A. Yes we did. 10 to 15 minutes.
- Q. When the troops moved up to fire, when it lifted, where did they go to?
- A. It lifted on pre-arranged schedule.
- Q. When it lifted where was it placed?
- A. On any target that the battalion commander designated.
- Q. They planned initially to put fire on the reverse slope, I wonder if you know the plan the infantry battalion commander had on that?
- A. I knew that artillery and infantry battalion commanders went into a huddle before every attack and worked out a scheme of fire.
- Q. Did they discuss it at the infantry CP?
- A. The Artillery Battalion Commander was constantly going up to the CP.
- Q. In your attack with your reserve battalion, did you fire preparation?
- A. Not that I remember. The artillery was in position firing and fire was called for by battalion commander if he needed.

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Q. For your fires of your mortars and cannon company, what was worked out?

A. We tried to tie in closely with the artillery plan.

Q. Were the forward observers out there? Were they familiar with where the mortar observers would be before it was marched out of the assembly area?

A. Yes. They knew where they were going. I don't know whether they knew where the mortars were.

Q. In basing your time for an attack, was there ever an occasion when you had to set that time due to the time artillery set at some prior time?

A. Yes we did in Sicily. We had gone so far out at night that we had gotten beyond our artillery support and had to hold up until artillery could displace.

Q. But you did consider the fact that they couldn't support you?

A. I certainly did. We didn't move unless they could support us.

Q. You discussed it prior to displacement?

A. That's right.

Q. At what ranges were artillery shooting when you were discussing this plan?

A. That's hard to state. In the movement from the beach at Salerno, we had to discuss how far they could support us, the time they would displace, etc. I never did push forward on any attack unless artillery was able to support us.

Q. I read some reports about 4.2 mortars being right up there always, did you have any?

A. Yes. We had a company attached to the regiment in every operation.

Q. Did they do most of the smoke missions?

A. Yes. They were excellent. They gave battalions a great deal of support.

Q. When you had those three battalions in this defensive position, did the artillery have sufficient observers to keep the zone under observation?

A. I am positive they did. Each battalion had an observer with him.

Q. Did they have one observer with each company?

A. No, but they had them with the two infantry battalions and with the second battalion of the 33th engineers. They improvised a team for the 3rd Battalion.

Q. Did you have an anti-tank platoon?

A. Yes.

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Q. Our T/O has been cut - instead of 118 men we have only 38.

A. I couldn't have desired any better support than I had.

Q. Of course you had an experienced battalion commander who had been to all the artillery schools we have?

A. He commanded the battalion for years and had been an infantry commander before that. In addition he had a lot of good common sense. We did some things which may have helped that situation. At Picket, artillery lived and ate right at my regiment. We had specialized training at Chesapeake in amphibious operations. Our training at Picket was practical combat team training; also mountain training. We had a great deal of combat team training before we went over. That may have helped in ironing out a lot of difficulties.

Q. Many of those officers were in the original 45th Division and came from the same town?

A. That's right.

Q. The forward observers would know all the company commanders?

A. Yes.

Q. In that respect, I wonder if you could answer this - do you know how they affected relief of the forward observers?

A. No I don't. I think they alternated when they could.

Q. They had forward observers with the reserve battalions?

A. No.

Q. Did the Germans ever shoot artillery out?

A. No, they didn't. The artillery got a lot of fire on their position but the Germans never knocked them out.

Q. They had to move many times to get away from the shelling?

A. No, they stayed in there and took it.

Q. The battalion of mortars attached was attached to the fourth company?

A. No. They attached one company to each regiment and on some occasions I think we had two companies but what they did with the battalion I don't know.

Q. When you were using the company as a unit, they furnished you a liaison officer?

A. That's right.

Q. You had a forward observer with each company?

A. Yes, and observers with battalions.

Q. Do you know how the scheme worked?

A. No, I don't.



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- Q. Would you know about where in the attack these mortar positions were picked? How far behind the line of departure, so you could support a counterattack?
- A. Yes.  
One disadvantage we had was that the 4.2 mortars were hand-pulled. This just about killed the men from exhaustion, until we hooked the mortars behind our heavy weapons vehicles.
- Q. Did you have any occasion where the artillery fired WP?
- A. No.
- Q. 4.2 mortars were used mostly?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Your artillery didn't use much smoke then?
- A. Very little.
- Q. Did you refer the approval of smoke missions?
- A. We didn't have an SOP. I would, however.
- Q. Any time a smoke mission would come in?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Due to restriction of ammunition, did artillery turn down many missions?
- A. Not to any extent. I think the ammunition they allowed was ample. They got me almost everything.
- Q. Was there any complaint from commanders?
- A. No.
- Q. What was the greatest number of battalions you have had massed in front?
- A. We had two battalions.
- Q. You never had 155's?
- A. Not unless called for. They were in general support.
- Q. If an important target came up?
- A. They would fire them, upon artillery commander's request.
- Q. You always got enough to do the job?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did your secondary battalion commander ever growl about not getting fire because the main battalion was using too much?
- A. No. In the majority of cases we were in column. We never got any complaint.
- Q. I just felt that the battalion might get short-sighted and realize he wasn't making the main blow and might complain.
- A. We had no such trouble.

Q. You had some preparation fire in front of you?

A. Yes.

Q. Did Lawson submit to you the final preparation for your approval?

A. He usually discussed that with the battalion commander. It wasn't submitted to me. I knew the time. I made the general plan initially.

Q. You didn't have it submitted again?

A. No.

Q. When you issued instructions to your staff for attack, was Lawson always with you?

A. Always.

Q. Did he leave or stay with you?

A. He left.

Q. When you actually issued orders he was present?

A. Always.

Q. Did the battalion commanders quite often have questions after you issued the order?

A. Yes. He would see them and discuss with them the artillery plan.

Q. Mortars, did they get area fires or would they spend time between point targets?

A. We spent quite a lot of time on the point targets.

Q. I just wondered if your commanders were using them like they used the 81's.

A. I think they did.

Q. In reference to mortars, did artillery include 4.2 mortars to assist them in the preparation?

AA. Not to my knowledge.

Q. How about cannons?

A. I think they used the 105's. The cannon company would contact artillery commander.

Q. Did you ever find a case where they used them any way they wanted to?

A. No.

Q. Regarding the use of your cannon platoon for direct fire, did they do direct or indirect fire work?

A. We started off with direct and before I left they were using indirect fire.

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- Q. Did you have the self-propelled?
- A. We had the self-propelled.
- Q. Were they many missions for direct fire?
- A. Yes, for the 75's. They did a lot of direct firing. They kept pretty close behind the front line.
- Q. What was the usual target?
- A. A tank, or machine gun emplacement, etc.
- Q. Did you have any anti aircraft attached?
- A. Yes, on the landing. We used them to defend the beach. They reverted to division control as soon as we cleared the beach.
- Q. In general, what you have told us is right down our alley. We teach that if two commanders never saw each other before. Of course, as they work together for months, they can skip over a lot of little points. Lawson could always make decisions?
- A. That's right. I relied on him.
- Q. That was one thing I didn't get clear, why Lawson put that artillery in position.
- A. He put it in under division direction. That's where there was a mixup. It should have been with my knowledge and it wasn't. He was attached and division ordered him, without my knowledge. When I came to move he wasn't in place.
- Q. He should have been in the assembly area?
- A. Yes.
- Q. In daylight prior he could have selected positions farther forward?
- A. That's right.
- Q. Were those positions selected on the map prior to landing?
- A. No. After we got on the ground. He apparently went over to support the 36th.
- Q. During the Sicilian operation did you ever have a coordinated attack by division?
- A. No.
- Q. The 45th went up through the middle, the third division on the left and the first on the right?
- A. That's right. Lots of times division took my artillery and sent it over and reinforced the other regiments.
- Q. You always got the same battalion?
- A. Yes.
- Q. I think we are right down that alley - it is working?
- A. That's right. I have no suggestions to offer in handling artillery.

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- Q. I think the only difference is in handling between people who know each other.
- A. Yes, and the experience of the two officers. If you understand all those little details you don't have to check them.
- Q. Did you have much discussion on observation for artillery prior to attack?
- A. That always came up and a likely spot was always available.
- Q. To include certain hills in the objective, so you could get observation?
- A. Yes. In order to get observation further on, we would take certain points. Our objective was so far out it didn't matter.
- Q. After you advanced six or eight thousand yards you always got together and discussed the thing?
- A. If we were engaged, yes. If not, we leapfrogged.
- Q. Did they use artillery at Massena?
- A. No. They may have used 155's.
- Q. They didn't use Lawson?
- A. He came back with me.
- Q. As a result of the Sicilian campaign there were certain faults in training both in artillery and infantry, did division take over the training between the end of the Sicilian campaign and the start of the Italian campaign?
- A. Yes. They specified what we should do.
- Q. From your lecture, I understood you couldn't load that outfit as you wanted to but you kept battalion landing teams there?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did the headquarters split up into three pieces?
- A. No.
- Q. How about ammunition, did they split that up?
- A. I think some to each battery.
- Q. Did you do any withdrawals at all?
- A. Only from Persano, and then the artillery pulled out ahead. We kept one battery in place.
- Q. It was really a replacement?
- A. Yes.

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TACTICAL SECTION

INTERVIEW WITH COL. ROBERT B. HUTCHINS

(Sicilian Campaign and Initial  
Phases of the Italian Campaign)

7 April, 1944.

- Q. The thing that confuses me is the matter of frontages - we have heard all kinds of reports - 3 miles down to 500 yards, in attack.
- A. Well, that is a problem. The division had a 35 or 40 mile front on which to land in Sicily. My regiment had something over a 10 mile front. In the division order the three battalions of the regiment were prepared to do certain things. They had three objectives.
- Q. What could be done that necessitated three battalions on a ten mile front?
- A. One took the town of Scogliti to furnish a harbor for the ships and handle heavy equipment, another headed straight in to take Victoria and the other followed further to the north and to the left of the other battalions to cut around the Comiso airfield. The actions of these three battalions were independent and they had to meet any resistance they ran into. In planning it I tried to solve the problem by having as much of the regiment as possible give assistance. The third battalion was echelon to the rear, to be used as necessity demanded. In Sicily, from then on, for five days, we operated on a front of about that width until we struck the objective. Up to that point we advanced with two battalions abreast on a ten mile front. Right here I would like to say that the battalion, with all its fire power, can hold out a long time and a matter of two or three hours getting a battalion up as needed, can be done without difficulty. It didn't worry me on such a big front, after satisfying myself that this could be done. From then on we advanced with regiments abreast and mostly each regiment in column. We were separated some 5 or 10 miles from each other. The battalions were more or less under regimental direction, followed mostly in column on the side of the road, moving forward. We tried to pin the enemy down. Usually we decided in advance which flank we would envelop. We tried to determine where the enemy would hold, the best method for cover and all other considerations, so the battalions would know the way the situation would develop if we ran into resistance. The same thing applied in Italy. The division was either in columns of regiments or regiments on a wide front.
- Q. As I get this picture, this tactic is what we call advance against discontinued resistance or advance in route formation until you run into something. On other words, while you knew the enemy was to your front somewhere, you hadn't been actually developed but as you ran into resistance you still couldn't hold your regiment over a ten mile front, and would have to shrink the frontage?
- A. Yes, by employing battalions from columns.

- Q. This picture is more or less a picture of the higher command, a picture of provisional arms tactics. When landing and going into the unknown, when you actually ran into something, what would your battalion frontages shrink to and what would regimental frontages shrink to?
- A. When you bump into something your intervals and distances become approximately what you teach here. I employed my regiment on that basis, developing from flanks within supporting distance.
- Q. In other words, the battalion's distance would shrink down to 1000 yards and regiment a couple of thousand?
- A. That's right. And regiment was more or less independent.
- Q. Did you try to keep your reserve battalion within supporting distance?
- A. I did, yes.
- Q. We run into that one sometimes. We have sent a battalion out 3, 4 or 5 miles. Is that sound?
- A. I would say it is sound.
- Q. You said you were advancing on a ten mile front - what specific thing did you hold under your control?
- A. I usually held one battalion in reserve.
- Q. Did you send all your regimental weapons out?
- A. I had battalion combat teams and attached a platoon of the cannon company and a platoon of the anti-tank company with a battery of artillery to each battalion.
- Q. You retained no powerful weapon under your control?
- A. I divided them into combat teams. I think they can hold out a long time this way. The difficulty we were having on the part of some was that they failed to recognize the different stages of combat. This has felled a lot of people, due to the terrain situation, etc.
- Q. But when it hits resistance it gets to be a regimental fight and they have left the area?
- A. It becomes a regimental picture.
- Q. I don't see how we can overcome that particular problem.
- A. I don't either.
- Q. Did you get into coordinate attack at any time when the situation was somewhat normal?
- A. Yes we did with the Germans at Fashio, Italy. We attacked with two battalions abreast - a daylight attack.
- Q. Did you use your reserve battalion guns initially?
- A. No, because the reserve battalion was holding another town.

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- Q. And you had a two battalion attack?
- A. Yes.
- Q. If you had a reserve battalion you would have used your reserve weapons?
- A. I would have put them all in there - everything. The more you have the better it works out.
- Q. In other words, on your initial objective you would deliver with everything - artillery, cannons, mortars, tanks and anti-tank guns?
- A. Yes. Everything. You have a better chance.
- Q. In that connection, in regard to heavy weapons, we teach now in assigning machine guns to a company, we give both machine guns and mortars on an area and they will look in that area and fire within sustained points. Controversies come up in regard to the width for the mortars and machine guns, could you recall anything that in any way would limit that or give something as a guide as to how they use their weapons initially in attack?
- A. Initially we tried to mass all of them in support of the attack and as for any specific area, I don't think we did particularly that. The battalion commander used them wherever he thought best.
- Q. On the same subject, did they take part in the preparation prior to the jump off?
- A. For the mortars and machine guns in the heavy weapons company I would say they invariably took targets of opportunity, but in addition we had a 4.2 mortar company usually attached to the battalion, and it did take part in putting down a preparation prior to the attack.
- Q. That's our teaching; there's no use for them to duplicate firing of artillery. They could replace artillery in some cases. And yet we get a number of people from overseas who claim our teaching is entirely false.
- A. Everybody gets a different viewpoint.
- Q. In connection with heavy weapons, do you recall the approximate distance behind the advancing troops that the heavy mortars usually stayed?
- A. Around 800 to 1000 yards. They tried to get to that position. That's the best position.
- Q. Did you use sound power wire to the full extent of 800 yards?
- A. Observation was excellent in Italy and I doubt if we ever had to go 800 yards for our 'phones.
- Q. What I was thinking of - we find in training here, observation has to continually move forward to keep abreast of the troops and I shouldn't think that situation would exist in Italy where you have those great towering mountains.
- A. No, that didn't happen there.



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- Q. During the course of your operations there, did you have a terrain similar to what we have here?
- A. Initially we were on a flat plain at Salerno and at that time the Germans were looking down our throats. We were handicapped by the lack of OP's. We used the roofs of houses and towers - anything we could find.
- Q. In hilly terrain your machine guns would also follow behind the troops a good distance?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did they attempt to keep any heavy weapons up with the attacking rifle troops?
- A. They generally followed the principle of supporting them as you teach it here, putting them in position and leapfrogging by platoons as the situation demanded.
- Q. In these counterattacks, did your heavy machine guns and mortars get up on a hill in time to repel a counterattack?
- A. Due to delaying action we never got a counterattack immediately after we took an objective so that we had plenty of time to organize under cover.
- Q. About the use of mortars - we have had discussions as to whether the 6-81 mortars should be emplaced more or less like a battery rather than as we teach - that you take your sections of mortars one behind one unit and one in place and one in the rear, not lining up all of them within 100 or 150 yards.
- A. I can't answer that question but I am sure if they employed them like a battery I would have heard about it. I am sure that they didn't. We probably employed them approximately as you teach here.
- Q. As far as you know there was no battery employment?
- A. That's right.
- Q. Would you say you ever came across a situation where employment would be desirable?
- A. No I didn't. If you use what you have properly you shouldn't have to do that.
- Q. About reorganization on the slope, did you reorganize on the rear slope?
- A. Up until the time I left we organized our objective, because we had no organized counterattack to come against us. I'd say mostly on the forward slope. I don't think there was much intermingling.
- Q. How long did you take on reorganization?
- A. It would vary.
- Q. Did you have many instances of a holding attack being made in a battalion?
- A. Yes we did. We had a battalion at Guardia, a very difficult piece of terrain. The battalion held with one company and made a double envelopment with the other two.

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- Q. How do you think the American soldier stacks up against the German individually?
- A. My own outfit was a National Guard Regiment, inducted in 1940, and they had had two and a half years experience. I would say they were just as good as the German soldier. The small unit leadership was excellent (officers with a year's training). It requires that length of time to train an officer and I am of the opinion no man should be sent over without a good year's training. 13 or 17 weeks is not enough. You see a difference with an outfit like ours - they know how to move and meet all the hardships they run into.
- Q. How did the bazooka work out?
- A. They liked it very much. They had a little difficulty due to faulty ammunition but this was corrected with better ammunition.
- Q. How about the rifle grenade?
- A. The rifle grenade was very effective too.
- Q. What personnel was used to make up the rocket team?
- A. We had no definite team established. I think they were issued one to a squad.
- Q. In issuing regimental orders, whom did the battalion commander usually bring?
- A. Usually his S-3 and heavy weapons company commander, plus his S-2.
- Q. Did he pick up the artillery liaison officer there?
- A. Yes. Right there.
- Q. Along the subject of orders, in teaching rifle companies we stress the importance of small unit leaders getting information as far down as they can before starting coordinated attack, how much time did you give so that they would have time to issue these orders?
- A. I tried to give them ample time. I think that's very important. With the American soldier, if they don't know what you want them to do they fall down and don't know where to go. That didn't always work because higher headquarters did not give us ample time. Personally, I always tried to give them more than ample time.
- Q. In attack, would you have any idea of how much time the company commander had after he received his attack order until the time to jump off?
- A. This varied considerably. Most of the time there was not sufficient time allowed by higher headquarters.
- Q. We make a general statement here covering orders and speed of issuing orders that the battalion commanders should have as a minimum of time after he receives regimental orders, 1½ hours before the attack is actually launched. You should have more than that, of course - do you agree?
- A. I don't see how they could do it in that time. I have run two to three hours. In other words, the more time you have and the lower units have, the much better the result.

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- Q. We say that if anyone is to shortcut the orders that the regimental commander should shortcut his orders so that the smaller units would have the larger part of the time.
- A. That's just what happens. That is absolutely correct.
- Q. We feel that it's the lower unit that has to do the actual fighting and they are the ones who should have the bulk of the time.
- A. That's right.
- Q. So that heavy weapons in regard to attachment is in centralized control when you actually hit combat?
- A. Our practice was to keep the heavy weapons companies under battalion control wherever possible.
- Q. Do they have occasion to be able to switch fires?
- A. I would say they did. They could switch the fires from one section to another if the situation demanded it.
- Q. Did you ever make use of raiding parties in an attempt to get information?
- A. Not raiding parties such as to actually go over and capture prisoners. We did use patrols to go out to a certain point.
- Q. Would you comment on your experiences in combatting anti-personnel and anti-tank mines?
- A. We ran into a lot of mines - principally along the avenues of approach, roads, bridges that had been blown, open spaces, in front of any position the Germans were occupying. They had trip wires and booby traps mixed with mines. Also any likely OP locations. We handled that by augmenting the mine platoon of the anti-tank company with what we called a mine detector platoon. We had 18 mine detectors assigned to the regiment and divided this platoon into three squads of six detectors each. I attached a squad to the battalion as it moved forward. If it needed two, we sent two if the other battalions didn't need them at the time. These squads moved forward in advance guard formation, or if the company was operating on a wide front, spread out. They searched as they went forward and if they located a mine they would mark it so that the men would take a different route along the road with the vehicles. They were supplemented by the mine detecting men of the engineers, who were attached to us. If we were in the field the engineers would search the road. The mine detecting men would search shoulders of roads.
- Q. Did you find many of them covered by German fire?
- A. When there was a position, yes. On bypasses and blown bridges, no. They just buried them.
- Q. Would you say we make a mistake when we teach that the men should take advantage of natural approaches, provided we warn them they are apt to find mines, artillery concentrations and mortars?
- A. No. In mountainous terrain you have to follow the ridge line.

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- Q. People who have come back say that we should teach never to go up the draws, because the Germans have them covered.
- A. That's something you have to find out.
- Q. Did you engage in any river crossings?
- A. No. We weren't involved in the crossing of the Volturno. The only streams we crossed were streams easily fordable and at that time they were usually dry.
- Q. You didn't find mines along the banks of the streams?
- A. Yes. The Germans blew every bridge. You would always find mines there.
- Q. Passing through, did you allow your forward elements to go through without removing any mines?
- A. The mine detecting groups found them and marked them and the mine platoon of the anti-tank company would remove them, plus the engineers.
- Q. Did you ever barge through a minefield?
- A. You might say we did. We had a lot of casualties but we would reconnoiter and see if we could find another way - go around them.
- Q. We have a problem in which if a position is being strongly held by hostile forces and there is a minefield in front, our solution is that we send around to attack from the flank - send a squad or section or specially equipped group to go in and get wire and get the mines out - is that sound?
- A. You would have to do that.
- Q. In this particular problem, we have no attached engineers. Incidentally, about your pioneer platoon, were they equipped to do minor gapping?
- A. No. We had a special platoon.
- Q. Do you think that is a sound solution?
- A. I favor letting them do what they intended.
- Q. What expedience did they find necessary to use to continue to resupply mortar platoons within the heavy weapons companies?
- A. We had to increase the size of the squads in the heavy weapons companies. We took the men from the rifle companies. We were able to do this because we went over 15% over-strength in officers and men and in getting replacements we received them on that basis.
- Q. Did they give you any specialized equipment such as mules, etc.?
- A. We employed mules once in Sicily.



- Q. Did you have the Phillips type pack?
- A. Yes, the Third Division brought them over.
- Q. Did you make any night attacks?
- A. We made lots of them. We did an odd thing. We would move out at night with a regiment, into enemy territory, thinking it would save us casualties - usually the nights were moonlight, which helped a good deal. We moved out in advance guard formation until we hit resistance. The battalions would then employ one or two companies, with mortars, artillery and some anti-tank weapons to develop the situation. We made one deliberate night attack just south of Faschio, under the most trying conditions any battalion ever executed a night attack. The battalion commander had to make a reconnaissance under cover of darkness, taking all kinds of chances. The battalion attacked with two companies abreast, up a very high hill. It really was a mountain. The Germans were on the side of the hill and put up a determined resistance. Generally speaking, the attack was made as taught here at the school and was successful.
- Q. Did they attack with the men firing with fixed bayonets?
- A. With fixed bayonets but not firing until they ran into the German line. The artillery put down a preparation about 15 or 20 minutes before they jumped off; the men followed it and went on through. We ran into machine guns as we went along.
- Q. You say you had a pincer movement - that wasn't planned?
- A. It was planned but it was the result of how the companies and battalions happened to be placed after the previous day's fight. Finally we had to send a reserve company between the two to get through.
- Q. Did they do any flanking movements?
- A. They attacked straight to the front - they did have to do some flanking movements.
- Q. Of the two schools of thought about that - attack by stealth and by giving them the works - which do you subscribe to?
- A. I subscribe to giving them the works. It will save casualties in the long run.
- Q. Did the regiment take part in any village attacks?
- A. They were involved in taking Victoria but that wasn't a village attack. It wasn't very strongly held or organized, principally snipers.
- Q. The villages in Sicily and Italy, were they usually on mountain sides?
- A. Yes. Some were fair sized, about 35,000, usually though smaller than this - they would not cover any great amount of width or depth. The streets were narrow and the houses lent themselves nicely to defense.



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- Q. Do they have alleys in back?
- A. They have courts. The houses are close together with courts, usually of stone or stucco.
- Q. Would the troops go through the court yards?
- A. If they ran into resistance they would; most of our advances were usually going on alternate sides of the streets. We didn't have any attack of a fortified town as in Cassino.
- Q. With what type cannon was your organization equipped?
- A. We had self-propelled 75's and 105's. I am in favor of the self-propelled gun.
- Q. Did you have 57's or 37's?
- A. 57's in the anti-tank companies. I like the 57 very much. I feel it should be self-propelled. It is awkward to move around but its effect is so good it is worth it. It has the punch necessary.
- Q. Did you find it effective against installations of machine guns dug in pillboxes?
- A. I haven't any definite knowledge of that but it is effective against big tanks.
- Q. Did the infantry receive any training working with tanks?
- A. We had very little.
- Q. How did the infantry use the tanks?
- A. I used my tanks to accompany the attacking infantry. If the infantry were pinned down the tanks went out and knocked down the resistance ahead of infantry. The tanks then would stop and wait for infantry to catch up. This was very successful. I used them also as anti-tank guns in the defense of Salerno behind the first defilade of the front lines, and again they proved effective. On a third occasion I used them as a base of fire in attack at Guardia. They reinforced the fires of the battalion and were effective.
- Q. Did you have any souvenir trouble?
- A. No, we didn't have that trouble. The men did collect souvenirs but not to the detriment of our own equipment. They captured German guns and tried to use them but we had to stop that. It was too dangerous.
- Q. When attacking forward and the attack is temporarily stopped, did they dig foxholes or keep on going forward?
- A. We tried to impress on them to continue forward.
- Q. In other words, it was dictated by the situation at the time?
- A. That's right.
- Q. In your experience, to what extent did the German organize and defend reverse slopes?
- A. I don't recall any instance of that. In my operation the action was mostly delaying action by the Germans. When we ran on to them they were on the forward slope as near as I can remember. They were on the topographical crest.

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- Q. Did you feel they did a good job of delaying action?
- A. An excellent job. They are past masters in fighting and selecting terrain.
- Q. About the individual man in the attack, as you noticed, was there anything that resembled an old squad rush or something larger than that, or was it all more or less one man running four or five yards and staying there?
- A. Infiltration was generally what happened - individuals going through.
- Q. If you had to go across an exposed area that you knew was not occupied, would you attempt to get on the other side of the terrain feature by infiltration or get bunched there in a hurry?
- A. Ordinarily they employed infiltration - small columns - sort of a wedge.
- Q. In the final assault stages of a position under cover of fire, did they ever actually get up and go in with bayonets?
- A. No, I didn't see any of that.
- Q. In our Problem 188 - Demonstration of Attack, we make a final assault preceded by tremendous fire of all kind, where artillery lifts and one platoon goes forward, can it be done that way?
- A. I don't think it would be done.
- Q. This is the last place, going into position definitely occupied.
- A. I don't believe it would actually be done that way.
- Q. One group going in is better than two going on the right and two going on the left?
- Col. Hamilton - I don't think the enemy position is ever definite enough to know.
- Q. Then what is the use of putting the time on it if it isn't working - based on getting as many men as we can in the foxholes?
- Col. Hamilton - They went in by little groups at the Volturno River. It doesn't work along a wide line though.
- Q. We plan to put everything in and get perfect concentration - the infantry going within 150 yards. We teach that here - if it isn't all right we should throw it out. The defender will be in a stunned condition and if we can get on his position soon enough the thing will work out. Of course there is a timing element there - that may lead men into death traps and maybe we should teach infiltration. According to everything you said about assault, it would appear that our training is more or less wasted. Do you think it is difficult in controlling an assault?
- A. It is, because defense positions are so irregular.

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- Q. If we had recovered and we were able to control assault, do you feel we should try it?
- A. If you could get enough artillery, yes. If you could cover enough area. In all my experiences they went in in individual groups.
- Q. In case of assault by infiltration or small groups, it would seem it would give the enemy opportunity to put all his fire in one place and then when the other group advances, put his there. In other words, we can lift fire in a coordinate assault but I don't like it. I think our way is better. I believe in coordination - putting full force of assault with protecting fires. I am for this group going up into position dug in. I am thinking in terms of a problem and if this is not workable we are making a mistake.
- A. I don't think you will get men to do that. It has to be a small group.
- Q. Maybe it is a question of what we mean by a small group.

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