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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 363D INFANTRY REGIMENT (91ST
INFANTRY DIVISION, AT MT. MONTICELLE, IN THE GOTHIC
LINE, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE ARTILLERY SUPPORT OF THE
347TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, 12 - 18 SEPTEMBER, 1944
(NORTH APENNINES CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Battalion Executive Officer)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY REGIMENT ATTACKING
A KEY POSITION IN MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 363D INFANTRY REGIMENT (91ST INFANTRY DIVISION), AT MT. MONTICELLE, IN THE GOTHIC LINE, WITH EMPHASES ON THE ARTILLERY SUPPORT OF THE 347TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, 12 - 18 SEPTEMBER, 1944
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ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operation of the 363d Infantry Regiment 91st Infantry Division, in its attack on MT. MONTICELLE, ITALY, in its effort to breach the GOTHIC LINE, 12 - 18 September 1944 with emphasis on the artillery support of the 347th Field Artillery Battalion, 91st Infantry Division.

To bring the reader up to date on the Allied situation in ITALY at this time it is necessary to briefly review the major events leading up to the GOTHIC LINE. The ITALIAN CAMPAIGN started on 3 September 1943 when the British Eighth Army crossed the STRAITS OF MESSINA and started its long grind up the ITALIAN PENINSULA. American troops joined the campaign on 9 September with the assault landing of the U. S. Fifth Army on the beaches at SALERNO. (1) On 1 October both the city of NAPLES, with its port facilities, and the FOGGIA AIRFIELDS had been secured by the U. S. Fifth Army and the British Eighth Army respectively. (2) With the securing of these two initial objectives the invasion of ITALY was under way. (See Map A)

The U. S. Fifth Army, plagued by difficult mountainous terrain, extreme winter weather and opposed by a skilled and determined enemy, nevertheless, made rapid progress up the

(1) A-6, p. 16
(2) A-6, p. 36

1944

penninsula. ROME was captured on 5 June (3), the great port of LEGHORN on 18 July and by July 23 the U. S. Fifth Army was in possession of the south banks of the ARNO RIVER in its sector. (4). The British Eighth Army on the right was somewhat slower and did not close to the ARNO until a few days after 4 August. (5)

The 91st Division, less the 361st Combat Team, which had landed earlier, landed in ITALY in June 1944. The Division first entered combat as a Division north of ROME on 12 July. From that time on the 91st Division shouldered its full share of the fighting load of the Fifth Army in its advance to the ARNO. By 12 September 1944 the 363d Infantry Regiment with the 347th Field Artillery Battalion in direct support, after crossing the ARNO RIVER at FLORENCE and advancing rapidly to the north, had crossed the SIEVE RIVER and was now against the German main defenses in front the MT. MONTICELLI and MT ALFUZZO, key defensive points in the GOTHIC LINE.

THE GENERAL SITUATION

While the Fifth Army was engaged in breaching the WINTER LINE, just north of an east-west line through NAPLES and FOGGIA, the enemy started the construction of another fortified line in the NORTHERN APENNINES some 200 miles to the north, called by them the GOTHIC LINE. This fortified line was built under the direction of the TODT ORGANIZATION, employing some 15,000 impressed ITALIAN farmers and laborers to do the manual labor. (6)

The main line of defense in general followed the south side of the water divide rather than the military crest of the high mountainous ridge line that ran from the west coast town of MASSA

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- (3) A-6, p. 267
 - (4) A-6, P. 291
 - (5) A-4, p. 4
 - (6) A-1, p. 7

east across the ITALIAN PENNINSULA for about 170 miles to the east coast at a point near the town of PESARO. The Germans were greatly assisted in their construction of these fortifications by lack of roads, good or otherwise, to the north through the mountains. This permitted them to concentrate their labor and materials at points of entry into and through the mountains. At these points the enemy concentrated his defensive works. Highway 65, connecting FLORENCE and BOLOGNA, was the best of the few roads cutting the mountain range from south to north. This road, a modern macadamized highway, twisted up the slopes to cross the ridge line at FUTA PASS, at an elevation of 903 meters. This point was, topographically speaking, the weakest point in the defenses. Here the enemy located his strongest fortifications. (7) These fortifications extended on either side, east and west, of FUTA PASS for a distance of about seven miles. On the east they blocked the north - south road (6624) from SAN PIERO to FIRENZUOLA at IL GIOGO PASS. This chain of fortifications consisted of concrete, log and earth bunkers, personnel trenches, barbed wire and a profusion of mines, both anti-personnel and anti-tank guarded the approaches to all positions. All positions were expertly sited for maximum grazing fire and not one failed to mutually support at least one other in its area. In fact, no point along the entire line offered a good place for a penetration.

The 91st Division was in good condition for the attack. After the advance of the Division to the ARNO RIVER in July and the holding of positions along this line all units were concentrated in the vicinity of SAN GIMIGNANO and GAMBASSI for rest, reequipping,

(7) A-1, p. 8

and training on river crossing techniques, operations in mountains with mule supply, and the reduction of fortified positions. (8). During this period emphasis was placed on training for night operations. Replacements were received and integrated into units. Equipment was brought up to authorized allowances.

Morale in all units was high. The Division had just participated in the successful pursuit of the enemy to the ARNO RIVER and while some the actions had been a little rough all units without exception had been very successful.

Supplies for the operation had been built up in the Army support area and was considered adequate for the effort. The supply situation was aided somewhat by the opening to the port of LEGHORN on 26 August. (9)

Supply of the enemy seemed to be adequate despite the efforts of the MEDITERRANEAN ALLIED TACIAL AIR FORCE to isolate the battle area. (10) The personnel situation, however, was another story. The opening of the second front in FRANCE had forced the German commander to send two of his divisions to the FRANCO-ITALIAN border to guard his right flank. Two others left the theater. At this time there was a force of only 18 German divisions immediately available to defend the GOTHIC LINE. Most of these units were far below strength. A period of rest, reorganizing and strengthening during the period after 18 July had them considerably over the condition they had been in when the Allies reached the ARNO. (11)

Allied Forces planned for the British Eighth Army to make the main effort on the ADRIATIC coast with the object of breaking out into the PO VALLEY on a general line FERRARE--BOLOGNE. (12) The Fifth Army to be prepared on Dplus 5 to attack north with Corps abreast, making the main effort in the FLORENCE--PONTASSIEVE

(8) A-2, p89

(9) A-6, p. 309 - 310

(10) A-1, p. 13

(11) A-1, p. 13

(12) A-1. p. 41

area. (13) II Corps, to make the main effort in the Fifth Army area, planned to attack with two divisions abreast, 91st Division on the right. This placed both FUTA PASS and ILGIOGO PASS in the zone of advance of the 91st Division. IICorps planned to keep two divisions in Corps reserve until the 85th Division was committed on the right of Highway 6524 to take the hill mass guarding IL GIOGO PASS on the east. The 91st Division was to assault the hill mass on the west of IL GIOGO PASS ~~with~~ with a strong force. (14) Breaching of the GOTHIC LINE at IL GIOGO PASS was to be the Corps main effort. (see map C for boundaries and intermediate objectives.)

DISPOSITIONS AND PLANS OF THE 91ST DIVISION

The original plan for the advance of the division called for the division to cross ARNO in the vicinity of FLORENCE on the night of 4 - 5 September with two regiments abreast, 362d Infantry on the left and the 363d Infantry on the right, and after securing line the regiments would continue to the north with the 362d Infantry's objectives ~~were~~ MT. CALVANA and HIGHWAY 65 just south of SAN PIERO. The movement across the ARNO was to be screened by the British 8th Indian Division. (15)

After crossing the ARNO and before reaching the line of departure, patrols from the screening forces reported that the enemy had withdrawn to the north. This resulted in a change in the location of the line of departure the objectives of the second phase of the division plans, Phase Line D of the division field order, this line was some 8 kilometers north of the river. Before the two assault regiments could occupy this line British patrols operating to FARRAGLIA? BIVIGLIANE, MT. SINARIO, and MT. CALVANA failed to find the enemy. (16) Upon this information the British and

(13) A-1, p. 193

(14) A-1, p. 41

(15) A-2, p. 93

(16) A-2, p.95

Indian screening forces moved forward to occupy these positions. At this time the division was held up by II Corps and new plans were made. The only essential change was a minor change in direction and the left boundary was moved some 6 kilometers to the west. The Division would now attack directly north along Highway 65. The line of departure was the lateral road running from slightly south of FAGLIA to BIVIGLIANO. (17) Time of the attack was 0530, 10 September. The Division objectives were not changed, to force a crossing of the SIEVE RIVER and to advance to a line about 2000 yards north of the river. The Division Artillery moved into positions in the vicinity of PRATOLINO to support the attack. By 1945 September all of the Division Artillery was in position and registered. The two assault regiments moved into attack positions on the night of 9 September. The attack, after jumping off on time the following morning, progressed rapidly with no opposition in the early morning. Harassing artillery and small arms from north of the SIEVE RIVER started later in the morning and continued for the remainder of the day. (18) This did not stop or delay the advance of either of the two regiments. By nightfall the forward elements of both regiments had reached the SIEVE RIVER. During the night of 9 - 10 September both regiments crossed the river. Division Artillery had displaced during the afternoon of 9 September to positions along Highway 65 to support the crossings. The advance was so rapid on 10 September that the additional objectives had to be assigned the regiments. The 362d Infantry was to attack and secure FUTA PASS while the 363d Infantry was to attack and secure MT. ALTUZZO and MT. CASTEL GURRINO. (19) By the end of the day of 11 September the 362d Infantry had reached a position just north of GAGLIANO on Highway 65 and the 363d Infantry had reached the town of SANT' AGATA. (20)

(17) A-2, p. 95

(18) A-2, p.95

(19) A-2, p. 97, personal knowledge

(20) A-2, p. 97

The Division at this time had the two above mentioned regiments committed and the 361st Infantry in reserve. Division Artillery was in position north of the SIEVE RIVER to support the attack. In addition to the normal divisional artillery the 77th Field Artillery Group was assigned the mission of direct support to the 91st Division Artillery. (21) This group consisted of two 155-mm howitzer battalions, one 155-mm gun battalion, and one 4.5-inch gun battalion. In addition the Corps had, for long range work and for knocking out bunkers and pillboxes, the 423d Field Artillery Group, consisting of two battalions of (less one section) of 240-mm howitzers, three sections of 8-inch guns, and two battalions of 155-mm guns. Long range artillery was in positions around the village of VAGELIA and the medium range corps artillery was close to the SIEVE RIVER. (22)

DISPOSITIONS AND PLANS OF THE 363D INFANTRY AND SUPPORTING UNITS

The 363d Infantry planned to attack their objectives, MT. MONTICELLI and MT. ALTUZZO, with two battalions abreast. The 3rd Battalion on the right was assigned the objectives of MT. ALRUZZO on the east of IL GIOGO PASS and MT. MONTICELLI west of the pass. MT. MONTICELLE was to be the main effort. The 3d Battalion, advancing with two companies abreast were some 6000 yards north of the SEIVE RIVER. Leading elements of the 1st Battalion had passed through SANT'AGATA and were on line with the 3d Battalion. 2d Battalion, in reserve, was following the 3d Battalion and has arrived at FAGNA. (23)

At this time the 363d Infantry had the 755th Tank Battalion, one company of the 804th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company C of the 84th Chemical Battalion attached. The 347th Field Artillery Battalion was in direct support with the 916th Field Artillery Battalion reinforcing their fires. (24)

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- (21) A-1, p. 54
 - (22) personal knowledge
 - (23) A-3, p. 65
 - (24) A-2, p. 63

MT. MONTICELLI, the regiment's main objective, was a large, rugged hill mass devoid of cover, rising to a height of 2390 feet at the highest point. The highest point was near its eastern flank. A rough cut up ridge line ran from the summit generally west for about two thousand yards. The southern slopes of this ridge line was cut by three steep draws, the one on the east leading to the highest point. MT. ALTUZZO on the right of IL GIGO PASS was 110 feet higher and just as rugged, however, it did not have the great bulk of MT. MONTICELLI. (25)

The enemy had prepared, for the defense, these already formidable terrain features with the utmost care. These defenses have already been described. At this time the 12th Parachute Regiment of the 4th Parachute Division was responsible manning the defenses in this area. Enemy troops in the entire area were stretched to the breaking point and there were no reserves available. (26)

During the night 11-12 September the battalions improved communications and made preparations for a coordinated attack the following day. The time of attack was to be 0800, the line of departure the present front lines. No preparation to be fired by the artillery. Chemical mortars were to lay down a smoke screen. (26)

NARRATION

THE ATTACK ON MT. MONTICELLI

At 0800 on the morning of 12 September under the cover of the smoke screen both assault battalions jumped off in the attack on MT. MONTICELLI. The first battalion on the left moved one company generally up the road from SANT'AGATA with the other assault company about 500 yards to the right moving up a northwest-southeast draw. Both companies made good progress meeting little resistance except harassing artillery fire and by 1030 one company had advanced about a

(25) A-1, p. 56, personal knowledge

(26) A-1, p. 54

mile and was on the north slopes of MONTACCIANICO. The other company was at the head of the draw near HILL 443. The reserve company was following the left company. The third battalion on the right moved out ~~with~~ the left of Highway 6524 heading for MT. MONTICELLI another company on the left of the highway for FONTE FREDDA. The third company followed the right company with the mission of cutting to the right and attacking MT. ALTUZZO. Contact was made by the right assault company at POGGIO DI CASTRO, a 1567 foot ridge running to the north in the direction of MT. MONTICELLI. Company I, the right assault company, with artillery support, immediately attacked this position while Company K flanked the position by moving around it to the west. This relieved the pressure and the company moved up to the crest of the ridge. However, due to heavy artillery fire the company pulled back to the south slopes for protection. At this the regimental commander, Col. W. Fulton Magill, Jr., decided to wait until darkness and make a coordinated night attack with the 1st and 3d Battalions on MT. MONTICELLI and MT. ALTUZZO. (27)

The direct support artillery battalion was to mark the summit of both objectives with white phosphorus to guide the attacking troops to their objectives. Corps artillery was requested to fire on all known and suspected locations beyond the objectives. The direct support battalion and its reinforcing battalion was to fire planned concentrations on the objectives. The infantry plan was for the 1st Battalion to attack up the western ridge on MT. MONTICELLI while one company of the 3d Battalion attacked its position directly north to the crest of the objective. One company of the 3d Battalion was to attack MT. ALTUZZO from east of the highway. (28)

(27) A-3, p. 67

(28) A-3, p. 67

The attack jumped off on time. The 1st Battalion's attack did not progress very far before the companies moved into an area where they could not see the white phosphorus shell bursting the summit of MT. MONTICELLI because of an intervening secondary peak between them and the summit. They lost direction and after suffering numerous casualties when the enemy opened up with their final protective fires the units became disorganized. They were then ordered to return to protective ground to reorganize and reestablish contact. (29) The 1st Battalion attack met little success. I Company moving up MT. ALFUZZO from the south also lost direction when they ^{lost} sight of the white phosphorus markers. After feeling around in the dark they found the right path and moved almost to the crest of their objective when they were caught in the final protective fires of the defenders. They were still engaged in the fire fight at daylight the next morning. I Company advanced to within 400 yards of the crest when they ran into barbed wire and the final protective fires. (30)

The artillery continued to fire their missions during the attack and afterwards until day light. Corps Artillery had a well integrated system of interdicting and harassing fires in effect for this area. The direct support battalion had contributed to this plan by requesting interdicting missions on the routes of supply behind MT. MONTICELLI. The locations of these missions were work^{ed} out by the Infantry Regimental commander and the commander of the 347th Field Artillery Battalion. On the morning of 13 September Corps passed the information down that Corps radio intercept had intercepted an enemy message stating ^{due} to intense artillery fire work parties had been unable to bring mines forward to complete mining their platoon areas. These fires were continued each night until MT. MONTICELLI was captured. (31)

(29) A-3, p. 67

(30) A-3, p. 68169

(31) personal knowledge

On the night of 12 September an order was received from Division that made a big change in the regiment's plans. This order changed the east boundary of the Division and the Regiment to Highway 6524. II Corps felt that the enemy was going to hold these positions in strength and that his main line of resistance had been located. The 85th Division was committed to the right of Highway 6524 with the mission of securing MT. ALTUZZO. The 363d Infantry was to concentrate on taking MT. MONTICELLI. (32)

THE SECOND DAY

The 1st Battalion continued to apply pressure on the enemy by attempting to move up the Monticelli hill mass from the west. Enemy fire was heavy and well directed. This made progress slow and costly. The Regimental Commander committed the 2d Battalion between the 1st and 3d Battalions in an effort to keep the attack moving and reduce the fire being directed at the other battalions. They were to make contact with the 1st Battalion on their left and move up the hill mass on the right of the 1st Battalion. The 3d Battalion was to go in reserve as this attack progressed. (33)

The 2d Battalion moved into position and soon made contact with the 1st Battalion, however, the attack soon bogged down when the Battalions ran into numerous bunkers and pillboxes, in addition to minefields.

The 347th Field Artillery Battalion supported these attacks by firing observed fire missions from the forward observers and the battalion liaison officers. Ammunition supply was beginning to be a problem for the battalion because of the distance to the Army Ammunition Supply Point. The advance across the ARNO had been so rapid and the one road so congested that Army had not moved its supply points north of the river. This made the distance some 50-60 miles for a round trip ammunition haul. The heavy expenditure of artillery ammunition required constant hard driving by the

(32) A-3, p. 69
(33) A-3, p. 70

ammunition train and battery 5th sections. Road conditions, due to heavy traffic and the numerous by-passes, made the ammunition haul a long and tedious process. The battalion fired continually at known enemy locations to keep the enemy in his holes and to prevent him from having any freedom of action. (34)

THIRD DAY OF THE ATTACK

The 1st and 2d Battalion continued against heavy small arms and mortar fire but made small gains. Later during the day B Company again attempted to advance toward the farm BORGO this time closely following a rolling barrage laid down by the 347th Field Artillery Battalion. The attack progressed rapidly until 1330 when the enemy put one of his English-speaking radio operators on the American frequency and started to complain that "Artillery was falling on C Company." (35) This stopped the artillery barrage and permitted the enemy to get his head up and start firing at B Company. However, by night-fall the company had passed BORGO. There they were held up to await resupply of ammunition. (36)

THE FOURTH DAY OF THE ATTACK

B Company continued the attack at 0600 the following morning. During the night before an officer led patrol from B Company located a large log and dirt pillbox a short distance in front of the company. The company commander reported its position and requested. At daylight the next morning the Artillery Liason Officer with the 1st Battalion made a precision adjustment with a 155mm gun of the Corps Artillery. After a direct hit, the pillbox was taken by riflemen from the assault platoon. (37) The Company reached the crest of the western ridge of MT. MONTICELLI by 1500. The company commander immediately adjusted artillery fire on the enemy, who could be seen forming for a counter-

(34) Personal Knowledge

(35) A-3, p. 71

(36) A-3, p. 71

(37) A-3, p. 73, personal knowledge

attack in the draws behind MONTICELLI. The attack was broken up for the time being. At 1630 another attack was made by the Germans. The attack lasted for about an hour. The artillery fired at maximum rate during this time and was largely responsible for breaking up this attack. The enemy was repulsed with heavy casualties. Two other attacks were made during the night by the enemy to retake this position. Both were repulsed. The defensive artillery fire in front of B Company was originally fired as a concentration and was labeled concentration 10. This concentration was called for repeatedly by the company commander during the following days. This fire was very effective. After the action was over the battalion commander reported that he had counted 150 Germans in the area of this fire. This count coupled with the fact that the enemy was usually so prompt in his evacuation indicated that the enemy casualties were extremely high in this area. (38)

While the first action was going on the 2nd Battalion was methodically reducing emplacements in its area. The artillery supply situation had steadily grown worse. The heavy expenditure in support of attacks and the defensive fires were such that the battalion was forced to use, in addition to the normal vehicles provided for ammunition supply, every available truck in the battalion and the attached anti-aircraft platoon. (39)

THE FIFTH DAY OF THE ATTACK

The 3d Battalion, which had been in reserve since 14 September, was ordered to move up into position to the right of the 2d Battalion and attack ~~MT.~~ MONTICELLI to take some of the pressure off the 336th Infantry who ^{was} attacking ~~MT.~~ ALFUZZO. The attacks did not advance more than 300 yards during daylight and it was decided to stop and renew the attacks after dark. Moving up the slopes after darkness the assault companies were repulsed by the enemy's wire and final protective fires. (40)

(38) A-2, p. 110

(39) personal knowledge

(40) A-3, p. 77-78

THE SIXTH DAY OF THE ATTACK

On 17 September further attacks on MT. MONTICELLI were planned by the 3d Battalion, to take place at 1400. The assault elements were to be reinforced by the addition of some engineers to take care of the wire guarding the crest. However, the Division Commander arrived at the 3d Battalion Command Post and ordered the 3d Battalion to assault their objective by following a rolling barrage to be furnished by the Division Artillery. He had already arranged this with the Division Artillery Commander. It was already 1230 and this was the first the artillery battalion had heard of the barrage. (41) The Artillery Liaison Officer, with the 3d Battalion, Captain George D. Bunnell, immediately informed his Battalion Commander. The Artillery Battalion S-3 contacted the Division Artillery S-3 and coordination was made. Corps Artillery assisted by firing on targets in the rear of the objective. The assault jumped off on time. Moving closely behind the barrage the Company Commander, Captain William B. Fulton, of K Company and ten men reached the top of the hill. The Company Commander immediately began to adjust artillery fire on the enemy who were trying to retreat through the valley beyond. He requested one round of smoke for adjustment and the battalion gave battalion one round making 12 rounds of smoke. This obscured the target for a few minutes and caused a critical delay in the adjustment. Once the smoke cleared, however, Captain Fulton quickly made the adjustment and continued to adjust fire until the Artillery Liaison Officer arrived on the scene a few minutes later. The artillery forward observer with K Company had been cut off by mortar and small arms fire and had not arrived at the objective. (42) An arc of artillery fire was adjusted around the objective. The artillery continued to fire

(41) A-3, p. 80

(42) personal knowledge, statement of K Company Commander, William B. Fulton

defensive fires to protect the troops on the objective all night. Two batteries fired a total of 4000 rounds during the night hours. (43) Additional Artillery Battalions from Corps fired heavy harassing and interdicting fires all night. One of the targets of the all night firing was the entrance to a large dugout thirty feet wide and running 100 yds back into the side of the mountain. The next morning 33 prisoners were taken from this dugout. They were all dazed and befuddled by the heavy pounding.

By morning the objective had been occupied in strength and was secured. (44)

To sum up the results of this battle: The 347th Field Artillery Battalion was successful in giving the close support necessary to assist the Infantry to take an objective and hold it. The enemy was unable to supply or evacuate to any degree, thereby, lowering the efficiency and morale of his front line troops. Enemy prisoners taken during the latter part of the attack stated they had not been supplied during the entire period after the attack started. Reinforcements were unable to reach positions in the main line of defense because of intense artillery fire.

The Battalion fired at a rate of more than 4000 rounds per day for a 4 day period (14-18) September. Many more rounds were fired by other artillery units at the request of the battalion, some under the direction of observers of the battalion.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

1. AMMUNITION SUPPLY

The high rate of ammunition expenditure made normal means of ammunition supply, under the existing conditions, very difficult. The one road in the area was used as the MSR for II Corps 91st and 85th Divisions, and to some extent, by elements of the 13th Corps. This caused a tremendous number of vehicles to be on the road at all times.

(43) A-5, p. 54

(44) A-2, p. 110, personal knowledge

The physical condition of the road was not good due to bypasses around destroyed bridges causing one way traffic. Due to the rapidity of movement of the combat troops and the slowness of Army in moving its supply dumps up, it was a long tiresome trip to haul large quantities of ammunition. These difficulties were met by using every available truck to make the ammunition run.

2. VALUE OF CONSTANT ARTILLERY FIRE ON THE ENEMY

Constant artillery fire on the enemy position in the MLR and on his communications and supply routes was very beneficial to the assaulting Infantry troops. Here the enemy lost some of the tactical advantage of dominating terrain. He was unable to move troops either to or from the MLR to any great extent. His supply of rations and ammunitions to troops in the MLR was practically stopped. On numerous occasions reinforcements were prevented from reaching the MLR units in condition to perform their duties. Their units were hit by heavy long range artillery fire. Their casualties were great. Their organization broken before they reached the front lines. The enemy already, in his prepared positions, was unable to move out of them and the constant sound of shells bursting tended to lower his morale.

3. ADJUSTMENT OF ARTILLERY FIRE BY INFANTRY OFFICERS

The prompt action of Company Commanders, on at least two occasions, in adjusting artillery fire was a governing factor in either repulsing or preventing a counter-attack. Accurate shellfire on the enemy in the open prevented him from organizing for an attack or breaking up his organization if he is already organized. An Infantryman is usually first on the objective and is afforded the first opportunity to adjust accurate fire on the enemy. The liaison officers of the 347th Field Artillery Battalion had used every occasion to give instruction in fire adjustment. This instruction paid dividends at MT. MONTICELLI.

4. THE EFFECT OF ARTILLERY ON WELL PREPARED FORTIFICATIONS

Light artillery of the caliber used for direct support of Infantry units is not capable of destroying pill-boxes and bunkers due to the light weight of its projectile and its low muzzle velocity. It does not have the penetrating power necessary to destroy fortifications of the type found in the GOTHIC LINE. However, the Corps 155mm gun, 240mm howitzer, and the 8 inch gun are effective and were used time and again in the attack on MT. MONTICELLI with good effect.

5. USE OF PATROL INFORMATION BY THE ARTILLERY

The action of the B Company in passing the exact location of the large pillbox, that was located by his patrol of the night of 14-15 September, and the resultant destruction of this pillbox was a fine example of the proper use of specific patrol information. It is felt that many opportunities such as this were overlooked by the Infantry Commanders in this action. If a patrol can pin-point a target found, the artillery can usually destroy. The observers have at their disposal the heavy artillery if the type target calls for heavy artillery.

6. RADIO MESSAGES BY ENGLISH SPEAKING ENEMY RADIO OPERATORS

B Company's advance behind a rolling barrage was slowed and undue casualties resulted when a ruse, by the enemy, caused the artillery to cease firing the barrage. The ruse was an old one. An English speaking enemy broke in in the American radio frequency and began to request that artillery fire be stopped because the ^{fire} was falling in C Company. This caused great concern in both the 1st Battalion Command post and the artillery fire direction center and the barrage was lifted. A rolling barrage should be controlled through his forward observer by the Infantry Company Commander following the barrage. This barrage was well planned and correctly executed by the artillery. From the locations of the companies there was no chance to hit C Company. There was no excuse for stopping the fire.

7. MARKING OBJECTIVES FOR NIGHT ATTACKS BY THE ARTILLERY

In the attack on MT. MONTICELLI the artillery attempted to mark two objectives for a night attack on the night of 12-13 September with limited success. Two companies became masked from the objective and lost sight of the white phosphorous markers. Both companies, depending on them as a guide, lost direction and became disorganized. The terrain over which attacking troops must be carefully studied to determine whether or not they will be able to see the shell bursts. However, when the attacking troops can see the marking shell bursts they make an excellent guide.

LESSONS

1. In order to insure adequate ammunition supply at the gun position at all times, without placing undue hardship on the using unit, Army must keep its ammunition supply points well forward regardless of the speed of the advance.
2. Whenever possible the enemy must be subjected to continuous shell fire.
3. Infantrymen, enlistedmen as well as officers, must know how to adjust artillery fire.
4. The right caliber artillery must be used to destroy fortifications.
5. Accurate patrol information is invaluable in locating targets for artillery.
6. A rolling barrage must never be stopped on an unverified radio message.
7. Successful marking of objectives for night attacks depends on careful analysis of terrain.