

General Subjects Section
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE
1947 - 1948

THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY E, 325TH GLIDER INFANTRY
(82nd Airborne Division) IN THE BATTLE OF MOUNT SAINT
ANGELO, 18-20 SEPTEMBER 1943, (NAPLES-FOGGIA CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Company Commander)

Type of operations described: DAY RELIEF OF A FRONT LINE UNIT
AND RIFLE COMPANY IN DEFENSE

Major Robert L. Dickerson, Infantry
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Index	i
Bibliography	ii
Introduction	1
Situation, Left (North) Flank, British 10 Corps 9-16 September 1943	3
325th Combat Team Movements, 13-16 September 1943	4
Daylight Relief of 1st Ranger Battalion, 18 September 1943	7
Defense of Mount Saint Angelo, 18-20 September 1943	14
Analysis and Criticism	23
Lessons	31

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A-1 Operations in Sicily and Italy (July 1943 to May 1945)
Department of Military Art and Engineering
US Military Academy, West Point, N. Y. 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-2 Fifth Army History, Part I
US Army, Fifth Army (TIS Library)
- A-3 82nd Airborne Division in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944,
82nd Airborne Division. (TIS Library)
- A-4 Biennial Report of the Chief of Staff of the United States
Army, July 1, 1943 to June 30, 1945, to the Secretary of War.
By General of the Army George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff
The War Reports of General George C. Marshall, General H. H.
Arnold, Admiral Ernest J. King, 1947 (TIS Library)
- A-5 Action at Salerno
By Lieutenant Colonel Norman Husa, USMC
Infantry Journal, December 1943 (TIS Library)
- A-6 Observer's Notes on Italian Campaign,
Headquarters, Army Ground Forces,
5 December 1943 (TIS Library)
- A-7 Lessons from the Italian Campaign
Headquarters, NATOUSA, Training Memorandum Number 3,
10 March 1944 (TIS Library)
- A-8 Salerno, American Operations from the Beaches to the Volturno
(9 September - 6 October 1943)
Military Intelligence Division, US War Department, 26 August 1944
(TIS Library)
- A-9 The Salerno Landing
By Major General F. A. M. B. Jenkins, British Army
Military Review, August 1944 (TIS Library)
- A-10 The War in Italy (August 21 to September 21, 1943)
By Colonel Conrad H. Lanza
Field Artillery Journal, November 1943 (TIS Library)
- A-11 Correspondence in possession of Major Robert L. Dickerson
from Lt Col John H. Swenson, CO, 2nd Bn, 325th Glider Infantry.
- A-12 Salerno
By Major General W. H. J. Morris, Jr, United States Army
Military Review, March 1944 (TIS Library)
- A-13 "WAR" NO. 65 - "Salerno Diary"
Military Intelligence Division, US War Department
4 March 1944 (TIS Library)
- A-15 Battle of Italy,
Life Magazine, 4 October 1943 (TIS Library)
- A-16 Battle of Chiunzi Pass,
Life Magazine, 18 October 1943 (TIS Library)

THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY E, 325TH GLIDER INFANTRY,
(82nd Airborne Division) IN THE BATTLE OF MOUNT SAINT
ANGELO, 18-20 SEPTEMBER 1943. (Naples-Foggia Campaign)
(Personal Experience of a Company Commander)

INTRODUCTION

This monograph is an account of the action of Company E, 325th Glider Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division, in the battle of Mount Saint Angelo, 18-20 September 1943.

Since this monograph is written from an intimate personal knowledge of the incidents and events herein recorded, any reference not otherwise documented can be assumed to be personal knowledge or observation of the author.

Because of the fact that the organization of units change from time to time, it is thought advisable to acquaint the reader with the organization of a glider rifle company at the time of this action.

A glider rifle company, at full strength, numbered 150 men and 5 officers. This company was commanded by a Captain, who was assisted by an executive officer, and the normal complement of enlisted men usually found in any rifle company headquarters, though fewer in number. The company was organized into a company headquarters, two rifle platoons and one weapons platoon. The rifle platoons were composed of three 12-man squads, and one 60-mm mortar squad of 6 men. The weapons platoon was composed of two sections; a light machine gun section, and a 60-mm mortar section. Each section numbered 13 men. Each platoon was commanded by a Lieutenant, who had the usual platoon headquarters group to assist him.

This action was fought in the early stages of the invasion of Italy. To present a clearer picture of the action, it is deemed appropriate to review for the reader the events leading up to the battle of Mount Saint Angelo.

The Allies had successfully conquered Sicily by 15 August 1943. In order to retain the initiative, preparations were made to invade Italy. (1)

(1) A-10, p. 817.

There were many reasons for invading Italy. They may be consolidated into the following:

1. Italy was on the point of collapse, both politically and physically. The time was appropriate for an invasion. The Allies were in position to exploit the gains made in Sicily and Tunisia.

2. By attacking the Germans in Italy, the Allies would engage troops who, if not engaged here, would have to be engaged in other sectors. By splitting the German forces, the Allies might be able to defeat them in detail. Italy offered such an opportunity.

3. A most important consideration was the airfields in the vicinity of Naples and Foggia. From these airfields, our ground forces in Italy would be assured of adequate air cover, while the German industrial machine to the north and the Balkans to the east could also be attacked.

4. Control of the Mediterranean sea was the last consideration in attacking Italy. By driving the Germans out of Italy, and eliminating Italy from the war, the Allies could move unmolested in the Mediterranean Sea, which was an important supply lane. (2)

The Allies planned to invade Italy with two Armies. The British Eighth Army was to make the secondary attack by assaulting the Calabrian Peninsula and Taranto six days before the main attack. The main attack was to be made by the American Fifth Army on the beaches of the Gulf of Salerno. (Please see Map A) (3)

This plan was put into effect on 3 September 1943 when the British Eighth Army made the secondary attack, invading the Calabrian Peninsula and at Taranto. On 9 September, the American Fifth Army landed on the beaches at Salerno and Paestum. (4)

Fifth Army was to seize Naples and the airfields in that area. This large port was needed to supply the operation, while the airfields were needed to carry on the air war into the German held portions of Europe.

(2) A-4, p. 164; (3) A-1, p. 29, and A-10, p. 817; (4) A-10, pp. 817, 818.

By taking Naples, and the airfields nearby, ample footing would be gained so that the offensive could be maintained. (5)

To accomplish this mission, the American Fifth Army was to assault the beaches between Paestum, on the south, and Salerno, on the north. The British 10 Corps was to assault the Salerno area while the American VI Corps was to assault the beaches in the vicinity of Paestum. The boundary between Corps was to be the Sele River which flows through the south central area of the Salerno plain. (Please see Map B) (6)

The British 10 Corps, on the left (north) flank of Fifth Army, had the mission of capturing Naples. This was to be the main effort of Fifth Army. Between the British 10 Corps and Naples were the Sorrentine Mountains. The passes through these mountains were of utmost importance, as they led to the Plain of Naples, and Naples itself. In order to seize these passes, and protect the left (north) flank of 10 Corps, a force of three battalions of US Rangers and two battalions of British Commandos, all under Lt Col William O. Darby, United States Army, ~~were~~ ordered to land at Maiori, proceed north, and seize the Chiunzi and Nocera-Pagani passes. (7)

One reinforced regimental combat team of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 325th, was to be in Fifth Army floating reserve and to be prepared to land with light equipment on beaches that had not been previously established. (8)

SITUATION, LEFT (North) FLANK, BRITISH 10 CORPS
9-16 SEPTEMBER 1943

The British 10 Corps landed in the Salerno area on 9 September 1943 and encountered heavy opposition, but pushed inland. (9)

The Rangers landed at Maiori, moved north, and secured the passes. The Ranger Force seized the two mountains overlooking Chiunzi Pass and Pagani-Nocera Pass. These two mountains were named Mount Chiunzi and Mount Saint Angelo. The 1st Ranger Battalion occupied Mount Saint Angelo, while the 3rd Ranger Battalion occupied Mount Chiunzi. The 4th Ranger Battalion (5) A-2, p. 25; (6) A-8, p. 7; (7) A-8, p. 8; (8) A-1, p. 33; (9) A-1, p. 37.

were engaged in the Sorrentine Mountains west of Maiori. On the night of D-Day, the positions on Mount Chiunzi were attacked by the Germans. The attack was repulsed. (12)

It was realized by the Army Commander, General Clark, that this position, on the extreme left flank of Fifth Army, must be held at all costs. Reinforcements were hurried to the support of this force and, on 11 September, the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, 36th Division, arrived and was attached to Lt Col Darby's force. This battalion was placed in position on Mount Chiunzi, relieving the 3rd Ranger Battalion, ~~who~~ reinforced the 1st Ranger Battalion on Mount Saint Angelo.

Also on the 11th, a part of the 325th Combat Team was committed to support of this Ranger force. It consisted of the 319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion, plus the antiaircraft batteries of the 80th Airborne Antiaircraft Battalion, and one company of the 504th Parachute Infantry. (14)

From 11 September to 16 September, the Ranger positions were under constant attack by enemy ground forces. All attacks were repulsed, but it became evident to the Fifth Army commander that more troops were needed to hold the Mount di Chiunzi-Mount Saint Angelo position.

On 16 September, the 2d Battalion, 325th Combat Team, was attached to the Ranger Task Force. (15)

325TH COMBAT TEAM MOVEMENTS, 13-16 SEPTEMBER 1943

It is necessary to leave the Ranger Task Force for a moment and explain to the reader how the 325th Combat Team arrived on the scene, and relate the movements of the 2d Battalion from the time of landing at Paestum until they arrived at Maiori.

On 13 September, the 325th Combat Team, less the units attached to the Ranger Task Force on 11 September, moved from Licata, Sicily, (Please see Map A), at 2000 hours, to Palermo, Sicily, arriving at that port the next day at approximately 1430 hours. The convoy remained in port overnight and at 0500 hours on 15 September, the Combat Team departed for Salerno.

(12) A-2, p. 34; (13) A-8, p. 50; (14) A-3, p. 48. (15) A-11.

At approximately 2100 hours, 15 September, a landing was made at, or near, Red Beach, Paestum. (Please see Point "X," Map B) The Combat Team moved inland approximately 1000 yards and remained in position until morning. (Please see Map B) (16)

On 16 September, from the bivouac area near the beach, the 325th Combat Team moved to Highway No. 18, and north along that road to Stazione di Cappaccio, on the outskirts of Paestum, Italy. (Please see Map B). The Combat Team occupied an assembly area 1000 yds northeast of this railroad station. When the 2nd Battalion had closed in this area, orders were issued attaching Company "G" to Fifth Army Headquarters, with the mission of occupying the Island of Ischia, in the Bay of Naples. The 2nd Battalion, less Company G, was attached to the Ranger Force, ~~who were~~ committed on the left flank of British 10 Corps, in the mountains north of Maiori, overlooking the Chiunzi, and Nocera-Pagani passes.

The oral order given to Major John H. Swenson, battalion commander, 2d Battalion, 325th Glider Infantry, by Col Harry L. Lewis, commanding officer, 325th Combat Team, is as follows:

CO, 325 CT: "I have a job for you. Go to the beach. There you will find three LCI's. Get on them with your battalion, less Company "G." They will take you north up the coast, I believe to a place called Maiori, but I couldn't get much out of Army. When you get ashore, contact a Col Darby. He has grabbed off a toe-hold. 'They' want him to get out, but he isn't the kind to get. He says he is going to stay but he needs help. You will get detailed orders from him. Are there any questions?"

CO, 2d Bn: My mission, then, is to reinforce Col Darby?

CO, 325 CT: Right.

CO, 2d Bn: You indicated that I would get detailed orders from Col Darby. What am I to do if I can't contact him?

CO, 325 CT: You'll have to use your best judgement in that case.

(16) A-3, p. 74.

You'd better make sure that the boats don't leave until you have determined the situation on the beach.

CO, 2d Bn: Will the beach be defended when we arrive?

CO, 325 CT: There is no way of telling. Darby seems to be hard pressed. You had better assume that it will be. Then if you run into fire, there will be no surprise.

CO, 2d Bn: Where can I get detailed information on which to plan?

CO, 325 CT: You have all that I was able to get.

CO, 2d Bn: What about maps?

CO, 325 CT: Just what you already have.

CO, 2d Bn: On what beach are these LCI's located?

CO, 325 CT: Dammed if I know. You'll just have to hunt for them.

When you find them, send me word, I might have more information before you sail.

CO, 2d Bn: Very well, Sir." (17)

After receipt of these orders, the 2d Battalion, less Company G, was loaded into trucks, and taken to the beaches near Paestum where the convoy of vehicles was strafed by one German fighter aircraft. This action resulted in loss of time, little confusion, and no casualties.

The three LCI's were located without difficulty on the beaches. One LCI had become mired in the mud, but after some tugging by her sister ships, and another strafing by the same German fighter aircraft, the LCI was floated and the convoy stood out to sea at about 1500 hours.

The movement to Maiori was made without incident, and at approximately 2200 hours, 16 September 1943, the convoy slipped into the cove at Maiori. The ramps were lowered, and the troops ran ashore. Since Major Swenson had passed on the information regarding the uncertainty of the beach being secure, the battalion wasted no time in occupying the slopes surrounding the cove. In the meanwhile, Major Swenson searched for Col Darby, while Capt Roy, battalion executive officer, was left in charge of the battalion,

(17) A-11

who moved the troops to a bivouac area in a lemon grove near the town square of Maiori, where the night of 16-17 September 1943 was spent.

DAYLIGHT RELIEF OF THE 1ST RANGER BATTALION,
18 SEPTEMBER 1943

We have reached the section of the narrative where the 2d Battalion, 325th Combat Team is in contact with the Ranger Force, to which unit the 2d Battalion, 325th Combat Team, was attached. If the reader will recall, it was at this point where the narrative was interrupted so that this attachment could be explained and illustrated.

On the morning of 17 September 1943, Major Swenson contacted Lt Col William O. Darby, the commanding officer of the Ranger Task Force, who gave Major Swenson the following oral order:

"We hold the general line of the high ground on the three sides of this gorge. Two of my battalions hold the line from about that cliff (hereinafter referred to as 'The Point') at (56.8-34.9) to the saddle between Mount Saint Angelo and Mount di Chiunzi. That saddle is shown at (54.0-35.5). In general, you are to relieve them and hold the ground they now occupy. You will get your detailed orders from Lt Col Dammerer, my executive officer, at the forward CP. You will find the forward CP at (54.5-33.9). (Please see Insert, Map C) (18)

Major Swenson returned to the bivouac area, where the battalion was concealed, and alerted the battalion. Capt Roy was ordered to move the battalion, by foot, to the Ranger forward CP, (Please see Insert, Map C), and from there to the crest of Mount Saint Angelo where they would be met by the company commander. He was further told to prepare to take over the installations in Ranger forward CP, for that would become the rear CP for the Battalion. Major Swenson then took the S-3, and the company commanders of Hq, E, and F companies, by motor, to contact Lt Col Dammerer, at the Ranger Forward CP.

This party arrived at the Ranger Forward CP at approximately 1100
(18) A-11.

on 17th September 1943, where Lt Col Dammerer made the following statement to Major Swenson: "There doesn't seem to be anything to add to what the 'old man' has told you. Get the troop locations from Capt Saam, our S-3, up on the hill." (19)

Major Swenson and his party were then taken on a tour of the rear installations of the position. While on this tour, Lt Col Walker, battalion commander, 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, was contacted and a limiting point and boundary decided upon between units. Lt Col Walker's battalion was defending Mount Chiunzi at this time. This limiting point boundary is shown on Map C.

Lt Col Dammerer furnished Major Swenson and his party a guide who took them to the summit of Mount Saint Angelo, where Capt Saam, S-3, Ranger Force was contacted by Major Swenson.

Capt Saam stated as follows: "Our troops occupy this ridge from the Point on both sides of this mountain. Our left, or west, limiting point is the saddle (exclusive) between Chiunzi and Saint Angelo. Put your troops in as they come up. We will stay in position until in the morning. The Point is hot. Stay off of it. We had to withdraw from it. As soon as anyone gets near it, the kraut pours direct 88 fire on it from all over the valley. The route of approach he has been using is up the north side of the mountain right through those thick woods near the point." (20)

Major Swenson made a careful reconnaissance and estimate of the situation. His plan was for Company E to relieve the 1st Ranger Battalion, and Company F to relieve the 3rd Ranger Battalion. Each company was to have one section of heavy machine guns, and one section of 81-mm mortars attached. The company commander, Company E was ordered to become familiar with the communications facilities existing in the Ranger OP, and to take over this OP when the Rangers evacuated. The battalion OP was in rear of OP of Company E approximately 400 yards. The battalion CP was on the supply trail on the south side of the mountain. The aid station was near the CP. The (19) A-11; (20) A-11.

rear CP, ammunition supply point, water point and switchboard were to be in the same location as the Ranger Forward CP. (Please see Map C)

When the company commanders, who had taken cover nearby, were called forward to receive the order from Major Swenson, they saw why the Fifth Army Commander wanted to hold this position. Mount Saint Angelo was a high, rugged terrain mass, approximately 3,700 feet in height. From its summit could be seen the hotly contested Nocera-Pagani Pass, the narrow valley through which ran Highway 18 and the double-tracked railway from Rome to Battapaglia, and, of course, any movement by the enemy in that area. From its south slopes could be seen the secondary road coming north from Maiori, and Chiunzi Pass. From the Point (56.9-34.9), the approaches to the town of Cava and the village of Camarelle, Italy, could be seen. Any movement of the enemy in these areas could be quickly observed.

The mountain itself contained several terrain features. (Please see Map C) On the eastern edge, or cliff side, it was almost vertical. No vegetation of any kind grew here. The southern slope was bare in spots while sparsely wooded with scrub oak in other areas. No attempt at agriculture was in evidence. The grade of the southern slope was approximately 45 degrees. The north slope was bare in spots, while in others it was heavily wooded. Inside these woods were entangling vines and thorn bushes, very similar to the swamps of the southeastern coastal areas of the United States. This factor alone materially affected fields of fire and observation for the crew-served automatic weapons.

Beside the jungle area on the north slopes of Mount Saint Angelo, man-made terrain features were found. These were pits approximately five feet deep, and ten feet in diameter, which had been dug by sheep farmers in the region to catch rain water, presumably to provide the sheep with water adjacent to their grazing range. These pits were put to use as mortar positions, machine-gun positions, and platoon command posts.

The crest of Mount Saint Angelo was a barren, rocky, razorback ridge which extended from the Point (56.8-34.9) to the saddle between Mount Saint

Angelo and Mount Chiunzi.

Although the entire mountain was a rocky mass, there were some isolated spots where the soil permitted digging. This soil was a volcanic ash and lended itself to digging very well. A two-man fox hole could be scooped out in a matter of minutes; however, when this ~~group~~^{Ground} had a severe shock, the fox hole, so easily scooped out, would fall in on the occupants.

Concealment and cover existed in certain areas. On the northern slope near the point existed a part of the jungle already discussed. Near the machine-gun positions of Company E at (56.6-34.8), (Please see Map C), was good concealment afforded by several large oak trees with scattered underbrush among them.

The best obstacle in the area was the mountain itself. Armored vehicles could not negotiate its steep, deeply gorged slopes, nor could they negotiate the sharp turns of the secondary road from Maiori. The steep slopes were no obstacle to infantry who were not too heavily loaded.

A route of communication existed. It was not ideal, but it was sufficient to resupply and evacuate the units involved. There was only one possible trail from Mount Saint Angelo to the battalion rear CP at the base of the mountain. (Please see Map C) (54.5-33.9)

To conclude the discussion of the terrain of Mount Saint Angelo, it was definitely the key terrain feature held by the Ranger Force. Without it, all observation of the important passes and surrounding territory would be lost, plus the fire support of the Royal Navy, who had several Forward Observer Officers on this position. Fields of fire were short, with intermittent dead space sometimes very close to the position, which had to be covered by mortars.

The Company Commanders left Major Swenson at his vantage point (55.7-34.7) (Please see Map C) to make a reconnaissance of the area assigned them and to make arrangements for the relief of the 1st Ranger Battalion.

The company commander of Company E, contacted Capt Frederick I. Saam, S-3, 1st Ranger Battalion, in order to make a plan for the relief of the

1st Ranger Battalion, and to make a reconnaissance. Capt Saam stated as follows: "The Germans have been hitting us in small groups every morning about dawn and in the late afternoon about twilight. We have beaten them off each time, except one, when they shelled us off this hill and we had to attack and retake it. They usually come up on the north side of the point, through those woods. They work in pairs and get in close as hell before we spot them. Most of them are big young guys out of the 16th Panzer Engineer Battalion, although we found one the other day from the Hermann Geöring Division. Watch that hospital down in Nocera. I think it is a kraut headquarters, because I have never seen an ambulance go in there. Other vehicles of all types have been going in and out of that place at all hours of the day and night. I haven't fired on it yet. We will be going down there soon, now that you people are here. We will let you know what the score is, and you can direct the fire on it, if my suspicions are confirmed. About the relief--send your people on up here. There are enough holes for one company in my area. The 1st Rangers will stay until morning and show your people the ropes. We will pull out in the morning. By the way, stay off the Point. We will leave all our small arms ammunition and telephones (EE-8) on position, as your people will need these items.

(21)

The company commander, Company E, then visited the CPs of the company commanders of the 1st Ranger Battalion and made a detailed reconnaissance of the area assigned. Despite the warnings of the Ranger officers, the company commander included the Point in his reconnaissance, and while unduly exposing himself, was promptly fired upon by the enemy artillery in the valley.

As a result of this reconnaissance, it was decided to place the 1st Platoon in the area now occupied by Company E, 1st Ranger Battalion. They were to be disposed on the left, or north slope of the mountain, in the

(21) Personal knowledge, Statement of Capt Frederick J. Saam, S-3, Ranger Force.

heavily wooded area in the vicinity of the Point. The 60-mm mortar squad was to be placed in defilade on the right or south slope of the mountain, in one of the water pits, which have been described earlier in this narrative. The second platoon was to be placed in the area now occupied by Company F, 1st Ranger Battalion. They were disposed to cover the right, or south side, of the company area with one squad, while the other two squads were to be placed on the left, or north slope of the mountain. The 60-mm mortar of this platoon was to be placed in position in another of the water pits, and was to be able to fire to the north and cover the wooded approaches into the company positions. (Please see Map C)

In the squad areas, the following plan was used: the squads were to be broken down into roughly three mutually supporting groups. The men making up these groups were to be in two-man foxholes. Positions were chosen which afforded fields of fire, observation, cover and concealment, in that order of importance. The BAR team was to be the backbone of this arrangement. These weapons were sited along enemy avenues of approach, and were used skillfully to fill in dead space. The 60-mm mortar squad of the platoons was to be employed by the platoon leader near the platoon OP-CP. (Please see Map C)

The weapons platoon was to be placed in position on the right, or south slope of the company area. The 60-mm mortar section from positions at (56.5-34.8) were to be able to cover the Point and the north, or left, slope of the mountain with high angle fire, so that the high trajectory of these weapons could be utilized in the heavily wooded area which the Germans had been using as a route of approach. The 60-mm mortar section was to be prepared to fire also on the right or south slope of the mountain at targets of opportunity. The light machine gun section, now armed with heavy machine guns, was to be placed in a position on the right, or south slope (56.6-34.8) where they could fire a sector covering the right, or south, slopes, and fire a final protective line along the right, or south, slopes, roughly parallel with the crest, though about twenty yards down the slope.

The heavy machine gun section, which was attached, was to be placed in position at (56.5-35.0) and was to cover a sector on the right, or north slope. It was to fire a final protective line along the north side of the mountain toward the Point, approximately parallel to the crest and about thirty yards down from the crest.

The 81-mm mortar section, which was attached, was to be placed in position at (56.3-34.7). They were to prepare to place fires on the Point, the cliff on the eastern edge of the mountain, the north slopes adjacent to the 1st platoon's position, and at targets of opportunity on the south slopes.

This entire plan was submitted to Major Swenson, who approved it and ordered the company commander, Company E, to orient his officers, issue the order, and place the troops in these positions as they arrived on the mountain.

The company commander, Company E, realizing it would be dark when the troops arrived, marked the positions of his crew-served weapons so that they could be guided to their position more efficiently.

After these tasks were completed, the company commander, Company E, took position at the Ranger OP, to obtain all the information he could from Capt Saam relative to the enemy before the troops arrived.

The troops began to arrive at the crest of the mountain at approximately 2300, 17 September, 1943. They were exhausted, water was low, and they were, in general, disorganized. Base plates of mortars were clanging against the rocks, muttered curses could be heard, but no infractions of light discipline could be seen. Platoons were reorganized as quickly as they assembled. Stragglers were collected. Platoon leaders were briefed as they arrived, and after receiving the order, moved their platoons to positions previously reconnoitered. The company commander acted as the guide, taking one platoon to position, while the other was assembling and reorganizing after the ascent. The 1st platoon, the weapons platoon and company headquarters were in their previously reconnoitered positions, when Capt Saam, Ranger S-3, requested the company commander, Company E, not to move the

2d platoon into position, because he was of the opinion that his men were nervous after their hectic stay on the mountain, and that further movement of the relieving troops would result in fire from his troops. The company commander, Company E, agreed to this request and the 2d platoon was assigned a temporary area behind the Ranger OP. The battalion commander was not notified of this change in plans, it being an agreement between the Ranger S-3 and the company commander, Company E.

At approximately 0700, at first light, 18 September 1943, the enemy began a shelling of the position held jointly by 1st Ranger Battalion and Company E, 325th Glider Infantry. This artillery fire lasted until 0715, approximately. Three Rangers were wounded, while Company E, 325th Glider Infantry, had one killed and four wounded.

The relief was carried out in great haste after the fires ceased. By 0800, the Ranger Force had evacuated the position, and command had passed to Major Swenson, who now had the responsibility for Mount Saint Angelo.

There was no further enemy activity for the day. Company E spent the day improving the position. The two-man foxholes were dug deeper, and 'undercuts' were dug in these holes. These undercuts were simply recesses dug away from the center of the hole and parallel with the surface of the ground. They furnished cover from treebursts and time fire. Overhead cover for the foxholes was also fashioned by cutting trunks of trees which had been felled by artillery fire, and placing a layer of these logs over about one-half the opening of the foxholes. During the day, the defensive fires, which were planned by the company commander the day before, were registered and range cards made. All fires were observed except those designed to meet the enemy threat from the east, or cliffside, beneath the Point. These fires could not be observed because of enemy fire on the Point when the slightest movement was detected.

DEFENSE OF MOUNT SAINT ANGELO, 18-20 SEPTEMBER, 1943

Beside the defense of this terrain feature, Company E had other problems with which to contend. These problems were so closely enmeshed

with the actual defense, that they are worthy of mention here.

The problem of supply was a major one. As has been mentioned before, the only means of being supplied was by hand, or air. No transport, or bomber aircraft were available for such missions, which left only manual means. It was decided to use native laborers, who were promptly recruited. The language difficulty was solved quickly for the Supply Sergeant of Company E, Staff Sergeant Famigletti, was of Neapolitan descent, and was quite at home with the native population. He was sent to the rear CP, at the base of the mountain, to help the Battalion S-4 initiate and maintain a supply train of native labor, who were recruited from the non-combatant male population of the area. This group agreed to carry water, ammunition, and medical supplies to the positions on the crest of Mount Saint Angelo, and to carry the wounded and dead from the position. In return for services these men were given three meals of Ration "C" each day. These arrangements worked to our advantage until the enemy began searching the valley south of the mountain with artillery, which they did occasionally during the day. After one supply train was dispersed in such a manner, a guard was placed at the head and tail of the column, who regulated the speed of ascent, and insisted that no unscheduled stops or detours be made because of sporadic shelling.

Since the number of native laborers was limited, which in turn limited the amount of supplies which could be hand carried up the mountain, it was decided to limit the troops to one canteen of water per day, and two meals of "C" rations per day. This was considered the minimum requirement for food and water, and left sufficient men to carry the vital ammunition and medical loads. As events later proved, this system was ideal. An average of two trips per day were made with supplies. These supplies were placed under cover at the battalion ammunition supply point. (Please see Map C) The companies sent carrying parties after them, by covered routes, during the day. The troops in covered positions were resupplied during the day, while those in uncovered positions were resupplied at night. "C" ration

cans were buried in the foxholes, so that they would not reflect the sunlight. All dead were evacuated at night. Wounded were evacuated as soon as possible, regardless of the situation. The dead and wounded were evacuated by the companies to the Battalion Aid Station, where they were taken down the mountain by the native carrying parties.

Now that we have discussed supply and evacuation on Mount Saint Angelo let us look to the most popular place on the position, the OP of Company E. It became popular for two reasons; (1) it offered the best observation of the surrounding terrain, and (2) all communications on the entire mountain were tied in with this OP, for it had been taken over intact from the Ranger Force. There were a total of five officers in the immediate vicinity who were observers for British Naval Units, British Artillery Regiments, and American 4.2" Chemical Mortars. A concealment problem presented itself in that this group were a busy lot, and were constantly coming to the OP to use the telephone. Since the OP was devoid of cover or concealment, the enemy was sure to locate it. However, before this happened, these officers were requested to restrict their movement to cases of emergency and allow the company commander, Company E, to transmit their messages. This was agreeable, and the problem was solved.

Another problem arose on the 18th which demanded, yet defied, solving. That problem was civilian control. Even though the mountain was 3700 feet above sea level, Italian refugees climbed the north slopes, walked through the position and clamored for food and water. Although food on Mount Saint Angelo was scarce, they were given what little could be spared.

Those groups began their movement through the position at approximately 1000.

Before they were given food, however, they were questioned for military information. Staff Sergeant Ferrone, Mess Sergeant of Company E, spoke the dialect of the area and was given the mission of questioning these people. He was to ascertain the locations of the Germans, their latest movements, what units were in the area, their morale, and any other

facts of a military nature. These people reported that the Germans were moving toward Naples on Highway 18 during the hours of darkness, almost nightly. This news was both informative and comforting and was forwarded to the battalion commander. (Please see Map C)

After the questioning, during which time they were searched for hidden radios, messages, etc., they were despatched to the rear battalion CP, via the supply trail with instructions not to approach Mount Saint Angelo until the battle had passed that area.

Still the problem was not solved by the company commander of Company E. It was solved, however, by the enemy, who used mortars in searching the north slopes of the mountain. Although this fire never reached the crest, it did disperse the civilian refugees who had been climbing Mount Saint Angelo.

19 September, 1943, was relatively free from enemy activity, with the exception of intermittent shelling of the position and small enemy patrols who operated in the area between 2200 and 2230, 19 September. These patrols, or individuals, harassed the 2d platoon position on the south slope firing machine pistols into the air at irregular intervals. Patrols sent out by 2d platoon, Company E, were unable to locate any enemy, and at approximately 2230, the machine pistol fire ceased. A few grenades were rolled down the south slope by the members of the 1st platoon, who were in position on the north slope. It is important to note that only a few grenades were thrown by the troops of Company E, and these from the north side of the mountain, neither were the machine guns on the south slope fired. These patrols probably returned to their units and reported the south side of the mountain unoccupied, a mistake they would regret having made, some of them to their dying day, which was at dawn on 20 September.

20 September dawned a foggy, damp day. The south slopes of Mount Saint Angelo were covered by a cold clammy fog bank which rose from the valley. The wind, which blew from the northwest, dispersed this fog when it was within fifty yards of the crest. At first light on 20 September, the company commander, Company E, was inspecting the positions of the

machine guns of Company E, which were laid on their final protective line covering the south slope of the mountain. As one of the clouds was dissolved by the wind blowing from the west, a force of Germans was seen, deployed, with their weapons at high port, on the south slope directly in rear of the 1st platoon's position. (Please follow this action on Map C) The section leader and the company commander were both so amazed and dumbfounded, not to mention being frightened, that, for a second, neither acted. Then, as this machine gunner's dream was realized, the section leader, Corporal Harmon, fired a belt of continuous fire at the stricken Germans. This firing alerted the force on the mountain, and all fires which could be brought to bear were placed on this hapless enemy force. Though surprised, the Germans retired well under the circumstances, leaving only a few of their wounded, but most of their dead. This force was later estimated at 150 men by the various observers near the Company OP.

This action was reported to the battalion commander, who ordered a search made of the enemy dead and wounded to establish the identity of the unit engaged.

Before this order could be transmitted to a searching detail, the enemy artillery located in the Pagani-Nocera valley began a merciless shelling of the position which lasted from approximately 0700 to 0800.

During this shelling by the enemy, one enemy position was located in Camarelle, by company commander of Company E. This position was taken under fire by the British FOO, (Forward Observer Officer) who was observing for a British monitor in the Gulf of Salerno. The fire of the monitor silenced the enemy guns in Camarelle, but the shelling continued, though not as intense, with fire coming from the north and west.

The communications of the company were damaged during this pounding to the extent that the two wire lines to 1st platoon were cut in several places. Repeated attempts by the communications personnel of the battalion to repair, or relay wire to the 1st platoon was futile. Realizing that the wire should be buried, the company commander was at the point of

directing that this be done only to discover that the wire line could not be buried because of the rocky formations in the soil. To add to the confusion, the SCR-536 to the 1st platoon failed to function properly after 0745.

At 0800, approximately, the shelling abated in fury, and the wounded and dead were evacuated. This operation was completed at about 0815. The 1st platoon had approximately twenty effectives at this time.

At approximately 0820, a messenger from the 1st platoon, reported to the company commander that the enemy were seen coming up the cliff on the northeast side of the position toward the Point. He stated that their number was unknown, but that they were armed with one large mortar and two machine guns. The fires of the 81-mm and 60-mm mortars were placed on this group of the enemy, but the fires failed to stop the enemy's advance.

The enemy shelling increased at 0835, which restricted movement considerably. Tree bursts were harassing the 1st platoon, but they were bearing up under this ordeal very well because of the undercuts they had made in their foxholes the day before. Lt Gayley, 1st platoon leader, transmitted a radio message at 0840, to the company commander which could barely be heard, stating that he needed help to hold the position, for the enemy had worked to within grenade throwing distance of his 1st squad near the Point. He was told to hold the position, and that final protective fires would be fired for two minutes. This message was transmitted to the weapons supporting Company E, and the fires were brought down, with the exception of the fires of the machine guns on the left, or north, flank. Repeated messages were sent to the section leader of this section, and, finally, two or three timid bursts were fired. This was the maximum fire support received from those guns during the action on 20 September. (The reason for this failure to fire was brought out later when the section leader of this section stated that he was afraid to fire his guns because,

by firing, he would disclose his position.) Battalion was notified of the situation at this time.

Coupled with the fact that the left or north flank was without its deserved machine gun final protection fire, the 81-mm mortar section, which had been the most effective weapon against the enemy, reported a total of fifty rounds on position. Since the mortars were firing an average of five rounds per minute, it was rapidly deduced that this supply would not be sufficient. Again, the battalion commander was called and notified. He assured the company commander that the supply was to be replenished almost momentarily, for the supply train was just passing the battalion CP, headed in the direction of Company E. He further stated that they had about twenty cloverleaves of 81-mm HE Medium ammunition. This was welcome news, but luck was still with the enemy, as all of this ammunition was faulty, and failed to detonate. The battalion commander was again notified of the urgency of the situation. He gathered all the personnel around the Battalion CP, and despatched them to the Ammunition Supply Point at the base of the mountain after a supply of 81-mm HE Light ammunition. In the meanwhile, the mortar section firing in support of Company E, were rationed to an average of one round per minute, which exhausted the supply in approximately twenty-five minutes. The only mortar support available to Company E ~~were~~ the 60-mm mortar section of that company which was doing yeoman service, and which had enough ammunition to keep up the fire for a short period. The fires of these weapons were placed on the cliff over the Point.

The British Naval and Artillery support could not be used because they were flat-trajectory weapons; the 4.2 mortars could not be used because they had no ammunition.

(The group of personnel sent to the ammunition supply point at the base of the mountain by the battalion commander, returned in two hours with approximately 20 cloverleaves of 81-mm HE Light ammunition, which, though too late to avert the crisis at the Point at 0900, still it was

useful during the remainder of the day.)

The Germans, seeming to notice that no machine gun or heavy mortar fire was being delivered on the left or north flank, infiltrated a small group through the heavily wooded area near the Point, and assaulted the 1st squad of the 1st platoon who held the terrain nearest the Point. In the hand-to-hand fighting which ensued, the Germans succeeded in eliminating the 1st squad and occupying the squad position and the Point. This was the situation at approximately 0920.

At this time the company commander notified the battalion commander of the situation and was told to hold the position somehow ~~until~~ the reserve could be committed. The battalion reserve consisted of one platoon, called the "Commando Platoon," ~~who were~~ a special unit made up from volunteers in the battalion who did the patrolling and other special tasks as desired by the battalion commander. This platoon was led by Lt Wade H. Meintzer. In the meanwhile, the fires of the 60-mm mortars were placed on the Point and the position occupied by the enemy.

At approximately 0930, the Commando Platoon passed through the 2d Platoon of Company E, and assaulted the Germans on the Point, when the 60-mm mortar fire was lifted. They were successful in ejecting the enemy and restoring the MLR. To accomplish this mission, some 60-mm mortar ammunition was taken from Company F, who were left with only a few rounds. This was done by the battalion commander who counted on the Germans continuing the attack in the sector of Company E, which is exactly what they did later in the day.

After the Germans were ejected from the Point, the company commander ordered the 1st Platoon to reorganize. The Commando Platoon, under Lt Meintzer, was attached to the Company as reinforcement, and assigned an area in the western half of the 1st platoon's position. The positions near the Point were reoccupied. The time was approximately noon.

Ammunition was needed, as was water, food, and first aid packets.

Platoons sent in their needs by written message. These requests were consolidated and sent to the battalion commander, who immediately despatched this request by phone to Capt Roy at the rear CP. At 1300 the needed supplies were on their way up the mountain by carrying parties under Sgt Famigletti.

At approximately 1400, while this reorganization was in progress, the enemy attacked the south slopes near the position held by the machine-gun section of the weapons platoon. This attack was beaten off by the 2d platoon using rifle grenades, hand grenades and rifle fire. The Germans did succeed in working a small group up the deep gorge to the right or to the south of, the 1st squad, 2d platoon. None of the fires of the platoon, or of the machine guns, could be brought to bear on the enemy in this situation. The company commander ordered the 60-mm mortars to fire a round on the south slope of the mountain near the Point, record the range and elevation, then to decrease the range 25 yards each time a round was fired until mortar fire was falling in the gorge, which was approximately 50 yards in front, or to the east, of the 1st squad of the 2d platoon. This was accomplished in approximately five rounds, and the enemy group in the gorge, numbering three men were destroyed. At 1600, the enemy had apparently disengaged, for no more firing of small arms was heard.

The reorganization was continued despite the intermittent shelling of the position. At 1700, the positions were inspected by the battalion commander who pronounced them sound, and complimented the men.

There was no further enemy activity on 20 September, 1943.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The analysis and criticism of this action will be divided into three general headings, which are (1) orders, (2) relief of the 1st Ranger Battalion, and (3) defense of Mount Saint Angelo. It is felt that arranging the analysis and criticism of this monograph under these headings will insure a more penetrating analysis, thereby facilitating an unbiased criticism.

(1) Orders

The three most important characteristics of a good operation order are clarity, brevity, and timeliness. Of these, clarity is the most important.

The orders quoted in this monograph were all oral. They were brief, they were timely, but they were not clear.

Lt Col Darby ordered Major Swenson to relieve the troops on Mount Saint Angelo and to hold the ground they occupied. Major Swenson was not given the 'when' or 'how' of this order at this time. Lt Col Dammerer did not add to, or detract from, anything Lt Col Darby had said to Major Swenson, but sent him to Capt Saam, S-3, 1st Ranger Battalion, at the Ranger OP on Mount Saint Angelo.

Capt Saam furnished the 'when' and 'how' to Major Swenson when he stated, "Put your troops in as they come up. We will stay in position until in the morning."

This information was passed on to the Company Commander of Company E, whose plans went no further. No estimate was made as to how long it would take the troops to scale the mountain, nor was any thought given to their probable physical condition when they arrived.

The principle of war which is applicable in the case of the orders discussed in this monograph is Simplicity. The orders were simple, and, had they been clear and complete, their execution would have been a matter of routine.

This discussion can be summed up in two sentences: orders for this relief were never clear, and since the orders were not clear, the plan, based on these orders, was not the best plan to fit the situation. The characteristic

of clarity must be brought out by intelligent and diplomatic questions by the person receiving the order in case it is not clear and complete.

(2) Relief of the 1st Ranger Battalion

Since the orders for this operation have been discussed, it is appropriate to review their execution.

The company, being in bivouac with the battalion at Maiori on the morning of 17 September, was alerted in time to move by foot to Mount Saint Angelo. Further warning orders were unnecessary.

No restrictions were placed on reconnaissance parties as to size, routes, or hours of operation. The reconnaissance was made between the 1400-1600 hours approximately. This was the ideal time of day for the enemy observers to note any movement on the mountain. However, time was short, the troops were ascending the mountain, and since the Germans usually attacked at dawn and dusk, only the daylight hours were available for reconnaissance.

The route of reconnaissance was the trail which ran generally along the crest of the mountain. No other suitable routes were available. This route furnished the necessary vantage points, and had some cover and concealment.

The company commander of Company E made a detailed reconnaissance of his assigned area and decided where to place each squad and each crew-served weapon. Although it is realized that this was the duty of the platoon leaders, still they were in the process of ascending the mountain and would not be available to make a reconnaissance, therefore the company commander had to do it for them.

A conference between the commander of the relieving unit, and the commander of the unit to be relieved was held. During the conference known enemy habits, their probable locations, and the transfer of signal communications were discussed.

Even though these items were important, there were several other of equal or greater importance which were not discussed or coordinated. Among

these were the fact that the use of guides was not discussed. Furthermore, it is felt that not all the troops of the unit to be relieved knew that a relief was in progress, since the Ranger Force S-3 requested one platoon of the relieving unit not be moved to its assigned position because his men were nervous and might fire into the relieving troops. Had proper instructions been issued the troops to be relieved, and had proper coordination been made for their relief, it is believed their nervousness would have turned to joy. Another important item omitted from this conversation was that no time was agreed upon when the command would pass to the relieving unit, although it was assumed that command would pass to the relieving unit when the Rangers had cleared the position. Other items which should have been discussed and coordinated were plans for the transfer of supplies, arrangements made for liaison personnel, and the selection of assembly areas where the company could have been reorganized after the ascent. Had these assembly areas been chosen and used, the troops could have been reorganized and moved in an orderly fashion to their previously reconnoitered positions.

The 2d platoon of Company E was not moved to its previously reconnoitered position when it arrived on the mountain. This change in plans was an arrangement between the company commander of Company E and the S-3, Ranger Force. This constituted a change in plans. No changes should have been incorporated into the already poor plan, for a relief is a delicate operation and allows for little flexibility once the plan, however poor, has gone into effect.

The principles of war applicable in the discussion of the relief are Surprise, Security, Cooperation, and Simplicity.

Tactical Surprise was lost in this relief when it was decided to have both the relieved and the relieving units occupy this position until broad daylight, and then have the relieved unit evacuate the position. The enemy, hearing the troops enter the position on the night of 17-18 September, waited until dawn to use his artillery so that he could better observe and direct his fires.

Security, in this instance, was another principle which was violated. This lack of security can be blamed on the lack of a security plan. There was entirely too much noise on the night of 17-18 September by both units occupying Mount Saint Angelo. Security and Surprise go hand-in-hand.

Cooperation was one principle which was accomplished. This principle is concerned with team work and unity of command. The troops, both organic and attached, of the Ranger Force, cooperated with one another to the utmost, as is shown in this monograph.

The principle of Simplicity was again violated in the plan for this relief. The simplest way is the best way. The manner in which this relief was accomplished is not considered the best way it could have been done. The plan was flimsy and uncoordinated, therefore it cannot be assumed to a simple workable solution to the problem.

To summarize the important points in the relief of the 1st Ranger Battalion, we may enumerate the following:

1. Orders for this relief were not clear and complete, therefore the plans were not complete.
2. Prior planning was faulty. More emphasis should have been placed on secrecy and security.
3. The reconnaissance of the commanders concerned was excellent.
4. The relief should have been accomplished on the night of 17-18 September, with the relieved force having cleared the position by dawn.
5. The entire company should have occupied its previously reconnoitered positions, dug in, sited their weapons, and assumed an alert attitude.
6. The battalion commander should have been notified of the request of the Ranger S-3 to not move the 2d platoon to their position, and a decision requested.
7. The entire company should have been assembled at an assembly area, somewhere along the trail from the Ranger Forward CP to the crest of Mount Saint Angelo and reorganized. At this point, water should have been provided,

the company should have met their guides and moved, according to plan, to their positions.

(3) Defense of Mount Saint Angelo

Any defense must be built upon sound thinking, and intelligent actions, if that defense is to succeed.

Troop leading is considered a part of that sound thinking for it is a time saver and lends itself to efficient operation. In this action, all the steps of troop leading were complied with. The only part which was not done to near perfection was the planning phase.

Since troop leading may be considered the thinking phase of a defense, then the application of the seven principles of defense should be considered the intelligent action so necessary to success in defensive combat.

In the defense of this position, the principles of defense were applied. Not all of these principles were applied to the maximum, still the mere fact that they were practiced even to a minimum degree proves the fact that without the application of these principles our defensive theory is inadequate.

There are seven principles of defense. They are organization of key terrain, mutual support, all-around defense, defense in depth, coordinated fire plan, coordinated antimechanized plan, and flexibility.

It is necessary to examine each one of these principles and notice how they were applied in the defense of Mount Saint Angelo in order to understand how the position was held despite the inadequate planning.

The key terrain was organized. Mount Saint Angelo was the key terrain feature on the left flank of the entire Allied effort in Southern Italy. It was under one commander. He was given the responsibility for the approaches to the position. The ground was organized in the best possible manner with tools available. Provisions were made for mutual support between units, though complicated by ground forms, tree growth and dead space. The mountain furnished all the observation needed, except over the cliff on the eastern edge. All available observation was utilized. Despite poor fields

of fire on the north slopes of the mountain, other parts of the mountain furnished good fields of fire. Any dead space could be covered because of our excellent observation. Concealment and cover was considered a very important item in this fight for survival. All natural cover was used, as was all natural concealment. The artificial concealment which was available was used by individuals. No obstacles were placed in the approaches used by the Germans. This is considered an error. Mines should have been placed on the north slopes, and covered by fire of riflemen or machine guns. Trip wires attached to grenades could have been used. The communications developed into a major problem. The SCR-536 used in the company worked well until the batteries ran down. Reserve batteries were not taken to the position initially, with the resultant loss of radio communication until some were brought up from the supply point at the foot of the mountain. Telephones, both EE-8 and sound power were used in the action. Initially, wires were left on the ground when lines were laid. After the initial shelling on 18 September, dual lines were laid at night and dug in. The cardinal error in this organization of this key terrain was the fact that no security echelon was sent out from the main battle position. If there were not sufficient troops to man combat outposts, then certainly local security could have and should have been sent out to protect the command from the surprise and annoyance it was often subjected to while it was in this position.

The second principle of defense is mutual support. The squads in the platoons of Company E were disposed so that mutually supporting groups within the squads were within supporting distance of the other. These groups consisted of four men usually, or when the squads were at full strength. The crew-served weapons covered the flanks, while the mortars filled in the dead space and covered the most likely enemy approaches.

The third principle of defense is all-around defense. This was accomplished by the mere fact that all the approaches normally used, or could be used, by the enemy were covered with the troops and fires available.

Defense in depth was achieved by placing the 2d platoon of Company E 200 yards to the rear of the 1st platoon. In addition to being this distance behind the 1st platoon, they were on ground which was approximately 50 feet higher. They were in position to cover the south slopes of the mountain which were directly in rear of the 1st platoon's position.

The fifth principle of defense brought out in this action was that the coordinated fire plan is a major element in stopping the enemy, and later, in ejecting him if he penetrates the position. Long range fires were present in the form of British Naval Observer Officers who were in communication with British Naval Units in the Gulf of Salerno. Final protective fires were furnished by the 81 and 60-mm mortars, and the heavy machine guns. Fires within the battle position were delivered by the 60-mm mortars. All the fires were planned in advance. The supply of ammunition should have been given more thought when this fire plan was conceived. This supply problem was never given due thought until the crisis on 20 September.

No antimchanized plan was necessary for armored vehicles could not negotiate the steep slopes of Mount Saint Angelo, nor could armored vehicles of size greater than an Bren Carrier or Half-track negotiate the narrow road which ran northward from Maiori. However, 2.36-inch rocket launchers were taken to the crest of Mount Saint Angelo to avoid being surprised.

This defense was flexible in that its fires could be massed and shifted to meet the situation, even though most of the troops of Company E could defend in only one general direction.

The Principles of war which were applied or violated in this battle were Mass, Objective, Surprise, Security, Offensive, Movement, and Economy of Force.

In applying the principle of Mass, the company commander of Company E placed half his rifle strength to cover the most likely approaches to the position. In this way the enemy was stopped because of the superior positions and fire power of the defenders.

The principle of Objective was emphasized when it became clear to the company commander of Company E that this position had to be held at all costs because of its tactical importance to the left flank of the entire Allied effort in Italy.

The enemy was surprised when his troops were decimated by the machine gun fire on the south slopes of Mount Saint Angelo on the morning of 20 September. This was a tactical Surprise from which he never recovered, and was instrumental in the retention of the position.

Security was violated, as has been shown before. This was a mistake which was nearly fatal. No security echelon was sent forward from this position. The positions held by the 1st Ranger Battalion were the ones they wrested from the Germans and became the MLR. This same position was later occupied by Company E. This position did not possess the ideal characteristics of a defensive position but had to be held regardless. Security groups should have been sent forward to delay the enemy and to warn of his approach.

Although the mission of the Company was tactically defensive, still the strategic mission was an offensive one. Even though this company was on the defensive, the initiative was seized by the counterattack of the Commando platoon on the afternoon of 20 September. This restored the morale of the troops.

Movement applies Mass and Security. Since the use of Mass in this action was considered satisfactory, while Security was unsatisfactory, the reader can see the extent to which the principle of Movement was applied. Our movement was excellent, but security was unsatisfactory.

Economy of Force was in effect in the positions held by the Ranger Force. It is the opinion of the writer that more troops should have been assigned the mission of holding these mountains and the passes in the vicinity. Any less could not have held the positions of Mount Chiunzi and Mount Saint Angelo. This is taking in to account the fact that most of the supplying was done by native carriers and not by troops. There were times when every

Allied soldier was in the main line of resistance, with no appreciable reserve being held out. Reserves were reconstituted as soon as possible after each attack was repulsed, but had the enemy attacked the position in force, in more than one position, reserves would not have been available to meet the threat.

LESSONS

"Fools say they learn by experience. I prefer to learn by other people's experience."

-----Bismarck.

There are many lessons to be learned from the operations of small units such as Company E, 325th Glider Infantry.

These units put into effect the plans and orders of higher echelons. The success or failure of the plans given them is dependent upon the manner of execution, training, intelligence, leadership, discipline and courage of these small units.

Some of the lessons learned from this action are:

1. Units under fire for the first time require a maximum of personal leadership.
2. Orders must be clear, brief, and timely.
3. One of the keys to success is the personal reconnaissance of the small unit commander.
4. Reliefs of front line units must be carried out during the hours of darkness with the utmost secrecy.
5. Small unit leaders must insist that their men make full use of their weapons so that all available fire power is brought to bear on the enemy as planned.
6. Supporting fires do not necessarily destroy the enemy, merely force him to take cover.

7. Unobserved mortar fire, though necessary under some isolated circumstances, is still considered wasteful where ammunition supply is difficult.

8. Protective fires in front of the MLR should be registered.

9. Every commander is responsible for his own security.

10. Every man in the infantry squad should listen intently to the squad leader's order so that he may take over the command of the squad and carry out the mission in case the squad leader becomes a casualty.

11. The two-man type fox hole is ideal in the defense because of the fact that if one man is wounded, the position is still occupied. Furthermore, it is ideal because of the psychological effect of companionship.

12. Civilian control should be considered before the problem presents itself, not when the refugees are streaming through a defensive position.

13. Small units should have personnel who speak the language of the area in which the unit is operating.

14. Before a unit is committed to action in mountainous terrain, serious consideration should be given to the supply problem.

15. All telephones in a battalion area should be on an open circuit, and manned at all times so that any message passed is heard by all. Wire must be laid in dual lines, dug in where possible, and laid to all important installations. Alternate means of communication are important.

16. Naval gunfire is an effective area fire weapon.

17. Basic tactical principles used by the United States Army were found to be sound. In mountain fighting, the technique must be modified to fit the situation.

* R.F.