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THE OPERATIONS OF L COMPANY 15TH INFANTRY
(3RD INFANTRY DIVISION)
THE CROSSING OF THE VOLTURNO RIVER
7-13 OCTOBER 1943
(NAPLES-FOGGIA CAMPAIGN)
(Personal experience of a Company Commander)

Type of operation described: Company in a River Crossing

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THE OPERATIONS OF L COMPANY 15TH INFANTRY (3RD INFANTRY
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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of L Company 15th Infantry for the period 7-13 October 1943. It includes the preparation for the crossing of the Volturno River, 7-12 October 1943, and the river crossing, 12-13 October 1943.

The battle for Sicily was but the forerunner to even more difficult operations for the men of L Company 15th Infantry. The officers and men of the company were, during the coming month, to fight their way to the outer edge of the formidable "Winter Line" defenses under some of the most difficult conditions experienced by combat troops in this or any other theater of war, and in the face of the most stubborn and relentless delaying action on the part of the Germans.

From the beginning of the Italian Campaign, everything seemed to be against the front line "doughfoot". While Sicily had been torturously hot, dry and dusty, in Italy our troops slogged through endless rain, knee deep mud and bone chilling cold. Moving over high and very rugged mountains, they suffered agonies from exposure; through open valleys, exposed to enemy observation and shelling from the heights as they carried the fight to the Germans.

Men were soaking wet and cold for days at a time. Winter clothing was inadequate in the early phase of the campaign, so men suffered helplessly in summer clothing from the penetrating Italian cold. Time and again, wounded could not be evacuated from the mountains for hours, sometimes for days. At times not even the sturdy pack mules could traverse the terrain covered

by our men. Then supplies, ammunition and weapons had to be hand-carried to the forward units that were in contact with the enemy. (1)

Such was the task that faced every leader and soldier in the Italian Campaign.

The crossing of the Volturno River was to open the second phase of the Allied campaign in Italy. The first phase started when the leading units of the Fifth Army (commanded by Gen. Mark W. Clark) hit the beaches at the Gulf of Salerno at 0330 9 September 1943. (Map A) Stories of this landing and how the Allies had to fight for every inch of the beach and withstand repeated counterattacks from the enemy have been told many times. The beachhead was secured, and, under pressure of the Fifth Army, the Germans began an orderly withdrawal up the Italian peninsula. Under this pressure, their rear guard relinquished the port of Naples to the British 10 Corps on 1 October 1943. This provided us with the base necessary for large scale operations west of the rugged Apennine Mountain range, backbone of the Italian peninsula.

The British Eighth Army, which landed on the toe of the Italian boot on 3 September 1943, now joined with the Fifth Army east to Salerno, making a solid front across the width of the peninsula. (2) By 7 October, the enemy had formed a new line from the Volturno River valley on the Tyrrhenian Sea to the mouth of the Biferno River on the Adriatic side of the peninsula. It was along this line that the Germans intended to make a determined stand to stop, or at least delay, the Allied northward advance. (3)

Fifth Army at this time was composed of the US VI Corps, commanded by Major Gen. John P. Lucas, and the British 10

(1) A-5, p. 69; A-1, p. 12; personal knowledge, self

(2) A-1, p. 1 (3) A-1, p. 2

Corps, commanded by Lt. Gen. Sir Richard L. McCreery. VI Corps had three battle tested divisions; the 3rd Infantry Division under Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott Jr., the 34th Infantry Division and the 45th Infantry Division. The British 10 Corps had operated on the left in the Fifth Army zone after the Salerno beachhead had been secured. The US VI Corps was on the right inland along the edges of the central mountain range. On 7 October 1943, Fifth Army held a line along the south bank of the Volturno River from its mouth on the Tyrrhenian Sea to a junction with Calore River. The boundary between corps ran through Triflisco Gap with the US VI Corps on the right. (4)

Orders for the assault across the Volturno were issued twice. On 8 October 1943, VI Corps issued orders to the 3rd Division to force a crossing on the night of 9-10 October in the vicinity of the Triflisco Gap, and drive along the ridge line running northwest from Triflisco in the direction of Teano. (5) However, if the 3rd Division with its fifteen mile front was to launch an effective attack at Triflisco, concentration of forces was imperative.

On this date, the 3rd Division, composed of the 7th, 15th and 30th Infantry RCT, was holding the south river bank from the Triflisco Gap to the Calore River junction, a total of fifteen miles in length. The 15th Infantry held the line in the left half of the Division sector from Triflisco Gap to and including Mount Castellone. The 30th Infantry held the right of the sector to the river junction. 7th Infantry was in concealed bivouac two miles north of Caserta. (6)

The 34th Division was ordered from Corps reserve to relieve the 30th Infantry and to make preparations to join the 3rd Division in a coordinated attack on the enemy defences across

(4) A-1, p. 5-6 (5) A-2, p. 16 (6) A-5, p. 121

the river. (7)

The relief was much slower than anticipated. The mud, rain and enemy action delayed both the 30th Infantry and 34th Division in their movements to make the change. Since the 10 Corps also needed more time to get ready for the coming attack, Gen. Clark postponed the crossing until the night of 12-13 October 1943. This gave the 34th Division the time it needed to make its preparation for a coordinated attack along with the 3rd Division. (8)

THE GENERAL SITUATION

The Volturno River ran due east-west along the 3rd Division front. It was about 150 to 200 feet wide, and varied in depth from three to six feet. The current was very swift. The bank ranged in height from two feet on the south side to ten and fourteen feet on the north side of the river. The terrain just north of the river was flat and unusually soft from recent heavy rains. (9) (Map B)

The key terrain feature in the 3rd Division sector was the ridge line running northwest from Triflisco. The ridge was an extension of Mount Tifata, broken only by the narrow gap formed by the Volturno River in forcing its way through the mountains to the coastal plain. This gap was so narrow that troops of the 1st Battalion 15th Infantry dug in on the north slopes of Mount Tifata were exchanging small arms fire with the enemy on the north side of the gap. The enemy from his positions could dominate the valley lying to the east as well as command the best bridge site in the Division sector. Highway 87 ran northwest from Caserta along the east and north sides of Mount Tifata, crossed the river within the Triflisco Gap and then cut east across the valley toward Casizzo. The natural site for

(7) A-1, p. 10 (8) A-1, p. 10 (9) A-4, p. 88

the engineers to build a bridge for heavy vehicles was somewhere within the gap where the road paralleled the river on both sides. (10)

By 9 October, it was known that at least eight self-propelled 105mm howitzers defended this site along with the other weapons dug into the rock formation. (11)

Just north of the river on the Division's right flank were two smaller hills, Mount Monticello, and Mount Mesarinolo. These two hills raised from the valley like solitary outposts that guarded the approaches to Mount Ceruso. Mount Ceruso dominated the valley leading northwest along the 3rd Division axis of advance. The hills, Mount Monticello and Mount Mesarinolo, were later to become the objectives of the 15th Infantry.

Marshall Kesselring, commander of the German forces in Italy, had four divisions at his disposal. Though this was a far inferior number to that being employed by the Fifth Army, the German commander intended to prevent the Fifth Army from crossing the Volturno River. The enemy divisions were all battle experienced and consisted of the Herman Goering Division, the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division, the 26th Panzer Division and the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division. The Herman Goering Division was directly opposite the US 3rd Infantry Division. (12)

As surprise was the key to the success of the 3rd Division, on the afternoon of 8 October 1943, General Truscott called a meeting of his regimental commanders and staff and outlined his plan. The plan called for a demonstration on the Division's left flank by the 1st Battalion 15th Infantry supported by all the heavy weapons of the 30th Infantry. The 7th Infantry was to cross the river in the center of the Division sector. The (10) A-1 p. 13-14 (11) A-5, p. 7-10 (12) A-2, p. 8

15th Infantry, less the 1st Battalion, was to cross the river on the Division's right flank. The demonstration on the left was to start at 2400 12 October and to continue for the remainder of the night. If the enemy showed any signs of withdrawing in that sector, one battalion of the 30th Infantry was to cross the river immediately. The Division artillery was to fire preparatory fires from 0100 13 October, one hour after the start of the demonstration on the left, and continue until 0155, at which time smoke was to be mixed with the high explosive for a period of five minutes. These fires were to be directed at known and suspected enemy positions north of the river bank. Infantry elements were to cross the river at 0200 13 October 1943. The 15th Infantry (less the 1st Battalion) was to attack north from Mount Castellone. First objectives were the enemy strongpoints on Mount Monticello and Mount Mesarinolo. Then it was to capture the high ground above the town of Piana di Casizzo and secure the Division's right flank and prepare to continue the attack to the west. (13)

PLANS AND PREPARATION

On 7 October, L Company was fighting strong patrol actions on the southern crest of Mount Castellone with the mission of taking the crest. (14) (Map C)

At this time, the regiment, under the command of Brig. Gen. William W. Eagles, (now Maj. Gen.) was ordered to occupy two areas on Mount Castellone with one battalion in each area. Each battalion was ordered to have by daylight a combat patrol on the high ground overlooking the river. As soon as possible after daylight, strong reconnaissance patrols, in command of an officer and covered by at least a rifle platoon, were to make (13) A-1, p. 15-16 (14) Personal knowledge, self

a thorough and systematic reconnaissance of the river line. They would determine assembly areas affording concealment for personnel and equipment and suitable fords for crossing the river. If possible, these patrols were to cross the river and determine the terrain on the opposite bank. (15)

Because of strong enemy delaying action encountered at the river banks, it was impossible for these patrols to cross the river. However, the 3rd Battalion patrol from L Company, under command of Lt. Charles Coles, and the 2nd Battalion patrol from G Company were able to gain control of the summit of Mount Castellone. (16)

Now, from the excellent observation points on Mount Castellone, observers could look down on the brush covered banks of the Volturno River. However, the job of completely clearing the enemy from the south banks in the 3rd Battalion sector remained to be done.

On the morning of 8 October, L Company was ordered by the Battalion commander, Lt. Col. Fredericks, to clear the enemy from the south banks of the river in the 3rd Battalion sector and, in addition, to send a strong patrol across the river to try to reach Mount Mesarinolo. By nightfall, L Company had succeeded in clearing the enemy from the south banks of the river in that sector. However, the company was unable to send the patrol across the river because of strong enemy reaction.

The company was then ordered by the company commander, Capt. Charles J. Parziale (now Major), to move back to its initial position on the summit of Mount Castellone.

The company commander reported to the battalion commander at 2000 8 October. This report outlined the main geographical features of the northern slope of Mount Castellone. Only one trail existed leading down to the river in the 3rd Battalion
(15) A-5, p. 109 (16) Personal knowledge, self

sector, and this trail was very steep, rocky and difficult to traverse even by foot troops with little or no equipment. The river bank on our side was not steep; however, a man sank up to his knees in mud as soon as entering the river. The enemy activity on the opposite shore was considerable. All attempts to cross made by patrols from the company were met by heavy machine gun and machine pistol fire. There were two men killed and six wounded in the attempts to cross. (17)

The battalion commander called the company commanders to his CP at 2100 that night (8 October). At this meeting he gave his plan for the crossing of the river on the night of 9-10 October 1943. L Company was to cross the river just opposite Mount Mesarinolo, capture the left half of Mount Mesarinolo and continue on and capture Hill 580 north of Piana di Caiazzo. K Company, under command of Capt. John O'Connell, was to cross the river some thousand yards west of L Company's crossing and attack Mount Mesarinolo from the right. I Company, under command of 1st Lt. Troupier, was to follow L Company and after L Company had taken the left half of Mount Mesarinolo, relieve L Company and be prepared to move to the west on orders. M Company would support the attack from positions near the river bank.

All companies were that night to organize both reconnaissance and combat patrols. These patrols, one of each per company, were to start operating at 2400 8 October, with the mission of finding crossings and determining the enemy dispositions. Combat patrols were also to patrol as far as Mount Mesarinolo and to take a prisoner if possible. (18)

It would be impossible to give a detailed account of the numerous patrols that crossed or attempted to cross the river (17) A-5, p. 111 (18) Personal knowledge, self

during the next three days and nights. But I would like to give in some detail the action of two patrols, both from L Company, and their action may be considered as typical of all the patrols that operated in the 3rd Battalion sector during this period.

A combat patrol, under command of Lt. Charles Coles, left Mount Castellone at 0030 9 October with the mission of finding a crossing, crossing the river, patrolling as far as Mount Mesarinolo and determining the enemy locations and dispositions around this mountain. The patrol consisted of the 3rd platoon of L Company.

The patrol reached the river at 0300 without incident. Lt. Coles then sent small patrols of two or three men each to the east and west to find a crossing. Within thirty minutes a crossing had been found within 100 yards south of where the trail coming from Mount Castellone met the river. Lt. Coles then crossed his patrol without seeing or hearing a sign of the enemy. He left three men on the north bank to protect his rear, to give warning of any enemy movement along the bank of the river, and to serve as guides to find the crossing again.

The patrol moved across the flat terrain between the river and Mount Mesarinolo. They did not encounter any enemy until they reached a road running at the foot of Mount Mesarinolo, at which time they were challenged and immediately thereafter brought under heavy machine gun fire which swept all along the road. Lt. Coles decided to withdraw to the river, as by this time it was getting daylight and he did not want to be on the enemy side of the river at dawn. Lt. Coles, on his return to the river bank, was not able to find the three men he had left as guides. However, he was able to find the crossing, recross the river and be back at his own company area by 0745. He had

four men wounded and three men missing in action. He was able to bring all the wounded back. As the three men never returned to the company, it was assumed that they were captured by a German patrol.

Lt. Coles' report stated that the river was about 150 feet wide, the bottom was very muddy, the current swift and the depth up to about five feet. He also said that the north bank was so steep that they had had to cut footholds in the bank and help one another up. The brush on the north bank was very thick. However, the open field beyond had many dips and drains that would afford some cover from enemy fire. (19)

It was at this time that the decision was made by Gen. Clark to delay the attack until the night of 12-13 October. This gave time to make a more detailed study of the river. (20)

The second patrol I wish to describe was a reconnaissance patrol under command of S/Sgt. Charles Adams (later Capt. Adams). He took two men with him. He left at 1800 11 October, following the same route taken by Lt. Coles. He was to cross the river about 500 yards west of the crossing made by Lt. Coles, reconnoiter the banks of the river and report on any enemy activities.

On attempting to cross, the patrol was immediately brought under fire by enemy machine guns. The enemy also used hand grenades against them. Sgt. Adams then moved his patrol down to the crossing that had previously been used and was able to cross the river without difficulty. Once across he was not able to move around because of enemy activity.

This report fitted in with reports of other patrols returning the same night, as all reports indicated that the enemy resistance had stiffened considerably, and the patrols had received a great deal more fire than on previous nights.

(19) From Lt. Coles report to 3rd Bn. Commd. 9 Oct. 43, Personal knowledge, self (20) A-1, p. 16

It must be remembered that during this period various other patrols from the regiment were constantly probing the river line, testing the enemy defenses and engaging his patrols in small but numerous fire fights. They drew heavy and accurately placed fire from time to time. The men who went out night after night patrolling the Volturno line can perhaps be called the real heroes of the battle which eventually smashed that line. They were the ones who found the depth of the river, the steepness of its banks and the units of the enemy which opposed the crossing of the 3rd Division. (21)

The 15th Regiment was informed by Division that it could count on at least 75 "ducks" for the crossing, while the engineers would operate 18 rubber pontoons. They could also count on 4,000 feet of rope for each battalion. There was also available enough life jackets, taken from an Italian warehouse, to supply each man who made the crossing. (22)

During the period of reconnaissance and preparation, each man of L Company was thoroughly briefed for the part he was to play in the coming crossing. This was accomplished by taking each and every man to an observation post atop Mount Castellone where he could see the river, the flat terrain beyond, and the objectives of the company. He was briefed by the officers on the part that his unit and he as an individual would play in the taking of these objectives. (23)

The battle for the Volturno was fast coming to a head. On the morning of 12 October, Col. Fredericks called the company commanders together to receive the orders for the attack.

The orders followed the same outline as those given for his earlier plan, with the following exceptions: K Company was to cross the river 200 yards east of L Company, and a section

(21) A-5, p. 118 (22) A-5, p. 115 (23) Personal knowledge, self

of machine guns from M Company was to be attached to K Company and one to L Company. The point of crossing the river was changed because it was feared that Battalion could not control the two companies widely separated, and if the two companies were attacking the same objective from different angles as originally planned, there would be a possibility of their becoming engaged in a fire fight between themselves. (24)

It was decided that only ropes and life jackets would be used during the crossing, as it was impossible to get other heavy river crossing equipment to the river over the rugged terrain. (25)

After receiving the battalion order, the company commanders returned to their companies to make their final plans and issue the order to their companies.

The plan of L Company's commander was to have the 3rd platoon move to the crossing site at 2200 12 October, secure the crossing and place two rope spans across the river about 50 feet apart. These ropes were to be used by the company in its crossing. The 3rd platoon was also to have guides meet the remainder of the company as it moved down the trail from Mount Castellone and guide it to the ropes.

The 1st platoon was to lead the way, followed by company headquarters, the 2nd platoon and the weapons platoon. Each rifle platoon was to have a 60mm mortar attached. The order for crossing was for the 1st and 2nd platoons to cross abreast, 1st platoon on the right. Company headquarters was to follow the 2nd platoon, and the weapons platoon minus mortars was to follow the 1st platoon.

After the company crossed, the 3rd platoon was to reorganize and would be in company support.

(24) A-5, p. 118-119 (25) A-1, p. 34

It will be necessary at this time to say a word about the strength of the company so the reader will have a basis for understanding the extent of the casualties to be sustained in this short operation. Casualties due to enemy action to date in the Italian campaign had been comparatively light. However, the weather and the rugged terrain had caused many non-battle casualties. Replacements had been few, and on 12 October the strength of L Company was approximately 145 men and five officers. (26)

SPANNING THE VOLTURNO

At 2200 12 October, the 3rd platoon of L Company started down the north slope of Mount Castellone to carry out its mission of securing the river crossing and placing ropes to guide the company in crossing. Two hours later the remainder of the battalion, led by L Company, started its long march to the river.

An uneasy silence which had settled over the Volturno River erupted suddenly into an inferno of fire and noise. All along the northern slope of Mount Tifata, within the Triflisco Gap, rifles and machine guns of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry spouted lead at the German positions across the river and exploding mortar shells blanketed the slope with puffs of smoke. With the assistance of all the heavy weapons companies of the 30th Infantry, the 1st Battalion, entrenched just south of Highway 87 was carrying out its orders to "demonstrate vigorously" on the 3rd Division left flank. An hour later, 3rd Division artillery opened fire against the north bank of the river. The targets were enemy machine gun and mortar positions which had been spotted during the days of preparation. For an hour, shells plowed up the turf and smashed into the fortified farmhouses all along the division front. Then at 0155 13 October (26) Personal knowledge, self

smoke shells were mixed with the high explosives to screen the crossing areas. (27)

At 0200 13 October, the 15th Infantry jumped off with the 2nd Battalion on the left and the 3rd on the right, while the 7th Infantry crossed the river at Hairpin Loop.

The alerted Germans immediately reacted with heavy volume of machine gun and mortar fire. K Company, on the right flank of the 3rd Battalion, was hit hard by these fires, having several casualties. These men were swept down the river by the swift current, bumping into L Company, causing great confusion. To add to this confusion, the upstream rope gave way and could no longer be used. 1st Sgt. Hendon, who was to be the last man of the company to cross, reorganized the portion of the company that had not crossed and moved them quickly across on the remaining rope to the assembly area on the other side.

The assault troops, after reorganizing quickly, smashed the enemy outpost on the river in the company sector. Then, supported by the fire of mortars and machine guns emplaced along the south bank of the river, they drove on to attack Mount Mesarinolo.

At 0325, L Company was held up along the trail at the base of Mount Mesarinolo by a machine gun in a house at the base of the hill and another machine gun 200 yards on the company's left flank. The 1st squad of the 3rd platoon was sent to knock out the machine gun on the left. The remainder of the 3rd platoon worked around through K Company and caught the enemy in the house from the rear.

Now, pressing home the attack, Companies L and K swept up the steep slopes of Mount Mesarinolo to take the enemy defenses by storm. A German command post with its equipment was captured. (28)

(28) A-1, p. 34; Personal knowledge, self

The enemy reacted quickly, concentrating his artillery on the abandoned hill with his tanks and self-propelled guns operating down the highway from Piana di Caiazzo, keeping the entire valley under fire. While reorganizing and bringing up its weapons platoon and attached machine guns, L Company suffered severe casualties from this shelling. Anyone who exposed himself drew fire and the men literally had to crawl forward, making use of every ditch and stone wall for cover.

As the company worked its way out on the north nose of Mount Messrinolo, it was hit by furious machine gun fire from the north. An enemy counter-attack, consisting of about forty men armed with machine guns, machine pistols, 50mm mortars and supported by self propelled guns, hit the right flank of L Company at about 0800. For the next hour there ensued one of the bloodiest engagements in which L Company had yet taken part. Though taken under fire by every weapon available to L Company, the Germans kept pressing home the attack. Hand to hand fighting, using the bayonet and rifle-butts, would drive the enemy back only to have them regroup and make another attempt.

By this time, all three platoons of the company were committed to hold the objective gained. The company commander of K Company had moved his support platoon into position so they could place fire on the attacking enemy. (29)

At about 0930, the Germans made their last attempt to regain the hill, and failing, withdrew to the north of Highway 87.

The company commander of L Company immediately started his reorganization. Casualties had been so severe he had to combine the 1st and 2nd platoons into one platoon with a total strength of 15 men. The 3rd platoon had about 25 men left. One officer had been killed, and two others so severely wounded that they had to be evacuated. The remaining lieutenant and the company commander, though wounded, were able to stay with the company (29) Statement of Capt. O'Connell, 13 Oct. 43; Personal knowledge, self

I Company and the elements of M Company not attached had much difficulty in crossing because of heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire. It was not until late in the morning of 13 October that I Company was in position to accomplish its relief of L Company.

At 1300, the battalion commander ordered L Company to continue on to its next objective, the high ground beyond Piana di Caiazzo. The company was to have attached a section of 81mm mortars from M Company. The battalion anti-tank platoon was to work on the right of L Company and establish a road block on Highway 87. Later, an enemy tank coming down Highway 87 from Caiazzo ran into this road block. The tank was destroyed by three direct hits from a bazooka. (Map #2)

At 1400, the 2nd Battalion and L Company of the 3rd Battalion pushed on to the high ground above Piana di Caiazzo. L Company, which took the town, found only one enemy soldier. He surrendered. (30) Two machine gun positions located on the high ground above the town were engaged by the 3rd platoon of L Company, using rifles and rifle grenades, and were quickly destroyed. This ended enemy resistance above the town. (31)

ANALYSIS

There is no doubt that, from a high level point of view, this operation could be considered a success. However, there are many details that can be brought out in analyzing the operation.

One of the most outstanding factors, though not primarily concerned with this operation, is the fact that United States troops were not properly clothed for an operation in this type of terrain and climate. This caused undue hardship and resulted in many unnecessary non-battle casualties which considerably

(30) A-1, p. 35-36 (31) A-1, p. 35-36

weakened the units.

In the 3rd Battalion sector, physical control of the south bank was obtained before the crossing. This allowed patrolling to be continuous without appreciable interference from enemy action. It is a benefit to the attacker to gain control of the near river bank as it permits him to gain information of the enemy's strength and disposition that otherwise would not be obtainable.

Briefing, or giving information to the individual, is undoubtedly one of the best means of insuring success in battle. In this operation, ample time was available for proper briefing, and the time was used to the best advantage.

The estimate of the amount of river crossing equipment should be made with consideration to the type of terrain over which the unit is operating. In this case, the 15th Infantry overestimated the type and amount of river crossing equipment that could be used in this area. In the 3rd Battalion sector, only ropes were used. To have used heavy equipment would have unnecessarily burdened the assault troops.

The depth of the river did not require the use of assault boats or amphibious vehicles.

When assembly areas are used in a river operation, they should be well marked. If the operation is at night, colored lights should be used to guide the units into their assembly areas.

Once an objective has been taken, especially one that offers little cover from artillery and small arms fire, the attacking unit should move a short way beyond the objective to take advantage of any existing cover. If this is not feasible, the unit should pull back to a rear slope position. In this way it avoids excessive casualties.

I feel that the Germans should have outposted the river,

or even resisted the crossing in this sector in strength. In this way, they may have been able to make the river crossing more costly for the attacker. In my opinion, the Germans can also be criticized for failing to have a coordinated fire plan. The terrain favored the defender in every respect.

LESSONS

Some of the lessons to be learned from this operation are:

1. Leadership is all-important. This is especially true in small units where the outcome of an operation will be determined.
2. Assault boats and heavy equipment are of little value in mountainous country where it must be hand carried for any distance.
3. Reconnaissance is of vital importance in any operation, and must be continuous throughout the planning and preparation phase.
4. Forward assembly areas must be picked well in advance and marked so as to enable follow-up troops to find them without loss of time. Colored lights may be used at night.
5. Support by fire should be continuous once it has started until the objective has been taken or friendly troops mask the supporting fire.
6. The mission should be known by everyone in the command to insure a successful operation.
7. Cooperation between small units (platoons and companies) is a must, as these units actually fight independently once the action begins.
8. Simplicity of plan makes for easy operation and eliminates confusion.