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OPERATIONS OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 504TH
PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT (82ND AIR-
BORNE DIVISION) ON THE ANZIO BEACHHEAD,
22 JANUARY - 23 MARCH 1944
(ANZIO CAMPAIGN)

(Personal Experience of a Battalion Operations Officer
and Company Commander)

Type of operation described:
BATTALION IN THE ATTACK AND DEFENSE

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the Second Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, on the Anzio Beachhead, during the period 22 January - 23 March 1944. It covers both attack and defensive situations, but may be closely divided into two parts, one on attack and the other on defense. The attack is divided into two parts, called by the names of the operations. The defense is divided into two parts by the relief of the Battalion.

The parachute infantry battalion, while organized along the lines of regular infantry, was designed for a special purpose and at the time of this monograph is organized as follows, three rifle companies of three platoons. Each platoon having a mortar squad of six men and three rifle squads of twelve men; each rifle squad had a light machine gun and a Browning Automatic Rifle. The Headquarters Company had a platoon of 81 mm mortars and machine guns, each having four guns. The machine gun platoon was armed with light machine guns. There was no heavy weapons company in the battalion and no anti-tank company in the regiment. This organization was conceived for quick hard blows at the enemy and not for long sustained ground combat. However parachute infantry is infantry and infantry fights on the ground. (1)

(1) Personal knowledge

The Eighty-second Airborne Division had departed from Italy on 29 October 1943, leaving the 504 Parachute Infantry Combat Team behind as Fifth Army troops at the request of General Mark Clark. The Combat Team was composed of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 376 Field Artillery Battalion, and Company C, 307th Engineers. The 376th was a seventy-five millimeter, pack howitzer battalion, modified for dropping by parachute. From the time of the division's departure until January 1944, the regiment had been used as mountain troops because of their light equipment and splendid physical condition. At the turn of the year they had just been relieved from the grueling fighting to the North of Venafro, and sent to Pozzouli to reorganize, reoutfit and prepare for a parachute mission called Shingle[†]. (2)

In the last nineteen days of combat the regiment had lost 218 men through enemy action, and about half of the outfit through sickness and fatigue, so that each battalion was composed of a very large percentage of replacements or men that had just been released from the hospital. In fact the 2nd Battalion had been relieved from the line when it had only 120 men and twelve officers. (3), (4)

The period from 4 January to the 21st was spent in retraining and briefing the troops on the impending operation. Due to the lowered morale and physical conditioning this was extremely difficult. At the end of the training the men were only shadows of their former selves and the only thing that carried them on was an intense loyalty to the unit. This loyalty was played

(2) B, ITALY, (3) A, p. 82, (4) Personal knowledge

upon by everyone in an attempt to make the men put forth the necessary energy to make the training and the mission a success.

The operation, Shingle~~s~~, was scheduled for the night of 21-22 January, but on the morning of the 20th the troops were informed the mission had been called off because of bad weather on the drop zone. Instead of jumping they were to go to Anzio as floating reserve in Landing Craft Infantry. This change pressed the unit for time and left very little chance to brief the men on the new plan. New lists had to be made out for the changed loading plan and all the equipment that had been packed to drop had to be unpacked and redistributed to the men. But by 1120 on the 21st all were loaded and ready to sail. (5)

The 2nd Battalion was loaded on three LCIs, one rifle company to each, plus a platoon from Headquarters. Headquarters and the communication section were on D Company's, the mortar platoon was with E Company and the machine gun platoon was with F Company. The convoy set sail at 1300 and joined the rest of the invasion fleet before it had become dark. (6)

At this time it may be well to note that it seemed as if all security had been forgotten. Every person in Naples could tell one more of the contemplated operation than one already knew. The convoy sailed during the daylight hours of a clear day, from a harbor that could be observed for many miles. No attempt had been made to confuse or blind the enemy of the im-^(CONFUSING)pending operation. Whether planned or not, the enemy was confused and had the landing scheduled for later in the year, pending the out come of the Gargigliano attacks. Surprise was

(5) C, p. 48, (6) C, p. 48

completely on the side of the Allies and they hit the enemy at his weakest point. (7)

INITIAL SITUATION

The trip to Anzio was uneventful. Only the constant threat of enemy air or submarine action caused any consternation among the troops. Upon arriving in the invasion area every one was aroused and fed a hot meal of C rations and jam. Then all preparations to land were made. Reports came through that five waves had landed, but from the ships no action could be observed on the beach. The enemy was very noticable by his absense. All in all it looked like a dry run for the 504th. Sprits began to rise, as it seemed that for once we would not be committed and that Fifth Army had told us the truth; surely the reserve wouldn't be needed in such a quiet and peaceful situation. Right at this time the regiment was ordered to land on Red Beach, and the German air arm put in an appearance. The Second Battalion was about half through disenbarking in waist deep water when the beach was bombed and strafed. In spite of this, or rather with this aid, the battalion was through by 1145 and making fast tracks for their assenbly area about one half mile inland. No enemy troops were seen, but evidence that Americans were in front of us could be seen on every hand in the equipment they had dropped. (8)

The battalion moved out for its own assembly area at about 1230 and closed there, after a two hour march. The day was sunny and warm making it very hard to beleive that a war was going on and that we were in the middle of it. The men dug in and

(7) D, p. 8 &9, (8) Personal knowledge

dried out, all were wet to at least their waists and some had had to swim in landing. There had been no casualties in the battalion and the strength stood at 481 men and officers. Maj. Melvin Blich was in command, Capt William Colvill was battalion executive officer, Lt Chester Garrison S-1, Lt Lewis Fern S-2, Lt William Sweet S-3, and Lt John Silver S-4. The companies were commanded by: Headquarters -- Lt Robert Cellar, D Company -- Capt William Roe, E Company -- Hanford Files, and F Company -- Lt Beverly Richardson. (9)

The first night saw no action at all, only cold with a light frost. During the evening the battalion was assigned a new area on the right flank of the beachhead near Mussolini Canal, but would not move in until the following night (23 January). (See map "A")

The battalion arrived in the new area at about 1830 in the dark along with a steady rain. The decision was then made, to wait until the next morning to move the unit into the woods, which lay just across a small but very treacherous stream. So a temporary position was set up and local security posted. Small arms fire could be heard on all sides and the sky was continually laced with tracers. Other than distant battlefield noises the night was spent uneventful. (10)

FIRST ACTION

The next morning the companies moved into their proper areas and F Company, reinforced with a squad of light machine guns and 81 mortars, was given the mission of clearing and organizing a near-by cross road. In doing this the battalion saw its first

(9) C, p 48, (10) C, p. 49

action. The company ran into snipers in the houses and lost two men to them. Upon clearing the houses it was found that the snipers were Italians in German uniforms and civilians. One was killed while attempting to hide his gun. The area was cleared and the company saw no further action for the day. (11)

The remainder of the battalion made plans to move up and stood on the alert all day but never received the order. For the first days action the battalion had lost three men, one man in the mortar squad had been wounded in addition to the two from F Company. The first rations received on the beachhead were issued to the battalion -- K rations. (12)

At 1900 the report was received that fourteen plane loads of German Paratroopers had been dropped in the rear of a neighboring battalion. The pass word was changed and local security reinforced -- no further action was taken by the battalion. (13)

BORGO PIAVE

The battalion commander was called to the Regimental Command Post at 250700 January where he received an attack order to be executed at 1330 the same day. The battalion had been waiting for such an order, so no time was lost in routine preparations therefore.

The battalion was to make the main effort in a coordinated attack to the East on a town called Borgo Piave, (located 2000 yards from Mussolini Canal), seize the town and be prepared to continue the attack to the East on order. The intelligence report on the area indicated ^{that} no tanks and none that could get there in less than eight hours. The town was supposed to be only light-

(11) C, p 49, (12) Personal knowledge, (13) C, p 49

ly held by inferior enemy troops. Only light resistance could be expected once the outposts had been broken through. See map "B" (14) (15)

The battalion was to have three tanks in direct support plus the fire of the 376th FA Battalion. The tanks could not cross the canal. After the battalion commander went forward with the company commanders and his staff, the following plan was laid on: to attack behind a rolling barrage in a line of companies, D Company to lead followed by E Company. F Company was to remain in reserve in the vicinity of the canal. E Company was to do an automatic flanking movement to the right when D Company struck any stiff resistance or was stopped. All headquarters weapons were to be set up on the banks of the canal to support the attack. A Wire line would be laid from the old CP to the canal and both of the attacking companies would lay a wire as they advanced. In addition, 536 radios would be carried as a secondary means of communication. Lt Garrison would operate the CP at the canal, and the battalion commander and S-2 would go with D Company while the S-3 went with E Company, to operate the phones and assist in the attack. (16) (17)

The companies moved out of the bivouac area after establishing piles of bed rolls and excess equipment at the house that had been the old CP. They closed in the forward assembly area at 1120 and received their final briefing on the situation. An artillery forward observer was to accompany Maj. Blich and D Company and one was to remain at the CP on the canal. All was in readiness for the attack. (18)

(14) C, p. 49, (15) Personal knowledge, (16) C, p. 49, (17) Personal knowledge, (18) C, p 49

At 1325 the artillery fired their initial preparations and the battalion moved out at 1330. It had gone but a short distance when it seemed to run into its own artillery fire. Lt Fern called Lt Garrison to get the artillery to lift the fires. This was to no avail as the fire was of enemy origin. He had sensed the reason for the artillery and had fired into our concentration then lifted his fires so that it looked like our own artillery was firing upon us. As a result Lt Fern had our fires placed upon the objective and to be fired on call. This cut the effectiveness of the artillery and the attack as a whole. It left the men with 1500 yards of open flat ground to cross before reaching the objective, and had used up the better part of an hour to accomplish. (19)

D Company moved out on a dead run towards the North side of the town and had nearly the whole company across the road running North from Borgo Piave, when 20 mm flak guns opened up on them from the town and from the north. This pinned the company down so E Company swung to the right and pushed on into the town. The enemy then counter attacked from the North and East of the town, cutting D Company off from the rest of the battalion and into two parts and isolating E Company in the town. Five tanks and eight half tracks mounting 20 mm guns were used by the enemy and our troops had no anti-tank protection at all. Our three tanks were rendered ineffective by the banks of the canal and a desire not to get on top of the banks for fear of high velocity fire. Enemy artillery fire had forced the CP and F Company to move back to the protection of a draw to the rear. Also the wire

(19) Personal knowledge

from this position to the rear was constantly in and out, making communication with regiment very difficult. The artillery liaison radio was used to great advantage to cover this deficiency in communication. Maj. Blich ordered F Company to pick up some anti-tank weapons and get D Company out of their situation. It was getting dark by the time F Company could bring any pressure to bear on the situation, as all the anti-tank weapons were left with the regimental supply in the rear and had to be brought forward. (20)

E Company was having a bad time in town. They had been hit hard twice by three medium tanks and two flak wagons plus about two companies of infantry. Lt. Files at last withdrew to the west side of town and set up a perimeter defense on the three roads leading towards the canal. The town was shelled by using the 536 radio to the CP and then relaying the directions through the normal channels. By these means the companies held out until 2020, when they were ordered to withdraw to the canal. E Company left an outpost of a platoon in position and F Company covered the area where D Company had been cut in two, as the remainder of the battalion withdrew. F Company withdrew at 0200 to their old positions on the West side of the canal. (21)

D Company had only 28 men left when they returned and their company commander was still missing. But the missing men from the company continued to drift in all night long, until at 0845 the following day they had a total of 40 men and officers. E Company held the outpost for the day with only an occasional exchange of artillery fire. They withdrew the evening of the

(20) C, p. 49, (21) Personal knowledge

26th under cover of darkness. (22)

Capt. Roe came in at 0845 on the 26th with nine more men. He had gone all the way through Borgo Piave and had tried to hold the enemy from entering the town from Littoria and the Northeast. He had no idea what had happened to his company when they had been hit, as he was with the point at the time. All he was concerned with was why no one had come to help him hold the enemy off. (23)

While our battalion had suffered heavily the enemy had been hurt too. He had lost two dual purpose 88 mm guns, three flak wagons, one medium tank in the fight and three other vehicles to mines left in the area. Three prisoners were taken and an estimated one hundred killed or wounded in the action. The three prisoners were from the Panzer Division "Hermann Goring", one of the enemys crack units and they had plenty of armor support for their counter attack during the afternoon. (24)

SECOND SITUATION

In the mean time the rear echelon had come in, bringing four officers, the kitchen personel and kitchen, and about 20 men that had been left behind in Naples. The battalion was placed in regimental reserve in the same area as they had occupied before the attack. The battalion strength now stood: Headquarters Company -- 174, D Company -- 50, E Company -- 100 and F Company -- 82, or a total of 406 men and officers. The battalion had lost over 100 men in the three days on the beachhead and most of them in this attack. (25)

The night of the 27th was spent in licking our wounds and

(23) Personal knowledge, (24) Personal knowledge, (25) C, p. 50
(22) C, p. 50

getting the battalion reorganized. The battalion kitchen personnel got careless and showed a light. Immediately they received high velocity fire on the house and the instillation. One truck was cut up slightly by fragments and breakfast delayed but otherwise no damage was done.

The 28th was spent in getting reorganized, issuing new equipment and speculating on the next possible move. Other than an occasional artillery round there wasn't any enemy action in our area. The kitchens had learned a lesson and were not making the same mistake again.

30 JANUARY ATTACK

The next morning we received the assignment, along with the First Battalion, to act as right flank protection for the Third Division in an attack to the Northeast on the night of 29-30 January. The two battalions were to move Northeast along Mussolini Canal, covering the area to the first main road on their left, or an area of about 2000 to 3000 yards. The plan of action was to attack in a column of battalions with the First leading and peeling off along the canal until they were used up, then the Second would take over doing the same until the objective, Highway 7, had been reached. The leading battalion was to have five medium tanks in direct support. Each battalion had its own artillery forward observers. See map "C" (26)

The battalion was moved by shuttle from the bivouac area to a forward area and placed along the road in movement order. This action took three hours or until about 2100, as only four trucks were available for the movement. A new CP was set up in the house

(26) C, p. 51,

at the cross roads of Strada del Piano Rosso at the head of the column. The troops were along the main road in the order from front to rear, E, F, Hq, and D. The battalion would cross the canal to the front, some 300 yards to the east of the road bridge, follow the First across country and take up the attack when the First had been completely committed, taking over the five tanks at the same time. The highway bridge was denied to us as the Third Division had the priority on the road. (27)

The battalion moved out early through some confusion and moved into the First as they were moving out. This caused some delay and a great deal of confusion. As a result the battalion was late in getting to the canal. Crossing the canal proved to be a great hardship as it had to be waded and the night was cold. More delay and confusion was experienced. There were supposed to have been planks across the canal but they had been either broken or lost and the few that remained were not enough to accommodate the battalion. As the first company arrived on the far side, an ammunition ship in the harbor exploded and lit up the entire beachhead like a giant flare. All movement stopped. When this had died down the crossing continued only to have the same thing happen again. This was repeated three times and by the time that all the men were across the canal, it was getting close to daylight. As it became light the First Battalion committed their last company on bridge number 6. The Germans retreated across the bridge and blew it up in the face of the battalion. The Second Battalion was now ordered to take the lead. (28)

The medium tanks which had supported the First Battalion

(27) Personal knowledge, (28) Personal knowledge

were withdrawn by Corps order to another sector of the front and the Second Battalion had to wait until five light tanks could be brought up to support the attack. By the time the battalion moved out it had become fully daylight. Observation for the enemy was superior and only limited for the attackers. The ground was absolutely flat, crossed by many ditches that kept the tanks on the roads. The flat ground was bordered on the right by ^{the} Mussolini Canal, which had a bank or dyke ^{of} about ten to twelve feet high, on the front, by another canal with about the same ^{character} characteristics. To the rear was the canal we had crossed during the night, also built the same. The roads that were surfaced in the area were built up to about six or eight feet above the surrounding land. Thusly the entire area was cut up into fields of about an acre in size, bordered on all sides by higher ground. The hills to our distant front and flank afforded the enemy with the best possible observation of our every move. This allowed him to bring to bear, with observation, all the long range weapons he had.

(29)

The going was slow as nearly every house was defended and the enemy small arms fire from the canal banks kept the troops down low in their advance. A system was worked out where-by the troops would advance until fired on from a house or strong point, then the tanks would move up, blast the defenders out, to be taken by our troops. The further the advance continued the more fire was received from the right flank. At last E Company had to be committed to clear the dyke along Mussolini Canal, North of the First Battalion. F Company took up the lead, using the same tactics

(29) Personal knowledge

and advanced fairly well until they hit a strong point at "A" on Map C. Here the enemy did not break from the tank fire and the tanks were unable to advance or flank the position. The company had to flank, and reduce it from the east and rear. (30)

While F Company was doing this the rest of the battalion was left strung out in a column along the road and got their first taste of the German's Nebel Weffer, or "Screaming Meemy". The entire column was shelled for about ten minutes by this fire and then hit by 88 mm time or anti-aircraft fire. Several men from D and Hq. Companies became casualties and the column was spread into the fields. E Company forced the Germans across the bridge at number 7 and experienced the same thing as the First Battalion. The Germans blew the bridge as soon as they had withdrawn across it. (31)

F Company reduced the position at "A" and took 25 prisoners, then moved along the road to Fso di Cisterna. Here the Germans blew the bridge at number 8. Now it was apparent that the enemy had decided to deny us any crossings for armor in the area, so a race started for bridge number 9. Before D Company could get well under way, with the tanks, the Germans blew that one, leaving us with no armor crossings of Mussolini Canal or of Fso di Cisterna. (32)

Upon clearing Fso di Cisterna (called the ditch from here on) from bridge number 9 to Mussolini Canal, and joining E Company, all resistance in the area melted. From the forward slope of the ditch, not over 300 yards to the front, the enemy could be seen milling around in complete confusion. The best was made

(30) Personal knowledge, (31) C p. 51, (32) C, p. 51

of the situation and all the enemy were taken under fire. The battalion, less E Company got ready to move on and was set when the word came to hold what we had, as armor could not cross the ditch and we were ahead of the left flank unit. (33)

At this time the battalion was hit from the left flank with heavy but inaccurate small arms fire. Upon investigating it was found that the left flank was wide open for a distance of 1000 yards. D Company pulled back and formed a curve along the road by Cle Pantano in order to deny the flank and to neutralize the enemy fire. F Company extended to their left to include bridge number 9. The enemy fire was reduced and the MG platoon moved into the ditch to give support, also the 81 mortars were called into the ditch to bring the enemy under fire. One battalion of artillery was kept busy firing at any number of targets and troop movements. Right at this time, a full Brigade of artillery could have been used by the battalion. As it was the 81s and the 75s, along with a battery of 105s were kept firing steadily all the rest of the day. (34)

The battalion CP moved back to the houses at the old enemy strong point location and preparations were started to defend this position for the time being.

At about 1700 the first counter blow was struck. The attack was preceded by a heavy barrage of artillery and Nebel Weffers, which caused little or no damage to the troops in the ditch. The attack failed in all respects in the face of heavy small arms, artillery and mortar fire. It was of about the strength of a company and around twenty dead could be counted in front of our

(33) Personal knowledge, (34) Personal knowledge

positions. (35)

As darkness descended the battalion was in firm control of their sector -- from 200 yards South of bridge number 7 North along Mussolini Canal to the intersection of Fso di Cisterna. Along Fso di Cisterna to bridge number 9, and left along the road towards Cle Pantano. Our attack had been stopped by the enemy's action in blowing the bridges across Mussolini Canal and Fso di Cisterna. No one had progressed any further than this in this sector and the battalion was left with an open left flank for the night. This open flank was covered by patrols to the 15th Infantry. (36)

The attack of the day had cost the enemy heavily, while our casualties were light. The battalion had lost one man killed, 14 wounded and no equipment. The enemy had lost; 40 prisoners, 4 light field guns (75 mm), five half tracks (personel carriers), two half tracks (20 mm flak), thousands of rounds of ammunition, several staff cars and trucks and an estimated 200 wounded. (37)

Plans were made to have our Engineers clear the blown bridge at 8 and construct a by-pass so that the tanks could get across in the morning. This called for the remainder of the bridge to be blown and a bulldozer to work through most of the night. It all was accomplished with the minimum of difficulty and no interference from the enemy. 81 mm mortar ammunition was brought into the position by the truck load and dumped on the gun positions. The mortars had spent some 4000 rounds during the day and it was expected that the coming day would see no

(35) Personal knowledge, (36) Personal knowledge, (37) Personal knowledge

le/ up in the expenditure. There were 1200 rounds on each of the gun positions by morning. (38)

THIRD SITUATION

The 31st dawned cool and clear with no attack orders, "Hold what you have", were the instructions. The troops received their rolls and mussette bags and settled down to defend. Most of the day was spent in organizing the area for defense and getting a coordinated fire plan built up. Extra weapons were drawn and issued to help cover the front. (39)

During the evening the First Battalion received an attack which caused the Second slight worry in that our position was hit hard by artillery and most of the evers from the First Battalions area, making it look like we were under attack from the rear. During the rest of the night heavy patrol action caused several minor fire fights and a large expenditure of small arms ammunition. Plans were laid on to establish anti-personel mine fields to cover some routes of approach into the positions. All the companies wanted more automatic weapons to help cover the front as grazing fire was impossable due to the banks of the ditch and the fact that a hole could not be dug on the surface without filling with water. (40) (41)

On 1 Febuary a new adjustment of supporting troops gave the battalion the following attachments: 1st and 3rd Plattens, D Battery, 376th Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Platoon, Company C, 84th Chemical Battalion, 1st Platoon Company A, 751st Tank Battalion, and one platoon Company A, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion. In addition to these we had the direct support of

(38) Personal knowledge, (39) Personal knowledge, (40) C, p. 51,
(41) Personal knowledge

one battery of 105 assault guns. This led to a great deal of confusion in designating targets and ended up in the development of a fire plan based on a schematic chart of the area as shown in chart number 1. It was used from this time until we left the beachhead and then was turned over to the relieving troops. (42)

While Lt Richardson was inspecting his strong point on bridge number 9, a German staff car pulled up to the bridge and the officer and driver both dismounted and moved up to look over the blown bridge. The car was fired upon by all the anti-tank and small arms weapons in our area and in the adjacent units, with the result ^h that both the officer and driver were killed and the car burned up. Captured papers showed that they were from the Hermann Goring Division. (43)

The 81 mortars, for the lack of anything better to do, devised a plan to stop traffic on Highway 7, 3300 yards to our front. The Mortar Sergeant figured how long it would take to place an HE light on the road and how far he would have to lead a vehicle in order to hit it. He then set up and zeroed in two mortars on the road. Number one gun to get traffic going North and number two to get traffic going South. When a vehicle passed a certain point, the proper mortar would fire six rounds. During the course of the day the mortar platoon got credit for; 2 half tracks, one truck and one staff car and also for getting the battalion's position shelled ^{MO} almost constantly. They may not have stopped the traffic, but they did force the Germans to use extreme caution while in front of our positions. (44)

Two 57 mm anti-tank guns were placed in rear of bridges 8

(42) Personal knowledge, (43) Personal knowledge, (44) Personal knowledge

and 9 as anti-tank protection, covering the two roads into our positions.

On the night of the first, F Company was hit from the rear by a German staff car coming from the rear towards bridge number 9. The car went off the blown bridge and two of the occupants were captured, the third ran and was shot. All three were from the Hermann Goring Division. No explanation could be found for their being in our rear unless they had been by-passed in the attack of the 30th. (45)

The day of the second was spent in comparative quiet. The gap on the left was closed when the 15th Infantry made a push to come up on line with our left flank. This gave us solid contact all along the line. The 57 crew were talked out of knocking down one of the houses that blocked their view of Highway 7, for the day. But they tried it early the following morning. They got off two rounds when the expected happened. The entire area was shelled both by direct and indirect fire. In less than half an hour over a hundred rounds were received. Net results, the 57s packed up and moved and the battalion had one man killed and several wounded including Lt Richardson. We were learning that we were in no position to get ambitious with the Germans unless we had well prepared plans. (46)

The houses to our front became sore spots, but higher headquarters would not let the battalion outpost them due to our extended lines and shortage of man power. The Germans moved in during the night and had to be shelled out the next day. Patrol activity continued heavy on both sides and many engagements were

(45)C, p. 52, (46) Personal knowledge

were experienced each night. (47)

Our artillery and mortar fire was used to keep the enemy back from the lines and caused him no end of misery and troubles. By searching with the 81s we were able to find targets for the larger guns. In this way we were able to hit sensitive areas in defilade. Several ammunition dumps and gun positions were shelled out and burned far into the night. (48)

The enemy was most touchy all along the front and could be excited most easily. One man firing an M1 would cause the entire area to be shelled. This shelling was becoming more and more accurate each time and the range to the position becoming well known. The fact that the men were in a ditch with ten to twelve foot banks saved the Battalion from much higher casualties. As it was, the companies lost at least two and sometimes as six men a day through enemy action. In addition the strain of the shelling was having a telling effect on the men. The strength of ^{the} ~~the~~ battalion had a definite downward curve. D Company being in the worst shape was bolstered by the addition of a squad from the Regimental S-2 Section. (50)

DEFENSE

On the fourth the inevitable became true, the order came through to go into a deliberate defense. We had reached the peak for our stay on the beachhead. No depth could be achieved due to the terrain and lack of men. So the front line was made as hard and formidable as was possible. Extra machine guns were issued to bring the battalion total to 110 MGs of all kinds, plus several captured enemy guns. One company's breakdown, which (47) Personal knowledge, (48) Personal knowledge, (50) C, p. 52

is typical of the front line, was; 19 light machine guns, 16 heavy machine guns, 4 fifty caliber machine guns and their own organic 9 Browning Automatic Rifles. Needless to say, there was fire power to throw away but a lack of men to man the guns. The 81 mortars stayed in the ditch as there was no cover to the rear and in range. (51)

The Engineers went to work on each house converting it into a strong point to be fallen back on by anyone ^{who} that was forced to withdraw. A plan was laid on for a withdrawl and also in case of a serious breakthrough preventing our withdrawl. The later called for a perimeter defense in place for each unit. The cooks and supply personal were put to work on the canal to our rear constructing what was later to be called the King Plan. (52)

The following three days were spent with the usual harrasing fires from the enemy and in putting our plans into effect. The enemy artillery fires were stepped up and the observation of them must have been improved, as he seemed to have phenomenal luck in hitting CPs and other key instilations. Movement during the day in any place back of the ditch brought fire of all kinds. Phone lines were a constant source of trouble and difficult to keep in. The battalion communication section was less than half strength and was loosing two to three men a day trying to keep the lines in. (53)

Continued rains made the fox holes damp and in many cases untenable. Also the blown bridge at 7 formed a dam and threatened to flood the battalion out of the ditch. New holes had to be dug on the side of the dyke above the water line. The ditch

(51)(52)(53) Personal knowledge

floor turned into a sea of mud and mud became each mans bosom companion whether wanted or not. Clothes were cleaned by scraping with trench knives and what were once shinny boots, became blobs of mud. The soft ground did help, in that it let the enemy's artillery shells penetrate and give mine action upon exploding. Also he had a very high rate of duds during this time. All the trees in the ditch were cut down to prevent tree bursts. Shade was unnecessary as the sun was a stranger that called only seldom any more. The final touch had been added to make us all living pictures of what the First World War must have been like.

During the morning of the seventh F Companies CP, which was in the house at "Z", was the recéprocant of direct fire from a German self propelled gun 200 yards to the front. Two men were killed and nine others wounded including the executive officer. This cut F Company to about the same strength as D Company and put an end to the use of houses as company CPs. The SP was spotted by the 105 observer who took it under fire and destroyed it with several direct hits. The damage could be seen with field glasses, but the gun did not burn and the enemy later recovered it. (54)

That night the battalion was ordered to cause a diversion to cover the movement of tanks into our area, to blast down the houses to our front. As the guns opened up the enemy struck between E and F Companies with about 45 men. The attack was determined and strong, but not supported. As a result it failed, but only after the leading elements had penetrated into the ditch by ~~short~~ numbers. Our guns could not be brought to bear

(54) C, p 53

soon enough to stop the rush, so, close in fighting resulted and the enemy was thrown back by hand to hand combat. The enemy suffered 15 killed, 3 captured and an estimated 10 wounded. We had lost one wounded and one killed. Harrassing fires from small arms continued until early in the morning with no further damage done to the battalion. The tanks did not get to move into position. (55)

During the next several days, time dragged heavily, the positions were wired in and the stream bed at F Companies left was mined and booby-trapped. The whole front was a maze of mines and wire which caused a very high casualty rate among the live stock. Enemy patrols were numerous and the interference of the animals made all mine fields unpredictable and in definate. We would lay one and the Germans would lay one on top of ours or booby-trap it. German mines could be seen from any point along our front. Both sides had stepped up the patrolling, but the enemy's patrols were not as good as in the past and therefore met with very limited success. No prisoners were taken during this period, but several enemy were killed or wounded. Our losses ran about normal with each company loosing at least two or three men a day through all causes. Mort^{or} ammunition of all calibers and artillery ammunition was placed on a ration basis of fifteen rounds per gun, per day, due to the difficulty in getting it to the beachhead. This could be exceeded only in the case of a most pressing nature. This hurt, as we had been using our mort^{rs} and indirect fire weapons to search out the enemy in defilade and to keep him a safe distance from our lines. (56)

(55) C, p. 53, (56) Personal knowledge

More rain only increased the mud and miserableness of the troops. Fatigue was becoming more and more apparent and we were losing more men through this cause than enemy action. Morale was something that had been forgotten and it ceased to exist, *except for* ~~only in a~~ pride of unit. No member of the unit could remember when he had last had a hot meal from the kitchens. Increased activity on the part of the Allied Air Forces kept the German artillery down but he still managed to shell us at least twice each day heavily. A replacement group of old men from the unit came in, totaling thirty men. A few of them had been out of the hospital only a very short time and they did not last long when exposed to the wet, damp life of the ditch. z(57) (58)

On the night of the 12th the Battalion CP barely escaped an enemy bomb that dropped about fifteen yards from the house and made it untenable. No one was hurt, but the communication was out for the rest of the night and many anxious moments were spent in trying to account for all the personnel. As it turned out the CP was moved back about a thousand yards to a safer house. The plane that dropped the bomb had been circling the area for about half an hour dropping flares that looked like ours. These flares had put an end to the patrol activity for the night, ~~and~~ none of our patrols were able to get out very far and none of the enemy hit us that night. (59)

All during the 13th enemy activity was stepped up and many enemy could be seen moving around the front. As a result there were many ^apreparations of artillery and mort^rs fired all along the line. About noon, D Company was hit with a particular^{ly} heavy

(57) D, p. 45, (58) Personal knowledge, (59) C, p. 54

concentration of mortar^h fire. They had one man killed and ten wounded as a result. At that time an attack was expected in the area but it did not come.. All the activity added up to an alert being put on for an attack, either at dusk or early the next morning. Extra ammunition was issued to all the automatic weapons and the limitations were taken off the mortar^s and artillery. (60)

About nine the following morning D Company was hit by about sixty men plus an armored vehicle of some kind that penetrated their outposts and caused much concern all along the line. D Company opened up with all they had, which was what the enemy wanted. Immediately the company was hit with a terrific mortar^s and artillery barrage that all but shook them out of their holes. It lasted for nearly half an hour. Strangly^e, none of the rest of the companies ^{was} were hit at the same time. The net results were two men killed and five wounded, all from D Company. The enemy lost about fifteen to D Company and to our artillery fires. (61)

Later on in the day an enemy self propelled gun pulled out in the open in front of E Company and "let blast" them, and at the same time the company received a concentrated mortar^s barrage. Before any fires could be brought to bear on either the gun or the mortar^s it was all over. E Company had lost one man killed and eight wounded, plus getting a good shaking up. One platoon leader was sent to the rear to rest because he cracked under the strain and ordered his men out of the ditch. The company commander stopped the movement. Now both Blanks had been hit by the enemy and the whole line was on pins and needles for the next blow. Our positions had been well disclosed and there was

(60) Personal knowledge, (61) C, p. 54, (62) C, p. 55

not any alternate position in the area. The battalion could only sit and wait for the final plans of the enemy to ~~come~~. ^{MATKIN 12E.} (63)

On the fifteenth we received word that we were to be relieved on the following night, also that we could expect a German attack during the night. This was superficial in that we all knew, from the enemy's actions, that he was preparing to hit either us or some place close to us. During the day we became more convinced that we were in for it, as the enemy didn't shell the area as hard as before nor as often. (64)

A Ranger officer and a man from each of their companies made a complete reconnaissance during the day of the 15th and returned to their units that night. We were going to get out of the ditch for a while and the news was received with the greatest of ^{USIASM} enthusiasm. (65)

Next morning all the men were at a stand-to one hour before day break. All weapons were checked and ready for action when the expected happened. See map "C"

The whole area was raked with 20 mm fire and shelled by both mortars and heavy artillery (10 CmO), except the dog leg in F Company's position, which ^P escaped all through the action. After about ten or fifteen minutes of ^{PK} preparation D Company was hit at the same time as the right flank of E Company. E Company's attack proved to be a diversionary attack and the main effort was in the area of D Company. In order to hit D Company the enemy had to expose a flank to F Company's dog leg. The F Company commander had placed two heavy, four light and one fifty caliber machine guns along this area covering the front of D

(64) Personal knowledge, (65) Personal knowledge

Company. No attempt by the enemy to neutralize this position was made all through the attack and a field day was had by all the gunners. The fifty took care of the flak guns and drove off the light armor while the machine guns cut down the enemy like so much wheat, but he still was able to crash through D Company with a limited number of men. His reserve was placed along a road in the ditches. Our artillery FO shelled this road on his own idea to keep enemy tanks from coming up. Luckily the concentration fell right on top of the enemy reserve and decimated them. At the end of an hour of fighting the enemy asked for and was granted a truce to evacuate the dead and wounded. At the close of the truce he withdrew to his own lines. The attack had failed. (66)

D Company was the hardest hit with six dead and eight wounded, including their commander. The rest of the battalion lost four men killed, including F Company Commander, and ten wounded. the enemy had lost two whole units with 190 dead or missing. To estimate the number wounded is impossible, but must have run close to four hundred as a Parachute Demonstration Battalion and the Training Units of the Hermann Goring Division were wiped out in the action. (67) (68)

FIRST RELIEF

By 0200 the following morning the battalion had closed in the rear area as shown on map "C". The remaining Ranger Battalion had relieved us starting at 2100. This rear area was not the front line but couldn't be called a rest area either. All the troops were in houses with generally a house to a platoon and (66) Personal knowledge, (67) Personal knowledge, (68) D, p 53

three to a company. Activity had to be kept down all during daylight. This was hard as the men had been in the line so long and now wanted to move around and stretch. Shower schedules were laid on and clean clothes issued at the showers. Companies were reorganized and the whole area fortified to be made into a delaying position. The battalion was to stay in these positions until the 6th of March with the exception of D Company which was committed on bridge 5 on the 28th of February. Before being committed they had received 22 replacements in the company plus several old officers being transferred to the company. Lt Greenblatt was in command of the company. Lt Sweet had been sent to F Company as company commander also. (69)

During this time the battalion was charged with the mission of organizing the canal in the area as a defensive position, called the King plan. Also we were called upon for at least one patrol every night. The companies took turns sending out these ^{patrols}. In addition to this, every company received more replacements in men and officers. Training was carried on in small arms and in patrolling for the new men. This caused a rather high attrition rate as the patrolling was very hard and risky business. The old battalion commander was relieved on the 1st of March and Lt Col Henry Adams took over the battalion. (70)

The bridge over the canal, near the Battalion CP, was under constant enemy observation and shelled almost constantly during the day. It was on the main supply route for that sector of the beachhead and of vital importance to both the enemy and to us. As a result the entire area was always in danger of receiving a

(69) Personal knowledge, (70) C, p. 57

concentration of artillery at any time, day or night. On the average, one hundred rounds would be placed in the area each day. This did not cause any great number of casualties but did lend to the already high tension of the nerves. Headquarters Company seemed to be the most unfortunate in this respect in that they were the closest to the bridge. Their CP was hit several times during that period and F Company had theirs shaken up once or twice. It seemed that the closer one was to the front the better chance he had of keeping his skin whole. (71)

The King Plan, as shown on Map "B", was conceived to give the right flank of the beachhead depth and a secondary defensive position in case there was an enemy breakthrough. It had been put into effect some time before this but we had had little to do with the actual plan other than the organizing of the houses in the front line area. Now we were it and had the mission of getting the canal bank in a condition so that it could be properly defended. First, all the bridges forward of the canal were mined and prepared for demolition. Every house in the area was made into a fortified position, with a heavy machine gun in position at all times. Men were assigned to each house to delay the enemy advance and if possible to stop it. The canal itself was organized and assigned to the companies as shown on the map. Machine gun ^Spositions were sighted in and prepared with sandbags and over head cover. All the company weapons were habitually kept on position and man^Ned by skelton crews during the hours of darkness. Ammunition was placed on position and wire and mines used to the extreme in the canal and on all approaches to it. Routes

(71) Personal knowledge

through these mine fields were laid out with engineer tape but were prepared to be closed as the last man went into position. Fire charts were prepared on all weapons and the individuals were made to prepare covered holes to fight from. All of this was closely supervised not only by the Battalion Staff, but by the Regimental Staff as well. (72)

In the mean time D Company had their hands full on their bridge. They had many little scrimmages with enemy patrols and were constantly harrassed by direct fire weapons, mort^ars and artillery. They placed one platoon on the line and rotated them with the two in reserve. During this time they were not called on for any of the patrols. (73)

A typical patrol action of this time occurred on the 27th from F Company. Regiment had called for a patrol into the area indicated on Map "C", by the letter "Y". Lt Navas and twenty-nine men from the company made up the patrol. There was little or no intelligence on the area and no map of friendly or enemy mine fields in the area. The patrol was given the mission of going to the houses numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, clear the enemy from them, send back any prisoners and remain there if possible for the following day. Observe any enemy movement in the area and direct artillery fire on located enemy placements. Troops occupying the front said that no tanks or armored vehicles were in the area and that they had no information on the mines, as they had not placed any mines since they had taken over the positions. We knew that there were mines there, but no map of the fields could be located. The patrol moved out at about 2100
(72) Personal knowledge, (73) Personal knowledge

and progressed down the trail towards the houses. No enemy activity could be seen or heard. The trail cut through a light woods, so Lt Navas divided it into two parties, one to go to the right under Sgt. Rodjenski and one to the left under the Lt. Upon entering the woods the point set off a trip flare and alerted the enemy at the houses. Immediately a tank pulled out and started to fire on the woods. Lt Navas started to rush the houses and in so doing ran into a mine field. He was at once hit and put out of action. The rest of his group swung towards the trail and ran into more mines and suffered more casualties. The group on the right were under fire from the tank and immobilized, but Sgt Salkowski managed to get his rifle grenade launcher working and through its fire, forced the tank to withdraw. A second attempt to get to the houses failed, due to heavy small arms fire and mortar fire on the area. Sgt Rodjenski ordered the patrol back. Upon reaching the line he found that the Lt. and three men were missing. He immediately took six men along with Sgt Salkowski and returned to the mine field for the missing men. Subsequently the wounded men were found and returned to our lines. The patrol had lost eleven men and one officer and had fallen short of their mission. Other companies had about the same experience and success during this period. (74) (75)

LAST PHASE

On the 6th of March we went back into the line in the same positions that we had formerly held. At this time the average company strength of the battalion was sixty men and officers per company. The relief was effected with the minimum of trou-

(74) C, p. 57, (75) Personal knowledge

ble and interference by the enemy, and by 2330 the battalion was all in position. (76)

Regiment?
When dawn came we found a much different situation than when we had left the ditch. The Rangers were the remains of the Ranger Regiment that had been cut up at Cisterna and had lost their fighting spirit. So they had worked on the principle that, if they didn't shoot at the Germans they in turn would not be shot at. This worked very well for the Germans, they had moved right in on the position and set up machine guns, less than two hundred yards from the ditch and had fortified all the houses to the front. This caused a slight debate bright and early on the first day and resulted in our getting shelled all day long. Also the enemy had a good deal more mort^ars in the area, which were well zeroed on the positions. In our minds corrective measures had to be taken and swiftly. The artillery had a busy day trying to fill all the missions that were called for. (77)

The enemy had grown bold and careless in the area and in the first two days we were back in the line, he got a good idea that the situation had changed. Once again we were able to pull patrols in an area we were familiar with and gain success. E Company went forward and took the houses to their front with little difficulty and the loss of only one man. (78)

The 81 mort^rars were moved from the line and heavy machine guns set up in the rear area to deliver indirect fire. This helped keep the enemy back where he belonged and gave the companies more room in the ditch. (79)

(76) C, p. 58, (77) Personal knowledge, (78) Personal knowledge
(79) C, p. 58

F Company, taking the cue from E Company, moved to their front to take the houses in their area. The houses were too strongly defended the first time, so a second attempt was made and met with success, only in that we had the ground floor and the Germans the top one. By shelling the house with the 60s the Germans were forced to surrender. Six prisoners were taken and the house held. Two other houses were attacked but found to have been evacuated by the enemy. In the course of this action the company lost a total of six men wounded. (80)

The time from here on was a steady skirmish of patrols and small engagements. No attacks were made by either side during the rest of our stay in the lines. Everyone was sweating out the order to break out of the area and accomplish the original mission. But no orders came. We countered enemy action with artillery and planned fires. His efforts were much weaker than the first time we were in the line and the quality of his troops seemed to have deteriorated to a large extent. (81)

RELIEF

On 23 March we were relieved by elements of the 34th Division and moved to the rear, where we picked up trucks and were taken to the area of the beach for embarkation for Naples. The following night we were loaded on LSTs and sailed from the harbor in the midst of a German air raid. Thus ending 63 days on the Anzio Beachhead. (82)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In analysing and criticizing this operation it will be taken in the order presented and then summerized. First it is believed

(80) Personal knowledge, (81) C, p. 59 & 60, (82) Personal knowledge

that it should be pointed out, this is a case of a special unit being committed in a situation that a regular unit could have better accomplished. Because of this the operation was much more expensive in all respects than it otherwise would have been.

The type of replacement received prior to the operation was a very well trained and physically conditioned man, Thus the training time was very much shortened and allowed in part, the rapid change from the drop mission to the seaborne.

Esprit de corps can make up, in part, for a lack of conditioning and can assist new men in putting forth the necessary energy to become ready for combat. This should be used as much as possible to indoctrinate the new men in a unit. It was used here to its fullest advantage. This esprit de corps should be given a full measure of the credit for the showing the unit made on the beachhead.

The unit had no time to make a loading plan or to run a practice one, due to the shortness of the time when the plans were changed. We had never had any practice in loading or unloading from Landing Craft Infantry, except for the administrative move to Maiori from Salerno.

The loading plan for the landing craft was not tactical. Had we been required to land fighting or under fire the reorganization of the battalion for combat would have been extremely difficult.

As shown by the Germans not discovering the entire plan, sometimes an operation that is left wide open and free to discussion will succeed to hide the intent by making it over obvious. This is extremely risky business and most often will prove foolhardy.

Adaptability and initiative were used to make the most of the time left in getting prepared for the seaborne movement. No one threw his hands up in the air and said that it could not be done. Everyone cooperated and coordinated in every respect. As a result the men were equipped and loaded in time to get under way with the rest of the convoy.

The regimental communication net based on the SCR 511 had been found to be undependable before this operation, yet the mistake of still trying to use the same radio was made. This should have been corrected before the mission.

2. The attack orders on Borgo Piave were confused. Corps wanted a diversionary attack made and the orders we received were to make an attack, seize and hold; be prepared to continue on order. This was due to verbal orders and the chance that is taken in their being misunderstood. Corps should have had someone on the spot to supervise the attack.

The battalion should not have been committed in a column of companies as it was a violation of the principal of mass, and allowed the enemy to defeat us one company at a time. Also too much faith was placed in the G-2 report that no armor was in the area, some anti-tank weapons should have been carried. This was a very serious mistake on the part of all commanders and the staff.

The troops had had no training with rolling barrages and were confused and delayed by the nearness of their own artillery. Also it is believed that they did move too fast for the barrage and of course the enemy's peculiar use of his artillery caused us to discontinue the use of ours except upon call, which was a mistake.

The tanks might just as well have stayed in their assembly area as they could not shoot over the dyke and would not get on top of it, for fear of hi-velocity fire.

The Battalion Commander should not have gone with the lead company as he lost contact with the rest of his battalion and could not control their actions. This lost time in getting F Company into the fight and did not allow for the full advantage of the reserve to be used.

Capt. Roe likewise got too far forward in his company and lost control of them, as well as not knowing what had happened to them.

All communication was in a terrible state. It never did work properly and caused untold confusion. The use of the artillery radio showed quick thinking and no doubt saved a lot of trouble, but still was not adequate.

More time should have been allowed for the crossing of the canal in the attack of the 30th, as it consumed much valuable time. Had the line of departure been on the North side of the canal and the troops allowed to use the bridge the attack would have been much more successful and easier. As it was a great deal of time and energy were expended on getting the battalion across the canal and in shape to move against the enemy. Just enough time was lost to force us to continue the attack in day light and allow the enemy to see us upon approaching the bridges in the sector, thus allowing him to blow them before we could capture them.

Advancing along a road in column is dangerous and can be very costly. Just luck kept the battalion from having any heavier casualties when ^{the enemy} he shelled the column as it waited for F Company to clear the houses at "A". Here again is an example of

the column attack being faulty, but for a different reason.

No time was given any of the unit commanders to make a ground reconnaissance. This served to add to the confusion and disorganization of the battalion in crossing the canal and took time to regroup the men for the attack.

Had the 15th Infantry kept up the advance and not fallen behind, the Germans might not have been able to blow all the bridges in the area. Also we were through their main line of resistance and had them completely off balance in the sector. With the assistance of the 15th we could have easily driven to the objective that morning.

We should have located the 15th as soon as contact was broken. In failing to do this we allowed ourselves to be caught with an open flank and no knowledge of friendly troops upon our left. Luck held, we covered the gap before the enemy could get through it.

The ditch proved to be an ideal defensive position, even with the lack of grazing fire. In holding this we could keep the enemy at a distance and still have a great deal of protection from flat trajectory fire and a limited amount of cover. The use of the 81 mortars in the ditch gave them a longer field of fire and aided in relieving the communication problem.

Supplying ammunition to the ditch was, at times, difficult, but accomplished most of the time by the use of jeeps during the night. No hot meals were served while we were in the line as we had only one kitchen per battalion and it could not get the food to the men while it was still hot. With rare exceptions the men cooked their own food for the entire period. This had a very bad effect on the morale of the men.

Placing troops of this caliber in a defensive position for an extended time is not profitable. We had little or no training in this type of warfare and it told heavily in battle fatigue cases and just plain nerves. Our equipment was not of the type to be used for extended defense and we had to draw excessive amounts of new and different equipment to hold the position.

All of the men in our battalion could and did adjust artillery fire at one time or the other. This was a great assistance to the defense, and payed high dividends.

The use of a schematic chart to get all the units talking the same language was a smart idea. Not all the maps were of the same issue and edition and not all the men could get the Italian names pronounced properly. But with the chart, all was clear.

Detailed plans should be kept of all mine fields laid and no one should be allowed to lay them except the people that are trained to do so. Also all information should pass both up and down, as this is the only way that all the information can become available when needed.

Well trained and disciplined men can be depended upon in any situation for which they have been trained. A man's previous training will show up in battle and if he is a well trained soldier he will do the best he can under the conditions, be he enlisted man or officer.

In summary it can be said that this whole operation shows that special troops should be used as they are intended to be used. The fact that we were short on many types of equipment necessary for sustained ground combat presented a continuous problem that had to be met by the initiative of the men and officers of

the unit. Only this initiative and quick adaptability made the difference between failure and success in many of the situations here-in presented. There were mistakes made by both the commanders of the unit and by higher ones, but none that didn't turn out for the best in the end. It is easy to sit back and look at an operation and say that a thing was done wrong, but at the time it may have been the only course open, or may have seemed the best from the situation. Most of our troubles in this operation could be traced to the fact that we were not trained and equipped for this type of warfare.

All the credit for the success of this operation should go to the individual soldier. His adaptability, initiative and understanding of the situation, along with a great fighting heart, made the mission a success, as great as it was. Here we have seen a special unit used in a roll that it was untrained for, unequipped for, not mentally prepared for and placed in situations it knew little or nothing about and yet, through stoutness of heart and initiative has done a job to the very best of its ability.)

LESSONS

Some of the lessons that can be learned from this operation are:

1. Special units should be used in the role for which they are organized. This is brought out by the troubles that were had in lack of equipment and men to man the line properly.
2. The principal of mass is sound and should not be violated. The attack on Borgo Piave might well have been a success had we been able to get two companies into the town.
3. When you have an advantage press it home.

4. Trained replacements save time in preparing for an operation and lessen the load on the unit. They also make for a more better balanced unit.

5. There is no substitute for adaptability and initiative, but they may be used to make up for other lacking qualities and material. These two attributes are the best that a soldier can have on the battle field.

6. When material proves to be faulty through its design and limitations it should be discontinued in use and either a new one used or none. Anything that is undependable will fail in combat at critical times. This chance is too expensive to be taken.

7. Orders should be so clear that it is impossible to misunderstand them.

8. After an order is issued it has to be properly supervised or it is going to get out of hand and be improperly used.

9. Troops should not be expected to react normally under conditions for which they have not been trained.

10. Commanders of all grades should stay where they can control their men.

11. Auxiliary means of communication should be used when a normal means fails. An example is the use of the artillery observer's radio to take care of our lack of communication.

12. Movement at night is difficult at best and time should be allowed for any natural obstacles in the path of the advance.

13. The enemy can not be depended on for his full cooperation. His artillery fire was used in an unorthodox manner in the attack on Borgo Piave, but did serve to get us to discontinue the use of ours.

14. Time should be allowed for each unit commander to make a personal reconnaissance of the area over which he is to move his unit.

15. Contact must be maintained at all times with adjacent units to secure the flanks and give the maximum support.

16. A defense can be successful without grazing fire, but it is expensive in men and material.

17. Ammunition can be supplied to front line troops with the use of jeeps.

18. The kitchen should serve at least one hot meal a day to help the morale as well as the physical condition of the men.

19. Every man in an infantry unit should be able to adjust artillery fire.

20. Mine fields should be thoroughly mapped and recorded for future reference.

MAP "A"

Produced from:
SCALE 1:100,000, Sheet 158 (LITTORIA)

Showing initial landings of
504th PIR, 22 Jan 1944 and
initial moves on 22nd and 23rd,
also areas in red indicate the
areas of MAPS "B" and "C"

