

*History of
Second Chemical
Mortar Battalion*



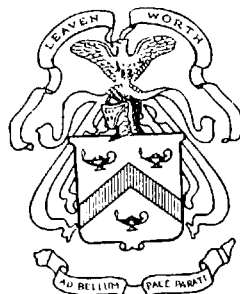
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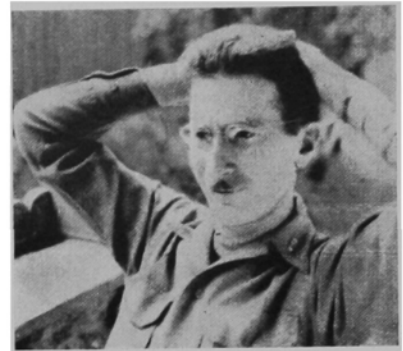
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U.S. Army. 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion

^{III} HISTORY OF SECOND CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION



Foreword



This is the history of the Second Chemical Mortar Battalion in the European Theatre. It has been taken from the unit journal and written especially for both the former and present members of the battalion. Though it would be impossible to cover each action completely or go into details of individual accomplishments, the reading of this history, names of towns and places, supported units, and battles will bring to mind individual experiences, gay times, hardships, and tragedies as well, that were shared with old friends and all sorts of events long forgotten in the maze of actions that took place during this period.

Herein lies the story of a fresh, inexperienced battalion seasoning into a battle-tested machine ready for any task. It is the story of a new type unit with no precedent working with such determination, ingenuity, and adaptability as to bring only praise for every assigned mission.

It is a record covering three invasions and operations under as many and as varied conditions as that of any army unit. Serving under Seventh Army in Sicily, Fifth Army in Italy, the First French Army and Seventh Army in France, and then on through Germany and into Austria, the battalion has compiled an outstanding record that has earned for it six battle participation awards. Through this is reflected the sincerity of purpose of each individual in making a real contribution to the war effort. It is a record of which each member of the battalion may well be proud.

/s/ David W. Meyerson
DAVID W. MEYERSON
Lt. Col., 2nd Cml. Mortar Bn.
Commanding.



Major Campaigns

IN WHICH THE SECOND CHEMICAL
MORTAR BATTALION PARTICIPATED



SICILY



NAPLES-FOGGIA



ROME-ARNO



SOUTHERN FRANCE



RHINELAND



CENTRAL EUROPE



EARLY HISTORY

The Second Chemical Mortar Battalion was activated originally at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland on 16 April, 1935, as the Second Chemical Battalion (Separate) (Motorized). It consisted at that time of Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company "A", personnel for which were transferred from the First Chemical Regiment. inactivated at that time.

The Battalion had as its home station, Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland, and remained there until early in 1942, except for occasional maneuvers. During February of 1942 the battalion, still just two companies. moved to Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

April 1, 1942, was the second activation day, at which time companies "B", "C", and "D" and the Medical Detachment were activated in a ceremony marked by a fanfare of trumpets and a noticeable lack of personnel in the rear ranks. The battalion was on its way.

Cadres and practically a full complement of men had been received and trained in time for maneuvers in the Carolinas in July and August of 1942, so the battalion under command of Robert W. Breaks participated wholeheartedly. The older men will remember the six weeks of really "roughing it" there. It was a general confusion of enemy alerts, the reds and the blues, foxholes by the numbers, great clouds of dust, smoke pots and tear gas, the Pee Dee River battles, and warm beer.

Even before the maneuvers had ended, rumors of overseas shipment began to infiltrate into the conversations of these "rugged soldiers", a practice, continued daily right up until the embarkation almost a year later.

Back to Fort Bragg for more training by the middle of August, 1942, the battalion underwent an intensive training period on company problems designed to develop and maintain superb physical condition. Late in the year additional men were received to bring the unit up to T/O strength. At the same time amphibious training was instituted at Camp Carabelle, Florida, and each company spent approximately two weeks firing from landing craft in support of simulated assault landings. Here for the first time ammunition was made available in quantities large enough to permit adequate gunnery practice. Previously an allotment of about 30 rounds per company per year was the total. But at Carabelle, firing technique was developed. Onward!

Rumors of overseas still pervaded the atmosphere in the latrines, and sometime in January the battalion received A-2 priority for supplies so rumor had become almost a fact. On February 20, 1943, orders arrived attaching the battalion to the 45th Infantry Division and the move was made to Camp Pickett, Virginia, immediately. Here things were in the state of a mad rush of final preparation and we joined right in. Privileges were limited and combined unit training conducted. Last minute small arms qualifying was carried through, and all personnel crawled on their stomachs through the mud of the infiltration course, experiencing for the first time the "withering hail of lead" laid down by a couple of chattering. 30's. Were we soldiers at last?

Time out for a couple of shots at special training. Late in March the battalion was attached to the 180th Infantry Regiment for mountain maneuvers in the Blue Ridges near Natural Bridge, Virginia. The initial mountain conditioning about ruined the command, because on one afternoon the entire battalion

lugged carts over roads and trails in the rarefied atmosphere for more than 15 miles, and every step of it up hill. At some points the mortar carts had to be winched up perpendicular cliffs. The remainder of the mountain training was merely routine, except for the mud, snow, and extreme cold. Was this war?

Early in April of '43 the battalion reported to Newport News to fight the battle of Chesapeake Bay. A delightful cruise on the Barnett to the landing area hardly prepared the men for what followed. The first exercise, a daylight landing, was miserable. Boat team after boat team climbed over the side down the nets, and into the small landing craft. The bay was very rough, the spray cold and the run to the beach was not to be made until all boats were loaded and ready. The early boats circled in the high sea for as long as four hours. "Keep your heads down, boys" the Navy said. Fully 75 % of the battalion kept them hanging over the side, but recovery was rapid on shore. Sailors all!

The night landing ran smoothly, and it was back to Pickett and the mockups. Dry landing practices, especially on Sunday, sort of increased the dissatisfaction of the men and absenteeism arrived unheralded one sunny Sunday. We pass now to the next phase.

The overall plan of the 45th Division called for support of each assault battalion landing team by a platoon of mortars. The destination, of course, was not announced, but it was known that we would land fighting so attachments were made and plans for loading with the respective RCT's completed.

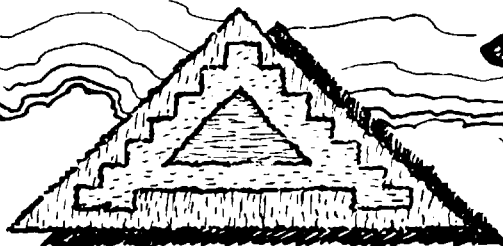
On May 23 and 24, 1943, the battalion moved by train to Camp Patrick Henry, the staging area where it was understood last minute purchases of all necessary personal items could be made. That was a gross misstatement as nothing was available. We were practically overseas while at Patrick Henry since high fences and alert MP's indicated that the only way out of the camp was via the high seas.

June 3rd and 4th found the men leaving these old revered shores for destination unknown. Red Cross girls with ice tea and ice water plus a brass band furnished a sendoff never to be forgotten. Our ships sailed into the bay and began assembling into convoy formation. Thus the start of the momentous occasion, but not so fast. Finally — finally at 1200 on June 8, 1943, the convoy weighed anchor and set sail. This was it — a moment for which countless hours of preparation had been expended — was it really true? As the outlines of our beloved United States faded into the blue yonder, a feeling of lonesomeness and apprehension filled our thoughts. But before long the prospect of that 20% pay increase for overseas duty brought out the cards and the dice.

The location of the sun showed us we were traveling generally southeast, but the zigging and zagging sort of confused the issue. One thing was certain, our port of call was not — definitely not — South Philly as one man kept insisting. The voyage itself was very calm and as enjoyable as possible under the conditions, which conditions are in no way to be confused with "honeymoon cruises". The common joke, worn in by constant usage, was that the destination was Sardinia since we were packed in so tightly.

On June 20th, a beautiful day, the convoy formed into a double line of ships and passed through the straits of Gibraltar under cover of some P-38's. The rock looked pretty strong and it was a safe feeling there as we entered the blue Mediterranean under the guns of the British. The convoy was not as safe it might be surmised as the German radio blared forth that very evening with the startling fact that several ships in our convoy had been "attacked and sunk while passing through the straits". Some ships were mentioned by name even, and while we knew they had not been injured, the Germans did have some definite knowledge of our whereabouts. Heartening to say the least.

CAMPAIGN of *Sicily*



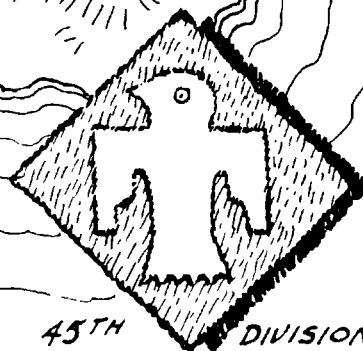
7TH ARMY



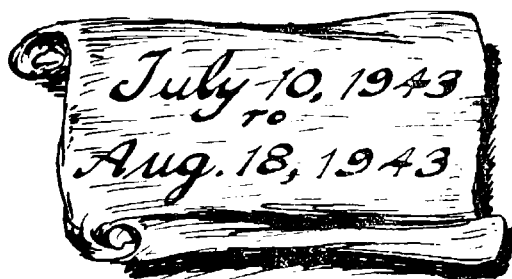
2ND CORPS



3RD DIVISION



45TH DIVISION



AFRICA

By following the maps and charts and at the same time nagging the navy, the course could be followed and on June 22, 1943, the convoy anchored in the bay at Mers-El-Khaber near Oran, Algeria. Here was a beautiful looking town almost within reach, it seemed, but fortunately not within smelling distance. Maybe the wind was right. At any rate we stepped not food on land here, but waited a couple of days before firmly planting our feet in the sands of Africa, Africa, the great land of the unknown, praise Allah, the dark continent.

The reason for the landing — *Operation Camberwell* — was to harden the soldiers after their three weeks aboard ship. Early on the morning of June 25 the troops staged a practice landing in the Gulf of Arzau and proceeded to assembly areas on foot — one foot in front of the other for 17 long miles in a blistering sun. At the end, joyous rest on the sand among the mosquitoes and sand flies.

An intensive program of training was conducted stressing physical conditioning through forced marches, obstacle courses and reduction of pillboxes. This fifteen day schedule was completed in seven days and by July 2 all personnel were back aboard ship. Staff conferences and previews of invasion plans occupied the rest of the time, and on July 5, 1943, the convoy set sail for Sicily.

SICILY

“D” day for the southern coast of Sicily was set for 10 July 1943, with “H” hour being at 0345. The convoy had sailed quite a distance out of its way in order to confuse the enemy regarding the place for the landing but during the night swung sharply back and headed for Sicily. For the first time in the long journey from the States the weather became very rough. There was much speculation about postponing the landings but by midnight on the ninth the seas had subsided somewhat, making landings possible.

As the convoy assembled that night there was in the hearts of everyone a slight but perceptible bit of apprehension and some fear of the unknown. This moment which had been prepared for by long and tedious hours of training had no prospect of glory for the men. The last meals on shipboard were gulped down or shoved aside depending on the degree of excitement with the individual.

Just to start things off with the proper spirit the navy opened up with its preliminary bombardment which drew everyone to the decks to witness the mighty spectacle. And it was impressive to watch the bright flashes of the big guns and then the explosions on shore. A few searchlights played out from the shore and made the men on the ships feel like ducks on a pond. To make things more interesting a couple of Jerry planes buzzed over, dropped a few bombs and strafed a little. Those few bombs made the war real for the first time and later reports indicated the bombs fell just off the stern of every ship in the convoy. Remarkable, indeed, but thus all war stories are exaggerated.

By this time the shelter of a foxhole seemed attractive and all were ready for the comparative safety of terra firma. A flash over the ship's radio indicated that the first four waves had landed successfully — the war was on! The 45th Division landed on several beaches between Scaglitti and Gela and our men were right with them.

The general tactical setup at that time was that the 45th Division was the right division of II Corps and was between the American 1st Division on the left and the 1st Canadian Division of the British Army

on the right. The initial objectives were Comiso Airport, Biscari Airport, and Vittoria, while securing Scaglitti for subsequent unloading of supplies. Resistance in the sectors of the 179th and 157th Regiments was fairly light and their objectives were reached and reduced rapidly. The 180th Regiment met fairly stubborn resistance north and east of Gela and Company "D" did quite a bit of firing in that sector.

At this stage of the war the battalion was equipped with mortar carts and all moves had to be made pulling these loads. It was a heartbreaking job to keep up with infantry who, of course, travelled light and rapidly, but frequent missions on fleeting targets demanded that the 4.2 mortar, now called the "Goon Gun", be right up front. Even at this early stage of the war the value of the mortar was well understood by the Infantry Commanders.

By July 15 the 45th Division had reached the outskirts of Caltagirone where it reverted to Corps Reserve and made a quick motor movement to Caltanissetta. The attack was resumed from that point through S. Caterina, Valledlunga, Caltavuturo, Cerda to the northern coast. The delaying actions here were restricted generally to blown bridges, a few mines, and road blocks in the mountains, but night and day the infantry fought its way through. During those nights and days the mortars rolled along behind the men, sometimes as much as 25 miles in a single day.

As the division reached the north coast it swung to the east along the main road skirting the coast. Mountains reaching nearly to the sea restricted maneuvers. Cefalu fell before the determined "Thunderbird" but east of that city resistance became pretty rugged. In the history of the 45th Division, "Bloody Ridge" holds an important place. This ridge was taken, lost, and retaken at least three times. Mortars of companies "C" and "D" furnished very close support in this series of actions. Three counterattacks were successfully broken up by our mortars and infantry 37mm AT guns. One counterattack was stopped only after the platoon executive at the mortar position fired direct fire on the attacking enemy.

Well over 1500 rounds had been fired and every round arrived at the position by cart. Enemy artillery fire fell pretty close throughout this period but good defilade in the mountain draws held casualties to a minimum.

By July 31 S. Stefano had been captured and preparations made for relief of the 45th Division by the 3rd Division. Instead of the expected rest, the battalion was attached to the 3rd Division for continuation of the attack towards Messina.

August 4, found the 3rd Division smack up against hill 715 where very serious resistance was met. The hill itself overlooked the Furiano River and was by far the outstanding terrain feature. On August 6 an attack was launched across the Furiano River by the 15th Infantry Regiment with the battalion less "C" Company attached. Company "C" was attached to the 30th Infantry moving inland to flank hill 715.

The attack was fairly successful and two battalions crossed the river before being stopped cold. Here they were held up and subjected to intense small arms and artillery fire. In this afternoon the position became untenable so the regimental commander called for a smoke screen to cover the withdrawal. The screen was held until darkness and allowed the trapped battalions to get back across the river.

On the next morning the attack was resumed with two companies firing screens close in front of the advancing infantry and one company firing HE in direct support. The attack moved along successfully due in large part to the screen which was held for 13 hours during the daytime. A 45 minute screen on the next morning aided the infantry in its final attack on hill 715 which reduced all resistance there.

The advance moved rapidly toward Messina, but by this time no commander would commit his troops unless he had the support of the 4.2's. Consequently numerous screens and HE missions were fired. At 1000 on August 17, 1943, Messina fell and all resistance in Sicily ceased. At the end the battalion was exhausted

physically by the constant hauling of the carts over the mountain roads of Sicily. There was a general feeling that war wasn't so bad and we predicted an early end of the war. But first rate German troops hadn't been met as yet.

At the conclusion of the campaign the battalion reassembled and moved to Agrigento in southern Sicily, presumably for movement with the 1st Division to England. Somewhere these plans were changed and the battalion was assigned to the Fifth Army and attached to the 45th Division again. Movement was made back to the north coast near Trabia in preparation for an amphibious landing in Italy.

Following are remarks made by infantry Commanders at the conclusion of the Sicilian campaign regarding the mortars and work of the platoons of the 2nd Chemical Battalion:

EMPLOYMENT OF THE 4.2 CHEMICAL MORTAR

" . . . The chemical mortar is simply grand. In this battalion we are completely sold on them. We think the attached chemical company did a marvelous job. These mortars proved to be tremendously effective for all sorts of missions, especially against machine gun nests, strong points of resistance, prepared strong points, pillboxes, and targets in defiladed positions beyond the range of our regular mortars. They are accurate as the devil up to 3000 yards and more, and they pack a punch worth two 81mm's. We dropped one round on the corner of a house and killed nine Germans who were taking cover behind it. We think these mortars are the finest weapons we have seen. A German prisoner we got referred to them as "automatic artillery". Our Battalion C. O., and also the Regimental Commander have recommended that these mortars be made organic with the infantry. We think they are just tops . . ."

— Captain Putnam, 3rd Bn., 179th Infantry.

" . . . Despite the weight and the ammunition problem, it is a magnificent and extraordinarily effective weapon. The mortar is most effective with white phosphorous and H. E. The Germans are very allergic to white phosphorus, anyway, and we would root them out of their holes with well placed rounds of phosphorus, and when we had them above ground, we plastered them with H. E. We killed large numbers of them in that way, and they sure dreaded the mortars. They are the equivalent of real artillery. We also used them in the assault coming ashore. I have said we used them; I really mean the supporting chemical troops used them. They did such a good job with us, we got to regard them as our own people. The prize package was one day when a chemical officer actually dropped a round of H. E. from one of his mortars into the open turret of a German tank . . ."

— Lt. Colonel Wiegand, C. O., 2nd Bn., 179th Infantry.

" . . . The 4.2 chemical mortars are marvelous weapons. After we had a platoon attached to the battalion, I was scared to death they would take them away from us and attach them to some other outfit, the demand for them was so great. The Germans were deathly afraid of them and the prisoners told us that they thought they were some kind of new secret weapon like an automatic cannon, because they had such tremendous effect and could be fired so rapidly. I do not recommend that they be made organic in the infantry. I much prefer that we have attached chemical troops as we had in Sicily. Their cooperation and proficiency was all anyone could ask for. We shall always want a platoon attached to us, and we think that the best results are obtained by cooperative, attached units like we had. Without exaggeration, I would say that the 4.2 is the most effective single weapon used in support of infantry I have ever seen. We have yet to see an enemy position that was tenable when we fired on it with WP and HE from this mortar. They can reach into almost perfectly defiladed positions, and their effect is devastating . . ."

— Lt. Colonel Patterson, C. O., 3rd Bn., 180th Infantry.

" . . . The Germans hate and fear white phosphorous especially when you deal it out to them with the 4.2 chemical mortar. We had a platoon of these mortars attached to us, and they were remarkably effective. They were used for all kinds of missions, including night harassing and interdiction fire close behind the enemy lines, like real artillery. We would also use them with phosphorous to interdict the lines of escape when we had the Heinies on the run, to keep them from getting away. The 4.2 mortar was one of the most powerful and effective weapons we had with us. The chemical troops did a grand job . . . "

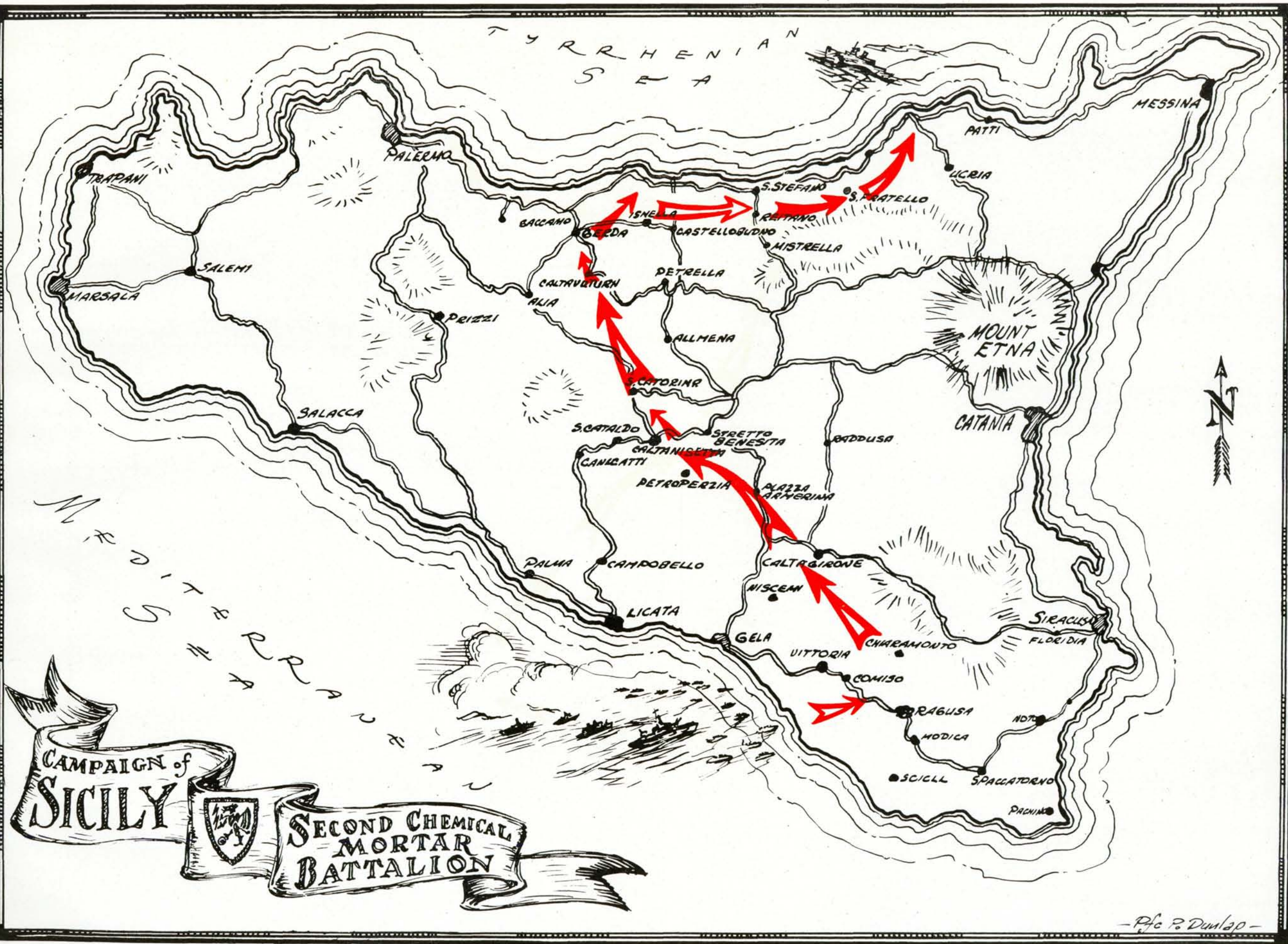
— Lt. Colonel James, C. O., 3rd Bn., 157th Infantry.

" . . . The 4.2 chemical mortar? I think that it is one of the finest weapons in existence. Their effect on the Germans was tremendous. They feared them more than anything else, except our massed artillery barrages. Especially the Germans hated the WP the chemical troops rained on them. One German prisoner who spoke English is reported to have asked, 'what the hell was that new weapon that had the effect of medium artillery that blew us out of our foxholes no matter where we were and burned our tails off at the same time! . . . "

— Captain Reed, Ex. Officer, 1st Bn., 180th Infantry.

" . . . White phosphorous with the 4.2 chemical mortar gave remarkable results. It was used with tremendous effect, particularly against pillboxes and strong points, prepared positions, etc. Letters captured and taken from prisoners have shown that the Germans fear WP more than anything else, and from these mortars, our fire power with this projectile was tremendous . . . "

— Colonel Cookson, C. O., 180th Infantry.



CAMPAIGN of

Italy

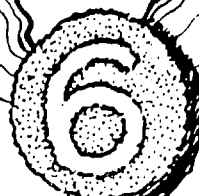
SEPT. 10, 1943
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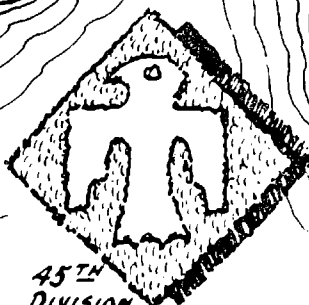
5TH ARMY



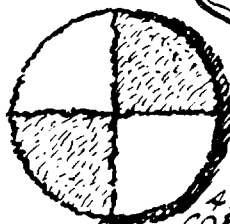
7TH ARMY



6TH CORPS



45TH
DIVISION



4TH
CORPS



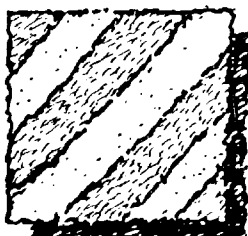
2ND CORPS



34TH
DIVISION

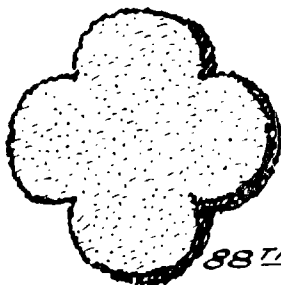


1ST ARMORED DIVISION

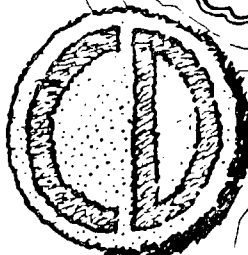


3RD DIVISION

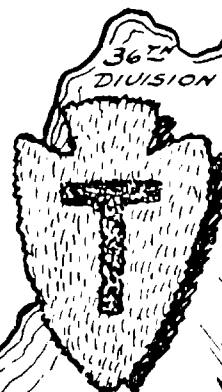
1ST
AIR-
BORNE
TASK
FORCE



88TH DIVISION



85TH DIVISION



36TH
DIVISION

P.S.D.

Preparation for the amphibious landings south of Salerno, Italy were made near Trabia Sicily during the first days of September. The Battalion was attached to the 45th Division which initially was scheduled to be in VI Corps reserve to be committed when and where needed. Attachments were as follows:

Company "A"	179th R. C. T.
Company "B"	157th R. C. T.
Company "C"	157th R. C. T.
Company "D"	180th R. C. T. (Division Reserve.)

Replacements were received just prior to the operation.

The operation at Salerno has been widely discussed and publicized as being quite rough and it was here that our companies met their first real test.

Companies "A" and "B" landed with their respective regimental combat teams near Paestum on September 10 and immediately went into the line. Company "C" landed on September 11.

In the German counterattacks on September 11, the battalion to which "A" Company was attached received a severe mauling from the superior force in the vicinity of Persano, Italy and became cut off from the main body of troops. The company was placed in a holding position to await reinforcements which never arrived so with the threat of being cut off and annihilated withdrew only after serious casualties had been received. Results of this were 15 men missing in action and 7 wounded in action. Returning to its primary mission of firing the mortar the company successfully broke up a counterattack with its accurate fire.

Company "B" ran into a hornets nest along the Sele River when a German penetration reached a point only a few yards across the river and fired direct fire into the positions. This company also occupied the line as infantry when the mortar ammunition was exhausted. Meanwhile the positions along the entire beach were critical and firing was limited to repulsing counterattacks.

By September 17, in a magnificent stand, the German counter thrusts had been stopped, the beach was secure, and the pursuit began. The battalion was placed in support of the 180th Infantry which was to swing to the east through Eboli and Olivetto, to Benevento. The enemy was fighting a determined delaying action taking advantage of every available terrain feature, and the mortars were kept well forward for quick employment against machine gun and infantry emplacements barring the advance. The mortars were ideal in these situations and were used constantly. The Germans held no great love for the mortar and rather hastily withdrew from positions brought under fire.

In the vicinity of Quadlietta, Italy, German resistance more or less fell apart and the 45th Division made a quick motor move on the heels of the retreating Germans and pulled up on the banks of the Volturno River where it went into temporary reserve. In this drive Benevento, a fairly important town, fell to the Division after a short fight involving air activity on the part of the Americans and tank-supported counterattacks by the Germans.

On October 8, Company "A" was detached from the battalion and placed in support of the 34th Infantry Division to aid in crossing the Volturno River. Here on the night of October 13, the company fired an unusual mission. The river crossing was to be made at night under a full moon which made visibility

almost as good as on a sunny day. At 0200 hours a WP smoke screen was fired to support the crossing of the 168th Infantry Regiment. This was our first night smoke screen, and very successful it was.

On October 18, the battalion was relieved from attachment to the 45th Division and attached to the 34th Division. Movement approximating 30 miles was made to the 34th Division area on October 20 where immediate attachments were made as follows:

Company "A"	135th Infantry R. C. T.
Company "B"	133rd Infantry R. C. T.
Company "C"	Division Reserve
Company "D"	168th Infantry R. C. T.

The division was attacking north and then east through San Angelo D'Aliefe and Prata preparatory to another crossing of the Volturno River. Numerous missions were fired by all companies in support of the attack which met serious resistance. The river crossing on the night of November 3 met very determined opposition but progressed satisfactorily.

On October 30, Companies "C" and "D" were attached to the 3rd Infantry Division moving then on the left of the 34th Division through Dragoni and Pietraolara. Upon relief by elements of the 3rd Chemical Battalion, the battalion, less Companies "C" and "D", went into II Corps reserve in the vicinity of Aliefe.

Meanwhile the 3rd Division was seriously hampered by mud, rain, and mountainous country. In order to maintain supplies in their front line positions the two mortar companies were used to haul supplies and perform engineering work. By November 11, the advance had reached the slopes of Mt. Rotundo and Mt. Lungo after a very hard and difficult fight.

On November 15, Companies "A" and "B" replaced Companies "C" and "D" with the 3rd Division. The battle for the valley of Cassino was beginning. The 36th Infantry Division relieved part of the 3rd Division and on November 18 attachments were as follows:

Battalion less "A" and "B"	— 3rd Division
Companies "A" and "B"	— 36th Division

At this time the Companies were firing mainly schedule and harassing fire for both divisions. Weather conditions were very miserable and it was only the beginning of a time in which living conditions reached their lowest ebb. There was absolutely no shelter except for caves and slit trenches — it rained or snowed constantly — and cold reigned over all. During the next three month period an average of 90 to 100 men in the battalion were sick in the hospital. Fully 10% of the command was rendered inoperative by weather conditions and poor food.

To make the story complete, poorly packed ammunition rendered most of it faulty, and soft muddy ground rendered many mortars unfit for use after only a few rounds. It hardly seemed necessary that the battalion be there, but infantry commanders insisted that they have mortars available. Supplies of winter clothing went first to the infantry, which is as it should be, but no one in Fifth Army seemed to realize that our men suffered the same rigorous hardships in the miserable weather and without benefit of proper clothing. Many boys felt that they would be better off in the infantry where they could be issued parkas or combat jackets and overshoes. The latter item did not arrive for us until some time in February.

At one point in the fighting there, Company "B" had a gun position which was inaccessible by motor vehicles. Ammunition was hand carried about one-half mile, transported across creek by home-made trolley and then carried by hand to the gun position.

On December 3, 1943, the super secret 1st Special Service Force came into action for an attack on Mt. Defensa, part of the huge Camino hill mass. The force was attached to the 36th Division for the operation and Companies "A" and "B" fired in conjunction with the attack. After severe casualties the SSF secured the mountain. Our firing was limited somewhat by the fact that there was a critical shortage of 4.2 ammunition. Only the most important missions could be fired.

December 9 the entire battalion was attached to the 36th Division and shortly thereafter permission was granted to have Companies "A" and "B" relieved. However before they could be moved the entire Battalion was ordered to stay in support for the attack on San Pietro and Mt. Lungo.

The plan called for the 141st Infantry and 143rd Infantry to assault San Pietro at 1200 on December 15 with the 142nd Infantry jumping off in the afternoon to secure Mt. Lungo. Companies "C" and "D" were attached to the 142nd Infantry, but forward observers were placed with all the assault battalions. At 1200 on the 15th December, Company "A" with the aid of Company "B" fired a smoke screen on the east slopes of Mt. Lungo to cut down observation on the San Pietro attack, particularly on a tank company moving down the only road to the village. The other two companies fired on predesignated targets and against the inevitable counterattacks. The attack on San Pietro was unsuccessful, but in a well executed night attack on Mt. Lungo the 142nd Infantry secured that terrain feature. With Lungo in our hands the German position in San Pietro was untenable and an attack the next day was successful.

On December 18th Companies "A" and "B" were relieved for a short rest and rehabilitation period. Companies "C" and "D" remained attached to the 143rd Infantry in vicinity of San Pietro. On December 27th these two companies reverted to attachment to 34th Division which relieved the 36th around San Pietro.

December 31, 1943, found Companies "A" and "B" relieving "C" and "D". This relief ended with Company "A" attached to Task Force Allen, a combat command of 1st Armored Division in the vicinity of Mt. Lungo for an attack on Mt. Portia, and Company "B" attached to 135th Infantry for attack on Mt. La Chiaia. Both attacks were successful. Task Force Allen after two days of rough going secured Mt. Portia but casualties were so high that the force could not exploit the evident breakthrough to Cassino. The 34th Division moved right along and ultimately captured Mt. Trocchio.

Here now began the battle of Cassino. The German forces held, by virtue of a well fortified position along the Rapido River and positions in and on the mountains surrounding Cassino, a very strong line. Opposing them II Corps had the 34th Division on the right and the 36th Division on the left, flanked on the east by the French Expeditionary Corps and on the west by the 10th British Corps. An attack all along the line was to be made with the main effort in II Corps sector. Two mortar companies were initially attached to each division. At the same time the battalion ammunition section worked on a smoke pot detail to smoke the whole Rapido Valley so that undetected movements could be made in the rear areas in preparation for the assault on Cassino.

The plan for the attack up the Liri Valley called for a crossing of the Rapido River at two places --- one north and one south of St. Angelo. Troops involved were the 141st Infantry with Company "A" attached and the 143rd Infantry with Companies "B" and "C" attached. On January 20th the attack began. Companies "A" and "C" fired mainly on smoke screens to cover the crossings while Company "B" fired HE and WP against fortified positions. The most bloody fighting the battalion had seen ensued during the following three days. The German positions were practically impregnable, mines were everywhere, and enemy artillery had the crossing points covered thoroughly. Time after time the infantry crossed in the face of all this only to find themselves cut off and practically annihilated. Continuous screens were maintained during all the daylight hours, first to cover the crossing and then to screen the withdrawals.

By January 23, it seemed futile to attempt any further attacks at this point so the last screens covered the withdrawal of remnants of the two regiments. History will record this engagement as one of the most costly of the war.

During the afternoon of January 23 Companies "A" and "B" moved into the 34th Division area to support their crossing of the Rapido north of Cassino. Missions generally consisted of screening enemy visibility in vicinity of the Abbey de Monte Cassino and of Mt. Cairo, both of which points overlooked the plains in front of Cassino. In the ensuing close quarter fighting the 34th Division crossed the Rapido, advanced to the edge of Cassino and secured some of the heights overlooking the city. The Germans held tenaciously to the commanding ground forcing the situation into another stalemate. Consequently, mortar firing settled back into a routine of shooting at everything that moved while at the same time firing night harassing missions to forestall German counterattacks. No major attacks developed on the part of the American forces here, but limited attacks were made to secure certain important hills north and east of Cassino.

Company "A" was relieved from the 34th Division on February 22, and moved to the battalion assembly area in vicinity of Venafro. Company "B" was relieved on February 27. For the first time since September 10, 1943, the battalion was out of the line. This represented a total of 170 consecutive days in the line. Looking back on that period it is felt that time was the roughest the battalion has ever experienced. Enemy resistance, especially during the Cassino phase was fanatical, and its artillery support was very effective. The main difficulty was extremely adverse weather conditions. Absolutely no shelter was available and the supply of suitable clothes was very slow. It was not exactly a period of sitting in one place for long periods since the supply of chemical battalions never approached the demand. The weapons companies were constantly on the move to the point at which *every* attack was made. Mentally and physically the men suffered every minute of the time; suffered quietly and bravely practically beyond the point of human endurance. Such was our part of the battle of Cassino.

On March 11, Company "D" was attached to the 88th Division and moved to the vicinity of Minturno in the area of the 350th Infantry Regiment. The remainder of the battalion moved to the vicinity of Frasso, Italy, for rest, rehabilitation, and training.

Company "D" remained with the 88th Division from March 11 to March 28th. The mission of the Division was to defend the general line from a point east of Minturno to the sea. The firing of the company was directed at enemy gun emplacements and patrol activity throughout the period. Night harassing missions were fired extensively in this stabilized situation. The front was fairly quiet and it was a matter of shooting at any and all enemy activity.

The whole Fifth Army front was quiet during the month of April and the first ten days in May. Extensive preparations were under way for the big attack to reach Rome. For the first time in the campaign sufficient troops were made available for a major push, and it took some time to regroup the troops. The battalion was attached to the 36th Division for training during this period with particular stress placed on mountain training in the vicinity of Avellino in southern Italy. Italian pack mule companies were made available and special pack saddles for 4.2" mortars were improvised. Each company conducted at least one problem in the mountains in conjunction with regimental problems to determine the feasibility of packing the mortars and get some estimate of logistics in mountain operations.

On May 6 it was back to the battle for the Second Chemical. An initial move was made to the 85th Infantry Division sector in the vicinity of Mondragoni on the Italian west coast. On May 9 and 10, the battalion moved into positions close to Minturno and hauled ammunition in preparation for the big attack.

"D" day was May 11, 1944, with "H" hour being at 2300. Initially two companies each were attached to the 85th and 88th Divisions, but initial concentrations were fired under battalion control on schedule.



The time between "H" hour on the eleventh and the ultimate rupture of the line on May 14 was possibly the most rapid concentrated warfare the battalion has experienced. With the infantry it was touch and go during those critical moments, and for the mortars it was constant shooting. Initial preparation fires amounted to 1267 rounds in the first 15 minutes with succeeding missions in the first 24 hours bringing the total to 5293 rounds, approximately one-fourth of which was White Phosphorous.

Forward observers were out all along the front bringing the fire of their mortars to bear on all targets in a minimum of time. Success in the operation depended to a great extent on the work of all communication sections during the constant enemy shelling. Wire was maintained to each division headquarters, each infantry regiment, II Corps headquarters, all gun positions, and eight forward observers. Changes in missions and attachment were made practically on a moment's notice and fire control was superb.

It was a great satisfaction the battalion had during the period as our HE paved the way for the infantry's success and WP screened every little move. It was the best job we had done. Breakage of mortars during this attack was tremendous, a total of 17 being out of action during the first night. M-6 powder charges were hard to obtain and a direct hit on the ammunition dump destroyed 1148 charges in one wallop, which hurt. During the afternoon of May 14, following the fall of Santa Maria, three companies moved to mortar positions in vicinity of Tame over a road covered constantly by accurate enemy shellfire. This road wound along the top of a ridge for several miles past knocked out vehicles and tanks, but it was the only way in, and the infantry needed our mortars.

On the fifteenth, organized resistance in the valley before Spigno ceased and a slight respite was had for a day or two. The companies still remained attached to the 85th and 88th Divisions which by this time had consolidated positions and attacked again in the direction of Itri.

On May 17th Company "A", attached to the 351st Infantry of 88th Division, left Spigno for a mule pack trip through the mountains. Three mortars for each platoon plus 240 rounds of ammunition were loaded along with two day's supply of rations, forage, and water. The mules were furnished and handled by the IV section of the First Italian mule pack company. The trip lasted three days, three days of intense physical activity but little enemy resistance. On the 19th, Highway 82 leading east from Itri was cut by the 351st, which immediately took to the hills again toward Leonola. Here the company did some excellent shooting, some of it in support of the French, and then moved through the mountains to the vicinity of Priverno where on May 29th the company was relieved from the 88th Division.

Meanwhile the rest of the battalion moved in direct support of the leading elements of the infantry along the main road Itri-Fondi — Terracina. Resistance was very slight during this push and very little mortar support was required. On the night of May 23rd an enemy air raid on Fondi and surrounding territory furnished quite a bit of excitement, but casualties were slight. Ten men of Company "B" were wounded in this action.

On May 27th in vicinity of Priverno, Italy the battalion was attached to IV Corps upon relief of II Corps by IV Corps, but the desired rest, attending a relief, never materialized. On May 29th battalion was back with II Corps and moved to the vicinity of Cori, Italy. By this time the junction with the beachhead forces from Anzio had been made and the drive for Rome was on.

Immediate attachment was made to the 85th Division and companies moved into position to support the attack. The jump-off took place around Guilianello on the thirty-first and moved fairly rapidly against determined rear guard action. The terrain generally favored the attacking forces and everyone raced toward Rome.

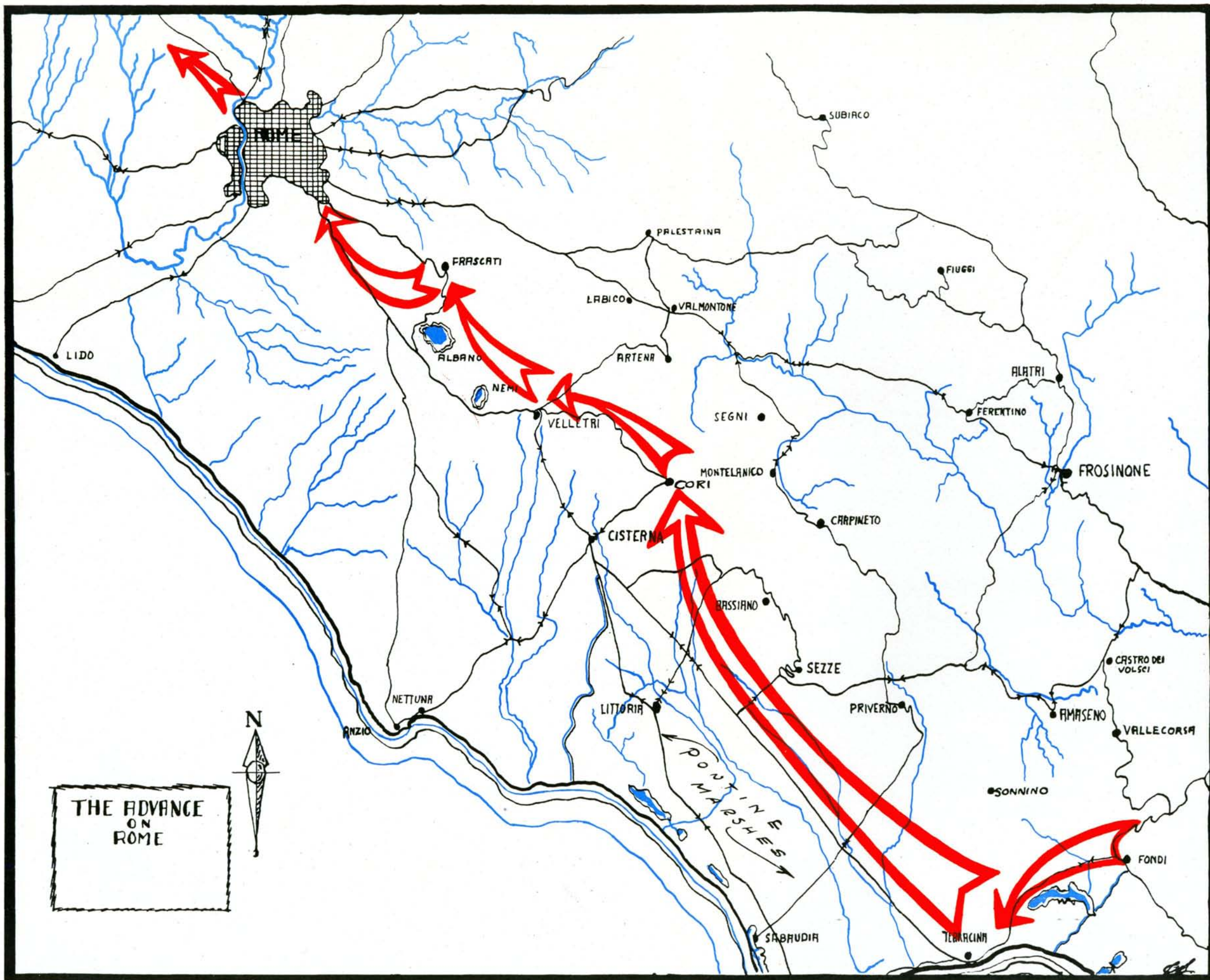
On June 4, Rome fell without a fight and the first European capital had fallen to the Allies. There was still a war to fight and all assault units proceeded through the city and along Highway 2 leading

north. Advance elements reached Lake Bracciano where on June 8 the battalion was placed in Fifth Army reserve and moved back to a rest area two miles north of Rome.

Thus ended the Second Chemical Battalion's part of the Italian campaign. The allied victory was complete and decisive, and should be treated as such by historians. It has long been called the forgotten campaign — merely a side issue — but to those battle-tested and battle-weary soldiers it was the main battle since they were in it. Victory had been achieved after overcoming many major difficulties and surviving untold hardship and danger. The part the 4.2" mortars played in the victory was very important, but sadly enough, is recognized only by ourselves and the infantrymen. A large number of days were spent in the line without relief because of a shortage of Chemical Mortar Battalions. General Clark, Fifth Army Commander, was quoted as saying he would never commit an infantry division without an attached chemical battalion. Our version of that statement was that he would not commit a division without the Second Chemical Battalion.

From June 10 to July 2 the battalion occupied a rest area just north of Rome and for the first time in a year relaxed and rested without thoughts of things to come. We knew that something was bound to happen but for the moment there was nothing to worry about.

On July 2, the battalion moved by motor convoy to an area just north of Paestum, becoming attached to the Seventh Army and further attached to VI Corps and to the 36th Division for training. On July 5 the outfit was reorganized on a new T/O No. 3-25 dated September 7, 1943. This called for a large decrease in number of men, and men who had been in the unit for a long time were transferred. During the period, extensive training on amphibious operations was conducted. On July 15, Company "A" was attached to the First Airborne Task Force and moved to the Airborne Training Center near Rome. They were to participate in an airborne landing operation in Southern France, the first time 4.2" mortars had been used in such operations.



CAMPAIGN of France, Germany & Austria

• AUGUST 15, 1944
TO MAY 9, 1945 •



REC. P. DUNLAP

For the amphibious and airborne assault on the southern coast of France the elements of the battalion were attached as follows:

Company "A" 550 Inf Bn (Glider) 1st	ABTF
Company "B" 143 Inf Regt	36th Division
Company "C" 143 Inf Regt	36th Division
Company "D" 141 Inf Regt	36th Division

"D" Day was set for August 15 and "H" hour at 0800. By August 10 all assault elements had been loaded and the ships had anchored in Naples and Salerno bays prior to sailing — a stirring sight. Here, under the watchful eye of Mt. Vesuvius the Allied Navies gathered on "Mare Nostrum" for another grand assault on the European mainland.

The mental attitude on this occasion, momentous as it was to become in the annals of history, was strikingly changed from that of the days before Sicily and Salerno. Possibly it was the similarity and monotony of such occasions, but in the hearts of our men was no room for fear and anxiety. There existed merely a sense of duty and the belief— "We can do this easily, haven't we done it twice before?" We could be heroes and liberators later when the time came, but now we settled down to selling souvenirs to the navy boys, spinning yarns of the rough life in the army, and providing ourselves with things that would make for greater comfort ashore.

The trip from Italy to the assembly area off the coast of southern France was pleasant, calm, and peaceful. The calm was broken early on August 15 by the air and naval bombardment preceeding the landing, which we had learned to accept as a part of such amphibious landings. The assault waves landed practically unopposed since some of the mortar platoons which were to support the initial Infantry waves did not arrive until some time after noon on D plus 1. One could see the battalion headquarters tramping up the road to assembly area at "H" plus 90 minutes while some of the mortar platoons were somewhere off the coast of Sardinia, utterly unconcerned by the war. Company "D" and parts of "B" and "C" did land as scheduled on Green Beach east of St. Raphael, but very little firing was required. No one will ever know what happened to the navy schedule, but by the afternoon of "D" plus 1 the battalion finally made it. So this was France.

Company "A" of the battalion was part of the Airborne Task Force which figured quite prominently in the invasion of Southern France. That operation presented something new in the way of mortar operations, but after landing, the mortar employment resolved itself into regular direct support of the Infantry.

Training for the operation was done in the vicinity of Rome, Italy, and the take-off was made from Orbatello and Canino airports. The men were not particularly apprehensive before the take-off, and they were anxious to have the thing begin. They had long ago learned to be business-like and to work successfully with a minimum of confusion. Very little thought was given to the possible dire circumstances — there was no time for that. The two platoons occupied fourteen gliders each and provisions were made for a follow-up ammunition supply on D plus 1. Flights consisted of forty-eight transports towing an equal number of gliders and presented quite an inspiring sight as they moved through the air to their eventual resting places on French soil.

All proceeded according to plan and at 1855 hours on 15 August, "H" plus 1055, the gliders started landing. Generally, the landing of gliders was without serious mishap to our men, a tribute to the extensive preinvasion planning and the skill of the glider pilots. One of the gliders was forced to make a crash landing, during which one "A" company jeep was thrown through the front of the glider for a distance of about 40 yards. Three men were sitting in the jeep at that time, all of whom were injured seriously.

Assembly of men and equipment was accomplished with a minimum of confusion and the mortars were ready for their mission, come what may. Direct support was given during the assault on LeMuy, France, a very important objective of the Airborne force. The company accomplished its mission in this operation with a high degree of success and now wears the Airborne patch as one of its most treasured possessions.

After the amphibious and airborne forces effected their junction in the vicinity of LeMuy, France, Company "A" remained attached to the Airborne Task Force when it took over the job of pushing east toward the Italian Border while protecting the right flank of the US Seventh Army.

The battalion less Company "A" continued with the 36th Division in pursuit of the enemy through Draguignon, Castellane, Sisteron, Aspres-s-Buech. This pursuit was so rapid, however, that the problems of supply over great distances were of almost more concern than the enemy delaying actions. To help relieve the supply situation the weapons companies were used to haul and handle supplies, while the battalion headquarters remained attached to and travelled close to the 36th Division headquarters.

The first real battle the division engaged in occurred in the vicinity of Montelimar, France on the Rhone River south of Lyon. The German 11th Panzer Division had been trapped in a pocket north of Marseilles and was attempting to fight its way north out of the trap. Contact was made in the narrow Rhone Valley and in a bloody three day battle the Germans were cut to ribbons, but not before inflicting serious casualties on the American Forces.

On 27 August 1944, the Chemical Mortar Battalions in VI Corps lost practically all resemblance to their former selves. Instead of being merely supporting units they became infantry. Lt. Col. BIBO took command of the right flank of VI Corps on a front of 90 miles from Albertville, France to Col de Larche, France. His command consisted of a group of units, among which were two companies each of the 2nd, 3rd, and 83rd Chemical Battalions, complete with mortars, carbines, and prayers. Before the group had fully consolidated it's positions, the Germans launched a counterattack against Briancon, main strongpoint and CP of this force, and forced a withdrawal to Col du Lautaret. Another defensive line was established in the high mountains, but the enemy failed to follow up his initial successes.

On September 2, Task Force Bibo was relieved by elements of the French Army "B" and the battalion, still less "A" Company, returned to its attachment to the 36th Division. The mortar companies served in several capacities during the following days of rapid liberation of Lyon, Bourg, Besancon, and Vesoul, From Vesoul on September 18, the battalion moved by motor convoy to Nice, France, where it was attached to the 1st ABTF in its defense of the Franco-Italian border.

This situation was strictly a defensive position with the mission of protecting Seventh Army supply lines in the south of France. Here among the French Alps and looking over the blue Mediterranean the battalion established itself. Attachments were as follows:

- Company "A" — 1st Special Service Force
- Company "B" — 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment
- Company "C" — 509th Glider Infantry Battalion
- Company "D" -- Initially in reserve (committed on
Sept. 24th in support of 1st SSF
and 550th Inf. Bn.)

Companies "A" and "D" occupied positions in vicinity of Menton on the southern coast. Company "B" moved to vicinity of Peira Cava, and Company "C" went into position in vicinity of Lantosque-St. Martin Vesubie. The northern most element was the 1st Platoon of Company "D" which occupied, by two-gun sections, positions near Col de Larche and Barcelonnette.

The front covered 120 miles and was held very thinly by road blocks on all important roads. An active defense was conducted by the use of extensive patrolling and mortar fire. Since there was very little artillery available to the ABTF and since the mortars were ideally suited for mountain warfare of the type encountered here, the commanders concerned were very anxious for the mortar support and continually called for fire at enemy installations and personnel. The mortars were registered on numerous points so that heavy concentrations could be brought to bear on important targets in a very short time. Registration on targets which were unable to be observed from the ground was accomplished by use of artillery observation planes.

All types of missions were fired. On several occasions enemy counterattacks were fired upon with such success that they were broken up and never reached serious proportions. Friendly patrols were supported often and extracted from serious positions by well placed fire, sometimes as close as 100 yards to our own troops. At night in practically all sections harassing and interdiction fire were placed on bivouacs and supply routes giving the enemy no end of trouble. One enemy medical prisoner reported that he had personally treated 70 casualties from "heavy" mortar fire within a space of three days. From captured German document in this sector, the 4.2 mortar was given A-1 priority by German artillery as its counter-battery target. attesting to the accuracy and casualty effect of our fire.

On October 19, 1944, the battalion was attached to the First French Army for operations, and moved from Nice to an assembly position in the vicinity of Vellefans, France. The First French Army was to attack in conjunction with the American Seventh Army to destroy the enemy resistance east of the Rhine between the German border on the North and the Swiss Border on the South. Initially, the presence of the battalion in the French sector was kept secret, but preliminary reconnaissance and preparations were made for the big attack.

On November 11, Company "B" was placed at the disposition of the 1st French Forces of the Interior (FFI) brigade in the vicinity of Le Chenoley, France, this brigade to operate as the left element of the I French Corps in the attack. Movement of the battalion (less Co. "B") into position for the attack was made on November 12 with attachment and locations as follows:

Company "A"	6th Moroccan Regt. — Villars les Blamont
Company "C"	6th Zouave Rgt. — Pont de Roide
Company "D"	6th Regiment Inf. Colonial — Mauchamp

Plans called for extensive preparation fire by all companies on the day of the attack — originally planned for November 13 but postponed until November 15 because of unfavorable weather — followed by general support on call of infantry commanders.

As the attack, progressing slowly at first, gained momentum all along the line the battalion moved in direct support of the attacking infantry up to the general line MONTBELIARD — AUDINCOURT — VANDONCOURT. Only minor changes in attachments were made as infantry units were relieved and regrouped. Once the break-through was made, firing was fairly light as resistance was not too great. Company "B" supported the 1st FFI Brigade along the route LE CHENOLEY — LAMONT — CHENEBIER — EVETT. On November 19 the entire battalion was placed at the disposal of 2nd Division Infantry Moroccan in its attack on the environs of BELFORT which included numerous forts and dug-in strong points. During this operation the weapons companies changed attachments on various occasions, alternating from

regular French Army Units to FFI units. This necessitated much movement of platoons on the front, but numerous targets were engaged with good results. On November 23, Company "B" was relieved of their attachment to the FFI Brigade and attached to the 5th RIM in the vicinity of GRANDE CHARMONT. On November 25 resistance around BELFORT ceased and a pursuit followed to the Northeast against weak resistance.

The battalion was again placed at the disposal of the 9th Brigade DIC in vicinity of COURTELEVANT — SAURCE — FECHE L'EGLISE near the Swiss border to assist in mopping up the remnants of enemy troops who had cut the supply route to the French armored units fighting in the vicinity of MULHOUSE.

On November 28, the battalion was alerted for movement to the sector of 6th RIC which had the mission of cleaning out a pocket of resistance in VILLAGE NEUF on the Rhine River just north of the Swiss border. This presented a target suitable for a battalion concentration within a fairly confined area. During the evening and night of November 29, all companies moved into position in ST. LOUIS, France, prepared to fire a preparation on one area target 500×1,000 yards and followed by concentrations on four other targets in support of the attack as well as on targets of opportunity on call from forward observers. The attack was successful largely because of the power of the mortars. It is worthy of note that the first rounds of 4.2 inch mortar ammunition from the guns of the 2nd Chemical Battalion fell onto Germany proper between the hours of 0650 and 0800 on November 30, 1944 at a point on the east bank of the Rhine River just north of the Swiss border.

On December 1, 1944, the entire battalion was in BELFORT, France, having just been relieved from attachment to the First French Army. It moved on December 2, from BELFORT to the vicinity of SARREBOURG preparatory to employment in support XV Corps operations. On orders of CG, XV Corps, the organization moved to assembly positions in the areas indicated:

2nd Cml Bn (-A)	atcd 100 Inf. Div.	Frohumuhl
Company "A"	atcd 106 Cav. Grp.	Ingwiller

The general plan of attack for the 100th Infantry Division was to advance along a general line PETITE PIERRE, WINGEN, SARREINSBERG, GOETZENBRUCK, LEMBERG, to secure BITCHE and breach MAGINOT Line. The mission of the 106th Cavalry Group was to maintain contact between XV Corps and to screen XV Corps right flank in the general area MOUTERHOUSE — BAERENTHAL — PHILLIPSBOURG. The terrain within the sectors ranged from rolling farmland to hills covered with heavy forests. By noon of December 5, 1944, attachments within the 100th Division were established as follows:

Company "B"	atcd 398th R. C. T. Vic WINGEN
Company "C"	atcd 399th R. C. T. Vic PUBERG
Company "D"	atcd 397th R. C. T. Vic WEINBOURG

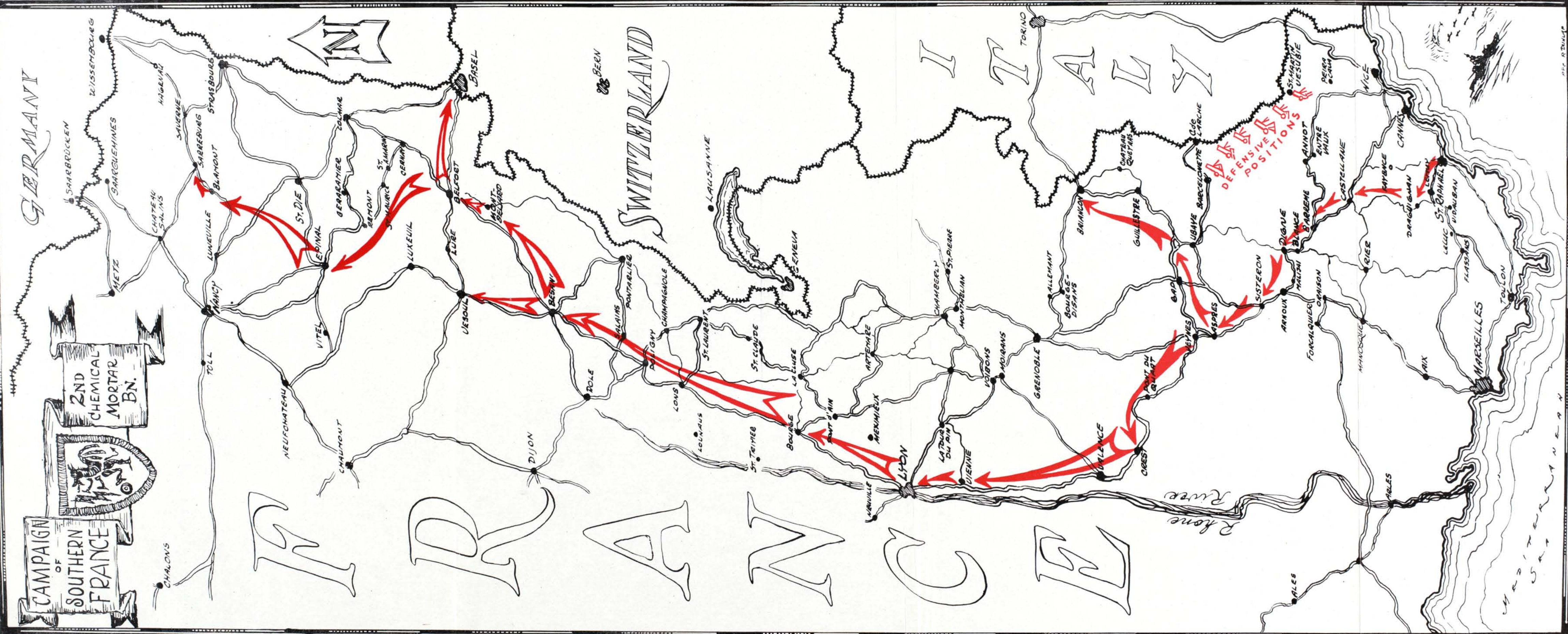
Company "A" in its attachment to the 106th Cavalry Group was required to decentralize control and operate separate platoons extended over a wide area. Inasmuch as no definite offensive action was undertaken by the Cavalry Group, the mission of the platoons was to furnish defensive and harassing fires to discourage any organized enemy attacks within the zone.

FRANCE

BERN
SWITZERLAND

I T A L Y

MYRA TERRYAN



ADVANCE ON THE MAGINOT LINE

The attack on Wingen by the 398th R. C. T. with Company "B" attached, was practically unopposed requiring no mortar support. After securing WINGEN, the 398th R. C. T. moved to assembly positions in the vicinity of MEISENTHAL, Company "B" still attached, remaining there until December 10. The 397th R. C. T., attacking WIMMENAU, called for preparation fire from Company "D", after which Company "D" moved successively to MELCH and MOUTERHOUSE in direct support. MOUTERHOUSE and vicinity being in very difficult terrain, much mortar support was required. By December 9 the village was cleared and Company "D" established positions there for harassing and defensive fires.

The 399th R. C. T. with Company "C", attached, attacked to seize SARREINSBERG — GOETZENBRUCK — LEMBERG, and on securing high ground north of LEMBERG was placed in Division Reserve. During this action Company "C" supported the assault elements as well as furnished harassing and interdictory fires. By December 10, Company "C" had been withdrawn to SARREINSBERG after having placed a platoon in LEMBERG to support the advance of the 399th R. C. T.

ASSAULT OF MAGINOT FORTIFICATIONS

On December 10, the 398th R. C. T. with Company "B" attached passed through the 399th with its objective to seize REYERSVILLER and the high ground south and southwest of BITCHE. Company "B" established successive mortar positions in LEMBERG and REYERSVILLER, firing on numerous strong points and enemy troop concentrations in direct support of the advance. Just north of REYERSVILLER the attack was checked by extensive enemy fortifications. During this phase mortar fire was generally limited to small scale smoke missions to cover troop movements and engineer demolition parties operating against the heavy fortifications.

By December 22, sectors were reassigned, and the 100th Infantry Division took up defensive positions requiring some minor adjustments in Company "B" positions to cover the defensive zones.

Company "C" remained in Division Reserve with the 399th R. C. T. until December 14, at which time the entire company moved to REYERSVILLER and fired in support of their attack, but on December 15 the company was attached to 71st R. C. T. of 44th Infantry Division and moved to mortar positions in vicinity of SIERSTHAL. Firing here was mainly harassing fire on enemy activity and installations although some local screens and counter-mortar missions were fired. On December 22, Company "C" moved to SARREGUEMINES with the 71st R. C. T. in accordance with the complete regroupment plan of XV Corps. This regroupment was ordered so that additional troops could be rapidly shifted to the First Army Sector to combat the German attack in that area.

Company "D" from December 9 to December 15, remained in mortar positions in vicinity of MOUTERHOUSE in support of 397th R. C. T. in its attack on the high ground south of CAMP DES BITCHE firing many harassing missions. On December 15, Company "D" was withdrawn from the line and deactivated according to Paragraph 1, General Orders 122, Headquarters Seventh Army, dated December 7, 1944. Men and officers of the company were reassigned among the other companies of the battalion.

Company "A", attached to 106th Cavalry Group, supported the Group on its fairly slow advance through the heavily wooded country. The Group held what territory it gained by local outposts and roadblocks in the area. These outposts and roadblocks were generally reinforced by Company "C" platoons. No concerted attacks were made so that missions consisted of harassing enemy installations, road interdiction and some observed fire on enemy activity and possible counterattacks. By December 22, the company had reached positions vic PHILIPPSBOURG. During this entire period the 4.2 mortars of Company "A" were practically the only support the group had.

DEFENSE OF SAAR RIVER LINE

On December 23, 1944, the entire battalion was attached to 106th Cavalry Group, which group was moving to the vicinity of LUDWEILER, Germany, under orders to relieve task force Pickett, cover left (west) flank of XV Corps, maintain contact with XX Corps, and organize and defend MLR along line BOUS — LUDWEILER — GROSSROSSELN — MORSBACH. The companies assembled in the vicinity of ST. AVOLD by morning of December 24 and moved into position during the afternoon as follows:

Battalion Hq	Atchd 121 Cav Sqdn	Vic GROSSROSSELN
Company A	Atchd 108 Cav Sqdn	Vic WERBELN
Company B	Atchd 121 Cav Sqdn	Vic LUDWEILER
Company C	Atchd 121 Cav Sqdn	Vic GROSSROSSELN

All companies registered and set up normal defensive fires. Coordination of sectors and general fire distribution was handled by the Battalion Headquarters in conjunction with the plans of the Cavalry Commanders concerned. Extensive harassing fires were maintained by all companies during each night while day time firing was done on all enemy activity observed by our own observation posts or reported by Cavalry outposts.

At 2330A on December 31, 1944, the enemy launched a coordinated attack from the vicinity of VOLKLINGEN with his objective as SCHAFFHAUSEN, GEISLAUTERN, and the bridgehead we held across the Roselle River. In this engagement Company "A", after firing against the attack, was forced to withdraw approximately 1000 yards when communications were interrupted. Enemy shelling in positions became intense, and the cavalry troops withdrew to an alternate position. Company "B" from positions in LUDWEILER fired against the enemy attack until small arms fire necessitated their withdrawal approximately 1000 yards. Company "C" fired on the enemy attack and supported the cavalry troops in their sector, which was fairly quiet. All companies were credited with inflicting numerous casualties and helping stop the attack. During the two days following the attack minor adjustments were made in platoon positions so that more effective support could be maintained.

After the short flare-up on the part of the enemy, the situation became stable, evolving into a sector of minor patrol activity, punctuated by sporadic artillery and mortar fire. During this period our mortar companies fired many night harassing and interdiction missions to restrict enemy activity and prevent concentration of any sizable enemy forces. Several withdrawal plans were prepared by the cavalry group to coordinate defensive deployment of the various units, and alternate mortar positions were selected to conform to these plans. Snow and overcast skies restricted to a large extent the observation, but OP's were maintained and rapid support on observations from cavalry troops, as well as our own OP's kept enemy activity to a minimum. Weather conditions were severe with temperature reaching zero on occasions and the snow reaching eighteen inches in depth.

On 13 January, XXI Corps assumed control of the sector, and the battalion was attached to the Corps for operations, remaining attached to 106th Cavalry Group. On 25 January, XV Corps again assumed command of XXI Corps Sector with the same attachment for the battalion.

On 16 January, orders were received from Seventh Army through XXI Corps directing that one company be attached to VI Corps, to move to vicinity of SURBOURG. Company "B" departed from vicinity CARLING and traveled to SURBOURG, a distance of approximately 100 miles, where it was attached to the 315th Infantry, of the 79th Division, which regiment was operating with the 14th Armored Division. Positions for two platoons were established in vicinity of KUHLENDORF to support an attack on the enemy occupied portion of RITTERSHOFEN. During this attack and subsequent operations in

the town, the fighting was very intense. Extremely close support was necessary to aid in reducing strong points and to hold the part of the town already taken. One place in particular, a church used as a strong point by the enemy, was within 50 yards of our own infantry in houses. The Company "B" observer directed fire on the church and adjacent houses, scoring numerous hits on the church, setting it afire twice with WP, and one occasion drove the enemy into the open where four of them were killed by our MG fire.

During the course of the fire on RITTERSHOFEN the company knocked out one tank or SP gun, two half-tracks, removed a sniper by direct hits on a house within 30 yards of an outpost, and upon two occasions enabled patrols to extricate themselves by neutralizing MG and mortar fire that had them pinned down. During the entire three day period, in which 1881 rounds were fired, mostly in very close support of the infantry, no damage or casualties were inflicted on our own troops. Air reconnaissance also credited Company "B" with destroying a battery of 120 mm mortars. The company returned to battalion control and arrived in MERLEBACH on 22 January.

After the return of Company "B" a rotation system was initiated whereby two companies remained in direct support of operations in the line while one company remained on a semi-alert status in group reserve to take up delaying positions in case of an enemy attack. This company was also available for special missions in support of raids or small scale attacks. On January 29, the Cavalry Group staged a successful raid on SCHAFFHAUSEN, during which Companies "A" and "B" fired smoke screens to prevent observation and HE on known enemy locations and targets of opportunity.

On one occasion, February 5 to February 9, one platoon of Company "C" was attached to the 2nd Battalion, 276 Infantry to support that battalion in an attack. In this instance screens were fired, and HE concentrations were fired on enemy counterattacks with very good effect. The missions in support of the cavalry groups consisted mainly of harassing and interdictory fire to restrict enemy movements and prevent concentration of enemy forces of sizable strength.

Acting under orders of CV Corps, the 101st Cavalry Group planned an attack to clear SCHAFFHAUSEN in conjunction with the attack of the 70th Infantry Division on FORBACH. Elaborate plans were made calling for smoke screens and large preparation fires, but the 70th Division attack failed to achieve its final objectives and the attack of the 101st Cavalry was called off. The companies of the battalion moved into their previously prepared positions, however, and fired in support of a demonstration on the morning of 9 March 1945.

At the conclusion of this raid the battalion reverted to XV Corps reserve for rest and rehabilitation and moved by motor convoy from vicinity LAUTERBACH, Germany, to vicinity of BERG, France.

During this rest period, one section of mortars (two guns) from Company "C" under the command of Lt. Walter C. Norris was attached to Division Artillery of the 44th Infantry Division for counter-mortar operations. The work was of an experimental nature using radar as a means of locating enemy gun positions and adjusting our counter fires. A Signal Corps officer who had experimented with the principle in England in conjunction with the British, was in charge of the work. On account of defects in the apparatus, satisfactory results were not obtained. Operations demanded that the mortar section return to the battalion before the defects could be corrected. However, the application of radar as described is of such importance as to demand immediate development.

BREACHING THE MAGINOT LINE

On 13 March, 1945, the entire battalion was attached to the 100th Infantry Division for support during its attack to secure BITCHE and breach the Maginot Line. Thus the battalion returned to a mission it had previously had during the week of December 20, 1944, but which was interrupted by a reshuffle of troops in Seventh Army to release units to combat the Ardennes breakthrough. The 100th Division was virtually in the same positions and jumped off on 15 March at 0500. The Battalion moved into position on the 14th attached as follows:

Battalion, less companies "A" & "C"	— 398th Regiment
Company "A"	— 397th Regiment
Company "C"	— 399th Regiment

The attack was made without artillery preparations so that firing was light. As the attack progressed fairly rapidly, the companies fired several local smoke screens of short duration and numerous missions on call from the infantry against machine guns and strong points.

By noon of 17 March, BITCHE, CAMP des BITCHE and the number of forts surrounding the Maginot stronghold had been reduced and the 100th Division had advanced to the north against light resistance. At 1200 on 17th, the battalion less Company "A" was relieved from attachment to the 100th Division and attached to the 45th Infantry Division. Company "A" remained attached to the 397th Infantry Regiment, 100th Infantry Division. The company continued in support of the 397th advancing north from BITCHE to WALSCHBRONN.

BREACHING THE SIEGFRIED LINE

By 1000 on 18 March, the battalion assembled in the 45th Division area. The division was attacking the main Siegfried defenses with three regiments abreast, 157th on the right, 179th in the center, and 180th on the left. The main axis of the Division at this point was the road BLIESKASTEL-ZWEIBRUKEN-HOMBURG. The Siegfried Line was fairly lightly defended, but the infantry was badly in need of smoke to screen their maneuvers and allow tanks to approach the line.

Company "B" minus the 3rd platoon was attached immediately to the 180th Infantry and went into position in the vicinity of BIESINGEN to fire screens on the high ground to the left of BLIESKASTEL. On the afternoon of March 19, the company fired four screens in support of the 180th which allowed the infantry to clean out pillboxes along a small stream.

On the 20th the resistance began to crumble and very little firing was done by Company "B". By 21 March, HOMBURG had been taken and the race to the RHINE began. The company moved from assembly area to assembly area with the 180th Infantry, since no fire support was necessary.

By 23 March, the RHINE River was reached north of WORMS and the company reverted to 2nd Cml Mortar Battalion control and moved to vicinity of GAUERSHEIM before moving into position for the RHINE crossings.

Company "C" moved from BITCHE to the 45th Division area on the morning of 18 March and the company, less the 3rd Platoon, was attached to the 157th Regiment. It established mortar positions in the vicinity of BLICKWEILER and fired a smoke screen for an infantry-tank advance during the afternoon. Several HE missions were fired also in support of that attack.

On the 19th of March, the company displaced forward to the vicinity of HENGSTBACH and fired five smoke screens to cover the infantry advance through the Siegfried Line. It also fired several missions on call against pillboxes and dug-in positions.

By the 20th, resistance had been practically reduced and ZWEIBRUKEN had fallen. The company fired two screens plus some night harassing on enemy approach routes and then assembled in the vicinity of ZWEIBRUKEN, preparatory to the dash to the RHINE. For the next two days, the company advanced with the 157th Infantry to successive assembly positions along the general axis HOMBURG-KAISERSLAUTERN-GRUNSTADT. No firing was required, and on 24 March, the company assembled under battalion control in vicinity of GAUERSHEIM.

From 18 March to 24 March, the third platoons of both Company "B" and Company "C" were attached to the 179th Infantry. These platoons, in support of the leading battalions fired several screening and preparation missions for the advance through the Siegfried Line. Their movements closely approximated those of the rest of the battalion and on the 24th they were relieved from attachment to the 179th Infantry and rejoined their companies in the vicinity of GAUERSHEIM.

On 22 March, Company "A" was relieved from attachment to the 100th Division and joined the Battalion at GAUERSHEIM. The 100th Division had the mission of defending the corps right flank and required very little support from the company.

The battalion headquarters moved in close conjunction with the 45th Division Headquarters, establishing CPs at BRIETFURT-HOMBURG-GRUNDSTADT-GAUERSHEIM. At GRUNSTADT during the night of 22 March, an enemy plane bombed and strafed the battalion CP killing two and wounding ten men.

CROSSING THE RHINE

During the evening of 24 March, the battalion was attached to Regimental Combat Teams for the Rhine River crossings, as follows:

Company "A" — 179th Infantry
Company "B" — 180th Infantry
Company "C" — 157th Infantry

Company "A" moved into position on the evening of 25 March, in preparation for the Rhine crossing between WORMS and MAINZ. Two platoons were in the vicinity of HAMM with one platoon in assembly position for immediate crossings. The crossing started at 0230A on 26 March and one platoon fired into GERNSHEIM at "H" hour starting several fires. During the night of 26-27 March, the company completed its crossing, by ferry, clearing at 0400 on 27 March and assembling in GROSS RUHRHEIM. As resistance was light no firing was required and the company moved with the 179th to GROSS OSTHEIM. On the 28th to 31st March, the company fired in support of the 179th advance which moved rather slowly south of ASCHAFFENBURG because of fanatical resistance in that city.

On 30 March, one man was killed and five men were seriously wounded in Company "A" by an enemy mortar burst directly over one of our mortars which was firing at the time.

On 25 March, Company "B" moved into position for the RHINE crossings, one platoon attached to each battalion of the 180th Infantry. No firing was required in support of the crossings. The company crossed on the 26th, two platoons in DUKWS and one by ferry. A few missions were fired to support

the advance of the 180th which was meeting more resistance than the other regiments. On 29 March, the company fired very successfully on an enemy strongpoint in a factory on the east bank of the Main River starting a large oil fire.

On 31 March, after Company "B" had crossed the Main river in support of the 180th Infantry, the regiment was relieved by the 15th Infantry of the 3rd Division and the company was relieved from attachment to the 180th Infantry and attached to the 3rd Division in the vicinity of VOLKERSBRUNN.

On 25 March, Company "C" moved to positions in the vicinity of IBERSHEIM and RHEINDURK-HEIM in support of the 157th Infantry which was initially in reserve. The company crossed the RHINE by pontoon bridge on the 27th and did no firing until ASCHAFFENBURG was reached. Here fanatical resistance was encountered by the 157th and the entire company fired many missions into the city starting numerous fires and destroying several buildings. For four days, the city held out against our constant mortar and artillery fire and continued daylight bombing. The company remained in position on the outskirts of town until the end of the month.

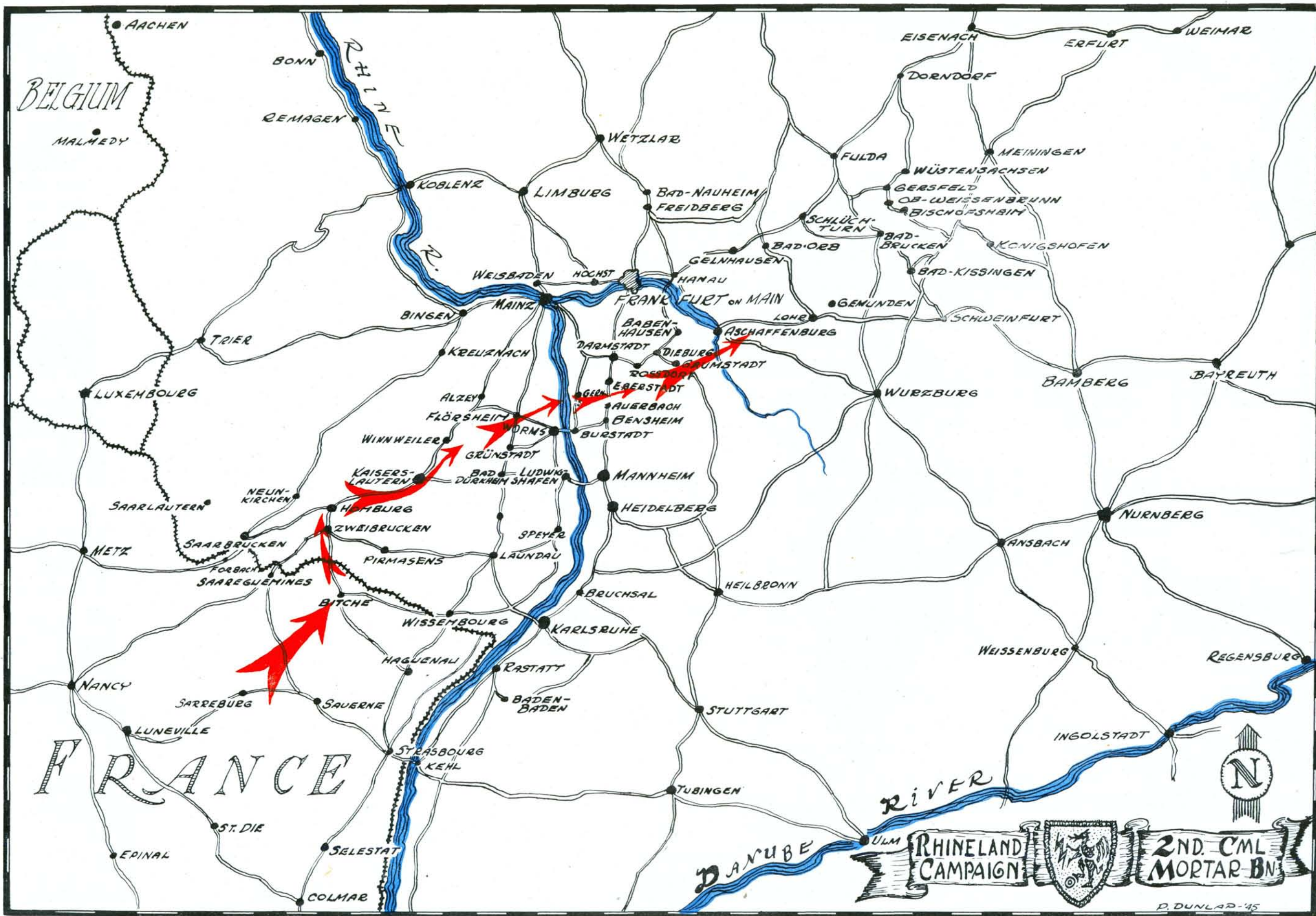
On 1 April 1945, the battalion, minus "B" Company was attached to XV Corps and further attached to the 45th Infantry Division. Company "B" was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division. Both Divisions were operating adjacent to each other and spearheading the drive of the Corps across Germany. At the beginning of the month the Main river had just been crossed by both divisions south of ASCHAFFENBURG and they had advanced northeast toward BRUCKENAU and GERSFELD. ASCHAFFENBURG held out for two days after it had been isolated and bypassed but surrendered on 2 April.

Attachments of companies to units within XV Corps during the month changed frequently and are listed below:

Battalion Headquarters		
April 1 to April 30, 1945		45th Infantry Division
Company "A"		
April 1 to April 21, 1945		179th Infantry Division
April 21 to April 30, 1945		42nd Infantry Division
Company "B"		
April 1 to April 21, 1945		3rd Infantry Division
April 21 to April 30, 1945		45th Infantry Division, 179th Regt.
Company "C"		
April 1 to April 3, 1945		157th Infantry, 45th Division
April 3 to April 14, 1945		180th Infantry, 45th Division
April 14 to April 30, 1945		157th Infantry, 45th Division

In general, the war at this period had become a pursuit of the enemy. On most occasions, platoons were detached from their companies and attached to infantry regiments and battalions for rapid support in the fast moving situation. Resistance was light during the entire period except for defenses around NURNBERG and on the Danube River. Very little firing was done during the month, in fact, the lowest of any combat month since the battalion first saw action in Sicily.

During the fight for NURNBERG, defended by approximately 8,000 SS troops supported by dual purpose 88 mm guns, one incident is worthy of note. The 3rd Platoon of Company "C" attached at the time to the 180th Infantry engaged in a close-up duel with a battery of six 88 mm guns at a range of 350 yards. Two mortars firing with two powder rings (minimum range table — 3 ½ rings), completely neutralized the gun battery with 150 rounds of mixed WP and HE and enabled a squad of infantry to take 225 prisoners from dugouts surrounding the position.



April for the XV Corps found the resistance, except for a few isolated instances practically negligible, and the fight was a fight of supply and rapid movement alone. Important cities captured during the month by units to which the battalion was attached were: ASCHAFFENBURG, GERSFELD, BAD BRUCKENAU, BAD KISSINGEN, BAMBERG, ERLANGEN, NURNBERG, SCHWABACH, DACHAU, AND MUNICH. The Main, the Saale, the Pegnitz, the Altmuhl, and the Danube and Isar rivers were crossed.

On May 1, 1945 the battalion less Company "A" was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division. Company "A" was attached to 42nd Infantry Division. Practically all resistance had ceased and the Infantry was traveling rapidly.

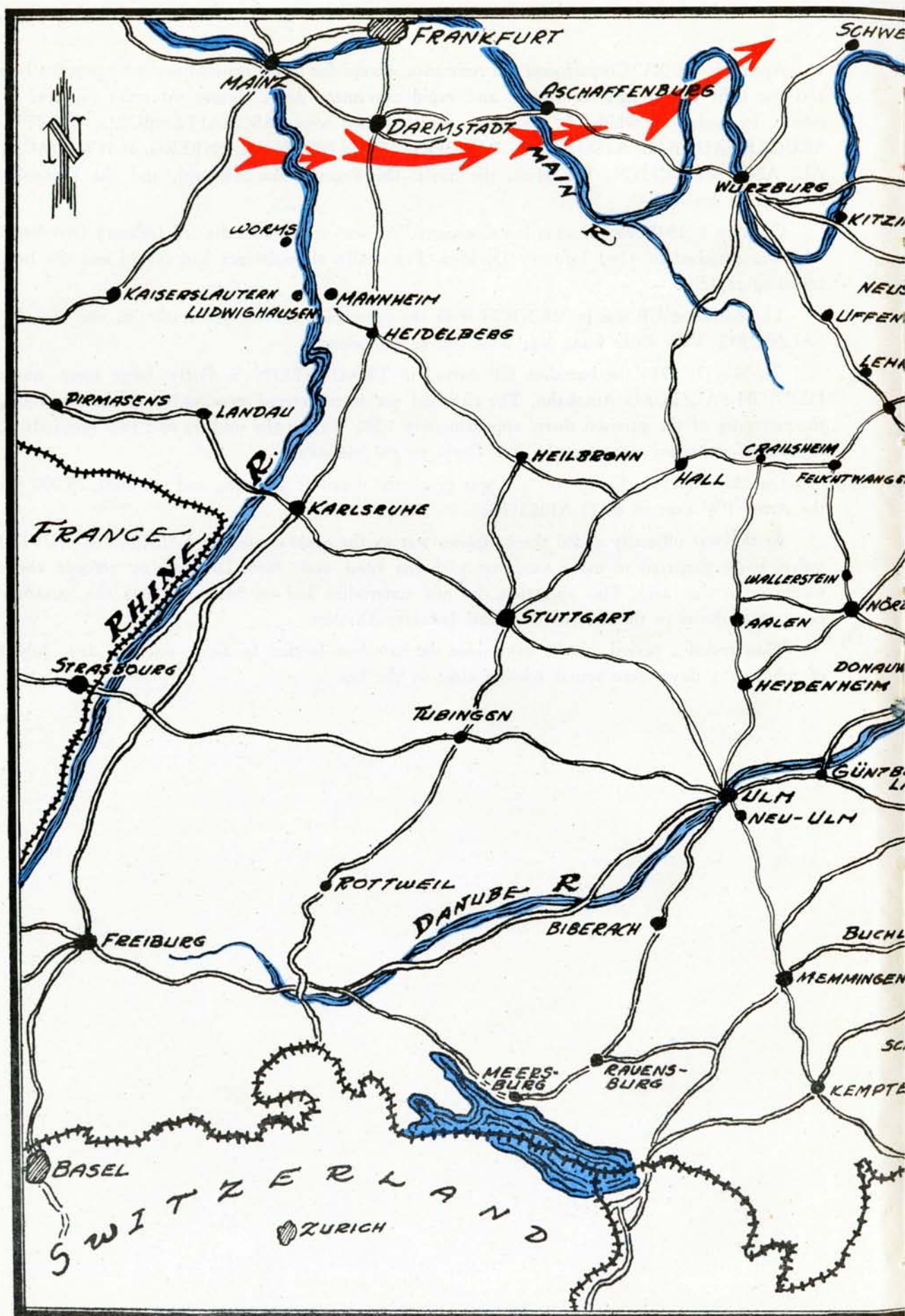
The Battalion CP was in MUNICH with the companies moving generally on the axis MUNICH-SALZBURG. Very little firing was done during the month.

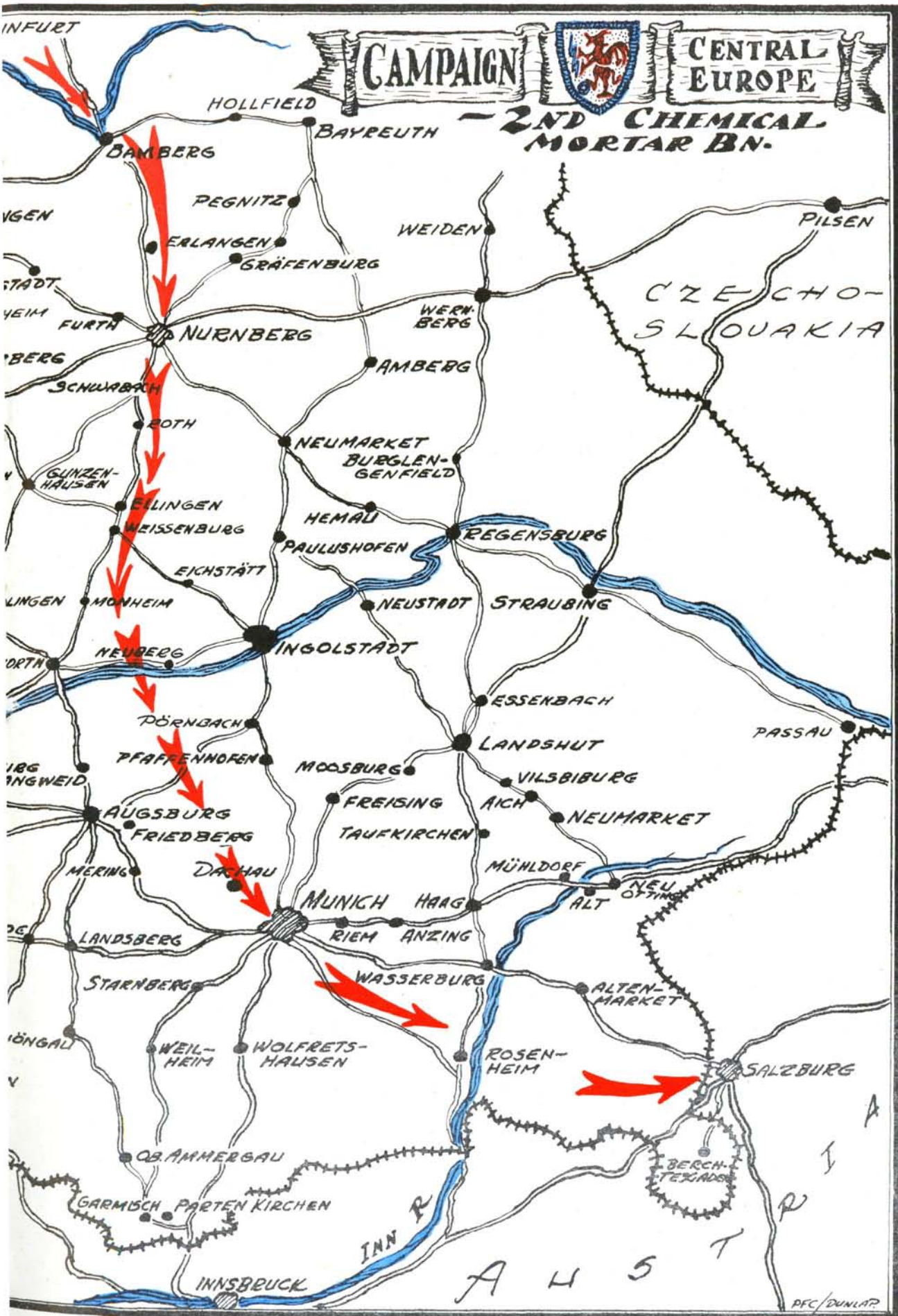
On May 3, 1945 the battalion CP moved to TRAUNSTEIN a fairly large town north of the MUNICH-SALZBURG Autobahn. The city had not been entered previously, so the battalion accepted the surrender of the garrison there, approximately 1000 Wehrmacht soldiers and two hospitals. Credit for capture of the town was given by XV Corps to the battalion.

On May 4, 1945, Company "C" was given the detail of guarding and marching 25,000 prisoners to the Army PW cage in BAD AIBLING.

As the war officially ended the battalion was in the general area of SALZBURG, AUSTRIA under orders to be prepared to move southeast with the 42nd and 86th Division to enforce the terms of surrender in that area. This operation did not materialize and on May 10, 1945 the battalion took up occupation duties in the area of the 42nd Infantry Division.

Thus ended a period of 670 days since the battalion landed in Sicily on "D" day, July 10, 1943, of which 511 days were actual combat time in the line.





LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Assigned:

Seventh Army
Fifth Army
Seventh Army

July 10, 1943 to September 10, 1943
September 10, 1943 to June 29, 1944
June 29, 1944 to June 9, 1945

ATTACHMENTS:

July 10, 1943 to July 31, 1943	45th Infantry Division
July 31, 1943 to August 18, 1943	3rd Infantry Division
August 18, 1943 to September 10, 1943	II Corps
September 10, 1943 to October 8, 1943	45th Infantry Division
October 8, 1943 to October 20, 1943	45th Infantry Division
	34th Infantry Division
October 20, 1943 to October 31, 1943	34th Infantry Division
October 31, 1943 to November 5, 1943	34th Infantry Division
	3rd Infantry Division
November 5, 1943, to November 23, 1943	VI Corps
	3rd Infantry Division
November 24, 1943 to December 28, 1943	II Corps
	36th Infantry Division
December 28, 1943 to January 1, 1944	II Corps
	34th Infantry Division
January 2, 1944 to January 31, 1944	II Corps
	34th Infantry Division
	36th Infantry Division
	Combat Command A, 1st Armored Division
February 1, 1944 to February 29, 1944	II Corps
	34th Infantry Division
	36th Infantry Division
March 1, 1944 to March 31, 1944	II Corps Reserve
	88th Infantry Division
April 1, 1944 to April 30, 1944	II Corps Reserve
May 1, 1944 to May 6, 1944	II Corps Reserve
May 7, 1944 to May 10, 1944	85th Infantry Division
May 11, 1944 to May 13, 1944	85th Infantry Division
	88th Infantry Division
May 14, 1944 to May 22, 1944	85th Infantry Division
May 23, 1944 to May 31, 1944	88th Infantry Division
June 1, 1944 to June 10, 1944	85th Infantry Division
June 11, 1944 to July 2, 1944	Fifth Army

July 3, 1944 to July 14, 1944
 July 15, 1944 to July 18, 1944 (Co. "A")
 July 19, 1944 to July 31, 1944 (Co. "A")
 August 1, 1944 to September 17, 1944
 July 17, 1944 to July 18, 1944
 July 19, 1944 to August 31, 1944
 August 27, 1944 to September 3, 1944

 September 4, 1944 to September 17, 1944
 September 1, 1944 to September 17, 1944 (Co. "C")
 September 18, 1944 to October 19, 1944
 October 19, 1944 to November 18, 1944
 November 19, 1944 to November 25, 1944
 November 26, 1944 to November 30, 1944
 December 1, 1944 to December 3, 1944
 December 4, 1944 to December 23, 1944
 December 4, 1944 to February 10, 1945 (Co. "A")
 December 15, 1944 to December 23, 1944 (Co. "C")
 December 24, 1944 to February 10, 1945
 February 11, 1945 to March 8, 1945

 March 9, 1945 to March 12, 1945
 March 13, 1945 to March 17, 1945
 March 18, 1945 to March 30, 1945
 March 13, 1945 to March 21, 1945
 March 31, 1945 to April 30, 1945
 March 31, 1945 to April 20, 1945 (Co. "B")
 April 21, 1945 to April 30, 1945
 May 1, 1945 to May 5, 1945
 May 6, 1945, to May 8, 1945 (Co. "B")
 May 6, 1945 to May 8, 1945
 May 8, 1945 to August 30, 1945

Seventh Army
 Airborne Training Command, Seventh Army
 Seventh Army Airborne Division (Prov)
 1st Airborne Task Force
 VI Corps
 36th Infantry Division
 Provisional Flank
 Protective Force, VI Corps
 36th Infantry Division
 36th Division Quartermaster
 1st Airborne Task Force
 9th DIC, 1st French Army
 2nd DIM, 1st French Army
 9th DIC, 1st French Army
 XV Corps
 100th Infantry Division
 106th Cavalry Group
 44th Infantry Division
 106th Cavalry Group
 101st Cavalry Group
 70th Division
 XV Corps Reserve
 100th Infantry Division
 45th Infantry Division
 100th Infantry Division
 45th Infantry Division
 3rd Infantry Division
 42nd Infantry Division
 3rd Infantry Division
 86th Infantry Division
 42nd Infantry Division
 42nd Infantry Division



Unit Citations

HEADQUARTERS
FORTY FIFTH INFANTRY DIVISION
A. P. O. No. 45
U. S. ARMY

3 August 43

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 2nd Chemical Weapons Battalion.

1. It is my desire to take this opportunity to commend you and your organization for the efficient accomplishment of assigned missions during the phase of operations just concluded. The determination and skill shown in the performance of duty contributed much to the success of our operation.

2. Sincere wishes for your continued success.

/s/ Troy H. Middleton
TROY H. MIDDLETON
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding.

Ag 330.13 (AG) Ist Ind.
HQ II CORPS, APO 302, US Army, 8 August 1943.

TO: CO, 2nd Chemical Weapons Bn.

I take pleasure in forwarding this letter of commendation and in adding my personal appreciation thereto.

/s/ O. N. Bradley
O. N. BRADLEY
Lieutenant General
Commanding.

AG 330.13 (AG) 2nd Ind.
HEADQUARTERS, 2nd CHEMICAL BATTALION, APO No. 700, US Army, 18 August 1943

TO: All Company and Detachment Commanders.

1. The above commendation was made possible only by the untiring devotion of the officers and men to their task at hand. In view of the determination and fortitude shown by every individual it is directed that certified copies of this commendation become a permanent record in each company and detachment and that copies be filed in each officers personal records.

/s/ Robert W. Breaks
ROBERT W. BREAKS
Lt. Col., 2d Cml. Bn.
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS THIRD INFANTRY DIVISION
APO — 3

23 August 1943

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 2nd Chemical Motorized Battalion.

The Sicilian campaign has ended. You have overcome natural obstacles of terrain rendered a thousandfold more difficult by enemy demolitions and opposition. Your record during these days will be an inspiration to all Americans. Your success can be attributed to high standards of individual and organizational skill, developed over a long, and sometimes tedious, period of training. You have accomplished the objective toward which those laborious efforts were directed. You have aided in attaining a smashing victory.

The 2nd Chemical Motorized Battalion distinguished itself during the period of its attachment to this command by its immediate availability for, and its efficient accomplishment of, every smoke and other mission it was called upon to fire. The rapid advance, the tortuous roads, the constant action without rest tested the mettle of all the members of your command. In spite of continuous service since July 11th, you have performed your assigned functions in a most commendable manner.

I want to express to you and every soldier of your command my personal appreciation for your efforts and your loyal support.

/s/ L. K. Truscott Jr.
L. K. TRUSCOTT JR.
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding.

AG 330.13-C/S 1st Ind.

Hq II Corps, APO 302, In the Field, 2 September 1943

TO: Commanding Officer, 2nd Chemical Motorized Battalion.

I take pleasure in forwarding this letter of commendation and in adding my personal appreciation thereto.

/s/ O. N. Bradley
O. N. BRADLEY
Lieutenant General, U. S. A.
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS, THIRTY-SIXTH INFANTRY DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

AG 201.2

APO 36, U. S. Army
28 December 1943

SUBJECT: Appreciation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 2nd Chemical Battalion, APO 36, U. S. Army.

1. Companies A, B, C and D of your battalion have served with this Division for the past seven weeks. During this time, the reports received have indicated that the personnel of these companies have

a high devotion to duty, are tireless in their efforts to assist in the general operation and have completed such mission assigned to them in a superb manner.

2. Please express to the members of these companies my appreciation for their fine service and cooperation.

/s/ Fred L. Walker
FRED L. WALKER
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMY
APO 758, US Army

13 April 1944

GENERAL ORDERS

NUMBER 23

COMMENDATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, War Department Circular Number 333, dated 22 December 1943, the 2nd Chemical Weapons Battalion (Motorized) is commended for outstanding performance of duty while in support of the *** Division on 6 August 1943 in Sicily.

Preceding and in conjunction with the attack of the *** Combat Team across the *** River and up Hill ***, "B" Company of this battalion fired whitephosphorus shells to set up a 3500-yd. rolling smoke screen from the river bed to the ridge of the enemy-held Hill ***. "A" and "D" Companies simultaneously fired many WP and HE missions to eliminate opposing centers of resistance. Although the main attack was held up by enemy artillery, which had direct observation of the entire area, and friendly artillery and half-tracks had been forced to withdraw, the mortar crews remained and helped to repel a strong enemy counterattack. Later in the day this battalion established a protective smoke screen for two battalions of the *** Combat Team. This protective smoke screen enabled the two battalions to shift their positions and withdraw across the stream under cover of darkness, thereby avoiding complete annihilation or capture. The superior performance of the 2nd Chemical Weapons Battalion (Motorized) in the unusually hazardous action described reflects highest credit on the military forces of the United States and is worthy of the highest commendation.

By Command of Major General PATCH:

ARTHUR A. WHITE
COLONEL, GSC
Chief of Staff.

COMMAND POST, 22 November 1944

FROM: General Magnan, Commandant 9th DIC.

TO : Major Meyerson, Commander 2nd Cm1 Bn.

My Dear Comrade-in-Arms.

When the 2nd Cm1 Bn was relieved from the Division to continue the battle before Belfort, I had great pleasure and a keen satisfaction for the manner in which your unit conducted itself during the time of the difficult fighting which caused the collapse of the enemy front between the Doubs and the Swiss frontier, an uncontestible victory which led to the liberation of the French provinces of the East.

You have the admiration of the Division for the manner in which your Battalion carried out my orders of attack, for the rapidity, precision and effectiveness of the units' fire, in particular before ECURCEY and the GRANDS BOIS.

I will recognize any recommendations you may wish to submit to me for citations for officers and men of the 2nd Cm1 Bn who have distinguished themselves in particular during the attack of November 14 to 17, 1944.

/s/ Magnan.

HEADQUARTERS, 2ND CHEMICAL BATTALION
Office of the Battalion Commander

A. P. O. No. 758
U. S. Army
25 November 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Officers & Enlisted Men, 2nd Cm1 Bn., APO No. 758, U. S. Army.

1. Quoted below is a letter of commendation received from General Morliere of the 9th D. I. C.

Command Post, 22. November 1944

FROM: General of the Brigade MORLIERE Infantry Commander of the 9th DIC, and attached troops east of the Doubs River.

TO : Battalion Commander, 2nd Cm1 Bn attached to the 9th DIC.

I wish to thank you for the magnificent contribution that you have given me during the attacks of 15, 16, 17, November 1944. Without a doubt the powerful, efficient action of your units (companies) had much to do with the success of our attacks on EXURCEY, ROCHES-les-BLAMONT and HERIMON-COURT. Please transmit to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of your command my most sincere congratulations for the valor and courage which they displayed in these actions.

/s/ Morliere.

2. It is with gratification that I transmit this letter of commendation to the officers and enlisted men of the Battalion. It is not the first letter of its kind received and I feel confident that future actions of this organization will continue on the same high level of combat efficiency.

/s/ David W. Meyerson
DAVID W. MEYERSON
Major, 2nd Cm1 Bn
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS 399TH INFANTRY
APO No. 447, US ARMY

12 December 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Battalion, Special Unit and Commanding Officers of Supporting Elements.

1. I wish to express my thanks to all the Officers and Enlisted Men of this Combat Team and Attached Units, for a job well done. Your excellent work has resulted in the taking of Lemberg and surrounding territory. This could not have been done without the combined work of the Infantry, Artillery, Armored Unit, Tank Destroyers, Engineers, and the Chemical Mortars, and not forgetting the excellent work that the Medical Corps has been doing through all engagements.

2. Both General Burress and General Miller have praised the fine work done by all arms in this achievement.

3. The taking of the town and surrounding territory around Lemberg has reduced the strength of the enemy and will enable the Division to reach its objective in a very short time.

/s/ Andrew C. Tychsen
ANDREW C. TYCHSEN
Colonel, 399th Infantry
Commanding.

Individual Decorations

LEGION of MERIT

Capt. Douglas R. McConnohie

CWO William F. Houser

SILVER STAR

Lt. Paul Adkins
Pvt. Robert W. Davis
Pfc. Joseph Dorn
Lt. Col. Sam Efnor Jr.
Pfc. Ernest J. Fortier
Pfc. Harold S. Gano

Pfc. Amos P. Grizzard
T/5 Charles H. Huff
S/Sgt. James A. Kulka
T/4 Stanley C. Kokoszka
S/Sgt. James G. McFayden (Post-
humously)

Pfc. Lorenzo A. Poin
Cpl. Robert J. Schellenberger
Pfc. Martin S. Tazreak
Capt. Lowell E. Thompson
*Pfc. Frank I. White

*Indicates Oak Leaf Cluster

SOLDIER'S MEDAL

Cpl. Leburn J. Bailey
T/4 Samuel P. Butto

Pvt. Robert W. Davis
Capt. George E. Hall

Pfc. Jesse V. Johnson
Pvt. Gav Thompson

BRONZE STAR

Sgt. Paul Andruch
T/5 Herbert Aram
T/5 Hayden Bartlett
Lt. Roland C. Barton
Lt. George E. Bell
Sgt. Sol B. Benzion
M/Sgt. Eugene Bevelalqaw
Sgt. Frank Blinstrub Jr.
T/5 Harvey R. Bowman
Pfc. William C. Boyd
Pfc. John J. Boyle
Lt. Walter J. Chrzanowski
Pfc. George M. Constans
Pfc. Edgar Cornett
Pfc. James M. Craig
Pfc. Frank L. Cramer
Pfc. Jim Crawford
Pfc. Kenneth R. Crotty
Lt. Raymond C. Dale
Pfc. Lowell M. Dice
Cpl. Russel W. Dittmar
Sgt. Clarence E. Dix
Sgt. Harold Erdich
Sgt. Alfonso F. Falvo
Pfc. Michael Fech Jr.
Pfc. John S. Ford
Cpl. Ernest J. Fortier
Sgt. Frank B. Fox
Pfc. Norman L. Gearhart
T/5 Verus L. Grilliot
Lt. William J. Gumm
S/Sgt. William H. Hendricks

Pfc. Gerald S. Henry
T/5 James Hresil
Pfc. Frank J. Ingrish
Lt. Robert L. Jardine
S/Sgt. John H. Johnson
Pfc. John F. Kane
Pfc. Francis X. Koebel
S/Sgt. Paul Korchun
Sgt. John J. Kwasnik
Sgt. Michael Laba
Pfc. Samuel W. Lacy
T/5 Michael E. Lanza
Lt. William E. Link
Pfc. Roy A. Lawless
Pvt. James C. Loftus
Sgt. Leslie V. Marty
Pfc. William T. Marche
Pfc. Harold H. McBride Jr.
Pfc. William H. McCleese
Pvt. Clyde McCoskey
Pfc. Michael P. McMahon
T/Sgt. John D. McEwen Jr.
Sgt. Lewis S. Miller Jr.
S/Sgt. Lucius M. Mills
Pfc. Sam N. Minshew
Pfc. Louis J. Money
Pfc. Douglas M. Morrison
Capt. Woodford T. Morelev
T/5 Joseph P. Nee
T/5 Casimer J. Niec
S/Sgt. Andrew J. Oravec

Lt. Walter W. Perrott
Sgt. Levin L. Peters
Lt. Hilary M. Prince
*Cpl. Myron O. Ravenscroft
S/Sgt. Edmund Rego
M/Sgt. William G. Roberts
Lt. David R. Rodney
Cpl. Junior E. Searfoss
Lt. Jack F. Shook
Cpl. Joseph T. Siarkowicz
Pvt. Loyd A. Simonsen
Pfc. Carl E. Sims
Cpl. James E. Slusher
S/Sgt. Abraham Smith
T/5 Robert C. Smith
T/5 Thomas F. Smith
Pfc. Thomas J. Stanowski
S/Sgt. Richard A. Stark
Sgt. Walter L. Stumpf
Pvt. William E. Sutton
Cpl. Conrad F. Szymanski
Pfc. Elmer S. Thomas
Lt. William H. Timberman
Cpl. Peter L. Tomory
Sgt. Francis L. Uzdilla
T/5 Bernard V. Wallin
Pfc. Thomas C. Webb
Pfc. Warren E. Witman
T/5 Wesley F. Wooten
Capt. George H. Young
Sgt. Harry Yavorsky

*Indicates Oak Leaf Cluster

PURPLE HEART

Sgt. Lovis F. Acerbi
 Pfc. Lewis D. Alexander
 T. 5 Herbert Aram
 Sgt. Lewis F. Azeribi
 Pvt. Kenneth W. Bakle
 Capt. Harry E. Barnes
 Pvt. Roscoe C. Barnett
 Lt. Roland C. Barton
 *Pfc. James D. Baskette
 Lt. George E. Bell
 Sgt. Harry R. Bell
 Sgt. Sol B. Benzion
 Pvt. Kenneth G. Berg
 M/Sgt. Eugene Bevelalqaw
 Pvt. Ray D. Blackburn
 Pfc. Francis Blinstrub Jr.
 Pvt. Sebastian Bottiglieri
 Lt. Col. Robert W. Breaks
 1st. Sgt. Robert B. Brennan
 Pvt. Joseph N. Bricken
 Pvt. Theodore F. Brown
 *Cpl. Robert Buchanan
 Pvt. Ernest Caillouette
 Pfc. Heliodoro G. Caldera
 *Pfc. Howard K. Caldwell
 Pfc. Thomas V. Canavan
 Pfc. Calixto S. Candola
 Lt. Walter J. Chrzanowski
 Lt. Mitchell S. Ciborowski
 *T/5 Earl L. Clarke
 Pfc. William R. Cloney
 Pvt. Ulysees Collett
 Lt. Siverin P. Comninaki
 *Pvt. George M. Constans
 Pfc. Otis Cooper
 Pfc. Edgar Cornett
 Pvt. James M. Craig
 Pfc. Frank L. Cramer
 Pvt. Daniel A. Christinziani
 Pvt. Kenneth R. Crotty
 Capt. Paul E. Curran
 Lt. Raymond Dale
 Cpl. Allen E. Davis
 Pvt. John J. Degroot
 Pfc. George A. Delaney
 Pfc. Lowell M. Dice
 S Sgt. Alexander W. Ditchkus
 Cpl. Russell W. Dittmar
 Pfc. Harry W. Dodge
 Lt. William M. Dougan
 Pvt. Abraham J. Dowding
 Pvt. Hampton P. Ducote
 Pvt. John S. Dunay
 Pfc. William T. Dunston
 Pfc. Calvin C. Edwards
 Lt. Col. Sam Efnor Jr.
 Pvt. James F. Egolf

Pfc. Charles A. Elliot
 Pvt. Willie E. Etherlon
 Pvt. Daniel M. Evanisko
 Sgt. Alfonso F. Falvo
 Pvt. Foister Fields
 Pvt. Anthony Fiore
 Pfc. David E. Fisher
 Pfc. Ernest J. Fortier
 Pvt. Jack J. Fowler
 S Sgt. Frank B. Fox
 *Pvt. Robert H. Friedenberg
 Pvt. Robert E. Fuller
 Pvt. T. C. Funburg
 Sgt. Glenn J. Fuson
 S Sgt. Lawrence L. Galusha
 Pfc. Cyrus M. Garhart Jr.
 Pvt. George A. Geddie
 Pfc. Joseph A. Giardullo
 *Pvt. Clarence W. Gilley
 Sgt. Edwards F. Golas
 Pvt. Robert A. Guitierrez
 Pfc. Arthur H. Hall
 Capt. George E. Hall
 Sgt. William H. Hamilton
 Pfc. Bernard J. Hardin
 Pvt. Michael Hassa
 Pfc. Frederick C. Heaton
 Pfc. Joseph E. Henitz
 Pfc. James F. Hipskind
 Cpl. Charles W. Holliman
 Pfc. James C. Hope
 Pfc. Edward V. Huda
 *Pfc. Glomon Hurt
 Pvt. Louis Inden
 Pfc. Joseph E. Ineichen
 *Lt. Clarence E. Jefferies
 Pvt. Doy Johnson
 Cpl. Charles D. Jones Jr.
 Pfc. Edward E. Jones
 Pvt. Sandile Jones
 Pfc. George E. Joyce
 Cpl. Carl W. Kanter
 Pfc. Wilbur G. Kapp
 T/5 William L. R. Karabec Jr.
 Pvt. Warren J. Keigharn
 Pfc. Francis E. Kelly
 Pfc. Charles E. King
 S/Sgt. Philip E. Kinter
 Pvt. William R. Kirklin
 Pvt. Anthony J. Kitsos
 Cpl. Richard W. Knightley
 Pfc. Harry E. Koehler
 Pfc. Paul J. Koerner
 Pfc. Morris P. Kohn
 T/5 Stanley C. Kokoszka
 Pvt. Henry B. Kolos
 S Sgt. Andrew Kotcher

Pfc. Alphonse M. Krystowiak
 Capt. Leonard R. Kuiper
 Sgt. Michael Laba
 Sgt. John S. Lamia
 Pvt. Weber Lashley
 Sgt. Maurice W. Lawler
 Pfc. Roy A. Lawless
 Pvt. Isaac L. LeFever
 Pvt. Armand R. Lemieux
 Pfc. Jackson C. Lemons
 T/4 Frank Licker
 Pvt. Edward J. Light
 Pvt. Alfred L. Litsey
 Pfc. Cordell Liverett
 Pfc. William J. Long
 Pvt. Raymond F. Lorch
 Pvt. Nicholas Lucas
 Pfc. Winifred E. Lykins
 Pfc. Leon L. Lyons
 Pfc. Richard C. Lyons
 Pvt. Harold C. Mackey
 1st. Sgt. John J. Marchio
 Pvt. Clarence E. Martens
 Pvt. John T. Mawhinney
 Lt. Charles A. Mc Claugherty
 Pfc. William N. Mc Cleese
 Capt. Douglas R. Mc Connohie
 Pvt. Lester L. Mc Daniel
 Pfc. Frank Mc Elyea
 Pvt. Arthur S. Mc Murtrey
 Pfc. James A. Mc New
 Pfc. Francis Mc Nulty
 Pfc. Louis E. Meadows
 Pvt. Frank H. Mekelberg
 Pvt. Merle W. Menter
 Pvt. Edwards E. Mereideth
 T. 5 Charles E. Midlam
 Sgt. Walter Mika
 Pvt. Frederick L. Miller
 Sgt. Lewis S. Miller Jr.
 Pfc. Sam N. Minshew
 Major Floyd B. Mitman Jr.
 Pvt. Wilfred T. Moffatt
 *Pvt. Robert H. Mokes
 Pvt. Alfred Moore
 Pvt. Robert H. Moore
 Pfc. William Nason
 Lt. Walter C. Norris
 T. 5 Alexander R. Nowacki
 Pvt. Daniel J. O'Halloran
 Pvt. Anthony J. Pager Jr.
 Pfc. Sam Parisi
 Pfc. Ray C. Parsons
 S Sgt. Anthony P. Pennucci
 *Lt. Walter W. Perrott
 T. 5 Joseph E. Perry
 Pvt. Paul C. Picard

Pvt. Lorenzo A. Poin
Pfc. Raoul Poisson s
Pfc. John W. Polston
Pfc. Steven G. Pongrac
Pfc. Curtis J. Porter
Pvt. Walter J. Porter
Pfc. George Price Jr.
Lt. John Puskar
Pfc. Clifford L. Ramey
Pfc. Candelario M. Ramos
Pfc. Earl E. Reall
Pvt. Charles E. Rector
Pvt. Harry C. Reed
Pvt. Henry E. Richardson
Pvt. Ralph F. Ridenour
Pvt. Henry L. Rimmer
Pfc. Peter A. Rizzo
Lt. David R. Rodney
Sgt. Joseph W. Ruszkowski
Pfc. Walter S. Ryms
Cpl. Joseph M. Sabol
Pfc. Brather H. Saunders
Pfc. Douglas J. Schurman
*Cpl. Raymond T. Scoggins
Pvt. George R. Sebo
Pfc. William L. Seidenstricker

Sgt. Grover C. Selph
Pvt. Jake G. Sharkey
Lt. Jack F. Shook
Pfc. Michael J. Slinkosky
Sgt. James E. Slusher Jr.
Pvt. Henry A. Smith
Pfc. Wilbur J. Smith
Pfc. John Solan
*Pfc. Alexander Sopyla
Pvt. Daniel S. Spechler
Sgt. Vaclav J. Steinocher
Pvt. Stanley M. Stoner
Sgt. Walter L. Stumpf
*Pvt. Edward L. Sullivan
T-4 William P. Synnott
Cpl. Chester C. Szymanski
Pvt. Earl Tackett Jr.
*Pfc. Martin S. Tazsreak
T-4 Gene J. Taylor
Pfc. Julian L. Thach
Sgt. William J. Thomas
Pvt. C. T. Thompson
Pfc. Milton J. Thompson
Pvt. Walter V. Thompson
Sgt. William J. Thompson
Pvt. Wallace A. Thorn

Lt. William H. Timberman
Pfc. Pete L. Tomory
*Cpl. Elmer E. Trost
Pfc. Will K. Ulm
Pfc. William D. Ulva
Pvt. Charles C. Vaccaro
Pvt. Joseph Vidovich
Pvt. Carl W. Vosburg
Capt. Donald M. J. Vredenburgh
Pvt. William S. Wargo
Pvt. Thomas C. Webb Sr.
Pfc. Earl White
Pvt. Thomas C. White
Sgt. Ernest F. Willet
Pvt. James M. Williams
Cpl. Robert T. Wilson
Sgt. Pete J. Wolfe
Pfc. William M. Worthington
Cpl. Virgil L. Wright
Pvt. Frank U. Young
Capt. George H. Young
Pfc. Rocco F. Yulianetti
Sgt. John Zanetti
Sgt. John R. Zedek
Pvt. Peter W. Zervos

*Indicates Oak Leaf Cluster

CROIX DE GUERRE with SILVER STAR

Capt. Joseph L. Canady Jr.

Pfc. Francis O'Hara

Lt. Samuel Witz

CROIX DE GUERRE with BRONZE STAR

Major Floyd B. Mitaman Jr.

Major James O. Quimby Jr.



... CHIN UP, STOMACH IN, EYES STRAIGHT
AHEAD



COL. HUMPHREYVILLE AND REVIEW-
ING PARTY,
NIEDERNDORF, AUSTRIA, MAY, 1945



PRESENTATION OF AWARDS AT BATTALION
REVIEW



"CHARLIE" COMPANY, COL. MEYERSON INSPECTING



STANOWSKI OF "C" COMPANY AND
PET MORTAR



SHOOTING THE DANUBE'DFC. KIRKLIN
AND CPL. SZYMANSKI ON THE FIRING
LINE



"SOMEWHERE IN GERMANY"

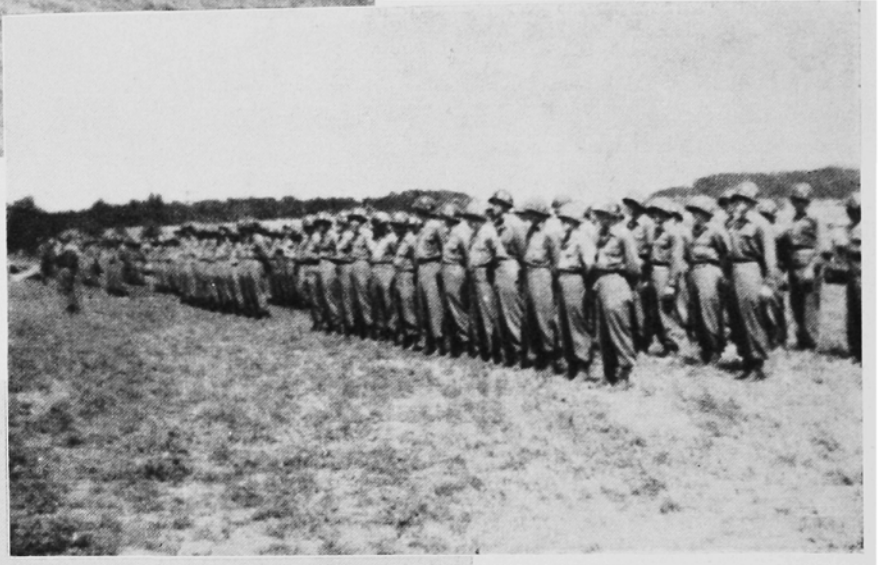


2 G CONVOY PAUSES IN NURNBERG

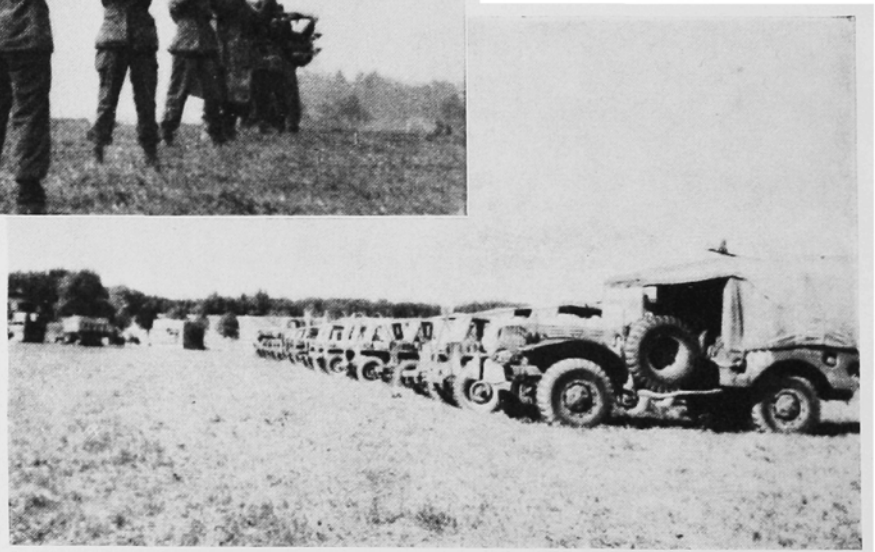


IN COMPANY-FORMATION PASSING . .

...AND STANDING IN REVIEW



TIME OUT FOR SMALL ARMS PRACTICE — JUST IN CASE — EBBS, GERMANY



TRUCKS TOO, STANDING REVIEW



SETUP IN NURNBERG



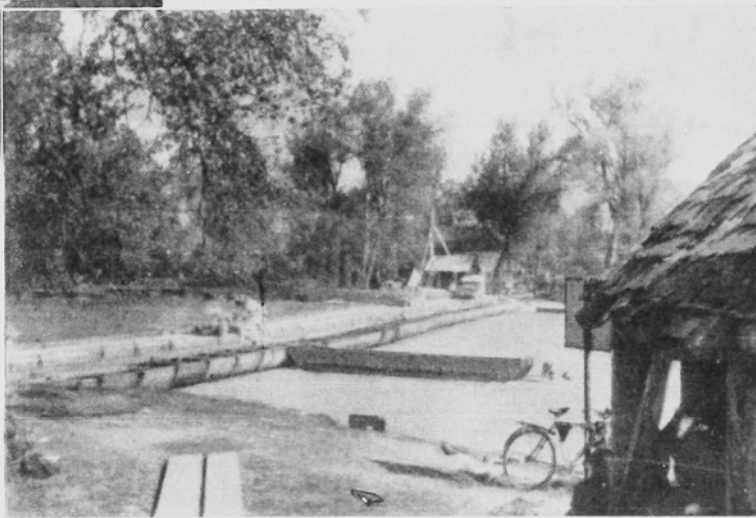
STOPING FOR THE NIGHT . . . APRIL 1945,
JUST NORTH OF NURNBERG



CONVOY APPROACHING . . .



SOUVENIR OF DACHAU



. . . AND CROSSING THE DANUBE

NICHTS HABEN ZIGARETTEN OR
SHOKOLADE



HOUSE-WARMING PARTY
BAKER COMPANY



WE WILL HAVE RECREATION



"FORMAL OPENING OF DACHAU
PARK"
SACHRANG, GERMANY, JUNE 1945

GOON GUN GAL

(Sung to tune of "Lili Marlene")

We have a Recon O, who finds you a place,
Then our S-3, who checks upon your pace.
Our Liaison will give "all clear"
And then it's up to you, my dear,
To sing your song of hate;
Before it gets too late.

Inside a building, which is my OP
Trying to spot a Jerry, Oh! where can he be?
Hiding as always inside a house,
Afraid to come out, the dirty louse;
Afraid of you, my doll,
Afraid of Goon Gun Moll.

Oh! Mr. Exec, this is the OP,
Send over a volley on concentration three.
You are short and to the right;
Now make a change and check your sight;
And have her blast again,
That dear Old Goon Gun Jane.

Now, Mr. Exec, you're right on the spot,
So fire for effect, and we will kill the lot.
A few more less to fret about,
The further we get in the land of Kraut;
Mission complete, Old Pal,
Thanks a lot, Goon Gun Gal.

You've been through Sicily, Italy and then here,
And you've rode through France, just like Paul Revere.
Your work's admired by all we help.
You've made the Heinies holler and yelp,
For you, our stove pipe moll
Tis you, the Goon Gun Doll.

There'll be a crowd, wondering who's the dame
With such a helluva title for a name;
So do your stuff — a blast from you —
And then they'll know the four point two.
For you're our Goon Gun Tess
The pride of CWS.

Words by Lt. Raymond Dale
Written near Lauterbach, Germany
December, 1944.



MAIN 940.542 U56h
History Of Second Chemical Mortar Battal
United States. Army. 2D Chemical Mortar
1946?
Combined Arms Research Library
Fort Leavenworth, KS



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U56h

U. S. Army. 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion.
History of Second Chemical Mortar
Battalion.

