

HEADQUARTERS 88TH INFANTRY DIVISION
UNITED STATES ARMY
APO #88

NARRATIVE

April 1 - 30, 1944

During the month of April the division continued the mission of maintaining an active defense on the lower Garigliano bridgehead. Initially, it held the entire II Corps front with three infantry regiments abreast, but with the entry of the 85th Division into the line the sector was reduced to two regiments and later to one. This permitted during the month the withdrawing from the line each of the infantry regiments for a period of rest, recreation and further training in the Cascano - Carinola area east of the Massico Mountain Range. The highlights were the combined infantry and tank training and small arms firing.

Except for several skirmishes the action of the infantry on the front was limited to patrolling. A maximum of night patrols interspersed with daylight patrols were carried out by all battalions to get practical experience, as well as to gain information and take prisoners. Many minor skirmishes occurred resulting in the capture of 15 prisoners of war. Individual positions and disposition of smaller units were continually improved but no attempt was made to occupy any new ground or enemy positions by force. Early in the month plans were made for the capture of DAMIANO (411) and Hill 316. The 349th had completed all planning, including use of tanks and TD's, when the plan was cancelled by higher headquarters.

The 403rd Field Artillery Battalion (155mm How) and the 910th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm How) of the 85th Division Artillery were attached to the division on the 3rd and moved into positions in the MINTURNO area on the night of the 4th supporting the 351st. Other elements of the 85th Division arrived in the Corps area from Naples. On the 10th the left sector held by the 339th Infantry passed to the command of the 85th Division. The 337th Infantry completed relieving the 351st on the night of the 14th and the 85th Division assumed command of that sector. The 403rd and 920th Field Artillery Battalions also reverted to 85th Division control. The division assisted the 85th in making the reliefs and all details were closely worked out together by commanders and staffs of all echelons. Command of the center sector passed to the 85th Division at 0200 April 14.

On 15 April the division was disposed with the 349th in the line and the 350th and 351st in the rear. The 350th and 351st had spent 26 and 37 continuous days in the line, respectively. The division artillery remained in their initial positions with the exception of the 338th Field Artillery Battalion which moved into new positions in the Castrese area, supporting the 349th Infantry. Companies of the engineer battalion and the medical battalion were rotated, allowing each to have a rest period. A rotation system of relief was also initiated on the 20th for the artillery whereby the personnel of one battery of each battalion were allowed to go to the rear every three days. On 15 April 1944 the forward echelon command post of division headquarters was moved from Carano to an olive grove several miles east and north of Cellole. The division reconnaissance troop was withdrawn from its positions at the mouth of the Ausente Valley and returned to rear areas after 36 days in the line.

The enemy was a little more active on the front this month than during March. Several prisoners of war stated they had been alerted for an attack by the Americans to come during April. His activity indicated this feeling. At dusk on the 8th the 403FA OP reported tanks massing around the bottom slopes of M. Bracchi. Immediate steps were taken to alert the units and prepare for a possible attack. Though it was never proven that there was a massing of tanks to the front, two tanks were definitely knocked out by artillery and one by a patrol of the 351st Infantry. This incident was welcome in that it showed the troops some enemy tactical possibilities and prevented troops from getting stale and careless from inactivity.

Aerial photographs verified by infantry, artillery and air OP's showed the enemy was increasing his positions, particularly in Bracchi, Geracoli and Damiano areas. There were no indications, however, that new troops were in this area.

Enemy artillery fire during the month was characterized by three general periods. The bulk of his artillery fire in the first nine days was in the forward areas with heavy concentrations falling in the Minturno, Tufo and Tremensuoli areas with the Minturno Bridge receiving a light concentration each day. There was no counterbattery fire. The period 9-19 April saw a tapering off of fire in the forward areas with counterbattery fires gaining in volume. In the last period counterbattery fires were heavy with increased fire on bridges and communications while fires in the forward areas were negligible.

Our division artillery had a relatively quieter month with only one battalion in direct support of an infantry regiment. During the slack periods all batteries fired battery missions independent of the fire direction centers. Heretofore, nearly all firing had been done through the fire direction centers and this opportunity enabled them to get the rust off the other techniques of fire. Each artillery officer fired at least one battery problem. Another major item in the artillery was the division artillery concentrated fires. Though this had often been done before, the technique was heavily stressed. The division artillery expended 43,940 rounds in the month.

Training in the rear areas was continued for units out of the line. Because of periods of inactivity in forward areas, little physical exercise was possible for troops. Accordingly, training in rear areas was designed to overcome any passive attitude they may have acquired by reinvigorating in them the aggressive attack spirit. Hardening by mountain climbing and marches was undertaken to get men back in good physical condition. Range and field firing was prominent in the training with eight ranges available for use. Combined training for the infantry and the tanks was carried out under general supervision by division, with the units working out details together. Various types of tactical problems were run with the infantry and tanks coordinating. Systems of liaison and communication and a good understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the team were developed. Platoon, company and battalion attack problems were run. A major part of the training was accomplished at night.

In order to provide an appreciation to officers of air and ground units of the workings and problems of their opposite branches, a policy of interchanging such officers was initiated by higher headquarters. Infantry officers from this

division were sent to air force units for periods of 5 days and air corps officers were sent to front line infantry units of this division for a similar period. Instruction for infantry officers in air corps operations included participating in bombing missions. Air corps officers with infantry units were given front line experience. It is felt that this interchange is definitely beneficial in providing an understanding of the operations of two branches.

Quotas were allotted the division at the Fifth Army Patrolling School and Sniper's School. Quotas for the patrolling school were such that each battalion was permitted to send a complete patrol of 1 officer and 14 EM to be trained as a unit and upon return to the division to function as a unit, either in additional training or in combat. Quotas for the sniper's school were filled on the basis of 1 sniper for each sniper's rifle in the division.

One battalion of infantry in the rear areas was designated as division reserve under continuous alert for employment on counterattack missions. Commanders were kept familiar with the situation and counterattack plans. The battalion was to be prepared to move on two hour's notice.

The division engineer battalion kept at least one company in continuous support of front line regiments, employing them in lifting minefields, road construction, etc. A jeep trail was constructed up the side of the MASSICO Range to give the companies experience in blasting a road up a steep mountain.

The division has provided for a system to handle "exhaustion cases," (anxiety neurotics) in a training center set up near the division clearing station under the supervision of an officer with front line experience, with the division psychiatrist assisting. It was felt that under a busy training schedule and excellent leadership, a majority of such cases would be cured in from three to four days. However, the initiation of this program was delayed until the number of cases on hand reached a figure which would justify it. Of the 85 cases received in the training center and treated by the psychiatrist, over 50 returned to front line duty after three or four day's treatment.

The changes in attachments to the division were numerous. Companies "C" and "D" of the 83rd Chemical Battalion were withdrawn from positions supporting the 349th Infantry and reverted to Fifth Army control on 6 April. The 142nd Field Regiment (British) was detached from the division on 7 April after having stayed a requested additional ten days. The 760th Tank Battalion was attached to the division on 8 April, relieving the 755th Tank Battalion. Company "A" of the 760th had been previously attached and had occupied positions supporting the 351st Infantry and was immediately relieved to return to battalion control for rest and heavy maintenance. While under division control, Company "A" of the 53rd QM (DUKW) Battalion spent a short period of maintenance on its vehicles and then, dismounted, operated as the beach patrol in the division sector until detached on 13 April. II Corps assumed responsibility of smoking the Minturno Bridge and artillery emplacements on 4 April. At that time the 172nd Chemical Company (SG) reverted to Corps control. The 5th Italian Mule Pack Company was relieved 5 April and was replaced several days later by the 2nd Italian Mule Pack Company. On 30 April the 753rd Tank Battalion was attached to the division. At the end of the month the division had the following attached units:

804th Tank Destroyer Battalion
760th Tank Battalion
753rd Tank Battalion
525th Italian Infantry Regiment
2nd Italian Mule Pack Company
Platoon, 10th Field Hospital

A total of 928 infantry replacements and 84 field artillery replacements were received by the division during the month of April. These replacements were handled according to the new Fifth Army policy whereby units were to be maintained at T/O strength but not to carry any overstrength. After the regiments had been filled to T/O strength the remainder of the replacements were kept in the regimental rear areas. The replacements were trained as a group, and, prior to being assigned to the regiments, were required to demonstrate certain mental and physical capabilities. While they were in the rear areas in the regimental replacement pools, training was continued under experienced officers of the regiments.

The Fifth Army policy of attaching surplus officers to the division was continued during the month, as was the policy of assigning such officers upon request of the units concerned, when vacancies developed. During the month of April, 25 such infantry officers were attached to the division; and 18 officers - 16 infantry and 2 engineer - previously attached, were permanently assigned to the division.

The division CIC detachment, charged with security along the coastal area as well as the division front, has apprehended 13 Axis agents. These agents were found among several thousand Italian refugees handled by the CIC as they entered the division sector from the enemy lines.

Colonel William T. Sexton, formerly secretary to the War Department General Staff, was attached to the division on 3 April in an observer capacity with the division artillery and remained with the division until early in May. On 17 April the division commander presented Colonel Sexton with the Legion of Merit which had been awarded by the War Department. Brigadier General William C. Crane, IV Corps Artillery Officer, was attached to the division on 22 April to command the division artillery when Brigadier General Kurtz contracted pneumonia. Colonel James Fry reported to the division as an extra colonel, spending a short time at division headquarters coordinating infantry-tank training and plans before going to the 350th Infantry. He commanded the 350th Infantry for a short while. Colonel Lynch was in the hospital.

Again a considerable number of general officers and visitor-observers visited the division during the month. Lt. General Mark W. Clark, Fifth Army Commander, visited the area on 3 April and again on April 27, with Major General Gruenther and Brigadier General Brann, visited and inspected the division command post. Major General Geoffrey Keyes, II Corps Commander, made frequent visits to the division, as did many members of his staff. Major General J.B. Coulter, Alexander M. Patch, Commanding General of the Seventh Army, visited the command post. Other visitors included General Alphonse Juin, Commanding General CEF, Major General Colton, Crown Prince Umberto of Italy, Major General Guillaume, Brigadier Generals, Moran, Kincaid, Williamson, Van de Veer, Warnock, Foster, Bowman, Elliot and Tate.

During the past two months division units have gained valuable combat experience, suffered casualties and have learned much of the enemy and his methods. Experience gained in combat has been applied in recent training, and new phases of training have been emphasized, particularly the highly important coordination between the infantry and attached units such as tanks, tank destroyers and chemical mortars. With the troops in good physical condition and possessing a high spirit, it is felt that the division is ready for and capable of accomplishing its missions in coming operations.

J. E. SLOAN
Major General, U.S. ARMY,
Commanding.

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
MAY 1944

On 1 May 1944 the Regiment commanded by Lt. Col. JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD was in a rear area for training and rest. Special emphasis was placed on physical conditioning and with this end in view many day and night marches were made. Battle Drill was practiced by the rifle squads. It proved valuable by improving both control and the effective use of available fire power of the small unit, particularly of the B.A.R. team. The battalions conducted night problems, stressing Scouting and Patrolling and employing the principles of Battle Drill. On the night of 1 May, Staff and Company Officers of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions took part in a C.P.X. working the problem from maps at Regimental Headquarters.

General MARK CLARK, Army Commander, visited the Division area on 3 May. Training ceased at 0945 hours. At 1300 hours the General addressed the 88th Division welcoming it into the 5th Army. The General expressed the conviction that in the hard fighting to come the 88th Division would acquit itself nobly. After the General's address which lasted for approximately a quarter of an hour the units resumed their training program.

The three battalions conducted Infantry, Tank, Artillery Field exercises. Cannon Company fired in support of the infantry in the exercises. Personnel from the 1st and 2nd Battalions and Special Units armed with the 50 cal. M.G. engaged in practice firing. Regimental Anti-Tank Company and Battalion Anti-Tank Platoons fired their guns from the beaches using the sea as an impact area. D and H Companies fired their machine guns on the range. The 3rd Battalion, being the first unit to move up to the front from this area, was not able to complete all the training scheduled for the other battalions.

Supplementing the training schedule was a schedule of recreational activities made up and directed by the Special Service Officer. Captain COAKLEY arranged for various units to spend the day at Speedy Beach and a limited number were given passes to visit NAPLES. Eight officers and two hundred men attended the show "This Is The Army" at SANTA MARIA. Movies were shown every night at the recreational center and various USO shows and Italian show-units were scheduled for the men.

From the rest camp the following officers went on DS to the 57th Bomber Wing Squadron at CORSICA: Lt. Col. JOSEPH A. KIELTY, Captain CARL F. BENZ, 1st Lt. ROBERT E. VAIL, 1st Lt. WILLIAM H. MEYER, 1st Lt. RICHARD McFARLAND and 1st Lt. GIFFORD G. GIBSON. They went as observers in conjunction with the War Department policy of promoting a better understanding of operational practices and problems between the Ground and Air Forces.

On the night of 5 May the advance detail of the 3rd Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. WALTER B. YEAGER moved into position near MINTURNO. Major SHUEY was slightly wounded during the movement and Captain LOTTERHOS replaced him as Regimental Surgeon. On the night of 7 May the balance of the Regiment moved into position near TUFO.

The morning of 8 May found the Regiment less one battalion in the line in the vicinity of TUFO. The 1st Battalion had relieved the 3rd Battalion, 337th Inf. and the 2nd Battalion, designated Division reserve, was in an assembly area in the vicinity of MINTURNO. Cannon Company and Anti-Tank Company took up positions behind the 2nd Battalion. Headquarters Company and the Regimental C.P. were adjacent to the 2nd Battalion area. On the left was the 351st Inf. The 350th Inf. was on the right.

The order was given that all troops would stand-to daily at 0430 hours until daylight, and that all units would report to the Regimental C.P. hourly from 2100 to 0500 hours.

From 8 May to 11 May activity on the front was confined to artillery exchanges and patrol activity. Patrols were supplied by Company I, 337th Inf. This was done to keep any knowledge from the enemy of the presence of the 88th Division in the line. Patrols were sent out nightly with the mission of setting ambushes to forestall any enemy infiltration into our positions. Contact with the enemy was made on several occasions by these patrols. It consisted principally of exchanges of small arms fire with mortar fire called for by our patrols with good effect.

During the period from 8 May to 11 May several PW's were taken by our troops. These, together with the deserters who on several occasions gave themselves up in groups of two or three gave us much valuable information on the strength, morale and disposition of the enemy facing us.

Every effort was made at this time to prepare for the coming offensive operation. Supplies of food and ammunition were kept on hand at a maximum and the troops were prepared to move out at a moment's notice. Meetings were held, attended by all key personnel during which problems which were expected to arise were ironed out. It remained only for H Hour D Day to be designated by Division.

The moment for which every man in the Regiment had been anxiously waiting came at 2300 hours, 11 May 1944. Supported by one of the heaviest artillery barrages ever laid down by British or American forces our troops crossed the Line of Departure. Regimental Field Order No. 14 dated 8 May 1944 called for the 349th Inf. less 3rd Battalion to attack and capture Mt. BRACCHI, Mt. CERRI, SPIGNO and Mt. CIVITA and to be relieved on position by the 351st Inf. and then to assemble in division reserve in the vicinity of SPIGNO. To F Company went the honor of being the first unit in the 349th Inf. to cross the Line of Departure when at 2300 hours it moved according to plan to a forward position in the vicinity of SAN VITO. This was accomplished in the face of very light resistance.

The town of SANTA MARIA INFANTE, first objective of the 351st Inf. on our left proved to be a tough nut to crack. A stubborn enemy held until 14 May taking a terrific pounding from artillery and tanks and losing many men. This temporary hold up caused a change in the Division plans.

Several hours before SANTA MARIA fell, the 1st Battalion 349th Inf. pushed off moving towards Mt. BRACCHI. Commanded by Major JAMES E. HENDERSON, the 1st Battalion moved swiftly and aggressively and by nightfall of the same day, 14 May was dug in on the slopes of Mt. CIVITA having advanced about 6000 meters from

the Line of Departure, through heavy artillery and mortar fire driving small enemy groups from their positions. Company B reported capturing a German tank in good condition. Four casualties were reported when a platoon hit a mine field.

Prior to the fall of SANTA MARIA the 2nd Battalion 349th Inf. commanded by Lt. Col. JAMES W. DAVID and the 3rd Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. WALTER B. YEAGER moved to an assembly area southeast of that town taking the road north from MINTURNO. The two battalions, after the fall of SANTA MARIA about noon, 14 May took up the mission of the 351st Infantry with HILL 86 and CAPO D'AGUA as objectives. These objectives were taken in the face of strong resistance from enemy mortar and artillery fire and without pausing the advance was continued. By 1900 hours the 2nd Battalion and 3rd Battalion joined the 1st Battalion on the lower slopes of Mt. LA CIVITA.

That night the 3rd Battalion attacked up the slopes of LA CIVITA catching the enemy completely off guard and driving them from the heights, leaving their dead and wounded behind. So complete was the surprise element in this action that one officer and 22 enemy artillerymen were captured. It was obvious that the enemy had not expected so rapid an advance and when attacked on the top of LA CIVITA were engaged in shelling SANTA MARIA AND CAPO D'AGUA where they supposed our forward elements to be.

By the morning of 15 May LA CIVITA was taken and the regiment was ordered to push strong contact patrols from Mt. LA CIVITA 1500 meters west to the ridges in the vicinity of HILL 490, to continue pressure against the enemy and to be prepared to attack on order with at least 2 battalions to capture and hold the area in the vicinity of that hill.

It was at this time that the problem of supply came to the fore as a stupendous task. Although the Engineers were doing an excellent job in their construction of a road along the southern base of LA CIVITA, there was no way to supply the troops on the heights by vehicle. Forseeing this the Regimental Commander advised S-4 of the necessity of procuring mules and Italian porters to follow over whatever mountainous terrain the regiment would be ordered to move. This was done and on 15 May the first pack trains moved up the slopes, following the advancing battalions. The principal problem encountered throughout the following ten days was not so much that of scaling the high peaks but rather of guessing where a certain battalion would be at a specific time, so rapid was their advance. Also, there was the ever present danger from snipers and small ambush parties bypassed as the regiment moved on. Despite these problems, supplies of food, ammunition, wire and batteries continued to flow to the battalions, insuring their uninterrupted advance. Fortunately, the water supply in the mountains took care of itself. The men found wells scattered along the route which considerably lessened the load with which the pack train would otherwise have been burdened. Each man was required to carry a supply of Halazone tablets and to purify water in his canteen when drawn from these wells.

From the vicinity of Mt. LA CIVITA, the regiment attacked on Division order moving west towards HILL 490 at 1500 hours 15 May. The attack was coordinated with the 85th Division on the left. At 2200 hours the 349th Inf. together with the 337th F.A. Battalion were attached to the 85th Division to add strength to

its attack. Although the battalions reported that their progress was slow because of the extremely mountainous terrain, by midnight their objective had been reached.

On 16 May the battalions continued to move to the west reporting some enemy resistance consisting principally of snipers, group of 2 or 3 armed with machine pistols and scattered artillery fire. These small groups were methodically mopped up and were not permitted to slow up the advance. The route taken was through the mountains parallel to the CASTELLONORATO-TRIVIO-MARANOLA road which lay to the south. These three towns were objectives of the 337th Inf. on the left and the regiment's mission was to support this attack from the right in any way possible. As the day moved on, reports of scattered resistance came from the battalions and at 2000 hours the 3rd Battalion closed with the enemy in a stiff fire fight northeast of MARANOLA on HILL 441. Closing with the enemy aggressively the 3rd Battalion forced them to abandon their positions, exposing MARANOLA from the northeast. Preparations were made to assist the 85th Division, if necessary, in taking that town the next day. The 1st Battalion was then, abreast and north of the 3rd. The 2nd Battalion was northeast of TRIVIO to the rear of the 3rd. Division ordered a halt and the regiment dug in on positions for the night prepared to continue to attack at daylight.

The men, many of whom had not slept in 72 hours were given a few hours rest. Supplies reached the units by mule train, bringing food and ammunition.

Something should be said at this time of the communication set up which the regiment employed. Wire was laid throughout the entire advance from Division to regiment, from regiment to battalions and from the battalions to the companies. The problems facing the wire sections appeared insurmountable at the outset. The terrain was rugged and wires were constantly being ripped up by tanks and vehicles along the road, chewed up by goats and cattle or knocked out by artillery. In spite of this, excellent communication between units was maintained. Whenever a unit paused in its advance, wire parties, following close behind, brought the lines in. 110 wire was found to be far superior to 130 and despite its added weight was carried by the wire men over the highest and most inaccessible terrain.

On the move, the units found the SCR 300 radio to be the best means of communication. They worked particularly well on high points and when the battalions got out of range of regiment, relay stations were set up. Four nets were maintained - one in each battalion and one including the regiment and the battalions.

The SCR 536 radio was used within each company. Being somewhat temperamental, their effectiveness depended on the skill of the individual operator and the care he took of his set.

Between regiment and Division communication was maintained on the SCR 284 radio. This was very dependable but its use was limited to transmission by key.

On 17 May, the 85th Division attacked MARANOLA. The 349th Inf. received instructions not to turn south toward MARANOLA, but to continue to the west and capture the ridge 2000 meters northwest of that town. By 1500 hours the regiment reached its objective, and by 2200 hours had continued on, the 1st Battalion taking Mt. CAMPONI without resistance, the 2nd Battalion taking HILL 660 southeast of CAMPONI, and the 3rd Battalion taking the high ground south of Mt. LAPILLO, all

battalions digging in. The Regimental C.P. was set up in MARANOLA and by mid-night wire communication was in to all battalions. The battalions reported that they had all been supplied. Reconnaissance patrols were sent out to reconnoiter for routes of advance to the west.

By 0800 hours, 18 May a complete check had been made of ammunition on hand and supplies of food, wire and batteries. Weapons were cleaned and the battalions reported that the dead had been picked up and all wounded had been evacuated. Captain LOTTERHOS, Regimental Surgeon told the Regimental Commander that Lt. Col. DAVID, C.O., 2nd Battalion was stricken with pneumonia and had been evacuated. Major NORRIS R. FOWLER, Executive Officer, 1st Battalion and former Regimental S-4 assumed command of the 2nd Battalion.

The Regiment was instructed by the CG, 85th Division to hold present positions until further notice. At 1600 hours, the 349th Inf. reverted to the 88th Division and a message was received from General SLOAN to be prepared to move west on order to assist in cutting the FORMIA-ITRI -PICO road in the vicinity of ITRI.

At 2015 hours the 1st Battalion moved out, followed by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. The head of the column reached a point midway between MARANOLA and ITRI by 0600 hours 18 May after crossing a ridge well over 3000 feet high.

A message from CG, 88th Division ordered the 349th Inf. to push on vigorously, bypass light resistance and take ITRI. It was apparent from the light resistance being met that the enemy was running and every effort was to be made to make contact with the main body.

ITRI was taken at 1500 hours when the 1st Battalion, 349th Inf. moved in, clearing the town of snipers and small enemy groups left behind to slow up our advance. The enemy started shelling the town intermittently which kept up until dark. The three battalions moved into assembly areas in the vicinity of the town and the Regimental C.P. was set up in a house on the outskirts. General KENDALL arrived at the Regimental C.P. at 2000 hours and plans were laid to pursue the Krauts up Highway 7 towards FONDI.

At 0100 hours, the three battalions started moving up Highway 7 in the order, 2nd, 3rd, 1st. The plan called for the regiment to move with all possible speed up the highway with the mission of striking at the main body of the enemy, not permitting small groups to hold up the advance. Patrols were sent out to the flanks with orders to attack any resistance met, calling for additional assistance if needed.

The movement proceeded without incident. Only intermittent artillery fire was reported. By 0600 hours, the head of the column was two miles northeast of ITRI. Every two hours, the lead battalion was passed through by the succeeding battalions during which time it was re-supplied while the men got a short rest. Wire was laid along the route and the battalions tapped in on it to make the regular reports to the Regimental C.P.

At 0800 hours, General KENDALL left the C.P. to join the Regimental Commander up forward. His plan was for the regiment to leave Highway 7. The 1st Battalion struck off to the north, its objective being HILL 392, six miles northwest of ITRI. Taking that point it was to continue northwest across the high ground running roughly parallel to the Highway. The 3rd and 2nd continued along the

highway in that order. By 1200 hours, the 3rd Battalion was two miles from FONDI meeting light resistance - scattered small arms fire and artillery. As the 3rd Battalion neared the town, enemy resistance stiffened. Company I, the leading element, deployed in the face of heavy fire from 88's, light tanks and self-propelled guns. Company L, personally led by Lt. Col. YEAGER moved off the highway to the left to flank the enemy positions. Without the help of supporting armor which was held up in the rear by natural and prepared tank obstacles, the 3rd Battalion assaulted the town destroying a light tank, a self propelled gun and leaving many enemy dead in its wake. By 1600 hours, the town of FONDI was cleared of all enemy machine gun nests and snipers and 15 PW's had been taken. The battalion had six dead and 13 wounded as a result of the afternoon's fighting. With the lightning blow struck at FONDI by the 349th Inf., the famed ADOLPH HITLER line had been pierced for the first time.

Leaving a company to outpost FONDI, the 3rd Battalion then turned north towards Mt. PASSIGNANO, the Regimental objective 2000 meters north of FONDI. All battalions were reported on the objective by 2220 hours. Patrols were sent out to the north and to the west while the units dug in for the night.

On the morning 21 May, the battalions were alerted for movement down off Mt. PASSIGNANO. The Regimental C.P. moved to a position north of FONDI at the base of the mountain. The 3rd Battalion attacked northwest towards CIMA DEL MONTE and after a bitter struggle succeeded in driving the Germans from their positions, taking five prisoners and knocking out seven enemy vehicles on the road north of the mountain. At 2100 hours, the Hill was completely cleared of the enemy. A patrol sent out to HILL 8 to contact the 351st Inf. found that it was occupied by the enemy and after a bitter fire fight, captured 19 PW's after killing six Germans. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion moved west around the southern base of CIMA DEL MONTE, then heading north towards HILL 9. The 1st Battalion, followed the route taken by the 2nd, but cut off to the north before passing CIMA DEL MONTE and moved up its slopes to the positions held by the 3rd Battalion.

On 22 May, plans called for the 2nd Battalion to move northwest from HILL 9, taking HILLS 10 and 11, the 3rd Battalion to move to HILLS 9 - 10 -11, and then to attack HILL 14 followed at 1000 yards by the 1st Battalion.

The problem encountered in identifying these unnamed knobs was solved by arbitrarily numbering them. This also made it possible for units to give their location over the radio in the clear. S-3 sent overlays indicating such identifications to the battalions, to G-3 88th Division and to adjacent units. This procedure worked very well. It was found advisable to number only the points expected to be covered within a period of several days. New identifications were put out as each phase of operations was entered upon.

As the battalions moved out according to the plan of 22 May, the Regimental C.P. moved northwest and set up between CIMA DEL MONTE and Mt. CASARECCIO. It was the usual practice of the Regimental Commander to accompany one of the attacking battalions with several members of his staff constituting a Forward C.P. This usually included S-1, S-2, S-3, M.I.S. Officer, Liaison Officers, wire and radio personnel, operations sergeant-major and approximately a squad of riflemen from the C.P. Platoon. The Regimental Executive Officer operated the Rear C.P. maintaining contact between Division Headquarters and the Forward C.P. and supervising the flow of supplies to the battalions.

At 0400 hours, 22 May Lt. Col. CRAWFORD and his staff constituting the Forward C.P. moved out to join the 2nd Battalion then on HILL 9. By 1000 hours, the 2nd Battalion had reached HILL 10 after overcoming scattered enemy resistance. The 3rd Battalion was 1000 meters southeast of HILL 9 and the 1st Battalion was on HILL 6.

The battalions reported that they were being shelled by artillery, apparently coming from the vicinity of VALLECORSA to the northeast. Cub planes were dispatched to search out enemy battery positions. Division Artillery, the 337th F.A. Bn and the Regimental Cannon Company shelled VALLECORSA and vicinity laying interdiction fires on the road leading south to our exposed right flank and firing counter-battery fire on gun positions.

At 1200 hours Lt. Col. CRAWFORD, then with the 3rd Battalion on HILL 9, reported that they were fighting for all ground being taken. Opposing them were snipers to the west of the hill and machine guns to the front. At the same time, the 2nd Battalion on HILL 10 was beating off a counterattack and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. The 1st Battalion was ordered to send a reinforced company to HILL 9 to help out the 3rd Battalion if necessary.

The Regimental Surgeon dispatched 30 extra litters to the 2nd Battalion and set up relay posts 500 yards apart to facilitate the evacuation of the wounded. Major FOWLER, M.C.O., 2nd Battalion was among those wounded. Captain JOHN W. LYON assumed command and reported that at 2000 hours the battalion would jump off to take HILL 11.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions continued to push on to the northwest. At 1200 hours, 23 May, the 1st Battalion was on HILL 7. The 3rd Battalion on HILL 9 was waiting to be relieved by a battalion from the 351st Inf. before continuing the advance. The 2nd Battalion advancing on HILL 14 encountered strong enemy resistance from positions well dug in. The assault on the hill was made by Company E commanded by 1st Lt. WALTER GUNTARP in the face of heavy fire from automatic weapons and mortars. The attack was pushed aggressively and the enemy quickly gave up the heights. Forty-five German dead were counted, including an officer. Casualties sustained by Company E in this action were seven men wounded. Enemy resistance in this sector appeared temporarily broken as all battalions reported rapid progress at the end of the day.

On 24 May an 88th Division Directive assigned new objectives to the 349th Inf. as follows: "1. Organize and hold Mt. ROTONDO with one battalion. 2. Organize and hold Mt. ALTO with one battalion. 3. Organize and hold PTA DEL CAMPI with one battalion. 4. Secure bridge crossing at point 406208 (2500 yards northeast of Mt. ALTO) and at MADNA DEL PONTA, (3000 yards north of Mt. ALTO). Units will then reorganize and rehabilitate equipment. Advance will be resumed on Corps order about 26 May."

At 0700 hours, the 1st and 2nd Battalions had moved from HILLS 37 and 14 and the 3rd Battalion was on HILL 15; all advancing toward their assigned objectives.

The problem of supply again came to the forefront at this time. The battalions had advanced seven or eight miles through terrain so rugged and mountainous that at times even the mule trains were unable to reach them. Trails were indistinct and extremely difficult to follow at night. Mule trains sometimes became lost and wandered for days looking for the troops. On the whole however, the flow of supplies continued to reach the battalions, despite all obstacles.

Personnel from the Regimental Anti-Tank Company accompanied the mule trains as protection after a 350th Inf. mule train was reported ambushed by a group of enemy bypassed in the hills. On 24 May a man from the Anti-Tank Company moving with a mule train was captured by nine Krauts led by an officer. After a brief conversation with his captors, he persuaded them to give themselves up to him, which they decided to do. Borrowing a weapon from them, he herded the Germans down the mountain.

As the battalions moved further into the mountains preparations were made by the Regimental Executive Officer to supply them by air. Arrangements were made with 88th Division G-4 to drop rations to the troops on Mt. ALTO and Mt. ROTONDO when those objectives would be reached.

At 1700 hours, 25 May, S-1 reported to the Executive Officer that the 1st Battalion was on Mt. ROTONDO, the 2nd Battalion was on Mt. ALTO and that the 3rd Battalion had moved from HILL 29 heading towards PTA DEL CAMPI. He also reported that the 1st Battalion had received rations by air.

A warning order was received from CH, 88th Division stating that the attack would be resumed on Corps order at daylight, 26 May. Plans called for 349th Inf. and 350th Inf. to attack abreast with the 349th Inf. on the right, ROCCOGORGA the probable objective.

On 26 May, the following order was received from CG, 88th Division at 2200 hours - Seize and occupy CLA LA TORRE and Mt. S. MARTINO. Leave rear battalion at PTA DEL CAMPI - Mt. S. MARTINO. Maintain contact with C.E.F. on your right. Move on assigned missions at once.

At 0830 hours 27 May, the 1st Battalion had moved from Mt. ROTONDO to a position in the vicinity of PISTERZO. The 2nd Battalion advancing northwest from Mt. ALTO, had cut the PRIVERNUM-PROSEDI road and was driving back approximately a company of the enemy at the base of Mt. NERO. The 3rd Battalion had also cut the road, 1000 yards east of the point cut by the 2nd Battalion and was moving towards its objective, CLA LA TORRE which was occupied at 1045 hours.

The Regimental Rear C.P. was moved at 1600 hours to a position on the highway south of Mt. NERO. The Regimental Commander and the Forward C.P. personnel arrived at that location, coming from the vicinity of PISTERZO.

The 2nd Battalion, advancing northwest towards its objective, Mt. S. MARTINO, sent Company F, its leading element to establish a road block on the road leading north from MAENZA, a small town to the west of the battalion objective. Company F, commanded by 1st Lt. PAUL R. BEHNKE, encountered a German Panzer Company retreating from the town. A fierce fight ensued during which three enemy half-tracks, 10 motorcycles and two volkswagons were destroyed. Company F, although out of ammunition and out of contact with the 2nd Battalion was on its objective - Mt. S. MARTINO. Contact was made with Company F. It was reported that during the night, the enemy had withdrawn to the north.

The battalions remained in position until 30 May. Activity was confined to patrolling the area to the north and maintaining contact with adjacent units. The men were given an opportunity to rest after three weeks fighting over some

of the most rugged mountains in ITALY. The 349th Inf. had advanced a straight line distance of more than 40 miles since the jump off on 11 May, breaking through both the GUSTAV and HITLER lines.

Soon after the enemy's prepared line of defense on the MINTURNO front had been smashed in the first few days of the campaign, the operations assumed the character of a pursuit. Plans which were made called at all time for a full exploitation of this situation. At no time were the hostile forces given an opportunity to regroup and adequately dig in. Our troops pursued them night and day, constantly overtaking the scattered remnants, and forcing small groups to stand and fight until they surrendered or were wiped out.

The wisdom of maintaining the pursuit 24 hours a day was evidenced by the relatively small number of casualties that we sustained and the large number that we inflicted on the enemy. The routes of advance while always over the most inaccessible terrain, proved to be the safest. Time and again, we surprised the enemy who had expected our troops to use the more obvious avenues of approach on which their artillery was usually registered.

Throughout the most difficult days, the morale of the men remained at a high point. They were always eager to close with the enemy and unit commanders experienced difficulty in restraining their men when an opportunity to kill krauts presented itself. Disappointment was always expressed when a knob was taken without resistance and the man in each platoon or company who had killed the most Krauts was the envy of all.

This spirit was the principal factor that kept the men going for days on end without sleep, sometimes without food and often with their clothes ripped and torn apart by the rocks and thorns. Time and again after dragging weary bodies up hill after hill, the sight of a group of Krauts put new life into them and a surprised and scared enemy would find themselves being set upon by hard shooting, hard running, yelling American soldiers. The usual result was several enemy dead and others straggling down the hill with their hands raised.

Three weeks of fighting in the mountains of ITALY had made seasoned veterans of the men of the 349th Inf. They learned that the more Krauts you kill, the fewer there are to kill you; they learned the value of the assault and the necessity for teamwork; they learned that wars are won, not by taking ground but by destroying the enemy. They learned above all that the American soldier can lock the Kraut at his own game, if he shoots hard and keeps driving.

JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD
Lt. Col., 349th Infantry
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
JUNE 1944

On 1 June 1944, the 349th Infantry commanded by Colonel JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD (then Lt. Col.) moved from the vicinity of CORI, ITALY to a forward assembly area four miles southwest of VALMONTONE, principal strongpoint in what proved to be the enemy's last organized line of resistance protecting ROME. The mission of the 88th Division, with the 349th Infantry as its leading element, was to attack to the north and cut Highway 6 thus depriving the enemy of his principal route of escape from VALMONTONE, CAVE and PALESTRINA, objectives of the 3rd Division on the right. The advance of the 85th Division on the left was slowed down by strong enemy resistance and although it had been in contact with the 3rd Division, as the latter continued its advance a gap was opened up which the 349th Infantry was ordered to fill.

At 1100 hours, 1 June, the 3rd Battalion, 349th Infantry commanded by Lt. Col. WALTER B. YEAGER moved out, advancing to the north with HILLS 2 and 4, halfway to Highway 6, as intermediate objectives. The 1st Battalion commanded by Major JAMES E. HENDERSON had the mission of advancing on the left of the 3rd Battalion as the gap continued to widen. The 2nd Battalion commanded by Major JAMES E. MILNER was ordered initially for follow in reserve.

The 3rd Battalion contacted the enemy along the railroad south of its first objective. Tanks supporting the 7th Infantry had previously been driven from this same locality so resistance was strong and the enemy artillery which fell was the heaviest experienced since the first few days of the drive. An enemy self-propelled gun scored four hits within twenty five yards of the Battalion C.P. causing several casualties. By 1800 hours enemy resistance had been broken, the railroad track had been crossed and the 3rd Battalion supported by a platoon of tanks from the 760th Tank Battalion was attacking HILL 4. Although three American tanks were knocked out, HILL 4 was cleared of the enemy by 1200 hours and nine PW's were captured.

The 1st Battalion which had been following the 3rd Battalion, at 1000 yards had been heavily shelled during its advance but had made no other contact with the enemy. The 2nd Battalion by 2230 hours was on HILL 2 having mopped up scattered enemy delaying parties, not meeting strong resistance.

By 1900 hours 2 June the 2nd and 3rd Battalions had cut Highway 6, moving rapidly and not permitting enemy delaying parties to slow the advance. After occupying the high ground north of Highway 6 which had been designated as the Division Objective both battalions dug in. Preparations were made to meet and throw back any enemy attempt to re-open the highway. There was a road leading south toward Highway 6, branching out into two roads around the high ground held by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, forming two natural avenues of approach to the highway. On these roads the 3rd Battalion set up road blocks, Company "I" on the left and Company "K" on the right. Some resistance was met as the road blocks were being set up and several casualties were sustained when enemy snipers and machine guns opened up from commanding ground further north. Then on 3 June the enemy made a determined effort to re-take part of the ground he had lost. Company "K" bore the brunt of the attack and from well dug in positions, threw the Germans back, killing forty-five and capturing five prisoners.

During this time the 1st Battalion had been kept in position on HILL 10, south of Highway 6. On 3 June it moved to an assembly area near SAN CESAREO on the highway. There the battalion was attached to the HOWZE Task Force, a strong infantry-tank unit whose mission it was to proceed with all possible speed up Highway 6 towards ROME in an attempt to contact the main body of the enemy.

The advance was led by the tanks averaging five to seven miles an hour. The infantry moved out behind them hard pressed to maintain the same pace, but keeping up with them nevertheless. When the force was three miles northwest of SAN CESAREO generally along the highway the advancing tanks were held up by enemy infantry and anti-tank guns. The rolling terrain offered good cover for the tanks, so they pulled back in partial defilade on both sides of the highway. Further to the rear M-10 tank destroyers went into position. At a prearranged signal Company "C", with a platoon on each side of the highway moved through the tanks as they started firing. The excellent results that can be obtained through close coordination between tanks and infantry were observed during the action. The enemy was subjected to heavy shelling at point blank range and our troops, careful not to mask the fire of the tanks moved up under it until the enemy was forced to withdraw from his untenable position.

The advance on Highway 6 was continued until darkness made it unsafe for the tanks to continue. The HOWZE Task Force C.P. was set up in the vicinity of FINOCCHIO for the night and 1st Battalion provided security for the tanks. At this time, Lt. ROBERT R. LYONS of Company "C" observed a German truck attempting to make a getaway down the highway towards ROME. On a motorcycle he overtook the truck, capturing it, killing one German and capturing three PW's. The truck contained command post supplies and important documents relating to information of the enemy which were sent to Division G-2. The area was bombed and strafed by the Luftwaffe during the night but little damage was done.

On 4 June the HOWZE Task Force continued the advance until it reached a point three miles from ROME. The 1st Battalion in reserve, set up a road block and during the day killed three Germans, capturing 17. At that time, another exploitation force passed through the HOWZE Task Force and took up the pursuit, entering ROME in the face of scattered resistance.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions remained in position on the Division Objective until the morning of 5 June. At this time the French moved across the regimental front taking over the 349th Infantry zone of action. The two battalions entrucked and moved down Highway 6 to an assembly area on the outskirts of ROME. After a short stop the movement was continued on trucks through the city.

Large crowds of people greeted the troops as they drove through ROME. Flags and flowers adorned most of the vehicles by the time the convoy reached the TIBER River. Crossing the river on one of the many bridges that the Germans had failed to destroy, the trucks brought the two battalions to an assembly area approximately two miles north of the city.

The Regimental C.P. moved to a modern office building on the banks of the TIBER River where it was set up until the 1st Battalion, rejoining the Regiment had passed through the city. Several shells landed in the vicinity of the C.P. during the day, causing little damage although a Medical Detachment jeep and trailer were hit and burned at the curb.

From ROME the direction of advance was due north. The 6th South African Division was on the right of the 88th Division and the 85th Division was on the left. Highway 2 was the boundary between the 88th and 85th Divisions. On the night of 5 June, the advance north was continued with the 351st on the right and the 350th on the left.

The 349th Infantry, in Division Reserve, was ordered to move to a forward assembly area, being prepared to pass through the 351st Infantry when it arrived at Phase Line 1, approximately six miles north of ROME. Field Order No. 16, Headquarters 349th Infantry directed the formation to be in column of battalions, in the order, 3rd, 2nd 1st. At 2200 hours the next day, 6 June, all Battalions had reached HILL 23, halfway to the Corps objective. Little resistance had been met during the day and the advance had been rapid.

An 88th Division Directive ordered the regiment to hold up the advance for the night. Contact patrols were sent out to the 6th South African Division on the right and the 350th Infantry on the left. All battalions were re-supplied and the troops were given several hours of rest. At 0600 hours, 7 June the advance to the north was resumed. Enemy resistance was light and Corps objective was reached at 1600 hours. The battalions moved into an area in the vicinity of MAZZANO ROMANO where the advance was held up pending further orders.

The Regiment remained in the same area for several days. The enemy retreat had become so rapid that mobile task forces were employed by II Corps in an effort to contact the main body. However the Regiment was not called upon to furnish infantry support in these operations, so the troops received an opportunity to rest and clean up. Kitchens were brought up and hot meals were served.

On 13 June the entire Regiment moved by motor to a rest area in the vicinity of ALBANO, 12 miles southeast of ROME. A well rounded training schedule was initiated which was calculated to correct any deficiencies noted in the recent operations. Particular stress was laid on Battle Drill, platoon problems, night operations and physical hardening. Schedules also called for a thorough review of interior guard duty and of military courtesy and discipline. Ranges were laid out and all weapons were fired.

The Regiment moved to another area in the vicinity of TARQUINIA on 23 JUNE. Training was continued as before. Company "A", 760th Tank Battalion was attached to the regiment for training, and problems were scheduled for the Battalions in which Infantry-Tank-Artillery coordination was emphasized. The troops also received further training in mountain fighting. Schools were held for Officers and for Non-Commissioned Officers twice a week. During these one hour classes map reading was reviewed and graded tests were given.

Provision was made for athletics and recreation outside of regular training hours. Softball teams were organized and games were played between the various companies. Swimming was encouraged and hours were set aside for each Battalion to make use of the beach. Service Company operated a shower unit and a Quartermaster Clothing Exchange and shower unit was set up near the Regimental area.

There were movies every night and U.S.O. shows were staged several times. A number of men went to ROME to see the show "This Is The Army." A Non-Com's Club was organized in each Battalion and then men were encouraged to have parties and dances when time permitted. A Regimental Officers' Dance was held at the Opera House in TARQUINIA.

Twelve-hour passes were given to the men to visit ROME and a number of men received four day passes, staying at the 5th Army Rest Center at FORO MUSSOLINI in ROME. Many of the Officers spent three days at either the Rest Camp at SORRENTO or at the Hotel Excelsior in ROME.

On 25 June, Major General JOHN E. SLOAN, Division Commander, 88th Division called a meeting of all the Officers in his command. The General briefly reviewed the more important phases of the recent operations. The 3rd Battalion, 349th Infantry was singled out by General SLOAN as one of two infantry battalions deserving of special praise for aggressiveness and drive exhibited during the push on ROME. The principal fault which the General found common throughout the three regiments was that small enemy delaying parties often held up large bodies of troops. The General directed all unit commanders to take steps to overcome this fault during the present period of training and to be prepared to either bypass light enemy resistance in the future or to send out only enough men to mop up delaying parties, without interrupting the advance of the main body of troops. In conclusion, the Division Commander expressed his thanks to the Officers for the fine spirit of cooperation and the excellent results achieved by all and predicted that the 88th Division would acquit itself even more nobly in the future, than it had in the past.

At a Division ceremony on 28 June medals were awarded in recognition of individual achievements of Officers and Enlisted Men during the drive. 2nd Lt. JOHN A. LIEBENSTEIN, 349th Infantry, listed as missing in action, was announced winner of a Distinguished Service Cross. Major General JOHN E. SLOAN presented an Oak Leaf Cluster to a Silver Star to Major JOHN W. LYON, 349th Infantry.

Other recipients of the Silver Star from the 349th Infantry were Lt. Col. WALTER B. YEAGER, Captain TED L. BELIMONT, 1st Lt. PAUL R. BEHNKE, 1st Lt. ROBERT C. KELLY, 1st Lt. WILLIAM SAVICH, 2nd Lt. ALONZO R. NEWMAN, 2nd Lt. ARTHUR KUHIMAN, T/Sgt. JAMES W. MURPHY, Pfc RAYMOND K. THORSEN and Pfc MAX I. TEETER. In a Regimental ceremony following immediately afterwards, Bronze Stars were awarded to six Officers and thirty-two enlisted men of the 349th Infantry.

As the month of June ended the 349th Infantry was still in the vicinity of TARQUINIA, training for whatever would be its assigned mission in the future. The lessons learned in combat which appear below served as a valuable guide in preparing for future operations.

COMMUNICATIONS: A SCR 300 on the Regimental channel should be in the cub observation plane for relay. A Regimental relay should be set up to the rear C.P. due to the fact that the forward C.P. is several miles in advance of the rear C.P. and the wire lines are usually cut by tanks. Message Center and use of code often handicap operations and must improve in efficiency. The use of wire in this operation proved extremely valuable. It served as a guide for troops from the supply train and in the evacuation of the wounded. The wire line should be marked either by tag or engineers tape. Communication with Division is on numerous occasions impossible. There is not time to set up a SCR 284 in going through the mountains without becoming separated from the troops. The SCR 384 is a very heavy and difficult radio to carry over mountainous terrain. Some characteristic and distinguishable flare should be arranged to show the cub observation pilot where the commander is located on the ground so as to be able to drop important documents near him. Communications between Battalions and Corps Artillery should be

improved so that forward observers can fire artillery without delay. The cub observation plane might be a solution. Communication between infantry and Tanks must be perfected so that rifle troops can communicate with the tanks operating near them. The SCR 300 is the solution. The pyrotechnic signal using smoke or flares should be arranged so rifle companies can signal to the tanks when and where they want fire placed.

TECHNIQUE: It is fundamental and vital that the soldier return fire immediately when being fired upon whether or not they can actually pick up the spot from where the enemy is firing. The fact that our guns are shooting encourages our men and most of the time causes the Kraut to cease firing. In closing in with the Kraut, men should make as much noise as possible by yelling as this causes the Kraut to shoot wildly or surrender. It also encourages our troops and takes their mind off the enemy fire directed at them at the psychological moment. Yelling is vital at night. By doing so you are able to tell if you have troops on your right or left and it keeps our troops from firing on one another.

The principles of battle drill have been found valuable for preparing troops for combat. The BAR was used more in this past operation than in other operations where our troops have been engaged. Our troops have learned that the best way to avoid casualties is to close in with the enemy as quickly as possible, therefore, making it unsafe for the enemy to fire their own mortars and artillery for fear of shooting up their own troops. We found that giving numbers to hill tops and recognizable points prior to action enabled talking in the clear on our radios. In order to be sure of our locations we would use the artillery to mark certain hills with smoke. Too much use of single file was used in the past operation. It slowed down the troops and lengthened the amount of time for Battalions to pass a given point. When in single file firing is not effective and the troops are stopped more quickly.

The close support of tanks and tank destroyers was disappointing due to lack of communications. On one occasion almost a Battalion of enemy was allowed to escape due to the fact that our small artillery was out of range and by the time the fire mission was relayed to the medium artillery of Corps, the Krauts had pulled back and the Corps fire was ineffective due to the time taken in relaying the mission. Close supporting artillery should be fired only by persons with the most advanced elements. The liaison with artillery was difficult when a Battalion other than our supporting Battalion was firing for us. The relay system had to be used here and the time for bringing down fire was too long in most cases.

Security and patrols are vital, especially after troops are exhausted and when there is danger that our outpost may fall asleep. It has been found essential that a Battalion be closed completely before starting operations at night. If this principle is violated little if any gain is made for the energy expended. Control will be lost and when morning comes the troops will be a good target for counterattack. Much time is saved by warning orders and future planning. Early dissemination of enemy information is vital for intelligence work and for all troops to know the situation and what the requirements of the orders are. Liaison officers have often been the only method and safe means of getting orders to Battalion Commanders when communications were lost.

SUPPLY: In mountainous terrain mules are the only solution for getting supplies to the troops. In one case a supply train was ambushed. Afterwards strong patrols accompanied the supply train and gave protection so as to avoid a similar occurrence. The patrol proved to be of great value where supplies had to be hauled

by mule for 10 to 12 miles. In this case a SCR 300 should be sent with the mule train in order to keep in contact with the Battalions as they are moving forward.

Supply trains should be oriented thoroughly before departing to find the unit which they expect to supply. They should go only to a place which they are sure is safe and which they are sure they can find. At that point they should pick up a guide who has recently been over the route yet to be followed before reaching the troops to be supplied. If these principles are violated, the supply train will wander aimlessly about, exhausting the mules and personnel, arriving late if they arrive at all, and perhaps running into enemy fire. Battalion supply officers should follow the habit of contacting their Battalion daily so as to ascertain for themselves the articles of supply required and see on the ground the place where they will be required to deliver the articles; and pick for themselves a route by which these supplies can be delivered. Company supply sergeants should accompany the Battalion supply officer and assist him in supplying the company. Carrying parties other than troops from the fighting companies should be used to transport these supplies from the Battalion dump to the company and platoon positions. In practically all cases water could be supplied by local facilities, but this water was raw and had to be purified by use of Halazone tablet and diarrhea often resulted from what was believed to be a failure to use these tablets. It was found more practical because of ammunition supply to carry fewer machine guns and mortars than is called for in the table of equipment so that sufficient ammunition could be carried to keep the guns firing for a longer time. Resupply of armed vehicles by withdrawing vehicles to the rear is not an efficient method since it leaves the Infantry without support during the time the mounts are being withdrawn. In most cases it is possible to bring food, ammunition and fuel to the vehicle on position by motor vehicle even if done at night and so prevent this violation of procedure. The dropping of supplies by parachute was tried with fair results, but the supplies must still be transported a considerable distance after they reach the ground, and this requires combat troops to abandon their mission and search for the exact spot where the supplies have landed and then transport them to the consuming troops. Dropping of small quantities of supplies by cub plane was accomplished with good success. The essence of supply in battle is anticipatory planning coupled with energetic resourcefulness on the part of the supply echelon. It is essential that supply officers visit the troops to be supplied, daily in ample time to allow them to return to their base of supply and get the supplies moving during daylight.

ADMINISTRATION: Mail service has a stimulating effect upon combat troops. The halting of the mail causes a depressing attitude on the part of the troops and this should be avoided. Daily strength reports and battle casualty reports are difficult to obtain and constant pressure must be kept upon smaller unit commanders in order to keep this information correct. Replacements were kept with the supply echelons and were given to the companies as they were needed and escorted to the company by the supply echelon. This practice worked extremely well. Graves registration and evacuation of dead was handled by the graves registration officer and by the agents provided by the companies. Position of the dead was marked by sticking the dead's rifle in the ground beside his body and placing his helmet on top, thus enabling graves registration personnel to find the bodies. A section of the adjutant staff was set aside to handle citations. This personnel received its information from the eye witness each time a brief rest was granted the troops. The information was obtained on special mimeographed forms signed by the witness and supervised by the special S-1 staff. The staff then took the mimeographed pamphlets to their office in the vicinity of Service Company where they prepared the necessary papers so that citations were ready for publication when the troops

were withdrawn from combat, during rest period. This feature enabled citations to be accurate and timely. The principle used in gathering information was to receive citations of officers and men who performed deeds which were being generally discussed as heroic immediately following the event. No citation was accepted after a period of five days following the event. A system of staff duty officers was established within the regiment and battalions so that fresh personnel operated by day and night and allowed for continuous service by competent personnel. This is particularly necessary after troops have become exhausted. Supply of hot food to troops in combat, especially on offensive operations is difficult. Often hot meals arrived just as troops were moving out of their assembly areas on operations not scheduled at the time hot food was ordered. This has a depressing effect on the men who see the food but are not allowed to consume it. Arrangements for mess utensils should be made so that mess kits and other similar equipment is brought up with the food by kitchen personnel and returned to the kitchen area for washing.

PRIOR TRAINING: .Prior training for offensive operations should include a thorough course in map reading, combat firing to include platoon, radio procedure and night attacks. Troops should be vigorously hardened by prolonged physical exertion and should be accustomed to living under field conditions without sleep and on field rations prior to offensive operations. Troops should be perfected in movement under fire, both small arms, artillery and mortar, just as close as this fire can be placed without undue casualties. Personnel who show a lack of fortitude under fire during practice should be segregated prior to beginning offensive operations. Non-commissioned officers and platoon leaders should be thoroughly versed in night attacks and in navigation by night in order to become efficient and effective patrol leaders. All personnel should know the difference in sound between friendly and hostile guns prior to combat. Troops should be schooled more vigorously in the use of the fragmentation grenade and the A-T grenade; and should be given an opportunity to shoot the A-T grenade at actual enemy vehicles prior to combat. Vigorous training in discipline to include the actual exercise of disciplinary control by non-commissioned officers and platoon leaders under trying conditions prior to combat is essential.

JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTROY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
JULY 1944

The month of July 1944 opened with the 349th Infantry commanded by Colonel JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD in a rest area near TARQUINIA, ITALY. Continuing the intensive training program in preparation for further combat, emphasis was placed on night operations and battalion problems.

But the 349th Kraut killers were becoming restless again which boded ill for more of Field Marshal KESSELRING's prize troops. The continued simulation of combat conditions had made many a soldier look longingly to the north. When the 4th of July dawned without even an issue of firecrackers to throw at each other, more than one man threatened to hitch hike to the front for a little Kraut killing to break the monotony. Most of the men had visited ROME for at least a day and, after having been duly exposed to a mixture of vino, signorinas and historic ruins, in that order, they were looking for new fields to conquer.

The troops were straining at the bit without even a good rumor of action to come when suddenly late in the day an order came from Division Headquarters that all passes were to be cancelled. Shortly after that the Regiment was alerted for a movement by motor. The men breathed more easily - this was it at last. The 349th was on the move again. Somebody needed some fighting done somewhere. Whoever it was had picked on the right people. Those were the sentiments expressed by the veterans who had smashed to ROME after cracking the GUSTAV and HITLER lines.

Weapons were quickly checked, given a hurried cleaning. Tents fell and packs were rolled. The "Piezon Club" for non-coms served its last drink of vino to its last customer, then closed. All was in readiness for the move.

At 0600 hours, 5 July the quartering party left the area followed at 0700 hours by the first truckloads of soldiers singing, and cheering, waving farewell to the open mouthed natives. Frantic Italian women trying to return their customers' laundry stood at the crossroad waving G.I. shorts and coveralls, peering anxiously at each truck as it passed by. By 1800 hours most of the column had cleared the area and when Pfc MATHIAS BURCHKART's wheezing Kraut truck chugged up Highway 1 bearing the regimental shower unit the last vehicle had pulled out.

The movement proceeded without incident, north along Highway 1 and 156, a total distance of 110 miles. The troops were treated to a rare sight when the column passed through the town of LARDERELLO, site of one of the only natural sources of volcanic steam harnessed by man. What made it especially impressive was that most of the steam pipes had been broken in the fighting and continued to shoot geysers hundreds of feet in the air with undiminished strength.

On the evening of 5 July the Regiment moved into an assembly area on the CECINA River, four miles south of VOLTERRA, then held by the enemy. Resistance all along the line had stiffened, the Germans who had been in full flight ever since the break through on the MINTURNO front showing unexpected ferocity, savagely contesting for every foot of ground that they were forced to give up. The 1st Armored Division, which was operating in the sector now assigned to the 88th Division, had been hard hit, forced to give ground in some places. The call for infantry support brought the 88th Division into the line ready to jump off at a moment's notice.

It had been expected that the 349th Infantry would attack as soon as it reached the CECINA River line and the men, on detrucking were prepared to move off immediately. The attack which had been planned for the early hours of 6 July was called off however, pending a straightening of the line at other points. The Battalions made preparations against possible enemy counter attacks. Protective forces were sent out to the front and patrols pushed halfway to VOLTERRA probing for enemy positions and contacting the 350th Infantry on the left and the 1st Armored Division.

During 6 July and 7 July there was little activity except for artillery exchanges. Casualties sustained were few although one enemy shell fell in I Company's area killing Lt. FORREST T. FOSS and wounding the other five company officers. 1st Lt. FILMORE W. McABEE was sent from Regimental Headquarters to take command of the company.

At 2000 hours 7 July, F.O. #7, Hq 88th Infantry Division was received with the following instructions for the 349th Infantry:

"3a. 349th Infantry with one company of medium tanks from Task Force HOWZE (1st Armored Division) and Company B, 701 T.D. Bn attached, attacks at H-hour on D-day and seizes objective (overlay). Protects Division right flank and maintains contact with CCA on right. After capture and securing of objective, reorganizes in Division reserve, protects Division right flank and awaits order."

The 349th objective was the high ground north of VOLTERRA. The plan was for the 350th Infantry to by-pass the town on the left while the 349th Infantry went around the right. At 0230 hours 8 July, the attack jumped off. The three Battalions moved across the Line of Departure abreast in the order 1st, 2nd, 3rd from right to left.

The mission of the 1st Battalion commanded by Major JAMES E. HENDERSON was to seize HILL 60, a prominent knob 2000 yards east of VOLTERRA, rising abruptly out of the rolling terrain and giving the enemy who held it, observation for miles. About 500 yards to the southeast of HILL 60 was the town of RONCOLLA, small and compact, resembling a fortress. Company A commanded by Capt. ROBERT E. RICHARD was given the mission of capturing RONCOLLA. Company B, Captain JOHN J. KIND commanding, was ordered to attack HILL 60. Company C, under 1st Lt. CECIL A. MATNEY was to follow in reserve.

When Company A reached a point 600 yards south of RONCOLLA, the enemy opened fire. Machine guns camouflaged in wheat shocks on the rolling ground surrounding the town set up a vicious cross fire - snipers and more machine guns poured fire from the town - 88mm guns sent shells plunging into whatever covered approaches might have led to the town - and whenever a man exposed himself for more than a second or two, 20mm shells fired at point blank range with the accuracy of a rifle threatened to cut him down.

With the company pinned down, 2nd Lt. GEORGE ROUDEBUSH, 337th F.A. Bn who had been moving with the forward scouts all morning, called for artillery support. The response was immediate. As shells crashed into the town and on the enemy positions in its vicinity, hostile fire slackened. When the artillery lifted, Capt RICHARD, 1st Lt. ELROY H. LEMASTER and 1st Lt. JESSE J. SMITH led five squads in the final assault. Pfc MELVIN J. KIDD, sighting a Kraut machine gun that was about to cut the other men down ran towards it alone and was killed by another machine gun. Bazookas and rifle fire accounted for both nests and for any remaining Krauts who showed themselves as the men led by Capt. RICHARD streamed into the town.

The knockout punch had come when the artillery blasted RONCOLLA. The mopping up process took some time as Krauts were dragged from under the straw in stables, from wine cellars and out of closets. Those who held out, anxious to die for Der Fuehrer, had their wish granted. Capt. RICHARD forced two of them out of a hole. They shook their heads when asked if any more were in there but seven jumped out when a grenade was tossed in. Forty Pw's were taken in that town, including 1 officer. At least 15 dead Krauts were counted and four wounded were picked up. The few Krauts who escaped left behind 2 Ford V-8's 2 20mm guns and over a hundred rifles and machine pistols. Lt. LEMASTER then led a patrol of 15 men into VOLTERRA and came back with 12 Pw's. These were the first American soldiers to enter VOLTERRA and on returning, reported that the enemy had left the town.

While this action was in progress Company B was meeting bitter resistance. Enemy fire from RONCOLLA and HILL 60 pinned the company down for half an hour, several hundred yards from the base of HILL 60. Kraut positions were well dug in and the smokeless ammunition used by the German machine guns made them difficult to locate. One machine gun was discovered and knocked out when 1st Lt. SAMUEL J. SLOAN crawled out on the road and sighted to the position along the gashes made by a burst of enemy machine gun fire.

With cleverly concealed enemy machine guns on Hill 60 firing down all draws and with 20mm and 88mm shells combing the area to their front, Capt. HUGH E. QUIGLEY, Capt. KING and 2nd Lt. CLARENCE H. WEAVER with 17 men from the leading platoon started forward. There was no choice but to go over the rolling ground in full view of the enemy. Moving in short rushes, drawing the full fury of the hostile fire, they worked their way towards the base of the hill. Of those who started out, Pfc EARL M. WELCH, Pvt JOSEPH L. LICARI and Pfc JESUS R. CASTRO were cut down, mortally wounded. Pvt. RAPHAEL CIRRI, bleeding badly as he lay on the ground severely wounded, called to the others to keep moving. When Pfc CHARLES E. ADAMS was hit in the chest, although fully conscious, he refused to call for help knowing that anyone who came to him would also be cut down.

Under the direction of Sgt. JOSEPH W. McCANN a firing line was built up at the base of the hill and heavy fire was poured into the enemy positions. Three Pw's came down the hill under a white flag - Capt KING captured two more and Sgt. McCANN, leading eight men encircled a machine gun nest taking two more Kraut prisoners. About a dozen Germans were killed and 11 Pw's taken before the resistance was broken and HILL 60 occupied at 1300 hours 8 July.

The progress made by the 1st Battalion in its fight was closely observed from the Regimental O.P. which was located on the high ridge just north of the CECINA River. The rolling terrain in the valley to the north swept up abruptly toward VOLTERRA, HILL 60 and RONCOLLA and from the O.P. the troops had been seen battling their way successfully toward the hill and town. After the Battalion reported by radio that the objective was taken, the situation in hand, two columns of soldiers were observed moving up the slopes of HILL 60 along the same route previously traversed by the attacking troops. In the distance their identity could not be made out. If they were by-passed Krauts, the 1st Battalion was about to be surprised and hit from the rear. In answer to the Regimental Commander's call, warning the, 1st Lt. WILLIAM H. MEYER Bn S-3 reported seeing no such column and stated that since the Bn Command Group was then moving, he might be able to give more definite information in a short while.

The Regimental Commander and his Staff spent a tense hour watching the two columns making their way slowly up the hill. No one knew who they were and for some reason the 1st Battalion couldn't see them. At the end of an hour the mystery was explained. The two columns were the 1st Battalion Command Group moving up to join the troops.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions meanwhile were advancing steadily. The 2nd Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. CLAUDE M. HOWARD crossed the Line of Departure at 0230 hours. No resistance was met until Company F, 1st Lt. PAUL R. BEHNKE commanding, was fired on from HILL 53 at 0430 hours. Advancing up the hill in the face of heavy rifle and machine gun fire, 1st Lt. WESLEY B. EVANS with the leading platoon, drove the enemy from the crest. When the remainder of the battalion received mortar and machine gun fire from the left flank, Company F mortars and machine guns fired into the early morning haze and although exact targets were difficult to make out the intensity of the enemy fire was reduced and the other elements of the battalion were able to reach the top of the hill.

After reorganizing, the 2nd Battalion moved out toward HILL 38, about one thousand yards northeast of HILL 60 which the 1st Battalion was attacking. When halfway to the objective, F and G Companies moving abreast, came under long range machine gun and very heavy artillery fire. G Company was able to continue its advance along a well covered draw but F Company was pinned down by fire from RONCOLLA (Company A objective), and from HILL 38. The Krauts had the entire area covered with SP 88's, 20mm guns, mortars and machine guns. When Company A broke into RONCOLLA, fire from that quarter died. Company F was still pinned down however, until Lt. LYONS crawling forward to a small knoll spotted four machine gun nests and adjusted artillery fire on the enemy positions. Using an SCR 536 to call Lt. BEHNKE who relayed to the Bn C.P. on an SCR 300, he called out "OK - dump the bucket." Seconds later four Kraut positions went up in a cloud of dust and F Company moved forward taking HILL 38 at 1300 hours.

The 3rd Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. WALTER B. YEAGER had crossed the Line of Departure at 0300 hours and moved up the valley on the right of MAZZOLA meeting no resistance. At noon the Battalion reached HILL 53 receiving artillery fire which caused several casualties. Moving from HILL 53, the Battalion advanced toward HILL 44 (2000 yards north of VOLTERRA). At 1600 hours the column passed between the 1st Battalion (HILL 60) and the 2nd Battalion (HILL 38). When 2000 yards from its objective, the Battalion came under intense machine gun, sniper and 20mm gun fire from three sides. Lt. McABEE deployed Company I which was in the lead and returned the fire, knocking out three machine guns. 1st Lt. BENJAMIN R. TOWNSEND with a bazooka team advanced toward a house in which a sniper had been spotted. A well placed rocket silenced the rest.

The advance of the Battalion was still held up however, until Lt. VICTOR MENSING, a forward observer, 337th F.A. Bn went alone ahead of all the troops to a place where he could observe the enemy positions. For half an hour he faced the enemy fire which diminished as he adjusted artillery fire to within 150 yards of his position. After the last concentration, there was no response from the enemy and the 3rd Battalion continued its advance. S/Sgt. WILLIAM J. TRACY, with his squad captured two PW's at the road junction, southeast of HILL 44 and as the Battalion moved up the hill without opposition eight more PW's were taken.

The 2nd Battalion left HILL 38 and moving behind the 3rd Battalion arrived at HILL 34 without opposition. Both Battalions set up defensive positions and spent the night of 8-9 July in position on their objectives. The 1st Battalion continued to occupy the town of RONCOLLA, with Company C on HILL 60.

During the night of 8-9 July Lt. Col. HOWARD was accidentally shot in the leg by one of the men and Major NORRIS R. FOWLER assumed command of the 2nd Bn. In the morning the battalion moved to HILL 44 where it joined the 3rd Battalion.

With the capture of HILLS 44 and 60, the fate of VOLTERRA was sealed. The 349th Infantry had successfully enveloped the most important point, strategically, in the German line of defense in that area and the town itself fell without resistance. It was perched on a hill dominating the countryside for miles around and the Germans occupying it had been able to observe American troop movement as far as 15 miles to the south. Although previous attempts by other units to take it had failed, it fell to the 349th Infantry on the day of the initial jump off.

The troops were well received by the citizens of VOLTERRA. German occupation had evidently been borne with sullen resignation and as the American troops entered the town the people thronged to the main thoroughfare dressed in their best finery with flowers and vino to welcome the liberating army. It was a day of celebration for the citizens of VOLTERRA and any soldier lucky enough to have a few minutes of free time in the town was treated to everything that the town had to offer - a shave, a dish of spaghetti, wine and the warm smiles of pretty signorinas.

On 9 July the 1st and 3rd Battalions remained in position. The Regiment was placed in Division Reserve and F Company moved by motor to the Division C.P. to furnish security. When an air O.P. at 2115 hours observed 30 truckloads of Germans detrucking 12000 yards to the north, the rest of the 2nd Battalion moved to join Company F as added protection.

The 3rd Battalion, on 10 July moved north from HILL 44 to HILL 69 a distance of three miles, without encountering any opposition. In the new position the Battalion was shelled heavily but casualties were light. There was a ridge line further north which cut off observation of enemy occupied VILLAMAGNA, so it was decided that the ridge should be taken. Enemy fire opened up on I Company as it moved up the slope. The 2nd Platoon under 1st Lt. EVERETT M. MARS led the attack in the face of a vicious crossfire laid down by enemy machine guns. With mortars and Nebelwerfer screaming in on the men, Lt. McABEE called for mortar fire and for smoke and under its cover the attack continued. Lt. JACK SILVERSTEIN took his platoon to the right and flanked the enemy positions. When the smoke cleared the Krauts found themselves being fired on from front and flank. Their withdrawal was immediate and Company I took the ridge without further resistance. The remainder of the Battalion moved up with Company I and 2nd Lt. JOHN P. PETERSON joined the Battalion with his platoon which had made a wide sweep to the east to Mr. NERO with the mission of knocking out an enemy O.P. which had directed artillery fire on the Battalion the day before. Information was received from an Italian that the O.P. was also a German strongpoint so Lt. PETERSON had set out with a platoon. On reaching the base of Mt. NERO, he sent T/Sgt. ALBERT I. THOMAS with a squad to the far side of the hill to move in on the enemy as he attacked with two squads, up the forward slope. The platoon was met but not stopped by heavy enemy machine gun and mortar fire as it advanced up the hill. The enemy, not knowing which way to turn as the attack hit from two directions, was trapped and cut to pieces.

Pvt. JOHN L. BERNARDINELLI, a scout, crawling through the hail of fire killed two Krauts manning a machine gun, charged into the heavy woods on the rear slope, killing three more with a grenade. T/Sgt. THOMAS, with three men advanced up the hill, knocked out a machine gun and forced a mortar to withdraw. In the fight that took place, 13 Krauts were killed and 18 were taken prisoner including one officer. While returning to rejoin the 3rd Battalion Lt. PETERSON and one man were wounded by shrapnel. These were the only casualties.

Company L sent out a platoon to VILLAMAGNA under 1st Lt. LEE FORBES. When 1500 yards from the town the platoon was fired on by enemy machine guns. Lt. FORBES, one of the scouts, and his radio man were instantly killed. T/Sgt. JAMES F. RHODES and Sgt. DORRANCE L. MAGRUDER worked their way toward the radio which lay in the path of the enemy fire, but were unable to reach it. Sgt. RHODES was wounded while making the attempt. 1st Lt. LAURIN A. LYON who was supporting the platoon with a section of machine guns, radioed for help. 1st Lt. CHESTER A. NIFORD, Cannon Company forward observer, whose guns were the only ones registered in the area at that time, adjusted fire ahead of the troops. When smoke and artillery fell on the enemy positions the platoon was able to withdraw.

The 1st and 3rd Battalions remained in position until 12 July protecting the Division right flank. Patrols were sent out by day and night. Most of the enemy activity reported was in the vicinity of VILLAMAGNA and artillery fire was called for by the O.P.'s and patrols with good effect.

On 12 July the 2nd Battalion with a platoon of tanks and tank destroyers moved from the Division C.P. to an assembly area on the ERA River, five miles northwest of VOLTERRA. The mission of the Battalion was to plug up the gap between the 350th and 351st Infantry. Later in the day, the 1st Battalion moved west by motor through VOLTERRA, went into an assembly area near the 2nd Battalion.

An 88th Division Directive gave the Regiment a zone of action running due north and alerted it to attack on order with the 1st and 2nd Battalions under Regimental control. The 351st Infantry was on the left flank, the 350th on the right. The 3rd Battalion was placed in Division reserve, remaining on HILL 69 to protect the Division right flank, ready for prompt employment. Field Order No. 18, Hq. 349th Infantry dated 12 July '44 gave HILLS 184 and 188 as 2nd Battalion objectives and HILL 186 as the 1st Battalion objective. These hills were strong points on the enemy's principal line of defense to which the Germans had been pushed after the breakthrough by the 349th at VOLTERRA had cracked their line further south.

The attack jumped off at 2330 hours, 12 July, with the 2nd Battalion moving toward HILL 151, an intermediate objective which was taken without resistance at midnight. The 1st Battalion echeloned to the left rear of the 2nd, reported satisfactory progress without resistance and by 0430 hours 13 July was on HILL 186, receiving heavy enemy shelling but having few casualties.

At that time, the 2nd Battalion was moving toward one of the bloodiest and most decisive fights of the campaign. Although the Kraut had not met the attack on HILL 186 with a sizeable resistance he was well prepared to stand off a strong attack on HILLS 184 and 188. The approaches to the objective were heavily mined and the enemy succeeded in slowing down the advance somewhat at a critical time which later worked to his advantage.

The excellent route reconnaissance made by 1st LT. HERBERT J. HART and his patrol prior to the jumpoff, saved many lives. The jump off time had been moved up while his men were still reconnoitering routes and the column, with F Company leading, was forced to start off without the guidance of Lt. HART's men. Company F had just entered a mine field when Sgt. TRUMAN WOLF and Pfc WADE L. BUCKTROT caught them before any casualties had been sustained and from there led a column safely by another route toward the hills. As the objective was approached, Company E and Company G passed through Company F to go into the attack phase. Company E had the left knob of HILL 184 as its objective and Company G moved to attack the right knob.

As Company E commanded by Capt. WALTER F. GUNTARP moved through a draw toward the hill, it was already growing light and the enemy from the commanding ground ahead had excellent observation of the oncoming troops. The first casualties were sustained as nebelwerfers, 88's and mortar shells plastered the route of advance. 1st Lt. CHARLES H. BAEHNER, JR. with the 2nd Platoon, leading the attack moved straight toward the top of the hill but was held up on a false crest with a deep gorge cutting off any further advance. By this time 8 or 10 enemy machine guns and machine pistols had opened up from the commanding ground and were in a position to wipe out any attempt to cross that deep cut. Capt. GUNTARP moving with 1st Lt. ROBERT C. KELLY and his platoon around the left flank tried to bring artillery down on the Krauts but his exact location at the time was not clear and it was feared that friendly artillery would land among his men. Later when his radio was destroyed all communication was cut off. The situation was relieved somewhat when Company H machine guns went into action. S/Sgt. ALBERT B. McSWAIN brought his section forward to an exposed position where without digging in they set up and pored fire back at the Kraut. His two guns expended 4100 rounds during the fight and as his supply ran low the ammunition bearers crawled through the vicious enemy fire gathering up what they could from the dead and wounded.

The base of fire laid down on Lt. BAEHNER's platoon supported by the heavy and accurate fire of the machine guns finally began to tell on the enemy. After three enemy machine guns had been knocked out by Sgt. MCSWAIN's men and several Krauts killed, the enemy didn't appear as anxious to show themselves. As the enemy fire diminished somewhat, Capt. GUNTARP, Lt. KELLY and the 1st Platoon inched their way up the slope on the left. The radio man, Pfc NILS G. LARSON was killed as he moved at the side of his company commander, who at the same time was wounded in the leg but continued. Creeping and crawling, taking advantage of every ripple and fold in the exposed ground the platoon, badly depleted by casualties finally neared the crest of the hill. Pfc ISADORE W. PELLEK and Pfc JOHN H. BERNING each wounded already in the move up the hill, were again hit and forced finally to stop. The assault in its last stage was made by Capt. GUNTARP, Lt. KELLY and only 10 men and although the main body of the enemy had withdrawn, several Krauts were dug out of their holes and killed. Most were too dazed to put up much fight but one, charging at Sgt. VINCENT KANE was dropped with one shot from his carbine, fired from the hip. Fifteen dead Nazis were counted on the hill top. The 3rd Platoon which had followed the 1st, moved up and poured fire on the retreating Krauts and although the hill, as soon as it was occupied, was pounded by mortars and SP guns, Sgt WILLIAM SPECK went alone to forward slope with a machine gun and fired on a group of about 30 Germans withdrawing toward the next slope. Although ordered back to a covered position, Sgt SPECK kept inflicting casualties on the enemy until he was seriously wounded.

Lt KELLY then organized the hill for defense and under heavy enemy fire all day, the men dug in and held the position. Five hours after he had been wounded Capt GUNTARP was evacuated after satisfying himself that his company was as secure

as possible on the objective. Lt. KELLY, while organizing the men and checking positions was also wounded and evacuated.

Company G commanded by Capt. ROBERT E. VAIL also rain to the full fury of the Kraut main line of defense. Advancing toward the right knob of HILL 184, the company absorbed everything that the Krauts had to offer - Nebelwerfers, 88's, heavy artillery and mortar fire - and still the advance continued. As the objective was approached in the darkness the enemy opened up with machine guns and machine pistols, causing heavy casualties in the 1st Platoon which stopped to reorganize as the 2nd the 3rd Platoons passed through. Casualties continued to mount in the deadly fire, but the remaining men worked their way to the top of the objective by dawn. It was there that the heaviest fighting took place. The Kraut, had pulled back, putting up stiff resistance evidently hoping to wipe out the attackers by a strong counter attack before reorganization could be affected. On the objective Company G was temporarily disorganized having come through a terrific artillery pounding during which time all the officers had become casualties except Capt. VAIL who could not be contacted as the first elements took the hill. S/Sgt. CARMINE TAVALARO and S/Sgt. FRANK GUYER hastily organized their 15 men into two road blocks to repel the expected enemy attack along the two roads leading into their position. The attack came at dawn before they had a chance to dig in. Preceded by a mortar and artillery barrage that shook the whole hill, approximately 60 or 70 Krauts attacked, yelling and throwing hand grenades as they closed in on the small group. Pvt. WILLIAM D. WORMAN, JR. cut three down with his B.A.R. and with their position on the point of being over run Sgt. HAMILTON CORWIN opened up with his machine gun, spraying fire in wide sweeps. Throwing grenades, firing in all directions as the Germans came at them from three sides, Pfc's WILLIAM JOHNSON, THEODORE SCOTT, MORRIS JONES and GEORGE ADAMS held their ground until at least 20 Germans were killed and the rest withdrew. Company F then moved up with Company G made the hill secure against further attack.

On the night of 13 July the 1st and 2nd Battalions prepared to jump off again. During the day both Battalions received constant pounding from SP guns and artillery but the enemy line along the ridge had been completely smashed. Although casualties, principally in the 2nd Battalion, had been heavy, the advantage gained when the enemy line broke had to be rapidly exploited. Wounded were evacuated and the companies replenished ammunition supplies, received rations and after reorganizing were prepared to push on.

At 2300 hours the 1st Battalion jumped off moving east across the 2nd Battalion front, advancing through FABRICA DE PECOLI, MONTE LOPIO AND MADNA DELLE SERRE without meeting resistance. At 1100 hours the next morning the Battalion with Company B leading the column was moving toward LIBIANO when it was subjected to a terrific artillery barrage. For three hours Nebelwerfers, 88's and tanks raked the column with fire and heavy casualties were sustained. One shell, landing among the members of the command group which was following Company B killed Lt. MEYER, Bn S-3, 1st Lt. MATTHEW W. KEARNEY Bn S-2 and wounded Major HENDERSON, Battalion Commander. Capt HUGH E. QUIGLEY assumed command of the Battalion and when the enemy fire lifted, LIBIANO was taken without resistance at 1700 hours. Two hours later the Battalion pushed on toward the ridge running between MONTE FOSCOLI and LEGOLI. The ridge line was occupied without resistance although once again Nebelwerfers and artillery pounded the Battalion positions inflicting more casualties.

The 2nd Battalion meanwhile was advancing north on the left of the 1st. The Battalion had jumped off at 0400 hours 14 July moving northeast across HILL 169 and arriving at GHEZZANO (HILL 111) at 1800 hours. The advance had been rapid

and the enemy had not shown himself. Pushing on without delay the column reached LA GHUGA east of LIBIANO and was held up there by enemy SP guns until darkness prevented observation at which time the column moved on to LEGOLI, reached without resistance at 0300 hours, 15 July. The terrain across which the two battalions were advancing at this time was particularly well adapted for defensive operations. A series of ridge lines running east and west had to be crossed and although all were not defended by enemy troops the advancing columns after being located by artillery observers while crossing the high ground were then hit by terrific artillery barrages in the intervening valleys. Although Cannon Company and the 337th F.A. Bn gave excellent support on call, the Krauts had massed a great number of guns in an effort to stop the drive and were not at all reluctant to throw everything they had at the advancing troops. It was an entirely different picture from that witnessed in the drive to ROME when the Kraut had comparatively few guns and less ammunition.

Enemy mines were met in great numbers and although they were not permitted to slow up the advance there were some casualties and the threat of their presence made any movement over unswept ground extremely dangerous, particularly at night. The Kraut used all his old tricks. Roads and driveways were mined with Teller mines and sometimes they were discovered in areas likely to be used as concentration points for vehicles. Vineyards and avenues of approach offering good cover for advancing troops were filled with anti-personnel mines. Shoe mines, with enough force to blow a man's foot off, were used a great deal and houses, orchards and cornfields were booby trapped. The excellent work of Anti-Tank Company, Bn Anti-Tank platoons and the 313th Engineer Bn in clearing out mined areas and neutralizing booby traps was a big factor in the success of the drive.

While the 1st and 2nd Battalions were moving to occupy the ridge line running from MONTE FOSCOLI to LEGOLI on 14 July, the 3rd Battalion, which had remained in position for two days on HILL 69 south of VILLAMAGNA protecting the Division right flank was ordered to move north, take the town and then rejoin the Regiment. For two days artillery and SP guns had pounded the Krauts in VILLAMAGNA and its vicinity. When the 3rd Battalion advanced on the town it was taken without resistance at 0130 hours 14 July. Moving northwest in Regimental reserve the Battalion reached HILL 169 and at midnight occupied HILL 198, south of LIBIANO.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions had spent the night of 14-15 July in position on the MONTE FOSCOLI-LEGOLI ridge line. On the morning of the 15th they prepared to push on - the 1st Battalion on the left to hit PALAIA from the west, the 2nd Battalion to take HILL 182, 2000 yards south of PALAIA.

At 0400 hours the 1st Battalion, with Company B leading, jumped off, moving into the valley south of HILL 182. At 0530 hours the Battalion met the full fury of the German artillery massed in defense of the enemy main line fronting PALAIA which the 349th was threatening. Nebelwerfers, SP guns, tanks, 88's and six or eight machine guns rained fire on the troops who were caught with little cover available and with no possibility of shaking loose a maneuvering element. The Battalion was held up all during the day and casualties were heavy. Company B leading company, had eight men killed and 15 wounded. At 2300 hours under cover of darkness the Battalion withdrew to its starting point.

The 2nd Battalion, Company G leading, ran into the same barrier of fire laid down by the Krauts. Moving down a draw about 500 yards north of LEGOLI in the early morning the Battalion column came under intense enemy fire. The Krauts continued to throw in artillery and tank fire all during the day and the Battalion was withdrawn to LEGOLI to reorganize before continuing.

The mission of the 1st Battalion was changed. On the morning of 16 July both the 1st and 2nd Battalions jumped off at 0200 hours. The Kraut, confident that the 349th had been stopped in its tracks the day before was not prepared for so quick a comeback. The 1st Battalion swept around to the west of HILL 182, bypassing resistance which the 2nd Battalion met later in the day. Moving in on the hill from its left rear, meeting no resistance, the 1st Battalion struck into the heart of the enemy on the hill, occupying their C.P. at 0430 hours. Following established custom the officers had fled as the Americans approached and a staff car was seen to leave the C.P. before it was taken over. Although fired on, it was not stopped. Lighted candles still burning in the Kraut operations room gave witness to the haste in which they had departed. When motors were heard several hundred yards to the north, the first grey of dawn revealed several sleepy Krauts warming up a Volkswagon and lazily shaking out their blankets. A Company D machine gun quickly reminded them that the war must go on. Although the Volkswagon escaped and there was no bodies to be seen, a well ventilated Kraut blanket was picked up. A few minutes later a German courier on a motorcycle drove into the C.P. When he realized his mistake and turned to head north, S/Sgt. JAMES A BURKE disposed of him with a B.A.R.

On the eastern approaches to HILL 182 the 2nd Battalion met a determined enemy in positions about 400 yards from the hill. Company F commanded by 1st Lt. WESLEY B. EVANS was leading the column in its advance when suddenly from commanding ground on both flanks the enemy opened fire with machine guns and rifles. The Kraut had allowed the first two platoons to penetrate well into the positions before opening fire at close range. With enemy guns from overhanging banks firing practically straight down at the company, Lt. EVANS with the 1st Platoon worked forward through the cornfield toward higher ground with better observation, to adjust supporting artillery fire on the enemy positions. When a machine gun in the stone house toward which they had been crawling, opened fire, Sgt. ROY L. ANDERSON with five men, advancing by fire and movement got to within assaulting distance of the house before being stopped by the Kraut gunner who could then observe every movement they made. Sgt. ANDERSON directed one of his men to fire a rifle grenade at a haystack near the house. Smoke from the burning hay concealed his movements for the last 50 yards as he led his men in the assault knocking out the machine gun and taking two prisoners. An O.P. was established in the house and from there, Lt. EVANS directed fire from supporting tanks on other Kraut machine guns.

While this action was going on the 1st Platoon of Company H led by 2nd Lt. GEORGE A. CARR moved up with the Weapons Platoon of Company F succeeded in cutting down the volume of enemy fire which was causing casualties in the two leading platoons. Although the initial surprise of the enemy fire had temporarily disorganized the Weapons Platoon, it was shortly in full operation under the direction of Sgt. CESARO LOMBARDI, who moved about placing his men and directing fire in apparent disregard of the Kraut machine gunners who fired wherever a cornstalk rustled. When the Sergeant pointed out a machine gun nest to Pvt. LAWRENCE CERVI he stood up and fired three rockets at it. As the last one found its mark, Pvt CERVI was killed instantly. Pfc CLARENCE DUJERING had his belt of ammunition cut twice but continued to fire his machine gun from an exposed position.

The fire from supporting tanks and machine guns made things too hot for the Krauts and after six or seven of their machine guns had been knocked out and 12 of them killed, the remainder withdrew. Company F pushed on, moving through an area heavily mined with AP and shoe mines reaching the crest of HILL 182 at 1400 hours.

The 1st Battalion which had taken the western half of the objective earlier in the day was ordered to move north to SAN GIORGIO, establish a road block at the junction there and protect the advance of the 3rd Battalion which, still in Regimental reserve, was moving north to be committed in the attack on PALAIA. During the day, harassing fire from enemy machine guns and snipers had caused casualties in the 1st Battalion on HILL 182. 2nd Lt. JOHN J. ERNSER with a reinforced platoon from Company C was sent out with the mission of flanking these enemy positions which were denying the approaches to the vital road junction. While attempting to move around the Krauts and take them by surprise, Lt. ERNSER, leading the advance was fired on by two riflemen who wounded one of his men. He killed one of them and with the surprise element destroyed by the exchange of shots led his men straight for the enemy positions. The Krauts were occupying a house, outposted by riflemen, protecting machine guns dug in nearby. Thoroughly alerted, the Germans opened up with machine guns and machine pistols as Lt. ERNSER moved in on them with his men. T/Sgt. EDWARD J. DAVEY, after sending several of his men to flank one of the machine guns charged the position killing the two gunners and a rifleman. As they approached the house, a Kraut rifleman leaped to his feet and ran down the slopes toward them, dropping in his tracks when Lt. ERNSER fired at him. Through fire from mortars and an enemy tank, the attacking platoon worked its way toward the house. After killing a sniper in one of the windows, Sgt. DAVEY located another machine gun firing through a small aperture in the house. With the other men firing over his head he crawled forward to within a few yards of the house and killed the gunner. At this point the remaining Germans made an attempt to escape but after seven more had been killed, 13 gave themselves up. The action lasted only 15 minutes and in addition to those Krauts killed and captured, a German radio, seven machine guns, 13 pistols and 9 rifles were seized by the attacking troops. This short decisive fight broke the enemy resistance in the vicinity of SAN GIORGIO and secured the vital road junction, through which the 3rd Bn was to pass later that night.

The enemy line, shattered by the 349th on HILLS 186, 188 and 184, showed its full strength again in an organized line running through the town of PALAIA. PALAIA was the central point in the road net in that area and, being the point through which the Germans would have to withdraw if necessary, it was strongly defended and fell only after some of the most vicious fighting of the campaign. The fate of PALAIA was not as much decided in the fight for the town itself as it was in the battle for HILL 254, 500 yards southeast of the town. It was here that the 3rd Battalion engaged the enemy in a bitter fight, the outcome of which made the defense of the town impossible.

Advancing north on the road through SAN GIORGIO which ran past HILL 254 and into PALAIA, the 3rd Battalion first met the enemy at 2300 hours 16 July, when it was yet two miles from the hill. Company I in the lead was held up by approximately 12 Kraut machine guns, several machine pistols, firing from both sides of the road. The deadly cross fire cut off the leading squad of the 1st Platoon from the rest of the company which was temporarily scattered in the dark. Minefields on either side of the road made a flanking movement impossible so 1st Lt. JACK SILVERSTEIN moved forward to the 1st squad and with six men continued the advance to engage the enemy while the company reorganized. A brush fire started along the road by the machine gun fire, silhouetted the small group as it moved and two men were cut down by the enemy. The others continued firing as they advanced, put two Kraut machine guns out of action forcing those remaining to withdraw to new positions.

Meanwhile, Lt. McABEE, Company Commander had reorganized his men and as the enemy fire diminished he led them around to the right of the road, through the mined area, continuing the advance toward the objective. Moving forward, the 2nd Platoon in the lead kept driving on the enemy. Kraut machine gunners and snipers were trying to protect demolition and mine crews working on the road ahead but the 2nd Platoon led by Sgt. ROBERT E. DAVIES fought their way to within 100 yards of them and killed four, scattering the rest and capturing two motorcycles. Against constant resistance the advance was continued until the road junction at the east end of PALAIA was reached by the 2nd Platoon. This envelopment cut off HILL 254 from the town and took the Krauts by complete surprise. A road block was set up with men placed in nearby buildings and on surrounding high ground.

The 3rd Platoon led by 1st Lt. KENNETH W. GRAY cleared the buildings at the base of the hill and then, with the 1st Platoon, worked up the hill through the Kraut machine gun fire that was covering the road in both directions. An enemy armored car roared down the road pouring fire at the two platoons. Two of its crew were hit in the fire that was placed on it but it disappeared in the night heading toward PALAIA. The final assault on the hill was led by Lt. McABEE and Lt. GRAY. Machine guns poured fire on them - one was knocked out by Pvt JAMES C. LONERGAN, B.A.R. man, and another by Pfc EUGENE MAZAROWITZ. At close quarters, firing point blank at the enemy and throwing grenades as they attacked, the two platoons drove the enemy off the hill although outnumbered more than two to one. No sooner had the company been reorganized than a desperate counterattack was launched from two directions simultaneously. The enemy, firing machine pistols and throwing grenades charged up the southeast and northwest slopes of the hill yelling as they came and at the same time, others who had laid concealed in holes on the top of the hill during the attack rose up with machine pistols and sprayed the defenders with fire.

Company I machine guns went into action and cut down the Krauts as they came on. S/Sgt. DANTE SASSI ran with his machine gun section across open ground and although wounded, got them in position in time to pour fire on the main assault coming from the southeast. Pfc PATRICK W. McGURK picked up his machine gun and met the attacking Krauts, advancing toward them firing from the hip. Riflemen from the 3rd Platoon poured fire on the Krauts, stopped them in their tracks. When 10 Germans came at Pfc GLEN HUDGINS he held his ground cutting down one after another until he was killed. Grenades thrown by his comrades drove them off. Their attack broken, leaving 12 of their dead and eight wounded, the Germans scattered and disappeared in the darkness toward a knoll 150 yards to the left front.

On the northwest slope the 1st Platoon and part of the 3rd was still battling and 60 odd Krauts who charged fanatically up the kill. More of the 3rd Platoon ran across to meet the attack. Sgt. WILLIAM J. ELMS drew the fire of the Krauts as he crossed open ground with his machine guns but returned a blistering answer as his men fired point blank at the Germans. When Lt. GRAY was wounded T/Sgt. MARTIN G. McCUE took command of the platoon. Lt. McABEE and Lt. SILVERSTEIN, firing and directing the fight, kept the enemy from overrunning their positions. Rifle fire, grenades and withering machine gun fire gave the Krauts more than they had bargained for and the attack broke, but not before 12 more had been killed and 17 captured.

The enemy, retreated toward PALAIA where the 2nd Platoon met them at the road junction. A short fire fight showed them that they were cut off. In desperation they once again charged the hill supported this time by two 75mm guns which fired direct fire at Company I men on the hill. Using all their remaining B.A.R. and machine gun ammunition, and throwing their last grenades, the men started forward to meet the attack with cold steel when once again it broke and again the Krauts retreated in disorder leaving dead and wounded behind.

At that time the Germans who had been beaten off to the southeast, fired machine guns and sniper fire at the hill. Lt. SILVERSTEIN with the 1st Platoon moved down the hill toward them and after a short fire fight the Krauts withdrew more than somewhat impressed by the fighting spirit of these 349th men. They had left behind 60 dead, 21 wounded and 51 PW's during the action at HILL 254 and even a Kraut knows when he has had enough, although one PW being taken later to the Bn C.P. tried to overpower Sgt. WILLIAM J. GORDON, JR. When the Sergeant's tommy gun jammed, the Kraut was killed by Sgt. GEORGE E. ZILINSKY.

Although the Germans had apparently given up their idea of retaking HILL 254, Company I prepared to withstand another attack should it come. What ammunition was left was re-distributed and an all around defensive set up was organized with the men who were left. Five men had been killed, 17 wounded and 22 were missing but there was no thought in the minds of the men but that they would stick. And when enemy artillery and mortar fire was covering the hill they only dug in deeper and cursed the Kraut a little more eloquently.

At 0830 hours 17 July, contact was made with the Battalion by radio and by 1000 hours, Company K moved in to reinforce Company I on the hill. A runner was sent to the 2nd Platoon to bring them in from the roadblock. No contact had been made with them since they had gone to the road junction the night before. With K Company on the left flank the hill was made secure and during the morning the enemy could be seen retreating through PALAIA, carrying dead and wounded with them.

The 337th F.A. Bn and Cannon Company had a field day as they placed fire on the town in preparation for the attack. The Krauts were pulling out as fast as they could, loading trucks and moving north through terrific artillery fire which was concentrated on their only route of escape.

At 1430 hours the 3rd Battalion jumped off from HILL 254 to attack the town. Companies I and K moved on PALAIA from the south while Company L made an envelopment moving into the town from the north. The first patrol to enter the town was repulsed and five men were killed, but when the entire Company led by 1st Lt. JOSE E. GUZMAN broke into the town supported by fire from Companies I and K there was little resistance. The mopping up process took less than two hours.

At 1700 hours 17 July, the 1st Battalion moved out having remained all that day on HILL 182 while the 3rd Bn was taking PALAIA. Moving past PALAIA the column, with Company C leading headed towards its next objective which was HILL 166 on the road running north from the town. The 1st Platoon led by 2nd Lt. MARTIN C. BECKER formed the point and advance guard for the Battalion. Capt. CECIL A. MATNEY followed with the remainder of Company C.

When Company C moving in column of two's reached a point 1500 yards from the objective, several machine guns opened up at the base of the hill firing down the road at the point which at that time had passed into an exposed position from good cover which still protected the rest of the column. A low ridge ran parallel with the road on the right side, so Capt. MATNEY ordered Lt. BECKER to move from the road across the ridge and then to continue the advance toward the hill. In preparation for this move, Capt. MATNEY called for artillery fire and as it fell, cutting the effectiveness of the enemy fire, Lt. BECKER led his men in short rushes across the open ground, over the ridge and into the protection of the draw on the other side, continuing the advance.

Casualties previously sustained in the other two platoons had made it necessary to combine them into one, and led by 2nd Lt. THOMAS P. LEE this 2nd Platoon followed the 1st until the open space had been cleared at which time LT. LEE led his men across the road to the left side and continued the advance almost abreast of the 1st Platoon which was still moving up on the right side of the road.

Moving in aggressively under the supporting artillery, the 1st Platoon hit the base of the hill as the artillery was lifted driving the surprised and dazed Krauts before them. The enemy retreating wildly before the fast moving, hard shooting Americans abandoned a 6-barrelled Nebelwerfer, one half track full of weapons (including an American B.A.R.) 1 SP gun, 1 A.T. gun and several machine guns.

Several Krauts stuck it out, firing until the end. S/Sgt. ROBERT M. VENTER rushed a Kraut who swung his machine gun toward him, but too late, as the sergeant put a bullet through him at point blank range. Sgt. EARL R. WHITEAKER, on the run, snapped two shots, one to the right and one to the left in quick succession and two more Krauts were dead. Picking up German "potato masher" he threw them at the others who were scattering up the hill. The rest of the platoon charged up the hill yelling and firing and when the Krauts dove into the houses and prepared positions at the top they were being so closely pursued that they never had a chance to put up even a semblance of organized resistance. Several machine guns and pistols went into action but in the gathering darkness their firing was inaccurate and the Krauts were quickly driven away from their guns.

Artillery which had been placed on the crest as the troops moved up, was transferred on Capt MATNEY's order to the draw on the left side of the hill down which some Krauts had been seen escaping and when 50 Germans were seen beyond the hill loading into trucks and command cars, more artillery was called for, although by then visibility was so poor that exact results could not be observed.

Following the Germans into the houses, shooting through windows and battering down doors, the men of Company C flushed Krauts from all kinds of hiding places. Pfc WILLIAM EDMUNDSON and Pvt. GEORGE VIEGAS crashed into a house, made several startled Krauts lie on the floor while EDMUNDSON raced upstairs to make the catch of the day. In a room on the top floor he dragged three of Der Fuehrer's Artillery Officers out from under a bed where they had been hiding and hoping fervently for a miraculous appearance of their beloved Siegfried and his Valkyrie. Pvt. EDMUNDSON got there first.

HILL 166 had been occupied by two companies of Krauts and from the PW's it was learned that the Americans had not been expected for at least 24 hours. At the time of the attack many were eating or sleeping and the surprise element was so effective that not a man from Company C was as much as scratched while 15 Krauts were killed and 40 taken prisoner, including the three officers. The rest of the Battalion moved up on HILL 166 and the position was organized for defense against possible counterattack. The only activity during the night consisted of harassing artillery fires which were laid on the hill, causing no casualties.

While the 1st Battalion spent the night of 17-18 July on HILL 166 and the 3rd Battalion remained in PALAIA, the 2nd, after having held up on HILL 182, south of PALAIA for more than 24 hours, jumped off at 2000 hours with HILL 102 as its objective. The column with Company G in the lead advanced without resistance.

Shortly after midnight, Pfc GERRARD SCHUBERT, the lead scout, reported that he had discovered a mined area in the dark. Picking his way in the darkness he led the column safely through it, marking a large tree that he discovered to be heavily booby trapped. Moving on he entered another mine field and again managed to stop the column before any casualties were sustained. This time he picked a new route of advance and the Battalion continued on. Sometime later while it was still dark, there came an explosion behind him. 2nd Lt. TRAVIS A. THOMPSON, second in line, had tripped a wire and was severely injured. SCHUBERT ran to his side, realizing after he moved that he was again in an area infested with mines and booby traps. Lt. RESBERT MARTIN, Company Commander came to the side of the wounded officer and together they applied tourniquets to his legs, using belts and shoe laces. Moving him carefully out of the danger area on a litter made of rifles and a blanket, Lt. MARTIN and Pfc SCHUBERT together with 1st Lt. LARRY S. BEST and 2nd Lt. DANIEL F. NEWMAN went back into the mined area and on hands and knees, crawling in the darkness, they made a path through the danger zone, feeling for trip wires and mines, marking or neutralizing them. The column, following behind got through without further casualties, arriving at HILL 102 at 0430 hours, occupying it without resistance. Pushing on immediately with still no sign of the enemy, the Battalion reached HILL 108 at 0800 hours where it was ordered to hold up the advance.

On 18 July the 34d Battalion advanced following the 2nd, occupied the town of BUCCIANO. The enemy continuing to fall back had evacuated the town without leaving behind even the usual small delaying parties. The 1st Battalion received only long range machine gun fire as it advanced to MONTE BICCHERI and the Kraut gunners disappeared while the column was still far from the objective. Taking MONTE BICCHERI the Battalion pushed on at 1700 hours toward HILL 188. In the EVOLA River valley before dark the column was heavily shelled by nebelwerfers and SP guns but pushed on to the objective. Company B, moving to the right of HILL 188 surprised eight Krauts who were digging in a defensive position. They gave up without a fight. Any of their comrades who might have been preparing to withstand a dawn attack faded away in the night as the 1st Battalion moved up the hill. Digging in, the Battalion remained there all day on the 19th under constant tank and artillery fire, harassed by enemy machine gunners who sprayed their positions from well concealed dug outs on the next ridge line to the north.

Sgt. EARL R. WHITEAKER, Company C had a particular grudge against one Kraut gunner who had caused several casualties among his buddies. Sgt. WHITEAKER is narrow minded about these things. For eight hours he studied the terrain to the north, trying to locate him. A puff of dust and the chattering of a M.G. 34 finally gave the position away. Knowing that his friend, S/Sgt. ROBERT M. VENTER, was always on the lookout for a little excitement he told the sergeant about his discovery. Sgt. VENTER, thoughtfully remembering a friend in Bn Hq., Pfc JESSIE A. WALLACE, who liked very much to kill Krauts, passed the word on to him. Securing permission from Capt. MATNEY, the three of them set out to settle the score. Creeping down the hill they went into a draw and started up the next hill toward the gun. When they were sighted several machine guns opened up on them, but they faded out of sight, working their way up through brush and vegetation as streams of tracers crossed over their heads.

Back on the company position observers watched through field glasses as the German gunner, a huge red faced Kraut, left his gun position and wormed his way forward, frantic because he had lost sight of the three men. They saw his face

appear for a few seconds at the edge of a wheat field, saw him glance wildly around, then like a trapped animal plunge back into the concealing grain. The chattering of his gun started up again. He was desperately firing by then at every moving blade of grass hoping for a lucky hit. Suddenly with a rush the three men were on him. Two Krauts in foxholes near the gun were dropped by a quick succession of shots as they stood up to bar the way and as the big Kraut swung his gun, the men, all three emptied their carbines into him. His assistant, cowering in the back of the dugout was dragged out and later at Bn Hq. talked freely, about the strength and disposition of enemy troops in the area. Pfc WALLACE after graciously thanking Sergeant VENTER and Sergeant WHITEAKER for a most interesting afternoon went back to his humdrum life at Bn Hq.

In the early evening, the 1st Battalion was ordered to withdraw and take up a defensive position at MONTE BICCHERI. The withdrawal was made without incident although the column was harassed by hostile artillery fire before darkness closed in.

The 3rd Battalion which had occupied the town of BUCCIANO on 18 July moved out at 1400 hours with the mission of making a reconnaissance in force to determine the strength of the enemy between BUCCIANO and S. MINIATO. The Battalion objective was a ridge line running through MORIOTO about 2000 yards to the north. With Company K in the lead, the Battalion moved across the EVOLA River valley and was 450 yards from the objective when enemy SP guns and tanks opened fire. At the same time from high ground on both flanks and to the front, Kraut riflemen and three machine guns poured a stream of fire at the advancing troops. Good concealment on both sides of the road made it possible for the men to disperse and keep pushing. 2nd Lt. JAMES P. FERGUSON worked the 3rd Platoon to within 50 yards of the machine gun which was firing from the front and when Pvt. FARRELL ASHCRAFT fired a rifle grenade at it, two Krauts piled out of the dugout and leaving their gun, disappeared over the hill. This relieved pressure which had been holding up the 1st Platoon under 2nd Lt. RALPH C. COLE, which he then led up on the right flank, pouring fire at a machine gun whose flanking fire had caused several casualties. Forcing it to withdraw, advancing and firing the men approached to within 150 yards of the 3rd machine gun which also pulled out. Approximately two squads of Kraut riflemen retreated before the oncoming troops, leaving several dead and wounded behind them. At dusk the ridge was occupied under continuous enemy shelling which lasted throughout the night. Before dark S/Sgt. FRANCIS A. STREIGL noticed a movement in the cornfield on the forward slope of the hill and although snipers fired at him as he moved, he advanced down the slope, threw a grenade and came back with two Krauts and a machine gun. More prisoners were taken when eight Krauts armed to the teeth walked into the Battalion C.P. thinking it was still theirs. Company I moved into position on the right flank and the next morning, 19 July, the Battalion withdrew to BUCCIANO where it went into defensive positions.

For three days, the Regiment occupied the high ground between MONTE BICCHERI and BUCCIANO. Italians coming through the lines reported that the main body of the enemy had crossed the ARNO River after laying mines and setting booby traps in great numbers. The battalions sent out patrols by day and by night and their reports established the fact that delaying parties had been left behind. On several occasions, night patrols had fire fights with small groups of Krauts protecting mine laying details and the O.P.'s by day observed scattered enemy activity, reporting movement in two's and three's. Sgt GEORGE S. SEWELL with several men from Lt. HART'S battle patrol going beyond his objective, entered S. MINIATO and reported the presence of at least 25 Krauts.

Explosions reported in S. MINIATO seemed to indicate that Kraut demolition crews were at work and this was borne out by reports from Italian Partisans who stated that the roads were being blocked in the town with rubble in which Teller and shoe mines were being buried.

Cannon Company and the 337th F.A. Bn fired missions on call. Houses reported by the Italians to be inhabited by Krauts were fired on, night patrols called for fire on S.P. guns located south of the ARNO River and Kraut vehicles were observed and fired on several times. German artillery was not entirely silent during this period but most of their fire was counterbattery, and the front line troops were not bothered by the few rounds that fell in their general area.

The men had ample opportunity to catch up on lost sleep and with clean clothes, hot food and a chance to write letters, they enjoyed the break even though they were in the front lines. Standing-to at dawn every morning, they were alerted for possible counterattack but thereafter, unless called for patrols or details there was little to do except man their positions.

Major JAMES E. MILNER assumed command of the 2nd Battalion on 21 July, and MAJOR NORRIS R. FOWLER was designated Regimental S-4. Capt. JAMES P. LYONS was designated Executive Officer, 2nd Battalion.

On the night of 22 July, the Regiment was ordered to seize the final line of high ground commanding the ARNO River. It was anticipated that enemy resistance would be confined to small delaying parties and although plans were to be made against a strong and determined enemy, previous reconnaissance and Partisan reports made the belief widespread that mines and booby traps would be the principal obstacle. However, before the high ground was finally cleared of the enemy and secured, Company G, 349th Infantry had engaged in one of the most bitter and at the same time most colorful, fights of the campaign.

The mission of the 2nd Battalion was to seize S. MINIATO, a good sized Italian town which was built along the ridgeline overlooking the rolling slopes leading down to the ARNO River. Company F was to strike directly into the town as Company E took the high ground to the northwest and Company G came in from the right flank.

With Company E leading, the Battalion moved out at 2200 hours. After crossing the EVOLA River valley, Company G broke away from the column, moving out to the right to flank the town. There was no enemy resistance until Company E approached the western part of S. MINIATO when Kraut machine guns cut the darkness with tracers and 20mm guns fired at the leading elements. Returning the fire, pushing steadily forward, Company E drove the enemy back toward the center of town. A few potato mashers were thrown by the Krauts in a parting shot as Company E skirted the town, occupied its assigned objective in the early hours of the morning without further resistance.

Company F led by Lt. EVANS advanced into the town at dawn and was immediately met by enemy machine guns firing well planned cross fire down the principal thoroughfare. Advancing slowly, hugging the buildings, the 3rd Platoon had moved about 300 yards into the town when it was held up by the intense fire. The 1st Platoon worked its way to the right of the 3rd, moving behind the houses fronting the street down which the heaviest fire was pouring. S/Sgt. JOSEPH T. EMOND and Sgt. ROY L. ANDERSON searching the houses from the rear looked out of one of the front windows in time to see a Kraut machine gun crew setting up their weapon at the head of the street. Two Germans were dead a few seconds later as both sergeants fired at once.

Lt. EVANS, working his way further into the town behind the houses turned down an alley that led to the main street. He was about 30 yards from the street when he heard the pounding of hobnailed boots on the pavement. He stopped, raised his P38 and as a massive Kraut rounded the corner on a dead run, he nailed him with one shot. The machine gun crew which was following their fallen leader hesitated, turned and dove into a nearby house under a hail of fire which hit several of them. From then on during the day little progress was made. Kraut machine guns fired at the slightest movement so Company F had to be content with holding what it had already taken, waiting for Company G to move in from the opposite end of the town.

After leaving the Battalion column which was then moving toward S. MINIATO, Company G made a wide sweep to the east and at 0200 hours moved north again on a ridgeline with the mission of attacking the town from the right flank. Having a greater distance to cover than the other two companies the speed of advance was increased. When the company column became over extended, the 2nd Platoon in the lead and one squad of the 3rd Platoon lost contact with the remainder of the company. Capt. JAMES P. LYONS, Bn Executive Officer who was with the company, moved to the head of the column and advised Lt. RESBERT MARTIN, Company Commander, to keep pushing forward. The advance was resumed until two shots rang out directly ahead. 35 men and four officers were advancing in the darkness toward an enemy of unknown strength. As they approached a large stone building on the left side of the road the chatter of machine pistols broke out in the night. As the tempo of enemy fire increased, Lt. MARTIN deployed his men around the house and organized a quick perimeter defense. Firing into the night with only the flashes of enemy guns as targets, the men threw back the first hostile attack. Throwing potato mashers firing and yelling as they charged, approximately 20 Germans were stopped in their tracks by the desperate fire of Lt. MARTIN's men.

Realizing that their position was critical, sensing that the first Kraut attack would not be the last, Lt. MARTIN sent two men to try the door of the house. There was no response as the men banged on the door. Eight shots fired at the lock failed to budge it. Finally T/Sgt. CARMINE TAVALARO, calling to an Italian persuaded him to open the door. Maintaining a volume of fire at the Germans, who could be heard shouting in the darkness on the skirts of the position, Lt. MARTIN directed small groups, in turn, making quick rushes to the house. Deploying these men through the house, the third floor was utilized for the active defense of the building, men stationing themselves at windows and such apertures as would afford observation and places from which to fire. By this time it was getting lighter, allowing a more detailed view of the ground surrounding the house and vineyard. Some of the men were still in position in the vineyard as others continued to work their way into the building. S/Sgt. CHARLES LEVESQUE with a small handful of men, still firing through the grey light at Kraut gun flashes in an arc on the edges of the position, saw four Germans in close column, rifles held over their heads moving rapidly toward the house, shouting "Paezon" as they came and apparently intending to surrender. They might however have planned to rush the door after getting close enough, the entrance as yet not being barracaded while some of the Americans were still outside the house. Sgt. LEVESQUE left his men in position, ran forward to intercept these four Germans, divert them from their path to the house. As he came up to them, believing they were surrendering with weapons held overhead, the nearest Kraut, swinging down the butt of his piece in a cross to the jaw felled the sergeant. At once all four Krauts closed in, kicked him about the head and body as he lay on the ground at their feet, emptying their weapons into his battered form. Pvt. ARDEN L. SMITH, automatic rifleman of Sgt. LEVESQUE's squad, immediately blazed at the Germans, cutting down three of them in a burst and Pvt. FRANK R. COSTELLO, a rifleman got the fourth Nazi. After the death of their squad leader, the remaining handful of men worked their way to the door and slipped inside. When the last man was in the house, the door and windows were barricaded

under the direction of 2nd Lt. WILLIAM S. HALPRIN. Beds, chairs and tables, anything movable was piled against possible entrances. Mattresses were jammed into windows. Anticipating that the Krauts would try to force their way in, possibly with explosives, it was hoped that the barricades would slow them down enough to give the defenders a chance to concentrate all fires on them.

Lst Lt. FREDERICK E. CUMMINGS on the top floor had his platoon practically intact and throughout the battle he fought it as a unit. When the Germans attacked the second time his men beat them off with grenades and rifle fire and they fell back a distance of some 400 yards. By then it was broad daylight and Capt. LYONS was able to see that the Krauts were concentrated at three points surrounding the house. Observing from a window as rifle fire slapped into the side of the building, he called for artillery. As the first shells came in, he adjusted the fire with deadly effect. Greatly outnumbered, the handful of men in the house would have been easy prey for the Germans had it not been for supporting artillery which time and again broke up their attacks forcing them to seek cover. From the Regimental C.P. came word by radio that help was on the way. Company I supported by tanks moved to the northeast to join in the fight.

In the third attack which came as the morning wore on, the Krauts, about 30 or 40 strong managed to reach the side of the building itself, where they could be heard but not seen by the men in the windows. Grenades were dropped on them and some of the men held their rifles at arms length out the windows firing blindly downward but not until Capt. LYONS had brought artillery fire to within a few yards of the house did the attack break.

Continous sniping between concerted attacks failed to drive the men from the windows. As Pfc EDUARDO LOPEZ would appear for an instant, fire and step back, a Kraut bullet would snap past his head. Again he would fire and again the Kraut bullet would come through the window. This dueling kept up all morning until LOPEZ had a score of six dead Krauts to his credit. Pvt. WALTER CASBY on the other side of the house got his Krauts all at once. Seeing four or five of them creeping toward the building under partial concealment he opened up with his B.A.R. spewing death among them.

One of the men squeezed off a round at a Kraut in the vineyard, turned to Lt. HALPRIN: "Well how long do you think we can hold out, Lieutenant?"

"Well, I think we can hold out indefinitely," he answered, " we've got plenty of ammunition - and plenty of Krauts."

It was now mid morning and the Germans were desperate. Artillery fire was cutting them to pieces but they were still determined to take the house. The next attack was launched by a suicide squad of about 12, who ran up to the door, fixed a charge to it and set it off. The explosion appeared to backfire because the door stood firm and cries were heard outside. When Capt. LYONS again adjusted artillery fire to within a few yards of the door even the cries of the wounded ceased.

Seeming to go mad with frustration the Germans attacked again and again, first from one direction, then from another. Through the crash of exploding shells, the curses and yells of the Krauts rose and fell as they swarmed around the house. In the midst of the roaring confusion of battle the voice of Capt. LYONS could be

heard calling for artillery: "Pour it on - pour it on now they're coming at the northeast corner -- bring it 50 yards closer That's good -- dump the bucket. Here they come again, southeast corner Pour it on - pour it on" As if by miracle, not a single shell hit the house, although Capt. LYONS was calling for fire on the Germans as they stormed the building itself.

In the Regimental C.P. the progress of the fight was anxiously followed by radio. At noon the 337th F.A. Bn ran out of ammunition and were bringing new supplies up. Artillery continued to pour on the enemy as the 913th F.A. Bn, a six gun SP group from the 760th Tank Bn and a battery from the 339th F.A. Bn all fired for Company G. At the same time Company I and the tanks were reported only 900 yards from the beseiged house.

The attacking Germans, continued to press in relentlessly taking terrific losses until the rumble of tanks was heard and the men of Company I appeared on the scene. 25 Krauts came forward with their hands raised and the others withdrew. From the PW's it was learned that the German force had numbered 180 and had sustained over 50% casualties during the fight. Company G casualties, testifying to the futility of the German counterattacks were one man killed and two wounded. During the action the 337th F.A. Bn alone fired 3400 rounds and when relieved, the soldiers of Company G had only a handful of ammunition and two anti-tank grenades left.

Company G moved into S. MINIATO that night, 23 July, found that the enemy had withdrawn leaving a great many mines and booby traps in the rubble strewn streets and in the houses. Contact was made with Company F in the western part of the town. The 1st Battalion had moved into position one mile west of S. MINIATO without resistance and Company I rejoined the 3rd Battalion which was located 1500 yards south of the town.

For the next 36 hours all Battalions sent patrols to the north. It was definitely established that the last enemy line of resistance south of the ARNO River had been broken by the capture of S. MINIATO and the decisive fight by Company G at CALENZANO. Patrols reported SP guns south of the river but failed to find any evidence of large bodies of troops. Enemy mine and demolition crews were at work but Italian Partisans were able to give detailed reports on mined areas which were of great help when the next move was made.

The Regiment was ordered to clear the terrain to the river and on the night of 25 July, Companies A, E and G moved to the BADIA-PINOCCHIO Road, each company sending a platoon north to the railroad, and from there patrols worked to the river. All companies reported satisfactory progress, with no enemy contact. The outstanding action during the night occurred when three Kraut machine guns opened up on Sgt. SEWELL and his patrol which was scouting the advance of Company G. The enemy allowed the patrol to penetrate to a point where they could fire on the men from three sides. Machine gun bullets sprayed into their midst but caused no casualties. Pvt. LITTLE had three bullet holes in his shirt - Pvt. JOSEPH A. JOHNSON had four holes in his trousers and a bullet cut the sling on Pfc MICHAEL A. GRESKO's rifle. But the Krauts were their own undoing. When their tracers ignited a haystack, artillery was easily brought down on their positions and they were forced to withdraw.

By daylight the three companies were in their assigned positions, each with a platoon forward along the railroad. A constant lookout was kept for small enemy groups who might be attempting to infiltrate up from the river during the day. When darkness fell, the Regiment was relieved on position by the 1st Battalion, 362nd Infantry at 2135 hours, moving by motor to the vicinity of VILLAMAGNA for

a short period of training and rehabilitation. As July drew to a close the Regiment was undergoing intensive training in the principles of river crossings. With the ARNO River as the next German defense line to be breached, the men were thoroughly schooled in the minute details of such operations.

On 27 July, Major JOHN W. LYON assumed command of the 2nd Battalion. Major JAMES E. MILNER was assigned to Regimental Headquarters.

The 349th Infantry during the month of July, met the Kraut at his best, holding tenaciously to every foot of ground, fighting vicious delaying actions when his planned lines of defense had been cracked, supported by heretofore unseen masses of artillery. Four times the Regiment stood before German defense lines which the Kraut was savagely determined to hold. Four times the 349th crashed through to push the Germans back.

At VOLTERRA, a lightning envelopment had struck to the rear of the town, unhinging the German defense line after inflicting heavy losses. When a new stand was made on HILLS 184, 186 and 188, the 349th, although sustaining heavy casualties, smashed ahead, sent the Krauts reeling back. Again at PALAIA, despite massed artillery which slowed the advance, the Germans, decisively beaten after a bitter fight were forced to yield this key town to the Regiment. And finally at S.MINIATO, last barrier before the ARNO River, the 349th met the Germans who again were driven back after frenzied counterattacks had only resulted in heavy losses for them. Meeting the full fury of an aroused enemy, pushing ahead through terrific artillery barrages and beset at all times by mines and booby traps which infested the roads and fields, the 349th drove the enemy from VOLTERRA to the ARNO River, more than 25 miles in less than three weeks.

JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
AUGUST 1944

The first day of August found the 349th Infantry commanded by Colonel JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD in an area for training and rest at VILLAMAGNA. The men had come off the lines on 27 July with the understanding that after several days of training in river crossing operations they would go back to ford the ARNO River. Every man had full realization of the hazardous nature of the job to come. Many, on patrols, had been to the banks of the river and all reported that the crossing would not be easy. 2nd Lt. MARTIN C. BECKER, Company C, first in the Regiment to cross the river with a patrol, reported steep banks and a wide deep stream, a formidable obstacle that could not be breached without casualties if the Krauts chose to defend the river line. All this made a marked impression on the men which was reflected in the way they threw themselves wholeheartedly into the training that was planned for them.

The Kraut expected the 349th to hit him again - and soon. Displaying increased signs of jitters as the battle lull continued, they threw hundreds of flares by night and by day masked movements with smoke screens. Knowing that the enemy expected a crossing, although he could be surprised on the time and location of the effort, the soldiers looking to the task ahead took their training seriously. Being seasoned veterans there was no undue apprehension among them at the prospect of making the crossing, but they knew it could not be easy and realized that the teamwork and technique practiced in training would save lives at the pay off.

For ten days the Battalions and Special Units underwent intensive training in all phases of river crossing operations. The scope of this training was expanded from day to day starting with the initial phases of organization of boat loads, carrying boats from forward assembly areas to the water, loading, launching, crossing, unloading and attacking to seize the initial objective. In addition to the careful training in use of boats, crossing by footbridge and handlines was also practiced by rifle and heavy weapons companies.

The Engineers put on demonstrations for the men in bridge construction, detecting and clearing of mines, minefield markings and crossing minefields. Use of grappling hooks, and ladders were also demonstrated, and the men received intensive training in the scaling of steep banks. The men were particularly interested in this phase of their training because past experience had taught them that the roughest and most inaccessible approach to enemy positions was invariably the safest and would most thoroughly exploit the element of surprise.

Under the direction of Captain JAMES A. BROWNING the use of prima cord for clearing minefields was demonstrated. Sergeant EUGENE E. BOHN, A & P Platoon, 1st Battalion developed an effective device for clearing mines when he secured lengths of 1/2 inch pipe and charged them with dynamite. By screwing the sections of pipe together he was able to clear teller and shoe mines to a distance of 150 feet.

Anti-Tank Company, Cannon Company, also Headquarters and Supply personnel witnessed river crossing demonstrations with special emphasis on phases applicable to their functions. Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies studied the selection of crossing sites for vehicles and weapons, preparation of near and far banks for

crossing, clearing and taping of routes and gun positions, detecting and clearing mines, waterproofing of vehicles and guns. Technical training was regularly scheduled for these units.

On the night of 4-5 August a regimental river crossing problem was executed with excellent results. In the critique the following morning the Regimental Commander pointed out minor deficiencies noted in the operation, stressing particularly the necessity for rapid, aggressive movement and maintenance of control. 1st Lt. CHARLES R. SNIFFIN presented the men with a summary of latest developments on world battlefronts and Colonel CRAWFORD gave the men some interesting speculations on the probable state of mind of the "Big" Kraut and his minion, the "little" Krauts.

On the morning of 6 August, the regiment assembled in the 2nd Battalion area to witness presentation of awards for deeds of heroism in the previous months fighting. The Regimental Commander spoke first, reviewing the offensive operations of the 349th Infantry from the jump off on the MINTURNO front through ROME and to the ARNO River. To remind the men that they had not been alone in the fight, Colonel CRAWFORD presented the highlights in the brilliant accomplishments of the other two regiments. Whistles of admiration greeted the account of the fight for Mt. DAMIANO by the 350th Infantry and the battle of LAIATICO by the 351st Infantry.

Colonel CRAWFORD concluded his remarks by introducing Brigadier General PAUL W. KENDALL. The General told the men that he was standing before veterans, as fine a group of fighting men as could be found anywhere in the world today. Congratulating them on their fine record in all combat operations, General KENDALL then observed that, as always, some men stand out as bearing a larger share of the burden than others and in recognition of their outstanding heroism, medals were to be awarded to those men. Eight Silver Stars, three Oak Leaf Clusters to the Bronze Star and 35 Bronze Stars were pinned on the proud chests of the 349th's outstanding Kraut Killers. As each man came forward and stood at attention before the General, spontaneous applause broke out and the calls of "Atta boy Joe," "Nice work, Bill" gave indication of the admiration held for these men by their comrades.

Until 12 August all training pointed toward the ARNO River crossing. With all phases of the operation well in hand, emphasis was shifted to battle drill and physical hardening as the men awaited the word that would send them back into the lines. Scouting and patrolling, map and compass reading, instruction in basic weapons and interior guard duty were all scheduled. Brigadier General KENDALL visited the training areas regularly and each morning every company area was inspected by a Regimental Inspecting Officer.

Competition in battle drill proficiency stimulated efforts of the men to achieve a high standard. Eight squads representing Companies A, B, C, E, F, I, L and M received top ratings and a more tangible reward in the form of a three day visit to ROME. Each day one company was sent to the range near CECINA to fire machine guns and rifles. In addition to the usual side-bets, the companies fired competitively, Company F emerging with the highest score.

A number of changes in key personnel were made in the Regiment during the month. Lt. Col. WILLIAM J. MCCONNELL was assigned to the 349th and designated Regimental Executive Officer on 18 August in the absence of Lt. Col. JOSEPH A. KIELTY who was hospitalized earlier in the month. On the same day 1st Lt. LYNN C. REDFIELD was designated Regimental S-2 and on 25 August, Captain JERROLD D. SNOW

was released from the 313th Engineers and assigned to the 349th being designated Executive Officer, 3rd Battalion. To the 351st Infantry, as Regimental Executive Officer went Lt. Col. WALTER B. YEAGER who had commanded the 3rd Battalion during all its offensive operations since the jump off on the MINTURNO front. In his place Major DONALD A. YONGUE was designated Commanding Officer, 3rd Battalion.

On 21 August the 1st Battalion was attached to the 442nd Infantry, a Japanese-American unit which was in position in the line near FLORENCE. The quartering party left VILLAMAGNA at 1030 hours followed by the main body of troops at 1900 hours. The movement was accomplished without incident and at midnight the last elements reached the new area, all troops immediately dug in and counter attack plans were drawn up.

The 1st Battalion, in reserve with the 442nd, occupied an area roughly 4000 yards southwest of FLORENCE on the rear slope of the last high ground south of the ARNO. The two battalions of the 442nd on the line patrolled to the river but no concerted effort was made to drive all Krauts north of the ARNO. The 1st Battalion was not called on to furnish patrols so the men had little in the way of action to report other than the occasional shelling to which they were subjected. Early evening was the time usually chosen by the Krauts to throw a few shells in. The only casualties occurred when Company A kitchen was hit by a tree burst. Pfc JOSEPH B. AGAPITO and Pfc GRANT E. HULTZ were wounded and evacuated. Pots and pans were riddled and a roast of beef earned the Purple Heart several times over. An unusual number of duds were counted whenever artillery fell in the Battalion area and several men owed their lives to Lady Luck when projectiles landing nearby failed to explode.

With particular attention being paid to the left flank, the 1st Battalion maintained contact with the Natal Mounted Rifles a South African reconnaissance outfit. On the right, the 2nd Brigade, 1st British Division was forward of 442nd positions the line bending toward the ARNO as it went east. The entire Battalion was on 12 hour alert and a Company plus a machine gun platoon was on alert at all times. Training was conducted in units of half a squad to avoid attracting attention. All civilians in the area were closely watched after reports were received that several Germans posing as Italian farmers had been picked up. An O.P. was maintained at all times with observation on the north side of the river, but reported no enemy activity. Information on gun reports and flashes was relayed to supporting artillery.

To complete plans for a possible crossing of the river, 1st Lt. EMIL HARTMAN, Company B volunteered to lead a patrol to reconnoiter a route to the ARNO. With eight men he set out on the morning of 28 August, moved through the 442nd positions and found an excellent trail as he got to within 30 yards of the river. Several wild shots were fired by the enemy from the small town of COLUMBANO, but no other enemy resistance was encountered. Civilians reported that small groups of Germans infested the area and the patrol observed enemy activity in COLUMBANO, possibly in platoon strength. The patrol discovered minefields, both Teller and A.P. Returning at dusk the men came through intermittent artillery fire but sustained no casualties.

With little activity on the front lines the men of the 1st Battalion had ample opportunity to rest and write letters. Although their social life was restricted due to their proximity to the battle front, it was not an unpleasant mode of existence and they expressed no envy of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions at VILLAMAGNA,

which were continuing their vigorous training with night problems and long marches.

In addition to the routine training there were "extra curricular activities and interests" which absorbed the free time of the men. Under the direction of Captain JOSEPH H. COAKLEY, Special Service Officer, the men were treated to a well rounded program of entertainment. Every night either movies or shows were scheduled. JACK HALEY AND MARY BRIAN, big names at home, put on a show that drew enthusiastic applause from the men. But the highlight in entertainment was provided by a Miss BARBARA LONG. Doing an "esthetic" dance in decorous fashion she held the respectful attention of the soldiers. Then as a column of tanks rumbled by behind her, she whirled around with a "Hiya Boys!" raised her skirts to a considerable distance above her knees, exhibiting long and not unshapely legs. The lead tank ground to a halt and the heads of two startled tankers popped out of their cockpits. A battalion of tanks was held up on the road as Miss LONG, accompanied by the enthusiastic cheers of all present, launched into a uptown version of boogie-woogie at its best.

Perhaps the most patient man in the Regiment is Corporal HARRY A. MILLER, Captain COAKLEY's able assistant who runs the movie projector. Every night the somewhat ancient generator conks once or twice bringing hoots and catcalls from the audience, but the patient smile never leaves MILLER's face, even at cries of "MILLER for Section 8" or "MILLER, turn in your Combat Badge." But the show must and does go on as Corporal MILLER, using a touch of magic and a minor miracle or two coaxes the wheezing gasoline engine to hold up through the final reel.

Assistant Special Services Officer is 1st Lt. CARL M. BISCIGLIA and Corporal EUGENE E. SMITH handles the athletics schedule, with Private HAROLD W. PITTS lending a helping hand as needed. During the month the men of the 349th began getting beer in cans regularly and S.S.O. expected to provide them with an average of one can per day. Scientific and equitable distribution of the beer, limiting imbibers to two cans per issue, kept parties on an even keel. Most Coca Cola was going to hospitals but at least one bottle was allotted each man from the bi-weekly quota.

Arrangements for entertainment at battalion parties were made in several instances. Organizations holding parties made out the best they could on bringing feminine partners for dancing, locally, either nurses from the hospital units or the ever-present dark-eyed signorinas. When BENNY MEROFF's U.S.O. show, with a cast of 10, the largest overseas, played an engagement, 5,000 soldiers were entertained. August attendance at shows totalled 90,350.

It was always a treat when the Red Cross girls showed up with either their clubmobile or doughnut car to pass out doughnuts to eager GI's. Company kitchens furnished the drink, while musical entertainment was improvised, aided and abetted by a piano or the accordian of Private SAM PETRALIA, of 3rd Battalion Headquarters. The "doughnut girls" are FRAN BEATTY OF FORT WORTH, TEXAS, VIRGINIA CRAWFORD OF KENTUCKY, ROSLYN MYER of TENNESSEE and the gal known as "SYLVIA OF BROOKLYN" The girls spent all day, 20 August, entertaining and feeding sinkers to the men of all three battalions - and bantering with those who wanted their telephone numbers or else.

Only regiment of the 88th and first in the Fifth Army to receive souvenir service was the 349th. Corporal MILLER made available to home-minded soldiers various items of jewelry - cameos, rings, coral necklaces, bracelets, etc. - and by the end of the month sales totalled around \$5,000.

Other services of the S.S.O. included the establishment of an Officers' Clothing PX, orders being taken for filling at the Fifth Army Exchange. Private PITTS, backed by an official O.K., was developing developing service - that's not double talk, for he has taken care of several kodak films for the men and hopes to expand this as an added service for the benefit of the troops.

The Division baseball playoff was swinging along and a strong club was anticipated for the Fifth Army tournament. In their first game as a team the 349th's club in charge of 2nd Lt. BRUCE COMPTON of Company A clipped the 88th Quartermasters 1 to 0 on 26 August. Practically every company furnished talent for the powerful team. On 28 August the team defeated the 351st 15 to 9 in a time limit game ending in the first half of the 8th inning and the following day rolled up 18 runs to 12 for 788'th Ordinance.

The 349th Infantry, already making a fine record as a fighting regiment, made a bid for fame in fistiana, the age-old manly art so closely akin to the battlefield. Our exponent of leather-pushing, solid, well-built T/5 ARTHUR J. PHAIAH, began intensive training and conditioning during the last part of August at the Fifth Army rest camp. A sparring match in the division area with none other than the world's heavyweight champion, JOE LOUIS, was arranged and this gloved meeting with the Brown Bomber promised fulfillment of the heart's ambition of T/5 PHAIAH. The 88th chose five other leather-pushers to the rest camp but ART will be the only one scheduled to climb through the ropes to the gloves on with the champion. PHAIAH hoped his performance there would win for him a berth as JOE's sparring partner on tour. Fighting for five years in civilian life under the ring name of ART FAIR, the fistic pride of the 349th continued his ring career when he joined the 88th. In December, 1942, he was Division and Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, heavyweight champion and in February of the following year he won the Northeast Oklahoma Golden Glove heavyweight championship.

An evening of slam-bang sport was provided the men of the 349th on 23 August by Special Services and the Anti-Tank area show grounds became the "Madison Square" of TUSCANY. A fine card of novice bouts kept the khaki-clad audience shouting and roaring and gave the participants excellent ring experience. There were no decisions, but interest was maintained at a high level throughout. Pvt. JACK TARNOFOSKY of Company H traded rights and lefts with Sgt. CARL W. AMERSON of Company E. Both were 125-pounders. Company H contributed another stalwart, Cpl. PHILLIP C. ENGLAND who had his hands full with scrappy PVT. HOWARD L. BILLITER of G.R.O. in the 135-pound class. Cpl. MIKE GEROSION of Company M showed up well against Company H's 145-pound entry, Pvt. EDWARD F. GOLEC. Plenty of promise as a pugilistic warrior was exhibited by Pvt. LESTER P. OATSVALL of Company E, 155 pounds, as he and Pfc JOHN BERNARDENELLI of Company L threw leather at one another in their bout. OATSVALL scored the only knockdown of the evening when he put BERNARDENELLI on the floor- but only temporarily. An oldtimer at the game, PVT JOHN TOCONITA of Company E, came out with a few tricks that added considerably to the fistic education of Serice Company's 160-pounds Pvt. VICTOR S. GREATHOUSE. An "outsider," Pvt. WOODWARD CLINTON of Battery A, 432nd A.A. traded telling punches with S/Sgt. PETER L. VOJTISEK of 2nd Battalion Headquarters, each putting his 165 pounds solidly behind the blows. The battle was lively until CLINTON's second

claimed he had received a low blow and the referee T/5 ARTHUR F. PHAIAH of the Medics, had to stop the action. The crowd, however was all for VOJTISEK and there was much doubt as to the "low blow." The program wound up with a comedy bout that would have had the customers rolling in the aisles - had there been aisles or even seats of the grassy slope. T/5 PHAIAH took on a formidable though lighter opponent in the person of Pvt. JOSEPH H. ("DANGEROUS") DEGILIO of the Replacement Pool. Aided and abetted by referee Pvt. EDMUND J. RONGETTI of Service Company, DEGILIO hurled his 111 pounds at PHAIAH's 205 with devastating results. The bouts showed that the 349th has plenty of ring talent to vie for places on the team the Division will enter in the Fifth Army Tourney later on.

Social life was somewhat limited but Cannon Company celebrated the first anniversary of its activation in the regiment, mainly on a full quota of beer the evening of 26 August. Company F, with the highest score of 1146 points for the regimental shooting competition held 23 August, celebrated the triumph with a beach party near CECINA. Steak sandwiches, prepared on the spot, beer or cold drinks took care of appetites and thirst whetted by swimming in the sea and baseball on the sand. A rumor of "mermaids" turned out to be the sighting by "recon patrols" of a few signorinas employed at nearby hospitals - but they did add the touch of Coney Island's variety in forms. Comradely spirit was shown by Company E in furnishing guards so that all of F Company could participate in the beach party. H Company's machine gun section which was attached to Company F for the firing competition celebrated at the beach with their erstwhile teammates. 2nd Battalion Headquarters Company, winner of the competition for shooting held amongst headquarters units, also had an enjoyable day.

A pleasant event awaited Pfc. LAWRENCE W. REARICK of E Company on his arrival home in the States on rotation - seeing his baby for the first time, born since he came overseas . . . A couple of men in H Company sent home Kraut helmets as souvenirs - and proof to the folks of the aggressiveness of men of the 349th. . . Under the broiling Italian sun on the afternoon of 27 August two muscular figures broiled sweated and swore for the entertainment of L Company. T/5 DOMINIC NERO CAMMARANO, roly-poly chef, and Sgt. FRANK DE VITO engaged in gloved fisticuffs for three hectic rounds . . . H Company's C.O., 1st Lt. CLYDE M. DAVIS sent one of shirts out to a "Paesan" hand laundry - and got back a buck Sergeant's. . . His buddies of G Company joshed 1st Sgt. CARMINE TAVALARO about his "affair" with a pleasant peasant - and suspected him of a Sunday dinner date when he took off just before chow time . . . On the other hand Pvt. HENRY BOYKIN was trying to live down the title of Company I's Don Juan, the signorinas' pride and joy, before his amorous activities threatened (according to his cohorts) to undermine international relations. . . Over in G Company LEATHAL McCARTHY and S/Sgt. ALEXANDER LAYMAN, pursued a less dangerous hobby in pounding Italian coins into neat rings during spare time . . . With the sun setting earlier as the autumn season neared, avid horseshoe tossers continued their contests after dark with the aid of candles set close to the stakes. The radio, too, was doing night duty as the men listened eagerly for the latest news on warfront developments. As elsewhere throughout the regiment they were ready to raise the roof when the Stars and Stripes failed to show up at its expected hour . . . M Company's Bugler BOB MacLAUGHRIN jived forth with a hot lips version of reveille morning ater morning . . . Most of the men avoid contacting the Mp's but S/Sgt. JOSEPH SCHNEIDER of Company E took off Sunday, 27 August, to visit his brother who is a member of the watchdog unit in the vicinity of FLORENCE. . . With rest camp leaves more prevalent the bottom of the financial barrel was being scraped but somehow the lucky ones slated for the FORO D'ITALIA, managed to beg or borrow before they took off. They returned with glowing accounts of their stay - it was "just like home," there were showers daily,

clean clothing, sewing and dry cleaning service, frequent busses into ROME, tennis courts, a daily diving exhibition by the Italian champ, a nearby park where romance might blossom, continuous movies from 0830 hours far into the evening with a stage show, and an ever-busy snack bar.

Maybe he's a bit idealistic but T/Sgt. MARTIN J. McHUGH of I Company favors an extension of the Boys Club idea into EUROPE. A member of such a club back in WOODSIDE, L.I., T/Sgt. McHUGH believes the world would be better off if youngsters were handed baseballs, boxing gloves, etc., and shown some good old American games to take their minds off of heels and gosesteps. . . An unusual vocation is that of Pfc FRED L. CLAFLIN of I Company - before going khaki he was a teacher of sign language to the deaf and dumb. He hails from MENAHGA, MINN. . . . Throughout the 349th's area the men gather around at night for a session of batting the breeze. Sandwiches and coffee mysteriously appear from nowhere - the soldiers have learned to be good providers . . . I Company boasts the tallest Officer in the 349th - 1st Lt. JACK SILVERSTEIN who towers nearly 6 1/2 feet. His shoe size is 14 D.

Pvt. EDWARD ZINK, public relations man for the Regiment at last found a legitimate reason for putting his own name in print. Like thousands of other soldiers it was his fond dream that someday he would run across a Nazi flag for a souvenir. At CATELFORTE a French Officer beat him by several yards to a beautiful silk specimen that some Kraut had left behind. Knowing that opportunity knocks but once, ZINK gave up hope. You could have knocked him over with a German 88 when one day, looking in the chain compartment of his jeep he discovered a huge Kraut flag, swastika and all, neatly folded up, looking as though it had lain there for some time. Only then did ZINK remember that he was driving a jeep which, two months before, had been recaptured from the Krauts. Sgt. HAROLD F. BLACK, top man so far, has offered him \$50 for it, but ZINK holds out for five hundred.

S/Sgt. DONALD L. WOOD of A Company made good use of a captured Jerry motorcycle and sidecar for supply room errands - when he was able to coax the temperamental contraption into running. Two other Nazi-made vehicles, a V-8 sedan and a Volkswagon, were passed along as A Company bid fair to become over-mechanized and all-too-frequent overhauls became necessary . . . White-haired S/Sgt. JAMES E. KENNY spent every minute he could up front looking after the supply needs of B Company boys first hand . . . Pfc MATTHEW LAMKINS and Pfc JAMES SAMITO were accused of becoming Scat addicts and their cronies of D Company claimed the two were cutting their Italian wine with the insect repellent. . . The luscious likeness of BETTY HUTTON adorned B Company's bulletin board and the men were proud of her autograph and "sincere and best wishes to the men of Company B" which they obtained by voting her their top pin-up girl . . . An almost daily mystery was T/4 ARTHUR MILNER's unanswered demand, "Who stole my water can?" The D Company mechanic has had to overwork the requisition. His huge handlebar moustache, which once drew commendation from two visiting Generals, has gained ferocious breadth under frequent waxing treatment.

S/Sgt. EDWARD BANASIEWIZ had to take steps to neutralize the popularity of his supply room as a gathering place for C Company gossipers so he put up a sign warning "This Is No Day Room." The men got even with him by ribbing him continually about trying to encourage a wave in his straight hair in anticipation of his return to TULSA, OKLA., and the girl he left behind . . . D Company staged a mock presentation of sergeant's stripes to then Cpl. CORNELIUS (Bloodless-Gutless") MOORE, frozen-in-grader for better than a year and a half. S/Sgt. NEAL BONNER, spotting

a couple of makeshift stars on his helmet, handed the hapless buckler a two-foot board painted with huge chevrons - "so that all may see and know" - while 1st Lt. MELVIN M. SMITH busily shot the scene from various angles with a filmless camera. Lanky MOORE, according to his brothers-in-arms barely tips the scale at 90 pounds soaking wet and passed his physical only because the doctors overlooked trying to take a blood test. His authentic sergeant's chevrons were finally presented him on a platter. C Company still talks about Pfc ANTHONY VELNICK's feat of capturing four Krauts without a rifle. He had wandered off into an orchard in search of apples during a roadside halt and reappeared shortly with the quartet of docile "supermen" following. "Look what I got," shouted Pfc VELNICK, "now give me a rifle." T/4 MATTEO AGRILLO, K Company cook, was still trying for a brief furlough so he could visit his parent in SICILY. It's been 21 years since he last saw them.

An opportunity to send home souvenirs of ITALY was afforded the men of the 349th both by the withdrawal from the front line and the proximity to VOLTERRA, center of alabaster carving. The handling of homeward-bound packages kept the mail system busy in what was otherwise a light month due to the demands of the invasions of FRANCE. Sgt. JOHN D'ANTONIO, in charge of the section, noted that money orders would total around \$40,000 which indicates a laudable tendency to save with an eye to the future. Assisted by Cpl. MILTON IPP and Cpl. FRANK T. SULLIVAN, Sgt. D'ANTONIO operates a regular postoffice with all its taken-for-granted services. The section is set up to work under any conditions and always the objective is to get that mail through - it's a very important matter to the soldier and a prime factor in keeping his morale at a high level.

Field Director EDWIN C. JOHNSON of the American Red Cross reported a heavy drain on supplies stocked at LEGHORN. He distributed exceptionally large numbers of such items as razors, soap, combs, cigarettes and tobacco, and Red Cross stationery was much in demand as time was afforded the resting Kraut Killers to write home. Numerous telegrams, both incoming and outgoing, were handled by Field Director JOHNSON and he arranged for several of the men of the 349th to visit relatives. It has been a source of much enjoyment to the Field Director to be present at happy reunions and more than once he has found himself in the midst of a happy welcoming as though he were a long lost cousin - and that wasn't hard to take when there happened to be a beautiful signorina in the family.

As the month drew to a close the 2nd and 3rd Battalions continued to train at VILLAMAGNA. Rifle platoons conducted night firing exercises, the problems involving seizure of six or more objectives. Squad and Company attack problems were scheduled and the men engaged in supervised athletics. As events on the various battlefronts moved more rapidly, greater interest was taken in the regular orientation lectures which were given.

The 1st Battalion remained in reserve with the 442nd Infantry, southwest of FLORENCE. The Kraut continued to throw shells over the ARNO but only sporadically and no damage or casualties were reported. Several patrols were sent out but only one reported contacting the enemy. On the night of 30 August, 2nd Lt. RAYMOND L. PLANTE, Company C, with a ten man patrol moved toward the ARNO to set up an ambush at a trail junction. As they approached the appointed spot, German machine

guns and machine pistols opened up in the darkness. The fire fight lasted for twenty minutes as the Company C patrol answered the enemy fire with submachine guns, automatic rifles and M-1's. One enemy machine gun was knocked out with a rifle grenade but the price paid was high as T/Sgt. ROBERT M. VENTER, winner of a Silver Star for gallantry in a previous action, was caught in a stream of hostile tracers and was instantly killed. Not having sufficient fire power to drive the enemy out of their positions, the patrol retired without further casualties.

August proved to be the most uneventful month in the history of the Kraut Killers since their first taste of combat in March. Training was intensive but the days slipped by, one very much like another, broken principally by passes and scheduled entertainment. Finally, on the last day of the month came the word the men had long expected. The Regiment (2nd and 3rd Battalions and Special Units) was alerted for movement north to the vicinity of the 1st Battalion. Once again the 349th prepared to reenter the fight, perhaps this time to have a hand in dealing the final blows against ADOLPH HITLER's tottering fortress.

JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
SEPTEMBER 1944

The 349th Infantry, (less 1st Battalion) commanded by Colonel JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD was enroute by motor, moving toward the ARNO River front as the month opened. The Regiment had been alerted the previous day, 31 August and that night all units entrucked, leaving the rest area at VILLAMAGNA, heading north. At 0300 hours all elements of the Regiment had checked into assembly areas, completing the movement without incident. The 3rd Battalion was located in an area to the east of and on line with the 1st Battalion, approximately 4,000 yards southwest of FLORENCE. The 2nd Battalion and Regimental Headquarters were two miles further south. During the remainder of the day all companies dug in and awaited orders.

On 2 September, the 1st Battalion commanded by Major HUGH E. QUIGLEY was alerted for movement across the ARNO River. Patrols during the day reported that the enemy had withdrawn at least as far north of the river as the first line of hills and two companies of the 442nd Infantry had crossed the river without resistance. It was, therefore, not contemplated that the 1st Battalion would meet anything more than small delaying parties at the most.

At 1800 hours, the 1st Battalion moved out with Company A leading the column. Moving down toward the ARNO, past the town of SCANDICCI the troops crossed the river through a shallow ford without seeing any sign of the enemy. Advancing through the town of PERETOLA, the Battalion struck off to the northwest along Highway 66. At a road junction a mile from the town, Company A with a section of mortars and a platoon of machine guns joined with a platoon of tanks from Company C, 760 Tank Battalion and took the right branch leading north to SESTO. The rest of the Battalion continued along Highway 66 toward CAMPI BISENZIO. By midnight both towns were occupied without a shot being fired. Buildings were searched and security patrols were sent out. Company B outposted the bridge on the BISENZIO River and dispatched a patrol which went 300 yards north of LE CORTI with still no sign of the Krauts.

On the same day, south of the ARNO, the 2nd Battalion moved up to the position left by the 1st. Both 2nd and 3rd Battalions scheduled small unit training, stressing physical conditioning and squad tactics as they awaited orders.

Planning more extensive patrolling on 3 September, the 1st Battalion prepared to actively probe enemy positions to determine how far the Krauts had pulled back. CAMPI BISENZIO, occupied by B and C Companies was on the western boundary of the II Corps sector with the 6th South African Division (IV Corps) on the left. To the east there was a gap of almost three miles between CAMPI BISENZIO and SESTO, the town occupied by Company A. On the right of Company A was the 2nd Brigade, 1st British Division.

With the mission of investigating CALENZANO, three miles northwest of SESTO, 1st Lt. ELROY LEMASTER, Company A, started out with a 15 man patrol. Moving through SETTITUELLO, he was approaching SPAZZAVENTO when fired on by the enemy. Heavy fire from well concealed Kraut machine guns and snipers commanded the surrounding terrain and had previously held up two assault platoons of the 91st Reconnaissance Regiment. Without sufficient fire power to force the German positions, Lt. LEMASTER returned to SESTO.

Another daylight patrol on 3 September also had a fire fight with the Krauts. 2nd Lt. RAYMOND L. PLANTE, Company C, with a squad was given the mission of reaching the high ground north of LA QUERCE. The objective was the first commanding ground, north of the Battalion positions, which were on flat open terrain. As the patrol approached CAPPELA, a machine gun position was sighted and fired on. Immediately three Krauts, surprised while sunbathing nearby, jumped to their feet and escaped. The gun was seized intact. Moving on, the patrol worked its way around to the west of LA QUERCE but met heavy fire from automatic weapons. Pulling back, Lt. PLANTE led his men around the east side of the town. Again the Krauts responded with intense fire. Unable to penetrate further with so few men, Lt. PLANTE brought his patrol back to CAMPI BISENZIO.

On the same day, 3 September, a platoon of Company B was sent across the BISENZIO River to occupy S. MARIA which was accomplished without resistance. Four contact patrols from Company A and Company C were sent out each day to cover the gap in the Battalion sector, meeting at a halfway mark. Contact with the British on the right was made by Company A patrols four times a day.

SESTO, closely watched by the Krauts, was heavily shelled on 3 September. More than 300 rounds of heavy artillery fell in the vicinity of Company A positions on the northeast side of the town, a direct hit smashing the wall of Lt. LEMASTER's platoon C.P. No casualties were sustained, but the men were deprived of hot meals as the heavy fire curtailed all freedom of movement. The Germans continued to shell SESTO on 4 September but still inflicting no casualties and causing little damage. Company B was ordered to withdraw all elements to the east side of the BISENZIO River. During the day a plane was seen to crash in the vicinity of PADULE. Company C sent out a patrol picking up one crew member, A new Zealander who had taken refuge in a house near CAPPELA. It was believed that other crew members landed behind the Kraut lines.

With a full platoon, 2nd Lt. ROBERT L. BULLOCK went out at night in an attempt to reach HILL 478, north of LA QUERCE. On approaching the railroad south of the town the platoon came under machine gun and mortar fire. After probing for several routes of advance and finding all well covered by Kraut automatic weapons, Lt. BULLOCK withdrew his men and returned to CAMPI BISENZIO.

From Company A, 1st Lt. KENNETH E. KRUCKS took a patrol the same night. Starting out initially with two platoons of the 91st Reconnaissance Regiment, the combined forces reached a church 1500 yards northwest of SESTO. When fired on at that point, LT. KRUCKS went forward to confer with the Officer in charge of the Reconnaissance elements. When he failed to return, T/Sgt. IGNACY I. MROZINSKI took over the patrol and led it to the objective, 1,000 yards west of the church. At that point the patrol came under fire of several Kraut automatic weapons. After feeling out enemy strength in the vicinity, Sgt MROZINSKI led his men back to the company positions.

South of the ARNO, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were continuing training in small units. Each night the 2nd Battalion sent two patrols across the river to contact the 1st Battalion at CAMPI BISENZIO. All patrols completed their missions without incident.

On 4 September the 2nd Battalion was visited by General Sir HAROLD R. ALEXANDER, Commander of Allied Troops in Italy, Major General GEOFFREY KEYES, II

Corps Commander and Brigadier General PAUL W. KENDALL, Commanding General, 88th Division. The distinguished visitors briefly inspected the area and expressed satisfaction at the appearance of the soldiers and the training they were undergoing.

On the morning of 5 September, Lt. BULLOCK, Company B made a second attempt to complete his mission of the previous night. Leading a patrol of 15 men he again reached the railroad south of LA QUERCE and again met strong enemy resistance. Contacting elements of the 91st Reconnaissance Regiment which were held up at the same point, Lt. BULLOCK learned that 40 to 60 Krauts were in positions around LA QUERCE and on the slopes north of the town. Civilians reported that they had been forced to dig emplacements for the Germans, that there were four machine guns and two mortars around the town and at least 11 machine guns on the commanding ground to the north. Without a sufficient number of men to engage the strongly defended positions, Lt. BULLOCK returned to CAMPI BISENZIO.

On a similar mission, 2nd Lt. MARTIN W. BECKER of Company C with 15 men became engaged in a fierce fire fight with the Krauts. As he tried to work his way around the east side of LA QUERCE he was fired on by the enemy in positions south of CALENZANO. An estimated 50 or 60 Krauts covered the area with machine gun and machine pistol fire. Although at one time completely surrounded, he managed to keep his men moving to avoid being pinned down. Over 200 rounds of artillery were thrown at the patrol during the fight which lasted a full hour. Working his patrol toward a ravine, Lt. BECKER managed to withdraw without sustaining casualties.

Without definite knowledge of enemy strength and disposition in LA QUERCE and on the high ground to the north, the 1st Battalion would have been at a disadvantage had it gone into the attack without this information. Although three patrols had previously been thrown back in attempts to pierce enemy defenses in that sector, 1st Lt. EMIL W. HARTMAN, JR., Company B made a determined and successful effort to reach the objective on the afternoon of 5 September. With a combat patrol of 15 men, Lt. HARTMAN worked his way in a wide encirclement around the west side of the town. Closely following his own artillery which crashed on enemy positions as he advanced, he led his men up the slopes north of LA QUERCE. When behind the town he moved to the south coming on enemy positions from the rear. Sighted by three Kraut machine gunners who turned their fire on the advancing patrol, Lt. HARTMAN dispersed his men and worked them in small groups toward the emplacements. One machine gun was silenced at a distance by well directed fire. The second was knocked out when Lt. HARTMAN, leaving his men, crawled forward, jumping into a gravel pit to pump carbine bullets at point blank range into the Kraut gunner. The third gun was destroyed as his men assaulted the position with grenades. Two Krauts were killed, four wounded and one captured. After the action, Lt. HARTMAN led his men back to Company B positions and was able to give his Battalion the sought for information in detail.

In another action on the same day, 1st Lt. JOHN H. CARTER, Company A, led a patrol to the church, northwest of SESTO. As he moved beyond it, the Krauts opened fire with automatic weapons from positions on three sides. Returning the fire, Lt. CARTER called for artillery and as the Germans were observed trying to cut his patrol off from the rear, first moving on the right then on the left, he brought planned concentrations on both sides, beating them back. Directing artillery with deadly effect, Lt. CARTER was able to withdraw without sustaining casualties, under the protective curtain of fire. Civilians later reported that four Krauts had been killed and 11 wounded in the fight.

On 6 September the 1st Battalion withdrew to an area south of the ARNO River. Training throughout the regiment was coordinated and on 7-8 September scouting and patrolling, manual of arms and instruction in basic weapons were scheduled. Particular emphasis was placed on military courtesy and discipline.

On 9 September, the first anniversary of the SALERNO landing, the men paused briefly in their training to listen to messages from both Lieutenant General MARK W. CLARK and Brigadier General PAUL W. KENDALL which were read to all troops in the afternoon. Later in the day, in a radio broadcast, General CLARK spoke to the men of the 5th Army, in commemoration of the gallant soldiers who fought and died at SALERNO. Summing up the progress made in a year of bitter fighting on the Italian peninsular, the General stated that the time was at hand when the final blow would be struck at Nazi forces in Italy. Gathered about their Company radios, the soldiers of the 349th recalled with justifiable pride the important part played by their regiment in the Italian campaign.

In a ceremony at Regimental Headquarters on the same day, awards were presented to those Officers and men who had distinguished themselves in action. After a brief address congratulating them for their distinguished achievements, Colonel JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD, Regimental Commander, presented seven Silver Stars and 19 Bronze Stars to the top Kraut Killers of the Regiment. Sergeant ALFRED R. TOY, Regimental Motor Dispatcher, was presented with the first Legion of Merit to be awarded to any officer or enlisted man in the 349th.

Training was resumed on Monday, 11 September and until 16 September basic subjects were stressed. Emphasis was placed on map reading, and during the week all Officers and non-coms attended regular classes, taking graded tests to determine proficiency. Physical conditioning, battle drill, dismounted drill and manual of arms made up the body of daily schedules. Platoon problems at night were held on 13 and 15 September and the men attended an orientation lecture on 14 September. Training areas were limited in size and there were no facilities for firing of weapons.

Since the 88th Division was in Corps reserve, a move to the front was anticipated for the near future. There were no passes issued, all men were restricted to company and training areas, and neighboring towns were declared off limits. With night falling earlier as the days grew shorter, the men had little more than an hour after supper in which to read, write letters or play cards. Blackout regulations made any activity after dark impossible so the men found themselves going to bed as the sun set. Not reluctantly however - their training was rigorous and after a hard day's work the "sack" had great appeal.

During the week, the progress of the drive on the GOTHIC Line was closely followed and regular situation reports came from Division Headquarters on other units of II Corps. On 12 September a Staff Officer from each Battalion and Cannon Company went forward on reconnaissance in the 34th Division sector. Similar groups reconnoitered both the 91st and 85th Division sectors on 13 and 14 September.

An 88th Division Directive alerted the Regiment for movement on 17 September.

"1. 349th Infantry will reconnoiter an assembly area in rear of 338th Infantry in 85th Division zone as far north of SIEVE RIVER as practicable and RCT will move under cover of darkness night of 17-18 September to area selected. Be prepared to pass through 338th Infantry and launch attack prior to daylight 19 September."

That night, the troops entrucked and moved through SCANDICCI to FLORENCE. Crossing the ARNO the trucks passed through the outskirts of the city and headed north along Highway 65. For 15 miles the convoys rolled toward towering mountains in which the 85th Division was battling to breach the Gothic Line. Detrucking, the men marched three miles to an assembly area south of Mt. ALTUZZA, prepared to attack on order.

With the 85th Division reporting good progress in its attack on the main Gothic Line defenses, plans to throw the 88th Division into the line were modified and it was kept in reserve, following the 85th and prepared to pass through it to exploit a breakthrough. The 349th remained in its assembly area on 18 September. The following day II Corps reported "astounding advances" in the 85th Division sector, adding, "it is definitely felt that the Gothic Line has been breached." That night, the 349th, moving further north, crossed the first barrier in the famed line of German defenses and went into an assembly area in the vicinity of COLLINACCIA.

On 20 September, the three battalions were supplied, and that night moved to forward assembly areas. Through the darkness, moving single file across rough, mountainous terrain in a driving rainstorm, the troops arrived in the forward areas, two miles east of FIRENZUOLA, prepared to pass through the 337th Infantry and take up the attack. Plans called for the 3rd Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. ALFRED W. HESS to drive north, to the left of the FIRENZUOLA - CASTEL DEL RIO road, with the 1st Battalion commanded by Major HUGH E. QUIGLEY initially in Regimental Reserve at Mt. FRENA.

At dawn on 21 September, the 3rd Battalion moved out, followed by the 2nd. Moving toward HILL 9, then held by the 2nd Battalion 337th, the 3rd Battalion crossed the FIRENZUOLA - CASTEL DEL RIO Road and was approaching the hill when the Krauts laid a devastating barrage on the advancing column. Heavy artillery and SP guns poured fire on the troops killing five and wounding 20. Despite the intense fire, the Battalion kept moving up the slopes, passing through the 2nd Bn, 337th Infantry and continuing the advance toward HILL 23. The hill was reached without resistance at 1600 hours and without stopping the 3rd Battalion headed for HILL 47, 500 yards to the north. As the column moved up to the knob, scattered Krauts opened fire on Company I. Captain FILMORE W. McABEE, deploying his men, led them in a head on assault, every man firing as they swept over the crest of the hill, killing several Krauts, capturing one and driving the others off. The PW stated that a Company of Germans had planned to occupy the hill within an hour and the appearance of American troops was not expected for at least another day.

The 2nd Battalion, following the 3rd, made no physical contact with the enemy on 22 September. Moving over Mt. FRENA through rain and fog the Battalion reached the FIRENZUOLA - CASTEL DEL RIO Road at 1030 hours, relieving the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry. In positions near S. PELLIGRINO the troops were heavily shelled during the day. Fourteen casualties were sustained as the Krauts threw heavy artillery into the area without let up.

At dawn on 22 September, the 3rd Battalion jumped off from HILL 47. Clearing weather made the advance easier for the troops and ahead in the distance the men could see friendly fighter bombers wheeling and turning over Kraut positions as they bombed and strafed, preparing the way for the infantry. Company I, leading the column, seized the first of three objectives, HILL 53 by 1000 hours. Still without sign of hostile resistance, Company K pushed on to HILL 54, and Company L moved to HILL 63. All positions were consolidated without a shot being fired.

In a lightning drive the 3rd Battalion had spearheaded well ahead of the 2nd which at the time was meeting fierce resistance as it moved up the road on the right, some 2,000 yards in rear of the 3rd Battalion. From their advanced positions on commanding ground the 3rd Battalion troops could see a great deal of Kraut activity along the road - motorcycles, vehicles and mule trains clogged the artery as the enemy was seen trying to pull out to the north. Across the road, to the east, the hills swarmed with Krauts, and mortars, firing on the 2nd Battalion were easily spotted. From 1100 to 1500 hours, fire of the 337th F.A. Battalion was directed on the Germans. Shells crashed along the road, leaving a tangle of smoldering vehicles, dead mules and Kraut bodies strewn on the highway. Bringing fire down on German positions and mortar emplacements on the east side of the road, the Krauts were seen to dive for their holes. Many who had been walking around in the sunshine, others who were washing clothes, were riddled as murderous concentrations were poured on them.

At 1500 hours from HILL 53, where the 3rd Battalion C.P. was set up, 30 Germans were seen coming up the slope of the hill from the rear. Lying prone, almost shoulder to shoulder, Captain DWIGHT W. PETERSON, Captain JOSE E. GUZMAN and the men of Headquarters Company had a field day as they scattered the Krauts in a hail of fire. With Major JERROLD D. SNOW, Battalion Executive Officer directing their fire, six Germans were killed and as many more wounded. When a white flag waved frantically from a clump of bushes, S/Sgt BRENCE JACKSON, Company M, went down from the hill to round up the confused enemy. After prodding several from their hiding places he was fired on by others not intent on giving up as easily. Working his way down a draw the sergeant spotted them. As he dropped one with a shot through the head, the rest scattered, clambering down and over the rocks trying to escape. Pumping shot after shot at the Krauts, Sgt. JACKSON wounded four more and the rest gave up. By the time he arrived at the Battalion C.P., Sgt. JACKSON had rounded up two German Officers and 20 men.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, moving north astride the FIRENZUOLA - CASTEL DEL RIO Road had met a determined enemy. Jumping off at 0200 hours with Company G commanded by 1st Lt. HERBERT J. HART on the left side of the road and Company E, Captain MARTIN A COKER commanding on the right, the troops moved through continuous artillery and mortar fire as they advanced across the rugged terrain in darkness. By dawn, Company E was approaching its objective, HILL 420 and had started up the steep incline when Kraut riflemen from positions on the crest opened fire on the advancing troops. Deploying his two leading platoons, Captain COKER led them by fire and movement up the hill. Building up a skirmish line near the crest and supported by a platoon of Company H machine guns led by Lt. SAMUEL KHOURY, withering fire was sprayed over German positions only 20 yards away. Leading the first squad of the flanking platoon, Sgt. ALFRED GELENA worked his way to within several yards of a house, around which the Krauts were concentrated. In a surprise assault from the flank, firing as he ran, Sgt. GELENA led his men into the German positions. Killing two Krauts himself, his men accounted for five more, taking seven PW's and driving the rest from the hill.

From the newly taken objective which commanded seven hundred yards of the road winding north to CASTEL DEL RIO, long range fires were laid on the Krauts by Company E. Machine gun and mortar fire cut down many who used the road as an escape route and during the day the soldiers of Company E exhibited some fancy long range shooting as they squeezed shots off at the harrassed Krauts. Pfc ESQUIPULO C. PADILLA won top honors in dropping two running Germans at 500 yards.

Company G which had jumped off with Company E at 0200 hours, ran into bitter resistance. Initially moving along the road to gain time, the leading elements were 500 yards south of FERGNANI when scattered firing rang out in the darkness. After a brief exchange of shots the enemy appeared to have withdrawn and Lt. HART at the head of his company ordered his men to continue the advance. The column had moved only a short distance when flares arched over the advancing troops and Kraut machine gunners from both sides of the road poured cross fires at the body of the company, splitting and disorganizing the men. With the forward elements of his Company, Lt. HART beat the Germans off as he sent his men in groups of twos and threes to make their way back to the main body. As the Germans pressed closer, finally breaking out on the road, Lt. HART with five of his men were cut off and captured. Reorganizing the shattered elements of the company, 1st Lt. MARVIN C. BUNSE took command and struck off the road to the northwest. Striking at the Krauts' rear, he led his men, as yelling and firing in the darkness they drove the Germans north, killing nine and taking the objective, HILL 591 by dawn.

Company F held initially in reserve sent out a patrol of six men led by 2nd Lt. FRANK F. PARKER to contact the 3rd Battalion. Three times, as the patrol moved along the winding mountain trails, they ran into parties of Krauts lying in ambush. Three times, Lt. PARKER, climbing over the rugged rock formations, led his men as they encircled the Germans, and in brief, sharp encounters, taking the Krauts by surprise, killed 12 and arrived at the 3rd Battalion with 14 PW's.

The 3rd Battalion had jumped off that morning, 23 September, at dawn, with HILL 15 as its objective. Company K commanded by Captain LEFTRIDGE W. HONEYCUTT moved up on the knob and, meeting no resistance had organized the hill by 0730. Passing through Company K, Captain GUZMAN led Company L toward Hill 99, 700 yards to the north. As 2nd Lt. JACK S. PARKER with the 3rd Platoon approached the hill two machine guns opened up and seconds later a hail of sniper fire cut into the shrubbery, splintering rocks about the advancing troops. Lt. PARKER worked his platoon around the hill to flank the enemy, by then identified as approximately a company of Italian Fascists. Moving from rock to rock, crawling through the tangle of undergrowth the soldiers of the 3rd Platoon wormed their way toward the hostile positions. Well ahead of his men Sergeant JOHN BERNARDINELLI rose to his knees, his tommy gun blazing as he cut down two of the Italians, continuing to fire until mortally wounded. Pfc LUTHER F. WERNER, with his B.A.R. man crawled forward through the grazing fire, surprised and captured an Italian with a machine pistol.

As his men closed in on the enemy, Lt. PARKER sent S/Sgt. BLAIR A TALLEY with his squad to the right. Leading the move to flank the enemy, the Sergeant was killed by machine pistol fire. Taking over the squad, Sergeant KORAC kept the men moving as he killed three more Fascists in quick succession. As mortar fire directed by Sergeant GEORGE G. KLARDIE crashed on the hostile positions, killing four enemy snipers and wounding more, Lt. PARKER led the final assault. Yelling and firing, his men charged the enemy, tommy guns and B.A.R.'s sweeping the hostile emplacements as they overran the few fanatical defenders who chose to hold out to the end. Killing 18, they captured four and drove the shattered remnants of the Fascist Company down the hill in full flight.

By noon, positions on HILL 99 were consolidated. In its rapid advance the 3rd Battalion had crossed some of the most rugged terrain in northern Italy and supply trains moving over the mountains had been far outdistanced. Not having been re-supplied since the jump off on 21 September, white panels were displayed in a pre-arranged code and two cub planes dropped D rations to the troops - enough for one bar per man. Approximately 85 per cent of those dropped were recovered.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion, in Regimental reserve was moving up on the east flank. Having moved from Mt. FRENA on the morning of 22 September, the column passed ROVIGO and by noon had occupied HILL 75 without resistance. Advancing rapidly across 2,000 yards of rocky, mountainous country the troops were approaching HILL 80 when scattered firing broke out on the crest of the knob. Capt. JOHN J. KING deployed his leading platoon and moved up the slope. Firing as they advanced, the men drove a small Kraut delaying party from hiding places among the rocks and when the troops reached the top of the hill the enemy had withdrawn.

Jumping off from HILL 80, Company B had the mission of seizing CAMAGGIORE while Company C commanded by 1st Lt. JOHN E. EMERSON was to take CASELLINA. Moving down the slope of the hill, both companies came under heavy Kraut artillery fire as they approached their objectives. The 2nd Platoon of Company B had moved into CAMAGGIORE and the 3rd was entering the town when two Kraut machine guns, covering the road opened up from well concealed positions in a draw on the left flank. Caught in exposed positions the men were unable to move as the Kraut gunners sprayed streams of fire down the highway. Three Company B soldiers had been wounded before Captain KING was able to bring effective mortar fire down on the machine guns, destroying them and wounding four Germans. Moving into the town the troops occupied it without further resistance. Company C after advancing all the way through murderous artillery fire struck swiftly into CASSELLINA. By mid-afternoon several isolated snipers had been cleared out and the town was completely occupied.

At 1500 hours the Battalion moved out, advancing north along the CASTEL DEL RIO Road. When the column was 1,000 yards north of CAMAGGIORE, Company B leading the advance was fired on by two machine guns, pouring grazing fires along the highway. Deploying his men on both sides of the road, Capt. KING called for supporting mortar fire, working his men forward by fire and movement toward the hostile positions. Kraut snipers joined with the machine guns to pour fire at the advancing troops. With mortar shells crashing among them and fire of the oncoming troops streaming into their positions, the Krauts broke and fled into the hills in confusion leaving 11 dead and six wounded behind them. Receiving orders to disengage, Company B pulled back into CAMAGGIORE where it joined the rest of the Battalion, spending the night of 22-23 September in the vicinity of the town.

At 1500 hours 23 September the 2nd Battalion after moving along the CASTEL DEL RIO Road to CAMAGGIORE, had advanced cross country to Mt. ALLOVOLA, moving up behind the 3rd Battalion which was then occupying HILL 99. For 1,500 yards to the north of HILL 99 the terrain dropped away in open rolling country, then rising in ever mounting rock masses and crags to the summit of Mt. LA FINE, 993 meters above sea level. Commanding the surrounding terrain for miles, Mt. LA FINE was the most important objective in the Division sector and its seizure was a vital necessity. Holding this feature, the Krauts could have disrupted the advance of two divisions and the success or failure of the drive in that sector hinged largely in beating the Germans to its crest. Of vital importance also were the key features - HILLS 870 and 832. One thousand yards to the east of Mt. LA FINE, on the same ridge line, those critical points had to be held by friendly troops, to make secure the eastern approaches to La Fine.

Plans called for the 3rd Battalion to seize Mt. LA FINE, for the 2nd Battalion to take HILLS 870 and 832. At 1300 hours the 3rd Battalion jumped off, Company K on the right moving toward CASALINO, and Company I on the left advancing toward VISIGNANO. Both towns, at the base of Mt. LA FINE were passed through without resistance. In CASALINO, Company K picked up 13 Krauts being held by the Partisans. Without slowing the advance the Battalion moved up the torturous slopes of the mountain. Across rocky draws, scaling practically inaccessible

heights the troops drove to the crest of LA FINE and by 1600 hours were on the summit. A small party of Krauts were scattered, several killed and from the 2 PW's captured it was learned that a large force of Germans had planned to occupy Mt. LA FINE that afternoon. The 3rd Battalion had won a close race and by 1800 hours the hill was organized and plans to repel counterattack were prepared.

Jumping off at 1530 hours with Company F on the right and Company E on the left, the 2nd Battalion crossed rolling open terrain as Kraut artillery raked the columns. In a lightning advance, the Battalion reached the twin objectives from the north, moved up, probing into the gap between E and F Companies. With the 3rd Platoon of Company G, 2nd Lt. WILLIAM S. HALPRIN moved in to drive the Germans back. The Lieutenant was wounded in the first exchange of shots, as his men, coming up behind him fanned out to sweep the area and dig the enemy out of hiding places where they had taken refuge from the crossfires of E and F Companies. S/Sgt. GEORGE S. SEWELL, taking command crawled forward, spotted two Krauts and riddled them with fire from his tommy gun. The rest of the patrol made good their escape as darkness closed over the mountainside.

During the night of 23-24 September, Captain HONEYCUTT, Company K reported a Kraut convoy moving toward Mt. LA FINE. From his O.P. the Captain could see a long chain of blackout light winding along a road leading to the base of the mountains. For several hours he adjusted fire of the 339th F.A. Battalion and "long toms" on the German vehicles. Shells crashed along the road, explosions were heard and many fires of burning trucks lit the sky. In his first attempt to concentrate troops for a massed counterattack the Kraut suffered a severe setback.

On 24 September 3rd Battalion positions were counterattacked twice. Company K bore the brunt of both assaults as the Krauts, 30 strong, sought to penetrate the defenders positions. Spotted when still several hundred yards away the Krauts suffered heavy casualties from prepared artillery concentrations blasting around them as they advanced. The few who survived the deadly artillery fire, crawling toward Company K positions, were cut down in planned crossfire of heavy and light machine guns. Several who gave themselves up rather than die in the murderous fire, stated that two Battalions in the valley, with orders to strike at Mt. LA FINE had been unable to organize for the attack due to constant pounding by artillery. A second counterattack launched at noon also ended disastrously for the Germans, as remnants of another force of platoon strength fled down the hill leaving the twisted bodies of most of their comrades lying on the rocky hillside. Again artillery mortar and machine gun fire had torn their ranks to shreds permitting only a lucky few to escape.

In the 2nd Battalion sector a similar small scale attack was broken up in the morning, principally by the effectiveness of artillery and mortar fire. With HILL 870 affording the Kraut an avenue of approach to hit Mt. LA FINE from the east it was anticipated during the day that his main effort in counterattacking would eventually be at that point. All day long a tense watch was kept for the first sign that the Kraut was about to strike. Toward dusk, the German artillery which had harassed the 2nd Battalion for 24 hours became intense. Kraut mortars opened up and as shell after shell burst on the hilltop the men of Company E and Company F could see the first of several German skirmish lines, deployed at the base of the mountain, starting up the rocky slope.

For two hours the Germans sought vainly to take HILL 870. Charging fanatically up the hill, time and again they were beaten off as the soldiers of Company E and Company F from well dug in positions pouring fire from machine guns, tommy guns, B.A.R.'s and M-1's, decimated their ranks. Supported by fire from 24 artillery pieces the defenders refused to be dislodged and when the Krauts penetrated in several places to within forty or fifty yards of the Americans they blasted back in a hail of grenades. Several, miraculously escaping death, after reaching the top of the hill, dropped their arms and with hands raised stumbled forward to give themselves up. When the last assault had been driven off it was learned from the PW's that of 300 Germans who started the attack 75 per cent had been killed or wounded. Kraut bodies littered the slopes, more than 50 dead were counted the next day.

On 25 September the 3rd Battalion was relieved by the 1st Battalion, 337th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion was relieved by the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry. Moving south, the battalions occupied areas at the base of the hill mass, Mt. LA FINE - Hill 870, and there spent the night 25-26 September.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had moved to S. MICHELE without resistance. Receiving orders to attack HILL 834, just south of Mt. PRATOLUNGO the Battalion jumped off at 1315 hours, 25 September. Crossing a low ridge line, the column moved into a steep gorge and started up a small narrow valley with HILL 834 on the right. Company A, commanded by 1st Lt. EMIL W. HARTMAN, JR. was in the lead, nearing the base of the objective when, from well concealed positions at the bottom of the hill, more than a dozen Kraut machine guns opened up, firing down the valley. With all approaches covered by murderous grazing fire the troops were held up until darkness fell, during which time the Kraut gunners continued to inflict casualties as they raked the column with fire. At dusk a heavy fog settled over the mountains and rain, pouring down quickly turned the hillside into an almost impenetrable wall of mud and slippery rocks.

With fog and darkness cloaking his movements, Lt. HARTMAN led his men of Company A up the steep incline. Company C commanded by Lt. EMERSON moved to take the high ground to the right of HILL 834. Struggling up the steep sides of the hill the men were forced to sling their arms as, clutching at bushes and overhanging rocks, they pulled themselves up, working their way toward the crest. Ahead of him men, Lt. HARTMAN had almost reached the top when the Krauts from above him and on both flanks opened fire. In the first burst of fire, Lt. HARTMAN and Lt. KRUCKS, Executive Officer, Company A were both killed instantly, Lt. LEMASTER taking command of the company. Contact between units being impossible and unable to see more than a few feet in the blackness Company A and Company C held up their advance a short distance from their objective.

Throughout the night, Kraut machine gunners, firing blindly, sprayed the hillside with tracers, others rolling grenades down the slope among the attacking troops. At 2300 hours Captain KING brought Company B into the gap between Company A and Company C and some measure of contact was restored. Small patrols probed into the enemy defenses, locating machine gun positions and snipers. S/Sgt. WILLIAM B. BALLIN during the night worked his way alone to the top of the knob, throw two grenades into Kraut emplacements and as the Germans ran out, his tommy gun cut loose into the screaming Germans. Returning for more ammunition, Sgt. BALLIN, this time accompanied by Pfc SEYMOUR WEINSTEIN set out to destroy a machine gun which had caused casualties among his men. Covered by Pfc WEINSTEIN, he crawled to within several feet of the gun, lobbed a grenade into the emplacement, destroying the weapon and killing two Krauts. As the two men were making their way back to friendly positions, a machine pistol opened up on the flank, killing Pfc WEINSTEIN instantly. Another Kraut machine gun was destroyed during the night when Pfc EDWARD PETROWSKI crawled to the rear of a German position and dropped two grenades on the startled Krauts killing and wounding several.

As dawn broke, through continuing rain and fog, the soldiers of the 1st Battalion gradually worked their way into better positions. In the gray light of early morning Lt. EMERSON brought the leading elements of Company C to within 30 yards of a cluster of Kraut machine guns - a hail of grenades destroyed three of them and the rest withdrew. Supporting Company A, 1st Lt. MICHAEL LEVITSKY had his Company D machine guns in position at the first sign of daybreak to pour streams of tracers, silencing two German M.G. 34's. With Company B, supporting machine gun fire directed by Sgt. BOHNER drove the Krauts over the crest of the hill after three more of their automatic weapons had been put out of action.

During the morning the troops continued their relentless advance as the chatter of machine guns and crack of rifles pushed the Krauts out of prepared positions forcing them to fall back to the north. By 1500 hours the Germans were abandoning HILL 834 as rapidly as they could. Leaving machine guns, rifles and equipment strewn on the ground they fled in confusion as Company C and Company B launched final assaults at 1600 hours. Over the top of the hill the troops poured fire at the running Krauts, and by 1630 hours the only Germans on the knob were the 50 or 60 dead, sprawled among the rocks, riddled as they had sought to escape.

At 1700 hours the 2nd Battalion jumped off for HILL 811 and Mt. PRATOLUNGO to strike a second blow at the Germans retreating from HILL 834. After a devastating artillery preparation and supported by 50 cal. machine gun fire from Hill 870, the troops, with Company E leading, assaulted Hill 811. As friendly artillery was lifted, Captain COKER led his men in a smashing drive over the top of the knob and into the midst of the dazed Krauts. Germans ran in all directions as the men of Company E cut dozens of them down. S/Sgt. JOSEPH W. SCHNEIDER, JR., without moving from his position, killed four with as many shots - S/Sgt. MERVYN K. MATCHETT drilled three and T/Sgt. VINCENT J. KANE accounted for three more. 1st Lt. ROBERT C. KELLY pursuing one group of escaping Krauts killed two as they tried to scramble down the hill and 2nd Lt. CHARLES W. HAYNES, pumping carbine bullets as fast as he could pull the trigger, dropped four more Germans.

Company H machine guns, going into action as soon as they hit the top of the hill, sprayed fire in wide sweeps piling Krauts in heaps of dead and wounded. 30 Germans gave themselves up and after the hill had been cleared of the 1st living Kraut, 197 dead were counted.

Without halting the lightning drive, Company F commanded by Captain CHARLES F. THORNTON struck at MONTEFUNE and by dusk had broken into the town, taking the Krauts by complete surprise as the troops captured a Battalion C.P. and 53 PW's including the Battalion Commander and two Lieutenants. Also seized, were three radios, a switchboard, eight telephones, important documents, overlays and maps showing the entire defense setup of a German division. Moving on, Company F advanced 500 yards further north and occupied HILL 733, highest terrain feature on the MONTEFUNE ridgeline. There the advance was held up for the night, the troops dug in and positions were consolidated.

On the morning of 27 September, the 3rd Battalion after having moved the previous night to a forward assembly area in rear of HILL 625, jumped off at 0600 in an attack coordinated with the 2nd. The 3rd Battalion objective was HILL 571 overlooking CASTEL DEL RIO, the 2nd Battalion moved to seize HILL 508 and MORARA. On the left, with Company G leading, the 2nd Battalion met with murderous artillery during the entire advance. The column worked its way slowly across 1200 yards of rugged terrain as shells continued to crash all morning among the men. Thirty

casualties were sustained by Company G during the advance and when the Krauts from positions around the town of MORARA opened up with machine guns and machine pistols the attacking troops were temporarily forced to seek cover. In the bitter fire Pvt. COLEMEN MacDONALD crawled forward, well ahead of the foremost elements to reconnoiter for a route of advance. Armed only with a .45 cal. pistol he penetrated into the town itself. Seeing a lone Kraut dive into the doorway of a house he burst in after him to find 16 Germans lying in wait. With four slugs from his .45, Pvt. MacDONALD had killed three of them before the rest gave up. Reporting back to his Company after having herded 13 PW's virtually out of the Krauts' backyard, Pvt. MACDONALD was able to give locations of seven machine gun emplacements and two mortars enabling the Battalion to neutralize several of the positions with supporting artillery.

Meanwhile the 3rd Battalion, moving on the right had met little resistance. Company I seized HILL 571 and Company K occupied HILL 400, further north, without meeting the enemy. The town of VINCHI fell to Company L after two PW's had given themselves up at the first exchange of shots. In VINCHI Company L received heavy Kraut artillery and mortar fire and as Captain GUZMAN started to move his men to safer positions on the outskirts of the town, the troops were fired on by snipers and machine guns from MORARA, the same Krauts who were holding up Company G. When several casualties were sustained in his Company, Captain GUZMAN went forward alone more than 1,000 yards to reconnoiter for a route of attack. Wounded as he returned, 1st Lt. CHARLES W. ALSTERLUND took command and immediately launched an attack on the town.

When the leading platoon under T/Sgt. THOMAS J. DORMAN was 500 yards from the town the full fury of Kraut fire was turned on the approaching troops. Eight machine guns firing crossfires over the flat approaches, machine pistols and snipers firing down the draws, all combined to set up a deadly pattern of defense as the troops continued to advance. Ahead of his men T/Sgt. DORMAN snaked his way forward, his platoon following as every man used each rock and fold in the ground to the best advantage. Building up a skirmish line 50 yards from the cluster of buildings, the sergeant ordered every weapon in his platoon into action. Rockets pulverized the buildings, Anti-tank grenades blew in walls, B.A.R.'s and M-1's poured fire into the rubble. Giving the signal for the final assault, T/Sgt. DORMAN led his men into the town, personally cutting down two of the several Krauts who remained. Eight Germans were killed in the clash, seven PW's were taken and five machine guns were destroyed. An artillery O.P., largely responsible for the intense fire crashing on the 2nd Battalion column, was wiped out and a heavy mortar was silenced.

With enemy fire cut by the smashing assault of Company L, Company G was able to move into the town and continued on to the high ground 700 yards further north where the entire 2nd Battalion tied in to hold for the night. Meanwhile, Company K which had been ordered to seize HILL 434, Mt. BERNASINO, had reached its objective without resistance and by 2100 hours the rest of the 3rd Battalion had moved to that point, securing the right flank of the Regiment. That night the Battalion extended its flanks, on the left occupying HILL 533, contacting the 2nd Battalion and on the right moving to HILL 379 adjacent to the CASTEL DEL RIO Road. Enemy activity during the night was confined to harrassing SP fire but only one casualty was sustained.

On 28 September the 1st Battalion moved from HILL 834 west, to 870, relieving the 3rd Battalion, 337th Infantry. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions remained in position receiving scattered shelling all day. Company F and Company G moved back to occupy the MONTEFUNE ridgeline on 29 September, leaving Company E in MORARA. All troops were supplied, winter clothing was brought up on 30 September and as skies cleared for the first time in almost a week the men had an opportunity to dry out and rest up for the next move.

Although the 349th had actually come to grips with the enemy only during the latter part of the month, the Kraut Killer Regiment again made its full weight felt in decisive actions as it struck crippling blows at the Germans. After a lightning advance over rough, rugged mountains, Mt. LA FINE, keypoint in what the Kraut had planned would be an impregnable defensive set up, had been snatched from him by the 3rd Battalion. Able to withstand previous assaults, the Kraut had been driven off Hill 834 by the smashing drive of the 1st Battalion which unloosed him from a dangerous salient in the Division line. And on 25-26 September the 2nd Battalion had severely mauled a German regiment, inflicting terrific casualties, disorganizing it as a fighting unit. Cutting to ribbons the Kraut battalion counter-attacking HILL 870, smashing another battalion at HILL 811 and MONTEFUNE, the 2nd Battalion had broken the backbone of German resistance in the sector, removed a serious threat to units moving up on both flanks and paved the way for further advances. Although Kraut resistance in the Regimental zone had not been completely destroyed, all opportunity for the enemy to make a determined stand as once planned had been lost and as the month ended the Kraut was looking over his shoulder to the north for a new line of defense to organize.

JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
OCTOBER 1944

The Kraut had lost Mt. LA FINE to our 3rd Battalion, his fanatical counter-attacks had been beaten off with heavy losses. He had left more than 200 dead on Mt. PRATOLUNGO when our 1st Battalion hit him from the south and our 2nd drove into his flank. Without time to reorganize he had reeled back as we smashed into MONTEFUNE and MORARA. Unable to stop the headlong drive, the Krauts, fighting desperately, were cut to pieces on knob after knob, reorganize each time only to be mauled again. According to PW's a current rumor in the 956th Regiment was that a conference of Division commanders, all refused to take over the sector to the front of the 88th Division except Major General GREYNER, who said, "My division will hold it." (General GREYNER's success in past operations is reputed to be far from praiseworthy - his remark was though to be that of a desperate man who stakes all in one last play).

Now as the month of October opened the Kraut Killer Regiment commanded by Colonel JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD was poised to strike again. Our objectives were SASS-OLEONE, three miles to the north and HILL 587, one mile beyond the town. The original plan to use three Battalions abreast in the attack was changed because of the nature of the terrain and it was decided to send the 1st Battalion along the ridgeline on the left while the 3rd Battalion ran the ridgeline on the right. Our 2nd Battalion was held in reserve, later to be pushed through the other two.

By dawn on 1 October, the 1st Battalion had moved to HILL 422 south of BELVEDERE and the 3rd had taken up positions on Mt. MAGNOLA. At 0530 hours both Battalions jumped off in the attack, the 1st to seize Hill 441, the 3rd to take HILL 320. With information that the Krauts had pulled out of BELVEDERE it was not anticipated that our 1st Battalion would meet resistance in the town. Commanded by Major HUGH E. QUIGLEY the Battalion moved to the outskirts without sign of the enemy. With the leading platoon of Company A, 2nd Lt. JOHN BARKER had just entered the town when the Krauts dropped a terrific mortar barrage on the column. Temporarily cut off, as the rest of the Battalion was forced to hold up the advance, Lt. BARKER pushed on. Sending his men in small groups from house to house, they were working their way toward the center of the town when Kraut machine guns cut loose, firing from windows, covering all approaches as their tracers ripped and tore at walls and buildings sheltering the soldiers. Mortar shells crashed in the streets and against the houses, showering the men with debris, inflicting casualties as they sprinted from house to house. The chatter of machine pistol and methodical crack of sniper fire disclosed that the Krauts were holding the town in force.

Keeping his men moving, Lt. BARKER worked toward the Kraut strongpoint, a large building near the heart of the town. Krauts surrendered in twos and threes as Pfc THOMAS GLYNN, Pfc EDWARD WOOD, Pvt WOODROW GRAY and Pvt BURKE WRIGHT as they broke into several houses. Eleven Germans had been killed and 23 PW's rounded up before the last Kraut stronghold was finally isolated. A large building, it was a natural fortress and the Krauts, holed up inside, seemed determined to go down fighting. Snipers, several machine pistols and a machine gun raked the area surrounding the house. Lt. BARKER, directing two squads to pour fire in windows and doors, led his third squad in the assault. Running, hitting the ground, crawling and

working their way forward, the men got to within 20 yards of the house. Moving ahead of the others as murderous enemy fire cut into the ground about him Pvt CHARLES WEBB was 15 feet from the house when he fired a rifle grenade tearing up the Kraut machine gun. Jumping to his feet Lt. BARKER ran to the door, smashed it in, leaping over the machine gun and three dead Germans. Grenade in hand he ran to the cellar where the Krauts had taken refuge. Poised to throw, he was met with cries of "Kamerade Kamerade" and 15 "supermen" with hands raised, filed up the stairs.

At 1100 hours the rest of Company A moved into BELVEDERE and by 1600 hours the last sniper was cleared from the town. We counted 15 dead Krauts, and 40 PW's were sent to the rear.

To keep the Kraut on the run, Major QUIGLEY sent Company B through Company A at 2000 hours with the mission of seizing HILL 515, 400 yards north of the town. With two platoons abreast, CAPTAIN JOHN J. KING led his men up the long sloping hill. In the darkness, Krauts on the crest opened up with machine pistols and rifles, firing blindly at our men as they advanced. Leading a squad into the Kraut positions on the left, Sgt. HECTOR FLORES cut down two with his tommy gun and when a third attacked him as his gun jammed, the Sergeant beat the German to a pulp with his bare hands. Leading the final assault, Captain KING with his men swept over the crest of the hill. Six Krauts who stood up to meet the charging troops were dropped in their tracks -- 11 more were dragged out of holes and the rest disappeared in the darkness. Ordered to hold up the advance, our men dug in. During the night, the hill was pounded by SP guns, causing several casualties.

While the 1st Battalion was fighting its way through BELVEDERE and up on HILL 515, our 3rd Battalion commanded by Lt. Col. ALFRED W. HESS was running the parallel ridgeline on the right, striking at a fiercely resisting enemy. Jumping off from Mt. MAGNOLA at 0530 hours, with Company K leading, the Battalion advanced on its first objective, Hill 320. Through rain and concealed by heavy fog Captain LEFTREDGE HONEYCUTT led his men up the steep slope. Just short of the crest the attacking troops ran headon into the Kraut's planned defenses. Machine guns and machine pistols fired at almost point blank range, mortar shells crashed among our men and when more Kraut automatic weapons opened up from the left flank, Captain HONEYCUTT withdrew his company to the base of the hill. A quick reorganization was followed by a second assault. Again the Krauts refused to be dislodged as crossfires from his well emplaced machine guns covered on the troops. Ordering his men to dig in on the reverse slope, Captain HONEYCUTT reorganized the company, by then seriously depleted in strength. Throughout the afternoon the Kraut rained artillery and mortar shells on the hillside but the soldiers of Company K held their positions as barrage after barrage crashed around them. Darkness fell. At a sign from their Company Commander the soldiers crept from their slit trenches and moved silently up the hill in a skirmish line. Not a shot was fired. The Kraut, entrenched on the hilltop saw nothing, heard nothing. Approaching in silence as near to the crest as he dared, Captain HONEYCUTT signalled for the assault. With every weapon in the company blazing, the men charged up and over the top of the hill. Storming the Kraut positions, yelling and firing in the night they drove the Germans in confusion, off the hill and down the other side. Eight Krauts were killed in the space of seconds but the majority made good their escape, withdrawing as they saw the wave of fire sweeping up at them.

Passing through Company K, Company I pressed forward with the mission of seizing HILLS 449 and 382. Committing his three platoons at the outset, Captain JOHN MARSHALL sent the 1st and 2nd toward HILL 449, the 3rd to take HILL 382 on the right. As the 1st and 2nd Platoons approached their objective, three Kraut machine guns opened up, firing from the base of the hill, one from the front and one on each flank. Attempting to force the German positions, 1st Lt. THOMAS F. ANASTASSIEU led his platoon to the left, creeping and crawling in the darkness. Streams of tracers converged over their heads as the men worked their way forward. A sudden explosion, then another, and the men knew that the Kraut had caught them in a minefield. With their platoon leader injured by an exploding mine, the soldiers lay, pinned down in the minefield as Kraut gunners raked them with deadly fire. When the 1st Platoon led by 2nd Lt. CURTIS LEE tried penetrating the interlocking machine gun fires, moving to the right, it too became pinned down as schu mines exploding in the night gave away the location of the soldiers.

With two platoons disorganized, pinned down and suffering heavy casualties, Captain MARSHALL worked his way forward to the leading elements. With 14 of his men he started for the nearest machine gun at the base of the hill. Mortar shells crashed about them and flares arching over the hill gave the Kraut machine gunners perfect observation. Through the minefield, Captain MARSHALL led his men, urging them to keep moving, to pour fire at the machine gun nest dead ahead. Twenty yards from the gun, the fire of the assaulting troops took effect and two Krauts slumped over their smoking weapons. Still fired on from both flanks, Captain MARSHALL led his men as they crawled and wormed their way to the crest of the hill. Fifty yards from the German positions, Pfc EUGENE MAZAROWITZ and S/Sgt MAURICIO ARAGON, after dragging machine guns the entire distance fired point blank at the Krauts. Another hostile machine gun fell silent and Captain MARSHALL jumping to his feet, led his handful of men in the final assault. Digging the Krauts out of holes, some of them six or eight feet deep, his men killed ten, turning their own machine guns on others trying to escape.

But the Kraut strong point on HILL 449 was yet to be taken. From positions around and in a house further to the west the Krauts poured fire at the few soldiers who had gained a foothold on the objective. Almost out of ammunition, under constant fire of mortars and small arms during the night, Captain MARSHALL was unable to do more than hold what he had gained.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Platoon led by 2nd Lt. CHARLES SHEPHERD had run into stiff resistance as it approached HILL 382. Through a minefield covered by machine gun fire, the Lieutenant worked his platoon toward the objective. Suffering casualties, his men were finally pinned down, 30 yards from a house on the hill where two Kraut machine guns were spitting fire from basement windows. Kneeling straight up, Lt. SHEPHERD threw three grenades. Two exploded inside the house destroying both guns, killing two Krauts and wounding four. As the men rose for the final assault, Kraut snipers who had been firing from upper windows, broke out of the back of the house and disappeared in the night.

At dawn, 2 October, Captain MARSHALL and his men still had their precarious foothold on HILL 449. Pressure had been somewhat relieved when the 3rd Platoon occupied HILL 382 on the right but further to the left on HILL 449 the Krauts still poured fire from their strongly defended house. Back with Company Headquarters at the base of the hill, 1st Lt. KENNETH GRAY, Executive Officer organized his men to assault the position. With 1st Sgt. HENRY ANDERSON, three radio operators, two wiremen and two runners he started up the steep grade. Three soldiers including the 1st Sergeant were injured as more mines were encountered. Into the full fury of Kraut machine gun and sniper fire, Lt. GRAY drove to the top of the

hill with his men. Supported by fire from Captain MARSHALL and his handful of soldiers who shot their few remaining rounds at the house, Lt. GRAY led the assault. Blasted off his feet by an exploding mortar shell, he was up instantly, running to the side of the building, at the head of his men. In desperation, the Krauts who had fled into the house, rained the attacking soldiers with grenades and fire from machine guns and pistols. Emptying his carbine into the windows, Lt. GRAY threw in two grenades and with his men broke into the building, killing four Krauts, capturing 17 and seizing four machine guns. With the assault by Company I Headquarters, all Kraut resistance on HILL 449 was smashed. Although heavy casualties had been sustained the way had been opened for our 3rd Battalion to continue its drive and another regiment moving up on the right found a serious threat to its flank removed.

Jumping off for the next knob on the ridgeline, HILL 495, Company L passed through Company I on the morning of 2 October. Approaching the objective through intense SP and mortar fire, 1st Lt. THOMAS BRESKIE with the leading platoon was held up when enemy machine guns from the front and left flank laid down withering crossfires effectively covering all approaches. The intense fire from well dug in Kraut emplacements made it impossible to shake loose a flanking element in daylight. Digging in, the troops held up the attack until dark. At 2130 hours, 1st Lt. BEVERLY HAYES, Company Commander called for supporting artillery. Shells crashed on Kraut positions as 2nd Lt. JACK PARKER led his men in the assault. A lone Kraut machine gun firing on the men from the left was destroyed when Sgt. LEO JIMINEZ, Sgt. STEPHEN KOSACK and Pvt. LUTHER WERNER crawled 75 yards to hurl grenades, killing two Germans, wounding several. As the artillery was lifted, following Lt. PARKER, the men running and firing, took the objective with little resistance. Dazed and confused after the pounding they had absorbed from exploding shells, most of the Krauts had withdrawn without putting up a fight. In a quick exchange of shots Sgt. JIMINEZ cut two Krauts down, Sgt. IRA LACKNEY accounted for one and three more were killed by our soldier, ending all resistance on HILL 495.

Pressing the attack the 1st and 2nd Platoons immediately pushed off for HILL 548, 200 yards to the north. Assaulting in a wave the troops were just short of the knob when Kraut machine guns opened up and "potato mashers" blasted among the men. Unable to advance further they returned the fire. Cries of "Kamerade" were heard in the darkness, but before the Krauts could give themselves up, one of their officers, cursing them for cowards, ordering them to die for Der Fueher, regained control of his men, forcing them to fight on. At dawn, 3 October, the two platoons moved forward again to find that the Krauts had withdrawn from HILL 548, which was seized without further resistance.

While Company L, spearheading the advance of our 3rd Battalion, was driving the Krauts from HILLS 495 and 548, our 1st Battalion on the left, keeping abreast of the 3rd, was striking hard at the enemy and making good progress. At 0500 hours, 2 October Company C commanded by Captain CECIL MATNEY moved through Company B with the mission of seizing HILL 847. In a rapid advance, taking five PW's out of one house along the road, blasting a Kraut machine gun nest out of another building with fire from a supporting tank, the company occupied the hill by noon, capturing nine more Krauts who had been taken by complete surprise.

Ordered to jump off immediately for HILL 497, the 1st Platoon led by 2nd Lt. RAYMOND PLANTE was held up in murderous artillery and mortar fire as it was moving up the slope. When Krauts on the crest opened up with machine guns and small arms fire, Captain MATNEY sent a platoon led by Sgt. EDWARD DAVEY around to the left to flank the positions. In murderous fire, suffering heavy casualties,

DAVEY's platoon was stopped also. As it began to grow dark Captain MATNEY called for artillery support. Shells pounded the Kraut positions, heavy casualties were inflicted, but when T/Sgt. STEPHEN TUMINSKI with his platoon made another attempt to flank the Germans on the hill he too was stopped by the enemy fire.

Three attempts to take HILL 497 had been met with fanatical resistance. The objective had to be taken in time for Company B to push forward, occupy HILL 524 by dawn 3 October and tie in with our 3rd Battalion on HILL 548. Forming the intermediate Regimental objective these two hills were dominating features from which we planned to strike at SASSOLEONE and both had to be seized before the attack on the town could be launched. Time was short. At 0200 hours, Captain MATNEY, after pulling his men back for quick reorganization, formed them in two waves, 75 yards apart and started the all out assault. As supporting artillery blasted at Kraut positions, Captain MATNEY led his men up the rugged slope. Two Krauts manning a machine gun on the flank were killed when Sgt. DENSLOW DIXON with two men charged the Germans with rifles blazing. Reaching the top of the hill the men drove into the German positions. His B.A.R. flaming Pfc RALPH FOREMAN dropped two Krauts crouched behind a MG 34, killed another as he ran toward a house. Assaulting the building with four men Sgt. DIXON destroyed another machine gun, killing the crew with hand grenades. Running around the side of the house Pfc FOREMAN cut down three more Germans as they piled out of a window. Dragging two Krauts out of their holes he held them by the collar with one hand pouring fire with his B.A.R. at others trying to escape. The smashing assault had caught the Kraut off balance. Too late they tried to withdraw. Fifteen were killed, 29 wounded and 17 PW's taken as the men of Company C cleared the hill.

To take HILL 524, Company B jumped off at 0300 hours, moved through Company C. Up the slope toward the crest, Captain KING led his men in a lightning assault. Through heavy artillery fire the soldiers struck at the Kraut. With the leading elements T/Sgt. CARMEN MINAOLAIO charged a machine gun emptying his carbine into the crew. Throwing grenades in a desperate attempt to stop the assault, the Krauts held their ground. Leading a squad, S/Sgt. LOUIS MYERS sneaked around the right flank without being seen. Working his way to the rear of the Kraut positions, the Sergeant jumped to his feet and led his men, yelling and firing as they hit the Kraut from his rear. A sharp exchange of shots and 18 Germans with hands raised climbed out of their holes. Without further resistance HILL 524 was completely occupied by dawn, 3 October.

With our 1st and 3rd Battalions holding dominating ground 2000 yards south of SASSOLEONE, the stage was set for us to strike at the town. For 48 hours the 1st and 3rd Battalions in bitter fighting had driven the Kraut back, along ridgelines converging at HILLS 524 and 548. Although the Kraut had suffered severe losses he was still fighting for every knob and the casualties in our 2 battalions had been heavy. To press the attack with fresh troops our 2nd Battalion, which had moved up behind the other two, was given the mission of seizing SASSOLEONE.

Company F, commanded by Captain CHARLES THORNTON, led the column as the Battalion jumped off on the afternoon of 3 October. By dark the high ground south of the town had been occupied without resistance. As plans were being laid to attack the town the Krauts opened up with murderous artillery fire, pounding Company F positions. Having advanced far ahead of units on the right, the flank was exposed and Kraut SP guns pulled in at close range, plastered the reverse slope of the hill, able to put direct fire into the men's foxholes. Rather than withdraw, Captain THORNTON ordered two platoons into SASSOLEONE. After a patrol led by Sgt. PRESTON SMITH had penetrated into the town, finding it unoccupied,

the remainder of the company, still under terrific artillery fire moved off the high ground to occupy the buildings. Later that night the rest of the Battalion moved into SASSOLEONE, Companies E and G continuing on to the high ground just north of the town. Bombed and strafed, with artillery continuing to blast all night the companies suffered heavy casualties.

After the fall of SASSOLEONE our next Regimental objective was HILL 587, 2000 yards to the north. Leaving the high ground north of the town, Company G, commanded by 1st Lt. ROBERT KELLY, moved into CUVIOLO before dawn finding no Krauts although several radios and a lot of equipment lay in the houses and streets. When Sgt. VINCENT KANE, leading his platoon out of town, attempted to seize the next knob to the north, the Krauts firmly entrenched, poured fire from mortars and machine guns, killing five and wounded six of his men. Ordering him to draw back into CUVIOLO, Captain THORNTON kept his company there for the rest of the day. Joined there by Company E, plans were laid to continue the attack at dark, in coordination with our 1st Battalion which was moving up on the left.

At 2300 hours, 4 October after an artillery preparation the 2nd Battalion jumped off with Company E on the left, Company G on the right. Without meeting resistance, Company G had advanced to CASA SFERIA when the Krauts opened up in the darkness with machine guns firing from the front and both flanks. Leading his men in a wild charge, yelling and shooting, 1st Sgt. RALPH HOMESLEY headed for the large house where spurts of flame gave away Kraut positions. Swarming around the house his men poured fire and threw grenades in the windows. Battering down the door they burst into the building, killing five Krauts, digging 15 more out of hiding places from cellar to hayloft. Out of contact with Company E; still under fire from machine guns on both flanks and suffering casualties from terrific mortar and artillery concentrations that shook the building to its foundation, Company G was ordered to hold up where it was.

Meanwhile, Company E on the left had been unable to keep abreast of Company G. Shortly after leaving CUVIOLO the company column was raked by Kraut artillery and mortars. SP guns fired direct fire at the men and when Kraut machine guns, aided by flares, opened up inflicting heavy casualties, Company E was ordered to withdraw to CUVIOLO to reorganize. Company F immediately pushed forward, attempted to move to the right of Company G, but after meeting the same bitter resistance from front and flanks was forced to withdraw again to the town.

Our 1st Battalion, which had jumped off with the 2nd, made a wide sweep during the night, advancing 1000 yards to the northwest, with the mission of flanking HILL 587. Meeting no resistance until dawn, Company B was leading the column as it approached the base of HILL 403, CAMPI DI VANNIO. Captain KING had started his men up the steep slope when the Krauts opened up, firing from a group of houses on the hill. Machine guns, machine pistol and snipers fired almost straight down at the troops. Momentarily disorganized as they scattered to take cover, the leading platoon was held up in the heavy fire. Bringing up his 1st and 3rd Platoons, Captain KING, after called for artillery support, led them in the assault. Scaling almost perpendicular cliffs, ignoring natural routes of approach, the men reached the top of the hill and started for the houses. Kraut fire, concentrated on draws where they expected our troops to appear, frantically shifted to the left to meet the head on assault. It was too late. Captain KING, grenade in one hand, pistol in the other raced to the side of the nearest house. Following him, T/Sgt CARLTON HAND, Cannon Company F.O. with two shots dropped two Krauts who appeared in the doorway. Joining Captain KING, together they fired in windows and doors, throwing

grenades and calling to the Krauts inside to give up. The answer was a hail of grenades and machine pistol fire. Catching a potato masher in mid air, Sgt. HAND threw it back in the window, then as several more soldiers came up they battered down the door, breaking into the house to find that the Krauts had fled to the upper floor. Calling to those of his men who were still outside the building, Captain KING directed their fire at the Krauts on the floor above him. Sgt. HARRY ANDREWS put rifle grenades into three of the windows. Emptying their rifles into the ceiling, Captain KING and his men ran up a flight of stairs, taking the Krauts by storm as they killed three and captured 20, destroying two machine guns.

Other Germans in positions near the house still held out. In a fanatical charge, two Krauts jumped up and headed for Pfc JOHN BARRON. His M-1 jammed. Grabbing his rifle by the muzzle end he waded in. A roundhouse swing caught the first Kraut in the face, sent him spinning to the ground. The second, a big red faced Officer, sprang at BARRON with a yell. Stepping back, swinging his rifle down like an axe he broke it in two over the German's head. 50 yards away a machine gun opened up. Two grenades fired by Sgt. ANDREWS tore the gun up and eight Krauts piled out of holes around it to escape. ANDREWS cut one down, Captain KING and Sgt. HAND firing from the house, killed two more. With a few scattered shots several Germans who had gotten away gave up the hill to Company B. By 0900 the new positions were secured, 12 dead Krauts lay strewn around the houses and 20 PW's had been taken.

That night, Company C was ordered to seize HILL 487. Through rain and dense fog, moving by azimuth, Lt. PLANTE with the leading platoon was 200 yards from the objective by dawn. A sudden break in the fog gave Kraut machine gunners a perfect target as the troops advanced across the open ground. Mortar shells plastered the approaches, streams of tracers poured down the hill as the soldiers attacked. Leading a squad, S/Sgt. DANIEL MOONEY worked his way forward, got to within 10 yards of a MG 34. With a rush he was on the surprised Krauts. Pumping bullets, firing from the hip, he killed two and wounded three. A supporting machine gun close by swung its fire on him. Without stopping he charged the position, cutting down the two Krauts manning the gun. Having destroyed two key machine guns, the 2nd Platoon under Sgt. VICTOR SKEEN was able to move up with Lt. PLANTE's platoon to within 70 yards of the Krauts strongpoint, a house surrounded by well dug in positions. Bringing his machine gun up to an exposed position with the leading elements, Pfc DEAN THAXTON used up eight boxes of ammunition spraying fire at close range in wide sweeps. When eight Krauts jumped out of their holes trying to get away, THAXTON cut down six of them as they clambered down a draw. Wounded three times, he kept firing until the final assault was launched.

Led by Lt. PLANTE and Sgt. SKEEN the men drove into the Kraut positions. His B.A.R. blazing, Pvt. FOREMAN riddled two Krauts who held their ground to the end. Throwing grenades as he ran Sgt. DIXON blasted another machine gun position, killed two Germans and captured four. As the men reached the side of the house Pfc ADAN MARINO and Pvt ANTHONY NAPOLITANO fired rifle grenades into the building. Smashing down the door, throwing grenades inside, the men broke in on the Krauts who by then had little fight left in them. 21 Krauts gave themselves up; in and around the house 14 of their comrades lay dead. For the rest of the day, 6 October, Company C stayed in position on the hill, subjected to continuous mortar and artillery fire.

HILL 587, our primary objective was yet to be taken. Its strategic importance was great since it commanded the surrounding terrain for miles and the Kraut seemed determined to hang on to it at all cost. After our 2nd Battalion had been held up trying to strike at the hill from the south our main effort was shifted.

With the mission of hitting 587 from the west our 1st Battalion had gone to the left. HILL 403 had fallen to Company B, HILL 487 to Company C, but when Company A jumped for HILL 587 it met the same bitter resistance that had stopped the 2nd Battalion. 100 yards from the objective the Company commanded by 2nd Lt. JOHN BARKER was held up all day, 6 October. Well entrenched, with machine guns covering every approach the Kraut raked the troops with withering fire. Mortar shells crashing among the men inflicted heavy casualties. Unable to push further, Lt BARKER ordered his men to dig in and hold.

During the day our 3rd Battalion moved to the left of the 1st with the mission of striking at key points on the ridgeline running northwest from HILL 587. Seizure of the ridgeline, we anticipated, would weaken the Kraut position on 587, force him to withdraw to avoid being cut off from the rear. At 2200 hours, 6 October the 3rd Battalion jumped off, Company I to take HILL 527, Company L to seize HILL 528.

Moving silently in the darkness, Captain MARSHALL led Company I toward its objective. Without firing a shot his men reached the crest of the hill, breaking to surround a large house on the commanding ground. About to investigate the building, several men were moving forward when the Krauts came piling out. The first few to come out of the door started to run for prepared positions, pulled up short when they realized their plight. The rest came out with hands already raised. 60 PW's were taken without a round being fired, without a man being scratched. All around security was posted and local patrols reported no more Krauts on the hill.

On HILL 528 Company L had met a more determined enemy. With two platoons abreast 1st Lt. CHARLES ALSTERLUND led his men up the hill through heavy artillery fire. 50 yards from a building on the hilltop S/Sgt THOMAS HEFFERMAN stumbled into a machine gun position in the darkness, surprised and captured two Krauts. The men had moved 20 yards further when machine guns opened up on both flanks. Leading his men through the interlocking streams of tracers, Lt. ALSTERLUND made straight for the house, creeping and crawling, working his assault platoons forward. Jumping to his feet, Pvt. LEE WILSON rushed the door, fired several shots at the lock and burst inside. Closely following him, the men raced through the house to find that the Krauts had gone out the rear door, some taking shelter in a shed behind the house.

Meanwhile, a bitter fight had developed on the hilltop. Surrounded on all sides by superior numbers, T/Sgt. ROMEO RAMIREZ and Sgt. HEFFERMAN placed their men at windows and barricaded doors to withstand assault. It wasn't long in coming. Firing machine pistols, throwing grenades and screaming fanatically as they charged, the Krauts were within 15 yards of the house when the assault broke as the men inside riddled them with grenades and rifle fire inflicting heavy casualties. Retiring to the shed behind the house, the Krauts shot rockets at the building, blasting the roof in, setting it on fire. Swarming around the house, they assaulted again. From the flaming house the Company L soldiers again beat the Germans off, dropping grenades among the, driving them back with rifle fire. Spotting a Kraut firing flares over the house, Pvt. ORVILLE ANDREWS killed him with one shot. On the first floor Pvt. MCHUGH stood off the third assault singlehanded. Reaching the side of the house, the Krauts ran to the door, smashed it in and were almost inside when MCHUGH beat them back with grenades. When two Germans brought up a machine gun to fire through the open doorway, he stepped out in full view of the Krauts, killed both with his M-1.

All night long the fight lasted. Getting the fire under control, the men were able to remain inside the house. Drained by heavy losses, the Kraut assaults weakened and as dawn approached the fight became a snipers duel. As it grew light the Krauts withdrew from the hill, leaving 22 dead strewn around the building.

Meanwhile, Company A was still holding, 100 yards from 587. In a sea of mud, with rain pouring on them, the men lay on the western slope of the hill. Slit trenches caved in, weapons clogged with mud and the Kraut continued to bring down mortar and artillery fire without letup. With only a few rifles in condition to fire, his Company weakened by heavy casualties, Lt. BARKER was unable to attack. Ordered to hold his ground he moved among his men until satisfied that all were determined to hang on. As night fell on 7 October, Company F and Company C moved up, Company C with the mission of striking at the ridgeline behind the Kraut on 587 and Company F preparing to pass through Lt. BARKER and his men, to attack the hill itself.

With T/Sgt. STEPHEN TUMINSKI and his platoon in the lead, Company C approached the high ground in darkness, slogging through thick mud as they advanced. Surprising the Krauts in their holes, the Sergeant had dragged 10 out of their hiding places before the rest opened fire. Machine pistols and machine guns cut the night with tracers as the Krauts realized too late that their positions were overrun. Firing as he charged, Sgt. TUMINSKI skilled three Germans manning a machine gun. When others left their holes, creeping to envelop his platoon from both sides, the Sergeant and his men beat them off and in a final assault drove the Krauts from the ridge, killing seven, wounding 13. Pushing on immediately toward HILL 587 Company C moved up through murderous artillery and mortar fire, reached the crest to find it already occupied by Company F which had taken the knob without resistance. The blow at his rear, struck by Company C had unseated the Kraut on 587 and he had withdrawn from his key position without a fight.

The fall of HILL 587, under staggering blows dealt by our three Battalions which had made the Kraut position untenable, destroyed a natural line of defense for the Germans. Although his determination to resist ferociously on every knob had not been broken, the Kraut had lost another major decision to our hard driving troops.

At dawn on 8 October, Company K moved to the left of Company L on HILL 528, digging in to protect the Regimental left flank. 500 yards to the northwest was FALCHETTO, HILL 543. Our O.P.'s had spotted a lot of enemy activity in the vicinity, the hill was believed to be strongly held and we anticipated that it would be seized only after a bitter fight.

To probe the Kraut positions a patrol of eight men, led by Pfc JOHN WALKIEWICZ, set out at noon, heading for HILL 543. Nearing a house on the forward slope, WALKIEWICZ entered the building, surprised and captured six Krauts manning an O.P. From a window, he spotted the entire German defense set up, foxholes, machine gun emplacements and mortar positions. Leading his men through the rugged rock formations, WALKIEWICZ crept around the flank and into the Kraut rear. Working his way toward a machine gun emplacement he captured three more Krauts. One of his men manned the gun, covering him as he moved to the next position. Five more Germans surrendered to him and with that, Krauts on all sides came piling out of holes to give themselves up.

Back in Company K positions, observers with field glasses had been closely following the progress of the patrol. To capitalize on the situation, 1st Lt. FRED GALLIART set out on the run, leading a platoon to support WALKIEWICZ and his men. Arriving on FALCHETTO, the Lieutenant passed the 50 odd Kraut PW's who had already given up. Leading his men over the crest of the hill, he turned abandoned machine guns on more Germans dug in on the northern slope. Six who tried to escape were cut down and more Krauts came out of their holes with hands raised. A total

of 73 PW's were rounded up, 10 machine guns, an artillery radio and numerous small arms were seized. The remainder of Company K immediately moved to FALCHETTO, organized the hill and dug in. Without sustaining a casualty, the company seized a strongly held position in broad daylight, walking off with a fat batch of "supermen."

That night on the Regimental right flank, Company C jumped off from 587 with HILL 565 as its objective. Knee deep in mud, through rain and dense fog, Captain MATNEY led his men in a slow torturous advance. Two hundred yards from the objective, Sgt. SKEEN with the leading platoon came under fire from six machine guns, burning tracers through the fog from front and flanks. Weakened by casualties previously sustained, Captain MATNEY was not able to launch a flanking movement in sufficient strength. Working ahead in a frontal assault through terrific fire the men advanced only a short distance before they were forced to hold up. Sending several men to the left flank to create a diversion, Captain MATNEY was able to pick up another hundred yards as Kraut machine gunners shifted their fire to meet the new "threat."

50 yards from Kraut positions, with only a slight rise in ground between them and the Germans, the attacking troops were met with a hail of grenades, machine pistol and sniper fire. To advance further was impossible. By then most of the weapons were fouled with mud. Lt. PLANTE and Sgt. SKEEN worked desperately, stripping M-1's, wiping off mud with their shirts, but despite their efforts only a handful of rifles were in condition to fire at any one time.

With the leading elements of his Company, Captain MATNEY directed the fire of his men, refusing to give ground. Counterattacked twice during the night he led a group of men in squad strength to beat off the Kraut assaults with grenades and rifle fire. The situation looked hopeless - at one time, a German Luger carried by Lt. PLANTE was the only weapon which would fire, but still the men held on. Dawn came and Captain MATNEY withdrew his company about a hundred yards, prepared defensive positions to withstand counterattack in daylight. All during the day of 9 October, the soldiers of Company C kept their precarious foothold, alternating between cleaning and firing their weapons. At dusk, Company E, commanded by 1st Lt. WESLEY EVANS moved through Company C to take up the attack.

With the leading platoon, 1st Lt RICHARD WALKER was nearing the objective when four Kraut machine guns opened up behind him. By-passed in the darkness the German gunners cut the first two squads off from the rest of the company as their crossfires blocked the route of advance. Taking six of his men, Lt. WALKER started back to re-establish contact with the main body. Moving unseen to the rear of the German positions he charged the nearest, jumping into the emplacement, kicking over the machine gun as it was firing, killing one Kraut and capturing two. Assaulting another gun position he destroyed the weapon, surprised and captured four Krauts. With his men running, firing and yelling he swept into two more machine gun nests, dragging out seven Krauts, breaking up two more guns. In a bold stroke the German guns were silenced, contact restored and the advance resumed. As Lt. WALKER led his men up the slope, Krauts dug in on the crest, rolled grenades down among the attacking troops, machine pistols blazed in the night and three machine guns broke out, firing from the left flank. Two of his men were killed and four wounded as Lt. WALKER led the final assault, every man firing as the entire platoon drove into the Kraut positions. Two Krauts were killed, nine captured and others were driven from the hill leaving rifles, equipment and three machine guns behind them.

At dawn the following day, 9 October, Company I was ordered to move from FALCHETTO to attack HILL 527, 1000 yards to the north. With two platoons abreast, Captain MARSHALL advanced along the ridgeline until Kraut artillery, zeroed in on the only route of approach, crashed among the men, forcing them to take cover. German machine guns cut loose, interlocking fires grazing the ridge and covering the draws. Until 1500 hours, Capt. MARSHALL tried, first one draw, then another, found all under Kraut machine gun fire. Calling for artillery and smoke he withdrew his company to FALCHETTO.

On 10 October we received an 88th Division Directive:

- "2. 349th Inf. will continue to secure and hold hill-mass extending from HILL 543 to HILL 587 to HILL 565 with a minimum of one Bn.
3. Not more than one Bn 349 Inf. may be moved to an assembly area south of the above mentioned hill-mass for showers and clothing issue. With approval of this Hq, Bns of the Regt. may be rotated."

Our 2nd Battalion was immediately pulled back to the vicinity of SASSOLEONE leaving one company on the line with the 1st Battalion. Attached to the 351st Infantry to help secure and hold HILL 502, further east, our 3rd Battalion occupied positions on the ridgeline until 11 October, when it reverted to our control and moved to an assembly area north of SASSOLEONE.

Hot showers, clean clothes, a PX ration and plenty of sleep put new life in the troops after 19 days of bitter, bloody fighting. They had struck hard against the best that the Kraut had to offer. During the period, 16 German regiments were rotated against the 349th and from 13 of them we took 673 PW's killed more than 450 Krauts and virtually annihilated the 134th and 131st Regiments. Among the 13 Officers captured, frank words of praise came from one who had watched the fall of BELVEDERE. Speaking of our 1st Battalion which had stormed the town in the face of terrific SP, mortar and machine gun fire, Lt. FRITZ WEBER, commanding 6th Company, 134th Regiment, said, "In nine years of service I have fought in Poland, Russia and Italy - never have I seen such spirit. I would be the proudest man in the world if I could command a battalion such as the one which took BELVEDERE."

For five days the Regiment rested. Although the 1st Battalion held positions in the line during the entire period, one company came down each day for hot meals and showers. The relative quiet pervading over the front in our zone of action gave even the men in foxholes a chance to rest up. In the 2nd Battalion, one company was kept in position on the right of the 1st Battalion. The companies rotated, sharing the duty equally.

Two of our Battalion Commanders were evacuated at this time. On 11 October, Lt. Col. WILLIAM J. McCONNELL, 2nd Battalion, went to the hospital, sick. Major JOHN W. LYON was designated Battalion Commander in his absence. On 12 October, Lt. Col. ALFRED W. HESS was wounded by a shell fragment and Lt. Col. JAMES E. HENDERSON assumed command of the battalion.

From our positions on high ground, the PO Valley could be seen stretching out broad and flat, some eight miles distant. It looked like the promised land to our men and weeks of bloody struggles over back breaking mountains were almost forgotten as the soldiers gazed with anticipation at the level plain, its straight roads and orderly rows of houses. But one obstacle stood in the downward path to the valley. Almost 2000 feet high, Mt. GRANDE barred our way. Rising out of a series of smaller knobs, we expected it to be the center of German resistance because with its fall we would be looking down the Kraut's throat, from there to the PO

Ordered to resume the attack on 16 October, our 2nd Battalion prepared to jump off with the mission of seizing Mt. DELLE TOMBE, 1500 yards to the north. On the left our 3rd Battalion, making an end run to the northwest moved out to occupy HILL 373, our 1st Battalion was in Regimental reserve.

At 0030 hours, 16 October the 2nd Battalion jumped, Company E making a wide swing to the left to attack from the flank, Company F advancing due north. Led by Captain WALTER A. GUNTARP, Company E moved through terrain broken by deep gorges and ravines. Thick fog cut the visibility and when Captain GUNTARP, three hours later, had gotten his company in position to launch the coordinated attack, it was impossible to pick out the objective in the darkness. Holding up the advance he sent patrols forward. For an hour they searched in vain. Then, bursting over the top of the hill, a Kraut flare outlined the objective.

The attack was launched immediately. Leading the 1st Platoon, 1st Lt. ROBERT MEANS moved up the hill, had almost reached the crest when the Kraut showed his hand. More than 10 machine guns opened up simultaneously, machine pistols and snipers swept the hillside with fire. Unable to contact his 2nd Platoon which had become lost in the night, Captain GUNTARP sent 1st Lt. ALEX DENYS with the 3rd Platoon around to the right to support Lt. MEANS and his men, by then held up in heavy fire. On the run, down a draw, up the other side, through thick shrubbery Lt. DENYS led his men to flank the Kraut positions. Nearing the top of the hill, Sgt. HENRY KOCHIS with the lead squad met the first resistance as Kraut gunners swung their fire over to meet the new assault. Plunging into the nearest emplacement, KOCHIS tore up two machine guns, killed four Krauts - his tommy gun blazing, he ran straight for another position, destroyed another machine gun, pumping .45 caliber slugs into the two Germans manning it. Lt. DENYS came up, organized his men to pour fire at other Kraut positions. As enemy fire diminished, Lt. MEANS and Lt. DENYS rose together, led their men yelling and firing in an all out assault. Sweeping into the hostile positions they killed more than 20 Krauts, wounded 15 and drove the rest off.

Fifteen minutes later the Kraut struck back. Captain GUNTARP and Pfc ANDREW METCALFE checking positions on the left flank, hit the ground when a hail of potato mashers burst around them. The Germans had crept to within 50 yards of Company E positions without being seen. Pumping shot after shot into the Krauts as they charged head on, Captain GUNTARP and Pfc METCALFE cut five down before the remaining dozen broke and fled.

Meanwhile, on the south side of DELLE TOMBE, Company F was driving the Kraut back in bitter fighting. Two assaults, one led by 2nd Lt. JOHN KEARNEY, the other by 2nd Lt. WILKIE LANE, JR had been driven back with casualties as Kraut machine guns and mortars plastered the slopes. At dawn 2nd Lt. FRANK PARKER with the 1st Platoon in a skirmish line, started up the rugged hillside. Two men were killed, six wounded as they reached the crest. Working his way ahead of the others, creeping and crawling toward the spitting snout of a MG 34, Sgt. RADOSI was 10 yards from the gun when he threw two grenades, both into the dug out, tearing up the gun, killing the crew of three Krauts. Jumping up, Lt. PARKER moved his men forward for the final assault. Throwing grenades, firing into holes and emplacements, his men overran two more machine guns, killed 11 Germans and captured five. Under continuous artillery, mortar and SP fire, Company E and Company F dug in on Mt. DELLE TOMBE for the rest of the day.

At 2000 hours Company E and Company G moved from DELLE TOMBE, by 2200 hours had occupied PARR LE TOMBE without resistance, 1000 yards further north. Meanwhile our 3rd Battalion, with Company A attached had made a sweep to the northwest, moving rapidly, occupying HILL 373 by dark without resistance. Our next objective was S. CLEMENTE, a town strategically located at the end of a valley running to the base of Mt. GRANDE. Guarding a natural approach to GRANDE, the town was a key point and we expected the Kraut to fight hard for it. Our 3rd Battalion on 373 was in position to strike at S. CLEMENTE from the west, at the same time to send troops across the Kraut rear to cut off his escape route. At 2000 hours Company K jumped off with the mission of seizing S. CLEMENTE, Companies I, L and A to occupy HILLS 435 and 456 north of the town.

Advancing into the town, 1st Lt. JOSEPH ARMATO and his men had cleared the first few houses when the Kraut cut loose with mortar and SP fire, machine gun and tank fire. The Lieutenant ordered his men into the buildings but they gave little cover as the Kraut methodically tore each structure down with shellfire - and when the men sprinted from crumbling houses, machine guns raked the road. After keeping his foothold in the town for several hours, Lt. ARMATO withdrew Company K still under terrific fire.

To the north, the remainder of the Battalion was making good progress in driving across the Kraut rear. Commanded by Lt. ALSTERLUND, Company L took the lead, advancing through heavy artillery and SP fire, cutting the road running north out of S. CLEMENTE by midnight. Without slowing the advance, Lt. ALSTERLUND led his men up the steep slopes of HILL 435. 50 yards from the crest, the troops came under murderous fire as machine pistols, machine guns and snipers blazed into the night. In a head on assault with every man yelling and shooting, the Lieutenant drove into Kraut positions. Overwhelmed by the sudden attack the Krauts were driven from the hill leaving 13 dead and five wounded behind them.

With the mission of joining Company L on 435, Company A was meeting resistance north of S. CLEMENTE. Under heavy machine gun and SP fire coming from the town, 1st Lt. JOHN ERNSER led his men across the same road cut by Company L. As the company started up the side of the ridge which ran north into 435, the lead scouts flushed several Germans from holes. A quick exchange of shots, and then scattered Kraut fire broke out on all sides. Deploying his 1st and 2nd Platoons on a broad front, Lt. ERNSER led them as they swept the area for Germans. In a short fire fight seven Krauts were killed, one captured and about a squad escaped. On to the top of the ridge and along it to HILL 435, Lt. ERNSER brought his company, joining with Company L at dawn. Contact was made on HILL 465 with Company I which had occupied its knob at dawn without a fight after having swung further north than the other companies. At one time surrounded on all sides by groups of Germans, Captain MARSHALL led his men through them rather than to risk a decisive fight while still far from his objective.

At noon, 17 October, Lt. PARKER, Company F led his platoon into S. CLEMENTE, captured a lone Kraut, met no resistance. To protect our exposed right flank, Lt. LANE with a platoon of Company F moved out of S. CLEMENTE on the road running east, and set up a roadblock. The remainder of the 2nd Battalion stayed in position in the vicinity of PARR LE TOMBE.

Later in the day on HILL 435 a bitter fight developed as the Krauts tried to dislodge Company L from its position. From early morning the knob had been plastered by German mortars and SP guns firing direct fire. A number of casualties were sustained and when the Krauts appeared in person the men were in an unreceptive mood. At 1400 hours in platoon strength the Germans made a fanatical assault after creeping through tangled shrubbery almost to the defenders positions. Yelling as they charged, pouring fire from machine pistols and rifles, they were cut to ribbons as the Company L soldiers drove them off with grenades. One Kraut got to the door of the building housing the C.P. With his machine pistol he blazed a huge hole in the door, threw a grenade inside which failed to go off, dropped in his tracks as he was riddled from three sides. Leaving 21 dead and eight wounded, a handful of Krauts escaped down the hill. For the rest of the day the Company received heavy shelling. Snipers caused several casualties and long range machine gun fire continued to harrass the troops until dark.

On the following day all elements of the 1st Battalion were assembled behind HILL 435. Company B was released from the 2nd Battalion, Company A was released from the 3rd, and Major QUIGLEY with the rest of the Battalion moved up prepared to jump off. At 2000 hours, with Company C leading, the Battalion jumped off with HILL 450 as its objective, 1000 yards to the north. The column was raked by Kraut artillery as the men fought their way through thick mud, moving up the steep rugged hillside in darkness. Leading his men, Captain MATNEY was almost on the knob when six or seven Kraut machine gunners, opened fire, their interlocking streams of tracers forming a perfect barrier. Withdrawing a hundred yards, the Captain called for artillery. Shells pounded and crashed on Kraut positions and when Captain MATNEY, after lifting the artillery, led the final assault, three or four dazed Germans were all that were left. Fourteen dead Krauts lay on the ground, the others, if there were any, escaped. By dawn the rest of the Battalion had joined Company C. Under continuous artillery fire the troops dug in, prepared to resist counterattack.

While Company C was attacking HILL 450 in the right half of our zone, the 2nd Battalion was moving up on the left with the mission of seizing C. DEL CHIN and DI SOTTO, HILL 361. 1500 yards south of Mt. GRANDE, these objectives would be the springboard from which the attack on the mountain would be launched. After a six hour march through rain and darkness, Company G with Sgt. MOMESLEY's Platoon in the lead approached C. DEL CHIN shortly before dawn on 19 October. From three sides the Krauts opened up, firing machine guns, machine pistols and rifles. SP guns put direct fire on the advancing column and mortar shells blazed continuously. With dawn soon to break, rather than have his leading company trapped and wiped out, Major LYON ordered a withdrawal. As the Krauts pressed closer, Sgt. HOMESLEY and his men held their ground, firing into the darkness at shadowy figures that moved nearer and nearer on all sides. Protecting the withdrawal of Company G, this sergeant with part of his platoon fought until either killed or captured.

Time was growing short. If Mt. GRANDE was to be taken at all it would have to be done before the Kraut had an opportunity to reinforce it with fresh troops, and organize for a last ditch stand. On the night of 19 October our 1st and 2nd Battalions were poised to attack. The 1st Battalion objective was Mt. CERERE, the 2nd had the mission of driving through C. DEL CHIN, across DI SOTTO, DI SOPRA and to the crest of Mt. GRANDE. The operation had to be completed by dawn to succeed. It meant calling on the last ounce of strength and guts in each soldier. Each man knew that the weeks of bloody fighting, across rugged mountains in rain and mud, would be capped by failure if GRANDE was not taken.

The 1st Battalion mission, to seize Mt. CERERE, was of vital importance to the success of the whole plan. CERERE, 1000 yards southeast of Mt. GRANDE, was a keypoint on our exposed right flank. To hold Mt. GRANDE alone would be impossible, laying the troops open to fire from their right rear, if not to the danger of being cut off completely. At 2200 hours, 19 October, our 1st Battalion pushed off, with Company A, commanded by Lt. ERNSER, in the lead. Leaving Hill 450, the troops struggled through mud, advancing slowly in the darkness through a driving rain. Climbing up the rocky slope, Lt. ERNSER led his men to the crest of the mountain, meeting no resistance, encountering only light artillery fire. A large building on the highest point was surrounded and at dawn 11 Krauts were flushed out without a shot being fired. Company B and Company C moved to the hilltop, joined Company A and Mt. CERERE was organized for defense.

During the night our 2nd Battalion was battling to reach Mt. GRANDE before daylight. At 2130 hours Company G commanded by 1st Lt. ROBERT KELLY jumped off for C. DEL CHIN, took it without resistance. DI SOTTO was occupied without a fight but halfway to DI SOPRA the Company was fired on by Krauts dug in around a large house. Deploying his leading platoon, with every man firing, Lt. KELLY led them in a smashing assault. Swarming around the house they killed four Krauts, wounded three and captured six. The remnants of a company were driven off.

Less than an hour later the Germans counterattacked. 1st Lt. FREDERICK CUMMINGS with his platoon in and around the house bore the brunt of the assault. Pfc CHARLES GILLAND from a half dug in position on the forward slope opened up with his B.A.R. as the Krauts charged. His blazing weapon cut down five before his position was overrun and he was killed. With his tommy gun spitting slugs, Sgt. ERWIN BAKER rounded the corner of the building, pulled up short as a dozen Germans came at him. With his back to the wall he drilled four, fire from the house cut down three more and the Krauts broke. Stumbling down the hillside they left 11 dead and four wounded behind them.

Pushing on to the north Company G occupied HILL 581 without resistance. At 0300 hours, Company F followed by Company E passed over 581, started up the slopes of Mt. GRANDE. A devastating artillery preparation pounded the objective as the troops advanced. Shells crashed on the crest and concentrations blasted at routes of approach which the Kraut might have used to reinforce the mountain. As the first gray light of dawn appeared, Lt. PARKER with the 1st Platoon of Company F reached the highest point, the top of Mt. GRANDE. Not a shot was fired - the Kraut had lost another close race.

The rest of Company F moved up, occupied the northern part of the hill while Company E dug in on the reverse slope. Half an hour after our troops had taken their positions, the Kraut counterattacked. Striking at Company F, about a platoon of Germans was scattered, four killed and several wounded as the soldiers cut loose with every weapon available. They were on the knob to stay.

Taking Mt. GRANDE we had spearheaded the 5th Army drive to cut the BOLOGNA-RIMINI Road and our troops, looking downhill toward the highway, were occupying the most advanced and most critical terrain features on the entire front. Through our Division Commander, from Major General GEOFFREY KEYES, II Corp Commander came words of praise for the Kraut Killer Regiment: "Congratulations on the capture of Mt. GRANDE, MT. CERERE. . . Please tell Colonel CRAWFORD . . . that we are very proud of the fine work of the 349th. . ." To our Regimental C.P. came Lieutenant General MARK W. CLARK, 5th Army Commander. His visit at this time emphasized the importance of our position in the line, focused attention on this drive to cut Highway 9 which was rapidly developing into a threat more serious and imminent to the Kraut than the much publicized drive up Highway 65. After congratulating

us for taking GRANDE, General CLARK turned to what was now more important - the task of keeping it. The General stressed the importance of holding the mountain at all cost, advised that a strong, well knit defense be set up until the time should come to push on. For half an hour the General remained with us, wished us good luck and left.

In the vicinity of GRANDE, isolated groups of surprised Krauts were being rounded up. With a squad, Sgt. PRESTON SMITH of Company F went to clear a house at LA TORRE on the southern slope. Nine Krauts were found inside, some sleeping, some cleaning weapons. Shortly after that a German Captain and 12 men walked into the building, were easily captured. Questioned, the officer said that American troops had not been expected to attack Mt. GRANDE before the next morning.

While the troops dug in, strengthened their positions and prepared to resist a possible counterattack in force, Company G, still on HILL 581 sent a platoon led by 1st Lt. WILLIAM JOYCE to establish a roadblock on the forward slope of Mt. GRANDE. Advancing down the hill, 500 yards ahead of friendly troops, the Lieutenant approached a house, sent a squad to investigate it. Pfc McDONALD COLEMAN, leading the squad, was 50 yards from the building when the chatter of Kraut machine guns broke out, firing from windows, forcing the men to drop and seek cover. COLEMAN worked his way forward, almost to the side of the house, then jumped to his feet, firing in windows as he rounded the house on the run. Breaking down the door, he riddled three Krauts with his tommy gun, killed another and captured four in the next room.

By then his men were coming up to the house. Sounds of a fight outside brought him to the door. A Kraut Major had one of COLEMAN's men by the throat. Tearing the two apart, COLEMAN stepped back, his tommy gun blazing - the Kraut crumpled to the ground. Leading his men to German positions beyond the house, COLEMAN killed two more while his men rounded up eight PW's. The rest of the Platoon coming up, positions were taken to forestall any attempt by the Kraut to use the main avenue of approach to GRANDE, the road running south from Krautland to the base of the mountain.

On Mt. CERERE, Company A and the Battalion C.P. occupied the large house on the hilltop. Company B was dug in on the left, Company C on the right. At noon on 21 October the Kraut started to shell the building. Two SP guns, one to the right front, the other to the left front, pumped shell after shell, tearing the walls down as they continuously got direct hits at close range. Mortar shells burst in the courtyard causing casualties as the men ran for cover on the reverse slope of the hill. Over 100 shells tore into the house, demolishing it completely. Company A dug in on the reverse slope, protected from the direct SP fire that continued during the day.

In the middle of the afternoon, S/Sgt JAMES McMANUS, Company B spotted 15 Krauts marching in column of twos, along the road from Mt. GRANDE to CERERE. Working his way forward to a concealed position near the road he waited for them to approach. They were 30 yards from him when Sgt. McMANUS rose silently, raised his tommy gun and squeezed the trigger. Seven Krauts were killed instantly, three wounded lay squirming on the ground and of the rest who escaped several were wounded.

In strong defensive positions, our 1st Battalion concentrated on protecting its knob and preventing GRANDE from being hit in a flank attack.

After having taken up positions in the vicinity of FRASSINETO, our 3rd Battalion on 24 October prepared to strike due east to extend our spearhead in width by seizing HILL 339. At 2000 hours Company I jumped off, planning to push through C. CERETO and then up on 339. With 1st Lt. GALLIART commanding, the column approached C. CERETO meeting no resistance until a lone machine gun opened up, firing from the building. To press on with all possible speed, the Kraut was bypassed at CERETO and left for Company L to deal with. Pushing on Company I neared the objective. Ahead in the darkness the sound of shots rang out, grenades exploded and a sharp fire fight was heard. Some minutes later three survivors of S/Sgt. STEPHEN JATKO's eight man patrol, previously sent to reconnoiter HILL 339, reported to Lt. GALLIART. They had met strong resistance on the knob and felt that it was being held by the Krauts in strength.

The column continued on, moving painfully through deep mud, rain and darkness. Up the hill, Lt. GALLIART led his men expecting to draw Kraut fire at any minute. They were on the top and still no sign of the enemy. It was only after dawn broke that the Lieutenant saw the cluster of houses, on another part of the hilltop still unsearched, possibly harboring the enemy. To clear the buildings he sent S/Sgt. LARKIN with the 2nd Platoon while the rest of the company dug in on the reverse slope.

The sergeant had entered the first house, some of his men were inside with him, some outside covering the rest, when from three sides the Krauts who had lain concealed cut loose with machine guns and pistols, rifles and grenades. The soldiers outside the building had no choice but to take shelter with the others. Surrounded and greatly outnumbered they could only hold the Kraut off, could take no offensive action. Meanwhile the remainder of the company was being raked by small arms fire, pounded by mortars and artillery. Heavy casualties were sustained, Lt. GALLIART was killed by a sniper's bullet and 1st Sgt. ELLIOT M. KALKSTEIN took command.

His company depleted by casualties, with all his automatic weapons destroyed, Sgt. KALKSTEIN held his ground unable to move to the aid of the 2nd Platoon, unable to withdraw with mortar fire blasting his rear. By noon the Krauts were starting to press forward to drive Company I from the hill. Unable to stop them with his few men, the Sgt. was ordered to withdraw. Smoke was brought down on Kraut positions and under its protection, two platoons of Company I withdrew without further loss. The next morning all but seven of the 2nd Platoon appeared at the Battalion C.P. Bottled up all day and all night in the house they had frustrated every attempt the Kraut made to dig them out. Rifle fire and grenades had left the ground around the building strewn with German bodies as time and again, for 20 hours, the Krauts had tried to get at them. Attacking first from one side, then another, the Krauts finally gave up their costly assaults when night fell. Having the house surrounded they could afford to pause for a breather.

But at 0400 a door at the side of the house swung slightly ajar, a figure slipped out in the fog and disappeared, then another and another, eleven in all, as the survivors made their break. After daybreak, 11 men walked into their Battalion C.P. after being given up for lost. In two they had two PW's picked up as they had made their escape. From the prisoners it was learned that at dawn there was to have been a final all out assault on the house.

Meanwhile Company L had been forced to pull back from CERETO. One Kraut machine gun had withdrawn as the company moved in to take up positions around the house at 1000 hours 25 October. A terrific pounding by artillery, mortars and SP guns continued all day without let up and a steady flow of casualties was sent

to the rear. It grew dark and the hostile fire continued - when Lt. ASTERLUND was wounded there were no officers left. With 1st Sergeant ALBERT I THOMAS taking over the company the men beat off the first counterattack, launched about midnight. From three sides the Krauts assaulted, got to within grenade range before they were thrown back, leaving the ground strewn with dead Germans.

But they had inflicted casualties on the company and when the second attack was launched it looked like the finale. However before the assault had developed fully, Sgt. THOMAS received orders to withdraw. Sending his men back in twos and threes with a handful of soldiers he kept the Krauts at bay for precious minutes. Last to leave CERETO were Sgt. THOMAS and Sgt. DORMAN, firing their final shots, then following their men.

Our 2nd Battalion was relieved on Mt. GRANDE by the 1st Battalion, 351st Infantry and moved to Mt. CERERE. In accordance with a Division Directive dated 29 October our mission became that of defense:

"1. 88 Div. . . maintains an active defense generally along present front lines prepared to resume the offensive at an early date.

2. Missions:

a. 349th Inf.

- (1) Maintains active defense of sector.
- (2) Occupies and secures FRASSINETO and Mt. CERERE.
- (3) Maintains contact and coordinates fires with 350th Inf. on left and 351st Inf. on right.
- (4) Conducts aggressive patrolling . . ."

Immediate emphasis was placed on improvement of positions. Sandbags were brought up and used extensively. All weapons were put in shape, counterattack plans were drawn up, mines were laid in front of positions. The comfort of the soldier was the next big consideration. After continuous exposure to rain and cold for weeks the men needed dry clothes and hot food and when possible these were brought up to them. Tommy cookers and burners, dry socks and shoes, clean clothes, blankets and mail - these things eased in part the rigors of their life in the lines which continued to be rugged as wet, cold weather became a regular thing. Each day one company was brought down to a rest house near S. CLEMENTE. There the men had three hot meals, haircuts and beer, a good night's sleep and a chance to write letters. Although only a short break it was a welcomed one.

It had been a month of bitter, grueling struggle, against a fanatical enemy, against rain, mud and rugged mountains. There was no "Fall of Rome," no screaming headlines, no cheering crowds - this was the kind of fight that carries with it no tangible reward. Yet in the heart of each man who stood finally on Mt. GRANDE or Mt. CERERE was a feeling of pride, in himself and in his Regiment. The 349th during the month of October emerged as a veteran fighting unit with more than just a record of so many miles covered in so many days. This was a record of gallant fights with a smart, capable enemy - it was a record that stood for driving ahead

after setbacks, weakened by heavy casualties, struggling, through mud and over mountains. The veterans who stood on GRANDE and CERERE had smashed through BELVEDERE despite heavy losses, had taken HILL 449 attacking through minefields, had driven the Kraut from HILL 587 in the face of devastating artillery, mortar and machine gun fire that had beaten off their previous assaults. These were the men who had captured 60 Krauts at night without firing a shot on HILL 527, and who the next day in broad daylight took 73 PW's out of strong defensive positions on FALCHETTO. These were the soldiers who smashed across Mt. DELLE TOMBE, were driven out of S. CLEMENTE and went right back to take it. And these were the soldiers who fought and clawed their way across knob after knob to steal Mt. GRANDE and Mt. CERERE from the Kraut. They had reason to be proud, these soldiers of the 349th, as they stood looking down to the PO Valley. Courage, stamina and guts had put them there.

JOSEPH A. KIELTY
Lt. Col. 349th Inf.
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
NOVEMBER 1944

After driving the Kraut back in repeated smashing attacks, the 349th Infantry had taken Mt. GRANDE and Mt. CERERE in the last week of October. With the occupation of these terrain features, the most critical in the division zone of action, the drive had been temporarily held up. Strong defensive positions were prepared and our troops were held ready to repel any attempt by the Kraut to regain what he had lost.

The first day of November found the 2nd Battalion in positions on Mt. CERERE, HILL 552 and TREBBO. On its right was the 3rd Battalion plus Company B at FRASSINETO. Company C occupied HILL 312 while Company A in a reserve position remained on HILL 435. For a week the men spent most of their waking hours improving their positions, developing a strong all round defensive set up. Thousands of sandbags were brought up to the front lines and a large percentage of the foxholes were sandbagged. Continuous rain had made it almost impossible for the men to dig holes without having the sides cave in, making the use of bags a vital necessity. Company and Battalion C.P.'s were likewise strengthened - sandbags and timbers protected them against all but direct hits.

Every effort was made to provide for the comfort of the men. Orders from Division specified that Coleman stoves and burners would be brought up to make hot coffee whenever possible and as a rule the soldiers were able to heat their rations. To keep the men as dry as possible the company supply sergeants kept a constant stream of fresh socks and clothes flowing to the front line troops. The companies made it a practice to rotate their men in small groups, letting them dry off in houses behind the front line positions. On a larger scale, the 3rd Battalion rotated an entire company each day, bringing it back to a large house in S. CLEMENTE. With fires blazing in each room and a kitchen set up in the basement, the soldiers were given a 24 hour break which included hot meals, new clothes and a good night's rest. A barber was available and there was a day room well stocked with magazines and writing materials.

During this period there was little activity on the front. The Kraut threw continuous harrasing fires in the regimental zone but few casualties were sustained. On the night of 6 November prompt action by II Corps Radio Intelligence undoubtedly saved the lives of several of our men. A patrol from Company A had set out with the mission of creating the impression that a full scale attack was being launched. Moving east toward CERETO the men dispersed in the darkness. At a signal they opened up with tommy guns, B.A.R.'s and bazookas. Sure that the attack was on, the Kraut called in the clear for a TOT to be laid on HILL 312 at 2400 hours. II Corps Radio Intelligence intercepted the message at 2355 hours, called Leather and Captain EDWARD J. AILEO, Regimental S-2 relayed the warning to Company C, in positions on 312. The men had no sooner taken cover, than a devastating barrage shook the hill. For seven minutes, artillery, 81mm and 120mm mortar shells crashed on the knob. Not a single casualty was sustained although more than 200 shells were dumped on our positions. After thoroughly arousing all the Krauts in the vicinity of CERETO, the Company A patrol returned without sustaining any casualties.

The three Battalions maintained constant pressure on the Germans patrolling aggressively at night to feel out hostile positions. A combat patrol from the 1st Battalion was dispatched each night with mission of reconnoitering CERETO, TOMAGNINI and HILL 166. Company A, in reserve provided the patrols. 1st Lt.

LOREN BRYSON, 2nd Lt. FRANCIS RUDLOFF and 2nd Lt. WALTER WYLLIE rotated as patrol leaders, taking with them new men who gained valuable experience. Contact with the enemy was made on several occasions and there were sharp exchanges of small arms fire. It was soon apparent that the Kraut held CERETO, TAMAGNINI and HILL 166 in some strength and several Company A patrols were repulsed by enemy machine gun fire when they tried to penetrate deeply the hostile positions. None of the patrols sustained casualties and it is doubtful if they inflicted more than light casualties on the enemy.

Almost 100 Italian civilians had congregated near TAMAGNINI in no-man's land. 1st Battalion patrols warned them of their dangerous situation and they were advised to move through our lines to safety. In daylight 6 November more than half of them, mostly women and children loaded with household possessions, passed through the front line positions. Although under close observation from Kraut positions they were permitted to leave the danger zone without being molested. On reaching our rear area they were evacuated by representatives of A.M.G.

In addition to the combat patrols, the 1st Battalion sent an ambush patrol each night to the draw leading from CERETO to FRASSINETO, a natural avenue of approach into our positions. The Kraut, however, was reluctant to press forward even at night and the ambush patrols made no contact with hostile forces. One contact patrol moved each night between Company A positions on HILL 435 and the 3rd Battalion at FRASSINETO.

An ambush patrol from the 2nd Battalion was sent every night to C. GALLO, several hundred yards short of a house known to be occupied by the Krauts. Protected by defilade the Krauts could be heard digging and bringing in supplies. Over a sound power telephone prepared mortar concentrations were called for and on several occasions yells and screams indicated good results. S/Sgt. THOMAS DUKE, S/Sgt. ANDREW METCALFE, S/Sgt. CHARLES MARTIN and Sgt. SOHASKI led the ambush patrols on successive nights, had no direct contact with the enemy and sustained no casualties. Night security patrols moved constantly in front of 2nd Battalion positions but the Kraut did not appear anxious to penetrate our lines. On only one occasion did the enemy move in and make contact. Two Krauts were challenged on the night of 4 November as they approached S/Sgt. GEORGE SEWELL's Company G platoon. When they failed to answer, M-1's and B.A.R.'s blazed in the darkness, killing one and driving the other off.

The 3rd Battalion from positions at FRASSINETO sent night patrols to PENZLA, 500 yards to the north. Several times they engaged the Kraut in fire fights but were unable to penetrate the strongly defended emplacements. With the mission of driving the Germans from the cluster of buildings, 1st Lt. ROBERT RICHARDSON, Company K led his platoon on 5 November in a daylight attack on PENZLA. Working his platoon forward through covered draws, the Lieutenant led his men to within 50 yards of the first house without being seen. The last 50 yards was barren ground and when the leading squad moved into the open the Krauts cut loose with machine pistols and machine guns from inside the building. Covered by Lt. RICHARDSON and the rest of the platoon pouring fire into the house, the men of the leading squad charged to the side of the building to find the doors strongly barricaded. From within the Krauts tossed grenades at the men trying to force their way inside. Unable to move to the aid of the few men at the house as German automatic fire raked the area, Lt. RICHARDSON signalled for a withdrawal. Bazookas, B.A.R.'s and tommy guns sent streams of fire into windows forcing the Krauts to take cover, giving the squad a chance to pull back to safety. Without sufficient numbers to press the attack further Lt. RICHARDSON led his men back to friendly positions, after sustaining three casualties, wounded by Kraut potato mashers.

During this first week of November our artillery played havoc with the Kraut continuously. Our OP's, on highpoints overlooking the PO Valley, were able to spot the approximate location of every Kraut gun that fired by night and by day their positions were blasted without let up. Visibility was sometimes poor as dense fog intermittently blanketed the battlefield but there were several days of good shooting when our artillery made life unpleasant for the Kraut. On 5 November, Lt. McNAMARA, 337th F.A. Battalion from his O.P. on HILL 435 spotted 30 Krauts in a cñow line, their mess equipment gleaming in the sun. Adjusting fire from the 248th F.A. Battalion's 155's on a point 900 yards southwest of the Krauts, the Lieutenant in one shift fired for effect on the spot where the Germans were grouped. Shells crashed on them, the Krauts ran for a nearby house and Lt. McNAMARA tore it down with direct hits. Only one German was seen to leave the shattered building when the firing ceased.

On 6 November Colonel JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD, Regimental Commander was sent to the hospital because of illness. On the same day, Lt. Col. JOSEPH A. KIELTY, Executive Officer, assumed command of the Regiment. The following day according to an 88th Division order, the relief of the 349th Infantry by elements of the 1st British Division was started. The 2nd Battalion was relieved by the 1st Harts on the night of 7-8 November, the 3rd Battalion plus Company B was relieved on the night of 8-9 November by the 11th Lancashire Fusileers and the following night the 2nd Royal Scots relieved the 1st Battalion less Company B. All units moved by truck to the rest area at MONTECATINI.

It was to a well earned rest that the Kraut Killer Regiment went. In 53 days of bitter, bloody fighting the 349th Infantry drove the Germans back many miles over some of the wildest, most rugged terrain in ITALY. Battling through rain, mud and cold weather our men faced nine different Kraut divisions. At least six regiments were so badly mauled that unless rebuilt completely they will never fight again. Eight hundred and forty five PW's were taken, including one Battalion Commander and 18 other officers. From these prisoners we learned that the 349th is both feared and respected by the Kraut and that over 2000 of the Germans who faced us were killed or wounded. It was with a feeling of justifiable pride in a job well done that our men entrucked and rolled south for ten days respite from the rigors of life in the front lines.

Their destination was MONTECATINI TERME, peacetime resort well known by tourists for its innumerable small hotels, its famed sulphur baths. North of the ARNO, thirty miles west of FLORENCE, it was virtually untouched by war and was an ideal site for the rest and relaxation of our men. By the morning of 10 November the entire regiment had arrived in the city and a short time later all units were billeted in hotels. With real beds to sleep in, running water and electric lights the men were soon comfortably established in surroundings more homelike than any they had experienced since coming overseas.

The first four days were devoted primarily to resting and cleaning up. G.I. showers were worked overtime and the men relaxed in the hot sulphur baths. Clean clothes were issued, the Italian barbers were called upon for their super-deluxe specials. The soldiers went through a routine medical check up, were brought up to date on their shots and were paid. Most of the time they were on their own, free to stroll down the CORSO VITTORIO, to buy souvenirs in the shops lining the PIAZZA UMBERTI. Movies every afternoon and night, stage shows and the huge Red Cross building gave the men places to go at all hours. Perhaps the most attractive thing about MONTECATINI was the absence of "Off Limits" signs. What bars

there were, were open to all and the men had practically free run of the city. They responded to the confidence placed in them by the military authorities by conducting themselves with an almost perfect record of good behavior during their freetime.

On 14 November regular training was scheduled and each day after that the troops were schooled in basic subjects between the hours of 0830-1200 and 1300-1700. Training areas were laid out on the outskirts of the city. Lectures, calisthenics, dismounted drill and battle drill were scheduled. A great number of new replacements came to the regiment at this time and particular stress was laid on familiarizing them with their duties, developing teamwork and control. The men received brush up courses in stripping and assembling their weapons and they ran through platoon combat firing problems, both by day and by night.

The introduction of training schedules cut down their free time somewhat but not entirely. After 1700 hours, unless on special detail, the men were at liberty to do as they pleased. Budding friendships with dark eye signorinas in some cases blossomed into "true love" hampered only by the 2200 hour curfew or the presence of the every present chaperone. There were carriages for hire and more than one G.I. Romeo was seen rolling grandly through the city park with a pretty Italian girl possessively clutching his arm. Some of the men went on pass to nearby FLORENCE but the majority were perfectly content with things as they were in MONTECATINI.

On Saturday, 18 November, the Regiment was assembled for presentation of awards to the foremost Kraut Killers of the 349th. Lt Col. KIELTY, Regimental Commander gave a brief accounting of what the men accomplished during the current drive from the ARNO to Mt. GRANDE overlooking the PO Valley. Following the Regimental Commander, Brigadier General PAUL W. KENDALL, Division Commander, spoke to the men complimenting them on their fine record in combat. The General then called forward those Officers and men of the Regiment who had particularly distinguished themselves by outstanding performance of duty. To Lt. Col. JAMES E. HENDERSON and Master Sergeant JOSEPH M. VLACANICH, the General presented Legions of Merit. A total of eight Silver Stars and 28 Bronze Stars were awarded for courageous deeds in action. Private First Class EUGENE NAZAROWITZ, Company I received a Silver Star with an Oak Leaf Cluster and Captain JAMES P. LYONS was awarded both a Silver and a Bronze Star. As he pinned on the medals and ribbons, the General had a word of congratulation for each Officer and man. The ceremony ended as the medal winners, standing at attention, received the salute of the Regiment.

As the stay at MONTECATINI drew to a close, the troops were issued special winter clothing to combat the frigid weather which had closed in on the battle front. Parkas, shoe pacs, gloves and heavy wool helmets were distributed to the troops and special instructions were given on protective measures to be taken to prevent casualties from the cold. The Division Commander ordered all personnel to wear shoe pacs or galoshes on returning to the front and instituted stringent measures to prevent the occurrence of trench foot. Dry socks were to be made available daily, feet to be massaged and the men to be kept moving about as much as possible.

Sunday, 19 November, the last day spent at the rest area, was designated as Thanksgiving Day. The traditional "turkey and trimmings" graced the board of all companies and a beer ration helped to wash the food down. After a sumptuous repast the men spent the rest of the day making final preparations for the movement north. Packs were rolled, weapons checked and a careful police of all areas was made.

At 0700 hours, 20 November, the 3rd Battalion convoy moved out and by 2200 hours the 1st Battalion, 339th Infantry had been relieved on position. The new regimental sector was to the west of Mt. GRANDE and included HILL 532, VOLPIERE and CASETTA DI VIGNALE. Our 2nd Battalion moved into a reserve position immediately behind the 3rd while the 1st Battalion occupied pyramidal tents in the valley at CASA DI LAVACCIA. Plans called for the regimental front to be held by one battalion for a period of six days when it would be relieved by the battalion in reserve and then move back to tent city. The battalion occupying tent city would then move up into the reserve position.

The 1st Battalion at CASA DI LAVACCIA conducted regular training in basic subjects designed to rapidly assimilate the new men into the unit as part of the team. In reserve, the 2nd Battalion worked on the positions, sandbagging the foxholes, making them as comfortable and secure as possible. In lieu of a training program, each company sent out patrols at night, composed principally of new men, with missions of contacting other units. Established trails were not used and the men gained valuable experience in night patrolling, and in moving across country in darkness.

During the remainder of the month there was little action on the front. The Kraut threw intermittent harrassing fire in the regimental zone but there were few casualties. An all around defense was set up, counterattack plans were made and positions were shifted and improved to provide maximum effectiveness in the event of attack. The problem of supply grew more difficult as the muddy trails became more and more treacherous in the rain. Vehicles were able to move to within several miles of the front lines, but from there on mules had to be used to transport supplies. On the company positions a five day supply of rations was built up, to be used only in the event that rain or snow cut off the normal flow.

Every night the 3rd Battalion sent out patrols to feel out enemy strength and contact the 350th Infantry on the left, the 1st British Division on the right. On the night of 23 November, 2nd Lt. CHARLES STONE, Company I, led a patrol to enemy held PARROCHIA. As he approached the German positions, the Krauts opened fire with machine guns and machine pistols. Unable to penetrate further the patrol engaged the enemy in a fire fight lasting for an hour and a half. One Kraut machine gun firing from the flank was silenced as the men poured fire from B.A.R.'s and tommy guns at burst of flame which disclosed its position. Almost out of ammunition the Lieutenant ordered his men to withdraw, bringing the patrol back to Company I positions without sustaining any casualties. The following night a patrol from Company L led by 1st Lt. HENRY JACKSON, set out with the mission of clearing an enemy minefield located astride the road running north of HILL 532. Working in total darkness with fog cutting off all visibility the men had succeeded in removing most of the mines clearing a path through the field when they were detected by the Germans. Machine guns swept the area and after a short fire fight the patrol withdrew without casualties.

Contact with the enemy was made again on the night of 25 November. With the mission of reconnoitering the road junction 600 yards north of HILL 532, 1st Lt. IRVING CUTLER set out after dark with a patrol from Company K. They were 300 yards from the objective when the Krauts opened fire on a broad front, streams of tracers converging on the men as they tried to work their way forward. For more than an hour the fight lasted but no gap in the hostile defenses were found. Bringing his men back for a re-supply of ammunition, the Lieutenant made a second try to penetrate the German positions. Again the patrol met heavy resistance and after spotting the location of several strongpoints, returned to their own lines shortly before dawn.

A 12 man Kraut patrol tried to penetrate Company K positions on the night of 26 November. Disclosing their latest "secret weapon" the Krauts drove a flock of sheep ahead of them to cover their approach. In the dense fog they were only 25 yards away when first discovered. A hail of grandes, B.A.R. and rifle fire drove the Germans off but not before they had killed one soldier and wounded two with a rocket fired at a platoon C.P. No Krauts were killed or captured, but the men had fresh mutton for several days in addition to some slightly inaccurate publicity in the Stars and Stripes.

On the night of 27 November, the 2nd Battalion relieved the 3rd. The 3rd Battalion moved back to tent city and the 1st took up reserve positions. Activity on the front continued to be limited to artillery exchanges and patrolling. Patrols probed enemy positions in the vicinity of PARROCHIA drawing heavy enemy machine gun and small arms fire but sustaining no casualties. The number of casualties inflicted was unknown but several times fire from B.A.R.'s and tommy guns brought screams from German positions, indicating good results. A great deal of valuable information on enemy strength and disposition was reported and the Battalion mortars and supporting artillery blasted the Kraut heavily.

As the month ended, the 349th Infantry was still at the front with one battalion actually on the line. November was a quiet month with little activity but the time was well spent as the heavy casualties of the drive north of the ARNO were replaced by new men who were trained to fill the shoes of those who had fallen in the bitter fighting. It was a month in which the Kraut Killer Regiment trained, rested and prepared for the decisive battles which each man knew would mark the final phase of the war in Europe.

JOSEPH A. KIELTY
Lt. Col., 349th Infantry
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
DECEMBER 1944

The first day of December found the 349th Infantry occupying defensive positions in a situation which continued to be static. Commanded by Lt. Col. JOSEPH A. KIELTY, the regiment held a sector to the west of Mt. GRANDE with the 1st British Division on the right, the 340th Infantry on the left. Included in the regimental sector were HILL 532, VOLPIERE and CASETA DI VIGNALE. These points were occupied by one battalion at a time, another battalion holding the regimental reserve line while the third was back in tent city for rest and training, some six miles behind the front lines. The policy was to rotate battalions. One battalion remained in the line for six days, then moved back to tent city after being relieved by the battalion in reserve.

As the month opened the 2nd Battalion was in front line positions, the 1st was in reserve and the 3rd was in tent city in the vicinity of CASA DI LAVACCIA. Activity on the front was confined to patrolling and artillery exchanges. The Kraut appeared to be content to maintain the "status quo" and he made no attempt to penetrate our defenses. In contrast to his stand pat policy our patrols maintained constant pressure, moving out every night to probe and feel out his defenses. On the whole the Kraut reacted violently to any penetration and was quick to open up with machine guns and machine pistols at the first suspicion of an approaching patrol.

With the mission of investigating C. DEL BROGLIO, 500 yards north of VOLPIERE, 2nd Lt. ANDREW McLOVICH, Company F, set out with 12 men on the night of 2 December. Reaching a point 100 yards from the objective the patrol contacted the enemy who were dug in on the forward slope. Scattered rifle shots, then machine pistols and two machine guns opened up. For 20 minutes the patrol fired continuously into the German positions. Working his men forward the Lieutenant was within 50 yards of the enemy when a hail of grenades, thrown and rolled down the hill, forced him to pull back. Almost out of ammunition he led his men back, calling for prepared concentrations on the enemy strongpoint.

Ambush patrols, sent out every night to cover natural routes of approach, reported sounds of enemy activity and called for mortar fire but at no time was direct contact with the enemy made.

Although it rained a great deal during the first part of the month, the soldiers had improved most of their positions to a point where they were able to keep fairly dry. In compliance with a Division Directive socks were changed every day to combat trench foot. By squads the men were brought into houses once a day when possible and given an opportunity to dry out in front of a fire. They ate 10 in 1 rations and with burners and Coleman stoves were able to prepare hot meals. The wet, raw weather made life in the lines anything but easy, however as time passed and more and more comforts were added, the soldiers made a reasonably liveable place out of the frontlines.

On 3 December the 2nd Battalion was relieved by the 1st and went back to tent city. The 2nd Battalion, 365th Infantry was attached to the 349th and moved into position on the regimental reserve line. It was the first taste of combat for these negro troops of the 92nd Division and as the lull on the battlefront continued they had an opportunity to acclimate themselves to their new surroundings. Key personnel from the 365th visited frontline positions and O.P.'s, becoming familiar with the 349th sector. At the same time, the 365th command group

moved into the 349th C.P. which was occupied jointly until later in the month.

During its period in the line the 1st Battalion pushed patrols aggressively into German positions. On 5 December 2nd Lt. JOHN BARKER, Company A, led a combat patrol of 12 men with the mission of probing enemy positions around the road junction to the east of PARROCHIA. 200 yards short of the objective the patrol was fired on by a machine gun and a machine pistol. In a skirmish line, Lt. BARKER led his men forward, pouring fire at the Germans, creeping toward the hostile positions in the darkness. Suddenly the machine gun fell silent. Jumping to his feet, Lt. BARKER led an assault on the emplacement, found only an unmanned machine gun, still hot. After moving on to the road junction and failing to contact any more of the enemy, the Lieutenant led his patrol back, picking up the machine gun on the way. The only casualty was a G.I. shirt which had two bullet holes in it - the man was untouched.

On the same day, 5 December, Colonel JOSEPH B. CRAWFORD paid a final visit to the 349th before returning to the United States. Arriving at the C.P. with Colonel PERCY E. LeSTOURGEON who assumed command the following day, Colonel CRAWFORD took leave of the regiment which he had led from the GARIGLIANO front through ROME, from VOLTERRA to the ARNO and through the GOTHIC line to Mt. GRANDE. Introducing his staff and Battalion Commanders to Colonel LeSTOURGEON, Colonel CRAWFORD thanked all for their cooperation and support, then left for FLORENCE and the States, expecting to be in HUMBOLDT, KANSAS for Christmas. On 6 December, Colonel LeSTOURGEON, Regimental Commander, inspected front line positions and took immediate steps to building up the fighting strength of the companies.

From Company B, 1st Lt. JAMES HOLLIS set out on the night of 7-8 December with a combat patrol of 12 men. His mission was to engage the Krauts in the vicinity of the road junction, the objective of the patrol led by Lt. BARKER two nights before. Moving out at midnight, the patrol was fired on by a lone machine gun, 200 yards from the objective. Laying heavy fire into the position, the patrol forced the machine gun to withdraw. Pushing forward through knee deep mud, they reached the junction, found no enemy but discovered AP mines and evidence of fresh digging on the road. Moving back toward Company B positions the patrol had gone several hundred yards when the last man signaled to the others to disperse and lay low. Several minutes later the shadowy forms of five Germans took shape, moving cautiously along the same path, stalking the returning B Company men. At 30 yards, Lt. HOLLIS gave the order to fire. At the first volley the Germans broke and ran. One screamed, stumbled and was helped up by another. All five disappeared in the night as Lt. HOLLIS and his men struggling through deep mud to reach the road arrived too late on the hard ground. Leading his men to friendly positions the Lieutenant brought his patrol back without sustaining any casualties.

During the day activity continued to be confined to artillery exchanges. From commanding ground our O.P.'s picked up a great deal of enemy activity, many times spotting vehicles and groups of men. Artillery was brought down on the Kraut and his front line positions as located by our patrols were heavily mortared.

Meanwhile, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were conducting small unit training at tent city near CASA DI LAVACCIA. Special emphasis was placed on battle drill to develop control and coordination within the squad. Weapons instruction and physical hardening together with other basic subjects were scheduled. The 2nd Battalion remained at tent city until 7 December when the troops moved by truck to the vicinity of GAGLIANO, 15 miles north of FLORENCE. There the men spent several days setting up large tents and preparing the area for use as a training

and rest center to accommodate one battalion at a time. South of FUTA pass, the rest camp was located in flat, open country, and except for the ever present mud, was ideally situated for training purposes. The 1st Battalion was relieved by the 3rd on 10 December and together with Anti-Tank Company, Cannon Company and part of Headquarters and Service Companies, moved back to the rest camp. At the same time the 2nd Battalion moved up to tent city. With the exception of the 3rd Battalion which was occupying the front line positions, all units conducted regular training in accordance with published schedules.

On 12 December at the Division C.P. there was held a ceremony for the awarding of medals to those officers and men of the 88th who had performed with unusual distinction in action. Lieutenant General MARK W. CLARK, 15 Army Group Commander made the presentation. Among those decorated were 1st Lieutenant KENNETH W. GRAY, Company I, 349th Infantry who received a Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in action on 16 July near PALAIA. In congratulating the Lieutenant, General CLARK commended on his outstanding display of courage and concluded by expressing admiration for the luxuriant and well trained mustache which has made Lt. GRAY the envy of the officers and men in his battalion.

The Stars and Stripes reported "a general lull along the 5th Army front" but although activity was on a small scale men still fought and died, and to them it was every bit as bloody as an all out offensive. On the night of 12 December, 2nd Lt. WALTER MYERS, Company I led a combat patrol into enemy held territory with the mission of killing or capturing any Germans encountered. Moving across a ploughed field one of the men stepped on a mine. The explosion killed him instantly and wounded our others, two of them seriously. At the blast, Kraut machine guns and machine pistols opened up, sweeping the minefield with fire. Caught in the open without cover, Lt. MYERS ordered the patrol to withdraw. Sgt. FREDERICK PIRIE, he himself wounded, dragged the two critically injured soldiers to a place of comparative safety, then returned alone to Company I. At daybreak, two litter teams moved out to where the wounded men had been hit but they were not there. Several Krauts were spotted and one of the men called to them in German, inquiring about the two men. One Kraut answered that the men had been picked up during the night by the Germans and evacuated. The litter bearers returned to their own lines without being fired on.

One of the principal patrol objectives was PARROCHIA, a cluster of houses 500 yards to the north of C. DI VIGNALE. At times our patrols contacted the enemy there, at other times they searched the houses or shot into the town without seeing any sign of the Germans. After dark on 14 December 1st Lt. EARL HEFLIN, Company I started out with a squad to investigate the town. The patrol had worked to within 50 yards of the first house when the enemy opened up. Machine guns blazed from windows raking the ground with heavy fire. Rifles and grenades added to the volume as the Krauts by then thoroughly aroused, tried to wipe out the Company I patrol. Although two of his men were wounded by potato mashers, Lt. HEFLIN led his patrol around the town to the right and moved toward it from the east. Again the Germans poured fire at them. With B.A.R.'s and tommy guns the patrol sent streams of fire into windows and doors using as targets and flashes of Kraut weapons. After a firefight lasting almost an hour, Lt. HEFLIN and his men, running low on ammunition, withdrew to Company I positions. From information gained concerning location of enemy strongpoints, Company H mortars dropped murderous concentrations on the Germans.

The 3rd Battalion moved back to the rest camp at GANGLIANO on 16 December after being relieved by the 2nd. Leaving the rest camp the 1st Battalion moved up to tent city. Activity at the front continued to be marked by artillery and mortar fire with combat and ambush patrols moving out each night. Few casualties were sustained and the soldiers constantly improved their positions making them safe from all but direct hits. During the first two weeks of December, three soldiers were killed, 12 wounded and two were missing in action. Most of the casualties were sustained in patrol actions. In their positions the men were comparatively safe and they ignored the intermittent harrassing fire sent over by the Krauts which as a rule fell with little effect. 2nd Battalion patrols continued to feel out the enemy and there were several sharp fire fights, centering mainly around the town of PARROCHIA.

During this time a regular allotment of four day passes was given to the regiment. The enlisted men were sent to either FLORENCE or MONTECATINI and the Officer quota was divided between FLORENCE and ROME. Enough travel time was allowed to insure four full days of civilized life - of plumbing, pavements and electric lights. Regular movies were shown at the rest camp at GAGLIANO and from there one day passes were given for visits to FLORENCE.

On 20 December the 365th Infantry took over command of the 349th sector. Our Regimental C.P. moved back to the vicinity of SAN BENEDETTO leaving the 2nd Battalion in the line, attached to the 365th. Except for switch in command, the situation for the 2nd Battalion was unchanged. Normal patrolling was continued without let up and there were several sharp encounters with the Kraut.

With a heavily armed combat patrol of 16 men, 1st Lt. ROBERT CADRAIN, Company E moved out on the night of 22 December to search out PARROCHIA, for Germans. In a skirmish line, the Lieutenant led his men toward the town, pouring fire into the buildings as they advanced. They were alongside the first house when the Germans responded. From the building a hail of grenades was thrown at the patrol. Machine guns opened up and snipers shot from windows and doors. In the first exchange of fire one Company E soldier fell, seriously wounded. Ordering a withdrawal to better positions, Lieutenant CADRAIN built up a base of fire. Tommy guns and B.A.R.'s, M-1's and carbines blazed at the Germans. But the wounded man still lay where he had fallen, only 10 yards from the German held building, exposed in heavy fire. As the fire fight continued, S/Sgt TALMADGE PERKINS took two men and started forward to pick up the casualty. Working his way forward through mud well over his knees, the Sergeant reached the side of the house. Over his head bullets smacked into the wall and ripped through windows as his comrades fired to cover him. Unable to carry the wounded man because of the deep mud, Sergeant PERKINS lay down, with the soldier on his back. The two men with him dragged him down the hill using his body as a sled. With the injured soldier in a position of comparative safety, 150 yards from the town, a litter team was summoned but before the man could be picked up he died. The patrol meanwhile had succeeded in cutting the volume of enemy fire until at last only a lone machine gun disclosed that there were any Germans left. Exact results were not ascertained but screams were heard during the fight and later a wagon moved into PARROCHIA, perhaps to remove the wounded. After exhausting all ammunition, Lieutenant CADRAIN brought his patrol back to Company E positions.

With only one battalion in the line as Christmas approached, Major NORRIS R. FOWLER, Regimental S-4 distributed turkeys to all units except the 2nd Battalion. On Christmas Eve the cooks worked feverishly, and on the following day the men had a complete turkey dinner with pastry and wine to top it off. Chaplain OSCAR REINBOTH held Christmas services at several locations and in the absence of Chaplain

LEO CROWLEY, Chaplain GEORGE HIGGINS said Mass for the men. Attendance was high at all services. Christmas day for the 2nd Battalion at the front was no different than any other day. A few shells came over, more were sent back back at the Kraut, normal patrolling was scheduled and the men ate the usual 10 in 1 rations. There was no holiday for soldiers on the battlefield.

On 27 December all personnel left the GAGLIANO rest camp and moved north. The 3rd Battalion occupied tent city while Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies relieved similar units of the 350th. At the same time the 1st Battalion moved up to FIUMETTO where it went into reserve, attached to the 350th. On the following day the 2nd Battalion after 12 days in the line was relieved by the 3rd Battalion, 365th and moved back to tent city. There the Battalion had a belated Christmas dinner and several days of rest. From its reserve position, the 1st Battalion, still attached to the 350th moved up and relieved the 2nd Battalion 351st. The 349th Infantry took command of the sector on the night of 29-30 December and as the month ended, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were in front line positions on a broad front. The 3rd Battalion held Mt. FANO with the 1st on its left, the 2nd on the right. The situation remained static and the battalions prepared to continue their regular patrolling by night to keep pressure on the enemy.

The last day of December brought to a close a memorable year in the history of the 349th Infantry. The veterans who had come overseas with the regiment just one year before had much to remember. There was the month spent in AFRICA, training and freezing in the mountains, then across the MEDITERRANEAN to ITALY, more training and then the first day at the front. Mt. DAMIANO on 2 March gave the men their first taste of combat. Almost two months in defensive positions, a short rest and the regiment was back in the line on the MINTURNO front. On 11 May the entire front erupted and the drive for ROME was on. Across rugged mountains, day and night the Kraut was pursued and on 5 June the 349th was through ROME and still moving. Several days later came a break and the regiment rested and trained at LAKE ALBANO and at TARQUINIA. The first week in July saw the 349th in the line again, breaking the German hold on VOLTERRA. Then bloody fighting with the Kraut resisting fiercely until SAN MINIATO fell and the ARNO River was reached at the end of the month. Through August and until 17 September the regiment trained at VILLAMAGNA and SCANDICCI. Then to exploit a breach made in the GOTHIC line the 349th went into action again. For 53 days of bitter, ruthless fighting the Kraut was driven back. Mt. LA FINE, PRATOLUNGO, BELVEDERE, HILL 587, DELLE TOMBE and Mt. GRANDE, these names and many more will never be forgotten by the soldiers who smashed again and again at a fanatical enemy. Ten days rest at MONTECATINI and then from the 1st week in November until the end of the year the regiment held defensive positions to the west of GRANDE. The Officers and enlisted men of the 349th Infantry had reason to be proud of their regiment and its record of accomplishment.

P.E. LeSTOURGEON,
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

Researching World War II

WW2 Books, Reports
Maps, Historical Narratives
Government Publications

PDFs Remastered
and Word Searchable



All Discs Are Available As
Family Heirloom Edition
Personalized Laser Etched CDs/DVDs

Email: hella@mtnestas.com

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
JANUARY 1945

On 1 January 1945 the 349th Infantry, commanded by Colonel P.E. LeSTOURGEON, was occupying defensive positions at the front. In a situation which continued to be static, as it had been for two months, the three battalions were on the line in a sector between Mt. GRANDE and Mt. BELMONTE. The 3rd Battalion on the right held Mt. FANO, the 2nd Battalion was in the center, with the 1st Battalion on the left. On the right of the regiment was the 351st Infantry, on the left was the 350th.

Artillery exchanges and patrolling constituted the principal frontline activity. Company B and Company C bore the brunt of the hostile shelling and until the regiment was relieved they sustained a number of casualties. Every night the battalions sent out ambush and reconnaissance patrols and there was one raid in platoon strength on enemy positions.

On the night of 1-2 January, 2nd Lt. DONALD R. HOUSEMAN, Company L led a patrol to raid Kraut positions near PIZZANO. In the first house they set up telephone and radio communication, then moved to investigate a church. Voices were heard coming from a house further to the east. After bringing down a dozen rounds of mortar fire on the building the Lieutenant searched the house, found it unoccupied but saw several Germans on the hillside to the north. Advancing on the Germans with several of his men, Lt. HOUSEMAN engaged the enemy in a fire fight. In an exchange of grenades, the Lieutenant and one of his men were wounded. When Kraut machine guns opened up from the west, the patrol was forced to withdraw.

At 0200 hours, 2 January, a heavy mortar barrage hit Company B positions at COLLINA. A building collapsed burying 19 soldiers. As the enemy fire continued, Lt. ROBERT L. BULLOCK ran to the outposts expecting a counterattack. It failed to materialize although machine gun fire swept the area and what were then believed to be rifle grenades, exploded among Company B positions. When the soldiers, buried in the rubble, were finally dug out it was found that eight had died and 11 were wounded.

Patrols continued to probe hostile positions but heavy snow falls and fog hampered their movements a great deal. Ambush patrols invariably reported no enemy contact. It was plain that the Germans were content to sit back and let the Americans come to them. They were, however, constantly on the alert and patrols had never gone far before they drew fire from both machine guns and mortars.

During this period our defensive set-up was improved day by day. Detailed counterattack plans were drawn up and switch lines were laid out in the event the enemy launched a full scale attack. Particular attention was paid to the possibility of the Germans breaching our lines with armor. Anti-tank guns were strategically placed, bridges were prepared for demolition and mines were laid to cover natural routes of approach. However although all personnel maintained a constant vigil, the enemy launched no attack. OP's reported the usual amount of Kraut activity by day. Vehicles were seen occasionally, sometimes one or several enemy soldiers were spotted but there was no evidence that the enemy planned to assault in strength. Although the snow hampered operations it also gave valuable information. Well worn paths in hostile territory were often sighted and they gave away the location

of installations which promptly became targets for our artillery.

From Company L, Lt. HENRY J. JACKSON led a combat patrol on the night of 6-7 January. The patrol started out in darkness through a blinding snow storm with the mission of killing or capturing any Krauts encountered near PIZZANO. A communication center was set up in a house close to the objective and two B.A.R.'s took up positions to cover the patrol as it moved further. The patrol was nearing the objective when from three sides the Germans opened up with machine guns and small arms. Lt. JACKSON started to withdraw his men, preparing to call for mortar fire. Moving back, the patrol became lost, walked into a mine field. Lt. JACKSON stepped on a mine and was severely injured. Seconds later another man tripped a wire, had his foot smashed and leg broken in the resulting explosion.

At the same time one of the soldiers manning a B.A.R. left his position and walked over to the second B.A.R. man. Mistaken for a German he was killed instantly. Disorganized and lost, still under heavy fire, the remaining members of the patrol managed to make their way back, carrying the dead and wounded. Only when they had returned to Company L positions did they realize that the Lieutenant and another soldier was missing.

A search party was organized. Pfc CHESTER R. WOJCIK volunteered to lead. Through two mine fields he led the search, then another man stepped on a mine. He was carried back and a second time Pfc WOJCIK started out at the head of a patrol to try and find the Officer. Hostile fire was sweeping the area and after searching fruitlessly for several hours through a heavy snow storm the men returned.

After daybreak Pvt. PAUL HENES after wandering for hours found his way back to Company L positions. Although exhausted and weak from exposure he immediately volunteered to guide litter bearers to where the Officer lay. Moving through mine fields he brought the men to the scene of the action. It was then that their movements caught the attention of German machine gunners. Although they carried a red cross flag the machine guns opened up, killed two and wounded one. The others tried to make a getaway. Pvt. HENES was last seen when he disappeared over a rise in the ground. There was a burst of fire, a cry and then silence. Two survivors made their way back to Company L. One returned by dark on 7 January, the other two after 40 hours in enemy territory reported in, stating that he had found the dead body of Lt. JACKSON lying in the snow.

Constant pressure was kept on the enemy by nightly patrols and there were several fire fights during which casualties were inflicted. The Krauts pounded Company B positions at COLLINA with mortar fire and at last the true identity was discovered of what had been thought to be rifle grenades. A dud disclosed that the Germans were using a very small mortar, about an inch in diameter. The propelling force was not an explosive but a spring. Although a considerable number of them fell in the vicinity of COLLINA they had little effect.

On the night of 7-8 January the 135th Infantry relieved the 351st on the left. A battalion of the 350th relieved our 3rd Battalion which went into a reserve position at FORMICHE on the night of 8-9 January.

A raiding patrol from Company F moved out on the night of 10-11 January to attack German positions at CASA MERLA. Made up of 26 men and two Officers, led by 1st Lt. WILKIE LANE, the patrol started out at 2330 hours and set up a base of fire 250 yards from the objective. After a heavy mortar and artillery

preparation had blasted Kraut positions the assault group moved to within 100 yards of CASA MERLA. There they met intense machine gun and machine pistol fire. The base of fire supported the assault group, sweeping the enemy emplacements with a hail of bullets. The soldiers moved forward 50 yards but enemy fire increased to a point where further advance was impossible. Countless flares sent up by the Germans lit up the hillside and with little cover available the patrol was forced to withdraw, returning to Company F without sustaining any casualties. Almost 1500 mortar and artillery shells crashed around enemy positions during the action. A number of casualties were inflicted, cries and screams being heard during and after the barrage.

The following night with the mission of killing or capturing any Krauts encountered, Lt. LOREN F. BRYSON, Company A, led an eight man patrol toward a point some 500 yards north of COLLINA. As they approached the objective the patrol was fired on from the east. Moving ahead of the others, Pvt. BERNARD GOODMAN crawled up a rocky slope, got to within 20 feet of a Kraut who was firing at the patrol with a machine pistol. Hurling a grenade, Pvt. GOODMAN scored on the first try, killing the German. The patrol moved on to the next ridgeline. When another machine pistol opened up, Lt. BRYSON went forward, was about to throw a grenade when a blast from the machine pistol killed him instantly. As the German continued to fire down the hill, Pvt. GOODMAN worked his way to the side of the Lieutenant and had dragged him out of the line of fire before he realized the Officer was dead. When several more Germans appeared on the ridge and poured fire at the men they were forced to withdraw.

The 3rd Battalion had left FORMICHE by truck on the night of 11 January and moved back to the GAGLIANO area. The next night the 349th was relieved by the 133rd Infantry. The 349th, less the 2nd Battalion, moved to GAGLIANO. In division reserve attached to the 34th Division the 2nd Battalion went to FORMICHE.

For six days the men rested. There was no regular training scheduled and the men spent their time cleaning up and relaxing. They were taken into FLORENCE on one day passes, there were movies and shows every day. During this period Captain JOHN J. KING, Company B was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross by General MARK W. CLARK for extraordinary heroism in action at CAMPO DI VANINO on 8 October 1944. In the action Captain KING personally killed 16 Germans in a one man assault on the critical objective.

On 17 January the 3rd Battalion moved by truck from GAGLIANO up Highway 65 to LOIANO. The following day the 1st Battalion, Regimental Headquarters, Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies moved into the same locality, relieving the 362nd Infantry in reserve positions. On 20 January the 2nd Battalion at FORMICHE was relieved and moved to LOIANO to rejoin the regiment. Regular training was started on 22 January, stressing basic subjects.

At this time 350 replacements arrived at the regimental pool. To acclimate the men a carefully planned program was laid out and good results were achieved. After spending as much as four or five months in various replacement depots the new men were prepared for a repetition of the indifferent treatment to which they had become used. However from the time they were assigned to tents with stoves in them the soldiers were treated to one surprise after another. They were given "Welcome to the 88th," a booklet outlining some facts about the Division, they

they were given new clothing and good food. The men were broken down into groups according to whatever companies they would later join. Officers and enlisted men from the line companies lived at the pool and trained the men assigned to their own company. The replacements were quick to react to the treatment accorded them. There was a noticeable improvement in morale and as a group they looked forward to the day when they would join their own organizations.

For one week the replacements were held at the pool. The Battalion Commanders spoke to them and they heard talks by the Chaplain, the I & E Officer, the Adjutant and the Special Service Officer. After training in scouting and patrolling, battle drill and weapons they reported to their companies.

During the time spent in reserve positions the three battalions, in addition to training, worked on switch and defense lines preparing positions in case a withdrawal should be ordered. The men lived in pyramidal tents, dug in, and although the Germans shelled LOIANO occasionally, few rounds fell in the battalion areas. A regular allotment of passes was given and the men went to FLORENCE, MONTECANTINI and ROME for several days at a time.

As the month ended the 349th was still in reserve positions. It had been a relatively uneventful month on the Italian front. The men followed closely the progress of the drive for BERLIN, not forgetting that the dormant Italian front would one day flare up again when the final push for the PO Valley got under way.

P.E. LeSTOURGEON
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
FEBRUARY 1945

The month of February opened with the 349th Infantry, commanded by Colonel P.E. LeSTOURGEON, in reserve positions in the vicinity of LOIANO. For almost two weeks the regiment had been in division reserve and as the new month rolled around the program of training and work on switch lines was continued. The new replacements who had come in during January were rapidly assimilated into the companies bringing fighting strength up to normal. Continual stress was laid on scouting and patrolling and by the time the regiment moved into front line positions, the new men had acquired enough skill and experience to enable them to hold up their end on any mission along with the veterans.

Until the night of 6-7 February the 349th remained in the LOIANO area. The regular allotment of passes sent men to ROME and MONTECATINI, the Special Service Officer sent movies up to the battalions and the regimental shower unit handled hundreds of soldiers each day. In a contest to pick the best "barber shop" quartet in the regiment for competition with other 5th Army units, the 1st Battalion group was judged the best. Although the soldiers gave out with their best jive they were later defeated in the Division finals.

On the night of 6-7 February the 349th left reserve positions and relieved the 350th Infantry in the front lines, south of German-held Mt. ADONE. The Regimental C.P. was set up near MONZUNO. The 3rd Battalion was on the left, in the center was the 1st Battalion and the 2nd Battalion was on the right. In the sector to the right of the regiment was the 351st Infantry and to the left was the 6th South African Division.

Activity was confined to patrolling and artillery exchanges. From Mt. ADONE the Krauts could look down on many of the regimental positions and movement by day was cut to a minimum after it was found that men and vehicles drew fire whenever exposed. Supply trains moved up under cover of darkness to the battalions, none of which could be reached by day without coming under enemy observation.

Patrols kept constant pressure on the Krauts and following his standard practice the enemy was content to sit back and wait for our soldiers to try and penetrate his positions. During the month the Germans made no attempt to strike at any of our positions although on several occasions our patrols encountered groups of Krauts which were patrolling in "no-man's land."

Each night patrols moved out from the three Battalions - some to set up ambush, others to reconnoiter and raid enemy positions. Until the night of 11 February there was no contact made with the Krauts. On that night, two patrols, one from the 1st Battalion and the other from the 2nd Battalion had sharp, bloody encounters with the enemy.

Leading the 1st Battalion Battle Patrol of 20 men, Lt. EDWARD DAVEY set out at 2100 hours with the mission of killing or capturing any Krauts found along the road running west from C. FURCOLI. While investigating houses on HILL 446 south of the road, the patrol ran into a minefield. Four men, including Lt. DAVEY, were injured. The patrol was returning, carrying the wounded, when they were ambushed by approximately 25 Germans near the bridge south of the Hill. In a fire fight lasting half an hour, four more men were injured and an unknown number of casualties were inflicted on the enemy. The patrol scattered and the men worked their way back to friendly positions in twos and threes.

At the same time an eight man patrol led by Lt. CARMINE TAVALERO of Company G was fighting the enemy in the vicinity of S. CECILIA. Moving up to investigate a house the patrol was 30 yards from the building when six or eight hand grenades were thrown from the windows. The Lieutenant and one of his men were injured. From positions in and around the house the Krauts poured heavy fire from machine guns and machine pistols. The patrol dispersed and returned the fire but as ammunition supplies began to run low the men were forced to withdraw. When the patrol returned to Company G positions it was found that two men were missing. Several hours later both men, one of them wounded, returned safely after having wandered around in the darkness trying to find their own lines.

For the next week patrols reported no contact with the enemy. Most of the missions were to set up an ambush along likely avenues of approach or at spots where German patrols had been previously reported. However, although the distance between German and American positions was short, there were no fire fights and no casualties were sustained. Reconnaissance patrols were sent out. They too made no contact although evidence of Kraut activity was discovered on several occasions. From night to night new mines were found where 24 hours before there had been none. The enemy worked continually to build a more perfect defense and patrols found the going more dangerous with each mission.

Both ambush patrols and OP's reported a great deal of enemy activity. To cloak his movements by day, the Kraut smoked the valley but closer to American lines vehicles and soldiers were spotted and immediately became targets for our artillery. By night our artillery fired at gun positions and at targets located by ambush patrols which often heard sounds of digging our construction going on. Generally it was a fairly quiet period in the lines. The volume of German artillery diminished somewhat, particularly after it was learned that the enemy could spot our vehicles on the roads in daylight. Although casualties were few, each side tensely awaited any move by the other and it was impossible for the men to relax for any period of time.

About the middle of the month the cold weather broke, the snow disappeared and once again the men were faced with the familiar Italian mud which they had grown to know so well in the fall. Although life in the front lines had been rugged during the cold months the temperature had never gotten down to the low levels expected. The "Stars and Stripes" reported that it was the mildest winter in 30 years. Sickness was kept at a minimum and cases of trench foot were few, due principally to the well planned program of educating all men in measures to be taken to combat the inclement weather. With kitchen burners in forward positions, almost all the soldiers ate hot meals regularly and as the tactical situation continued to be static they lived with as many comforts as could reasonably be expected.

Even though the soldiers had their own war to contend with in Italy they followed closely the progress of the Russian and American armies on the east and west fronts. To get the latest news to them in the shortest possible time, the Regimental I & E Officer put out a mimeographed news summary each morning with a digest of latest events. This was followed by the "Stars and Stripes" which reached the men before dark each day.

The 2nd Battalion Battle Patrol raided enemy positions near FAZZANELLO on the night of 16-17 February. Led by Lt. GEORGE SEWELL the men moved silently toward the objective under cover of darkness. To gain the element of surprise the patrol advanced without calling for artillery preparation. After working their way slowly through extensive minefields the men were nearing a cluster of

houses when the Krauts opened up with machine guns and machine pistols. At the same time enemy mortar fire sealed off the only unmined avenue of approach. The patrol took cover and poured fire back at the German positions. For 20 minutes the fight lasted. Two hostile machine guns were silenced by direct hits scored with rifle grenades and a machine pistol firing from a window was knocked out. At least six of the enemy were killed or wounded in the fight. After expending all ammunition Lt. SEWELL led his men back to the battalion positions without sustaining any casualties.

Until the night of 19-20 February the enemy was not contacted. On that night, Lt. THOMAS WALSH, Company G. led a 10 man patrol with the mission of raiding Kraut positions at FAZZANO. Approaching the objective the Lieutenant was challenged by a German. The Lieutenant fired and threw a grenade, immediately machine guns and machine pistols cut loose in the darkness. In the face of intense fire the patrol was forced to withdraw. Lt. WALSH hurled a second grenade at the German position, then went back and joined his men leading them back to Company G. One man who had become lost managed to work his way back to friendly positions early the next morning.

The following night Lt. JAMES HOLLIS of Company C set out after dark with a reinforced platoon of 40 men to strike at the enemy near C. DI BACCHINO. Skirting freshly laid minefields, the men moved single file toward the objective. At the base of HILL 403 the patrol assembled and went into position for all around security. A machine gun was placed in position behind a wall prepared to fire through a break in the stones. Beyond the wall the gunner spotted two Krauts in a foxhole. Lt. HOLLIS was formulating a plan for taking them prisoner without giving away the presence of the patrol, when one of the Germans threw a grenade over the wall. The machine gun opened up and the two Krauts were riddled. Other Germans joined in the fight. In a wild exchange of grenades and machine gun fire six men of the patrol were wounded. Sending them back, the Lieutenant, with a handful of men covered their withdrawal. The Krauts pressed closer, by then their number had increased to more than 50. As they crept around both flanks, the Lieutenant and his men, firing and inflicting considerable casualties, slowly pulled back at last making a run for it. One man stepped on a mine and had to be left where he fell as German machine guns swept the area with fire. The wounded men were found at the reorganization point and the patrol returned to 1st Battalion positions without further incident.

Continuing to keep pressure on the enemy, the 2nd Battalion sent Company F on a raiding mission on the night of 21-22 February. Led by Lt. PAUL BEHNKE the men set out after dark with DI SOPRA as the objective. Setting up a base of fire, the Lieutenant led the assault group toward the church at DI SOPRA. At the church the attacking force was fired on from several directions. Kraut machine guns around the building opened up, another in the steeple fired almost straight down at the men and when the enemy threw a hail of hand grenades in their midst the soldiers were forced to withdraw. Calling for artillery fire, Lt. BEHNKE was again forced to pull back as German machine gunners swept the area with fire. Running low on ammunition the Lieutenant brought his company back to his own lines. There was only one casualty, a soldier slightly wounded.

The next night two raiding parties were sent out. From Company F, LT. WILLIAM SAVICH led a 20 man patrol toward MONTERUMICI. Moving up a steep slope near the objective the men were fired on from the front and both flanks. Kraut machine guns blazed in the darkness pouring tracers from all sides. From the top of the hill, the Germans threw and rolled grenades down on the attacking soldiers and after twice attempting to drive the enemy from the crest, the Lieutenant ordered

a withdrawal to company positions.

Lt. BERNARD LYNCH, Company K, on the same night led a patrol of 20 men to CA VALLA, investigated several houses and found them unoccupied. Leaving a covering force there, he moved with the rest of the patrol toward K-12. The lead scout had reached the first house and was moving toward the second when the Krauts cut loose with machine guns, grenades, rockets and rifle fire. Flares shot up making the area bright as day. The patrol hit the ground, poured fire back at the enemy. The 300 radio was knocked out and being unable to flank the Kraut positions or to call for supporting fires, the Lieutenant ordered his men back to CA VALLA. Four were wounded and two were missing. Later, after the patrol had returned to Company K positions, one of the missing men, Sgt. LLOYD MAXWELL, returned and reported that he saw eight Krauts come along the road and take the other soldier prisoner.

The 2nd Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Battalion, 350th Infantry, on the night of 23-24 February and moved to MONTECATINI. Until the end of the month the 1st and 3rd Battalions continued to send out reconnaissance and ambush patrols but there were no fire fights with the Kraut and no contact was made with enemy forces. At MONTECATINI the 2nd Battalion had a short training schedule each day and a maximum of free time was given to the men. Although there had been several bloody clashes with the Kraut during the month, it was a relatively static period in the front lines. However, with each passing day the men knew that the time was drawing closer when the 349th would be called upon to strike a final blow at German forces to help bring to a close the European war.

JOSEPH A. KIELTY,
Lt. Col, 349th Infantry
Executive Officer

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
MARCH 1945

The month of March opened with the 349th Infantry, commanded by Colonel P.W. LeSTOURGEON, in front line positions south of German-held Mt. ADONE. The Regimental C.P. was set up near MONZUNO. Two battalions, the 1st and 3rd, occupied positions in the regimental sector. The 2nd Battalion had moved to Montecatini on the night of 23 February. In the sector to the right of the regiment was the 2nd Battalion, 350th Infantry and to the left was the 6th South African Division.

Activity was confined to patrolling and artillery exchanges. From Mt. ADONE the Germans could look down on many of the regimental positions and movement by day was cut to a minimum. Patrols kept constant pressure on the enemy. Each night, they moved out from the two battalions - some to set up ambush, others to reconnoiter and raid enemy positions. For the most part the Germans were content to sit back and wait for our soldiers to try and penetrate their positions. The enemy had become extremely sensitive to movement at night and whenever contact was made a heavy fire fight ensued.

On the night of 1 March a raid in company strength was made on FURCOLI, an enemy-held town. Led by Capt JOHN ERNSER, Company A moved out after dark and was nearing the German positions when the enemy opened fire with mortars, machine guns and machine pistols. With the 1st and 2nd platoons making the assault the men worked their way forward toward the town. When the leader of the 2nd Platoon was wounded, Lt. JOHN CARTER, Company Executive Officer, took command. From buildings in the town and from caves on the outskirts, the enemy poured withering fire. Leading his men into the town, Lt. CARTER cleared the first house and drove the enemy from a machine gun position. After a quick reorganization the men worked from house to house driving the Germans ahead of them forcing them to abandon another machine gun.

On the left the 1st Platoon fought through the western part of the town. With the leading squad S/Sgt ELLESWORTH KENNEDY was mortally wounded as he attacked a house in the face of heavy machine pistol fire. Killing three Germans his men cleared the house and worked their way to the northern edge of the town. From caves dug into the high ground overlooking FURCOLI the enemy threw hundreds of grenades, covered the area with crossfires from machine guns and machine pistols. Unable to penetrate the German main line of resistance the men raked the enemy positions with heavy fire, heard screams as bullets found their mark. When ammunition ran low Capt. ERNSER ordered his men to pull back. Seven Germans were known to have been killed, an unknown number of others were killed or wounded and FURCOLI was completely cleared. Although Company A had seventeen men wounded in addition to one killed, most of the injuries were slight.

Until the night of 3-4 March patrols continued to move out nightly but no contact with the enemy was reported and there were no casualties. In the vicinity of FURCOLI heavy mortar fire was received but there were no fire fights.

On the night of 3-4 March the 1st Battalion was relieved by the 2nd Battalion, 133rd Infantry and , together with Cannon Company, Anti-Tank Company and Regimental Headquarters Company, moved to MONTECATINI. The following night the 3rd Battalion was relieved by the 3rd Battalion, 133rd Infantry and at 2245 hours command of the sector passed to the relieving regiment.

After a three months absence, MONTECATINI looked good to the men. For three days their time was their own and there was a variety of entertainment to be had - U.S.O. shows, movies the Trianon nightclub and a round of parties and dances. On 7 March preliminary training was started to prepare the troops for the more intensive schedule which they would follow after leaving MONTECATINI. For the first time since assuming command of the 349th Infantry, Col. LeSTOURGEON called a meeting of all Officers in the regiment to discuss training methods and plans for the future.

After a week at MONTECATINI the regiment moved to a training area near La CROCE on 10-11 March. Until the end of the month the troops were put through a still training schedule. Basic and technical subjects made up each day's work. There were a number of night problems, river crossing problems and tank-infantry problems. Conditions were similar to life in the garrison and particular stress was placed on Military courtest and discipline. There were frequent inspections and high standards of order and neatness were maintained in the company at all times.

With the coming of spring the troops turned in their heavy clothing and many truckloads of shoe pacs, parkas , other winter apparel were hauled to the quarter-master warehouses. The heavy clothing had served the men well and throughout the winter months sickness had been kept down to a minimum.

After training hours the men had movies and shows and a number of them went on pass to ROME, MONTECATINI and FLORENCE. A Red Cross center was set up with radios, games and a place to read or write letters. A new Red Cross Field Director, Mr. Robert Breeden, came to the regiment, replacing Mr. E.C. Johnson who had been with the 349th since the early days at Camp Gruber.

On 17 March a ceremony was held for the presentation of awards to the men who had distinguished themselves in combat. With the exception of the 2nd Battalion which was located some distance from the rest of the regiment, the troops assembled by units near the Red Cross center. The Division Commander, Major General PAUL W. KENDALL was present at the ceremony and presented nine Silver Star Medals, five Oak Leaf Clusters to the Bronze Star and 25 Bronze Star Medals. After congratulating the winners of awards, the General commended the assembled troops for their achievements in combat. Later, at a 2nd Battalion formation, the Regimental Commander presented two Oak Leaf Clusters to the Bronze Star and two Bronze Star Medals.

As the month drew to a close the regiment made preparation to take part in a Division Review, the first since coming overseas. On the morning of 31 March the 349th moved by truck to an airfield near FLORENCE where the entire 88th Division was assembled. General MARK W. CLARK, 15 Army Group Commander, led the group of distinguished visitors which also included Lietutenant General LUCIAN K. TRUSCOTT, 5th Army Commander, and Major General GEOFFREY KEYES, II Corps Commander. The ceremony was executed with flawless precision and the men taking part could not help but feel proud of their outfit which, as the first Selective Service Division to see action, had acquitted itself so well.

As the month ended it was ordered that all unit insignia be removed from clothing, equipment and vehicles. The men knew well that the bell for the last round of the European War was about to strike and that they were to be given a part to play in dealing the final blows against Nazi Germany. After a month of training and rest the 349th was prepared for whatever its mission would be.

P.E. LeSTOURGEON,
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

4 Incls:

- #1 - S-1 Section**
- #2 - S-2 Section**
- #3 - S-3 Section**
- #4 - S-4 Section**

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
APRIL 1945

In April 1945, the most dramatic and colorful month of its combat history, the 349th Infantry played a major part in the final destruction of German forces in Italy. Never before had the achievements of the regiment been of such sweeping significance in the so-called big picture and when the month ended every Officer and man had the satisfaction of knowing that his outfit had led the way in bringing to a close the last chapter of the bloody Italian Campaign.

On 1 April, the 349th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel P.E. LeSTOURGEON, was bringing to a close a period of intensive training at La CROCE. For three weeks the troops had trained day and night in preparation for the coming offensive and as the new month opened the regiment was fit and ready for whatever lay ahead.

The order to move north was received and on 2 April the troops entrucked, rode up Highway 65 and went into reserve positions. Attached to the 91st Division, the 2nd Battalion occupied an area near Mt. DELLE FORMICHE. The remainder of the regiment was in reserve, attached to the 349th Division. The Regimental C.P. was on Highway 65 at CROCIONE, the 1st Battalion was at ANCONELLA and the 3rd was located near TRASASSO. For two weeks a regular training schedule was followed as final preparations were made for the jump off. Troops, guns and equipment representing the striking power of a mighty army flowed up the highways. Day after day a continuous stream of convoys moved up to the front. Under a cloak of secrecy, with insignia and identifying markings removed, the units jockeyed for positions, shifted into final sectors and then stood poised, waiting for H hour.

On 12 April, the 349th moved into a sector north of MONZUNO. Field Order No. 1, Headquarters 349th Infantry, dated 11 April 1945, gave the plan of attack indicating a sector bounded on the right by MONTERUMICI and on the left by Highway 6620. The plan called for the regiment to be pinched out some 4000 yards north of the Line of Departure, then to move to a new sector west of the RENO River prepared to pass through other units, continuing the attack to the north. The immediate objective was FURCOLI RIDGE, well known to the troops who had engaged in bitter firefights there with the enemy during the winter months. It was known that the Germans were well dug-in, living in caves that gave them almost perfect protection against artillery and mortar fire. Patrols had found the enemy mail line of resistance to be an almost impregnable barrier of mortar and machine gun fire, all possible approaches completely mined and the terrain favoring a strong defense in every respect. Every man knew that it would require the utmost in courage and determination to crack the German line at FURCOLI.

At 2200 hours, 15 April the front erupted with a flaming roar. Artillery, tank destroyers, and mortars poured thousands of shells into the German positions. Regimental Anti-Tank and Cannon Companies added to the weight of steel that crashed along the ridge. Half an hour later the infantrymen jumped off.

While the 3rd Battalion launched a company strength raid in a feint to the left, the 1st Battalion attacked FURCOLI and the ridge which rose immediately behind the town, to the north. With B Company on the right and C Company on the left, the battalion moved toward its first objective. Alert and virtually unharmed by the devastating barrage which had not penetrated their deep cave, the Germans

opened fire with mortars and machine guns. Flares arched over the attacking troops, lighting up the terrain and making the soldiers perfect targets for the German gunners. In the terrific fire the attack stalled. After three attempts, Capt JOSEPH REILLY worked his men of B Company through the enemy defensive fires and assaulted FURCOLI from the east. Firing and throwing grenades they killed four of the enemy and drove the rest from the town.

From caves dug into the ridge north of FURCOLI the enemy poured intense fire. Leaving the town and moving up the steep slope, the soldiers could make little headway. Every movement brought a hail of mortar fire and grenades and casualties were severe. After both his squad leader and assistant squad leader had been cut down, Pvt. HYMAN BERGMAN reorganized the remaining men, led them through continuous fire and succeeded in gaining a foothold on the ridge. By dawn Capt. REILLY had worked 40 of his men up with the leading squad. Hour after hour the Germans blasted them with mortar barrages. In the heaviest fire ever absorbed by any element of the regiment the men hung on.

At 1030 hours, unable to shake them loose with fire, the Germans counter-attacked. Screaming wildly, throwing grenades, they came over the ridge. Fanatics in every sense of the word, these Germans were young and tough and as they swarmed over the high ground they were fully confident that the tired, shaken men of Company B were no match for them.

Moving among his men Capt. REILLY got them into firing positions and they opened up with all weapons blazing. Germans fell but the rest came on. Calling for tank support, the Captain directed fire at the enemy. Shells crashed among them and after more than 25 had been killed the rest broke and retreated.

Meanwhile, Company C, commanded by Capt. JOHN A THIBADEAUX had been held up attempting to move across open ground to attack HILL 375. Minefields swept by machine gun fire and repeated mortar concentrations had caused heavy casualties. Several hundred yards short of the objective, the men had been forced to take cover and dig in. Further to the left a platoon of Company L, led by Lt. DALLAS ADAMS with the mission of creating a diversion had met heavy fire from K-12 and before dawn, after suffering casualties had been ordered to withdraw.

Before dark on 16 April, Company A commanded by Capt. JOHN ERNSER jumped off to relieve pressure on Company B by seizing HILL 427 on the left. Meeting the same murderous fire Capt. ERNSER, after three attempts had failed, led his men in a driving attack across HILL 427, digging several of the enemy out of their holes and pushing a wedge into the main line of resistance. However, weakened by casualties and under continuous fire from the flanks, the company was ordered to pull back to the east side of the hill during the night.

At the same time the 3rd Battalion repeated the raid of the previous night. Supported by two tanks a platoon of Company L led by Lt. DALLAS ADAMS advanced through CA VALLA and was approaching K-12 when the Germans covered the area with crossfires from machine guns and machine pistols. The Lieutenant, his platoon sergeant and six of the men were seriously wounded. One of the tanks was knocked out by an exploding mine. Jumping on the other tank, Sgt. AUBREY SALLY reorganized the scattered platoon, directed fire at the German positions and then ordered a withdrawal, seeing that the wounded were moved to safety. Only after he had made a complete report of the situation by telephone to his battalion commander did the sergeant agree to be evacuated. In the first burst of fire he had lost an

eye, had his face severely wounded and been shot through the arm.

Field Order No. 2, dated 15 April 145, ordered the 2nd Battalion to pass through elements of the 1st holding FURCOLI Ridge with the mission of seizing IL POGGIALE and LE BRAINE. At 2200 hours, 16 April the 2nd Battalion, which had been in reserve, jumped off to push through the 1st. Led by Lt. PAUL BEHNKE, Company F passed through Company B to strike at LE BRAINE but was held up as the Germans continued to offer fierce resistance from caves and dugouts which still could not be reached by supporting tank and mortar fire. To the left of Company F, Company G commanded by Capt ROBERT C. KELLY struck at a point between FURCOLI Ridge and HILL 427, with IL POGGIALE as the objective. The company objective was well behind the main line of resistance and was located in the center of what amounted to a bowl. From IL POGGIALE it would be possible to shoot into the reverse slope of the German-held hill. The caves which offered perfect protection against fire from the south would then be exposed.

Led by Lt. FREDERICK E. CUMMINGS the lead platoon advanced, the men working their way through interlocking fire, through a hail of grenades thrown by the Germans from high ground to the left and right. When Capt. KELLY with the main body of the company tried to follow the path of the first platoon, the German fire reached its peak and a number of casualties were sustained. Ordering the rest of the company to withdraw, Capt. KELLY moved forward, crawling to where the lead platoon had taken cover. After a quick reorganization he led the men into the heart of the German defenses and seized the house at IL POGGIALE, taking prisoner four German medics who used the building as an aid station.

Without communication and hidden from friendly observation, Capt KELLY and his men were in a critical position. Surrounded by German positions they could only hope that other units would break through to relieve them. Throughout the day the men poured fire into the reverse slope of FURCOLI Ridge and HILL 427. Vulnerable to fire from their rear the enemy were forced out of some of the caves. More than 20 were killed as they frantically sought new cover.

Throughout the morning, the enemy riddled the building with rifle and machine gun fire but refrained from mortaring the house because their own aid men were being held there. At noon the Germans counterattacked. Firing into windows and doors they surrounded the building, calling on the Americans to give up. Capt KELLY refused, urging his men to beat the enemy off. Hurling their last grenade, the soldiers threw the Germans back, killing 15 and wounding many more. As the afternoon wore on supplies of ammunition ran low, then after the four German medics who had been captured, were released in exchange for eight American aid men who had been captured, the enemy opened up with mortars. The house was roofless and from all sides at close range mortar shells were lobbed into the shattered structure.

Still Capt KELLY refused to be taken prisoner. Four of his men were killed and six were wounded but the rest fought on. Toward evening a mortar shell landed in the room where the Captain stood, mortally wounded him. Later in the night, out of ammunition and with only a handful of men left, Lt. CUMMINGS surrendered to the enemy.

Field Order No 3. dated 17 April ordered the 2nd Battalion to continue the attack securing HILLS 300 and 403 while the 34d was directed to clear VADO and

NUZZANO Ridges. For 48 hours gains had been measured in yards. FURCOLI Ridge was partilly occupied by the 1st Battalion; the 3rd Battalion had been unable to reach K-12 and a platoon of Company G had made the only real penetration, at IL POGGIALE. Although it appeared that the enemy line was as strong as ever, the Germans were being closely crowded and they were gradually yielding critical points to the attacking troops.

Shortly after dark on 17 April, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions jumped off. By 0900 hours in the morning Company F had occupied all of FURCOLI Ridge. With a machine gun platoon of H Company attached, Company G worked along the reverse slope of the ridge, toward MONTERUMICI. Throwing grenades and firing into the caves, they flushed out 40 Germans who promptly surrendered. The FURCOLI Line was cracking. Company I led by Capt. FILMORE McABEE passed through Company A and struck at HILL 427. Under Lt. MAURICIO ARAGON the leading platoon ran into bitter resistance and suffered casualties. Calling for smoke on the hills across the SETTA RIVER, Capt. McABEE reorganized his men and attacked again. Supported by tank fire, Sgt. PANKY directed his squad to lay down a base of fire while Sgt. BUEHLER worked his squad around to the reverse side of the hill.

At the same time, moving from the east, Lt. GEORGE S. SEWELL with the 2nd Battalion Battle Patrol attacked the same objective. One of the tanks managed to work its way around the ridge to a point where it could fire into the caves. As Lt. SEWELL led his men through a minefield in the assault, the Germans tried desperately to stop the attackers with rifle and machine gun fire. The tank opened fire, drove the enemy back from the openings. When the Lieutenant and his men reached the shelters and threw grenades inside, 27 Germans gave themselves up. Eight had been killed and 12 wounded.

The German line had buckled. After withstanding repeated assault for more than 48 hours the strongly organized positions were pierced by the 349th. Quick to follow up the advantage gained, Company F overran LE BRAINE and took 20 prisoners. By noon the company had reached CANOVA, on Highway 6620, the regimental objective. Company E led by Capt. WALTER GUNTARP and Company K under Capt. JOSEPH ARMATO cleared the ridge to NUZZANO and reached the highway in the early afternoon. By 1600 hours Company I took VADO after seizing HILL 403.

The 349th, in smashing German resistance in the caves at FURCOLI, played an important part in the general enemy collapse which developed. Several days later two prisoners were taken, from the G-2 section of the 65th Infantry Division Headquarters. Questioned separately, they revealed a wide and accurate knowledge of the disposition of American troops prior to the jumpoff. Both agreed that it was the break through scored by the 349th Infantry that made it impossible for the Germans to hold Mt. ADONE and MONTEPUMICI, splitting the carefully prepared defenses and causing a large scale withdrawal to be started.

After reaching the highway the 349th was pinched out by the 350th Infantry on the right and the 6th South African Division on the left, moving then by truck to VERGATO. By 0800 hours 19 April, all elements of the regiment had closed in at the new area. That night the troops moved by truck to LAMA and on the morning of 20 April started on foot into the mountains, following the 351st Infantry at a distance of 1000 yards. Moving rapidly the column reached LAGUNE at 1380 hours and by midnight arrived at LA TORRE. At 0300 hours, 21 April, the advance was continued. Still following the 351st Infantry, the leading elements of the regiment reached the PO Valley at 0900 hours, eight miles west of BOLOGNA. After

eight months of fighting across some of the worst terrain in ITALY, the men looked around them at the broad expanses of fertile farm land. It was hard to believe - the promised land at last, no more mountains to climb, no more attacks up rocky slopes with the enemy looking down their throats.

And ahead the Germans were in full flight. The operation had become a pursuit and shortly after reaching the valley the regiment was given a sector and committed. Field Order No. 4 dated 21 April gave the direction of attack as due north with the mission of reaching the PO River with all possible speed. At 1000 hours the regiment jumped off with two battalions abreast, the 3rd on the right and the 1st in reserve following the 3rd at a distance of 1500 yards. With little opposition the troops moved rapidly. Scattered groups of Germans gave themselves up, often without firing a shot. The civilian population turned out to greet the troops as they passed. Cheering and waving flags they were genuinely happy to see the soldiers come through.

Still rounding up prisoners the regiment pushed forward for 24 hours. On the morning of 22 April, the 2nd Battalion was joined by five tanks and three tank destroyers. Lt. Col. JOHN W. LYON ordered a platoon from Company E to mount up. Climbing aboard the lead tank, Col. LYON started the force to the north toward the town of DECIMA. Up to that point, only scattered resistance had been met. However as they approached DECIMA, they met for the first time an enemy force determined to make a stand. From houses and ditches along the road a company of Germans opened fire with rifles and machine guns. Behind them, two German tanks and an SP gun nosed their way from behind some buildings and pumped shells at the small task force.

As Lt. Col. LYON directed tank fire on the enemy, Lt. CHARLES HAYNES, the platoon leader, advanced on foot with his men. Machine gun bullets ripped through his shirt as he led the assault. There was a bitter struggle. Germans and Americans fought it out at close range. Lt. HAYNES killed five of the enemy, then in hand to hand combat killed another one. S/Sgt. JAMES DUNCAN led his squad through withering fire as he assaulted a dugout and a group of houses. His B.A.R. man, Pfc JOHN BANKE killed five Germans, the sergeant cut down two more as they broke into the buildings. Firing rifle grenades, Pfc AUSTIN REAL knocked out a machine gun then cut down a German who was shooting rockets at the tanks. As he rounded the corner of a building he came face to face with a German non-com. After a short struggle the German lay on the ground, dead. Leading the 3rd squad, S/Sgt. ERNEST FRZIER worked his way forward along the road. Before being wounded by German machine gun fire he accounted for five of the enemy. Still advancing, his men routed an enemy platoon from dug-in positions, killing and wounding a large number. Driving forward, supported by heavy fire from tanks and tank destroyers, Lt. HAYNES and his men took 70 prisoners, including three officers. More than 40 of the enemy were killed and one German tank destroyed.

Meanwhile with Company G on the left and Company E on the right, the 2nd Battalion was advancing behind the armored task force. At 1000 hours, Company E was 1000 yards east of DECIMA when from the right flank the enemy in company strength and supported by two tanks opened fire. With the leading platoon, Lt. JOHN AUSTIN deployed his men, set up a base of fire and then led two squads in the assault. Closing with the enemy, he killed four. His men overran the German positions. T/Sgt. CHARLES HANCOCK led a squad around the right flank, destroyed a machine gun and killed six Germans in nearby holes. Several minutes later while reorganizing

his men to continue the attack he was mortally wounded in the heavy fire. With a total of five machine guns the German company fought back viciously but under the driving attack of Company E the defenses wilted, 22 of the enemy were captured and more than 30 were killed and wounded. Moving on, the men fired rockets at the tanks. Without infantry to protect them, the German tanks withdrew.

At the same time, on the left flank Company G was approaching DECIMA from the west. Nearing the town the company was fired on by two Mark VI tanks. Tanks of the 6th South African division which had ranged into the regimental sector were contacted by Capt. BROWNING. Under their supporting fire the troops swept into the town as the German tanks pulled out to the north. Firing in windows and doors the soldiers did not hold up the advance to search the houses. Several minutes later they were moving along the road running north from the town. Several hundred yards up the road they were fired on again, this time by rifles and machine pistols. They had caught up with two companies of Germans who were fleeing from the town together with two Mark IV tanks and two armored cars. The Germans dispersed into the fields on either side of the road and poured heavy fire at the troops. 1st Sgt. FRANCIS HACKETT ran through a hail of bullets, back to DECIMA where he contacted the tanks of the 6th South African division. Riding the lead tank he came up the road and directed fire at the German tanks and infantrymen. Scattering under the withering fire, the enemy broke and fled, leaving more than 20 dead behind them. The G Company soldiers worked their way up to the German tanks. One was knocked out by rocket fire. The other, together with the two armored cars, pulled out and headed north.

The 3rd Battalion which had swung into the left half of the regimental sector during the fight around DECIMA was continuing to make good progress, still meeting little resistance. A steady stream of prisoners flowed to the rear, most of whom came forward with their hands up at the first sight of American troops. By 1900 hours, the 2nd Battalion had advanced another 6000 yards and on the left the 3rd Battalion had pushed 1000 yards into the lead. Three miles to the north was the PANARO River, the first formidable barrier facing the regiment. By 2400 hours the 3rd Battalion was on the river bank. On the right, with Company E in the lead the 2nd Battalion rounded up six German officers and seventy two men just south of the river, reaching the PANARO shortly after midnight.

FROM THE PANARO TO THE PO

It was during the next thirty hours that the 349th unleashed the full might of its power. Striking to the north, first in one direction, then in another, the whirlwind pace was maintained in a smashing attack that carried the 349th a distance of 20 miles to the PO River, netting 8,785 prisoners and bringing death to many hundreds of the enemy. Although large numbers of Germans gave up without a fight it was far from being a case of mass surrender. The majority fought with the fanaticism of old, only to be overwhelmed by the combined might of infantry, tanks and planes. Working in perfect coordination they swept through town after town, leaving a wake of burning tanks and vehicles, shattered buildings and enemy dead. An endless stream of prisoners flowed to the rear and when the 349th pulled up on the banks of the PO River in the early morning hours of 24 April, it was to look back on a scene of destruction and death that spelled the end of organized German resistance in ITALY.

First to cross the PANARO River was a platoon of Company L, led by Lt. MILTON McLAREN. Finding a bridge intact some distance upstream he led his men across without resistance. By 0800 hours the 2nd and 3rd Battalions had crossed the river on rubber boats and were pushing north. With the 350th Infantry on the left, ahead of the 91st Division on the right, the regiment raced for the PO. Meeting

little resistance initially the 3rd Battalion on the left pulled into the lead and by 1000 hours had advanced through DOGARA and reached LA TRUAZZA, five miles beyond the PANARO.

Meanwhile, with the 1st Battalion following in reserve, the 2nd Battalion reached MASSA FINALESE and there was joined by five tanks, four tank destroyers and a platoon of the 88th Division Reconnaissance Troop. Lt. Col. LYON ordered Company G to board the tanks and tank destroyers. On the lead tank he headed the force northeast along the highway. With the infantrymen firing from the tanks as they roared through several small towns the task force, heading for bigger game, scattered groups of the enemy into the nearby fields. As they neared the VIA DELLA DUCHESSA road junction, German SP guns opened fire. An American tank was hit, nosed into a ditch along the road and broke into flames. The infantrymen hit the ground, then fanned out on both sides of the road. Ahead a German regiment in bivouac was thrown into confusion by the sudden appearance of American troops and armor. By the hundreds they ran into nearby fields, jumped into irrigation ditches and swept the flat terrain with rifle, machine gun and machine pistol fire. A battalion of German field artillery lining the road got several guns in action. In the confusion most of their fire screamed over the men's heads and crashed hundreds of yards to the rear.

Above the noise of battle there was a snarling whine overhead. Five planes broke out of the sun and swept over the battlefield. At the sight of the familiar white star the men of Company G waved their helmets, in answer the leading plane dipped its wings, banked, burned, and with machine guns flaming streaked down on the enemy positions. In quick succession five Thunderbolts made passes over the Germans. Vehicles exploded and burned, men and horses were thrown about like dolls as the planes bombed and strafed, sometimes only a few hundred yards ahead of the troops.

Leading his men in the attack Capt. BROWNING fought through the open fields. On a broad front his men assaulted across successive irrigation ditches, killing and wounding scores of Germans. Tanks fanned out behind the infantrymen, sent shell ploughing into the enemy positions and machine gunned countless Germans as they tried to pull back. A battery of field artillery was overrun, most of the men manning the guns were killed. A company of Germans refused to retreat from a cluster of houses. With his platoon, Lt. JESSE SMITH assaulted from two sides. In a bitter fight, 50 Germans were killed and 150 came out of the buildings with hands raised.

Contact with the planes was visual. Seeing the scarlet or yellow panels on the tanks, seeing the wave of advancing infantry, they pressed a relentless attack on the enemy ahead and although at times they strafed dangerously close to the soldiers in olive drab, the coordination between air and ground forces was almost perfect.

Streaming north or scattering far and wide hundreds of Germans made good their escape. An estimated 200 were killed and wounded and twice that number were captured. Completely disorganized, often without weapons or leaders those who got away were rounded up later as other elements of the regiment came through.

Moving on foot the rest of the 2nd Battalion followed, with Company E in the lead. A mile north of MASSA FINALESE, Capt. GUNTARP sighted a number of Germans 1000 yards to the east. He sent one platoon which engaged the enemy in a short fight, killed several and returned with 45 prisoners. Meanwhile Company F had pushed ahead of Company E. Near LE MAGNANINE sounds of firing were heard and

as the column drew closer the men saw that elements of the Reconnaissance Troop were pinned down by an overwhelming number of Germans who poured fire at them from three sides. On a wide front Lt. BEHNKE deployed his men and worked them toward the German strongpoints. The enemy resisted fiercely sweeping the open ground with grazing fire. The arrival of fresh American troops, however, had its effect on them and in small groups they started to surrender. S/Sgt. JOSEPH COULSTON, leading three of his men in an assault on a bazooka position killed the German who manned the weapon while his men killed and wounded 15 more. Sgt. EMANUEL GAMBONI took over his squad after the squad leader was wounded. Although wounded himself, he and his men assaulted two machine gun positions, killed two more Germans and rounded up ten prisoners. 12 more prisoners were added to the total as S/Sgt. ALEXANDER GRABOWSKI and his squad worked their way along an irrigation ditch and surprised a group of the enemy firing two machine guns.

It was a short fight. After the first positions had been overrun the Germans came forward by the score with hands raised. A total of more than 300 prisoners were started to the rear.

To catch up with Company F, Company E had boarded three Anti-tank trucks and started up the road. To the east more Germans were sighted after the trucks had gone about a mile. Off the trucks scrambled one platoon and headed cross country. Another short fight and the men returned, herding 96 Germans back to the highway. By then prisoners were coming in so rapidly that it was impossible to send guards back with each batch. After being searched and disarmed they were put on the road and told to walk south. Dazed and beaten, with the last bit of fight taken out of them, they obediently formed in long columns and trudged down the highway.

On the left the 3rd Battalion, meeting less resistance, was still ahead of the main body of the 2nd. At 1000 hours, Division had ordered a change in direction to northeast from MASSA FINALESE and the regiment had swung to the right to take the shortest route to the PO. From LA TRUAZZA the 3rd Battalion swept through LA POVERTA and GRAZZI. In two parallel columns, with Company I and Company L on the right, Company K and the remainder of the battalion on the left, the troops advanced steadily, cleaning up pockets of resistance and rounding up hundreds of prisoners. Resistance increased as they neared SAN MARTINO. Approaching the town Company I, in the lead, was fired on by German tanks which pulled out from hiding places on the side streets and fired down the highway. The tanks and a cluster of German vehicles in the town caught the attention of American fighter bombers which still ranged over the battle area. As Capt. McABEE led his men into the town, the planes wheeled overhead, then plunged straight down. Their chattering guns were punctuated by devastating explosions as bombs tore into the enemy-held town and when the infantrymen moved in to secure the principal road junction they passed scores of burning vehicles and enemy dead.

From the north end of the town the German tanks still pumped shells at the advancing troops. Led by Lt. ARAGON the 3rd platoon pushed forward on the left while on the right Lt. McCUE worked his platoon from building to building, killing and capturing a large number of the enemy. Bazooka teams crawled toward the tanks. Without infantry support they were easy prey, three were knocked out and the rest withdrew. As the men were mopping up the last resistance a German truck coming from the north roared down the main street. Yelling, firing rifles and machine pistols, about 25 Germans hanging on the vehicle were bent on carrying out their sworn word to fight to the end. Their minds were suddenly changed as they came

up face to face with a tank destroyer, gun pointed their way. Climbing down off the truck they stood meekly with hands raised. Three hundred and fifty prisoners were rounded up in the town, huge supply dumps and many vehicles were seized.

By 1600 hours it became clear that the enemy was trying to funnel large masses of troops and equipment through the town of REVERE on the PO River. At 1650 hours a directive from II Corps shifted the regimental boundaries and from SAN MARTINO the 349th turned to the northwest and headed toward REVERE. The 3rd Battalion left the town and moved in the new direction toward MAGNACAVALLO.

Coming up on the right, the 2nd Battalion moved into SAN MARTINO and reorganized. There, five more tanks and two tank destroyers joined the battalion. Again Lt. Col. LYON ordered the men of Company G to mount up and on the lead tank he started northwest. Through MAGAZZIN the armored column rolled along the highway until a blown out bridge at a canal forced it to stop. The men dismounted and a reconnaissance party moved along the canal to find a crossing. As the tanks set up a base of fire, Capt. BROWNING deployed his men and advanced across the field. One German machine gun firing from an irrigation ditch was knocked out, the men assaulted the enemy positions, killed several and captured 30. In a suicide attack a German armored car came up, firing as it moved. The men held their ground. Bazookas went into action. Two direct hits brought the car to an abrupt halt and it burned fiercely.

When the tanks and tank destroyers could find no crossings they made a wide sweep to the east in search of a bridge while the infantry went on alone. At MONDINE, 3000 yards to the north a road block was set up by Company G and by 1700 hours the entire battalion was re-assembled, the armored elements had rejoined the troops and all was in readiness for the final dash to the PO, 10,000 yards to the north.

For the third time, Lt. Col. LYON organized his armored task force. With Company G and two platoons of Company F riding the tanks and tank destroyers he again took his place on the lead tank and started off. Until he reached the PO River Lt. Col. LYON never slackened his whirlwind pace. Planes strafed the roads ahead, the tanks with infantrymen on them overwhelmed the enemy who at first tried to fight back, then gave up in large numbers as houses sheltering them crashed down under the weight of bombs and tank fire, as prepared positions were overrun. North, through CARBONARA the armored column swept and at 2000 hours reached the banks of the PO. The tanks fanned out. Germans trying to cross the river on rafts were machine gunned. Many hundreds were captured at the water's edge. 1300 prisoners including 65 officers were herded together on the river bank. By 2100 hours the remainder of the battalion led by Maj. JAMES LYONS reached the road paralleling the river and soon headed west toward REVERE with the mission of clearing the river bank for a distance of 6000 yards.

Meanwhile the 3rd Battalion had smashed into MAGNACAVALLO, caught the enemy in the process of sacking the town. In a driving attack Company I and Company L split the town, killed 25 Germans in a matter of minutes, seized 15 trucks, three 1/2 tracks and six field guns. Included in the scores of prisoners taken was a German colonel and his staff. On to the river the battalion advancing rapidly, crossed to the right of the 2nd Battalion and reached the PO at about the same time - 2000 hours.

With two battalions on the river, the 1st Battalion which had followed in reserve was given the mission of attacking northwest to REVERE. Throughout the day after following the 2nd and 3rd, the 1st Battalion had added hundreds to the prisoner total, clearing isolated groups of Germans by-passed in the swift advance. At 2300 hours from MONDINE the battalion jumped off. Commandeering every available vehicle the troops were almost all mechanized. The enemy, still flowing toward REVERE were split up and disorganized as the battalion struck into the town from the east. Leading the attack Company C deployed and under Lt. HOLLIS broke into the few buildings still standing. Cut off and without hope of escape small bands of Germans still held out in the smoking ruins. Under heavy fire from the attacking troops they were gradually eliminated and by 0200 hours 24 April the town was cleared. More than 500 prisoners were taken. At the same time, under Maj. JAMES LYONS, Company E and part of Company F were fighting their way toward REVERE along the river bank. By the time the town was reached they had gathered up nearly 400 prisoners.

Thus was brought to a close the most dramatic day in the history of the 349th Infantry. Between two rivers, the PANARO and the PO, the regiment exacted a terrific toll on the enemy and the results of a single day's fighting made it doubtful that the enemy would be able to reorganize his shattered forces for another stand. Troops, guns and equipment were seized on a large scale, a complete hospital was taken intact, hundreds of vehicles were captured or destroyed. Among the prisoners was the commanding general of the 65th Infantry Division together with many of his staff. In the fighting both his assistant division commander and artillery commander were killed. In a single day the 349th Infantry captured one fifty of all prisoners taken by the 5th Army south of the PO since the opening of the spring offensive and in the catch there were elements of 13 divisions. The cost was slight. Casualties were few. It was the overwhelming power, the terrific momentum which was developed and maintained that cut the ranks of the enemy to ribbons and when at last the PO River was reached the men of the 349th had experienced a day seldom seen by troops in combat.

Until the morning of 25 April the regiment remained south of the river. Then, crossing in "ducks," the troops moved to an assembly area near RAGOSINA. In reserve, following the 350th Infantry, the 1st and 3rd Battalions headed north-east toward the ADIGE River, while the 2nd Battalion made preparations to move north as part of a task force under Colonel JAMES C. FRY, Assistant Division Commander. The 1st and 3rd Battalions spent the night at RONCANOVA. The following morning the advance to the ADIGE River was continued. Scattered enemy resistance was encountered and more prisoners were taken. Clearing OPPEANO after a short firefight, the two battalions reached the ADIGE River at RONCO.

Meanwhile on tanks and trucks, the 2nd Battalion had moved north, against little resistance, to BUTTA S. PIETRO. Turning the the east the column reached the ADIGE River at ZENIO and cleared five miles of the river bank to the northwest. Another complete German hospital was seized at the river where it had been waiting for some means of transportation to get across. More than 300 prisoners were rounded up throughout the day.

During the night a platoon of Company L led by Lt. DONALD HOUSEMAN managed to get across the ADIGE. Securing a small boat from a Partisan the men worked all night battling the strong current that carried the boat hundreds of yards downstream with each crossing. By dawn, meeting no resistance the platoon was on the east bank. At RONCO, using a ferry and assault boats the 1st and 2nd Battalions crossed on the morning of 27 April. The 2nd Battalion rejoined the regiment in the afternoon and crossed the ADIGE at the same place.

Advancing almost due north toward Highway 11 the 3rd Battalion on the left moved into SAN BONIFACIO and there spent the night of 27-28 April. On the right after a sharp firefight the 1st Battalion occupied LOBIA by 2145 hours and the 2nd Battalion, bringing up the rear, moved into GAZZOLO.

On the morning of 28 April, partly motorized, the regiment advanced to the northeast parallel to Highway 11 moving to VICENZA. On the right the 1st Battalion, with the 2nd following in reserve, completed the move without incident. The 1st Battalion occupied ANCONETTA northeast of the city while the 2nd moved into vacated German barracks within the city itself. The 3rd Battalion, on the left, arrived at VICENZA, swung to the north and cut Highway 46. At an airport Company I and Company L encountered heavy sniper fire. Supported by tank fire the men deployed surrounded the field and killed 12 Germans, capturing 25.

After spending the night and most of the following day in and near VICENZA the regiment moved north and crossed the BRENTA River. On 30 April, the 349th moved 20 miles east to CORNUDA, turned north into the mountains and help up the advance for the night. Last in the column, the 3rd Battalion occupied CORNUDA and during the night engaged in a bitter firefight with a full battalion of the enemy.

At 2300 hours more than 600 Germans, attempting to escape north into the mountains, moved into CORNUDA from the south. Company K bore the brunt of the attack. Overrunning an anti-tank gun the enemy turned it around and fired into buildings occupied by the soldiers. Firing rifles and machine pistols the Germans swarmed around the houses, broke into the Company k C.P. and forced the soldiers to pull back toward the center of town.

Sgt. RACEY located a friendly armored car and directed its fire at the Germans with good effect. The support platoon under Lt. KURT STEDINGH, firing from doors and windows and throwing grenades checked the drive. When one German walked up to the door of the Battalion C.P. Capt. TED BELLMONT killed him with his pistol. For three hours the fight raged. Then after a number of their men had been killed the enemy pulled out of the town taking with them 12 captured men from Company K.

As the month ended the regiment was preparing to continue the advance to the north. It was clear that the end was not far off. On 29 April General MARK CLARK had announced that in ITALY only mopping up operations remained. It was true that in isolated instances, such as CORNUDA, there were bitter fights but German resistance was continuing to disintegrate and when groups of the enemy were contacted they showed less and less inclination to fight it out. The part played by the 349th Infantry in the final destruction of German forces could not be overlooked. In 15 days the regiment had advanced more than 100 miles, captured 10,557 German soldiers and seized vast stores of arms and equipment. It was a record of which every Officer and enlisted man who participated could well be proud.

P.E. LeSTOURGEON,
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

REGIMENTAL HISTORY
349th INFANTRY REGIMENT
MAY 1945

As the month of May opened, the 349th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel P.E. LeSTOURGEON was advancing into the Alps after having swept across the PO Valley in a lightning drive. Enemy resistance had all but ceased. On the night of 30 April the 3rd Battalion had engaged in a bitter fight at CORNUDA with a full battalion of Germans but as the troops pushed into the foothills of the Alps they met no organized resistance.

On 1 May, with the 2nd Battalion leading the regiment moved north along Highway 50. 300 Germans gave themselves up without a fight and 12 Company K soldiers, captured the night before at CORNUDA, were re-taken. By 2200 hours the entire regiment had moved into FELTRE. After spending the night in the city the troops moved out at dawn. Passing through FONZASO the 1st Battalion, leading the column, reported a blown out bridge. While all armor and trucks were forced to make a wide detour through the mountains to the northeast on a secondary road, the 1st Battalion moved through the stream on foot and continued along the road. Local Italians made a footbridge in record time and the remainder of the regiment crossed without delay.

The regimental objective was FIERA DI PRIMIERO. Without incident the advance was continued. Riding on tanks and tank destroyers the 1st Battalion met no resistance and by 1600 hours the leading elements had reached MOLINE. At 1800 hours the battalion was approaching MEZZANO when from houses in the town the troops received machine pistol and small arms fire. The tanks pumped shells into several buildings, the soldiers dispersed and closed in on the town and after a short fight, 32 Germans gave themselves up.

It was the last official engagement of the 349th Infantry with German forces in ITALY. At 1900 hours the word flashed over the radio that the German Armies in ITALY had surrendered. There was no cheering and little feeling of exultation among the men. The end had been expected for several days and when it finally came it was accepted without emotion. For the regiment the climax of the Italian campaign had been reached on 23 April south of the PO River, when thousands of prisoners and vast stores of supplies were taken in a single day of fighting.

The Regimental C.P. and the 3rd Battalion moved into MEZZANO. The 1st Battalion moved two miles further to PRIMI while the 2nd Battalion halted at IMER. At 1500 hours 3 May, the regiment, with the 1st Battalion leading, resumed the advance. The 2nd and 3rd Battalion moved on foot while the 1st Battalion on tanks and tank destroyers pressed forward rapidly with S. MARTINO as the immediate objective. The regiment was directed to make every effort to avoid a fight with the Germans and to fire only in self defense.

After an advance of 20 miles along a mountain road winding higher and higher among the snow clad mountains the 1st Battalion moved into S. MARTINO shortly before dark. The armed German soldiers strolling along the streets or staring curiously out of windows came as something of a shock to the men who had been trained to shoot at the sight of the familiar blue-green uniform. The hospital at S. MARTINO housed several hundred German officers and men and it was with some

interest that the soldiers of the 349th observed the Kraut in his native haunts looking well dressed and fed, stiffly saluting, Nazi style, and apparently going about his business as if the arrival of American troops meant little more than a changing of the guard.

On the following morning, 4 May, the entire regiment was motorized. In a race to the BRENNER Pass the troops moved some 115 miles by nightfall. Across the PASSO DI ROLLE through heavy snow, west along Highway 50 to PREDAZZO, then north to S. GIOVANNI on Highway 48, west again to Highway 12 at BOLZANO, the advance continued without interruption. Ahead of the regiment Lt. Col. RALPH E. HAINES, Executive Officer, who had joined the regiment on 2 May, sped up Highway 12 and at 1051 hours at VIPITENO made contact with the 103rd Division. The 5th and 7th Armies had joined in an historic meeting.

Thousands of armed Germans watched the troops as they rolled north to the assigned objectives. With no outward show of emotion the German troops appeared almost indifferent and although some wore a sullen expression, that was as far as it went. They made no move to resist the advance of American troops and appeared to take no notice of the Italian populace who lined the highway, cheering and throwing flowers. By 1200 hours the 1st Battalion had moved into COLLE ISARCO the Regimental C.P. and the 2nd Battalion had moved into BRESSANONE, and the 3rd Battalion was moving toward BRUNICO, closing in at 0100 hours, 5 May.

On 5 May the regiment was ordered to assemble German troops wherever large concentrations were found. They were to be disarmed and guarded but not evacuated to rear areas until further notice. Two days later a regular plan of evacuation was worked out. Each day the regiment received a quote from Division Headquarters giving the number of Germans to be moved out of the regimental area. P.W. cages were set up in the principal towns, all organized German units were soon interned and disarmed and a constant flow of stragglers poured in from the outlying districts. Many hundreds of the enemy had put on civilian clothes and taken to the hills, many undoubtedly made their way back to Germany, but the majority lost heart after spending days in the mountains without food or shelter.

Until 12 May the 349th occupied a zone of approximately 700 square miles. The northern boundary included the town of BRENNER and stretched along 40 miles of the Italian-Austrian border. A strict check was made on traffic through the BRENNER Pass and all roads running from ITALY to AUSTRIA were guarded and patrolled. Valuable equipment, warehouses and public buildings were closely guarded.

On 12 May the regimental zone was extended to the west as far as the border of SWITZERLAND. The 85th Division took over BRUNICO and several square miles of the regimental zone in the eastern part. The new area totalled approximately 1100 square miles. The Regimental C.P. which had moved to VIPITENO from BRESSANONE on 6 May, moved to MERANO on 18 May and the 3rd Battalion took over most of the new territory extending from MERANO west to SWITZERLAND.

Several thousand Germans were evacuated each day from the regimental area. The majority came from some 23 different German divisions, but there were elements of countless other units. Luftwaffe, Todt Organization, labor battalions, police engineers - those and many others were represented. There were German "WACs" civilians of doubtful status and Gestapo men. Included among those evacuated were members of the German, Japanese and Manchukuoan Embassies. Well known names

appeared on the list of prisoners - Friedrich Graeff, Consul General to Italy who had his headquarters in ROME until May 1944, Dr. Eberhardt Messerschmidt, Claire Luchard, French actress and many others. Every country in Europe was represented among those evacuated. Slave laborers and displaced persons, people forced to serve in the German army or carried along with it were evacuated by the hundreds. There were Poles, Russians, Czechs, Dutch, French, Belgians and people from every small state on the map.

After the evacuation had gone on for two weeks most of the organized units had been cleared out. Stragglers continued to come in, however, and as the month ended they made up the majority of those sent out each day.

It was perhaps the most enjoyable month spent by the troops since leaving the States. The war had ended in Europe - that was something of a relief and while there was work to be done there was plenty of free time to rest and relax. For the men not detailed as guards there was a regular training schedule that included basic subjects up to noon of each day. The afternoons were taken up with organized athletics and in the evenings there were shows, movies and dances. On the whole the troops were quartered in lavish style, many slept between sheets and ate in hotel dining rooms. There were a limited number of passes given, but the majority of the men were perfectly content to remain with their companies and enjoy the round of parties and entertainment.

During the month the first group of men left to go home via the point system. Most of them had more than 100 points but digging down as low as 85 points only 175 men eligible for discharge could be found. It was plain that as long as a minimum of 85 points was necessary there would be little turnover of personnel in the 349th.

As the month ended the work of disarming and evacuating the Germans had been almost completed. A total of 42,243 had been sent out of the regimental zone and the only sizeable groups left were those in hospitals numbering more than 12,000. The 349th prepared to turn over all installations to the Italian Army and with the last day of May the first of the relieving troops moved into the area. With its first post-war mission completed the regiment awaited further orders.

P.E. LeSTOURGEON
Colonel, 349th Infantry
Commanding

Researching World War II

WW2 Books, Reports
Maps, Historical Narratives
Government Publications

PDFs Remastered
and Word Searchable



All Discs Are Available As
Family Heirloom Edition
Personalized Laser Etched CDs/DVDs

Email: hella@mtnestas.com