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THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY A, 350TH INFANTRY (88TH
INFANTRY DIVISION) AT FURCOLI, NORTHWEST OF LOIANO,
ITALY, NIGHT OF 1 - 2 FEBRUARY 1945
(NORTH APENNINE CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Company Commander)

Type of operation described: RIFLE COMPANY IN A NIGHT
COMBAT PATROL TO CAPTURE PRISONERS

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ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of Company A, 350th Infantry, 88th U. S. Division, in a night combat patrol to secure prisoners at FURCOLI, northwest of LOIANO, ITALY, the night of the 1st and the morning of the 2d of February 1945, during the North Apennine Campaign.

In order to orient the reader, it will be necessary to discuss briefly the major events which led up to this action.

Early in September of 1943 the U.S. Fifth Army and the British Eighth Army stormed ashore the ITALIAN PENINSULA. The Fifth Army went ashore at SALERNO, ITALY, on 9 September 1943. (See Map A) (1) By 1 October the city of NAPLES had been captured and the German armies began to fall back across the VOLTURNO RIVER. Thus the initial objectives of the Italian invasion had been achieved and the Fifth Army had a great port with which to support future operations. (2) The U. S. Fifth and British Eighth Armies continued to advance and had crossed the VOLTURNO RIVER by 15 October 1943. (See Map A)

They continued the drive to the north and broke through the German Winter Line on 15 January 1944. (See Map A) Then the Fifth Army attacked the GUSTAV LINE on the 17th of January 1944 and failed to break through until contact was established

(1)

(2) A-1, p. 45

with elements of the Anzio Beachhead on 25 May 1944.

The race to ROME was on and the Fifth Army entered ROME on 4 June 1944. (See Map A) Two days after the capture of ROME, Allied Forces crossed the ENGLISH CHANNEL. Two months later landings were made at the FRENCH RIVIERA. Fifth Army dwindled from a strength of 379,588 at the fall of ROME to 171,026 by 15 August. (3)

Pursuit was initiated and Marshal Kesserling made no major stand south of the GOTHIC LINE, in the high APENNINES twenty to thirty miles north of the ARNO RIVER. (4) By the 22d of September 1944, the GOTHIC LINE was breached and the Fifth Army drive lost its momentum on 28 October 1944, barely nine miles from BOLOGNA and four miles from the PO VALLEY. (See Map B) (5)

THE GENERAL SITUATION

From 30 October 1944 until 15 January 1945 the Italian front lapsed into its longest period of stalemate with offensive action confined to patrol activities and limited objective attacks to improve positions and straighten lines. (6) Divisions of the 15th Army Group were in a line with a front extending from the ADRIATIC SEA to BOLOGNA, the responsibility of the British Eighth Army, thence from BOLOGNA inclusive to the LIGURIAN SEA, responsibility of the U. S. Fifth Army, under Lt. General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr.

In the Fifth Army zone, II Corps was in defensive positions north of FLORENCE with three divisions in contact on 20

(3) A-3, p. 268
(4) A-3, p. 273
(5) A-1, p. 85
(6) A-3, p. 371

January 1945. (See Map C)

Plans called for no large scale offensive action until spring. During the first part of January 1945, II Corps issued a directive ordering that two prisoners a week would be taken by each regiment on line. (7) This order was based on intelligence of the enemy planning a readjustment of units in contact with II Corps. On 1 January 1945 there was a total of 14,700 Germans in forty-three (43) battalions in contact or local reserve. In contrast this number had dwindled to only about 12,000 enemy in thirty-six (36) battalions by 31 January 1945.

The combat efficiency of the enemy was excellent as indicated by limited attacks in the left zone of the Fifth Army on the 25th and 26th of December 1944. (8)

The Germans had organized another defensive line of the type for which they had become famous in ITALY, the GHENGIS KHAN LINE. It was a rugged mountain mass composed of ridges and peaks, some of which reach well over 6,000 feet in elevation. The principal fortifications were mutually supporting caves and tunnels organized to control all approaches. The defensive positions were organized in depth and in such a manner that the loss of any single position would not endanger a breach of the line.

The weather was generally freezing with twelve to twenty-four inches of snow. Artificial aids were required for a firm footing on the roads and trails.

Although stiff enemy resistance, heavy casualties and an exposed right flank were the primary factors considered in

(7) A-6, p. 139

(8) A-3, p. 370

arriving at the decision to suspend offensive operations at the beginning of November, of equal importance was the serious supply situation at the time. (9)

There was almost an acute shortage of artillery ammunition. The available supply rate for the 155 mm howitzers was eight (8) rounds per weapon per day, 155 mm cannon nine (9) rounds, 105 mm howitzers eleven (11) rounds, 75 mm howitzers eleven (11) rounds and the 4.2 mm mortars four (4) rounds. (10)

Four divisions of combat troops were being supplied almost entirely over HIGHWAY 65. (11) The majority of Army Supply Points were located in FLORENCE almost fifty miles away over steep grades and around sharp curves. There were few lateral roads. Supplies to companies had to be transported by mule train, and, in the majority of the cases, hand-carried to platoon positions.

We had benefitted by our first winter in the Italian mountains and were better prepared for this one. (12) We had new and improved types of clothing. Shoepacs, combat trousers, mountain sleeping bags and fur-lined caps were available. White parkas and crampons were issued to enable men to blend with the white background and walk on the icy trails. Artillery pieces were painted with a coat of white gasoline soluble paint.

DISPOSITIONS AND MISSION OF THE 88TH INFANTRY DIVISION

On 21 January 1945 the 88th Infantry Division, less Division Artillery, began relief of the 91st Infantry Division. The relief was completed on 25 January when the 88th Infantry

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- (9) A-2, p. 21
(10) A-3, p. 368
(11) A-3, p. 373
(12) A-2, p. 24

Division assumed command of the former 91st Infantry Division sector at 0700 hours. (See Map C) (13)

The following attachments were made to the division on 21 January, for operations only:

151st Field Artillery Battalion

175th Field Artillery Battalion - Direct support of 2d Battalion, 350th Infantry

346th Field Artillery Battalion - Reinforce 175th Field Artillery Battalion

347th Field Artillery Battalion - Direct support of 3d Battalion, 350th Infantry

348th Field Artillery Battalion

916th Field Artillery Battalion

100th Chemical Mortar Battalion (less Companies A and C)

Battery A, 432d AAA AW Battalion (less M-16 Gun Section)

The mission of the 88th Infantry Division was:

- a. Continuous defense of the sector.
- b. Maintain one regiment in reserve for counterattack mission.
- c. Maintain contact with 34th Infantry Division on the right flank and 6th South African Division on the left flank.
- d. Complete organization and preparation of defense of the sector.

Elements of the enemy 157th Mountain Division, 305th Infantry Division and 65th Infantry Division opposed II Corps.

DISPOSITION OF THE 350TH INFANTRY

The mission of the 350th Infantry Regiment was:

(13)

The mission of the 350th Infantry Regiment was:

- a. Continuous defense along present sector.
- b. Continue organization and preparation commenced by 363d Infantry Regiment of defensive positions in depth within sector.
- c. Maintain contact with 6th South African Division and 351st Infantry Regiment.

The regiment was in defensive positions north of LOIANO. (See Map D) The 1st Battalion, less Company A, was in regimental reserve at MONZUNS, the 2d Battalion in the left sector and the 3d Battalion, with Company A in reserve, held the right sector. The regimental command post was at ANCONELLA.

The effective combat strength of Company A was approximately 180 officers and men, less supply personnel at the field train area and administrative personnel at division rear area. (14)

Since the 11th of May offensive, Company A, 350th Infantry had fought for six months without rest. The last forty or fifty miles was through rough mountainous terrain and the company had suffered heavy casualties. Replacements had been received but many key personnel had been lost. Two platoon sergeants were the only combat veterans occupying key positions. The company executive officer had been recently transferred from Division Reconnaissance Company and commanded the company for a short while prior to the last of November 1944. The remainder of the company officers, the 1st Sergeant, supply sergeant, and two of the platoon sergeants had recently been assigned and had participated in nothing more than small patrol action. (15)

(14) Personal knowledge

(15) Personal knowledge

The terrain in the regimental zone of action was the MONTE RUMICI hill mass, a ridge running generally northeast and southwest. The ridge rose abruptly from the SETTA RIVER to a height of 589 meters. Then continuing northeast tapering off gradually to about 400 meters, it joined MT. ADONE, a mountain 655 meters in height, dominating all approaches in that area.

There were between twelve and twenty-four inches of snow on the ground. The weather was sub-freezing except for a short time around noon when it thawed enough to make the footing hazardous when the temperature dropped back below freezing. It was generally cloudy both day and night except for a short period of time of forty minutes or an hour's duration.

Company A was billeted in houses, with two platoons in a large cavern, at ANCONELLA, where the regimental command post was located.

WARNING ORDER AND PLAN OF ATTACK

On 27 January the company commander was alerted that a raid by a company strength combat patrol, to secure prisoners in the division area, had been ordered by the Division Commander in compliance with the II Corps directive. (16) The enemy force opposing the division in its area of responsibility had not been fully identified. At the time of the warning order, the regimental commander was undecided whether Company A would be designated or whether Company A would relieve one of the companies in the 3d Battalion while that company made the raid. The following day the Regimental Commander, Colonel

(16) Personal knowledge

(later Brigadier General) James C. Fry, informed the Company Commander of Company A to be prepared to make a company raid in the vicinity of FURCOLI in the next day or two and to contact the operations officer for further details. The operations officer confirmed the order, however the raid depended on the success of the combat patrol the 2d Battalion was sending out that night. If prisoners were taken the raid would not be made. Also, if the raid was made, any ground seized would be consolidated and held until elements of the 2d Battalion could effect a relief. (17)

Company A would pass to 2d Battalion control on arrival in the assembly area prior to the operation. The 1st Battalion Commander, Lt. Colonel James G. Holland, would assume command of the 2d Battalion area for the period of the operation and the supporting fires for the operation would be allocated the following day, if required.

The supply officer was contacted and requisitions for white parkas, clampons, and white gasoline soluble paint were submitted. The supply officer indicated that the requisitions would be filled the following day if the supplies were required.

The intelligence officer was contacted and aerial photographs of the area were secured and a study of them was made. At this time it was discovered that the platoon leaders lacked the fundamental knowledge of how to utilize a stereoscope or how to interpret the terrain from aerial photographs. The intelligence officer said that the 2d Battalion was making a raid on the FURCOLI area that night. It was decided to visit

(17) Personal knowledge

the 2d Battalion and view the action from their observation post, and make as much of a reconnaissance of the ground over which the operation would take place, as the situation permitted.

The 2d Battalion's patrol crossed the point of departure and when they neared the houses 300 meters south of FURCOLI, they received heavy accurate small arms fire from the vicinity of the houses and one or two members of the patrol were wounded, at which time the patrol was forced to withdraw. (18)

Tentative plans were made at the observation post and the platoon leaders made as much of a reconnaissance as the situation permitted, familiarizing themselves with landmarks.

On 31 January the order was confirmed that the raid would be made on the night of 1 - 2 February and the company was ordered to move to the vicinity of the 2d Battalion Command Post commencing at 1900 hours that night. The platoon leaders met the company commander at the operations room of the regiment and orders were issued on the employment of the platoons.

It was decided that the 1st Platoon would lead and attack and secure Objective Able, the houses 300 meters south of FURCOLI. (See Map E) This was a position known to be occupied by the enemy. If prisoners were secured here the 2d Platoon would cover their withdrawal from positions near the point of departure. If not, the 2d Platoon would pass through and move on FURCOLI and if no prisoners were taken there, would take up positions north of FURCOLI and protect the remainder of the company as it moved into position. (See Map E) The 3d Platoon would follow the 2d Platoon, pass through the 1st Pla-

(18) Personal knowledge

toon and take up positions on the east side of FURCOLI. The 1st Platoon would then move forward and take up positions on the left of the 2d Platoon. After all platoons were in position, the 3d Platoon would search caves in their area for prisoners. If the 3d Platoon failed to find any enemy in the caves in their zone of action they would take up positions and cover the 2d Platoon while personnel of that platoon searched the caves in their zone of action. If no prisoners were taken by this time the 2d and 3d Platoons would cover the 1st Platoon while it searched its zone of action.

The Machine Gun Section would follow the last rifle platoon and when the three rifle platoons were in position would take up positions in FURCOLI and be prepared to fire to either flank.

The Mortar Section was broken down into four litter teams. They would be used to evacuate the wounded, if any, to the rear company command post where litter bearers from the 2d Battalion would further evacuate them to the battalion aid station at the 2d Battalion Command Post.

The company headquarters was divided into two echelons. The first echelon composed of the Company Commander, Communications Sergeant, two messengers, bugler and radio operator would follow the leading platoon until the town of FURCOLI was reached, then set up a Command Post in the first building on the right side of the road.

The Communications Sergeant and messengers would pay out assault wire as the assault echelon moved forward so a sound powered telephone could be used to communicate with the battalion commander at the observation post. Liaison personnel

of the Cannon Company, Artillery Battalions and Mortar Section were at the observation post. Requests for fires would be called to the Battalion Commander and relayed by him to the unit capable of performing the fire mission in the least time. A SCR 300 radio was carried in the forward command group to be used in case wire communication was disrupted.

The second echelon composed of the Executive Officer, 1st Sergeant and a clerk were operating from a position in defilade, near the point of departure, to keep an account of casualties being evacuated, so that an accurate record would be made of all evacuees and no personnel would be unaccounted for at the end of the operation.

The platoon leaders sent for their platoon sergeants, platoon guides, and squad leaders. They were oriented on the map and the plan of operation was explained and orders issued by the platoon leaders to their subordinates. After the order was issued and questions answered, the platoon sergeants, platoon guides, and squad leaders were given the opportunity to study the maps and view the aerial photographs through the stereoscope. Again the lack of knowledge of how to interpret terrain from aerial photographs was apparent.

Later in the afternoon, prior to the move, word was received that CIC agents had uncovered information in MONTECATINI, Fifth Army Rest Center some eighty miles south, that a company was making a raid the night of 1 - 2 February. (19) The information disclosed the name of the unit commander and the number of parkas, clampons and gallons of white paint requisitioned, as well as the place of the raid.

(19) Personal knowledge

It was feared that this information would reach the enemy in time for an ambush to be set. However, it was decided to make the raid anyway.

MOVEMENT TO FINAL ASSEMBLY AREA AND FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE ATTACK

At 1830 hours the company was formed and moved to the entrucking area at SABBIONI. The company moved by motor to the vicinity of MONZUNO where it detrucked and marched to CASA DI GUILIETTA. The platoons were moved to their billets in a company assembly area.

Due to the lack of knowledge of how to interpret terrain from aerial photographs, as exhibited by the subordinate leaders, arrangements were made for small reconnaissance parties to go forward for a view of the terrain over which the operation would take place. Platoon leaders, sergeants, guides and squad leaders visited the 2d Battalion observation post in small groups.

The 1st Battalion Commander met the Company Commander at the 1st Battalion Command Post and the point of departure and time of attack was decided. At that time, the battalion commander stated it had been decided not to hold any ground taken but to return to the assembly area.

The ~~first~~^{Five} support plan was firmed up. All the artillery that could fire in the sector had been made available. Corps artillery would fire counter battery, fire the cannon company would fire a fifteen minute preparation on the houses located 300 meters south of FURCOLI at H-hour. They would employ VT fuze as well as point detonating fuze.

At the same time two battalions of artillery would fire on FURCOLI. Corps artillery would fire counter battery or known enemy installations as well as suspected installations. On call, the Cannon Company and two battalions of artillery in support would fire on FURCOLI for another fifteen minutes thence to suspected installations in rear of FURCOLI for fifteen minutes. The mortar section of the 1st Battalion would man the mortars of the 2d Battalion for the period of the operation. Plans were made to isolate FURCOLI and code names were designated for fires to deny likely avenues of approach. These fires would be delivered on call. On the morning of 1 February final preparations were made. Troops were issued two bandoleers of ammunition and two hand grenades, squad leaders were given two white phosphorus grenades. White parkas were given the three rifle platoons as well as clampons to give them firm footing on the icy road. White gasoline soluble paint was used to paint the helmets which were worn over fur lined caps. At first it was the decision to paint individual weapons white but this idea was discarded.

NARRATION

ATTACK ON OBJECTIVE A

At 1900 hours, 1 February, the company formed up and a check was made to insure that all personnel were present and properly equipped. When this had been accomplished the company moved out. The point of departure was reached at H - 5. At H hour the artillery and the Cannon Company opened up with the barrages and the lead platoon moved out. The platoons em-

ployes a column of squads, in single file, echeloned on either side of the road. With the firing of the barrages, the enemy immediately fired concentrations on the road. This road was the only approach to their positions. One of the first rounds that came in wounded the Executive Officer. Our 81 mm mortars started counter mortar fire by walking concentrations up and down the draw in rear of FURCOLI and silenced some of the mortars. Artillery rounds still came in. It is unknown whether the Corps counter battery fire knocked out enemy batteries, drove enemy artillerymen to cover, or knocked out communications, but only about 30 - 50 rounds of enemy artillery come in after counter battery was fired. The 1st Platoon did not have to stop, the artillery time schedule worked so well. When the 1st Platoon reached Objective A they did not find any enemy. While the 2d Platoon was moving up the Germans commenced final protective fires and scored a direct hit on one man with a white phosphorous shell. It unnerved the platoon leader of the 1st Platoon and he almost had to be evacuated when this happened. This was the first of two men to be killed in this action. The Company Commander had to reorganize the 1st Platoon and the 2d Platoon was practically through by the time reorganization was complete. The Platoon Leader pulled himself together by the time the 3d Platoon passed through and was able to continue on his mission.

MOVEMENT TO POSITION FOR EXECUTION OF PLAN B

The 2d Platoon reached FURCOLI and the squad leaders threw white phosphorous grenades in the houses prior to making an assault on them, however no live prisoners were found, although

four dead ones were.' The 2d Platoon moved on toward the hill mass and left one (1) half-squad on either side protecting their flanks. When they were in position the 3d Platoon moved up, established contact with the half-squad on the 2d Platoon's right rear and that half-squad rejoined the platoon. The 3d Platoon moved on to the right and took up positions while the 1st Platoon moved up. The 1st Platoon passed through FURCOLI established contact with the half-squad to the 2d Platoon's left rear and that half-squad rejoined the 2d Platoon. The 1st Platoon then moved to positions along the west side of FURCOLI and announced that it was in position. The machine gun section moved into position to fire to either flank.

EXECUTION OF PLAN B

After all platoons were in position to repel any counter attack, the 3d Platoon was ordered to send out patrols to search the caves and seek out the enemy. The first two patrols that were sent out were unable to find any caves or enemy positions in the area they were to search. The action at this time had taken about three hours. The company had suffered two killed and two seriously wounded with nine casualties slightly wounded. The Division Commander, Major General Paul W. Kendall, was at the 2d Battalion Command Post with the Regimental Commander and at this time ordered the patrol to return. He left the 2d Battalion Command Post to return to the Division Command Post. The Regimental Commander called the Battalion Commander on the telephone and told him to bring the patrol in. The Battalion Commander radioed the Company Commander and asked what the situation was. The Company Com-

mander told him that so far four enemy dead were all the Germans in the area apparently and it looked as if the company would have to go to BOLOGNA to get any live prisoners. The Battalion Commander gave permission to remain out a while longer and at that time small arms firing was heard in the 3d Platoon area.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

The communications sergeant tried to reach the 3d Platoon on the SCR 536 radio but received no answer. It was discovered, at this time, that no visual signals had been arranged and wire was not carried forward by the platoons. As the communication by SCR 536 had not been too good during the operation, the company commander decided to move to the 3d Platoon area and see what was happening. It was feared an ambush had been set and that a German counterattack was underway. While on the way to the 3d Platoon, the flash and report of a 2.36 rocket launcher was seen and heard as well as the cry of "Kamerad".

An automatic carbine was fired. / When the company commander arrived in the 3d Platoon area it was discovered that the platoon leader had taken a rocket team and two rifle men to search an area and had stumbled at the entrance of a cave. The enemy had fired point blank with their machine gun and the platoon leader had dropped his SCR 536 radio in the mouth of the cave. He had retreated a few paces to get the rocket launcher and had fired two rounds at the mouth of the cave. The Germans called "Kamerad" and he had fired over their heads as they came

out to deter any attempt to escape or fire. The mission was accomplished. The company had five live prisoners and the withdrawal was begun,

The 3d Platoon started to withdraw and the 2d Platoon sent out a half-squad to cover the right flank, then the 1st Platoon started its withdrawal. Another half-squad from the 2d Platoon dropped back to cover the left flank. After the 3d and 1st Platoons were clear the 2d Platoon with machine gun section ^{attached} attacks was withdrawn in a rear guard formation with the company command post moving at the head of the 2d Platoon. When the 3d Platoon passed the rear command post a count was made to insure that all men were accounted for. The same procedure was followed with the 1st Platoon and 2d Platoon. The company moved back to the assembly area and another check was made of the platoons against the casualty list compiled at the rear Command Post. There was one man in the 2d Platoon unaccounted for.

ANOTHER PATROL

The phone in the company command post rang and the 2d Battalion reported that one of their company observation posts had heard someone with an American accent calling "Help, don't leave me. Help!" The 2d Platoon was ordered to send out a volunteer patrol to investigate even though it was felt that an ambush had been set. The patrol crossed the LD and as they approached the houses 300 meters south of FURCOLI received machine gun and machine pistol fire. The patrol leader was shot in the hand and side and the patrol returned to the company assembly area.

THE CRITIQUE

On the morning of 2 February 1945 the company was assembled and a critique of the operation was held by the company commander and the battalion commander. A clear understanding of the operation was obtained by all members of the company. As a result of this critique unit SOP's and manner of performance for future operations was perfected.

For this action members of Company A, 350th Infantry, received the award of eight (8) Silver Stars and twenty-seven (27) Bronze Stars. Presentation ceremonies were held during the afternoon of 3 February 1945, when the Division Commander, Major General Paul W. Kendall, made the presentation of the Silver Stars to the platoon leader of the 3d Platoon and six (6) enlisted men. (One of the enlisted men being awarded a decoration was in the hospital). (19)

This successful operation, critique, and prompt presentation of awards was highly beneficial to the morale, esprit de corps and combat effectiveness of this company, as borne out in the spring offensive during April 1945, when this company successfully assaulted MONTERUMICI in the drive to the PO VALLEY with a minimum of casualties and a maximum of results.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

1. COMMUNICATIONS

In the planning phase, proper consideration must be given to difficulties expected to be encountered in maintaining communications, particularly from the company commander to the

(19) A-5

platoon leader. However it is difficult to see what could have been done to improve matters with the authorized communication equipment. If the company commander had foreseen the futility of trying to maintain communication with the platoons by the use of the SCR 536 radio, and secured additional SCR 300 radios to communicate with the platoons or used wire and sound powered telephones with prearranged visual signals, the operations might have been successfully concluded at an earlier time.

2. SECURITY

Personnel working in headquarters staff offices should be carefully screened for intelligence, loyalty and ability to keep classified information. Only the information necessary for personnel to perform their duties and carry out their operations should be disseminated. Had information of this attack reached the enemy he would have been able to successfully ambush an entire company. It is difficult to see how information of this operation failed to reach the enemy in time, when CIC agents found out about it in Fifth Army rest areas two days prior to the attack.

3. MAP AND AERIAL PHOTO READING

The only information available of terrain over which an operation is to take place may be from the study of maps and aerial photographs in some instances. Terrain over which a unit has to operate may be in defilade from observation posts. While maps are fairly accurate, aerial photographs depict terrain as it actually exists. Recent aerial photographs offer

an excellent view of this terrain. Some company officers and non-commissioned officers leading patrols lacked fundamental knowledge of how to utilize a stereoscope or how to interpret the terrain from aerial photographs and maps.

4. LEADERSHIP

A military leader must be able to get the job done. Everything else must be subordinated to the accomplishment of the mission assigned. A successful leader must know his subordinates and develop responsibility in them. Finally after a leader has issued orders he must supervise the execution of the orders. If a leader knows his subordinates he is able to determine the extent of supervision they require. Until a thorough understanding is reached between a leader and his subordinates he must continually supervise and not permit anything to chance.

5. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

One activity that contributes, in a major degree, to the morale of a unit is an adequate awards and decoration policy. Plans should be made prior to entrance of the unit into combat to establish boards, policies, etc. Recommendations should be processed, boards should function, and orders should be published promptly for decorations that meet all requirements. Writer teams should take the basic recommendations from small unit commanders and relieve him of all administration involved. After orders are published an appropriate ceremony should be held to make the presentation to individual or individuals involved. Publicity, such as photographs, publishing in unit and

hometown newspapers, etc. should be given with clippings and pictures to individuals involved.

6. USE OF SPECIALIZED UNITS TO PERFORM NORMAL INFANTRY TASKS

II Corps ordered each regiment on the line to take at least two prisoners a week due to evidence of the enemy re-adjusting his troops, necessitating prisoners for identification purposes and to obtain better knowledge of enemy dispositions. Most units of II Corps requested volunteers to form special unit patrols at Regimental or Battalion level. Strength of these patrols varied from one (1) officer and ten (10) men to one (1) officer and twenty (20) men. During the time positions were static the only tasks performed by these specialists was patrolling. Due to special privileges such as no out-post duty, special leaves after the successful accomplishment of a mission, etc. the number of volunteers always exceeded the demand. The patrols were specially equipped with white helmets, weapons painted with white gasoline soluble paint, white trousers made from salvaged mattress covers, shoepacs with crampons to establish a firm footing and white parkas.

The making of an infantry soldier into a specialist of this nature is not desirable. An infantry soldier must be able to perform a number of duties proficiently. Not only does an organization of this type throw a hardship on the remaining members of companies, necessitating double duty, etc., it reduces the strength of the units materially. It is believed that few of these type units accomplished a mission better than a comparable sized unit patrol, led by a determined leader, could have.

Continuation
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objective when the Spring Offensive was launched. It would not have been more difficult to hold this ground than some of the positions that were being held by units of II Corps at that time.

LESSONS

1. In the planning phase of an operation, consideration must be given to difficulties expected to be encountered in maintaining communication and special measures must be instituted to utilize all alternate means of communication possible.

2. All means available should be employed to screen personnel having access to classified material or involved in the planning phase of an operation, no matter how small, to insure that careless or loose talk does not allow a leak of the information to unauthorized personnel.

3. Special emphasis should be placed on map reading, map interpretation, and stereoscopic study of aerial photographs from service schools down to and including small unit schools.

4. In the absence of thorough knowledge of subordinate leaders, supervision over the execution of orders should be exercised to a high degree.

5. The prompt award of decorations with appropriate ceremonies and publicity contribute to a major degree to the morale of a unit.

6. Too much emphasis should not be placed on routine operations of an infantry unit so as to overemphasize the importance of that type of operation out of proportion to its real value. This tends to segregate that type of operation from the routine that should be an infantryman's normal chore.

7. CRITIQUES AFTER OPERATION

A discussion or critique should be held immediately following an operation and, for small units, preferably at a location when the terrain can be seen, tactical situation permitting. The critique should consist of a brief review of the mission, employment of subordinate units, use of supporting weapons, etc. A mere recital of what has taken place is a waste of time. The mission, plan of action and orders as issued must be presented. Each subordinate unit should present the method of employment, paying particular attention to errors or violation of tactical doctrine as well as the successful application of factors that insured the success of the operation, from their viewpoint. Standard Operating Procedure should be developed from this critique as well as errors to be avoided in future operation under same or similar circumstances.

8. GROUND TAKEN SHOULD NEVER VOLUNTARILY BE RELINQUISHED

Prior to assigning a mission, future plans should be made. Every successful operation shows the enemy mistakes he has made in setting up his defense, planning his fires, making his dispositions, etc. A successful company size operation is approximately one eighth the strength a division uses in the initial phase of an attack. Normally there are only eight companies, initially, in the attacking echelon of a division. Plans should be made to hold a limited objective if an operation succeeds. Had this ground that was gained been held, it would have immeasurably assisted the spring offensive that followed on 15 April. It required a regiment to seize this

7. Situation permitting, a critique should be held immediately following an operation to emphasize errors or violations of tactical doctrine as well as the successful employment of tactics that contributed to the overall success of the operation.

8. Ground taken should never be relinquished voluntarily.

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