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THE OPERATIONS OF 2D BATTALION, 338TH INF.
(85TH U.S. INF. DIV.)
IN TAKING MT. DELLA FORMICHE, ITALY
10-13 OCT. 1944
(NORTH APENNINE CAMPAIGN)
(Personal experience of a Rifle Platoon Leader)

Type of operation described: BATTALION IN THE ATTACK

Captain Orville E. Bloch, Infantry

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph relates the action of the 2d Battalion, 338th Infantry Regiment, 85th U.S. Infantry Division, in the capture of Mt. Della Formiche, 10-13 October, 1944, during the North Apennine Campaign in Italy.

After the fall of Rome, the Fifth Army pushed north against a strong, well organized, determined rear guard action of the enemy. The general consensus to every fighting man was that the next major enemy stand would be made somewhere along the North Apennine barrier stretching from the Tyrrhenian Sea to the Adriatic north of Florence. This shortly became known throughout the world as the German Gothic Line.

Ever since the Allies first landed in Italy the German had been developing this natural defensive position, accelerating the pace of his construction after the fall of Rome. The German had reinforced this position with a formidable chain of carefully sited rock hewn pill boxes and bunkers, extensive wire entanglements, mine fields and tank obstacles, all integrated into the rugged, mountainous terrain which rose to elevations of 3 to 4 thousand feet above sea level.

The mission of the Fifth and Eighth Armies was to break through the Gothic Line, exploit this break-through and debouch into the Po Valley plains. At dawn 10 September, after a long pause to regroup and to prepare an offensive, Fifth Army launched its drive to pierce the highly vaunted line. The American Two Corps bore the brunt of the assault, striking the line with three divisions along the axis of the Florence-Bologna highway. This highway was known as highway 65. The battle for

the Gothic Line, like the Gustav Line Campaign in Southern Italy the previous winter, resolved itself into a series of hard fought actions for dominating mountain features which formed the key points of the enemy defense. (1)

Beyond the Gothic Line, the German had forty miles of mountainous terrain to defend before the Allies could deploy their might on terrain more suited for offensive warfare. Many cross compartments afforded the enemy excellent defensive positions and many of them were as formidable as the initial line itself.

THE BREAKTHROUGH

On 18 September, the Gothic Line was shattered. This event occurred only after some of the severest fighting ever encountered in Italy had taken place. As days went on and the Apennines began to appear endless, it seemed that the entire mountain range to the north might be called the Gothic Line. Whatever the name, it blocked the way to the Po Valley and it was toward that region that the Allies now directed their mighty offensive forces. Nevertheless, in pleasing contrast with the first week of fighting, the advance was now progressing with what appeared to be remarkable speed; with as much as two miles being covered in one day. (2)

Initially the enemy was somewhat disorganized, but they soon began to make use of every advantage the terrain afforded. Enemy reinforcements were moving up constantly. The 85th Division was opposed by the German 4th Parachute Division during the first ten days of fighting. Following this period, elements of the 362d "Greiner" Division, miscellaneous units of the 715th Infantry Division, and elements of the Lehr Brigade made their appearance. (3)

(1) A-1, p.45; (2) A-2, p.61; (3) A-2, p.61.

Many mountain masses were to come into the line of advance of the 85th Division. Some of these were Monte Atuzzo, Color-
etta, Canda Bibele, Formiche, Monterenzio, Fano, Castelvechia,
Costellaro, and many others.

THE OBJECTIVE

The specific mountain mass of which I am writing is Monte Della Formiche. (4) This mountain was a part of one of the German secondary defense lines and characterized by being especially formidable because of the steep cliffs which fell from all sides except the north. It was doubly important for the enemy to hold Formiche since it commanded highway 65 in the sector of the Division on the left, as well as the Idice Valley road. Furthermore, it afforded complete observation over the entire area for a distance of 6 miles to the south (see sketch no.2). (5)

The 2d Battalion of the 338th Infantry Regiment, 85th Division, was assigned the task of wresting this critical terrain feature from enemy hands. This Battalion, being in reserve at the time, was following closely behind the 3d Battalion of the same Regiment which was doggedly fighting forward to establish a specified line of departure through which the 2d Battalion was to pass in its attack. (6)

Below Monte Formiche, the terrain was very hilly and there was little opportunity for cover and concealment for the two Battalions while moving forward from one hill to the next. In view of this, and the fact that the enemy had excellent observation, the 3d Battalion's progress was exceedingly difficult. In addition, the enemy not only used delaying tactics, but

(4) Monte - Italian for mountain; (5) A-2, p. 81; (6) A-4, p. 96

stubbornly resisted every foot of the advance by machine gun fire, sniper fire, small arms fire, and mortar and artillery barrages. Every hill, ridge line, and building was utilized by the enemy as strong points. No ground was given up to the attacker without contest. (7)

During the night, 10 October, the 3d Battalion had accomplished its assigned mission of establishing a line of departure for the 2d Battalion. The 3d Battalion was to remain in its present position and be prepared for operations to the right of Monte Formiche. (8) Combat patrols were sent out during the night and contact was made with the enemy along the entire Regimental front. However, the patrols became heavily engaged and were driven back to our lines by intense machine gun and mortar fire. The enemy appeared to be extremely sensitive and responded readily to every move made by the forward companies.

ENEMY FORTIFICATIONS AND TERRAIN

Directly before the cliffs of Monte Della Formiche the terrain was exceptionally smooth, sloping gently to the south approximately 1000 yards, and as barren as a golf course fairway. Everyone of the 2d Battalion had a heavy heart for the job looked impossible. The summit of the mountain rose to approximately 2040 feet above sea level. The German had fortified the forward slopes with cleverly camouflaged gun emplacements, all carefully sited to give fine fields of fire down the slopes. On the summit of the mountain, heavy caliber machine guns, as well as smaller caliber weapons, were placed covering the frontal area with plunging fire. The valley below was studded with "Shu" and picket mine fields covering the most logical avenues of approach.

(7) A-4, p. 94; (8) A-4, p. 97.

Immediately below the sheer cliffs and about three-fourths of the way up the mountain lay the little town of Maceratoia. To the left rear on the crest lay the town of Ca Del Monte.

At the base of the cliffs below Del Monte were numerous caves. These caves afforded the enemy excellent firing positions covering the approaches to the buildings of Del Monte. The Del Monte ridge dropped off to the northwest falling gradually into the valley below (see sketch no.2).

PLAN OF ATTACK

The 2d Battalion's initial plan was to attack in a column of companies (a formation often used in the Italian Campaign) with the first objective being the village of Del Monte; from there to push to the north with two companies abreast, cutting in behind the mountain. The 1st Battalion was to push up the Idice Valley to the right of the objective. The combined action of the two Battalions was to outflank the mountain crest and finally clear it of the enemy from the north. Due to the barren terrain before the sheer cliffs of Formiche, there was no cover for maneuver. This, therefore, appeared to be the only logical plan of attack. Easy Company was to lead, followed by George Company with Fox Company in reserve.

In support of this contemplated attack, tanks were moved forward to the ridge along the line of departure, taking hull defilade positions and were to fire directly into the buildings of Maceratoia and Del Monte. Division Artillery was to fire "time-on-target" fire into the same two villages, 4.2 Chemical Mortars were to cover the rear areas of the mountain, and Cannon Company was to cover the crest, shifting their fire as directed. The 81mm Mortars of the 2d and 3d Battalions were to fire a covering smoke screen, if necessary, for the attacking

forces. All of the aforementioned fires were to be ready to fire on call.

Due to the fact that the enemy controlled the ground a foot reconnaissance was impossible, therefore, on 9 October, a field glasses and map reconnaissance was made. It was decided to attack Maceratoia from the left flank. A small drainage ditch was detected running southwest of Maceratoia to the valley below, a distance of approximately 1000 yards, which afforded the only cover, meager as it was, in the entire area (see sketch no.2).

At 0330, 10 October, Item Company was successful in taking La Casone on the Regiment's extreme left flank. Two platoons of Easy Company proceeded to La Casone to relieve Item Company. The attack on Del Monte was to be launched from this point at 0600 hours. Final plans were formulated as follows: The 1st platoon of Easy Company was to lead the attack, with the mission of taking Maceratoia. The 2d and 3d platoons were to follow, pass through the 1st platoon at Maceratoia, and attack Del Monte.

THE ATTACK

Prior to daylight the 1st platoon with a strength of 18 men moved out of La Casone, crossed over the open ground under the cover of darkness, and reached the aforementioned drainage ditch. The formation taken up at the ditch was a column of squads with each man directly behind the other on his stomach. The desired element of surprise forced all the men to creep and crawl forward in the direction of the objective--Maceratoia. Through SCR 536 radio communication, the Company Commander was contacted and notified of the platoon's position. As the platoon moved forward, this contact was maintained. At 0800, the support-

ing weapons began to lay down their devastating fires on their assigned target areas.

Daylight was slow in coming because of a heavy fog which obscured the area from enemy observation. It did not take the enemy long to sense the oncoming attack although their observation was greatly reduced. They began to cover the forward slopes of the mountain with concentrations of mortar and artillery fire, most of which was ineffective as it cleared the ditch by a considerable distance.

Speed in progress was most difficult for the 1st platoon for the ditch was extremely muddy and varied from only 2 to 4 feet in width and depth. To the men it seemed the slushy, shallow ditch extended for miles instead of just a mere 1000 yards. The 1st platoon moved on as rapidly as possible, spurred by the prevailing thought of reaching the objective before the fog lifted. As they neared Maceratoia all attempts to contact the 2d platoon by radio failed. In spite of this the 1st platoon continued to move forward.

0830 arrived. The platoon was in position to assault the objective. Bayonets were fixed and final instructions issued. The platoon was then broken down into 3 six-man squads. Each squad was assigned a portion of the small cluster of buildings in Maceratoia and were to move in from the west and south. The platoon leader radioed the Company Commander and requested that the artillery and tank fire be shifted from Maceratoia to Ca Del Monte and to the church at the summit of the mountain. All fires shifted as requested, and without a moment's hesitation the assault began with each squad dashing for its assigned sector firing their rifles as they speedily closed in on the objective.

Maceratoia was ours. The attack had been successful and

one thing had made it so--maximum use of supporting artillery fire. The 1st platoon had followed it very closely and upon the lifting of fire had assaulted the enemy positions before the enemy could get his head up to fire his weapon--complete surprise had been gained.

In Maceratoia the 1st platoon had captured 1 prime mover, 1 anti-tank gun, 4 machine guns, and 19 prisoners. The prisoners were disarmed, searched, and some of them questioned. They were then herded into a large room, the door closed behind them, and securely bolted. Here the prisoners were left as no man could be spared to guard them and it was deemed that the risk to our own men in sending them back was too great as the protecting fog had lifted.

Immediately the platoon took up positions in and around the buildings of the town; the Company Commander was given the following message, "Objective taken, no casualties, have 19 prisoners." The Company Commander, Lieutenant William G. Coblin of Frankfort, Kentucky, a bold and aggressive officer, replied that he was leaving La Casone enroute to the objective and that he wanted the 1st platoon to continue to Del Monte. After receiving this order, radio contact with everyone was lost for the 1st platoon.

Little activity took place during the next 20 minutes, except for light enemy mortar fire falling around the area to our rear and in the vicinity of La Casone. Our own supporting fires continued to fall on the crest of Formiche around the church and to the left of Del Monte.

Plans for the attack on Del Monte were begun by the 1st platoon leader. Some of the prisoners, when questioned, revealed that the Del Monte ridge was held by one reinforced company of Infantry. It was decided that Maceratoia could not be

left undefended as the 19 prisoners were still there and the 2d platoon of Easy Company had not yet arrived. Ten men of the platoon were to remain in Maceratoia. The remaining 8, plus the platoon leader, were to move forward for Del Monte. The route of advance was along a trail from Maceratoia to Del Monte. The patrol moved slowly, stayed close to the sides of the cliffs and took advantage of the little cover and concealment that existed.

Del Monte appeared to be deserted. No activity was seen nor heard. Hopes began to rise that the town was unoccupied because of the heavy shelling it had taken. When the group arrived at a point within 50 yards of the first building, they split into two separate parties, one consisting of 4 men and the other of 5. The 5 man group dashed into building no.1 (see sketch no.2); the other group rushed forward taking up positions at the west side of building no.2. The platoon leader took up a position from which he could control both groups (see X on sketch no.2).

Nothing happened--all was quiet. It soon became evident that the enemy was unaware that an attacking force was in his immediate area, also, he did not know Maceratoia was no longer occupied by his troops. The men who had taken building no.1 captured 8 Germans including one lieutenant. One man of the group hurried the prisoners back to the reserved cell in Maceratoia.

No sooner had he left when all hell broke loose in Del Monte. The enemy had finally realized the presence of our troops and immediately began attacking the small group from 3 directions; both flanks and frontally. It appeared as if machine gun fire was coming from everywhere as the foe closed in to take the invaders. Defensive positions were taken up and fire

was returned to the enemy; but the force was overwhelming. Little could be done to stop them. The 4 men in building no.1 were completely boxed in by machine gun fire; there was no exit for them. They continued to return fire to the enemy from the doors and windows until the enemy forced them to surrender.

One of the men, Pfc Richard J. Kerrigan of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was shot through the right shoulder. He came charging out of the house screaming, throwing his rifle, helmet, and cartridge belt to the ground, then made a mad dash for Maceratoia. Apparently the enemy was paralyzed by this action, as not a shot was fired at the fleeing, wounded soldier. The platoon leader, realizing that it was impossible to take Del Monte with the number of men on hand, called for his men to make a break for Maceratoia, 4 men were able to get back.

Artillery and mortar fire now began to fall over the entire forward slopes of the mountain. Maceratoia was mortared and strafed with machine gun fire from positions atop the mountain and from the left flank. The 2d platoon had been following the drainage ditch and did have some cover; however, the 3d platoon was caught out on the open terrain, completely exposed and tried desperately to dig in where they hit the hard ground. Every move they made could be clearly observed from Maceratoia, as well as by the enemy in Del Monte.

New orders were received by the 1st platoon to hold Maceratoia at all cost and the remainder of Easy Company and George Company was to close in that night on the area under cover of darkness. There was no alternative for the 1st platoon; they had to hold Maceratoia as withdrawing was impossible. As the shelling continued, the prisoners became restless. One of our wounded men sat guard at the bolted door and the remaining 14 men of the platoon took defensive positions within the buildings of the

town. Although the buildings were badly battered, they did give ample protection from enemy fire. During the remaining daylight hours the platoon was busy spotting enemy gun positions. They detected at this time the caves on the left flank and below Del Monte. This information was sent back and direct tank fire was brought to bear upon them.

Immediately after darkness, all of Easy and George Companies closed into Maceratoia, and the best possible means of defense was set up. At 2200 hours that night, the 2d and 3d platoons of Easy Company again attacked Del Monte. A hard fire-fight developed as the enemy stubbornly defended his positions and little progress was made. The platoons became disorganized and again the attack failed. Every man was completely exhausted by the fighting, but Easy Company again closed in on the area around Maceratoia to set up a semi-perimeter defense. The two companies dug in well around the town. Easy Company had two platoons dug in forward and to the left of Maceratoia, with the support platoon in position to the left rear of the two forward platoons. George Company occupied the buildings and one platoon dug in to the right of the town. Fox Company was in reserve taking up positions in the ravine south of Maceratoia.

That night a new plan was made to attack over the mountain before daylight, 11 October, with the two leading companies abreast. Fox Company was to move forward and occupy Maceratoia upon the departure of Easy and George Companies. Easy Company was given the mission of taking Del Monte, to clear the enemy from Del Monte ridge and to hold until further orders. George Company was to take the church, cemetery, the crest of the mountain, and to continue the attack. Fox Company was to pass through Easy Company to the right of Del Monte and push forward with George Company on the right. The 1st Battalion was to attack

simultaneously with the 2d Battalion. It was to push to the right of Formiche, clearing the enemy from the right slopes of the mountain and the valley below. Complete plans were made by all companies. Resupply of ammunition and rations was accomplished during the night. Patrols were sent out to keep the enemy occupied above Maceratoia.

THE ENEMY COUNTERATTACKS

That night at 0330, 11 October, both Easy and George Companies received one of the strongest counterattacks ever directed against the Battalion. (9) It was then apparent that the German considered Monte Formiche one of the key points of his defense. A hectic night battle began and continued until daylight. The enemy had moved many automatic weapons forward and massed them on the crest of the mountain above Maceratoia. Enemy troops moved in from Del Monte and caught Easy Company head-on, the surprise element now favored the enemy. The enemy's move was so rapid that there was little time for warning of the oncoming counterattack. Easy Company's outpost line was driven back. The enemy automatic weapons above Maceratoia opened up, pouring a hail of lead into the village below. The prime mover which had been captured and parked along side the buildings in Maceratoia was set on fire by an enemy incendiary grenade. The burning vehicle illuminated the entire town, making it doubly difficult for the defenders--they were in the light while the enemy was lying around and above the town in the darkness. Grenades seemed to be coming from everywhere. Rifle grenades were fired through the windows and doors and exploded within the buildings.

The enemy pushed his attack with full fury and a deadly

determination to retake Maceratoia. Easy Company on the left was compelled to give ground. The right portion of its line was forced back to the first building in its sector. As the enemy moved to within 40 yards of this building he began to blow in the walls with Panzerfausts--a German sequel to our Bazooka. Every door and window in the village was pouring out fire in the direction of the attack as rapidly as the men could reload their weapons. To the weary soldiers it seemed as if the prime mover would never burn out. Two hours of grueling fighting against morale breaking odds had passed before the attack was finally repulsed. The German withdrew, but continued to harass the town from his dominating position.

THE FINAL ASSAULT

The following morning, 11 October, the Battalion attacked as previously planned, preceded by the finest co-ordinated artillery, tank, and mortar barrages ever witnessed. (10) Easy Company, following the tank fire exceptionally close, was able to advance right up to the cliffs of Del Monte. With Bazooka fire, it worked its way through the town and cleared the enemy from the mountain ridge extending to the east. One platoon of George Company scaled the sheer cliffs, reached the crest of the mountain, and occupied the cemetery positions of the enemy. Another platoon immediately joined the first and pushed on to clear the enemy in the vicinity of the church. After this foothold was gained, the two platoons pushed on against strong enemy resistance. The support platoon of George Company moved in and around the church. Fox Company, still in reserve moved into Maceratoia.

The enemy made a grave mistake which proved most advantageous

to us--the attacker. He left his positions along the crest of the mountain, manned by scattered troops, while the main body backed away from the crest in order to get more cover from artillery fire, which was falling along his forward positions. (This incident definitely proves the weakness of a reverse slope defense). Because of this George company was able to reach the summit of Formiche. After George Company's success the enemy feverishly counterattacked to regain his lost position. Enemy self-propelled weapons and artillery began to shell the George Company area. The church collapsed causing many casualties in the support platoon, including the company commander. Through all of this, George Company held tenaciously to its gains inflicting heavy casualties on the counterattacking enemy.

The German continued to counterattack. Fox Company was ordered to move in between Easy and George Companies. The higher commanders were worried. They did not want to lose Monte Formiche by German counterattacks; therefore, companies Item and Love of the 3d Battalion were attached to reconstitute a reserve and to give additional power to the 2d Battalion which had all companies committed. (11) The 3d Battalion of the 339th Infantry was also attached to the 338th Infantry at 1500, 11 October, to be used on Division order only. (12)

The attack continued with Fox and George companies steadily pushing forward, despite the enemy's bitter resistance. This progress persisted until darkness again forced the Battalion to take up a defensive role. Love Company moved into position in the vicinity of Ca Del Monte and Item company was used for out-posting the newly won Battalion front.

In the valley to the right of Formiche the 1st Battalion

(11) A-3, p. 39; (12) A-5

had pushed north and was nearly on line with the 2d Battalion and 339th Infantry on the right.

During the night of 11 October, both sides were actively engaged in patrolling and small fire-fights flared up along the entire Regimental front. At 0600, 12 October, the attack was again resumed with the 3d Battalion passing through the 2d Battalion to take Monte Della Vigna, north of Formiche. The attacking battalion had advanced only a short distance beyond Formiche when it became quite evident that another "Formiche" had to be taken.

The successful termination of this engagement was followed by the characteristic maneuver of the German in Italy. That is, when an area or mountain becomes untenable, to fall back to the next favorable defensive position and to wait for the Allies to again press the attack.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In studying this operation it is easily seen that the mission given the 2d Battalion was most difficult. The cardinal principle is to by-pass, out-flank, and cut-off the enemy however, circumstances may demand a frontal attack. If the latter is true, the enemy can only be evicted by hard work. In this particular action it was not feasible to maneuver to the left of the mountain because the division on the left did not control the terrain as far forward as the 338th Infantry.

The initial plan of attack was good, sound thinking but never materialized. The success in taking Maceratoia and the failure in taking Del Monte with the remaining platoons of Easy Company pinned down by enemy fire dictated a new plan of action.

If the Battalion had attacked with two companies abreast over the barren terrain the result would undoubtedly have been

exceedingly heavy casualties.

Points worth of criticism are:

1st: The enemy had partial success in his initial counter-attack from Del Monte. The failure of the unit commanders to organize alternate defensive positions and consider counter-attack capabilities of the enemy made this "partial" success possible.

2d: In any offensive action heavy casualties must be expected and adequate replacements should be available. However, this was not true in the instance of the taking of Monte Formiche. Throughout the entire North Apennine Campaign units had to launch their attacks with greatly depleted ranks.

3d: Immediately upon the capture of Maceratoia a communication line should have been established with the Company C.P. at La Casone. Because this was not done the 1st platoon was without any means of communication when its radio failed.

4th: The initial attack on Del Monte might have been successful if the 2d platoon of Easy Company had reached Maceratoia as was intended. Because with increased strength in the attacking force probabilities are that Del Monte could have been held.

LESSONS

Some of the lessons to be learned from the North Apennine Campaign and Monte Della Formiche are:

1. In softening up an enemy position for the assault he must be pounded unmercifully with artillery concentrations, bombing attacks, tank and tank destroyer fire, mortar barrages, bazooka fire and hand grenades. All this must be followed aggressively by infantry. Concentrations and barrages are of no value in any assault unless they are followed closely enough so that the rifleman can close with the enemy before he realizes

that the fire has lifted and comes up to man his guns. The enemy will take up the slack the moment he knows it is there-- you must beat him to it.

2. In moving up to take an enemy occupied building, toss a hand grenade or fire a bazooka round into the building. Immediately after the explosion dash into the room with an automatic weapon blazing. This surprise action is almost always successful.

3. In mountain fighting, the enemy usually set up his automatic weapons and mortars to command trails, deep gullies, and ravines. However, by "riding the ridges" these points of resistance may be by-passed, out-flanked, and mopped up later. Get the high ground first and this will take care of the low ground.

4. Endurance, physical stamina, is most essential to the fighting man. Mountain warfare does not involve any new basic principles and in most cases in Italy it did not require specially trained troops. But the terrain encountered in the mountains required men to undergo exceptional hardships and necessitated top physical condition.

5. Unit commanders must consider human limitations. If the terrain is steep and the going is complicated by deep mud and lack of trails, the men are apt to lose contact. This especially applies to weapons platoons or heavily loaded units.

6. Whenever a hasty defense is set up for the night and burnable material as a haystack, vehicle, building, etc., is to your front, tie an incendiary grenade to it. Run a wire from the pin of the grenade to your position. Place plenty of gun powder or powder increments around the material. In the event of a counterattack at night pull the wire. The material will burn lighting up the area to your front catching the enemy completely exposed.

7. During the training phase, men must be taught that to bunch together is inviting casualties. This cannot be over emphasized because if the men are allowed to do it in training they will do it in combat.

8. The success of small units is still the backbone of victorious campaigns. The corollary of this is that the success of small units hinges upon the aggressive leadership of its commanders--the Sergeant, the Lieutenant.

9. A reverse slope defense is only as good as the time spent in constructing it. A hasty reverse slope defense will crumble rapidly in the face of a determined attack.

10. Wire communication in mountainous terrain is inadequate because of the time element involved in laying the lines. The answer to this is radios which have a longer range and greater portability.

11. Mules employed in mountain warfare, if placed under trained personnel, prove to be invaluable for supply and resupply.

12. Outpost positions must be mutually supporting. A covered route from the outpost line to the MLR is most important.

13. Every front line or position should have an alternate line or position. Every man must be thoroughly briefed as to what to do in the event of a counterattack and a withdrawal is necessitated.

14. Ridges continue to be the best means of approach, especially at night.

15. Houses should not be used for defensive positions if it is possible to select other locations. If it is necessary to occupy a house every man must have a predetermined firing position within the house. Captured buildings are invariably shelled by the enemy.

16. Once an objective has been taken, the leading elements must be reinforced without delay. This is especially true if the objective requires a larger force than the capturing unit to adequately defend it. The enemy will execute deep, flanking counterattacks to cut off any means of reinforcements; and at the same time launch a strong frontal attack to regain the lost position.

17. If a small unit is to operate 500 to 1000 yards in front of the next supporting unit, reserves must be brought up close enough so that the enemy cannot possibly cut the route of approach to the objective.

18. Ground once gained must be held.

19. The T/O is insufficient for evacuation of wounded in mountain warfare.

20. It is most essential for officers and non-coms to have a basic knowledge of artillery and artillery fire adjustment.

21. Enemy weapons and material must be destroyed upon capture if evacuation is impossible.

22. Ammunition and equipment must never be thrown away.

23. Orders must be obeyed even if they appear to be senseless. There is reason behind every one of them. Failure to obey may lead to the suffering of others.

24. The training of small units for independent action is very necessary.

25. Frontal attacks should be avoided unless they are absolutely essential to the success of the operation.

26. Practically all lessons learned on the field of battle only emphasize the teachings found in field manuals. Every time a cardinal rule is broken a casualty results.

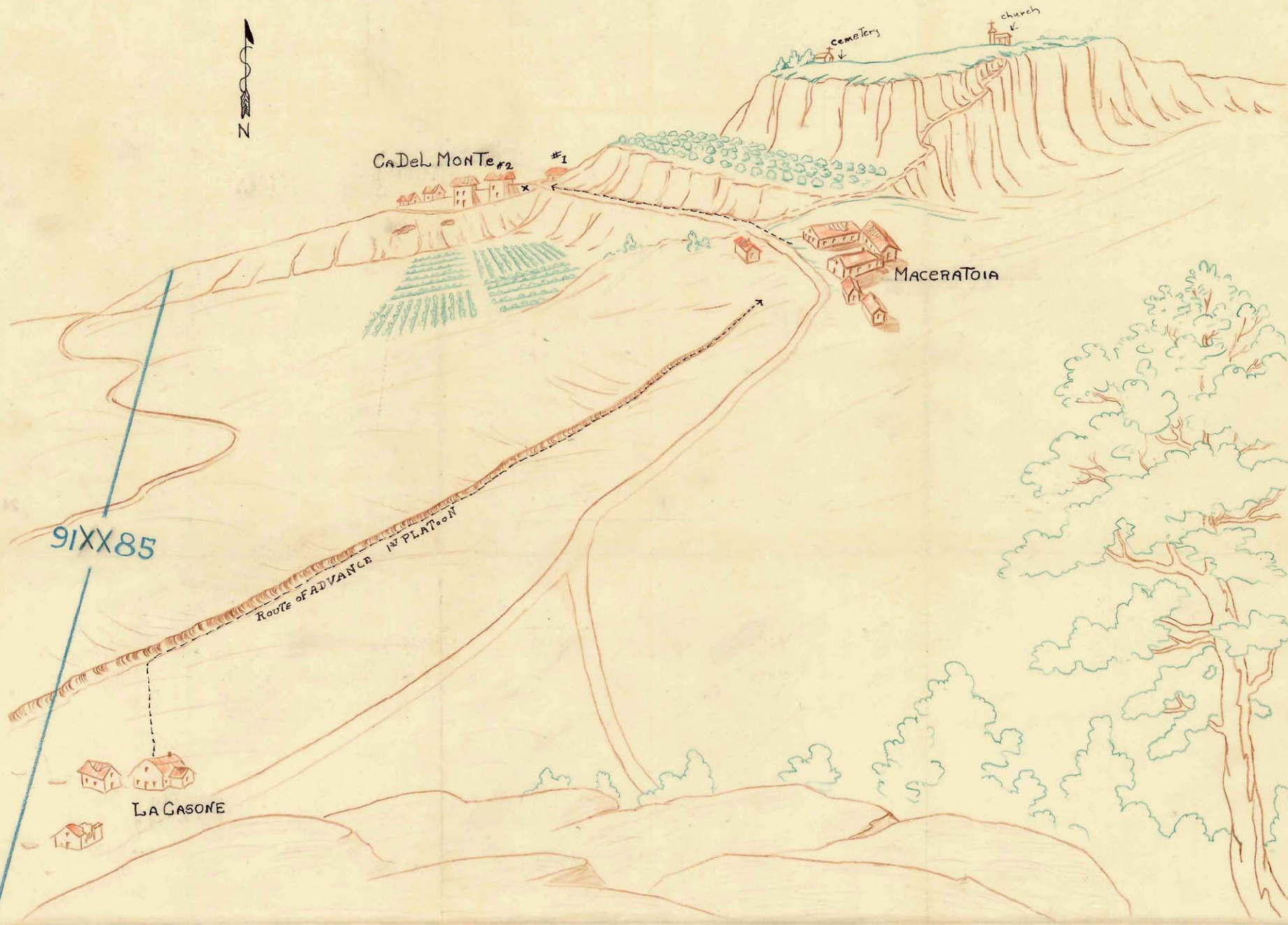


Contour Interval
170 Feet

0 500 1000 Yds.

Sketch No. 1

MONTE DELLA FORMICHE
Sketch No. 2





G E R M A N Y

SWITZERLAND

I T A L Y

MT. DELIA FORMICHE

YUGOSLAVIA

ALBANIA

A D R I A T I C
S E A

T Y R R H E N I A N
S E A

S I C I L Y

A P E N N I N E

GOthic LINE

GUSTAV LINE

SARDINIA

Statute Miles
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