

COMPANY "L", 357TH INFANTRY  
APO #85 U. S. ARMY

## HISTORY OF BATTLE

On 15 August 1944, the advance party consisting of Capt. Savacool, the platoon leaders, two section leaders and one gunner per L.M.G. and 60 MM went forward to join Company L, 363rd Infantry at Ponte a Evola, Italy. At dark, all men went to their respective positions to get oriented for the change over of the next night.

On inspecting the platoon positions; I found they were no good. Only one Mortar was employed and during the time the 363rd Infantry was on line, only three rounds were fired.

16 August: Went to a meeting that was called by the Bn. Commander to thrash out all questions and the preparation of the relief for to-night. This meeting was called for 0800.

Inspected the platoons before noon and received many suggestions from my platoon leaders.

The afternoon was spent picking a kitchen, new U.P. and a supply point. Our kitchen was coming up and we were to feed "B" rations.

The company moved forward leaving the last assembly area at 1400, walking. At 1730, I met the Company about two miles behind the lines and I took them forward to the last cover, about 200 yards behind Ponte a Evola. The men were dispersed and hot supper arrived at 1800.

At 2050, The Germans laid a big artillery barrage along the railroad tracks. At 2100, the Company was brought forward to relieve Company L, 363rd Infantry. At this time the L.M.G. Section of K Company, this Regiment, was attached to my 1st Platoon.

17 August 1944: At 0200 the relief had been completed without incident. At 0730, I received word by telephone that the 1st Platoon C.P. was surrounded by Germans. I could not get the details because the wires were then cut. I immediately went forward to the 3rd Platoon and was notified that the 1st squad was captured plus platoon headquarters. Sgt. Yaske, platoon guide of the third platoon was appointed platoon Sgt. of the 1st platoon and Sgt. Roberts' squad of the third platoon were ordered to join the 1st platoon. I then called the company C.P. and had Lt. Worrell report to me at once to become the platoon leader of the 1st platoon. I then went forward to the 1st platoon and saw what poor positions were turned over to them. No squad was able to support any one else. I and Lt. Worrell reconnoitered the area and welded the platoon together so that all squads could support each other. After taking a roll call, I found that nineteen (19) were captured- fifteen (15) of ours and four (4) of K Company.

Upon returning to the company C.P. Col. Madsen and Col. Hughes were there. Plans were laid for moving my company forward of the rail road tracks to better positions. During the afternoon, I and Lt. Sneary went forward of the rail road tracks

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to reconnoiter for new positions in no mans land. My decision was to move forward the next morning to occupy the new positions because too much confusion would be made at night digging, giving away our positions. Also the Germans did more moving at night. During the day 1st Sgt. Davis moved the company C.P. to a new location in Ponte a Evola because the other place was so dirty and hot. A clean up job would not have chased away the terrible smell.

1st Sgt. Davis and Lt. Stack were to take care of all operations at the C.P. and to see that all supplies were ordered and delivered to the platoons.

18 August 1944: I and Lt. Sneary started to displace his platoon forward to new positions. By 1400 every man was in position with out incident. I placed each man myself and each man was fully oriented before placing the next two men. The men were placed in two man fox holes and each fox hole had the support of a fox hole on either side of them.

A platoon of heavy machine guns were attached but could not find room for only a section. The 2nd section was then attached to K Company. The 1st section was placed on the left flank of the company. The LMG section was still attached to the 2nd platoon and were placed on the right flank.

I and Sgt. Hoffman then looked for a Mortar position. They would be put in battery so they could cover the entire company front. A position was found 500 yards behind the line in the center of the company zone. During the afternoon all communications were re-laid and each platoon was given a 300 radio to use when all telephone wires were knocked out. Each platoon had a BEA phone to the company C.P. and each squad in the platoons had a sound power to their C.P. Sgt. Heckel, communication Sgt., and my runners were my wire team and they were very busy most of the time. I will not give the action day by day because it is covered in the platoon reports.

19 August 1944:

27 August 1944: On August 19 the Mortar section zeroed in on seven different targets along the front line and each target was numbered. All these numbers were given to each enlisted man and shown their areas. In this way, every man was an observer and when something happened in front of him he could call to the 60MM for a certain barrage and receive it in short order. Also he was taught how to adjust mortar fire and could lay it where he pleased.

The 81MM were zeroed on several points to the front and each man knew those numbers and where they would hit. Therefore nearly every man directed 81MM mortar fire from his fox hole.

The artillery was zeroed on several points along the river and across the river to the foot hills. All men knew where the points were and their numbers and could shift to any target front of our lines. So a great part of our firing was done by calling for numbers only.

Many new artillery targets were picked up at night and a compass reading was taken from two points in the line and placed on a map and the coordinates given to the artillery observer. Many night targets could only have one azimuth reading and an estimate of the distance given to me. I would find the coordinates on the map and given this, the artillery observer, could direct fire. My front line observers would do the adjusting on the target. I and my entire company want to congratulate the artillery on such fine service they gave us and also such quick service. Also we want to congratulate the 81MM mortars on such fine service they gave us throughout the operation.

This is the first time that privates and all of my NCO's had a

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chance to work with mortars and artillery since our being in combat. Every man believes he is a good observer and can readily adjust to a target.

Nearly every night the company C.P. telephone line was open directly to the artillery O.P. I or Lt. Stack would be busy until 0200 every morning with the platoon telephone to one ear and the Bn. telephone to the other, transmitting information from the front line to the rear or vice versa.

The 81MM mortars had a direct wire to my 60MM section. This speeded up communications very much. While we were on line, those few days, we were attacked 37 different times-- dawn attacks-- mid-day -- evening-- and any time during the night.

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