

COMPANY "A" 310TH MEDICAL BATTALION
85th Infantry Division

HIGHLIGHTS OF COMPANY "A"

DECLINED

OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

COMMITTEE

Phillips 9 Aug 46

Company "A" arrived in the vicinity of Mondragone Italy in the first week of

April 1944. Everyone was curious and perhaps somewhat apprehensive, as we made preparations for our first entrance into combat. The "Gustav Line" was static at the time and only periodic shelling of certain areas seemed to be the rule. The site for our station had been occupied previously by another collecting company and we were told that no enemy shells had landed close to the area for weeks.

On the night of 23 April 1944 the company moved into position to support both the 337th and 338th Infantry Combat Teams. The next night an enemy artillery shell landed in one of our 32 gallon corrugated cans standing on the northwest corner of our house. Fragments punctured three tires on an ambulance, and cut holes in many other vehicles scattered about the area. Fortunately, there was no one outside at the time and there were no casualties. Since enemy shells landed around the area the rest of the night, we considered that night, our battle indoctrination.

During our first week in combat we began to hear many stories of the weird activities of an ally of ours, the Gurkhas. We were told how they would infiltrate the enemy lines and slit Jerry throats with sharp razors, while Jerry was asleep, and many other equally fearful things. They were supposed to identify the enemy from friendly troops by feeling the type of identification tag the individual wore. Thus, it was with quite a shock that Pvt. George Hodge was awakened one night in a room at a battalion aid station, and found someone fingering about his neck. Luckily his fright was so great that he figuratively froze on the spot until the individual, identified as a Gurkha, was satisfied he was a friendly soldier and left. They say that George called for a quick change of underwear at the first opportunity.

On May 3 the company was removed from the line and placed in battalion reserve. On May 9, in preparation for the big operation of cracking the "Gustav Line", we received thirty three additional men to the company, many of whom recently arrived from the good old United States. Because of the amount of work which had to be done later on, they

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indeed, were, a welcome addition.

On the night of May 11, when the campaign to crack the "Gustav Line" began, the company was still in battalion reserve. However within 24 hours the entire company except for a few men in headquarters, was called up to help "B" and "C" companies evacuate the large number of casualties that were occurring at this time. In the first four days and nights of this operation, because of the confusion and immense amount of work everyone had to do, it was difficult to single out individual acts of heroism and "close calls" that everyone experienced. Each man who was engaged in this action had some experience that he will never forget. Litter bearers and ambulance drivers, carried and drove wounded men back to rear areas under intense shell fire until it seemed that they would collapse from exhaustion. However, the work was done and done well by everyone.

The company as a whole was suddenly and deeply grieved on 14 May when Pfc. Belvin A. Allison was killed in action. While seeking cover during an enemy artillery barrage, he was hit by a shell fragment and died instantly. In tribute to his memory it can be said that he is still mourned by his many friends in the company.

Despite the tragedy and many sacrifices that were going on about us these first four days, the period was not without its humorous incidents. On one of these occasions, Pvt. Herbert Bullock and Pvt. John Kelly, company litter bearers and six infantry litter bearers became lost somewhere in the front lines. They found a tank lieutenant who volunteered to lead them back to the vicinity of the aid station. They were marching single file when all of a sudden the lieutenant threw down his carbine, raised his hands and continued on down the trail. The litter bearers did likewise, thinking they were surrendering to the enemy. The lieutenant stopped after thirty yards of hands up marching. Much to his chagrin and relief, there alongside the trail was a dark stump with such shape as to resemble a rifle man at the kneeling position ready to fire. With the "Tree Stump" surrender over, all made their way back to the aid station safely.

By the 15 of May the rout of the German Armies in Southern Italy began. The company evacuated the wounded of the 337th Infantry Combat Team as it moved north along the west coast of Italy through such well known places as Formia, Itri and Fondi. When the company moved to S. Biagio four miles west of Fondi, the combat team was fighting a strongly fortified enemy force at Terracina. In this engagement, the Germans ignored

the Geneva Convention and began firing directly on Red Crosses and medical personnel. As a result Pvts. Morris H. Lichtenstein, Chandis, Stewart and John Milczarski were machine gunned by the enemy. Fortunately none of their wounds were serious and they were able to return to the company within six weeks time. Despite this type of fanatical resistance, the litter bearers still braved all types of small arms fire to do the job expected of them by the combat team.

By the 28 of May, the combat team had broken through into the Pontine Marches in the vicinity of Sezze. Here we were removed from the line with the ~~rest~~ ^{balance} of the division for what we thought was a rest. However, after 48 hours of regrouping, the company moved with the combat team to the vicinity of Cori for the all out assault on Rome. At Cori we witnessed our first exhibition of enemy air activity, as enemy planes bombed the former Anzio Beachhead. However, on the night of June 1st, at Lorian, enemy planes bombed the company area, and everyone then knew what enemy air activity was like. Fortunately, we had deep wine cellars^a handy for everyone to get into, in order to feel more secure. Two nights later on ~~the 3rd~~ ^{the 1st} of June, the company experienced another strafing and bombing attack by enemy aircraft. The attack occurred about dusk, on highway six, approximately eight miles south of Rome. The company had just moved into the area and many patients were lying about waiting for treatment when enemy planes suddenly dove down upon the company area and released anti-personnel bombs and strafed the area. At the same time enemy artillery shells began to land in the immediate vicinity. During the raid Capt. Untracht, one of the company medical officers, injured his shoulder when he fell trying to seek cover and had to be evacuated. His injury was grievous enough that he has been unable to return to the company, since his injury occurred. Once again a large number of casualties were evacuated under very trying circumstances. On the 5th of June, the litter bearers, with the infantry were able to receive the ~~applaudits~~ and enthusiasm of the Romans as they marched through the eternal city. The remainder of the company had to wait until evening to move in convoy with the combat team vehicles. When the convoy was moving along on highway seven, enemy aircraft appeared and strafed the column. Everyone agreed that this was probably their most horrifying experience of the war. The enemy aircraft flew over the column a number of

times releasing anti-personnel bombs, as the men of the company wildly left the vehicles in search of cover. Many men were so close to exploding bombs that they were lifted off the ground from the concussion. By some stroke of luck not a man of the company was injured, while many others of the combat team were killed or injured alongside of them. It was a sober and subdued company that moved through Rome that night to an assembly area near Mt. Mario, just north of the eternal city.

Following the fall of Rome the company followed the combat team to a point about 25 miles north to the vicinity of Lake Bracciano, where on the 10th of June the division as a whole was removed from the line. On the 15th of June the company moved to Lido Di Roma, south of Rome. Here training was commenced again but the men were able to take advantage of the famous Lido beaches for swimming. On the 13th of July the company moved north to the vicinity of Roccestrada and remained there six days and then moved to Rossignano. The area at Rossignano proved to be heavily mined. (On the 23rd of July Pmts. Tony Romero and Raymond Talamantes were walking about the perimeter of the company area when Romero stepped upon a mine, blowing his right foot off and injuring Talamantes with superficial wounds.)

On the 28th of July the company moved east to a bivouac area Northeast of Volterra, where training was resumed. Arrangements were made for some of the men to purchase articles made of the famous Volterra Alabaster, which they were able to send home as souvenirs.

On the 16th of August the company was alerted, and moved to an assembly area Northwest of Castel Fiorentino and from there moved into the line to support the 337th Infantry Combat Team, who was to defend the south bank of the Arno River. Aside from a few anxious moments from enemy artillery shelling, nothing exceptional occurred in the ten day period the company was operating. On the 27th of August the combat team was withdrawn from the line and went to an assembly area four miles north of Certaldo.

In September of 1944 following withdrawal of the Division from combat after the crossing of the Arno River Company "A" occupied several ill-fated bivouac areas while making preparations for an reentrance into combat in the assault in the Gothic Line. No one in the company will forget Certaldo where the sun shone all day and the rain fell

all night. While there we were bivouaced in what the die-hards would call a fairly active river bottom. Each night the creek which flowed through our company site rose in response to the rain and covered a large part of the area with a foot or more of muddy cold flood water. Equipment floated irresponsibly down stream for miles. Sgt. Felton and his company supply section were in a constant state of damp chaos. It was here that Capt. Runde's most famous (and only) optimism was born. "It won't again rain until April", he would intone with amazing solemnity night after night shivering as he stood on his bed in his shorts peering at the two foot flood waters lapping through the tent by the light of his flickering Zippo lighter. In spite of that the entire company did finally move to high ground whereupon it stopped raining. On September 13th at 0600 the assault on the Gothic Line commenced. The 337th Infantry Regiment was initially in reserve. Company "A" moved from Certaldo, by motor infiltration to a rear assembly area in the vicinity of Vaglia, on the Sieve River on September 14th. The first days of the new offensive demonstrated the defensive power and strength of a numerically equal enemy entrenched in mountain positions on the slopes of the Central Appennines. Because of the ferocity of the resistance elements of the 337th Regiment were committed to combat on September 14th with the mission of securing Mt. Pratone which dominated strategic Mt. Altuzzo to the west. Company "A" moved in behind the Regiment to set up a station in Luco, within the shadow of the Regiment's mountainous objectives. Casualties were heavy and conditions for evacuation unbelievably difficult. Our litter bearers at times carried patients for as many as six to eight miles over almost impassible mountain trails, across narrow paths gouged out of the sheer cliffs, paths wide enough to allow passage of only one man. Many times one false step meant death. The experience of Sol Glick and his squad of three consisting of Pvt. John Schaffer, Pfc. Thomas Shipp and Pvt. Leopold Spry is a indication of the heroism and physical strain demanded of the men in effecting hand evacuation. Sol and his squad volunteered to accompany an assault unit in an early morning attack. While yet a considerable distance from their objective the unit was fired upon and split into two sections by Jerry who was dug in on the side of a nearby dominating hill. His fire was the signal for an intense mortar barrage which lasted for almost four hours. Machine-pistol fire raked the road where the squad sought meager cover. Both infantry and medics

alike were pinned to the ground. Word of a casualty eventually reached the squad and the men were forced to abandon what cover they had to find the casualty, gave what aid they could, and prepared to carry him back to the aid station by a round-about route. As it developed this return route involved the crossing of two mountain peaks. It was only with a superhuman effort that the squad finally completed the unfamiliar, eight miles evacuation over terrain hazardous in itself, not to mention the difficulties imposed by intermittent enemy artillery and mortar barrages. It was for this achievement that Sol Glick and his squad were awarded Bronze Star Medals. T/5 Jack Becker received the Bronze Star Medal during this same period for effecting the evacuation of two of our men under a concentrated mortar barrage which men were injured both within sight of the enemy.

At Lucca many of the men of the company saw allied Spitfires bombing and strafing enemy mountain strong-points in "our front yard", for the first time. That experience was repeated many times as our Regiment slugged and battled its way into the belly of the fanatically defended Gothic Line. As the assault elements of the Regiment moved from captured Pratone to La Fine and from there forward in a northeasterly direction the company was forced to move to the extreme right flank of the division front to effect evacuation. On the 18th of September a station was established at Ronta on the main supply route of the British flanking Corps. Thus began a long and interesting association with the British troops, as only Americans can associate. Cpl. John Geary's vocabulary was immeasurably enriched with Choice Cockney phrases unerringly rendered. We began to hear, at first hand, of Dunkirk and El Alemein.

On the 20th of September the company moved to a bivouac area four miles Northeast of Scarperia preparatory to moving into the traffic-choked Giogio Pass. A forward collecting station was promptly set up in Barco at the heels of the advancing infantry. Heavy casualties resulted from an engagement in the vicinity of Moschetta which could be reached only by an exposed jeep trail, the famous first, "ridge road". Under intense artillery fire and despite urgent arguments from infantry and artillery officers in the vicinity, Lt. Eliscu with two ambulances driven by Cpl. Geary, Pfc. Glennon Smith and Pfc. Gerald Lansfield successfully accomplished the hazardous trip from Barco to Moschetta and back, evacuating several loads of seriously wounded infantrymen. For this these men were awarded Bronze Star Medals.

On September 22nd the company closed into Rifredo after a cold late afternoon ride through battle-pocked Gioigio Pass. The following morning a forward station was set up in S. Pelligrino on the banks of the swollen torrential Sauterno River. Two miles beyond the station our ambulance loading post was heavily shelled while the station was being established. "Curly" Carlson's ambulance was literally riddled with fragments though "Curly" himself escaped without a scratch. Cpl. Billie Windham who was on his way to an aid station as a litter bearer was not quite so fortunate as "Curly". He was struck in the arm by a fragment, and had to be evacuated to the rear along with 16 infantrymen caught at the loading post in the same barrage.

The autumnal rains started in earnest on September 27th. Dry river beds previously used as roads by our ambulances filled with torrents of water in a matter of a few hours. One ambulance, with a litter patient, was suddenly caught up in such a flood. The waters rose so rapidly that the patient was rescued from the ambulance by means of ropes only a few short moments before the ambulance itself was carried away crashing down the mountain slopes. Dugouts were flooded. Cave-ins were a common thing. The supply situation forward of the company became so critical that the previously initiated forward medical supply dump became an urgent necessity. Pvt. Lowell Huntley spent many lonely hours forward of the ambulance loading post, where our dump was located, to be most convenient to the aid stations.

October first, the company moved through a drizzling cold fall rain to the town of Roco where a forward collecting station was already operating. In a roadside farmhouse, still remarkably intact in spite of enemy mortar and artillery fire the company set up station, kitchen, and headquarters. With the increasing rains all possible routes of ambulance evacuation rapidly developed into rivers of thick heavy mud, hub deep. The never-to-be-forgotten second "ridge road" which flowed past Oppio was a constant challenge to our drivers. No one who drove over the road in daylight would believe that it could possibly be driven over under blackout conditions, but it was, many times. Forward casualty collecting points were established first at Oppio and, six days later in a churchyard adjacent to Monterenzio. Pfc. Lynn Ritter's many friends in the company were greatly saddened when they learned of his death which occurred on the jeep trail leading from Oppio to Monterenzio, the result of an enemy mine explosion. His loss left a place

impossible to fill in the hard-working litter bearer platoon.

Following a rapid shift in the Regimental sector to the west, the company moved rapidly to the vicinity of Borgo di Bisano on October 9th to straddle a recognizable road for the first time in three weeks.

The Regiment entered on a week of much needed rest in a forward bivouac area on October 13th but rest proved difficult to both the litter bearers and ambulance drivers stationed with it since the bivouac areas were under intermittent heavy artillery fire. Casualties from the rest areas were as heavy as those from the front line company areas. Added to this was the painful novelty of several strafing attacks mistakenly directed at our own battalions by friendly planes. During this week the litter bearers were rotated back to the company and treated to the luxury of good hot meals and a dry secure bed. Sgt. Brannen with Sgt. Daniel Reyes, Cpl. Brownkowski, and the remainder of the kitchen crew worked long and hard to make up to the men for the cold, infrequent rations which they had had for the weeks past in the aid stations.

When the Regiment reentered combat in the Monte Castellaro sector on the 20th of October on the left flank of the 88th Division the situation made imperative the establishment of a forward collecting station on the main Supply route of that Division, highway 931, to effect evacuation of combat team casualties. The elements of the company which went forward to set up the chain of evacuation, were caught in a heavy enemy artillery barrage in the vicinity of Belvidere and spent an anxious half hour in a deep culvert. They say it was here that "Doc" Schomburg "barked" most of his few remaining hairs on Chaplain Thomas Nolan's shins. This story has never been confirmed but the facts speak for themselves.

A station tent was pitched two miles south of St. Clemente on the flat bank of a river in defilade but rising flood waters forced the almost swimming crew to seek higher ground at the price of security. Intermittent artillery barrages gave Staff Sgt. Tallman, Sgt. DeLong, Sgts Kimmel and Carr, and the remainder of the station platoon many anxious moments as they "sweat" it out in the tent on the bare slope of a hill beyond which was an exposed flank. Increasing rains made our main axis of evacuation impassable, for we had to cross what had originally been a shallow brook, 15 times from the main road to

the ambulance loading post. It was at this point that we called on the 248 F.A. Battalion for use of their 13 ton prime movers. All Casualties were taken to a collecting point on the top of the hill, and from there were carried down hill in mud knee deep. At the base of the hill they were fed hot coffee through the courtesy of our ambulance drivers, and provided with fresh dry blankets and a warm place to stay while waiting for the prime mover transportation. Once on the main road, they were given further medical treatment, and then came another problem: the evacuation to the rear. By this time at least four bridges and one culvert on highway 931 were washed out, so this is how a casualty was transported to the rear: He was driven first to the washed out culvert, then hand-carried across a narrow foot bridge, placed in another ambulance and driven to the first washed out bridge. Here he was either taken from the ambulance and placed in a boat to be rowed across or the ambulance would be used as a tram way, with the help of the tow lines of two ^{or} catapillers. This process continued all the way to the rear. A total of 87 casualties were evacuated in this manner.

Because the company was evacuating outside its own division zone during this period, it was thought most expedient to evacuate casualties directly to the 88th Division Clearing Station which was located in Piancondoli, a distance of eight short miles from our station. The round trip from Collecting to Clearing frequently took an entire night because of heavy traffic and the condition of the roads. The road was under artillery fire at some points and Pfc. David Levine, with "Doc" Schomburg could always be relied on to return with a story of hair-breath escape from disaster, usually much too true to be humorous, yet always laugh provoking for the inimitable way he told it.

With such long ambulance runs over flooded and hub-deep rutted roads vehicle breakdowns became an almost hourly occurrence and a constant headache for Lt. Roginski, Staff Sgt. Allen C. McLawhorn, Sgt. Kozlowski, Opl. Peter Bukk, and Pfc. Rufus Dickerson who never spared themselves in keeping the ambulances on the road.

Knee deep mud was constantly at work against the litter bearers as well as the ambulance drivers. On one occasion a squad of four litter bearers carrying a 190 pound patient mired down in mud and appeared to be caught in a hopeless predicament until a group of passing infantrymen sighted the unfortunate group and rescued both patient and squad. Front lines were not too clearly defined and Pvt. Paul Baker reports that on one occasion,

at least, he realized he'd gone too far in search of a casualty when an Italian family came out of their house and began to hug and kiss him, with cries of "Liberatori". He beat a hasty retreat after such treatment.

On the night of October 25th, Tec 4 Richards and several of his squads were being guided forward of the aid station, when the guide lost his way, leading them all inside enemy territory. As soon as Richards heard the German voices, he dropped down and in soft undertones called to his men to follow him. He saw the beacon lights and was going to go in that direction to get back to our lines. It was here that Tec 5 Kalletta, and Pvt. "Meatball" Consalvo, failed to follow him, and became P.O.W's, the first and last of the company.

The attack on Monte Castellero on October 26th and 27th proved an extremely costly one and casualties were heavy. It was here that Pvt. Harry O. White was struck and instantly killed by a shell fragment a short distance from a forward aid station while he was on his way to evacuate a casualty. His loss was felt deeply in the company. To evacuate the injured from this sector three squads of litter bearers under the direction of Sgt. Ezzie Miller worked ceaselessly in the mud and rain with little food, and less rest, for four days and nights, under intense mortar and artillery fire, until the wounded were found and carried to the rear. Those awarded the Bronze Star for such heroic work, in addition to Sgt. Miller were Pvt. Harry O. White (Posthumously), Cpl. John Frkan, Tec 5 James McMenamy, Pvt. Kenneth Knittle, Pfc. John Kelly, Pvt. Joseph Hawxhurst, Pvt. Milio Frustini, Pvt Simon Clark, Pvt. Frank Clement, Pfc. Urban Alewine, Pfc. Fred Agnello, Pfc. Wayne Tone, Pfc. Paul Mobley, Pfc. A. Z. Clayton and Pfc. Francis Baggett. Staff Sgt. Patrick Sullivan did a splendid job of coordinating this activity as well as in setting up litter relay posts throughout the entire Gothic line. He accomplished the almost impossible task of providing food and dry clothes for his men at regular intervals during these difficult days and to insure rest for his men, himself carried litter patients. Through his careful planning and constant vigilance he contributed much to the fact that not one battle casualty died while enroute from battalion aid stations to the collecting station.

On November 11th the Regiment was relieved by elements of the 1st British Division and our war-weary, thoroughly exhausted, company moved on November 12th to a bivouac area

at Gagliano, Italy, for a richly deserved rest. After two days of rest and inspections a period of training was begun which was interrupted on November 24th for six days when the company followed the Regiment to Pistoia for a period of restricted training, rest and relaxation. Intensive training was resumed on the return of the company to Gagliano on November 30th and continued until the 23rd of December when the division was unexpectedly alerted and moved to the vicinity of Lucca, Italy, ~~to avert a possible enemy breakthrough in the Serchio River Valley.~~ The Regiment remained on alert during the Christmas holidays and the company likewise, but in spite of this fact Sgt. Brammen and his group prepared a Christmas Dinner which no one in the company will ever forget. Both the men and the company officers thoroughly enjoyed the informal Christmas Eve party marked by exchanges of season's greetings and the singing of Carols. The spirit displayed made everyone almost forget that home was four thousand miles away.

The New Year found this company in an assembly area with the 337th Infantry Regiment. This area was located at the junction of the Serchio River Valley and the Plain of the Arno. The combat team had been sent to this point late in December to act as a reserve force, ~~in the event of an Enemy Breakthrough in this sector of the front.~~ We remained here only a few days after the New Year before returning to the Division Rest Area at Gagliano on 7 January 1945. On January 8th one-half of the company was sent forward to support the relief of a portion of the 1st British Infantry Division by the 337th Regiment Combat Team. This sector of the front included the famous or infamous, if you will, Mt. Grande, Mt. Cuccoli, and Monte Caldera^{are} sectors which we had left with no reluctance what-so-ever back in November. Our station was located in what had been a fairly modern farm house near Casola Valsenio, Italy. The building now featured many-draft ventilation among its other drawbacks, but it was the site of the British Dressing Station which we were relieving and was all ours for better or for worse. A plan was formulated by our Battalion Headquarters whereby A and B Company were to alternate every ten days in the line. This was done for two reasons: 1. the casualty density was so light that this was permissible and 2. there were very few sites available in this area for a collecting company—— as one man expressed it, "even the Italians won't live in these dam mountains". Our station was located approximately 2 miles from the town of St. Clemente. The routes from our station to the Battalions

had wonderful names, a legacy from the British. The Western Valley Road, Boston Byway, Sunset Walley, Tank House, and such signs as "Proceed with caution periodic shelling" will live long in memory. This period at the front was not by comparison at least a particularly arduous or dangerous one for station personnel. There was periodic shelling but through foresighted previous arrangements with enemy gunners B Company always seemed to get the shells, and we recieved the quieter stretches. A great portion of the local din was contributed by Capt. Demsey's Battery C of the 328th Field Artillery whose fire direction center was situated ~~in a portion of our building.~~ ^{Paragraph} The stretch at the front proved to be no vacation for the people who have the really tough assignments in a collecting company, the litter bearers and the ambulance drivers. The drivers alternated every few days at the ambulance loading posts situated at the tops of Western Valley and Boston Byway. The litter bearers were out with the battalions and carried casualties not only from the aid stations back to the ambulance loading posts but frequently went out in front of the Aid Stations to the Infantry out posts after casualties. They had many experiences both humorous and "not so funny", Bud! Pvt. Clark orderd to 1st Battalion Aid Station was told to accompany the mule train as no guides were available. Approximately one-half way he found himself to be in complete control as the guide became very "tired". The only difficulties involved were: 1. Clark speaks no Maharati, and the mule skinnners spoke no English; 2. he was still ignorant of the location of 1st battalion. It is known that he spent most of the night wandering around the frontlines, but Clark's only comment is "Never again". Pvt. Daniels of D Company made a very fine impression upon the litter bearers in this company during this period. One dark and lonely winter night Pvts. Turso and Mills were returning from the ambulance loading post. Suddenly two rifle shots zinged overhead. Mills made a dive for cover in a nearby house with Turso running along remonstrating with him to the effect that a guard nearby might mistake them for a Jerry Patrol. Mills classic response being-- "If that isn't the Germans, it is the guard, and if it isn't the guard lets go, brother". It was during this period in the line that we had our first snowfall in Italy. The snow was quite deep along the ridge lines and in the draws it drifted to impassable depths. This imposed further difficulties upon the litter bearers, until litter sleds were issued. It was then discovered that in some instances one man could evacuate a litter patient. We were relieved in the line March 7th, 1945 and returned to Gagliano for

training and reequipping.

We remained at Gagliano for a period of fifteen days. It was during this period that the boys had a fling in the 5th Army Rest Area at Montecatini, Italy. From all reports a very wet time was had by all. On the 22nd of March we moved with the combat team to the vicinity of Casine Nuova, Italy. This was a training area, and during our four day stay here we participated in a rivercrossing problem in support of the combat team. We were then moved to a new training area in the vicinity of St. Leonardo, Italy.

On April 16th, 1945 we recieved orders to move in convoy with the combat team to a frontline assembly area near Abetiaia, Italy. We arrived in this area the morning of the 17th, and that same afternoon we were ordered to move to Cereglio, Italy. This proved to be a long and somewhat uncomfortable trip over the extremely rough secondary roads being used at the time. We were then informed that there would be a necessity for an immediate move in the morning. The Regiment was being committed. Since the distance to the Clearing Station from the Station at Cereglio was already a long road trip, it was decided to send one half of the company forward with the Regimental C.P. The other one half was to remain at Cereglio and serve as an ambulance relay post and another echelon in the medical treatment of casualties. The forward portion of the company moved out at 0600 the following morning and joined the Regimental C.P. Reports from the frontline companies at the time stated that they had had no casualties, and were moving constantly forward with no resistance. We remained with the rear C.P. until afternoon and then moved on ahead to Forward C.P. at Vignola, Italy. It was here that we set up our first station of this period of combat. The roads leading back to Cereglio were choked with traffic that night and in addition there was heavy shelling of the entire route back as far as three miles from our position. It was decided that it would be best to continue the present setup and maintain our relay at Cereglio until our route of evacuation was shortened. The round trip from forward to rear collecting companies was in itself a five hour haul under the conditions at the time. This was to be the last night in Italy that our station was on the receiving end of a shelling. The following day the entire company closed into the station at Vignola. This was possible as a new route of evacuation had become available which materially shortened our run to the Clearing Company. We remained at Vignola for one more

day in which there was little activity as there was a shift in the Corps boundaries taking place. The following morning at 0600 the forward one-half of the station moved out again for a distance of five miles. This day we moved three times, with our last site being in the Valley of the Po approximately one half mile below Gezzo, Italy. It was this day also that T/5 Jack Becker and Pvts. Bullock and McCall were to distinguish themselves and earn Becker the Oak Leaf Cluster to his Bronze Star and Bronze Stars for the other two men. The casualties were left behind by F Company of 2nd Battalion when they were compelled to withdraw from a ridge due to a heavy mortar barrage and small arms fire. These three men with great risk to themselves traveled over one-half mile out in front of our lines under enemy observation with small arms fire constantly being directed upon them to evacuate the men. As they returned, they passed through the lines of one of the Regiments of the 88th Division which had held up its attack until the men were evacuated. Now the chase was on. The prisoners were streaming by going to the rear and the PW cages, and the infantry reserve battalions were going forward. It was near Gezzo that we had our greatest casualty density during the push as 2nd Battalion ran into a lot of trouble. On the 21st, the following morning, we moved out to Highway 9 in the wake of the 338th. We were now in Divisions Reserve with the 337th Combat Team. We remained in an assembly area here until evening. A quartering party was sent on with the forward Regimental C.P. to Budere, Italy. Their arrival at this small Italian village was being simultaneous with "one hell of a big shell from Jerry" according to Runner Lane. The company closed into Budere at 1000. Plan had already been discussed at Regimental Headquarters for a motorized task force to the north. We moved out at 0500 in the morning following the Regimental C.P. which was following the motorized 3rd Battalion. Two ambulances with "Curley Carlson" in charge were supporting motorized 2nd Battalion. If there were any casualties in his battalion, "Curley" was to contact us by Battalion Radio as to our location. The first battalion supported by "Irish" Geary's and "Muscles" Mittleman's ambulance were following on foot. We followed along with no difficulties to mention except for several truck loads of Jerrys popping up here and there to confuse the situation, until reaching Camposanta, Italy. Here a small force of Jerrys attempted to prevent our crossing of the Pianora River. A fire fight ensued, and it was late the same afternoon before 3rd Battalion fought their way across

the stream. The 2nd Battalion meanwhile had better progress after ^{expecting} ~~attacking~~ a relatively uncontested crossing of the Pianora. We remained at Camposanta that night, and the following day moved with the Regimental C.P. to Ghetto, Italy. A forward collecting company was moved into Quistello, Italy with the Forward C.P. This was a day characterized by one of those fluid situations that one reads about in the papers. There were German troops moving about in the rear areas during the entire day with local fire fights springing up when they contacted American Road blocks. They were all attempting to get back across the Po River before being cut off by American Troops. The night was also a memorable one for several reasons. First the wonderful reception given us as we moved into Quistello, crowds were cheering, vino was flowing, and the local scenery was excellent. Second was the last of the Luftwaffe. He spent his entire ~~evening~~ making life miserable for us in one way or another; for after strafing Quistello's main square three times, he bombed the town and thereby distributed plaster and glass liberally all over our station. T/5 Shelley and Pfc. Bradbury were to earn their Bronze Stars this evening as they courageously carried out their duties in evacuating patients from the forward to the rear collecting stations. The third and by no means least memorable reason was the preparation for the crossing of the Po in support of the combat team. This had been done as mentioned above in a recent problem and by applying the principles learned there we were able to rapidly set up an efficient evacuation plan. The morning of the 24th the combat team crossed the Po with no immediate opposition. After moving inland and establishing a BEACHHEAD we were relieved by other elements of the Division. It was the evening of the 26th of April before we were able to get priority to cross the Po although our ambulances and litter bearers had crossed the first day of the operation with the assault battalions. The company moved to the north and entered Division reserve with the combat team in the vicinity of Foretta, Italy about six miles south of Verona. We remained in the vicinity until the night of the 30th of April, when we were ordered back into the line in support of the ^bcombat team. This night we moved northward in convoy to an assembly area near Vincenza, Italy, ^tthe following evening moving by convoy to Ferner, Italy. From this point we moved one half of the company forward with the Forward C.P. in support of the motorized 2nd and 3rd Battalions. This was the 3rd of May. The Task Force moved rapidly northward until reaching the vicinity of Maas, Italy.

Here the 2nd Battalion motorized units with support of the 757 TK Battalion contacted German resistance. They moved rapidly into combat and shortly after ~~almost~~^{near} annihilation of a German column, the Regimental Headquarters was contacted (on the radio) by the 76th German Corps Headquarters with a some-what aggrieved statement to the effect that the war was supposed to have ended this day at 1400. This later turned out to be the truth, and we remained in the vicinity of Maas evacuating both Germans and our own wounded until V-E Day May 8th, 1945.

For meritorious service in support of these last operations the following men received Bronze Stars:

1st Lt. Norbert S. Roginski O-1546549

Sgt. Lonnie E. Lizana 34276950

Omit

During combat operations, one thousand nine hundred and eighty three (1,983) battle casualties and three thousand two hundred and nineteen (3,219) sick and non-battle injured were treated and evacuated through this collecting company.