

HEADQUARTERS 805TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION  
APO 464, United States Army

Battalion History, 1 Feb - 29 Feb 1944

- 1 - 135th Infantry, supported by 756th Tank Battalion, launched an attack South from the bridgehead across the Rapido to capture the Barracks at M. Villa. Arty cubs reported tanks or SP's moving North toward Cassino. Our observers could not see them; however, we interdicted roads entering the town. Heavy fog and smoke definitely spoiled our plans for sniping. During the night we harassed the road to Villa San Lucia and Highway 6. Battalion paid on schedule (this never happened in Tunisia).
- 2 - Lieutenant Hardy, Liaison with 756 Tank, reported 135 has Barracks and some tanks are in North end of Cassino. Later these were driven out by SP AT guns. The Battalion Commander and Reconnaissance Officer inspected Forward Observer OP's in 133rd sector. Because of the trees and wrecked buildings none give a good view of Cassino streets. The best, in an attic, was crowded by other observers, including four photographers. Surprisingly, the Infantry Battalion Commander was unable to point out definite enemy installations. Trochie, and CP behind "C", and the roof of our CP, 5,000 yards from Cassino, afford excellent OP's for registration and the like, but have been useless for observing the enemy. Forward OP's in the bottomland are blinded by trees and the river levees. 9 light armored cars, M-20, were received and are being readied for service.
- 3 - Lieutenant Thompson found an OP in a house close to river South of Highway 6 from which he checked C's registration, but could see no enemy activity across river. 4 tanks seen by cubs South of town were quite possibly 4 lost by 756 in Cassino last night. CP visited by two observers: G-3 of a Division in the States and an Antitank Officer from First Army.
- 4 - An exhausted pigeon landed in "O's" area; we phoned its message to Div Arty. Aside from this and usual harassing schedule, our day was quiet.
- 5 - Lieutenant Colonel Pyland, 636 Tank Destroyer Battalion, visited the C,F. on a reconnaissance of the area. The day dawned clear and smokeless -- perfect visibility. Lieutenants Nahrwald and Hoffman on Trochie had a field day, finding considerable traffic on Highway 6. Adjustments were made on Piedimonte and S. Lucia M's, and a battery or company held ready to fire. Observer, watching progress of vehicles, called "Fire" as target entered impact area. Some guns and Nebels were located by Company observers, one by a "B" Company gun commander. Battalion Commander adjusted on an occupied house from the CP roof top. Jerry also was active, making several adj adjustments around Cervare, followed by night harassing, some very heavy stuff coming from Atina. "B" had one light casualty from counterbattery fire.

- 6 - 0715 - A single large caliber round scored a direct hit on "A's" 1st platoon CP, killed Lieutenant Antonelli and fatally wounded Pvt. John Kelly. Trocchio CP completed three adjustments on Infantry near river South of Cassino. The Battalion Commander conferred with Brigadier General John P. Hays, 2nd Division, new Acting Commander of Div. Arty. Battalion Commander adjusted a gun on a house at 6700 yards with HE, then with APC, obtaining hits at the same elevation. Results are not yet conclusive. Enemy air reconnaissance active today. Infantry hangs on to North end of town and heights North of Monastery, though fighting is bitter and continuous. Lieutenant Walker was attached to "C" to command in the absence of Captain Kunkle, hospitalized with an accidental injury.
- 7 - Trocchio CP continued his sniping on Highway 6 traffic. Battalion Commander adjusted on three Cassino houses, used some APC. "A" reported some shelling. Friendly A-20's turned back before reaching Cassino, dropped three large bombs around "A". Neighboring units suffered casualties, 16 killed, 10 wounded.
- 8 - 0820 - 6 rounds 105 fell near CP, throwing rocks against building; repeated at 0840 and 1320. "A" reported 5 rounds at 1305. 756 lost 6 more Tanks in Cassino. Two day's ammunition and rations were stocked, as Highway 6 will be unavailable for this period. 24-hour for main effort still delayed due to inability of 168 to obtain its preliminary objective, the Abbey Hill. "B's" North platoon demolished a house for 133rd with 50 rounds HE and APC. All rounds were target hits at 4400 yards except first APC. This mission aroused considerable counterbattery.
- 9 - Harassing fire fell on A's road, throughout early morning hours. A Battalion ammunition truck was hit, suffering 6 flats and a small fire; ammunition and truck were saved. Several rounds fell in Cervero from due North, probably from S. Biagio. CP had a near miss from behind Abbey.  
1230 - Lieutenant Colonel C. G. Smith, Hq. Fifth Army, and Lieutenant Colonel Porter, 8th Div., visited Battalion Commander.  
1500 - General Keys, with Colonel Raymond, 8th Division, visited CP, and with Battalion Commander, inspected C's guns and FDC. He appeared quite impressed with our accomplishments as Artillery.  
Lieutenant Nahrwold, sniping from Trocchio, destroyed two more trucks on Highway 6.
- 10 - Poor observation prevent CP's finding targets of opportunity. All batteries were adjusted on their concentrations in the preparation scheduled by F.O. #16. These were changed by annexes to F.O. #17, received at dark, however, adjustments were not wasted as the targets remain as "call" missions. Our first officer, the S-3, departed for Officers' Rest Camp, Sorrento. M/Sgt. Weber was sworn in as a Warrant Officer, Personnel.
- 11 - From 1000 to 1100 the Battalion fired 1600 rounds in preparation, in conjunction with the artillery with the Corps, for Infantry's attack on Abbey Hill. The concentrations were observed falling where requested on the Cassino-Abbey Hillside. Infantry, receiving intense

machine gun fire from a hill N. W. of Abbey, found it necessary to include this in their objectives; they shifted and jumped off at 1150. Captain Gerald A. Derosier, Infantry, and 5 NCO's, replacements for rotation personnel, reported for duty.

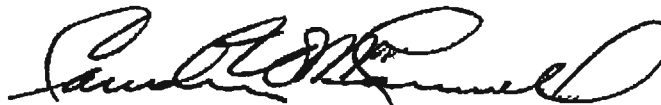
- 12 - Jerry artillery was particularly active today from 0600 to 2230, all companies and Battalion C.P. receiving 120 rounds in 8 shellings; three men were slightly injured in "B" and "C".
- 13 - Infantry made slight progress in town and in hills Northwest. We harassed some gun positions, previously counterbattered by 71st Brigade. The Chaplain held services in company areas.
- 15 - 0700 - Received a Division Movement Order indicating the Battalion would move with the Division to Alife for rest, time and details later. Reconnaissance Officer departed for Alife for bivouac assignment. Permission was obtained, and 2nd Platoon, "B", on North flank was withdrawn and moved to Rear Echelon.  
0925 - 103 4-engined bombers from high level attacked the Abbey Monte-Cassino. There were a few direct hits, but in general effect was scattered and disappointing. 53 men were seen to run from the Abbey. Div. Arty. stated 3 Battalions were harassing the area; also that friendly Infantry had previously withdrawn 1000 yards from Abbey. About 1400 over 60 Mitchells repeated the attack from a much lower level, and with much better effect, reducing the Abbey to a pile of rubble. Over 200 Germans were seen to leave.  
S-3, back from Officers' Rest Center, Serrante, reports it exceeds all expectations, leaves nothing to be desired.
- 16 - During night same heavy stuff fell near G.P. Captain Kunkle's injury proving to be a broken vertebra; he was dropped from the rolls and Lieutenant Walker assigned to command. Lieutenant Melzer also dropped.
- 17 - In response to a call from Commanding Officer, 133rd Infantry, through Commanding General, Division, Battalion Commander and Lieutenant Ewaska visited Commanding Officer, 133rd and selected a gun position in S.E. corner of Barracks at M. Villa. The gun was in position at 2110. There is some possibility of a Tank or SP in Cassino making a nuisance raid North along Cairo road. To accompany a preparation and attack by New Zealand Corps, this Battalion began an all-night harassing mission on Piedimonte, expending 800 rounds.
- 18 - 4th Indian Division reoccupied Hills 593 and 444, vacated by 34th Division for the bombing of the Abbey. New Zealand Corps, crossed the Rapido, captured and held the Railroad Station South of town. Enemy shelled this tiny bridge head intensely all day.
- 19 - New Zealand Corps lost the Railroad Station last night.
- 20 - 0840A - 133rd Infantry and 756 Tank Battalion, through Division, requested a TD Officer. Inquiry developed that it was desired to dismantle a gun and hoist it to a hill overlooking Cassino from the West, to destroy a particularly troublesome house. Lieutenant Ewaska, now with

gun in barracks, was dispatched to make this reconnaissance.

1500A - Battalion Commander visited Div. Arty., learned Battalion, less "A", would move tonight. Clearance was obtained and Movement Order #4 issued. The one gun mission, above, was cancelled. Pvt. DeSoto, a motorcyclist, was killed in Cervaro by shell fire.

2000A - Battalion passed IP in Cervaro and closed in Bivouac near Alife (H 2303) at 2330A without incident.

- L - 1100A - Corps S.S.O. Show entertained in Battalion Area for one hour with excellent talent. This private showing did much to life morale.
- 2340 - "A" joined the Battalion, thus completing our Cassino operation. The Battalion was in position 32 days, fired 24,175 rounds, suffered 1 officer and 3 men killed; 1 officer and 12 men wounded. (See attached list)
- 4 - All existing officer assignments were terminated and new ones published By S.O. #21.
- 5 - 27 The men and officers spent this period cleaning their clothing and equipment. Stage shows, movies and miscellaneous entertainment was presented in Division Area.
- 5 - 29 The Battalion has entered a period of training and conditioning. Ordnance personnel were inspecting and making necessary repairs on Battalion Ordnance equipment.



GADEN W. MCCONNELL,  
Lt. Col., F. A.,  
Commanding.

*Journal*

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S-3 REPORT

JSL/ala

From: 5 1800A February 1944  
6 1800A February 1944  
805th T. D. Bn. (towed)  
AFG 404, U. S. Army  
6 1800A February 1944

No. 62

MAPS: Carried #160 - 1/100,000

- 1. \* \* \* \*
- 2. \* \* \* \*
- 3. \* \* \* \*

4. Clear. Visibility good.

5. Liaison maintained with 756th Tank Battalion.  
Battalion fired 500 rds (1800 - 1815 hrs.) unobserved harassing fire. See record of missions attached. Observed fire (160 rds) placed on enemy infantry at G 858152 and enemy gun positions at 848187 and 78872375.

6. Excellent.

7. Effect of fire unknown. All companies were adjusted and fire adequately covered the target areas.

8. Status of material: 36 M5 guns in firing condition.

*John S. Lyons*  
JOHN S. LYONS  
Capt., F. A.  
S-3.

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