

HEADQUARTERS 135th INFANTRY
UNITED STATES ARMY
APO - 34

15 June 1945

LESSONS LEARNED IN COMBAT

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY 135TH INFANTRY
UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 34

15 June 1945

SUBJECT : COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCES LEARNED DURING THE ITALIAN
CAMPAIGN.

TO : S-3 135TH INFANTRY

1. Wire Communications.

(a). In winter where snow is likely to fall, lines should not be tied flush to the ground but should be raised, two (2) to three (3) feet. Using this method the line can easily be found and tested. When snow melts and freezes again the line cannot be traced at all. It is best to string wire on low bushes if possible

(b). The BD72 is not light or compact enough for combat. The BD71 is light, easily handled but has too few drops.

(c). In combat linemen could use a lighter and smaller test phone. It would only have to include a generator and hand set. We tried experiments along these lines with fair success.

2. Radio

(a). In operations of S. C. R. 284 from field mounts the use of two or more generator cables enables emplacement of set in position of cover and concealment.

(b). During periods when radio operators are few, one man may operate complete S.C.R. 284 field setup by extracting one handle from generator, turning generator with left hand and operation with the right hand.

(c). As radios, in moving or combat conditions become frequently faulty and fail to stay on frequency a radio setup at the rear positions to send out periodical check calls, can easily keep N.C.S. station from drifting. In turning keep Bn. stations calibrated to N.C.S.

3. Message Center.

(a). In operating split C.P.'s the rear message center group should be in close proximity to the S-1 section to handle the bulk of traffic coming from that section as well as from higher headquarters.

(b). No more than three (3) men of an eight (8) man section are necessary for a forward group, having the bulk in the rear where the majority of the work originates. Such a system also operates to eliminate surplus personnel in forward areas where concealment of movement is of paramount importance.

(c). Forward and rear teams should be alternated with the section chief and second in command, taking turns.

(d). Messengers, foot and motorized should be equipped with pistols instead of carbines or M-1's.

PAUL H. KUMP
M/SOT 135th Infantry
Communications Chief

125 Field Artillery

2 June 1945

LESSONS LARNED IN COMBAT

During the latter part of April 1945, our battalion was in position near Piacenza, Italy. Late in the afternoon one of our forward observers located a large concentration of enemy personnel in a wooded area preparing to cross the Po River.

Darkness was fast approaching. The observer asked that we give him the fire as quickly as possible. In a few more minutes he would be unable to see his target. If the enemy were not destroyed they would cross the river under cover of darkness.

After one adjusting round of HE, we went into fire for effect with VT fuzed shell using the battalion.

From information received later we learned that many of the enemy had been destroyed since they had no overhead protection.

This, as on many other occasions, we have found that it pays dividends to have a minimum of ten, M48 fuzed cavity rounds loosened to hand tight when there is any expectation that VT fuzed shell will be fired. The M48 fuzes of cavity ammunition are counterpunched, making them difficult to loosen. By loosening ten rounds beforehand it is a simple task of unscrewing the M48 fuze and replacing it with the VT fuze when that type of fire is called for. While the ten rounds are being fired, more VT rounds can be prepared and in that way there will be no delay in firing.

Had there been a delay for the preparation of ammunition in the incident concerned, the enemy would have had time to disperse and a fewer number of them would have been destroyed.

VICTOR B. MC CLURE
Capt., F.A.

Antitank Company
135 Infantry Regiment

14 June 1945

SUBJECT: Lessons learned in combat.

TO : Commanding Officer 135 Infantry Regiment

1. Listed below are some lessons learned by personnel of Antitank Company during combat operations.

a. Several times my squad was called upon to deliver 57mm fire on fixed targets at a great range. I found that for this purpose, the free traverse on our gun carriage was not entirely satisfactory for adjusting fire. A traversing handwheel would be a big help in scoring hits on stationary targets, although the free traverse is fine for moving targets.

3/3gt. Lee

Our guns are towed with a Dodge 1½ ton truck, and in the mountains these vehicles sometimes could not make the pull up a steep grade to place the gun in position. A 2½ ton GMC short wheelbase truck would be better.

Cpl. Doebler

Antitank gun platoons are generally spread out over the entire regimental front, which makes contact by S O R 300 difficult, especially in mountainous terrain. We found that by putting an extension cord on the radio handset so that the transmitter receiver could be placed high up in a building and still be operated from the ground, our radio communication problem was nearly always solved.

T-5 Ward

In blackout driving, the drivers must be trained to keep closed up enough so that they do not lose sight of the vehicle ahead. Luminous buttons on the rear of all vehicles would help when you are so near the enemy that even cats-eyes can't be turned on. Blackout lights should be checked very frequently to make sure that they are not covered up by mud or dirt. Drivers must be cautious of large black spots on the road. They might be deep holes, not shadows

T-5 Hebold

Several times we have received replacements while on line and in one or two instances while in the attack these men are usually very green and don't know what a shell or bullet sounds like, this endangers their lives as well as those around them. They take no advantage of cover or concealment and consequently they are the first to get hit or give away positions occupied by their units.

Lt. Fosburg

I'd suggest that they give this company larger
guns, preferably self propelled, then they would not only
have a gun that they could depend on against tanks but would
also have a good artillery piece and something to give the
little company a little support.

S/St. Brown

Edward I. Butt
Capt. Cav.
Cdr. G.

Antitank Company

135 Infantry Regiment

SUBJ: Lessons learned in combat

TO : Commanding Officer 135 Infantry Regiment

1. Listed below are some of the lessons learned by the Antitank Company during combat operations.

a. If a squad stays in an Antitank position for more than several days it has been found advisable to substitute heavy communications wire for the lighter combat wire. It pays in hours spent in maintaining the wire.

It has been found dangerous to inquire of civilians the whereabouts of roads and land marks since they are anxious to help even though they are ignorant of exactly what you want. Depend on your map or your own information.

When the regiment of infantry is in pursuit of the enemy or on long moves to catch leading units it is necessary to know the whereabouts of every squad leader and member of his squad since moves are sudden and the time of the move unknown. Keep the small unit as compactly grouped as possible in the tactical situation.

On several occasions the antitank company has been called upon to deliver indirect fire upon fixed targets with its 57mm guns. For this purpose more training should be devoted to problems of this kind. Clinometers and artillery aiming stakes are necessary for indirect fire and should be issued to antitank company. H. E. ammunition should be easier to obtain for the 57mm as it is far more effective for indirect fire than A.P.

The mine platoon is divided into three 8 man squads. In combat where there is a large amount of detecting to do, it was found to work better to divide the platoon into smaller work groups (3-5 men). Too many men draw fire and the smaller group can do the average job as easily as more. A 1 ton trailer for the 2 ton vehicle would be enough transportation for two work groups and much easier to use than the bigger truck.

Many times orders have been given for a group to report at a place and clear A.P. mines out of an area. When they arrived the job was something different. Some jobs require different equipment and it would help to plan if possible what to take along. Men are not worried by the jobs ahead if they have an idea what to expect but only fear what they don't know. If orders are given to a group to do a job, it helps greatly if the job can be explained first. A bad example: A group was sent to a rifle company area to clear

mines; getting there, they found that they were to go out on patrol. The men had taken pistols which are sufficient protection on the average job but worthless for patrol.

Sometimes when men were very seriously wounded it was not possible for an aid man to reach them immediately. Some of these wounds proved fatal due largely to shock. In my opinion the first aid packet, in addition to the Carlisle bandage and sulfa powder, should also contain a morphine syrette, and all personnel should receive adequate training in the proper use of morphine to reduce pain and consequent shock.

For patrol work and raiding operations, a light sub machine gun with a high cyclic rate of fire should be incorporated into the rifle company. The M-5 might well meet this pressing need but as yet none have been available. Also the WP grenade has proved invaluable for clearing bunkers and strongpoints of enemy personnel besides providing effective screening smoke for deployment or withdrawal. The SCR 536 has not proved successful for patrol operations and the SCR 300 is suggested as a substitute. The RL 39 when used in the communications net of a patrol has often disclosed units location to the enemy due to metallic clicking sound resulting from unreeling of wire - adequate substitute should be devised.

Edward T. Butt
Capt. Cav.
Cdrig.

**CANNON COMPANY
135th Infantry**

14 June 1945

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE OFFENSIVE

The Cannon Company as it is now equipped did not prove to be satisfactory in a fast moving situation.

It was evident that some type of Self-Propelled gun would be more satisfactory in a fast moving situation. In order to keep up with the Infantry and give them close supporting fire.

**HARFORD G. EVE
1st Lt. 135th Inf
Cannon Company**

**CANNON COMPANY
135th Infantry**

14 June 1945

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE OFFENSIVE:

The Cannon Company as it is now equipped with a 105 mm Howitzer with a split trail is a big advantage in getting in and out of position a great deal faster than with the 75 mm Howitzer with a Box Trail. If the 75 mm Howitzer had a split trail during the big push Cannon Company would have been able to get in and out of position a great deal faster than we did during the push.

It would be advisable to have some sort of connection made up so the aiming stake lights could be turned out from the Gun Pit. This would reduce the consumption of batteries, as the lights would not have to be kept burning all night. This would also reduce the possibility of the aiming stake lights giving away our position during an enemy air raid or enemy infiltrating through our lines.

Michael Boytin'
T/Sgt On Co 135th Inf
Platoon Sgt.

CANNON COMPANY
135th Infantry

14 June 1945

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE OFFENSIVE:

COMMUNICATIONS:

Not enough importance is attached to communications especially radio. In the Cannon Co. not enough personnel is the most common fault in combat, as continuous watch must always be maintained and not enough personnel is allotted to handle the situation efficiently. The present set SCR 300 has not proved practical in most cases. If a set similar to the SCR 300 with a greater frequency range is designed as to operate from the ground or from a vehicle as the situation changes from a slow move to a fast move. A more powerful set designed to operate on the same frequency, as the OP set, would be more desirable for Op use.

On the OPs the present system of one operator is not sufficient for a fast moving offensive, as the work load is too great for one operator. It is recommended that Op radio operators work in teams of two whenever possible. It is also recommended that radio operators be armed with a pistol in order to lessen the work load.

Most operators find the SCR 300 an awkward set to carry due to the fact that the padding is not fully sufficient to keep the set from rubbing the operators back, thus after a long march an operator is usually worn out. A more simplified method could be devised for carrying the set, by eliminating the present carrying straps now in use. There are too many straps which usually become twisted while preparing for a move, one or two straps would serve the same purpose.

The present antenna becomes warped after being used a short time. A crew in type antenna with the same number of sections could serve to better advantage. If the long antenna would be equipped with a swivel at the base, similar to the short antenna, equipped with this swivel, it could be used to better advantage, thus allowing the operator to incline the antenna in any direction without having to tilt the set.

The present set is so designed that the changing of batteries is slow and cumbersome. If a set could be designed so that the batteries could be changed from the top or side without completely disassembling the set, would be a big improvement.

Each set should be equipped with a spare parts bag permanently attached to the set in place of the present method, each spare parts bag should contain an alignment tool and all operators instructed as to their use.

Zola Teter
Commo Chief Jn Co

CANNON COMPANY
135th Infantry

14 June 1945

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE OFFENSIVE

MAINTENANCE:

On a long hard push such as the one from Bologna through northern Italy it is necessary that the trucks be in very good condition before starting. The drivers and maintenance men have to spend every bit of the little time they have making minor repairs and keeping the trucks properly lubricated.

Keeping gas in the trucks is quite a problem. Each vehicle should carry as many extra gas cans as possible, for usually gas dumps are many miles back of the lines.

Alexander C. Philp Jr.
S/3gt 135th Inf.
Motor Sgt. Cannon Co.

COMPANY B 109th MEDICAL BATTALION
A P O 34 U.S. ARMY

13 June 1945

SUBJECT : Lessons Learned in Combat.

TO : Commanding Officer, 135th Infantry Regiment, USAPO 34

During the period just closed which carried this organization from south of Bologna up to the foothills of the Alps Mountains several new and interesting situations were encountered by this company. During the initial phase no unusual operations were encountered but as the speed of our advance gained momentum it became necessary that we make preparations to make long moves without much notice.

The first step in making this company extremely mobile was to insure adequate supplies at all times. Since most of the time we were far in advance of our supply column this problem was solved by carrying with us supplies sufficient to maintain this company for three days. At stops of any duration these supplies were immediately replenished to maintain this level. This system proved, on several occasions, to be wise in that we were required to make moves of much greater distances than originally planned, frequently on short notice.

Our next consideration was to arrange our operations so that we could give prompt and efficient medical attention to our patients and still maintain our mobility. The infantry battalions moved in column, riding tanks and trucks, so it was decided to keep two ambulances with the lead battalion at all times thereby avoiding any delay in the evacuation of the wounded. The speed of the advance was so rapid it was not practicable for us to leapfrog station sections so it was decided to remain as close to the lead battalion as possible. When the leading elements of the battalion ran into resistance we would immediately establish our collecting station in a nearby building and would be prepared for operations before the arrival of the patients. On one occasion, after moving more than one hundred miles, we were able to establish our station and immediately to handle thirty patients and to evacuate them in a very short period of time. The smoothness and efficiency of this particular operation drew a favorable comment from our Commanding General who was visiting us at the time.

Another problem that presented itself was the care and maintenance of the vehicles while on the move. It was necessary that the vehicles be kept in good condition for us to move with the infantry and to promptly evacuate patients. While on the move, one company officer who had been briefed on the route to be covered, was assigned to move with the rear of our column. On two occasions trouble was experienced with our ambulances. This officer immediately pulled the maintenance truck out of column and roadside repairs were made and the ambulances returned to service. These immediate repairs made it possible for us to continue the evacuation of patients promptly and efficiently.

The morale of our personnel did not offer any serious problems as the speed of the advance was sufficient to maintain a very high feeling among the troops. As a collecting company we were fortunate to be able to keep our kitchen equipment with us and every effort was made to furnish the men with hot meals at every opportunity as a further aid in maintaining this high state of morale.

GEORGE C. BRADY
Capt. M.C., Commanding

The strength of a Rifle Platoon should not exceed 50 men. The breakdown as follows:

30 men squads
1 Platoon Sgt.
1 Platoon Guide
1 Radio man

The breakdown of the squad as follows:
Squad Leader - sub Machine Gun
Ass't Squad Leader - Rifle - Grenade Launcher
Pail Man - Bar
ASSIST PAIL Man - Rifle
2 Men - Rifles and Grenade Launchers
3 Riflemen - Rifles

All rifles should be M-1s.

The Platoon Sgt. and the platoon Guide should carry Gas lines. Also the radio man should carry Gas lines.

The Bazookas should be carried either in the weapons platoon or on the same jeep to be brought up when ever they are needed.

Lt Donald C. Johnson
Exec. Off. Co "B"

Due to the poor liaison between adjacent units and also to supporting units we have had many more casualties than ordinarily should be. Wrong information about the position of friendly troops has led us into many bad situations. The Artillery should never fire in close to friendly troops unless called upon by that unit. It has given away the surprise value, and only alerted the enemy to our movements.

Lt Donald C. Johnson
Exec. Off. Co "D"

Combat on what I think should or should not be done to help the safety and comfort of the foot soldier. Safety which every soldier thinks and knows but he don't do it. If he goes on the line to relieve another outfit and there is a foxhole already dug for one man and two or three more don't have any they all stay in the same one. In this case only one lucky shell would get them all. In other words they crowded us to much. When on march we don't take enough interval. Men also don't get enough exercise. They stay in a hole for two or three weeks and have to move out on an attack it is all they can do to walk let alone fight.

Supplies and rations is another important thing. Men don't get what they should have when on the line. They get the same to eat day after day. I mean C rations which no soldier likes after he has eaten two or three meals especially when they are cold. Sometimes canned beef is brought up which helps a lot. I think men should have fresher food if possible when on the line.

(cont)

There should be two officers for each platoon of infantry men when on attack and more replacements close up to take the place of the casualties and make the guard lighter on the boys that are still left alive. A man is usually so tired it is tough to stay awake all night after a long tough hike over rough terrain.

Candy ration should be brought up to the lines more often and not so many all of one time as it is impossible to carry them.

Pfc John Maxwell
Co "G" 135th Inf.

My comments on army equipment and the manner of issue are as follows:

It has been my observation in times past that the combat soldier is sadly neglected in the case of issuing new and serviceable clothing and equipment. On several occasions when I have had the opportunity to visit some of the rear areas, one of the most noticeable things was the extreme contrast between the clothing worn by the combat soldiers and those stationed in said areas.

The question which crossed my mind is as follows: Why should it be that upon the rare occasions when to get cleaned up a bit, we are issued old, torn and worn out uniforms?

The infantry squad has not enough firepower. There should be more automatic weapons such as tommy guns and some sort of improved model of the BAR. The BAR weighs too much, is too awkward to maneuver from a foxhole, and will not function at all if one atom of dust gets in the chamber.

The G rations are wasted. No GI will eat stew of which there are four cans per case. K rations are not palatable and are not edible as far as GI Joe is concerned. Give us variety in our chow.

Information is poor. A hundred times or more I have moved out with the outfit and did not know where we were going, where the enemy was or what we were going to do.

How about a light weight, waterproof jacket. The M-13 is bulky and leaks. The old type field jacket is too light colored, is not warm or waterproof.

And shoes. The combat boots give no support to weak arches and the soles should have some sort of cleat. After a week of walking on bad surfaces the shoes slip.

I have learned that a good knowledge of all weapons is one of the main things. Another thing is learning how, where and when to dig a good foxhole in the shortest possible time. Also all men should have some knowledge of the telephone and radio call signs. Also men should have special training for specialist jobs. All men should have a good conditioning training before returning to their outfit after being in the hospital. Company commanders should have authority to send any man from his outfit to the rear, who is too old, or is a handicap to the outfit.

2nd Platoon Co. A, 135th Inf.

I suppose that the biggest of help and protection to the riflemen in a rifle company would be to make corrections and a little more training on artillery observers as there has been many a time when our own F.A. falls short and that is not helping out the rifleman any at all, because you lose lives just by our own F.A. and not just by enemy fire. It's true that the Infantry men especially the rifle companies sometimes advance too fast but still and all our F.A. should not fall short.

So why not try and get the range and deflection down so as not to stop the drive when it's on improvements could be made on our F.A., also.

Pvt Roger C. Valdivia

In the attack, the mortars should be brought up as close or as is possible to the LD a day before the attack. They should be zeroed in on all possible targets. During the attack enemy machine guns, snipers, and mortars can be rendered useless or inactive.

In the defense the mortars should be brought up at such time to enable them to zero in during the day light hours, before the company is brought up. This would enable the company to ward off any possible counter-attacks.

Pfc Howard Heller
Co "C" 135th Inf.

I think that there should be a bazooka team in each platoon. This is for the reason that in the attack there is times when a MG could have been knocked out and would not have held up the advance so long.

I also think if the terrain permits there should always be tanks support. More artillery could be used for barrages before the push off.

The transportation is bad. The boys are always crowded and are so tired after a ride that they don't feel like fighting. There are times when we could have had hot meals and had to eat cold rations.

Kenneth B. Stroud
Co "C" 135th Inf.

Re-adjusting the Point System

Number One topic with G.I.s today is the Point System for discharge. As the system stands now it is not entirely fair and re-adjustment is necessary.

One adjustment needed above all others is for the line combat man of the Infantry. Nothing is so good for this soldier who really gives up and endures the most, and who so far as I can see has benefited perhaps the least of all servicemen.

Certainly he has not been compensated in a monetary way, considering his 20% combat pay compared with the 50% flight pay the Air Corpsman receives. Of necessity he has had to do without many of the things that the average soldier enjoys. His is the grime and blood of battle; the hell and fury, and the utmost in danger. Not only has he been fighting a physical war; but he has been subject to a war of nerves. Perhaps now with the advent of the Point System he can be compensated.

Adjustment for the line combat man can be made either of two ways; 1. Lower the number of points required for the discharge of line combat man. 2. Make allowance of added points for combat badge and combat time.

If the required points for the discharge of the line combat man were lowered, possibly to 50 points, the system would work more justly for this hard fighting man.

Should extra points be attached to the issuance of the combat badge, and for actual combat time on the line, another way may be found to repay our "doughboy". The following is suggested on same:

Comb at Badge 10 points
Each month in combat 1 point.

In re-adjusting the Point System for the line Infantryman, to such emphasis cannot be placed on the advantage he should have over Rear Echelon personnel who at the present time are eligible for points for battle participation stars although they have not actually been on the line engaged in fire fights, hand-to-hand combat, etc. As matters stand the line combat man of the Infantry has no just advantage.

Another need for re-adjustment of the Point System is for that group of single men who have dependency obligations.

Before their entrance into the Armed Forces, these men were placed in similar category of classification as that of married men with children, like married men with children; they too were placed in Class (A), (B), etc., and were drafted in the same quotas.

Now these servicemen find that the married men have from 12 to 36 points advantage over them. It must be remembered that in many cases these single men with dependency obligations could not afford to get married and have children because of the support of their dependents. Main consideration should be given to those single men with actual parent dependency. These men should be put in the same category in relation to married men with children in computing discharge credits, since they entered the Armed Forces in similar category.

I believe that these single servicemen with dependents should be allowed 12 Points for each dependant.

With the shifting of servicemen from Europe to the South West Pacific and China-Burma-India theatres of operations, still another re-adjustment could be made.

I believe any servicemen that serve in more than one theatre of war should be entitled to 10 points additional for each Theatre ribbon over one. Therefore if a serviceman is sent from Europe to the Asiatic-Pacific Theatre, I would believe he should automatically gain 10 points credit towards discharge upon becoming eligible for his Asiatic-Pacific Theatre ribbon.

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Perhaps there are a thousand other ways in which the Point System might be re-adjusted but at the present time, I believe the aforementioned are some of the most needed.

The Greeks may have a word for it, but I think the French expression; "Ou bien; oh rien;" captures the idea best.

Pvt Frederick F. De Stolfe

The BAR is still the best and most effective weapon available to the Infantry platoon, but it is still too heavy. If a smaller lighter gun, similar to the Harlin .38 could be adopted it would be possible to put more than one in a squad and would increase the fire power of the platoon.

The present three man BAR team is too large. Two men are sufficient. The three man team cuts down the maneuverability of the squad and no advantage is gained by the additional ammunition supply.

In the fast moving attack situation the companies in this Bn always found it advisable to carry two 60mm mortars and use the third squad to carry the ammunition supply. The third mortar was carried on the ammunition jeep where it would always be available if the situation required it.

The flare for the sixty mortar is a great improvement and has become a must in every defensive position. Another addition that would aid the Rifle Companies considerably would be a smoke shell for the same weapon. It would enable the observer to zero in more effectively on the rear slopes of hills, in valleys, defiles, etc.

More training should be given to the average man in zeroing in and adjusting artillery and mortar fire. We have found that there has been many situations where fire has been needed but the elements of the company which had the best observation could not make the proper use of their artillery support.

It is suggested that all junior officers spend some time at an artillery forward observers school and be given some practical experience in this work. There are too many officers now that do not know how to use artillery because they have never had any instruction in its use.

Recently the 57mm anti-tank gun was taken from the Infantry Bn, and the 37mm gun was substituted. This left the Bn without an organic anti-tank protection.

It is true that the 57mm gun was very seldom used but taking it away and substituting the 37 left a blind spot in the Bn, rather than improve the situation any.

The present practice of holding TDs or tanks in a reserve position should cease. These weapons should be well forward with the Infantry Bns, at all times. There have been many cases where a Bn has been held up for a day or so waiting for armored support when one or two tanks could have dealt with the situation immediately.

It is also suggested that a small self-propelled anti-tank gun be placed in the Infantry Bn. This weapon could move quickly from one Co sector to another and give immediate support where an anti-tank gun would have to pick position, drop the train, go into action, etc.

All squad leaders should be armed with the Thompson Sub-Machine gun. The Thompson is the best weapon we have had for close in fighting in the Italian campaign.

The Bazooka in its present position in the rifle platoon is more of a hindrance than a help. It tends to slow down the platoon. It would be advisable to put them in a special section to be included in the weapons platoon. They could then be attached whenever it was deemed necessary.

It has been the practice in the past to ration Mortar ammo. when in a defensive position. That is one of the most foolish mistakes ever made. Most men have more confidence in their own company mortars than they will ever have in artillery. The rationing practice does more to break down the fighting spirit of the men than anything else. It makes the riflemen feel that he isn't being given the proper support, and the mortarmen feel that their weapon is of little use.

There should be a replacement company attached to every regiment. These men should be kept as replacements only, not used as litter bearers, KPs, C.P. guards, etc. They should be continually be undergoing training to fit them selves for the line. They should not be kept with men just returning from the hospital. It should be possible for a line company to get replacements two days after they have lost a man.

When occupying buildings during a fast moving situation it is a common fault to group a large number of men in one room or building. This has often resulted in a large number of men getting captured or wounded at the same time. Whenever entering a village divide your troops among the houses establishing an all around defense, with one squad supporting the other.

Walter R. Hayes, Jr.
1st. Lt., 135th Inf.
S-3, 1st Bn.

Another thing which every soldier hitches about is when off the line for a week or two rest. He doesn't get enough rest because of army rules are to train every day. The only rest he gets is not having the enemy shoot at him.

Communication is very important between the doughboys and various points aren't so good most of the time. I don't know who is at fault but it should be corrected if possible. When we need support they need it then not thirty minutes later.

Men don't know enough about what is going on when on the line. This would make a big difference with the combat men.

This is only my idea of what should be done in combat.

The house stood in a small valley on no-man's land about 500 yards in front of our positions on the hills of the Apennines of Italy. It looked deserted and harmless but from previous patrols we knew that Jerry was using it as an observation post at night and no doubt in the day time too. The big push was getting off as soon as we had favorable weather, so that house had to be taken at all cost, either occupied or destroyed, we to deny the use of it to the enemy.

It was January and the snow was thirty inches deep in most places. It was a cold winter night when my platoon got orders to send out a 20 man combat patrol and clear the house and if possible capture a prisoner. Our CO oriented us and explained our mission, the enemy was able to have very good observation of all moving objects on the snow, especially under moonlight conditions. That night the moon would rise at 2200 hours so it was necessary for us to accomplish our mission with utmost speed.

We were 2000 yards behind the lines in a reserve position. At 1815 hours after a few last minute instructions the patrol started off at 20 yards interval between men because of the ever present danger. To the right and left friendly units were firing mortar and artillery barrages to distract the enemy attention.

Halfway to our advance positions we stopped where our tents were concealed to take a snack. The faces of the men showed a tense expectancy as they sucked greedily on last minute cigarettes. At 1930 hours we left the tent positions and reached our advance positions at 1945 hours.

There was slight mist covering the valley and we moved out in single file along the path where both the small friendly and enemy patrols had used previously. It was necessary for us to stay on the path because we knew there were many mines off the beaten tracks. We finally reached the vicinity of our objective and the patrol leader gave us the word to take our positions for the advance. We advanced as planned, the platoon leader and three men went towards the house, the squad leader took half the remainder of the men left to the left of the house and I took the rest of them to the right to form the base of fire on the house and to the flanks. It was 2000 hours and zero hour, we layed on the snow and tried to make our white parkies blend with the snow. My eyes were focused on the four figures which crept silently toward the house. It was very quiet now, at any moment I was expecting a mine to go off or a machine gun to open up, my fear grew tense, then lying on the snow looked at each other and wondering how the four men up forward were making out. They had been gone for thirty minutes but it seemed like three hours, at long last we heard the crouching of the snow and saw a figure of a man coming towards us from the house, all our weapons rifles, tommy guns and BAR were aimed at him, the man in front halted him and asked for the pass word, which was a relief to all of us when we heard them whispering to each other. The house was cleared, they had found no enemy so we moved forward silently and formed a defense around the house and again continued

Four men went forward to clear a curve on the road which led from the house. In the meantime I contacted our control-point on our lines over the sound power and asked for the "cable" that meant the house was clear and we were ready for the dynamite to blow up the house. After half an hour our four men came back, and after a little while six men came up from our lines with five boxes of dynamite. Working in the dark they set 250 pounds of dynamite inside the house and went back to our de lines. We were all set to set off the fuse when a new order came over the sound power from the control point, we were supposed to leave six men in the house to form an ambush in case Jerry decided to come on later that night. The squad leader and five men stayed in the house and was supposed to bring the patrol back to our lines. It was 2200 hours and the moon light was beginning to show between the clouds and mist that covered the sky. We started back to our positions everybody was silent except for the breaking of the snow. After reaching the security of our tanks our tension was relieved. Cigarettes were lighted by all and talk flowed freely once more. We reached our reserved positions at 2300 hours and most of the company was making awaiting our return. Half of our mission was accomplished, the house was clear. For us who came back that night it was all over but we were still awaiting it out for the men that were in the house with the 250 pounds of dynamite. They stayed in the house all next day and night and the following morning at 0500 hours they set off the fuse and headed for our lines. Our mission was accomplished then, the house blew up with a thunderous roar and that was the end of obstacle which was a menace to our patrols. One push across the Appennines and the end of the house in the valley.

Sgt Eddie Velasquez
2nd Platoon

My buddy Tom and I joined A Co 135th Inf on November 9, 1944. At the time we joined this outfit we had been in Italy just ten days. So we had come fresh from the states and distinctly green horns in the army. We had been trained on the 105 Howitzer. So I guess that was why they made us the BAR team. We joined A Co at Montecatini. Just at the end of their short rest, after being on the lines for a long time. On Anzio Bay we headed for the front. We were unaware of the army's general procedure so we figured that we would just walk up to the front lines and start firing a M-1 rifle but we were rather surprised when we stayed for several days a few hundred yards behind the front. We could hear the Bwp guns, machine guns, mortars falling around us, and also a few artillery shells or I should have said we could hear these famous 80s.

The night that I'll never forget was the night we moved from the secondary position up to the main defense line. Our squad was sent to the outpost just as soon as we arrived. Tom and I and another fellow were sent with the BAR to relieve two men in a small foxhole. We were arguing about getting the three of us in such a small hole when a mortar shell landed a few yards away and before the bang of the explosion had been completed there was three heads peering out of that hole. We were standing in six inches of water, and in plenty of misery. We were afraid to bail any water out of the hole because even that excess enough noise that it would easily give away our position. Should Jerry have a patrol looking in the darkness. Our fox hole was dug right at the edge of a vineyard and every now and again during the night Jerry would prune the vines above our heads with one of his best shooting machine guns. Jerry also kept us plenty worried with his mortars that were landing all around us.

All of the squad was glad when time came for us to pull back to our day time positions which was a shell torn house. My squad leader was a French Canadian who could not speak very clear English. So when he had to give the pass word he either forgot it or could not say the word. So he said "Oh my aching back" which was his favorite saying. The guard recognized him and let us by.

It was raining all the time and the ground was really beginning to get muddy. On the 25th of November we pulled off of the line for several days and then went into secondary positions again. Tom and I had our dugout at the top of hill, right besides the platoon CP so it seemed that we were on the ration detail every night. The hill was so steep and so slippery that they could not use jules to get our rations. So we would slip and slide up and down the hills with a box of good old 10 in 1s rations on our back. One night Tom fell into an old water filled fox hole. Although it was not Saturday night he had a bath anyway.

We went back from the lines for our Christmas dinner. On the way back the mud was knee deep and it seems that every 40 step that I would take in the mud I would fall. So it kept Tom and another friend busy pulling me out of the mud holes. One time I fell in one so deep that they had to drag me out by my feet.

It started freezing a couple of days before Christmas and on Christmas day it snowed. It was sure a treat to have frozen ground to walk on after walking in knee deep mud. "A" Co was very lucky as we spent Christmas day off of the front lines.

The day after Christmas we went back on the line. Again walking was bad because instead of having to contend with mud as we had going out this time we had a slippery ice covered path to walk on. It was a bright moonlight night which made our silhouette out standing with the snow for a background. As we approached the lines, not knowing exactly where the line lay we began to get frightened because we could be seen so easily. About this time Jerry began tossing in some of his 88s so we began to think that we had been seen. We had to hit the ground several times for protection, but all this time we kept moving always forward, to our position and cover.

We only stayed one day on the line this time and then received a call from the 92nd Div. That night we really had a tough march as we were carrying lots of ammo and plenty of clothes and blankets. It was the hardest march that I have ever taken. On this march a lot of the fellows got so tired that they would lay down in the snow and did not want to get up. So their buddies and other fellows would have to help them up so they could keep on with the rest of the company. Finally we arrived at the trucks, some eight or nine miles from where we had started earlier in the evening. We climbed on the truck and rode all the rest of the night and arrived along the coast to our new position about eight o'clock in the morning.

On January 5th I went to the hospital with Yellow Jaundice. I had one swell time the month that I stayed there, just laying around eating, and taking a bath. I took lots of baths as before this I had not had a bath for at least one month. From the hospital I went to the reconditioning camp for three weeks. After that it took me one week for getting from the recondition camp back to "A" Co.

I arrived just as they were getting ready to take a hill so you can well imagine how I felt. Just coming back in time to be in on attacking a hill. We were very lucky that night as we did not meet with any resistance, while taking the hill. But during the next 24 hours we lost several good men from the 1st Bn as we started going to different positions on the hill the Jerry's started shelling. Then that night men began stepping on well placed German shoe mines.

By this time the snow had all melted and it was not raining anymore. The ground had started drying up so that tanks and other equipment could move about the hill.

Any day now was the time for the big push to start. We were always waiting and also very much dreading that day to come. We were very lucky when that day came as the South Africans pushed through us. We moved forwards the first few miles, following where they had pushed, we could see hands, legs, feet or most any part of a man lying around.

At last the time came for us to do a no pushing. We were not quite so much afraid now, because we were passed the German's inter def nae lines, where most of those terrifying mines had been planted and we had lots of tank and armored support.

We moved forward on this big push riding trucks, tanks, and walking, our means of transportation varying from day to day.

One evening we moved into a small town and were told that all the German had left. About midnight a call came for the platoon, that I am in, to go out to the edge of town and escort some tanks into town. This order had just come through when down the street came some tanks. In came one of the company officers yelling that those were German tanks. I guess that we all held our breath while all the tanks went by the houses we were in. We spent a most miserable night, not knowing what was going to happen next. We were glad when morning came and found out that our own tanks had arrived to help us.

We started moving forward very fast, riding most of the time on tanks. It had started to rain just a little, so that made everything seem to go slowly. We were the first Allied troops in lots of the small towns we went through. What a swell reception we received from the small town folks. They would come running out to us with bread chese, eggs, and wine. This would naturally taste good to us, as we were mainly living on C rations.

Finally that great day came of May 2. It was very hard for all of us to realize that the Germans were finished in Italy. It sure seemed funny to be guarding the man y u were once trying very hard to kill.

Now the day has come when war is over in Europe, so were all thinking hard about the point system and each and every one of us is trying hard to raise up a few more extra points so we can go home. I and lots of my friends are not worrying very much about points, because we have so few. But still I am all ready to leave for the good old U.S.A. and home, just the first chance they will give us.

1st Lt. Ellsworth L. Lindsay
Co "A" 13th Inf.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY
2nd Battalion, 135 Infantry

11 June 1945

Our last operation which started south of Bologna, was chasing the enemy which was greatly disorganized, on through the Po Valley.

The one lesson I learned was not to be too hasty where the enemy put up resistance. For instance we were going on to set up guns which I thought was not necessary in the day time while we had our tanks in the lead and already in positions. It was risking the lives of too many men and vehicles. To my opinion it would be better to go a little slower and take the cover of darkness.

S/Sgt. Paul L. Wheeler

In our last operation which was the pursuit of a disorganized enemy through the Po Valley, one lesson was learned concerning this type of fluid warfare.

Men and Officers, especially the latter, exposed themselves more than necessary, this I believe happened because everyone was over-optimistic due to the head long flight of the enemy. Consequently in the course of one day four were casualties.

In my opinion it would be better to keep officers in the center of a Task Force, not in the lead vehicles.

Cpl. Robert E. Montgomery

Just after the initial push in the Po Valley we were moving forward accompanied by tanks. In my opinion we were moving too fast, there was little or no patrols out in front. To our left we by-passed about 50 jerries, we stayed right on the highway instead of dispersing to the side of the highway. We were quite lucky that the Germans did not open up on us, they surely could have killed many of us. That they proved stupid was our only luck. The tanks supporting the infantry then went over and cleaned them up.

Sgt. Robert Kage

Since the big offensive in the spring we have learned that while attacking a fortified position, keep all weapons firing. This keeps the enemy harassed and more or less pinned down allowing our men to advance with a minimum of casualties. On level ground where tanks can maneuver well, they are the main stake. Also, while attacking a fortified position they and the Infantry move up together.

T/Sgt. Coy E. Mabe

In our most recent push up through the Po Valley and outstanding feature was the coordination and cooperation between the Tank Corps and the Infantry soldier. Any operation at all that takes place on flat ground like the Po Valley should always have that cooperation. Not only do the tanks give us the added fire power and close-up Artillery that is needed on strong points, but also has a demoralizing effect on the enemy and gives the Infantrymen an added sense of security. In the latest push our tanks showed us they could keep up and outdistance the Infantrymen and also save a lot of unnecessary casualties that may have been inflicted on the Infantryman who had to storm a strongpoint instead of the tank destroying it. In conclusion let's keep the tanks right up there with the foot soldier.

S/Sgt. George F. Willmott

In combat it is best to have the terrain well softened up with Artillery, Air Force and plenty of Tank support. Without this support there would be many more casualties in the Infantry. In our most recent operations we have had plenty of tank support with very good success in reaching our objective. The first thing the average Infantry soldier should keep in mind is to stay low in attacking over flat terrain and well camouflaged. We found when cutting a highway off from our enemy it is necessary to set up good road blocks and to keep them well manned at all times in case of counterattacks. It is vitally important to have tank and Heavy Machine Gun support near the road block.

It has been taught to us when going into the attack to go forward shooting to keep the enemy down. Another thing we have learned is to watch for booby traps and mines. These at times cause more casualties than enemy fire.

For flat level terrain we have found that to have tanks in front of the Infantry is very important in case we run into strong points that the infantry could not take alone.

Sgt. Warren M. Iverson

The breakthrough into Bologna and the Po Valley; this action instituted an entirely different type of warfare here in Italy. There seems to be a tendency for men riding trucks and tanks, to become lax and disregard the extreme necessity for always being on the alert, because in fast moving Mobile action, there is always the danger of ambush, and the flanks are never secure. A large number of men did not keep their equipment intact, when opposition was encountered, these men were without the equipment that is vital to every soldier in combat. In one action we met hostile small arms fire in extremely flat terrain, the men moved hard and fast until the objective was taken, had they hit the ground, they would have offered themselves as ideal targets for any type of enemy fire.

Sgt. John C. Rhoades

During the drive through the Po Valley I noted that as the men rode tanks for long distances, they were very apt to remove equipment and relax. When an emergency arose, too many men were struggling with packs, etc, and were of no help to the rest who were on their way. One must be always ready and alert for anything that comes.

There was one instance where the officers of a Company were casualties, and there was much hesitation on the part of the ranking NCO to take over until replacement officers could be had. It is of prime importance for the men to carry the ball, no matter what happens. If this is done, everything moves faster and the enemy has no time to collect his reserves and use them to good advantage, as he will do when he sees hesitation on the part of the attacking unit.

S/Sgt. Harry D. Roberts

In combat, there are two very distinct phases or categories. One is offensive action and the second is defensive or holding action.

Having seen the above mentioned actions to some degree the main lesson I learned is the complete or partial failure of unit commanders, be they squad, platoon or higher echelon, or it maybe unwillingness to pass on to the men under them a complete understanding of the action at hand or action that is about to transpire.

This fault can easily be corrected by intelligent selecting by the unit commander of all facts at his disposal. The deficiency discussed is prevalent in both offensive and defensive warfare, but mainly presents itself in the aggressive action.

Green recruits be they officers or enlisted men, do not, in my estimation, absorb the experiences and advice of men, although perhaps not holding equal rank, have the valuable asset of experience. This is especially true of officers who fail to ask or heed advice given in a constructive manner which in most cases was learned the hard way.

Bunching up is a common fault and in many cases can have a disastrous effect by creating more casualties than normally a unit would suffer if preventive measures, which simply consist of spreading out, had been taken.

The American soldier with his inherent tendency of companionship tends by this well meant fellowship to create more noise and disturbance than would normally occur if the soldier liked solitude. This explains the undue noise that occurs at times when silence is appreciated and wanted.

S/Sgt. E. Pickard

One of the main faults of troops I believe is exposing themselves when it is not necessary. Why make a target of yourself? If the enemy is going to get you make him do it the hard way. When you move and must expose yourself, move fast and low, many times the enemy will miss you. When you move slow or expose yourself when not necessary you're just asking for trouble. It's true the American soldier is a great souvenir hunter and it's a shame, many a good man has paid dearly for the want of some mere object. This, the enemy knows well and therefore he lays many such traps. Don't forget, the enemy realizes that as a casualty you are no good to anyone, but trouble to many--Be wise, DON'T take chances.

S/Sgt. F. Groom

The following is a list of items that I have found to be most important in combat.

1. Whenever you stop for longer than ten minutes dig a hole.
2. When being shelled stay flat on the ground.
3. Stay as calm as possible and don't run when you may be safer where you are.
4. Don't ever lose contact or lag behind.
5. Be on the alert at all times, especially at night and never fall asleep on guard.
6. Whenever attacking a strong point don't be afraid to fire your weapon and don't hesitate to fire any time when necessary.

Sgt. Alfred Collier

The main thing wrong that I find wrong with the American soldier in combat is that he makes too much noise at night and that causes the enemy to fire on our positions and as a result causes a lot more casualties.

The failure to dig foxholes when they stop is another main cause of casualties as they are exposed so much more on the top of the ground than when they are well dug in.

To keep your head at all times is a good idea and don't run from your position to another because you expose yourself more by running in the open than by keeping well hid.

To keep awake on guard at night is another good idea as not only does your life depend on your keeping awake but also the lives of your buddies.

When attacking it is a good idea to keep a volume of fire on the enemy position to keep him pinned down and that way he can't direct fire on you.

Sgt. William C. Scott

Lessons learned in combat with an 81st Mortar Platoon. The main lessons learned was in communications. In attack have a three hundred radio with the platoon in able to give support when ever needed. When in defense have a direct line from Bn. and rifle companies to the mortar platoon. In both of these examples, the mortar fire will be faster and more accurate, than when you have two or three parties repeating the fire order.

In defense, stakes should be set-out at a hundred mil intervals, and clearly marked. This helps to get fire out faster and is a great help in night firing. These were the two main lessons I learned in combat. Some minor things are, always dig, keep under cover whenever possible in daylight hours. And above.

Sgt. Harold Hanson

I learned to keep well dispersed and to dig. I think more lives are lost by bunching up and digging than any other way. The enemy will not shell one man as quick as he will three. And if you have a good hole it will take a direct hit to get you when he does shell. So keep spread out and when you stop dig in.

Cpl. Boyd Kerstetter

When you get the enemy on the run keep him going and don't give him a chance to stop and dig in. Morale is one big thing with the fighting man. If they lose that, things do not go very well. Especially when they call for artillery and they tell them that the days ration is gone. Be as still as possible and do as little moving around as possible when in a stationery position.

Sgt. William B. Peterson

As for machine gunners I think section leaders and squad leaders should make a good reconnaissance as possible for fields of fire, possible routes of approach that the enemy may use to counterattack, and cover this route of approach with your fire.

I have learned that there is never two like situations in actual combat, always be on the alert, expect anything and everything and when things get rough use your head, think and act. The one, the enemy or you, who sums up the situation, makes a decision and then does it with confidence will most generally, not always, be the victor.

T/Sgt. John D. Schmalzer

In combat I learned that one of the most important factors to be considered in the success of a combat operation is keeping communication because without communication your operation cannot be successful and oft times has proved to be very disastrous. Some of the methods of communication are by signals, by wire and by radio. In my estimation the most important is wire because your signals at night or in bad weather are very often useless and your radio many times proves useless on account of the terrain or perhaps the weather. Whereas wire if it is laid carefully in the best protective spots along the way will in many cases be more useful than your signals or your radio. And when your wire does go out it is not too hard to trace your wire to the break and fix your communications.

Pfc. Ray Driscoll

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 3rd BATTALION
135th INFANTRY REGIMENT
A.P.O. #34, U.S. ARMY

SUBJECT: Lessons learned in combat, (Wire Section)

One thing we learned early in combat was to reach our destination first and then lay our communication lines back to our C.P., this grew out of the fact that many times we were handed a map and told the location and then upon reaching that spot find the position moved, and then no opportunity was afforded to pick the best possible path for the wire to lay in. Many times we would have to double back, therefore using more wire than was necessary so by going out and finding the position first we had a chance to reconnoiter the ground and things worked much smoother, of course there were times when such procedure was not practical, such as in a continuous attack. The line is always advancing in back of the leading Co. and contact kept as much as possible. Another important thing was learned at La Piano, at the Reno River crossing, we encountered a very swift and treacherous river to cross in order to reach one of our companies, men tried to swim the river with the wire and failed time and again and the situation was looking pretty dark until one of the fellows hit upon the idea of shooting the wire across on a rifle grenade - it worked.

Another lesson learned which we learned the hard way for it cost us the life of one of our men. It was our practice to lay light combat wire from heavy reels most of the light wire we got then was on DR-4 reels, on this night at Monzune the lead Co. had halted in the attack and a wire was needed immediately we had no wire on small reels and in fact no small reels in our possession at all so the men went out with the large reel. The path was narrow and mined on both sides and so one man had to carry the reel alone, of course he couldn't carry it far and much time was lost on the way. A counter-attack was expected almost at any time and it came as the men were struggling thru a deep ravine. The ravine had been zeroed in and one man was killed; now if we had the wire on small reels, one man could have managed it very easy alone, the wire layed and the men returned before the counter-attack started. You can bet after that we always had light wire on light reels and ready for instant use.

T-5 Ray C. Varner
HQ Co 3rd Bn 135 Inf
Wire Section

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 3RD BN.
135TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
UNITED STATES ARMY
APO - 34

13 June 1945

SUBJECT: Combat Lessons Learned by A&P platoon.

TO : S-3 Officer

1. In a platoon such as this the main thing to be stressed is cooperation on the job among the men. We operate similar to the engineers but on a smaller scale with the limited number of men we usually have to work with every man. They in turn should know how to cooperate with the next man in order to get the job done quickly and efficiently.
2. The men should know the different types of ammunition that is used by his rifle companies and heavy weapons company and by so doing eliminating any waste of time in getting the same up to the line. At least eight men in the platoon should have a fairly good knowledge of enemy mines, how to neutralize them and how to identify each type. In using the mine detectors it takes much practice and work in patience and never for a second should a man take his mind off his work as the mine tactics the enemy is using today calls for an alert mind and a practiced hand. The best method we have found in using the detectors is for one man to handle the detector while another man follows up in order to probe for mines and to mark their locations so a third man can follow up and do the neutralizing. A relief squad should be on hand to take over at intervals so that too much strain is not put on any one man.
3. Most times our jobs have to be done under fire of the enemy and a little orientation beforehand for the men that are to go out helps considerable as each man will have an idea of what has to be done. Too many times men were sent out with very little knowledge of what their job was to be and it was difficult to organize the men and to give them a specific job. Another point to be stressed is that not too many men should be taken on one job when it has to be done under enemy observation or under heavy fire. Too many men add to the confusion and also draw fire.
4. In reference to transportation a one and a half ton truck and a one ton trailer as we have been using to transport all of our equipment such as shovels, picks, squad boxes etc. is only too little to cover our needs. Most times we have to make reconns to determine the best routes for supplies to our companies and in too many cases our truck is much too large and is too easy of a target for the enemy. A peep and a quarter ton trailer would cover the needs for transportation fairly well.
5. The equipment used by the platoon of this sort demands steady maintenance and the best way we have found for keeping the equipment is at all times to assign a man to take charge. If a specific man with a T/5 rating were added to the platoon as a

tool non com it would be an improvement. Tools should be signed for when taken out by anyone so as to keep track of them at all times, this would reduce loss in combat and in other areas.

Cpl Philip D. Braun

COMPANY I 135TH INFANTRY
3RD BATTALION
APO 34

12 June 1945

SUBJECT: Combat Lessons from Po Valley Campaign

TO : Commanding Officer 135th Inf. APO 34

1. Support of ground troops by aircraft. In the breaking of the winter line in the north Apennines it was apparent that aerial bombs and aerial rockets had much to do with the initial success of the push north to Bologna. It is indicated that bombing and strafing did much to disrupt enemy communications, supply, and line of withdrawal.

2. Troop movement. During the Po Valley campaign where the situation was described as "fluid" it was necessary to keep the enemy constantly withdrawing at a rapid pace in order to keep him from occupying prepared field positions. Most of the movement of infantry troops was done on either trucks or tanks. Sometimes it seemed as if enemy troops were completely surrounding us. In fact at one time our Combat Team pulled into an assembly area. A few minutes later an enemy convey went by our assembly area. Coming from the same direction from which we had come. The leading Combat Team destroyed this enemy convey by fire from 57mm AT guns which they had sited facing to their rear. Rapid movement by troops by-passing strong points resulted in disorganizing the enemy's routes of withdrawal.

3. Supporting fire from artillery. In most cases, in the early part of the Po Valley push any amount of artillery fire could be had on call. It was evident that the tremendous amount of fire placed by the artillery on the enemy positions succeeded in very greatly easing the job of driving the enemy from his positions. Without this supporting fire the job would have been much more difficult.

4. Good tactical Planning. When the Valley campaign had progressed as far as Bologna we could see how we fitted into the overall planning. It was evident that much coordination had been accomplished between the arms and services. Even though our supply lines were quite long as a result of rapid movement the supplies got to us some way. Armored support was excellent in reconnaissance and overcoming strong points. Things did not seem confused as they would ordinarily have been. We felt the campaign was well planned.

JOHN S CHESEBRO
Capt. 135th Inf
Commanding Co I

COMPANY I 135th INF.

I found out that it was not good to camp near a road or railroad junction or any other place likely to be bombed. Also that you should dig your slit trench at the first possible chance. I also found out that you should travel as light as possible and keep your eyes open for cover at all times. If travelling by truck to keep your rifle clean by putting some kind of cover on it.

SGT. MENNO KENNEL

From Bologna on, our particular unit had little or practically no engagement with the enemy. Therefore, the individual soldier had little actual combat experience. But the individual doughboy, after the "PO" operation, could realize more fully the importance of having the enemy outnumbered in aircraft and armor, and also that coordination between the infantryman and the armor is important in a swift and smooth operation.

SGT. OLIVER R. MYERS
33460111

1. Keep your eyes open at all times. 2. Don't drink liquor at any time when on duty. 3. When assembled in an area stay there. Don't wander off. 4. When in a bivouac area always have a fix-hole handy. 5. Don't give away your "C" rations or throw them away. 6. Never take chances. Always use your water pills. 7. When riding in trucks keep your weapon in safety. 8. Always check your ammunition.

PFC NATHAN SCHAWRTZY
CHARLES LABRYKEWICZ
KENNETH W. BLOKHERE
NORMAN W. BODWIN

That speed is essential, always know where you have all equipment. Be alert for snipers, and don't be curious about enemy material.

SGT. JOHN BERGHUND

I learned that it pays to be able to read maps when pushing so fast in strange country.

PFC. W. CO STOCK

To be able to read a map well when in a strange country. To know the roads in which you are going to go over. Feel your way when going through a town. To keep contact at all times with your outfit. Be carefull of minefields. Do not take an Italians word for anything at anytime. Go get all the sleep when you get a chance to.

PFC R.L. WATPEN

COMPANY "K" 135TH INF.
APO -34

11 June 1945

SUBJECT: LESSONS LARNED IN COMBAT

TO : S-3, 3rd Bn 135th Inf.

In compliance with Memo. HQ 135th Inf the following report is submitted.

1. In moving vehicles were loaded with too many men splitting the Plats. on different trucks, causing the Squad & Plat. leaders to lose control of the men. Some trucks did not have relief drivers.
2. In setting up local defense in small towns at night after bypassing enemy in the rear Squad leaders must keep control over the men and watch for enemy in civilian clothes.
3. There was no local defense for enemy planes made while riding crowded trucks.
4. More vehicles should be attached to Rifle Companies for motorized patrols.

RICHARD T. BOWEN
1st Lt Inf.
Commanding

Kraut artillery is one of the things I learned to respect. When we entered the Gothic line it seems as tho he had every route of approach covered as well as being zeroed in on all possible gun positions we might pick. Supply routes near the front were under his observation and were shelled according to the amount of traffic. He even concentrated his fire, that is he fired large amounts at one time, but the lack of quantity was made up for by the accuracy of his firing. The lighter artillery especially his S.P. guns contributed greatly to the hold up of our troops. When Kraut was withdrawing they were used with the rear-guard covering the retreating forces.

S/Sgt. Arvill Giles, Co. K, 135th Inf.

The way we used our mortars on the drive north was good for fast moving attakes. Have one section follow the machine gun platoon with the sections guns, ammunition, Section sgt, Squad Leader and gun crew on two+ peeps. The other two sections at the rear of convoy ready to cover the other section and troops that might need help.

S/Sgt. John Waldroup, Co. K. 135th Inf.

These are the lessons I have learned from Bologna to the conclusion of the war.

Once the enemy is on the run and completely disorganized he retreats in a hurry and trying to maintain contact with the Kraut is a major operation. After the first few days of the spring offensive everyone could sense the ending of the war. This expectation made some of the men a little cautious while the more foolhardy ones through their own carelessness were wounded and some fell never to rise again. You must have organization in order to wage successful warfare. Cockiness and overconfidence to an army and in this war have been the predominant factors in the loss of positions, materials, as well as human lives. Maintaining contact between squads, platoons and companies is of the utmost importance. On one occasion we were surrounded by the enemy due to the loss of contact between companies. Trucks were overcrowded and the men had to ride standing up from 15 to 22 hour stretches. Too many officers are unable to read maps correctly and sometimes forget that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Too few relief drivers. The truck drivers become fatigued fall asleep at the wheel and roll over the mountain side killing some men and injuring the others. This put the men out of action and was just as effective as enemy artillery, mortar and rifle fire.

Pfc. Chas. J. Bauman, Co. K, 135th Inf.

In our drive after leaving Bologna, I learned of the work that the partisans had done. The way in which they received their instructions and equipment and carried out their work, was wonderful. They contributed much towards our success in the drive. I also learned of the importance and how successful it is to have armor work with the Infantry, when and where ever possible. Our drive worked very much ahead of schedule. It was difficult to keep supplied with gas and other materials, yet, the job of keeping us supplied at all times was well done. Keeping in contact with the enemy was a problem. Another problem was taking prisoners and pushing at the same time. The engineers had their problems in keeping roads open and making detours where necessary. The idea of cramping a whole company of Infantrymen in a cattle (semi-trailer) truck and driving them for about twenty hours, I learned was not a very good idea for if we had to fight at the end of the journey it would have been impossible to perform at our best.

Sgt. Geo. Barns, Co. K. 135th Inf.

I learned that at times our forces are too little to hold off the enemy. That at one time I was put out on a main highway with six men and one bazooka to hold off three thousand enemy. If they had come down from the mountains which had been reported we would have easily been captured. We didn't have any communications or any means of contacting our Hq. So we would have had to do the best we could have and that wouldn't have been very much.

S/Sgt. Marvin B. Manning, Co. K, 135 Inf.

Starting from Bologna with tanks in the lead at great speed disorganizing the enemy then by setting road blocks on all roads of retreat the enemy was forced to surrender in large units.

Pfc. Richard McClung, Co. K, 135th Inf.

All infantrymen should have more first aid work and actual practice. During the last drive our company was split up into many small patrol and outposts, 1 to 30 miles apart. The 3 Aid men in the company were of no use to them if these patrols were hit. Also, the radio comm. during a fast move failed to work. The distance between units being too great. The wire section did wonderful work during this drive. The wire was in before we even set our defense up.

1st Sgt. A. Groebel., Co., K, 135th Inf

While enroute towards the north I had a very difficult time at being able to know whether the Italian civilians in the various communities that we hit were really friendly or just a front. It seemed like they were on the side which took over the town. I learned the importance of road blocks while outposting a large city and learned that the main roads are the ones that are blocked and covered with small arms, artillery and mortar fire. Also that a very large scale battle would be very improbable to be fought inside a large city, cause it would be just as dangerous for friend as it would be for the foe. I learned that the major part for the latter statement of the battles always took place in the outskirts of the town and cities. I learned of the part the Italian partisans played in this war, how effective it is to have organized warfare way behind enemy lines, how they helped to hinder and sabotage Jerries equipment and plans. How they helped us in clearing the big cities and of how they dealt with the Facists. For the first time I realized how our forces dropped clothing and food to them and had a very strong and powerful organization. From the retreat of the Germans I learned how easy it is to lose contact from one organization to the other, the hard time a unit has at keeping contact with one another. Also of how poorly equipped the Germans were. I learned that superiority of arms and force can and will always come out on top. I learned of how disorganized we ourselves were at times the strength and importance of our own forces and service units, the importance of armored warfare etc.

Pfc. Abel C. Prendy, Co. K, 135th Inf.

In the short time I have been in combat I have learned several things, from actual experience and in taking advice from older, more experienced men; that both agree and disagree with what I was taught in Basic Training. In other words, what is taught in the book is little used under actual combat conditions as far as I can see. For instance, on a patrol mission, the squad leader must sometimes disregard fundamental tactics such as cover and concealment when crossing a path through mine fields and difficult terrain that cannot be bypassed. When the time element is important a patrol cannot stop going to look for mines or the other means of approach. I have noted that many men disregard the law of maintaining silence while in combat near where the enemy can easily pick up their sounds and act accordingly by throwing a few rounds in. This more than often results in these noisy Joes being killed, or even wounded as well as their buddies who are on the ball and keeping quiet. The necessity of maintaining silence should be impressed again and again as the new men taking basic back in the States or on-coming units coming into a battle zone.

Pfc. C. F. Hahn, Co. K, 135th Inf.

How to use a machine gun in the squad. How to protect a machine gun from the enemy by having an outpost on all four sides to give the alarm in case of enemy approaching and to give it full support.

Sgt. Chalmer O. Martin, Co. K, 135 Inf

CO. "L" 155th INFANTRY
34th INF. DIV.

SUBJECT: COMBAT LESSONS

TO : LT. COLEMAN

1. Here are a few things of which seem simple, and yet, most of us fail to carry out to the letter. First is the (Pass-Word). Especially when it is given in a column for some unknown reason, it is not passed on correctly, and that of course, goes for oral messages as well. Now another important word in battle is contact. Whether you are moving at night into position or (in position) you must maintain contact at all times.

Another important operation that should be more stressed and that is when one outfit relieves another in which such positions are under enemy observation, and to make sure that the outfit that is taking up the position is fully oriented with the terrain, and approximate enemy strength and the latest activities in that sector. Many of times we would relieve another outfit and they would just take off and not tell us anything.

Whenever an observer is observing, he should be on the alert, especially when our planes come to strafe and bomb. Most observers which are on duty, watch the plane and not the enemy's terrain, and he would be able to pick out enemy machine gun nests and other enemy weapons cause, most of the time the enemy is firing at the plane. I think if you watch the enemy's terrain, instead of the plane you will get better results.

Signed by Sgts RACZY & FERRARA

2. To be in the best of condition especially when on the offensive, when on moving ahead you never know when you will be stopped so you will have to be able to take it for days.

Team work and depend on your buddy, he usually will be right on the job with you in the thick of it.

Be on the alert and never underestimate the enemy, he is as well trained as you are. Don't take any chances, because they will always try and outsmart you.

Signed by PFC GRANT
KUNR
SANCHEZ

3. In our advance through the Po Valley we were taught many lessons. One of the most apparent ones was the lack of relief given the truck and vehicle drivers that conveyed the troops. In many instances drivers drove steadily for twelve and fourteen hours over bad and dangerous roads and despite the fact that some troops never had to do much firing and the casualties were light in actual combat there was an alarming number of injuries and discomfort suffered due to the fact that there was only one driver to each truck. And the strain of so much driving over the bad roads eventually caught up with the

best of drivers causing them to fall asleep at the wheel and causing unnecessary accidents.

Signed by PFC. McDermann

4. In a fast moving situation such as the Po Valley Campaign it is essential that close cooperation between the Infantry and the supporting arms be maintained. In order to do this, small pockets of resistance must be eliminated along the main line of advance, so the supporting arms may advance rapidly. It is not always possible for the advance teams of Infantry and Tanks to clear these small groups. Therefore, it is necessary to have at least two teams of Infantry and Tanks, one to maintain the advance forward, the other to clear the small groups of bypassed resistance and secure the flanks. This allows the supporting arms of heavy artillery to advance without fear of interruption from small groups of enemy that may have been bypassed, it also enables them to come within minimum range and give the maximum support to the leading elements. It also facilitates the employment of reserve troops in exploiting gains and break throughs.

Frank B. Feolker
1st Lt., Infantry

11 June 1945

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned in Combat

1. I learned that Terrain is the greatest single factor for our modern combat teams. Chain of commands isn't adequate enough for fast moving, as too many rumors get started that cause the average G.I. to believe that he is unimportant and he is not conscious of his place. And, therefore, causes great disorganization which could be easily corrected by short critiques held frequently to keep people abreast of operations.

Richard A. Kearney,
1st Lt., Cozig.

2. During the last offensive we found the panel markings on our vehicles very useful. On at least one occasion our fighter planes swooped down on us as if to strafe, but on seeing our panel markings they left us alone.

Donald F. McCaffrey
1st Lt. Infantry

3. During the Pe Valley campaign we found that it was possible to move an entire heavy weapons company on its organic transportation. It was under very crowded conditions, but it got us there.

Harold E. Hudson
2nd Lt. Infantry

4. In the last push, with its rapidly changing tactical situation we found little use for our mortars and machine guns. Our company, however, was called on to carry out many motorized patrols, although we never did establish contact with the enemy. The method we used was to send out two vehicles, one vehicle carried men armed with rifles and carbines and the other vehicle had a light machine gun mounted on the hood and covered the lead vehicle and also the men when they stopped for foot reconnaissance.

Richard McCaffrey
1st Lt. Infantry

5. In making up Range Cards and overlays of 81MM Mortar targets we adopted a numbering system which immediately identified the mortar, or mortars, "screed in" with that particular target area. All numbers of targets for Mortar No. 1 started with the number "1", i.e., 1, 10, 11, 12, 13, etc., No. 5 Mortar -- 5, 50, 51, 52, 53, etc.

If a call came in for target No. 63, it was immediately understood by all concerned that the 6th Squad's mortar was to fire the mission. Then by merely informing the designated squad of the target number to be fired they in turn would lay on the No. 63 stake with the necessary data which was kept at the mortar at all times.

Many times it was necessary to give a particular or important target area more than one number because two or more mortars were used to fire that target. As an example, the sixth squad's range card might show target No. 63 as "63 (45) (26)", meaning that Mortars No. 4 and 2 also have it as a target. By conforming to the above, it was possible to maintain maximum efficiency and fire power.

James Solomon
1st Lt., Infantry