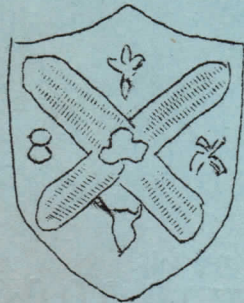


A CONDENSED HISTORY
OF THE

135TH INFANTRY



"TO THE LAST MAN"



FROM GETTYSBURG TO THE
General John W. Vessey
Minnesota Soldier



William B. Kreyer
B/G-4 US-Std.

FORWARD

To write in detail about a regiment whose past is as full of glory and valorous accomplishments as the 135th Infantry Regiment is no small task.

The archives of the Department of the Army contain the official records --- meager and lacking as some are --- pertaining to the 135th Infantry. These records measure over 66 lineal feet or more than 66,000 pages. Available time and funds preclude proper historical research at this time.

This plebian work is in tribute to those members, known and unknown, who have answered the last bugle call of a soldier's day and in appreciation to those whose hearts still swell with pride at the sight of this regiment's colors and battle streamers or the sound of "Glory to the Trumpets."

Acknowledgement of their contributions since 1917 to the present is made to: Major General Ellard A. Walsh, Brigadier Generals Earl D. Luce, J.E. Nelson, Harold E. Nelson, Lester A. Hancock, Colonels W. T. Mollison, Otto I. Ronnigen, Charles Parkins, Robert W. Ward, Chas. B. Everest, Ashton H. Manhart, John M. Briet and Richard Cook.

The welding of the spiritual and moral fibers of the regiment by Lieutenant Colonels Ezra C. Clemens and Neil S. Cashman, Chaplains, must be recognized. The late Chaplain Clemens served with the regiment in the Spanish-American War, on the Mexican Border, and World War I. In the 42 years he served his state and nation as a chaplain he has become a legendary figure. Lieutenant Colonel Neil S. Cashman joined the regiment in 1940 and served as Regimental Chaplain in North Ireland, North Africa and part of the Italian campaign. He joined the Rangers in Italy and remained with them until March of 1944. After rotation to the States, he served in the Pacific Theater until December, 1945. Early in 1947 Father Cashman came back in the Guards as 47th Division Chaplain and went on active duty with the division.

An expression of gratitude is extended to Major Roland Anderson and Captain Paul Stevens for the materials made available for the compilation of the World War II portion and to Corporal Herb Schaper who has assisted greatly in the preparation of this document.

Last, but not least, a personal expression of sincere appreciation and gratitude to my former company and battalion commander, Brigadier General Albert A. Svoboda, whose courage, loyalty and devotion to duty have been most inspiring to all who served in his command.

A sincere attempt is herewith made to present a general but concise synopsis of the history of the 135th Infantry Regiment.

It is hoped, too, that this will arouse sufficiently the interest of former members as well as others concerned to the end that some funds can be made available for the purpose of preparing a suitable history of Minnesota's oldest military organization and the United States' best Volunteer Regiment.

WILLIAM G. KREGER
Lt. Col. Inf.
135th Infantry Regiment

THE COAT OF ARMS

The Coat of Arms for the 135th Infantry Regiment was approved 23 June 1926.

The shield is argent, on a saltire azure between in chief a Fleur-de-lis gules, in fess the corps badge of 2nd Division. VIII Army Corps during the Spanish War proper (two white circles overlapping each other one-third radius, resembling the figure "8") fringed of the third and two bolos saltirewise of the last, the 2nd Division. II Corps badge, of the Civil War of the fourth (a white three-leaf clover with stem, voided).

The crest is that of regiments of the Minnesota National Guard.

The motto is "To The Last Man."

DESCRIPTION OF SHIELD: The shield is white, the old infantry color. The blue saltire is from the Confederate flag for Civil War Service. At Gettysburg the regiment was in the 2nd Division. II Corps, whose badge was the three-leaf clover. The figure "8" represents Spanish War service, the crossed bolos Philippine insurrection service and the Fleur-de-lis World War I service. The red bull in the lower quadrant represents service with the 34th Division in World Wars I and II.

The above completed distinctive insignia was approved 19 December 1951.

ORIGIN

The origin of the 135th Infantry is found in an independent military company called the Pioneer Guards who were organized in St. Paul, Minnesota in April of 1856 and in the First Regiment Minnesota Volunteers.

In 1858 the Minnesota legislature authorized formation of a State Guard and the Pioneer Guards were the first unit in the state to be recognized.

After its organization, the First Regiment Minnesota Volunteer Infantry parent organization of the 168th and 135th Infantry Regiments respectively, guarded the frontiers and engaged in quelling various Indian uprisings.

The Indian Wars in Minnesota from 1859 to 1864 remain as the most bloody and important Indian wars that ever occurred since the first settlement of the continent. These extended over five years of active operations and it was in this war that a considerable number of men of the First Regiment Minnesota Volunteers played an important part in the early phase.

THE CIVIL WAR

Alexander Ramsey, Governor of Minnesota, was in Washington when the news of the fall of Fort Sumter reached the capitol on the evening of April 13, 1861. President Lincoln immediately called for 75,000 volunteers and on the morning of April 14th, hearing the President's call, Governor Ramsey, personally called on Secretary of War Cameron and offered a regiment of 1000 men; making Minnesota the first state in the union to offer volunteers. Governor Ramsey immediately sent a telegram to Lt. Gov. Ignatius Donnelly informing him of his actions and directed him to recruit volunteers.

On the evening of the same day as the telegram was received, the Pioneer Guards met for the purpose of signing as volunteers. Josius R. King was the first to sign up and has the unique distinction of being the senior volunteer of the United States Army for the Civil War.

On 16 April, 1861 Lieutenant Governor Donnelly called for a regiment of ten companies of infantry to report to the Adjutant General. These ten companies assembled 20 April at Fort Snelling -- then in a state of disuse and disrepair. After repairing the cordage and halyards of the flag staff, the Stars and Stripes were raised at noon 29 April and the regiment was mustered in by Captain Nelson of the Regular Army.

The following units became the First Minnesota Volunteers for Civil War duty:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| A--- St. Paul | F -- Red Wing |
| B -- Stillwater | G -- Faribault |
| C -- St. Paul | H -- Hastings |
| D -- Minneapolis | I -- Wabasha |
| E -- St. Anthony | K -- Winona |

Complete uniforms were unavailable. Each man was given a blanket, red flannel shirt and a pair of heavy wool stockings. Later they were furnished black felt hats and black pantaloons and these with the red flannel shirt was the uniform that the First Minnesota wore when it headed south.

On 3 July, 1861, the regiment set up camp at Alexandria in the old Dominion State of Virginia, some six miles south of Washington. Here they settled down to drilling, picket duty, reconnaissance missions and general orientation courses to fit them for the ordeal which lay ahead.

The story of the daily lives of these men will have a familiar ring to every G.I. serving today. There were orders against disturbing private property; continuous griping about the food (consisting of salt port and hard-tack) and complaints against the mud, rain and shelter. There was constant complaining about the "miserable pay" of \$11 per month.

At Bull Run, the Union forces were at first successful, but the trap set by the Confederates closed in. The position became untenable so the North withdrew to defensive positions.

In its baptism of fire, the forebearers of the 135th Infantry Regiment had proven their caliber as fighting men. In the initial attack and the ensuing retreat they had performed in the best of military traditions. For this the regiment received official commendations from two division commanders. And this fighting reputation endured until the end of the regiment's tour of duty.

Bloody, though less disastrous, days followed at Five Oaks where the regiment was highly commended by a party of French military observers. The battle which followed remains, almost 100 years later, as one of the most important in the glory-studded history of the regiment.

THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

On the fateful day of 2 July, 1863 the outcome of the Civil War stood precariously in the balance. Several thousand Confederate troops under Longstreet and Hill, has forced the Third Union Corps under Sickles into disorderly retreat.

At that moment General Hancock rode up and ordered the First Minnesota Regiment, then reduced to 262, to charge the advancing Confederates. With levelled bayonets, these gallant sons of Minnesota hurled themselves at the vastly superior forces of the South. Their savage attack halted the advance long enough for reinforcements to arrive and save the day.

When the bloody engagement was over, nearly every officer of the regiment lay dead or wounded on the field. This amazingly intrepid band of 262 suffered 215 casualties but they were all there. None had left the field. Their casualties were more than 82 percent, the greatest in the annals of American military history and never equaled in world history. Yet, they accomplished their mission. The color sergeant, although fatally wounded, whispered in death, "They never touched the ground." And they never have.

The tribute paid the regiment by General Hancock finds few parallels in history:

"There is no more gallant deed recorded in history. I ordered these men in there because I saw I must gain five minutes in time. Reinforcements were coming on the run, but I knew that before they could reach the threatened point, the Confederates would seize the position. I would have ordered that regiment in if I had known that every man would be killed. It had to be done, but I was glad to find such a gallant body of men at hand willing to make the terrible sacrifice that the occasion demanded."

The name of Colonel William Colville, too, has come down through the years as a legend and inspiration. In a sense, he is the father of the 135th. It was he, who, at Gettysburg, was to command his men in that fateful encounter with the order to hold "To The Last Man," the motto that has emblazoned the banner of the 135th throughout all the years.

After a short tour of duty at Brooklyn and a return to the scene of combat with further fighting at Bristow Station and Mine Run, the fighting days of the regiment were over. Orders to return to Minnesota and for deactivation came to tired troops on 5 February 1864. It was mustered out of service 28 April 1864.

Brigadier General Charles P. Adams in his farewell message to those embattled volunteers paid a stirring and enduring tribute. "You were the first three-year regiment in the volunteer service. Then you were a thousand strong, but stronger in your love of country and devotion to its flag."

"The blood of more than seven hundred of your companions has crimsoned those heroic fields, and more than two hundred fifty of them have passed from the smoke and clangor of battle strife to their eternal bivouac beyond the skies."

The veterans of the regiment immediately began reorganizing a two-company battalion but with their recruiting they ended up with nine units. These were redesignated as the 1st Minnesota Volunteers and were mustered into the service in March of 1865. On 14 July 1865 they were again mustered out of the service.

The regiment was officially credited with 23 Civil War battles plus a number of lesser engagements and skirmishes.

SPANISH -AMERICAN WAR

Early 1898 found this country's diplomatic tensions with Spain tightening and the inevitable result - war - occurring.

On 23 April, 1898, President McKinley issued a call for 135,000 men. The 1st Minnesota again volunteered. This was the second time for this regiment to have the distinction of being the first to volunteer its service to its nation and is the only regiment in the United States to have that honor in two successive major wars.

On 29 April, 1898 -- the same month and day the regiment entered the service in 1861 -- the regiment found itself assembling at the state fair grounds. Redesignated the 13th Minnesota Volunteers on 6 May 1898 it was mustered into federal service at St. Paul, Minnesota with many members of the old 1st Infantry. It's units were:

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| A -- Minneapolis | G -- Red Wing |
| B -- Minneapolis | H -- St. Paul |
| C -- St. Paul | I -- Minneapolis |
| D -- St. Paul | K -- Stillwater |
| E -- St. Paul | L -- Minneapolis |
| F -- Minneapolis | M -- St. Cloud |

It embarked from San Francisco 26 June arriving in the Philippines 31 July 1898.

The unit participated in 35 battles and engagements including the capture of Manila.. and later, during the Philippine Insurrection, took part in

the Luzon and San Isidor campaigns.

The regiment was mustered out of service 3 October 1899.

THE MEXICAN BORDER

The following units of the First Infantry were mustered into Federal service for Mexican Border duty on 30 May 1916.

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Hq & Supply -- Minneapolis | F -- Minneapolis |
| Machine Gun -- Minneapolis | G -- Minneapolis |
| A -- Minneapolis | H -- St. Paul |
| B -- Minneapolis | I -- Minneapolis |
| C -- St. Paul | K -- Minneapolis |
| D -- St. Paul | L -- St. Paul |
| E -- St. Paul | M -- Minneapolis |

The regiment left for the Mexican border by President Wilson's proclamation 19 June, 1916 where they were stationed near Flaro Grande and Brownsville, Texas. They engaged in border patrol duties and in intensive training for eight and a half months though no part of the regiment accompanied "Black Jack" Pershing on his punitive expedition into Mexico. They were mustered out of the service 14 March, 1917.

While this tour of duty was uneventful and resulted in no combat experience it did serve to whip this unit of the Guard into a fairly effective organization. The training was particularly important because the regiment was again to be called into federal service to meet the challenge of Germany in her first attempt to conquer the world.

WORLD WAR I

Shortly before we entered World War I, the old 1st Minnesota responded to our country's call again. The call to the colors came by Presidential proclamation on 25 March 1917 and on 7 April 1917 the regiment was mustered into service. It was redesignated the 135th Infantry Regiment 1 October 1917 and was assigned to the 34th Infantry Division -- then known as the "Sandstorm" Division.

The same units and stations of the First Infantry, Minnesota National Guard as mustered into federal service for Mexican Border duty were mustered into federal service during World War I on 26 March 1917.

The regiment was sent to Camp Cody, near Deming, New Mexico, and for 12 months prepared itself for duty as combat troops by engaging in the most intensive kind of training. At the completion of this training the men of the 135th were a hardened, sun-browned lot, prepared and ready for action.

As part of the 34th Division, the regiment landed at LeHavre, France 3 October 1918. Here it was that the 135th Infantry, along with several other organizations of the division, experienced a great and most bitter disappointment. Instead of being committed as a unit, it was used as replacements in small units and individuals. The 168th Infantry and 151st Field Artillery Regiment of the division were more fortunate by being assigned to the 42nd "Rainbow" Division.

The remnant units of the regiment returned home at various times commencing 6 January 1919 and completed demobilization at Camp Grant, Illinois being officially mustered out 18 February 1919.

The regiment was reorganized as the 1st Minnesota Infantry 31 January 1920. It was redesignated the 135th Infantry 21 November 1921 remaining in the 34th Division during the years to follow.

WORLD WAR II

During the ensuing years the regiment remained a part of the 34th Infantry Division and with the 164th Infantry of North Dakota comprised the 68th Brigade. Several small exercises and two Fourth Army maneuvers were participated in by the regiment in the late 1930's.

Late 1940 found the 135th Infantry, along with other National Guard units in the United States, planning in anticipation of a call to active duty for

training purposes.

On 14 January 1941 Presidential Executive Order Number 8633 was issued directing all elements of the 34th Infantry Division to mobilize for 12 months active federal service 10 February 1941.

Units of the 135th, all from Minnesota, and their home stations who answered the call were:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hq and Hq -- Minneapolis | Hq Detach., 2nd Bn -- Owatonna |
| Service -- Minneapolis | Company E -- Jackson |
| Anti-Tank -- Minneapolis | Company F -- Owatonna |
| Medical Detach. -- Minneapolis | Company G -- Albert Lea |
| Band -- Minneapolis | Company H -- Austin |
| Hq Detach., 1st Bn -- Minneapolis | Hq Detach 3rd Bn -- Montevideo |
| Company A -- Stillwater | Company I -- Madison |
| Company B -- Hutchinson | Company K -- Dawson |
| Company C -- Minneapolis | Company L -- Ortonville |
| Company D -- Stillwater | Company M -- Appleton |

All units of the regiment were mustered into service with a total strength of 86 officers, one Warrant Officer and 1,489 enlisted men. This corps of officers and enlisted men little realized what further glory they were to bring to their regiment in what was to be one of the most bloody and destructive wars in the history of the world.

With the mercury around 20 degrees below zero, the units entrained at their home stations for Camp Claiborne, Louisiana on 25 February 1941. Various civic and veterans organizations as well as bands escorted units to their respective depots where the troops boarded special trains while crowds of local people, parents and friends waited in the bitter cold for the troops to leave.

The troops arrived at Camp Claiborne, located 18 miles south of Alexandria 27 February and were marched to an ungraded and eroded camp site which resembled a sea of mud. The units set up in pyramidal tents and training started immediately.

In April groups of 650 and 500 selectees arrived from Fort Snelling, Minnesota to bring the regiment to full strength.

A strenuous training program soon produced a physically hardened and well-trained team ready for unit training which included some small scale exercises. From June to August the training consisted of battalion, regimental combat team and division exercises.

On 6 August 1942 the regiment took to the field to participate in the V Corps maneuvers which were culminated in the 4th Army maneuvers ended 30 September.

Like a thunderbolt out of the sky came the news on 7 December of Pearl Harbor. With the declaration of war on 8 December came also the rapid movement of the regiment to assigned areas.

The regiment was divided into three separate combat teams with a battery of the 125th Field Artillery attached to each. These combat teams started leaving Camp Claiborne 8 December and had cleared entirely by noon the next day.

Their mission was to protect their assigned sectors of the southern coastal frontier. Regimental headquarters and the 2nd Battalion were charged with the defense of New Orleans in conjunction with permanent installations. The 1st Battalion was assigned the defense of Fort Barrancas, Florida, while the 3rd Battalion moved to Texas City, Texas, for its part in the defense of the southern coastal line along the Gulf of Mexico.

Upon relief from its coastal defense mission on 1 January 1942 the regiment started back to Claiborne on the same day. However, on 8 January the 135th again cleared Camp Claiborne and entrained for Fort Dix, New Jersey, arriving there on 11 January.

It was "for the duration and six months" now. The morale and esprit-

Broadcasting Company program directly to the United States. It was in Ireland that the band's leader, John Cafarelli, was termed by the "Stars and Stripes" as the "Pied Piper of Ireland."

In mid-October Companies I,K,L, and a detachment from M were detached from the regiment to participate in special invasion training. They embarked on their mission 21 October from Belfast.

Later, the 2nd Battalion, minus Company F, but with the addition of Company M were detached from the regiment, underwent some further intensive training and embarked on their mission 9 December from Liverpool. The remainder of the regiment departed from North Ireland 11 December and from England on 23 December 1942.

N O R T H A F R I C A

Companies I,K,L and a detachment from Company M, known as the "Terminal Force," under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Edwin T. Swenson, were aboard the British Destroyers "Malcolm" and "Broke" who were assigned the very difficult task of breaking the boom barring the way into the harbor at Algiers. It's mission was to capture all installations which controlled the dock area and was assigned the further task of preventing sabotage to ships in the harbor. This was all predicated on a coordinated plan under which "Terminal Force" would receive assistance from the two combat teams of the Eastern Assault Force which landed east of Algiers.

About 0320 on 8 November 1942 they steamed toward the boom. After two unsuccessful tries by the Malcolm and Broke, the Malcolm withdrew because of heavy damage from shore batteries. The Broke went in alone and again was forced to turn back. On the fourth try, the Broke cut the boom and got into the harbor.

During this operation Second Lieutenant William L. Muir, Company L,

heroically dealt with burning ammunition containers and was honored by the British Navy, receiving a certificate from the British Officer of the Secretary of the Admiralty.

Once upon the docks and having moved to their assigned areas, the troops were subjected to a withering fire which could not be silenced. This gallant force fought for more than four hours almost completely surrounded by the mass fire without encouragement or news of the planned assistance.

Only the Broke had gotten into the harbor and that destroyer had to withdraw, leaving this small group to accomplish their mission. Lieutenant Colonel Swenson realized that their position was hopeless so he surrendered to the French rather than sustain additional casualties. After two uncertain days as well-treated prisoners of war, all men and officers were released 10 November. Even though the French were our allies, they believed they should defend their city.

Because of the commandable manner the Third Battalion performed on the landing at Algiers, even though forced to surrender, they were selected as the guard of honor for division formal affairs as a token of their outstanding services. In the landing 15 were killed and 33 wounded.

FONDOUK

In the two battles of Fondouk, though sustaining heavy casualties under prolonged and gruelling fire, the 135th, true to its traditions, had stood the test. Each battalion commander had served in an exemplary manner. Lieutenant Colonel Jess Lee was cool and reassuring. Lieutenant Colonel Robert P. Miller came out of the battles as a fine combat leader who was to further distinguish himself in the later phases of the Tunisian campaign and in Italy.

Lieutenant Colonel Albert A. Svoboda, a man of rugged exterior, kind

heart and great courage, held his men in position under tremendous enemy fire and led them on to final victory. He was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

In both battles of Fondouk, the 135th Infantry's losses in men present a picture that discloses the stubborn resistance offered by them and by the elite corps of the German Army -- the Afrika Corps -- as well as by the price paid by the regiment in forcing the entrance through Fondouk Gap. Four hundred eight wearers of the regimental crest were killed, wounded and missing.

HILL 609

Hill 609 is a high mass of sheer rock and a natural fortification which was to remain impregnable until the enemy had been swept from the many high hills around it.

In an attack on a hill near 609, which had to be secured, Captain Vincent F. Goodsell of Company G observed a hostile group armed with machine guns moving into a position from which the battalion would be enfiladed. The commander of Company G personally led three of his men forward to intercept the enemy. They were seen by the Germans and brought under intense machine gun fire, but in spite of this Captain Goodsell drove home his attack, killing or capturing the entire group and their three machine guns, thereby removing a serious threat to the battalion. He was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

The 135th Infantry regiment took Hill 490. From there they moved toward Hill 609. At 1100 hours that day, advancing under terrific fire, they captured the small Arab villages huddled close to the slopes of the hill. The fire was heavy but the doughboys hung on, actually working their way up the jagged rock for one half a mile from which position they were never dislodged.

A most important pass leading to the crown of the hill was a goat

trail which the Germans had regarded as invulnerable. However, in a surprise move, the 3rd Battalion of the 135th entered the trail from the rear. The maneuver probably proved the determining factor in the enemy's final withdrawal.

In the 3rd Battalion's initial attack on the famed hill, they earned the commendation of the division. The courage of the men of the battalion was recognized when it was cited by the 34th Division for its initiative and determination in this encounter. The men faced heavy machine gun and mortar fire coming from concrete reinforced caves and defiles, Bayonets and grenades were used in the bitter struggle.

After the battle, General Omar Bradley, commanding the II Corps, stated in regard to the fighting, "A strong enemy was repulsed. Fighting all day was intense and bloody. The enemy was engaged with bayonet and grenade and there were many cases of outstanding bravery."

When the French staged a celebration of the liberation of Tunis, United States' troops who had taken part in the African fighting were represented by the 135th who marched past in a solid mass under the palms of Boulevard Gallieni to the vigorous applause of the crowd.

ITALY

The first taste of Italy by the regiment was received at Salerno, the bloody beachhead. However, the 135th did not see action there immediately. After they moved into an assembly area on the beachhead, they discovered German documents which oddly enough indicated that the German 135th Flak regiment had occupied the area shortly before their arrival.

The 135th Infantry regiment again went into action when it received orders to cross the Volturno river in Italy. The Volturno was the first large scale obstacle which the Germans had decided to defend since the breakout from the Salerno beachhead. Colonel Robert W. Ward ordered the 1st Bat-

talion to cross the river and attack the heights behind the village of Squille.

Company E of the 2nd Battalion and 1st Battalion were to lead the assault in the first of three crossings of the Volturno that the regiment was to make over the winding river. Company E effected the crossing and the first German was personally captured by First Lieutenant Joe H. Kimble who directed the security of the bridgehead so that the balance of the company might cross. There was intense machine gun fire but Lieutenant Kimble's personal direction and inspiration spurred the mission to success. His leadership in making possible the crossing of the battalion brought him the award of the Distinguished Service Cross.

Two other extreme acts of heroism were brought to light during that initial crossing.

Second Lieutenant Vernon C. Harris of the same company, who later died, was the platoon leader of the leading element and although the barrage of friendly artillery fire had not lifted, he plunged across the river at the head of his men in the face of enemy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire and gained the other side. He was mortally wounded by shrapnel and while suffering great pain, he directed his platoon in organizing the ground and shot flares into the air to mark his position.

When Lieutenant Kimble came to him, the dying Lieutenant pointed out several enemy machine gun positions. He was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously.

The DSC also went to Second Lieutenant William O. Sporbert of Company A. He led his platoon in placing a guide rope across the swiftly flowing river, enabling the balance of the battalion to cross. After reaching the far side, Lieutenant Sporbert ran into a mine and was thrown into the river. Rescued and given first aid, he set out to join his platoon and enroute he

entered a minefield to aid a wounded man. In so doing he was seriously injured by a concussion mine.

Their names are indelibly carved on the banner of the gallant 135th.

The Volturno river lay in the path of the 135th Infantry three times and it had to be crossed. During the first crossing, as in the remaining two, all observation was with the Germans. The Nazis has the entire line stretched with interlocking machine gun fire and had their artillery zeroed in on the likely sites for bridge construction and crossing points besides placing numerous pillboxes and bunkers in positions with great fields of fire.

The 1-3-5 jumped off their attack behind a smoke screen with the protecting fire of 96 guns and howitzers. Later the 125th and 151st Field Artillery battalions cut loose and in the first 20 minutes, the two had fired 1,134 rounds.

In action near Hill 235, Second Lieutenant Howard R. Lieurance of Company E was mortally wounded and won the DSC. His platoon position was under fire from enemy machine guns 150 yards away and also under a barrage of artillery and mortar fire. Lieutenant Lieurance called his squad leaders and gave them instructions for an attack before he became unconscious.

During the entire operation of the three crossings, most of the supply was carried by hand at night, varying from 1,000 yards to four miles, and most of it through mountainous terrain. Many times it was possible to feed only one meal in 24 hours and that at night. Round trips for food and water took as long as 11 hours. Maps of the area were very difficult to read, especially in the mountainous country. Disease, as well as the enemy, had been taking a toll from the regiment. During this phase of the crossings, 392 officers and men were evacuated because of illness. There were many cases of malaria and jaundice.

The regiment was up against the shrewd German defenses in all their many days of combat in Africa and Italy. For example: The Germans had been laying a minefield in one sector for over two months, but the 135th drove sheep and goats ahead of them to locate routes through the fields.

ANZIO TO ROME

In the terrific series of engagements from Anzio to Rome, the 135th Infantry had achieved one of the most single victories of all the long war. Their's was a brilliant accomplishment performed under the most adverse circumstances. They had fought with a spirit and fatal determination which epitomized the fighting of the old 1st Minnesota Volunteers at Gettysburg. Like their famous predecessors, the 135th almost literally fought "to the last man."

During this drive to Rome, two enlisted men of Company B gave such demonstrations of courage and initiative that they were later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and one was commissioned as a result of his exploits. They were Staff Sergeant George G. Hall and Technical Sergeant Ernest H. Dervishian, the latter commissioned as a Second Lieutenant.

When Company B was pinned down by grazing fire from three enemy machine guns Sergeant Hall set out alone, taking advantage of slight depressions and shellholes, and from a distance of 50 yards, hurled four hand grenades into the first enemy gun emplacement. Two Germans were killed and four others surrendered. Hall turned his attention to the second gun. Exhausting his own grenades, he picked up some German "potato mashers" and killed five members of the crew. Five more surrendered. As Sergeant Hall crawled toward the third gun, an enemy artillery shell exploded and severed his right leg. With two guns out of action, the company flanked the third and continued its advance.

Sergeant Dervishian's exploit took place near the Cisterna-Albano railroad embankment where his platoon, by aggressive action, had advanced far ahead of the balance of the company. Sergeant Dervishian and four other men captured 25 Germans by the railroad embankment and proceeded on. After sending the Germans to the rear, Dervishian went ahead to capture six Germans after his group had wounded three more of the enemy. Moving through a vineyard, he was pinned down by machine gun fire. He ordered his men to make their way to the rear while he worked his way forward within hand grenade range. He grasped his opportunity when the gun ceased firing at him, took the four man crew prisoners with the use of grenades and his carbine, sent them to the rear, and started after a second machine gun. This gun crew had observed Sergeant Dervishian's men moving forward again and had killed one and wounded another. Sergeant Dervishian turned the captured enemy gun on the second. This crew, too, surrendered and picking up a German machine pistol, Dervishian captured the crew of a third gun 25 yards to his right. In all, the Company B Sergeant captured 39 prisoners and knocked out three machine guns. Other deeds of valor by the individual infantryman also lengthen the long roll of honor of the regiment.

The squad of which Private Furman L. Smith, Company L, was a member knocked out two enemy machine guns, killed eight and captured 18. Then 80 Germans, armed with automatic weapons, charged. First the company pulled back, then the platoon, but Smith and two wounded non-commissioned officers remained. Smith, dragging his wounded comrades to the shelter of a shellhole stood erect before the advancing Germans and fired clip after clip of ammunition from his rifle. The enemy wavered, then pressed forward and Smith fell dead with his rifle at his shoulder. The company, inspired by the courage and devotion to duty of this lone man, rallied and beat back the foe. The Con-

gressional Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously to Private Smith.

Staff Sergeant David Lopez of the same company, using a Tommy gun, crawled across an open field, killed five Germans and destroyed two machine gun positions. One of his legs was shattered and he was taken prisoner. Although he suffered great pain, he observed enemy positions and when he was recaptured by the men of the company, he was able to provide valuable information on the enemy's strength and positions. Sergeant Lopez was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Private Francis J. Laurain, a runner with Company K, saw some of the men withdrawing in the face of a German counterattack and he left the company command post, rallied them and led the group through an intense barrage of mortar and machine gun fire to the former positions. Private Laurain, posthumously awarded the DSC, was killed while firing his rifle.

The 135th was attached to the First Armored division again, as in some of the prior battles, when the breakout from the Anzio beachhead occurred and was credited with a "magnificent performance." The 1st was the assault division in the break from the shallow beachhead. Later as the Germans were on the run, the 135th was again attached to the armored unit in the chase.

If it is true that the 36th Division's capture of Velletri opened the road to Rome, then it is even more true that their opportunity for doing so had been made possible by the brilliant success of the 135th Infantry in breaking the enemy's defense line. They passed through the regiment just before Velletri.

On 5 June the 135th Infantry entered the first of the Axis Capitals to fall and was the first infantry unit to march into the limits of Rome. The CP of the 1st Battalion was established in Rome at 0130 and the troops continued to press through and beyond the city with tanks. The 3rd Battalion followed armored units and moved into Rome and occupied a park on the south

bank of the Tiber river at 0730. The regimental command post was established in the Majestic Hotel on the same day.

The civilian population of the "Eternal City" lined the streets, throwing flowers and fruit to the troops and embraced and kissed the men. Because of the emotional welcome, the movement of vehicles and foot soldiers was slow. The infantrymen were footsore, dusty and weary but the greeting of a liberated people aided greatly in reviving their spirits.

CASSINO

During the period of inactivity at S. Angelo D'Alife the regiment went through a period of training and was reconstituted with replacements and new equipment. The men were able to secure clean clothing and showers, which most of them had not had since coming to the Italian front. There was entertainment in the form of stage shows and movies. And shortly before the Cassino engagements the regiment, for the first time in either the Tunisian or Italian campaigns, had the assistance of mule pack trains. The trails through the mountains, often mined, were extremely hazardous and difficult. The recruited mule skimmers from the battalions did good work with this new type of transportation in spite of the fact that mule shoe nails and pack equipment was extremely difficult to obtain. The mule skimmers on several occasions led and controlled the animals through heavy shell fire and prevented the loss of valuable cargoes of food and ammunition. At one time the peak of the mule strength was 74 and at that time 45 of them were "non-combatants" because of the lack of mule shoe nails.

Communication lines were extended and of necessity followed the mule trails closely. Signal equipment had to be packed over the hills and the sharp mule hooves and sliding men and animals on the slippery trail often took out their own lines.

It was impossible to secure socks until the end of the month and considerable foot trouble resulted. The battalions coming out of the Mennella-Selvane area evacuated 40 men in 24 hours for various degrees and stages of trench foot.

Also, just before Anzio, two officers and 17 enlisted men, the first to be selected under the rotation plan calling for one half of one percent per month of the regiment, left for home on 21 November.

Bloody was the battle of the Abbey of Montecassino and the surrounding terrain which the Germans had organized into strong defensive positions. While at this part of the Italian campaign, known the World over, many instances of bravery by regimental personnel came to light.

Members of the medical detachment, under difficult circumstances, did excellent work. For instance, Private Clement S. Mackowiak, attached to the 3rd Battalion, went across and observed field under German machine gun fire to reach and administer first aid to five wounded men of Company L. He crawled 50 yards on a forward slope under crossfire to get to one of the men and was wounded five times but carried on until he was assured of saving the men's lives. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

With plans being laid for the assault on the fortress of Cassino, Company K crossed the Rapido river in order to make a feint to throw the enemy off balance. A dense mine field was encountered. The water was found to be too swift for the engineer assault boats so the company was forced to return to its position in the line. First Lieutenant John W. North, who lost a leg in the mine field, begged the men not to come in after him, because of the large number of mines in the area. But he was rescued and evacuated.

Another bit of heroic action occurred when a 10-man patrol from Company G. split itself into two parties, one crossing the river and the other remain-

ing as a covering party. The first group went into enemy territory and ran into heavy machine gun and sniper fire. Private George Kurtovich, a scout, was wounded in the stomach and lay at the mercy of the enemy's withering fire.

Private George S. Paudel, seeing this comrade fall, left the covering group and crawled forward 200 yards under excellent enemy observation. While making his way to the wounded man, he was wounded in the nose but continued on and before reaching Kurtovich he was wounded in the forearm. Paudel dragged the scout across the open fire-swept field, up a steep embankment and into a covered spot. The patrol withdrew and Private Paudel stood vigil over his comrade until darkness permitted evacuation by litter bearers. Private Paudel was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

An example of initiative was given by Private First Class Charles H. Bussey of Company C who took over the duties of a wounded first scout and led the attack up a hill. Near the top he captured a German radio operator who had been directing fire and thereby deprived the enemy of vital observation. When Private First Class Bussey reached the top he knocked out a machine gun nest which had been holding up the advance, killed one man and wounded another.

Acting as a squad leader, he assembled the men and led them into driving the enemy from the hill. Bussey, later promoted to Technical Sergeant, was awarded the DSC.

As the regiment moved nearer to Cassino, a counterattack in strength was launched by the Germans against the 2nd Battalion on 3 February and Captain Alden S. Lance, Commanding Company F, exposed himself to heavy machine gun fire to direct the elements of his company. The German attack increased in intensity. Enemy hand grenades forced the men back about 200 yards but Captain Lance rallied his troops as well as a platoon from another company.

and directed such a furious attack that the ground was immediately retaken with great loss to the enemy. During the entire attack Captain Lance kept in constant telephone communications with the battalion and regimental commanders, moving his telephone around the area, and relaying a description of the action. His inspiring action brought the award of the DSC.

Badly hit by casualties, the regiment fought furiously to repel frenzied German counterattacks near Cassino. During one of these counterattacks Technical Sergeant Sylvester D. Singlestad was cut off from Company F and was later awarded the DSC for the following action:

In a hand to hand struggle Sergeant Singlestad fought his way free by using hand grenades and firing his rifle until his ammunition was exhausted. Then, moving behind the Germans and using his rifle as a club, he fought his way through to his commanding officers and provided valuable information on the enemy's strength and dispositions. This information enabled the direction of artillery and mortar fire with deadly effect and also made it possible to use the reserves in a manner which successfully repulsed the enemy. Sergeant Singlestad returned to his platoon under machine gun and rifle fire, reorganized his unit and returned to the fire fight.

A platoon, actually a squad, from the 1st Battalion, was the first in reaching the walls of the Abbey Di Montecassino where they gathered in 14 enemy prisoners from a cave dug in Monastery hill. This represented the farthest advance on the Abbey and the position was held until relinquished later by relieving troops. It was not taken again until Polish troops entered the Cassino area on 18 May and found some of the dead of the 135th lying by their weapons.

At one point after this force reached the walls, the second battalion, ran into trouble in another sector. The regimental I and R platoon was rush-

ed as reinforcements to the badly hit battalion.

One of the platoon's members conspicuated himself. Private Francis H. Gisborne, on his own initiative, three times left his platoon and position of cover and exposed himself to the intense enemy fire to silence a German machine gun and kill two snipers.

In the face of one of the counterattacks, Private Gisborne advanced to within 30 feet of the enemy. stood up in full view and killed four and wounded another to completely disrupt the attacking forces and alone repel the assault. Wounded, Private Gisborne voluntarily chose to remain with his hard-pressed comrades. He directed the fire of a BAR team until the survivors were relieved. He was later given the DSC.

When the regiment's service in the Cassino sector was ended, the 48 days of constant fighting had sapped the fighting strength of the unit. Some of the rifle companies were as low as 30 men present for duty and the average strength was 50 men.

It was in the Gothic line fighting where Captain Kimble, CO of Company E was killed by a sniper. He had fought throughout North Africa and Italy and had been presented with the Distinguished Service Cross by General Mark Clark and also had been awarded the Silver Star.

On the same day, Staff Sergeant William E. Davis of Company G led his rifle squad in a frontal attack on an enemy pillbox located at the crest of a hill. Going through mortar, machine gun and sniper fire, Sergeant Davis went ahead to cut the wire. He rushed to within hand grenade distance of a pillbox, killed two Germans, wounded another and captured 18. Later in the day, while organizing defensive positions, Sergeant Davis was killed by a sniper. He was awarded the DSC posthumously.

In one group of houses at Lagnano a hand to hand fight developed with

extensive use of grenades. This engagement was won primarily through the initiative and courage of Second Lieutenant Thomas W. Wigle, who, although mortally wounded, continued to hurl grenades at the enemy and shout words of encouragement to his men. Inspired by his heroic leadership, they moved in to clean out the strongpoint. A posthumous award of the Congressional Medal of Honor was made to Lieutenant Wigle.

THE VALLEY OF THE PO

The final sweep of the victorious American armies across the Valley of the Po to the Swiss, French and Austrian borders, must remain one of the most amazing military accomplishments in all history.

During the Po River fighting the 1st battalion of the 135th Infantry was surrounded but "quite undaunted," as a 34th Division history states, "the battalion fought on throughout the night until by daybreak all the enemy had either surrendered or had been killed."

The 135th Infantry, which was part of the IV Corps, struck north and west in a broad sweep to cover all the valley to the west of a line running from Bologna north through Verona to the Brenner Pass on the Austrian border.

When the German LXXV Corps cracked in the final phase of the Italian campaign, General Schlemmer, a few hours after Hitler's death had been announced, sent his Chief of Staff through the lines to the Command Post of the 135th Infantry regiment to announce his willingness to sign an unconditional surrender.

And oddly enough, the 34th German Infantry Division surrendered to the 34th "Red Bull." And shortly thereafter the war ended.

Embarking from Naples on October 22, 1945 the regiment landed at Newport News, Virginia, proceeding immediately to Camp Patrick Henry, where the troops were mustered out November 3, 1945.

And so, the 135th Infantry regiment, covered with glory, had returned to the United States as it had left; totally and completely without pomp and ceremony. There were no bands, no popular greeting, no public review, no speech making. Public acclaim had been expended on troops which had returned earlier. The 135th had left the shores of America beginning in January, 1942 under the greatest secrecy; and now they returned home in almost total obscurity.

The 135th Infantry regiment will stand high on the scroll of honor among the greatest fighting machines that ever carried the Stars and Stripes into battle.

Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill once paid a tribute to the 34th Red Bull Division and indirectly to the 135th when he said, "The 34th United States Infantry Division has the record of the longest period of action of any American troops in this war and participated in Africa, Salerno, Cassino Heights, Anzio Beachhead and glorious capture of Rome and movement North thereof. I pay tribute to officers and men of the 34th United States Infantry Division for their glorious contribution to this great effort."

The 135th alone had over 520 days of combat.

The typical fighting of the 135th is summed up by this statement in the book, "Fighting Divisions:" "When complete histories are written of Allied operations in the Mediterranean Theater, the story of the progress of our forces from the coast of North Africa up the long Italian Peninsula will be in many ways that of the 34th Division. No outfit has fought harder and longer and the slow, steady, costly advance of the "Red Bull" from November 1942 to May 1945 is a typical example of grim infantry warfare over terrain so rugged that the foot soldier was the only consistently usable means of waging war."

There are many details left out of this and many, many places and names not mentioned. However, here are the names of some of those whose contributions to the success and glory of the 135th Infantry in World War II will not be forgotten:

(The following is a list of individuals who received the Medal of Honor and Distinguished Service Cross as indicated up to September of 1944.

MEDAL OF HONOR

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2nd Lt Ernest H. Dervishian | Company B |
| 2nd Lt. Thomas E. Wigle (Posthumous) | Company K |
| S/Sgt George G. Hall | Company B |
| Pvt Furman L. Smith (Posthumous) | Company L |

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Lt. Col. Ray J. Erickson (Posthumous) | 2nd Bn Hq |
| Lt. Col Albert A. Svoboda | 2nd Bn Hq |
| Capt Vincent F. Goodsell | Company G |
| Capt Joe H. Kimble | Company E |
| Capt Alden S. Lance | Company F |
| 1st Lt. Sylvester J. Hunter | Company G |
| 1st Lt. Edwin K. Turner | Company C |
| 2nd Lt. Vernon C. Harris | Company E |
| 2nd Lt. Howard R. Lieurance | Company E |
| 2nd Lt Richard E. McCaffrey | Company H |
| 2nd Lt. Rufus E. O'Farrell | Company B |
| 2nd Lt William O. Sporbert | Company A |
| T/Sgt Charles H. Bussey | Company G |
| T/Sgt Sylvester D. Singlestad | Company F |
| S/Sgt Ralph D. Baker | Company G |

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| S/Sgt | Elmer J. Cassna | Company B |
| S/Sgt | William E. Davis | Company G |
| S/Sgt | David Lopez | Company L |
| S/Sgt | Robert A. Rooney | Company M |
| Sgt | George S. Paudel | Company C |
| Tech 5 | Francis H. Gisborne | Hq Co |
| Pvt 1cl | John G. Garst | Company E |
| Pvt 1cl | Albert E. Gellman | Company C |
| Pvt 1cl | Melvin A. Loin (Posthumous) | Med. Det. |
| Pvt 1cl | Omar Page (Posthumous) | Company K |
| Pvt | Francis J. Lourain (Posthumous) | Company K |
| Pvt | Clement S. Mackowiak | Med. Det. |

OTHER AWARDS EARNED BY PERSONNEL OF THE 135TH INFANTRY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Legion of Merit | 17 |
| Silver Star | 348 |
| Soldier's Medal | 13 |
| Bronze Star | 469 |
| Division Citation | 79 |
| Purple Heart | 4,000 (Approximate) |
| Meritorious Service Plaque | Service Company |
| Regimental Combat Streamer | All Units |

(The regimental combat streamer is awarded after 65 percent of the regiment present for duty have received the Combat Infantryman's Badge. It was effective 3 March 1945)

BATTLE HONORS AWARDED TO THE REGIMENT

Civil War:
Bull Run

World War I
Streamer without inscription

Peninsula
Valley
Antietam
Virginia 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1865
Fredericksburg
Gettysburg
Petersburg

Spanish-American War
Manila

Philippine Insurrection
Luzon
San Isidor

World War II
Tunisia
North Apennines
Naples-Foggia
Rome-Arno
Po Valley

Unit Decorations
Streamer in the colors of the
French Croix de Guerre with
palm embroidered BELVEDERE.

END