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**Report date:** 30 August 1945

**Title:** Extract from 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Journal of 6 April 1945

**Author:** Headquarters 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team

**Abstract:** The sections of the journal extracted have been those which would build up the picture leading up to the air action, the actual air attack, and give a picture showing results obtained. The plan of attack was as follows: 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion attack the fortified positions frontally, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion on a wide enveloping movement capture Mount Folgorito behind the fortified positions; and the two attacking battalions to make contact on Mount Carreta and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion to be held in reserve.

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D809.73

Extracts from 442d inf.jl.

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6-Apr-45

**RESTRICTED**

DISSEMINATION DIVISION

G-2 Section

HEADQUARTERS ARMY GROUND FORCES  
ARMY WAR COLLEGE  
Washington 25, D. C.

SUBJECT: Extract from 442d Infantry Journal of 6 April 1945

Number 2010-45

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SECRET

HEADQUARTERS  
442D REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM  
APO 464 U.S. ARMY

30 August 1945.

**SUBJECT:** Extract from 442d Infantry Journal of 6 April 1945.

**TO :** Commanding Officer, Army Ground Forces Board, U.S. Army.  
**Attention:** Infantry Member.

The sections of the journal extracted have been those which would build up the picture leading up to the air action, the actual air attack, and give a picture showing results obtained.

On 5 April 1945 the 442d Infantry, attached to 92d Division, attack along the Ligurian Gulf Sector on the Fifth Army front in Italy. This attack started approximately 10 days prior to the final push that resulted in the capitulation of the German forces. The divisional objective was La Spezia, strongly fortified naval base, and it was hoped that through this action the enemy would be compelled to move reserve forces from the Po Valley to the Ligurian Coast sector.

The sector assigned to the 442d Infantry was the mountainous area commanding the coastal plain on which the towns of Massa, Carrara and La Spezia are located. The plan of attack was as follows: 100th Battalion attack the fortified positions frontally; 3d Battalion on a wide enveloping movement capture Mount Folgorite behind the fortified positions; and the two attacking battalions to make contact on Mount Gerreta. 2d Battalion to be held in reserve.

Although the 100th Battalion sector had the normal frontage, the battalion commander, after extensive reconnaissance, elected to attack along the ridge in column of companies rather than risk putting troops in the valley to the left which he was certain the enemy had zeroed in. The right side of the ridge was absolutely perpendicular offering one foot trail only.

At 0450 all divisional artillery plus tanks, tank destroyers, and 57mm antitank guns available layed on the fortified ridge in a 10-minute preparation in front of the 100th Battalion. At 0503 A Company crossed the line of departure with B and D Companies furnishing base of fire. By 0530 hours A Company was on their objective, "Hill Georgia," a "pimple" on the ridgeline that was a mass of caves, bunkers, interlocking trenches and sniper posts surrounded by extensive minefields. (So intricate were these

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"Extract from 442d Inf Journal of 6 Apr 45," Hq 442d RGT,  
30 Aug 45, Contd.

caves and fortifications that although the company was on the objective at 0530 hours they were still getting prisoners out of hiding at 1845).

As soon as A Company was on their objective, C Company was committed. According to plan they were to "slide" by on the left flank of A Company and had as their objective "Ohio 1," another "pimple" 300 yards further along the ridge. B Company reverting to battalion reserve.

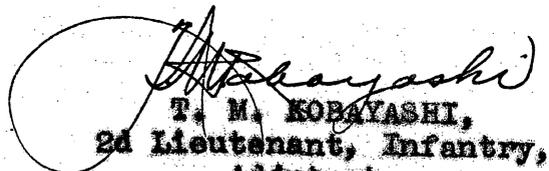
So furious was the defense that C Company was only able to come alongside of forward elements of A Company and both companies were unable to progress forward. Intensive small arms, mortar, grenade and artillery fire was employed by the enemy; reinforcements came from the "Ohios" to hold the line. Although this area was isolated by smoke placed and held on all commanding ground in the sector the enemy kept constant artillery on "Georgia."

The situation remained the same throughout the day. Hand-to-hand fighting, grenade duels, and dogged determination on both sides predominated. The reserve company was not committed because the battalion commander felt it would accomplish nothing but put more men in the "hell" that had developed there. Awaiting night-fall and holding precious ground gained the stalemate continued.

That night reinforced combat patrols tried to break three Jerry defenses without success. Two prisoners were captured. However, the battalion commander then ordered a reinforced platoon from B Company to attack in an enveloping movement along a trail on the left of C Company. At the same time C and A Companies were to push just prior to dawn. This action netted 26 prisoners and advanced the frontline 200 yards. Then they all were stopped again.

Following is a extract from the Regimental Journal that covers actions during the night of the 5th and the day of the 6th. The battalion commander, realizing that it was "do or die," requested and employed everything possible, finally the situation "snapped" and the mission was completed.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

  
T. M. KOBAYASHI,  
2d Lieutenant, Infantry,  
Adjutant.

1 Incl:  
Extract of Journal.

SECRET  
HEADQUARTERS 4400 INFANTRY  
JOURNAL

Date 6 April 1945  
Place Vallecchia

Time Dated	From	To	Orders, Incidents, Messages, etc.
0515	Red 6	S-3	<p>We can't get any further up here. We are running into Schu mines, it is just like a fortified line. They won't come out; you have to dig them out. Can you get us some flame throwers so we can burn them out? We had some tough luck last night. We sent a patrol to clear them out and after it was clear some more came down the hill but the rifle company didn't fire because they thought they were the patrol. As soon as this reconnaissance is over I am going to call for all artillery I can get.</p>
0530	G-3	S-3	<p>Is that relief completed yet? That is the 2d Bn? S-3 We have only radio communication and I'm afraid to put anything out. Red is having trouble; the Jerries have a hell of a defense up there and many mines and we'll have to burn them out.</p>
0545	S-6	Bl 6	<p>How is it going? Bl-6 We didn't get any rounds last night. S-6 We got some heavy stuff landing here. Did White get there? Bl-6 Neither the ration party nor White. We hear noises and think it may be the ration party. S-6 Red definitely needs help from you. Did you get that order? Bl-6 No sir. It is with the ration party. S-6 Hold what you have in that area but give them as much help as you can. Do not lose what you have already. Did somebody from Dike call you? Bl-6 No sir, no one. S-6 Are you already to start on the hour? Bl-6 What is the hour? S-6 0600. Bl-6 I think we will be a little late. We have to give out rations and water. We had a little fight in L Co area last night; we got 13 or 14 PWs but we had to kill them all. There are 40 to 60 Jerries in Fragolita. S-6 You had losses? Bl-6 Quite a few. We had 15 casualties in K Co from mortars. S-6 Yes, I know about that. You think you can handle the situation? Bl-6 I will try. S-6 You say there are quite a few people up there? Bl-6 Yes, definitely. S-6 Have they come up since you were there? Bl-6 No, they were there initially. The PWs say they had 60 or 70 there. The way we got these PWs, a platoon went behind and surprised them and rounded them up. Then the Jerries started to make a break and we had to shoot them. S-6 That was when they were running? Bl-6 Yes. S-6 Have you any Krauts alive there? Bl-6 Yes, but the boys think two got away. They are all dead or wounded. S-6 You know about that original plan to Red? Bl-6 Yes. S-6 I want that worked out with elements but not with everything you got. I want you to hold that ground you are on. White is taking over that ground I Co has. You know what I mean. Bl-6 Yes.</p>



S E C R E T  
HEADQUARTERS 442D INFANTRY  
J O U R N A L

Date 6 April 1945

Place Vallecchia

Time Dated	From	To	Orders, Incidents, Messages, etc.
0629	S-6	Red 3	<p>How did those men get in back of the bunkers? Red 3- Well, it happened during the mix-up last night. We had two patrols out, one from B and one from C Co. They thought the Jerries were the other patrol so they didn't fire. S-6 I see. Red 3- You know what the plan is for today? S-6 No. Red 3- B Co, the Reinforced platoon, is going around left of C on an envelopment. S-6 I see. Red 3- There were lots of mines and several men injured.</p>
0705	S-6	G-6	<p>Red Bn is having trouble with the bunkers. G-6 What are you going to do? S-6 We're getting five flame throwers and going to use them there. G-6 Good. S-6 Last night a group from the bunker followed our G Co patrol. Red had two patrols out, 1 from B Co, 1 from C. Well, they didn't know who it was so didn't fire on them. This morning B is sending a platoon around. G-6 Can they go around the rocky ledge? S-6 No. They also hit more mines last night. Blue Bn is still trying to push to Cerreta. Last night they had 16 PWs and they made a break. We shot 14 of them and 2 got away. G-6 That's all right. I'll be over to see you sometime today.</p>
0710	Red 6	S-3 By C	<p>Can you get Rover Joe to bomb reverse slope of Ohio 1, 2 and 3? S-3 Off- I'll try.</p>
0730	S-3	Capt Hodges	<p>Red 6 called on mission on Ohio 1, 2 and 3 and they had planes up but said visibility isn't so good so they will work on it later today. However, it will be in abeyance. How did they make out last night? Capt H- Able Co got a beating.</p>
0750	Red 6	S-3	<p>That request I made is on the reverse slope of Ohio 1, 2 and 3. S-3 Yes. Red 6 Now the smoke we are throwing today isn't doing a bit of good. The wind just blows it away, so we can't give coverage to our men. They are in a firefight now. S-3 I see. The cub was up and reported poor visibility. Red 6 Well, those three crags are clear. S-3 OK. I'll try to get them to fly it.</p>
0802	Red 5	S-6	<p>We got five flame throwers and liquid for it but no operators for them. Our boys are not trained for that. S-6 I'll ask Engrs and see if I can get men for that.</p>

First request  
for air



S E C R E T  
 HEADQUARTERS 442D INFANTRY  
 JOURNAL

Date 6 April 1945

Place Vallecchia

Time Dated	From	To	Orders, Incidents, Messages, etc.
0850	Red 6	S-6	<p>Those planes are up there now and circling. S-6 Tell Red 5 that Engrs haven't got any operators for the flame throwers and ask him if he can work something out. Red 6- Well, that thing isn't too hard to operate so get somebody on it. Red 6- OK. (Conversation relayed from Red 6 to S-6 to Rover Joe. "Red 6 to S-6: Call planes off they are over A Co. I will fire one round of smoke on target.")</p> <p>Planes are circling and diving. 1st plane a little too far to left. The rest OK. S-6 I'll clear through Blue. (S-3 phones Blue Bn and B1 3 says his troops are a good 1000 yds back of reverse slope of Ohio 1, 2 and 3). S-6 All clear. Red 6 If they hit it 200 yds N of the smoke it'll be perfect. S-6 Good. How far S are the targets? Red 6- 200 yds S. Now they have 8 PWs coming back. Those planes are overhead now. Made a couple of dry runs. Here comes one now. He dropped a stick but it dropped 500 yds too far. Tell him bomb release line 500 over. It seemed to stick to the plane before it dropped. 2d plane dropped bombs right on the target and there's black smoke rising from the objective. We can't see the objective too clearly because of the white smoke all around us. Another plane dropped bombs and there's more black smoke, 4th plane OK, too. S-6 Now they have rockets and strafing to do. Where do you want it? Red 6- On the next hump on the reverse slope of 2. Also B Co got 13 PWs. The plane is over target on Ohio 2, he's strafing and maybe shot rockets, can't see it too clearly. They're OK. There's a bomb smoke behind Ohio 2. My whole damn reserve and some front line are standing on the hill watching the air show. All 4 made out all right. Another one in, firing rockets, and machine guns. He did all right. Another one coming in. He did all right. Rockets fired, also machine gun. The last guy got the rocket right in the place. Another coming, he did all right. All 4 made all right. They almost lit on it they were so close. Here comes another one and fired machine guns but no rockets. One more coming in, he went between two peaks and dropped one. S-6 The pilots saw the emplacements and they're going to fire into it. Red 6- Good. Here comes one, he's a little high, they are all a little too high. Must be a dry run. Now here comes one, he did all right. S-6 Planes coming in from W to E. The pilots observed slit trenches on the western slopes.</p>
Air responded to call made at 0710.			



S E C R E T  
HEADQUARTERS 4400 INFANTRY  
J O U R N A L

Date 6 April 1945

Place Valliccia

Time Dated	From	To	Orders, Incidents, Messages, etc.
		Cont'd	<p>Red 6- They are coming in at a different angle. What's the tale on Cerreta? S-6 Nothing much. They jumped on preliminary fire and Jerries put all they got on them. Red 6- Those planes are drawing fire from some place up Cerreta. Seems like .50 Cal possibly 20mm. S-6 On the Cerreta deal, Blue is doing all right. Red 6- Fire coming from between Cerreta and Ohio 3, there seems to be a lot of troops in there. There's a lot of tracers coming from there. Let me know a couple of minutes before AC completes mission. I want to lay 2 Bn 133 on Rocky Ridge and Ohio 1 and move in under it--10 minutes preparation. S-6 contacts planes-- S-6 to Red 6- This will be their last run. (Red 6 orders artillery). Red 6- If you can get another mission in there it will help a lot. S-6 OK. Red 6- We'll go ahead and move now. S-6 OK.</p>
0928	S-2	Red 2	<p>The two men you sent last night say that the men and Noncoms know they were cut off from Fragolita and the officers told them to dig in. They said they had an order from some place so it must be important. The men were ready to give up and with the bombing and confusion you'll probably have it easier now. Red 2- OK. We sent you 13 PWs.</p>
0932	S-3	Bl 6	<p>How did the mission look? Bl 6- I couldn't see. S-3 Maj Conley directed the mission and he said they were on the target. Do you want a mission in the valley between Cerreta and Fragolita? Bl 6- No, we'll fight our own battle.</p>
0944	Red 6	S-2	<p>B has 11 more PWs and C has some too, will you request Divarty to work on Ohio 2 and 3--also another bombing mission on those hills between Mt Cerreta and Fragolita. S-2 I don't think Blue wants that but if you want to coordinate it with Bl 6; also coordinate the artillery mission with him. Red 6- OK.</p>
0945	Op #1	S-2	<p>Air Corps just strafed and rocketed Mt Cerreta between Cerreta and Fragolita and we can see our men working way up Carchio. S-2 That's probably men from the White. If you pick up anything where the plane strafed let me know. The strafing was not between Cerreta and Carchio--it probably looked that way--but they were strafing and bombing the Ohio peaks.</p>



S E C R E T  
HEADQUARTERS 442D INFANTRY  
JOURNAL

Date 6 April 1945

Place Vallecchia

Time Dated	From	To	Orders, Incidents, Messages, etc.
1030	S-5	Red 6	We got 20 PWs. S-5 How far are your leading elements? Red 6- Our leading elements are about 150 yards from where our C Co was last night. S-5 Where are you located? Red 6- I've been all around but I haven't passed Georgia. S-5 Later we are going to have smoke in the valley to your right. On your movement last night the Jerries knew your plans. That was on the 300 radio. Jerry evidently has a 300 radio. The Blue call is BMC Channel 35. How is your supply? Red 6- We had trouble yesterday but I think we won't have trouble today. The coordinate is 968962.
1150	Red	S-3	Radio Msg: Send SPs to rear CP - 13 PWs.
1148	Dixie Blue 6	S-3	I can see your men between Ohio 2 and 3. S-3 We had heard they were on Cerreta. Are you certain? DB 6- Yes, I'm sure. S-3 Our CP reports they say our men on Cerreta. They must have seen the same men that you saw.
1155	G-6	S-6	From my CP I can see a concentration of men. S-6 We have a report that our men are on Ohio 2; also we have an unconfirmed report that our men are on Cerreta. G-6 Confirm it and call me back.
1205	S-6	Red 2	What is your situation? Red 2- C Co has moved ahead and have taken Ohio 1 and 2. B Co has 2 platoons working toward Rocky Ridge. We have one platoon that is working on dugouts on Rocky Ridge and another platoon to E of Rocky Ridge. S-6 Have you any units in Cerreta? Red 2- No sir. We still have Ohio 3 to contend with. S-6 OK.
1230	S-6	Red 5	Is it true you have Ohio 3? Red 5- We have no confirmation. We see some troops moving there. S-6 What are they encountering? Red 5- Nothing. S-6 Are you sure they are on Rocky Ridge? Red 5 Yes, B Co is there.
1245	Red 5	S-2 Maj McKenzie	C Co is sending patrols to Ohio 3. The company isn't there. S-2 There is an estimated squad coming down to Cerreta. Red 5- Well, unless we get hills mixed up, our platoon is going to Ohio 3. B Co has two platoons on Rocky Ridge. Is the supply route to Blue OK to use? S-2 It is very busy and it is under fire from Mt Altissimo.
1320	Red 6	S-3	I think I got 3. There are a couple of bumps and I don't know which it is. S-3 The artillery says it is 3. Red 6- OK. What is the dope on Blue? S-3 We have no information on them. Red 6- Get the Cub up. S-3 You are doing well up there. Red 6- Yes, we expect a counterattack.



S E C R E T  
HEADQUARTERS 442D INFANTRY  
JOURNAL

Date 6 April 1945

Place Vallechia

Time Dated	From	To	Orders, Incidents, Messages, etc.
1332	Red	S-3	We have 8 PWs at the aid station and 50 more coming down. (S-3 called SPs for PWs) (S-3 notified IPW)
1337	Red 6	S-2	Blue forward elements are on crest of Cerreta and some stuff has been by-passed and he wants to reorganize and so do I. I will push out a patrol as soon as I can but I want to get these places set. We have all three peaks and Rocky Ridge. We have some PWs.
1410	Red 5	S-3	We are getting heavy stuff from down in the flats. Can you get Rover Joe on it? S-3 OK. I'll call you back on it.
1425	S-2	G-2	Blue is on crest of Mt Cerreta. Something has been by-passed. Red has 3 Ohios and Rocky Ridge. Both Red and Blue are digging in. As soon as that is completed Red will send a combat group up to Blue and get anything in the middle. The PW total is 64. S-2 Here is a msg from Jerry we picked up, probably 2d Bn, 281st Regt. "After conference I think best time for undertaking would be twilight." Also probably from 281st Regt, "Bombers circling over consider twilight is best time." Once before we had an attack on Rocky Ridge and they may try to send a company up behind it. 1130 Rover Joe saw 200 troops in Capanella coord 921028 headed toward Massa. 1240 Rover Joe observed 40 troops on W road going into Capanella. Both were strafed by Rover Joe. S-2 Our White should be on Belvedere shortly.
1455	S-2	Red 6	Above msg given. Red 6- We are losing a lot of men on mines because we are moving so fast.
1617	S-3	Bl 5	What is the dope. Bl 5- Did you receive word that Red is attacking their objective on Cerreta? S-3 No. Bl 5- Blue-6 says they are on it. He doesn't know where the forward elements are but the last one was forward elements 700 yds from objective. S-3 White ran into opposition on the S slope of Belvedere. Bl 5- Our troops should run into Red now. Bl 6-is checking on it. It is set for the surprise tonight. S-3 OK. I'll check with Red on it. Bl 5- That road was cleared yesterday. I wonder if you could keep vehicles from going up there? S-3 OK. Bl 5- Well, it should be clear for those medical vehicles. That road is taking a shelling. S-3 I see. Bl 5- We lost our 3. He was killed by a sniper.



SECRET  
HEADQUARTERS 4TH INFANTRY  
JOURNAL

Date 6 April 1945  
Place Vallecchia

Time Dated	From	To	Orders, Incidents, Messages, etc.
1623	S-3	Red 5	What do you hear from up there? Red 5- They got everything off Ohio and up on Gerreta. S-3 Bl-5 says they have probably a merger up there. Red 5- Well, Red 6 has sent out a patrol to contact them; as yet they haven't made any contact. They are catching a lot of large fire from the left. S-3 They were two planes up there. Red 5- There were, but not now.
1645	G-2	S-3	We intercepted a message from the Germans which goes like this: "Counterattack at Rocky Ridge. There is a company assembling there and think the time may be twilight."
1650	S-2	Red 5	Above msg given. Red 5- We saw some people getting together so we pounded them.
1653	Red 6	S-2	My 5 just called me again on that msg from G-2. Now, I just came back from there and we had the same msg some time ago. We fired on it already. Can you tell me whether it is another new threat? S-2 OK.
1656	S-2	G-2	On that counterattack, was that the same one you mentioned sometime ago this afternoon? G-2 Yes. S-2 Well Red 6 has put fire on it and dispersed them.
1851	Red 2	Capt Shirey	Total PWs taken today is 80. Capt S- Have we got all of them? Red 2- Yes. We got 3 ammo and ration dumps captured. Ration supplies enough for 1 Co for 1 week; 15 MG and unknown amount of rifles, hand grenades, 2 sub-machine guns, 1 British type and the other Italian type, 1 grenade launcher, Schu mines and demolitions, American water cans, pack boards, and one radio complete. 10 enemy KIA. Capt S- Give me an estimate on amount of artillery and mortar. Red 2- I can't give you any number. Capt S- A couple hundred rounds? Red 2- About that.
1910	Red 6	Capt Shirey	I wonder if we could get Air OP out to look over the situation? Capt S- I think so. Red 6- Blue had a patrol out and captured some PWs. They had a firefight and they have 20 or 30 Krauts between Blue and Red.
1934	Red 6	S-2	6 more PWs caught other side of 3. Made contact with Blue. S-2 Are you going to take over part of Blue? Red 6- No, we can't, I talked to 3 about it and we are so spread out it will be almost impossible. Will you contact Bl 6 and see if he can take it over? S-2 OK.



S E C R E T  
HEADQUARTERS 442D INFANTRY  
J O U R N A L

Date 6 April 1945

Place Vallechia

Time Dated	From	To	Orders, Incidents, Messages, etc.
2010	S-2	Red 5	How about the paper, did you find it? Red 5- I declare it lost in our area. There is a counter-attack. We think it is coming from the rear of Rocky Ridge, coming from SE of Strettoia. We have everything on them, artillery and mortars. S-2 Call back and let me know how it comes out. Red 5- OK.
2030	S-6	Red 5	How's the counterattack? Red 5- We don't know. We got report from OP that the enemy was massing side of Rocky Ridge. We put everything there. It is pretty hard to observe. We are prepared for it though. All our men are alerted. S-6 What OP reported it? Red 5- California OP, and Maj Hazel who has been giving us a lot of support reported it. He has a couple of MGs covering the valley. S-6 Think you have it pretty well controlled? Red 5- We can take care of it all right. We had one man from B Co killed and also an artillery man, but I'm not blaming it on our artillery. The Jerries might have been throwing in artillery at the same time.



**HEADQUARTERS  
442D REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM  
APO 464 U.S. ARMY**

27 August 1945.

**SUBJECT: Action for Which 100th Battalion, 442d Infantry Regiment,  
Was Cited.**

**TO : Commanding Officer, Army Ground Forces Board, U.S. Army.  
Attention: Infantry Member.**

At the time this action took place, the 442d Combat Team had been ordered to seize the high ground north of Suvereto, Italy, then defended by approximately one battalion of SS troops, with artillery, SP, and light tank support. The attack was launched at 1000 hours 26 June 1944 and by 1200 hours heavy fighting was in progress, enemy positions had been thoroughly developed, but the 2d and 3d Battalions were unable to make further progress.

Here the regimental commander elected to commit his reserve, the 100th Battalion. Speed was essential to the mission; therefore, the battalion was ordered to move out at 1200 hours, 30 minutes after the order was issued.

Moving by a covered route in column of companies--B, A, and C--the battalion gained a height which the enemy had neglected to cover and which overlooked the town of Belvedere. While the 2d and 3d Battalions maintained a steady pressure against the enemy MLR, the 100th now prepared to attack the enemy from his flank and rear. The machine gun section of B Company, supplemented by the machine gun platoon of D Company, was sent to engage this force. At the same time the 1st platoon advanced toward the town of Belvedere while the 2d platoon advanced west to cut the road northwest of the town to deny the enemy this means of escape.

The 3d platoon was then sent southward to intercept a road-bend and prevent escape from Belvedere to the southwest.

Upon completion of this deployment, the platoon leader of the 1st platoon elected to commit his platoon by squads, two of them encircling the town and the third, lead by himself, making a direct attack on the objective. The outskirts were reached and German communication cut before the enemy countered with machine pistol fire. This was quickly reduced by well-placed grenades and the defense was broken with three enemy being killed, one wounded, and approximately 20 more retreating to secondary positions on the other side of town. These 20 men were joined by a halftrack armed with a machine gun. This new threat was met

Ltr, "Action for Which 100th Bn, 442d Inf Regt, Was Cited,"  
Hq 442d RGT, 27 Aug 45, Contd.

with small arms and bazooka fire disabling the vehicle and killing or wounding five enemy. Two of the enemy were captured and the remainder fled into another platoon of B Company.

Taking up the advance again, the squad received fire from a German MK IV tank. This was eliminated by a direct hit with a bazooka killing the entire tank crew. One member of the bazooka team was killed.

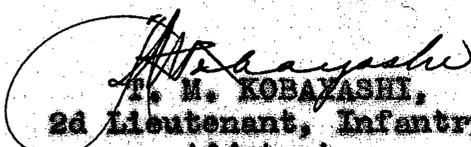
Meanwhile, A Company was committed on the right of B Company with one platoon moving in a northerly direction to mop up east of Belvedere. The 2d and 3d platoons of A Company were dispatched to the west to complete mopping up operations. Considerable resistance was met by elements of A Company in accomplishing its mission. One squad of the 2d platoon was pinned down by machine gun fire from a nearby house. This was neutralized by a hand grenade and three enemy were captured.

The 1st platoon also ran into heavy machine gun fire while the platoon established a base of fire. One man rushed the position capturing the entire crew. The next objective was a German motor pool guarded by five enemy guards. These men were overcome by a small patrol and the motor pool was captured intact. The cache included five  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks, one  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton truck, five motorcycles and two  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks.

By 1700 A Company had reached the town of Micheline adjoining Belvedere and had overcome all enemy resistance in the area. From the capture of the motor pool until the company reached Micheline, 16 vehicles, one field piece, one tank, and 15 enemy were captured. Thirty enemy were killed, a battalion command post was captured intact, and an American reconnaissance patrol that was captured that morning was rescued.

Having accomplished its mission, the 100th Battalion remained in position that night and resumed the attack the following morning.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

  
T. M. KOBAYASHI,  
2d Lieutenant, Infantry,  
Adjutant.

**HEADQUARTERS  
442D REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM  
APO 464 U.S. ARMY**

27 August 1945.

**SUBJECT:** Operational Report of the 442d Regimental Combat Team Covering the Period 5 to 15 April 1945 Which Resulted in the Destruction of the Western Anchor of the German Gothic Line North of Pisa, Italy.

**TO :** Commanding Officer, Army Ground Forces Board, U.S. Army.  
Attention: Infantry Member.

The 442d Regimental Combat Team operation from 5 to 15 April 1945 which destroyed the western anchor of the German Gothic Line north of Pisa, Italy, serves as a classic example of classroom lessons that worked on the field of battle. All the theory of security, the night approach, and the frontal attack coordinated with a surprise flank assault from the least expected source, were wrapped up in this action.

The key to the success of the entire strategy was the surprise flank attack made by one battalion in coordination with a frontal assault by a second battalion. The flanking movement, made with the eyes of the enemy looking down from 3000-foot heights, had only a 50-50 chance of success, but it was felt that the objective warranted the risk involved. Especially in view of the fact that the defensive heights held by the enemy had resisted the attacks of other elements over a period of six months. And furthermore, by the fact that with the Gothic Line defenses having been broken with the successful battle for Futa Pass during the winter and the entire front now fluid, it was imperative that this western defensive anchor be destroyed so that the Allied Armies could drive the enemy back along the entire front. Therefore, given the objective of destroying the western anchor of the enemy's Gothic Line, the 442d Regimental Combat Team was given as H-hour 0500B 5 April 1945.

The secrecy required to insure surprise, however, was placed over the unit three weeks prior to this date. On the earlier date, 15 March 1945, the 442d was relieved of its winter-long holding action on the Maritime Alps sector, France, along the Italian border, and prepared for movement to the Fifth Army's left flank. Relieved by elements of the 2d Brigade, 1st DMI (Motorized Infantry Division), French Army of the Alps, the 442d moved by rail and organic motor to Antibes. Throughout the following overseas movement the strongest security measures were observed. Every effort was made to build the unit to its highest peak of strength and efficiency. Six officers and 303 enlisted

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

men classified limited assignment and unfit for further combat were transferred out of the unit. At an assembly area near Antibes a showdown inspection of clothing and equipment was held, ordnance equipment inspected, and typhus shots administered. At the staging area near Marseilles, all vehicles, equipment and crew-served weapons were turned in, and an IG showdown inspection of clothing and equipment was conducted. A physical examination was also made. The sea trip from Marseilles to Liverne was made aboard Navy LSTs in two convoys. The advance party, consisting of the 3d Battalion and Antitank Company, boarded LSTs the night of 21 March and sailed at 0630B 22 March in convey. On 22 and 23 March the remainder of the 442d, less the 522d Field Artillery Battalion which had been sent north to the German front, boarded LSTs and sailed at 1700B 23 March. To avoid German naval activity off the northern Italian coast, the convoys took a circuitous route, passing between the islands of Corsica and Sardinia. The weather was fair and the two-day trip without incident.

By 1600B 25 March the main body of the 442d had joined the advance party and was billeted at Peninsular Base Section Staging Area Number 3, near Pisa. The unit was assigned to Fifth Army, attached to IV Corps, and for combat operations attached to the 92d Infantry Division. On 26-27 March new vehicles, weapons and equipment were issued and prepared for use. Identifying insignia were removed from clothing and helmets. Outfitted in the record time of two days, the regiment, on 28 March, under cover of darkness, moved by truck in four serials to a bivouac area at San Martino, near Lucca. At this secluded area, training was resumed in preparation for combat. The unit conducted an intensive training schedule, consisting of range firing, conditioning marches, mine indoctrination, night problems and unit tactical problems. To have a backlog of reserves, a Provisional Company was constituted to control reinforcements, RTU's and personnel above T/O strength, in accordance with a 92d Division directive.

Movement forward to the assembly areas was ordered 3 April. After dark the 100th Battalion (1st Battalion of the 442d) and 3d Battalion troops detrucked at San Martino and rode to Pietrasanta, 17 miles distant. The trip had to be made at night as the enemy had direct observation on the route of approach. The 100th Battalion troops detrucked on the outskirts of Pietrasanta as the town was under shellfire, and marched the eight miles to Vallecchia (972953) where they bivouacked. The Regimental Command Post was opened at 2140B this same night in the town. The 3d Battalion, which had taken a different route, detrucked at Seravezza four miles beyond, under orders to proceed on to the mountain village of Azzano under strictest secrecy. The eight-mile march to Azzano was made in pitch darkness along a winding trail bordered on the left by steep cliffs. Twenty-five men fell from the trail in the darkness, two of them becoming hospital cases. Azzano, which was reached at 0245B 4 April, was nestled

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

near the top of the last hill before the mountain heights controlled by the enemy. The terrain here fell sharply away on the forward slope into a valley and rose steeply to the 3000-foot mountain heights which formed the regimental objective. The 2d Battalion moved up from San Martino on the following night, 4 April, and occupied the 100th Battalion's bivouac area when it moved out to its forward assembly area.

Thus, before the attack, the troops were situated at the base of a mountain mass of ridges and peaks which rose almost perpendicularly 2700 to 3300 feet from the flat coastal plains along which ran Highway 1. The east side of this main highway formed the regiment's zone of advance. Immediately to the regimental front rose the objective, a series of peaks, Mount Gerreta, Mount Felgorite, Mount Garchio, and Mount Belvedere, running south to north in that order, which commanded all the flat ground to the south and west. This western anchor of the Gothic Line, which was known to be well-fortified, also protected the key communications center of Massa.

The plan of operations called for the 100th Battalion to attack frontally up and along the back of the south-north ridge-line which ran across the four peaks, while the 3d Battalion was to attack from the east in a pincer-movement, cutting the ridge-line between Mount Felgorite and Mount Garchio. From this point, designated the Line of Departure, one element of the 3d Battalion was to attack southward along the ridgeline, capturing Mount Felgorite and making junction with the 100th on Mount Gerreta, while another element of the 3d Battalion attacked northward along the ridgeline to capture Mount Garchio, until the entire commanding mountain mass was in the hands of the 442d Combat Team. Success depended upon the 3d Battalion achieving complete surprise. As the course of events revealed the enemy did not expect an attack up the cliff-like east face of the ridge. The only practical means of ascent up the at-times 60-degree slope was a little used path, known only to local civilians and to spies whom the enemy sent through the Allied lines.

During the night of 4-5 April the 100th Battalion moved up to its Line of Departure on a hill mass designated "Florida" (697-967). B Company relieved elements of the 371st Infantry, and placed one platoon on the left crest of "Florida" hill and another platoon on the right crest as a base of fire for the attacking companies. Its firepower was augmented by the machine gun platoons of D Company. At 0450B a preparatory 10-minute concentration of friendly mortar, tank and artillery fire was placed on enemy positions directly to the front. The regiment was supported by the fire of the 599th Field Artillery Battalion and the 329th Field Artillery Battalion; 1st Platoon, B Company, 895th Tank Destroyer Battalion; B Company, 84th Chemical Battalion (4.2

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RGT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

mortars), and Assault Guns of the 758th Tank Battalion. The barrage was of pinpoint accuracy and some of the most effective artillery fire the observers had ever seen. It pinned down the enemy who was strongly entrenched in a series of bunkers so arranged as to give him interlocking fields of fire that covered thickly-sown minefields, and materially aided the attacking troops.

The first of the enemy's defense points was Hill 411 (966970), designated "Georgia." Beyond this lay a series of ridge peaks: "Ohio 1" (963975); "Ohio 2" (963977); and "Ohio 3" (963977). At 0502B, A Company crossed the Line of Departure (967968). Simultaneously, the friendly barrage was shifted and smoke and HE shells were placed on "Rocky Ridge" (962973) which was between 300 to 500 yards to the left of the "Ohio" peaks. Its purpose was to prevent the enemy on "Rocky Ridge" from giving supporting fire to his troops on Hill 411. A Company immediately encountered resistance and sustained casualties from enemy artillery and ground fire. A Company advanced with two platoons abreast, working up the hill through a thickly-sown minefield. The leading elements had gone 150 yards and were almost to the top of Hill 411 when an enemy mine was tripped. In the next several minutes, seven more men tripped enemy mines and became casualties. With the first detonation, the enemy threw grenade, automatic and small arms fire on the attacking platoons. Maneuvering through the minefield, the attacking troops destroyed two machine gun nests and at 0532B reached the crest of Hill 411. However, A Company was unable to advance down the forward slope against enemy positions as he laid down a heavy mortar and artillery concentration.

At 0600B, C Company was committed, passing through the left platoon of B Company, in an attempt to outflank the enemy positions on the northern or forward slope of Hill 411. However, as forward elements of C Company drew abreast of A Company which was on the right, they were pinned down by a crossfire from enemy machine gun nests and log bunkers 200 yards beyond Hill 411. Concentrations of 60mm and 81mm mortars and artillery fire were placed on enemy strong points, but neither assault company was able to advance through the heavily-mined area in the face of the strong enemy fire. The close nature of the fighting around the pillboxes limited the use of friendly artillery, and in order to advance it was necessary to destroy the enemy positions one at a time by the use of bazookas and grenades. Fighting was severe throughout the day. By nightfall, against stubborn resistance, 12 bunkers were destroyed. The leading companies dug-in and B Company was assembled on the reverse slope of Hill 411 as battalion reserve. Throughout the day and night patrols were dispatched to probe enemy strongpoints, and one patrol from C Company returned with two prisoners. Information so gathered was used in preparing the next day's operations. At 2345B the enemy counterattacked in force but was thrown back by accurate mortar and artillery fire. In the first day's action the Battalion accounted for 12 bunkers destroyed, two prisoners captured and 14 known enemy killed. This

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RGT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

was achieved at a cost to the battalion of 16 killed and 56 wounded.

Meanwhile, this same day, 5 April, three kilometers to the north, the 3d Battalion had carried out its part of the coordinated operation. It had spent 4 April in resting up from its hard climb to Azzano, remaining out of sight in the buildings. This was necessary as the enemy had excellent observation from the top of Mount Altissimo, which stood at the head of the valley. Absolute security was required if the attack on the morning of 5 April was to be successful. On the night of 4 April at 2500B, Companies I and L, as heavily armed as possible, and accompanied by the machine gun platoons of M Company, moved westward down the steep trail from Azzano to the valley bottom. The troops moved as silently as possible, a difficult task in the utter darkness. Then, guided by a Partisan, the men moved up a faint switchback trail leading to the ridgeline between 2800-foot Mount Folgorite and 3300-foot Mount Garchio. The trail skirted dropoffs 15 to 150 feet high and was so steep that the troops were forced to practically scramble up on hands and knees. The climb was arduous and made dangerous by the darkness. The menace of discovery hung continually over the toiling troops, and if the enemy had observed them before they reached the top the results would have been disastrous. The climb took so much out of the men that although the Line of Departure was reached by the leading elements at 0500B, H-hour, the attack was delayed until the companies had reorganized. Although day was breaking, the 3d Battalion troops still escaped detection and were looking down on the unsuspecting enemy.

The 3d Battalion achieved complete surprise when it attacked at 0600B. Undoubtedly the attention, if not some of the strength of the enemy had been drawn toward the 100th Battalion which had attacked an hour earlier. Initial resistance was scattered, and by 0730B the ridge was secured. L Company captured eight prisoners and swung south against Mount Folgorite, while one platoon of I Company moved to secure Mount Garchio to the north. By 1230B the latter was fighting to wrest Mount Garchio from the enemy, while L Company had taken Mount Folgorite, cutting the enemy supply route to Mount Cerreta. It seized the enemy observation post on the peak, captured 15 prisoners, one 75mm pack howitzer, four machine guns and innumerable rifles and machine pistols and stores of ammunition and grenades. Enemy resistance increased as L Company pushed southward toward Mount Cerreta to meet the 100th Battalion. Enemy mortar and artillery barrages caused numerous casualties, and the company was forced to dig-in for the night without having made contact with the 100th Battalion. In the initial attack, I Company had been forced to follow L Company almost to Mount Folgorite and then swing back north toward Mount Garchio along the razorback ridge which was the only accessible route to the peak. The I Company platoon drove the enemy back into the recesses of Mount Garchio and directed artillery fire which destroyed an enemy observation

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

post on the peak. It kept the small enemy force neutralized before being relieved by F Company of the 2d Battalion on the following day, 6 April. The heaviest casualties of the 3d Battalion were suffered by the reserve company. K Company had been called from reserve at Azzano at 1000B. As the company, with the M Company mortar platoons attached, moved down into the valley preparatory to ascending Mount Carchio, it received an intense 120mm mortar barrage from Mount Altissimo, overlooking the valley, and suffered four KIA and 42 WIA. All available personnel in the battalion were used to evacuate the wounded, including the Anti-tank platoon, 57 men from the Antitank Company, and 88 from the Provisional Company. The trail was so difficult that 12 litter relay points had to be set up between the ridgeline and the valley bottom, and the litter parties in many cases came under shellfire.

Notable throughout the day was the air support from the 57th Fighter Group, XXII Tactical Air Command, which bombed and strafed the enemy rear, as well as a suspected reserve battalion in Massa. Night fell without the two battalions having made contact. After dark supplies were carried up to the peaks on packboards by carrying parties of Partisans. In order to take sufficient rations, water and ammunition, 88 Partisans were required. Elements of the carrying parties who left Azzano for Mount Felgorite at 2300B did not return to Azzano until 1500B 6 April, a roundtrip taking 16 hours.

A complete tabulation for the regiment for the day revealed that in addition to the positions occupied, 30 enemy were killed, 12 log bunkers and 17 machine guns destroyed, and 25 prisoners, including one officer, taken. The prisoners were from the 3d and 4th Companies, 281st Regiment, 148th Division.

#### 6 April 1945

The regimental attack order for operations on 6 April was for the 100th and 3d Battalions to make a juncture at Mount Cerreta. In driving southward along the ridgeline the 3d Battalion was to block the trail leading from the town of Montignose which was west of the ridge, also all trails leading into the battalion zone, and to guard against counterattack. The 2d Battalion, which had moved out from Vallecchia at 2130B the previous night, 5 April, was ordered to pass through the 3d Battalion and seize Mount Belvedere to the north.

B Company, which had been in reserve the previous day, was committed and given the mission of taking "Rocky Ridge." As long as the enemy held this height, he posed a threat to the battalion left flank in its attempt to take the "Ohio" peaks. One platoon, reinforced with a section of light machine guns, passed through C Company's left sector. Under cover of brush and small trees the platoon followed a descending trail until it was below "Rocky Ridge." Meeting automatic fire from four enemy bunkers, the

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

platoon, splitting into squads and using rifle grenades and all its available firepower, closed in so rapidly that the enemy yielded the first line of bunkers on "Rocky Ridge." Then, as resistance proved heavy, a second platoon of the company was called up to reinforce the assaulting platoon. On the way it encountered a well-camouflaged minefield 40 yards in depth. One man stepped off the trail and activated a Schu mine. The mine was connected to a series of others and in the explosions that followed two men were killed and eight wounded. Skirting the minefield the platoon joined the other in an assault on "Rocky Ridge." In a firefight lasting one hour, six enemy bunkers were neutralized, 17 of the enemy captured, one killed and two wounded. In the heavy fighting the two platoons took a total of 49 prisoners and captured 12 German rifles, three heavy machine guns, four cases of "potato masher" grenades, three antitank grenade launchers, 2000 rounds of machine gun ammunition.

Meanwhile, as A Company remained in battalion reserve, C Company prepared to attack the "Ohio" peaks. First at 0850B an air mission was called on the objectives. Close coordination was accomplished in the following manner: The battalion commander, who was at the battalion Observation Post, was in direct communication through the infantry switchboard with the regimental executive officer. The latter was in communication with the air force representative at the regimental command post, who in turn was in communication by radio with the air force officer who relayed instructions to the fighter pilots. Due to this close communication it was possible to correct the run of the plane after the dive had begun. Such close communication permitted excellent accuracy in target designation. Before the pilot would loose his bombs or rockets he would make a pass at the target firing tracers from his machine guns. By doing this the battalion commander (observer) could tell perfectly if the pilot had the proper target and in a matter of seconds could readjust or confirm the accuracy thus allowing the pilot to accomplish his mission with the greatest accuracy. The 100th Battalion commander directed the fire of four fighter-bombers in this manner, enabling the pilots to score direct hits on "Ohio" objectives with bombs, rockets and machine gun strafing. This was followed immediately by a ten-minute artillery barrage. The air and artillery support worked perfectly, and C Company followed the latter so closely that the men surprised and captured an enemy post of 40 men on "Ohio 1." By 1230B, after several brief firefights, the "Ohio" heights had been cleared and defensive positions set up. Three ration and ammunition dumps with supplies for one company for one week were taken intact; in addition 15 machine guns, two submachine guns, one British and one Italian type, a grenade launcher, Schu mines and demolitions, American water cans, packboards and an SCR 300 radio complete.

During the mopping-up operations on the "Ohio" hills, C Company captured 34 prisoners between 1000B and 1230B, with small groups of enemy surrendering throughout the rest of the day. At 1500B a

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RGT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

platoon of G Company moved out from "Ohio 3" to make contact with the 3d Battalion on Mount Gerreta. On the way the patrol reduced several enemy pockets in brief firefights, capturing six prisoners. The last enemy resistance was overcome on Mount Gerreta, resulting in the capture of 2000 hand grenades, 2000 rations amounting to a two-day's supply for a battalion, 100 rounds of bazooka shells, a large number of rifles and 100 boxes of Schu mines. In addition, American equipment, including sleeping bags, blankets, rations, rifles and ammunition, was recaptured. Fifteen minutes later, at 1900B, and L Company patrol made contact with the G Company platoon. C Company set up defensive positions from "Ohio 3" to Mount Gerreta, and A Company moved up to occupy "Ohio's 1" and "2." Throughout the day and night the battalion was subjected to mortar and artillery barrages.

A recapitulation gave the 100th Battalion a total of 20 enemy killed, 92 prisoners captured, three ammunition and ration dumps, 15 machine guns, a light mortar, a 20mm antitank gun, 2000 hand grenades, a large number of rifles, and large amounts of bazooka shells, Schu mines, ammunition and other supplies. This was achieved at a cost of 16 killed and 46 wounded in the day's action.

L Company, although it suffered two killed, including the battalion S-3, and 11 wounded by intense mortar and artillery barrages, had little trouble in making contact with G Company except at a point halfway between Mount Felgerite and Mount Gerreta. Here it ran into a strong pocket of resistance which was reduced after a stiff firefight. Thirty rifles, and a dugout full of hand grenades and ammunition. K Company secured the ground taken by L Company, setting up a defense line from the midway point back to Mount Felgerite. I Company moved into the sector left by K Company. Enemy artillery was active all day, and an air mission was called on Mount Altissime in an effort to silence German batteries firing from there. A protective smoke screen was maintained along the flank of the battalion. In spite of these counter-measures, enemy artillery "zeroed-in" not only on the forward companies but also on supply trails and rear areas. The Regimental Command Post at Vallecchia was shelled by heavy caliber coastal guns on Punta Bianca.

The 2d Battalion, which had left its position in reserve at Vallecchia at 2130B the previous night, 5 April, had arrived in the morning and moved in on the right flank, relieving the 3d Battalion, with F Company taking over the sector held by I Company at a point 800 yards south of Mount Carchio. One platoon of F Company went to the west slope of the peak. The company was ordered to attack and take Mount Belvedere (946016), the fourth and northernmost peak of the ridge chain, which was located 1000 meters northwest of Mount Carchio. Mount Belvedere commanded Massa. Mopping-up operations were completed on Mount Carchio and forward elements of the company advanced on the objective, only to encounter resistance at two knolls (953014) situated between the

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

two peaks. One platoon attacked the knolls, wounding several, killing two, silencing several snipers and machine gun positions, and forcing the enemy to withdraw. Pockets of enemy resistance remained on Mount Belvedere, but as night was approaching, these were left for the next day. The remainder of the company dug-in on the east slope of Mount Garchie, while E Company assisted in the mopping-up operation on the north slope and dug-in (953014). G Company, in battalion reserve, dug-in on the south slope of the peak. The 2d Battalion thereby formed a perimeter defense around the vital height.

The difficulty of getting supplies up precipitous slopes to the front 3000 feet above the valley bottom and of evacuating the casualties can be realized for all three battalions in the experiences of the 3d Battalion's S-4. The 3d Battalion's supplies for the front were ready to go at 1600B on 6 April, and 100 Partisans were alerted for a carrying party. At 1700B the battalion S-4 was informed that earlier in the day a reconnaissance party had been sent through the 100th Battalion area to find a route of supply that could be traveled by mules. He was ordered to hold up the carrying party until the reconnaissance party was heard from, so he alerted the non-commissioned officer in charge of the 30 mules to be ready to leave on a minute's notice. After waiting two hours the S-4 called the 100th Battalion's commanding officer and was informed that it was impossible to get mules through the 100th's area because of mines and shell holes, and that the 100th was hand-carrying its supplies. The S-4 reported this to his battalion commander. He wanted to get his carrying party under way at once as it took such a long time to pack supplies up to the mountain top. He felt that if the men were spaced properly they could make the trip up the valley to the foot of Mount Folgerite in daylight without drawing enemy fire, thereby cutting down the work for the night. He was ordered to hold the carrying party until the reconnaissance group was heard from. The latter reported in at 1930B, saying that the mule route was impossible and to use the carrying party. In the meantime, however, the Partisans had been released to another battalion, so that it became necessary to use civilians. As a precaution, should the party get mixed up enroute, supply issued each civilian an identification card which stated to what company the supplies he was carrying was intended so that the non-commissioned officer in charge could segregate them when they reached their destination. In this manner he could be certain that each company would get its full share of supplies. The party moved out at 2230B. In the morning, at 0700B 7 April, it was discovered that during the night, due to the long hard climb and the interdicting fire of the enemy, the civilians had become frightened, thrown supplies and ammunition over the cliffs and run away. At 1000B a 50-man carrying party from the Provisional Company of the regiment and all available men from the Special Police Detachment, litter bearers and radio operators were taken up the trail to salvage and carry the supplies up to the front lines in daylight. The party salvaged only about half the rations

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

and some much needed ammunition and carried them to the troops.

In all, during the day, 106 Germans were captured from the 2d, 3d, 4th and 7th Companies, 261st Regiment. Among the prisoners was the company commander of the 2d Company.

7 April 1945

This was a relatively quiet day. At 0700B, C Company moved to Mount Cerreta and took up defensive positions, while one platoon of A Company moved to occupy "Ohio 3" vacated by G Company. B Company remained on "Rocky Ridge," reverting to battalion reserve. The 100th Battalion thus formed a defensive line protecting the left flank of the regiment. At 1500B a reinforced platoon from B Company was dispatched to make a coordinated attack with elements of the 370th Infantry, on the town of Strettoia. The platoon was to give fire support and enter the town from the north. Taking a defiladed route, the patrol succeeded in reaching the high ground overlooking the town without meeting the enemy. Observing no evidence of either the enemy or the 370th, the patrol immediately entered the town and occupied it by 1630B without opposition. At 1740B the patrol contacted elements of the 370th Infantry which had entered the town. The patrol then returned to its company on "Rocky Ridge," and the 100th Battalion remained in position for the rest of the day. It suffered no casualties but captured six prisoners.

In the center sector the 3d Battalion was given the mission of consolidating its positions on Mount Felgerite, to attack and clear an enemy line of resistance on a spur that ran westward from Mount Felgerite at right angles to the main ridgeline, and to assist the 370th Infantry in its attack to the northwest. K Company and one platoon of I Company were to form the prongs of a pincer, each one going around opposite sides of the peak of Mount Felgerite and closing in on the spur from opposite sides. The I Company platoon attacked on schedule and destroyed an enemy hedgehog on the east end of the spur, killing four and capturing nine prisoners and three machine guns. Unable to hold the area the platoon withdrew and directed artillery and mortar fire on enemy positions spotted on the other end of the spur. Meanwhile, K Company, with the intention of hitting the other side of the enemy line, swung too wide in the rain, thick mist and strange terrain. However, the company over-ran four enemy 81mm mortars, captured a large ammunition dump and 23 prisoners in the vicinity of Strinato. By taking this mortar position, the company prevented the enemy from throwing fire on the I Company platoon. At the same time the town of Montignose was bombed by air support, and a reconnaissance made by the battalion commander, guided by Partisans, indicated that the way to the town had been opened.

On the right flank, at 0700B 7 April, F Company resumed its attack upon Mount Belvedere against troops of the Kesselring

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

Machine Gun Battalion. E Company held the slopes of Mount Garchio, while G Company remained in reserve. Mount Belvedere, a height made up of successive knolls, had to be attacked a knoll at a time. Achieving surprise F Company occupied the first knoll (948-015) by 1300B without much opposition. Without delay the company advanced on the second knoll, where it was pinned down by the interlocking fire of two machine guns and the supporting fire of several snipers. The men were fired upon by enemy troops overlooking them, but by the maneuvering of two platoons around the flanks the knoll was taken by 1900B. The company killed 20 Germans, destroyed six machine gun emplacements, took 26 prisoners with maps and documents. A company of the enemy was observed forming in a draw at 940006 at 1250B. Division artillery was called and the enemy threat effectively removed. Toward evening, F Company dug in to await the replenishment of ammunition and rations which were practically exhausted. The company sustained casualties of two killed and 11 wounded. The regiment captured 55 Germans, but suffered casualties of 11 killed and 61 wounded. Two hundred and fifty reinforcements arrived and were attached to the Provisional Company.

The 2d Battalion had the same trouble with supplies as the 3d had the previous night. After one experience with the desertion of civilian carriers under enemy fire, subsequent carrying parties were accompanied by 15 or more Partisan guards, together with four battalion men to further insure against desertion. On one occasion, due to the fact that the supply point in the valley was under direct observation from hostile Mount Altissimo, 12 casualties, including one civilian, were sustained from enemy shelling. Thereafter, a constant smoke screen was maintained to cover the valley. Casualties were evacuated down the steep trails by litter parties of 10 men, each descent taking at least eight hours. The battalion surgeon had relay aid stations along the route, each one with a medical technician, so that the maximum attention could be given each casualty during the process of evacuation. Throughout this period, 124 to 200 civilians were used by the battalion for carrying parties.

8 April 1945

The major action of 8 April took place on the right flank as the 2d Battalion was given the missions of securing Mount Belvedere, and the towns of Pariana and Altagnana, which would give most of the commanding ground east and southeast of Massa to the regiment. At 0800B G Company moved out from Mount Garchio on a special mission to secure the battalion's left flank by seizing Hill 381 on C1e Tecchioni (922007), a long ridge overlooking Massa. By 1200B the company was in position to launch its attack on the ridge when it began to receive fire from the rear. At first the troops thought the fire was from F Company on Mount Belvedere, but a checkup showed that it came from the enemy on the last knoll on

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

Mount Belvedere. G Company laid covering fire on the knoll while F Company made a flanking attack to the right. In a hard fire-fight the company captured the peak, taking six machine guns, 30 prisoners, and killing 20. With this threat from the rear removed, G Company prepared for its attack. A hundred yards in front of its position was a thickly weeded area which concealed an unknown number of the enemy. The company commander called for a five-minute artillery concentration which thoroughly covered the area. The company then attacked, with two platoons abreast and one in reserve. They were met by the fire of three machine guns and supporting enemy rifles. These were destroyed and the ridge wrested from an estimated 200 enemy troops after a three-hour firefight. The entire ridge was occupied by 2000B. In this operation the company destroyed nine machine guns, four 50mm mortars, captured six prisoners and killed 22, at a loss of 11 wounded and three killed. A defense was organized along the length of the ridge with strong elements placed at points vulnerable to counter-attack. The enemy struck at midnight against the east and west ends of the defense line. Fighting took place at hand grenade range, with several instances of hand-to-hand conflict reported. The company gave no ground and the enemy finally withdrew, leaving 15 dead. Throughout this period, from 2000B to 0200B (April) the company's positions were under constant mortar and small arms fire. In the action the company lost four killed and 12 wounded.

Meanwhile, the other two rifle companies of the 2d Battalion which had left Mount Garchio before dark on their respective missions had encountered similarly stiff opposition. E Company had been ordered to attack Altagnana (937035), at the foot of Mount Antona, and had sent a patrol in platoon strength toward the town. The 3d platoon was only a short distance down Mount Belvedere when it was caught in a mortar barrage which wounded 17 men. All the squad leaders were casualties, but the remainder of the platoon continued on the mission. The 2d platoon was dispatched shortly after dark. The men helped to take care of the 3d platoon casualties and proceeded down the mountain. They joined the 3d platoon on the outskirts of Altagnana. Careful reconnaissance revealed a large number of enemy troops in the town. Establishing communications with the company command post, an artillery concentration was asked for and placed on the town. The two platoons remained on the outskirts in preparation for a dawn attack.

F Company, at 1900B on this day, had dispatched its 2d platoon toward Pariana, its objective. A heavy mortar barrage on the slopes of Mount Belvedere split the patrol in two, but after reorganizing it continued on its way. It made contact with elements of the E Company platoons outside Altagnana. Then, with a Partisan as a guide, the platoon advanced on Pariana. From the high ground above the town it observed much enemy activity, and this information was reported back to the company command post by messengers.

In the center sector, the 3d Battalion left Mount Folgorite,

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RGT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

advancing down a spur toward the hill Cle Piano and the town of Montignoso. Contact was to be established with the 473d Infantry, advancing up the coast flatland. K Company on the battalion left was given the mission of taking Cle Piano, I Company to take the village of Vietine on the battalion right, while L Company, in the center, moved directly down the spur toward Montignoso. This spur was the same one on which the I Company platoon had destroyed the enemy's hedgehog defense. The companies moved out at 1200B, but meeting scant resistance, had converged by 1630B and occupied Montignoso by dark. The regimental command post was moved here and opened at 1900B.

As the two attacking battalions advanced, the 100th Battalion took over the defense of the ridgeline between Mount Cerreta on the south to Mount Belvedere on the north, with one platoon of C Company as outpost on Mount La Croce, north of Mount Belvedere. A defense line was set up to guard against any possible counter-attack by the enemy from Mount Altissimo, on the regiment's right rear. B Company sent out a reinforced platoon from Mount Cerreta to Stretteia, on the battalion's left flank, on a five-mile patrol to clear the area of the enemy. Two prisoners were brought back.

#### 9 April 1945

On 9 April the 100th Battalion maintained its defensive position as regimental reserve. The command post was moved to Montignoso at 1030B. The only change occurred at 2130B, when B Company was relieved by G Company of the 370th Infantry. B Company moved to positions between Mount Carehie and Mount Belvedere to strengthen the battalion sector of defense. The other two battalions were ordered to secure the Frigido River line. While the 2d Battalion completed the capture of Altagnana on the regimental right flank and Pariana in the center, the 3d Battalion was ordered to move northward out of Montignoso toward Pariana and upon order to cross the Frigido River to take Hill 547.

Daybreak found the 2d and 3d platoons of E Company on the outskirts of Altagnana closing in on the town. They discovered that the main body of the German garrison had withdrawn. While they were mopping up, three enemy reconnaissance cars approached from the direction of Pariana and opened fire with 20mm guns. The E Company troops returned fire with all available weapons, including a bazooka. The vehicles withdrew when two of the enemy were killed and one wounded. During this action, Partisans on nearby heights, Antona and Mount Brugiana, thinking the troops in the town were Germans, began firing into Altagnana so that for a while the platoons had to contend with fire from all sides. In the day's action E Company killed seven and captured 20, 15 of them wounded.

Daylight also found the 2d and 4th platoons of F Company making an attack on Pariana. As they approached the town they encountered a strong enemy outpost. One hundred and fifty Germans of the

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RGT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

Kesselring Machine Gun Battalion were assembled in the town, supported by automatic weapons and mortars, a tank, an self-propelled gun and a reconnaissance car. Planes were not available for an air mission. After artillery preparation and a morning-long battle, the 2d platoon of F Company, supported by H Company machine guns, succeeded in penetrating the defense line at 1300B and at 1400B occupied the fringe of the town. It captured 15 and killed 10. In the meantime, as the 1st and 3d platoons descended from Mount Belvedere to give support, they met a large force of enemy troops who retreated into Pariana. At 1500B, with F Company together as a unit, the attack was resumed on the town. In an hour's firefight the outskirts were penetrated, and eight German mortars were captured intact with 75 boxes of ammunition. Pressing the attack in close house-to-house fighting, the troops reduced main enemy resistance by 1600B, although the town was not cleared until nightfall. F Company killed 77, captured 75, including three officers, took a houseful of ammunition, four 50mm mortars, 12 81mm mortars, cases of maps and documents, eight machine guns, destroyed another eight, a radio set, and recovered an SCR 300 set.

With the capture of Altagnana and Pariana, E and F Companies, under orders, dispatched patrols across the Frigide River to maintain contact with the enemy.

Meantime, the 3d Battalion, in the left of the Regimental sector, had left Montignose at 0830B, heading north toward Pariana, with K Company leading, followed by I Company and L Company in reserve. At 1000B K Company was taken under fire by the enemy from Hill 381 on Ole Tecchione, in the adjoining sector on the left. As the flanking fire threatened the Battalion's advance, K Company engaged the enemy, approximately two companies in strength. A three-hour mortar barrage by M Company drove the enemy into the open where he was subjected to an artillery concentration. By mid-afternoon the hill was cleared. Small arms, mortar and artillery fire had killed 60 of the enemy. Forty troops were captured, as well as seven machine guns and four mortars. Following its battle, K Company went into battalion reserve at Quadrelli, while I and L Companies, after relieving G Company on the Ole Tecchioni-Mount Belvedere ridge, advanced abreast against the Frigide River line.

With the Mount Belvedere ridge-mass now in possession of the regiment, Highway 1 was now open as far as Montignose, and the former 12-hour supply route was cut to two hours. Supplies were brought up on the highway and the wounded evacuated by the same route.

10 April 1945

With the capture of the heights commanding the coastal plain and Massa after five days of stiff fighting, the western anchor of

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RGT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

the Gothic Line had been destroyed, and a six-months' stalemate ended. In these next few days it became evident from the relatively light resistance that the enemy's heavy losses was forcing him to withdraw to his Green Line defenses north of Carrara. Without losing momentum, the regiment pressed the attack, maintaining close contact with the enemy so that he would not have an opportunity to get set. The regiment by-passed the city of Massa, crossed the Frigido River and advanced 3500 yards ahead of flanking units to seize the high ground south of Carrara. Massa was occupied by the 473d without opposition.

On the regimental left flank combat patrols of the 3d Battalion, with Partisan guides, waded the Frigido River at dawn and entered the towns of Laveccchio, Berghina, Mirtate and Bergiola Maggiore without opposition. At 1800B the remainder of the battalion moved forward to reinforce these forward elements, stopping for the night at Bergiola Maggiore with the battalion command group. The battalion command post was moved into Massa. Most of the towns were hit by enemy artillery barrages, but no troop resistance developed.

On the right flank of the regiment, the 2d Battalion was given as its next objective for this day the 975-meter height of Mount Brugiana, midway but two kilometers east of a line drawn between Massa and Carrara. The height commanded the surrounding terrain. In a coordinated attack, E Company was ordered to attack the mountain from the right flank while F Company advanced on it from the left. The companies left the Line of Departure at 0800B, and by 1250B, except for occasional artillery fire, they had secured the peak without meeting enemy resistance.

In the rear the 100th Battalion remained in defensive positions until 1600B. Mortar fire was laid with good effect on 30 enemy personnel at 937015. Scattered enemy forces came in to surrender throughout the day. At 1600B the entire battalion less A Company was relieved by a friendly unit and moved to Altagnana, arriving there at 1830B to take up the defensive positions left by E Company when it had moved out. Approaches to the town were guarded, and B Company was sent across a stream to Antena on high ground to protect the battalion's right flank against any possible enemy counterattack. A Company on Mount Belvedere and Mount Garchio guarded the unit's rear. At 2400B A Company, less one platoon which was left on the ridge, also joined the battalion. The enemy offered no resistance during the day.

Antitank Company established a block on the road leading into Massa from the northeast at the junction at 935054.

Throughout this action, as the regiment had forged ahead of its flanking elements, it maintained security on the flanks and to the rear to guard against enemy infiltration and counterattacks. The advance was carried out on as sound theory and practice as possible.

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

11 April 1945

The regiment continued its rapid advance on 11 April. The marble quarrying center of Carrara was occupied without resistance and the surrounding towns of Sorgnano, Gragnana and Terano taken. Strong Partisan support continued to aid the advance.

Carrara was entered first by an L Company platoon at 1200B, moving up from Bergiola Fossalina. K Company moved through the city and dispatched outpost security of one platoon to Terano, a second to Sorgnano and a third ahead to Gragnana. I Company moved from Bergiola Maggiore to Fossalina to maintain rear security. Late in the day M Company was moved forward to reinforce the K Company platoon in Gragnana.

On the right flank the 2d Battalion, with the assistance of Partisans, occupied all the area immediately east of Carrara with little or no resistance. While G Company held Mount Brugiana, Companies E and F were ordered to take the small towns of Bedizzano and Belgia. Bedizzano fell at 0830B with little resistance. E Company sent a platoon to occupy Belgia, where Partisans had captured 150 German troops. The remainder of E Company occupied Codena, on the heights above Carrara.

At 0015B on this same day, 11 April, the 100th Battalion received orders to attack and secure Colonnata, four kilometers north of Altagnana in order to protect the regiment's extreme right flank and rear. After loading its weapons on mules, the battalion moved out in approach march formation in column of companies with C Company leading. On the way one platoon of A Company was sent off to the right of the route of march to secure the town of Gasette which was done without incident. The approach to Colonnata was difficult, the trail a mass of crumbled marble which had fallen from the marble quarries on the steep cliffs above. At 1600B, after an eight-hour march along the mountain trail, the battalion reached the ridge overlooking the objective. The weapons were set up and Companies B and C descended into the town, which was taken without resistance. Twenty-two Germans, including eight who had been wounded, were taken prisoners. C Company took up defensive positions to the right of the town while B Company established road blocks on the left.

On the regimental front, the 232d Combat Engineer Company, 442d Regimental Combat Team, in clearing roads to the forward companies, ran into something new in the way of German delaying action when four of its bulldozers were destroyed by mines. In addition to the usual types the Germans had laid rows of three 12-inch shells a foot-and-a-half beneath the top of the ground, rigged with detonators, and had resurfaced the road.

In the day's action the regiment captured a total of 70 prisoners, including two officers.

"Operational Report," Hq 442d BCT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

12 April 1945

The regiment consolidated its positions around Carrara and outposted the high ground on 12 April.

The 3d Battalion was ordered to regroup but to keep its outposts at Torano, Sorgnano and Gragnana, while one I Company platoon was to remain at Fossalina to give rear security. At 1100B a German counterattack in half-platoon strength was launched against the 2d platoon of K Company in Gragnana. The counterattack was stopped with the help of M Company mortars. Two Germans were killed and two captured. The 1st and 4th platoons of K Company were moved over to Gragnana to reinforce the 2d platoon. One squad of K Company, with a mortar observer and Partisans, went forward to Castelpeggio, four kilometers north of Carrara. Mortar fire was placed on a platoon of enemy infantry coming towards Castelpeggio from 852106 at 1500B. To further extend security, one I Company platoon was sent to La Bandita, a ridge. L Company completed its movement into Carrara and at 1315B the battalion command post group marched from Massa to Carrara. After the road had been opened for vehicles the remainder of the Battalion Headquarters Company moved up, closing at 1930B. The Germans began shelling the town with heavy caliber guns.

On the right 2d Battalion sector, F Company, in Bedizzano, underwent an artillery shelling. G Company, less the 2d platoon which was left on Mount Brugiana as rear security, moved through Bedizzano at 1315B and secured the town of Niseglia. The 2d Platoon made contact with I Company at Fossalina.

The 100th Battalion consolidated its position in Colonnata, while the A Company platoon in Cassete maintained contact with the Regimental Antitank Company which had established roadblocks at Forno and Gronda. When an enemy raiding party threatened the regiment's rear right flank, a special force of 100th Battalion, 2d Battalion and regimental command post personnel was alerted to move on order to reinforce Antitank Company, but the enemy withdrew when it was intercepted by Partisans at Resceto. In addition to six prisoners, the Partisans turned over to the regiment 250 prisoners whom they had taken in previous fighting. During 11 April and the forenoon of 12 April, the Massa-Carrara road was interdicted by the enemy from the adjoining sector and was impassable because of craters and mines. Carrying parties were unable to reach the battalion because of the precipitous terrain, and a serious supply problem developed. An effort was made to drop "K" rations from planes. Air-ground panels were improvised from blankets laid on white rock and communication was maintained through the artillery liaison officer. However, the supplies were dropped on the cliffs out of reach, and only one box of rations was obtained. Later in the day, however, the Massa-Carrara road was secured and the 232d Engineers opened it up for vehicles at 1730B. At night jeeps carrying rations left Carrara and reached

"Operational Report," Hq 442d HQT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

Colonnata, negotiating the three miles on the ties of the railroad track. At 1000B on this day the A Company platoon on Mount Garchio was relieved by the division at 1000B and rejoined the battalion at 1530B.

#### 13 April 1945

On 13 April the 3d Battalion assembled in Carrara as regimental reserve as the other two battalions of the regiment moved forward in attack. The regimental command post moved into Carrara at 0930B.

The 2d Battalion, from its position on high ground commanding Carrara, was ordered forward to take Mount Pizzacuto, five miles north of Carrara. The battalion started off at 0730B, marching through Carrara, Gragnana and Castelpeggio, with G Company at the point. E Company sent strong combat patrols along the right flank as the march progressed. Tanks of the Assault Platoon, Headquarters Company, 758th Tank Battalion, supported the unit. The battalion rear command post was established at Gragnana and the forward command post at Castelpeggio, both mountain towns. The E Company patrols took the heights of Mount Ucelliera, Gabellaccio and La Pizza. At 1400B the enemy began shelling, and as G Company neared its objective, the enemy barrages increased. From Hill 706 (837107), west of the objective, the Germans had observation on Gragnana Valley and covered the road with air bursts. The company became pinned down at 1700B. At the same time enemy self-propelled guns on Mount Pizzacuto opened direct fire from above. Artillery support was called for but the regimental advance had outdistanced artillery range and the guns were being moved up. The battalion dug-in for the night under shellfire.

The 100th Battalion (less G Company) left Colonnata, passed through Carrara and followed the 2d Battalion up the Gragnana road at 2500 yards. The battalion assembled at Gragnana and was subjected to a heavy barrage as they moved in. The town was under constant shellfire throughout the day and one B Company man was killed. G Company remained at Colonnata as security for the right flank.

#### 14 April 1945

It became evident on 14 April that enemy resistance was stiffening, and that he had stopped his three-day withdrawal. His new line of defense was anchored on Hill 706 on the left to Mount Pizzacuto on the right, with Mount Grugola in the middle. For the first time it became known that the enemy had drawn upon its reinforcements in an attempt to stop the threat of the 442d. Prisoners were captured from new units, the 1st Company, 4th High Mountain Battalion, and the 1st Battalion, 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment. The regiment had encountered the German Green Line of defenses.

"Operational Report," Hq 442d RGT,  
27 Aug 45, Contd.

B Company, which had marched up to Castelpeggio to reinforce the 2d Battalion during the night and taken positions north of town, was forced into close fighting with infiltrating enemy troops. At 0530B the enemy counterattacked the 442d forces in Castelpeggio in battalion strength. The attack was launched by the 1st Battalion, 361st Panzer Grenadier Regiment, with its 1st Company attacking straight up the road, the 2d Company from the north flank and the 3d Company from the south side. Each company was supported by six machine guns. The 3d platoon of B Company bore the brunt of the main assault, fighting three hours until 0830B, supported by H Company mortars. The attack was repulsed, with eight enemy wounded and 16 killed, including the commander of the 2d Company. Losses sustained by the elements of the 442d in the town amounted to five wounded and five killed by machine gun fire and grenades. The enemy withdrew toward Hill 706, on which was located Fort Bastione.

At 0800B, G Company, less the 2d platoon which was still on Mount Brugiana, moved out to attack Mount Pizzacuto. The 3d and 1st platoons attacked down the road on the left and right sides, respectively. H Company heavy machine guns and 81mm mortars supported the advance. Heavy enemy ground and artillery fire developed. The 3d platoon killed seven of the enemy, captured seven prisoners, two 20mm guns, one machine gun and one bazooka. The 1st platoon captured 23 of the enemy. By 1000B Mount Pizzacuto was taken, and the attack was continued down the forward slope in the afternoon. By 1900B 12 Germans had been killed and 54 captured, 14 of them wounded. F Company followed G Company and took up defensive positions on the mountain. G Company deployed for an assault on Fort Bastione. E Company remained on La Pizza, Gabellaccia and Mount Ucelleria, guarding the right flank.

Meanwhile, the I Company patrol which had been sent to secure La Bandita, the ridge running westerly from Fort Bastione, discovered more enemy troops on the height than had been reported. One section of I Company mortars that was sent up for support proved inadequate so and M Company forward observer was sent to the patrol. In preparation for an attack, in which the I Company platoon was reinforced by a K Company platoon from Castelpeggio, a 10-minute barrage of M Company mortars and 599th Field Artillery Battalion guns was laid on the enemy positions at 1100B. The attack succeeded at a cost of eight wounded and one killed.

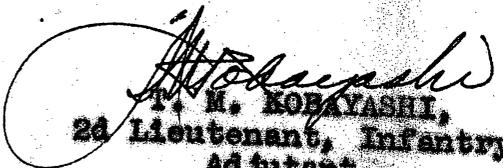
The final bit of action that set the stage for the attack on the enemy defenses occurred on this day. At 0530B a carrying party of six recently-arrived reinforcements from the Provisional Company left Castelpeggio carrying water to G Company. The men carried water cans and were unarmed. As they made their way up a trail towards the company they were ambushed and taken prisoners by a German combat patrol. The men were taken to Fort Bastione where they were questioned but they refused to give any information other

than name, rank and serial number. The Germans relieved them of all valuables and sent them under a three-man guard to Castelnuovo. While passing through the town of Valleschia during the confusion of a friendly artillery barrage they turned on their guards, killed them and took their arms. The men made their way back through the German lines in daylight, bypassing the town of Gasano, where they saw a German battery firing on Carrara, and with a Partisan and a small boy as guide, reached the 100th Battalion aid station at Gragnana. One man had been slightly wounded by powder flash burns on the face.

Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion captured several prisoners in their zone. These men, under skillful questioning, revealed the entire enemy strength and dispositions in the sector.

In this manner, on the night of 14 April 1945, the 442d Regimental Combat Team, armed with information and placed in strategic positions, was poised for its assault on the Germans' Green Line of defense.

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