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TITLE

AGGRESSIVE ACTION WHERE OPPOSING FORCES ARE
EXHAUSTED WILL OFTEN MEET WITH SUCCESS.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

- (1) Company A, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry
(34th Infantry Division) at Mount Pantano,
Italy. 29 November - 2 December 1943.
- (2) Company F, 15th Infantry (3rd Infantry
Division) at Monte San Fratello, Sicily.
3 - 8 August 1943.
- (3) 1st Battalion, 135th Infantry (34th Infantry
Division) at Hill 531, Tunisia. 26 April -
2 May 1943.
- (4) Company L, 3rd Battalion, 106th Infantry
(27th Infantry Division) in the battle of
Death Valley, Saipan. 23 - 28 June 1944.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bibliography.....2
Introduction.....4
Historical Example (1).....6
Discussion (1).....10
Historical Example (2).....12
Discussion (2).....15
Historical Example (3).....17
Discussion (3).....19
Historical Example (4).....21
Discussion (4).....24
Conclusion.....25
Map A - Company A on Mount Pantano
Map B - 2nd Battalion, 15th Infantry, 2 - 7 August 1943
Map C - Saipan, Sketch of Death Valley
Map D - 1st Battalion, 135th Infantry at Hill 531

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AGGRESSIVE ACTION WHERE OPPOSING FORCES ARE
EXHAUSTED WILL OFTEN MEET WITH SUCCESS.

INTRODUCTION

Aggressive action in the meaning of the sentence above implies aggressiveness in all its forms. Aggressive individual fighting, aggressive personal leadership, aggressive employment of the means at hand, and aggressive thinking. In its broad terms it embodies the principles of seeking out the enemy and destroying him, of carrying the fight to the opponent. Aggressive soldiers are the nucleus of any nations fighting force. Soldiers can be built or molded into aggressive individuals through proper indoctrination, suitable equipment, good training, and intelligent leadership. Aggressive use of the means at hand is the result of proper training, experience and aggressive thinking. Aggressive thinking and aggressive personal leadership are two factors in battle that must be initially present in the make-up of the individual. Of course, those qualities may be developed with training and experience. But the spark, the ability, the fetus must be an inane quality.

A good rule to keep in mind is the probability that the enemy is just as tired as you are. His supply lines have been subjected to the same disrupting action as have yours. His ammunition is as depleted as yours and his soldiers have been fighting as long without rest or food as have yours. Often times just one more effort is all that is needed to take the objective, or a little more distance during the march before digging in will secure valuable tactical terrain before the enemy arrives. While it may not seem so at the time: the enemy is a human machine and needs rest and resupply just as we do and the ability to take advantage of his needs is often times all that is necessary to tip the balance of war in our favor. In the words of General G. S. Patton, Jr. in his message to the 7th American Army prior to its

invasion of Sicily: "Above all else remember that we, as the attackers, have the initiative. We know exactly what we are going to do while the enemy is ignorant of our intentions and can only parry our blows. We must retain this tremendous advantage by always attacking; rapidly, ruthlessly, viciously, and without rest. However tired and hungry you may be, the enemy will be more tired and more hungry -- keep punching! No man is beaten until he thinks he is. Our enemy knows that his cause is hopeless."

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE 1

Four days before the coordinated attack by the Fifth Army on the Winter Line in Italy during December 1943, the Sixth Corps on the right of the Fifth Army made a diversionary attack in an attempt to draw the German reserves from the Camino Sector. Our air force was in the air, constantly bombing enemy battlefield installations as well as targets deep in the enemies rear, forcing the German fighters to protect the vital communication system in the rear. Consequently the German front was relatively unsupported by air. In one day the Fifth Army mounted 612 sorties against only 30 odd by the Germans. Artillery too, had been brought up to support the general offensive, the greatest ever in the Fifth Army's history. The weather and terrain prevented maximum use of the artillery as the guns and prime movers mired down in the all prevailing mud and the hills provided dead spaces which the beleagued enemy used to maximum advantage in his rear slope defenses.

On the right of VI Corps elements of the 305th Grenadier Division opposed the 34th Infantry Division as the 34th Division began its assault on MOUNT PANTANO.

The 1st Battalion of the 168th Regimental Combat Team was selected as the unit to make the drive for the top of the mountain itself. At 0600, 29 November 1943, Company A started across the line of departure behind an intense artillery barrage. The climb was difficult over a trail-less slope some 1600 feet above the valley floor with an inclination of better than 60° in places. The selection of the most difficult route up MOUNT PANTANO paid dividends as A Company arrived upon the summit and found that surprise was complete. They now occupied the southeast knob, one of four which comprised the top of MOUNT PANTANO. (Map A). One of the prisoners taken revealed that the top of MOUNT PANTANO was held by the 2nd Battalion, 577 Grenadiers. The Germans counterattacked strongly about noon and the company's right flank

received the main thrust. The right platoon composed of new men, except for the non-commissioned officers, began to give way. Captain Benjamin J. Butler, the Company Commander, moved two squads from his left to meet the threat just in time to hold the position and beat off the Germans in hand to hand combat.

Radio contact with the rear was non-existent and the wire team had not had time to work their way up the mountain. Even though the other two companies of the 1st Battalion reached the top of the hill, with C Company on the rear and B Company on the left, the enemy counter-attacked twice more that afternoon. Each time the attack was beaten off but not without loss of personnel and the expenditure of precious ammunition. The wire line was completed late that afternoon and the serious situation was reported to regiment. Two platoons of the 2nd Battalion were assigned the task of carrying ammunition and supplies to the hard-pressed troops on the top. Enemy mortar and artillery fire frequently knocked out the one line of communication to the rear and wire crews worked constantly under heavy enemy fire attempting to repair the repeated breaks.

That night after a terrific artillery and mortar barrage lasting one hour, the fourth counterattack was launched. Captain Butler moved through the darkness encouraging his men all along the line. When his line was broken he personally led his support of twenty men telling them: "Follow me to the top and when I give the word, yell as loud as you can -- for we must sound like 100 men, not 20." His stratagem worked and once again A Company's lines were restored at bayonet point. However, the enemy did not retreat far and soon they were throwing hand grenades into A Company's positions. Ammunition was running low and help must reach them soon if they were to survive. It was later learned that the Battalion Anti-tank Platoon, the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon, available personnel of the Battalion Headquarters Company,

Regimental Anti-tank Company, most of Cannon Company, and one company from the 2nd Battalion was striving to keep the supply and evacuation chain open. By 2300 the supply efforts began to build up much needed ammunition and the casualties could be carried to the rear.

Fog covered the hill top the next morning reducing visibility to almost nothing. However, the fog lifted about noon allowing the waiting Germans to launch another attack that was not pushed back until 1500. The battalion commander was a casualty during this fight and his words, as he was being carried down the mountain side, were to hold Knob 1 at all costs.

That night the Germans attacked for the sixth time. This time, however, communication to the artillery was functioning and supporting fires, together with the well directed rifle fire of the defenders, drove the attackers back with many losses. The artillery fired so fast and for such a long period of time in support of this gallant group that recoil oil let out of one malfunctioning gun was boiling as it came out.

The litter bearers from Company C, 109th Medical Battalion worked without thought of rest or of their own safety as they carefully carried the wounded off the battlefield and down the back slope. Captain Emile G. Schuster, the Battalion Surgeon, was not content with waiting for the wounded to be brought to him at the aid station but administered first aid wherever he could go. At one point he had a bottle of blood plasma shot from his hand as he was working over a patient. He calmly reached for another bottle of plasma and finished his work. His bravery, calmness, and skill did much to comfort the wounded even though they lay out in the open under a wet freezing cold mist. It is said that he did not sleep for three days and three nights.

On the 2nd of December after the 3rd Battalion gained possession of Knob 2, a patrol sent out from Knob 1 to make contact with the 3rd

Battalion captured several prisoners and freed some B Company men who had been taken prisoner the previous day. The fact that the prisoners had not been evacuated indicated that the enemy was having trouble with his own supply and evacuation problem.

At 2100 hours the relief of Knob 1 began by elements of the 2nd Battalion, being completed by 0300 hours on the 3rd of December and what was left of A Company reached the valley floor they had left four days before. Captain Butler had three officers and fifty three men with which to begin to build another fighting unit.

From the monograph of Major John J. Moore who was Battalion Operations Officer of the 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry during this action.

DISCUSSION

The success of the attack on MOUNT PANTANO can be attributed directly to two factors. The first factor was the choice of the hardest route up MOUNT PANTANO and the second factor was the stubborn, courageous defense of Knob 1.

It is hard to single out one act of aggressiveness in this action. The selection of the most difficult route up the mountain is an example of aggressive thinking. The climbing of the steep slope by the soldiers the morning of 29 November is an example of aggressive soldiers pushing on to overcome terrain and the enemy. The prompt, unstinting utilization of the means at hand to establish and maintain a supply and evacuation system proves the regimental and battalion commanders were aggressively using all their resources to maintain a precarious foothold. Above all, the fighting on Knob 1 is replete with aggressive action, aggressive thinking, aggressive individuals and aggressive groups.

Although defensive action is not usually thought of as the type of action exemplifying aggressiveness, this example is an exception.

The leadership of Captain Butler embodies aggressiveness in many phases. He aggressively moved among his men during the fighting and encouraged them to hold at all costs. He did not wait to be driven from the mountain but aggressively moved his squads and platoons to meet the threats. The aggressiveness of the support groups he moved to meet the attack was the deciding factor on two occasions in holding A Company's position. The twenty men who charged with fixed bayonets shouting like 100 certainly was the deciding factor in breaking one of the most serious counterattacks. These men carried the fight aggressively when they might easily have attempted to stem the Germans from their holes in the back of the company position; but no, under the leadership of their company commander they charged

the enemy and defeated him at close quarters.

No inspection of this action would be complete without reference to Captain Schuster, the surgeon. Here is another twist to our discussion of aggressiveness: a man who extended himself beyond the call of duty and aggressively went forward under fire to care for the wounded. He took his aid station to the men who needed him.

The attrition of the enemy against the defenders of Knob 1 aided materially in weakening them, physically and mentally. Their losses attempting to regain Knob 1 together with the troubles they had overcoming the elements and our air force caused them to gradually yield ground to the Allies.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE II

The invasion of SICILY, an island of about 10,000 square miles just off the "toe" of the boot of ITALY began 10 July 1943. The allied troops; Americans, British, Canadian, and French found a mountainous island dominated by the mountain of ETNA -- 10,740 feet high and nearly 400 square miles at its base. This mountain mass greatly restricted the avenues of approach along the east coast and served as a natural barrier to advance from west to east across the island. It was against this barrier that the allies stopped temporarily just 23 days after their successful invasion of the island. The British Eighth Army was on the southeast and the American Seventh Army, under Lieutenant General George Smith Patton, was holding the upper or northwest end of the line. This operation marked the first time in World War II that a complete American Army was in the field. In the American sector, the 3rd, the 9th, and the 1st Divisions were on the line with the 3rd Infantry Division on the coast and the 1st Infantry Division flanking the British Eighth Army.

It was expected that the Germans would attempt a strong defense along the SAN FRATELLO - TROINA line to enable them to evacuate their forces to the mainland of ITALY across the MESSINA STRAITS. Even though we enjoyed air superiority and constantly hammered the Axis lines of communication and particularly the MESSINA STRAITS, the strong antiaircraft defenses along both coasts enabled the Axis to evacuate most of their forces.

During the 24 hours 2-3 August, the 3rd Division succeeded in fighting its way to the FURIANO RIVER. Here they were stopped by well prepared dug in positions on the far bank of the river. The bridge on Highway 113 was blown, the river bottom filled with "S" and teller mines and both banks of the river subject to observation and fire from direct and indirect fire weapons. (Map B).

On the morning of 3 August after a $2\frac{1}{2}$ hour artillery preparation along the entire division front, the 15th Infantry on the left of the division sector was again halted at the FURIANO RIVER. Although elements of the 2nd Battalion did succeed in crossing the river they were driven back with deadly mortar and artillery fire. Again at 1500 the 2nd Battalion attempted to cross the river supported by the Navy using the guns from 2 destroyers and a cruiser. The attack jumped off with E and F Companies in the assault and G Company in reserve. This attack, too, was repulsed.

The night of 3-4 August was spent in patrolling the area between the ocean and Hill 171. However, the patrols could not advance beyond the east bank of the river. On 4 August the battalion again jumped off in the attack supported by H Company and one battery of 155 mm howitzers. E Company moved out at 0600 followed by G Company with F Company in reserve. E Company with two platoons of G Company succeeded in reaching the east bank of the river about 200 yards south of the bridge but heavy machine gun and mortar fire again forced the battalion commander to order the withdrawal of these two units. Later that same morning, F Company supported by two platoons of Cannon Company and the 39th Field Artillery Battalion, reinforced by the 10th Field Artillery Battalion, attempted to cross farther to the south. Here the route down the southeast side of Hill 201 furnished concealment to the river bed itself. Under the supporting fires of the artillery and the concealment of the trees and underbrush on both banks of the river, F Company advanced about 600 yards when intense mortar fire drove the company back to the east edge of the river. When the battalion was informed of the situation the company was again ordered to withdraw to prepare for another attack, this time a night attack.

The plan of attack called for F Company followed by G Company to cross the river at the same point F Company had used that afternoon,

capture Hill 171 and hold it at all costs. As night closed in, F and G Companies moved out. Just as F Company reached the junction of the river and a dry stream bed, the enemy discovered them and drove both companies back about 200 yards. Failure of the 1st Battalion on the right created an open flank and caused the 2nd Battalion Commander to order his companies back into the old battalion area under the cover of an artillery concentration. During the days fighting the battalion had lost about 50 men.

The next attack was coordinated along the entire Seventh Army line. The 2nd Battalion was supported by a battalion of 4.2" chemical mortars, 4 battalions of 105 mm howitzers and 4 battalions of 155 mm howitzers. The attack jumped off at 0600 on 6 August preceded by a 30 minute artillery preparation. G Company led this time, followed by F Company and E Company in reserve. G Company reached about the same position as F Company had reached two days ago when it was stopped. F Company committed two platoons around the left of G Company. The 3rd and 2nd Platoons of F Company succeeded in entering the enemy positions on top of Hill 171. At night fall both companies were forced to withdraw. F Company had an effective strength of 1 officer and 90 men after the casualties, including the company commander, had been removed.

The following day successful action on the right combined with an amphibious flanking movement seven miles behind the enemy lines at S. AGATA forced the Germans to yield their skillfully defended positions on the FURIANO RIVER. The 2nd Battalion of the 7th Infantry passed through the 2nd Battalion of the 15th Infantry to join up with the amphibious force.

From the personal experience monograph of Major Clayton C. Craig.

DISCUSSION

The constant pressure exerted by the 2nd Battalion, each time penetrating a little deeper as the artillery built up its support and the enemy grew more exhausted, served to prevent the enemy from moving his forces from that point to other weakened points on the extended front of the Seventh Army. The almost continuous action of the battalion, our air superiority, and the increasing artillery prevented the enemy from getting rest, supplies, or much needed reserves. In fact, the enemy troops not needed in the line were being evacuated to the mainland of ITALY with all possible haste. Any let up on the front would allow the Germans and Italians to evacuate more and more of their beaten forces. The 2nd Battalion realizing this, attacked aggressively and often, even though against a position naturally disposed for defense and skillfully defended. This position had to be flanked by other units before it fell.

Here is an example of aggressive use of troops under the most trying conditions. Less vigorously trained and led soldiers might have been inclined to lessen the vigor of each succeeding attack. However, the opposite was apparent, since each new attack gained just a little more ground. The aggressive attacks found out and eliminated more of the enemy defenses each time.

Neither the commanders nor the soldiers were content to let one failure cause a let up in their efforts. The commanders used more supporting weapons each attack as well as varying the time and place of the attacks. The soldiers carried out their orders with aggressiveness that spoke well for their previous training in the use of their weapons and equipment. The vigor of their attacks also spoke well for the confidence they had in their leaders' decisions and ability. If the leaders had not been thoroughly trained and possessed of a driving desire to carry the fight to the enemy, it is doubtful if they

could have mounted 7 attacks in five days with any vigor at all in the later pushes. The action of F Company is symbolic of the entire battalion in that it spearheaded two of the later attacks and upon moving to the left of G Company in the seventh attempt succeeded in pushing into the enemy's position on Hill 171.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE III

Shortly after Major General Omar N. Bradley took over command of the II Corps in the later part of April 1943, the 34th Division was engaged in the attack on the TINE RIVER approach to MATEUR and BIZERTE in TUNIS. On 28 April the 1st Battalion of the 135th Infantry Regiment in the right sector of the 34th Infantry Division was assigned the task of attacking Hill 531 (Map D), one of the lesser hills guarding Hill 609 which was the terrain key to that sector of the front. (Map D).

Fighting was difficult against a stubborn, battle-wise enemy who had skillfully organized the natural defensive terrain. The Germans were fighting on the last toehold of the continent of AFRICA and while the German nation was far from defeat, the soldiers fighting in AFRICA were weary and short of much needed supplies that could not be brought to AFRICA from the continent of EUROPE because of the action of our air force along the SICILIAN STRAIT and along their long lines of communication. Companies A and B made several unsuccessful attempts that day against Hill 531 but were forced back by the tenacious enemy.

During the night of 28-29 April the 1st Battalion was ordered to attack Hill 531 and prepare to move onto Hill 609. Again the 1st Battalion attacked and again they failed. All day long on the 29th of April the enemy held out while our mortars and artillery banged away on Hills 531, 609 and likely avenues of approach for enemy reinforcements.

During the day the battalion mortars and machine guns displaced forward so that the next night, 29-30 April, the battalion renewed the attack with increased vigor and fire support. Company C succeeded in gaining a toehold on the hillside and daylight found one platoon of Company C on the southern slope of Hill 531 protected from the Germans by an overhanging slope. On the morning of 30 April, Company A was on KEF EL GUEBLI, Company B was on the reverse slope of Hill 529 and

Company C was partially on Hill 529 and Hill 531. The 81 mm platoon was behind Hill 529.

At 1145 hours on 30 April the battalion received orders to make a coordinated attack at 1230. In view of the extremely limited time available, permission was sought and granted to attack at 1300. At that time Company A and Company C moved off in the attack preceded by a 10 minute artillery concentration. Company A was on the left and Company C on the right with Company B in reserve from positions just vacated by Company A.

Just as the attack jumped off, a counterattack was observed forming just north of Hill 523. The battalion commander called for artillery from both the 34th Infantry Division and the adjacent division. This request was granted thereby alleviating the need for diverting previously prepared concentrations supporting the attack. The artillery successfully dispersed the counterattack while at the same time supporting the attack in progress. Company C was halted temporarily. Seeing this, the battalion commander rushed to the company position and by personally leading the company regained the forward impetus. Under heavy fire they succeeded in gaining the top right half of Hill 531. Meanwhile, Company A, well supported by mortars, artillery, and machine guns, gained their objective. A tenacious rear slope defense of Hill 531 by the enemy delayed the full possession of the hill until the machine guns could be brought up and the mortars adjusted upon the remaining pockets of resistance. Early in the evening Company B was ordered to reinforce Company C and by the next morning the hill was firmly held by the 1st Battalion. German prisoners taken during the attack asked if the Americans ever slept since they seemed to be attacking all the time.

From the personal experience monograph of Major Arnold N. Brandt.

DISCUSSION

It is apparent from statements of prisoners taken during the attack of Hill 531 that the continuous pressure on the stubborn position was in a large measure responsible for the final success. The Germans were kept awake and on edge from the day and night attacks. The air force prevented large scale reinforcement. Aggressive action on the part of the battalion commander prevented what might have resulted in another futile attack when he personally led Company C after their forward momentum had been broken. His aggressive attacking and probing of the position from 28 April to 31 April gave the enemy no rest and lowered their will to resist. Allied command of the air contributed materially in the endless harassment of the enemy which finally wore the opposition down and opened the way for success. The action of one platoon from C Company in gaining the base of the hill is illustrative of the courage and aggressiveness of our small units. It may well be that this one platoon was the key in the lock of Hill 531. The entire battalion used aggressively the maneuver, fire power, and training they had at their disposal. In the face of several initial setbacks, the battalion aggressively employed artillery and mortars on known enemy positions and likely avenues of approach. A night attack was resorted to when day attacks failed. The partial success of this attack in placing one platoon of Company C near the objective was followed up the next day with all the resources at hand. The aggressive thinking of the battalion commander manifests itself when he sought means of breaking up the German counterattack while yet pushing his own attack. The decision to call for artillery not usually available to a battalion, i.e., artillery of an adjacent division to repel the threatening counterattack, is indicative of the nimble minds of all concerned in meeting an unusual situation. The attack might properly have been delayed until the fire mission on the

counterattacking Germans had been fired. Then the original attack could have been executed as planned. However, the battalion commander preferred to do everything in his power to push his attack as planned thereby giving the enemy a minimum of time to perfect his defenses. His own aggressiveness and leadership instilled the fighting spirit and will to push on into C Company which had been halted. The aggressive actions of the individuals, the units, and the leaders reflected aggressive thinking and training.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE IV

The overall Pacific strategy called for the capture of SAIPAN as the initial thrust into the MARSHALL ISLAND stronghold. The Fourth and Second Marine Divisions with the 27th Infantry Division, U.S. Army, in reserve landed on the southwest end of SAIPAN on 15 June 1944. The troops found an island 13 miles long and about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide with its long axis roughly north and south. The terrain was rugged with many caves that were defended unto death itself. The dominating terrain was MOUNT TAPOTCHAU with an elevation of 1,554 feet rising from almost the exact center of the island. A low plateau extended to the east from MOUNT TAPOTCHAU ending in the hills which cut across the mouth of the KAGMAN PENINSULA. The main road of the island extended from ASURITO AIRFIELD on the south of the island through this plateau, curved around to the north of MOUNT TAPOTCHAU and ended at TANAPAG HARBOR on the west center of the island.

It was through this plateau that Major General H. M. (Howling Mad) Smith committed the 27th Division commanded by Major General Ralph C. Smith. The 4th Marine Division was on the right, the 2nd Marine Division on the left, with the 27th Infantry Division in the center. On 23 June the 106th Infantry and the 165th Infantry abreast, with the 165th Infantry on the right, were stopped by flanking fire from Japs firmly entrenched on the slopes of MOUNT TAPOTCHAU. However, the 4th and 2nd Marine Divisions had rapidly pushed up the flanks leaving the Army in the valley. The doughboys named this low plateau, which contained the islands main route of communication, "DEATH VALLEY". The plan of maneuver called for the 106th Infantry to swing wide to the right in an attempt to flank the DEATH VALLEY strong points. It was during the execution of this maneuver that Major General Ralph C. Smith was relieved and Major General Sanderford B. Jarman was placed in command.

The 3rd Battalion of the 106th Infantry swung to the left after

bypassing MOUNT TAPOTCHAU with I and L Companies in the assault. (Map C). L Company was on the left and K Company was in reserve. The terrain to the front of the battalion consisted of a steep slope down the ridge to the valley lying between the ridge of hills and MOUNT TAPOTCHAU. The descent was through high, heavy grass strewn with many boulders. The valley leveled off into a cane field and finally faded into a grassy area which marked the battalion objective. The objective was a slight ridge in the middle of the grassy area and marked with a lone house. The entire area was open to Japanese fire from both MOUNT TAPOTCHAU about 1,000 yards to the left front and the ridge of hills dubbed PURPLE HEART RIDGE to the right and rear. Directly in front of L Company near the main road there was a wrecked concrete house.

L Company Commander dispatched a nine man squad with a platoon leader to investigate the house. The squad cautiously approached the house, killing three Japs as they took the building. The platoon then moved up to the house upon command of the platoon leader and prepared to continue the advance. After advancing a short distance beyond the house they were covered by heavy fire which seemed to come from MOUNT TAPOTCHAU, PURPLE HEART RIDGE and a line of small trees on the company's left flank.

The battalion commander, upon being informed of the situation by L Company Commander, committed K Company on the left in an attempt to drive the enemy from the left front. Concurrently with the movement of K Company, the leading platoon of L Company succeeded in pushing a squad of men by a series of individual rushes to the battalion objective. Shortly thereafter a Lieutenant and four men from I Company reached the house on the ridge. These men, 14 in all, held the battalion objective for one hour while the rest of the battalion was pinned down in the valley below. The Japanese used mortars, machine guns and some

direct fire weapons. An intensive mortar barrage fell directly on the remainder of L Company and completely disorganized the company. Seeing this, the company commander immediately set about reorganizing and reassuring his company. He moved about the fire-swept valley with complete disregard for his own safety. I Company was caught in the cane field by another mortar barrage which killed two non-commissioned officers, the new company commander, and wounded six others. This last barrage left the company with no officers and few senior non-commissioned officers. Captain Charles H. Hallden, L Company Commander, immediately took command of I Company and succeeded in reorganizing what was left and integrating I Company with his own company.

K Company on the left had succeeded in reaching the line of trees to the front of L Company when they too were stopped. Enemy fire scattered many of the men over a wide area. Captain Hallden gathered elements of K Company into his composite company and, personally leading his men at the head of the company, pushed on to the objective. He succeeded in reaching the house by 1530 and set about an immediate organization for defense of the battalion objective.

Although the battle for SAIPAN went on until 10 July 1944 "The enemy knew he was licked. His fleet had been turned back in disgrace and his air force at most could send but a few 'Washing Machine Charlies' over the island at night." (1)

From the personal experience monograph of Major Charles H. Hallden.

(1) The Fourth Marine Division History in World War II, p. 66

DISCUSSION

The vigorous actions of the company commander of L Company and his aggressive leadership at a time critical to the progress of the entire battalion, held together the remnants of a badly shaken organization and secured victory from a tenacious enemy by boldly leading his men.

The company commander of L Company, who had aggressively gathered up the shocked remnants of his own company after the men had lost most of their own squad and platoon leaders, by personal leadership and example succeeded in moving his company on to the battalion objective. On the way to his mark he integrated two other companies into his command and quickly made a fighting unit out of three independent and separately defeated companies. Captain Hallden undoubtedly accomplished a most difficult task when he took command of K and I Companies as the men did not know him as their normal or familiar leader. In this instance the aggressive thinking, good training, and personal leadership caused the Japanese to yield a terrain feature that they had defended stubbornly for several days. Quick thinking and aggressive actions in unusual situations reflects the superiority of the American way of life and the United States Army's method of training. These characteristics of thinking quickly and acting vigorously made our army far superior to that of any Axis power. Other armies may be better drilled but none are better equipped or better trained to solve the unexpected or the unforeseen. The defenders were, without a doubt, tired and short of supplies. Flanked on both sides and confronted with an aggressive force in their center, they were forced to withdraw after holding successive positions over eight days.

CONCLUSION

Aggressive action where opposing forces are exhausted will often meet with success.

To separate aggressiveness from the makeup of a soldier or a unit is a little like taking the spirit from a man. It is just one element that serves to produce a fighting soldier. It is difficult to separate aggressiveness and hold it in the palm of your hand for examination, yet it is readily recognized on the battlefield. In the examples just presented it is hard to discern where aggressiveness ends and training, or leadership, or valor begins but the results of aggressive thinking and actions are readily apparent.

The leaders in the examples cited most certainly were aggressive to the utmost. An unusual situation as when Captain Hallden rallied two companies and combined them with his own unit, was solved in an aggressive manner. Captain Butler and his men overcame a determined enemy time and time again by using all means at hand aggressively and when all means but the man was expended, aggressively closing in hand to hand combat.

Most of the time in combat the resources of the enemy are not fully known, but as General Patton pointed out: The enemy is as tired as our own troops, at the very least. In almost all cases where we are attacking, local superiority of artillery and/or air power has resulted in an enemy severely mauled at long range before our infantry moved into the assault. His supplies and reserves have been knocked out or interfered with so that the enemy soldier does not have the staying power or the resources to continue his fight over an extended period of time as was the case at the FURIANO RIVER in ITALY. The ability or desire to punch and punch will many times in itself wear the enemy down and ensure success. War is much like two boxers: the man who aggressively strikes his opponent again and again will eventually win even though other factors were equal at the beginning.