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THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY "G"
26TH INFANTRY REGIMENT (1ST INFANTRY DIVISION)
IN THE ORAN OPERATION 8-11 NOVEMBER
(ALGERIA-FRENCH MOROCCO CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Company Executive Officer)

Type of operation described: RIFLE COMPANY AS
FLANK SECURITY FOR A BEACH HEAD

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ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO. 1

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ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

"NOTHING IN HELL CAN STOP THE FIRST DIVISION" - Major General Terry Allen.

This monograph covers the operations of Company "G" 26th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division in the ORAN OPERATION, 8-11 November 1942, during the Algeria-French Morocco Campaign.

At this time, I believe that my readers should be oriented to the fact that I served in the dual capacity of the Company Executive Officer and as the platoon leader of the Weapons Platoon. This situation arose from the under strength of officer personnel within the Division as a whole.

It is necessary at this time to give the readers the background of the operation and the events which led up to the successful amphibious landing on the hostile shore of Vichy controlled North Africa.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

During July 1942, the occasion being Mr. Churchill's second visit to Washington, the plan was conceived and formulated to invade North Africa. This plan was an alternative to the request of an attack against Fortress Europa, via the English Channel. The problem of organizing the operation was placed in the capable hands of General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

At that time it appeared that the following strategic advantages would accrue from the occupation of French North

Africa. The following is quoted from "The War in North Africa." (1)

(1) "Vital shipping lanes would be opened. Convoys would be permitted free movement in the Mediterranean being under constant safeguard by aircraft from bases in North Africa."

(2) "The Axis powers would be in the grips of a virtually complete blockade."

(3) "Another springboard into Fortress Europa would be secure."

(4) "The Middle East would be safe from attack through the Mediterranean."

(5) "The threat to South America, namely DAKAR, would be diminished."

(6) "Finally, it would provide for the rebuilding of the French Army in preparation for its eventual return to the homeland, France."

The plans were formulated for a three prong attack at the very heart of North Africa. (See Map A) Casablanca was target number one. The attacking force (Western Task Force) would be formed and sail from the United States. Their mission was to be the capture of the port and naval base located at Casablanca and vicinity. The next thrust was directed at Oran and the task force for the objective was comprised of British Naval and American forces. (Central Task Force) Their mission was to be the capture of Oran and its port, also the surrounding airbase of LA SENIA and TAFARAQUI. The final blow would be directed at ALGIERS, by the second task force from the United Kingdom. (Eastern Task Force).

(1) A-1, p. 1,2

The 1st Infantry Division and attached units comprised the Central Task Force that would strike at Oran.

PROLOGUE TO INVASION

Plans for "Operation Torch" were formulated by the combined chiefs of British and American Naval and Army forces in London. (2) The problems that were produced by the limited shipping and landing craft the less of organizational and individual equipment; preparatory training for the operation were solved to the satisfaction of all concerned by the combined staffs.

The training of the Division took place in INVERARARY, Scotland, during the interim period of 4 September to 25 October. Landing operations under simulated conditions that would be encountered in "Operation Torch," were enacted almost daily on the shores of the Firth of Forth. The dress rehearsal was held on 18 October under the title of "Operation MOSSTROOPER." Upon the completion of this operation, all troops, staffs, and commanders began final embarkation. (3) Troops were loaded in accordance with the overall plan. Each CT comprised a transport division. (See Annex A)

On the evening of 26 October, the darkened ships left the anchorage, the Fighting First was on its way to adventure - time unknown - destination unknown. The objective of this mighty convoy was not disclosed, until the Straits of Gibraltar had been passed. (4) Rumors filled the holds with talk of DAKAR, SUEZ, and EGYPT - but the security involved in "Operation Torch" withstood the test.

(2) A-5
(3) A-2, p. 17
(4) A-2, p. 36

Ferries plying in amongst the ships of the convoy, and a lighted shore marked the passing of Spanish Morocco, on 6 November 1942. (5) The lid came off the following morning, Oran was to be the target of the Central Task Force.

THE DIVISION PLAN

The general plan of the division was as follows: the 16th and 18th Infantry were to land just south of the town of ARZEU; the 1st Ranger Battalion would hit the town itself. The 26th Infantry would land on Y Beach to the west of Oran, under the control of General Teddy Roosevelt. (See Map B)

All day 7 November, the mighty convoy continued to steam toward Malta and destruction. The Germans believed the feint to be a move in the attempt to strengthen the Eastern Mediterranean, so they sat and waited in the Sicilian Channel area. (6) The absence of any enemy effort against this convoy is a lofty tribute to the careful thought and effort which went into the cover plan. (7)

The plans for debarkation were complete, everybody sat tense awaiting the call to boat stations, which would mean the First was to receive its baptism of blood. The chaplain sounded a word of prayer over the ship radio from the Command Ship of CT 26, HMS Monarch of Bermuda, then the call "Proceed to Boat Stations" was sounded. Men moved in the darkened ship to their assigned landing craft. The boats were lowered away, and the lonely trip to the beach was a reality.

(5) Personal Knowledge

(6) A-2, p. 22

(7) A-2, p. 21

THE REGIMENTAL PLAN OF ATTACK

CT 26 was to assault with the 3rd Battalion in the lead, with the mission of clearing the beach and driving East to BOU-SFER. After the fall of the town, they would then drive to the Southeast, seize and hold the heights of DJEBL MURJADJO. The 2nd Battalion, less Company "G", which would land with the assault troops, would disembark at H + 1, pass through BOU-SFER on to its objective AIN EL TURK. After its capture, they were to seize and hold DJEBL SANTONE which overlooked the important port of MERS EL KABIR. The 1st Battalion was to be in Corps reserve, and would not land until ordered by the Corps.

Company "G" would land with the assault wave, on the extreme right flank of the beachhead. Attached to the company, in order to facilitate its mission, was one section of the Battalion AT platoon, and one squad of combat engineers from Company "C", 1st Engineer Battalion. (8) The company objective was the town of EL ANCOR (Population 2,000), (9) and secure the right flank of the beachhead by establishing a road block on the road running from EL ANCOR to LOURMEL. One squad was to remain on the beach to establish a strong point on the right flank of the beachhead. This afore mentioned squad was to be under the control of Lieutenant Colonel Wells, the Army Beachmaster. Upon relief they were to return to the company CP.

The Company Commander, Captain V. L. Ruwet briefed us thoroughly aboard ship, with aerial photos and a scale model of the beach. The problems which confronted the company commander were discussed and settled by the Officers and NCO's of the company.

(8) Personal knowledge
(9) A-4, p. 1

THE COMPANY PLAN OF ACTION

The company plan of action was emphasized and reemphasized, everyone was well briefed prior to D - 1. The plan of action was as follows:

- (1) Sergeant Riccio, with one squad from the 1st platoon, was to help mop up the beach, and be available to the beachmaster if the occasion arose.
- (2) The remainder of the company would clear the beach, as quickly as possible, and move to the assembly area, which had previously been designated on an aerial photo. From this point the company would launch its attack on EL ANCOR.
- (3) The 3rd platoon, with one 60-mm mortar and one IMG attached, would have the mission of establishing the road block at the Road Junction southwest of EL ANCOR.
- (4) The 2nd platoon would attack the town from the east. If resistance was strong, a white flare would act as a signal that the 3rd platoon would then push the attack from the North. If no resistance was encountered, a red flare would serve as a sign that all was well.
- (5) If the landing was opposed, contact was to be broken immediately, and the company would push to the company assembly point. This last plan had been coordinated with Major Bowen, the Commanding Officer of 3rd Battalion, and approved by Colonel Starke, the Regimental Commander. (10) (See Map C)

Landing tables had been prepared well in advance to our loading. Each LCA would carry approximately thirty-five men.

Company G was allotted six landing craft. The right five craft would contain the 3rd platoon, 2nd platoon, and 1st platoon. The last craft would carry the remainder of the weapons platoon, with intelligence section from Division and spare parts from Regimental Headquarters.

Each craft was equipped with two pair of bolt cutters, in case the beach was wired. Certain men from the company had received prior training in England and Scotland in breaching of wire obstacles. These men were broken down into three man crews, and assigned to each landing craft.

The combat load of the troops of the assault was tremendous. Each individual soldier was required to carry the following items:

- (1) Two full canteens of water.
- (2) Two bandoliers of ammunition plus basic load.
- (3) One complete "C" ration plus 2 "D" rations.
- (4) Two hand grenades (except weapons platoon).
- (5) Gas Mask.
- (6) Complete suit of gas impregnated clothing down to and including impregnated underwear. (11)

All the aforementioned items were in addition to what a soldier would normally carry into the field, shaving equipment, socks, underwear, cigarettes, etc. It would be safe to estimate that each individual was to carry an additional twenty pounds of equipment, over that which he had undergone training with in Scotland.

The biggest draw back to our plan of attack was that the 37-mm AT section that was to assist us in the establishment of

(11) Personal knowledge

the road block was loaded on a different ship. This group was scheduled to land at H + 3 without any knowledge as to their support role or mission. They were to be directed to our CP by the beachmaster.

NARRATION

ASSAULT LANDING OF Y BEACH

LCA's were lowered into the water at approximately 2330 hours on D - 1. We then circled in the rendezvous area for an estimated hour, prior to our run to the beach. Hydrographic charts had not disclosed to our coxswain a sand bar running parallel to the beach which caused many to become uncomfortably wet and in some instances nearly drown. The executive officer, for example, walked approximately five yards from the ramp, when he went to the bottom, due to the excess of equipment that was being carried. Only the immediate action of his platoon sergeant saved him from possible drowning. (12) This sand bar also resulted in delaying the landing approximately twenty minutes. (13)

Instructions had been previously issued to the effect that weapons would not be loaded; only if the enemy opened fire would the weapons be loaded. Men were entering a hostile shore with nothing more than a club for preservation. In the study of the aerial photos many possible positions where the enemy could readily defend the beach were disclosed. Suddenly as we pulled from the sand bar, a red flare burst over head, and men hugged the bottom of the landing craft. The Executive Officer ordered weapons to be loaded and locked. In the briefings prior to the landing, the use of flares by the beachparty had never been disclosed by the company commander.

(12) Personal knowledge

(13) A-2, p. 25

The company's craft, with the exception of the two LCA's under the control of the Executive Officer, were beached at approximately 100 yards ^{from} for the previously designated point. Men cleared the beach immediately and moved to the initial assembly area. Control was extremely difficult, due to the fact that the LCA's were overcrowded, and the moon failed to penetrate the heavy clouds. Visibility was limited to five or ten yards. The terrain and brush differed greatly from that which had been anticipated in the study of the maps and aerial photographs.

Gas masks were dropped in the assembly area. (14) The company then attempted to cross the wadi and proceed to the company objective, but it was found that the wadi was over 30 feet at the selected point for crossing. This necessitated two patrols being sent out under the control of Lieutenant Southerland, and 1st Sergeant Bornbusch to locate suitable crossing areas for the company. A crossing was located approximately 400 yards from the assembly area. The company crossed the wadi at approximately 0330 hours, and the third platoon moved toward the crossroad. The men under the control of the Executive Officer never reached the company assembly area. (15)

The two landing crafts that were under the control of the Executive Officer were landed approximately 400 yards to the extreme left flank of the beach. These landing crafts consisted of two mortar squads and one machine gun squad, plus PW interrogation teams from Division Headquarters, and intelligence personnel from Regiment and Battalion Headquarters, plus one squad of riflemen.

(14) A-4, p. 3

(15) Personal knowledge

The landing of the aforementioned groups was effected in approximately four feet of water. On reaching shore, they immediately crossed the beach and assembled in a small orange grove. The attached detachments were briefed and ordered to travel down the beach to reach their units.

After the aforementioned units had departed, the Executive Officer called the NCO's and discussed the plan of action that would be undertaken. A hasty check of the aerial photo and maps disclosed that the main road from LES ANDELOUS to BOUSFER was only approximately 400 yards away. The plan of action was as follows: they would push to the main road, taking advantage of the trees to offer them concealment. Upon reaching the main road they would then turn to the right and attempt to rejoin the remainder of the company at the predetermined assembly area.

On reaching the crossroad North of EL ANCOR a road guide from Battalion Headquarters was encountered and questioned by the Executive Officer. The road guide stated that "Company 'G' had just passed approximately fifteen minutes ago, and turned down the road to the south." The executive officer believing that the Company Commander had changed his plan of attack, then made changes accordingly. They would proceed straight down the road to the objective. Corporal Petit and four rifle men would constitute the point. The main body would be comprised of two mortar squads and one machine gun squad. Four remaining rifle men would follow and act as the rear security element.

This change in plans would bring the small detachment directly to EL ANCOR, the company objective. On reaching the

town, the two mortar squads were immediately emplaced in firing positions. Firing would be conducted by direct observation alone. The machine gun squad took up firing positions on the side of the road protecting our rear and also were able to fire directly up the road into the center of the town. (See Map C)

Upon arriving at the objective, a hasty reconnaissance failed to reveal the presence of the company. The Executive Officer then organized two patrols, and they began a systematic investigation of questionable locations which had been marked on the aerial photos. These patrols were oriented, and were given flare guns which were to be used if trouble was encountered.

CAPTURE OF COMPANY OBJECTIVE

At approximately 0315 hours, Patrol Number One reported back to the platoon OP and stated that all was quiet, and that there were no indications of troops in the town. Five minutes later Patrol Number Two reported in, with two prisoners. These prisoners proved to be the local police force. After close interrogation by the Executive Officer and his interpreter, Pfc Belisle, it was determined that there were no troops in the vicinity, the closest troops being located in the Cape Falcon area. The Executive Officer then ordered the telephone wires to be cut, thus sealing the town from passing on information concerning the landing. The switch was also pulled on the high tension wire, thus plunging the town into darkness. The moon had since poked out from behind the clouds, giving us sufficient light to observe adequately.

One of the local gendarmes, escorted by the two patrols and the Executive Officer, then moved into town to ferret out the local mayor. On moving out Corporal Petite was instructed to

remain with the mortars. If a green flare was fired, he was to open fire with the mortars on the City Hall, and the street junctions which he could observe from a position approximately ten yards from the mortar position. The patrol moved directly to the City Hall. The BAR man and the AT grenadier took up positions in rear of the wall which surrounded the park. From these positions both roads leading into town could be covered.

Two members of the patrols escorted the executive officer and his interpreter into the City Hall. There seated in candle light was the Mayor and on his desk was the symbol of Vichy France, Marshall Petain. The mayor verified the fact that the closest troops were in Cape Falcon and also a small detachment in Laurmel. Instructions were issued that no one was to attempt to leave town and that road blocks would be established to enforce this regulation. Also the mayor was to remain in his office until the arrival of the American Commander. It was further explained that we had come to free the people of the Axis domination which was being forced upon them by Vichy France. If trouble would arise due to actions of the population, artillery would immediately begin to fall on the city.

Patrols were then withdrawn from town, and road blocks were set up, utilizing the two policemen to help enforce our wishes. On the completion of this plan, the red flare was ordered to be fired. This flare was the company's prearranged signal that the town was in friendly hands, and that all was well.

At approximately 0430 hours, the remainder of the company, less the third platoon, arrived on the outskirts of town. The

Company Commander was thoroughly brief^{ed} as to the action which had previously transpired. The Company Commander and Executive Officer then proceeded to the City Hall. The Mayor was informed that the town was under Army control, and that nothing would be done without the express approval of the Army Commander. They responded slowly at first, but I believe the sight of cold steel in the candlelight, influenced their decision to cooperate and comply with the Company Commander's orders tremendously.

Lieutenant M. Jellison, the second platoon leader, was ordered to set up the local security in town and was to relieve the control points which had previously been set up by the Executive Officer. The weapons platoon was then reorganized and moved to the road block, which was in the process of being established by Lieutenant Jack Kirk. The weapons platoon leader was given the assignment of assisting Lieutenant Kirk and to advise him in the employment of his supporting weapons.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROAD BLOCK

Upon reconnaissance of the area, it was concluded that no artificial road block could be established. It was then decided that the block would be of necessity that of fire only. Mortars were set up in a defilade position approximately four hundred yards from the crossroads. The machine gun squads were split, one on either side of the road on the high ground, where they would be able to deliver effective fire on both roads. The third platoon was to dig in on the dominating ground on either side of the road. From these positions, small arms fire could adequately cover the road junction and also protect the machine squads and AT guns which were expected momentarily. Two men volunteered to dig in within fifty yards of the junction. These

men were supplied with AT grenades and took up positions on either side of the road. (See Map C).

At 0630 hours the Company Commander was informed that the block was established and that the 37-mm AT guns be sent up as soon as possible. The Transportation Corporal was dispatched to the beach to ascertain if the AT section had been landed. He reported back that the section had landed, but the guns and transportation were not expected to land for another half hour. Delay was encountered due to the lack of landing craft for vehicles in proportion to those supplied for the landing of personnel. The road block was now being handicapped by lack of antitank weapons and the fact that our combat engineers had not arrived at the CP.

Corporal La Boeuf was again dispatched to the beach with the order to bring the AT section up the main road. At 0800 hours the first AT gun was being placed into position. It was necessary to shuttle the weapons and crew due to the lack of transportation available on shore. By 0830 hours all guns were in position, and we waited for the contact patrol from the 1st Armored which was to come from LOURMEL.

Sergeant John Dillon, platoon sergeant 3rd platoon, reported by radio from the observation post that he had spotted an armored vehicle at a range of approximately 2,000 yards but the vehicle had withdrawn. The Company Commander gave the order for everyone to get into position and to withhold their fire so as not to disclose their position prematurely. Corporal Le Boeuf was sent back to town with the mission of alerting all troops in the town and also to notify Lieutenant Jellison, who was covering the high ground on the north of the

road block, to be ready to move to our assistance if the occasion arose.

ACTION AT THE ROAD BLOCK

At approximately 0830 hours a shot rang from the enemy armored car at an approximate range of 1800 yards. With glasses it was ascertained that there were three armored cars and two motorcyclists. The shot grazed the pavement next to the Commanding Officer's jeep, and crashed through EL ANCOR. The command to "hold fire" was reiterated. The aforementioned three vehicles and motorcycles continued to leap frog up the road block, the lead armored car then opened up on the observation post on our left flank with its "Maxims" and continued toward the block. "FIRE" then reached through the positions, the left AT gun then slammed an AP shell through the driver's compartment of the lead vehicle. The vehicle then stopped a short distance from the crossroad and began to spray our position with its machine guns and 37mm cannon, our mortars then opened fire on this vehicle and with a direct hit the vehicle burst into flame.

The motorcyclist turned tail and fled in the direction of LOURNEL. The two remaining cars, however, continued toward the block delivering 37-mm gun and machine gun fire on our positions. The lead vehicle was then engaged by our right AT gun which bored several shells through the turret and motor. The AT grenadiers also fired on this vehicle, and with two direct hits the vehicle burst into flame, the crew as it attempted to take cover was subjected to heavy small arms fire.

The third vehicle, seeing the road blocked by one of its own, then turned tail and was taken under fire from the two AT guns, and was knocked out at a range of approximately 1,000 yards. Even though these AT guns were engaged prior to the trails being dug in, they delivered extremely accurate fire.

Small arms fire continued to fall on these vehicles and their dismounted crews,^{the} vehicles were burning, but it was believed the guns were still being manned as these weapons continued to fire.

END OF ACTION

Action was broken off at approximately 0930 hours. The Executive Officer was dispatched from the scene of action to EL ANCOR to relay this information to the Battalion. It was necessary to use either wire or messenger as radio contact was out. The wire had not been run into the CP so a runner was dispatched, however at approximately 0945 hours the wire line was completed. The following message was then sent to the Battalion Headquarters: "Road block hit at 0830 hours by three armored cars, all cars knocked out, situation well in hand, no casualties." (16)

Before the Executive Officer left the CP, Colonel Stark called and stated, "Hold at all cost, reinforcements are on the way." Upon being reassured the situation was well in hand the latter plan was cancelled.

The armored cars, upon examination, proved to be Renaults, vintage of 1932, their armament consisted of two 7.5 caliber Maxims, and one 37-mm AT gun, their armor was approximately 3/8" of bolted steel plate. (17) These vehicles were manned by a

(16) Personal knowledge

(17) A-4, p. 4

three man crew, driver, assistant driver, and gunner, plus the cannoneer. During the engagement three men were killed and the remaining six were taken prisoner, all men required medical treatment due to the small arms fire and splinters caused by the AP shells and bullets. The Commanding Officer of the enemy vehicles was immediately evacuated to Battalion Headquarters for medical treatment and interrogation, the remaining prisoners were escorted to the beach PW enclosure for questioning and safe keeping.

Upon searching the dead it was ascertained that the crews of these vehicles were members of the 2nd Chasseurs, home station Oran. (See Annex B) The crews were comprised of one regular and two recruits, these recruits had been called to service only two weeks prior to our attack. This latter information and all documents found were forwarded to Battalion S-2 for further disposition.

ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS

The second section of the Battalion AT platoon reported to the CP at approximately 1.000 hours; (18) these men supplied depth to our position which is a prime requisite for a well organized defense. Personnel, of necessity, was reorganized in order that a continuous band of fire could be brought to bear on the main line of resistance.

The second platoon was at this time recalled from the high ground north of the road block. Lieutenant Jellison was then instructed to outpost the town and set up patrols within the town to maintain order. The first platoon, less the first squad which was attached to the third platoon, and the third squad

(18) A-4, p. 4 and Personal knowledge

would act in a supporting role in town, this group would relieve the second platoon.

Reserves, comprised of the Regimental AT Company, reported to the CP at 1200 hours, (19) this group had only their individual weapons, and would act as infantry. The AT weapons were not expected to be landed until the following morning, this was due to the shelling of the Langiby Castle from the shore batteries at Cape Falcon. Captain Ruwet and Johnson, after making a reconnaissance of the area, decided that the AT Company would be maintained in reserve.

INFILTRATION

On the night of 8-9 November, an attempt was made to infiltrate through our outpost line SW of the town. Small arms fire sufficed in stopping the attempted infiltration. The latter maneuver was repeated on the evening of 9-10 November, again small arms fire was used to foil the stratagem.

The much awaited patrol from the 1st Armored Division arrived at the road block at 1300 hours 9 November and announced that LOURMEL was in friendly hands. Difficulty had been encountered by the 1st Armored due to failure of the paratroop mission, the thirty-nine planes that carried the airborne troops scattered the paratroops from Spanish Morocco to a point east of Oran. (20)

RELIEVED BY REGIMENTAL ANTITANK COMPANY

Company "G" turned over control of the road block to the AT Company at 1100 hours 10 November. We were then transported by truck to the base of DJEBL MURDJADJO in the vicinity of Le Cole

(19) A-4, p. 4

(20) A-3

and placed in Regimental Reserve. (21) Action in the Central Task Force sector ended at 1230 hours, 10 November with the fall of Oran.

On 11 November the following message was read to all troops from Major General Allen:

"You have won your objective on the indicated day and have acquitted yourselves in a most creditable manner.

"This is the initial phase of a long series of difficult operations. Nothing must stop or delay the First Division, we must reach our objective in a minimum time, with a maximum lost to the enemy." (22)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The operation described in this monograph provided the 1st Division with a considerable amount of practical experience.

1. COMBAT LOADING

One factor which greatly affected this operation was the inability to combat load complete battalion landing teams on one ship. This factor, in my opinion, accounted for the haphazard defensive situation which confronted "G" Company. The company was landed without their attached support weapons which had been loaded on another ship in the 26th Transportation Division. Picture to yourself a road block being held by only small arms fire! It is true that the stream and the mountain provided a natural barrier, but no other equipment was available to seal the natural avenues of approach which was the main road from LOURMEL to the beach. The AT weapons arrived in time to give a bit more depth to our defensive position, yet the engineers

(21) A-4, p. 5

(22) A-8

squad which was to be attached to the Company for demolition arrived after the action had taken place. The Engineers' equipment was still loaded aboard the ship, consequently they amounted to one additional rifle squad. There was a sufficient amount of landing craft for personnel, but there was a definite lack of landing craft for vitally needed vehicles equipment and supplies. This latter situation necessitated men loitering around the beach-head awaiting their equipment, in order that they could be properly utilized.

2. THE INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER

The individual soldier resembled a gypsy on the move, his pack bulged at the seams and his shoulders sagged under the tremendous load he was required to carry.

On his belt which contained 48 rounds of ammunition, he was required to carry two full canteens of water. (23)

Each person that was armed with a rifle, this included officer personnel, carried two full bandoliers of ammunition.

Each squad carried twelve hand grenades and twelve rifle grenades.

Each individual carried a gas mask plus the necessary protective ointment and protective goggles. This equipment for self-preservation in case of gas attack was left in the assembly area which if the need arose would have marked the company, with the exception of those men with the Executive Officer, as gas casualties.

The packs were loaded with a complete C ration plus two D rations. (24) One K ration would have served the purpose well.

(23) A-8 and Personal knowledge

(24) A-8 and Personal knowledge

A humorous note can be injected here, no one could figure just what purpose the hole in the role of toilet paper would serve, except to take up valuable space.

The mess equipment was carried by the individual, this material could readily have been carried with the kitchens as all metal surfaces were required to be carefully wrapped in order to prevent noise, thus adding additional weight.

Gas impregnated clothing was carried. Each individual had a complete suit including underwear. This clothing caused considerable comment amongst the troops, it injected fear into the operation and required repeated explanation. This equipment was discarded on D + 1 and turned in to company supply, the reason for this action was the soldiers had found it a valuable trading item amongst the Arabs.

All the aforementioned items were carried in addition to the items which were necessary for personal comfort and hygiene.

3. EVALUATION OF TERRAIN

The terrain provided obstacles which were definitely underestimated by all concerned. It is true that maps, aerial photos, and a scale model of the beach were provided for study, nevertheless it was under-estimated. The wadi provided a notable barrier, which, if a crossing could not have been readily located, would have prolonged the Company in reaching its objective. Also there was a failure in hydrographic reports to chart the sand bar, which added to the confusion of landing in total darkness.

4. FLEXIBILITY IN PLANNING

The plans for the company were well conceived; mainly they were flexible which is necessary in an operation of this type.

laid until H + 10 from the Battalion CP to the road block. Radio communication was practically nil, operators were well trained, but, nevertheless, contact could not be maintained.

7. INFORMATION

Information was never passed down from Battalion. The progress of the battle, difficulties being encountered, etc. were never received. All information that was received was via the grapevine from the beach head and hospital. It is my honest belief that this information should have been supplied in order that the Company, if withdrawn from the beach head, could have been engaged without excessive briefing as to the situation.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the operation of Company "G" was successful because:

(a) There was no enemy opposition encountered by the Company enroute to its objective (EL ANCOR).

(b) The enemy encountered by Company "G" was poorly organized and poorly equipped. This point, I believe, can be readily recognized by the use of combat troops with less than three weeks of actual army training. Equipment was definitely obsolete, being at least 10 years old from the standpoint of improvement and modification. Morale and esprit de corps was practically negligible. Troops were equipped with various and sundry articles of uniform, no two men being equipped the same. It is true they were ordered to fight, but they lacked a very important factor - a definite will to fight. I believe that if a determined counter offensive had been hurled at our position, we would have been overrun before sufficient reserves could have been employed to prevent a break through to the beach head.

LESSONS

1.a Special emphasis must be placed on combat loading of complete battalion landing teams aboard one ship.

2. Transport Quartermasters must be thoroughly familiar with the hold and deck space of ships in view of establishing a priority landing systems for critical equipment and supplies.

3. The individual soldier should carry the absolute minimum to sustain him in combat.

4. Proper evaluation of terrain, through study and supplemented by Intelligence Reports, should be continually stressed.

5. There is a definite need of flexibility in combat orders due to the unforeseen elements which may arise at any time during the progress of the offensive or defensive.

6. Sufficient antitank weapons are necessary in establishing a defense in depth, especially when the enemy is known to have armored equipment at his disposal.

7. Landing craft for transportation must definitely be furnished in proportion to landing craft for personnel in order to prevent beach from being crowded with equipment and supplies vitally needed by front line troops.

8. Keep your subordinates well informed as to the situation at all times.

L O A D I N G C H A R T

TRANSDIV. 18
(Combat Team 18)

SHIP:	PRINCIPAL ASSAULT UNIT:
HMS. ROYAL ULSTERMAN) HMS. ULSTER MONARCH) HMS. ROYAL SCOTSMAN)	1st Ranger Battalion.
HMS. REINA DEL PACIFICO)	Division Headquarters; CT 18 Headquarters; 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry CT.
HMS. TEGELBERG)	2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry CT.
HMS. ETTRICK)	1st Battalion, 18th Infantry CT.

TRANSDIV. 16
(Combat Team 16)

HMS. WARWICK CASTLE)	Division Artillery Headquarters; CT 16th Infantry Headquarters; 3rd Battalion, 16th Infantry CT.
HMS. DUCHESS OF BEDFORD)	1st Battalion, 16th Infantry CT; 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry CT.

TRANSDIV. 26
(Combat Team 26)

HMS. MONARCH OF BERMUDA)	Assistant Division Commander; Headquarters, Combat Team 26; 2nd Battalion, 26th Infantry CT.
HMS. GLENGYLE)	3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry CT.
HMS. LLANGIBBY CASTLE)	1st Battalion, 26th Infantry CT.

ORDER OF BATTLE (ORAN AND VICINITY)

- 1 Battalion - 2nd Regiment ZOUAVES
- 6 Squadrons - 2nd Regiment Chasseurs d'Afrique
- 3 Batteries - 66th Artillerie d'Afrique
- 1 Battery - Group Autonome Artillerie Metropolitaine
du Levant
- 8 Batteries - 411th Regiment Defense Contre Aerunets