

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~
HEADQUARTERS 16TH INFANTRY
Office of the Regimental Commander

August 18, 1943.

SUBJECT : Reports After Action Against The Enemy.

TO : The Commanding General, 1st U. S. Infantry Division.

Following is the report after action against the enemy covering the months of June and July, 1943, for the 16th Infantry, 1st U. S. Infantry Division.

JUNE 1 - JUNE 8, 1943

The regiment, having moved to the ground just out of St. Ieu, Algeria, from St. Louis, late in the month of May, had again received its combat team attachments and began training for the coming operation. In addition, several other units were attached in view of the coming operation. These were as follows:

- 1st platoon, Company D, 1st Medical Battalion
- Company D, 83rd Chemical Battalion
- 3rd Battalion, 551st Engineer Shore Regiment
- 11th Field Hospital
- 690th Antiaircraft Artillery Machine Gun Separate Airborne Co.
- 691st Antiaircraft Artillery Machine Gun Separate Airborne Co.
- Company B, 70th Tank Battalion

The above units were attached for training with the CT as these units would no doubt participate in the coming operation, unknown at this time, in direct support, or directly with the CT.

During this period, the regiment and attached carried on an extremely extensive training program under supervision of the Invasion Training Center, operated by 5th Army. It was known at this time that the division was to function in the coming operation under the command of I Armored Corps (Reinforced). The training center, for the most part, was located on the beach between Arzew and Mostaganem. Various courses were set up, including rifle and mortar ranges, street fighting, methods of reducing pill-boxes, amphibious operations in their various stages, combat exercises, and night problems. Training methods were unusually good, and the program was well planned.

Several of the attached units had never received any previous amphibious training, and had to be instructed from the very beginning. Also, many replacements were received by the regiment at this time, and were given a short course of special training.

The regiment at this time was located on the high open ground some two miles from the Mediterranean. The bivouac area was very open, with no cover and foliage. Tents were pitched on the bare rocky ground, putting

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

most of the men under pyramidal canvas. Dust was heavy, but was relieved by the frequent swimming parties to the beach.

No passes were granted, but highly organized athletics, movies and stage shows were conducted for recreation of the men.

Battalions, in order, participated in battalion landing exercises, actually loading aboard ships and going a short distance out to sea. Problems were terminated shortly after the landings were made.

The regimental staff began preliminary work on the coming operation, with very little information known at this time. All information was highly secret.

During this period, the training was visited and observed by the Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall.

JUNE 9, 1943.

Overland convoy for movement to Algiers left St. Leu early the morning of the 9th. All organic transportation, plus Anti-Tank Company and a small advance detachment of Regimental Headquarters, plus the 7th Field Artillery Battalion, composed the convoy. The bivouac that night was at Orleansville, Algeria.

JUNE 10, 1943.

Motor convoy of regiment arrived in proposed bivouac area in vicinity of Staouli, Algeria, some 12 miles from the city of Algiers. Immediately, a camp was set up, and plans made for the arrival of the troops. The Camp site was excellent, being in a large forest, on fairly level ground. Water supply was normal, and dust was low. The camp was some $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the beach, facilitating swimming parties. The remainder of the combat team was still at St. Leu, preparing to board ships for a water movement to Algiers.

JUNE 11, 1943.

The remainder of the Combat Team, plus attached, boarded the ships "USS ELIZABETH STANTON", "USS CHASE", "USS BELGOTUSE", AND THE "USS THURSTON" at Arzew, Algeria, docks. Convoy sails.

JUNE 12, 1943.

Combat Team and attached at sea on way to Algiers.

JUNE 13, 1943.

Combat Team and attached arrive at docks in Algiers and are moved to camp site at Staouli by truck.

JUNE 14 - 20, 1943.

Time spent in setting up camp, granting passes, and small unit training, including conditioning marches. Also, range firing for all weapons was

UNCLASSIFIED

held, with battalion combat problems. Plans laid for a Division amphibious exercise.

JUNE 21, 1943.

Training exercise; Amphibious operation "Conquerer" begun by initial movement of troops to ships in Algiers harbor for the exercise. Heavy units, such as Cannon Company, the platoon of tanks., etc., did not participate in the landing exercise due to loading and unloading problems.

JUNE 22, 1943.

Loading for exercise completed. Commanding Officer and staff move aboard "USS ELIZABETH STANTON". Day spent in assignment of personnel and acquainting men with ships regulations and outline of coming problem.

JUNE 23, 1943.

Convoy sails for problem. Moves short distance out to sea and then follows coast westward. Landing is to be made in vicinity of Siddi Feruch, Algeria.

JUNE 24, 1943.

Landing made shortly after midnight of 23rd. Problem carried through; successful landing accomplished, "Enemy" British forces pushed back, and beachhead established, with problem terminating at 1440 hours. Movement made to bivouac area at Staouli by motor, with one battalion marching back.

JUNE 25, 1943.

Rest and rehabilitation of clothing and equipment from landing exercise. Vehicles being loaded daily aboard supply ships in Algiers.

JUNE 26, 1943.

3rd Battalion, 16th Infantry, plus some attachments, board LST's in Algiers harbor. Remainder of regiment in Staouli bivouac area preparing to move.

JUNE 27, 1943.

Anti-Tank, and Cannon Company, 16th Infantry, plus some attachments, load aboard LST's in Algiers. Ships sail before noon, destination Tunis, Tunisia. Remainder of regiment and attached at Staouli bivouac area.

JUNE 28, 1943.

Preparation for movement - checking of all equipment and final checks in orders. 3rd Battalion, Cannon, Anti-Tank, and their attachments at sea.

JUNE 29, 1943.

3rd Battalion, and Cannon Company disembark at Tunis. Anti-Tank Company still at sea. Units which disembarked move to bivouac area vicinity of the city of Tunis. No passes granted men.

JUNE 30, 1943.

No change. All units still in same location, with Anti-Tank Company still at sea.

JULY 1, 1943.

Anti-Tank Company disembarks at Tunis and joins other elements of 16th Infantry there in the bivouac area. Remainder of Combat Team plus attachments still resting in Staouli.

JULY 2 - 3, 1943.

Units at Tunis and units at Staouli resting, making final preparations for operation to come.

JULY 4, 1943.

First units of group at Staouli begin loading aboard ships, movement being made to ships in Algiers by road marches.

JULY 5, 1943.

Commanding Officer and staff board ship "USS STANTON" in Algiers. Other units assigned as stated in Field Order No. 13, Headquarters CT 16, attached.

JULY 6, 1943.

Convoy moves out into harbor in Algiers. Boat drills and instruction held. Plans for coming action released to officers of the Combat Team by the Commanding Officer. At 1415 hours the convoy set sail.

JULY 7, 1943.

Day spent without incident. Officers study plan for release to all men. Men still do not know where they are going. Physical exercises and lectures for men.

JULY 8, 1943.

With the distribution of hand books on Sicily, it becomes known to all where they are going. All men briefed and Commanding Officer holds meeting of commanders, giving final changes in situation.

JULY 9, 1943.

Landing is to be made tonight. All final preparations made, equipment checked, and orders repeated. Sea very rough, sickness rate high. Just

Before midnight, first wave is loaded into boats.

16 RCT

JULY 10, 1943.

At 0057 hours, the first wave is lowered away and streaks to its assembly area. There after the wave is assembled, they head for the beach, landing at 0245 hours. The wave hit the beach, meeting little resistance. Some pill boxes and scattered riflemen on the beach are quickly disposed of. Subsequent waves land without incident. Few casualties occur on the beach. During mid-morning tanks were observed moving into the area in vicinity of the road junction of Nescemi road with Gela-Vittoria road. By noon 20-30 11 ton Renault tanks were active at the road junction, and they constantly harrassed our forward companies. The tanks were followed by Italian infantry which occupied the pill boxes and strong point in vicinity of the road junction. No contact was made with any organized group of our parachutists, and it became apparent by noon that they were not on any of their objectives. The reduction of the strong point at the road junction was begun by the 1st Battalion at noon. The pill boxes were reduced one by one aided by a plan of the defenses captured some after the attack was started. Mortars, bazookas, and machine guns were the principal weapons used. The reduction of the strong point was complete by nightfall, and the units dug in preparing for a counterattack by the tanks which appeared imminent - over 30 tanks and numerous vehicles on the road from Niscemi having been reported. During the day the tanks had been held at bay with bazookas, mortars, and artillery. During the day approximately two companies of Italians from the 49th Coastal Battalion were captured.

JULY 11, 1943.

Regiment still in position in vicinity of Niscemi road junction. Attempts to move forward on the morning of the second day were stopped by heavy fire from enemy tanks. It became apparent by noon that the 11 ton Renault tanks had been replaced by German Mk III, and Mk IV Special tanks. Shortly after noon the tanks advanced on forward units overrunning their position in places. At the same time other German tanks broke through the 26th Infantry, and drove almost to the beach. The tanks then split up, some moving east others west. The Cannon Company, direct from L.S.T's moved into action destroying some 10 to 15 tanks, and drove off the remainder. The tanks which had attacked our forward positions were held off by the infantry using their infantry weapons, and assisted by the Cannon Company and supporting artillery. A few M-4 tanks arrived with the Cannon Company, and a company of tanks was promised for the next day. At dusk 30 - 40 truck loads of German infantry were observed unloading three thousand yards north of our forward positions.

JULY 12, 1943.

Forward patrols during early hours of the morning reported German infantry on flanks of the regiment with tanks still in position to the front. At daylight tanks were observed moving south on the Niscemi road, and the two forward battalions were taken under mortar and small arms fire. Enemy tanks followed by infantry caused a slight withdrawal of the 1st Battalion. At the same time, tanks including 6 Mk VI's, followed by a few infantry were observed coming from the southeast on the Vittoria road. The tanks from the southeast continued to move forward and moved into the area around the road junction in the center of the regiment. The fire of the Cannon Company Anti-Tank Company, and M-4 tanks, and the artillery was so effective that

16 RCT

some three of the Mk VI, and 2 Mk IV Special tanks were ablaze, another Mk VI had been disabled, still another Mk VI turned toward the east. By noon the tank battle at the road junction had ended and the enemy tanks on the left flank of the regiment were engaged and forced to withdraw. During the remainder of the day our mortars, Cannon Company, and artillery continually harrassed the enemy tanks to our front, and set several on fire. At dusk the enemy were observed destroying one of their own ammunition dumps. Active reconnaissance to front was instigated. Reconnaissance of left flank by the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon just before dark indicated the enemy had withdrawn from positions on that flank.

JULY 13, 1943.

With not-to-heavy opposition, movement is made forward to the B3 Line by the assault battalions, and carried over into the town of Nesceimi, where little resistance is met, and a few prisoners are taken. The enemy has given up the town, moving some three miles beyond, with armor covering the area between them and the town. The armor is engaged by artillery fire, and the enemy replies with light sporadic fire.

JULY 14, 1943.

Battalions in position in vicinity of Nesceimi. Contact with enemy lost as the armor withdraws under our heavy fire. Active reconnaissance instigated, and enemy contacted some distance to the front. Immediately, artillery fire was placed on them and they were forced to withdraw in a disorganized state. However, we do not follow, except with reconnaissance. Battalions remained in positions at midnight.

JULY 15, 1943.

Majority of day spent in forward reconnaissance by all battalions and regimental intelligence platoon. Contact with enemy sporadic throughout day. Contact made by Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon in Galtagirono where an enemy tank was encountered. Plans made for movement of Combat Team as direction of attack has been changed to northwest, with Combat Team going into bivouac area in rear of 23th Infantry, headed in direction of Pietrap-
erzia. Movement begun during late evening, by road and shuttle march.

JULY 16, 1943.

Regiment in reserve in rear of Combat Team 26. 3rd Battalion, 16th Infantry, attached to Combat Team 26 in view of their having been hit heavily by artillery and tanks. Plans made for the employment of the regiment on the left flank of Combat Team 26 late in the day, but plan changed in late day, and at midnight, no change in location of battalions, all in the vicinity of Mazarino, with 3rd Battalion north of the river.

JULY 17, 1943.

During the night the regiment moved forward through Barrafranca, the 3rd Battalion leading. Shortly after daylight, forward units of the 3rd Battalion met slight resistance, but pushed forward and occupied the high ground northeast of Pietrap-
erzia. Several Germans, and one company of Italians were captured in the advance. Patrols found Pietrap-
erzia unoccupied.

Contact with the enemy was made by the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon at the bridge on the road leading to Caltanissetta. Efforts of the platoon to prevent the Germans from blowing up the bridge were unsuccessful. During the day enemy artillery fire from the north landed in our rear areas. During the afternoon one company of Germans were observed preparing positions near the bridge on the road Pietraperzia to Enna. During the afternoon this company was reinforced by light tanks. The enemy units were brought under fire by artillery and one tank was set on fire. Early in the afternoon orders were received to move forward at night and seize high ground east of Caltanissetta. Platoons from each of the two leading battalions were sent forward before dark to seize high ground south of the river, and to act as a screen for the movement forward. The platoon on the right became engaged with the company of enemy observed earlier in the day.

JULY 16, 1943.

During the night two of the battalions crossed the river, and seized the high ground which was the regimental objective. Only slight resistance was met. The 2nd Battalion secured the right flank. They encountered rear guard action and tank fire until the company of light tanks passed through them and moved in the direction of Enna. During the afternoon the 2nd Battalion also moved into positions across the river, while the tanks continued to fight a stiff action on the right flank. The enemy from positions north and east of the positions held by the regiment placed machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire on forward patrols.

JULY 19, 1943.

Patrols again made contact with the enemy on the high ground north and east of our positions. Patrols reached road junction south of Enna, but received artillery fire. Upon receipt of orders to move on Enna from the south, the 3rd and 1st Battalions moved east and seized the high ground southeast of Enna, the enemy withdrawing as our units moved up. Upon occupying their new positions, the battalions sent out strong combat patrols. During the night patrols reached the outskirts of Enna without incident.

JULY 20, 1943.

Preceded by motorized patrols of Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, and 3rd Battalion, the 3rd Battalion moved into Enna receiving only slight mortar and artillery fire. Large numbers of Italian soldiers were taken prisoners. Forward elements of the 2nd Battalion in moving on Calsibetta, captured two strong enemy machine gun posts left behind by the enemy to retard our advance. Calsibetta was occupied without incident, and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon made contact with the 26th Infantry north of Villarosa.

JULY 21, 1943.

Battalions in positions in vicinity of Enna and Calsibetta. Move proposed during morning, but called off just before noon. One platoon of men from 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, furnished protection to 36th Field Artillery for their gun positions near Villarosa.

JULY 22, 1943.

Battalions still in positions in vicinity of Enna. Movement made forward

Stg. Health Det. Office of the Regt. Comd.
during the day in the vicinity of Villaroşa, and positions were occupied during the evening.

JULY 23, 1943.

During the morning patrols were pushed northeast toward Villadora. Civilians reported enemy in the town. A combat patrol was sent out, which by mid-afternoon was on the outskirts of Villadora, had captured 9 Germans, and were engaged in a fire fight with other enemy in the town. At dusk the patrol returned after clearing the town of enemy. During the day enemy artillery fire was falling in vicinity of Villaroşa.

JULY 24, 1943.

Battalions still in position. Plans made for movement, then changed at last minute and battalions remain in position, until dark when motor movement to Gangi was commenced.

JULY 25, 1943.

Battalions moved through Gangi during early morning hours, and went into assembly areas south and east of Gangi. OP's were established, and reconnaissance to the front was instituted.

JULY 26, 1943.

Orders were received for employment of the regiment south of Gangi-Nicosia road in an attack on Sperlinga and Nicosia. Reconnaissance was instated forward. Contact with the enemy was made by the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon in the morning on Hill 1333. After a three hour skirmish two enemy squads were driven from the hill, which was shortly thereafter occupied by the 2nd Battalion less "F" Company, which had remained in Emma to guard ammunition dumps. During the evening the 3rd Battalion moved forward to pass through the 26th Infantry.

JULY 27, 1943.

During the night the 2nd and 3rd Battalions attacked. The 3rd Battalion captured 32 Germans and 6 Italians, but were driven back to their original positions by fire from the north of the road in the 18th Infantry sector. Meanwhile the 2nd Battalion received heavy machine gun fire from the hill to their front. During the day both battalions continued to work forward slowly. Artillery fire was placed in concentrations of the enemy observed in front of the 3rd Battalion. In the afternoon enemy rocket mortars were active in vicinity of Sperlinga, but they were taken under fire by artillery. At dusk the 18th Infantry had moved into position abreast of the 3rd Battalion on the north side of the road. A tank thrust down the road at dusk drew heavy fire and two tanks were destroyed. During the evening patrols found the enemy had withdrawn from positions held during the day.

JULY 28, 1943.

Preceded by patrols, and according to plan, the 3rd and 2nd Battalions pushed aggressively forward at dawn to seize their objective. The 3rd Battalion to take Sperlinga and Nicosia, the 2nd Battalion to seize the high ground south of the towns. By 0830, forward units of "L" Company had

entered Sperlinga and found the town abandoned. Meanwhile "F" Company had pushed swiftly forward south of Sperlinga and by 1000 hours was entering Nicosia. Sniping was prevalent for about an hour, and stiff resistance was met consisting of small arms fire from high rocky area in the north edge of the town. Just as their ammunition was running out the enemy capitulated. Over 700 Italian prisoners were finally rounded up together with a few German stragglers. While the 3rd and 2nd Battalions consolidated their gains the 1st Battalion proceeded by the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon pushed northeast toward Cerami. Approximately two miles from Nicosia, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon drew heavy machine gun fire from high ground northeast of the road, and the locations of several machine gun nests were ascertained. Before dark the 1st Battalion had moved into position and had knocked out several machine gun nests, capturing several Germans. Heavy enemy machine gun fire prevented further progress. During the day the enemy artillery shelled Nicosia and rocket mortars were fired in the 1st Battalion area.

JULY 29, 1943.

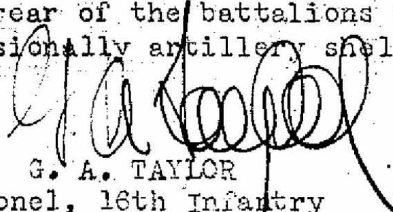
The 1st Battalion was unable to progress very rapidly due to the fact that the enemy kept them pinned down by machine gun fire from favorable positions in caves. However, one by one the machine guns were knocked out and finally just before dark, an organized assault resulted in the capture of the positions, and a large number of German prisoners were taken. A large number of enemy dead were found in the positions. Late in the afternoon the 2nd Battalion commenced a flanking movement, and after dark the battalion moved past the 1st Battalion on its right flank, and by morning had occupied the high ground west of Cerami River, and south of the Cerami Road.

JULY 30, 1943.

Positions occupied during the night were improved, and patrols were sent out to the Cerami River but no contact was made with the enemy except by the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon which came under heavy mortar and artillery fire while attempting to cross the Cerami River on the road to Cerami. Foot patrols reached Hill 910 without incident, while another patrol climbed the high ground toward Cerami, and made contact about 2,000 yards southwest of the town. Enemy was observed dug in on high ground southwest of town.

JULY 31, 1943.

During the day the 39th Infantry occupied Cerami, and the battalions moved into assembly areas. The road junction in rear of the battalions was dive bombed twice during the day, and occasionally artillery shells landed in the area.


G. A. TAYLOR
Colonel, 16th Infantry
Commanding