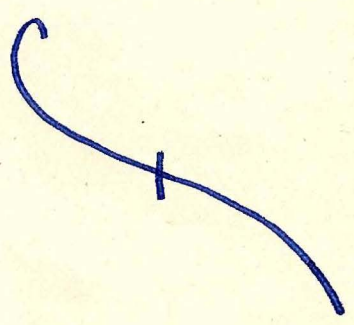


171st 20 Bw

NARRATIVES OF CAMPAIGNS



SEC II

HISTORICAL RECORD OF SICILIAN CAMPAIGN
171st FA BN

Flotilla anchored off the Southern Coast of Sicily, in the area between GELA and SCOGLITTI, on schedule at about 0001, 10 July 1943. Debarkation began immediately in anticipation of an H-hour of 0245. However, before the initial waves were dispatched, H-hour was changed to 0345, and assault waves were away on schedule. Support of Naval guns was intense and no doubt effective.

BLT 1, aboard the CALVERT, which included Battery A, 171st FA, about half of Hq Btry, and half the Bn Staff, was scheduled to land on beach RED CALVERT. Some of the vehicles of the above units were landed on the proper beach; however, the howitzers of Btry A were landed near GELA, and other impedimenta was landed on the beach near SCOGLITTI. The result of this very scattered landing was that the battery was not in position to fire until 2000B on D Day.

BLT 2, aboard the NEVILLE, which included B Battery 171st FA, was scheduled to land on beach RED NEVILLE. This unit was not so badly scattered but was landed on beach RED CALVERT instead of its proper beach. Some elements of this unit were also landed in the area of the 1st Division near GELA. This unit was in position to fire from the dunes at about 1230B, but moved to 2000 yards inland about 1530 without firing. Contact with RCT Hq had already been accomplished and Battery B was firing in direct support at about 1545B.

By 1530B, Bn Hq had been assembled in part and the FDC was ready to operate at the time Battery B commenced firing. FDC personnel, including the Bn C and S-3, were present at the Btry B position to assist in the direction of fire, although missions were handled directly with the battery until about 2000B on D day, when 3 howitzers of Btry A had arrived in position and ready to fire. Btries reverted to Bn control and a schedule of fires was prepared to harass the enemy throughout the night, using uncorrected map data. The fourth howitzer of Btry A arrived about 2400 to complete its fire power. Exceptionally good results of this harassing fire were observed the next day when many German dead were observed in defiladed positions, obviously killed by 105 mm fire. Reports from prisoners also verified the effect of the artillery fire during the night.

BLT 3, aboard the FUNSTON, was in Corps reserve, scheduled to land on beach RED immediately after the assault Battalions. However, the boats from the NEVILLE and CALVERT which were to shuttle this BLT were swamped on the beach and the contemplated schedule did not materialize. Personnel was landed in personnel carriers of various types, but vehicles carriers were not available until about 1000B D plus 1, when the FUNSTON pulled in close to SCOGLITTI. Consequently, the howitzers of Btry C were not in position in the Bn area until about 1200B d plus 1.

The entire Bn was busy with support missions up to and including 1400, from positions in the vicinity of h35.1-22.2/. At that time (1400), exceptionally accurate counterbattery fire was placed upon the positions of Battery A, B, and the Bn CP, by what was estimated to be a 75 pack howitzer battery or batteries. Casualties sustained included: HAAS, PAUL T., pvt, 36058178, fragment in back which later resulted in death; SWANSON, CHARLES E., T/5, 32332366, fragment left ankle; ABBETT, ROBERT H., T/5, 32301067, fragment right ankle; HOBBS, MARK H., T/5, 20832340, fragment left hip; REED, EUGENE A., pvt., 33091107, fragment over left eye; JONES, CHESTER M., pvt., 17074902, fragment on left hand; all sustained in CP area. Btry A - SALINGER, KURT, pfc, 35162951, fragment on face (sustained on beach), LARSON, OSMOND J., T/5, 37040574, fragment in arm; POLACK, FRANK J., pvt., 31120356, fragment left leg; GRIFFIN, GLOYD B., pvt., 20831810, GSW left arm.

Bn displaced to alternate positions about 1000 yards to rear, from where Bn missions continued. Supported infantry in repelling counterattack.

At 2230 Paratroopers were landed in the Bn area, following closely on the heels of a terrific bombing of our ships along the shore about 4 to 5000 yards to our rear. Since no news of the American Paratroopers had reached this Hq., they were assumed to be hostile and the Bn was deployed for all around defense. One burning transport plane was landed near the area. In the dark DICKERSON CHARLES B., T/4, 20833056, Btry C, was shot and killed instantly when mistaken for an enemy paratrooper.

D plus 2, the Bn displaced to positions NW of Hwy 115 along the BISCARI road, from which some firing was done. However, at dark it was displaced to positions 2000 yards west of Biscari, from where the Bn supported the attack

toward the BISCARI airport, repelling a counterattack with furious fire on the left flank. During that engagement, CAPT. WOODS, ROBERT F., LNO 2, was wounded by fragment in hip.

At 0830, the Bn displaced to positions North of BISCARI, (437-278) from which the attack on the BISCARI airport was successfully supported. (Dplus 4, July 14, 1943.)

At 2100, D plus 4, the Bn displaced to positions just North of BISCARI airport, from which no firing was done. A 149mm howitzer Bn was captured in the drive.

At 1230, D plus 5, the Bn displaced to positions at 4508-442, about 4000 yards South of CALTAGIRONE. Although our observers and LNO's were under fire from roving guns and tanks, in the position, the Bn was held in check by limiting lines which prevented firing, since the CANADIANS and ENGLISH were crossing our front thru CALTAGIRONE, thereby squeezing out our Division as the Corps changed direction.

On July 16, (D plus 6,), the Division started a long motor shuttle movement to a bivouac area SW of MAZZARINO, for reorganization, rest and instruction. Route led thru CALTAGIRONE, GELA AIRPORT, and thence NW toward MAZZAPINO. Moving forward, the Bn bivouaced in the vicinity of PIETRAPERZIA, and thence to positions just north of S. CATERINA, 1000 July 19, 1943. The 180th RET moved thru the 157th RCT, but the 158th FA remained in support and the 171st didn't fire any reinforcing missions from this position.

At 0700, the Bn started moving up, traffic was terrific, movement slow. Many enemy vehicles and tanks noted burned along route. Occupied positions East of VILLALUNGA, vicinity (919-969). A little firing was done from this position.

At 0530, July 21, the Bn occupied positions West of VILLALUNGA (834-998). The infantry moved forward with little resistance, capturing several tanks and high officers.

At 1200, July 22, Bn moved to new positions at (832-996). During the night the Infantry moved forward 10 miles with no resistance. Bn moved again to vicinity of ROCCAPALUMBA, from which no firing was done, but the Infantry patrols entered PALERMO, confirmed at 1900. At that juncture,

the fall of PALERMO was announced and General PATTON announced that the 3rd Division and the 2nd armored would enter the town, and clean up the west end of the island, while the 45th changed direction again to the East.

At 1415, July 23, the Bn moved thru ALIA, MONTEMAGGORE, and into bivouac just north of ALIMINUSA, (836-217). Many roads blocked and blown bridges caused the move to be slow.

At 0930, July 24, the Bn moved out of rendezvous, moving North to Coast just East of TERMINI IMERESE, thence East along coastal road to positions in vicinity of CEFALU. Six Me-109's visited the area, 2 shot down. Many Italian prisoners were taken and big stores of arms, ammunition and equipment were seized.

At 0630, July 25, the Bn started movement forward to positions in vicinity of S. AMBROGO, Btry A in position at 351-091. LT MILLER, JAMES C., was killed by a sniper about 600 yards from his battery position as he attempted to gain observation. He saw some Germans over a knoll, sent his men back for a platoon of infantry to help him capture them. He was dead when the platoon arrived, shot in the back. Battery A received counterbattery fire three times during the afternoon in that position, in which three casualties were sustained. The Bn fired 1100 rounds during the day, as the infantry was given good support and in repelling three counterattacks. The Bn was reinforced by the 189th FA Bn which also fired almost round for round with the lights.

By 1800, the Bn had completed another move forward (about 5000 yards) to positions near (351-091). Scheduled firing took place during the night as the infantry scaled steep cliffs to organize positions on the high and difficult terrain. The Bn remained in these positions during July 26. Btry C fired about 200 rounds at tanks and vehicles definitely knocking out a German M-6 Tank with a direct hit, causing the tank to explode and scatter machinery some 200 yards. LT. LAVERSON, ALBERT H., Btry C observer, directed the Fire. At 1630, the Bn displaced forward to positions at 136-359, vicinity of FINALE.

At 0830, July 27, the Bn moved forward to positions South along the road at (351-157). These moves were difficult due to the coastal road having been demolished, bridges blown, and land slides from the steep cliffs overhanging the highway. The Engineers did a commendable job. Positions were impossible except along the stream outlets to the sea, which occurred about every 4 to 6000 yards along the highway. Throughout movements forward along the lone coastal road, vehicles were subject to direct fire of the German 88's from commanding ground to the front. Bn fired along 122 rounds from this position.

July 28, the 157th passed thru the 180th. Very little firing, the batteries firing only about 60 rounds each on scheduled fire during the night to interdict roads deep in the German rear. The Bn took over a reinforcing mission of the 158th when the 157th passed thru the 180th. Only a few reinforcing missions were fired during the day.

July 29. A few counterbattery missions were fired in the vicinity of S. STEFANO, and one counterattack on the 157th was repulsed. 95 rounds were fired. At 1800 the Bn began displacement forward to positions at 192-3501. Batteries were registered and did some night firing on the road behind S. STEFANO. At 1545 the Bn participated in a joint Army-Navy bombardment of the road East of S. STEFANO. Germans were observed abandoning vehicles and tanks to get to the rear during and after that bombardment.

July 30, 1730, the Bn displaced forward to positions (239-331). At 1930, patrols entered S. STEFANO. Very little activity all day, due to road blocks.

July 31, the relief of the Division by the 3rd Divisions was started. Quartering party left for rear area at 1630. Activity light, 198 rounds during the day.

At 1530, Aug. 1, movement to rear was started. Road congested. Movement slow. Bn closed into Rest Area at 2000. (842-385.) Area was immediately organized for defense against hostile landing. Everything surveyed in, communications complete.

Aug. 2, 3, 4, 5 - records, repair of materiel, cleaning of clothing and equipment.

Aug. 6, Bn moved to a coastal defense position at 356-364, about 12 miles East of S. STEFANO. No activity during this period. Routine training conducted during this period. Some air activity in the area. Service Btry at FINALE was bombed by one plane about midnight Aug. 11-12.

Aug. 13, Bn moved to defensive position at 613-443, East of TORRENOVOA. Only routine training and organization of area was conducted to Aug 17 when MESSINA was taken.

For Lt. Col. KENNY

JOSEPH G. CATHEY
Major FA
Executive

OFFICIAL:

JOSEPH G. CATHEY
Major FA
Executive

HEADQUARTERS 171ST FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION
APO #45, c/o Postmaster
New York, New York

16 October 1943

SUBJECT: Historical Record and History of 171st FA Bn (19 Aug-30 Sep/43, Incl)

1. Submitted herewith is one (1) copy of Unit Journal, Firing Charts & Maps, Overlays and Orders, and five (5) copies of the Battle Casualty Report and Historical Record.

2. Reports to include 18 Aug 1943 (Sicilian Campaign) were submitted about 20 Aug 1943.

3. The campaign in Sicily ended 18 Aug 1943 with the 171st FA Bn in direct support of the 180th Inf, protecting rear of 3rd Division in the vicinity of Orlando, Sicily. A few days of relaxed training followed before the Battalion moved to the vicinity of Termini Imerese, where extensive schools and training programs were put into effect 22 Aug.

23 - 24 Aug	Complete property inventories.
25 "	General PATTON addressed the Division.
26 - 8 Sept	Extensive training, field problems, etc.
9 "	Preparation for move to staging area for Italian Invasion.
10 "	Staging Area.
11 "	Staging Area.
12 "	Moved to P of E at Palermo.
13 "	Sailed at 1500 on LST's.
14 "	Arrived at transport area, south of Salerno, Italy at 1100. Bombed by Germans at 1300. Lost one Liberty Ship. In position, reinforcing 155th FA Bn of 36th Division at 1630. Bn attached to 36th Div Arty. 180th RCT in Army Reserve. Enemy bombers very active.
15 "	Still in same position at (88.0-06.5) open, flat field.
16 "	Still in open field, firing maximum range. Infantry would not advance to favorable positions. Received some German 88 fire.
17 "	Moved up 5000 yds to (89.9-09.9). Batteries under counter battery fire a day and a half. Repelled big 24 hour counterattack. Our fire almost continuous.
18 "	Rather quiet- same position- fired some.
19 "	Returned to 45th Div Arty control and went into position at (83-14) at 0400. Moved north of Presano (87.5-17.5) to support 180th Inf in attack on Campagna. Moved again at dark in front of 180th Inf to support daylight attack against supposedly weak delaying action of Germans. Position (92.9-26.2). Move took all night. Position area by 0300, 20 Sept.
20 "	180th Inf passed thru the 157th Inf. Fired some in direct support, then moved to (96.5-27.5). Drew fire in CP and battery position areas. Visited by CRA, Brigadier COLVERT-JONES.
21 "	Drew more more fire from 150 mm in CP in deep ditch. Lost one man. Had 158th, 189th, and 27th Armored FA Bn reinforcing us. Heavy firing.
22 "	Moved to (99.7-29.8) and placed heavy fire on Oliveto all day. Supported tank attack at 1800. Fired interdiction fires all night.
23 "	Fired 15 minute preparation prior to capture of Oliveto by 2nd Bn, 180th Inf, and the 179th Inf. The 179th passed thru the 180th and we reinforced the fires of the 160th FA Bn. Heavy fire all day.
24 "	Moved to (05.4-33.7) at 0400. Busy day of firing, but drew no fire.

- 25 Sept Bn underwent some changes. Lt Col ROY W. KENNY, Bn CO, moved to Executive, Div Arty Staff, and Maj JOSEPH G. CATHEY, Bn Exec, assumed command. Maj ELMER L. WHITMAN, Bn S-3, became Acting Exec, Capt GERMAN P. ODOM, Asst S-3, became Acting S-3, and Capt MARVIN L. BRIGGS, BC of Btry A, became Asst S-3. Bn moved in daylight to poor positions (03.5-40.0) south of Callibritto. Column passed thru 150 mm road interdiction and bridge by-passes without serious mishap. No night firing- too close and open.
- 26 " Quiet until 1500. Moved to good positions 2000 yds south of Teora (04.3-48.3). C Btry attached to 3rd Bn, 180th Inf on special mission of road block on flank of Division. Bn got several replacements.
- 27 " Heavy rain. Plenty of wire troubles, but light day of firing.
- 28 " Big move to south of San Angelo (95.9-58.4) was changed and move took place in heavy rain and mud early the next morning.
- 29 " Moved into above positions at 0200. No firing. Moved again at 1630 to Frigento (93.5-68.2). Position by dark in direct support 180th Inf outposting Division. Weather: cold.
- 30 " Same positions. Cold day. No firing. Positions commanded miles of valley.
- Remained in this defensive position until 2 Oct, when move on Benevento started. — Continued next month.

For the Battalion Commander:

ELMER L. WHITMAN
Major 171st FA Bn
Acting Executive

HEADQUARTERS 171ST FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

APO #45, c/o Postmaster
New York, New York

3 November 1943

SUBJECT: Historical Record and History of 171st FA Bn (1 Oct-31 Oct/43 Incl)

1. Submitted herewith is one (1) copy of Unit Journal, Firing Charts & Maps, Overlays and Orders, and five (5) copies of the Battle Casualty Report and Historical Record.

2. As month opened the 171st FA Bn was in direct support of 180th Inf which was outposting the Division. Positions vicinity of Frigento (93.5-68.2). Had been there since 29 Sept.

2 Oct	Moved to (74.3-83.7) along road to Benevento. Secured bridgehead for repairs. Heavy rain. No action.
3 "	Furnished 32 trucks to shuttle infantry. They were strafed by "Spitfires" in vicinity of Frigento at 1330. Slight damage to trucks but no casualties. Planes undoubtedly were German flown. More rain.
4 "	Moved at 1030 north of Benevento (65-83). Quiet.
5 "	Germans put a few rounds of 150 mm fairly close to us at dawn. Fired quite a bit reinforcing 158th FA Bn. Inf resistance tough.
6 "	Put in direct support of 179th 3rd Bn. Fired a lot. Moved to (69.7-89.4) at dark.
7 "	Fired 10 minute preparation at 0615. Busy morning in heavy rain. Kept 178th FA Bn ("Short Toms") reinforcing us busy too. Capt Allan L. Grain, LO, killed at OP near Fragneto Monforte. Artillery shell hit him directly in side. His radio operator (McDonald) shot a short time later at same OP (later died). 1st Lt Glen L. Garner moved from Survey Officer to LO. Moved up to (66.0-94.6) in rain late in afternoon. Right flank completely exposed.
8 "	Good day of shooting. KO'd two batteries, one AT gun, and neutralized several other targets. Moved Btry "B" up 2500 yds near Fragneto. Inf took objective.
9 "	Quiet morning, then moved up to (61.9-94.8). Rain. 3rd Bn, 180th Inf, protecting road blocks past Campollario, our whole Bn in direct support--rest of 180th moved south to Ponte. Fired interdiction fires and sound and flash missions at night.
10, 11, 12, & 13 Oct	Same position--frequent air raids.
14 "	Moved long distance from right flank of Division to left flank (43.5-93.5). Arrived just in time for big bombing and strafing. One man (Sgt Mattheyer) killed, one injured. Close to front--German patrols reported thru our lines, including tanks. One round landed near CP, probably a stray tank.
15 "	Fired some, reinforcing 158th FA Bn. 2nd Bn, 180th moved in to line to attack at 1400. Our Bn in direct support. Tough assignment for Infantry. Moved up on flat plain at 2300 (39.2-89.8).
16 "	Still near Amarosi, close to front. Had hard fight to cross Titurno River. Lost 2 tanks. Lots of mines. Lost 3 peeps and 1 tank in CT.
17 "	Bn followed Btry "B" across Titurno River to positions at (35.8-94.8). Leap-frogged batteries twice and got well forward. Survey Officer Lt Ash killed by mine, driver injured peep gone. Also lost one man and wire truck on another mine.
18, 19, 20 Oct	Same position, waiting for 34th Div to catch up. Our observers, have fine observation on Germans in front of 34th but can't get clearance to fire. <u>Finally</u> Division is relieved after 40 days in line, which is record for Division in action, this war, without relief.

21-30 Oct Rest area (38-96). Furnished trucks for shuttling occasionally. Worked on administration, had ordnance inspection and repairs and had vehicles thru 6000 mile maintenance.

31 " Moved to bivouac area at 1330 (24.5-04.5) and then moved into position at (13.9-09.1) at 2030. Direct support 180th, reinforced by 189th FA Bn. Quiet.

For the Battalion Commander:

ELMER L. WHITMAN
Major FA
Actg Ex

30 Nov. 1943

HISTORICAL RECORD 171st FA Bn NOV. 1943

1. As the 171st FA Bn entered the month of November, 1943, it had just completed a 10-day rest period in the vicinity of FACCHIO, Italy, and had, on the 31 Oct. 1943, returned to the line in positions at (13.9-09.1).

2. Daily accounts follow:

Nov. 1--All batteries were registered in their new positions early, and a busy day of firing ensued. German dive bombers visited at 1130, rocked the house in which the Bn CP was located, bracketed the kitchen truck, blowing out several tires and perforating the body, and caused several casualties in a Japanese Regiment which was marching by on the road. Reconnaissance was made across the VOLTURNO river, but the territory there was still in German hands. Italian civilians pointed out German OP to observers, who withdrew across the river and blasted the OP with an artillery battery. Observation was good from the flank of the Germans being driven back by the 34th Division on the left. However, difficulty in clearing fires in that sector held observers useless.

Nov. 2--Another air raid at 0830, no damage. Shot four planes down. Rcn for positions across the river and preparation for night move when ponton bridge completed at 0030.

Nov. 3--Registered batteries, when light enough, but didn't fire any more. Went on reconnaissance for positions farther up and out in the flat valley. Swept area for mines for night occupation.

Nov. 4--Moved at 0300 to positions near (06.6-13.5). Wide open to artillery fire. No defilade, but fair concealment. Enemy artillery searched about the area often, but did no damage. Our air force very active. Batteries had a busy day. VENAFRO about taken once by Infantry, but trouble from the left flank near VALLECUPA prevented its capture.

Nov. 5--Same position. Bn busy firing more to left flank than ahead. Observation good and many "close up" targets taken under fire with good effect. Enemy artillery rounds continually search area, but no damage. Bn reinforced by 977th TD's, 189th FA Bn, 158th FA Bn, and 79th Bn. Efficiency of Bn shooting cut considerably, trying to get all the various units registered, etc. Area far too congested also.

Nov. 6--Bn extremely busy, registering and re-registering attached units. Not enough time used on German targets. Several units never used (weren't needed) after considerable time had been wasted getting them registered. Bn has 13 officers working as FO's and LO's, and all the radio sets busy---with just two channels over which to work. Superfluous! Bn S-2, Capt. Raymond W. Washam, killed instantly on reconnaissance in VENAFRO. Several EM of Div Arty Hq Btry also killed at same time. Capt. Jesse Williams, Btry "B" CO, wounded and five of his men wounded while on same reconnaissance. Bn Hq Btry also had one man wounded in the VENAFRO area. That area definitely not ready for Artillery occupation, still under small arms and mortar fire. Lt Lloyd D. Cox to CO Btry B, vice Williams, evac.

Nov. 7--Reconnaissance made again to VENAFRO area with mine sweepers and details to clean out the multitude of mines and booby traps. Moved at dusk. Germans stopped interdicting road thru flat valley just long enough for the Bn to pass safely. No trouble at all. Btries registered from new positions, and counter battery rounds were wild. (Captured German firing chart showed all Bn installations setting on surveyed concentrations. Lt Leo Kelly, FO, got machine gun bullet thru nose and Lt Ralph Mengel, LO, was wounded in the right leg with shell fragment. Btry positions still within machine-pistol range, but well hidden in trees. Bn fired propaganda newspapers shells over VITICUSA and SAN PIETRO INFINE.

Nov. 8--(Note: last four lines of previous paragraph apply to Nov. 8--error).

Nov. 9--Btries busy firing. Everette E. Spears, Btry A, killed by booby trap in his Btry area, 2 others injured. Four English officers and one Italian escaped from Germans and came to our area. First contact they had made. Been in captivity from 1 to 3 years. Gave us some locations of gun positions. Area bombed at 1545, one AA man at Btry B hit, one Infantryman killed. Bombed again at 1630. None close. One Sgt of Btry A wounded by a 37 mm AA shell which returned to the ground without exploding until it hit a tree by him. Five men killed and about 25 wounded when the bombs landed across the road from the Bn area into the area of the 189th FA Bn. Entire area underwent heavy shelling at 2230. None hurt.

Nov. 10--Reconnaissance made for alternate positions in the area of the 158th FA Bn. At 1300, 12 German dive bombers hit Btry "A" with 500 lb fragmentation bomb, hitting almost directly in gun pit and killing five men, and wounding six, 3 critically. Bombers returned at 1530, wounding one Hq Btry man and 4 AA men, doing in two trucks and perforating 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ton truck which was loaded with bodies of men killed in previous bombing.

Nov. 11--CP moved from tent to caves. FDC fired many time fire missions for 4th Rangers on left flank. Area bombed again at 1315. Btry "A" moved to alternate position in area where the 189th FA Bn had evacuated the night before. Still penned up in small area however, easy to spot from the air because of the huge mountains above the position, and an improved road which runs near by.

Nov. 12--Air raid early, but no damage. Received heavy counter battery at 0800. Fired heavily all day.

Nov. 13--Btry "C" shelled at 0800. Gun and ammunition hit. One man killed, 7 injured (3 critically). Another booby trap wounded one Sgt running for cover. Lt. Woodstra, FO, and one man injured by mortar fire on OP to left flank. Two Lts. "blew tops." Had to be evacuated. Morale low. FO's and parties under tremendous strain of physical fatigue, shelling, cold and rain. Scarcity of officers makes strain all the more severe. Reliefs manned by NCO's. Btry "C" moved to alternate position across the road, after terrific shelling.

Nov. 14--Area shelled at intervals all day. No damage. Bn and reing Bns fired heavily all night when German attack reported.

Nov. 15--More rain. Btry "A" shelled again. One man killed and four wounded. Moved Btry "A" after dark across the valley to West flank. Loosing too many men.

Nov. 16--Still raining. Communication troubles. 36th Div relieving 3rd. Btry "B" shelled out again., Three more wounded. Morale low--can't move, have to sit and take it.

Nov. 17--Air raid at 0800. No damage. "C" counterbattered again at 1045. One man buried by close one, but unhurt. "C" caught it again at 1400, when 40 rounds fell between its 3d and 4th pieces. However, btry stayed put and was still in position at close of month. Morale fair to good.

Nov. 18--Few scattered rounds in area. Bn busy firing reinforcing arty.

Nov. 19--Rather quiet, similar to yesterday.

Nov. 20--Artillery shifting. Losing some Bns and others coming in to reing us. Three enlisted men selected to return to US on the $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% rotation. Capt. German P. Odom selected as the officer to go in the place of the allotted Major. Majors behind eight ball. General won't turn lose of any he has.

Nov. 21--178th FA Egt (- 1 btry) in to reinforce us. Received some shelling. One Hq Btry man wounded. Three Service Btry men wounded when truck they were in turned over at bypass when driver was blinded by shell burst.

Nov. 22--16th day in same position. Clear day and good day of shooting. Shot propaganda newspaper shells to Tedeskis. Moved FDC to building in W edge of VINAFFRO. (FDC tent later received heavy shelling, killing native girl near tent).

Nov. 23--Germans counterattacked Rangers on North flank and they were hard pressed all AM. Heavy fire from our Bn and reinforcing Bns. Lt Woodstra, Lt. Allred and Lt. Goehring all awarded Silver Stars for work on OP's. 1st Sgt. Conley got Battlefield promotion to 2d Lt. FDC got terrific shelling after dark. S/Sgt James Olivo seriously wounded and Sgt. Bennett killed when they were hit by shell on highway while going after ammunition.

Nov. 24--Heavy shelling all day. Particularly heavy around CP and FDC at 1330. Three Rangers killed by shell near our CP. Big Tedeski counterattack. "B" Co, 180th (Res) committed to help Rangers. Lts. Ansley, Brown, Proter, Woodstra, and Allred promoted to first Lt. Fired heavy interdiction and counterbattery fires all night.

Nov. 25--Bn busy with repulsing heavy Tedeski counter attack from dawn to 0930. Another unit from 180th rushed in for reserve. Patrols at night flushed a Bn on the S. PIETRO road, backed off and we and our reinforcing arty plastered the column for some time. Fired interdiction all night in that vicinity.

Nov. 26--29 men and Lt Allred off to rest camp near Naples. Rain stopped. We helped repulse 2 good sized attacks while our bombers took three shots at the Germans in the vicinity of Concacasale. Bn fired interdiction fires all night.

Nov. 27--21st day in same position. 13 killed and 43 wounded to date, in this one position. Rather heavy for Artillery casualties. Leo Wisneski, Btry "B", killed by counterbattery fire. Enemy shell fire rather spasmodic all day. Our Bn had good day of shooting. Visability good.

Nov. 28--Troops starting to punch forward in scattered areas. Limited objectives. Our fires increased considerably in support of these attacks. Engineers built bridge at CEPPAGNA while our arty gave them a screen of fire on enemy mortar and artillery positions.

Nov. 29--Very busy day of shooting. All troops on their objectives, but are having tough fight to hold them. Our firing almost constant.

Nov. 30--Pay arrived on time. Rather quiet morning, but plenty of shooting on both sides in the afternoon. Old FDC site hit by shells, native girl killed there. Lts. Ansley and Laverson selected to go to Officers Rest Hotel for 7 days starting Dec. 5.

Indications are the Bn will remain in present positions for some time to come. Total casualties to date are 13 killed, 43 wounded, since entering these positions Nov 6. Observation almost perfect on clear days, but bad weather has been definite handicap while here. Morale in Bn, generally high, as month closes.

For the Bn Commander:

Elmer L. Whitman
Major FA
Executive

HEADQUARTERS 171st F.A. Bn.
APO #45, New York, N.Y.

1 January 1944

HISTORICAL RECORD OF 171st FA BN
Dec. 1 to Dec 31, inclusive

1. The month opened with this Battalion spending it's 25th day in position at the edge of VENAFRO. A total of 13 men had been killed and 43 wounded to date in this fateful position, but the pressure had eased considerably and was affording us good shooting with very little opposition in the way of bombing, counterbattery and harassing fire. Play-by-play, day-by-day follows.

Dec. 1 Quiet day. Few Tedesci rounds hit our old FDC a block away. None here. Our bombers hit VITICUSO. Ammunition restricted to 50 RPG by Corps. Been shooting around 1000 rounds per day. Cut to 600. However we have 1000 rds at each btry position and 3000 in Bn train in case of emergency.

Dec. 2 Very quiet. No enemy fire. Our fire also hampered by ammo restriction. Our bombers very active all day. Perfect day for observation.

Dec. 3. Most inactive day in battle. Fired only about 100 rounds all day. Few enemy rounds scattered thru our area.

Dec. 4 Another quiet day. Fired only a few rounds. Rained hard all day.

Dec. 5 (Sun) Quiet AM. Rain stopped. Tedesci dropped some in close during Church services at 1300. Bridges out to rear. S/Sgt Walter R. Wood got his 2d Lt. commission, assigned Bn Survey Officer. Capt. James Crow and Lt. Henry Ansley left for rest area at SORONTO.

Dec. 6 Lt. McQuaid and 20 men off to rest area at NAPOLI. Got five new officers. John B. Wylie, Louis G. Graves, Harold B. Simmitt, Ernest R. Enirach, and Walter R. Grapszynski. Busy day of shooting for us. Few enemy rounds hit close.

Dec 7 Bn finished 6 months overseas duty on second anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Busy day making targets with various colored smoke shells for A-36 bombers. Italian Light Brig tested out on our left flank, took Mt. LUNGO. 36th Div took Hill 1205. 3d Ranger Bn Hill 950, and the 179th took their objective north and east of VITICUSO. Had German air raid today. None close here. Dope released on 4-Power conference. Morale high. French Moroccan Div relieving 34th on our right flank.

Dec. 8 Fired three "Seranades" as we took all objectives in good shape. Reinforced fires of 36th Div Arty during night. Few enemy rounds here. None close.

Dec. 9 Reinf fires of 36th Div most of day. Heavy firing. Got three new officers Phillip N. Naumburg, Donald D. Shuler, and Lt. Wear.

Dec. 10. Heavy preparation as we took objectives. Air active. 150 mm enemy shells hit close at 2000. German resistance stiffening considerably.

Dec. 11. Nice day. Good shooting. Had three air raids at 0800, 1200 and 1445. Two AA men hurt at "C" Btry on last raid. Enemy shells close. No damage. Made recon for possible move to right flank.

Dec. 12. Rather quiet day. Few enemy shells in area. 3d Bn 180th to relieve Engrs. we go to direct support of them. 1st and 2d Bns 180th to right flank to reserve behind 179th near FILIGNANO. Turned "B" and "C" Btrys around to fire North.

Dec. 13. Quiet day. Shifted officers. 3d Bn 180 defending left flank of Div.

Dec. 14. Nice day. Generals Clark, Lucas and Eagles visited. Air raid at 0945. None here, but fragments landed all over area. Two men wounded in "B" from mortar fire. 38th day in this position and batteries still in good mortar range. Close?

Dec. 15. Nice day. 3 air raids. Good day of shooting. "B" Btry received more machine gun and mortar fire in position. None hurt. 13 killed and 45 wounded this position.

Dec. 16. Capt. Turner, Lts. Ghering, and Brown and 26 EM off to Naples rest area. Fired about 500 rounds. Good targets. One raid here at 0830. A-36 just missed our

OP with mislaid bomb.

Dec. 17. Fired 500 rds again. Our tanks in S. Pietro and patrols in CONCACASALE.

Dec. 18. Quiet day. Fired only one target. No enemy rounds.

Dec. 19. Maj. Joseph G. Cathey, Bn CO, left for 7-day rest at SORONTO. Maj. Elmer L. Whitman, Bn Exec, in command. Rcn for positions in vicinity FILIGNANO in AM. Rcn for positions close to front at (018-2600) in PM. Rcn party caught in arty interdiction. Gen McLain, Bn CO and RO in middle of concentration. None hurt. May move tomorrow. Little firing today. Had two air raids.

Dec. 20. Moved two Batteries to (040-250), CP at (030-252). Occupied position at night in driving rain. CP under fire about 1830. Rounds very close. None hurt. "A" to remain in direct support 3d Bn. Required two FDC setups. "B" and "C" reinf 160th at present until 1st and 2d Bns 180th take over from 179th.

Dec. 21. Big day of fire. Rcn for place for "A" when move necessary. Got Engrs to make road into valley. (took three days) Area mined heavily. No casualties. but area strewn with civilians and Germans.

Dec. 22. We took direct support of 1st and 2d Bns as they took over from 179th Inf. 160th and 189th reinf. Requisitioned and got four mules to pack wire and provisions for FO's. Weather bad, wire and mule troubles. Got new officer. Lt. Wm J. Nowak. Got heavy and close 150 mm rds at CP at 2050.

Dec. 23. Relaid all wire lines to FO's and LO's and communication fine. Firing good. German resistance tougher than ever before. Too well fortified.

Dec. 24. Gen Clark in area. Fired three "Bingos" and lots of fire all day. Quiet Xmas Eve except for interdiction fires.

Dec. 25. Busy day of shooting. Morale high. Real Xmas spirit. Turkey for dinner. Lt. Cox and Sgt. George M. Rhodes got Capt and 2d Lt. bars, respectively, pinned on them Gen Clark. No enemy fire, but we fired lots at night.

Dec. 26. No enemy fire here, but lots on our CP's and the Inf all day and night. Germans well surveyed in defensive positions and are tough. Smoked Hill 1395 long time for French on right flank.

Dec. 27. Cold and clear. 40 degrees on ground. Cub planes icing up. Lots of Arty and mortar fire on our troops all day. We couldn't get obsn on them because Cubs downed. Fired about 350 rds, plus our support.

Dec. 28. Fired about 600 rds. Snowing on Mts. Plan for 3d Bn to go thru 2d.

Dec. 29. Our 60th day in line without relief. Plan for 3d Bn to go thru 2d. 2d Bn 178th FA moved into our CP valley instead of our "A" Btry. Reinf us. Spent most of day registering in fires for huge preparation at 0630 tomorrow when Inf atks. Objectives high ground adjacent to CASALN and AQUAFONDATA.

Dec. 30. Attack very successful, but by 0830 the heat was on and we fired more than 1200 rounds and each of our reinf Bns (160, 158, 189, 1st of 178, 2d of 178, 933) fired about the same trying to keep Inf on objective, but accurate defensive fires of Germans too tough and we lost about half of objectives again. Lt. Simnitt, "B" FO wounded and buried by 150 mm shell (evacuated). 3d Bn had 26 killed and about 68 wounded, on right flank. 1st Bn casualties about the same. Toughest resistance yet encountered.

Dec. 31. See- Sawed for Mt. MOLINO, but finally had to give it up. Inf too depleted reinf Bns fired about the same ratio. We held objectives on front of 3d Bn as year closes, but had to give ground on front of 1st Bn and organize about 800 yards short of objective. 62 days in line for a new record this war. Others on flanks being relieved after 30 to 40 days. Hard on morale of our troops, who have suffered heavy casualties from fire and extreme weather conditions. Year closed with worst blizzard in mountains yet experienced this campaign and with German Artillery firing every concentration it had at 2355 to 0005.

For the Battalion Commander

ELMER L. WHITMAN
Major FA
Executive