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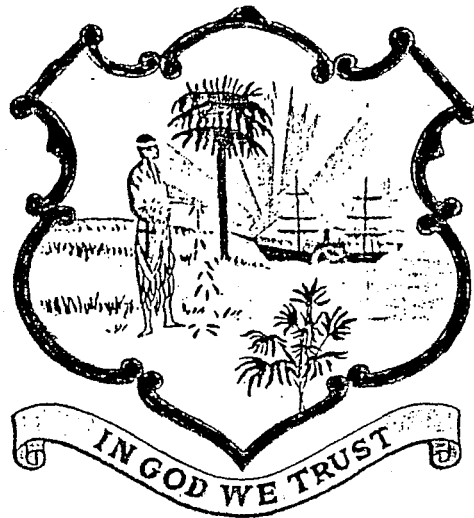
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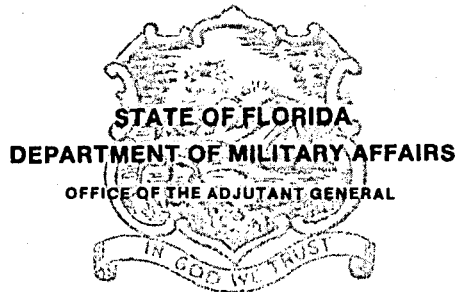


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7

UNIT WAR REPORT
149TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION
(2ND BATTALION, 116TH FIELD ARTILLERY)
1940-1944

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Robert Hawk
Director

H I S T O R Y

O F

149TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

F R O M

CAMP PICKETT, VIRGINIA

T O

MOROTAI, NEI

JULIAN P MYRICK
CAPTAIN F. A.

PROLOGUE

As an introduction to the History of the 149th Field Artillery Battalion, the following background data is furnished to make the History more complete.

The Battalion was formerly the 2nd Battalion of the 116th Field Artillery Regiment. Upon induction the Regiment was part of the Florida National Guard and one of the three regiments of the 56th Field Artillery Brigade, the other two being the 114th F. A. and the 117th F. A. The Brigade was the artillery of the 31st Infantry "Dixie Division" of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The Division was commanded by Major General John C. Persons of Birmingham, Alabama; the 56th Field Artillery Brigade by Brigadier General Sumpter L Lowry of Jacksonville; the Regiment by Colonel Homer W Hesterly of Tampa; and the 2nd Battalion by Lieutenant Colonel Emory Baya of Tampa. The Battalion was composed of Hq Battery of Bartow, "D" Battery of Lakeland; "E" Battery of Plant City; "F" Battery of Winter Haven and the Regimental Service Battery, which supplied the battalion, was from Arcadia.

In the late summer of 1940, the world situation beginning to look critical, the Congress authorized the mobilization of certain troops, among which was the 31st Division. The construction of Camp Blanding, near Starke, Florida, and only a short distance from Jacksonville was begun, and the Division

was mobilized at home stations on November 25, 1940, and sworn into Federal status. Of course much ground work and recruiting was done prior to the actual date of induction.

The time between induction and the movement to unfinished Camp Blanding, about the 20th of December, will long be remembered by one and all. In those days, food prices were low and the extremely liberal allowance of \$1.25 per man per day for food alone was enough to feed the troops like kings, three meals a day and still find it impossible to spend the money allowed.

The arrival at rainy, damp Camp Blanding just a few days before Christmas, was rather a rude jolt for it opened a period of seven days a week hard work of leveling, draining, filling, and generally making of a camp from a morass. A large percentage of the men were allowed to return home for Christmas, and another large group for New Year's Day.

Basic training was soon begun but equipment was painfully lacking, especially in view of the abundance of today. Work was not too hard as the novelty was still there, and Wednesday and Saturday afternoons were free, and home not too far away for more than just a few.

The first week in March, the first inductees reached the Battalion to bring it up to strength and immediate steps were taken to whip the Battalion into shape for the Louisiana maneuvers of twelve weeks duration. Maneuvers came and passed but were closely followed by others in the Carolinas for four weeks

duration. These of course were followed by the Jap sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, after only a few days from the date of return from Carolina. A rather dramatic sequence took place at this time. On Monday morning, December 8, the 53th F. A. Brigade left for Tampa, Florida, in accordance with prior plans for a ceremony to dedicate the Tampa Armory, which was to be named Fort Homer Hesterly. The Jap attack of the day before, alerted one and all to the fact that we knew not what the next few days would hold for the Division, which was a well trained outfit. The Brigade arrived in Tampa, in the morning and the scheduled parade was held early in the afternoon. It was quite a somber crowd that watched the long column wind its way through the Tampa streets, in a misting rain just as the EXTRA papers hit the streets telling of the U.S. Declaration of War on Japan. It is believed that this was the first War Time parade of World War II, to be held in the United States. That night, four Batteries of the Regiment were alerted as parts of Battalion Combat Teams for costal defense. "D" Battery went to Wilmington, N. C., and "E" Battery to Charleston, S. C. Little happened of consequence until the Division was moved to Camp Bowie, Texas, in early February 1942. Upon arrival there, orders were received to Trianglize the Division. Accordingly, the 2nd Battalion, 116th F.A. was redesignated 149th Field Artillery Battalion, under command of Lieutenant Colonel W EUGENE JONES. The complement of officers was very small at this time, getting as low as eight at one period. Most of these eight were destined to remain with the battalion for several years to come.

In the second week of March 1942, the battalion left for one month at Fort Sill, to act as school troops. This one month proved to be one of the best periods of Artillery training the battalion ever received. Annual AGF Test were held during the last week before return to Bowie. From Bowie it was Louisiana Maneuvers again that summer and thence to Camp Shelby, Mississippi. From Camp Shelby, six of the Captains left for BOC at Fort Sill, which they had been unable to attend prior to this time. The battalion was left with the three field officers and a large group of brand new Lieutenants. The regular battery commanders returned to take over their batteries in March, and AGF Test were shortly participated in again. The regular Louisiana maneuvers rolled around again, this time following the "D" Series in Mississippi. At this time Lt.Col. Jones, and Major Hill were alerted for oversea transfer but it proved that they were not to go, and they returned to the Battalion after a leave at home. From Louisiana the Division went to Camp Pickett for final preparation for overseas movement. From Camp Pickett, trips were made to very enjoyable and very cold maneuvers in West Virginia, as well as to Camp Bradford for Amphibious Training which included a landing in the Solomon Islands, in Maryland. Thanksgiving week was spent at Camp AP Hill, Va, training for AGF Test for which the battalion moved to Camp Butner, the first week of December. On 29 January 1944 the battalion left Camp Pickett for overseas. This story will follow in the next pages ,

HISTORICAL RECORD

149TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

The 149th Field Artillery Battalion departed Camp Pickett, Virginia by train 0630, 29 January 1944, for Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia for staging for overseas movement. The 114th Field Artillery Battalion was also aboard this train. The train arrived in Camp Patrick Henry, at 1335, where it was met by various officials of the camp, as well as the camp band. The battalion was marched to its assigned area and given preliminary instructions for its stay. Beginning 30 January and continuing through 8 February 1944, a schedule of athletics, hikes, instructions in censorship, and amphibious training was carried out, while final inoculations, inspections of equipment, and checking of administrative records was completed. Physically unfit men were transferred and replacements received to bring the battalion up to full strength.

On 9 February the 149th Field Artillery commanded by Lt. Col. W EUGENE JONES, the 114th Field Artillery commanded by Lt. Col. ALBERT LAKE, and Companies "B" and "C" of the 106th Engineers, commanded by Capt. KILLEEN, departed by train for Hampton Roads Port of Embarkation. The morning of departure was a very fitting send-off for the Southwest Pacific as the ground was heavily covered with snow, slush and mud and a cold rain was intermittently falling. At Norfolk, the troops debarked from the train and transferred to the Mohawk Ferry for the crossing of Norfolk

Bay. As each man boarded the SS Cape Henlopen, he removed and turned in his overcoat.

The Henlopen sailed the morning of 10 February at 0900, with Lt.Col. ALBERT LAKE as Commander of Troops, Lt. Col. W EUGENE JONES, as Executive Officer, Major JOSEPH J HILL, as Provost Marshal, and Capts. JOHN W BASKIN and JULIAN P MYRICK, as joint S-3's. The 149th had its complete complement of officers with the exception of the S-3, Major MILTON E HULL, who sailed with an advance group of S-3's, Capt WILLIAM H FREELAND, who sailed in January as advance representative of the battalion, Capt.GEORGE H CRILL, and Lts. JOHN H KEMP and FRANK N ZIRBLIS, who sailed on another ship due to shortage of necessary number of officers to fill that ships accommodations, and Lt. HARMAN A ALLEN, who sailed from San Francisco, as Division Ammunition Representative.

The trip was without event for the first week. Organization of ship duties, mess, police and sanitation was established, and a training program was put into operation.

The Henlopen arrived at Panama, Canal Zone, on 16 February and tied up to the docks for flushing of water tanks and repair of ventilation fan motors. The troops were debarked upon the pier for exercise and the two Colonels made arrangements for ice cream to be delivered to the pier. This was to prove to be the the last ice cream for many, many months.

The passage through the Canal was begun early on the morning

of 17 February and was naturally enjoyed very much by all aboard. The Henlopen anchored on the south end of the canal where it remained until 1600 of 18 February, at which time we sailed for the Pacific part of the voyage. During the entire voyage, until Milne Bay, New Guinea, was reached no land was sighted at any time. The trip was almost without event though there was a possibility of a definite submarine contact one night. Torpedo alarm sounded but no torpedo was actually seen. During the voyage one case of acute appendicitis occurred, which necessitated an emergency operation at sea. Capt. JOHN L WHITAKER, Battalion Surgeon, performed the operation while the ship was under way, and the patient was well nigh completely recovered when New Guinea was reached.

During the voyage a continuous training schedule of athletics, Pidgin English, visual signaling, current events and specialized section training was engaged in by all concerned. One of the features of the voyage was the evening entertainment program. A very diversified program was arranged with competition for attendance between the Colonels' who held a Bingo game on the forward part of the ship, and the S-3 Section's Boxing matches on the aft hatch. Frozen Coco-colas were among the prizes and were the most valued of all.

The Henlopen reached Milne Bay, at 1745, 15 March 1944 where she anchored awaiting orders. Anchor was weighed at 1400 on 16 March and was next dropped in Oro Bay at 0740 of 17 March. The unloading of troops and cargo was begun immediately. The 149th F. A. Battalion was the first battalion of the 31st Division to

land on New Guinea. Camp was established at Dobodura, and an extensive and intensive program of construction and camp improvement begun at once. Acclimation to the tropics was begun and many hours of instruction given in living in the jungle, malaria control, jungle diseases, and relations with the natives. Trips were made to the Battlefield and Cemetery at Buna, and at Gona. Upon completion of the construction of the battalion area it then became necessary to construct the area of the 116th Field Artillery prior to their arrival.

During the first week of May, intensive training was begun in preparation for future combat missions. Principal emphasis was placed on Operation of the Artillery in Jungle Warfare, with intensive study and construction of defense perimeters, followed by night attack and defense problems. Demolition schools were held.

During the week of May 15-22, the firing batteries engaged in BCT Problems with the appropriate Infantry Battalions. Critiques were held and special emphasis placed on the correction of deficiencies. Firing of all small arms for all members of the battalion was held during the month of May. Forward Observation schools were scheduled for both the officers of the Battalion and designated forward observers of the supported infantry. From 22 May until 5 June, intensive practice of Battery Proficiency Tests was carried out along with continuous preparation for the Annual Inspector General's Inspection. These inspections were given the battalion during the week of June 5 to 10. Preparation was continued for Battery and Battalion Tests.

A feature of the training of the battalion at Dobodura, was the construction and operation of a Minature Artillery Range. A tower was erected for the installation of a 50 Caliber M. G. which was to fire incendiary ammunition on a minature Forward Observation Range. Various forward observation posts were dug to give varied OT Ranges and variation in Angle T. Impact area was carefully constructed to include gas tanks filled with gasolineto burn, power plants, observation post, fields, mountains, water tanks and various other terrain objects. Continuous improvement of the range and practice of new ideas was carried out until it was possible to operate the entire battalion in every phase of occupation and firing except actual expenditure of Artillery ammunition. The Battalion Fire Direction Center was in operation and Battery Executives were used to give commands to the guns. In addition to the excellent training given officers firing, all other sections received training of a highly interesting and instructive nature. Untold benefit was derived by communication personnel. All procedures were normal and it was only at the machine gun that conversion of 105 Howitzer data was made to accommodate the M. G. The range was conceived by Lt. Col. Jones, and built under his personal supervision.

During the period of training and equipping in Oro Bay a large portion of the battalion was engaged in truck construction during parts of May and June. A Provisional Truck Assembly Battalion was formed composed of two batteries from 114th F. A. and two batteries from the 149th F. A. Bn, with attached mechanics from the Reconnaissance Troop and Ordnance Company, and the 124th Infantry Regiment. This group and the assembly line was

under command of Major MILTON E HULL, S-3 of the 149th F. A. This personnel was quartered at the old SOUPAC HOTEL with the assigned duties of assembling 500 trucks. Three shifts were established as follows: 0700-1600; 1700-2400; 0001-0600. A day and night mess were set up. The night shift having to feed five meals in 12 hours.

Base Ordnance was operating the assembly line at the time it was taken over by this Provisional Outfit, which we called the 1149th Prov. Truck Assembly Battalion. After about two weeks, the 114th F. A. personnel were relieved by additional men from the 149th F.A. Bn, in order that the training program of both Battalions would not be disrupted. During the four weeks period, a total of 506 trucks were assembled, consisting of Dump, $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ton; $3/4$ ton; Weapon Carriers and $1/4$ ton Command and Reconnaissance cars. This total would have been greater, but the assembly line was rearranged three times, and production could not go on while the rearrangement was being done. The battalion was commended for its outstanding record.

During the period 18 June to 24 June the firing batteries engaged individually in Battalion Landing Team exercises with the 124th Infantry. Actual full-scale loading and landing operations were made and much training was derived.

On Thursday, 22 June, the Artillery Army Ground Force Testing Team of the XI Corps gave the battalion the Battalion AGF Tests #1 & #2. The battalion was unable to participate in the Test #3, due to Alert for Combat movement.

From 25 June to 28 June preparations were made for embarkation for move to Aitape Combat Area. Major JOSEPH J HILL, Battalion Executive acted as TQM and did an outstanding job. Approximately 50% of the battalion personnel and all combat cargo sailed from Cro Bay on 29 June, aboard the SS Goodhue, and SS Barnes. These were Liberty ships and were greatly overcrowded due to the belated arrival of scheduled LCIs. Approximately 1200 men were aboard each ship and sleeping, feeding, and sanitary facilities were a ~~great~~ problem.

On the night of 4 July, the Libertys anchored at Aitape and Task Force Headquarters representatives came aboard for General HUTCHINSON, Task Force Commander, and Colonel STARR, Commander of the 124th Regimental Combat Team. On the morning of 5 July, commanders of all units and organizations, and their staff representatives went ashore for a conference and orientation at XI Corps Headquarters. Orders were issued for the unloading of Infantry troops with individual equipment to reinforce and improve the perimeter, but the artillery troops and all cargo was left aboard the ships. Other than the construction work to be performed by the infantry and scheduled preparation of positions by the artillery, the Combat Team was in the nature of a "Floating Reserve."

The remainder of the battalion, under Major MILTON E HULL, Battalion S-3, boarded LCIs at Cape Sudest on 3 July and sailed that night to join the battalion. The LCIs arrived at Finschhafen on the morning of 4 July and were beached for the troops to debark for exercise and swimming. Troops were reembarked in the afternoon and sailed for Aitape to arrive at 1630 on 6 July.

The 149th Field Artillery Battalion was under Corp Control and Liaison was established with XI Corp Artillery. At this time the Infantry went under the control of the 32nd Division. Prior to the arrival of the LCIs, arrangements were made for bivouacing the battalion in the rear positions of the 120th F.A., and reconnaissance for positions areas and perimeter of defense made by Bn CO and Asst S-3.

Troops debarking from LCIs were marched along the beach to the 120th positions where kitchens were set up and B rations fed. Minimum essential equipment was unloaded from the ships and survey begun immediately. On 9 July the remainder of the troops were debarked from the Liberty ships and unloading of equipment and cargo begun.

From captured documents and statements of prisoners, it was anticipated that the Japs would attack the defense perimeter between 1 July and 10 July, probably at the Covering Force line on the Driniumor River. A plan was put into effect on 8 July that sent two Battalions East across the Driniumor. One Battalion was to proceed along the coast and the other inland. Each of these battalions was supported by a battalion of Field Artillery. The 124th Regimental Combat Team with naval and air support was to embark on 12 July, and make an amphibious attack on the morning 13 July at Nyaparake, New Guinea, to seize a beachhead and expand it, South and West to make contact with the Reconnaissance in Force. All equipment and supplies along with the troops were assembled in the Tadji Plantation area and final

preparations made to begin loading the LCTs and LCMs at noon 12 July. On the night of 10 July, the Japs attacked the center of the Driniumor line which was held by the 126th Infantry of the 32nd Division. The attack was made in considerable force between the two Battalions who had crossed the Driniumor on the Reconnaissance in Force mission. Tremendous artillery support was given the river defense line, but the Japs succeeded in penetrating the center of the line, causing the Battalion in the center of the line to withdraw. The two battalions on the left and right of this battalion had crossed the river on the Reconnaissance in Force mission. The two battalions which had crossed the river were in a very precarious situation as were the troops holding the Driniumor line on the inland flank. This inland flank was called the BALDY FORCE and consisted of the 112th Cavalry and certain battalions of the 127th Infantry of the 32nd Division. The force from the beach inland to the Baldy Force was called the ALEX FORCE. The boundary between these forces as the AFUA-ANAMO TRACK. The break-through by the Japs and the withdrawal of the center Battalion, necessitated a hasty withdrawal by the BALDY FORCE, to prevent being cut off. The situation was rather obscure on July 11-12 but it was known that large numbers of Japs were on the West of the Driniumor.

In view of the situation, on the night of 11 July, the plan for the amphibious landing by the 124th Combat Team was temporarily suspended with the CT remaining on the alert for any assigned mission. It shortly became obvious that the Driniumor Covering Force line must be reestablished and accordingly the 124th Combat

Team, less 2nd Bn. 124th Infantry (in Corp Reserve) and Co "A" of the 106th Engineers, was ordered forward to assembly areas just short of Anamo, to attack the morning of 13 July. Upon receipt of the order to occupy positions to support the attack, the Battalion was loaded and movement forward begun under the Bn. Executive, Major JOSEPH J HILL, leaving Tadji Plantation at 1255. The NIGIA RIVER was not fordable and the light pontoon bridge would not accomodate more than a 3/4 ton vehicle. Col. Jones, after conference with General KAISER, the Task Force Artillery Officer, joined the advance parties who had preceded by light vehicles to the forward area. Necessary orders were issued and parties returned to the column. Prior and during this time, Liaison and Forward Observation parties rejoined their respective Infantry battalions. The advance parties rejoined the battalion just as it reached the Beachmaster, where it became necessary to shuttle the firing battery prime movers, guns, and all heavy vehicles forward across the NIGIA by LCTs. The remainder of the battalion, in light vehicles proceeded forward to the position area. The battalion began to arrive in the position area on a narrow sand spit, just West of the mouth of AKANAI CREEK at 1645. This was a very narrow spit with the ocean on the North and AKANAI CREEK curving back from its mouth just in front of "C" Battery to form the south side of the battalion. The spit was about 100 yards wide at the widest point and the battalion area from front to rear was less than 400 yards. Large bodies of Japs were known to be just south of our position with no infantry in between. With only about three hours remaining to fully prepare, occupy, and fortify before dark, feverish haste was made.

It was well after dark before the last battery, "A" Battery arrived in the position area. A perimeter was organized under the direction of Major Hill, using the water on three sides for fields of fire.

During the afternoon, the Asst S-3 and the Horizontal Control Operator had made an exact copy of the Metro Stripped Firing Chart of the 129th Field Artillery, which would have to be used through necessity, with only an early morning registration to correct it for our guns.

By 2000 overlays were completed for the forward observation and liaison parties for the attack the next morning.

At 0155 on the morning of 13 July the Field Order No. 1 of the Persecution Covering Force was received. It stated, in part, that Jap forces have broken through our lines along the Driniumor River south of ANAMO and in the vicinity of AFUA. His patrols had penetrated west for 2000-3000 yards. The Persecution Covering Force was ordered to attack early 13 July with the ALEX FORCE making its main effort in a southeasterly direction from Anamo, to restore original line along the DRINIUMOR RIVER. The BALDY FORCE was ordered to attack Jap forces on the right (south) flank drive west, and reestablish line along DRINIUMOR RIVER. PERSECUTION ARTILLERY was ordered to support the attack by a twenty minute preparation just preceding H Hour. Harrassing fires were fired during the night by other battalions.

At 0500 a barge load of 800 rounds of ammunition arrived at the battalion. All ammunition was delivered direct to the

battalions by barges and unloaded by both "human chains" and by tractors. At 0807 the Battalion had registered and preceded to fire preparation in front of the attacking troops.

At 0850, Capt. MCCAIN, Ln with Regt., reported capture of Jap plan of attack issued at 1630 on 12 July. One Jap battalion was to proceed down ANANAI CREEK towards the ocean. At about this same time an unconfirmed report from another Field Artillery Battalion stated that two Japs Battalions were moving from the south towards our area. The perimeter was notified of the possible attack, while support of infantry advance was continued. Our Infantry attack continued according to plan with intermittent calls for artillery support. During the early part of the campaign, great difficulty was experienced with Jap patrol and raiding parties, cutting wire lines. At 1630 on 13 July a wire party of the battalion was fired on by mortars, between the front lines and the battalion position. Pvt JAMES F LISA, 32500995, Hq. Btry was lightly wounded by shrapnel, in lower back region, becoming the first recipient of the Purple Heart, of which there were to be a considerable number. Buffalos were used to lay underwater lines weighted with sandbags, and effective communication was maintained in this manner for about a week. The work of Captain FLOYD E COLEY, Battalion Como and the communication men of the battalion was outstanding throughout the campaign.

The first round of Artillery fired in actual combat by any unit of the 31st Division, was fired by this battalion at 0752 on 13 July, by 2nd Section of "B" Battery. The lanyard was pulled by Sgt DAVID BALLARD, 20423101, the oldest enlisted man,

from point of service, within "B" Battery. The mission was an Air Registration on Base Point.

Prior to the jump-off, of the infantry in the attack, the battalion fired a preparation of approximately 500 rounds and continuous support was furnished throughout the remainder of the day. Approximately 1300 rounds of artillery ammunition was expended on that day, which is undoubtedly the heaviest day of fire that has yet been delivered by any battalion of the 31st Division. The continuous support in front of the advancing infantry was highly instrumental in their rapid and almost uninterrupted advance.

The attacking infantry of ALEX FORCE reached the initial objective in late afternoon of 13 July and preparations were made for night defense, which included the firing in of protective barrages which was to become a standard nightly procedure for the next four weeks. Throughout the night the battalion fired harassing and interdictory fires East along the coast beyond the DRINIUMOR RIVER.

About noon of 14 July the DRINIUMOR RIVER line was reestablished and by night our supported battalions had made contact with units on their flanks and preparations were made for the night and protective barrages shot in by the battalion.

The attack to reestablish the DRINIUMOR line was highly successful despite enemy opposition. Most resistance was in the nature of sniper fire, but one road block was encountered on 13 July. The Japs launched one counter-attack which was broken

up by intense artillery concentrations and the attack preceded. The Japs used automatic weapons, mortars and 75mm guns. A document that was taken from a dead Jap, who was apparently the CO of the 237th Infantry, gave the complete plan of Jap attack.

On Friday, 14 July, the battalion received a "Citation for the Operation of the 13th July 1944." It was from the Commanding General of the PERSECUTION COVERING FORCE, and is quoted here: "Congratulate your entire force upon their success of 13 July. The enemy still requires complete liquidation. Your demonstrated resolute spirit and determination give me greatest confidence in your ability." The Commanding General of the Force Artillery also added the following: "By your accuracy, skill, and courage you have proved your metal, and I am proud to have the privilege of conveying to your officers and men the Force Commander's message."

Fire of the 149th F. A. killed a counted total of 25 Japs in one concentration in front of BELL's (1st Bn, 124th Inf) position during the afternoon. The battalion sent out patrols to the south of its position. The front was rather quiet with continued organization in progress by all units.

For the next period extending from 15 July to 30 July days were very similiar. Many moments of excitement were experienced and many hundreds of Japs killed. Continuous improvement was made in lines along the DRINIUMOR, until large bunkers were finally constructed. The battalion displaced about 500 yards to the rear when high tides threatened to wash the sandSpit away.

The displacement was made possible by the area to our immediate rear being cleared by movement of the 129th Field Artillery. Our initial area had been improved but this displacement allowed the construction of an excellent position. Careful layout of the battalion defense, under the supervision of the Bn Exec., Major Hill, based on lessons learned in the first position provided for the best defensive perimeter. This period was characterized by continuous and aggressive patrolling by all elements. Frequent calls came in for artillery support both day and night. Infiltration into the infantry positions was the rule rather than the exception. On one occasion the Japs attacked the Driniumor River line in a column of fours, but were halted with considerable loss by timely fire from this battalion. Many remunerative targets were fired on by all forward observers and liaison officers. Lt. Michelson, "C" Forward Observer, on one occasion located a group of dug-in Japs to his rear and adjusted and fired a heavy concentration on them which resulted in the neutralization and subsequent capture of a Jap 70mm gun. Artillery Observers of this battalion were particularly active in patrolling with the Infantry. At the entrance of the Battalion into combat the total Jap casualties to date were 1366 Killed in Action and 41 Prisoners of War. Colonel EDWARD STARR, CO of 124th Infantry took command on 14 July of the forces formerly known as the ALEX FORCE. This Force now came to be known as the TED FORCE. Both the TED FORCE and the BALDY FORCE were the recipients of frequent attacks by the Japs both in the nature of harassment and full scale attack. The South flank (BALDY) was particularly exposed and subject to constant and heavy attacks. Artillery

positions were constantly in danger of infiltration and several Japs were killed in the vicinity of the artillery positions, bearing demolition charges. At the end of this period, 31 July Jap Casualties including prisoners, totaled 4756 of which a large percentage fell to the TED FORCES supported by this battalion.

Following the first day of the attack, when approximately 1300 rounds were fired, intermittent firing was the rule of the day for this period from 14 July to 30 July. A great number of night missions were fired both as harrassment and on targets of opportunity. A brief summary of the fire during this period follows:

From 1600 of one day to 1600 the following day was considered the day of fire for record purposes. For the period ending 15 July, the battalion fired twelve missions on enemy infantry, with telling effect to a total of approximately 600 rounds. During the next period only light fire on enemy troops was delivered, but many orientation rounds for the infantry were fired and protective barrages shot in along the DRINIUMOR RIVER. For the period ending 17 July, targets were not numerous but heavy fire for effect was used for a total of about 300 rounds, which included complete neutralization of machine gun fire, a body of enemy troops and enemy mortar fire. Firing continued rather light for the next several days which was a period of intensive and extensive infantry patrolling. The period ending 20 July was one of great firing activity. Heavy harrassing and interdictionary fires were laid down on areas in which enemy troops were known

to be assembling. On 22 July Lt. Michelson, located the dug-in Jap infantry to his rear. This group had a Jap Mountain gun which they used to drop short rounds behind our lines, when friendly artillery was firing, on several occasions. His successful adjustment resulted in the killing of a number of Japs and the subsequent capture of this gun. Enemy mortars were fired on three times, machine guns once, snipers on three occasions, enemy troops across the river on three more occasions during this same day of intensified Jap activity. Heavy harrassing fires were continued each night in an effort to destroy the combat efficiency of a suspected impending attack. Early on the morning of 27 July, Japs attempting to cross the river were on the receiving end of heavy artillery fire from this battalion and the attack was successfully repulsed. 450 rounds total was also expended in heavy harrassing missions on this same night. The following day and nights through the night of 30 July were characterized by intensive patrol and very little Jap activity in our sector. Principal fires were those of harrassment.

On 30 July the battalion received an Oral Field Order from the Commanding General Persecution Covering Force Artillery, to the effect that elements of Jap 237th and 239th Infantry Regiments were belived to be in the area east of the DRINIUMOR RIVER in the vicinity of NIUMEN CREEK. The TED FORCE, less 1st Bn 128th Infantry (which had been a part of the TED FORCE up to this time), reinforced by 2nd Battalion 124th Infantry, was ordered to attack at 0800 31 July and push forward to the east; three battalions in line, one in reserve, initial objective: NIUMEN CREEK. The

Driniumor line was to be immediately occupied by other troops upon the jump-off of the TED FORCE. For the attack the TED FORCE was composed of all three battalions of the 124th Infantry plus 2nd battalion of the 169th Infantry of the 43rd Division. This battalion was commanded by Major Lewis and was hereafter to be known as the LEWIS FORCE. 1st Battalion 124th Infantry was called the BUTCH FORCE, 2nd Battalion the FOWLER FORCE, and the 3rd battalion the PAPPY FORCE, after their commander who was known as "POOP-DECK PAPPY". This was Lt. Col. Williams, who will long be remembered as one of the most colorful figures of the Atape campaign. His battalion was featured in the YANK magazine with the story "PAPPY'S BOYS AT TADJI." The 149th Field Artillery Battalion, reinforced by one Liaison Section from the 129th Field Artillery, was placed in direct support of the TED FORCES from its position at AKANAI CREEK and ordered to prepare to displace forward east of CHAKILA when directed.

Capt. WILLIAM B SWEARINGEN and party were to accompany the TED FORCE headquarters as liaison; Capt WILLIAM H FREELAND with BUTCH; Capt GEORGE H CRILL with PAPPY; Capt FRANCIS S McCAIN with LEWIS. The FOWLER liaison was furnished by the attached section. Each of these liaison officers and sections did an outstandingly fine job and contributed in a large measure to the ultimate success of the attack. Each liaison officer was ably assisted by a forward observer party. With BUTCH was Lt. RICHARD L WAGNER; with PAPPY was Lt. WILLIAM H MICHELSON; with LEWIS initially was LT SAMUEL J NIELD. Lt Nield was relieved about the middle of the attack to report immediately for Shore Fire Control, and was replaced by Lt. RAYMOND J MARLOWE, the Asst. ComO who was forward

on a communication mission, and immediately stepped in to fill this vacancy. Before the end of the attack these liaison officers and forward observer parties had become intergrated into closely knit teams in every respect. Two other liaison officers who performed their missions in exceptionally meritorious manner, were Lt. FRANK J ZIRBLIS and Lt. JOHN J KEMP. These two officers as liaison pilots, flew many hours daily from dawn to after dusk and performed innumerable missions; among them which were constant fire missions, dropping of urgently needed small items such as radio batteries, location of units and cooperation in preparations for dropping supplies and food by C-47 Transports, and the dropping on two occasions of critically needed blood plasma in less than thirty minutes after the request was received. On one day one pilot flew over ten hours. Landings were made after dark and flights were constantly over the enemy lines--on one occasion one of the planes received machine gun hits in both wing and fuselage. To sum it up in brief: It is safe to say that without the support of these planes the infantry would have been without food for better than 75% of the time, completely without communications except a scheduled flight of the division courier, without artillery fire support and without the ability of locating itself in the dense jungle. In the words of hundreds of the doughboys: "The Cub plane and the C-47 are the best damn planes in the United States Army". Lts Kemp and Zirblis were both recommended for the Air Medal. It would be very hard to single out any individual for special mention from those that accompanied the infantry in this attack. The performance of every man was above reproach and the infantry had only the highest praise for

these men. Lt. RICHARD L WAGNER, due to his location with the leading battalion, probably had more opportunity to fire missions, and his work was the object of the highest praise of his Infantry battalion commander. He almost constantly placed himself with the point of the leading elements even though these elements were rotated. The team work in artillery support between Lt Wagner, with the point and Capt. Freeland with the Bn. CO, was very instrumental in the advance of this battalion without casualty from enemy action after the first day of the attack.

Later in the day by day description of this attack, which was described by General MacARTHUR as "a feat unparalleled in the history of jungle warfare", more will be said of the work of these various sections and officers, and especially that of Capt. Freeland and his section.

31 July 1944

TED FORCES crossed the DRINIUMOR RIVER at 0800, and proceeded towards NIUMEN CREEK. The advance was made with three battalions abreast, with the 2nd battalion on the beach (left), 1st battalion in the center and 3rd battalion on the inland (right) side. 2nd battalion of 169th, (LEWIS) crossed the river at 0945, and followed the right flank of PAPPY as a reserve battalion and to refuse the right flank of TED FORCE. Liaison and forward observation parties were with all battalions as set out in detail in preceding paragraphs. The advance continued with practically nil resistance. The one exception to this was an ambush hit by BUTCH. "A" Company was advancing on the right of the battalion. The jungle was very dense and intermittent rain was falling.

Three shots were heard from the point and the column halted, but shortly resumed its advance, passing three dead Japs, who were the results of the three shots. Shortly thereafter firing again was heard from the point--this time both BAR and rifle fire. As the march was resumed, twelve more Japs (thoroughly dead) were passed in their former bivouac area. The rain became heavy at this time. A short while later the battalion hit a Jap defense position, to which the jungle hidden Japs allowed the point to advance, within five yards. Jap snipers had allowed our advance elements to pass by them. At this time the Japs opened fire with machine guns. An effort was made to flank the Japs right, but it also met machine gun and sniper fire. First Aid men did an outstanding effort to evacuate these point casualties but every first aid man was either killed or wounded. At this time Lt Wagner, the forward observer, began his adjustment which was made under very precarious circumstances due to the remainder of the battalion advancing on the left and the PAPPY FORCE on the right. With the expenditure of only 36 rounds the Jap position was neutralized completely, which allowed the BUTCH FORCE to withdraw and establish a perimeter in the short time that remained before dark, and it was found the next day that the Jap position had been completely neutralized by the fire of the previous day. Other than the BUTCH FORCE, all battalions reached the objective that day with only a few Japs encountered and killed.

The 149th F. A. Bn. was directed to remain in position at AKANAI CREEK for the day, but to begin preparations for displacement forward to the vicinity of CHAKILA on 1 August. One battery of the 181st F.A. (155mm How) was to be attached and would se-

lect a position to the direct rear of our battalion. This would be a displacement of about three miles, putting the battalion within about 1000 yards of the mouth of the DRINIUMOR. Full reconnaissance was made and preparations begun for the displacement by the Bn CO and Battery Commanders and parties. The battalion was also ordered to carry survey forward with LEWIS. This survey was jungle survey of the worst sort, but nevertheless reported by Lt. Nield to be within 600 yards of being complete, when the section had to stop to dig in for the night. This survey was performed by Lt. Nield and his forward observation party as it advanced.

1 August 1944

Early in the morning, orders were received to displace forward by battery, furnishing continuous fire support to the infantry, during displacement. "B" Battery displaced first, and was in position ready to fire at 0930; "A" Battery at 1300; and "C" Battery at 1400. "CP" opened at 1330 at new position. This new position was in the vicinity of the village of CHAKILA, and was much larger in size than the former positions. A creek flowed on the south flank of the forward battery which was "C" Battery, turning south and then west again, and then north and then west again just at the junction of Hq and "A" Battery. A sketch of the area is attached as an annex but the position may best be described here by saying that the batteries in order from front to rear were "C", "B", "A", Hq, and Med Det, with elements of Service battery. The north was bounded by the sea and the south by a stream forming a large horseshoe with the flatten tips at "C" and Hq Batteries. The distance from the center of the

battalion to the stream at the deepest point of the horseshoe was a little over 100 yards and the ground was very rough, gullied and rolling. The far side of the creek was dense jungle. The interior of the horseshoe was cleared for artillery fields of fire by dark of this date.

Infantry activity during the day was minor and no calls were received for fire support. "B" Battery of 181st field Artillery Bn. was attached to us and occupied position to our direct rear. Night protective concentrations were shot in, and the above attached battery checked in on our selected Base Point, and Check Points. No other activity this date.

2 AUGUST 1944

All quiet during the night from the infantry standpoint. The 149th F.A., fired heavy counter battery fire beginning shortly after midnight on a Division Artillery located target. At about 1100 the battalion fired heavy concentrations on enemy positions for one hour and a half. This fire also was in the nature of a "softening-up" for the attack south and southeast the next day. A total of 651 rounds were fired with air observation with excellent coverage of the target area. The survey section under Lt. HOWARD N MOSELEY, continued survey to tie our positions into Corp Survey. At this time it would be well to mention the outstanding work done by Lt. Moseley and his section. All survey in this operation was of necessity under most difficult conditions. The Task Force Artillery called upon this section for much extra survey, all of which was carried out with dispatch and accuracy.

At 1110, Lt. Col Jones returned from TED FORCE with plans for the infantry to attack south and then southwest to envelop the enemy, cutting off his supply lines and to close him in a pincer move between the BALDY FORCE and the TED FORCE, with the apex of the forces being approximately at AFUA. This was to prove in the week that follows to be one of the most difficult attacks in the history of jungle warfare. Such an attack meant cutting off from all supplies other than by air, no communication other than by relay through artillery radio nets, no evacuation for days, plus the usual hardships of sleepless nights, cold wet clothing and resistance of the jungle; all of this not to mention the constant resistance of the Jap, who apparently is in his natural habitat in the jungle.

The attached battery of 155mm How, was registered on a long range check point in the afternoon, by the liaison plane of this battalion. Work was continued throughout the day by every available man, to clear fields of fire and lower the mask range to the south. This was a very difficult task due to the previously mentioned thickness of the jungle on our immediate south flank.

3 AUGUST 1944

This day proved to be one of the most eventful in the history of the battalion's mission at AITAPE. At 0100 a small force of Japs, approximately 6 or 8, penetrated our perimeter. They managed to cross the stream in the deepest point of the horseshoe under cover of intermittent rain and the noise of firing by the battalion. As before mentioned, the rising slope from the stream to the batteries was very gullied and ridged. The Japs apparently

divided into about four groups of two or three each headed towards one of the four batteries. The group that went for "A" Battery, managed to get into the battery perimeter and set off two demolition charges in between the rows of ammunition in the battery dump. A number of men were sleeping in the ammunition dump vicinity and within it. Two of our men; pfc ALBERT FERRERA, 16148691 and Pvt GEORGE J RUOTOLO, 31333193 were killed instantly. Several men were injured and their names are listed with the Purple Heart awards in the annex.

After placing the demolitions, which were large blocks of explosives approximately ten inches square and 6 to 8 inches thick, detonated by both a fuze and a grenade in the center, the Japs ran back towards the south flank, tossing a grenade under the cot of 2nd Lt. ROBERT H POWERS, O-1182684, wounded him with multiple shrapnel wounds in three places; Lungs, kidney and liver.

Very fortunately, the demolitions did not detonate the ammunition although some of it was blown many yards. The fuze of one smoke shell was blown off, but the shell did not rupture.

Considerable confusion existed in the dark night, but Lt. CLINTON V MESEROLE, Asst. Exec. of "A" Battery immediately left for the Battalion Aid Station to summon aid. Lt. Meserole made this trip even though Japs were known to be in the area and also in face of the greater danger of being shot by his own men. At the aid station, Capt. JOHN L WHITAKER, Battalion Surgeon, and two volunteers: Tec 3 RALPH E BAKERINK and Tec 5 STEWART McWILLIAMS, left immediately to give aid to Lt Powers and unknown others that might be injured. After treating Lt. Powers and other injured,

thesemen of the Medical Detachment searched the area for others that might be hurt; during this entire time Japs were known to be in the area and the order had been given to take cover. For their meritorious service, without regard to personal safety, Capt WHITAKER, Tec BAKERINK, and Tec 5 McWILLIAMS, were awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

This group of Japs apparently escaped from the area, but several were thought to be wounded. At about 0300 another attempt was made to enter the area and one Jap was killed within just a few yards of a howitzer of "B" Battery, which he was endeavoring to reach to set-off another demolition charge. Another Jap was thought to be wounded as blood and several demolition charges were found nearby the next morning. At about 0500 another Jap was seen escaping from the area. A small patrol was sent out south of the creek the next morning, for about 500 yards. This patrol saw two Japs, killed one of them and the other escaped. Two packs were found which contained rice and personal equipment, and one of which contained demolition charges. Blood and evidence of wounded was also found. At 1600 that afternoon an infantry patrol killed another Jap and located other equipment.

TED FORCES moved out according to plan at 0930. The first report received was that WILLIAMS was opposed by two companies of Japs, LEWIS by one. Resistance was overcome and the advance continued. The only form of communications was through the Artillery Cub plane and it was kept busy constantly. At 1700 the air observer, Lt. MARK F EVERETT, located a Jap mountain gun but the plane was called out of the area due to a bombing strike

before fire could be adjusted on the gun. When the plane was able to return to the area it was too dark to see the gun and the Nips had moved it by the next morning.

Work during the day was largely devoted to tightening the perimeter, clearing fields of fire and leveling with bulldozers the gullies as much as possible. Heavy log dugouts were built and barbed wire and chicken wire was strung. Arrangements were made for a 60mm Mortar to fire flares on call as well as HE in the event of a mass attack. Conservative estimate of enemy casualties for this date: 200.

4 AUGUST 1944

It was discovered on this date that the forces opposing TED were probably Imperial Japanese Marines, averaging about six feet and in excellent condition. Identification was extremely hard as the Japs were dragging off most of their dead in accordance with their custom and stripping identification from those they were not able to move.

The plane went up again in an effort to relocate the mountain gun that was obscured by darkness the preceding evening. It had been moved by the Japs during the night and the plane was unable to find it. The Japs were extremely persistent and labored out of reason to obtain a very small amount of ineffective artillery support. They would hand pack over long distances the 70mm mountain gun ammunition with individual men carrying one round each. They fired on us at no time with more than one gun and a maximum of nine rounds at one time. Their mortars were effective, however

and they are proficient in the use of their very light machine gun.

Between 0820 and 0830 the battalion fired the heaviest ten minute preparation in its history. 593 rounds were fired in front of the zone of advance of the TED FORCES with telling results. At 1130 two missions were fired on enemy infantry and two more at 1345 on a large enemy assembly area. Infantry continued to advance during the day and there were no further requests for fires until defensive fires were marked at the end of the day.

At the end of this period TED FORCES had captured and destroyed four radios and generators; 20 LMGs and 15 knee mortars. At the end of the period, definite identification of four units with which we were in contact had been identified, two of which were regiments, and another 18th Army Hq Troops.

A concentration was fired on a Jap Bivouac at 1800. At 2100 sentinals on the perimeter reported seeing three or more Japs approaching the perimeter from the jungle to the south. They were fired on, and flares were put up but they got away. The perimeter continued fire spasmodically throughout the night on Japs that could be heard in the edge of the woods.

5 AUGUST 1944

During the night harrassing fires were laid down on enemy positions. At 0830 a patrol of our battalion accidentally tripped a booby trap on the south perimeter of the battalion. Those injured were Cpl RAY H WEST, 37115461, who received severe head and brain injury which resulted in his death. Also injured was

Pvt AMELCA CHAPMAN, 34070970, who was later evacuated to a general hospital.

At 0930 the Battalion was notified to furnish name, rank, and serial number of Officer and enlisted party for Shore Fire Control Group. Lt. SAMUEL J NIELD of "B" Battery was ordered to report to the CP as soon as physically possible. He started out at noon with one litter patient and a patrol of 16 men. Lt. RAYMOND J MARLOWE formed a forward observer party from available men and went forward from Regiment to take the place of Lt. Nield.

At 1230 WILLIAMS requested fire on a dug in Jap MG which was opposing their advance. The gun was neutralized and the advance proceeded. At 1745 another concentration was fired on enemy infantry in front of BUTCH. Practically the entire afternoon was spent in arranging through our plane for the dropping of rations which were urgently needed. Details were completed and rations dropped.

Standing Orders for our Local Defense were disseminated by the Battalion Commander to standardize previous methods and insure the best possible cooperation between batteries when attacks occur.

WILLIAMS met stiff opposition all day. TED FORCES killed an estimated 104 Japs this date. The entire advance had been through Jap bivouac areas estimated to be more than two battalions. WILLIAMS was opposed by an estimated two companies when he stopped for the night. The terrain was very difficult; jungle was dense and paths had to be hacked out by machetes, no trails existed at

all, and the opposition was described as "sticky" by TED.

6 AUGUST 1944

Plane made early contact with each of the forces in regard to supply messages and arrangements were made for drops of needed food and equipment. Supplies had become an urgent problem by this day of advance. Very little could be carried while advancing through the heavy jungle, and recovery of supplies dropped in in only slightly cleared dropping spots were extremely difficult, often impossible. Evacuation of casualties was already a problem and on this date it was to become a much more severe one.

At 0930, Lt. Michelson, with WILLIAMS FORCE, called for fire on an enemy infantry, which had come up on their perimeter during the night. By the neutralization, effect of a well placed artillery fire, the battalion was able to continue its advance. At 1045 a safety line was agreed upon and ordered materialized on the map, by Lt. Col. TAYLOR, Divarty S-3. This line was to control artillery fire between the forces of TED and BALDY as they came together. Nothing was to be fired East of this line without clearance from the 149th or adjustment by its observer.

At 1130 urgent request for heavily guarded native train was received from Col. Starr, CO of TED FORCES. The work of these native trains in the AITAPE operation especially in evacuation of casualties can not be praised to highly. This request was forwarded to higher headquarters. At 1100 fire was again delivered for BUTCH on enemy estimated to number 75. The Japs were driven off to the SW after suffering casualties.

At 1730 the Forward Observer of BUTCH called for fire on an enemy supply route and by-pass which he had located with a Point Patrol. This was Lt. Wagner, who has been mentioned before. A concentration was fired on this area and request made to Division Artillery for authority to interdict it during the night.

Two protective barrages were shot in before dark. The liaison planes were particularly active this date in the handling and relay of messages.

Authority for interdiction was obtained and concentrations were fired twice before midnight and once after.

7 AUGUST 1944

Jap supply was interdicted as mentioned on day before. At 0700 the Forward Observer with WILLIAMS requested fire on enemy bivouac and 313 rounds were fired. This timely and effective artillery fire did much to allow this battalion to continue the attack in the face of what might have been serious situation. The Nips had moved up on the WILLIAMS perimeter during the night and the situation was critical at daybreak. At 0755 concentration again placed on enemy supply by-pass route. At 0810 another 152 rounds were fired on this same target, which was on the route of advance of BUTCH. As BUTCH proceeded it was discovered that at least 25 to 30 Japs had been killed and two mountain guns knocked out. The trail had been thoroughly shot up and the counted dead were only those on the trail, as no effort was made to search the entire area covered by the fire.

At 1150 LEWIS requested fire on enemy machine guns which were immediately neutralized. At 1250 a concentration was fired on enemy infantry.

The only form of communications continued to be through the Cub plane and the planes maintained a constant patrol over the TED FORCES. Essential small items were dropped during the day.

LEWIS had rough going all day long, both due to terrain and enemy action. This battalion killed at least 120 Japs on this date, plus an unestimated number destroyed by artillery fire. BUTCH killed at least 25 in one small area during his advance of this date.

In the early afternoon LEWIS had a premature burst of an 81mm Mortar and casualties and killed were heavy. This force was still far from AFUA and the situation was critical. In addition to the walking wounded, there were 18 litter cases-- three very serious. At 1745 an urgent request for 10 units of blood plasma was received by the plane, which was over the force at that time. The plane immediately radioed the battalion and plasma was wrapped for dropping and sent forward to the Cub strip. The plane received the plasma and completed the drop in 35 minutes from the time of the first call, undoubtedly assisting in the saving of a number of lives.

TED FORCES were ordered to remain on the East of the DRINIUMOR RIVER until LEWIS could close with it. Patrols were sent to contact LEWIS and additional litter bearers were also dispatched. It was impossible, however to evacuate any of these

casualties on this date.

From the 149th Field Artillery, the following were wounded on this day:

Capt.	FRANCIS S McCAIN	0-462865	L.W.A.
Pfc	AUSTELL E REID	34402130	S.W.A.
Pfc	CHARLES E SPIVEY	36534775	S.W.A.
Pfc	JAMES F McDONALD	36538811	L.W.A.
Pvt.	EDWARD J OUIMETTE	20423555	S.W.A.

Pvt. Ouimette later died as a result of his wounds and all others were evacuated and lost to the battalion.

8 AUGUST 1944

All battalions of TED FORCES continued march West and Southwest towards AFUA to complete the closure on the Japs. During the entire sweeping envelopment of the TED, the BALDY FORCE had also been taking a heavy toll of the Japs that were being pinched in between the two forces. The general picture seemed to be that the Nips were falling back in front of TED and at the same time vigorously attacking BALDY in an effort to break out of the trap. Undoubtedly some Japs fled into the very rugged and unexplored mountains on the South flank. Disease was reported to be taking a heavy toll by this time, by a prisoner taken by TED and BALDY. Many prisoners expressed awe at the amount and accuracy of the artillery fire that they constantly received, and one officer was said to have asked to see the automatic artillery.

During the morning our patrol combed an area 75 yards south of our position. Several Jap gas masks were found--one of which was apparently booby-trapped.

At 1230 one concentration was fired for LEWIS which killed

a total of 10 Japs counted dead on the trail. An undetermined number were killed and wounded off the trail and evidence existed of a number having been wounded on the trail. By night-fall all of the battalions except LEWIS had begun to close in on the DRINIUMOR RIVER. LEWIS was still in vicinity of NIEUMAN CREEK.

At about 0145 this morning at least two rounds of artillery fire of BALDY FORCE ARTILLERY fell very close to BUTCH. Division Artillery was notified and assurance was given that no more fire would be placed in this area. However, at 0730 BALDY FORCE ARTILLERY fired a concentration of battery five volleys on this same area, resulting in death for six of BUTCH'S men and 15 to 20 wounded. Full report of the occurrence was made to higher headquarters at once by all concerned. This fire was placed to the east of the safety line over protest of the 149th F.A., and was the same concentration that had fallen dangerously near BUTCH the preceding night.

When this artillery fire began to fall, all of the men were out of their sleeping trenches and thickly scattered through the battalion area. At the burst of the first round, TEC 4 DELANO G NEAL, 20423309 and CAPT. WILLIAM H FREELAND, O-326945, both ran for the Liaison radio. Tec 4 Neal reached the radio first, and immediately began the call to cease firing. Capt. Freeland reached the radio and took up the continuation of the call. Both of these men went to the radio with complete disregard for their own personal safety, when everyone else was diving for a hole or protection of some kind. Capt. Freeland was wounded severely in the heel, and has been awarded the Purple Heart. Both Capt Freeland

and Tec 4 Neal have been awarded the Silver Star Medal for Gallantry.

Of the 149th F.A. the following were wounded this date:

CAPT WILLIAM H FREELAND	O-326945	L.W.A.
Pfc MARION L HUYCK	16148575	S.W.A.
Pvt WILLIE T HEWITT	34530052	L.W.A.

Pfc Huyck later died as a result of the wounds received.

9 AUGUST 1944

All battalions of the TED FORCES except LEWIS crossed to the west bank of the DRINIUMOR RIVER and consolidated and patrolled to await the arrival of LEWIS. LEWIS began the extremely difficult march out early in the morning but was still about 1000 yards east of the river at 1600. The progress was very slow due to many walking wounded and the 19 litter cases. It was impossible for LEWIS to reach the DRINIUMOR that night, but when word was received that a portable hospital was there, a volunteer patrol of approximately 40 men brought out the three most seriously wounded during the night, one of who was Pvt Ouimette of the 149th F. A.

No fire was delivered during the day. Cub planes were in constant patrol over LEWIS to transmit messages and another drop of ten units of plasma was made in the afternoon.

Plans were made to displace to TADJI PLANTATION the next day beginning at 0830. Tractors were to be sent forward to AFUA to bring out the heavy equipment of the infantry.

10 AUGUST 1944

The 152nd Field Artillery Battalion arrived early to relieve the 149th F.A. Bn. and displacement to the bivouac area at TADJI was completed before noon. Camp was established and normal camp duties begun.

Many men had skin infection that required constant treatment and those that had made the attack of week long duration were in most cases almost unable to walk on their feet.

SUMMARY

At the close of the 124th Combat Teams part of the AITAPE campaign, 7606 Japs had been killed or found dead, and Prisoners of War totaled 95. Official credit for 2,067 Nips is given to the Combat Team plus countless others killed and wounded by artillery and mortar fire and others that the Japs drug off after they were killed or wounded. Copies of the commendations of General MacARTHUR, General KRUEGER, General HALL and others are attached. The highest praise that the 149th Field Artillery Battalion received and the one that the battalion appreciated the most, were the statements of the doughboys and infantry officers, who said that we had given them every possible measure of support and that the battalion was the "finest artillery in the U.S. Army." Men of the battalion could not help but feel a great pride when sick and wounded men in the hospital would call you over to their cot and ask if you were a member of the 149th F.A. When told that you were, they would say, "I just want to shake your hand." Every member of the 124th Combat Team was proud of a job well done.

From 10 August until embarkation for MOROTAI operation on

9 September, time was spent in fixing up an area, rest, swimming, repair and replacement of equipment and making of plans for the future operation. General PERSONS visited the Combat Team and paid us compliments and delivered congratulatory remarks of others.

During the rest period an intensive program of shell necklace and bracelet making was begun by a large percentage of the battalion.

The battalion lost two more Captains during this period: Capt. WILLIAM B SWEARINGEN, O-404157, and Capt GEORGE H GRILL, O-336396. Capt Swearingen was evacuated for high blood pressure and sinus infection, and Capt. Grill for a bad knee.

Orders were received and preparations begun for the MOROTAI operation. Major JOSEPH J HILL, Bn. Executive Officer was appointed Transport Quartermaster for the Combat Team, and shortly after became TQM for the entire XI Corp Headquarters and all attached troops at AITAPE when the job was turned over to the Combat Team by Corp. Major Hill was ably assisted by Sgt. JOHN A SMITH, 37016062, and for their outstanding work in this operation they were awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

For his leadership of the battalion in the AITAPE mission and the superb showing made by this organization, Lt. Col. W. EUGENE JONES was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

In preparation for the MOROTAI operation, Capts. HAYES, FOWKES, WELLES, and Lt. MOSELEY made maps of the general area of the operation as well as maps of specific areas on the island.

Terrain study was made and a talk given to the officers by Capt. Welles, Bn. S-2. For his meritorious achievement, Capt Welles, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

The batteries of the battalion were transported to MOROTAI, by LSTs less the detached personnel which travelled with the infantry. Prior to embarkation for the actual mission a full scale dry-run was held at AITAPE.

HEADQUARTERS US FORCES
APO 705

11 August 1944

MEMORANDUM:

1. I take great pleasure in transmitting this message from the Commanding General, Sixth Army:

"THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE HAS JUST BEEN RECEIVED FROM GENERAL MACARTHUR QUOTE PLEASE EXPRESS TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE TASK FORCE MY ADMIRATION FOR THE SPLENDID CONDUCT OF THE CAMPAIGN EAST OF AITAPE PD THE OPERATIONS WERE PLANNED WITH GREAT SKILL CMA WERE EXECUTED WITH GREAT DETERMINATION AND COURAGE AND WERE CROWNED WITH GREAT SUCCESS END QUOTE IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO TRANSMIT THIS MESSAGE AND I WISH TO ADD MY OWN CONGRATULATIONS FOR A DIFFICULT JOB WELL DONE PD SIGNED KRUGER"

2. I assure all officers and men that their expected fine performance, willingness to accept a difficult job and determination to see it through, have been appreciated by me.

3. This fight is preliminary to bigger and harder ones to come. We must all be prepared in future operations to accept greater losses and privations. The attack must continue and only by pushing it to the utmost can we attain maximum success.

4. This memorandum will be communicated to all officers and enlisted men of the command at the first opportunity.

/s/ C. P. Hall
C.P. HALL
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

ANNEX #1

AWARDS

AIR MEDAL

1ST LT. JOHN J KEMP	0-1170447
1ST LT. FRANK J ZIRBLIS	0-1177706

SILVER STAR MEDAL

CAPT. WILLIAM H FREELAND	0-326745
TEC 4 DELANO G NEAL	20423309

BRONZE STAR MEDAL

LT. COL. W EUGENE JONES	0-242926
MAJ. JOSEPH J HILL	0-176243
CAPT. BENJAMIN F WELLES JR	0-396677
CAPT. JOHN L WHITAKER	0-118773
TEC 3 RALPH E BAKERINK	37652022
SGT. JOHN A SMITH	37106062
TEC 4 CLARK A CONGDON	32492234
TEC 5 STEWART J McWILLIAMS	36404352
PVT CHARLES L NIXON	20423553

PURPLE HEART

CAPT. WILLIAM H FREELAND	0-326745
CAPT. FRANCIS S McCain	0-462865
2ND LT. ROBERT H POWERS	0-1182684
S/SGT GEORGE SEXTON	20423443
SGT RICHARD W KENYON	31047896
TEC 4 JACK D HUFF	38087305
CPL JAMES F LISA	32500995
TEC 5 R. J. MOCK	34021634
TEC 5 EUGENE ROBINSON	20423557
PFC WILLIE T HEWETT	34530052
PFC AUSTELL E REID	34402130
PFC CHARLES E SPIVEY	36534775
PVT PHILIP J BANKS	14202242
PVT SAMUEL F DARBY	38511710

HEADQUARTERS
32d DIVISION ARTILLERY

RBM/pod

APO 32
17 Aug 44

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 149th Field Artillery Battalion,
APO 705

1. Commendations and congratulatory messages to the Persecution Covering Force have been received from Generals MacArthur, Krueger and Hall for its performance in action throughout the campaign just closed. To these, General Gill, in Memorandum No. 28 dated 12 August 1944, adds his commendations.

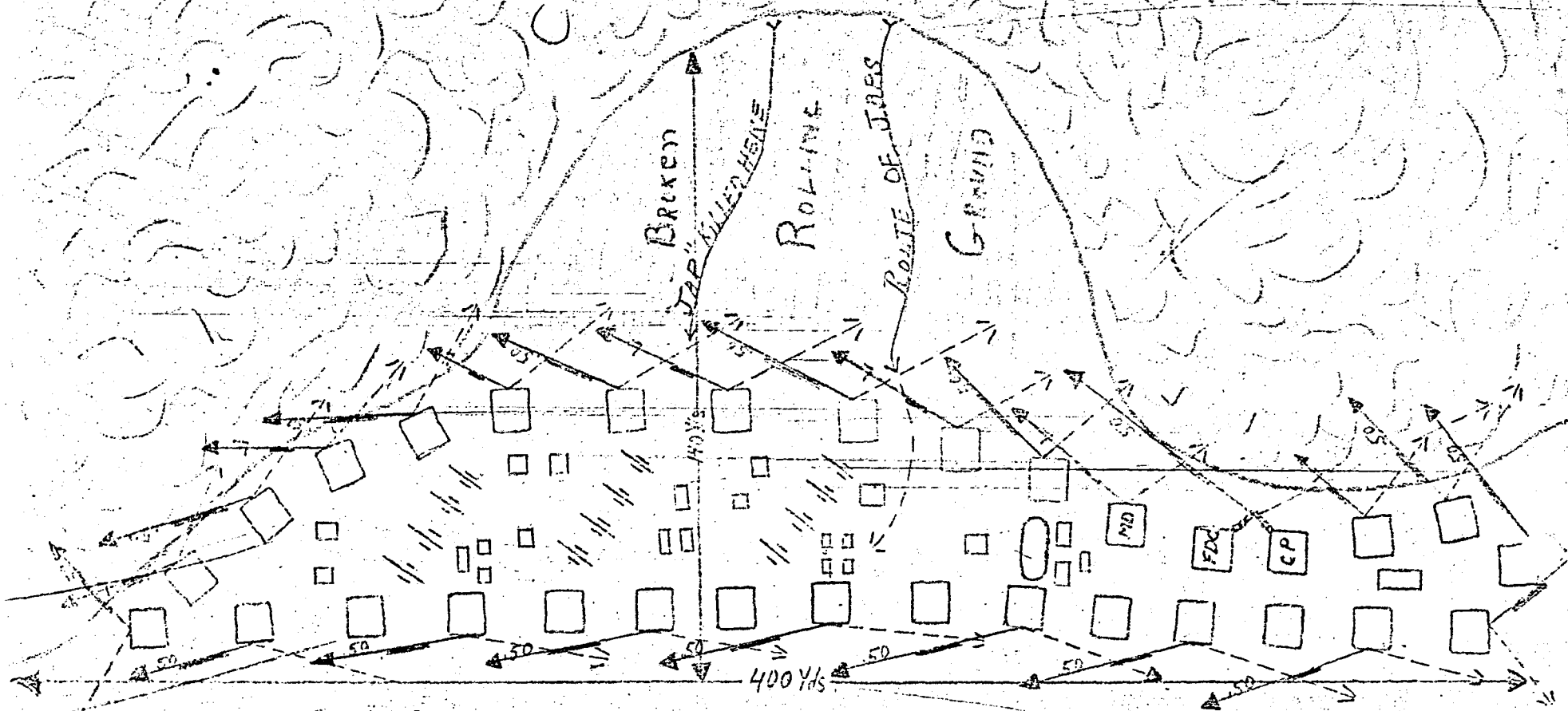
2. I wish especially to express to you my pride and commendation for your part and the part which your officers and men played in this action.

3. The skill, accuracy and meticulous attention to duty shown by the officers and men of your battalion was outstanding and a credit to our Arm. The efficiency, volume and timeliness of the Artillery fires, by breaking up the enemy's attack formations and causing him severe casualties, greatly contributed to the speedy and successful conclusion of the campaign.

/s/ Robert B Mc Bride Jr
ROBERT B MC BRIDE JR
Brigadier General USA
Commanding

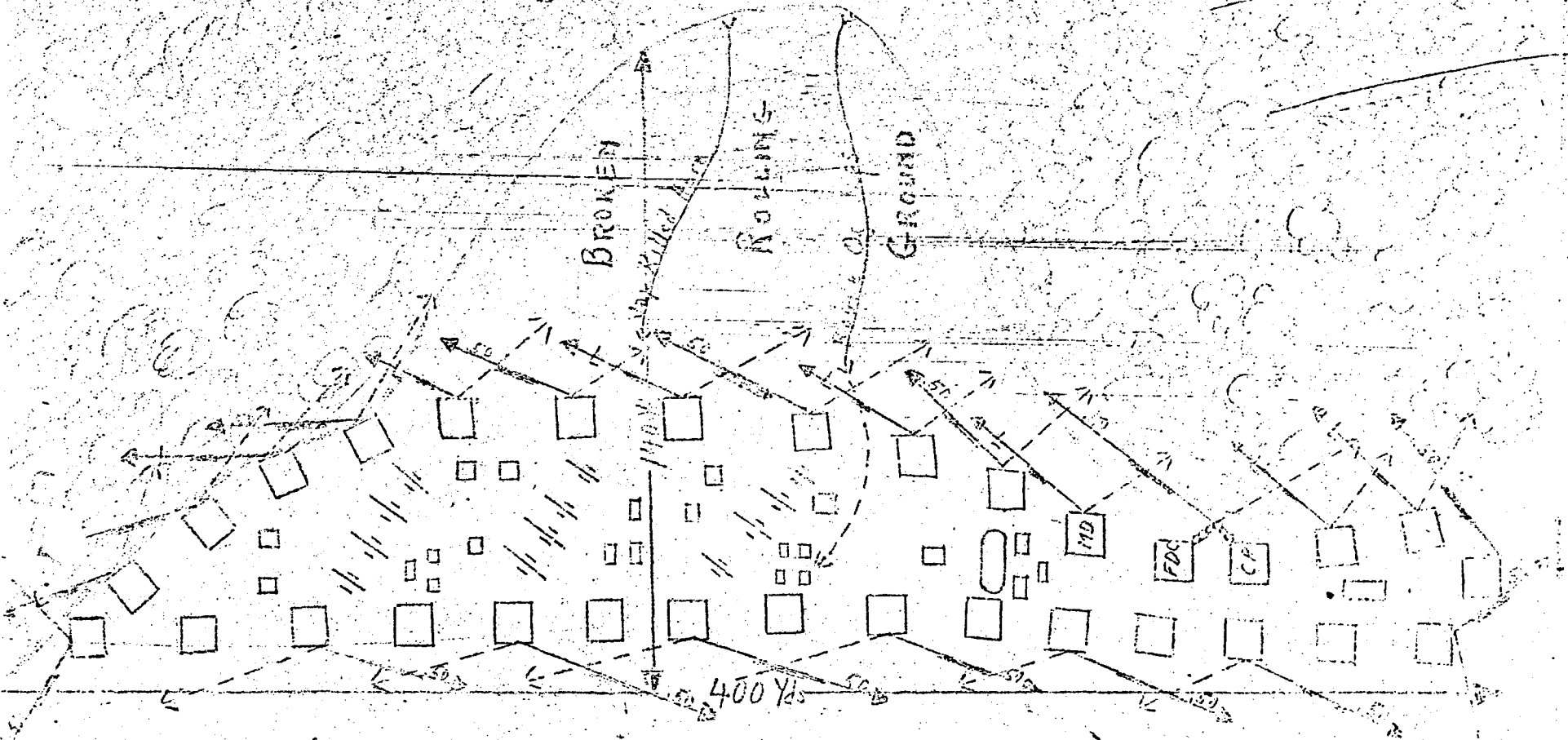
ANNEX # 3

DENSE
JUNGLE



PACIFIC
OCEAN

DENSE
JUNGLE!



PACIFIC OCEAN