

to reconiter for river crossings. (No infantry up there yet.) We have to stay in place. Up go the nets again. It rained last night. My bed-roll is soaked. Fixed block & sprocket on two M-10's. Layed parallel ^{in indirect type artillery fire.} Sketched views & wrote this up just before noon. Checked the lay of my battery and placed aiming stakes just before dark. Not having night-lights, we must shine a b.-out flash light into the sight head to see the reticule.

- 12 Oct. Up early. Had gun drill using the new phones. Dug a little "three room" fox-hole into the rock, & pitched ~~at~~ a tent over it for black-out. Lt. Mishkin came up & gave me 360 exposures of bulk 35mm film! Relayed on Comp. 555, and fired in #1 gun just before dark. The 175 was running the show. It was dark before they could locate our bursts. (Range 10,000) Too bad. About 2100 our entire left flank went up in a blaze. The English possibly jump and I know the 3rd did. The artillery fire look like the lights on an excited pin-ball machine. The "dutchmen" must be really catching it! We will not fire tonight.
- 13 Oct. Up early. Layed battery Camp. 685. Ready to fire. Received three letters from Dewey, & one

from dad. The latter said, "I hope you are not in that heavy fighting around Naples". The view of Naples is excellent from here! My guns fired 159 rounds today. I could observe one ~~area~~ from the guns. Walked & ladder down a road from 5,500 to 11,000. Each rd. is one more for Mj. We have had a bad time laying in because our SI is 40 or 50 ft and the min. elevation 1,35 ft. Our range is around 19,000 yds from this high ground. Hts. Cusick & Dotson were on the forward OP. I will describe what they saw. Our artillery plunked away all night. The left flank was a mass of fire where the 3rd & English were attacking. Just on either side of the OP the towns of Limatola and Torone were taking a terrific pounding. Our (the 34th) engineers had failed to push a bridge across the Volturo, and had fallen back to Limatola. The Germans evidently wanted them back further. All this was in the dark. German tanks could be heard "milling around" on the other side. Then at 0730 our arty. pounded the far bank in a big way. Nothing was in sight on the plain on either side.

of the river. Then at 1000 o
 barrage lifted and infantry pour
 from the deserted looking
 area on our side down toward
 the river. "Heine" arty. opened
 up heavily. We could hear,
 and see the tracer of, our
 own mg's supporting the
 attack. However, those
 damned high speed Jerry mg's
 predominated. (1250 rpm reputedly)
 White tracer was everywhere
 Our arty. laid smoke on the
 flanks, and HE on the ridges
 in front. The river is 200-300
 feet wide, waist deep, with a
 lightly wooded, bush belt making
 a strip (narrow) on each side
 of the river. Banks ~~20-30~~¹⁰⁻²⁰ ft.
 high of soft alluvial soil. The
 river near Jimatola is
 roughly 30 meters above sea level.
 1400 yds north west the ground has
 risen to 260 meters. It's a tough
 spot. They can look right down
 our throats. While one platoon
 covered, another platoon of "dough
 would rush up the slope.
 The Germans have no intention
 of giving up this ground. It
 is a real fight. We still do
 not have the high ground.
 No news from the units on
 our flank. I don't know how

they are making out. It is raining lightly. Finally found source of error making it so difficult to lay in. 175th's Survey is way out.

14th October.

Up at 0600. Shifted to daylight aiming point. (Castel on the hill.) Mg. fire to our left rear? Artillery still pounding. "Red" battery, that's me, fired ~85 rds. Expected to fire during the night, but did not. Five planes flew over at 1030. Most think they were P-51's, but I'm not so sure.

15 Oct.

Up at 0600. Lou won last night's card game. Dotson spent a bad night on an O.P. I took some photos of Vesuvius. Lou sent me up to look at a crossing. Peter wanted to see it also, so off we went. We got to the road-junction where our road joins the road paralleling the river. Turned right, and drove about half a mile to that bridge. It will only carry 9 tons. Retraced our road, and continued along the left fork. Stopped and checked a ford for a couple of minutes. Too deep for un-water-proofed tanks. Started down the road again in the peep. As we neared a RAT in front of us, we noticed that all three forks were heavily jammed with traffic.

Suddenly I heard Ack-Ack behind me and Peter yelled, "Jump!", and jumped. I made the mistake of looking over my shoulder as I hit the brake and took off the switch. Yipe! The road was going up in dust behind me and two particular ME 109's were breathing down my neck. I broke records getting out from under the wheel, running to the edge of the road, and diving. There was no gully, just a field, lower than the road and I was "sweating out" strafers. As soon as the first group passed I dash back down the road-side to a cross-wise ditch I had located. Where it ran under the road was a culvert, so I stepped in. Ah, just the thing! The water had dug a pot hole just outside my end. A couple of seconds later Peter dashed in the other end. We met in the center, laughing and asking questions. When Peter jumped from the moving "peep" his momentum carried him on down the bank of the road into some brambles, where he was hung up for a while. Had either of those first two planes straffed us we would have both been in bad shape. As soon as he had

broken free, Peter saw, and made for, the same ditch as I, and so located the culvert. Standing inside we were safe from our flak and German strafing. Lying in the pot-hole we were safe from bombing. (So being a comparative word, of course.) Our problem was to keep track of what was happening. We would follow the planes by moving from one end of the culvert to another. Four, five-hundred pound bombs were dropped on the RT 135 yds from us. The ground rocked. Had the raid come three minutes later, we would have been tied up in the road jam there! Two men were killed & many wounded. Three or four vehicles were bashed. As we ran to the north end of the culvert once, to watch the show, I noticed a "peep" in the center of a field. It was ours! We checked its course by the tracks. It continued down the road, and eased off the road, down a six-foot bank at a very bad angle. At the bottom it straightened out & coasted to the center of the field. We got a good laugh out of that. Did I mention that, in order to hit the RT east of us, they released their bombs west of us as they came down the road?

Visited an eleventh century church with glass & took some photos. The pillars from the building were taken from more ancient Roman Copula

A falling 500 lb. bomb, released from a low level, looks very big as it passes over! Yes it was an exciting half-hour. Was told ~~the~~ we would have no more fire-missions. The gun crews had no more than gotten to bed than a 2000 to 2400 harassing missing came down for one gun. Peter & I cut. High man to furnish the crew. I cut a 3 of spades. He cursed, & cut a duce of spades! Britz crew had the job.

16 Oct.

Hot-cakes for breakfast. Lou had two field ranges put into a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton, & brought up. Cleaned & inspected all weapons. Nice sunny day. At 0800 received word to stay put for three days. At 1230 received word to cross the pontoon bridge we checked yesterday, & proceed to Cajazzo. We were to be rolling by 1300!

It is now 0900, the morning of the 22nd. I will try to write the events up to date, though words will never describe them. The heavy stuff crossed the Volturno on the 30 ton pontoon bridge. It was a squeeze. When the 601 went across the day before one of their vehicles rode off center, & was dumped into the water. Four men drowned.

We passed the 601 & continued to Giarzo, where we met the wheeled vehicles which had come by Limatola. Mines everywhere. Pulled into a mosquito infested area at 1700. Germans had been run out so suddenly by our infantry that morning at 0900 that the Americans ate a chicken the "dutchmen" had fried! Enemy armored cars bothered the 168th Inf. so Peter's platoon pushed up to help. A blown bridge stopped them 1000 yds. short of a firing position. About midnight a bulldozer made it possible, but the enemy vehicles took out before Peter could fire on them. The German's are fighting a great delaying action. Lou & I went up to see Peter about 2200. Enemy mgs. plentiful.

17 October

Moved up just south of Avignone into arty. positions, & "layed parallel" on 5400 ft. Dug in & put up nets. Italians cried because I cut some of their trees for a field of fire. What a war.

18 Oct.

Moved up the road in my half-track toward Avignone to an ancient Roman road & reconitered it with the advanced party of the 133rd. Blown bridge. Went back to main road & continued up to Avignone. The 3rd Plak. under Lou was there, being held by a blown bridge. Left car & told Jensen, "let us take a walk & check a road." He did not bring a weapon. I started to tell him to get it, but decided to let him learn. Went east on a Roman road-bed. Only

marks on road were Mark IV tracks! Roadway quite deserted. Mgs firing on our left. (North). Found way to by-pass bridge holding me up, but Col. Fountain did not want us to come up. The 133 was doing fine, & did not want us to draw enemy arty. on them. Jensen & I walked up 5 miles with the Inf. to check the road. Walked back. Got back to Road Junction where I had told Haywood to bring the Platoon. They were clear of the road. General Taffy was there. Chewed on me. Told me not to move up, but to get away from the road. As he left, Col. Barney came up & told me to move up, & chewed me because I was not up with Col. Fountain. (Col. Barney knows I am attached to 133rd, but continues to try to run everything.) I (finally) got Barney to listen to what I had done, & had been told to do, and then moved into an area south of Avignano. Today has been hard on my nerves, patience, and meal schedule.

19 Oct.

Had the vehicles early. Went back to see Jess in the late morning. He & I went up to see the 3rd Pz. They were in Dragoni. Much to the engineer's delight, they had prevented the "dutchmen" from blowing a large bridge; the only one saved to date. The bridge was already charged for demolition. Just before Jess & I

reached Dragoni, the town was bombed. Many swear they were our own A-36's, markings & all. Two bombs were within 30 yds. of an M-10. They said it rocked like a ship at sea. Jess & I went on up to another tiny village with the 3rd platoon. The infantry outpost line is 300 yds. ahead. Lou & Dotson are with the platoon, so Jess & I went back. Just ready to eat when I received the following message, "Cole, Haywood, Britz, Huber, & Olsen report to the 3rd platoon as replacements." We grabbed our equipment, loaded onto two peeps, & took out. It was dark with no moon. Found traffic tied up bumper to bumper for two miles south of a by-pass. We managed, amid many curses, to reach the by-pass. An M-7 from the 27th F.A. had thrown a track there. On one side was room for a peep to pass, maybe, but two more M-7's trying to drag the one clear were blocking the road just ahead. A Lt. Fox was there & I explained the situation to him. He very quickly, for the equipment involved, cleared the way & we squeezed through. At Dragoni I left the peeps at the bomb craters & walked on up ahead to see if the situation was the same. It was. A patrol from the 7th Inf. passed, & then we brought the peeps up. (They didn't want us to draw fire to them.) Lou said that during the few minutes he was over to the Inf. (C.P. Dotson) had taken

the destroyer commanders up to the ridge 50 feet in front of the destroyers to show them a tank. They stood up there! Two mortar shells were dropped in. ^{S/}Sgt. H. T. Brown will probably die. Sgt. Baukal has less than a 50% chance. Corp. Hendricks - ^{previously} wounded in Africa - is in a bad way. Perkins, a gunner, will be O.K., & Dotson received two minor wounds. How got there immediately after it happened, & came to Hendricks. His first words were, "Don't stop here, Captain, the others are up ahead". The men, deprived of their commanders, & under fire, were in a very shaken state. It is lucky how was there. The night was not bad. Arty. & infantry weapons were dropping stuff here & there. Sleep was impossible after after - 0400.

20 Oct.

Up at 0400, with shells bursting short & over. Small arms fire very near. Distinctive noise of German mgs unmistakable. Was concerned for a while. The counter-attack was of short duration, & served only to cover German withdrawal. Day nerve wracking, but not dangerous. Got 16 letters today. Ate well, thanks to Black & Danburger. Arty. threw fragments through the area all day. Turned in early. Enemy arty. Keeping everyone awake.

21 Oct.

Up at 0400. Arty. heavy, but not on us. Concerned by small arms fire for a while. I don't dare let enemy infantry get too close to our vehicles. 168th, to whom this 3rd Platoon was attached, released us & pulled back. The 7th has taken over this sector. That means they will bring in their own 3rd Div. T.D. unit. The 601st dashed through us & was bashed. Strong enemy counter-attack failed. We had, the people ahead of us that is, - numerous casualties. Heard some damned funny noises. The Germans were using their "screaming meemies". I sat tight. Any fire on my part would have been unexpected, unwanted, & dangerous. As it was the 601 drove the 133rd from their positions across the river (Vulturdo again) for a while. Their direct fire on German tanks was right in line. After dark I received an order to move forward to the north & attack. I was only 2000 yds. south of the outpost line. It was dark, & the fog was hanging in the valley. I worked out a plan of fire with Martin. Moving northward put us in poorer position & endangered the men needlessly. None of the staff have visited my position or the terrain around. (This obviously another of their now-famous-within-the-battalion "map orders".) Now, in his usual good form, boss, at the platoon when I came back from Martin's C.P. He had heard the order over the radio.

& had churned right up. He says he now has three grey hairs instead of two. He agreed that the man on the spot must evaluate the situation. Martin's order from Gen. Taffy this evening was definite, "None of the M-10's are to be moved."

22 Oct.

Henningesen, Stoltz, & Lou were here last night. The division of responsibility was such a relief that, though the shelling was as usual, I slept until 0620. Did not mention that yesterday my car & crew came up. Day absolutely quiet. Some artillery pulled in ahead of us. We are now quite the "rear echelon kids". Lou sent Peter up with his gun crews to take over while our group went back to an engineer shower & bathed. It was our first bath since the Sele River crossing. The ten mile ride back from the showers was very dusty, but I still feel refreshed. Stoltz dug a deep slit trench. As he finished he was ordered back to the Co. C.P. (God, but he moaned. My only question about him is, is he a nit-wick or just a dim bulb?)

23 Oct.

Up at 0600. Food good ("U" rations) Night quiet except for a dog that did a baffling amount of howling. Sgt. Kang's security section relieved

Sgt. Smith's yesterday. Was called back to Co. today. I expect a movement order. Was called back to my platoon this afternoon. Henningsen was given the 3rd Pz. Dotson, now recovered from his minor wounds (fragments in leg & shoulder.), was removed by how far failing to press the attack against the tanks in front of him. The casualties we suffered were not equalized by inflicting losses on the enemy. Tried to listen to a foot-ball game without success. Played cards. Watched a magnificent AA & bomb show in the southwest and west over Naples and Capua. Had a good night's sleep. Fog heavy. Omitted that about 1500, two English Spit-fires straffed the road near us, killing some American troops. We pretty well shot them up. Circumstances of attack make us believe the planes were piloted by "dutchers".

24 Oct.

Took it easy. Read a book, "The White Devil". It was mediocre. Expect to move out. Got a lot of "B" ration. Also some PX candies.

25 Oct.

up at 0400.. Moved north through Ruignano, turned ~~over~~ eastward across the Volturno at Dragoni, through Alife & on north. - Received a bit of artillery fire. Moved our fire-direction center into an Italian home. The

people are terrified. Each "bang" they ask if it is ours going out or German artillery coming in. The artillery moved their kitchen up. The cooks are used to fire. An HE shell landed near them. The pungent odor scared them. They yelled, "gas!", and put on their masks. The word spread like wild-fire. The gas masks were buried under other equipment and some men did not know where theirs were. They soon found them. Lt. Peter was in the box on the back of his half-track up to his waist, head first, throwing things in all directions. He found the mask, finally. He said later, "I thought I was a goner!" Cusick & I did not fool with the masks. When they start using gas, they won't drop just one round. We finally convinced the Italian family that they should move out. They were in terror. However, one old man stayed; probably to watch us. He promptly got "skunk" drunk. Slept in the house.

26 Oct.

130 artillery pieces opened up on the Germans at 0530. From 0530 to 0730 our 12 guns fired 670 rds. A German 105 shell just landed four yards from this building. The thick stone walls absorbed it fairly well. Found out

later that the infantry were in the wrong area for departure, and they could not follow the barrage. However, we no doubt spoiled someone's breakfast. We drew no counter-battery. We are comfortably located in the house. Played hearts.

27 October.

Fired prepared barrage. 720 rds. from 0530 to 0700. Last few days have been nice. Mishkin came up. Talked him into a heart game, without difficulty. Trimmed him. He has managed to pick up a Zeiss Ikon camera, film size 120, Compur shutter to $\frac{1}{300}$ "th, & Zeiss Nover f:3.5 lens.; for \$35.00. I gave him some bedding. Someone else got him a cot, & he stayed all night.

28 October.

Received orders to "Move out immediately" from F.A. at 0130. Lou reasoned them down to 0430. We can't dash 35 ton vehicles around these roads easily, & the fog will prevent us from registering until 1000 at least. The Germans will see us move in, which worries the F.A.; but that's our worry. Moved out at 0430. Reached outskirts of S. Angelo, & turned west. Waited until down, & started down the trail. M-10's knocked down several hundred yards of stone walls, & part of a house. In an upper window of the house was an Italian man, shouting, and waving, & generally tearing his hair. However, a cliff on the right was solid stone, so the house had to go. Moved into

position & layed on 5400 by 0700. My declination constant (6339) & instrument error (94) add to 6330. on my own leit & aiming circle. To get a minimum elevation of 120, we had to chop down five beautiful oaks, & six olive trees. It is a shame, but necessary. The natives resented it greatly. Fog kept us from firing in until afternoon. Used German OP for base point. Survey & data accurate. Flipped a coin with Henningsen to see who took night fire missions. I won. He fired all night. Twelve German planes were over today. We & the S.P. 37th near-by put up a lot of flak.

Omitted on the 27th, that after dark "Havana" sent us some coordinates with the statement, "Enemy tanks assembling for dawn attack. Reconiter, & be prepared to move on a moment's notice." Checking our map we found the location impossible for German armor. We went down to the location given & found a company of M-4's. (Moral: If our battalion staff had no map they would be clear out of the war. They practically are now. It would be better if they were!)

29 October

Slept until 0600. No fire missions. Day rainy. Cut two thin cross-sections of olive to make pistol butts. 12 German

planes over. Lou was at Wier's C.P.
 One "C" company man killed, two wounded
 badly, ^(two others wounded) by bombs. Infantry rolling right
 along. Russians doing well. Played hearts till
 2030. Slept well.

30 October

Slept until 0715. This can't last long. Little
 incoming fire. 12-A-36's bombed the enemy.
 Sun bright & warm. Rigged up light for
 aiming circle. Ready to move at 1000. Our
 air "bashed" the Germans across the
 valley. Did not move. Read "Miraculous
 Chance" & turned in. Received lots
 of enemy harassing fire from heavy
 guns. No damage.

31 October.

Two months pay due me from the U.S. A.
 Am going to send home \$2500 & keep the
 rest for photography. Up at 0700. Censored
 the mail. All is quiet. Went up on recon..
 Passed Ailano, ~~10 Oct.~~ which was to the
 east of the road we travelled; went through
 Pratella & passed Prato, which had just been
 taken. In the 14-15 grid square (#3, 161. '150,000)
 we looked for positions. There were fresh German
 track marks & positions everywhere. There were
 wooden-box mines which I estimate to
 contain 25 pounds T.N.T. Our detectors will not
 pick them up. The Germans, as always, have blown
 several bridges. The by-passes are bad.
 After I drove through one wide open in
 a peep Lou said, "Well, we made it - even
 if I am a casualty". His really great statement
 was made on the way up, though. He said,

"Let me ask you a question. Are you getting tired of this war?" Peter & I burst out laughing. His tone was so serious, & we were so fed-up ourselves, that it seemed most funny. Our conversation followed the lines then that, though we were trying to push this thing along, the constant physical & nervous strain was growing very unpleasant. Went back, talked to Col. Barney, returned to the company. Played a good game of hearts & turned in. We are sleeping in an Italian house. It is quite clean, which is rather unusual for the peasant class. In one room the entire family sleeps on a large mattress, except for the old man, who sits up all night with a shotgun.

1 November.

Bright clear day. Air-raid in the morning. Capt. Rothchild payed us in lire. My 215⁰⁰ is already deducted. I intend to send some of the notes home for souvenirs. After Jack R. left we had a heavy raid from the air. Some day, I fear, our luck is going to relax. At 1500 the order came down to move to our reconnoitered positions. At 1600, Lou, Dotson, Henningsen, Hutchens, myself, & a security section took out. The company is to move at 1700. At 1700 we heard "Havana" tell Cusick not to move out until further ordered. We cursed & continued on. We stopped at "Widom". "Widespread" had told us that they would give us the situation, as it concerned us. They did not even know that we were to move!