

HEADQUARTERS
70th AIRBORNE DIVISION
APO 443, c/o Postmaster, N.Y., N.Y.

1 July 1944

3-D JOURNAL

Period - June 1 - 30, 1944

Our Operations

The initial phase of this period found Major Doren in command of a task force attacking and occupying the town of Viterbo. After this initial success the battalion was withdrawn to the vicinity of Lake Bracciano. Here they remained until the 20th of the month enjoying a well-earned rest, and having maintenance performed on all combat vehicles. On the 20th, the gun companies, acting in an anti-tank role for the combat command of the 1st Armored Division, moved through the mountains to a point just north of Grosseto. When Combat Command "B" and Combat Command "C" became stranded Reconnaissance Company spearheaded an attack by Task Force Three through the central sector. This diversionary attack caused a withdrawal of the German forces and allowed the combat commands to move forward again on the flanks.

Enemy Activity

Armor: Little contact was made with enemy tanks, as such, in the first part of the period; however, the enemy made good use of his anti-tank guns, both horse-drawn and self-propelled. On the move from Grosseto northward, the enemy made extensive use of his M 7 tanks of the 50th and 50th Tank Div. as anti-tank guns. This use by the enemy of his tanks as anti-tank guns proved very effective, especially on the 22nd of the month, when, in addition to 5 M-10's, he succeeded in bagging 2 platoons of light tanks. In addition to his tanks, the enemy made frequent use of his self-propelled guns, ranging from 75mm high velocity gun to 150mm and 160mm self-propelled guns.

Artillery: During the early part of the month enemy artillery was light and of a calibering nature. In the mountains between Grosseto and Viterbo all types of artillery were used, mainly in anti-tank and harassing roles. In the attack on Viterbo, however, a great deal of accurate, registered fire of all calibers was encountered. Coupled with excellent observation from commanding heights, and extensive minefields, this hastened the substitution of infantry for our armored elements.

Other activity: Probably the most effective opposition the enemy offered during the period was the excellent work done by his engineers. The roads, usually on hill sides, and the many bridges were, with few exceptions, thoroughly mined, cratered, and blocked. Likewise, when the open, rolling ground before Anagnina was reached each small trail and areas surrounding it were effectively mined. Both metal and wooden type mines were encountered, the latter causing the greatest number of casualties due to the fact that they were often missed by our detectors. The infantry encountered was of a poor caliber, including Wehrmacht, school troops, replacement units, and depleted and battered units that had been in the line for a long time, or had been withdrawn because they had been considerably weakened in previous engagements. Lack of sufficient men to properly guard road-blocks and anti-tank positions was one of the reasons the blocks and obstacles were removed as quickly as they were. However, during the last week of the period, elements of the

SECRET

20th Panzer Division and select paratrooper units indicated that the Germans were bolstering their retreating lines with first class troops. It also verified the fact that they intended to give rear units all possible time to prepare and man the Gothic Line running from Pisa to Florence to Rimini.

WILLIAM H. BATEMAN
Capt., 701st T.D. Bn.
S-2

SECRET