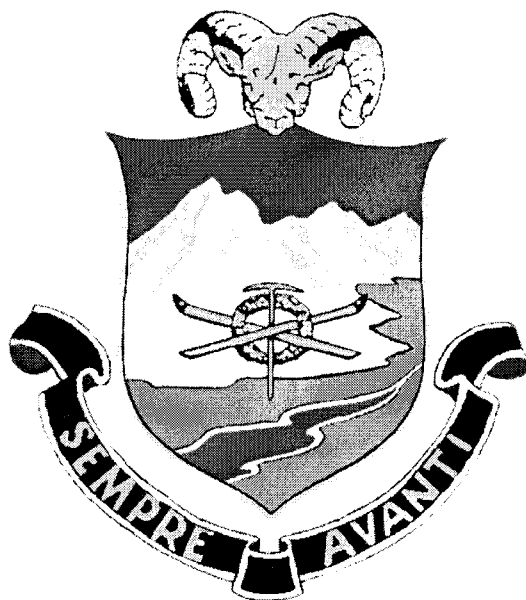


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# **HISTORY of the 85th MOUNTAIN INFANTRY REGIMENT**

**4 JANUARY 1945 — 31 MAY 1945**



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**Captain, 85th Mountain Infantry**  
**Historical Records Officer**

**1945**

dig in and defend Objective E (Hill 1088). At 1400, Company I was approaching Objective F to be used as additional support for the 2nd Battalion and at 1420 General HAYS ordered that the 3rd Battalion dig in and hold Objective F. Also the 3rd Battalion Company on Mt. Gorgolesco (Company L) was to move to Hill 1029 (between Objectives E and F), dig in and defend it. General HAYS further ordered that the 2nd Battalion, unassisted, would drive on to, seize and hold Objective H (Mt. della Torraccia) and that the 3rd Battalion, 86th Mountain Infantry, (vicinity Mazzancana) would be committed on Mt. della Torraccia when the 2nd Battalion had been expended.

The picture thus created from west to east was as follows: The 87th was to hold Mt. Belvedere as its right flank. The 1st Battalion 85th, was to hold Mt. Gorgolesco (Objective D) and Objective E (Hill 1088). The 3rd Battalion 85th, was to hold the high ground to the right of Objective E and to hold Objective F. The 2nd Battalion, now on Objective G (Hill 1027), was to continue the attack to Mt. della Torraccia (Objective H) and hold it until expended.

The 2nd Battalion resumed the attack as ordered and at 1635 Company E, commanded by Capt. ROBERT C. NEILSON, who was seriously wounded in the attack, was out beyond Objective G and advancing. At 1800, the 2nd Battalion was ordered to halt its advance at dark and set up a closed-in, all-around defense for the night.

The BEF took Mt. Castello at 1720 and was busy mopping up. By 1840, all 3rd Battalion 85th, companies were dug in on the correct positions as ordered.

At 1926, the 2nd Battalion reported they were under heavy machine gun and artillery fire and requested permission to withdraw behind the ridge for the night but they were ordered to dig in, hold their positions, and send in shell reports for counter-fire. The front line troops were just below the ridge of Objective H in defensive formation. An hour later, Lt. Col. STONE had informed Brigadier General ROBINSON E. DUFF that he had taken Objective H (Mt. della Torraccia summit), but at 0430, 22 February, the statement was corrected and the battalion was reported to be located 400 yards from Objective H and without artillery support because of lack of communication.

During the night, 21-22 February, the 3rd Battalion opened a new CP at 552191 on Objective F. The battalion defense extended northeast from Objective F to beyond Objective G where it was in physical contact with Company G. The 1st Battalion was still dug in on Mt. Gorgolesco and toward Objective E. Nearly three-quarters of all casualties on 21 February were suffered by the 2nd Battalion. The total for the regiment was 27 killed and 109 wounded:

|                 | Killed | Wounded |
|-----------------|--------|---------|
| 1st Battalion   | 3      | 17      |
| 2nd Battalion   | 24     | 76      |
| 3rd Battalion   | 0      | 9       |
| Service Company | 0      | 1       |
| HQ Company      | 0      | 0       |
| Medical Det.    | 0      | 6       |

The old regimental CP near Vaie di Sopra closed at 0545, 22 February, and a new CP was opened at Gaggio Montano (549163). The weasels used for evacuation of casualties were a disappointment because they all threw their tracks and had to be pushed off the road and left there.

Feb 22

Company E jumped off to take Objective H at 0740, 22 February. At 0855, Division ordered that the 2nd Battalion would occupy and defend Mt. della Torraccia, set up a compact defense to clear out the slopes, and clear out Fosso del Malandrone to make contact with the BEF.

At 1020, the 2nd Battalion was reported to be on Objective H (Mt. della Torraccia summit) and consolidating on forward.\* Company F, commanded by Capt. CHARLES H. KING, was on the ridge to the right of the objective and Company G was on Hill 1036 just beyond Objective G. At noon, a message from the 2nd Battalion revealed that Company E had reached Objective H at dark on 21 February without resistance, but upon reaching the objective they were fired upon by intense artillery and mortar fire which prohibited the reinforcement of the objective prior to dark. After dark, Company E was withdrawn to enforce the present defense of the battalion. The morning of the 22nd, Company E again attacked the objective against machine pistol and small arms fire. The 2nd Battalion opened a new CP at 0300, 22 February, at Ronchidos di Sotto (545182).

A 600-yard gap that developed between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions was ordered filled by the 3rd Battalion. At 1025, 22 February, the 87th Mountain Infantry received a counterattack at Valpiana and G-2 estimated that the enemy was capable of counterattack with the strength of one division.

Col. BARLOW returned to the regimental CP at 1415 after spending three days up forward. Lt. Col. STONE reported at 1700, 22 February, that he had only 400 men left and needed replacements, ammunition, machine guns, radios and water. He was ordered to hold what he had to the last man and supplies would be sent up to him.

At 2130, 22 February, the 2nd Battalion was ordered to contact the BEF (to the southeast) at 1400, 23 February, by patrol at Hill 902 (567198) which will be the limiting point of the 2nd Battalion.

During the night, 22-23 February, the 1st Battalion was still dug in on Mt. Gorgolesco and along the ridge through Objective E toward Objective F (Cappla di Ronchidos and Hill 1045). The 3rd Battalion was holding the ridge from Objective F northeast to the 2nd Battalion just short of Objective H (548188 to 555195). The 2nd Battalion was holding the ground seized on the south and north sides of Objective H but still had not taken the very top of Mt. della Torraccia itself.

Because of their forward positions on 22 February, the 2nd Battalion again suffered the greater percentage of casualties in the regiment: over 80 percent. The total for the regiment was 13 killed and 32 wounded:

|                 | Killed | Wounded |
|-----------------|--------|---------|
| 1st Battalion   | 0      | 1       |
| 2nd Battalion   | 12     | 25      |
| 3rd Battalion   | 1      | 4       |
| Service Company | 0      | 0       |
| HQ Company      | 0      | 1       |
| Medical Det.    | 0      | 1       |

At midnight, 22-23 February, Company B, 84th Chemical Battalion, was detached from our support. From the very start of the attack, they gave splendid assistance with their 4.2 mortars, knocking out enemy positions and concentrations, covering targets with smoke, and identifying targets for air and artillery fire with smoke.

On 23 February, very little change in the front took place. At 0825, the 2nd Battalion requested that aircraft pick up German 88-mm gun positions, which were giving the battalion a lot of trouble. At 0900, Company F attacked and advanced 200 yards but was held up by 88s and

Feb 23

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\* This report was incorrect. Objective H, the summit of Mt. della Torraccia, was finally taken by 3rd Battalion 86th on the morning of 24 February.

machine gun fire, as was Company E on the left. A heavy German counterattack was launched at 1000 between Company E and Company F with the greatest pressure against the left flank of Company F. All battalion reserves were thrown in to drive back this enemy effort. At 1100, Companies E and F were still pinned down by artillery and machine gun fire and Company G was being sent around to the right of Company F.

A new regimental OP was established at 548187 on Objective F just before noon. Word was received at 1245 that the 3rd Battalion, 86th Mountain Infantry, was to start relief of our 2nd Battalion at 1900, 23 February, and would jump off the morning of 24 February to take Mt. della Torraccia. The 2nd Battalion, upon relief, was to move to Gaggio Montano and billet there. Shelling from one of our tank destroyers in the rear was reported at 1515 by Company K. Eleven men were wounded when one shell burst in the company CP area. At 1450, Company F was still unable to advance because of small arms, machine gun and heavy 88-mm fire.

Capt. MORTON E. LEVITAN, 2nd Battalion surgeon, left the aid station in the early afternoon to treat a badly wounded soldier up on the ridge. He was last seen at 1500 in rear of the right flank of Company G and was reported as missing in action.

At 1630, the disposition of the 2nd Battalion was three companies in the line with a 75-man battalion reserve. The heavy weapons of Company H were in support on Hill 1036, in rear of the line companies. The combat patrol sent out by the 2nd Battalion to contact the BEF on the right returned at 1830 and had taken one prisoner. Six more gave themselves up to the battalion at the same time because of effective mortar fire.

The CO, 3rd Battalion, 86th Mountain Infantry, requested that tonight our 3rd Battalion leave Hill 1036 (555196) clear for his units and until the 3rd Battalion, 86th, had jumped off on the 24th for Mt. della Torraccia.

Three more PWs were taken by the 1st Battalion at 1940. The BEF reported at 2300 that many U.S. and German dead had been booby-trapped by the Germans, thus making evacuation a hazardous task. The 2nd Battalion CP at Ronchidos di Sotto closed at 2000 and a new battalion CP was opened in Gaggio Montano at 2230 in preparation for the relief of the battalion. All patrolling by the 1st and 3rd Battalions was ordered halted at 2230, 23 February, until further notice. Casualties on 23 February were much lighter than any day since the attack got under way. The 2nd Battalion had 8 men killed, 10 wounded and Capt. LEVITAN missing. The only other casualties in the regiment were 2 men wounded in the 3rd Battalion.

At 0440, 24 February, the 3rd Battalion reported that all was quiet and no changes. Relief of the 2nd Battalion was under way in the morning of the 24th. At 0710, Company G had been relieved and had pulled out for Gaggio Montano. The first of the battalion elements arrived there at 0750. The entire battalion closed in Gaggio Montano at 0910, 24 February. The 2nd Battalion was to remain there for 24 hours and then leave before daylight on the 25th for Campo Tizzoro for baths and rest.

The 3rd Battalion, 86th Mountain Infantry, which had relieved our 2nd Battalion, jumped off at 0700 on the 24th, and at 0730 they were past Mt. della Torraccia (Objective H) and pushing toward the village of Borro and were preparing to continue the attack.

At 0940, the 3rd Battalion, 85th, was told to occupy the ridge between Hills 1027 and 1036 as soon as the 3rd Battalion, 86th, had completely moved out and to have a mobile reserve of two platoons in readiness in case of an enemy attack.

The situation was rather quiet the morning of the 24th, with the 1st and 3rd Battalions still in defensive positions on the top of the ridge from Mt. Gorgolesco to the base of Mt. della Torraccia.

| NAME                   | RANK   | CO     | KIA/DOW<br>DATE | DOW WIA<br>DATE | PLACE                        |
|------------------------|--------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| LORIN J CARSON         | S/SGT  | F      | 2/23/45         |                 | MT DELLA TORRACCIA           |
| ARTHUR H CAULFIELD     | PFC    | G      | 4/14/45         |                 | MT DELLA SPE HILL 909        |
| GEORGE H CHAFEY        | 2ND LT | HQ     | 4/19/45         | 4/15/45         | CASTEL D'AIANO               |
| JOHN P CLANCY JR       | PFC    | K      | 4/19/45         | 4/15/45         | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| CECIL L CLARK          | T/5    | L      | 4/14/45         |                 | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| WARREN A CLENDENIN     | PFC    | E      | 4/14/45         |                 | SERRE D'AIANO                |
| JAMES E CLUNE          | PFC    | B      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT GORGOLESCO                |
| DANIEL J COBB          | S/SGT  | A      | 3/5/45          |                 | MT DELLA SPE                 |
| OSCAR R COFFEY         | PFC    | L      | 4/24/45         | 4/15/45         | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| JOSEPH P COIRO         | PFC    | E      | 4/16/45         |                 | MT PIGNA                     |
| RICHARD H CONDO        | PFC    | G      | 4/14/45         |                 | MT DELLA SPE HILL 909        |
| WILLIAM J CONNER       | CPL    | A      | 4/14/45         |                 | C DEL CONTE                  |
| LEONARD M CONWAY       | PVT    | E      | 4/14/45         |                 | SERRE D'AIANO                |
| SAMUEL T COOK          | PFC    | B      | 4/19/45         |                 | OST                          |
| ROBERT A COOLEY        | PVT    | M      | 3/3/45          |                 | LE TANE                      |
| WILLIAM S COONS        | PVT    | A      | 4/14/45         |                 | C DEL CONTE                  |
| JAMES J CORRIGAN       | PFC    | E      | 3/11/45         |                 | MT DELLA CASTELLANA          |
| GEORGE O COX           | PFC    | K      | 4/15/45         |                 | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| HUGH E CRAVEN          | PFC    | HQ 2ND | 4/16/45         |                 | FAMATICCIA                   |
| TOMMIE L CREEL         | PFC    | F      | 2/21/45         |                 | MT DELLA TORRACCIA           |
| JOSEPH P CROKE         | PFC    | G      | 2/23/45         |                 | CAPPLA DI RONCHIDOS          |
| ELBERT W CRONIN        | PFC    | M      | 4/15/45         |                 | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| COVILLE G CROOKER      | PVT    | SVC    | 2/20/45         |                 | MT GORGOLESCO                |
| TERENCE J CULLEN       | PFC    | B      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT GORGOLESCO                |
| THOMAS J DANFORD       | PFC    | C      | 2/21/45         |                 | MT GORGOLESCO                |
| ROBERT H DAVIS         | PFC    | L      | 3/5/45          |                 | LE TANE                      |
| HARRY G DAVY JR        | PFC    | K      | 4/14/45         |                 | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| JOSEPH L DE ROSE       | PVT    | G      | 2/22/45         |                 | MT DELLA TORRACCIA HILL 1036 |
| EDWIN C DEARBORN       | PFC    | I      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT BELVEDERE                 |
| ARTHUR L DELANEY       | S/SGT  | D      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT GORGOLESCO                |
| DELMAS J DEVENGER      | PFC    | C      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT GORGOLESCO                |
| EUGENE C DEVOWE        | SGT    | B      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT GORGOLESCO                |
| ALBERT E DIENER        | 2ND LT | H      | 4/15/45         |                 | MT DELLA SPE HILL 909        |
| RICHARD C DIEROLF      | PFC    | L      | 4/14/45         |                 | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| VLADIMIR L DIETRICH    | PVT    | G      | 2/21/45         |                 | CAPPLA DI RONCHIDOS          |
| JOHN J DOLAN JR        | PFC    | HQ 2ND | 2/20/45         |                 | CAPPLA DI RONCHIDOS          |
| STANLEY J DOLECKI      | T/4    | L      | 4/15/45         |                 | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| JOHN F DOYLE           | SGT    | G      | 2/22/45         |                 | MT DELLA TORRACCIA HILL 1036 |
| EDWARD S DRYKA         | PFC    | HQ     | 3/5/45          |                 | CANEVACCIA                   |
| CHARLES F DUBOIS       | PVT    | F      | 4/23/45         |                 | PO RIVER                     |
| JOHN E DUBZINSKI       | S/SGT  | C      | 4/22/45         |                 | BOMPORTO                     |
| JOSEPH B DUDLEY        | PFC    | M      | 4/15/45         |                 | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| MAYNARD L EASLEY       | PFC    | K      | 2/22/45         |                 | MT GORGOLESCO                |
| ERNEST EASTHAM         | PFC    | I      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT BELVEDERE                 |
| JESSE H EDEN           | PFC    | G      | 3/5/45          |                 | MT DELLA SPE HILL 866        |
| WILLIAM H EDWARDS      | PFC    | K      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT BELVEDERE                 |
| RICHARD J ELMER        | PFC    | F      | 2/21/45         |                 | MT DELLA TORRACCIA           |
| DUDLEY R EMERSON       | S/SGT  | A      | 3/5/45          |                 | MT DELLA SPE                 |
| KENNETH H ENGLAND      | CAPT   | M      | 4/15/45         | 4/14/45         | CASTEL D'AIANO HILL 913      |
| CHARLES R ENGLE        | SGT    | L      | 3/5/45          |                 | LE TANE                      |
| EUGENE A EPSTEIN       | CPL    | G      | 2/21/45         |                 | CAPPLA DI RONCHIDOS          |
| PETER T ERSDALE        | CPL    | M      | 2/20/45         |                 | MT BELVEDERE                 |
| WILLIE H EVERHART      | PFC    | G      | 4/14/45         |                 | MT DELLA SPE HILL 909        |
| OTTO C FABER           | T/4    | F      | 4/23/45         |                 | PO RIVER                     |
| VIRGIL N FARRIS        | PFC    | G      | 4/15/45         |                 | MARZOLA HILL 762             |
| CLARENCE R FAULKNER JR | SGT    | E      | 3/5/45          |                 | MT DELLA CASTELLANA          |