

ANNEX NO. 2

Citation, 2d Battalion,
442d Regimental Combat Team

file
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HEADQUARTERS
442D REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM
APO #464 U. S. ARMY

By *PT* NARA Date *4/14/83*
Authority *NND 735012*
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4 June 1945

SUBJECT: Citation of Unit.

TO : Commanding General, Fifth Army, APO #464, U. S. Army.

1. Under the provisions of Circular Number 333, War Department, 1943, it is recommended that the SECOND BATTALION, 442d Regimental Combat Team, be cited in War Department General Orders for outstanding accomplishment in combat on 19-20 October 1944, near Bruyeres, France, the period 28-29 October 1944, near Biffontaine, France, and during the period from 6-10 April 1945, in the vicinity of Massa, Italy.

2. The actions of the Second Battalion for which it is being recommended for a Unit Citation are: (a) the capture of Hill 503, 1 kilometer northeast of Bruyeres, France; (b) the two-day operation that resulted in the taking of Hill 617, 4 kilometers northeast of Biffontaine, France; (c) the five-day operation that resulted in the complete collapse of the German outer defenses of the Green Line east of the Ligurian Coast which in turn paved the way for the liberation of Massa and Carrara, Italy.

a. After fighting its way into the town of Bruyeres, France, on the morning of 19 October 1944, the Second Battalion attacked at 1000A hours with Companies E and G leading the assault on Hill 503, located east of the town. Although meeting heavy artillery fire Companies E and G pressed back enemy infantry on the slopes of the hill and had it secured by 1145 hours. With Company F remaining in close support on the top of thickly wooded Hill 503, Companies E and G reorganized and moved forward again at 1300 with the objective of reaching the railroad embankment 2000 yards east of Bruyeres on the edge of the Foret de Belmont. Enemy troops dug in behind the embankment and SP guns firing from the vicinity of Belmont, held up the advance at 1600. However, under the support of friendly artillery fire directed at the SP positions, Companies E and G continued forward and reached their objective at 1800 hours. 16 prisoners were taken. Inasmuch as the units on the battalion's flanks had not advanced, the Second Battalion, together with elements of the Third Battalion which had been attacking in coordination with the Second, now formed a salient 2000 yards deep in enemy territory. Faced with an enemy MLR along the railroad embankment made up of machine guns, mortars and mine fields, Companies E and G were forced to dig in for the night 75 yards from the embankment. During the day's action the battalion sustained casualties of 2 KIA, 5 MIA and 15 WIA.

The following morning the two forward companies began receiving small arms fire from their flanks and their rear from Hill 503 which had been cleared the previous day. This enemy small arms fire also

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interdicted the road leading around the hill toward Belmont and the road junction where engineers were attempting to clear mines in preparation for a tank attack. A supply party was also attacked on the slopes of Hill 503. The CO of the Second Battalion Headquarters Company and a sergeant were killed when they with a hastily organized combat patrol from Headquarters Company went to relieve the pinned down supply group. As the Second Battalion's flanks were still exposed it was apparent that some enemy elements had infiltrated under cover of darkness back to the slopes of Hill 503 in unknown strength. When Company F, reinforced by a mortar platoon of Company H armed with carbines and operating as riflemen, was ordered by the Battalion Commander to neutralize this fire on Hill 503 and to give closer support to the leading companies, it drew extremely heavy fire which prevented any advance. A platoon of G Company was detached and turned back to harass the rear of enemy troops attacking Company F in an attempt to relieve some of the pressure on the latter company. A reconnaissance party from Company F was ordered forward by the Company Commander to determine the strength and extent of the enemy infiltration because he feared that an enemy counterattack at this time would split the battalion's exposed left flank wide open and also threaten the forward movement of Companies E and G. The reconnaissance party worked its way 150 yard through the thick forest and discovered that the enemy forces had occupied emplacements which a short time before had been held by one of the forward companies which had since moved up. The enemy had set up at least 4 machine guns and 2 automatic rifle emplacements and had occupied a part of the hill mass in company force. During this period Companies E and G, attacking the railroad embankment were, in turn, attacked by 3 enemy tanks supported by infantry coming from the vicinity of Belmont. A bazookaman from Company G fired his weapons and succeeded in halting one tank and forcing the other two to withdraw. Friendly artillery was adjusted on the supporting enemy infantry and they, too, retreated. The attack on the embankment continued. Orders were issued by the Battalion Commander to Company F to clear the Hill and join the forward companies. At 1600 hours the first and third platoons together with a platoon of the heavy weapons company, made a daring frontal attack. Meanwhile the second platoon had infiltrated around the enemy's flank until it covered the only corridor of escape and offered flanking and enfilade fire on the enemy positions. This platoon's fire kept the enemy down and permitted the frontal attack to advance through the pine trees and heavy brush. Closing in on the enemy at point-blank range the first and third platoon threw hand grenades and shot anti-tank grenades into every machine gun nest and automatic weapon emplacement. Startled enemy troops died before they realized what had struck them. In half an hour of savage action almost the entire enemy company was wiped out. The company CP with complete records was captured together with a captain and a first sergeant. Six machine gun nests were destroyed and numerous automatic weapons and small arms with ammunition were seized. In the entire operation 20 enemy troops were captured, 10 wounded captured and 125 killed. The skill and precision of the attack was attested to by the fact that in the assault only three light casualties were sustained by Company F.

With the complete destruction of the enemy forces on Hill 503 the Second Battalion had eliminated a determined enemy move to disrupt

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the 442d Regiment's efforts to assault the German MIA along the rail-road embankment. Moreover, by destroying the enemy forces on Hill 503, the Second Battalion had eliminated a potential enemy threat to control the routes of supply leading from the key road junction village of Bruyeres where the Regimental and Divisional CPs were located.

b. The operation against Hill 617 occurred during the period 28-29 October 1944, against a strongly entrenched enemy force of 250 men. This force, composed of remnants of a Battalion of the 308th Grenadier Regiment, remnants of the 305th Regiment and the 202d Mountain Battalion, was also known as the Battle Group Conrad. The basis of the Second Battalion's operation was a single axis envelopment by two rifle companies in the main attack. It resulted in the killing of 100 and the capturing of 95 of the enemy with a loss to the Battalion of 9 wounded and 5 killed.

The Second Battalion had returned to a rest area after two weeks of steady fighting but was immediately alerted at 1400 hours 25 October 1944 and attached to the 141st Infantry Regiment. At 0300 hours 26 October 1944 the Battalion relieved the 3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry in position. It was immediately engaged in a firefight with an estimated force of 100 enemy troops with machine gun support and who were strongly entrenched across the valley. The enemy was dug in on the steep and wooded ridges running North and West from Hill 617. From these positions his machine guns raked the length of the valley which ran in a Northwesterly direction. On his right flank and in the vicinity of Hill 617 the enemy had two 120mm mortars and SP guns reinforced by small arms. A direct assault to capture Hill 617 would necessitate crossing the valley in the face of this interlocking fire and heavy shelling by enemy artillery.

The mission of the Second Battalion was protect the 36th Division's left flank and to maintain contact with the right flank of the 3rd Division which held the sector to the North. Company G held the right flank of the Battalion with a platoon across the valley at the base of the enemy held ridge. Company E held the center and Company F the left flank. (See overlay). Strong enemy forces held the heavily forested Eastern slope of the valley between 200 and 300 yards away from our troops. Other enemy troops occupied some of the houses in the valley. Company G was unable to move because of heavy automatic and sniper fire from the ridge to its front.

At 1100 hours on 28 October 1944, the Second Battalion, continuing its assigned mission and now returned to the command of the C.O. 442d Infantry, began the operation to capture Hill 617. Companies E and F moved along the West side of the valley in a Northwesterly direction toward Halley (see overlay) and entered the 7th Infantry Regimental sector. They crossed the valley, ascended Hill 563 and moved on to Hill 565 which was occupied by other elements of the 3rd Division. On Hill 585 Company F passed through Company E which took up positions to protect the rear and flanks of Company F. The latter company then advanced to Hill A (see overlay). The night was spent in these positions. Prisoners had been taken during the movement. In the evening an officer from Company F led a platoon patrol through the enemy lines at the base of the ridge opposite Hill A, seized 13 more prisoners, and circling north, made contact with Company G in the valley. Among the 20

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prisoners taken during the day was the Battalion Commander of the 802d Mountain Battalion, a newly arrived enemy unit. The Second Battalion suffered three WIA during the day's action.

On 29 October 1944, the attack was continued in a column of companies with Company F leading. Strong enemy automatic weapon, rifle, rifle grenade and mortar fire was received early in the attack. However, smashing forward and routing the enemy from dugout to dugout Companies E and F finally succeeded in clearing the top of Hill 617. 41 prisoners were taken during this phase of the operation. When the above mentioned phase had been completed Company G immediately launched a two platoon frontal attack on the hill. The enemy met the attack with a heavy concentration of small arms, machine gun and mortar fire. As Company G engaged the enemy to the front Company E attacked from the rear, after passing through Company F, and made a substantial advance before the enemy rallied to meet this new threat. Company F, in the meantime, advanced to the East and South edges of the flat top of Hill 617 to protect the rear of Company E in its advance down the ridge toward Company G. The third platoon of Company E, consisting of 22 men, spearheaded the attack toward Company G. The first and second lines of the enemy defenses were mopped up in a rapid succession but the men were pinned down for a short time by the third and final defense line fire. A one-man charge by a soldier with an automatic weapon followed by another man succeeded in clearing the way for the platoon to charge the well dug in enemy positions. Hand grenades finally dislodged the stubbornly resisting troops. As the prisoners were being rounded up and the platoon reorganized an enemy force of 12 men with small arms and supported by 4 automatic weapon teams attacked the platoon's left flank. The automatic rifleman checked the enemy's charge until the platoon could form a skirmish line. The platoon guide took a BAR man and two others on a flanking movement to the right and opened fire. This move kept the enemy fire neutralized until the platoon, making a frontal attack, over-ran the enemy troops and killed or captured them all. Company E made contact with Company G at 1800 hours. 34 prisoners were taken in this phase of the enveloping movement which wiped out the enemy force on Hill 617.

In addition to 100 enemy killed and 95 captured, and considerable amount of materiel destroyed or captured, with slight losses to the Second Battalion, the operation eliminated a serious threat to the left flank of the 36th Division and also to the right flank of the 3rd Division. It also opened a paved supply route from Halley to the right flank units of the 36th Division and made impossible the reinforcement of other enemy positions through Hill 617.

c. The Second Battalion displayed outstanding aggressiveness, determination and esprit de corps in the 5 day operation during the period 6-10 April 1945 which culminated in the cracking of the German outer defenses of the Green Line extending along the Ligurian coastal sector of the 5th Army in Italy. In this operation the Regimental zone of advance extended along the East side of Highway 1 and approached the communication center of Massa from the Southeast. The well fortified key points in the sector were a series of peaks, Mt. Correta, Mt. Frapolita, Mt. Carchio and Mt. Belvedere, ranging in height from 2700

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to 3300 feet. Extending in a South-North direction, these peaks commanded the flat coastal plain leading to Massa and Carrara and had resisted all previous assaults by other elements in a 5 month stalemate. Committed to spearhead the attack on these formidable positions the 442d ICG formulated a plan of attack which called for one battalion to assault the key defense positions frontally from the South, while another battalion enveloped Mt. Frapolita, took Mt. Carchio and sent elements to Mt. Cerreto to join the battalion attacking from the South. The Second Battalion, designated the reserve battalion in the initial attack, was to move from its reserve position through the Frapolita-Carchio ridge and was to send one company westward along the ridge, Co Tecchione, to join the elements of the other battalion swinging North along the left flank.

The Second Battalion, operating without the element of surprise enjoyed by the other battalions in their initial attacks and constantly hazarding a right flank exposed to strong enemy forces on Mt. Altissimo, accomplished its mission in a prompt and aggressive manner. The spectacular action of the Second Battalion during this 5-day operation resulted in the capture of Mt. Belvedere, Co Tecchione, Altagnana, Fariana and advanced the Regiment beyond the Frigide River. The well synchronized actions by the elements of the Second Battalion, while capturing the enemy strong-points, also erased the fighting potential of an enemy machine gun battalion and cleared the way for an unopposed entry into the important centers of Massa and Carrara.

The preparatory actions of the Second Battalion commenced at 2130B hours, 5 April 1945, when it exploited the success of the surprise assaults of the other two battalions by moving out of its reserve position and followed the steep path up to the Frapolita-Carchio ridge. The following day the battalion was forced to mop up and consolidate its positions on the forward slopes of Mt. Carchio preparatory to attacking its objective, Mt. Belvedere, the dominating terrain feature overlooking Massa. One platoon of Company F advanced to the Western base of Mt. Carchio and cleared two knolls situated in the saddle between the mountain and Mt. Belvedere which had hampered the other elements of the battalion operating on Mt. Carchio. The platoon neutralized several sniper and machine gun positions and killed 2 and captured 4 enemy troops. Company F then dug positions on the Eastern Slope of Mt. Carchio. Heavy mortar and artillery fire as well as several counterattacks were launched against this company and also against Company E on the Northern slopes and Company G on the Southern slopes of Mt. Carchio. The Battalion suffered 2 KIA and 10 WIA during the day's action.

The following morning at 0700 hours, after a heavy artillery preparation, Company F attacked Mt. Belvedere. Company E held the slopes of Mt. Carchio and Company G remained in Battalion reserve. The third platoon of Company F cleared the first strategic knoll on Mt. Belvedere without much opposition. The assault on the second knoll (891) was met by the interlocking crossfire of two machine guns and heavy harassing sniper fire. Despite flanking fire from machine guns and rifle fire from the third knoll (897) on Mt. Belvedere, the second knoll was secured by 1900 hours and the Company moved ahead to the third and highest knoll. However, because the Company was low on ammunition it was decided to dig in and await the replenishment of supplies. Company F suffered 2 KIA and 11 WIA in the day's action. During the night the enemy directed

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heavy mortar and artillery fire on Mt. Belvedere which caught Company H as it was hand-carrying supplies and ammunition up the steep slopes of the mountain. Long range coastal guns, SP guns and mortars placed fire on the Battalion aid stations, the rear Battalion CP and the main supply depot located near Azzano. In order to effectively supply the Battalion all available personnel, reinforced by 143 men from the Provisional Company of the Regiment and 50 Italian civilians, hand-carried all ammunition and ration to the forward companies from Azzano, a trip requiring 6 to 8 hours over terrain which was too precipitous for mule-trains.

The following morning at 0645 hours, 8 April 1945, Company F resumed its attack on the third and highest knoll of Mt. Belvedere. Taking the enemy by surprise, the company secured knoll 897 and cleared Mt. Belvedere of enemy forces by 0830 hours. In the spirited attack on this knoll, 20 enemy were killed and 30 captured. In clearing the objective, 6 machine guns were captured and an unknown number of automatic and sniper positions were destroyed.

In a pre-conceived and well-coordinated plan of action, Company G, prior to Company F's attack on knoll 897, left its positions on Mt. Carchio, passed through F Company on Mt. Belvedere and moved West with orders to attack Cile Tecchione, a spur-shaped 2000 yard ridge running from Mt. Belvedere to the Eastern vicinity of Massa. Synchronized with Company F's successful assault on knoll 897, this attack would cause an effective diversion for the battalion's main operation North of Mt. Belvedere. At the same time, it would block an estimated 200 enemy troops on Cile Tecchione from making a flank attack on the newly won positions of Mt. Belvedere. With the ridge secured and in coordination with another battalion's attack below the ridge Massa would be untenable to the enemy. Company G launched the attack at 1200 hours, despite constant enemy mortar and artillery fire which attempted to stall the assault. Advancing with two platoons attacking abreast, Company G was met by fire from 3 machine guns placed along the edge of a wooded area after reaching half-way across the exposed ground. After engaging in a stiff 3 hour firefight, the Company destroyed the 3 machine guns and 4 50mm mortars. It also killed 8 and captured 6 enemy troops who were members of the Commando Company of the Kesselring Machine Gun Battalion. The Company was then faced by an enemy strongpoint on Hill 381. In assaulting this hill, it killed an additional 14 troops, destroyed 3 machine guns and an unknown number of automatic weapons. The ridge was taken by 2000 hours. As the company dug in, mortar and SP barrages hit the area and the enemy launched several counterattacks. With the support of Company H's machine guns, Company G repulsed these enemy attempts to regain the ridge. Despite the fierce fight on rugged terrain, the Company suffered 3 KIA and 11 WIA.

While the fight for Cile Tecchione raged, the battalion was ordered to take Pariana and Altagnana, two villages located Northwest and North of Mt. Belvedere respectively, from where the enemy directed heavy mortar and SP fire and from where they mustered reserves to counterattack the hard won positions on Mt. Belvedere. Pariana also housed the headquarters of the Kesselring Machine Gun Battalion which formed the nucleus of the German defense troops. At 1800, Company E was committed and it sent one platoon toward Altagnana. The second platoon of Company F headed toward Pariana. A heavy concentration of mortar, SP and long-range machine gun fire, which raked their routes of

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advance on the forward slopes of Mt. Belvedere, gave an indication of the strength of the German forces. Moving forward in the face of this fire, both companies had platoons on the outskirts of their objectives by 2400. A patrol of Company F went to reconnoiter Pariana and withdrew after drawing heavy fire. Partisans reported that Pariana was occupied by 150 Germans, supported by 8 machine guns, 8 81mm mortars, an SP gun, a tank and a scout car, while 30 troops were assembled at Altagnana. Throughout the day's operation, the battalion suffered 4 KIA, 33 WIA and 1 MIA.

The following morning, 9 April 1945, the battalion resumed its coordinated attack on Altagnana and Pariana. Attacking in conjunction with Company F's attack from the East on Pariana, Company E stormed and occupied Altagnana after a short firefight. The Second platoon of Company F spearheaded the assault on Pariana and coordinated its attack with Company E's drive into Altagnana. Three armored vehicles and supporting infantry counter-attacking toward Altagnana from Pariana were encountered by the platoon. This counterattack was dispersed with rifle grenades. In pacing the advance to Pariana, the platoon killed 12 and wounded 16 German troops. The second platoon of Company F strove to capitalize on this initial success and aided by supporting machine gun fire from Company H, launched a bold frontal and flank attack by squads without waiting for reinforcements. This attack cleared the upper and western fringe of Pariana and killed 4 enemy troops, captured 12 more troops, 8 81mm mortars, 275 cases of mortar shells, 1 house full of ammunition, a German radio set, maps, documents, and a "300" radio set intact. The enemy recovered and counterattacked with two half-tracks and supporting foot troops at 1200. The platoon drove back this enemy attempt by using the captured mortars. Another counterattack a few minutes later was thrown back with hand grenades, machine gun and small arms fire. At 1400, battered by point-blank SP fire and machine gun fire which came from both flanks, front and left rear, the platoon was forced back 150 yards. At 1500, other elements of the battalion which included a platoon from Company E and the first and third platoons of Company F came to the support of the lone platoon. These elements immediately launched a coordinated attack on the town. In close house to house fighting, they killed 61 Germans, captured 60 (including 3 officers), destroyed or captured 4 50mm mortars and destroyed 3 machine guns. By nightfall, Pariana had been secured by the Second Battalion and the main strength of the Kesselring Machine Gun Battalion rendered ineffective.

While these elements of the Second Battalion were capturing Pariana and Altagnana, Company G fought off numerous counterattacks by the Germans to retake Cle Tecchione and Hill 391. In conjunction with elements of the supporting battalion, Company G broke up the enemy attacks and began mopping up operations. By 2000 hours the important ridge was definitely secured and the way to Massa cleared.

During the night of the 9th, Companies E and F sent out patrol across the Frigido River to maintain contact with the enemy who was expected to make a stand across the river. With the Second Battalion commanding all the high ground and another battalion of the 442d RCT moving along the left flank, the sector to the right and north of Massa was secured. Due to the successful attacks by the Second Battalion on the resisting enemy forces in Pariana and Mt. Belvedere, it was able to advance, without much opposition, beyond the Frigido River to Mt.

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Brugiana, a 2990 foot peak dominating Carrara, and the peak secured by 1600 hours, 10 April 1945. With the Second Battalion in command of the high ground overlooking Massa and by rendering a German unit ineffective, elements of another regiment were able to move into the vital communication center of Massa without opposition on 10 April 1945. Carrara was also occupied the following day by another battalion of the 442d RCT without opposition after the Second Battalion had advanced to Mt. Brugiana overlooking that city.

In the five-day period, the Second Battalion fought over terrain so rough and mountainous that it necessitated the hand-carrying of all supplies throughout the period. The battalion suffered losses of 10 KIA, 72 WIA and 1 MIA, while inflicting losses on the enemy of approximately 107 dead, 15 wounded and 102 captured. In addition to accomplishing its mission with excellent results, it destroyed 20 machine guns, 8 heavy mortars, 8 light mortars, and captured or destroyed tons of ammunition and other materiel, and an unknown number of automatic weapons, rifles and grenades.

The importance of the capture of Massa and the strategic heights of Mt. Belvedere and Mt. Brugiana is emphasized in a letter from Major General Willis D. Crittenger, Commanding General of the IV Corps, to Major General E. H. Almond, 99d Division Commander. Commenting on the actions in this sector, General Crittenger says in part: "The crossing of the Cinquale Canal and the capture of Massa, Mt. Belvedere and Mt. Brugiana mark an accomplishment that is most gratifying to all of us. The enemy was overwhelmed by the pressure of your advance as shown by the large number of prisoners of war that were captured".

3. Sketch: See attached overlays.

4. a. Nature of terrain: Actions on Hill 503 and Hill 617 took place in the foothills of the Vosges Mountains of Eastern France, over steep, heavily-forested hills, where thick undergrowth and rocky formations gave enemy troops good cover and concealment, and added the artillery hazard of treebursts. The 5 day action in Italy took place in the Appennine Ranges along the Ligurian Coast whose rugged and precipitous slopes necessitated the hand-carrying of all supplies.

b. Enemy morale: Good, stubborn.

c. Morale of our troops: Excellent.

d. Weather: Freezing temperatures in the Vosges Mountains were an added hardship, with numerous cases of trenchfoot developing. The days in the Appennine Ranges were generally clear and sunny making weather good.

5. a. Number of men assigned to unit cited who took part in a action: In the capture and securing of Hill 503, 675 men of the Second Battalion saw action. In the encircling movement and taking of Hill 617, 714 men entered action. In the 5 day Italian action, 942 men entered action on 6 April; 937 on 7 April; 966 on 8 April; 966 on 9 April and 965 men on 10 April.

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- b. Number of casualties suffered by unit cited: On 19 October the battalion had 2 KIA, 5 MIA and 15 WIA; on 20 October 15 KIA and 53 WIA, but in the half-hour assault on Hill 503 itself the battalion suffered 3 WIA. On 28 and 29 October the battalion sustained casualties of 5 KIA and 9 WIA. In the 5 day Italian action between 6 and 10 April the battalion had 10 KIA, 72 WIA and 1 MIA.
- c. Approximate strength of supporting troops and character of support rendered by other units: Third Battalion, 442d RCT held the right flank on 19-20 October 1944. Attached for support were elements of Cannon Co and Anti-tank Co of the 442d RCT. On Hill 617, elements of Cannon and Anti-tank Cos, 442d RCT rendered support to the Battalion. In the Italian phase of the Battalion's operations, the Third Battalion, 442d RCT, held the left flank; 599th FA Bn rendered direct support to the 442d RCT, while 329th FA Bn and Cannon Co, 442d RCT reinforced the 599th FA Bn. Other supporting elements: Anti-tank Co, 442d RCT, 1 platoon; 232d Engineers, 442d RCT, 1 squad; Provisional Company, 143 men as litterbearers and carrying parties; 57th Fighter Group, XXII Tactical Air Command.
6. a. Approximate strength of enemy: About 150 enemy troops of a company, occupied Hill 503. On Hill 617 there were about 250 enemy troops, according to G2 report. The 2nd Bn, 231st Panzer Grenadier Regt, supported by the Kesselring Machine Gun Battalion and the 3rd Btry, 1046th PA opposed the Battalion in the Appennine Ranges.
- b. Character of enemy fire: On Hill 503 enemy troops manned at least six machine guns in dug-in positions, 12 captured Bren guns, and numerous other automatic weapons. The enemy had five machine guns on high ground covering length of valley which had to be crossed in order to take Hill 617. On his right flank and around Hill 617 he had placed two 120mm mortars and SP guns, reinforced by mortar, automatic and small arms fire. He was given strong artillery support. This interlocking fire completely covered the valley and would have made a frontal attack costly. Enemy observation from the hill and ridge tops was good and he had clear visibility and fields of fire across and up the valley. In the Appennine Ranges he had numerous machine gun and automatic weapons emplaced in strongly fortified positions on commanding heights which gave him excellent fields of fire and observation. He was given excellent mortar, SP, artillery and coastal gun support. Missipers were active throughout the 5 day action.
- c. Apparent enemy intention or objective: At Hill 503 to mount a counterattack in company strength that would disrupt our left flank and break up our forward movement. At Hill 617, to hold this flank at all cost to prevent the divisional advance in that sector. In Northern Italy, the enemy was determined to resist a break-through by the Allies to the Po Valley.

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d. Losses suffered by enemy: At Hill 503, the enemy losses were 56 captured, 10 wounded and more than 100 killed. Six machine guns, 12 Bren (captured) guns, numerous automatic rifles and small arms, as well as ammunition were captured. At Hill 617, approximately 95 were captured, 100 killed, and automatic weapons, small arms and ammunition were also taken. Between 6 and 10 April 1945, the Second Battalion inflicted losses on the enemy of approximately 100 killed, 100 captured, 15 wounded, 20 machine guns destroyed, 16 mortars captured or destroyed plus ammunition, materiel, automatic weapons, rifles and grenades either captured or destroyed.

7. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated in this recommendation.

8. PROPOSED CITATION: The SECOND BATTALION, 442d Regimental Combat Team, is cited for outstanding accomplishment in combat on 19- and 20 October 1944, in the capture of Hill 503 near Bruyeres, France, during the period 28 and 29 October 1944, in the capture of Hill 617 near Biffontaine, France, and during the 5 day action from 6 to 10 April 1945 which effected the complete collapse of the outer defenses of the Green Line along the Ligurian Coast in Northern Italy. When the two forward companies of the Second Battalion, E and G, were faced by an enemy MIA named by machine gun nests, mortar positions and mine fields, to their front, and began receiving fire from their flanks and rear directed from Hill 503, which they had swept the previous day, a concerted action by all elements of the Battalion became necessary to expedite forward movement beyond Bruyeres and to erase the threat from the rear. While E and G Companies pressed the attack on the MIA, F Company was ordered to clear Hill 503 to which the enemy had infiltrated and had set up six machine guns, 12 Bren guns (captured), and numerous automatic weapons. A G Company platoon engaged the enemy rear and took some pressure off from Company F. The second platoon infiltrated around the enemy's flank and covered the only escape route. While this platoon offered flanking and enfilade fire, the first and third platoons of Company F, together with a mortar platoon from Company E, operating as riflemen, staged a daring frontal assault on the hill, closing in on the enemy at point-blank range with hand grenades and rifle grenades, and firing from the hip. In the savage half-hour action, the startled enemy company was almost completely wiped out by the daring of the assault. The attack killed 125, wounded 10, and captured 20 enemy troops. The company CP with complete records was captured together with a captain and a first sergeant. Six machine guns were destroyed and numerous automatic weapons and small arms with ammunition were seized. The skill and precision of the attack was attested to by the fact that in the assault itself only three men of the battalion were lightly wounded, the only casualties suffered. In addition to destroying an enemy company, the Second Battalion had eliminated a potential enemy threat to control the routes of supply leading from the key road junction town of Bruyeres where the Regimental and Divisional CPs were located. The Second Battalion troops again displayed extraordinary determination, fighting qualities and courage in capturing strategic Hill 617 in a two-day encircling operation that eliminated a threat to the

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left flank of the 36th Division and the right flank of the 3rd Division; opened a paved supply route to the 36th Division right flank units and made impossible the reinforcement of the enemy positions via Hill 617. This was accomplished in freezing weather, through jungle-like forests that gave the enemy excellent cover and concealment, and across an open valley covered by the interlocking fire of five machine guns, two 120mm mortars, SF guns, artillery, mortars, automatic and small arms fire. The Battalion practically wiped out the estimated 250 enemy troops on the hill, capturing 95, including a battalion commander, and killing 100. This was achieved at a cost of 5 KIA and 9 WIA.

When the Combat Team opened the Fifth Army's spring offensive against the strongly fortified enemy defenses in the Apennine Ranges along the Ligurian Coast, the Second Battalion, by exploiting the initial surprise assaults by the other two battalions a day previous, completed a break-through which carried the Combat Team beyond the Frigido River and paved the way for an unopposed entry into the vital communication centers of Massa and Carrara, Italy. Moving from reserve to the forward slopes of Mt. Carchie where it completed mopping up and consolidating operations on the 6th of April, the following morning at 0700 hours, the Second Battalion launched its assault on 3000 foot Mt. Belvedere with Company F leading. Although meeting stiff resistance and subjected to the interlocking fire of machine guns, snipers and mortars, two strategic knolls on Mt. Belvedere were cleared by nightfall and digging in for the night, Company F resumed the attack on a third and last knoll the following morning. The assault on this knoll was completed by 0830 hours and inflicted losses on the enemy of 20 killed, 30 captured and 6 machine guns destroyed. In coordination with the clearing of Mt. Belvedere, Company G attacked westward from Mt. Belvedere onto Cle Tecchione, a ridge extending to the eastern vicinity of Massa, and broke the stubborn and machine gun manned positions by nightfall after a fierce firefight. Closely synchronized with the taking of Cle Tecchione the Second Battalion pushed northward from Mt. Belvedere toward the Frigido River. Company E stormed and occupied the village of Altagnana, while one platoon of Company F assaulted and cleared part of the village of Pariana, capturing 8 81mm mortars intact with ammunition and other materiel, in addition to killing 4 and capturing 12. Several counterattacks led by armored cars and by select troops of an enemy machine gun battalion forced the platoon back 150 yards. Reinforced and assaulting Pariana again with the other elements of the Battalion, in close house to house fighting, 61 Germans were killed, 60 captured, 8 machine guns destroyed and 4 50mm mortars captured or destroyed. By 1700 the 9th of April Pariana was cleared and the main strength of a German machine gun battalion rendered ineffective. At the same time Company G and elements of another battalion mopped up Cle Tecchione and opened the way for an unopposed entry into Massa on the 10th of April. The Battalion then pushed northward and secured Mt. Brugiana, the commanding ground overlooking Carrara which was entered without opposition by another battalion on the 11th of April.

In 5 days of intense fighting over terrain which necessitated the hand-carrying of all supplies, the Second Battalion captured 102 prisoners, killed over 100, wounded 15, destroyed or captured 20 machine guns, 8 heavy mortars, 8 light mortars, numerous automatic

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weapons and small arms and tons of ammunition and supplies. The Second Battalion suffered losses of 10 killed, 72 wounded and 1 missing during the 5-day period. The courage, determination and esprit de corps displayed by the officers and men of the Second Battalion exemplify the finest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States.

V. R. MILLER
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding.

4 Incls:

- Incl: 1 - Sketch of Hill 617.
- Incl: 2 - Sketch of Italian sector
(two overlays)
- Incl: 3 - Unit roster
- Incl: 4 - Unit casualty roster.