

## Lang, Col. Edmund-1 of 5

[Speaker 11]

Oh, say can you see, by the dawn's early light, What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?

[Speaker 1]

With the playing of the National Anthem, I would like to introduce you to a battery that I thought did a tremendous job in World War II. This battery was once a part of the 34th Division. This division was made up of men who were the Iowa and Minnesota National Guard, one whose history goes back to 1861.

Regimental Headquarters Battery of the 185th Field Artillery was proud to be a part of the Red Bull Division. This battery was stationed in Davenport, Iowa, and this is where, I think, the history of the battery, Group Headquarters Battery, that is, should start. On February the 10th, 1941, the 34th Division was activated into federal service and was to move to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, to begin a year of training.

But as the camp was not quite ready, we stayed in Davenport, Iowa, and began our training, hikes, lesson on military etiquette, first aid, KP, guard duty. Oh, yes, walking guard duty at 2 a.m. was not my idea of Army life. But time passed, and it was time to leave Iowa and go to Camp Claiborne.

This was about the end of February, 1941. We left by motor convoy, and the first part of March found us in the state of Louisiana. They called it Camp Claiborne, but I know that it had other names, too.

We moved into tents, with each side of Battery Street having eight tents. At the bottom of the street was our bathhouse, and at the top was the mess hall. The truck park was a short walk from our Battery Street.

The Battery Street was good old Louisiana red clay, and when it rained, it was red gum, which stuck to your boots like glue. The battery settled into Army training, and replacements started to come in to bring the battery up to full strength. Some of our first replacements stayed with the battery all the way.

Bill Babbs, Orville Beeker, Paul Blewer, Kenny Haig, and Al Nairn. All of these men were drafted and did an excellent job. Then out to the firing range with the battalions and their 155 howitzers, RCP giving them fire problems, and the batteries firing, service battery supplying the regiment, all working to improve.

Then came the Louisiana Maneuvers. They started in August 1941 and went into September. After the maneuvers, the men were given their first furloughs.

Also, the Army gave some of the men who were older a chance to get out. Our battery had some of these, and they chose to get out. Again, we were under strength, but it was getting into November, and we all were thinking of February, when our year would be up.

But, and what a big but, December 7, 1941 came, and World War II was on. No more did we think of getting out. The end of the year found us loading our trucks and guns on flat cars for a trip, but where, we didn't know.

January found us loading on a troop train. Where to was the question. We started to head north and east.

The train stopped at Galesburg, Illinois. So many of us were so close to home, but yet so far. We continued to Chicago and then to Fort Dix, New Jersey.

We arrived late in the afternoon, and the barracks that we were to live in were in bad shape. The heat had been turned off, and the water pipes had frozen. Our mess hall was in no better shape.

It was a late meal that night. The battery was excited about being shipped overseas, and then things happened. Early in 1942, the Army triangulized the 34th Division, and Regimental Headquarters battery of the 185th Field Artillery had no home, as did the 1st Battalion of the 185th Field Artillery and the 2nd Battalion of the 125th Field Artillery.

So on the 1st of February, 1942, we became Headquarters Battery, 194th Field Artillery Group, place of organization, Fort Dix, New Jersey. The authority for organization was Paragraph 1, General Order No. 2, Headquarters 34th Infantry Division, Fort Dix, New Jersey, dated 29th of January, 1942.

And on the 1st of February, 1942, the old Regimental Band of the 185th Field Artillery Regiment became the 194th Field Artillery Group Band. The old 1st Battalion of the 185th Field Artillery became the 194th Field Artillery Battalion. The 2nd Battalion of the 125th Field Artillery became the 995th Field Artillery Battalion.

These two battalions were very close with us, the 194th Group Headquarters Battery, all through the war. Even to this day, the 194th Field Artillery Group Headquarters Battery and the 194th Field Artillery Battalion hold their reunions together. Then in March, we left Fort Dix for Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

This now brings us to our battery, the battery that all of us are so proud of. Now began the training and getting the new guns. To train and equip the men so that they would succeed was the goal of our new commander.

He was Colonel John C. Cook. He was new for us, and we wondered what kind of a man he was.

Time would tell. Training began, and new men came into the battery. Some of the older members were shipped out to cadre new artillery units.

In June 1943, we began to think just when we would be shipped out. In July, we began to get new equipment, and then we knew our time in the States would be short. We now have a full complement of men, men who have trained together and who had pride in their battery.

I must add that while in Fort Bragg, our battery had an excellent soccer team, basketball team, and in other sports we all played and enjoyed being a team. This, then, is why I think our battery was so good. To this day, there is still a very strong comradeship.

August came, and on the 11th of August at 7.05 p.m., we left by train to go to Fort Dix. We arrived at Fort Dix August 12 at 3 p.m., and at Dix we got ready for our trip overseas. Medical shots closed, and then we had to carry those impregnated gas clothes.

On August 20 at 10.30 p.m., we left Fort Dix and arrived at the New York Port of Embarkation at 2.30 a.m. on August the 21st and loaded on the USS Monterey of the Matson steamship line. Bill and I have just talked about that morning when we loaded on that ship with two barracks bags hanging around your neck, trying to choke you to death, and people asking you your name, rank, and service number. Then the Red Cross was handing out donuts.

Bill said he remembers going up that gangplank with one donut on his little finger, just what a man wanted about then, a Red Cross donut. That morning the Monterey left the dock at 10 a.m. and headed out to sea. She was fully loaded with troops.

I think there was about 8,000 men on board. This figure may be off a little, but not by much. As the ship left New York Harbor, the thoughts of the men were with our loved ones.

I suppose a tear ran down quite a few cheeks that morning. As we headed out to sea, we picked up more ships, and soon our convoy was steaming along. Ship life started that same day.

Lifeboat drills, everyone had his assigned place on these drills. Then there was fire drills. We found out that we would be fed twice a day.

I still have my mess card. Why I have kept it all these years is a mystery to me. As I recall, the meals were so-so.

Some of our people became seasick, but thanks to Kenny Haig, who had been on boats as he lived in California on the Pacific Ocean, who told us to eat even though we didn't feel like it. Keep food on the stomach, he said. We had some candy bars that we bought at the PX, and that helped, too, to keep our stomachs quiet.

Our battery was lucky on this trip. We drew staterooms. Oh, they were nice, but we were crowded.

But even so, we had it so much better than most of the troops. We had a few submarine scares, but our ship was well protected. After 11 days, we saw land.

We went through the states of Gibraltar, Africa on our right, Europe to our left. The convoy broke up on the 13th day. We docked at Oran, North Africa.

On September 2nd at 2 p.m., other parts of the convoy went on to Algiers. We unloaded and went a short distance outside of Oran on the side of a little hill. At this time, I wish to read a letter that officers of the group talked with Father Matt.

The title for this letter is The Basis of Adolf Hitler's Appeal to the German People. On a lazy summer afternoon shortly after landing in North Africa and before having been committed to combat, a group of officers of the 194th Field Artillery Group had finished with matters of official business when the question was addressed to Chaplain Madden. Did he have any ideas about the underlying source of Adolf Hitler's appeal to the German people?

Chaplain Madden was the only person in the group who had had graduate study in Europe with the exposure to scholars, students, and to others with a much better opportunity to observe and judge the meaning of events that most of us living within the United States. Those of us educated in a professional field had had little exposure to such subjects. Only Major Robert Frank had had a liberal arts background from the University of Kansas, which touched upon the question.

Father Madden said he had had the same questions and had made inquiries of German scholars and students. Their replies all appeared to include four items and to emphasize the importance of one topic above the other three. As members of the four items underlying the appeal great enough to be given control over the destiny of the German nation and to bring us to North Africa were first and foremost was the continuation of the blockade against Germany from the armistice of November 11, 1918 until sometime in May, 1919.

This prevented food from arriving and caused the death of infants, the young, and the elderly. Major Frank remarked at this time that a professor mentioned in a class that the commanders of the occupation troops had gone to their government in 1919 with the request that the blockade be lifted or they could not be certain of the discipline of their troops. Destruction of much of the middle class by inflation in 1923.

Use of vicious colonial troops to occupy the Rhineland of civilian population such as we were to see later in the north of Rome. In Italy, the French officers who provided control and civilized values had taken huge losses without replacements. These affected the Singhalese and the Moroccan troops around us.

This type of incident in Italy became known to the American public through the Sophia Moran movie, *The Woman*, about the events at Castro de Valencia. As far as I know, similar incidents from the occupation of the Rhineland were not widely known outside of Germany. Four, the effects of the Great Depression upon the German people by 1932.

These were severe enough to seek a change. This discussion was taken by the officers and hashed over the same question that the men had asked, why were we here? Of course, we didn't go into that much detail, but Colonel Lang thought that this letter ought to be on our tape.

Back again once to a history of our battery. We dug our first foxholes outside of Iran. We also saw our first air raids, but we were now getting over our trip and finding that things were done a little different overseas.

For one thing, we had to have our Atterburn tablets. That was to prevent malaria. Then the Lister bags, our drinking water source, were new, and all of the water tasted of rubber, no matter what you did to it.

So our life overseas began. I wish to read this time a letter of Father Madden and part of his sermon that he gave after we landed in North Africa. Chaplain Madden's advice to members of the 194th Field Artillery on their first Sunday in North Africa.

On the first Sunday after landing in Iran, the 194th Field Artillery Group and its attachment battalions were camped at Aym al-Turk, a short distance from a steep bluff which dropped down to the Mediterranean Sea. He addressed the men who had come to his service with remarks remembered as, We are about to participate in events which will probably be as important as any in our lives. Pay attention and observe what is happening to return home with a better understanding of what we see and of the way it will affect us in the future.

The waterway below the bluffs of the edge of this hill was the highway of the ancient world. Its great nations and empires were on its shores. Commerce and warships moved on its surface to influence their destiny and to become part of history.

While at Aym al-Turk, we started to draw equipment for battle. We had time to go swimming in the Mediterranean Sea. We had trips into Iran, but Africa didn't impress us.

Also, we attended a funeral. One of the officers in the battalion was killed in an auto accident. He was in a jeep and was hit broadside by a civilian truck.

Then we got word that we would make a 900-mile trip by truck to Bizerte, Tunisia. On September the 29th, we started our trip across North Africa. Once again, we had our eyes open.

We also came across some old battlefields, burnt-out tanks, old artillery being around. War was becoming to mean more to us. We stopped overnight in Algiers.

That was an interesting city. We arrived in Bizerte on the 3rd of October. Right away, we started training again.

Also, some of the men were able to go to the ancient city of Carthage, Tunisia. We also found out that some extra equipment would make life a little more bearable. So we did pick up a few different items.

On October the 21st, an advance party left for Italy with the 71st Headquarters Field Artillery Brigade. They landed in Naples on the 23rd of October. The rest of the battery loaded on an LST on the morning of the 5th of November, 1943 and sailed from Bizerte about 4 p.m. the same day. We were getting closer to the fighting with each move. The LST docked at Nacita, Italy at about 4 p.m. on November the 7th, 1943. That date is my birthday.

What a nice gift from Uncle Sam. We unloaded and moved to a staging area on the outskirts of Naples. That was our first encounter with the Italian people.

On November the 8th, we moved to Maddalonia and bivouacked in an olive and orange grove. And this was our first encounter with the Italian mud. On November the 10th, 1943, we were attached to the 2nd Corps.

Next day, we moved closer to the north, to Pasterone, always working our way north. On the 15th of November, 1943, the 194th Field Artillery Battalion and the 995th Field Artillery

Battalion, both 8-inch howitzers, was attached to the 194th Field Artillery Group. On November the 18th, Group Headquarters Battery of the 194th Field Artillery and the two battalions moved to a tactical position close to Presineano.

We were attached to the 71st Field Artillery Brigade, and on November the 19th, 1943, combat against the enemy began. This marked the first time that the Germans experienced our 8-inch howitzers. The 1st of December found us still by Presineano.

The Huns held the mountains and the commanding grounds. We were fighting the terrain, rain, and mud, mud everywhere. Even the four-wheeled jeeps were having a hard time of it.

On the 6th of December, 1st Lieutenant R.E. Savage and 2nd Lieutenant Floyd Lemming, pilot of the 995th Field Artillery Battalion, were shot down about 3 miles northwest of Magnano. Both officers were seen to bail out, and we reported as missing in action. On December the 19th, 1943, the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion was attached to the group.

Now we had 155 howitzers with us. December the 6th through the 15th, we fired a lot on Mount Camino. U.S. Special Troops finally took it, and we moved north, close to Magnano, in an olive grove. We had had a forward switchboard there for some time. I'm going to have Frank Ofisco and Chet Klingler and Roy Byers talk about that forward switchboard. They were the wiremen that laid the wires and tried to keep those lines in while we had that forward switchboard there.

One of the times there, right after we got into combat, we laid two lines up to a forward switchboard, and Frank Ofisco was up right around Magnano. We had a lot of trouble with trying to keep those lines in because of the shelling. Do you remember any of the incidents that we encountered there trying to keep those lines in?

[Speaker 6]

Very much. Very much so. One night, we had been out.

We had had trouble all day long that night, too, and my crew had been out. Another call came in on that same line. I decided rather than disturb them, I'd just take it myself and went out there.

I checked all the way up to the switchboard and went up to see Frankie and started back the other direction. I had a checkpoint at a tree down the mountain somewhere. I've forgotten exactly how far it was, but anyway, I checked it out there and it checked, so I went on to the next check station.

In the meantime, shells started coming in, and I lost contact with Frankie. They blew the line out behind me, and I went back to check it in again. The tree that was my checkpoint and where I had been just not very many minutes before was gone.

That's where one of the shells hit, where I'd been saying he'd taken that line.

[Speaker 1]

Frank, one time there, there were some American tanks moved in after dusk there, and the Germans heard them, but they didn't know where they were going or anything, and they

sent a patrol out that night. Do you remember the time when the patrol was up there just right around your bench forward switchboard?

[Speaker 5]

Yes, I think I remember it. As a matter of fact, the Germans were walking around, and we didn't know just about where they were, and one of the wiremen rang his telephone, and right away I grabbed it before anybody could hear the bell on the phone on the switchboard, and I told, please don't ring no damn bell. I said, just talk on the phone.

I'll have the wire open. I'll have the headset on my head, and if you have to say anything or want any kind of communication, just talk to me and whisper to me so I can hear you and give you the message back.

[Speaker 1]

Christmas was spent in the olive grove. Christmas, December the 25th, 1943. We all wondered how many more we would have to be away from our families and loved ones.

Beginning in January, our battalions became more active. From the period of January 5th to the 8th, 1944, ammo expended totaled 379 tons, 2,771 rounds of 8-inch howitzers, and 2,037 rounds of 155 howitzers. But all was not rosy.

We were also under fire. Father Madden, our Catholic chaplain, was severely wounded by incoming fire. On January 18th, we moved again.

This time to a place called Shavaro. But we found a place that had dugouts that the Germans had made. They were on the wrong side of the hill, but they were well built.

I think this area is the one spot that the men always talk about, and if possible, I'll try to get it on tape. While in this area, our guns covered a sector of 34,000 meters. In addition to supporting the U.S. forces, we also gave support to the French and to the British. I think one of the most harrowing experiences we had was when we moved up close to Casino and we took over those old German dugouts that the Germans had built. And we lived in those things for about three months. They were warm and they kept us out of the weather.

They were well built. What do you think about those days gone by, Jet?

[Speaker 8]

Well, I think about the one that just about came in the door. We'd been a foot over far enough to come right in the door, but it did explode outside, and we were saved. But, Roy, do you remember all them duds that came in behind us?

I sure do.

[Speaker 6]

I know there were several of them that planted there. It hit and didn't go off. Thank goodness there wasn't enough to be here today.

And, as you say, the dugouts were beautiful, but they were facing the wrong direction. They were on the German side instead of the American side. But they were still better than sleeping out in the hallway.

They were better than that creek we slept in and the position we was in before there, before the water would get up our tent.

[Speaker 5]

But, Jet Frank, where was he at? I was in one of those holes also. And the fact I remember is the fact that the Germans knew where those dugouts were, and they knew damn well that we were going to take them over.

So they had us zeroed in pretty goddamn well. And I remember quite a few shells landing around us. And, in fact, I think one lit up the wrong side of my tent, and they still couldn't find out how the shell lit.

And they couldn't determine which way it came from. That one tore your tent up, didn't it? It tore it up.

There was no holes in the tent at all at that particular time. That's why they couldn't find what direction the shell had come in from.

[Speaker 1]

On that particular night, I believe it was 96 shells that came into our area. And the dugout that I was in, I was right above your dugout, Jet. I was up there with Kenny Egg and Freddie Basile.

We could hear that gun fire, and then you'd wait for that boom where it hit. I don't think there were very many lines left after they finished that night, was there, Frank, that were still in service?

[Speaker 5]

No, as a matter of fact, it was hard to get in touch with the wiremen because I couldn't get in touch with them because the wires were being knocked out. At one particular time, I think I had to walk out to see someone to get in touch with them so they could come out and repair some of the lines. And when they did come out, it was kind of scary to go out there because we were still being fired upon.

Those lines had to be put into service, and those poor guys had to go out there with the shell and still repair those lines.

[Speaker 1]

Well, of all the hard times that we had there, we also had some humor there, didn't we, Jet?

[Speaker 8]

Well, yes, if you call it humor. We laughed about it afterward that we were up in the chow line getting shelled, and we had to go out on the line, and I told the rest of the crew, I said, you just stay up here, I'll go get the telephone out of the bunk down there, and then we'll take off. Well, I didn't get down there until they started shelling the fort.

And I hit the ground, and the shell exploded, and I went in, went in the dugout, and right where I was laying, another shell came in, and the guys were watching and wondered,

where's Jet? Well, he was safe. A little bit frank with a ring in the old telephone, and wondered where Jet was at.

[Speaker 5]

But I made her. Do you remember anything, Frank? Well, I think at one particular time there, we had our position, and I see a ring was going to come off, there was a little bit of a hole in the side of a hill, and he was putting his billet, they call it a billet, we call them foxholes, and he was about to put his billet there, and I saw him digging out a little, and I said, what are you doing there, fella?

He says, well, I'm going to put my billet there. I said, you're going to put your billet there? Those Germans are looking right down your throat.

I said, it won't be that long. And sure enough, he took our advice, and he went away, he didn't dig it there, but that particular night, a shell lit right where he was going to put his billet. And when he came back the next day and saw it, he came back and gave him one of his rations of liquor.

I think it was whiskey he had given us that night.

[Speaker 1]

For the rest of January, so much fighting and history took place that I will read from our book what took place. I would not want to leave any outfit out, as they all deserve to be recognized. On January the 20th, the group supported the U.S. 36th Division's effort to establish a bridgehead across the Rapido River in the vicinity of San Angelo and the demonstrations across the Gargiano River by the British 46th Division and across the Rapido River near Casino by the U.S. 34th Division. After five days, the San Angelo effort was abandoned and support was furnished to French and the U.S. 34th Division for a series of local objective attacks that at the month's end were meeting with consistent success. For the river crossing, the operations 20th to the 25th of January, 1944, units of the group expended 3,528 rounds of 155 howitzer ammunitions. That comes out to about 176 1/2 tons.

During the month, the group headquarters concerned itself largely with reconnaissance and physician studies, improvement and coordination of intelligence and communications and assistance in overcoming supply difficulties. Casualties within the group during the month totaled 34, including seven killed in action. In February 1944, we were still in our bunkers that the Germans had built.

February was an active month. The Germans shelled our positions on the 12th, the 13th, and 14th of February. We lost a radio truck, and two of our people were wounded, Corporal Fred Griffin and Lieutenant Campbell Smith.

The group as a whole lost 10 killed in action and three died of wounds. February, we fired 2,966 tons of shells. Also in February, three of our men received the Silver Star.

They were Ray Milverstedt, Al Naring, and Fred Basile. So February came to close, and we are still trying to take Cassino. Fred, I understand that while in Italy there, you received the Silver Star up around Cassino.

Will you tell us about the time and why you earned that?

[Speaker 9]

Well, I was sent out to pick up some gasoline with a personnel carrier, and I don't remember the exact amount of gallons of gasoline I had on the little truck, but it was loaded in the back. The seats were up, and it was all loaded with gas cans. Well, I'm coming down up Highway 6, pulling into the bivouac area.

They were tossing shells at me, and I pulled into the area and didn't have no problem, and I knew that I had to bring this. I was told to bring this truck up near a house that was occupied by the radio personnel. And I did what I was told to do.

I brought the truck up there, I parked it, I camouflaged it, and I started coming down. And as I get down to my spot where I had my bunk, I saw shells start coming in, and I seen a shell hit this building where the radio operators were in. And all I thought of was the gasoline truck, they're going to hit that, and they'll blow that building sky high.

So I ran back up to the thing there, and I know the truck would start right away because I just shut it off, it was hot. I started up, and I backed it around, and I drove it down into a gully close to the entrance of the bivouac area. And that was it.

[Speaker 1]

In March, the group headquarters battery was still at Casino and firing support for the New Zealand Corps. We were waiting for the attack designated Operation Dickens. On March 15th, the force bombed the abbey, and we fired to help the attack.

But the tanks were stopped at the fringe of town, and the attack lost momentum. In March, the 194th Field Artillery Battalion was relieved from attachment with our group and were shipped to Anzio. Also, we were shelled again by the Huns, and on March 28th, 96 rounds fell in three different concentrations, damage limited to wire lines, and this put our crews out to repair the damage.

On March the 29th, we moved back to San Vittore. It was at San Vittore that I think we saw just how poor and hungry some of the Italian people were, how they would scrub their clothes on the rocks of that little stream that ran by our battery, how they came down to eat what we didn't. Also here, we got two little Italian boys to do K.P. Bill will talk about that. Up by San Vittore, we picked up two young Italian boys that stayed with us as long as we were in Italy, and they helped wash pots and pans around there. Do you remember their names?

[Speaker 4]

Yes, distinctly. Sometime we'd like to see them again, if possible, ever. Their names were Orlando and his brother, Carmen.

They were somewhere between 12 and 14 years old. When they came to us, they took over after we saw they were good kids, hardworking kids, and they wanted to be with us. They took over K.P. duties and relieved all the boys that had to do K.P. duty of the outfit of that. They stayed with us all through Italy. I don't think anybody ever learned their last name.

They went all the way through Italy, and when we had to go back to Naples to ship to southern France, then we had to take them home.

We couldn't take them on a boat with us. They came out of San Vittore, though, was that right? They lived in San Vittore.

We went up, we saw their mother and father. They lived in a little old hut, whatever you call it. They had a sister, a cute little sister, about 14.

I know that they had a better life with us than they had at home.

[Speaker 1]

Thanks, Bill, for the information on those two little Italian boys. Appreciate that. In March, we fired 3,122 tons of shell.

Also, we picked up two battalions of 240 howitzers. So March came to a close. We were still trying to take Casino.

April was a month that we all remember, as it was when we lost three of our men with a direct hit on their dugout by a bomb from an enemy airplane. It happened on the 24th of April at 6.40 a.m. They were Alvin E. Bolts, Anthony Berger, and Leonard J.

Carlson. These three men were well-liked by all, and we will always remember them. April was also the month when we started to get our equipment in order and still fired support for the English and French troops.

They were getting into position for a big push. When, we didn't know. Shells fired for the month was 1,038 tons.

Also, two air medals were given. One to James F. Fournier, and one to Carl M.

Kaufman. So April came to an end. Before we go on to the next month, I talked with Bill Babbs and Bill Gruner.

On that morning when we lost the three men, they were up in the cook truck. It wasn't far from that that the bomb lit. We will listen to what they have to say.

I understand that on the morning that the planes came in and attacked our outfit at San Benitor, you two were cooking. Can you, both of you, I want Bill Babbs first, and then you, Bill Gruner, give what you saw that morning.

[Speaker 7]

Well, while I saw that morning, I noticed we always went outside, waiting for, you know, to get enough light so we could light the outside stoves. I just peeked back through the canvas of the door, and I spotted this airplane coming up the trail, and he wasn't playing around with it. He had some bullets coming right at us, and I told Bill to get his ass out of there.

So we jumped out of the kitchen truss and went in behind some big rocks, and the next thing I heard, a lot of movement up behind us, and that's when we had rusty bolts, and Carlson and Berger get killed up there, that trick of morning up there, and there was quite a

lot of excitement that morning there. I don't even recall breakfast that morning. I know Bill and I went up there, you know, to find out what we could do for them up there.

[Speaker 4]

Bill Gruner? Well, I remember, which I'll remember the rest of my life, in fact, I imagine that was one of the main things I'll remember. We went up there, and the three of them had dug a big dugout with pup fence over it.

All there was was a big hole, no sign of the three boys. So after a little while, we realized they got a direct hit, and the way I understand it, it was really a mistake. The plane was going for San Vittorio, the town, but it was a mistake, and the shell landed on right, direct hit, right on their dugout.

So I don't know how soon after that, and then several other fellas came, and I imagine there was eight or ten of us, and we went through an area, oh, well, I really can't say, but quite a lot of area, through the grass, the brush, and so on, and we picked up the pieces of the three boys. The biggest piece was probably the size of your fist, and we collected at the most one-third, I remember they put it all in a gunny sack, and it was between one-third and one-half of a gunny sack of the three boys. I still have, I picked up a torn part of about one-third of a hundred note lira, which I still have in my possession.

[Speaker 1]

Now, the three boys were Staff Sergeant Albany Bowles. I think it was technician fifth class, was it? Anthony, better known as Tony Berger.

He was a German boy, and he was our carpenter, I believe, if I remember right, for the battery, and Leonard Popper Carlson, who was a driver for the CP. Is that right? Right.

And now I have a little tape with Al Nairing on the same subject as those three boys. As a first sergeant, I know you had times when you had performed some duties that you didn't care for, such as what happened up at San Vittorio when we lost three of our men. And you had to go up there and help with the rest of the men, try to find evidence for the men that were killed.

[Speaker 3]

In order that they not be buried as unknown, we gathered their remains, and then they were shipped home with proper identification so that their families had known that they had died there in action and were not missing in action. And it is kind of a sad thing, especially with people that you had known and you had admired because they were real fine people. And I think we'll always remember them, and I think we'll always miss them.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, well, it's been nice talking with you this evening, Al, and I hope we get together quite a few more reunions.

[Speaker 3]

Well, thank you, and I'm glad I've had the opportunity to at least say a little bit of what happened to me when I was during in the service there. And the only other thing I could say

is that this is probably one of the finest group of people that I've ever worked and lived with. Yeah, I'd second that for sure.

[Speaker 1]

Thanks again, Al. You're welcome. This now brings us to the month of May, 1944.

I think that this month was one of great importance as things that happened in May had a bearing on the war, not only in Italy but the whole of Europe. The weather was getting better. There was more daylight hours.

The rumors were that a big offense was going to start soon. But for Group Headquarters Battery, we had had rumors before. The Battle of Cassino was soon to start.

If you were to ask the men of the Battery what battle or what event stood out in their mind today, I think Cassino would be their answer. As this month was so important, I will have to go to the Battery history so as not to overlook anything, any place, or anybody. Once again, I now see why this Battery was so great.

All did a tremendous job. From the lowest private to the highest general, all worked to get a victory at Cassino. The units of the group in the first four months of the Cassino barrier fired a total of 11,006 tons of ammunition.

The group prepared for the operation known as Operation Honker to the XIII Corps British. Prior to 11 May at 2300 hours, the object was to penetrate the Gustav Line and capture Cassino. The historical artillery preparation started promptly at 2300 hours, 11 May, and the infantry started to cross the Rapido River in boats 45 minutes after the preparation began.

Yeah, Burdette, can you recall anything outstanding when you were with the 194th overseas that stands out in your mind during your service with the group headquarters battery?

[Speaker 10]

Probably one of the most memorable occasions was when we were stalled at Cassino for the period of time when they had brought in so much artillery and when the big push-off came, we were able to, from our location up on the mountain, see the valley, and it just was like fireworks, the amount of artillery that opened up that night with all the artillery that opened up, and it was a sight that you'd just never seen before and probably will never see again.

[Speaker 1]

The attack breached the Gustav Line along the Gargiano River in the French Zone and later after considerable hard fighting in the Leir Valley. On the 18th of May, the Polish Corps completed the envelopment of Cassino and the Monte di Cassino. Both fell then, seven days after the start of the attack.

Attack of the Hitler Line through the Aquino-Panico Burro quickly followed the breaching of the Gustav Line. The vigorous pressing of the attack after breaching the Gustav Line by the French Corps captured Mount Malojo and flanked the line. The Hitler Line, consisting of extensive wire entanglement, dugouts for the use of personnel, minefields, steel and concrete bunkers, anti-tank guns, and prepared MKV tank turrets.

Penetration in the Leir Valley proved most difficult. The Canadian Corps relieved the British 8th Indian Division for this effort on the 18th of May. Group units supported the operation in the zone of all four corps.

The fire of the 995 Field Artillery Battalion 8-inch howitzers on Aquino, according to a letter from the commanding general of the 6th Agra, made the artillery history for the future generations. The group moved into the heart of the line on the outskirts of Panico Burro. The same afternoon, the town fell from its supporting position in the vicinity of San Grego.

From the 18th of May until the end of the month, the group supported the pursuit of the enemy following his withdrawal from the Hitler Line. This support was rendered from successive positions in the vicinity of Panico Burro, Pico, Pastino, and Castro del Volcini. The speedy advance limited road net and narrow sector of the 2nd Division.

Infantry moroccan between the Saco River and the mountains to the south prevented the emplacement of all units of the group. The group command post was shelled on the 22nd of May without casualties or damage. The absence of heavy enemy shelling was a big relief to all personnel of the group.

The enemy withdrawal accounted for this as his artillery was constantly being displaced to the north. Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, Commanding General, 5th Army, visited the 194th Field Artillery Group on the 8th of May while in position in the 8th Army British sector.

He was accompanied by Army Artillery Officer, Brigade General Thomas E. Lewis, and the Commanding General of the 13th Field Artillery Brigade, Colonel C.C. Bank. The group headquarters battery had been on the attack of the Abbey of Casino from January through May.

I think we and the 995 Field Artillery Battalion were the only American outfit that completed what it had started out to do. That was to take Casino. So the month of May came to a close.

Now that May has passed, I asked Chet, Roy, and Frank about the different troops that we had worked with. And this was the answer that they gave. We had dealings then with the Canadian troops, the New Zealand troops, and the English troops and Australian troops.

Can you remember any of the incidents that ought to be on this tape?

[Speaker 8]

Well, I remember one very humorous, but it really wasn't humorous at the time, and we had to laugh. Frank Sattah and I were out trying to fix a line, and it was raining, as it did for six months in Italy, and we were getting shelled pretty hard, and the lightning flashing, and as soon as we could get one end of the line fixed, we were having quite a time, and Frank took one end of the line and put it to you-know-where, and the other end in his mouth and started trying to talk to Franco Fisco. Now that was something.

[Speaker 1]

Do you remember the time, Roy, when the New Zealand troops had those little 25-pounders that came up there by our area and started firing there?

[Speaker 6]

I do remember, because I know after they set up their guns and started firing, if I remember correctly, every time they'd fire, they'd jump, and they'd have to reset them again for the next shell. But what I was really thinking about was that this particular time, the Germans started shelling us, and the shells were falling all around the place, but yet those guys never moved a muscle. They kept going right on with their...

I mean, they weren't scared of anything else. They'd just keep firing right back at them, out there exposed, nothing around them, no sandbags, no nothing, just out in the open.

[Speaker 8]

Yeah, but them boys had been in service five years in combat. They didn't care much what was going on.

[Speaker 6]

They were amazing. Well, you know, we had a Scotchman that was with us back in San Vittorio. He was the messenger.

[Speaker 8]

Kelso, did you say?

[Speaker 6]

Yeah, what'd they call him? Messenger, or it had another name for it. But he was a principle guy.

We all liked him. In particular, he got liquorice, and it tasted pretty good from time to time.

[Speaker 5]

Well, he's the father, like I said, in that billet at that time, if I'm not mistaken. That's how we got that liquor. When he came back and gave us the bottle, he found out that if he was in that hole where he was digging, he wouldn't be there to give us the liquor.

[Speaker 6]

Well, he was attached to us, you know, for a long time. He was one amazing guy. We all liked him.

[Speaker 1]

Of all the foreign troops that we worked with, which one would you say was the most congenial to work with?

[Speaker 6]

Well, I don't know. I think that bunch that was there that we had dealings with in, in my book, was probably the...

[Speaker 8]

Whatever they were. They were for Scotland, weren't they? Yeah.

[Speaker 1]

You think that they were probably the easiest to get along with and cooperating with us? Yeah. Next is a talk with Al Nuring about headquarters at Casino.

We had some dugouts and that up there, but the battery headquarters, that was located in an old farmhouse, wasn't it?

[Speaker 3]

Yeah, it was an old two-story farmhouse. It was all, of course, like most of the buildings there in Italy, was made of stone. The roof on that thing didn't amount to too much, but no one used the second floor anyway because you were too close to the roof and any shells or anything, well, you just had a pretty good chance of getting hurt.

But the orderly room was on the first floor. This is where I'd had my office along with Captain Andresen, of course, and Bobby Adams, the clerk, who was the clerk all during that campaign as we went along.

[Speaker 1]

Way down on that bottom floor, was there an old stove down there with maybe a coil or something?

[Speaker 3]

Funny that you ask. But we rigged up a still there. The captain liked some refreshments now and then.

What we did is we took an old five-gallon water can and got some copper tubing from a blown-out truck and then run that through a 25-pound coffee can as a condenser. We weren't too far from that little creek, if you remember, and we'd bring chains of water in that condenser and, of course, that was what we'd condense the alcohol with. Now, what we were doing is boiling Italian red wine that the guys would pick up here or there.

The first time through, it'd come out with a little pink twinge to it, but after you took that stuff and boiled it the second time, it'd come out of there pure white, just like real white lightning. It was probably 800 or 900 proof. It was really strong stuff.

I guess I never drank at that time, but I understand they used a little grapefruit juice with it, and it was quite a refreshing drink, to say the least.

[Speaker 1]

Then right outside the orderly room door there, we used to have a big old .50-caliber machine gun. I don't know what it was used for. Do you?

[Speaker 3]

Yeah. As a matter of fact, I don't know how we got the machine gun mounting because it certainly wasn't the kind of thing that an artillery outfit would carry, but I think it was the kind of unit that was on the deck of a Navy vessel. We acquired it somehow, and, of course, in the Navy they used those as all.

Most of this one was designed for a water-cooled gun. We mounted an air-cooled gun on it, and it was the kind of thing that had a cradle, and you just laid into this thing so you could shoot almost straight up in the air. One time a group of Falkeulf 190s, German fighter planes, came over, and we thought they were going to go right on by, but one of them turned on the wing and came right toward us, and I was sitting there in the cradle of that

gun, and I remember very distinctly seeing that pilot's face and two rows of tracer bullets because he happened to be too close to me when he started firing, and both rows of those tracers went right by me, probably five feet on each side or something like that, and I'll tell you, that's quite a thrill.

[Speaker 1]

You didn't think of doing that again, did you?

[Speaker 3]

Well, I probably would have, but I guess you don't think when you do those things, you know. It's like anything else, you do it impulsively.

[Speaker 1]

I was out on airing myself out to the Amanas last September in 1985, June. In June, we were in hot pursuit of the German Army. We made 11 moves in this month.

We were still in support of the French troops, who were good fighters, but a real hazard on the highways. A truck had two things to them, a throttle and a horn, and away they went. During this month, some of the batteries were ahead of division artillery so as to give the best firepower that was possible.

In June, we had the 2nd Division infantry Moroccans in front of us. They were very good fighters. Rome fell June 5, 1944.

Later, when we passed through the town, the people were still in a celebration move. With the movements in June, radio was used most of the time, but radios then are not like what we have today. Often, communications was very hard to maintain.

Also in June, we became more involved with German mines. They did a lot of damage. On the 30th of June, the 995 Battalion lost a 7.5-ton prime mover and two 8-inch howitzers. One was repaired and later returned to service. Also on June 6, the Allied armies invaded France. The big D-Day had happened, and we knew that they had their job cut out.

We passed through Rome June 12, and it was quite a sight for us to see. At the end of the June, we completed our 224 days of continuous combat, but one of our attached battalions, the 633 Field Artillery, completed its 382nd day of combat. 283 of these being continuous.

In June, Fred Basile was rotated back to the United States. One replacement assigned but never reported. Also, Russell Sage awarded the Purple Heart.

Commendations for the 194th Field Artillery Group was awarded by the commander of the French Corps and also by the 6th Army Group Royal Artillery. So June is now history. Rome free, an invasion of France on.

What will the future bring? July 1944 is here, and we are still working our way north. We are still supporting the French.

Siena was an open city, and we were there when they had their big festival. We passed through the city on July 5th and stayed on the north side of the town at a house that had belonged to Baron Segardi. It was a fine home with a big formal garden.

This home was visited by one of the popes dating back in 1798. It was also visited by the music composer Richard Wagner. Bill and I have talked about that house and the treasures that it contained.

Bill and I have often wondered what happened to it, but so much for the sightseeing. It was at Siena that a dog we had was lost. Jack was his name.

He came to us while we were at Casino, and we all liked him. He kind of took up with Kenny Haig and was missed by all. But German resistance stiffened now and became better organized.

Each time we moved up, we had to be on the alert for mines and booby traps. On the 23rd of July, we received closed stations, and for the first time since the 19th of November that the group headquarters battery was out of action. That gave us a total of 248 days of continuous combat.

On July 24th, we motored to Orbitello for a rest and to clean up equipment and get new equipment. We spent time swimming in the Mediterranean. It was while here that someone went into the town and found that we could do some horse trading.

Out of the trading, we came up with a form of ice cream. Oh, what a treat. While in this rest area, Lieutenant Colonel George E.

Holliday, who had commanded the 633th Field Artillery Battalion for such a long time, he had 406 days in combat time, was killed by a mine while walking on the beach in his unit Bivouac area. This happened on the afternoon of July 25th. Anthony V.

Bonney, a wire truck driver, was awarded the Purple Heart. So July closed out with all of us enjoying a rest at Orbitello. August 1944 found us in the vicinity of Orbitello, Italy.

We stayed there until August the 16th. While there, we were given a chance to visit Rome. There are some good stories about that city, and I hope to get some of them on tape in the future, and then cut them in here.

It was here that the 995 left our group. On the 16th of August, we hit the road again, heading northwest to fight the Huns. We were attached to Task Force 45.

This temporary organization held better than 20,000 meters up front with anti-aircraft troops serving as infantry after just a 48-hour notice. We arrived at the Arnold River sector. The group operated as a division artillery for Task Force 45.

This was our first combat role controlling light artillery. Our tanks and tank destroyers, not artillery weapons in the usual sense, did very well playing the part of artillery. A heavy harassing program to screen the reduction of troops in Task Force 45's sector was carried out.

A vigorous reaction followed, and more German shells fell in Task Force 45's sector than in any other part of the four corps area for the remainder of the month. The scarcity of

ammunition beginning the 27th of August curtailed our program, but it appeared successful in its deception. August was fast coming to a close, and we were just waiting for time.

The Germans were working on the Gothic Line a few miles north of the Arnold River, so August was entered into the history books. With the beginning of September 1944, the troops began to move north again. The group moved into South Pisa and established a command post.

At this CP, we were shelled by the Germans, and it was by a heavy gun, a 280mm. The shells landed about 200 yards away. On the 4th of September, we moved across the Arnold River and established a CP a few hundred yards from the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa.

At this time, we had to call on the infantry to move up 1,000 yards to protect the C battery of the 194th Field Artillery Battalion from enemy infiltration into its position. On the 6th of September, we were shelled by a 105mm howitzer. We lost a jeep and a three-quarter ton weapon carrier and most of our kitchen utensils.

I have a tape on this shelling by Bill Babs, and we'll play it now. And, uh, Bill Babs, uh, do you recall the time that, uh, I think it was up around Pisa that the kitchen truck was shelled? Uh, that?

[Speaker 7]

Yeah, the Pisa truck. We had parked along near a railroad siding. Parson, at that time, was cooking with us there, and I recall because I had a little bit of double-op camera sitting alongside the kitchen stove up there, and I had roast beef on it.

I had just taken the lid off, and they just started shelling us. One of the shells hit right in behind the kitchen truck, blew all our pots and pans to hell, ruined the roast beef, I believe it was. I thought it ruined it, but we was able to salvage that, and the next thing I knew, I couldn't find Parson.

He was down in a cave. So after all the excitement was all over with, I proceeded to go inside this kitchen truck and see what I could salvage, and was able to salvage the roast beef, but the graveyard didn't salvage that. I think we just had roast beef sandwiches, if I'm not mistaken.

And then later on, of course, then we had to get old iron pots to cook with. Bill remembers that. Cooked anything on that.

There was nothing but rust on top of it. If you just had green beans or corn, it was all rust on top. You couldn't do nothing with it.

You couldn't clean them up. It was pitiful.

[Speaker 1]

It was at this position that Staff Sergeant George Adams was trying to defuse a German booby trap when the detonator exploded in his hand, and he had to leave our outfit. I have George on tape, and he can tell you about it.

[Speaker 12]

And we went on up through Italy to as far north as Pisa, where I got tangled up with a mine. I was disarming the mine at about 11 o'clock. This was, I think, the 12th one, and I had a double booby trap, and my hand was injured, and that landed me in the hospital.

[Speaker 1]

Thanks, George, for that little bit of information. Also at this CP, the group captured three German 150-millimeter guns. They were fired against the enemy by one of our units.

At last, news came on September the 8th that we would be going to France. We were to be in Naples by the 19th of September. The 424th Field Artillery Group moved into the group area to relieve the 194th Group as artillery headquarters for Task Force 45.

As the 12th of September arrived, the group had completed 276 days of active combat. We left on the 16th of September and bivouacked at Rome that evening. The next day, on to Naples.

On the 25th of September, our advance party left for France. Next day, the rest of the battery moved to the Iowa staging area. All the vehicles were loaded on Liberty ship SS Henry S.

Footnote. As the month ended, it was also in September when Harvey Clark was killed as he was driving a command car and it turned over, killing him. In September, Master Sergeant Burdette Anderson received a battlefield promotion.

I'll read what it says here in the history. Master Sergeant Burdette Anderson received a battlefield appointment as 2nd Lieutenant on the 8th of September, 1944, and was assigned to Headquarters Battery, 194th Field Artillery Group, as an assistant communication officer. Colonel John C.

Cook pinned on the insignia of rank within the sight of the leaning tower of Pisa. I know that Burdette was very proud of this achievement. I will say that the wire section was equally proud because he had a hand in making our section the best.

Well done, Andy. We also received a letter from the Headquarters Fifth Army, which I will now read. Headquarters Fifth Army, Office of the Commanding General, APO 464, U.S. Army, 12th of September, 1944, Letter of Farewell to the Commanding Officer, 194th Field Artillery Group, APO 464, U.S. Army. It is with sincere regret that I see the 194th Field Artillery Group leave the folds of the Fifth Army. You leave us with an unbearable record of achievements and with high esteem of the infantry units which you supported so vigorously and effectively. The field artillery has played a most important role in the entire Italian campaign and a spectacular one in the recent Great Offensive, which you are now called upon to leave before its completion.

We have had ample confirmation of this from the German prisoners as well as from our infantry. I am well aware of the difficulties and the hardships which you have had to overcome in order to achieve these outstanding results. However, regardless of the mountainous terrain, the scarcity of roads, the long supply lines, and the constant changing tactical situations, you have done a superb job in accordance with the highest tradition of the artillery.

At this time, I wish to congratulate you for the task performed and to extend my heartfelt good wishes for further success in the new assignments which you are about to undertake. Signed, Mark W. Clark, Lieutenant General, United States Army, Commanding.

So after almost months in Italy, we now say goodbye to the mud and the rain. And to the four men whom we have left under four small crosses, they died so that freedom would live on. We also had to take our two little Italian boys who were such good KPs back to their home in San Vitor.

We will miss them. Even to this day, they are often mentioned in our talks around Casino. And so September 1944 goes into the history books.

Loaded on LST number 288 at Niceta, Italy. This was the same harbor that we landed in November 7, 1943. On October 2 at 0730 hours, we sailed for France.

At 1500 hours on the 3rd of October, we sailed through the channel between the island of Sardinia and Corsica. On this move from Italy, our liaison pilots flew our planes over to France. The LST number 288 dropped anchor in Marseille, France, on October 4, 1944.

Our vehicles, which were on the Henry S. Foote docked in Toulon, France, and didn't get to us until the 10th of October. While at Marseille, we drew new equipment and tried to get winter clothing, but once again, no overshoes.

At 0700 hours on October the 14th, we left Marseille on our way back to combat. As we moved up to combat, the towns of the southern part of France were much different than the towns of Italy. These towns had not been shelled into piles of rubble.

We were traveling in a convoy, and as we went through towns, the civilians would wave to us. Our first CP in France was established on the 16th of October in a schoolhouse in San Clemente. The 194th Field Artillery Group Headquarters Battery, with Colonel John C.

Cook in command, was back in combat. We were assigned to the 15th Corps in the 7th Army. We now had the 989th Field Artillery Battalion.

They were a 155 millimeter gun. And the 999th Field Artillery Battalion, eight inch howitzers. We supported the 79th Division on an attack on the 27th of October.

The group learned that we were going to support the 2nd French Armored Division. The attack took off at 0830 hours on October the 31st. We supported with counter-battery as well with direct support fire missions.

The attack was a success as they captured a bridge across the Meuse River just as the Germans were preparing to destroy it. So October 1944 became history as we finished our 16th day of combat in France. It was in Montigny that we were housed in a farmhouse.

The farmer had left as the fighting was heavy there, and he left his cows and chickens. Chuck Klinger, a farm boy in civilian life, took over the chores. He milked the cows and fed them and the chickens also.

But the wire section had fresh roast chicken that night. I still have a picture of the men eating that supper. It was also in the wire men that salvaged a German generator.

And at this time we repaired it, and the men of the battery had electric lights. We also began to salvage radios out of homes, and most of the men had radios from then on. November 1944.

As attack, which started October 31st, continued, we gave support to the 2nd French Armored Division after the breakthrough in the Vosges Mountains. German resistance was so disorganized that advance continued to the Rhine River with low need for heavy fire. Heavy rains and rapidly rising streams and flooded fields interfered with the Group Aero-P.

A conference was held at the Group Headquarters on the 10th of November to formulate plans for the 7th Army attack on the now famous Suburban Gap. On the 13th of November, at 0700 hours, the attack by the 44th Infantry Division on our left and the 79th Infantry Division on the right started. The 2nd French Armored Division supported the attack with artillery fire from their positions.

The group gave a 13-hour preparation fire for this attack. At the end of the day, the 44th had occupied Linentrois, and the 79th had troops in Neymanville and St. Paul. Observers of the group saw about 300 German infantry on a ridge preparing to counterattack in the zone of the 44th Division.

The group fired a concentration with all guns and broke the counterattack with heavy casualties to the Huns. All of this fighting was very heavy, and on November the 20th, the city of Saarenburg was captured, and the group was getting ready to fire support to take the Suburban Gap. But things changed.

Suburban was captured by a combat command of the 2nd French Armored Division following an envelopment through the Vosges Mountains from the north and south. This move took the enemy completely by surprise, and the anticipation, difficult penetration of the Vosges Mountains was accomplished. The 79th and the 44th Divisions continued to mop up the bypassed Germans in the towns west of the Vosges Mountains.

On a Thanksgiving Day, the 23rd of November, the battalions were given march order in preparation for our move to the Suburban Gap. Colonel Cook explained to the group that the terrain east of the mountains was flat and that the area in which we were to fight, just west of the Rhine River, was extremely vulnerable to enemy observation. The group moved through the Suburban Gap and established a command post during the hours of darkness in Hochfeld.

Sniper fire was encountered during the night.

[Speaker 2]

On the morning of Thanksgiving Day, 1944, we were in this French farmhouse. I went in to see Colonel Cook, and he had gotten up, but one side of his lip was down, and he was drooling a bit. He was sleepy.

We had had a message that the French armored column had gone into Strasbourg and captured the city during the night. We were going to breakfast, and he told me I was to go out and try to get into Strasbourg. Then report back.

He put his head down on the... I think we went to breakfast. He came back.

He put his head down on the field desk and went to sleep again. It was only later that we discovered that he had had a stroke, and this was bound to affect him, although we tried to see that he was able to continue to function, particularly if it were able to go away. I went out and went on the road to the head of a French column, which was an armored column, which was shooting at the hillside and was receiving returning German fire.

It was impossible to get into Strasbourg, so with that I returned and reported that we couldn't get there. We would need an armored column to get through. The medical officers gave Colonel Cook attention.

We tried to see that he was able to function to the extent possible, but Colonel Lakey, the executive officer of the 15th Corps Artillery, happened to come by on a visit and saw him as we were trying to move, and this is where he reported that he had to go to a hospital, and of course then the 15th Corps made some replacements. Colonel Cook fought the thought of leaving his unit because he feared he would not have a chance that he would be retired, and I don't believe he actually accepted the thought of retirement until about two years later when he was finally released from different hospitals Lieutenant Colonel Edmund H.

[Speaker 1]

Lang assumed command of the group during the absence of Colonel Cook. From November 25th to the end of the month, our air was unable to help us because of the fog we encountered in the Rhine Valley. End of November found us with 326 days of combat, 468 days overseas.

During November, Captain Carol Andresen received a Bronze Star Medal, so November goes into the history books. December 1944 found us still supporting the 45th Infantry Division and the 79th Infantry Division. We were still attached to the 15th Corps, but the 15th Corps left, and we acted as corps until the 6th Corps came in and took over.

We had lots of wire out at this time, and the wire crew did a marvelous job then.

[Speaker 2]

When the Battle of the Bulge occurred later, the 15th Corps was moved to the north and a skeleton force was left in the positions they had been holding. The 194th Field Artillery Group, which no longer had Colonel Cook in command, but was known, accepted by General Ott as being a rather capable organization, was left to function as the Corps artillery headquarters, and we did so, extending ourselves very much just as had been done previously in the casino area where the volume of wire was at a level that was totally unexpected in any of the training or any thoughts given to a group headquarters organization. We held this position until the 6th Corps moved up from the south, and Brigadier General Bair and the 194th Field Artillery Battalion came up and moved in and took over from us.

[Speaker 1]

The attack continued, and a captured field order showing the location of three German artillery regiments CP gave the group its first fire mission on German soil on the 13th of December. On the 14th of December, Lieutenant Colonel James B. Craft, formerly CO of the 312th Field Artillery Battalion of the 79th Division, assumed command of the 194th Field Artillery Group headquarters battery.

What a sad day for the 194th Field Artillery Group headquarters battery. From Colonel Cook to Colonel Craft, that's like having a Cadillac and then going to a Model T Ford. It was at this location that we encountered the Maginot Line defenses, and the Huns elected to defend them, and resistance stiffened considerably.

The 999th Field Artillery Battalion fired on the first Maginot Line pillboxes for the group. We used some captured German 88s to fire on these pillboxes, but to no avail. Then we got a 155mm self-propelled gun.

This gun did its job for the 110th Infantry Division. A little later this month, all units in the group displaced to defensive positions. We became aware that we must be preparing for tank attacks and for infiltration.

On December 24th, we moved to Edding. We now supported the 44th Infantry Division and the 100th Infantry Division. The 100th Infantry Division Order No.

2 showed that the infantry main line of resistance to be 500 to 1,000 yards behind two batteries of the 932nd Field Artillery Battalion and two batteries of the 697th Field Artillery Battalion and one battery of the 989th Field Artillery Battalion. The group told these batteries to find new positions.