



**34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division**  
**Narrative History of the 133rd "Ironman" Battalion**  
**23-26 April 1945 • Po Valley, Italy**



**23 April [1945]**

**REGIMENT:**

Command post moves to L614632, below Modena. This command post is the last of seven established for brief periods this day to keep up with our fast-moving troops.

Operational Instructions No. 29 issued, announcing the formation of the 133rd Regimental Combat Team, with Overlay No. 20.

**FIRST BATTALION:**

0900 hours - Have received orders and are moving out. Ride along Highway 9 to within seven kilometers on Modena (L565665), then detruck to begin foot move. Reach point about four kilometers from Modena, just across the Panaro River, and deploy across country. Mission, to wipe out any pockets of German resistance as well as to cut off and destroy any enemy, isolated in the mountains to the south, who might try to infiltrate through our lines.

1300 hours - Company A on left, Company B on right, moving across country and reporting no opposition.

1350 hours - Companies have passed two pre-designated check points and report no contact with the enemy.

1600 hours - Five hundred enemy troops with tank support reported four kilometers from Modena. A large ammunition dump south of the town has been over-run and the ammunition is still intact and piled in neat stacks.

1700 hours - Mission of cutting Highway 12 south of Modena has been accomplished and battalion has pulled into vicinity of Saliceta (L550644). Troops are to set up road blocks and motorized patrols for the night. Only one-half of the proposed road blocks are erected on account of meeting a strong enemy delaying force across a blown bridge at Rubiera (L450678), along Highway 9 about 10 kilometers past Modena. Kitchens are to move in and, if feasible, serve a hot breakfast in the morning.

**SECOND BATTALION:**

1145 hours - Battalion moves out in trucks northwestward on Highway 9. Detruck near Modena and go into the attack, moving westward on foot south of Highway 9. The only enemy activity is six rounds of self-propelled gun fire. The attack continues through the night.

**THIRD BATTALION:**

Troops alerted to move at 0700 hours. Reconnaissance patrols dispatched. Battalion motors at 1300 hours to point four miles south of Modena, closing in at 1400 hours. Companies I and K move out to vicinity of L508669, west of Modena, establishing road blocks. Battalion given the city of Reggio nell' Emilia (L335730), 10 miles beyond Modena on Highway 9, as its objective.

Troops move on foot, crossing Secchia River and proceeding westward, by-passing enemy strongpoint at Rubiera. Second Battalion is to by-pass this point from the south. Third Battalion route is north of Rubiera. First Battalion is to set up series of road blocks to the south of Second and Third Battalion operations. Third Battalion moves out, Company I leading, at 1900 hours. Plans changed en route; battalion clears out Rubiera before continuing.

**24 April [1945]**

**REGIMENT:**

Command post moves up from L614632 to Cittanova (L497666), three miles west of Modena on Highway 9, at 0100 hours. About noon the command post moved again, to

L374710, where the staff began planning the rout of the Wehrmacht. The Regiment's mission so far in this push has been to protect the left flank of the Division. To this end, road blocks were established at L330691, L318692, L298694 and L 295690, with others planned at L248695 and L224695.

One of the prizes in this day's haul of captured equipment was a German 105-millimeter howitzer which the Regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon seized intact at L358675, 12 miles west of Modena, below Via Emilia.

Operational Instructions No. 30 issued, instructing all personnel to carry arms at all times, and to neglect no opportunity to capture disorganized detachments of enemy. Prisoner-of-war total for the day: 113.

#### **FIRST BATTALION:**

0500 hours - Breakfast of steak and eggs served and troops are to move out.

0700 hours - Orders received to continue advance west along Highway 9. Enemy in Rubiera have pulled out.

0815 hours - Battalion command post established in Rubiera, with companies out as a screen around the town. Prisoners of war and Partisans are streaming into the town from all directions. Eight German soldiers taken in Rubiera and at least 50 others, some in civilian clothing, brought in by the partisans.

1000 hours - Battalion receives orders to move west of Reggio nell'Emilia.

1330 hours - Troops six kilometers southwest of the town. Battalion command post at Masone (L393697); companies occupying road blocks.

1730 hours - A barrage of enemy light-caliber artillery fire falls in Company B's area, killing one man and wounding seven, four of whom were hurt only slightly. The shelling occurred at the road block at L320700.

1900 hours - Company A in assembly area at Tarabuso. Company C still maintaining three road blocks, Company B two.

#### **SECOND BATTALION:**

Enemy tanks slow our troops' progress during the early morning hours. The hostile armor does not fire, but moves on the roads ahead of our men. By daylight the tanks have pulled out. Company E assists the Third Battalion in the taking of Reggio nell' Emilia. Companies F and G reach their objectives just south of the town and set up road blocks. This day, despite intermittent opposition, Second Battalion troops advanced by foot more than 27 miles.

#### **THIRD BATTALION:**

By dawn Companies I and L are on the southeastern outskirts of Reggio nell' Emilia, astride Highway 9 (Via Emilia). Enemy contacted at this point and fire-fight develops. Germans holding city with company or more of Infantry supported by artillery, self-propelled guns, mortars and machine guns. Friendly supporting artillery pulls in at approximately 1100 hours.

(Company K, out of contact with battalion since jump-off last night, checks in during early afternoon, giving its position as in the vicinity of the airfield at Reggio nell' Emilia. Thus Company K is on the right flank of the Battalion.)

Coordinated attack planned with Company I on the left of the highway, Company L moving up railroad tracks on right of road. Company K moving in from its position on the right. Battalion pushes into town in late afternoon with enemy retreating before it. About 20 prisoners taken and casualties inflicted on the Germans. The northern and western edges of Reggio nell' Emilia reached after dark, with only a few snipers remaining in the town. Battalion reorganizes, establishes road blocks and secures town. During the night there are Partisan and Fascist clashes throughout the area.

**25 April [1945]**

#### **REGIMENT:**

The road blocks at L295690, L298694 and L248695 were discontinued when elements of the Brazilian Expeditionary Force entered our positions. Company R, the Regimental replacement company, occupied Reggio nell' Emilia as an "S" Force and came under control of the 15th Army Group for the period of duty. The command post moved to L284729, two miles west of Reggio nell' Emilia, south of Highway 9.

Operational Instructions No. 31 appears with Overlay No. 21, outlining the immediate missions of the battalions. Verbal orders were given to every unit permitting all personnel possible to be carried on one vehicle, a measure design to facilitate our advance. The prisoner-of-war total for the day: 119.

#### **FIRST BATTALION:**

Expecting orders to continue westward through Reggio nell' Emilia and along Highway 9.

1400 hours - Company B ordered to watch for troops from the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, who are expected to make contact with us soon from the hills to the south.

1700 hours - Battalion moves out and bivouacs for the night near Cella (L257754), southwest of Reggio nell' Emilia.

#### **SECOND BATTALION:**

Company F, supported by tanks, moves westward to Bibbiano (L209705) to establish road blocks. Company G goes to Cavriago for the same reason. Company E stays at Catinni, just south of Reggio nell'Emilia, and also sets up road blocks.

#### **THIRD BATTALION:**

Company L assigned the mission of proceeding up Highway 9 with tanks until contact with the enemy was effected. The troops march all morning, reaching a point more than 13 miles northwest of Reggio nell' Emilia. Thirty-five prisoners are taken during the advance up the highway. After contacting the 168th Infantry, the battalion assembles two miles southwest of Reggio nell' Emilia in the afternoon.

### **26 April [1945]**

#### **REGIMENT:**

Operational Instructions No. 32 appeared, with Overlay No. 22, outlining plans for the Regiment to assemble west of the Taro River on order. Command post assembled at P981901, off Highway 9 seven miles below Fidenza. The Regiment has been moving into assembly areas so rapidly in recent days that it has been necessary to arm and enlarge quartering parties to take care of any enemy that might still be in the proposed location. In the late afternoon the command post moved again, to K876045, 10 kilometers north of Fidenza, below Busseto. This day the Air [Force] demonstrated with close support and started fires in many enemy-held buildings. Prisoner-of-war haul for the day: 180.

#### **FIRST BATTALION:**

0900 hours - Orders received to move to an assembly area west of Parma (L100855), 12 miles beyond Reggio nell' Emilia on Highway 9. The battalion departs in organic transportation and Cannon Company trucks. There is still some [weapons] fire in Parma, and the men must duck as machine-gun bullets crack over their heads as the vehicles pass through the town.

1300 hours - The Regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon notifies Company A that there are an estimated 100 enemy in Paroletta, northwest of Parma, below Busseto (K882065). Company A, with two tanks, goes around the town to the left. Company C and two other tanks move into the town and begin clearing the buildings. Considerable machine-gun and sniper fire is encountered., and some tank and mortar fire.

1700 hours - Company C has occupied about one-half the town with one platoon of Company B.

1900 hours - Prisoners report that Germans have eight heavy machine guns in Paroletta. Company D has set up mortars about 800 yards south of the town. Cannon Company is firing in support.

2000 hours - Thirty-three prisoners taken. Enemy still resisting with small arms and machine guns.

2200 hours - Paroletta has been taken and the battalion command post is established at the southern edge of town. Major Chapman, battalion commander, orders advance toward the Po River continued at midnight.

2400 hours - Battalion moving northward in column. Rifle troops marching, clearing and searching buildings as they advance. Company C suffers one man killed and three wounded this day, while one Company D man was killed and one wounded.

## **SECOND BATTALION:**

Troops move by truck at 1130 hours to assembly area near Fidenza, 10 miles up Highway 9 from Parma. Arriving at 1300 hours, Company E is dispatched to clear enemy snipers from several houses in the area. Companies F and G move northwest, their objective Monticelli. At S. Pietro in Cerro (K813115) civilians told Lieutenant Colonel Horan, battalion commander, that some 1,000 German soldiers had passed through there in the past three hours.

## **THIRD BATTALION:**

Troops alerted at dawn. Entruck at 1000 hours, moving on Highway 9 through Reggio nell' Emilia, Parma and S. Pancrazio, arriving at assembly area southeast of Fidenza at noon. Regiment to attack in column of battalions - Third, First and Second, respectively. Platoon of tanks attached to Third Battalion. Battalion, motorized, with one platoon of Company I on lead tanks, moves out at 1400 hours. Passes through the outskirts of Fidenza, crossing the Stirone River and moving northward on the road to Busseto. At 1630 hours battalion contacts strong enemy force on outskirts of city. Troops detruck, deploy and engage enemy. Progress held up by intense small-arms fire and self-propelled guns. Battalion attacks with Company I on right, Company L on left and Company K in support. By dusk Company L takes and secures the railroad station. Company I keeps abreast, thus giving battalion a foothold in town. Several hours after dark battalion clears town, taking approximately 70 prisoners, and killing and wounding many more.