

*Fifth Army, Anzio Forces Meeting 25 May 1944
Company B, 48 Engineers*

The big drive on Rome started at midnight on the tenth of May 1944. WE started moving north at 0001 hours amid all the confusion that one might imagine. The story of Anzio starts thirteen days later when I received orders from battalion headquarters to report to the commander of the 91st Reconnaissance Squadron. I am Alfred L Kincer, at that time I commanded Company B 48 Engineer (C) Battalion.

I reported immediately and was told that our rendezvous would be at 0600 at a certain coordinate the following morning. As per orders WE were at the appointed place at the designated time. The road along the sea at that point is a narrow two- way road with the hills to the east projecting to within ten feet of the road. All action had stopped for The Jerries were directing fire at the corner. There was a brief lull and Captain Mark Reardon of Company C 48 Engineers, Mark was writer and obviously was looking for a story, and I started around the corner and was met with a round that hit on the hill above us. Mark was hit and left the area soon after. My next effort was to grab onto a light recon tank along with an infantry lieutenant. We proceeded in a northerly direction without seeing the enemy. Suddenly a round hit just in front of the tank. As we were heading for cover another round hit nearby, the Lieutenant was slightly hit but kept running with me down a canal

that parallel the road. We managed to hang on to the tank and safely made it to the cover of the hill. When we were first fired on I could see several vehicles across the way that were beginning to pull out. After the second shot a towed gun, a good guess would be about a 57 mm, was towed away. This was probably the first sighting and action with the Anzio Nazis on the 24th of May. Later that day I moved my company along the road to Terracina and entered the small city at about 1400 hours. WE moved immediately to the north side and set up a mobile defense in the direction of Anzio. To my surprise a Major General, C.G. 88th Division, suddenly appeared. I reported to him and he asked if I might alter my orders and clear the main street, I had my D-4 dozer sitting near by. WE cleared the main street but his infantry did not appear for hours. I decided to have a look "out front" so with a rifleman, PFC Pancho Savala, from Salinas California, I drove north out of Terracina until I came to a blown bridge I could not cross. I was very apprehensive about my position and returned to my company. I briefed my platoon commanders and leaders about what WE were to encounter the next day. About dusk Captain Bill Munson came driving into my area from the north. He had encountered the same roadblock as I. He was very disappointed in not meeting our Anzio forces. Why he was there is debatable. As it was quickly growing dark, Bill stayed the night with me. He was very disappointed

that he had seen nothing on his brief journey out front and kept moaning about the fact. The next morning when I went north toward the Anzio perimeter he went south to battalion headquarters.

WE were up and ready to go by 0600 hours on the 25th. I spoke briefly with the captain of A troop of the 91st and was told in no uncertain terms that he was staying put until his commander ordered him to move. I decided to move forward, for I knew of at least one blown bridge that had to be repaired. I led off in my jeep accompanied by 1st Lt. Francis X. Buckley, my executive officer, PFC Pancho Savala and my driver Rex E. Bass. The three combat platoons were echeloned with the 1st leading the way. When WE reached the first blow Lt. Henry Hammerstrom's first platoon started the repairs and with the effort of a full squad my jeep was hustled to the far side. I instructed Lt Phelan of the second platoon to move forward as soon as possible. WE moved forward another five hundred yards and came upon another blow. I asked Lt Buckley to go back and bring the second platoon forward. His reply was "Have Bass do it, I'm going over to that farm house and get some eggs" "Buck" had experienced a night with the wine bottle and had not fully recovered. He and Pancho were about 100 yards across the ravine, Borgo Grappa, when two soldiers came out of the brush to our left. Captain Ben Souza, Co. B 36 Engineers called to Pancho to halt. Before Pancho could reply Lt.

Buckley identified himself as a member of Co. B 48 Engineers. Thus the first meeting of the Anzio and the 5th Army forces took place. Other accounts have been written but this is the only true one.

The second platoon arrived and we soon had repaired the damage to the culvert. A Colonel arrived about that time, from the Anzio side, and instructed us to stay put until Gen. Clark's arrival. WE made contact at Borgo Grappa at 0730; Gen Clark arrived at 1030 hrs. Movies were made of Gen Clark shaking hands with Lt. Buckley. Ben Sousa and I were not invited to participate however in the film we are noticeable. Pancho, who was the first contact from the 5th Army, was omitted from the ceremony. While WE were waiting for Gen. Clark to arrive we all stood helpless as the Jerries demolished the remaining bridges on the main highway to the east of us. At about 1200 hours WE moved forward, constructed two more by passes and bivouacked for the night. The next morning I was relieved from duty with the 91st and reported back to L/Col Swift, my battalion commander. NO ONE at the time of the meeting or SINCE has asked me what happened on that date.

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Primary participants on 25 May 1944
1 Lt. Alfred L Kincer C.O. Co. B 48 Engrs. Bowie,
Texas*

*Capt Ben Sousa C.O. Co B 36 Engrs., Honolulu,
Hawaii*

*1 Lt F. X. Buckley, Exe. O Co B 48 Engrs.
Philadelphia, Pa.*

*PFC Pancho Savala. Salinas California
SP 5 Rex E. Bass, Illinois*

1 Lt Otto H. Hammerstrom, Ohio

S/Sgt. John Mailey, Youngstown, Ohio

L/Gen Mark Clark, CG 5th Army.

*And the rest of the wonderful soldiers of Co. B 48
and Co. B 36 (C) Engineers.*