

Company Morning Reports

H Company 36th Engineer Combat Regiment

During World War II every Company had to prepare a Morning Report to show the status of its personnel, incoming and outgoing, for detached service, hospitalization or other. It also showed people temporarily attached for duty or for rations. It also recorded the location and the principle duty on that day.

The Company Clerk however, was not with the Company, he was with the Regimental Headquarters which was often some miles in back of the Company itself. In theory this should show accurately where each soldier was on any given day. In practice it didn't always work that way. I reviewed H Company Morning Reports of April, May, December of '44 and January, February, and March '45. In examining several months of records it can be noted that the information back and forth was not always accurate or timely.

One instance that I noticed immediately is that I was recorded as returning from the hospital on January 8th and, in fact, I had been with the company since January 1st. This can be explained in part because I returned directly to the company and didn't go near the Regimental HQ. Another thing I noticed is that for a couple of weeks there are 6 officers listed in our company as present for duty and this never happened. Possibly some officer in Headquarters was recorded as being with us.

During April '44 we are recorded properly as either Road maintenance or training. We were getting new people, returns from the hospital and from leave. However in the middle of this the Company was called to go quickly to the front line to a place

between the 45th and the 3rd ID where there was a gap. We stayed there for four or five days and it doesn't show at all in the Report. It involved nothing but a lot of machine gun duels and no fighting of consequence.

There is a space for the Clerk to record our activities for the day and this is probably the least informative of all the data on the Morning Report. Noticeably it states that we are in Infantry combat, period but nothing at all about the type of combat, patrolling, advancing, retreating (or should I say withdrawing). Often it lists Engineer duties when one or more platoons are actually in the line or covering road blocks and the other is doing Engineer work.

The Report does show some little things of interest, for example the Regiment actually had its own stockade for our own garrison prisoners. During the months I reviewed there was just one garrison prisoner. This boggles the mind because there could never have been more than a couple of soldiers in it at any time and it probably took as many to guard it.

Another item that seemed to be a bit understated was when it reported that the Company was attacking Velletri. Possibly the problem was not with the Morning Reports, it was mine for expecting too much. It just isn't there. However they can be of some value if a veteran wants to establish that he was wounded and has no hospital record to prove it.

The actual Company Commander had to produce two reports every day that we were in the line, a SitRep and a ShellREp. The SitRep recorded exactly what we were doing, patrolling or outposting or just sitting in a fox hole. The ShellRep was supposed to tell Hq the number of mortar and artillery shells that landed in the Company area and, believe it or not the size, although the Commander

usually just said big or small.

I don't know if these reports, which were just on scrap paper or read over field phone, were ever kept or just summarized by the Regimental S-2. They would be more informative than the Morning Reports.

Another thing of some interest to me is that in Italy we show on average 214 men for duty and in France 169. Obviously this means that the Engineer equipment, dozers, air compressor, truck maintenance section, are recorded some place else. Of course during combat they stayed back with the Regiment but were always with us as Engineers.

Since there was no such thing as a Battalion staff it is doubtful if the Battalion Commander submitted an action report. However if there is such a thing it would be informative. Unfortunately separate Regiments such as the 36th had no resident historian. The Division were more fortunate.

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