

MILITARY SERVICE IN FOREIGN WARS
OVERSEAS BARS, THEATERS, RIBBONS AND MEDALS

JOSEPH LOUIS PRAGER

FIRST LIEUTENANT

SERIAL NO. 01 173 043

1ST LT Prager left the Continental US May 19, 1944 and returned September 7, 1945 serving for 15 months. For his service to his country he was awarded the following:

European–African–Middle Eastern Campaign Medal	
	
European–African–Middle Eastern Campaign Medal	
Awarded by Department of the Army Department of the Navy	
Type	Campaign Medal
Eligibility	served in the armed forces between the following dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• between December 7, 1941 and March 2, 1946, for military service, in geographical theater areas of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.
Status	Inactive
Statistics	
First awarded	December 7, 1941
Last awarded	March 2, 1946

Overseas Bar – EAME (5 Bronze Stars and Bronze Arrowhead)

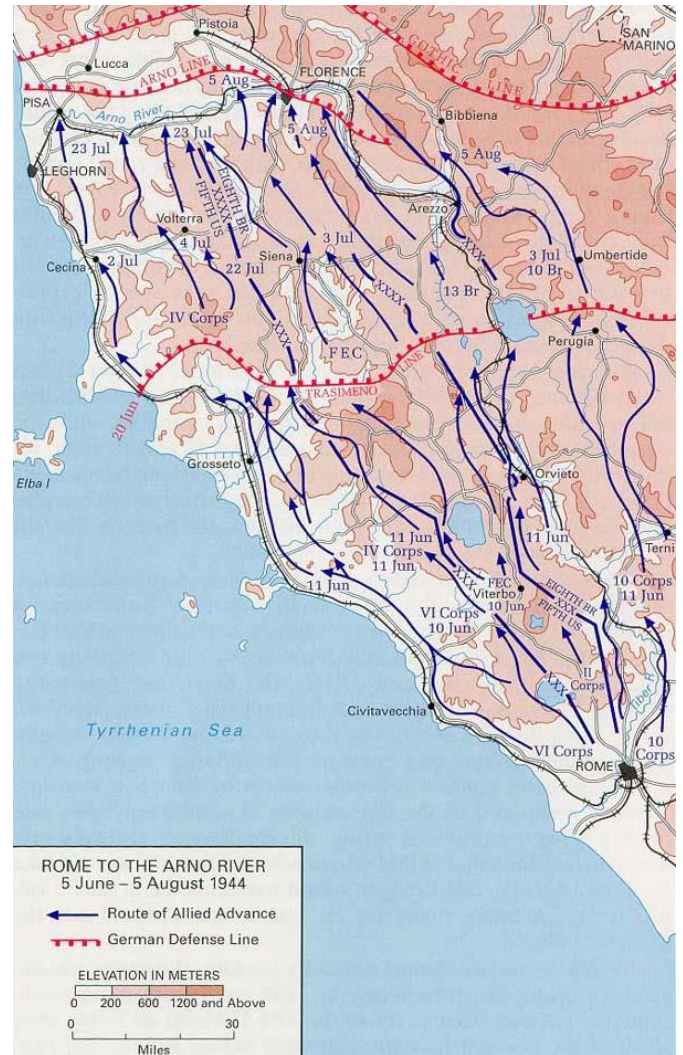
Originally known as the “EAME Ribbon”, the European–African–Middle Eastern Campaign Medal is awarded for any service performed between December 7, 1941 and March 2, 1946.

The colors of the ribbon have their own significance: the brown stripes on the outer edges represent the sands of the North African desert. The wide green stripes in the middle represent the forests of Europe. The narrow green white and red stripes on one side represent Italy and the narrow black and white stripes on the other side represent Germany. The narrow red white and blue stripes in the center represent the United States. Bronze Stars worn upon it are Campaign Stars, NOT to be confused with the Bronze Star Award for Valour. If the unit was involved in the **amphibious landing** at Salerno, then they would receive a Bronze Arrowhead.

Bronze Silver Star - Awarded 5 times in the following Operations

August 2, 1944 Theater of Operation – Rome - Arno Unit – 460th Parachute Field Artillery

The Allied operations in Italy between January and September 1944 were essentially an infantryman's war where the outcome was decided by countless bitterly fought small unit actions waged over some of Europe's most difficult terrain under some of the worst weather conditions found anywhere during World War II. Given such circumstances, the growing Allied superiority in materiel, especially in armored and air forces, was of little consequence, and ground troops were forced to carry out repeated, costly frontal assaults that quickly turned the campaign into a war of attrition on a battlefield where the terrain heavily favored the defense. Chronic shortages of troops and materiel throughout 1944 exacerbated the already difficult tactical situation in Italy and became worse as the year wore on, ensuring that the limited Allied forces available would not obtain a quick, decisive victory, but would rather slowly grind down their well-entrenched and determined enemies.

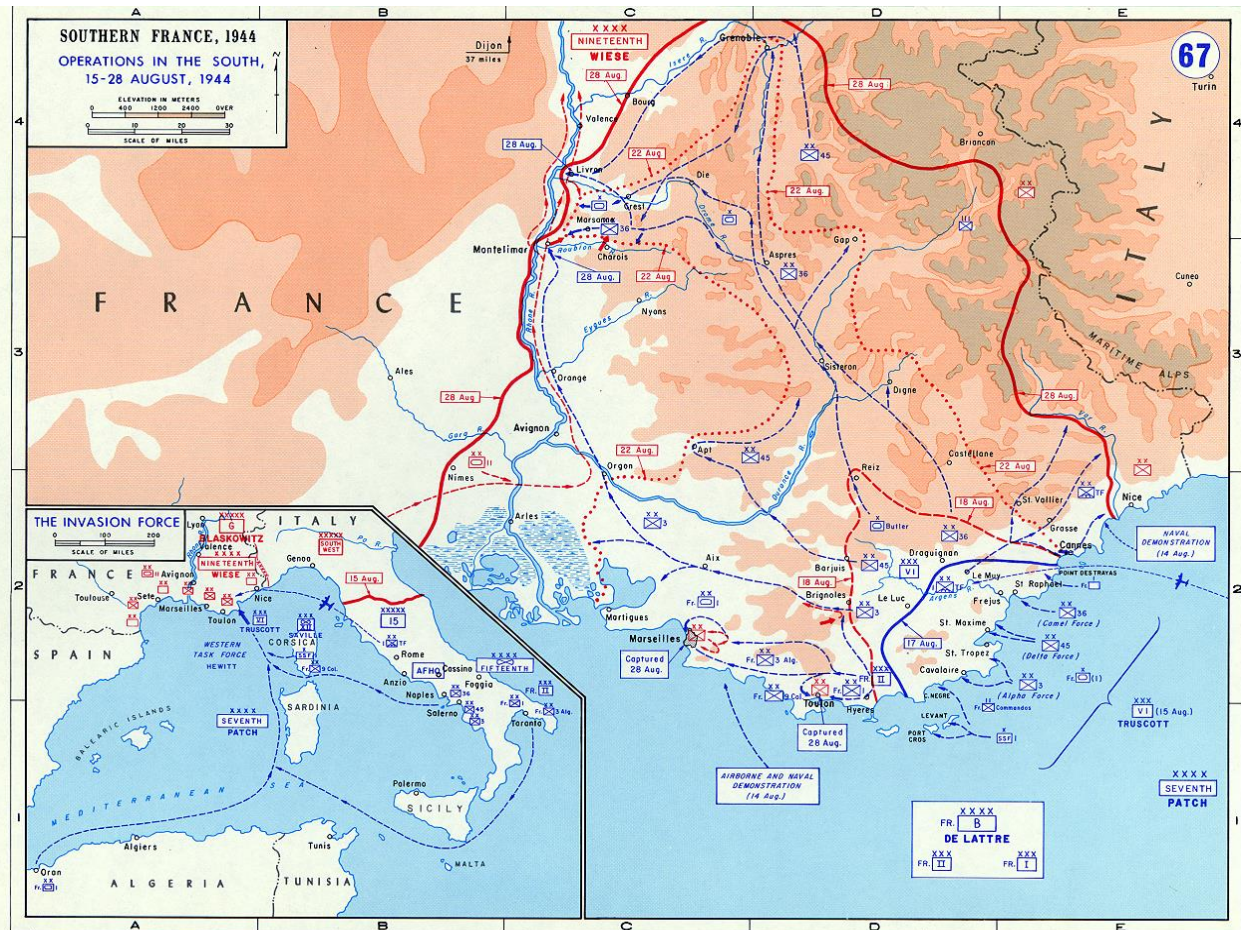


The Allied air forces aided ground operations by providing close air support and by disrupting enemy supply lines and communications, but their efforts were not decisive as demonstrated during the bombings of Monte Cassino and Operation STRANGLE.

To critics of the Allied effort in Italy, the repeated ill-fated attempts to open the Liri valley, resulting in the disaster on the Rapido and the three costly assaults on Monte Cassino, as well as the desperate Anzio gamble, all indicated a lack of imagination on the part of both British and American commanders. Allied commanders, however, were limited in their options considering the political, logistical, and geographical aspects of the campaign.

September 18, 1944 Theater of Operation – Southern France Unit – 460th Parachute Field Artillery

Operation Dragon (initially Operation Anvil) was the code name for the Allied invasion of Southern France on 15 August 1944.



Strength	
Initial landing 151,000 men ^[1]	Initial landing 85,000–100,000 men ^[4]
Entire invasion force 576,833 men ^[2]	Southern France 285,000–300,000 men ^[4]
French Resistance 75,000 men ^[3]	
Casualties and losses	
2,050–3,176 killed, captured or missing ~7,750 other casualties	7,000 killed ~21,000 wounded 131,250 captured ^{[6][7][8]}
more than 10,000 casualties ^{[5][6]}	Total: ~159,000
Total: ~21,000	

The goal of the operation was to secure the vital ports on the French Mediterranean coast and increase pressure on the German forces by opening another front. After some preliminary commando operations, including the British 4th Para's landing behind enemy lines to secure vital transport links, the US VI Corps landed on the beaches of the Côte d'Azur under the shield of a large naval task force, followed by several divisions of the French Army B. They were opposed by the scattered forces of the German Army Group G, which had been weakened by the relocation of its divisions to other fronts and the replacement of its soldiers with third-

rate Ostlegionen outfitted with obsolete equipment. The Germans were not able to hold Dijon and ordered a complete withdrawal from Southern France.

June 2, 1945 Theater of Operation – Rhineland Unit 460th Parachute Field Artillery



The Allied armies confronting the Germans in mid-September 1944 had arrived on the European continent through two great invasions—Operation OVERLORD and Operation DRAGOON. OVERLORD assaulted the Normandy coast of France between the towns of Caen and Ste. Mere-Eglise. DRAGOON occurred after a struggle with Winston Churchill, the British prime minister, and the British Chiefs of Staff who had steadfastly opposed an invasion of southern France. To the end, Churchill saw the Italian theater as the key to unlocking the door to the Balkans and Central Europe—the "soft-underbelly" of Nazi Germany—while the Americans, to include Eisenhower, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff saw northern Italy only as a cul-de-sac. Scheduled for 15 August and promising to draw at least some German forces from northern France and seize the great French port of Marseille, the mounting of DRAGOON remained uncertain until the last moment.

As the DRAGOON forces dashed north up the Rhone River Valley toward Lyon, the Allies in Normandy raced eastward. On 1 September, SHAEF headquarters became operational on the Continent, with Eisenhower taking direct command of the Allied ground forces there. Montgomery's 21 Army Group overran the V-1 rocket sites that had been bombarding England and then pushed into the Netherlands, while Patton's Third Army and Hodges' First Army, both part of the newly formed 12th Army Group under Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley, kept pace. Patton's forces sped through the Argentan-Laval-Chartres area, and Hodges' army trapped a large enemy force in the Mons pocket before driving rapidly into Belgium. By mid-September, Eisenhower's forces had reached the German frontier and occupied a line running from the Netherlands south along the German border to Trier and on to Metz.

Operation MARKET-GARDEN was, in reality, two plans combined. MARKET envisioned dropping three and a half divisions of Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton's First Allied Airborne Army near the Dutch towns of Eindhoven, Nijmegen, and Arnhem. The MARKET forces, under the command of Lt. Gen. F. A. M. Browning's 1st British Airborne Corps, consisted of the U.S. 101st and 82d Airborne Divisions and the 1st British Airborne Division, reinforced by the 1st Polish Parachute Brigade. The airborne soldiers would quickly seize the bridges over the canals and rivers between Eindhoven and Arnhem,

thus opening a corridor for the ground, or GARDEN forces of the Second British Army. Lt. Gen. Brian G. Horrocks' 30 Corps would spearhead the ground exploitation, advancing from a bridgehead across the Meuse-Escaut Canal south of Eindhoven to the IJsselmeer River, over ninety miles to the north, in two to four days. Second Army's 8 and 12 Corps would make supporting attacks on Horrocks' flanks. If all went according to plan, the Allies would have a bridgehead over the Rhine at Arnhem before the fleeing Germans could establish a coherent defense.

MARKET-GARDEN was truly a daring proposition, with success hinging on three critical assumptions. First, 21 Army Group planners believed that the German defenses in the Eindhoven-Arnhem corridor were thinly manned by disorganized formations of "low category" soldiers who would offer little resistance to the lightly armed airborne troops, much less to the rapid advance of the armored forces of 30 Corps. Second, the British presumed that the single narrow route suitable for armored vehicles could support the rapid advance of some 20,000 vehicles of the 30 Corps from their jumping-off point to Arnhem. Third, the plan banked on reinforcing and resupplying the airborne units by airdrops during a season when the weather in northeastern Europe rarely afforded good flying conditions. Nevertheless, the stakes of gaining a foothold over the Rhine and outflanking the Siegfried Line seemed to justify the gamble.

On 17 September, the roaring of thousands of engines from the airplanes of the vast Allied aerial armada supporting Operation MARKET-GARDEN shattered the calm of the clear skies over the Netherlands. Nearly 1,000 heavy bombers attacked German flak positions, while some 1,100 Allied fighters swept the skies searching for the *Luftwaffe*—all preparing the way for the 1,545 transport planes and 478 gliders of the largest airborne operation in history. In the early afternoon, over 20,000 airborne soldiers began landing on drop zones near Arnhem, Grave, and Veghel, while 30 Corps launched its attack toward Eindhoven.

By 23 September, it was obvious to the Allies that MARKET-GARDEN had run its course. German forces had stopped the advance of 30 Corps just short of Arnhem at Driel. The 1st British Airborne Division, cutoff and suffering heavy casualties, received permission to withdraw. On the night of 25 September, some 2,000 British soldiers slipped across the lower Rhine River into the Allied lines and safety; the other 7,000 who had fought in and around Arnhem were dead or missing. The British would not return to Arnhem until the following April.

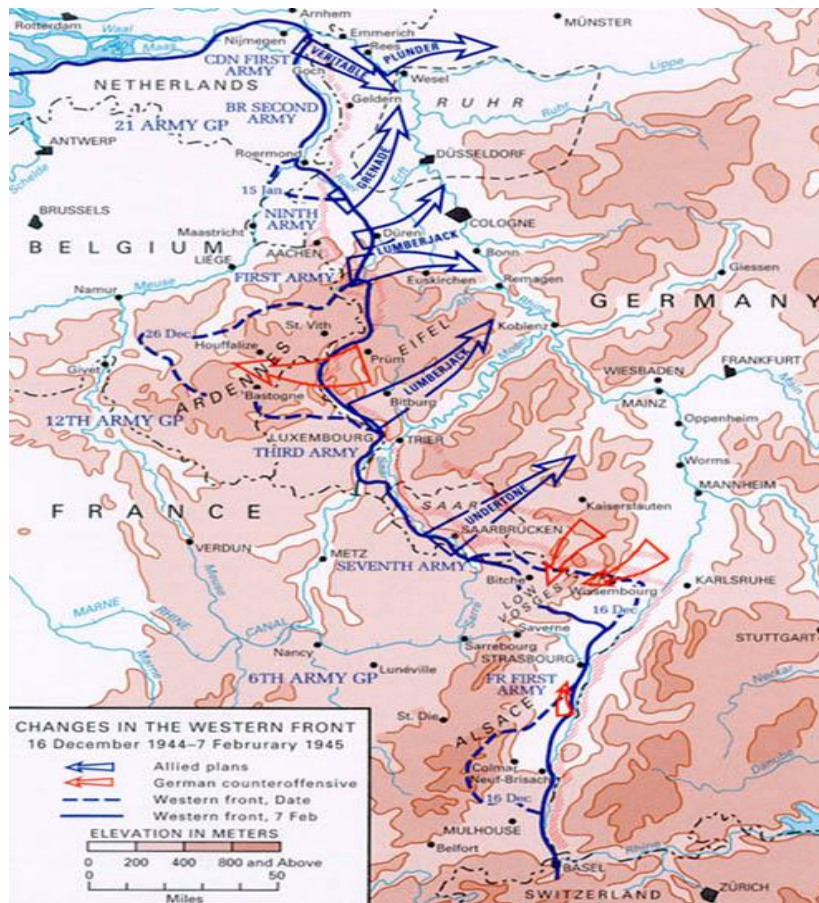
The American divisions had also suffered their share of casualties. The 82d had lost 1,432 killed and missing, and the 101st sustained 2,110 casualties. The fighting for the two U.S. airborne divisions did not, however, end with the halt of the drive toward Arnhem. The Allies, faced with continued German pressure against the MARKETGARDEN salient, kept the two U.S. divisions in the line. Brig. Gen. James M. Gavin's 82d finally started withdrawing on 11 November, after incurring an additional 1,682 casualties; beginning on 25 November Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor's 101st would follow, having suffered 1,912 more losses.

June 2, 1945 Theater of Operation – Ardennes Unit 460th Parachute Field Artillery

The Germans officially referred to the offensive as *Unternehmen Wacht am Rhein* ("Operation [Watch on the Rhine](#)"), while the Allies designated it the **Ardennes Counteroffensive**. The phrase "Battle of the Bulge" was coined by contemporary press to describe the [bulge](#) in German front lines on wartime news maps, and it became the most widely used name for the battle.

The tough going of Allied operations from September-December clearly showed that the Germans had recovered from their defeats of the past summer. Nevertheless, Eisenhower determined to keep pressure on the enemy throughout the winter and deny the *Wehrmacht* the freedom to further strengthen its defenses. On 7 December Eisenhower met in Maastricht with Montgomery and Bradley to plan an all-out offensive for the early weeks of 1945. Eisenhower decided that the main effort would again shift to the 21 Army Group, with secondary attacks in the south. Montgomery was perplexed and argued that the past few months had shown that only one attack could be adequately supported. He argued again for a concentrated thrust across the Rhine north of the Ruhr by his army group, while other Allied forces reverted to containing actions. Eisenhower disagreed and, having control of the ever increasing American resources critical to Montgomery's plan, made his views prevail.

Before the Allies could fully implement the decisions reached at Maastricht, the Germans attacked in the Ardennes. In the mist-shrouded early morning of 16 December, Hitler launched the *Fifth Panzer Army*, the *Sixth Panzer Army*, and the *Seventh Army* in a vain attempt to cross the Meuse River, seize Antwerp, and split the Allied front. Soldiers soon called it the Battle of the Bulge, after the salient the Germans made in the Allied lines. Although surprised, the Allies contained the German offensive, but only after much bitter fighting in freezing temperatures.



From 16 December-25 January, in the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign, the Allies fought to contain and then destroy the forces of Hitler's final offensives in the West. Eisenhower believed that the Germans had given the Allies a great opportunity by impulsively committing their reserves. Eisenhower wrote to the soldiers of the Allied Expeditionary Force that "by rushing from his fixed defenses the enemy has given us the chance to turn his great gamble into his worst defeat." But the heavy snowfalls and overcast skies that crippled Allied mobility on the ground and in the air, as well as the fanaticism of the well-equipped German attackers, gave the Allied soldiers little

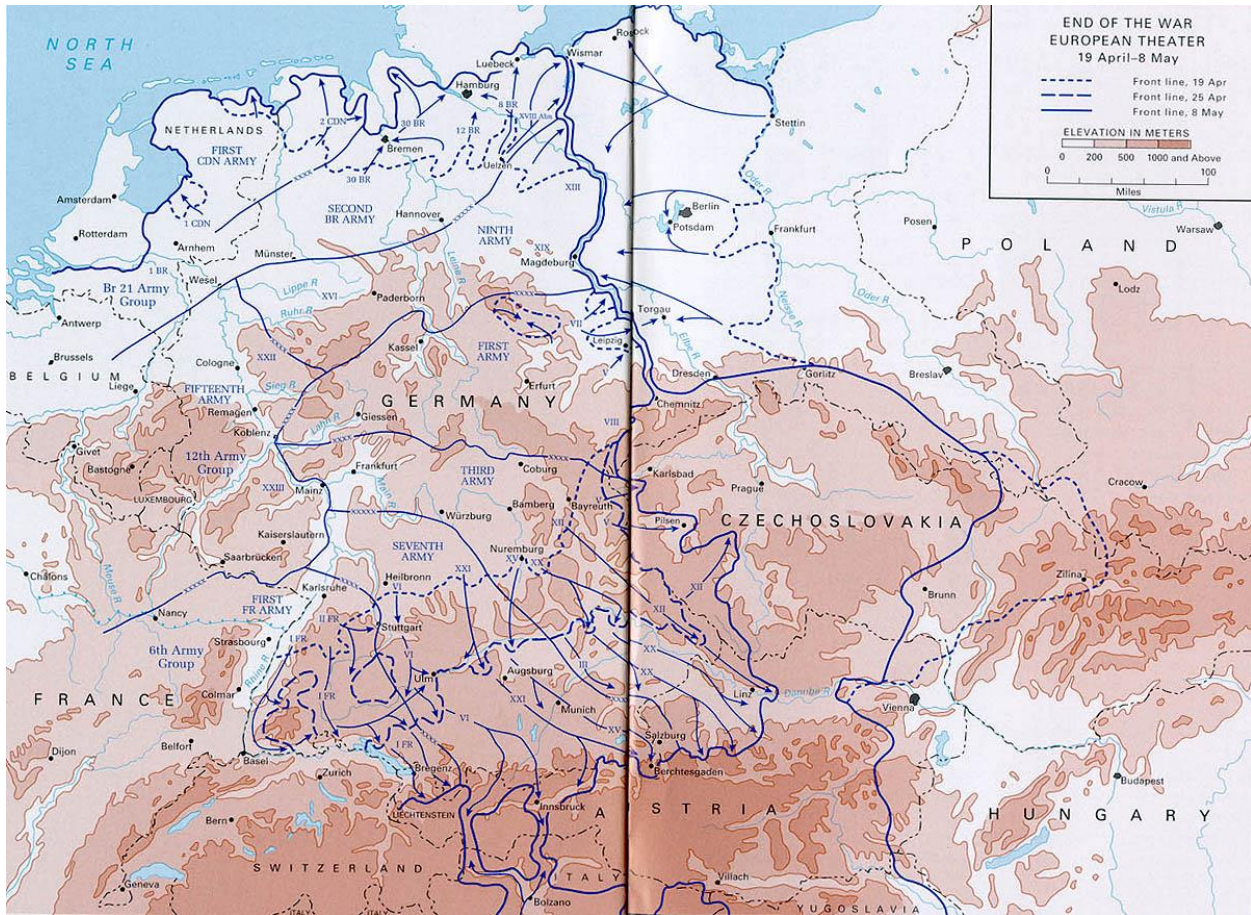
time to celebrate.

A crucial German shortage of fuel and the gallantry of American troops fighting in the frozen forests of the Ardennes proved fatal to Hitler's ambition to snatch, if not victory, at least a draw with the Allies in the west. Lieutenant General George S. Patton's remarkable feat of turning the Third Army ninety degrees from Lorraine to relieve the besieged town of Bastogne was the key to thwarting the German counteroffensive. The Battle of the Bulge was the costliest action ever fought by the U.S. Army, which suffered over 100,000 casualties.

June 15, 1945 Theater of Operation – Central Europe Unit 460th Parachute Field Artillery

By the early spring of 1945 events favored the Allied forces in Europe. The Anglo-Americans had by January turned back the Germans' December counterattack in the Ardennes, in the famous Battle of the Bulge. The failure of this last great German offensive exhausted much of the Third Reich's remaining combat strength, leaving it ill-prepared to resist the final Allied campaigns in Europe. Additional losses in the Rhineland further weakened the *German Army*, leaving shattered remnants of units to defend the east bank of the Rhine. By mid-March the western Allies had pushed to the Rhine along most of the front, had seized an intact bridge at Remagen, and had even established a small bridgehead on the river's east bank.

By the beginning of the Central Europe Campaign, Allied victory in Europe was inevitable. Having gambled his future ability to defend Germany on the Ardennes offensive and lost, Hitler had no real strength left to stop the powerful Allied armies. Yet Hitler forced the Allies to fight, often bitterly, for final victory. Even when the hopelessness of the German situation became obvious to his most loyal subordinates, Hitler refused to admit defeat. Only when Soviet artillery was falling around his Berlin headquarters bunker did the German *Fuehrer* begin to perceive the final outcome of his megalomaniacal crusade.



1st LT Duty Assignments in Theaters of Operation

Assistant S-2 460th Parachute Field Artillery April 26, 1944 – June 30, 1944

Assistant S-2 460th Parachute Field Artillery July 1, 1944 – November 13, 1944

Forward Observer 460th Parachute Field Artillery November 14, 1944 – December 31, 1944

Forward Observer 460th Parachute Field Artillery January 1, 1945 – January 23, 1945

Assistant S-2 460th Parachute Field Artillery January 14, 1945 – June 30, 1945

The **460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion** (460th PFAB) is an inactive airborne field artillery battalion of the United States Army. Active from 1943-1946, the battalion trained with the 17th Airborne Division; served with the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team in Italy, southern France, and the Battle of the Bulge; and ended the war assigned to the 13th Airborne Division before inactivation.

The 460th PFAB was formed at Camp Toccoa, Georgia, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel James B. Anderson and utilizing cadre from the 377th PFAB. After training at Camp Toccoa and Camp Mackall, North Carolina, the battalion conducted jump training at Fort Benning, Georgia, completing its fifth training jump on 18 September 1943. Further training at Camp Mackall culminated in training maneuvers in Tennessee in January-February 1944, where the battalion participated in the "annihilation" of the 26th "Yankee" Division during a 64-mile forced march with its supported infantry.

Returning to Camp Mackall, the battalion was relieved from the 17th Airborne Division and attached to the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment to form the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT). In early May 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Anderson and his staff were relieved, replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Raymond L. Cato and officers selected from the 466th PFAB. During this short period before deployment, Lieutenant Colonel Cato ordered Battery D, originally organized as an anti-tank and anti-aircraft unit with 37mm guns and .50 caliber machine guns, converted to a fourth 75mm pack howitzer battery. After final preparations at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, the battalion departed Hampton Roads, Virginia on 17 May 1944, aboard the USS "Cristobal".

Arriving in Naples, Italy, on 31 May 1944, the 460th staged at "The Crater" outside the city for two weeks, awaiting the arrival of the unit's equipment. After moving north aboard an LST to Civitavecchia, the 460th entered combat, supporting the 36th Infantry Division's attacks toward Follonica for 12 days. Throughout July 1944, the battalion staged at Frascati, near Rome. While preparing for the invasion of southern France, the Paratroopers were also able to relax with passes to Rome, the establishment of an NCO club, and other amusements. Some non-jumpers were also qualified at the Airborne Training Center south of Rome.

On 12 August 1944, the battalion (less Battery C, which staged with the 1st Battalion, 517th Parachute Infantry near Canino and assaulted with 1/517 in Serial 9) staged at the Montalto Air Field for two days, before departing for France in the Serial 8. On 15 August 1944, the 460th conducted its first combat parachute assault, landing in southern France. A third of the battalion (15 plane loads) landed near the intended drop zone. Lieutenant Colonel Cato led the assembly of this group, which had four howitzers in operation by 0630 hours, and an additional two by 0800 hours. Captain Louis Vogel of Battery C assembled most of his battery and two guns near Trans-en-Provence, northwest of the drop zone and dragged the howitzers by hand back toward the assembly area. A third group, about 40-60 men from Batteries A, B and D, jumped early and landed near Frejus, France, nearly 20 miles from the intended drop zone. Consolidating under Major Edward Frank, the battalion executive officer, "Task Force Frank" neutralized an 88mm position and routed an enemy battalion on their way to the assembly area. "Task Force Frank" finally arrived at the battalion's assembly area, with four howitzers. On the evening of 15 August 1944, the battalion received the gliders of the 602nd Glider FA Battalion, doubling the artillery support to the infantry. Over the next 90 days, the 460th accompanied the 517th as it pursued the Germans north and east into the Alps, continuously providing direct support to the infantry and firing 9,130 rounds. After relief in the line, the battalion was assigned to XVIII Airborne Corps and moved from La Colle, near Nice, to Soissons in northern France by train, arriving on 9-10 December 1944.

Campaign Participation Credit

World War II: Rome-Arno; Southern France (with Arrowhead); Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe

Decorations

- American Defense Medal
- American Theater Medal
- European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (5 Bronze & Arrowhead)
- World War II Victory Medal
- Parachute Badge
- French Croix de Guerre
- Belgian Croix de Guerre
- Dutch O Lanyard

Battalion Commander's Account



LT. COL. RAYMOND L. CATO
Battalion Commander

THE 460th Parachute field Artillery Battalion was activated April 15, 1943, under the command of Lt. Col. James B. Anderson. During the months of April, May, June, July, and August, the battalion assumed shape at Camp Toccoa, Georgia. Rigorous exercises and never-to-be-forgotten runs up Mt. Currahee in the heat at Toccoa, weeded out those physically unfit and left a unit of young, eager men, rarin' to go. Early in August 1943 the 460th became a part of the 17th Airborne Division at Camp Mackall, North Carolina. Here the battalion had its first artillery training, along with the never-ending physical program. Transferring to Fort Benning, Georgia, the 460th won its boots and wings September 18. Richard Daley of Baker Battery won the distinctive award of a pair of golden wings, his third jump being the 200,000th to be made at

Fort Benning.

The battalion returned to Mackall and stayed there from September 20 to January 24, 1944, when they left their warm barracks for maneuvers in Tennessee. Working with its combat team infantry component, the battalion battled the 26th, 78th, and 106th Infantry Divisions. On a sixty-four-mile forced march, the combat team walked through the entire area of the 26th and "annihilated" the "Yankee Division." In Tennessee "General Mud" took a hand in the command and made it necessary for the men to improvise many methods of keeping themselves and their equipment dry -- all of them unsuccessful. An important contributing factor to the victory in the "Battle of Mud" in Tennessee was the ice cream and candy sold by civilians at the end of each problem.



460 Prcht. F.A. Officers --

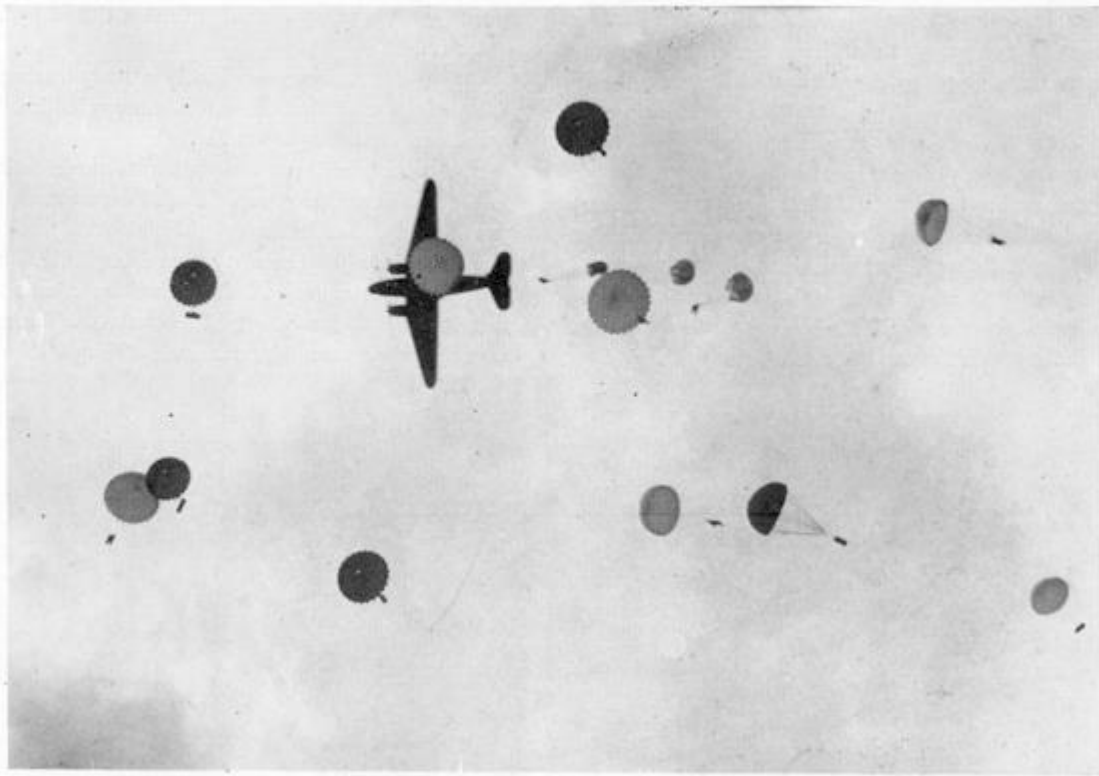
- L to R Standing:
 Lt. Elser
 Lt. Douglas
 Capt. Felix
 Lt. Col. Cato
 Major Alban
 Capt. Anderson
 Capt. Buelow
 Lt. McClurktn

Maneuvers came to an end when it was learned that the 517th Combat Team was to leave the 17th Airborne Division. The ride back to Camp Mackall was something out of this world -- each officer and enlisted man had a private bunk and, what was more, breakfast in bed! Back at Mackall, showdown after showdown started rumors 'a-flying of overseas shipment. A new battalion Commander, West Pointer Lt. Col. Raymond L. Cato, arrived, and when packing and waterproofing of equipment began, everyone felt sure he would be in action before long. On the 6th of May, the last short furloughs over, the last equipment packed, the 460th entrained for Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, where there were last showdowns and "shots" before the battalion sailed on May 17 from Hampton Roads.



Aboard the U. S. S. "Cristobal" there was a rumor that nine nurses were aboard, but the ladies were never found. To add insult to injury, Wacs could be seen standing at the rail of the nearby "Santa Rosa," which carried the 517th Parachute Infantry. The "Cristobal" docked at Naples, Italy, the 31st of May, and there the men learned that the combat

team was scheduled to go into action June 1st on a road leading to Rome. But its supply ship had not arrived, and the battalion bivouacked at "The Crater," just outside of Naples. During a two-week stay, the 'troopers visited Naples, and found it bombed, crumbling, and dirty -- vastly different from American cities.



Leaving Naples, the 460th, now attached to the 36th Infantry Division, boarded an LST and headed north for Civitavecchia. It was near Civitavecchia that two S-2 officers, Lt. Biddle of the 460th and Capt. Deering of the 517th, who were scouting the area around Grosseto, found themselves in the undefended village of Montalto di Castro -- a town which they were later credited with capturing! And near this town, on the morning of June 17, exactly one month after sailing from Hampton Roads, the men of the 460th were initiated into combat. During their twelve days of supporting the 36th Infantry, they gave the Germans no rest and had little themselves. They dug in and fired, moved and repeated the process, for seemingly endless days until the enemy had been pushed up the west coast of Italy to Follonica. Then, its mission completed, the combat team was relieved, and the men loaded on trucks for Fraschetti. In the few days since Montalto di Castro the 'troopers had changed; the bond of comradeship had grown stronger; confidence had replaced cockiness.



On the way back rumors about the next mission ran wild, but at their new station, high in the mountains overlooking Rome, the men of the 460th forgot about the future. There were passes to Rome -- sight-seeing tours taking in the Coliseum, St. Peter's Cathedral, and the Pantheon. A former Fascist's mansion became an NCO Club. There were coffee and doughnuts at the Red Cross, with real American girls behind the counters. Internationally-minded 'troopers set about strengthening Italiano-Americano relations. A few phrases of Italian, a bit of chocolate, and a fellow had a girl on his arm. Officers found night life and entertainment at Broadway Bill's or the Excelsior Hotel. But life at Frascati was not easy. Passes came only after days of hard work -- physical training and runs up the mountain sides -- and Mount Currahee in Georgia, was a mere mound compared to Italian mountains. In the afternoons there were road marches and swimming in beautiful Lake Albano. The battalion was shaping up into an outfit of hardened, sun-tanned men.

Then the 460th became a part of the First Airborne Task Force, under the command of Major General Robert T. Fredericks. Remaining non-jumpers were qualified at the Airborne Training Center south of Rome. Rumors of a coming combat jump held high priority in nightly bull-sessions. On the twelfth of August, the battalion, less C Battery, which was to work with the first battalion, 517th Parachute Infantry, proceeded by truck to Montalto Air Field on the outskirts of Montalto di Castro, the town captured a few weeks earlier by Lt. Biddle and Capt. Deering. The 460th spent two days at Montalto. Bundles were loaded on planes, dropping mechanisms were tested, officers were briefed by the Air Corps, and everyone was briefed at sand tables.

On the night of August 14th, forty-five planes, carrying the men of the 460th, took off from Montalto Air Field and headed for the French coast. The battalion had had its initiation into combat in Italy, but this was its first airborne mission. Men slept as they winged toward France. As land came into view, they woke each other up, and made last-minute checks of equipment. They stood up, bracing themselves as the plane lurched. There was a silent prayer on each man's lips as he shuffled toward the door. Two thousand feet below, obscured by the murky fog was the enemy. As they had many times before, men wondered why they had ever joined such a crazy outfit. Then came the commandGO!!!

Down, down, down -- suddenly a body-tearing yank, a grateful look at that beautiful canopy billowing overhead, and another prayer...



The parachute force was split into three main groups in the landing. One group, "Task Force Frank," jumped prematurely, five minutes after sighting the coast of France. These fifty or sixty men from Able, Baker, and Dog Batteries organized themselves as a small combat team, under Major Edward C. Frank, Jr. Taking advantage of the confused Germans, who thought them a much larger force, they neutralized an 88 position and routed what they later learned to have been approximately a battalion of the enemy, as they fought their way toward the 460th Assembly Area. In the vicinity of Trans-en-Provence, about forty men, assembled under the command of Capt. Louis J. Vogel, were able to walk through a German position undetected, so great was the confusion of the enemy. About three-quarters of the battalion landed on the DZ, but in small, scattered groups. One group under Col. Cato acted as an assault squad to neutralize enemy positions, and all groups had to fight their way to the assembly point, but by six o'clock in the morning approximately one-third of the battalion had assembled, and six howitzers were in their predesignated positions, to form the first battery.



A skeleton Command Post was set up in the Chateau St. Rosalina, outside La Moue, liaison officers and their sections reached their respective infantry battalions and set up radio communication between units of the combat team. The battalion could now fire upon call. By noon, eleven howitzers were in position with Fire Direction Center ready to control their fire. The landing of the 602nd Glider F. A. shortly afterward provided the infantry with two battalions of artillery for support. Order was replacing confusion. By early evening radio contact had been established with the 45th and 36th Infantry Divisions, with Capt. Vogel's force near Trans-en-Provence, with VI Corps, and with 1st Abn Task Force. Firing was continuous during the night and the next day. At six o'clock in the evening of the 15th "Task Force Frank" joined the rest of the battalion. The initial part of the mission was accomplished, and the 460th remained in bivouac near La Motte until August 18th, when the combat team moved out toward Puget.



The convoy to Puget that afternoon looked more like a gypsy caravan than anything military -- there was a thirty-passenger bus, several motorcycles, two Buick pick-ups, an Italian truck, and a French truck driven by its owner. Behind these came the hiking artillery-men. At Puget the expected attack by the Germans never materialized, and the battalion continued to move along the French Riviera toward the Italian border. From Puget to St. Pauls, from St. Pauls to St. Cezaire, from St. Cezaire to St. Vallier, the Krauts were in full retreat, and the combat team encountered only small units fighting a delaying action.

Weary warriors had a four-day rest in the taverns and bars of the pleasant city of Grasse; famous for its perfume. Then a thirty-five miles march over hills and mountains brought the battalion to Bouyon, where, in support of the 517th, it blasted the Germans across the Var River. On the other side of the Var, where the battalion fired a few missions, the men saw an example of a German anti-Airborne defense that they, luckily, had not encountered -- a network of poles and low-stretched wires, with artillery shells attached. From September 4 to September 6, from a position near L'Escarene, the 460th supported the 517th as it drove the enemy from the surrounding mountains. Heavy-counter-battery fire to which the battalion was subjected and a direct hit upon an Able Battery position made severe demands upon the coolness and courage of the over-worked medics, and forced the battalion CP to evacuate a railroad station in favor of a nearby tunnel.

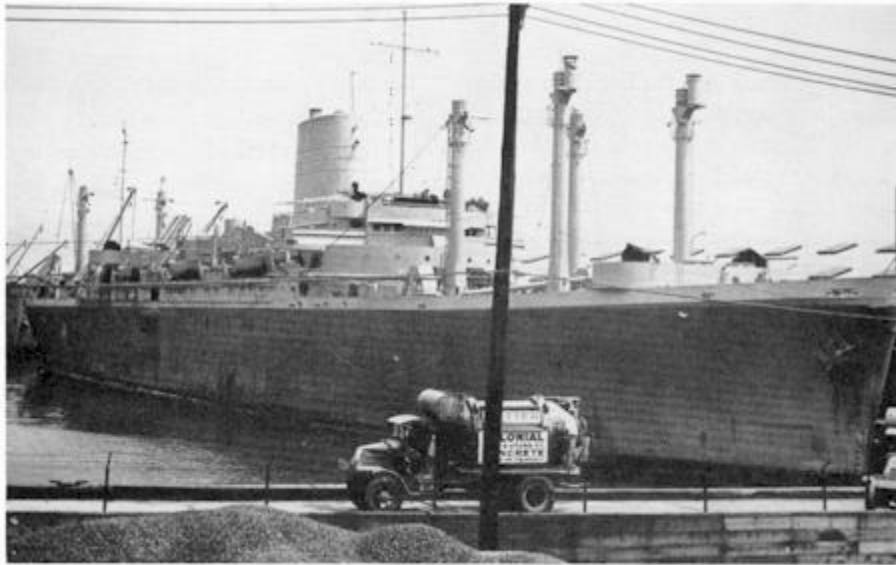
On September 6 the Germans withdrew to the fortifications of the Sospel Valley. The battalion CP was moved from the tunnel to the town of Luceram, and the batteries dug in at strategic positions overlooking the valley. For a long time Able Battery, at Piera Cava, and Dog Battery, on a cliff overlooking the valley, were "the front," with no infantry between them and the enemy three-quarters of a mile away. The combat team was in essentially a defensive position, but aggressive infantry patrol activity and incessant, highly accurate shelling and machine-gunning from the 460th made the Sospel Valley and Mt. Agaisien on its opposite side untenable for the enemy. On October 28th the Germans blew three bridges, and withdrew under cover of darkness. Moving forward in support of the 517th, the 460th dug into positions in the vicinity of Mt. Agaisien, overlooking the towns of Briel and Olivetto San Michelle. The battalion established itself as comfortably as possible in the available buildings, and fired with continuous and deadly accuracy on German supply lines until it was relieved by a battalion of Armored Infantry on November 16. Then, a three-day hike brought the men to a bivouac area near La Colle-sur-Loup, 'for their first rest in ninety-seven days.

It had been a long time since that night at Mohtaito Air Field. The combat team had touched off the Invasion Day TNT and had blasted the Germans from the chute-strewn field at La Motte through the Sospel Valley. It had been a lonesome, forgotten war of their own -- that "Champagne Campaign" -- long, hard days of combat, precious passes to beautiful Nice, abruptly-ended romances with Riviera belles, and for some the military cemetery at Draguignan.

After eighteen days of training emphasizing lessons learned in combat, and -- during off-duty hours -- movies, sports, passes to Nice, and walks in the picturesque countryside. At La Colle-sur-Loup, the battalion piled into forty-and-eights at Antibes, and for three days journeyed northward in weather which grew increasingly colder. Upon arrival at its destination -- cold, dreary, wet Soissons -- the 460th was attached to XVIII Airborne Corps.



December 16th "it" happened. Under Von Runstedt the Germans broke through in Belgium and threatened to split the American Armies. In response to a call from Corps Headquarters, the 460th entrucked on the 22nd of December for Werbomont, Belgium. There, at Corps Headquarters, Col. Cato and his staff learned that somewhere, not far away, in southern Belgium, the 101st Airborne Division, the 106th Infantry Division, and many other units had been cut off by the German advance from the rest of the Allied Forces.



Cristobal

The 460th moved to Xhoffraix, Belgium, to supplement the artillery of the 30th Infantry Division. There the men ate their Christmas dinner -- D-rations. There was heavy German air activity, but worse than the battle was the cold -- the bitter, numbing cold that penetrated layers of clothing and froze feet and hands. Men suffered indescribably during those days of "the Bulge." The day after Christmas, the Combat Team moved to Ferriers to prevent a break-through in that sector; on December 27 to Au Hautre in support of the 7th Armored Division's drive on Manhay. On New Year's Day there was a real turkey dinner, which made up somewhat for the Christmas D-rations. From position to position on the northern flank of the Bulge, in attacks on Manhay, Trois Pont, Bergeval, St. Jacques, Henumont, Coules, Logbeirme, Mont de Fosse, and Petit Thier, in support of the 30th, 75th, 106th, and 1st Infantry Divisions, of the 7th Armored Division, and of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 460th relentlessly pounded enemy-held territory until January 23 when the battalion was relieved for a rest at Stavelot, Belgium.

At Stavelot there were gun drill and classes, six-day furloughs to Paris for a lucky few, movies at night, and one real shower. Then on February 2, the combat team moved to Losheimergraben, Germany, in preparation for an assault on the vaunted Siegfried Line. Here artillery fire was directed at troop movements; the concrete emplacements of the Line were invulnerable to seventy-five millimeter shelling. After nearly three weeks of operations in the deepest mud the 460th had encountered, the combat team was again relieved on February 20 and started moving back to France for a well-earned rest.

Upon arriving at Joigny, France, the 460th was assigned to the 13th Airborne Division. Although it was not known at the time, the combat team had seen its last action. In March there was an alert for the jump across the Rhine; at Vitry, April 3rd, the battalion again made preparations for jumping, but as each day went by, it became evident that it was not needed. On May 8, 1945, the 460th paused for a brief celebration of victory in

Europe. However, with the war still on in the Pacific, V-E Day meant little more than transfer to another theater. This was borne out by the announcement at Joigny in July that the 13th Airborne was scheduled for redeployment to the Pacific with a short stopover in the States for furloughs. At sea, two days out of Le Havre, the announcement of V-J Day came over the ship's radio. Men who had been looking forward to a furlough realized that a discharge was not too far in the future. In the States at last on August 20, the men of the 460th were at home shortly afterward.

Welcome Home Boat Meeting the U. S. A. T. Barry New York Harbor—Aug. 20, 1945



Over a year had passed since they had sailed from Hampton Roads -- months of hard combat in far places. Perhaps some men sweated a little the thought of Pacific occupation with the 13th Airborne, but soon Japan had been peacefully occupied, and for the men of the old 460th duty with the Army was over a few weeks after the furloughs ended. It's another 460th in garrison at Fort Bragg now, a new battalion which will always be proud of the record made by the men of the "Champagne Campaign" and the Battle of the Bulge.

LT. Prager's Duties:

460th Parachute Field Artillery Duties of Assistant S-2 Officer and Forward Observer

The activities of the FA battalion are supervised by a number of key personnel in addition to the battalion commander, the command sergeant major (CSM), and the executive officer (XO). These include primary staff officers such as the S1 (personnel officer), S2 (intelligence officer), S3 (operations officer), S4 (logistics officer), and S6 (communications and electronics staff officer [CESO]). The chaplain is a member of the personal staff.

S2 (INTELLIGENCE OFFICER)

The S2 performs a wide variety of tasks concerning intelligence, targeting, and force protection. In addition, he helps the S3 supervise the TOC operation. In addition to those listed in [FM 101-5](#), the S2's duties include the following:

- Supervise the intelligence section.
- Develop artillery intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) in conjunction with other staff elements and the senior FA HQ, with the supported maneuver S2 (DS units), and the S2 for any supporting/supported FA units.
- Develop enemy artillery order of battle and monitor tactics and techniques of enemy artillery, mortars, and TA assets.
- Predict artillery target locations and pass predicted locations to a fire control facility (FSE or fire direction center [FDC]), targeting cell, or weapon platform as appropriate.
- Provide survivability and mobility information to the battalion S3.
- In conjunction with the S6, assess the enemy's capability to interfere with signal communications and supervise the counterintelligence aspects of signal operations within the battalion.
- Recommend commander's critical information requirements (CCIR), especially priority intelligence requirements (PIR), related to the primary mission, tasks, and role of the battalion.
- Prepare intelligence estimates and portions of the FASP (the enemy situation portion (paragraph 1a) and the TA tab), with the assistance of the targeting officer and the radar section leader. This includes the radar deployment order (RDO) when applicable.
- In coordination with maneuver and FA S2s, as appropriate, organize and supervise an aggressive collection effort designed to answer PIR.
- Advise and assist the S3 in positioning, tasking, and supervising organic/attached TA assets, and coordinating survey for TA assets.
- Assist the S3 in managing the counter fire fight.
- Develop and collect the intelligence and TA data necessary to support counter fire operations.

- Recommend radar employment, positions, decision points for cueing and moving the radar, cueing schedules, and radar zones.
- Template potential enemy locations, determine enemy-to-friendly FA force ratios, evaluate enemy FA/TA capabilities and tactics, and advise the FA battalion and maneuver commanders on the enemy indirect fire and counter fire threats.
- Ensure IPB analysis includes evaluation of the role and capabilities of ground, air, and naval forces, and possibly even satellite/space-based assets in the enemy's counter fire program.
- Ensure all subordinate and supporting units are kept informed of the enemy situation.
- Coordinate the battalion ground and air defense plans.
- Advise the commander and staff on control of classified materials.
- Request and distribute maps (paper/digital), as required.

Forward Observer



Because artillery is an indirect fire weapon, the forward observer must take up a position where he can observe the target using tools such as binoculars, rangefinders and call back fire missions on his radio.

The FO usually sits on the ground in cover, from which he can see the enemy. However, he may also be airborne—this was one of the very first uses of aircraft in World War I. He must take great care not to be

observed by the enemy, especially if in a static position. Discovery of an FO does not only jeopardize his personal safety; it also hampers the ability of the battery to lay fire.

Using a standardized format, the FO sends map references and bearing to target, a brief target description, a recommended munition to use, and any special instructions such as "danger close" (the warning that friendly troops are within 600 meters of the target when using artillery, requiring extra precision from the guns).

The FO and the battery iteratively "walk" the fire onto the target. The FDC signals the FO that they have fired and the FO knows to observe fall of shot. He then signals corrections. These are normally of the form of left/right of the bearing line and distance along it, for example "right 50 add 100" (distance in meters). When the fire is good enough the FO signals "**target on, fire for effect**".

If the mission requires a walking barrage he may continue sending correction orders.