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HEADQUARTERS 743 F.A. BATTALION
APO No. 339

2 June 1945



SUBJECT : Commendation

TO : All members of this command.

M26-1095

1. It has been my desire for some time to find a suitable medium in which to express to you, and to those who love you, a few thoughts concerning our association of the past and our preparation for the future. Not that I feel there is any need to engage in letter writing to reach an understanding between us as fellow members of an ancient and honorable profession; but "In after years you will smile to remember these things", which we have experienced together - - - thus: the idea for TIME ON TARGET was born.

2. Early in my military career, I was taught that the requisites of a good soldier are: TO SHOOT, TO MARCH, AND TO OBEY. Whether you realize it or not, your entire service in the Army has been directed towards a well planned program intended to instill in you these fundamentals. And now that we have engaged in combat against one of our enemy nations, it is fitting that we consider how well our work has been done. I believe that in a remarkably short period of time we have achieved a standard and a reputation which is both the pride and the envy of our associates in the military profession. As proof that I am not alone in this conviction there is reproduced elsewhere in this publication a few of the commendations which this organization has received. However, by no means are these our only commendations. During our participation in combat, scarcely a day passed without some Infantry Commander or Armored Commander calling me on the phone to express his gratitude for our fire. I wish it were possible for every man in the battalion to have heard the enthusiasm and the sincerity in their voices as they told me how the "Doughboys" were able to walk through after our barrage, where a few minutes before they could not move. So it is without reservation that I say you can shoot and shoot well. Our fire has been reported as being extremely accurate, effective and timely.

3. As for your ability to march; I have only to recall the many miles, the strange places, the difficult terrain that we have travelled together. You have marched in rain and fog, over ice and snow, through mud and dust, under hostile aircraft and blackout restrictions; but always without a major accident, without a single vehicle abandoned and without a man hurt. Such a record does not just happen. It is the result of proper training and a sense of responsibility on the part of every individual.

4. In the Field Artillery we shoot as a team and march as a team. Obedience is something different. It depends upon the attitude of individual soldiers and the leadership of officers and non-commissioned officers. Surely there is positive evidence that this relation has been developed to a very high degree when we look at the record - - Not a single officer or man lost in action. No sweeter feeling can come to a military commander than to know that there exists an equal exchange of confidence and respect between himself and those under his command.

5. All these things I have had the privilege of enjoying many times since I assumed command of this organization. I salute you as the finest soldiers in the world. Regulations do not permit a discussion of future plans, known or anticipated, but with the prayers of our loved ones we will always be found on Time on Target.

JAMES K. BELL

Lt. Col., F.A.

Commanding.