

# Division Chronology

The following documents are a combat record of each Infantry Regiment for their time in combat in Italy in 1945. These documents were compiled at the end of the War, and are based on daily reports. Please select the regiment below to learn more:

[85th Mountain Infantry \(731k\)](#) [Ebook Format](#)

[86th Mountain Infantry \(650k\)](#) [Ebook Format](#)

[87th Mountain Infantry \(1.2 Mb\)](#) [Ebook Format](#)

## THE 10<sup>TH</sup> HOW IT ALL BEGAN

*Earl E. Clark (87-HQ-1)*

Recently a copy of a letter written in 1955 by Minnie Dole was discovered, telling the story of the "birth of the mountain and winter warfare soldier" in great depth. It also explains the decisions that led to the building of Camp Hale. The letter has now been given to our Resource Center at the Denver Public Library. Here in brief is the story that Minnie told. His quotes are shown in italics. It starts with the following:

*Events began taking shape in 1938 when I was given the responsibility of organizing the National Ski Patrol System. One night in late 1939 or early 1940, Alec Bright of Boston, Roger Langley and I were together with a hot rum or two and the discussion led to the phenomenal job the Finns were doing on the Karelian Isthmus in crucifying the Russians. A perfect example of men fighting in an environment with which they were entirely at home and for which they were trained.*

With deep concern for our country this small group of men began a dedicated effort to convince the Army and the War Department that winter skilled and trained troops were an absolute necessity. They were met initially with total indifference. Those in authority were just not interested. They recognized, however, that there was a possibility of a North American invasion by Hitler should he succeed in Europe - probably via the old invasion route, the St. Lawrence River Valley between the United States and Canada. Quoting again from Minnie's letter:

*We came home from Washington and for the next month made a search for every bit of information, pictures and material that we could find about mountain and winter troops in foreign countries. We put all of our findings in a huge scrapbook.*

*A staff general who had listened to the group told them that "they were wasting their time unless they could get to see General Marshall. Minnie then sought the assistance of an Aide to the Secretary of War. Minnie wrote:*

*He promised us nothing but late that afternoon a wire came saying our appointment with Marshall was the next morning at ten a.m. We were introduced to him on the dot of our appointment. We sensed a quick and decisive decision one way or another... From that moment on the wheels began to turn. Our trips to Washington were frequent in those days.*

The whole subject of training and equipment was then explored. The Army thought that their "Alaskan Equipment" could be used but a Quartermaster search revealed that no such equipment existed any longer. The Army's book on Alaska, in fact, was dated 1914. It became immediately obvious that a completely new start had to be made. In early October 1941, a letter was sent to General Marshall - a desperation "last move." Suddenly, on October 20 General Marshall and the Secretary notified Minnie "that on November 15, 1941, the 87th Infantry Mountain Regiment, the first Mountain Regiment in our Army history, would be activated." Again quoting from Minnie's letter:

*The result was what counted and past worries were forgotten. For a long time we labored under the delusion that our letter had turned the trick. It perhaps helped for it arrived almost simultaneously with a report from one of our attachés in the Embassy in Rome detailing the debacle of the Italian winter campaign in Albania: "ten thousand frozen to death - 25,000 dead - if a global war is contemplated or envisioned men must be trained in mountain and winter warfare and time is of the essence as these troops cannot be trained overnight." The activation of the 87th was a little less than one month later - 22 days before Pearl Harbor!*

Because what had been created was totally new and different, the Army encountered many problems, including who would be named to command the Regiment. They chose Colonel Onslow Rolfe, a crack cavalryman, to take on the difficult assignment. They also established an equipment team of experts who gathered quickly and a much-needed new start was made. From Minnie:

*Plans to expand the 87th to a Division were in embryo. The War Department was looking for a site. Their need was mountains, a trunk highway and railroad and one and one half million gallons of water a day. They chose Pando, Colorado. We argued against it due to the altitude but the die was cast.*

With these decisions made, getting the men came next. The War Department asked Minnie to "help us get them." They asked for 2,500 in 60 days - Minnie provided 3,500! The source was the National Ski Patrol System that had become active in every winter area in the United States. Again, in Minnie's own words:

*At this point came those three letters of recommendation. They still give me nightmares! But consider our predicament. Never had the Army had a civilian recruiting agency. We had to give them evidence of a sound procedure.*

Minnie's letter then covered two additional matters of great interest to us:

*One morning I was sitting with General Hyssong in Washington and he was telling me about the terrific guy that Marshall had chosen and whom he was recalling from Europe to take command.*

*As he talked the door opened and a lean, human looking guy walked in. Hyssong jumped up and said "George, what the hell are you doing here?" George replied "Oh, just stopping in for orders." It was General George Hays. I was introduced and I looked at the guy and said "General, I'd give my eye teeth to have ten minutes alone with you." He replied "What's the hurry. I'll give you twenty." So we went into another room and without mental preparation, I did my best to tell him what I could about the division he was about to command. Being the great guy he was, is now, and always will be, he listened attentively and you know the rest.*

Just prior to meeting General Hays, Minnie sought and obtained another interview with General Marshall. He asked the General why we had been kept in training so very long. Marshall answered: "Dole, I have only one mountain division. If I commit it at point X and it turns out a month later that I need it much more at point Y, I can't get it there. My problems with transportation are too great." Minnie ended his letter with the following comment:

*In your fighting days you were all members of one unit. You still are, no matter what part of the country you reside in. In your Association deliberations I hope you will make it one strong cohesive unit. In unity lies strength and the weight of your united opinion may be very valuable in times to come.*

Minnie, we took your advice.

## **CHRONOLOGY OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> MOUNTAIN DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II**

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*Please note: you will need Adobe's free Acrobat Reader to view and print this file. Download the free Reader [here](#).*

[Chronology of the 10th Mountain Division \(709k\) \*Ebook Format\*](#)

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Any remaining errors are the author's responsibility alone and should be reported to him *via* the Webmaster of this site.

**INFANTRY CASUALTIES IN ITALY**  
**10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION CASUALTIES IN ITALY**

Total casualties. On January 6, 1945, the 10th Mountain Division suffered its first casualties in Italy when seven men were killed by mines in Quercianella, near Livorno. By the time the war in Italy ended, on May 2, the division had suffered a total of **4837 casualties - 975 killed, 3849 wounded, and 12 taken prisoner.**

Casualty percentages. Of the 19,734 men who served in the 10th Mountain Division in Italy, including 5,500 replacements, **25% became casualties.** Of these, **20% were wounded and 5% killed.** More than 30% of the men in our three infantry regiments who landed in Naples became casualties; your Database Committee is now working to obtain an accurate figure.

Casualty rate. The average casualty rate was **1209/month, for four months.**

**COMPARISON WITH OTHER INFANTRY DIVISIONS**

Ten other U.S. infantry divisions fought in Italy. Of these the highest number of casualties were suffered by the 34th Infantry division.

<u>Division</u>	<u>Total Casualties</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Interval</u>	<u>Casualty Rate</u>
34th Inf	16,401	3,408	20 months	<b>820/month</b>
88th Inf	13,111	2,606	14 months	<b>937/month</b>
10th Mtn	4837	975	4 months	<b>1209/month</b>

**10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION CASUALTIES IN PARTICULAR BATTLES:**

Riva Ridge

(18 Feb - 25 Feb = 7 days)

17 KIA + 51 WIA = 68 (10/day)

Mt Belvedere through Mt della Torraccia

(19 Feb - 2 Mar = 12 days)

195 KIA + 718 WIA+ 1 POW = 914 (76/day)

Spring Offensive and Breakout (14 Apr through 20 Apr = 7 days)

370 KIA +1427 WIA+ 3 POW = 1800 (257/day)

Po Valley (20 Apr through 26 Apr = 7 days)

93 KIA + 435 WIA+ 1 POW = 529 (76/day)

Final battles (Lake Garda)

(27 Apr through 2 May = 6 days)

62 KIA +257 WIA = 319 (53/day)

Figures for the 34th and 88th Divisions are from W. Victor Madej, 1984, "The U.S. Army Order of Battle: Mediterranean and Europe, 1942-1945", Rhoads Press, Allentown, PA. Other data from the 10th Mountain Division's WW II Database. Compiled by John Imbrie, 5/1/02.

**THE TRAMWAY BUILDERS  
A Brief History of Company D**

by

*Philip A. Lunday and Charles M. Hampton*

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The Tramway Builders (6.3 Mb) [Ebook Format](#)

**RIVA RIDGE REPORT**

Lt. Col. Henry J. Hampton, commander 1st Battalion 86th Mountain Infantry, planned and carried out the attack on Riva Ridge. In June 1945, he wrote a report on the attack — which is one of the most important and fascinating historical documents we have on the 10th's campaign in Italy.

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Riva Ridge Report (1.8 Mb)