



Colorado Military Historians

Newsletter

L, No. 3

March 2024



10th Mountain Division in Italy

News and Views

*Message from CMH Secretary
Eric Elder*

I'd like to thank Brian Kennedy for his article on the 10th Mountain Division. A welcome article for a newsletter that had almost none this month. I look forward to new articles from members on a variety of topics.



I received word from Larry Irons that he will not be seeking the CMH Treasure re-election in May. We are looking for a volunteer to submit their nomination for our Board election at our May monthly meeting during our West Wars convention. Larry is working on moving to North Dakota in the not-too-distant future. He will help to transition a new Treasure volunteer. Members can also submit their nomination for any of the other Board positions as well (President, Vice-President, and Secretary). Please contact one of the Board members with which position you are interested in.



February

Unit of the Month

Sponsored by Hobbytown Westminster



Each month, at the monthly meeting, CMH members bring their latest painted figures and models to the meeting to display their latest efforts.

CMH Member	Scale	Manufacturer	Era	Unit
Greg Skelly	25mm	Unknown	Knights	Jousting Knights
GREG SKELLY	28mm	Old Glory	Dark Ages	Saxon & Varangion
Scott Holder	28mm	Gripping Beast	Late Roman	Casualty Figures
David Manley	28mm	Foundry/Gripping Beast	Hun/Franks	Heavy Inf & Bowman
Bill Daniel	15mm	Homemade	Colonial	Desert Oasis

Winner in **RED**



Assault on Riva Ridge

Article by CMH Member

Brian Kennedy

The assault on Riva Ridge by 1st Battalion, 86 Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division on the February 18, 1945 was the opening move of the 10th Mountain Division operation that would see the division taking Mount Belvedere and eventually moving into the Po Valley. The assault on Riva Ridge by 1/86th was the division's first major action in the war and proved just how effective the division's mountain warfare training was.

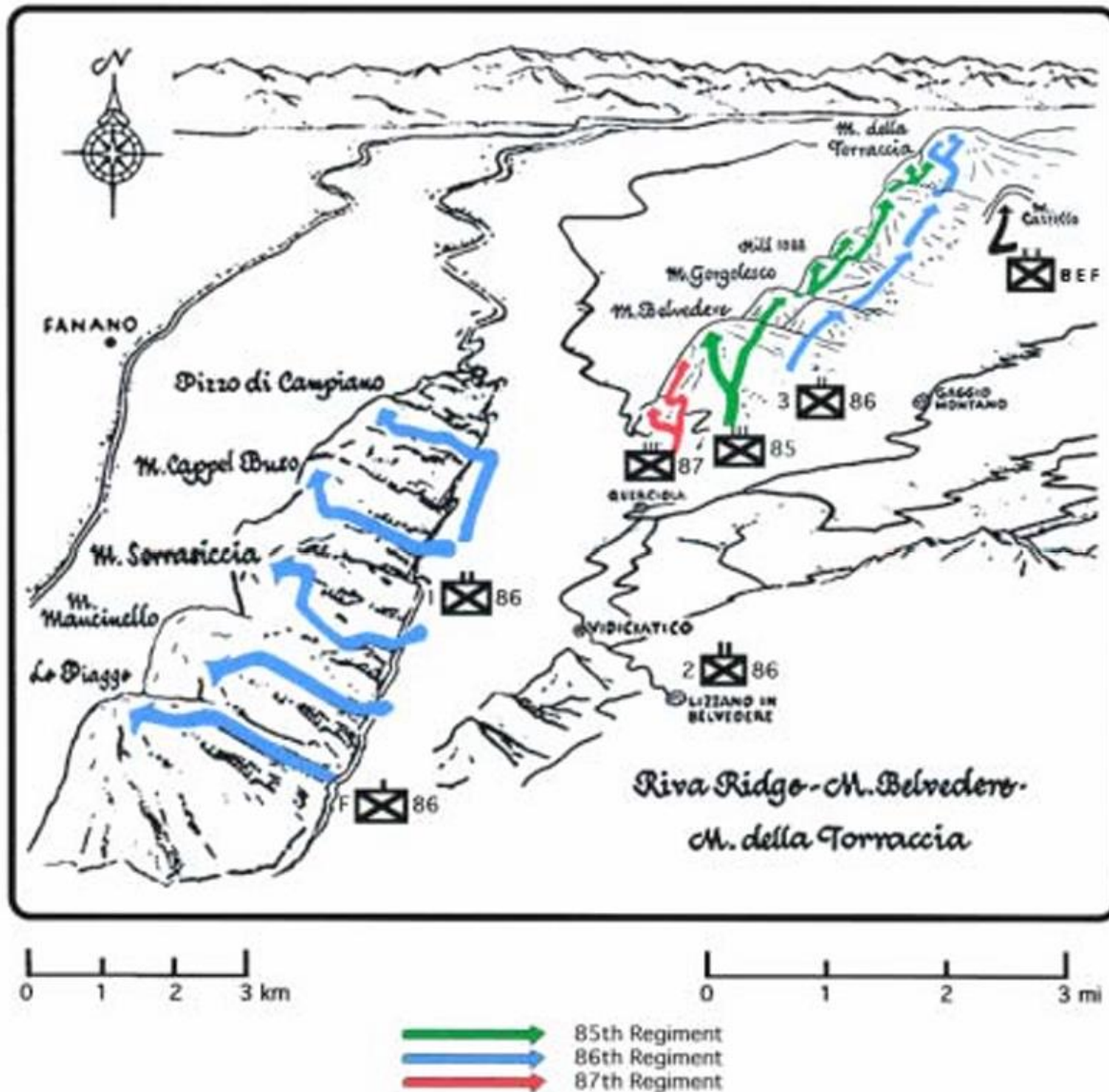
Upon arrival in Italy the Division was ordered to relieve Task Force 45 north of Bangi de Lucca in the Mount Belvedere area. The 86th Infantry Regiment relieved Task Force 45 by January 9, 1945. The 86th had the Brazilian 1st Infantry Division on their right flank and 25 miles of mountainous terrain between the 86th and the nearest Allied formation on their left flank. With the arrival of the rest of the Division in January the Division commander Major General George Hayes determined that in order to take Mount Belveder the ridge to the south-west would have to be taken. That ridge was the Mancinello-Campiano ridge, which would later be more commonly known as Riva Ridge. The task fell to 1/86 Infantry commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Hampton.

Riva Ridge consisted of ten summits ranging from 3,175 ft. to 6,030 ft. in elevation. The east side of the ridge that the 1/86th would have to move through was very steep and broken with cliffs and steep ravines. The west side of the ridge, controlled by the Germans, was comparatively mild terrain. Unless this ridge was occupied by 1/86th prior to the attack on Mount Belvedere the Germans would have had direct observation of and clear fields of fire on Mount Belvedere. In the words of LTC Hampton the repercussions of not taking Riva Ridge would be that "the Kraut could direct artillery on the backs of our troops attacking Belvedere."

1/86 began preparations for the assault on Riva Ridge began with scouting of the German positions on the ridge. The first patrol was sent on the January 15, led by Sergeant Carl Casperson of B Company. The patrol contacted the Germans and fired on them when they were spotted. In turn the patrol came under machine gun fire and had to move back down the ridge. The 1/86 learned the lesson that from that point forward the patrols would have to avoid contact with the Germans and not return fire if fired upon. During subsequent patrols five routes were found that would facilitate the movement of the 1/86th in five columns up the east side of Riva Ridge. Two of the trails would require fixed ropes to be affixed for the men to make the movement.

The elements that would conduct the assault trained for two weeks in a quarry near Lucca. This helped to prepare the approximately 30% of troops in the unit that had not undergone mountain training at Camp Hale, Colorado. A room was set aside at Lucca where a sand table was built, maps were studied, and aerial photos were displayed. Soldiers of all ranks were briefed and studied the plans and terrain in detail. The attack would be supported by field artillery, heavy machine guns and chemical mortars, all of which were placed in support of 1/86th for February 18-19.

MAP 8. RIVA RIDGE
February 18 - February 25



Map Source: National Association of the 10th Mountain Division

The attack began at 1930 hrs. on February 18 supported by a platoon of 30 porters from the Regimental Support Company and all members of the Battalion Headquarters company who continually packed ammunition, rations and water up the ridge and packed the wounded back down. All five attacking columns made it to the top before daybreak. Only B Company on trail two contacted the enemy when taking their objectives. The Germans had made it a habit of moving back into their dugouts for the night which allowed the attackers to take the positions with very little fighting. German prisoners stated afterwards that they never expected an attack on the ridge as they thought the terrain was too difficult. The initial objectives of the assault were taken without a soldier killed. That would change as through to February 22 the Germans mounted several counter attacks. The 1/86 held all their positions throughout that time and were able to move machine guns up onto the ridge as well as a 75mm pack howitzer. The 1/86th was relieved by the 10th Mountain Division AT Battalion on February 23.

In LTC Hampton's report on the Riva Ridge Operation he cited reasons for the success of the operation. The first reason he cited was that 70% of the personnel had been mountain trained and "had no fear of rugged, precipitous, and difficult terrain." He also cited the period of practice over similar terrain and the "high morale and esprit de corps of the men who knew they were a specialized mountain outfit, and when given an objective will do their utmost to surmount it to justify their specialized training."

I have only been able to scratch the surface of the details of this operation. I would highly encourage everyone to read LTC Hampton's report which has been digitized and made available in the first link below. I have also linked an excellent document that provides a chronology of the 10th Mountain Division in WWII compiled by the National Association of the 10th Mountain Division.

Climb to Glory!



The Riva Ridge Operation: The Report of LTC Henry Hampton
[hampton.pdf \(wordpress.com\)](#)

Chronology of the 10th Mountain Division in World War II
[10horska.pdf \(mountain-division.com\)](#)



February

Game of the Month

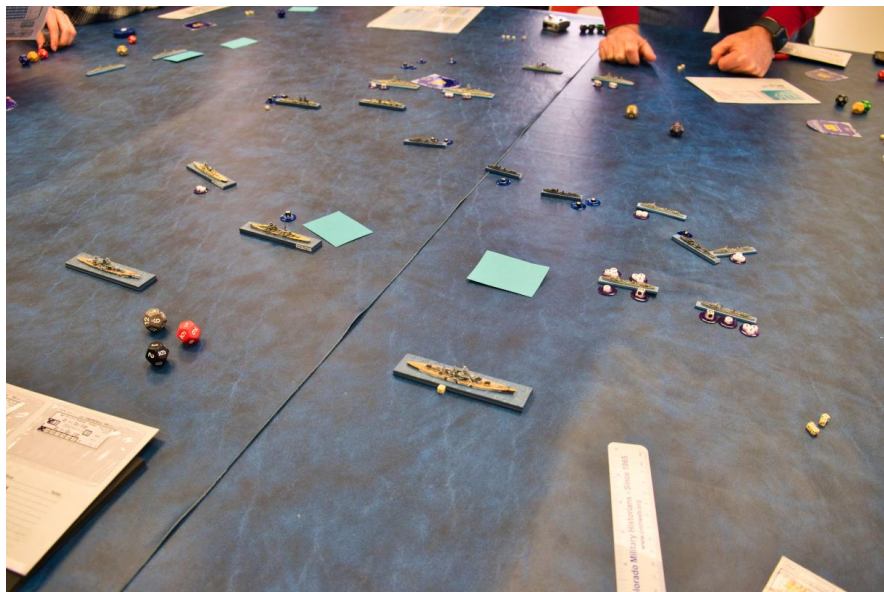
Sponsored by Hobbytown Westminster



Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting. This award is for the effort put out by the host.

CMH Member	Scale	Rules	Description
Steve Van Dyke	1:1200	Raiders & Blockaders	ACW Ironclads
Deborah Schouten	15mm	Nap Battles 2 nd edition	Portuguese vs French 1810
RICHARD KASTEN	15mm	ADLG (F)	Playtest - spells
Greg Cornell		Memoir '44	Boardgame
Eric Elder		C&C Ancients	Boardgame
Greg Skelly	1:2400	General Quarters 3	WWII Naval

Winner in RED



Historic Location of the Month

Venice, Italy

On March 21, 1945, Allied aircraft bombed Venice harbor sinking two torpedo boats, a merchant ship, and smaller vessels. A large cargo ship was damaged, five warehouses were destroyed, and a mine stockpile was destroyed. The attack was comprised of Mustang, Thunderbolt, and Kittyhawk planes with no pilot losses.



Wargame Conventions

www.partizan.org.uk

March

1st - 3rd March

1st - 3rd March

2nd March

3rd - 7th March

Not Being Held in 2024

15th - 17th March

16th March

17th March

20th - 24th March

20th - 24th March

21st - 24th March

22nd - 23rd March

22nd - 24th March

22nd - 24th March

22nd - 24th March

23rd March

23rd March

29th - 30th March

xxx March

Cincycon

Coastcon

Cold Barrage

Gama Expo

Cold Wars

Bashcon

Battlefields

Midwest Toy Soldier Show

Adepticon

Flames of War Midwest Nationals

Gamestorm

March to Victory

Coscon

Simcon

Hot Lead

FUBAR III Bolt Action Tournament

Lead from the Front Bolt Action Tournament

Scrum Con

Baton Rouge Rise of Rome ADLG Tournament

Hamilton, OH

Biloxi, MS

Havre de Grace, MD

Louisville, KY

Valley Forge, PA

Toledo, OH

Livonia, MI

Lafayette, IN

Schaumburg, IL

Schaumburg, IL (At Adepticon)

Portland, OR

Blue Springs, MO

Butler, PA

Rochester, NY

Stratford, ON, Canada

Quebec, QC, Canada

Cary, NC

Washington, DC

Baton Rouge, LA

April

4th - 6th April

5th - 7th April

7th April

12th - 13th April

12th - 14th April

13th April

13th April

18th - 21st April

18th - 21st April

20th April

21st April

25th - 28th April

26th - 28th April

26th - 28th April

27th April

xxx April

Annual Seven Year War Association Con.

Havoc

The Brawl in the Hall Bolt Action Tournament

Daycon

Trumpeter Salute

KozCon ADLG Tournament

Advance!

Midwest GameFest

Little Wars

Gajograd Ablaze Bolt Action Tournament

Gettysburg Toy Soldier Show

Recon

Cheyenne Gaming Convention

Ozcon

Conflict

Brewer-Sailors ADLG Open Tournament

South Bend, IN

Marlborough, MA

Kingston, ON, Canada

Kettering, OH

Burnaby, BC, Canada

Monroeville, NJ

San Diego, CA

Kansas City, MO

Lombard, IL

Sandy, UT

Gettysburg, PA

Kissimmee, FL

Cheyenne, WY

West Plains, MO

Camano Island, WA

Birmingham, AL

Full list available here:

[Americas Wargame Calendar](#)

Colorado Military Historians, Inc.

Colorado Military Historians (CMH) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote historical wargaming and the study of military history. Founded in 1965, CMH meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month, except in May when the meeting is deferred to the third Sunday. The meeting starts at noon at the Baker Recreation Center, 6751 Irving Street (just a few blocks west of Federal Blvd), Denver, Colorado. The club also hosts gaming at least one Friday night a month, called “Friday Night Fights” (FNF) at 7:00 p.m. Friday meetings will be held at a future determined location. See website for latest information.



CMH maintains ties with numerous local, regional, and national groups to help promote the hobby. CMH is governed by member-elected officers serving on the Board of Directors (executive board). Terms of office are one year, with elections held at the May meeting. New members are accepted after attending three CMH functions and a vote of the membership. Dues are \$60.00 per year, payable in January. Members wishing to receive a snail-mailed newsletter subscription must pay an additional fee of \$15.00 per year. Authors retain ownership of articles and graphics published. CMH reserves the right to edit or reject submissions to the newsletter.

One year Adult Membership: \$60.00

Half year Adult Membership: \$30.00

(For NEW members who join after June 30)

Family Membership: \$60.00 (one Adult and any number of offspring)

Student Membership: \$30.00 (16 to 22 years old)

Children: free (younger than 16 accompanied by member)

Club Links:

Web Site: <https://cmhweb.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cmhgamers/>

Groups.io Group: <https://groups.io/g/cmhweb>

Discord: <https://discord.gg/DAP2Gn>

CMH Newsletter

The CMH Newsletter is a monthly newsletter published by the Colorado Military Historians. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of all CMH members.

Mailing Address:
Eric Elder
9529 Castle Ridge Cir.
Highlands Ranch, CO 80129

Phone: 303-933-4723

Email: eejist@hotmail.com

Editor/Layout: Eric Elder

Next Issue: Apr 2024

2023/2024 CMH Board Members

President:
Nate Forte
natforteg1@gmail.com

Vice-President
Jim Rairdon
rairdon8071@comcast.net

Secretary
Eric Elder
eejist@hotmail.com

Treasurer
Larry Irons

Historian
Doug Wildfong
dwwild84@gmail.com