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OPERATIONS OF THE 701ST TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

Period - April 19 - May 9, 1943: North Tunisian Sector

Lt. Col. King returned from II Corps Headquarters, newly established near Beja, on April 19th, where he had, on the previous day, reported after the Battalion had been alerted for a move. Ben Ghobka was left behind in a trail of dust as Reconnaissance Company led the march followed by Headquarters, "A" Company, "B" Company, "C" Company and trains. An accident en route resulted in my injury to Lt. Romani of "C" Company, and he was removed to a hospital. At dusk the Battalion pulled into the bivouac area, a green cow pasture, six miles south of La Calle, a Mediterranean port on the Algerian coast. The night passed without incident, although unidentified planes flew overhead during the night. The Battalion was now attached to the 1st Infantry Division after being detached from 1st TD Group.

The following day an advance detail travelled to II Corps and 1st Infantry Division Headquarters with Lt. Col. King and there received instructions for a move of the Battalion and preparation for the all out attack. Thus, the Battalion moved out that night and arrived at a bivouac area approximately nine miles northeast of Beja at 0500 hours. Trains fell out to bivouac two miles east of Beja, and "C" Company was attached to the 26th Infantry Regiment which preceded them to front line positions north of the Battalion area. Lt. Col. King and others in the advance detail rejoined the Battalion and a further move was made at 1900 hours to the Dir Ben Escha area, approximately 13 miles northeast of Beja. The gun companies took up their positions, and the entire Battalion was ordered to camouflage and dig in. In the meantime, the trains had moved into the vacated wheat field.

On April 21st the 1st Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment, and one platoon of the 16th Armored Engineers were attached to the command of Lt. Col. King, and all were attached to the 1st Infantry Division in support of the 13th Combat Team. The following morning a tragic incident occurred when the

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... of the three company commanders of the 13th Armored Regiment
... in the "biceps". The Executive Off-
... the three company commanders were killed. In
... opened heavy artillery fire to our southeast.
... was noticeable all day as American bombers and fighter
... over the front. There was no sign of enemy planes.

At 0200 hours of April 23, all II Corps Artillery went into action with
a terrible barrage. The infantry moved forward to attack Hill 350 under the
... fire of the artillery, and an company of tanks; the 701st's Re-
cognition and "A" Companies supported the assault. Lt. Sumner of Recon-
naissance was in liaison with the 2nd Battalion of the 18th Infantry Regi-
ment, and he reconnoitered in this capacity. Lt. Col. King and his obser-
vation post party were on the newly established OP on Hill 337 early that
morning to watch the proceedings. "A" Company was located by the enemy,
and moving forward into position, and came under shell fire. The 13th
armored Regiment then reported that their tanks were pecked and under
enemy shell fire in the valley between Hills 350 and 407. Artillery sup-
port was requested and the resulting fire was directed through the 701st OP
with Lt. Jones of the 13th Armored Regiment as forward observer. Nine out
of the 17 tanks were rescued by this means. Later in the day Hill 337 on
which the OP was located was shelled by the Germans.

At 1630 hours, Colonel W. J. Thompson, Army Ground Forces Observer, who
had been sent from Washington, D.C., arrived to note the progress and action
of the war front. An hour later Major Patterson of the British Royal Artil-
lery came to observe the function of our Battalion G.P. A few rounds of
enemy aircraft added a lively note to the proceedings. Shortly afterwards
the first enemy planes seen by the Battalion in this sector dropped flares
southeast of the Battalion and attacked with machine guns wide area. Our
machine guns chattered back, and the Nazis "shagged" back to safety.

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American artillery put down a terrific barrage on Dj. El Reul to aid the infantry advance on the evening of April 24th. Lt. Morrison, C.P. disclosed the advance of all our forces. Reconnaissance patrols reconed the region, all of our forces, and the friendly advances. The following day, Lt. Morrison was at the CP before daylight. Lt. Smith reconed out. Lt. Smith reconed the vicinity of Hill 407. Tank platoons went out supported by a mine detector team. A platoon of tanks went east of Hill 407 into the pass at Dj. El Reul. Other platoons proceeded to the opposite side of 407 through the southeast pass. Company sent a light platoon to patrol and locate minefields south of Dj. El Reul and about the pass leading to Hill 388. Lt. Susser reported back that a minefield had been located at Hill 407 and that the road at 407532 was impassable to "peeps". Lt. Clarke, who was shelled later in the day, reported that Lts. Smith and Kennedy had reached their objectives and were observing the fire of enemy 88's landing in the valleys.

A mine detector team was attached to the 701st by the 1st Infantry Division, and it was placed with Lt. King's Reconnaissance Platoon. This mine detector team swept a minefield at 456532 during the afternoon.

Reports of enemy evacuation had filtered in. Our artillery fire had been very effective. "B" Company had taken forward positions at the pass north of Fendak. "A" Company (platoon) platoons at 460484, 471466, 471474. At dark, the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, was ordered relieved from the 701st by II Corp.

Command Group rolled forward to a new position on April 25th. Roads, due to mud and mines, caused a long detour to the destination, Cu. Querajima. Train moved into the position vacated by Command Group the same morning. Reconnaissance Company also moved forward. Intercept from 1st Infantry Division revealed that it had reached its objective without contact with the enemy. The going was difficult due to the terrain and mines. Lt. Col. King reported C.P. [unclear]

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Proceeding to the line of fire, Lt. Clark reported enemy vehicles. Two hours later, he added that his vehicles were drawing fire from the northeast, and Lt. Smith reported that he could see the smoke of the enemy guns. As the American artillery fire was misguided, he plotted the location. Lt. Kennedy had meanwhile contacted the 18th Infantry Regiment, two platoons of said infantry having crept forward to the S2 line on Sidi Keftah. Lt. Kennedy reported being shelled by our own artillery, but was happily uninjured.

On April 27th the 1st Recon Division moved into the 6th Infantry area to supply armored protection. "A" Company of the 701st TD Battalion was, therefore, relieved from this mission and shifted to the west and northwest of Djebel Teuta. Lt. Sumner was ordered to contact the forward elements of the 34th Infantry Division, and Lt. Kennedy, who had already contacted the 26th Infantry Regiment, was sent to the 34th sector by Lt. Clarke. It was reported that Lt. Smith was reconnoitering to the north and northeast where he reported enemy shellfire from the same points as the previous day. A short time later, Lt. Kennedy was reported to be under continuous artillery fire, but extricated himself from this position a little later.

Colonel Thompson left the Battalion to go to II Corps, and Major Petersen departed for the 1st Infantry Division Headquarters. The relay of a teletype message from General Bradley, II Corps, relieved Major Tardy, Battalion Executive Officer, from the 701st and assigned him to the 601st TD Battalion. Captain Redding of "C" Company was then appointed Battalion Executive Officer. Lt. Childs replaced Capt. Redding as commanding officer of "C" Company.

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Colonel Gibbs, G-3, 1st Infantry Division req. "of the company" of the 701st to accompany the 16th Infantry Regiment at dark. "A" Company was then alerted and contacted the 16th Infantry guide. The 16th was able to push ahead before the retreating enemy infantry, and "A" Company moved up to take position in support.

April 28th Capt. Morrison established an OP he had chosen the previous day. There was obvious interference with the OP and communication by phone only could then be used. Infantry advances by the Americans were reported from the OP, and an advance by these units up the slope of Hill 444, while the summit was being shelled by our artillery, was reported.

Combat Command "B", composed of the 2nd Assault Battalion, 770th SS Battalion, the 2nd Assault Artillery Battalion, and one company of the 16th Engineers, with the 1st Battalion of the 1st Assault Regiment in reserve, was now assigned to the Battalion.

Reconnaissance Company of the 701st was quite active and instrumental in securing information of considerable value. Lt. Smith, Sasser and Kennedy recommended to draw fire from the enemy in order to locate their guns. They also observed enemy movements and troop concentrations, and relayed their information through Lt. Glavin to the Battalion C.P.

Messages from G-3, 1st Infantry Division were received and sent on to the companies to the effect that the enemy was staging several counter-attacks, and that 40-50 vehicles and some tanks had been located at 2464. "B" Company was informed by our infantry that enemy infantry was in front of "B" Company positions. Artillery fire on the road adjoining their area was then reported by "B" Company, and the Company moved to the vicinity of 500562

The American advances on this sector had resulted over almost impassable roads, narrow, winding, and gutted with enemy mines. Our engineers immediately after removing the mines, set to work widening the roads and filling the holes, and the roads started to show marked improvement.

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Combat Command "B", composed of the 13th Amed Regiment, 776th TD
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509552.

The American advance on this sector had stumbled over almost impass-
ible roads, narrow, winding, and pitted with enemy mines. Our engineers
immediately after removing the mines, set to work widening the roads and
filling the holes, and the roads started to open up and improve.

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The 2nd Battalion of the American tank corps was under enemy shellfire on the night of 2 April 1945. Our reconnaissance elements went out, but had nothing of importance to report. German linguists of Battalion S-2 went on radio intercept effort to intercept enemy messages. These intercepts were sent immediately to S-3, 1st Infantry Division. Text of one message revealed that the 2nd Barenthin Battalion was moving into the line between the 755th Infantry Regiment and the 1st Barenthin Battalion. Lt. Col. King inquired of S-3 whether the intercept of enemy messages had proven sufficiently important to continue. He was told that due to these interceptions two enemy attacks had been repelled. Without this information of enemy plans, on the other hand, a withdrawal of our forces in these sectors might have been necessary.

Air activity, both friendly and enemy, was at a high point during the day. Large formations of American bombers were observed winging their way toward enemy lines.

Reconnaissance patrols went off again on April 30th, and Lt. Glavin acted as relay station to send their messages to the G.P. Lt. Kennedy reported the elimination of one of our 155mm guns by an enemy shell. Lt. Smith sent in the location of three Mark III tanks at 473607, and a little later six American tanks were reported around Hill 519. He continued with a report of three enemy planes over "B" Company positions. One "B" Company man was injured by the anti-aircraft fire. Lt. Kennedy gave a general picture of the situation in the sector. He stated that Hills 490 and 491, and the east area were held by U.S. troops forming a ring around Hill 519. The enemy still was in possession of the east end. Then American lines continued to the bitterly contested 523, now held by the 16th Infantry Regiment, and included up to the west slope of Hill 476 on Djebel Chankoura. The southern part of Djebel Ans was also held with the intention of taking more and pushing out to 502605. The 18th Infantry Regiment was in a static position on the left of 52 line. In addition, one tank company of the 1st Armored Regiment was holding at 455385.

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at Djebel Aza and Djebel Toubana after the capture of the
conclusion of Djebel Aza. Our forces were held in positions
Hill 545 and 550. Beausville, the highest peak of the range,
Hill 323. German intercoastal were being used to supply the
all during the day.

21 enemy planes came over during the morning. They were identified as
Focke-Wulfes and Messerschmitts, and engaged in air combat. The only
455655. In the afternoon, "C" Company reported that 10 He-109's were seen
over the north slope of Sidi Meftah.

May 1st dawned with a heavy fog obscuring visibility. The OP reported
that vision was too poor to see Djebel Aza. Heavy bombings by aircraft
were heard, but it was impossible to ascertain the location due to increased
haze. As the fog lifted later in the morning, the OP announced that American
artillery was pounding Hill 551.

The 18th Infantry reported the taking of Hill 609 at 0905 hours. In
the afternoon, 16th Infantry mentioned a counter-attack formation at Hill
545.

Lts. Max McLeod and John T. Deegan were assigned and joined the
talion. Capt. Redding sent "A" Company a coded message to move to
455601, 455612, and the approaching road (suitable for heavy AT) in
positions. Alternate gun positions were also to be provided.

"C" Company reported that four unidentified planes dropped bombs to
their left on the northwest slope of Hill 609.

Visibility was again poor on the morning of May 2nd. Djebel Toubana
could not be seen at all. Later on our artillery was reported to be shell-
ing Hill 558.

A report from the 16th Infantry declared that their patrol had
that the Germans had mined Hill 580 and then vacated it. It was
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The east slope of Djebel Badger was still in enemy hands.

Reconnaissance and the line companies sent out to reconnoiter. The Company sent to the vicinity of 456051 reported no contact with the edge of the nearby village. The 813th T. D. Battalion and some tanks were found in the area.

The 26th Infantry Regiment now revealed that three or four enemy tanks were forward of Djebel Badger and shelling Djebels Ans, Tauta and Badger. An air reconnaissance was requested. "B" Company of the 701st subsequently reported that these tanks were out of sight of their observation.

Lt. Smith reported the fall of enemy shells near his observation post. He then left for further reconnaissance and discovered a S/P and "peep" destroyed by mines at 455595. The possibility of a field of 300 mines was mentioned, and the results of the day's reconnaissance given. The 2nd Battalion of the 168th Infantry Regiment was perched on Hill 609. The 1st Battalion of the 133rd Infantry Regiment was at 450612, and the 2nd Battalion of the 26th Infantry Regiment was at 443603. One battalion of the 16th Infantry Regiment was on Hill 523 with a company out of the 26th Infantry on Hill 531. "A" Company of the 813th T. D. Battalion was situated at 438598. A German OP had been located near the railroad at 495615.

Lt. Clarke had reported that all elements north of the 62 line were hostile, and a message to all stations announced that 100 enemy vehicles were approaching 5560 from the east.

A G-2 report from 1st Infantry Division came in the following morning to place the location of the 1st Battalion of the 16th Infantry on Hill 558, the 1st Battalion of the 26th Infantry on Djebel Ans, and an element of the 18th Infantry on Djebel Badger.

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A section of the Pioneer Platoon was ordered to "C" Company, and "C" was to push reconnaissance up to the 60 line. At location 6060 Lt. Childs was fired on by the enemy. He called in and informed the OP that the road was impassable past 598577.

The Battalion OP was called in, after being operated by Lt. Morrison for five consecutive days, because the American advance in this sector and the German retreat made further observation of the enemy impossible. Lt. Col. King left with part of the Command Group to set up a forward CP.

An accident occurred directly in front of the Command Group when Capt. Redding of the 1st Engineer Battalion and his "peep" driver were blown up by a mine. The Capt. was very seriously injured. Capt. Kahn, the 701st Medical Officer, rendered immediate first aid and had the injured man rushed to the nearest hospital. Command Group then continued to move up. The forward C.P. group, after going 8 1/2 miles, left the road and parked the vehicles at 525595, a creek north of Djebel Neftah. It was later learned that the group had narrowly escaped injury because, in leaving the road, they had traveled through a minefield, some mines of which were straddled by our vehicles. In the evening, forward and rear C.P.'s joined and completed the move to 561607. A call, shortly thereafter, by Lt. Smith reported his location as 576598. He added that he was coming under shellfire.

Lt. Morrison got information that a large number of tanks and guns of the 776th TD Battalion were moving east of 565590. Some battalions of the 26th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion of the 18th Infantry were reported in new positions. G-3, 1st Armored Division, asked for a reconnaissance east and north to the hills, river, and road on the 65 line, if possible.

"A" Company reported in that the road to Mateur was now clear. All during the day fighting units on this front moved steadily forward into enemy evacuated territories. Reconnaissance patrols forged ahead to probe

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It was reported that the road had been damaged or abandoned
which was confirmed by a report at 030500 was also reported.

Reconnaissance of "C" Companies were informed that enemy tanks were
seen in the valley. An hour later a message from Colonel Cook
reported enemy tanks at St. Joseph's farm just south of the road. However,
Lt. Clark reported that Lt. Kennedy had just observed St. Joseph's farm
which was being shelled by American artillery. Nothing was to be seen,
and a later report from the infantry declared that their patrols were
working around St. Joseph's farm and to the north.

All the Companies of the 701st had moved up, and their positions were
checked by Lt. Col. King, who advised "A" Company to improve their positions
by digging in and camouflage. Although enemy planes had been visible
during the day, and had bombed and strafed the vicinity of the positions,
there was no damage. Enemy shells whistled over the forward area
during the morning and afternoon, but landed on the road south and eastward of
our positions.

Lt. Dugan and Pvt. Lengwerth, part of a "C" Company patrol, had
disappeared at one point and had not returned by 1600 hours. At night
fall, as they were still missing, Captain Redding, the Executive Officer,
set out in an attempt to locate them. Nevertheless, the search revealed
nothing. B Company moved during the night and took up positions at 0200
and vicinity under cover of darkness.

Reconnaissance alerts set out at dawn, May 5th. Five Reconnaissance
were reported overhead as Lt. Clark gave his position at 0200. The
reported contacting the 1st Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment, and
enemy was observed digging in along the line from 0200 to 0300. A
bridge at 060777 was discovered blown up. Lt. Smith reported enemy
fire in the path of the northern objective, making it impossible to be
reached even if dismounted.

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1st Infantry Division phoned in to inform the Battalion that a minefield had been found on the road west of the river between 64560 and 645660. Another minefield at 608701 had been detected by the 1st Reconnaissance. Reports of friendly troops at 645500 were received. Artillery also came in.

Enemy planes bombed and strafed the area of the 18th Infantry Regiment three times during the day. The raids were made with flights of 10 to 12 Pechu-24s and Messerschmitts.

"C" Company reported that a battalion of American infantry was advancing through heavy shellfire to 650585. An artillery CP visited the enemy gun positions at 675605. There were sporadic bursts of enemy and American artillery throughout the afternoon, but there was little action otherwise.

In the evening, Command Group completed its move north to 583642, and a new Command CP was set up at Hill 21, during the night for early morning use. The drone of unidentified aircraft could be heard everywhere all night.

A heavy barrage on enemy positions due east by all artillery in the sector opened May 6th. Under cover of this barrage, the 1st Infantry Division attacked and headed for the hills in the general vicinity of the 70 grid line. The ultimate objective was the G. area. The 701st mission in this assault was the same as previous, to give anti-tank protection to the Division, and also to assist the advance of the 18th Infantry Regiment. One each reconnaissance platoon, and one each section of Pioneer Platoon were attached to "A" and "B" Companies, while another section of Pioneer Platoon was attached to "C" Company. The C.O. of Reconnaissance Company and the remaining platoon were to establish a forward C.P. All gun companies were to hold forward and establish.

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30 hours, the 10th Infantry of the 1st Battalion that they had taken Hill 121 and were proceeding on to Hill 232.

Lt. Clark reported that a Battalion of the 26th Infantry was under heavy mortar fire of 656675. Another battalion of the 16th was on Hill 139, and one company from the 26th was under enemy machine gun fire. A coded message from Lt. Clark followed with this information: "Boys of the 18th suffering heavy casualties".

Six waves of Allied bombers, 15 to 18 in each wave, were observed from the Command Group area. They came in on the enemy positions and cut loose their bombs. One plane was seen to fall, victim of the intense enemy anti-aircraft fire.

Lt. Eisen reported that he was pinned down by shellfire and could not proceed further. A reconnaissance was then ordered forward in search of new gun positions, and "B" Company moved northeast while "A" and "C" Companies proceeded to the east. The attached reconnaissance parties were to go forward as far as possible. The reconnaissance party of "B" Company was unable to advance beyond the vicinity of Sidi Mansour due to shelling and machine gun fire. The "C" Company party reached 636641 where very heavy artillery fire caused two casualties, Opl. Irvak was killed and S/Sgt. Smith wounded. The "A" Company reconnaissance advanced to 6467 where heavy shell fire killed Opl. Harley and stopped the party. However, new gun positions were located for "B" and "C" Companies, and one platoon from each of the latter was placed forward.

Lt. Clarke reported again of an artillery due along the line. Otherwise, there existed a lull as indicated by the 1st Infantry Division report. The liaison report from the 3rd Infantry Division sector mentioned that the 1st Battalion of the 168th Infantry Regiment had captured Hill 295 and that the 3rd Battalion had occupied Hill 321.

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1st Armored Division was reported to have advanced to Perryville. A report from Lt. Olney, Liaison Officer, stated that the 18th Infantry Regiment did not hold Hill 232, and that the enemy was between the Hill and a battalion of the 18th. After repulsing a counterattack, the 3rd Battalion of the 26th Infantry Regiment held Hill 129 and the 2nd Battalion was near Hill 129. The 1st Battalion attack had been repelled and Hill 189 was still in enemy hands. Enemy infantry was also reported to be dug in at 639863. Due to strong and repeated enemy counterattacks during the night, our infantry withdrew to the west side of the stream. The ground lost had been taken earlier only after difficult fighting and heavy losses.

"C" Company sent word to the C.P. that it was unable to move another platoon forward until certain that the flank had been cleared. Reconnaissance told of heavy machine gun fire at 670590.

During the late hours of darkness two platoons of "A" Company moved to 642646 and 632646. The "C" Company C.P. shifted to 608635.

At 0800 hours of May 7th, Lt. Clarke delivered information gained in reconnaissance of the 1st Armored Division sector. Colonel Crosby's tanks had met resistance in an attempt to ford at 6284 a stream; but one company made the crossing. Counterattacks by enemy tanks and anti-tank guns forced his battalion to fall back to 6280. The 6th Infantry Regiment controlled the outer fringe of hills south of Perryville. Colonel Howe's battalion had advanced to the vicinity of RJ 7080 and held all opposition. The objectives of the 1st Armored Division for the day were Perryville, the ground northeast of Matur, and reconnaissance to the east.

Reconnaissance missions were assigned to the companies by Lt. Col. King. "A" Company was to reconnoiter to the east of the road between the 66 and 68 north coordinates. "B" Company had to reconnoiter northeast to the road between the 69 and 71 north coordinates, while "C" Company was assigned to reconnoiter to the east to the road between the 63.5 and 65.3 north coordinates.

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24 German prisoners had been captured that morning and were questioned by a II Corps interrogator on the hilltop of an Arab farm in the Command Group area. S. Officer, Lt. Morrison, was on the scene and received important information through the II Corps interpreter. The information was revealed by one prisoner, and parts of his testimony were corroborated by the others.. This material was immediately wired to G-2 of the 1st Infantry Division by the 701st C.P. Speed was needed to give the proper units the use of this information before the enemy could shift positions to make this knowledge useless, and forward observers of units informed were sent out immediately to take action.

The information extracted from the prisoners of war revealed that four 75mm howitzers were in a draw at 699691, four 20mm dual-purpose guns in a gully at 701692, two 88mm guns behind Hill 266, two 88's or 150mm guns in a wadi on the eastern slope, the C.P. of the 1st Battalion Barentkin Regiment on Hill 202, the Regimental C.P. for the Barentkins at Farm St. Jeanne, and approximately 1000 Hermann Goering SS Troops on Djebel Saidak.

Lt. Clarke reported in that vehicles, possibly tanks, were observed coming up a trail about 800 yards south of 672678. "A" Company got the information to the C.P. that the road and crossing from 642674 to 653674 were clear, but the sides were found to be mined. There was no confirmation on the road north and south.

Intercepts from the 1st Armored Division mentioned enemy tanks at 740770, and an 88mm gun in position at 7676. Reconnaissance units of the 1st Armored Division were said to be entering Ferryville with 9th Division reconnaissance troops engaging the enemy on barges east of the town. An enemy foot patrol was fired on at 665650 and a German gun battery was observed at 675599. New beehive traps were discovered by 1st Armored Division troops in this area. One type was a "Paris" marked chocolate bar form consisting of a chocolate coating over a steel case. The

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explosion would take place seven seconds after unwrapping. Another type of booby trap was a first aid pouch with Red Cross markings. There was a seven second delay, after lifting, for the explosion. This information on enemy booby traps was immediately passed on to all stations.

1st Infantry Division reported that Allied troops had the high ground looking down on Tunis. Massicault and Tebourba were cleared of the enemy, except for stragglers.

A report from Lt. Morrison declared that there was no action in the 1st Armored Division sector. The S-2 half-track and personnel had departed at 0200 hours the previous night to act as liaison with 1st Armored Division Artillery. At 0355 hours, Lt. Morrison reported as follows: "OP-4" was at 803903, 51st Reconnaissance Battalion at 708707, and had not contacted the enemy as yet. The German 15th Panzer Division was last reported on the road in the vicinity of 813734, and the 2nd Battalion of the 13th Armored Regiment was to swing left from its position to encircle the enemy. The 34th Infantry Division positions were at 609603 with British Forces at 905706.

This message was followed by another disclosing that the 1st Armored Division was drawing fire with an enemy OP believed to be at 676682.

"B" Company had reported all quiet in its area. It was then ordered to move forward until some kind of contact was made with the enemy. Reconnaissance Company patrols were ordered to comb the roads and vicinity, using the route leading north and northeast. Minesweepers were sent to "A" and "B" Companies and their reconnaissance patrols were to go forward either to contact the enemy or reach the 1st Armored Division sector.

A British radio message was intercepted and forwarded to 1st Infantry Division. The text read: "Tunis water supply good. Harbor blocked by two ships. Sub cable demolished. Air fields on north of city good. No action in suburbs."

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Lt. Morrison reported at 1030 hours that two platoons of U.S. Infantry were on Hill at 739718 with the rest of the valley clear. An hour later, he told of the enemy not manning anti-tank guns which were in good condition. The Germans were more than willing to surrender and were giving themselves up in droves. Colonel May's outfit had been told not to stop, but to continue on. The enemy was trying to evacuate 12 miles east of Bizerte.

Lt. Edson's "B" Company patrol, out with the infantry, reported picking up two prisoners of war. He had been informed by Arabs that the enemy had withdrawn 30 kilometers. "C" Company was clearing the road of mines to the 70 grid line, and reported that area 6667 was heavily beebie trapped. In addition, it stated that the 135th Infantry Regiment was at 730610.

Lt. Kennedy reported from the CP that our infantry patrols were all through the area on Hill 121 and to the south. As no resistance had been met, they were going to reconnoiter to the objective.

Lt. Morrison relayed a 1st Armored Division message to the Battalion C.F., mentioning that Division was moving to the vicinity of 7177. The tanks were engaged in mopping up as there were too many enemy troops in the rear for them to push ahead before pockets of resistance could be controlled.

"C" Company reported 30 enemy troops at 695627 and contacted British 46th Reconnaissance of the 46th Division at 724634. It then had to move its command track and relay station to maintain British contact. Proceeding cautiously because of mines, "C" Company discovered a new type of beebie trap near some German slit trenches; this was a black metal wash basin which exploded when moved.

On entering Tebourba, the British 1st Army found a prisoner of war cage in which Pvt. Ben Longworth, missing from "C" Company since May 4th, was incarcerated. He told of being captured when Lt. Begman and he were reconnoitering on foot after leaving their vehicle. An enemy tossed hand grenade had injured the Lieutenant. It was later reported that Lt. Begman

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was found in a hospital with injuries on his face, side, and leg when the British 8th Army entered Tunis.

At about this time, information was received telling that Lt. Burghardt, missing at El Guettar, was now a prisoner of war in a hospital in Italy. The nature of his wounds or injuries was as yet unknown.

On May 8th, Lt. Kennedy left for the Battalion OP at dawn. 1st Infantry Division had informed that enemy vehicles were seen at 815730 going north. II Corps added that plenty of men and arms were available to take care of them. Street fighting was reported in both Tunis and Bizerte. The 18th Infantry Regiment was dispersed west of the river between the 67.5 and 69.5 lines and the 26th Infantry Regiment was between the 65 and 67.5 lines west of the river. At 1650 hours, G-2 of the 1st Infantry Division reported that the British 6th Armored Division and the 4th Indian Division were entering Tunis.

Thus, the last few days had been marked with Allied attacks on all fronts in Tunisia. Casualties were heavy, but gains had been made and great losses were inflicted on the enemy. Reports were pouring in of enemy defense lines buckling, and of the enemy retreating and trying to evacuate. Late reports showed that advance elements of French Corps Franc d'Afrique and the 9th Infantry Division were in Bizerte, the 1st Armored Division was in Ferryville, the British 1st and 8th Armies were in Tunis, and the French had poured in to take Pent du Fahs. The U.S. 1st Infantry Division had made some advances in their sector but were held up by strong enemy rear guard resistance. Allied aircraft played an important part in these advances.

Lt. Olney, Liaison Officer, informed the Battalion that the 26th Infantry Regiment had attained its objectives. No resistance was met on Hill 189 that day, and it was continuing on to Hill 250. Lt. Morrison sent in the location of the 1st Armored Division Artillery at 7183. He later added that the Barenthin Regiment was reported on Hills 374, 226, 304, 234 and 393. In addition there were 1000 enemy troops and 200 vehicles

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airfield with five planes at 9085

Reconnaissance Company reported considerable abandoned equipment at 7085. Lt. Smith was said to be with friendly people. The enemy left the northeast at 2100 hours the previous night. Originally between 100 and 150 men they left in groups of one and two. Everything including machine guns and an undestroyed 88mm gun was at 67778.

"A" Company reported that two of its pieces blew up in a minefield. Lt. Nelson was killed and Lt. McLeod and Sgt. Wossley were injured.

"B" Company had reported their reconnaissance patrol at 67278. Later "B" Company had reached a point from which they could see the Mediterranean Sea. The "B" Company reconnaissance patrol meanwhile found large amounts of enemy equipment at 676710. Everything that could be carried had been abandoned by the enemy.

Lt. Romani was on a reconnaissance mission for "C" Company in the morning. He first reconnoitered north to Matmur, and then he headed east to Sidi Errah. Proceeding southeast along the Tunis road for one kilometer he ran into the fire of an 88mm gun at 773'6, at about 1630 hours. He then returned, going west on the road to about the 56 line and south to the O.P. at 734770 he had found two dual purpose 88mm guns lacking sights, but unharmed. Near a farm house at 735765, he discovered three trucks.

Lt. Kennedy left the O.P. at 1615 hours because his reports all day were negative. Lt. Col. King that evening ordered all companies to pull their reconnaissance parties into the vicinity of the gun positions. Machine gun positions were to be established for the night.

Lt. Smith's report for patrol with O.P. had discovered abandoned equipment throughout the area of 65 to 70 north-south lines and 67 to 71.5 east-west lines. A minefield was located at the west end of 67 and there was a heavy booby trap concentration at the north end. The 88mm howitzers were found at 70700 and an undestroyed 88mm gun was unaccounted for.

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ed at 700095 Another 88mm gun was seen firing at 0717. Smith added that the best route to this equipment was the valley of Cheuigui.

Throughout this eventful day, the Battalion Command provided all important information to 1st Infantry Division. This information only consisted of 701st reconnaissance reports, but also included reports picked up by the Battalion Command half-track and message center, which was functioning perfectly.

Late reports showed the Allied Forces pushing on from Fung's and Kizento II Corps units entered Ferryville at 1600 hours and Allied Forces captured much ground and captured many prisoners, the enemy running into the mountains. In pursuing the bulk of the retreating enemy, our forward elements usually passed scattered pockets of the resisting enemy. Allied Air Forces continued their excellent work, cutting enemy avenues of escape where they had previously concentrated on the destruction of enemy supply lines.

On May 9th, Lt. Olney reported that the 31st Infantry Division was making a push north and the 1st Infantry Division was driving south. All prisoners were reported taken by CC"B".

Lt. Morrison sent in the news that 12,500 prisoners were taken at the Raas Zebid peninsula. Hundreds of prisoners of war, arms, and other material were already taken here. The enemy command was reported to be at 925006. At 1110 another call from the 31st Infantry Division. A German General turned in at CC"A" and reported that he was in command in that sector. Firing north of the 701st Infantry Division at 1110 hours.

Other reports of surrender came swiftly from the front. The German groups of Germans wanted to give themselves up. The 31st Infantry Division trace all certain matters will consist of the 31st Infantry Division. But even if the war will be a long one, the 31st Infantry Division will be the best.

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and finally join their fellow "Supermen" in Allied prison camps.

It was May 10th when the 701st mission in the campaign ended, and the news of the tremendous successes scored brought rejoicing throughout the Battalion. A II Corps order that day detached the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion from the 1st Infantry Division and reverted the tank busters back to Corps supervision.

The period from 10 May until 9 July was spent in a rest area 8 miles South of Mateur, and on the latter date the Battalion moved to a new bivouac area on the Mediterranean coast to await movement back to Oran, Algeria (or vicinity) to be re-equipped. This contemplated move finally came on the 2nd of August when the Battalion left this area. The wheeled vehicles made the trip overland, while tracked vehicles moved in series by train shipment. The wheeled vehicles arrived in the new bivouac area at Sebou, Algeria (Fifth Army Tank Destroyer Training Center) on August 6, and tracked vehicles arrived during the next few days. The now-obsolete 75mm SP's were immediately turned in to Ordnance, and training M-10's were drawn. The next month was devoted to training in this new equipment and in learning indirect artillery fire.

On the 5th of September the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion rejoined the 1st Armored Division in the vicinity of St. Barbe du Thelat, Algeria to prepare for further operations in combat.

In this area new M-10's were drawn and made-ready for action.

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INCIDENTAL REPORT

UNITED STATES ARMY
AFRICAN THEATRE

DATE:

Number of Incidents
Number of Casualties 13
Number of Wounds Received 3
Number of Men Killed 1
Number of Men Missing 1

Total.....13

TYPE OF CASUALTY:

Killed in Action.....36
Missing in Action.....45
Captured.....30
Number of Wounds Received.....85
Killed in Action..... 2
Accidentally Killed..... 2

Total.....178

TOTAL CASUALTIES.....191

62