

AGC, 1st Plt 11-10-84 1.

I had been a photographer of sorts before I went into the Army but I wasn't allowed to have a camera when we went over seas.

I made a lot of sketches of the Tunisian Campaign and mailed them to friends here at home but ~~that~~ they got the letters, the sketches were missing.

The Action at Ousseltia started on my 25th birthday, Jan. 19, 1943.

We moved up to the walled village after dark on the 19th and set there until dawn on the 20th when we moved out about five miles and took up positions.

We were two heavy platoons ~~and~~
" 8 half tracks with 75 mm's and
4 $\frac{3}{4}$ tons with 37 mm's

I was with the first heavy platoon and we were positioned on the top of a hill overlooking a valley. The other heavy platoon and the light platoon were

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~~These~~ positions on the low land²
near the road that ran through
the valley.

The French Foreign Legion had
set us up there because they said
47 German tanks had moved in the
valley. We had been on a combat
alert several times before so we
figured this was just another
dry run so we didn't bother
to camouflage our guns or stay
out of sight. It was a beautiful
day and the valley was so
peaceful, with the little houses
and hay stacks scattered about.

We spread our blankets and played
cards or read or snoozed all day.

Just at dusk some one reported
an enemy tank coming up the road.
We all stood and watched it
until it fired a round at us, then
we mounted up and started
firing back. We scored several
direct hits but they just bounced
off and the tank backed down the

road until it got behind a little ^{3.}
hill where we couldn't hit it.

Nothing happened for a few
minutes and I looked over to our
left flank and saw three more
tanks moving but before I could
say anything there was rocket
flames went up on each flank
and one in the middle then all
those little houses and hay stacks
turned into tanks and they were
all concentrating their fire on our
hill. Sergeant Cobb, gave the order
to pull back so we dropped
back to the road on the other
side of the hill and we sat there
for ten or fifteen minutes until
someone saw the tanks coming
around on our left flank. We
thought the other platoons had
moved out so we pulled back
to our command post.

By this time it was dark
and we found out from the first
Sergeant that the rest of the Company

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was still in there. We sent a ⁴ jeep in to make contact while we took positions along the road to fire on anything coming down the road. The jeep came back and said there was something approaching but they couldn't tell whether it was German or one of ours so we moved on back to Osseltia and set up a battle line along with a British Anti-Aircraft Battery that was stationed there. We were all set to make a last ditch stand there when Lt. Fred Miner came in with the 2nd heavy platoon and chewed hell out of us for pulling out and leaving them in there. He pushed us back up in there to cover the evacuation of a group of French Cavalry that were trying to pull out.

We pulled up at a cross road and fired on the tanks and then moved back. They returned our fire but they didn't try to follow us.

They shure as hell didn't have any ^{5.}
idea of our strength or they
would have wiped us out.
The next day is what I have the
sketch of.

Ausseltia was an old French fort
and had a 15' Wall all around it.

Several of the French Foreign Legion
that I met were from the States.

One told us he was wanted by the
police and the gangs of Chicago so
he had to hide some where so he
picked the Legion.

When we moved up to the
Arab house a couple of days later
and saw how the gun crew had
used a rock ledge to hide behind
and fire on us without being detected.
We could understand why our tanks
were sitting ducks to them. They
were just unlucky that we decided
to take a shot at the building

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Whom buried them and pulled
the gun away, overlooked a pair of
binoculars that was laying on the
rock ledge. Sergeant Mike Dragon
started to pick them up but I
cautioned him it looked like a
booby trap. Mike agreed with me
and went off to get a length of
cable off of his half track. While
he was gone a Captain from G-2
came up and grabbed the binoculars
and walked away saying this is
what I've always wanted.

I don't know whether
you can make any sense out of
this or not.

I'll send you some more
later when I get around to it
Tom Morrison