

RESTRICTED

ACTIVITIES OF BATTALION HEADQUARTERS, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, "A" COMPANY, AND RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY FROM OCTOBER 3, 1942 TO JANUARY 30, 1943

After "B" and "C" Companies had left the Battalion under control of Combat Command "B", the remainder of the Battalion prepared for movement from Northern Ireland; and on October 27, 1942 Battalion Headquarters, Headquarters Company, "A" Company, and Reconnaissance Company (less one platoon) entrained at Tullymurry, County Down, under cover of darkness for Belfast. The unit then embarked at Belfast and crossed the Irish Sea, landing at Stranraer, Scotland, there entrained, and detrained at Stoke on Trent, England, and traveled by motor convey to Tytherington Hall, Macclesfield, Cheshire, England, where the Battalion was to be quartered. The wheeled vehicles crossed the Irish Sea, via Larne, to Stranraer, and then by convey to Macclesfield. At Tytherington Hall the Battalion assumed usual garrison duties, conditioned and prepared equipment for combat. Here the Battalion was again split into two groups (one group consisting of Headquarters Company, the other group of "A" Company and Reconnaissance Company).

On the 9th of November the Headquarters vehicles left for Liverpool, England, for shipment, via cargo vessels, to North Africa, while the remainder of the Battalion remained in Macclesfield for later shipment. Headquarters personnel followed on the 22nd of November and boarded the H.M.T. "Otrante". The ship lay anchored in the River Mersey until the 27th, when she set sail in convey for North Africa, at noon. Lt. Colonel King was appointed OG of all troops aboard ship.

The H.M.T. Otrante arrived in Gibraltar on the 5th of December, and remained there until the 8th (during the voyage she had developed motor trouble and had fallen behind her convey). On December 9th, the Otrante sailed again and arrived on the 16th at Mers-el-Kebir near Oran, Algeria. The Headquarters group moved to a new bivouac area in the vicinity of Salines D'Arzu on December 14th, and there awaited the arrival of the remainder of the Battalion from England.

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

In the meantime, the group left in England had prepared for movement, and on 11th December boarded the H.M.T. "Express Of Canada". The "Express" sailed on the 11th for North Africa. The voyage was rough and the seas were high for almost the entire voyage, and there was much seasickness among the crew. The "Express of Canada" arrived at Mers-el-Kebir on the 21st of December, disembarked, and moved into bivouac with the rest of the Battalion at Salines D'Arzu. Here the Battalion (minus "B" and "C" Companies) spent Christmas. The Battalion had a short alert on the 24th when Admiral Darlan was assassinated.

At Salines D'Arzu the troops spent perhaps the most miserable month of their lives. It was the rainy season in North Africa and the rains were incessant. The Battalion area became a sea of mud.

On January 8, 1943, to the delight of both officers and men (after such a miserable month), the track vehicles left the area for Oran, and there were loaded aboard Maracaibo boats for shipment to Phillipville. The vehicles loaded there on January 11th. On January 9th the remainder of the Battalion left Salines D'Arzu on a four day movement to Oued Segun area (near Constantine) by way of Orleansville, Affreville, L'Arba, Beuirra, Setif. Here they were re-joined by the track vehicles from Phillipville.

The Battalion moved from this area on the 18th of January, and in a two day movement arrived at Bou Chebka, Tunisia, in the 1st Armored Division Assembly Area.

"A" Company left Battalion control on the 21st of January and moved with elements of the 1st Armored Division (Combat Command "A") to Sbeitla, Tunisia, but this loss was balanced by the gain of "C" Company the following day. On the 25th, four new 75mm S/P's were received and assigned to Lt. Romani's Platoon of "C" Company. (Lt. Romani, ex-Sgt. Romani of "C" Company, had been commissioned for his good work near Medjez El Bab).

On January 30th, the Battalion (now composed of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, Reconnaissance Company (less one platoon), and "C" Company (less one platoon)) was assigned to Combat Command "D" under the command of Colonel Maraist

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

(Division Artillery, 1 AD) for an attack on Sened which was to begin at 0700 hours the following morning.

RESTRICTED