



B COMPANY
776 TANK DESTROYER
BATTALION
IN COMBAT

By
Jim Montgomery



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This narrative that I have put together was not meant as a history of W.W.2, but as a personal running commentary of one soldier, in one platoon, of one company- of a tank destroyer battalion.

It was first compiled from a diary that I kept for the thirty-three months that I was enroute to and from, and during the period that I was in French Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Italy, France, Germany, and Austria.

After having written it I was asked by several of my fellow tank destroyers, if I would consolidate my story with other information and photographs that some of my fellow soldiers and officers had.

One officer had a daily company report covering a six month period of most of our combat days in France and Germany. Other of my friends and associates had photos, scrapbooks and bits of information which I have assembled and integrated with my diary.

This commentary states the towns we were in, and the routes taken from place to place. It states some of the emotions felt and some of the physical trials by me and my close associates. It shows some of the boredom, frustration and the fear. It shows the problems caused by the elements. The heat, cold, rain, snow, and the mud. It shows much courage displayed by my associates, some bravery and probably a little heroism, though that would not be admitted by anyone whom you might ask.

To those who passed on to me information for this story, I thank you. To those close friends who were with me during all or part of this period I appreciate the close friendship we had during this period and which forty years later, we still have.

With Sincerity,

Jim Montgomery

INTRODUCTION

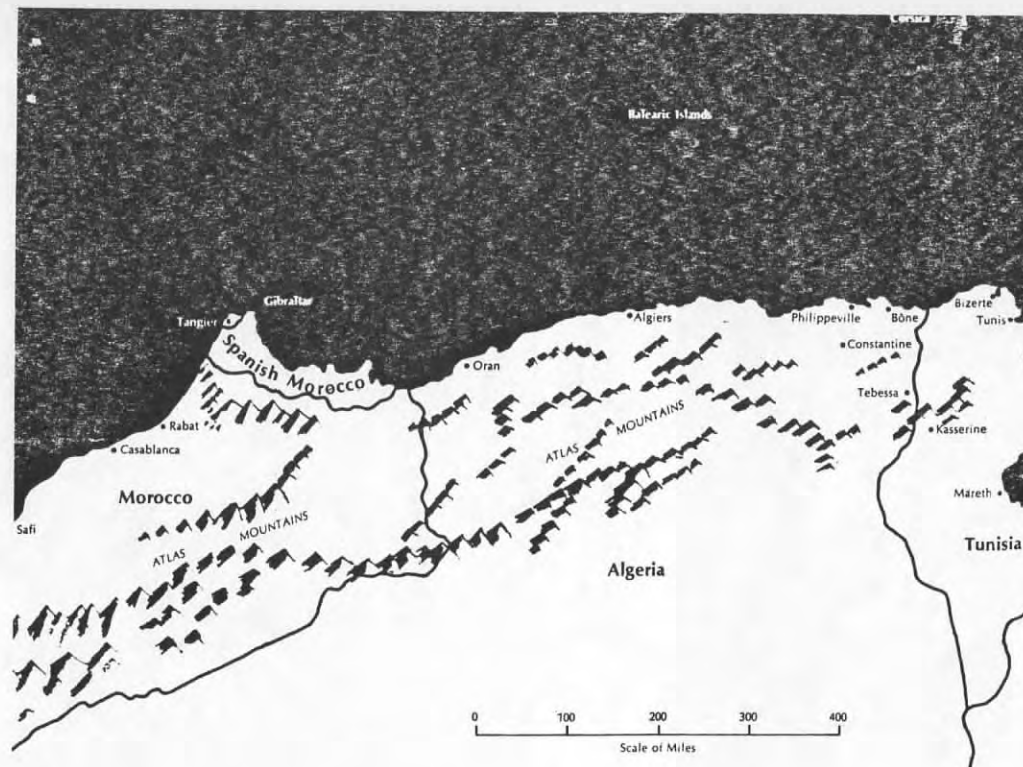
Our outfit was the 776th Tank Destroyer Battalion which consisted of about 80 officers and 1050 men. Each battalion had a Headquarters Company. They were in charge of strategy and planning, administration, supply, repair and salvage when possible. We had a reconnaissance company for the purpose of reconnaissance, mine sweeping, forward observation, perimeter guarding and other details. We had three destroyer companies. A, B, and C Companies. My company was B-Company.

Each company had three platoons, each of which had four tank destroyers, a command half-track and a jeep. Each company also had a maintenance and salvage section, supply vehicles to bring up ammunition, fuel, and food. Each company also had a kitchen crew, who provided hot food whenever possible, and other food and water when that was all that was possible to supply.

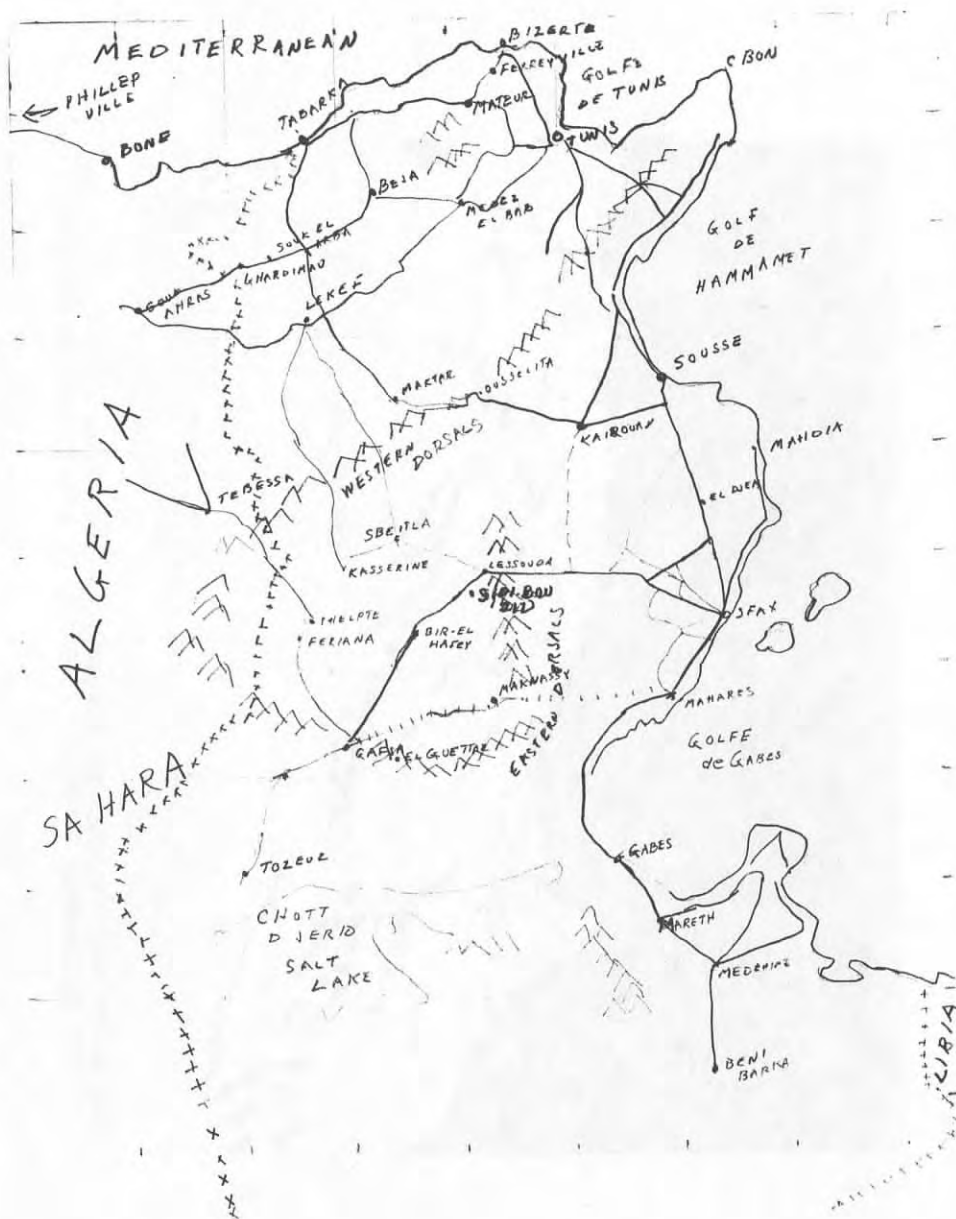
Each of our twelve tank destroyers had a crew of five men. A driver, a gunner, assistant driver and gunner, and loader. Each platoon had an officer in charge who rode in a half-track. His crew consisted of a driver, a medic, a radio operator, and a messenger. I was a radio operator. We had our own personal small arm, and we had a 50 cal. machine gun mounted on the half-track. Any of us could operate the machine gun that could get to it first, except the medic. All of us had other duties than those our title called for. When we were in a position for any period of time we turned off our radio, and strung telephone wires to our company command post and to our destroyers. The driver or the messenger or anyone else helped me with this chore.

An M-10 Tank Destroyer was a tank-like vehicle, approx. 30 ton, similar to a Sherman Tank. We had a 3 in. gun. The gun turret was open at the top as compared to a completely closed Sherman Tank turret. This had advantages & disadvantages, its occupants were subject more to casualties from strafing and artillery bursts, but it was easier to evacuate in case it was hit in the tracks or knocked out. The men could abandon it much quicker. We had many men save themselves in this manner and almost always we were able to salvage the vehicle unless it was burned.

We were in a bastard battalion or more gently put, in a separate battalion. We were not attached to any specific division but at a moments notice we could be assigned to a division to fill in a gap where they were being attacked and mobile enough, without excessive red tape, to shift from one division to another in a short time. We fought with the 1st, 2nd, and 10th Armored Divisions. With the 3rd, 4th, 9th, 34th, 44th, 63rd, 85th, 91st, 2nd French Moroccan Armored Infantry Divisions, Indian Gurka Division, New Zealand Maori Division 106th Cavalry Group, 756th Tank Battalion, and several others. Also we were seldom pulled out for rest periods. This resulted in 550 days on front line combat.



THE NORTH AFRICAN THEATER STRETCHED ACROSS MORE THAN 2,000 MILES
FROM EL ALAMEIN IN EGYPT TO SOUTH OF CASABLANCA IN MOROCCO



American Bombardment, November 8, 1942
Casablanca - without enmity



Arab Cemetery Wall, Casablanca
February 1943
Norbert Denoize, Jim Montgomery, Popeye

January 7, 1943 One complement consisting of Company B, moved from the staging area to STATEN ISLAND, N.Y., port of embarkation for loading on the transport Santa Elena.

January 12, 1943 Company C moved to the terminal and also boarded the Santa Elena.

January 13, 1943 Remainder of the battalion arrived at STATEN ISLAND. Anchors went up on the Monterey and Santa Elena at 0130 hrs.

January 14, 1943 And the voyage was underway. Our destination still a secret but it was supposed by most to be North Africa.

Crossing the Atlantic from New York in a rather small convoy zigzagging very often to lessen the chance of being torpedoed by German U-boats.

January 25, 1943 After eleven days of travel, in the distance were visible the white-domed buildings of CASABLANCA, FRENCH MOROCCO.

Debarkation was completed that night. Marching by the partially scuttled Jean Bart, Frances' largest battleship, we moved through the streets of CASABLANCA to a bivouac area in the northwestern part of the city outside a stone-walled Arab cemetery.

We lived in pup-tents for four weeks in this area, servicing our vehicles and weapons, practiced firing our new M-10 tank destroyers in the hills bordering CASABLANCA. We spent time map reading and attempting to pick-up an adequate knowledge of the French language which would be invaluable to us. We also acted as guards on the docks and the merchant ships unloading material.

January 27, 1943 Two days after we landed, F.D.R and Churchill met in CASABLANCA and though we knew of it we were in no way involved as we were busy unloading equipment.

About a mile away from our bivouac area was a walled Arab native area called a medina which was supposedly off limits to our troops, and three quarters of a mile in another direction was a French Army garrison, which was likewise supposed to be off limits. There was a plentiful supply of wine here and a limited supply of food. Mainly a sandwich made of crusty french bread with a slab of fat cold pork, about a half-inch thick. This was to us Class A-cuisine after having our rations limited to C-rations, which were monotonous as well as unpalatable.

Remember, France at this time was politically split between the De Gaulle, Petain Laval, Giraud and other factions, and that the American troops had entered French Morocco two months before this, in November fighting against the French.

We found even this early that the common soldier did not think too much of politics and three or four of us after about two visits to the French canteen found a camaraderie with three French soldiers. Norbert DeNoize from Algeria, one we called Popeve, and a third whose name I do not remember. They could not speak English,

and none of our group could speak French. Another fellow and I were reasonably versed in Latin, so that from the first we were able to communicate and by the end of a short stay we could carry on good communications. Popeye could never understand us, but he had seen American cartoons, and when things got too quiet he would say "OIME POPEYE THE SAILOR MAN", and we would all have another drink.

I met a young male civilian, Chiarelli Pascal, somewhere on the edge of our camp, who was a student and knew a bit of English. He was signing up with the French Air Corp, and was going to Canada to be trained. He wanted to learn some American Language as he was going over to a new world. I wanted to learn more French. I visited in his home a couple of evenings. His father worked at French Custom Office, and had in W.W.I been awarded the French Medal of Honor. France's highest award compared to our Congressional Medal of Honor.

I have photos given to me by the French soldiers of the bombing of CASABLANCA by the Americans on Nov. 8-11, 1942 at the time of the American invasion.

When General Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in French North Africa, visited his troops in Central Tunisia on Feb. 13, 1943, it seemed that the campaign in North Africa had reached a stalemate. Since the landings on November 8, 1942, the Allies had secured the support of the French in North Africa and occupied Morocco and Algeria but the winter rains and German build-up prevented them from occupying TUNISIA as well. Further east the British Eighth Army under General Bernard Montgomery had defeated Field Marshall Rommel's German Italian Panzerarmee at EL' ALAMEIN and pushed it out of Egypt and Libya. Rommel was now at Mareth in southern TUNISIA waiting for Montgomery's next push. Between Rommel's Army and Colonel General Von Arnims Fifth Panzer Armee in the north lay a narrow coastal plain vital to the supply of Rommel's men, who were dependent on the port of TUNIS.

Earlier in the campaign the Allies had threatened to cut the road to TUNIS, but small attacks by Von Arnim had driven them out of most of the passes between the mountains and the Mediterranean.

Rommel hoped to penetrate the ridges of the weakly held Eastern and Western DORSALES and threaten the Allies supply dumps at TEBESSA.

Kesselring, the German Commander-in-Chief South, held a conference with von Arnim and Rommel which lead to a modified plan. Von Arnim with two Panzer Divisions would mount an attack against SBEITLA. If this was successful, one Division was to combine with the mobile elements of the Afrika Korp, the Elite of the Panzerarmee to attack GAFSA.

Eisenhower was disturbed by the disposition of the American 2nd Corp which held the V-shaped area between

the eastern and western DORSALS. The most important part of the Corp, 1st Armored Division held a broad front, scattered in small pockets and had no reserve. The Allies were caught completely off balance.

February 14, 1943 The 10th and 21st Panzer army advanced from FAID, facing them was combat command A, of the 1st Armored Division and the 168th regimental combat team who held two hills, with a reserve, in the nearby town of SIDI BOU ZID. While the 21st Panzer Division drive south to outflank the position, through another mountain pass, the 10th Panzer Division struck directly at the Americans CCA. Reserve of about 40 tanks and a company of tank destroyers moved out to meet them but was halted and outnumbered by German Armor, which included some Tigers.

Meanwhile, the headquarters and support element of CCA left SIDI BOU ZID under heavy attack.

When these two groups of CCA rejoined they found that only seven tanks remained. Forty-four tanks had been lost, fifteen guns, and half-tracks and other vehicles were lost.

February 15, 1943 Colonel Alger who headed a battalion of tanks was ordered to prepare an attack to restore the situation at SIDI BOU ZID and release the trapped 2000 troops marooned in DJEBEL LES SOUDA and DJEBEL KSAIRA.

The Germans made no real attempt to exploit their gains.

This advance was quickly sighted by the Germans. A number of air attacks delayed the advance while the two Panzer Divisions prepared an ambush. This was sprung when the Americans troops were about two miles from SIDI BOU ZID. The Infantry and Artillery managed to escape with heavy casualties but only four tanks returned. Forty-six tanks were lost, 130 vehicles and 9 S. P. guns. In two days, 1st Armored had been completely mauled. Two of its three tank battalions had been completely destroyed, because they had been committed piecemeal against a stronger enemy. Three hundred of the trapped troops broke out but fourteen hundred were rounded up as prisoners.

February 16, 1943 The Germans made no real attempt to exploit their gains. In the south Rommel would not move toward FERIAANA until Von Arnim attacked SBEITLA. Von Arnim saw no need to hurry as he intended the operation to be limited. He moved the 21st Panzers toward SBEITLA but turned the 10th Panzers toward FONDOUK. This was critical as it took the 10th Panzers out of battle for three days.

During the night the Germans infiltrated as the Americans withdrew from SBEITLA in haste. SBEITLA was abandoned.

February 17, 1943 GAFSA, TOZEUR, FERIAANA, THELEPTE, SIDI BOU ZID, and SBEITLA were in German hands.

Rommel wanted to push forward to TEBESSA and its important allied airbase and supply center. Von Arnim was opposed to this.

February 19, 1943 Rommel was given the order with all available mobile troops under his command to advance from the general line. SBEITLA, TEBESSA, MAKTAR, TADJEROUINE, with EL KEF as his first objective.

Rommel was given no direct authority over Von Arnim, an omission that had disastrous consequences. An even greater mistake was to strike north toward EL KEF. This was what the allies expected him to do.

Tired of his superiors distrust and interference, Rommel obeyed the letter of his instructions. The Afrika Korp detachment was to attack KASSERINE PASS, 21st Panzer Division to capture SBIBA. 10th Panzer Division to reinforce whichever division had the most success.

When these decisions were being made and during the lull the Allies reinforced their troops. SBIBA was strongly held but at KASSERINE there were only 2000 troops. A mixture of infantry, engineers, and artillery.

Rommel's attack began with an assault by a reconnaissance troops. When this failed two battalions of Panzer grenadier regiment Africa were sent to the pass.

Troops under Maj. Heinz Werner Schmidt with speed, roared through the meadows, gullies and to the hill dominating the pass on the right.

Because most of the force stayed in the valley instead of trying to outflank the Americans in the mountains. The attack made little progress until night, then several allied units were cut off and dispersed. Meanwhile, the attack on SBIBA had met strong resistance by the Coldstream Guards.

Rommel visited both battlefields on Feb. 19, and decided that the KASSERINE PASS was more promising. He then ordered 10th Panzer Division to reinforce the Afrika Korp there. At SBIBA the Germans continued their attacks with no gains.

February 19-20, 1943 During the night the allied forces were reinforced by a battalion of American Infantry and by Gore Force (a squadron of tanks and a company of infantry with field and anti-tank artillery support. German reinforcements were stronger, but Von Arnim had retained nearly half the 10th Panzer Division tanks. Including all Tigers and the remainder did not arrive until after the Afrika Korp had begun their attack. When they did arrive the Allied line was at last broken on the southern side of the pass. Allied units began to withdraw sometimes leaving undamaged equipment behind in their haste. In the North, Gore Force fought on until all the tanks were destroyed. Then it fell back in a defensive position on the road to THALA.

February 21, 1943 Rommel decided to push his Afrika Korp element toward TEBESSA but this was only a feint. The main advance was to be toward THALA and EL KEF.

The 10th Panzers began to advance at 0930. The

Allied tactics were to fight a delaying tactic before THALA, until a new defensive line was set up outside the town.

It was dark before the 26th Armored Brigade pulled back into a defensive position on the ridge before THALA. Every available man was pressed into action. A welcome reinforcement during the night was the artillery of the 9th Division under Brigadier General Irwin.

February 22, 1943 Rommel intended to continue his assault on THALA, but the Allies began the day with a counter attack. Rommel decided that the enemy had grown too strong for his attack to be maintained and at the end of the day ordered retreat. When dawn came on Feb. 23, Rommel had vanished.

Rommel was relieved of his command in March and the 300,000 men were left to fight on under Von Arnim.

February 25, 1943 We left CASABLANCA in our wheeled vehicles to go overland to the front, after having sent our tank destroyers and half-tracks by ship to PHILLIPVILLE, ALGERIA, not too far from the TUNISIAN border.

After having left CASABLANCA, we went through RABAT and bivouaced for the night at MEKNES. We were now in the Atlas Mountains. Each night when stopping we would dig slit-trenches or fox-holes as protection from strafing or bombing. The second day we went through FES, TAZA, GUERCIF and camped outside OUJDA. Still in friendly territory, Went to town and got a bottle of wine.

Each little town we go through the populace line the streets and hold up a V for Victory. From the two year olds to old grandads Some bring us flowers, and fruit and wine if we happen to stop.

February 27, 1943 We left FRENCH MORROCO and into ALGERIA. These of course, with TUNISIA were three countries governed by the French. We stopped at SIDI BEL ABBES, Next day through MASCARA, RELIZANE and into ORLEANVILLE, L'ARBA, L'ARMA, and about eight miles from ALGIERS, To THIERS, PALESTRO, BOUIRA and stopped at STE. DE MAILLOT. Through MANSOURAH, SETIF, ST. ARNAUD and into the edge of CONSTANTINE. We shall wait here for our destroyers and half-tracks which will be in PHILLIPEVILLE, 87 miles from here within a few days.

CONSTANTINE is a fair size modern city, full of French, British and American soldiers.

Three of us went into town and scrounged around and found a place to eat. Had a chicken, a dozen eggs, a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine, and tangerines which cost us 414 Francs or \$8.28 (which in 1943 was a helluva-lot of money. A private was getting \$30.00 per month). We got a horse drawn phaeton to bring us back to camp for 50 Franc.

We are being fed British rations now which are a little better than ours, (at least different) and were given a ration of British cigarettes which aren't as good.

March 7, 1943 Tom Dautremont, Walt Brueggeman and I went to CONSTANTINE to a little French church for Mass. We went on downtown, had a picture taken and found we couldn't get them until 1 p.m. We had a glass of wine, had dinner at the Red Cross and walked around. All the wine shops were open from 11 to 12 and again at 4 p.m., as wine is rationed.

We were waiting in front of a wine shop a little before 4, when a jeep with two MPs and two British Red Caps drove up, grabbed us and took us to the American bastille. When I told the British we were tired of coming over here and fighting their wars for them, they knocked me to the floor with a billy-club and treated Tom even worse because he had more to say to them than I did. They threw us into their dungeon with a gravel floor and one blanket.

The next morning, we were released at 9 o'clock after having done their scrubbing and K.P. work. No charges filed.

March 12, 1943 Sutro & Tanner are in the guard house. They were released and transferred to Reconnaissance as mine sweepers.

They had been in various guard houses in the States, and were indignant, because Tom and I had seen the inside of a guard house in Africa before they had an opportunity, so somehow they got thrown in.

The guardhouse was built on a hillside with a bricked in lattice type brick wall overlooking a lower paved area where the M.P.s slept. Tanner and Sutro tore out the brick lattice work and dropped brick down on the sleeping M.P.s. This type of recreation was frowned upon by the M.P.s, and the two captives were handcuffed to steel cots for the balance of the night. The next morning their door was opened for the prisoners to work K.P., and my two friends (who had during the night picked the locks on their handcuffs with a safety pin) walked out of the room casually swinging their handcuffs from one wrist.

Our battalion commander was called to come down personally and pick-up these two characters, which he did. Now they find themselves appointed to the job as mine-sweepers.

March 13, 1943 An Arab spy was executed at the edge of the camp by the French. About 7 a.m. we pulled out for the front.

March 14, 1943 Moved further up. Our vehicle missed the road and we went within a few miles of the German lines before we turned back. We saw wrecked trucks, planes, and gutted villages. B-Company was assigned to Group 1, rest of battalion to Group 2. There is a Stuka dive bomber about 200 yards away from us that we shot down a few days ago.

We have been rained on for the past few days and we are alternately soaked then were dried out in the sun,

when it came out. We have only the clothing we are wearing and one blanket and at night it turns cold in this mountainous, semi-desert area. I have one helluva cold. We are near the mouth of the KASSERINE PASS. We are with the 9th Division.

March 16, 1943 Moved out through BIR EL HAFI. Dug in and camouflaged. Again at 10 p.m., moved out and dug in again. Just before daybreak we were reinforced by artillery and infantry.

March 17, 1943 We had left our positions hurriedly two days ago to fill in a gap anticipating an attack. We had only three days rations to last us five days and five gallons of water for five of us for that long. We have got to take it easy as we don't know when we will be supplied again, as we are in enemy territory. Only one Messerschmidt showed up and he's not very near us. Pfc. Harstad of C-Company was our first death last night. Floyd Severson, Recon Co. from FARGO, N.D. was captured and was our first P.O.W.

March 18, 1943 GARSA was taken last night by U.S. troops. We were to go there this morning but it's so muddy we can't move for awhile. Drew two more days of rations. Three men from Recon M.I.A. One lieutenant came back reporting running into machine gun fire. More rain. We are allowed only 100 gallons of water for our company of 184 men but we can catch some rain water. I haven't shaved for eight days and have washed only in mud puddles. Recon couldn't recover the Stuka they captured so blew it up. Lt. Kanoza captured an observation post and took several Italian prisoners. George Keller and John McCann sent back to hospital. Nothing serious.

March 22, 1943 We moved several times in the past few days. We are to make a drive on MAKNASSY. Moved into position before noon and were strafed by a couple of Stukas and bombed. No casualties and no planes knocked down. Have only three gallons of water left for five of us. Moved our positions to guard pass, and dug in. Arabs have all moved out.

March 23, 1943 Enemy has been throwing artillery at us all day. No hits. We sighted five enemy tanks at 3 p.m. No shots fired. Too far away. We got 10 gallons of water today for our whole platoon. MAKNASSY is in our hands, and was heavily bombed during the night.

March 24, 1943 Another pretty day. About 10 o'clock a Messerschmidt and a Spitfire tangled and the Messerschmidt fell about a mile in front of us. Recon captured the pilot and the engineers towed away the plane as it was only slightly damaged. MAKNASSY bombed again. At 9 p.m. we got into MAKNASSY. Heavy artillery fire all night.

March 25, 1943 We were bombed by Stukas at 6 a.m. Three bombs landed about fifty yards away. No casualties. Stukas back at 9, and again at 9:15. Two enemy tanks sighted. We move up at 11 to shell. We were under heavy shelling by 88s and dive bombers until 12:15.

We got another bombing at 3 and 6. Enemy tanks reported and two of our platoons moved out.

March 26, 1943 Saw dog fight overhead about noon. No bombings or artillery fire today.

March 28, 1943 Hot here today, both the weather and the artillery fire. 88's are in the hills by the phosphate mine but we are unable to spot them. C-Company has been having hell and have lost five destroyers.

March 29, 1943 Fairly quiet. Thirty-six of our planes went over. We now have an airport at GAFSA and should see more of our planes. MARETH LINE fell and 5000 prisoners taken. General Montgomery's spearhead within two miles of EL' HAMMA, due west of GABES.

March 30, 1943 Enemy bombing and artillery off and on all night. We were strafed this morning, and Capt. Martin (our company commander) was hit by a slug that lodged in his leg. Not too serious. First Lt. Donald Anderson assumed command.

March 31, 1943 We moved about 6 p.m., under heavy enemy fire, to about a half-mile from the mine. We had a track blown off one of our destroyers and one man got a piece of shrapnel through his helmet and a slight head wound.

April 1, 1943 April fools day and really so. We started just before daybreak to take the hill and mine. Infantry was supposed to be in advance. We had gotten about halfway across the bridge over the Wadi (a dry river bed), when all hell broke loose. The infantry was pinned down last night and couldn't move up. Fifteen tanks got across. Three of our destroyers and our half-track. Three artillery shells burst near our half-track, tearing our top to pieces, knocking a couple of holes in our radiator, blowing out a tire, and disabling our vehicle. Lt. Culp was standing outside our half-track and a piece of shrapnel cut the toe off his shoe, but didn't touch him. I was on radio duty in the track and foolishly had my helmet setting on top my radio. Shrapnel cut off our antennae, hit the top of my helmet and knocked out my radio. We dug with our helmets into the hillside as much as possible and sweated it out all day under artillery fire and one bombing.

April 2, 1943 We started pulling out at 2 a.m. A retriever came over the bridge, and we saved all our vehicles and all our men. It was a relief to get back over the bridge, and into friendly territory again. Yesterday morning at our push-off, Sgt. Jim Newman in a jeep with Rohrer and Luikens, was killed by shrapnel. Rohrer and Luikens wounded. A few days later, I ran into Tom Dautremont, from C-Company. He was surprised to see me. He had heard that Jim was killed and thought it was me. I am glad he was in error.

When we were making our first move toward the mine, on the evening of March 31. we were moving out through flat fields with no cover, with quite a number of tanks

and tank destroyers, when artillery started firing at us heavily. One of the fellows in our platoon, who had been showing some battle fatigue problems for some time; jumped out of his vehicle and took off on foot through the open fields toward the rear lines. Artillery hits were bursting, it seemed all around him, until after an interminable time he was out of sight. I heard later he made it back and was assigned to a non-combat outfit.

Several men and one officer in another company have been unable to stand the rigors of combat and cracked. No discredit meant to them. It's truly a wonder there hasn't been more. The human body and mind have been subjected to a lot of stress.

April 7, 1943 Montgomery's 8th Army have advanced along the coast toward SFAX, and are throwing artillery into the other side of the mountain, to our north. Lt. Kafka of Recon Co. was killed by a land mine.

April 8, 1943 Bartley's destroyer went up into the mountains to do some indirect fire at an enemy column of vehicles which Montgomery's 8th Army has on the move. We came back to BIR EL HAFEY, and up about five miles from SIDI BOU ZID.

April 9, 1943 We are now near FAID PASS, where our troops took such a beating a few weeks ago.

April 10, 1943 Found old friends Sutro and Dautremont. They look good, but have gone through hell and returned.

April 11, 1943 Sutro, Tom and I got a jeep and went on a reconnaissance through SIDI BOU ZID, which is completely wrecked. We went through the pass and well past the mountains into what two days ago was enemy territory. Engineers are busy taking up mines in the pass. Saw a wrecked light Italian tank, a wrecked burned out B-25. On a little further, we saw an American half-track, which the Germans had been using. It will not be used anymore by either side. It had an Iron Cross painted on the front, top and each side.

April 16, 1943 We move up the 19th to EL KEF then to BEJA. There are reported to be 160,000 Germans and Italians left with the Germans in the front, so they intend to put up a fight.

April 18, 1943 We have a chaplain for the first time, Father Flaherty assigned to us.

April 19, 1943 Pulled out about 10:30, through SIDI BOU ZID, SBITLA, SRIBA KSOUR, and outside LE KEF about 2 a.m.

April 20, 1943 Moved out at 4 a.m. to GHARDIMAOU, about thirty-five miles from the Mediterranean, which is to our north. TUNIS is about 120 miles to our east, and BIZERTE about 130 miles to our northeast.

Composition of the forces opposing Rommel's last defence line found the Free French under the command of General Henri Girard, in the extreme north, the American II Corp under the command of Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley of which we were a part on the right of the Free French and to our right the British forces under General Bernard L.

Montgomery.

April 22, 1943 Pulled out at 12:30, through SOUK EL ARBA, SOUK EL KHEMIS, BEJA, and a few miles to the northeast. BEJA has had several bombings but isn't the complete wreck as was SIDI BOU ZID.

April 23, 1943 Beautiful day. Ross Baker and I climbed a mountain near here, and took a shower under a waterfall. We felt so good. We could see artillery fire several miles to our east.

April 25, 1943 Went with Tom to look up Sutro. The three of us and another fellow took a jeep and went on a reconnaissance to see if we could capture a few prisoners. We went past destroyed tanks and equipment. Tom picked up a few pair of German pants and blankets to sell to the Arabs. We went past our artillery and a few infantry machine gun nests, but didn't find any enemy until we went through a little town. We passed a railway station and as we passed we saw fifteen or twenty German vehicles and thirty or forty German troops. We quickly turned around, went by them again and got to hell out of town. The Germans were as surprised as we were, and we were well down the road before they started shooting. We made a quick decision that someone else should capture Rommel, and we got back through our line safely to camp about 7 p.m.

April 28, 1943 Infantry brought in half-a-truckload of prisoners by us tonight.

April 29, 1943 Fortresses went over this afternoon, and all came back in a half hour. One was limping with the right motor knocked out. Medium bombers, fighters, and everything have been shuttling back and forth, but are gone only a short time as all the enemy is compacted into a small area with only two ports, BIZERTE and TUNIS for evacuation.

We attempted to conceal our half-track behind an Arab grass hut. I went inside to check the place and came out solidly covered with fleas. Shed all my clothes, powdered with flea powder and wore a mosquito net all day.

April 30, 1943 Constant artillery and mortar fire, machine gun and rifle fire all night. Believe Jerry must be trying a counterattack to break out. At 7 a.m., all hell fire broke loose out in the hills to our north and east. We moved back about a half mile to join the rest of the outfit. Got a bit of artillery fire before we pulled out. News tonight was the Germans had made a counterattack, but gained only one hill from the British 1st, while the British 8th gained a hill from them.

May 2, 1943 Good news tonight. We have captured hill 609 and hill 476 with 600 prisoners. GHOUMS (French Moroccan Ghoumiers) to our north have advanced. British 1st is holding. British 8th advanced slightly. We are now shelling MATEUR.

May 3, 1943 Alerted to move out at 4 a.m. 100 enemy vehicles reported at mouth of trap. No move. Packed to

move at 12:30. We have a recon element in MATEUR. Several hundred prisoners marched back under guard at 3 P.M. We moved out at 5 p.m., through the mouse trap and toward MATEUR. Germans evacuated here at 2 p.m., blowing two bridges. We can see LAC ACHKEL to both sides of DJEBEL ACHKEL. We are getting close to BIZERTE.

May 4, 1943 German planes bombed about a mile from here at 8 a.m. in an attempt to knock out bridges our engineers had rebuilt overnight. We found two ten gallon casks of wine in a shed German officers had been using for headquarters. One fellow drank a lot of it and didn't die so I drained off a bottle for myself and gave the rest of it away.

May 5, 1943 We moved up at midnight through MATEUR to cover a big drive on the mountains to the south. Infantry didn't gain much. 7 a.m. We were moved back through MATEUR, and to the northeast ridge of mountains where a tank drive of our own had been repelled. 4 p.m. another drive started. First a wave of B-25s and Escort, then our artillery, tanks and destroyers went over through a heavy smoke screen, and kept going. Our platoon stayed behind a ridge and threw down a barrage ahead of them to cover. I got tapped lightly on the back with a piece of schrapnel from a shell burst, but didn't get scratched much. Found a German dugout and tried to get some sleep. A tank man came back without his tank, and slightly burned and hungry. We fixed him up, and put him to bed.

May 7, 1943 Moved out through MATEUR and toward FERRYVILLE with a new Task Force. Infantry are bringing in a lot of prisoners and a few German tanks are burning. Mortars and German artillery was hot for a while but now seems silenced. I'm about dead for sleep and these fleas are chewing me up. 10 a.m. Three German soldiers and one German officer just passed. Getting so many we will need another division to act as guards. 10:10 five more prisoners. 10:40 five more.

Lieut. Culp got himself a Mauser pistol, and each of us a Mauser rifle, in addition to a submachine gun and a helmet. 11:30, 8 more prisoners. 12:00, 7 more. TUNIS is about to fall to the British in two hours. We are in an area marked up by Mark VI tank-tracks fresh this morning. Looks like a complete rout now.

Sgt. ----- found a German prisoner wounded in the back. We went up with a litter, dressed his wound and gave him a shot of morphine. He had a bullet hole in his lower back around his kidneys. ----- wanted to kill him. We took him back to MATEUR to hospital on litter in back of jeep. Turned his papers over to Lt. Anderson. Our first platoon knocked out an 88 yesterday and a MK-3 this morning. Saw an Arab with a bullet hole through his head.

Our artillery opened up on a bunch of barges trying to evacuate from FERRYVILLE. Knocked them sky high. Moved up to a road junction two miles from TINJA, two

miles from BIZERTE.

May 8, 1943 Up at 5:30. There is a good 88 abandoned at this road junction. Third platoon reports knocking out 5-88s. Several small ones and a concentration of troops. They are two miles past FERRYVILLE and still rolling. 7:30 a.m. News report TUNIS and BIZERTE are now occupied by Allied troops. (8 a.m. Moved to point on FERRYVILLE-DJEIDA road, almost to FERRYVILLE.) Colonel Barney drove up in a German jeep and got some yellow paint to fix a star on it so he would not be shot at. 2 p.m. Moved up to take a few pot shots at tanks and field pieces, pointed out to us. They are being pointed out so fast, we can't seem to get them all at once. Enemy must be in wild retreat, but not much area to retreat to. 3:30 p.m. 15 B-25s just went over going north. Guess they are going to drop a few eggs on some boats. A. C. Anderson's destroyer hit by friendly tanks. A.C. and Lonberger were sent to hospital.

May 9, 1943 Moved out at 6 a.m. Arabs are moving back through our lines by the droves. Passed a group of 100 prisoners. 8:10 a.m. passed a group of nearly a thousand prisoners. They are marching back in small and large groups without even a guard. 9 a.m. We are being fired on. Arabs are moving back through our lines with more sheep and cattle, than I imagined they could have. Every where can be seen burning German equipment and some in good shape which they abandoned hurriedly. 9:15 a.m. Wave after wave of bombers are going over to clean up the remnants that won't surrender. We are now forming into battle formation to move up and rend them to pieces if they don't surrender.

Prisoners coming back in their own convoys, by foot, horseback, or any way possible, flying white flags. We stopped about five minutes by an Arab Mosque, the Arabs are flying a white flag. They asked me if we wanted them to move back. I told them no, we were moving up and all would be fine before long. Asked them for some eggs. They had two, which they brought to me and I gave them a hand full of bon-bons. Gave the eggs to Carne.

We are moving up at double time. Some German officer coming with white flag to arrange surrender but we are still moving. 11:00 a.m., passed German hospital with many vehicles. Went up to secure hill north of PROTVILLE. Secured same and stopped for a bite of lunch. 11:45 Colonel Barney called and said Jerry had unconditionally surrendered in this sector. We moved back to an assembly area in an orchard and started collecting souvenirs. I found a pair of field glasses. 3 p.m. We moved to a bivouac for the night. It is good to sleep in peace with no shell barrage, no bombing. No nothing but peace for a while.

A German soldier came walking up the narrow road to Company half-track and gave himself up. Said he and others had killed their officers in order to give themselves up.

May 10, 1943 We are salvaging captured equipment to turn over to the French Army. Yesterday about 15 minutes after the big surrender we were collecting souvenirs when two young Germans soldiers came up on a motorcycle with side car, which was about out of gas. We found a can, filled up. They gave me a pack of German cigarettes. I gave them a pack of French cigarettes, I had salvaged and a few of my own. War is a strange thing, but peace is a wonderful thing. In a snap of a decision an enemy is a friend. I wish the whole damn thing was settled as is the African Campaign.

Baker and I went into BIZERTE for a few hours. We found a big supply of wine and liqueur, but I feel so overjoyed now, I don't need any false spirits at all.

May 11, 1943 Spent all day cutting hair. I'm getting to be quite a barber. Took my course in MAKNASSY.

May 12, 1943 Moved to a rest camp between MATEUR and FERRYVILLE. We still dig slit-trenches as a precautionary measure, because we are still liable to a possible air raid.

May 13, 1943 We will be here about 10 days, then to ORAN. It is believed we will be used for the European invasion.

May 14, 1943 Went swimming this afternoon in LAC DE BIZERTE. Beautiful place. When we went through FERRYVILLE, the populace was out on the street with the French tri-colour and an occasional American flag flying and a V on the fingers. Rumors we may go back home with the First Armoured to which we are attached. Don't believe a thing.

May 16, 1943 Had fresh beef for dinner. Someone accidentally ran over it or shot it or something.

May 17, 1943 Had memorial services for those of our outfit, who fell in battle. Only eight are definitely proved to have died. Several are missing and quite a number wounded. Two of the killed were from our platoon.

It was a beautiful service with the playing of Taps, 21 gun salute and a few words by the Colonel, and an appropriate sermon by Father Flaherty, our chaplain. Just as the service was over a giant Fortress flew over purely by happenstance, but it seemed a final touch of "you shall not have died in vain."

This afternoon we marched about three miles to hear General Harmon's speech of congratulation to the 1st Armoured.

May 18, 1943 Worked on radios and played black jack rest of day. Sold my Luger for \$50. as I was afraid I would not be able to get it home, and no telling when I might get home, and I didn't want to carry it around.

May 21, 1943 Up at 5. All light vehicles left about 8 for motor convoy back to ORAN. We in half-tracks and destroyers will be here a few more days to go with our vehicles back by rail. Three men stayed with each vehicle.

May 22, 1943 We pulled out for BEJA. and the rail Arab farmers are back cutting hay and harvesting wheat. Plowing mostly with oxen. Sometimes a camel, and an ox plow or work in teams.

May 23, 1943 We are two miles outside BEJA. Went to town and got a couple loaves of Arab bread. We are able to get BBC news on our radio we captured and get "This is Berlin Calling". A German propaganda program to American Forces in Africa.

May 25, 1943 Brueggeman and I got tired of this loafing and took a walk for a couple of miles to a big arched stone railroad bridge. This is really a beautiful piece of architecture. Wish I had a camera. About 10 a.m.. we heard we would not move out today. So Brueggeman, Jordensen and I cleaned up and took off for TUNIS. Picked up a ride with three Tommies (British soldiers) in their lorry and drove as far as MEDJEZ EL BAB. Passed a big P.W. camp here. MEDJEZ is pretty well ruined as the British had a helluva time capturing the place. Caught a ride immediately on top of a Jimmy loaded to the gills and rode to TUNIS.

TUNIS is a beautiful city. As we went in we saw the ancient ruins of a wall, bridge and what had been an amphitheatre. This is part of the old city of CARTHAGE, I think, which had been fought over so many times. Most of these ruins are 5 to 6 kilometres from TUNIS and we didn't have time to inspect closely. Residential and business districts are very little damaged except broken glass. Parks and lawns are all cut up with trenches. The docks are a shambles, and hardly a "stone upon a stone."

We visited the large Catholic cathedral which is truly magnificent. Beautiful piece of work inside. Marble, inlaid tile, tapestries, which dwarf any attempt of splendor, I have seen. I thought the chapel at Stanford U., Palo Alto was a pretty place with its gold and tile mosaic but the mosaics here far overshadow that.

We walked everywhere time allowed. They have no merchandise to sell and most shops are closed. Some make a feeble effort to stay open and sell what little they have at exorbitant prices. The streets are full of British, French and American soldiers in addition to Senegalese, Moroccan and all allies. Everyone has a pocketful of money and no place to spend it. The coiffeurs or barber shops are open. I got a haircut, shave, and shampoo, and felt clean. This is the first professional haircut I've had since I've been in Africa.

We started back to our bivouac area about 5. Had to walk all the way out of the town limits. Tommy MPs stopped traffic until they found us a ride on a Tommy truck back to within 4 miles of our area at BEJA. Got in about 10 p.m.

May 26, 1943 Up at 5. On the road at 6. Went through SOUK EL KHEMIS. Stopped a few minutes by the

roadside. An Arab kid walked up, hearing me sing, he started singing, "You Are My Sunshine." It like to have knocked me over. As we went through town five or six of them were singing the same song. What an affect our sojourn in Africa will have on them. Came on to GHARDIMAOU, arriving about noon.

May 27, 1943 Had a bull session with a bunch of fellows from British Ordinance outfit, across the road from us. Walked into GHARDIMAOU railroad where we are to ship out. American forces are allowed one train a day and one train will hold 320 tons or about 10 of our destroyers. We will be here for some time, but it doesn't matter. We don't have anything better to do than wait.

May 28, 1943 We got a few Type U-Rations today, which are about 100% better than these C-Rations.

May 29, 1943 Recon loaded 8 vehicles today. A half-track load of us went into SOUK AHRAS today across the line into ALGERIA. It is a nice town. Has a big evacuation hospital. Barrus and I found a cinema which showed American pictures with French language dubbed in. We paid 10 Francs to see an old quivery picture of Bob Burns in something. We found a confectioner that had obtained some sugar. We bought candy from him 10 pieces for 80F or 16¢ a piece. Quite high, but nothing around to spend our money on. We were delayed an hour going back over the narrow mountain roads, as a convoy was coming through with British trucks and tanks and Prisoners of war.

May 30, 1943 Went to High Mass at GHARDIMAOU. The Archbishop was present and gave us a blessing. This was only a small church. It was packed, and two or three times as many people outside. Native populace, American, British and French soldiers.

May 31, 1943 A-CO loaded out eleven vehicles today.

June 1, 1943 Bombers and fighters of ours have been going over all day today. Don't know where they are hitting.

June 4, 1943 More recon vehicles shipped out. Arabs were threshing wheat today. They cut about a foot below the grain and tie it with a wisp of straw. Mostly women doing the cutting. It is then piled up and an Arab drove three burros and two horses around in circles tromping out the grain, while another fellow with a fork kept it piled up. Then on a windy day they throw it in the air and let the straw and chaff blow away.

An Arab came to our vehicle tonight with a loaf of flat Arab bread for me. Then he told a pitiful tale of having six pickaninnies, no clothes and food for them. I guess they pick on me for a sucker. They get tears in their eyes and I shell out an undershirt or a can of food, while most of the fellows sell them stuff they have in excess.

June 5, 1943 A-Company moved out six destroyers today.

Brueggeman, Barrus and I went up the road a half mile to the German P.W. Camp. There are several thousand here that came in last night. They are guarded by the British. We talked to several after they had passed through a classification tent of some kind. Most of them still full of spirit and think the Nazis will still win. They told how every American had either been killed or captured in Hawaii, as well as the Phillipines. They stated how we are fighting for the capitalist and they were fighting for their country. How England and U.S. had been preparing for war since 1918, and Germany only since 1934. Went back to P.W. Camp, and traded two packs of cigarettes for a silver ring, that would have cost 300F in TUNIS.

We found some Arabs and bought 3 onions for 5 Francs and two small chickens for 150 Francs each. Sold a pair of German shorts for 85 Francs, and a mattress cover for 440 Francs. Money is worth hardly anything, and products to buy or sell are in short supply.

June 6, 1943 Brueggeman and I walked in to GHARDIMAOU to Mass. There were a couple of swallows with a nest built over the main altar, that flew around the church last Sunday. Now they are bringing bugs to a couple of young birds.

June 7, 1943 Rest of C-Company and one B-Co vehicle left today.

June 8, 1943 Recon light tank and C-CO half-tracks left today. Only Hq 7 half-tracks and 15 of our vehicles left. This morning 107 Fortresses in addition to fighters and medium bombers went over, headed for Europe.

June 9, 1943 More than a hundred Fortresses went over again today. News tonight, Forts dropped leaflets on PANTELLERIA to surrender. Jerry prisoners were singing tonight in the P.W. Camp. British, had a piano and other instruments and were beating out a rythmn. From the other direction, could be heard the Arabs chanting a war dance of some kind and an Arab flute playing. What A Country.

June 10, 1943 About 8 a.m., 125 Fortresses, and 93 P-38s went over. They kept coming over all day. More than a thousand planes passed over going toward PANTELLERIA or ITALY or SICILY. The French have taken over from the British, and are running the railroads and in the transition it is slower.

June 11, 1943 More Fortresses and other fighters and bombers went over this morning. The ISLAND of PANTELLERIA fell to allied forces about noon when they raised a white flag from TELEGRAPH HILL.

June 12, 1943 Eight of Hdq and three A-CO half-tracks were moved out at 6 p.m. Another little island LAMPEDUSA, 80 miles south of PANTALLERIA fell today to allies.

June 14, 1943 Vehicle came back from our headquarters near ORAN to see what was holding us up. They were paid

June 9th, and partly in American money. I hope this means something toward us going home.

June 15, 1943 Went swimming today.

June 16, 1943 Not much aircraft going over. Bases must have moved up closer. A bunch of German prisoners from PANTELLERIA have been brought to the P.W. Camp near here.

June 17, 1943 A Convoy of amphib trucks passed through here on way toward TUNIS. Learned a new card game today, from the Arab kids who hang around. They sit around playing cards and cussing in American style.

June 18, 1943 Two guys from headquarters, who were released from hospital near BIZERTE went AWOL, and hitched back here after having been assigned to a re-placement depot. They came back with us tonight. A-Company's two vehicles left this morning, leaving only five B-Company half-tracks.

June 19, 1943 Loaded up about 9 tonight.

June 20, 1943 Tied our vehicles down and are ready to roll whenever they get ready to pull us out. Two French kids hung around all the time we were loading, then they cleaned up and we went to church together. They were both altar boys. One, Marcel, is a French Staff Sgt. son and Maurice is a captains son. They were both back after Mass, and stayed all afternoon along with a couple of Arab kids, Geucif and Mohammed. They played cards in the shade of our half-tracks. One Arab kid, 13 years old, didn't have either parents, and Mohammed, 9 years old's, mama was dead. Those Arabs must die young or were killed, I don't know.

A trainload of nurses and medics went by headed for TUNIS. British and French and American troops and equipment are moving up and some are moving back, such as us.

About 4 o'clock Maurice and Marcel, along with about six Arab kids were sitting in the shade of an old British truck in the British salvage dump by our cars. They were hammering with their hand on the water cans or any other thing to make a rythmn. I joined the party, and we really had a jazz-band going. I learned a few Arab dances with the kids demonstrating. About 8 o'clock the British Lieut. chased them away. One little tyke about 5 years old wanted to sit by me all the time and hold my hand, arm, or leg, and if anyone tried to pull him away he cried. I suppose he unofficially adopted me. Little French girls came over by the cars about 7 p.m., and got their quota of sugar, candy or whatever we had. The French are really cute kids and keep clean most of the time especially on Sunday. The Arabs are veteran beggars, dirty as all hell, and just about as cute as the French. I feel sorry for the little devils and when I associate with them and have a good time, all my American associates get provoked and say I have been here too long, and am turning into an Arab.

June 21, 1943 Switch around in yard all day. Finally about 3 p.m. we pulled out. Maurice and his little sister

were down, hollering for Jim and waving goodbye, as we pulled out.

Maurice had a white sailor cap on with an American flag on the front. It is easy to make friends with the kids.

Had a pretty trip, through the mountain passes and through six tunnels to SOUK AHRAS some 40 miles. Could hardly breathe on the flat cars going through tunnels. The smell of coal smoke and cinders made me think I was railroading again.

Arrived about 6:30 in SOUK AHRAS and had a few glasses of wine before closing time at 8. We were shunted onto siding to spend the night.

June 22, 1943 Near a French cemetery, saw a French family burying a member of the family. Another dead soldier. This is more pitiful than the sight of war itself. I had grown to bear the sight of dead and wounded in battle, without quivering an eye-lid, but when I saw this war widow throw herself on top of the coffin and beat and hammer on it, moaning and sobbing, and trying to throw herself into the grave, it got under my hide.

A load of new troops heading up toward the front stopped beside us. I met a fellow from Marceline, MO, and had a nice talk with him about old acquaintances.

We found 10 gallons of wine to give us a little nourishment enroute.

June 23, 1943 Stayed in bed until late. Making fair time. Into SETIF at 2:30 p.m. out at 6 p.m. Through tunnels all night.

June 24, 1943 Went through THIERS, PALERMO and MENEVILLE. Towns we had been through on way to front in March. French Red Cross canteen at MENEVILLE. Got coffee and a piece of bread. Out about noon and through BELLE FONTAINE.

June 25, 1943 Into PERREGAUX, about 10 and out at 1:30. Have met a lot of American paratroops and airborne artillery, also British paratroops going up. Rumors of invasion about middle of July. Went through STE. BARBE DUTHELAT, SIDI BEL ABBES.

June 26, 1943 Went through LA MORCIERE. Arrived in TLEMCEN, end of our rail trip at noon. Unloaded immediately. Came through SEBDOU and some fifteen miles into the mountains to our bivouac area. We are in a desolate area compared to Camp Hood, Texas. We went to take a shower at an oasis where engineers had set up shower facilities. Received 25 letters and 5 newspapers. My first mail in AFRICA.

June 27, 1943 Did nothing all day, but write letters and catch up on my mail. Walked about a mile to 894th TD, to Mass tonight at 7:30.

June 28, 1943 Up at 6:30 for reveille, calisthenics and a four mile hike. Had retreat parade at which Lt. Welch was given the Silver Star. Colonel Barney

read a commendation sent by General Harmon of the First Armored division to which we were attached. From March 15, to May 19, for good work by 776th. Only two battalions were commended, 16th engineers and us.

We were alerted at 10 p.m., and put out patrols in adjoining area for enemy paratroops invaders. Don't know if it was just an attempt to keep us on our toes or if an attack was expected.

June 30, 1943 Left for SAIDIA with 12 other fellows to spend a week at 5th Army rest camp. Three of these, are fellows who have been wounded, but the rest of us I suppose just need a rest. Went through TLEMCEN, OUJDA and arrived at 12:30. Had type C-rations, and raised hell about it. Went swimming in the Mediterranean, drank a little wine and after supper went to a show. Gable and Turner in something.

July 1, 1943 Up at 7. Breakfast, calisthenics. Policed up and went to the Mediterranean for swim. Came back and slept all afternoon.

July 2, 1943 Went swimming in a.m. After dinner rented bicycles and rode to PORT SAY, to go swimming, took a few pictures and had a good time. Went on guard from 8 to 11:30.

July 3, 1943 Slept late and did nothing all morning but read. Got a hair cut from an Arab barber, who was barefoot and wore nothing but a pair of shorts. After supper drank a little wine and went to French Red Cross show at the square in SAIDIA.

July 4, 1943 Went to Mass in basement of hotel. Ate dinner and went swimming all afternoon in the Mediterranean.

July 5, 1943 Went swimming. About 10 a.m., started drinking wine and eating shrimp and didn't quit until 8 p.m. One of our men had hemorrhoids from bouncing around on the cold steel of our destroyers for months. We went down to Naval aid station. A Lieut. there had him drop his pants, gave him a shot, had him bend over and proceeded to operate. Then we all walked back to camp, including the patient.

July 6, 1943 Swam an hour, then headed back to our desert camp.

July 7, 1943 Got paid this p.m. for two months.

July 8, 1943 Had a tooth filled.

July 9, 1943 On guard tonight.

July 10, 1943 On guard all day today. Dust storm this afternoon. So hot and dry can hardly live in the afternoons. Allied troops invaded SICILY this morning.

July 12, 1943 Out on range firing from 5:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

July 13, 1943 Got typhoid and typhus shots today. Sent home a box with coins, pictures and souvenirs.

July 14, 1943 Left at 9 a.m. for BENI SAF to spend a few days. Beautiful country near the sea and the town is an improvement. Bivouaced near the railroad tracks and about 200 yards from the ocean. Went downtown and

had a few beers, first in over four months.

July 15, 1943 Swam a bit and spent most of the day in town.

July 16, 1943 Swam all morning and went for a walk with Baker, after dinner, down the coast and up in the mountains, for a few pictures.

July 18, 1943 Went to 9 o'clock Mass, then downtown to have a few beers. For the past two or three days, one beer place we go, I have a boy and two girls about three years old who are always on my lap. At least two at a time and usually one standing by my side. Cute little devils.

July 19, 1943 Left to come back to old area. Worked all afternoon installing radios.

July 20, 1943 Installed radios all day. Allies doing good job in SICILY, and Russians are advancing in the OREL front.

July 21, 1943 Allies captured ENNA in heart of island. Now half of SICILY is in our hands.

July 22, 1943 Got new destroyers today.

July 23, 1943 Four Silver Stars were awarded to C-CO men.

July 24, 1943 PALERMO has fallen. About 30,000 axis soldiers are penned in a small area in N.W. SICILY. Americans are pushing eastward along north coast. Canadians are pushing northeast and British 8th are still on outskirts of CATANIA.

July 25, 1943 MARSALA has fallen. Germans still hold CATANIA.

July 26, 1943 Mussolini overthrown, and Fascist Government abolished. New government under King Victor Emmanuel and Marshal Bagdolio.

July 27, 1943 Out on firing range all day.

July 28, 1943 Received certificate saying I was awarded the Good Conduct Medal. With this and a nickle I can buy a cup of coffee.

July 29, 1943 Went to TLMENCEN for the day. Sutro and I celebrated his birthday.

August 2, 1943 Had one of the wildest sandstorms I ever saw. Lasted all morning. We are supposed to move to a new area tomorrow.

August 3, 1943 Moved to a new area near highway where we won't have to travel over eighth miles of desert before we get this far. Baker and I visited a museum in town where we saw relics and stone engravings, murals in tile and other articles, 10 to 13 centuries old. We then went to a mosque or the Mohammedan church. Before entering, we had to take off our shoes, or put on a large pair of sandles over our shoes. The entire floor was covered with small individual prayer rugs of beautiful color and material. This mosque was claimed to be 12 centuries old. The inscription around the niche in the wall where the prophet must sit, was beautifully carved in stone. The timbers and all the woodwork of the ceiling was cedar from the Cedars of Lebanon. There was a huge chandelier

of silver about 10 feet in circumference, 10 or 15 feet tall. We then went in to the room where they wash their hands, faces and feet before praying. A pretty inlaid tile fountain is used and some Arab was washing. We saw several Mohammedans praying in their fashion of kneeling and bowing and standing and bowing and then repeating this.

In the Musee we saw a cannon of the 15th century. We had supper in a nice hotel and had a good time for a change.

August 5, 1943 CATANIA has at last fallen to the British 8th. Russians are fighting in the streets of OREL.

August 6, 7, 1943 Training group was in trying to teach us some principles of battle. They had never been in battle. Their training wasn't well received.

August 9, 1943 636 TD moved out yesterday. Feel that our time is coming soon.

August 10, 1943 Four of our destroyers and all of A-CO left at 7 a.m. for point unknown. We are supposed to follow Thursday.

August 11, 1943 Russians are on the move halfway to BRYANSK from OREL. KHARKOV is surrounded on 3 sides with one Russian group only ten miles away. Sudden change in plans has stopped our move at ORAN for invasion practice. We are now, again in the 5th Army, and not in the 7th as we have been for a month.

August 12, 1943 Changed our A.P.O. number. Don't know why.

August 13, 1943 Out all morning. Firing practice.

August 14, 1943 Germans are evacuating SICILY, but fighting a stiff rear guard action. Rome has been declared an open city by the Bagdolio government.

August 15, 1943 Several of our officers have gone to QM school for practice in invasion unloading. Went to town this afternoon. There was a Red Cross dance tonight but all tickets were given out to hospital and office groups. We tried to get in, but rough combat troops were not allowed. Wonderful institution, the Red Cross.

August 18, 1943 Installed radio in Capt. Martins track. Went to SEBDOU at 1 p.m. Was in town only 30 minutes when the M.P.s picked us all up and said we were recalled and alerted. Got back in camp at 4:30. Lt Culp and our vehicle along with Colonel Barney are to leave at 6 a.m. for ALGIERS, to load on boats and go as advance troops to meet the rest of the battalion in ITALY. ITALY apparently has been invaded or will be in a few days. We are attached to the 7th Army again.

August 19, 1943 Up at 4:30 and pulled out at 6:30. We are a group of 10 half-tracks, 10 Jimmies, and 10 jeeps. We are an advance reconnaissance and are supposed to be in on the Italian Invasion.

Went through SEBDOU, SIDI BEL ABBES, RELIZANE. Drove all day until 11 p.m., without stopping except 15

minutes for lunch. Broke all nuts and bolts off drive wheel on track and stopped about 3 miles out of BLIDA. Were due in Depot Area #1 at ALGIER tonight. Sent for wrecker to come after us.

August 20, 1943 Finally got picked up by wrecker at 12:30 and were pulled into ALGIER staging area #1. Put up pup tents and had a fair supper. Sold my Jerry field glasses for \$8.

August 21, 1943 Went to town this afternoon. Rather interesting city with its large dock full of boats and a few old bombed and torpedoed wrecks. Barrage ballons are all around city and docks. Nothing here to buy to eat or drink. Baker, Kubala and I had our pictures taken by a war reporter. Also with us were two Arab sailors.

August 22, 1943 Was on KP from 5 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Missed going to church. KISKA has fallen to U.S., which cleared the Aleutians of the Japs.

August 23, 1943 Up at 5:30 waterproofing our half-tracks. All our Jeeps and Jimmies are finished and we finished our half-tracks today.

August 24, 1943 We are to load out in M.T. Boats. A British landing barge of some kind. Have some Italian maps to study today. Don't know when D-Day is, but it is reported we are scheduled for D plus 7 and shouldn't be too bad. Went to ALGIERS this afternoon. Big loads of British and American troops are loading.

August 25, 1943 Went to docks. Worked all day unloading freight cars and working in warehouse. Saw Bob Hope and Francis Langford at a movie here tonight.

August 26, 1943 Our trucks were loaded this morning. Went to ALGIERS this afternoon.

August 27, 1943 About 5 a.m. we had an air raid. Several enemy planes were over and several bombs were dropped. Don't know how much damage. One stray anti-aircraft shell landed in our area and burst. No damage.

August 28, 1943 Work at docks all day. Saw where bomb fell. Hit a garage bldg. a block from the warehouse we had been working in and wrecked the building. A.A. say they knocked down 3 of the 6 planes that were over.

August 29, 1943 Went to Mass in ALGIER in a small Spanish church. I was the only soldier there.

August 30, 31, Sept. 1, 2, 3, 1943 Worked at docks. Working Arabs is almost as much work as trying to do the work yourself.

Sept 3, 1943 Italy invaded across the Straits today.

September 4, 1943 Bored with nothing to do. Found some India ink and started painting pictures of destroyers on backs of combat jackets. I have a cold, but don't want to go to the hospital and get left behind.

September 5, 1943 Cold a little better. Worked on the docks but sneaked off and went to church at 10 o'clock in my little Spanish church.

September 6, 1943 Allies are still moving in Italy.

Have captured REGGIO, BAGNARA, MELITA and several other towns. We loaded rest of our vehicles today, are reported to be going aboard Wednesday.

September 7, 1943 First bunch of men left here to board ship at 2:30. I am to go at 5:30, with second bunch. As we pulled out for our ship, TARANTIA, a radio on the dock was playing, "When the Lights Go On Again All Over the World." We were given booklets. Guides to ITALY, and were told we were to be in on the invasion, which we more or less knew already. We are bunked down on wooden shelves in the hold of a beat up old British merchant ship, loaded with dynamite, oil, vehicles, British and American soldiers.

September 8, 1943 Four merchantships, one transport and a corvette, moved away from docks late this afternoon. 8th Army is moving up in both south and west coasts of the toe of ITALY. 6:50 p.m. Just announced that ITALY has signed armistice and are to help us and retard the Germans. Now, we don't know what to expect.

September 9, 1943 American 5th Army under Mark Clark to whom we now belong invaded below NAPLES at 4 a.m. This is no doubt where we will go.

September 10, 1943 British captured TARANTO. 8th Army advancing up both coasts. American 5th, meeting tough opposition near NAPLES.

September 11, 1943 Pulled out past the harbor where a large convoy is making a rendezvous. They have been pulling out of here all day and also have been coming in from other ports.

September 12, 1943 Still out in harbor this morning. Saw Canadian submarine come in this morning flying skull and cross bones with many ships to its credit. Convoy started out at 9:30. We pulled out at 10:45. Dropped a few depth charges at 3:30. Following AFRICAN COAST LINE. Sea is a beautiful blue and calm as a mill pond.

September 13, 1943 Last night was beautiful with almost a full moon shining over the water and the shores of AFRICA, looming up out of the moonlight to our right. This would be a nice vacation in peace time.

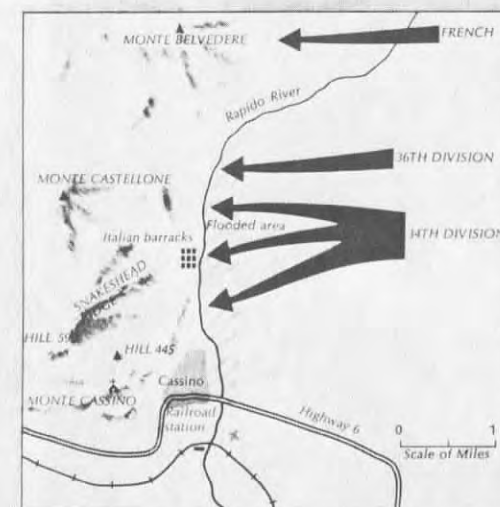
Our troops are having more trouble in the SALERNO area. Have gained only two miles from the beach and all unloading is under heavy fire from artillery and a superior air force. I hope it clears up before another two days.

September 14, 1943 Our troops at SALERNO are only holding. We make an attack and are counter-attacked back and forth. It must be hell.

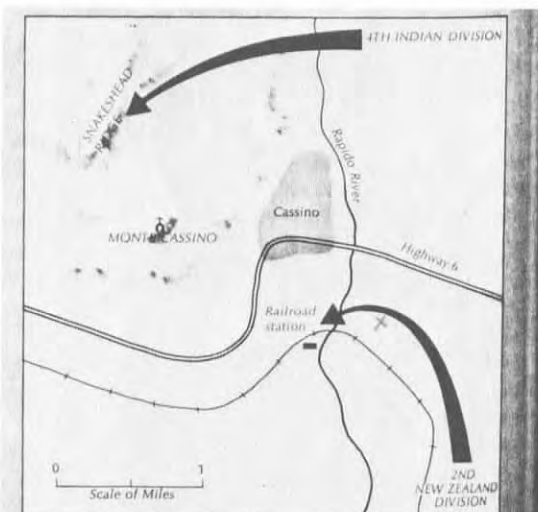
Saw three Italian destroyers steaming back. We turned into docks at BIZERTE about 10:30, then on again before noon. Have picked up several convoys. We are getting quite a crowd. Passed a submarine base near BIZERTE, 4 p.m. meeting by Col. Barney. We are to land at SALERNO on Thursday. We were to land at docks, but with conditions as they are we may not be able to do so,

Anyway our mission is to take the NAPLES harbor, and surrounding airports, at no matter what costs. Looks tough. 8th Army is advancing. BRYANSK has been captured by the Russians. SALAMAU has been captured by the Yanks.

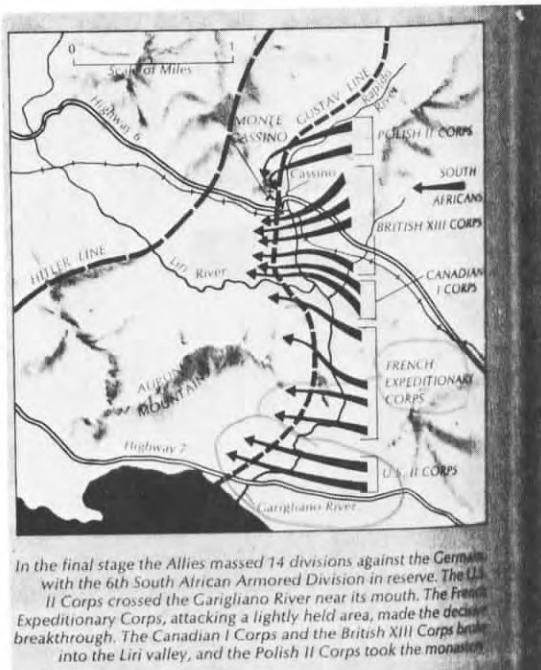
Some of our B-Company men shipped out of ORAN on the OTTAWA, and landed on RED BEACH, S of SALERNO.



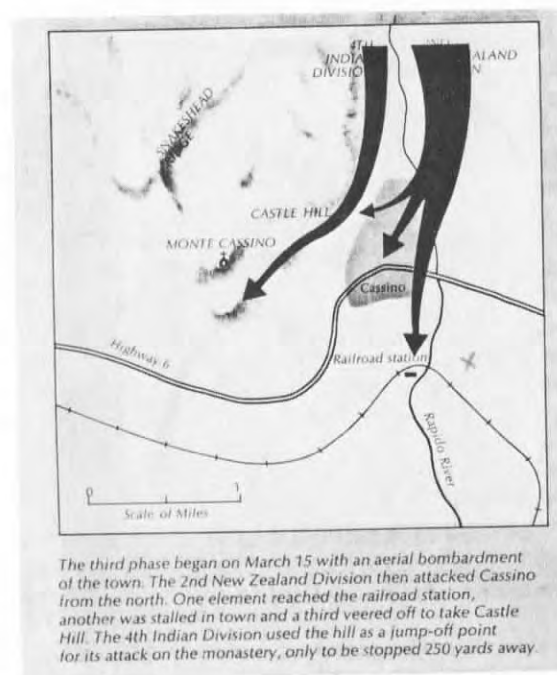
In the first phase of the battle of Cassino after the Rapido disaster (map, page 105), the U.S. 34th Division attacked through lowlands that had been flooded by the Germans. Aided by the French Expeditionary Corps and a regiment of the U.S. 36th Division, the 34th captured a heavily defended army barracks, drove toward the town of Cassino and fought to within 400 yards of the monastery.



The troops of the initial assault were relieved by the 2nd New Zealand and 4th Indian divisions on February 12. Three days later, after the monastery had been bombed, the Indians opened the second phase by trying to take the abbey from the rear; they failed. Meanwhile, the New Zealanders, attacking Cassino from the south, seized the town's railway station but were then driven back.



Maj. Rowland Martin



Capt. Donald Anderson
Lt. Adler Bratland



At Cassino
Maurice Rochlitz, Bob Bartley
Eddie Levine, John Newman, Harry Gardner
Jim Montgomery, Ross Grimes, Raymond Bible



Cowboy Baier & Willard Thompson



January 1944 near San Pietro, Italy
Joe O'Brien, Paynesville, Minn.; Ed Lukes, Lisbon,
N.D.; Alfred Strand, Nome, N.D.; Luther Thomas,
Rose Hill, N.C.; Stephen Turk, McAdoo, Penn.



April 1944 near Capua, Italy
Willard Thompson, Lisbon, N.D.; John Truesdell,
Lisbon, N.D.; Bob Campbell, DeLamere, N.D.; Bernie
Simpson, Bryson, Tex.; Emil Olwick, Toledo, Oh.



July 1944 near Ponasacco, Italy

Ernest Hines, Delhi, Minn.; Charles Bullard, Hico, Tex.; Elmer Thomason, Lisbon, N.D.; Howard Wilson, Wyndmere, N.D.



April 1944 near Capua, Italy

A. C. Anderson, Anaconda, Mont.; Irvin Devitt, Milnor, N.D.; Ralph Mikkelson, Wolseth, N.D.; Burnett Norby, Alkabo, N.D.; Andy Bartha, Lynch, Ky.



January 1944 near San Pietro, Italy

Fletcher Wood, Athens, Ga.; Joe Randash, Mohall, N.D.; Ralph Miles, Brainerd, Minn.; Bob Elijah, Lisbon, N.D.



January 1944 near San Pietro, Italy

Francis Zerr, Lisbon, N.D.; Harold Peihl, Hunter, N.D.; Arnold Freeland, Plaza, N.D.; Norman Dutoit, Washburn, N.D.; Orville Schjeldahl, Mayville, N.D.



April 1944 near Capua, Italy

Anthony Arboit, Baltimore, MD.; Tony Shutto, Denver, Colo.; Fritz Carroll, Lisbon, N.D.; Leon De Corte; Vernon Anderson, Minot, N.D.



January 1944 near San Pietro, Italy

Jake Sackmann, Tuttle, N.D.; Sig Johnson, McLeod, N.D.; Rohben Glazebrooks, Morganton, N.C.; Marion Toyne, Lisbon, N.D.; Ralph Veale, King City, Mo.



Eddie Lukes, Robert Gallup
Joe Calvert, Tony Shutto
A. C. Anderson, Lt. Holmes



Front--
Martin Bachman, Reuben Jodsaas
Rear-- Ed Carroll
Roy Weisenhaus, Myron Bell