

On 1-19-1943 "A" Co. of the 601 T.D.B.N.^{1.}
moved out of the area at Pichon
and proceeded to the Village
of Osseltia.

Osseltia was a French Foreign
Legion Post with a high wall
enclosing it.

The Legionnaires were mostly
fugitives from all different nations
throughout the world. One of the
men who was an ex Chicagoan
could still talk our language
and he assured us that the
valley north of there concealed
47 German tanks. We weren't
too concerned for we had been
rushed to other areas in southern
Tunisia to counteract enemy tank
activity only to find nothing there.

Early in the A.M. we moved up ~~about~~
5 mi and took up positions on the
high ground at the mouth of the
valley.

2.

The 2nd heavy platoon and the light platoon which made up of 4 heavy distroyers and 4 light distroyers which were 37mm² mounted on ³/₄ ton trucks, were stationed along the road that ran through the valley.

The 1st heavy platoon which I was a Cannonier in was placed on a hill to the left of the road.

When daylight came we saw a beautiful green valley spotted with little ~~Arab~~ houses and rich with Olive groves. A more peaceful scene one could not ask for.

We made a weak attempt at camouflaging the position while it was still dark but our main thing was to dig a deep fox hole for we were more worried about the German planes up to that time than we were of ground forces.

We sat around and played ^{3.}
cards and read or just snoozed
all day until just as dusk was
settling in.

We hadn't seen any officers
all day for they had an observation
post set up in between the
two gun positions.

Just at dusk the word came
that an enemy tank was moving
up the road. We mounted our
guns and shure enough there
was a tank sitting out there about
300 yards away and as we stared
at it in disbelief it fired at us
but the round didn't come near.

All the guns in the Company
fired at tanks and at that range
I doubt if there were any misses but
they didn't seem to have any effect
at all on it for it just backed down
the road and fired up a flare*
which was repeated on both sides
of the valley and every tree in the

* NOTE ILLUSTRATION

4.

valley turned into a German tank
that started to concentrate their
fire on us.

We could see three tanks moving
around our left flank but it got
dark so fast that we couldn't
even find a target to shoot at.
The entire valley looked like a
bunch of blue fire flies and the
entire hill side was bursting from
explosions.

Master Sgt. Cobb yelled at us
to get out of there as quick as
we could so we pulled back
about $\frac{1}{4}$ mi and sit for a short while
but we couldn't stay there long for
the shells began lobing in on us.

We then pulled back to the Co.
Command ^{post} that was set up about a mile
from our positions. We took up positions
at the edge of a wooded area on each
side of the road. A jeep that had
gone up the road returned with
word of approaching vehicles.

We were ready to fire on the 5.
vehicles but I've couldn't
get any definite recognition.

We could also hear tanks moving
off to our left.

We were afraid to fire because
the target may be the 2nd heavy
platoon moving back.

It was finally decided we
would go back to ~~the~~ Osseltia.

At Osseltia we were joined
by a British anti aircraft
outfit that had a battery of
Pom Pom guns.

We formed a semi circle
around the fort facing the
valley and we made a very
impressive looking defence.

We were all set to make a
last ditch stand of it when
Lt. Fred Miner and what was
left of the rest of A.C. came out
of the valley. They raised "Holy
Hell"; because they claimed we

6.
had deserted them under fire!

I was never any thing more than low man on the totem pole as far as the Bn. was concerned but everything I've described here is the way I saw and I don't think under the conditions there was any other intelligent solution for the two Sargents who were in charge.

Any how Lt. Miner said there was a Co of Legionnaires under attack by the Germans so we went back into the valley at about 1:AM and took up a position at the bottom of the hill where the Legionnaires were moving through.

When the tanks came over the hill we fired on them and they fired back.

In the black of early morning we couldn't see if we were

hitting anything or not.

The Tanks, firing downhill shot over our heads then when they compensated they hit just in front of us. When a round of armor piercing hit in front and lifted us up, we decided it was time to pull out of there!

I guess we did what we set out to do for we distracted the tanks long enough to let the Legionnaires get away.

Mike Dragon's Destroyer refused to start when they tried to pull back so they set off an incendiary grenade on one of the gas tanks and walked out.

The Germans never followed up so we spent the rest of the night in the area.

A heavy fog set in at the break of day.