

About the 1st of Feb 1943 they pulled us back from Ousseltia valley and put us up in bivouac near Maktar. We sat there for a couple of weeks. This was up in the mountains so we had snow and cold weather all that time.

Around the 14th of Feb. We joined up with the rest of the 601 Bn. and moved out to the area near Sbitla.

One of the things that amazed us was the size of the ammo dump there. It must have covered 1/2 sq. mi. and looked like mostly heavy stuff.

We heard that the first Armored division was in trouble so we pushed ~~north~~ <sup>south</sup> of Sbitla about 30 mi. We couldn't use our radios for all we could get was a high frequency squeal.

When it got dark we pulled into a circle with all guns pointing out.

2.

I pulled a time of guard from 10 PM to 12 M and all around us we could see tank battles going on. We could tell the German tracers from ours because they were different colors.

Capt. Fuller who was our C.O. at that time pulled into the area and ask me to awake him if the German tracers, that we could see moving around on both side of our position, come to-gather.

Just about 12 P.M., "as I was going off guard," the two lines of tracers come to-gather.

I found the Capt. still awake and aware of the situation. I called my relief and told him it looked like we were completely surrounded by German Tanks.

Before I could get to sleep I was sent up front as out-post guard.

I was posted about 10 yards in front of our position.

I was feeling mighty low for we had heard that the 1st Armored had lost 80 of their tanks and the 34 infantry division at Fondouk had been over run.

It just didn't look too good! I could see the battle going on and while I was watching there came the damndest explosion I ever saw it lighted up the country side like day. It was the ammo at Sbitta.

I was just standing there watching it burn when Sergeant Vite crawled out and warned me that there were patrols working all through the area so we both lay there and kept watch until day light started to break.

Just at dawn we lined out and started to move when four

4.

of our own planes come hodge  
hopping and one of the other  
Companies opened up with a  
50 Cal. They sprayed our area  
and wounded one of our men.

The planes assumed we  
were German and came back  
and strafed our Column. Two  
of our boys were killed.

Later German planes came  
over and they waved their wings  
at us. Evidently they assumed we  
were German too.

The German Artillery started  
to hunt us out so we broke  
up our Column and dispersed  
around a small valley bordered  
with Roman ruins. Then our own  
Artillery started laying in on  
us. When the Germans saw this  
they stopped firing. I guess  
they thought we were friendly.

The early P.M. we moved  
to a position on the open desert  
about 5 mi from Sbeitla.

5.  
Some time that day there were units of the 1st Armored Infantry and some other J.D. outfit that had been pretty badly mauled, that passed through us trying to find a way out.

Early in the afternoon our recon Co. made contact with the enemy so we formed up in two echelons with B.Co. first and they were to fire three or four rounds and retreat back through A.Co. Then while A.Co. fired off three or four rounds B.Co. was to form up and fire while A.Co. pulled back.

This was good retreat policy except when B.Co. saw the 300 tanks moving down on them, they just turned and kept going.

I didn't blame them for enemy tanks covering 15° of the sky line can be very awesome. Especially when they were leap frogging. That is where every other

6.  
tanks fired while the other moved forward and then vice versa.

We started firing as soon as B.Co. moved through us and we continued for about 700 rounds then we figured it was getting too hot so we took off after B.Co.. Everybody was throwing out smoke pots so it made a dramatic scene.

I couldn't see where we could run to for we were supposed to be surrounded and as we approached Spittle there were about 50 tanks lined up and following us with their guns.

It turned out to be part of the 1st Armored that had broke through and was going to fight rear guard action.

One of the tankers told me they were just ready to let us have it when Lt. Col. Baker came through in his jeep and told them it was his men

7.

Coming through and not to fire.

As we come through Seville everything was burning or smoking, there were boxcars on the railroad full of ammo burning. There were tanks and burned out trucks and jeeps all along the way. German planes strafed us as we moved through the town. As we come out the other side of town one of the German planes got hit and was burning just off of the road. There was a French officer on a beautiful black horse that came galloping through the town. A short distance down the road I saw the horse lying dead. Our vehicles were loaded down with French soldiers who were trying to get back to their outfits.

We spent the night guarding a road crossing while the tanks and other outfits moved past.

The Germans had dropped

8.  
paratroopers at Feriana Airport  
and we were there to keep them  
from cutting off the only retreat  
through Kasserine Pass.

We didn't have any trouble  
that night so we were the last  
to move through Kasserine Pass  
and onto the plains of Tebessa.

I thought the ammo dump  
at Sbaitla was large but the  
dump here was at least 10 times  
larger.

We hardly got settled when  
they sent the 1st heavy platoon  
which was down to 3 guns  
plus an anti aircraft unit  
to work with an English recon  
unit that was keeping a Pass  
out of Feriana under surveillance

The name of the British  
recon outfit was the Derbyshire  
Yomenery. Their vehicles were  
small, four wheeled light armored  
scout cars with a gun of about  
37mm and also a small

machine gun of about 30 Cal. They were so fast and manoverable it was impossible for an artillery piece to follow them. They would place us in a position to protect their flanks and rear then they would manover around through out the area spaced far enough apart so they wouldn't interfere with each other and they kept in touch with one another by radio. If they spotted anything they would fire at it and try to get it to disclose its strength.

We never had to do anything except stay on the alert.

The Valley ran Parallel to Casserine Pass and we could hear a battle going on there but it wasn't until much later that we knew what it was all about.

I Come down with Ombic disentary and spent three weeks

in a hospital bed.

If you want to hear about the battle in Casserine Pass you'll have to contact Charles Goutier or Dante Cappello or someone like that who were there.

You ask if we had our black "Y" on the side of our destroyers like I pictured it: yes.

The Bn. insignia was on the side and star was toward the front near the door also on top of the hood and on the louvers of the radiator.

The only anti-aircraft was 30 Cal. mounted in the back of each jeep and we had several 3/4 ton trucks with a 50 Cal. mounted in the back.

Later we had 50 Cal. mounted in the back of the destroyers and twin 50s mounted on the 3/4 ton trucks.

This is how I remember it.

Tom Morrison Co. A 601 T.D.