

*from Art C. Edson*

NORTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN DAIRY

"B" Co. 701st T. D. Bn. and 2nd Plt. Rcn. Co. 701st T. D. Bn.  
Shipping Number - 6528P

Introduction - as part of CC/B, began preparations for "Combined Operations."

September 27, 1942:

1st Lt. Clarke and 27 E.M. left on advanced detail from Downpatrick, Ireland, County Down. Advanced vehicular party, consisting of 1 peep and 2 E.M. from attached Rcn. Plat. departed same time. Remainder of company continued preparations for departure.

October 2, 1942:

2nd Lt. Edson together with all the tracked vehicles left for a new station.

Oct. 3, 1942:

Capt. G. A. Ellmann and 65 E.M. left by train from present station followed immediately by remainder of company and wheeled vehicles under command of 1st Lt. McKnight and Whitsit (promoted 2 days previous). Thus did "B" 6528P move from the Emerald Isle to new adventures.

Oct. 4, 1942:

Arrived at new location, a beautiful country house in England about 2000 hours. "Heary" and "Bag" tired, were met at the station by Lt. Clarke who did an excellent job of getting the "estate" ready for occupancy. All indications pointed towards a very efficient "snow" job.

Oct. 5, 1942:

Wheeled vehicles rolled in in time for evening chow and tracked convoy arrived later (much later) same date 5/6/52.

October 6, 1942:

Preparations for further travels carried on with flexible hope and with hazy weather much in evidence. 15 replacements arrives, also best wishes from Lt. Col. King. Kitchen truck departed after hurried preparations.

Oct. 10, 1942:

Oct. 9 being payday - Nuff said!.

## RECORD OF EVENTS

In early September, 1942, it was announced that "B" Company would soon participate in a combined operation as a part of combat command B. The command was to include a detachment of the 141st Signal Company, the 13th Armored Regiment, the 1st Battalion 1st Armored Regiment, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 6th Armored Infantry, the 27th Armored Field Artillery, Supply Battalion, Co. B 47th Medical Battalion, Company C, Maintenance Battalion, Company C, 701st T. D. Battalion, Company B, 16th Engineer Battalion, 106th Coast Artillery Battalion, 2nd Battalion 591st Engineers and the 2nd Battalion 502nd Parachute Infantry.

On September 27th, Lt. Clarke and 27 E. M. Advanced party for "B" Company, entrained at Downpatrick, North Ireland, bound for Hankelow Court, County Chester, England. The group proceeded by train to Larne, Ireland, by boat to Stranraer, Scotland, and by train to Crewe, England. After a short stop at Crewe Hall, the party went by lorry to Hankelow Court, where for six days it made necessary preparations for receiving the company.

The main body of the company, consisting of Captain Ellmann, Master Sergeant Todd, and 64 E.M., arrived at Hankelow on the evening of Oct. 4. They had traveled by train to Belfast, by boat to Liverpool and by train to Nantwich.

On Oct. 5th, Lts. McKnight and Whitsit brought the company's wheeled vehicles to Hankelow, having come by way of Larne and Stranraer. Lt. Edson arrived later that day at Nantwich with the track vehicles and drivers. On Oct. 13th, Lt. Smith brought to Hankelow those members of the 2nd Recon. Platoon, Recon. Company who had not been included in the advance party. This platoon had been attached to "B" Company for further operations. The two half tracks of the platoon were loaded on flat cars at Stranraer, but never reached Hankelow and did not again rejoin their platoon or "B" Company.

On October 13th, "B" Company's personnel was finally assembled in England. It totaled 6 officers and 203 men, the latter figure including 15 replacements received Oct. 9th, 23 men of the attached reconnaissance platoon, and 5 first aid men. Our vehicles included eight 75-mm. self-propels, four 37-mm self-propels, 16 half-tracks, 4 3/4-ton trucks, 3 1/2-ton trucks, 6 peeps, 3 2 1/2-ton trucks (kitchen, maintenance and supply) 1 trailer and 7 motorcycles. In addition to our heavy guns our weapons included 38 cal. .50 machine guns, 26 cal. .30 machine guns, 56 tommy guns, and 170 rifles, 10 cal. .45 pistols and 18 very pistols.

For those not accompanying the vehicles, the trip from Downpatrick to Hankelow was marked by the carrying of loaded musette bags, bed rolls, barracks bags and other items of full field equipment down station platforms and to and from transient camps and docks. It was clear that the planners of the movement had never carried the items required to be carried or been even passive lovers of horse flesh.

The main party's accommodations during the night from Belfast to Liverpool were most inadequate, there being not enough space for even a majority of the men to lie down on the floor. The wheeled vehicles

travelled the several hundred miles between stranraer and Hankelow without maps, accompanied by British motorcyclists, who, for the most part, were not familiar with the route to be traveled. As for the track vehicles, hours were required to check and block them on flat cars (materials for this purpose were most inadequate) and since only two cars could be brought to the siding at one time, the entire night of Oct. 5th and 6th was required to unload them at Nantwich.

Although the trip to Hankelow was decidedly annoying to all concerned everyone was pleased with our new country estate and grateful to the British for their helpfulness and very warm hospitality. The women, the landscape, in fact, everything but the British rations, were definitely improvements over anything North Ireland had to offer.

But before we could begin to develop the new life about it, it became necessary to prepare for further movement. Instructions by telephone and written directives poured from Marbury Hall, headquarters of Combat Command "B". These dealt with the waterproofing of vehicles, the loading of men and vehicles and equipment on various boats, all the matters incidental thereto. Although none of us knew where we were going, it was obvious that a combined operation of great magnitude was in the offing, that the British and Americans had never before cooperated in such an undertaking and that Combat Command "B" was a tactical and not an administrative unit. All this resulted in conflicting and confusing orders. To make matters worse, a last minute payday was imposed upon us on Oct. 9th with the inevitable aftermath.

On October 10th, Lt. Whitsit and the 3rd Plt. less its drivers, and 3 men A.W.O.L. left Hankelow for the H.M.S. "Misea" at Weymess Bay, Scotland. On the 13th the remainder of the company, including the 3 men formerly A.W.O.L., but less the drivers of the third plt. entrained at Nantwich for Liverpool where they embarked the following day on the H.M.S. "Derbyshire." After taking their vehicles to flat cars bound for Weymess Bay, the drivers of the 3rd Plt. were erroneously directed to the "Derbyshire" instead of to the "Misea." They did not rejoin their platoon until it had been committed to combat. The voyage on the "Misea" was a rough one but otherwise uneventful.

"B" Company with about 2000 other troops, British and American, remained aboard the "Derbyshire" for 25 days. Of that time several days were spent at Liverpool harbor, more days off Kent, Allen Station, Scotland, where a half-hearted practice landing in which our company did not take part was attempted, and more days off Clyde where our convoy was finally assembled.

"The "Derbyshire" was a medium sized luxury liner well converted for troop-carrying purposes. Officers had state-rooms on B deck; sergeants of the first three grades on C deck. Captain Ellman succeeded in billeting our men together in number 2 hold of E deck. Here the men would eat by day and play games and music and sling their hammocks by night. Each morning we would go to our boat stations, while Colonel McGuinness, also known as "My Goodness, McGuinness," and other brass hats inspected quarters. On many occasions while the ship was at anchor we were required to engage in "shore landing drill." This involved climbing the ship's ladders to and from the water line while carrying full field equipment - a feat which all but Lt. Smith could do with the greatest of ease. Calisthenics for the company were held for one-half hour each day, for this Lt. Clarke received the blame.



Our ship put to sea from Clyde Harbor with about 60 other vessels on Oct. 26. For several days the going was rough - especially for number 2 hold in the bow of the ship. But on the fourth day everyone was feeling better on a calmer sea. While the ship was anchored off Clyde, "B" Company had succeeded in having sent to it from shore a violin, guitar, and ukelele. With these our company furnished entertainment to itself and others throughout the voyage.

It was not until the 2nd of November that we knew where we were going. We then learned that combat command "B" had the mission of taking and holding Tafaroui, La Senia and Oggaz airports and of proceeding against Oran from the south. Field Order No. 1 disclosed that our 3rd Plt. would accompany "A" and "B" Companies, 1st Bn. 1st Armored Regiment in a flying column against Tafaroui and that the remainder of our company would proceed against Oggaz unassisted. We were issued great numbers of maps and air photos, a new S.O.I., various administrative orders and other documents. During the rest few days we were busily engaged in preparing ourselves for the operation ahead.

During this time the morale of the men was extremely high. Day by day they would perform annoying police duties and receive instruction willingly. In the evenings, while the ship was completely blacked out in dangerous waters, they would gather around the guitar and violin and listen to excellent musical talent or sing songs by the hour. The "high spot" of the trip came on the evening of November 6th when Lt. Smith conducted a surprise broadcast over the CCB net work under the auspices of Hell-U-Va-Watch Company, a violin, accordion and guitar were featured on the program for which Lt. Smith furnished the continuity. Among other lines the men, who had eaten little but mutton on the entire trip were given the news flash that the prices of mutton in the United States were soaring, the reason being that large shipments of mutton were being made to North Africa, for which alcoholic beverages of the latter place were being shipped to the States.

We passed Gibraltar at about 2100 hours on the 7th. The Rock partially blacked out, was an onimous sight. In Spain and Spanish Morocco the darkness was broken by lighted towns, the first we had seen since leaving American more than five months earlier. Before dawn next morning the darkness was again broken, this time by gun flashes off Oran. Our ship dropped anchor off St. Liu at about 0900 hours on the 8th of November. At that time we were ready for combat.

Lt. Whitsit and the 3rd Plt. led off for the company. They debarked with their vehicles from the "Misoa" at 0600 hours on the 8th. At about 0945 hours they set forth in a flying column commanded by Lt. Col. Waters bound initially for Tafaroui Airport. One company of the 6th Armored Infantry and 2 tank companies of the 1st Bn. 1st A.R. were included in the column. Since the 503rd Parachute Bn. had been unable to land at the airport at 0100 hours as planned, the column was met by local resistance. The airport was taken without undue resistance and at 1400 hours paratroops and fighter planes were ordered in. But before these elements arrived, the column was attacked by French fighter and bomber planes. A 500 lb. bomb completely demolished one half-track and inflicted our first wounds on Sgts. Roy, Dant and Hornsby. Shortly before sundown an enemy 7 gun mixed battery which had been shelling the field from the northeast, was neutralized by long range fire of the 3rd Plt. and thereafter silenced. The day had been highly successful. An important airport had been taken along with numerous prisoners and our own aircraft,

which played an important role in future operations, had landed.

The remainder of the company debarked from the "Derbyshire" in L.C.P.'s at about 1000 hours on the 8th. For the next few or 2 days our vehicles landed, one at a time, from motor landing craft. By noon of the 9th the vehicles of the 2nd Plt. were completely assembled. But it was not until the evening of the 10th that those of the 1st Plt. were beached and ready to go into action. The process of landing vehicles seemed unnecessarily slow. On the evening of the 8th the drivers and the 3 men of the 3rd Plt. who had been A.W.O.L. were sent to St. Leu to rejoin their platoon at Tafaroui.

The third Plt. saw more action on the 9th. The airport was again bombed and shelled by artillery which had moved up during the night. After our Spitfires had dealt successfully with these, the platoon moved south with a company of light tanks against an enemy tank concentration which had been reported in the vicinity of St. Barbe du Tlelat. In the afternoon at St. Lucien this force dealt successfully with 14 enemy tanks without loss to themselves. Two of these tanks were destroyed by the guns of the 3rd Plt. at ranges in excess of 2000 yards. After this engagement the small force withdrew to Tafaroui for the night.

At about 1100 hours on the 9th Lt. Col. Brusk was placed in command of a column which was to proceed from St. Leu against the armored threat at St. Barbe du Tlelat. The 2nd Platoon was to accompany this column, composed of two medium and five light tanks, representing all the fighting strength at the time available. Since Lt. Edson was busy unloading vehicles and could not be reached, Lt. Clarke acted as platoon commander. The column moved out at about 1300 hours and proceeded at great speed to St. Barbe du Tlelat. During this movement the platoon acted as advance guard - a rather questionable use of a tank destroyer platoon when proceeding in a flying column with light and medium tanks. While preparations were being made to proceed to St. Lucier, the column was ordered back through St. Leu. A hostile threat had developed to the east. As the column passed through St. Leu, Lt. Edson took over his platoon. The column went on to La Macta, ~~La Senia airport and Oran~~ but soon returned in order to take part the following day in the drive against La Senia airport and Oran. Colonel Brusk's column, less a section of the 2nd platoon, which had been left at La Macta for security, moved South beyond St. Barbe du Tlelat under cover of darkness.

Both the 2nd and 3rd platoons performed outstanding service on the 10th. They moved against La Senia from the south in the face of heavy sniping and artillery fire. An enemy shell struck a self-propelled of the 3rd platoon, setting it on fire and completely destroying it. Sgt. Robinson, Shelton, Dunham, Whipple and Landry were killed. Stearns, the driver, was wounded but fought outstandingly for the rest of the day. The 3rd Platoon and the remainder of Colonel Waters column by-passed the town of La Senia and were among the first to enter Oran - Colonel Brusk ordered the 2nd platoon, less the section at La Macta, to proceed into and beyond the town of La Senia. When the opposition proved heavier than expected the platoon except for the command half-track was called back and went with the rest of the column around La Senia into Oran.

Since Colonel Brusk was unable to communicate by radio with the 2nd



Plt.'s command half-track, it proceeded alone into La Senia. Its crew was composed of Lt. Edson, Corp. James D. Petrie, PFC J. C. Gardner and Pvts Wilbur H. Willis and Jerry Weinberg; a tankerman who had escaped from a burning tank and an interpreter were included. The vehicle proceeded against heavy sniping and artillery fire through La Senia to a point 3 miles beyond. Here the half-track, which had been damaged at a road block south of La Senia broke down. An enemy truck column had halted along the road and the occupants were firing at our vehicle from all directions. After a fight of several minutes, eight of the enemy surrendered. Within a short time the crew of the disabled half-track had taken more than 50 prisoners. Lt. Edson, assisted by the interpreter, arranged that 4 enemy trucks would tow the half-track and carry the prisoners back to La Senia. Here Lt. Edson and his crew without other assistance, made arrangements whereby some 300 French air and infantry personnel surrendered to Col. Robinette when he later arrived.

With the fall of Oran the campaign in Algeria ended. Although the French had fought with greater determination than we had expected, the people everywhere seemed glad to see us. The campaign showed that combat command "B" was an excellent tactical unit. General Oliver, by walking unconcerned through heavy artillery fire south of La Senia had won the admiration of the men of "B" Company of the 701st T. D. Battalion and "B" Company established for itself an excellent reputation. Colonel Waters secured a captaincy for Lt. Whitsit. Lt. Edson was awarded the Silver Star for "gallantry in action," that is for outworking Sgt. York.

On November 13th, our company was assembled in a desolate spot below Tafaroui airport. On the 16th we were sent together with "C" Company to take part in the campaign in Tunisia. The first night was spent a few miles west of Orleansville. We bivouaced on the nights of November 17th and 18th at L'arda, south of Algiers, and on the nights of November 19th and 20th near Setif and Constantine, respectively. On the 21st our 1st Plt. proceeded alone to Tebessa, "C" Company and the remainder of "B" Company proceeding on to Souk-Aras. Here new orders sent "C" Company in the direction of Tunis and us south to Tebessa.

The trip from Tafaroui to Souk-Aras was marked with rugged mountains and curved roads. We were forced to leave Henry Kirscher, one of our best motorcyclists in a hospital at Algiers. He had been injured on the night of November 17th when his motorcycle in a blackout brushed into a railroad crossing bar. Our supply truck failed to follow the column at Souk-Aras and was lost to the company in days to come. It was loaded with ammunition, barracks bags, and other personnel equipment of men and officers.

The company reached Tebessa at about 2300 hours on the 21st. There we learned that the 1st Plt. had proceeded on to Feriana, that Lt. Col. Raff, in command of the Tunisian Task Force, expected trouble from the southeast, and that we must, that night, rejoin the 1st Plt. After one hour of sleep at Feriana our company, at 0300 hours on the 22nd, once again resumed its march. We were to attack at dawn the town of Gafsa. By good luck we missed the mines which the enemy had laid at a road block and along the road north of the town. Except for sniping, Gafsa was occupied without resistance.

Our company had traveled more than 1000 miles in seven days, one of which was spent in bivouac south of Alger. Men were tired and vehicles

needed attention. But in the afternoon on the 22nd we attacked once again, this time against an enemy tank column moving against Gafsa from the east. At about 1600 hours the company deployed at El Guettar, the Reconnaissance and 2nd Plt. to the front the 1st and 3rd Plts. to cover a strip of woods to the right. The enemy had not taken up positions in the woods as we had expected, but were met suddenly by our reconnaissance. Four enemy tanks were destroyed by the guns of the 2nd Plt. before darkness ended the battle. Although we lost the leading jeep (or jeep) of the reconnaissance, no one was injured. Of the enemy tanks hit by our guns, one was destroyed by a round of armor piercing ammunition at a range later measured at 3500 yards. That night the company, less the 1st Plt., moved back to Feriana.

After a few hours of rest we proceeded at dawn on the 23rd against an enemy tank concentration which had been reported at Kasserine. Not finding the enemy there, we moved on to Sbeitla. Our order of march was reconnaissance and 2nd Plt. followed by Headquarters and 3rd Plts. We met the enemy, again suddenly, just before reaching Sbeitla. A hot fight followed in which our 2nd Plt. played the leading part. We knocked out of action eight enemy tanks and took 70 Italian prisoners and considerable equipment. The 75-mm. self-propelled in which Lt. Edson was acting as gunner, accounted for 3 enemy tanks, after it had been disabled by 47-mm. fire. Corp. Benvenuti, severely wounded by a mortar fragment, was our only casualty (he later died of these wounds). After the town had been cleared of the enemy, we withdrew to Kasserine.

By the 24th French Artillery and infantry had moved to Sbeitla. Accordingly we were released to return to Feriana to remain there as mobile reserve. During the next few days we enjoyed hotcakes produced by our kitchen crew and a long delayed rest. Lt. Col. Raff, because of his outstanding work in destroying enemy tanks (he was not present for our most successful engagement in Sbeitla) was awarded the Legion of Honor by the French and made a full Colonel by Allied Force Headquarters. Captain Ellmann and our entire company were awarded the Croix de Guerre with Palm. 2nd Lt. Edson was made a 1st Lt. Although we had been attached to Col. Raff and a few of his paratroopers, we had done all of the fighting in the recent engagements and had won the victories. Ours was a proud company.

Our stay at Feriana was interrupted by reports of an enemy concentration beyond Sbeitla at Sidi Bou Zid and Faïd. On November 29th the 1st Plt. was recalled from Gafsa, where it had been retained since our fight at El Guettar. On that and the following night Lt. McKnight and its 37-mm. guns were sent with a small force including a few French and American infantry men to reconnoiter the enemy positions and to take prisoners. The mission could not be accomplished on either occasion. The roads were little more than paths and could not be followed in black-outs. Furthermore, none of us knew where the enemy was located. Although the Colonel was irritated at the failure of these attempts, he should not have used our guns, whose effective use depends on the ability to see the target, for any such purpose.

At 2200 hours, December 1st, as part of a French and American Force including a heavy weapons company and a machine gun company of the 26th Infantry and a company of French Infantry left Feriana. The mission was to take the pass at Faïd. The plan was to proceed from the west, go around the pass to the south and to attack from the southeast. Colonel Raff announced that our force was more than sufficient for the purpose



at hand but that the occasion would serve as a practice maneuver for larger engagements to come.

At 0720 hours our aircraft (P38's) strafed the country around the enemy position. The 2nd and 3rd Plts. led the attack accompanied by about 50 French rifleman. The American infantry had mistakenly moved into the hills 2 miles west of the pass and were not present when the attack was launched. The reconnaissance and 1st Plts. deployed to guard the approaches to the pass on the east.

Our heavy guns delt successfully with one anti-tank gun and two artillery pieces and moved on into the pass. They were taken suddenly by heavy machine gun fire from high ground on both flanks. The enemy was well dug in and it was impossible to locate their gun positions. After Sgt. Foster and Klopp had been killed and Lt. Edson, Sgt. Partrick, Cpl. Milo, T/5 Turi, Pontillo and Howard wounded - all of the 2nd plt. - our platoons withdrew from the pass. We had gought for only a short time and except for the 3 guns heretofore mentioned had inflicted little damage on the enemy. The task was one for infantry, it was one which we should not have been called upon to perform. *Edson & Howard's wounds were very slight*

The reconnaissance and 1st Plts. had been busy dodging and trying to locate machine gun and mortar fire on the flat ground east of the pass. At 1020 hours four P-38's flew over their position. As the second of these passed one of the first platoon half track, the plane fired a burst with its machine guns killing T/5 Cole, Bryand and Youngman and severly wounding Cpl. Logan and T/5 Levine. This case of mistaken identity was inexcuseable and highly demoralizing to us. The explanation was that our vehicles were too far out, that is, outside the bomb line. As a matter of fact, our vehicles had been drawing enemy artillery fire from the vicinity of the pass, had they been anycloser in the pass they could not have performed their assigned mission.

The French Infantry and ours attacked the pass all day with machine gun, rifle and mortar fire. But at about 1700 hours when Lt. Clark took the ammunition half-track of the 2nd Plt. close to the pass in order to recover the two dead who lay there, the vehicle was met by heavy machine gun fire. The pass was still strongly defended.

Shortly before dark Col Raff ordered our company to bivouac close to the pass. Accordingly, the 1st and Recond. Plts, were called in and preparations made to spend the night in a small cactus patch. This was the only place where even imperfect camoufflage could be effected. But ~~hafte~~ after the platoons had been assembled and the Colonel decided that the 1st Plt. should take up positions in order to prevent the enemy from escaping to the east. The platoon moved out in dark. It was met at about 2100 hours by 50 mm. anti-tank, mortar and small arms fire from the enemy who had moved down from the mountains after dark. The platoon fought all night out of communication with the rest of the company. T/5 Hawley and Davidson were killed and T/5 De Luca wounded. Frazier was last seen severly wounded, but he could not be refound the following day. It is believed that our small arms fire inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy.

At dawn on December 3rd the 3rd Plt. moved to the assistance of the 1st. Upon learning that an enemy tank and truck column was approaching from the east the 2nd Plt. also moved out. The enemy of the night before



had withdrawn but two trucks were destroyed before the tank and truck column turned back.

At about 0900 hours seven enemy planes, JU88's, attacked our bivouac position with light bombs and 20-mm. fire. In this attack T/4 Patterson, Cpl. Petrie and PFC'S Goodwin and Caspers were killed, T/5 Wren, T/5 Patrick, PFC Upchurch and Baker were wounded. It was made very clear to us that our small arms could not effectively be fired against JU88's from a vehicle or other exposed position. Strafing was extremely dangerous and deadly. In addition to our personnel casualties, two half-tracks and one 3/4 ton truck were badly damaged. At 1300 hours our company moved to an assembly point nearby, and at dusk to bivouac at Sidi Bou Zid. At about this time some 120 Germans surrendered at the pass. For this result effective artillery fire by the French was largely responsible.

By nightfall of December 3rd our company had buried in a cemetery at Sidi Bou Zid, T/4 Patterson, Cpl. Petris, T/5 Hawley, T/5 Cole, PFC Goodwin and Pvts. Bryant, Youngman and Davidson. PFC Caspers died on this day at the hospital at Tebessa and was buried there. The bodies of Sgt. Foster and Pvt. Klopp had not yet been recovered.

The 4th was marked by one more vehicular casualty. In the morning Lt. Clarke with Pvts. Barga, Wetzel and Decker left Sidi Bou Zid in a 1/2 ton intending to pick up at the pass our two dead remaining unburied. Before reaching Faid the vehicle was attacked along the open road by four enemy aircraft. The personnel scattered from the vehicle and lay flat on the ground. They and the vehicle were strafed four times. Although no one was injured, the vehicle was a total loss. In the afternoon the reconnaissance and 3rd Plts. took up security positions around Lessouda; the remainder of the company perfected its position at Sidi Bou Zid. Our company remained at this place for the next 6 days divided between Sidi Bou Zid and Lessouda. During this time the position at Sidi Bou Zid was strafed and bombed daily by enemy aircraft. Our own aircraft based at Youks-Les-Bains was too far to the rear to afford us adequate protection. Men stayed close to their foxholes by day and moved vehicles and supplies only by night. Sergeant Foster and Klopp were buried at Sidi Bou Zid on the 5th. On December 8th, Allied Force Headquarters clarified our mission. It was to protect Youks-Les-Bains and to obtain information of the enemy in our section without dissipating our own forces. It was made clear that we would receive no materiel reinforcements. Since the French had consolidated the recent gains at and about Faid, it was in order to resume our position at Feriana in reserve. All but the 1st Plt. made the march back to Feriana on the night of December 10 to 11. It was raining hard. The roads were almost impassable on account of mud. Everyone was miserably wet and cold. The 1st Plt. moved back on the following night.

The next three weeks were spent at Feriana without incident. Because the French had taken over our former bivouac area we established ourselves in a large olive orchard one mile south of the town. The cover was excellent so that the men and officers could pitch tents and keep reasonably dry. With our own aircraft now based at Thelepte circling overhead each man was nevertheless careful to have at least one foxhole or slit trench available at all times. Enemy aircraft did not molest us, but passed over our position frequently when bound for Thelepte or Tebessa or Youks-Les-Bains.

On December 16th, 2 Plts. of "L" Company, 3rd Battalion, 26th Infantry conducted a night raid on the Italian force at Machnassy. They brought back to Feriana 21 prisoners and must have inflicted some 50 casualties by the effective use of grenades. The 4 trucks carrying these plts. stopped about 5 miles from the objective, so that a quiet approach and complete surprise were effected.

Because the company had received no mail since leaving England, Lt. Clarke on December 18th took off by plane for Algiers with the sole mission of obtaining mail. "B" Company's mail had left Algiers the night before bound for the northern front, exact destination unknown. Lt. Clarke flew from Alger to Telergma, Bone and Souk El Arora and went by truck to Guelma and Souk Ahras in a futile effort to intercept the mail. He returned to the company on December 24th (without mail).

Christmas was quiet married chiefly by thoughts of a year ago. On Christmas Eve, as on other nights, we set in small groups around dying embers, sang songs and told stories until driven to bed by the cold. On Christmas day most of us attended a service at the hotel in town or in our olive orchard.

On the night of December 29th, the enemy landed two gliders carrying 16 men and succeeded in blowing the railroad bridge 20 miles south of Feriana. Our force was too small and our sector too large to prevent such occurrences. But at about this time we began to see shadows of things to come. Generals Robinette, Ward and Clark (shadows to us) visited Feriana on successive days. Although we were told nothing it was obvious that someone in the driver's seat was interested in our long-forgotten theater of operations. We hoped for a speedy return to the Armored Force.

New Years Day was uneventful but the second of January was all important in that our first mail including mail to the rest of the Battalion came in from Youks-les-Bains and Souk Ahras. For the first time in 3 months we heard from the outside world and more particularly from home. Many of us spent hours reading our own letters and more hours reading the letters of others. Military duties were for a short time of minor importance.

On the morning of January 3rd, we were alerted. The Germans had launched an attack that day with tanks and dive bombers on the French positions at Foudouk. We left Feriana at 1330 hours bound for Sécitla. From there we were dispatched at 2100 hours to Hadjeb El Aïoun. The night was dark and driving in blackout most difficult. From the town last named we proceeded 10 miles in the direction of Foudouk, and on the 4th pulled into a cactus patch just before dawn. Capt. Ellmann who had gone ahead to reconnoiter for gun positions called the company forward to him at about 0800 hours. There was little cover to be found with the result that our vehicles and guns in position close to the enemy 3 miles beyond the cactus patch, were vulnerable to air attack. After a couple of hours in which the enemy failed to continue its attack of the day before, Colonel Mazoyer to whose forces we were now attached consented that all but one platoon withdrew to the cactus patch.

The 3rd Plt. remained for 8 days in its exposed position. It was protected by our P40's which came over less frequently as days passed, and by a cal. .50 anti-aircraft platoon which Col. Raff had attached to our company on the fifth. After a platoon of the 601st T.D.Bn. had moved



out of a clump of olive trees two miles to the north, our 3rd Plt. and attached anti-aircraft moved in.

On the afternoon of Jan. 4th, Pvt. Turi of the 2nd Plt. was accidentally shot and killed. Sgt. Paterno and Cpl. Rogers had brought to Lt. Edson in the cactus patch an Arab who had been acting suspiciously. While questioning the Arab he made a break for it. Cpl. Rogers fired twice into the ground with his French pistol, hoping that the Arab would be frightened and would stop running. Sgt. Paterno jumped to one side and before Lt. Edson could stop him fired twice through the cactus in the direction in which the Arab was running. Turi was found shot through the heart. He was buried the following day in our company plot at Sidi Bou Zid.

During the eleven days at the cactus patch the 2nd Plt. was called out by the French on six occasions to occupy a forward position some six miles to the east. The expected enemy tank attack never developed from this direction, but the platoon was called upon to perform a new function - to lay down artillery fire on enemy positions on hill No. 354 covering the advance of the French infantry.

During these days enemy aircraft, especially fighters, were extremely active. On one occasion we watched two Boston bombers and two P 40's shot down. On another occasion we saw the same fate befall four P 38's and two 109's. The Focke-Wolfes 190's and the ME 109's were very fast and succeeded in attacking our planes from above. During our last few days at the cactus patch German planes flew frequently over our positions trying to locate our vehicles and strafing whatever they could see. Our camouflage was good: only two peeps were slightly damaged. Everyone took a personal interest in his foxhole or slit trench. These grew deeper after every strafing, and sometimes contained ingenious innovations such as magazine racks, or hollowed out spaces for a cup of tea or a bottle of liquor or other prized possessions.

At about 2200 hours, January 14th, we were relieved of our mission in support of the French by a company of the 601st TD Battalion. We returned that night to Sbeitla and spent the following day beneath or rather alongside small and widely scattered olive trees. Troops of the 1st Armored Division were dispersed throughout the area, but we were not yet to rejoin them.

After watching an air battle in which P 40's shot down an entire flight of eight JU 88's we left Sbeitla at dark bound for our former bivouac at Feriana. Here we were sent on by Col. Raff (we were once again under his command) to Gafsa. The march was uneventful except for the injury of a motorcyclist, Pvt. Graening and the turning over and loss to the company of one of the half-tracks of our reconnaissance platoon. Since no preparations of any sort had been made to receive us, it was daylight before we found our way into an ideal bivouac.

Although it was the mission of our task force to secure the defense of Gafsa, Col Raff never produced a plan to this end, beyond ordering all the defending forces inward the center of town. It was not until a week after our arrival when French Colonel Mollier took over from Raff, that a well considered plan, making full use of all available French and American forces was evolved. Under this plan we were reconnoitering each day routes to be used to meet an enemy attack from any direction.



Plans for the defense of Gafsa became of less relative importance as our armored forces began moving to Feriana in preparation for a push from Gafsa to Macknassy and the sea. We were included in several of these plans but always at the last minute for reasons unknown to us, the large scale offensive was cancelled. On January 25th, an armored column successfully dealt with the enemy units at Sened and Sened Stations. No serious resistance was met and only 3 casualties were suffered. But we failed to capitalize this gain and allowed the enemy to retake the captured territory. A week later another armored column attacked Sened and Sened station. This time the enemy had moved in in force; although our attack was finally successful we suffered more than 300 casualties. Once again we withdrew our forces permitting the enemy to reoccupy the towns. We could not help wondering whether the officers directing the American effort knew what they were doing. To us the most discouraging happening of all was the recapture by the Germans of Faid pass on January 13th. Eleven or twelve of our men had and all of us had suffered in the capture of the pass. We knew that it was of great strategic importance and that it could easily be made impregnable. To the extent that a good soldier does not "ask the reason why" we were not good soldiers.

During these days at Gafsa we were visited frequently by members of our battalion staff. They seemed to be anxious and willing to give us everything they possibly could in the way of equipment and other supplies. Their concern was appreciated.

On the afternoon of February 2nd, we were ordered to proceed that night to Hadjeb El Aïoun to form a part of Combat Command C. Since the night was dark and the roads congested we did not reach our destination until dawn. Sgt. Milo's gun was delivered en route, to the 109th Ord. for repairs. A motorcycle and rider, Pvt. McWhorters, were also lost to us.

In order to be in closer support of the French, who held the forward line south of Pichon, we moved at 0200 hours, February 6th, to a position close to Trozza. From here an outpost was established on the East end of the mountain and peep patrols proceeded daily to El Ala and Pichon. Although the cover was excellent, we were still too far back to furnish immediate support to the French. At dusk on February 7th, we moved 5 miles to the east and took up a position beneath widely spaced olive trees near that occupied by our 3rd Plt. a month before. Our daily peep patrols continued and brought each night to Hadjeb El Aïoun, Headquarters of Combat Command C, the latest information of the Pichon section. Lt. Edson received at this time the Croix de Guerre with star for the effective manner in which he and his plt. a month earlier had taken under fire at close range the enemy positions on Hill 354.

At about 0100 hours, February 12th, Col. King, and staff, plus Hdqs. and Ren. Companies moved into our area. For the first time since leaving Ireland in September we were to revert to battalion control. Our misgivings as to the new status were substantiated, for on the morning of February 12th, Lt. Smith and his reconnaissance platoon, who had been with us in everything we had done since leaving England, were ordered back to their own company. Also Sergeant Simpson and Sizemore, who had given us excellent medical attention throughout our most difficult days were ordered back to Hdqs. Co. We wished to keep with us those who in action had proved their worth and had become a part of us; our reconnaissance platoon and medical aid men resented interference from outside (to all of us the Battalion was outside) even more keenly. Our movement

to get the staff back to Ireland would have succeeded anywhere but in the army.

On February 145h, we received reports that the Germans had launched from Faïd a powerful tank attack, that Combat Command A was in difficulty and that we would take part in a counter-attack to be launched the following day. As we moved out in the late afternoon of the 145h, four enemy fighters which had been strafing the main road near the cactus patch formerly occupied by us passed over. Captain Bohlender, S3 for the battalion, was killed by this strafing; he was riding at the time a short distance ahead of our company in a jeep with the side curtains buttoned.

By night fall we moved into a bivouac about 18 miles east of Sbeitla. We learned that the Germans occupied Sidi Bou Zid and LaSouda and that large elements of Combat Command A were trapped. Our counter-attacking force consisted of the 2nd Bn. 1st A.R., 2 batteries of the 68th P.A., the 3rd Bn. 6th Arm'd Infantry, a platoon of the 81st Rcn. Ban., and the 701st TD Bn, less companies A and C. Our attack was launched at about 1400 hours on the 15th from an assembly point some 10 miles west of Sidi Bou Zid. The tanks of the 2nd Bn. were proceeded in the attack by a light screen of reconnaissance. The Tank Co. of the 13th was kept in reserve. Our 3rd Plt. was to protect the right flank, the 2nd Plt. to support the center, and be ready to protect the left flank, and the 1st Plt. was to guard the rear and be ready to move to either flank. The artillery and infantry moved along with the rear elements.

The enemy had had many hours warning of our approach and had placed many "88's" in position in and about Sidi Bou Zid. As our tanks drew close, two or three 88's would commence firing. Then as our tanks would concentrate on these and move in closer, having apparently silenced them, other 88's would open up. Tanks in the open were at a great disadvantage. After the battle had progressed for some time enemy tanks moving from Faïd menaced the right flank of our force. After the 3rd Plt. had moved out to meet this attack other enemy tanks, proceeding from LaSouda, menaced the left flank. The reserve tank company was in the best position to meet this threat, but it set out in mistaken direction. As our 2nd and 3rd Plts. (the latter had been called back from its mission to the right flank) were attempting to deal with the last threat, a third enemy tank column closed in from the south. Our forces were being fired on from four directions. All that were not too far advanced beat a hasty retreat or rather route, our company abandoned one 37-mm. gun and one jeep. Only 7 out of the 54 medium tanks of the 2nd Bn. escaped from this well conceived and perfectly executed trap.

Our company, less the 1st Plt. moved into bivouac a short distance east of Sbeitla. Here we were joined by Sgt. Milo; two weeks had been required to replace the clutch in his vehicle. After a few hours we moved again to occupy the high ground close to Djebel Hamra.

On the following day the 3rd and 1st plts. joined in an armored column commanded by Col. Crosby, on the mission of releasing units of the 6th Arm'd Inf. who had been unable to disengage from the conflict of the day before. For the remainder of the company the day was passed in perfecting our position and in reconnoitering for gun positions southwest of Hamra. Our plans for defending this area were changed in the late afternoon when we received orders to move about two miles to the north



west into a cactus patch south of Sbeitla - Faïd road. The position afforded us no field of fire and was generally unsatisfactory.

The night of February 16 to 17 was one which all of us will long remember. Although the Crosby force succeeded in releasing elements of the 6th Arm'd Inf., it, in turn, was unsuccessful in disengaging cleanly from the enemy. As the Crosby force pulled back after dark toward Sbeitla, enemy tanks followed closely. Because of this situation and not knowing the exact location of the remainder of the company, the 3rd and 1st Plt. followed the Crosby force past their last bivouac toward Sbeitla. Here they were met by Lt. Clarke, who had been reconnoitering for a route from the company's bivouac to the Sbeitla - Faïd road.

Pursuant to orders obtained by Lt. Clarke from General McQuiller, the 3rd and 1st Plts. moved into a defensive area northeast of Sbeitla. General McQuiller did not believe that German tanks would attack at night. He paid no attention to reports of enemy tanks approaching towards his headquarters. But when Lt. Clarke returned to his headquarters immediately after the platoons had been directed to their assigned areas, he found that the general and his staff had moved out. The enemy had proceeded toward Sbeitla past the company's bivouac. The company had already been cut off from the main road. Although General McQuiller could not be reached by radio or other means, Col. King told Lt. Clarke to get the platoons out if possible. At about 2400 hours the 3rd and 1st plts. moved into Sbeitla from the north as enemy machine gun fire poured in from the east. Sbeitla was a picture of crowded confusion as the platoon's vehicles worked their way through the jammed streets. We entered a rallying area three miles beyond the town, as great number of non-combat vehicles moved on to the west.

As for the rest of the company, no order to move reached them until 2400 hours. At this time enemy forces were moving in a westerly direction immediately to the north and a short distance to the south of the company's position. The Co. less the 3rd and 1st Plts. moved cross-country to the west. Enemy machine gun tracers paralleled the company's column on both sides. Thanks to excellent pioneer work, directed by Lt. King, our vehicles could maintain, through or around various objects and obstacles and across deep wadis, their westerly course - a course which none of us would care to travel by daylight. The company entered a deserted Sbeitla at dawn. <

On the 17th our forces rallied in defensive positions about the outskirts of Sbeitla. Although enemy aircraft were active overhead, our guns held the newly occupied positions. In the afternoon we were informed that the American forces would withdraw further to the west. At about 1600 hours our company plus a platoon each of A and C Companies, furnished the rear guard for the withdrawal, the real guard action, conducted by Colonel King, was successful so that when darkness came we had disengaged clearly from the enemy.

We proceeded that night to Kasserine and then into bivouac a short distance from Thala. After about two hours sleep we moved on again before dawn to occupy the high ground commanding the most southerly approach to Tebessa. With the American defeats at Sidi Bou Zid, the forces defending Gafsa, possibly in fear of a flanking attack from the north, withdrew without fighting. The enemy was thus able to push rapidly to Feriana and Thelapte from the southeast and to Kasserine



from the northeast. The important supply center of Tebessa was in a none-too-secure position.

On the night of February 19 to 20, we moved southeast so as to be ready for an enemy attack from that direction. But the expected attack developed at the Kasserine Pass some 30 miles to the north. Combat Command B, which had been defending the important pass north of the one we had been defending moved out to meet the Kasserine attacks we were ordered to take over the position which C.C.B. had left. Our company, less the 1st Plt. moved northeast in the afternoon of the 20th and occupied a pine-covered hillside after dark. At midnight the 2nd and 3rd Plts. moved to the pass three miles to the south. During the remainder of the night the men attempted to dig out the rock and sink their guns into the slopes which flanked the pass.

The 21st and 22nd were spent in perfecting our gun positions. The 2nd Plt. was assisted in the task of digging through rock by a blasting crew from the Pioneer Platoon. When by evening of the 22nd these positions were completed, we again received the order to march. We moved out at dark in the direction of Thala. The 1st Plt. had been guarding a mined pass to the southeast since the 20th and could not be notified so as to go with us. After traveling all night, we entered a reserve position near Thala at about 1100 hours on the 23rd. Captain Ellmann spent the afternoon reconnoitering for routes of march and gun positions. We did not know how far the enemy might be able to exploit their penetration of the Kasserine Pass or what might be expected of us. But at dark we were ordered to return to our positions of the day before. We were tired when in the early morning of the 24th we moved into our former positions. The 1st Plt. joined us enroute.

On the 26th Captain Whitsit with his two remaining guns undertook with Colonel Crosby and a few tanks a reconnaissance in force towards Periana. He returned on the 28th reporting that the only evidences of the enemy encountered in and about Periana were innumerable mines and booby traps. By this time it was no longer necessary for our guns to remain in their prepared positions at the pass. Since the enemy was withdrawing on all fronts, we were to receive a few days rest.

The American forces had met Rommel's Division and had been defeated by them. They had attacked frontally at Sidi Bou Zid strong enemy positions - without surprise and without first determining the enemy's strength and weaknesses. In a difficult situation our company had functioned creditably. It was among the last of the American forces to enter Sbeitla and was chiefly responsible for their subsequent successful withdrawal. It had traveled on 8 out of 10 successive nights. According to current rumor, German prisoners referred to us, because of our continuous shifting position as the "American Tourists." In any event Lt. Edson's command for moving out his platoon was heard at all hours, day and night. "Glascock follow Milo" became a company slogan. Captain Ellmann's radio impressed all of us by its consistency in always failing to operate effectively; nearly every radio in the company acted as relay between the Captain and other stations.

In this active campaigning our company suffered light losses. Corp. Goodballet was shell-shocked. Sgt. Milo whose gun was hit 4 times by 47-mm. fire in our Nov. engagement at Sbeitla, whose driver was wounded in Faid pass, who was the only man of his crew not wounded or killed by

by the German air attack at Faid in Dec., and whose gun was hit by a shell in the rear guard action on Feb. 17th, broke down nervously, and T/5 Russell and Cerwinski were injured by the accidental discharge of a grenade in their vehicle. In addition to Sgt. Milo's gun, a second 75-mm. gun, a 37-mm gun, two half tracks and one peep were abandoned when, because of terrain or motor failure, they could not be moved.

Having received harsh treatment, in our first encounter with Germany's panzer divisions, we learned that our forces just be used with serious endeavor to insure victory; we understood for the first time why the British, with inferior equipment, might well feel proud of a successful evacuation. And we saw ample evidence that our machine gun fire could be directed effectively against enemy fighters and dive bombers. All these represented substantial gains in our experience.

While in this bivouac the company underwent training, conditioning marches, and inspections. The men fired large quantities of small arms ammunition the infantry had left scattered about and some 75 mm. the Battalion procured for that purpose.

On March 12th we received bad news. It was learned that not only was our rest over, but that Lt. Clarke had been reassigned to Rcn. Co. as Company Commander. We mourned Lt. Clarke's loss to the Company, but were, nevertheless glad because we were sure he was getting a much deserved break.

We left the area the next day, and, after the usual long delay on the road, finally arrived at our new bivouac 20 miles N.W. of Kasserine. We were to be a part of Combat Command "C" and to join in the attack on Sened Station and Maknassy. While in this area we received our long awaited new 75's beinging us up to strength in guns. Lt. McKnight and his platoon took secret delight in casting off on Reconnaissance Company, or anyone else, their 37 mm. guns; these guns, as mounted on high, unarmored vehicles, had proved utterly worthless. We lost and gained vehicles for several days, finally coming up with two half tracks, 4 guns, and four peeps per platoon.

On March 15, Lt. Neelman was assigned to the Company and took over the third platoon from Captain Waitsit, who in turn became the executive officer. Sixteen enlisted replacements were also received here.

During our stay North west of Kasserine it rained constantly. Everyone was wet, the ground was slimy and deep with mud. On March 16th we learned that we would not take part in the attack on Sened Station and Maknassy, but would be attached to the Ninth Infantry Division in Corps reserve, and would have as our mission the protection of the Thelepte airport. On the following day we moved into bivouac a short distance west of Thelept. From here we moved in and out of gun positions south of the airport and were kept generally busy with guard and patrol duties.

Captain Ellman left March 22nd for the hospital. Everyone thought it was to be but for a few days. Captain Waitsit took over and filled in during his absence. The Company was again one officer short.

"B" Company in reserve was a thing unheard of. We were a little dazed, and very glad not to be right at the front again. Everyone took great delight in counting the bombers and their escorts as they left the field for the front. We were sure it was too good to last and anxiously awaited March Order.

On the afternoon of March 24th we heard rumors of a fierce tank battle near El Guettar and were moved south to relieve the 601st Tank Destroyer.



Battalion which had suffered heavy vehicular casualties. The drive during the hours of darkness were enlivened by flares and personnel bombs dropped at us by Jerry. He incorporated a little moonlight strafing with his bombing but did no damage other than turn our hair a little grayer.

There was a constant threat of another tank attack in this area, but none developed. Casualties were caused by shell fire, however, when on the afternoon of March 25th, three shells of about 105 mm. landed in the second platoon area, killing T-5 Johnson and Pvt. Romine and seriously wounding T-5 Roberts and Pvt. Potter. These were the first casualties to occur in a squad under Sgt. Gilbert and it cost him his entire squad. The first shell, besides inflicting the casualties, destroyed the jeep driven by Pft. Gardner and Staff Sgt. Pios.

On March 27th we were relieved from our positions and went into bivouac to the west of Dj el Ank as Battalion reserve. Both A and C Companies were in positions to the east of Dj el Ank, south of Bou Hamran and in support of an attack launched by the First Infantry Division to gain the high ground on both sides of the Bou Hamran valley. This was a limited objective attack and was successful in its initial stages, but met stiffer and stiffer resistance.

From this position "B" Company moved out twice to take up its old positions on the El Guettar - Gabes road and once into positions just east of Bou Hamran in the north of Sekket Valley. At midnight on April 1st, the company was alerted and moved out to take up position approximately six miles ahead of our former positions on the El Guettar-Gabes road. The jeep in which Staff Sgt. Arnett, Cpl. Bohn, and Pvt. Works, all of the First Platoon, were riding was completely wrecked when it struck a mine in an unguarded field. Although the two men last named were sent to the hospital with minor injuries, all concerned were most fortunate. It was found unnecessary to have us in any of these forward positions and each time we returned to our old area.

Enemy air activity went on at an ever increasing scale. Stukas, ME's, F. W.'s and Ju's came and went. We cheered our pilots while they shot down two heavy bombers and chased Stukas and FW's all around our little valley. Jerry repeatedly dropped flares and bombs by night. Although one bomb landed within fifteen yards of the ammunition truck of the first platoon, no damage was done.

During this period the security sections and platoon commanders went out on "Ranger Patrols" establishing listening posts at the infantry line during the night and going forward to draw fire in the morning. Nothing was accomplished by the listening posts, but fire was quite easy to find at practically any point of the Bou Hamran and Sakket Valleys. Lt. McKnight went so far as to remove three German Teller mines from a field just before Sakket.

On April 6th two men were assigned to the company and placed in the second platoon. Shortly after these replacements arrived, the company was again on the move - this time to positions approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles ahead of our first positions on the El Guettar Gabes road. We moved into this area at 2000 hours and by 0100 hours on the 7th were dug into position.

The company was in a line across the valley composed of two battalions of tanks and two battalions of tank destroyers. We were astride the road and in the center of the line. From this position we watched the enemy



shell the 894th Tank Destroyer's position and one battalion of tanks, both on our right. There was no apparent effect other than a slight shifting of some of the more forward tanks. We were in a continual sweat, waiting for our turn to be shelled. The news that the 8th Army had broken through the German line 20 miles north of Gabes and the fact that our own artillery was giving back more than we took, kept our spirits at a high level.

At about 0200 hours on the morning of April 8th, the German artillery laid down a very heavy barrage - one concentration consisting of 212 rounds - just forward of our positions and again at the 894th. Our artillery answered and by 0400 hours all was quiet.

At 0700 hours our artillery laid a 15 minute concentration of smoke on the enemy positions and everything in the valley moved forward, with the exception of B Company. The force under command of Colonel Benson advanced some 30 miles down the road toward Gabes and swung north after contacting the advance elements of the 8th Army. They met only light resistance from Italian troops and took many prisoners.

We remained in our position until Noon of the 9th, at which time we moved back to our old bivouac at Dj el Ank. Here we were in the new position of sending forward to the rear echelon for rations and gas.

The company remained here, playing with a nearby Italian mine field, until Noon of the 11th. At this time we moved to a bivouac area in the vicinity of Bou Chebka. Here we relaxed. We didn't get up until 6:45 and the old Chow line was once again to be seen. But now we had to put up with Revielle, Retreat, and inspections of all kinds.

While in this area gun crews were given instruction and training in both direct and indirect fire. We also saw the first moving picture we had seen since leaving England.

On April 21st the Company left the Bou Chebka area and proceeded north. That night and the next day were spent in the vicinity of Roumas Souk. On the night of April 22nd we moved south and east to an assembly area northeast of Beja and thereafter to positions west of Fondouk. We remained in these positions for two days and two nights, conducting the usual forward reconnaissance.

On the morning of April 25th the 2nd platoon moved out in support of the attack on hill 407. The enemy had withdrawn during the night, however, and the platoon took up a position behind a German mine field. With the help of a few engineers who arrived later, the field was cleared. The remainder of the company joined the 2nd platoon that evening.

This position was held for two days. On the first day T-4 Kastner was slightly wounded by a booby trap while looking around a German ration dump. It was our first casualty caused by a booby trap.

On the evening of the 2nd day the company again moved forward. The 2nd and 3rd platoons taking positions nearly opposite each other at the head of the valley. The 1st platoon occupied a position about one mile forward of the other platoons on the left of the valley.

These positions were held for two days. On the morning of the second day, April 29th, Lts. McKnight, Neeleman, and Edson, with Pvt. Farber, went forward to reconnoiter for positions. While forward, Lt. McKnight noticed

two men making toward our lines down the center of the valley. After some discussion as to whether they were Germans or G.I., Lt. McNight convinced the others they should be looked at closer. They turned out to be two young Austrian soldiers who were tired of fighting. This caused a sensation in the company, but nowhere else.

The 2nd platoon moved into the position reconnoitered that afternoon at 2330 hours that night. This location was approximately two miles ahead of and on the same side of the valley as the 1st platoon.

On the morning of April 30th, Lts. Neeleman and Edson reconnoitered for positions still further forward, but found none suitable within the infantry line.

The situation, as far as our particular sector was concerned, was stable for several days. However, Hill 609, to our North, was holding up the troops to our right. No one seemed to be quite sure as to what was happening on 609. To our south the 6th Infantry sector was also shrouded in uncertainty and smoke from artillery shells.

On the night of May 1st the 1st platoon joined the 2nd in the same general area, and the 3rd moved forward to a position about one mile behind them.

While in these positions the forward platoons spotted enemy gun positions beyond effective range of our 75's. These were reported to our artillery, but no action was taken. It was very discouraging to watch these guns throw shell after shell at our infantry in the north valley while we stood by unable to do anything but watch.

On the evening of May 2nd, an enemy patrol of approximately 20 men drove in the artillery O.P.'s just forward of the 1st and 2nd platoon position. But three light tanks of the 81st Reconnaissance, bivouaced just behind these positions put on an excellent exhibition and drove the patrol back, taking eight prisoners.

On the next morning, the 81st moved forward of the 1st and 2nd platoon and stopped. They were under enemy observation and drew large caliber fire, the overs dropping in our area. The 81st then moved back through our area to a point just behind us - this time it was the shorts that it dropped into our area. No damage was done to either unit, due largely to the large number of duds among the Jerry shells.

Enemy aircraft was quite active, particularly dive bombers. On the afternoon of the 3rd Sgt. Carlton was seriously wounded above the heart by a stray 50 caliber bullet. Someone on an anti-aircraft gun was firing very wild.

The usual number of reconnaissance patrols were made forward with little result, other than the drawing of light artillery fire.

On the morning of May 4th, the 2nd platoon opened fire on a point thought to conceal an enemy vehicle. It was soon learned that it was a waste of ammunition, as the enemy had again withdrawn to the north.

The rest of the 4th was spent in reconnaissance and moving the company from place to place. The reconnaissance drew fire, proving an active enemy to the east.

The night of May 4th - 5th was spent on the east side of the valley. Early on the morning of the 5th we moved to a rally point north of Dj Badjar.

The 2nd platoon moved east from here and took up positions near Si Abdel Race. Although they drew fire in moving, no damage was done. They were recalled to the assembly area that afternoon.

After dark the company again moved forward. The 1st platoon took up a position west of the Mateur - Chouigui road opposite Hill 121. This proved to be a very hot spot.

The 3rd platoon was placed west of the 1st platoon and the 2nd platoon still further to the west.

These positions were held throughout the 6th. The 1st platoon was shelled almost continuously, wounded Pvt. Gilly and shocking Pvt. Dolezl. The 2nd platoon was shelled twice and dug again saved them from both personnel and vehicular casualties.

Lt. Ault was assigned to the company on this day and assigned to the 1st platoon.

On the morning of May 7th, the 2nd platoon was ordered to move forward to the northeast. The order was premature. They were denied entrance to their selected position by shell fire and were compelled to occupy hasty positions. These positions proved to be very poor. Hardly was the last vehicle stopped when very heavy mortar and artillery fire pinned them to the ground. Pvts. Wrona and Ketner were slightly wounded and two vehicles were put temporarily out of action. Considering the fact that all personnel was dismounted and just starting to dig in and the amount of fire received, the platoon was very lucky to get off slightly. The platoon was pinned down for the entire day. Any movement around the vehicles brought more fire.

The 1st platoon did some very good work on this day. They layed down an excellent barrage in front of our infantry as they advanced on the hills to our east. They received counter battery fire, but completed their mission before resuming their covered position.

The 3rd platoon was shelled in the afternoon, but no damage was done to either personnel or vehicles.

During the whole of the 7th, the 1st Armored Division was very active to our north. They broke through the enemy lines toward Ferryville just before dusk.

The second platoon moved forward after dark to the position originally selected.

The two damaged vehicles were turned over to the company as maintenance. Later that same night a patrol was sent out to the north, but returned with information of nothing but friendly activity in that direction.

On the morning of May 8th, Lts. McKnight, Ault, and Edson, with Corporal Willis, Pvt. Farber and Laythe, accompanied Lt. Smith and his reconnaissance platoon on a reconnaissance to the east. Two mine fields were discovered and paths cleared through them. An undiscovered field in a stream bed was luckily passed through, also. A distance of five miles (air line)



was covered and a great many guns of all sizes found. Rifles, 50 mm. 75 mm, 88 mm, 100 mm, and 150 mm guns, some destroyed and some in good condition, were quite numerous in the area covered. Jerry certainly hadn't been lacking in artillery.

That afternoon, as radio contact with the party was very poor, T-4 Scott and T-5 Covell were sent with instructions for the reconnaissance party. After receiving the message, they accompanied by Cpl. Willis and Pvt. Farber and their peep were sent back to Captain Whitsit to act as guides via another route. This route had not been previously reconnoitered, but was thought to be clear. Later, when the party had regained radio contact and had been recalled, it was learned that the other vehicles had not returned.

The party had a very narrow escape while returning. In recrossing the mined creek bed the party followed close behind a British kitchen truck. The truck set off a mine, completely wrecking the truck and seriously wounding two of the occupants. Although the party was covered with gravel and mud, none were hurt.

In the morning, as the other four men still had not returned, Captain Whitsit again went out to the point where we was to have met them on the previous night. He found Cpl. Willis and Pvt. Farber having a breakfast from the wrecked British kitchen truck. Their story follows:

The four of them: Willis, Scott, Covell and Farber; proceeded down the road for some time, but finally decided they were on the wrong road and getting deeper into enemy territory. As they were turning around, 12 Germans arose from the wheat field beside the road and so near to the peep containing Scott and Covell, that they could do nothing in their own defense. Willis and Farber, however, being behind the other peep about 51 yards, took off cross-country, Willis firing with his rifle. Their peep hit a hidden rock and hung up. Farber and Willis landed running and kept going on foot most of the night. They had arrived at the point where Captain Whitsit found them only a few minutes before he arrived.

The rest of the day was spent in picking up rumors of the general breakdown of Axis resistance in North Africa and sweating out Scott and Covell.

On the morning of May 10th, Scott and Covell arrived at the company C.P. driving a German reconnaissance car. They had been well treated, but had walked a long ways while they were prisoners. They were freed when the group holding them was in turn surrounded and captured. There were about 900 Germans in this group.

The company was assembled at this time and the next day moved to a Battalion Bivouac about 10 miles south of Mateur.

ASSOCIATION INDEX

1. Faid Pass
2. Sidi Bou Zid
3. Sbeitla
4. Hadjeb El Aoun
5. Pinhon
6. Fondouk
7. Trazza
8. El Ala
9. Djebel Gobel
10. Thelepte
11. Feriana
12. Tebessa
13. Gafsa
14. Nefta
15. Tozeur
16. Metloui
17. Phillipe-Thomas
18. St. Lew
19. St. Barbe du Thelat
20. Mateur
21. Bacet
22. Bizerte
23. Thala
24. Lassouda
25. Redeyef
26. El Guita
27. Socket
28. Kebili
29. Beja
30. Negrine
31. Kairouan
32. Djebel Berda
33. Guntree Forrest
34. St. Joseph's Farm
35. El Ma El Abiod
36. Hills 609, 350, 121, 409
37. Bel El Ater (Lt. Hollar's Hqs)
38. Tamerza
39. Mdilla



## STATISTICS

### Battalion left England with:

- 57 trucks - 1/4 ton
- 6 trucks - 1/2 ton weapon carriers
- 23 trucks - 3/4 ton C&R cars
- 14 trucks - 2 1/2 ton cargo
- 12 trailers - 1 ton 2-wheeled cargo
- 12 gun 37-mm. S.P.
- 24 carriage motor 75-mm. S.P.
- 49 half-tracks M2
- 32 motorcycles
- 2 wrecker, 1/4 ton
- 1 Ambulance

### Vehicles lost in combat:

- 29 trucks - 1/4 ton
- 3 trucks - 1/2 ton W/C
- 12 trucks - 3/4 ton W/C
- 2 trucks - 2 1/2 ton cargo
- 3 trailers - 1 ton
- 7 gun, 37-mm. S.P.
- 17 carriage motors - 75-mm. S.P.
- 30 Half-tracks Ma
- 18 motorcycles

### Lost in shipment:

- 1 truck - 1/4 ton
- 1 truck - 2 1/2 ton cargo (Medical)
- 2 half-tracks M2

### Vehicles in Bn. as of May 25, 1943:

- 70 trucks - 1/4 ton
- 3 trucks - 1/2 ton W/C
- 21 trucks - 3/4 ton W/C
- 4 trucks - 3/4 ton C&R
- 28 trucks - 2 1/2 ton cargo
- 20 trailers - 1 ton 2-wheeled cargo
- 10 trailers - 1/4 ton 2-wheeled cargo
- 8 gun, 37-mm. S.P.
- 36 carriage motor 75-mm. S.P.
- 33 half-tracks M2
- 1 half-track M3
- 16 motorcycles
- 2 Wrecker, 1/4 ton
- 1 Compressor, air motorized
- 1 Ambulance

# STATISTICS

|                                   |                               |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| "B" Company casualties            | 43 Enlisted Men               |
| Reconnaissance Company casualties | 27 Enlisted Men<br>1 Officer  |
| "A" Company casualties            | 67 Enlisted Men<br>6 Officers |
| "C" Company casualties            | 38 Enlisted Men<br>4 Officers |
| Headquarters Company casualties   | 2 Enlisted Men<br>1 Officer   |
| Total Enlisted Men                | 197                           |
| Total Officers                    | 12                            |
| 2nd Reconnaissance Platoon        | 23 Enlisted Men<br>1 Officer  |

Casualties 3 Enlisted Men  
One on mine, two non-combat, all three wounded

|         | <u>Ent.</u>      | <u>Killed</u> | <u>Wounded</u>    | <u>Missing in Action</u> |
|---------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Hqa Co. | 0                | 1 Off         | 2 E. M.           | 0                        |
| A Co.   | 8 E. M.<br>2 Off | 5 E. M.       | 18 E. M.          | 35 E. M.<br>1 Off.       |
| B Co.   | 0                | 19 E. M.      | 24 E. M.          | 1 E. M.                  |
| C Co.   | 1 Off            | 16 E. M.      | 1 Off             | 12 E. M.                 |
|         |                  | 1 Off         | 35 E. M.          | 1 Off.                   |
| Rcn Co. | 0                | 3 E. M.       | 14 E. M.<br>1 Off | 8 E. M.                  |

Personnel on duty with 701st T.D.Bn. when Bn. arrived at Oran  
Algeria December 12, 1942 and December 21st respectively.  
"B" and "C" Companies (C.C.B.). Figures only represent no.  
of Officers and Enlisted.

## That left Ireland:

|               | <u>OFFICERS</u> | <u>ENLISTED MEN</u> |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Bn.           | 9               |                     |
| Hq Co.        | 7               | 150                 |
| Co A          | 5               | 176                 |
| Co B (C.C.B.) | 5               | 178                 |
| Co C (C.C.B.) | 5               | 175                 |
| Rcn Co        | 5               | 138                 |
| Med           | 3               | 22                  |
| Total         | 39              | 839                 |