

1/ Page 9: We took up positions at Lessonda. Lessonda was a pumping station for water. A Frenchman and his young wife with an infant child lived and operated the station. This young woman showed much ~~courage~~ ^{courage}, living the dangers with us. She was also happy to receive any can goods we gave her from our Compo ration (British) Each morning at 7:10 you could look for the JU 88s pass over our positions. We were all still shaky from the working over they gave us. You could never hear them coming until they passed over the mountain and were right over us. We discovered, a dog owned by the Frenchman would hear the planes minutes the plane would appear. The dog would howl and we all went for cover. That was a well liked dog.

One morning, six JU 88s came over us a lone P38 appear. The German plane were strung out like in a column. That is how the P38 attacked. Like they were trucks on the road. He came up from the rear firing all the way to the leading plane. He was shot

2/ down quickly with no ~~effects~~ ^{damage} to the German.
He crashed near us and the Germans
attack him in his crashed plane. We sent out
a jeep to pick him up. He was badly shaken
but not hurt. We gave him plenty of pointers
what to do next time.

Page 11 There was air activities at our positions
at Fouldouk. The Fock-Wulfes 109s and the
ME 109s were appearing every day. They never
attempted to attack our 3rd Platoon positions.
They made a sport of picking off French
mortar cycle riders. The French cycle riders
would never go far over. We saw many
dispatch riders get killed. One day a rider
was attacked and hit near us. We went
out and picked him up. He was shot through
each of his ears. There were dog fights
and some directly over us. The expended
brass was falling around us. We never
had anything to cheer about. It was always
the American plan to be shot down.

Jan 43
We were called upon to place one of our
guns in a more forward position. Sgt Cox
was selected. The position had no cover
from the air and stood out to be seen.
The German planes came in one morning
firing MG and 20 mm Cannon and scored
many hits on the half track, but lucky
no one was hurt. The crew had a small
fire by the side of the track making

3/ The morning coffee. A 20 mm shell went through the armor plate and exploded inside of the self sealing gas tank. The tank was full of gas and so fire was started. The gas tank it self was as round as a barrel. The hole in the armor plate has gas seeping out and moving toward the fire. Sgt Cox picked up a tent pin and drove it into the hole stopping the leak. There were many bullet holes in the armor plate. The real damage was to the 75 gun. The French 75's have a hammer like lever that is spring loaded with a short lanyard attached. What it does is, when the lanyard is pulled back by the #1 man, and released, the lever strikes the firing pin and fires the gun. There was no way of repairing it. We could not loose this gun. Sgt Cox came up with a 1 lb ballpeen hammer and gave it to the #1 man and said this how you will fire from now on. Our maintenance was able to find a new gas tank. However the new tank was made for the right side and we needed the left. We used it anyway. Our platoon had only three guns. We lost one at Oran. we didn't want to loose another.

4 Page 11 Shooting down of the of the JV 88s I always thought it was 5. The P40 had French markings. The bombers had a fighter escort that flew well head. When the P40 attacked it looked like the whole sky was on fire. We had no idea what was happening. There were wreckage of burning planes all around us. That is when I seen the P40 bank off near by and flew away. The German fighters come back to let to engage.

Page 12 - Our move to Dapso was helpful in one way. We had got a chance to have our battalion Commo section repair our radios. I was called upon to fix a radio in the platoon. I had no knowledge of repair but somehow I was able to help in the operation. We were told we would go on half ration because the supply problem. The idea of half ration by our cooks was a mess kit spoon of hash and mess kit spoon of beans. It was a shame to dirty a mess kit, when some called Chow! some said bring your spoons.

Page 13 - I can recall that Capt Whetsit said things were going bad and Col Waters was cut off and we were going out to relieve him. I remember all the tanks from the 1st Armored lining up for the attack. It felt real good. This was the biggest operation we were ever on. We were in position near

5 the 68th FA (see enclosed copy) They fired
mission after mission. German Artillery was
coming in but not to effect. The tanks
moved out and wave after wave they went
and soon were all committed. We could
see tank after tank get hit and burning.
I received a report on the radio 50 enemy
tanks, right front and shortly after
a report 30 enemy tanks left front. We
could see the dust trails that was
raised behind each tank as they moved.
The 68th still kept firing we could not
help. The range was much to great. Our
attacking battalion was burning. I can
remember one tank coming back with
as many as twelve men hanging on to the
back deck. German artillery shells fire kept
coming in heavier. We received a call from 2nd
platoon. They needed help. They were about to
be over run. We quickly got into a march order
and moved toward the ~~2nd~~ 2nd platoon. About
that time there was a big scramble of vehicles
around and it looked like every body was taking
off. There was a lot of dust raised. It seemed
we were getting fired on from our rear. Looking
back I could see in a gap, in the dust cloud,
German tanks moving in on the 68th FA. We
were in no position to help them and we had
our orders to help the 2nd Plat. The dust trailing

I could not see the German tanks or the G87 FA. In front of us was a command half track that ran its battery down and was unable to start. Capt Whitset had our driver get behind it and gave it a push to start it. That was a grateful crew on that half track. Some how the 2nd Platoon broke out and we never did get to meet up with it. I don't remember much of what was happening after that but the German air activity got real heavy. They dive bombers were hitting every where. We took up new positions and waited for new orders. We lost many men and vehicles. The Germans captured our SOI. We were unable to send anything in code and they had the identification of all call signs for each unit. Instead of call signs we used first names and nick names. Like Bill this is Bob I can recall someone trying to make contact. Bill this is George. Bill this is George-OVER- A voice came back I hear you Good I hear you Excellent. The troops were enjoying themselves on the radio.

Page 13 On the Col Crosby's mission Capt Whitset decided to leave the Platoon command half track and take the guns and other units of the platoon. They were gone all day. I noted that the Artillery unit near by picked up and moved back and other units done the same. Soon we were alone. I radioed Capt Whitset and told him of the situation and (told) asked him if I could go and pick up Rev Mardeth's gun, that had broke down early that day, and take

at in tow. Whitsit ^{with} the situation was going well and not to worry and stay put. I was about dark when the Crosby tank force come back. It was already dark and our tanks continued to come in. Whitsit called the Motor Sgt. and he got into the half track with us. Whitsit was about to give him the instructions to Peck eye Rex's tank Sgt Ray call out to Whitsit and said German tanks were out there. He said he could tell because Germans had steel tracks (American had rubber) In the darkness maybe fifty yards appeared the outline of a tank. The Motor Sgt lit a cigarette and about that time the tank fired. The shell landed to the right side of us. The Motor Sgt jumped out. No order was given to move out we all moved out before the second round could be fired. Rex Merideth was forced to abandon his gun. The Springfield was removed from the 15 along with the sight. The back plate from the 50 Cal. M6 and thrown away. Rex and his crew had a adventure getting back with us ~~several~~ several days later.

Page 14 As I remember we set up positions at night protecting a mine field that was being laid in the front of us. The Engineers completed their job and left. We had no orders. The Germans were firing star shells lighting up the land ahead of them. The German tanks were coming

8 They were firing their MG and a stream of white tracers could be seen. They kept getting closer and closer. To engage these tanks at night was just about impossible. There were no lighting devices to make light in the sights. This made the sights useless. I listened to Lt Clark calling Col King. King said we were cut off and it may be too late to get B Co out, to try to get B Co out if he could. We took off cross country and some how got out without making contact with the enemy.

Page 15. About the digging in. Capt. Whitset got us together and told us how grim the situation really was. He said this is as far back as we go. We have to hold no matter what. If the Germans push us out there's no place to go. We would lose Africa. Rebecca was our main supply dump. Losing that we would be out of business. We all beat out for days. I had the earphones for the radio with no relief day after day and night after night. We had two guns left. We dug in all night and prepared defences. At that time, I didn't see any other units around us. I guess we were alone. The next day the 26 Inf Regt dug in around us.

This ends those terrible days. I can thank God we had Capt Whitset. He always was cool and knew what to do next. Some of NCOs rejected Lt Neelman coming in. They just didn't want to see Whitset go. It took a lot getting things adjusted. Lt Neelman was a real good officer. He did have a lot of imagination.