

A similar note book, covering the period 17 December, 1942 to 25 March, 1943, precedes this book.

26 March, 1943

Up 0630. Had a good night's sleep last night for a change. My job only kept me up from 0400 to 0430. Planes came over twice, but I did not get up. The moon ^{was} quite bright. Planes came over 0750, but were ours for a change. Where is our "air superiority"? Maknassy is a shambles. So far we have lost one destroyer from Lt. Toné's platoon. We have gotten 6 tanks and 2 planes. We have not been allowed to act as an organization, but are split down to companies.

and, in some cases, platoons. Artillery fire on both sides is heavy. It is odd how one becomes used (inured) to it. Traded my .45 pistol, the one dad gave me, for a carbine. While cleaning it up, in came the other fellows' planes. I am now writing in a slit trench. Our planes just came in for once. They are having quite a scramble. It is getting so that I know just what their bombers can do, and, though I play safe, I'm not excited by them any more. (Much) Got a birthday card from mom, & the first letter addressed to A.P.O. 668 from dad today. I wish these guys would go play elsewhere so I can finish cleaning the carbine. Sorenson

brought in four loaves of bread a while ago. That, combined with a can of strawberry jam I have been hoarding, will make a feast. Turned in early. As usual, the minute I got in bed I had to get up.

27 March, 1943.

Slept in until 0900. This has been a very tough day for "Blue". In fact, this has been a rough day. Our own planes came over & did a good job. We were really glad to see them. The VIIIth Army has broken through again. I think it may "stick" this time. Tiller & Leopard, & Sgt. Jones (the latter is dead) distinguished themselves. Lt. Welch's platoon destroyed 5 tanks & 2 88's. This, in addition to yesterday's catch, adds up

well on our side. Fritz shot
up our ambulance, hitting a
shell-shock case inside. (The
circumstances are such that
it could only have been deliberate)
Turned in soon after dark.

28 March, 1943.

For the first time since I can
remember, I slept through the
night without having to lash "13
miles to point 47" through unknown
situations. Action is very light today.
One of our rear echelon boys came
up at 0130 this morning. Our ark
was not firing. He through threw
down his bed-roll & went to
sleep. Soon our own artillery
opened up from all around him.
He lit out for a hole like a streak,
thinking the other side really

had him. One of our ss. boys
lay out on a ridge all day. He
just took it easy. The German snipers
(who are not as good as ours) would
disclose themselves by firing several
round without moving. Our boy
would fire (he never missed) and
move. Six rounds, six snipers.
The german may not be such a
good rifleman, but we have learned
not to let them fire more than
one round with an 88. Got a letter
from Am saying Bill P. & Grace
Simmons are now married. The
news announcer says, "Everything
has been quiet in the Markassy
sector the last few days." Is he
kidding? Our Gafsa airfield is
now able to help us. Instead
of 6 to 10 raids, the German

dive bombers only got to us once today. However, their heavy artillery is really having a time. I went into Maknassy about 1700 this evening & found not a soul at the C.P. ^{in fact} _{not a soul in town.}

29 March, 1943

ssssssssssss Burumb! That got me up. Our artillery has really been pounding the other fellows. Now they are coming back. So far they have done nothing but keep us ducking. Cushman sent Kimo an Italian aiming circle tripod to put his 10X80 German glasses on. That is really using the enemy's equipment right back at him. Forgot to mention yesterday that I have been taking hand

grenades & 20mm HE apart for the men, & disarming them so they can be taken home. I have scratched on it on the bottom of all that are now safe. I just got back from C.P. It has been moved since yesterday's arty. fell right amongst them. Two ME109's just came in straffing. I could have touched them with a fly-casting rod. They set off a near-by GMC loaded with explosives. About 15 minutes too late 17 Spitfires came over. I understand the VIII Army captured 4,000 German prisoners at the Mareth Line.

30 March, 1943

Was awakened at 0400 by

terrific bombardment. It woke up all of us. I lifted up the edge of the tent and saw seven flares. It was as bright as day. I said, "It looks like it might be time to get up." Then the motors got quite loud & I said, "I know it is time to get up"! They bombed until 0515. This was the first night since we reached this area that we used a tent. It was raining until midnight approx. It is clear now. At dawn we kicked the tent down. Before we finished breakfast a Heine plane came in strafing. We have only had pursuit ships strafing to date. Capt. Martin raised up after this plane passed. This one

had a rear gunner who nailed him. He will recover. Collecting stuff to take home, I went into an Italian ammunition dump. I almost blew my head off with a 47mm shell. Our planes just came by (1500) going south. They peeled off & dived just over the ridge. Smoke is coming from there now. Two ME 109's just passed over, but high. The artillery is still at it. We have arranged to purchase an Italian 6.5mm carbine so Sorenson & I picked up a case of ammunition. We opened our can of pineapple for supper. Turned in early.

31 March, 1943

Major Phillips got me up at 0145 to deliver a message. When I got to his vehicle I found he had

along the Sidi Bou Zid Rd.

phoned the message I was to deliver, & he had gone to bed. The orderly said the Major had not know about the phone. I had hurried over with my map case, thinking something had "popped". At 0300 Terry came over & dropped 3 flares, but nothing else. He must have been checking our road movements. Slept until 0900. It is a beautiful day. German planes in at 1030 & 1100. Received letters from: Mom, dad, (Gael), Mr. Peacock, Mrs. P., Kathleen, B. Lee, & Mrs. M. The latter said ^{Martin Williams} ~~Mark~~ is missing in action. I just can't believe he is dead, & wrote her so. This is a no quarter war from here on. He must be a prisoner somewhere.

1 April, 1943.

Last night was a rough one. I

hunted for our advance platoon in the dark. Got settled down and Fritz spent the night dropping flares & bombs. I lay in my bed-roll and estimated the odds of being hit each time they dropped a new flare. We jumped off toward the NE pass & the mine before dawn. A bit more opposition than was expected has been encountered. I am now located in a wadi, just behind the tanks. A Ju 88 just came over. I hope my command car looks insignificant to them. I have finally figured out this air superiority business. We don't have 3 for every 1 they don't have. Or something. Just now, for the third time, a single plane dove in without air opposition & had a jolly old time. It is on ME 109 this time. My coordinates, T-770115. At 1445 we really had troubles.

Twelve Stukas came in on us. Fifteen minutes late, and so high they could scarcely be seen, a large formation of our own pursuit ships came over, circled once, & went home again. Just dug my hole a little deeper. Two more bombings & I'll strike water. After dark we all pulled back, having accomplished our mission. My battery went dead from excessive radio use, just about midnight.

2 April, 1943.

Got up at 0900. Planes were in the air most of the night, (Germans) but never near our new location. Talked King out of some Cocoa. Worked over some small arms various people have squirmed. Everything is quiet. Nice warm day.

3 April, 1943.

Got some mail today from Dewey, Martin, the felts, Karel, Bob (Clayson). Went out & conducted a bit of a shoot with Lou. He has gotten some very nice hits at ranges from 12,800 to 13,200 yds. They gave me 4, 20^{mm} shells from a plane knocked down. I kept 1 & gave the others to my crew. We disarmed them. Cpt Waddle told me he had a small war to arbitrate. The Xth recon. had a patrol (unscheduled) stumble across our security. The recon. unit radioed back they were being fired on about the same time King radioed he was firing. Robinett got mad, but laughed. He said it showed alertness, but poor

coordination. We got some small cans of pineapple today (3). Food is good, considering.

4 April, 1943.

Got a package of candies from home. Also letters from Dewey, the Frances, the folks, (Carol,) and a bunch of magazines. The Col. carved my signature (Col.) in my carbine, & I named it "Minka II". Davis, instead of steadying down as time goes on, is getting more & more jumpy. Whatever may happen to me in this mess, at least I know that their worst can not greatly upset me, if at all. Blackshur & Sorenson are good steady men. Terry just came by & bombed & strafed. I could feel the ground pulsate. Which

reminds me; I have not seen an allied plane for four days. Sorenson just said, "I'd like to have a lump of milk-chocolate the size of that there jeep, so I could cut pieces off with an axe as I needed them". Just after dark "higher headquarters" got all excited, expecting a German push. Nothing happened.

5 April, 1943.

Up early. Made a real shot today with my carbine. Four men saw it. My shooting rep. is so high now I can't afford to shoot any more. Conozza is "artillery ^(dead) happy". Kafka has gone. Carter, Jones, & Hoover couldn't stand their responsibilities.

6 April, 1943.

Some allied planes came over & bombed the mine this morning. I went down to the C.P. just in time to get caught in an artillery barrage. Wrote Dewey (& Carol). Read a bit from the magazines I got in the mail. Had a "bull session" on dogs & women. Turned in. Enemy air activity light today.

7 April, 1943.

Up at 0950! Last night broke the spell of extremely cold nights. The clear days are hot, the clear nights very cold. A whole bunch (30) of U.S. pursuit ships came over & played a while. They really helped our faith in the air corps. As usual, a pair of German 109s

came in right behind them. Went down to the C.P. & it was shelled again. They claim down there that I drew fire. Lost the ejector & spring from the bolt of my combine just like a rookie. Got two letters (from Carol), 1 from mom. Mom said my bank balance was \$477.21 so she bought me \$625.00 worth of bonds. She gave me a \$100.00 bond for my birthday & I am buying by allotment of pay a \$100.00 bond each month. That, with the \$150.00 on hand and pay day over due, is the financial statement. I am set to move tonight. We are doing well. Stayed in place tonight.

8 April, 1943.

Moved west and relieved "Ferguson." Our force just over the ridge

(Benson's force)

to the S. has come abreast, & even a bit E. of us. The VIIIth is up to Mazzouna almost. I spent the day becoming familiar with my new HQ & in fooling with enemy ammunition. Had some delicious pan-cakes for supper. Night is turning very cold again today. Not a plane, except our cub, came over today.

9 April, 1943.

Up at 0500. During the morning our organization changed hands four times. At 1230 I left Maknassy to meet a "Col. Dewey at T. 5266". The outfit was to leave at 1825 & meet me. After a ride outstanding in roughness, dust, & a terrific wind, I got there. Lt. Fawcett was there so I sent

Hafey

him to Bir el Haffe to guide the outfit. (I want them with him.) Then I went NE again to find Gen. MacQuillen near Sodeguia. I was pitch dark. The roads were mined. And a strong cold wind was blowing the sands, but we found it. I located Moj-Foster O.K., but when I went out to get my bed roll I was careless & almost got lost afoot. (This is still 3-8-61 a strong memory. It was unbelievable dark.)

10 April, 1943

Up at 0600. Col. Haynes gave me the situation & I went to the outfit via Sidi Bou Zid. The 2 Bns. of destroyed M-4's ^(Tanks) must have been a joy to the German's hearts. Also saw 2 P-39's down. I would pay full price for my own camera to have it here. Sidi bou Zid & the surrounding area is quite a sight. Found the Col. & gave him the dope. He, Shirley,

King, & I went back only to find we are now under division's control. Ran on to Col. Stevens & secured a good meal & a mine detector marked, "Made in England by a Pole". Coming back I noticed some of the holes & a dud bomb. The bomb must be 500 Kgm. The holes were about 15 ft. deep & 20 ft across, roughly. Got a .30 cal. mg. & turned it over to Lou. Looks like we are going to move tonight so I am turning in at dark. ^{Got a letter from dad.} Need sleep from dad.

11 April, 1943.

Up at 0945. No move contemplated. It is a beautiful cloudless day. The sun is shining warmly & there is no wind. I have not as yet mentioned that the wild flowers

in this valley rival California. Though I chose this spot where I sit without thought of flowers, I can touch 12 different flowers. Blackshur just brought me some chow. A man just came by & asks where church services were, so I gather that today is Sunday. The Col. found a little British armored car & had it brought in. Motor mount. is going to try to fix what a Tellurid did to it. I got another light mg. for it. Ferguson & Kibler helped. Barney told me that Tinture has been removed. Bevington will prob. take his place. I will take Shirley's job over. Prescott brought in a German tanker. He answered all questions. He said

they were all tired of fighting, but kept on because they had been brought up to fight. Turned in at 2230.

12 April, 1943.

Up at 0700. Weather good. Quite warm. Wrote the folks (Carol. Told the folks I was going to marry Carol.) Disarmed some Brit. hand grenades for keepsakes. The major came back tonight with 8 Mauser rifles.

13 April, 1943.

Since we are inactive, the Col. gave me permission to go up to Kairouan and look the war over. The VIIIth lost some tanks to ambushed guns in several places. They got the guns, though. We found 3 of the large 75's, numerous 47's & an 88, in

our hurried trip. The town, a "holy" city was undamaged. The mosques, graves, & 2 French girls were the things that caught my eye. The

English are pouring through. Got back just in time for evening meal. After chow I told Davis to move out onto the plain, & pointed out where. When I got back from a talk given by Gen. Harmon I walked across the plain a dozen times before I found the car near a cactus patch. Mosquitos are bad in this valley!

14 April, 1943.

Up late. Made a piece for my carbine & got it

1 working. The bolt is hard to
assemble. Moved back to CC/B.
We are preparing for a long
march northward.

15 April, 1943.

Had one huge "belly-ache" last
night. Slept little. Up early. It
is cloudy & there is a cold wind.
Received a letter. (from Carol.) Disarmed
some 60mm mortar shells. Slept a
bit in the afternoon. Turned in
soon after dark.

16 April, 1943.

Up early. The English have been
using the road quite heavily.
We are still marking time.
Davis purchased a carbine
for \$30.00 yesterday. His is #3585,
mine is #1216. Day uneventful.
Spent most of our time cleaning

up weapons & vehicles.

17 April, 1943.

This is a bright warm day. I have
been sitting cross-legged on my
dirty old sleeping-bag writing to
the many people to whom I owe
letters. Lazy day - I won't be able
to do an honest day's work when
I get home. We are taking a
yellow-green pill called Afrodine
to keep off malaria. Lately,
to cut down annoyance I have
been wearing a head-net night.
I am optimistic about the war.
Africa should be ours within
the month. Received a camera &
1 roll of film from the folks. It was
plainly marked camera and came
over O.K. Received mail from dad &
Carol. She wrote a swell letter.)

We were able to buy 4 chocolate bars apiece. Turned in at dark.

18 April, 1943.

Last night the chaplain sent word around that today special services would be held for

Palm Sunday. So we lay in bed last night & talked about Saturday nights at home.

(This is the first Saturday night we have known it was Saturday night since I can remember.)

Sorenson remarked that when he got home he was going to quit buying whiskey in small bottles; either that, or buy it by the case. As we dropped off to sleep Blackshaw said with deep feeling, "My, won't it be nice to sleep between sheets!"

"A man never will wake up!" CC/B sent the customary midnight, unnecessary, message down to be delivered. Up late this morning. Talked with some English who were from the halted column on the road. We joked about the mine-fields. They told us of signs their Engineers had put up, "We don't care about you, but be careful of your vehicle", and, "We have plenty of men, but we are short of vehicles". My "tan" of yesterday has turned red. What a day this would be on Catalina!

Read the latest "Life" from cover to cover. (March 1, 1943). Had a spoonful of pumpkin for desert tonight. It reminded me of mom's pies; Good. Turned in about 2230.

19 April, 1943.

Up at 0245. Moved out through Sbeitla to Le Kef. The semi-desert country quickly turned into a rich, fertile valley north of Sbiba. Arabs once more dog our foot-steps, but they no longer (like in Casa Blanca) want money. They will trade their chickens & eggs for tobacco, shoes, undershirts (which they then wear outside everything else), or any type of clothing. We hit Sbeitla at 0530. The Roman ruins of what must have been a Greek city interested me greatly, however, I couldn't even get a picture. The trip to Le Kef was a "joy-ride" compared to next. I read "Time". Noticed an article on the "Faid Affair" (March 1, 1943 pp. 16 - "Worst Defeat") Had a soldier written the

same words & mailed them home. our censors would have courts-martialed him.

20 April, 1943.

I turned in 3 times last night between 2100 & 2300. Just got to sleep each time when I had to get up. We finally moved out to the north at 2400 (last night). The trip was more easily made than usual due to the bright moon. We went through beautiful country. The road was rough & winding. Every time I dozed off ^{my} we would hit a bump & crack me ⁱⁿ the shins on the Knobby dash-board. Pulled into a beautiful olive grove at 0510 & turned in. At 0700 I got up to get the situation & meet the org. Major Long told me they had no dope. That we would be here "between five minutes & 5 weeks".

Cleaned up materiel. Started carving a "praying" arab from olive wood. (Successful completion doubtful.) Studied maps of the area. Spent evening & early night talking about surfing, Catalina, & Hawaii with Col. Barney.

21 April, 1943.

Up early. My carbine not working perfectly. Made ejector & spring without model. Took Davis' out & made new part. Helped Capt. Shirley take a German tank sight apart. Sight definitely superior to ours. (When we finished Shirley gave me some of the lenses. (Most were damaged).)

Tomorrow we move up to Beja.

22 April, 1943.

Up at 0700. Packed up & ready to go. Sorenson & Blackster in the jeep, Davis & I in the jeep. This trip

to the NE of Beja was the most pleasant yet. Warm, smooth roads, no dust, air friendly, & the scenery superb. Wild flowers in violent bold splashes. Took #2 photo as we dropped down to Beja. (#1 was of me standing beside the "Sidi bou Zid" sign.)

Pulled into biv. early in the afternoon. The number of types of wildflowers leaves me dumbfounded. Food has been poor the last few days. Spent the evening at the org. in the CP truck. News (BBC) in Tunisia all good. Messages came in regularly until 2400. Then the ^{atubrine} Afridene_n bothered me.

23 April, 1943.

Got "bored" for using radio last night first thing this morning. Weather still perfect. Heavy showers expected this afternoon,

as usual. Went down to the org.
Col. Barney had a German
"Tommy" gun. Caliber 9mm. Very
cheaply built. Stripped it & cleaned
it for him. Reported back to "B."
Was awakened at 2330 & told to
go back to the org. Was awakened
at 0230 & told to report back
to "B," which had moved to 3055.
We found it. Jerry bombed Beja
at about 2200, and bombed & strafed
the road while we were on it.
I told Blacksher, "This is a good
night to win the Purple Heart."
He said, "You mean this is a good
night to get 'kilt'!" Davis
worried on in silence. Sorenson
broke the peep's oil pan. Will come
up tomorrow. Rained from 0300
(tomorrow) on through the night.

24 April, 1943.

Up at 1100. Sorenson just pulled in
J.K. Was pleasantly surprised: my bed-
roll was kept dry by the shelter-half
I threw over it. I must have slept
across the furrows in this wheat field. It
was really rough. After lunch I went
back to the organization. Sometimes I
wonder how we do so well at night.
We came through mine-fields, over
terrible roads, past many destroyed
Mk 3, 4 & 6 tanks. An unidentified
stench last night turned out to
be dead "dutchmen". Though air attack
seems remote, I had the men dig in.
Situation: good, improving. Inter mitent
heavy & light showers. Fog all day. It
looks like we are going to have to get
rid of Cona. One of the 3 enlisted men
the Col. recommended to be commissioned

2nd Lt. received his commission today dark. No action near us.

The Col. gave him a good send off. Nothing bothered us during the night.

25 April, 1943.

They tried to get us up at 0445 this morning for calisthenics! Davis got up & took our "lean-to" down up at 0730. Hot & clear. I whittled on my "arab". Nothing happening. Got Sorenson up at 2100 to deliver a message. Today is Easter.

26 April, 1943.

Up at 0800. "Jerry's" planes droned around all night. No action. Bugs in my sleeping bag bit me all night. Aired my bedding & put bug powder in it. Day hot & clear. No activity. Infantry still progressing on all fronts. Planes over soon after

27 April, 1943.

Up early. Checked over my maps. Had a talk about our radio proceedings with Gen. Robinett. Ours is not good. Wrote (Carol &) the folks. Filled out a form to change my policy no. 33657670 to a "Free Whole Life" in lieu of the matured endowment value. Blacksher witnessed my signature. Capt. (Doc) Monroe did the rest. Sorenson came over with a movement order. We moved up to the entrance to the "mouse trap".

28 April, 1943.

Up late. White had one of the new men killed under a vehicle last night. "Jerry" planes came over looking for the arty. near us. No