

Carlos D. Weber -
June 24, 2002

This was November 9, 1942 on the road to Oran in Algeria by way through the town of St. Cloud. We had made an amphibious invasion the night before, the eighth of November, and not a shot was fired.

We were the First Battalion of the 18th Infantry Division. We were "C" Company of the First Battalion and our platoon was the third platoon. We were the point in this sector. No one had been there before us and not one of us had ever heard a shot fired in anger from the enemy or a shot fired by us at them. We were all equal in that respect regardless of rank or military status.

"C" Company had gathered and organized to march on the road to St. Cloud at daylight. My platoon would lead. I was a corporal or assistant squad leader of the 3rd squad. St. Reubens was the squad leader. Captain Ray Froncillo, was the company commander.

Just before the march on the road to St. Cloud began, the captain told me to take three men and travel seventy five or a hundred yards to the left of the road and parallel to it and to protect the marching column from any surprise attack from that side.

The march began and my small patrol went along on the left of the road as instructed, going over ditches and fences, across back yards and around objects too large to jump over. My instructions included my return to the column when my small patrol could no longer keep up with the column. I was to judge the time by looking towards the road and when I no longer could see the marching company I would come to the road and join them. The captain said he would know when to send another flanking patrol to replace us.

I could not see the marching company any more so I called my men and came toward the column of marchers on the road and when I reached the road I found that they were taking a break. A rest. The men were laying down or sitting on both sides of the road resting and the road was clear and empty of any traffic. I found that convenient for me to march with my three men to the front of the column to rejoin my squad and Sgt. Oscar Reubens. I did that.

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When I reached my place in Sgt. Reubens' squad, "all hell broke loose." I heard loud close distance machine gun fire and was surprised it was so close to me. I turned towards the road and saw an armored car firing in my general direction.

All corporals or assistant squad leaders were carrying rifle grenades which require that a rifle grenade launcher be attached to their rifles. A special blank cartridge be inserted into the chamber and the rifle grenade positioned on the launcher and the sight on the rifle adjusted before one could aim and fire. There were other instructions that had to be followed but the armored car was firing and waiting. I was the only one standing up on the road because everyone else had taken cover. I did all I had to do and sighted my rifle at range of twenty five or thirty yards and fired. The armored car was hit in the slit from which they looked out to aim their gun. Five or six enemy soldiers jumped out and abandoned the vehicle. One soldier with a broken wrist gave up immediately. The armored car blocked the road and two other armored cars that had been following it also gave up. The first car in the column of four had actually passed me while I frantically prepared my rifle launcher and grenade.

The first car fired his machine gun at me as he passed and continued on to mortally injure men in our second platoon. All this took place and was over, it seemed in seconds. There were casualties. Our platoon Sgt. was badly wounded, two men were wounded on their legs. One man died in the second platoon and there must have been others that I was not aware of. This occurred on the ninth of November 1942. There was more combat on the 10th and the 11th and many casualties after that.

I received a Silver Star for "gallantry in action" for my actions on that day.