

1 March 2009

Susan:

We have numerous letters written by my wife's father, Major Lester C. O'Neal, MD from North Africa, Sicily and Italy. These were written to his mother whom he wrote every Sunday. Most are V...-Mail and are hard to read so cannot copy for you .I will, however, paraphrase those that may be of interest to you and show date written and APO number so you can correlate to your info...39th Path thru Sicily. Note that in most cases, he only talks about places and events after 2 weeks as was required by censorship rules.

4 July 43 APO 302

"...We are camped right next to a British unit. These men are young and very nice in every way." (This must have been written when waiting at the port for voyage to Sicily on 5 July.)

19 July 43 APO 302

"...You did not get a letter from me (written) last Sunday as we were at sea and could not write. By the time you get this letter, the fighting here will be over. My unit has seen quite a bit of action and they have made a very good showing. We did not lose a single man in all the fighting."

This was the first letter written after the invasion at Gela,Sicily on 10 July43.

25 JULY 43 APO 302

"...I am doing well and have had no battle wounds. Speaking of wounds, I want to tell you how these men take their injuries. It is almost unbelievable. I see these men get hurt and never does one complain. I saw where one man cut another one's arm off when a big tank turned over on him and caught his arm under the track. At once, the tank began to burn and when the man could not be gotten out, the other man cut the arm down to the bone and then, shot the bone in two. Both men had to be hospitalized. When I saw him in the hospital the next day, the man who had lost his arm was up and helping the nurses by taking out the buckets of used bandages.

1 Aug 43 APO302

"...During the past week I have received 29 letters. Now that it is over, I am allowed to tell you things that are at least two weeks old. My unit was in the invasion of this country and we were the first to put foot on this island .We landed on the southern shore at the GELA sector. The papers talked about the Rangers .We were attached to the Rangers so we were one of them. We did a swell job and did not have a single man killed."

9 Aug 43 APO 302

"...We have been asking for some action and now we are getting it .In a few days, all the danger should be gone."

PG 2

18 Aug 43 APO 302

“ Things have come to a close and now we can get a breathing spell. I am OK and came thru without a scratch.”

30 Aug 43 APO 302

“Things are at a standstill again and have had plenty of rest and are ready to go again.”

5 Sept 43 APO 302

“...At present, we are still in Sicily but cannot tell you how long.”

19 Sept 43 APO 464

“...I expect to see more in Rome and all over Italy.”

10 Oct.43 APO 464

“... I can now tell you of all we did in Africa .We landed in Oran and camped just outside of the city within walking distance. They did not need all of us there so our Regiment was split-up and never all got back together until just before coming to Sicily.

One company went to ST.CLOUD to build a prisoner of war enclosure.

Two companies went to PEREGUAY to build a railroad and supply dump.

One company went to ANNE FRATESSA to construct a school and remained there
On guard and repair work.

One company went to MOSTAGEUM as a port guard and to guard the docks

It was my duty to see that all these troops were looked after medically so I traveled the route to all units.

The first week in March, we went down to MAGENTA a little place below SIDI BELLE ABES. The two companies at PEREGUAY and the one at ORAN all went to MAGENTA and here we trained until time for us to go to Sicily.” (These must have been the ones who went into Gela in the first wave as the went to train with the Rangers ??)