

sent to camps in Canada or the United States. The 3,000-ton scow cast off at five A.M. on May 6, slowly steaming from a harbor so crowded with the protruding masts of sunken ships that one prisoner thought it looked "almost like a forest."

Three hours later the first Allied planes attacked, sinking a destroyer escort and driving *Triestino* to a cove sheltered by cliffs on Cap Bon's northwest shore. Terrified prisoners cowered in the dank hold as near misses opened seams in the hull and cannon fire riddled the upper decks. German anti-aircraft crews answered, and after a second attack blue smoke draped the listing vessel. Suffering from dysentery and limited to three filthy heads on the exposed weather deck, the men ripped up planks in the hold so they could defecate into the bilge. "The air," Denholm later reported, "was very bad."

With his ship slowly sinking, the Italian captain hauled anchor and wallowed back toward Tunis early on May 7. A third Allied attack put a bomb into the forecabin; it was a dud. More marauders swarmed above the ship as she neared Tunis harbor, with each near miss bringing frenzied shouts from the soldiers locked in the hold. "The ship seemed to jump out of the water, then settle back with a kind of quiver, which wasn't good," a lieutenant later recalled. "Not one of us doubted the transport was going to sink. We began beating the cage and yelling to be released." A fourth attack was too much for the thirty Italian crewmen, who "went completely to pieces," cut away the lifeboats, and—"hopping around like fleas"—dove into the water after them. The crewless captain steered for La Goulette, a fishing village below Carthage, and beached the *Triestino* on an even keel several hundred yards from shore. He and the German gunners freed the howling prisoners and then rowed off in the remaining lifeboat.

At least half a dozen more attacks occurred through the long afternoon. Only poor marksmanship and extraordinary good fortune spared the ship: more than one hundred bombs fell and every one missed except the dud. Tommies struck the Italian flag and Denholm's men laid out large red crosses on the weather deck with upholstery ripped from the ship's saloon. Pilots either failed to see the warnings or considered them a ruse; the attacks continued, forcing the men back into the fetid hold. A crude raft was launched toward La Goulette, but the wind blew it seaward. That night several Tommies swam ashore seeking help, and an intrepid Frenchman in a motorboat carried a plea to approaching Allied forces to stop the attacks. At last *Triestino's* ordeal was over. Denholm reported more than four thousand cannon and machine-gun holes in her hull. Miraculously, only one man had been killed, three wounded.

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Harmon's 1st Armored surged east in a light rain on the late afternoon of May 6. CCA angled toward Ferryville on the southwest shore of Lake Bizerte, while CCB sliced due east to control the roads between Bizerte and Tunis. German antitank guns were rooted out one by one; having predicted the loss of fifty tanks, Harmon in the event lost forty-seven. North of the two lakes, Eddy's 9th Division clattered down Highway 11 with orders from Bradley to "get the hell into Bizerte" and prevent sabotage of the port.

By Friday morning the enemy was reeling, leaving a wake of incinerated vehicles and charred German corpses. The reporter A. B. Austin recorded that "the women of Tindja and Ferryville were loading their perambulators with the bright, brassy German shell-cases. Flower vases? Umbrella stands?" A U.S. tank commander rumbled into Ferryville playing the *William Tell* Overture on his ocarina over the radio network. Cheering crowds waved tricolors at both the passing Shermans and Harold V. Boyle of the Associated Press, who stood in a jeep, waving and declaiming: "Vote for Boyle / Son of toil / Honest Hal / The Ay-rab's pal!" More cheers followed, and the slogan "Vote for Boyle!" became a standard greeting from the curbside throngs to baffled troops trailing the vanguard. Also puzzling was an enigmatic graffiti soldiers began noticing on walls and road signs. Of uncertain origin, as ambiguous as it was ubiquitous, the phrase would follow them to the heart of Germany two years later. It read: "Kilroy was here."

With the 9th Division headed for Bizerte and 1st Armored tanks effectively cutting the Axis bridgehead in half, the Big Red One had little to do in the Tine River valley eight miles south of Mateur, and there lay trouble. Terry Allen was a fighting man with a compulsion to fight; inactivity was his bane. Ordered by Bradley to hold in place and prevent a counter-attack by the Barenthin Regiment across the Tine, Allen on the night of May 5 concocted a plan to root enemy troops from the hills east of the river. His 18th Infantry Regiment commander opposed the scheme; so did Ted Roosevelt and several senior staff officers who argued at eleven p.m. that if left unmolested the Barenthin troops would feign a counter-attack and withdraw east to flatter terrain. Allen wavered, prayed over the matter, and at midnight ordered the attack forward.

At 4:20 A.M. on May 6, the 18th Infantry surged from the Tine across Highway 55 and up the grain-gilded slope marked on Army maps as Hill 432. By 5:30 a flanking battalion was lost in the dark and several assault companies had been pinned down by scything machine-gun and mortar fire. "Bullets were singing all around now," Private Max B. Siegel of the

3rd Battalion told his diary. "Our boys were not doing so good. Many were hit and calling for medics. . . . I seen a few boys running back. I tried to keep low." Engineers finished bridging the Tine at seven A.M. but the span collapsed with a great crack after only four tanks had crossed. The 3rd Battalion commander stumbled back with fewer than three dozen shocked, silent men. Others lay motionless in the wheat until nightfall, to avoid drawing artillery fire. By four P.M. all battalions and tanks had splashed back across the Tine. Losses in the 18th Infantry totaled 282 men. The Barenthin slipped away in the night.

Allen was chastened, and even loyalists doubted his judgment. "My bloody foolish commander," complained Lieutenant Colonel John T. Corley, who in a storied combat career would win the Distinguished Service Cross twice and the Silver Star eight times. "We got the shit beat out of us. . . . It's the vanity of the commander. He wanted to be in on the kill."

Early on Friday afternoon, Bradley and Eisenhower arrived in the leafy glen west of the Tine where the 1st Division had moved its headquarters. A warm drizzle slicked the roads, and camouflage netting billowed in the breeze. A shot-up farmhouse across the swale had served as a German supply dump, and the yard was strewn with gray tunics and Afrika Korps sun helmets. This was Eisenhower's third trip to the front since the Good Friday offensive began, and Harry Butcher thought he resembled "a hen setting on a batch of eggs . . . wondering if they will ever break the shell." He had approved the final plan for Sicily on May 3, and now awaited concurrence from the combined chiefs in London and Washington. With more time to devote to the endgame in Tunisia, he had seen a great deal that was heartening. "We are learning something every day," he wrote a friend, "and in general do not make the same mistakes twice." While admitting to Marshall only the slightest need for rest—"When this affair is all cleared up, I am going to take a twenty-four-hour leave where no one in the world will be able to reach me"—to Butcher he proposed getting "good and drunk when Tunisia is in the bag."

In truth he was sleeping badly, often waking at four A.M. to pace and fret, puffing through a pack of cigarettes before breakfast. Although victory in Africa approached, there was still much to unsettle a commander. "The fighting since April 23 has had a definite influence on our thinking and calculations," he wrote Marshall. "Even the Italian, defending mountainous country, is very difficult to drive out, and the German is a real problem." The portents were unmistakable, for Sicily and whatever

battlefields lay beyond. "The cation of what we can expect positions," Eisenhower added to him."

But only to his closest circles did Eisenhower reveal the deeper impact of his extended sequences of combat were heaviest. To his brother Allen, "the wounded" and of seeing "the stench of decaying human their deaths, thousands upon die. He sought refuge in duty must. "Far above my hatred enemy of my country, especially immersed himself in his personnel, as if his own will war to its end. That very week design a better winter uniform. The material does not show the dirt. We have discovered that our fellow—does not wear out."

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battlefields lay beyond. "The Tunisian fight appears to offer a good indication of what we can expect when we meet the German in defensive positions," Eisenhower added, "especially where the terrain is favorable to him."

But only to his closest confidants did Eisenhower acknowledge the deeper impact of his extended stay at the front. Here, where the consequences of combat were most vivid, the weight of command felt heaviest. To his brother Arthur he wrote of visiting "the desperately wounded" and of seeing "bodies rotting on the ground and smell[ing] the stench of decaying human flesh." He had ordered so many men to their deaths, thousands upon thousands, with many thousands yet to die. He sought refuge in duty and *pro patria* resolve, as commanders must. "Far above my hatred of war is the determination to smash every enemy of my country, especially Hitler and the Japs," he told Arthur. He also immersed himself in nitty-gritty decisions concerning supply and personnel, as if his own willful intercession in minutiae could hurry the war to its end. That very week, he had proposed the Army quartermaster design a better winter uniform of "very rough wool, because such material does not show the dirt." To Marshall on Wednesday he noted, "We have discovered that our older men—that is the 50- to 55-year-old fellow—does not wear out *physically* as quickly as might be imagined."

Now the fifty-five-year-old Terry Allen stumbled from his tent, where he had been roused from a dead sleep on the ground. He looked not only worn out but catatonic, and he spoke in monosyllables. His eyes were glazed, his hair mussed. As Eisenhower and Bradley slipped on their reading glasses to study the map, Allen tersely described the previous night's attack on Hill 232. Casualties were high. Some companies were hardly bigger than platoons. His men were tired after months of combat.

Eisenhower peered over his spectacles. The British, he pointed out, had chased Rommel across the desert for several months from El Alamein to the Mareth Line, with little water or rest. They, he added, had "taken it." Allen replied irrelevantly that his unit in the Great War had attacked every day for weeks. The conference ended. Allen tossed a weary salute as the two generals left. "How much better it would have been if Allen had been thoroughly cheerful, buoyant, and aggressive," Butcher scribbled in his diary.

Eisenhower shrugged off the unfortunate encounter. "I found the II Corps in wonderful spirit. The 1st Division has suffered a great deal of attrition," he wrote Marshall a few hours later. But Bradley seethed. The attack on Hill 232 was "a foolish one and undertaken without authorization," he later declared. While Allen was among the Army's

most competent leaders—Alexander would go so far as to tell Drew Middleton he “was the finest division commander he had encountered in two wars”—Bradley found him “the most difficult man with whom I have ever had to work,” an incorrigible rebel “fiercely antagonistic to any echelon above that of division.” He was disturbed by Allen’s truculent independence and the Big Red One’s self-absorption—the “Holy First,” some called it—particularly because the 1st Division was expected to play a pivotal role in Sicily.

For his part, Allen privately considered Bradley “a phony Abraham Lincoln.” Two men could hardly have been more dissimilar: the abstemious, restrained, cerebral corps commander and the carousing, emotional, impetuous division commander. But Bradley had both the rank and the commander-in-chief’s ear—Eisenhower had just recommended him for a third star—and this boded ill for Allen. “From that point forward,” Bradley later wrote of the Tine River debacle, “Terry was a marked man in my book.”

As Eisenhower and Bradley drove back to the new II Corps headquarters below Hill 609, Lieutenant Colonel Charley P. Eastburn radioed the 9th Division command post. “Believe road to Bizerte wide open,” said Eastburn, commander of the 894th Tank Destroyer Battalion. “Request permission to proceed and occupy the town.” The reply from Eddy came swiftly: “Go ahead. Good luck.” Mustering three companies, including more than a dozen tanks, Eastburn forded a creek past a demolished bridge, then wheeled back onto Highway 11. Shortly before four P.M. the cavalcade rattled past the stone gateposts at Bizerte’s western edge.

They entered a dead city. The ancient port of 70,000 souls lay empty, gutted by more than two dozen 4,000-pound bombs and many tons of lesser explosives. “Bizerte was the most completely wrecked place I had ever seen,” Ernie Pyle wrote. Italianate houses lay disemboweled, their porticos smashed. Charred palm trunks, stripped of fronds, lined the corniche. Shops had been bombed and then looted, and a stench of rot and plaster dust hung in the rain. The town had been without running water for three months. Typhus was here and cholera threatened.

Warehouses and shipyards lay in rubble. Bombs had wrenched a 100-ton crane from its foundation, tossing it across a dry dock. All that remained of a large Catholic church was three scorched walls and debris heaped in the nave. “You walked through the great stone front door, right out under the open sky again,” a soldier recalled. To escape the bombing, German soldiers had retired months before to tents west of

town; in recent days, they had power plants, and even fish

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town; in recent days, they had returned to blow up the remaining docks, power plants, and even fishing smacks that Allied bombers missed.

As Colonel Eastburn paused in the downtown shambles to ask a drunk Frenchman for directions to city hall, machine-gun bullets abruptly ricocheted off the pavement and 88mm shells cracked overhead. Muzzle flashes from German rearguard troops winked in the rubble 500 yards across a shipping channel originally dug by Phoenician colonists to connect the salt lagoon of Lake Bizerte with the Mediterranean.

Eastburn's Shermans returned fire with a smoky roar; other gunners hammered away at the Wehrmacht snipers infesting rooftops and a steeple. More Frenchmen popped from their cellars to toast the liberators with upraised wine bottles, huzzahing each tank volley even as slabs of stucco sheared from the walls and sniper bullets pinged about. "Quite ridiculous," a British liaison officer muttered. "Quite ridiculous." In the Café de la Paix, a soldier banged out "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" on a tuneless upright despite the bark of a Sherman main gun down the street. "Everybody was standing up straight at attention, partly humming, partly singing because nobody knew all the words," according to one account. "This café was part of another planet."

By dawn, the last Germans had died or fled. The Corps Franc d'Afrique was trucked forward to Bizerte for the honor of formally capturing the town. Behind the French procession, American soldiers followed in a jeep, with a busty mannequin liberated from a lingerie shop. The men belted out a new barracks ballad that eventually would reach two hundred stanzas, all of them salacious:

*Dirty Gertie from Bizerte,
Hid a mousetrap 'neath her skirtie,
Made her boyfriend's finger hurtie . . .*

A few miles to the east, scouts reported "hundreds of vehicles being burned on the flats, while overhead the sky was brilliant with tracer ammo being fired in anticipation of surrender." Harmon's Shermans rolled to the edge of the Gulf of Tunis, took aim at a few Germans trying to escape by barge or skiff, and blew them out of the water. The end was near.

Tunis fell at 3:30 P.M. on May 7, almost as Eastburn entered Bizerte. The Derbyshire Yeomanry and 11th Hussars, drawn respectively from the First and Eighth Armies, raced into the city so fast that Royal Air Force

fighters mistook the vanguard for fleeing Germans and attacked three times. Snipers fought a bitter delaying action downtown, puncturing the tires on British armored scout cars; reduced to their rims, the vehicles rattled across the cobblestones in a blaze of sparks. Unlike Bizerte, much of Tunis beyond the wrecked port remained unscathed and many of the city's 180,000 residents had remained through the occupation. Delirious French throngs now capered through the rainy capital, tossing flower garlands at the liberators or spraying them with scent from atomizer bottles. French vigilantes chased departing Germans with muskets and horse pistols, singing the "Marseillaise."

"The streets were full of civilian traffic. Astonished Germans were seen on the pavements, walking out with their girlfriends," a Rifle Brigade commander later wrote. "The populace was screaming itself hoarse in true French style. . . . To the enormous amusement of the battalion, I was embraced from behind by a highly colored French female of ample proportions and acquiescent tendencies." Tommies found Wehrmacht officers drinking schnapps at the Majestic Hotel bar or awaiting shaves from an Arab barber. Muffled explosions rumbled from garages along Rue el Jebbar as Germans grenaded their cars; others roared through the streets like gangsters on the lam with tires squealing and guns blazing. "Get out your weapons, boys," one sergeant ordered. "Jerry's still obstinate." Tracers crisscrossed the boulevards, and Sherman's fired point-blank at suspected redoubts. Hussars reported capturing the city's collaborationist governor, "complete with Buick and girlfriend," and above the roar of one firefight a Cockney voice bellowed, "Stop that shooting, you bloody fools. It's one of ours."

East of the city, near the white chapel where St. Louis had died of plague while leading the last Crusade in 1270, columns of black smoke billowed from burning fuel dumps. Wehrmacht soldiers spiked their big guns and piled small arms to be crushed by panzer tracks. At El Aouina airfield the only thing still functioning was a windsock.

Into the city came "endless streams of lorries pouring ahead three abreast, full of exuberant troops. . . . Men were singing and shouting." General Barré, the first French general to fire on the Germans in Tunisia, was given the honor of marching into the capital at the head of his troops. Logisticians and camp followers trailed closely: vengeful Frenchmen, jubilant Jews, souvenir hunters, quartermasters reserving the best buildings for their bosses, and journalists who enraged Anderson by describing the capture of Tunis as a "left hook by Eighth Army." "Cannot this pernicious rivalry be stopped?" he cabled Eisenhower. "We are

all one army and working for his diary, "I wish we could fo

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all one army and working for one cause." ("God," Everett Hughes told his diary, "I wish we could forget our egos for a while.")

Ten teams from a counterintelligence unit known as S Force also swept through town carrying a list of 130 targets, including the suspected Gestapo and SS headquarters at, respectively, 168 and 172 Avenue de Paris, and a house on Rue Abdelhouab used to train Arab saboteurs. Also warranted for arrest were scores of civilians, whose descriptions and purported offenses were equally vague: "Scarzini, Italian dentist," on Avenue Bab Djedid, for instance, and "Ramdam, a Tunisian egg merchant," in La Goulette.

For months, Eisenhower had worried that Axis troops would convert the Cap Bon peninsula into a diehard redoubt. But once Bizerte and Tunis fell, fuel shortages and Allied alacrity prevented Arnim from regrouping. Bradley's soldiers cut the last Bizerte-Tunis road at daylight on May 9, effectively ending American combat operations in Tunisia. Now there was nothing to do but smoke out renegades and escort prisoners to their cages. German officers under a flag of truce asked Harmon for terms; in reply, he quoted Grant at Fort Donelson: "Unconditional surrender. We propose to move immediately upon your works." For good measure he added, "We will kill all who try to get away."

Few tried. Soon every American truck and jeep sported a German helmet as a hood ornament. "Winning in battle is like winning at poker or catching lots of fish," Pyle wrote. "It's damned pleasant and it sets a man up."

II Corps casualties in the preceding two weeks had exceeded 4,400, nearly half falling on Allen's 1st Division. Enemy dead in the final fortnight were estimated at 3,000 in the American sector, with another 11,000 captured. Booty included 30,000 small arms—almost enough to corduroy the roads, as Sheridan had done with Confederate muskets near Appomattox. The wheezy declamations that commanders had favored earlier in the campaign now yielded to eloquent brevity; Bradley's two-word cable to Eisenhower on May 9 read simply: "Mission accomplished."

For the British farther south, the end was less tidy, although the Axis troops still holding the Enfidaville line lacked enough gasoline to fall back forty miles on Cap Bon unless they abandoned their heavy weapons. Kesselring at his headquarters in Rome ordered U-boats to haul fuel and matériel to Tunisia—each could carry twenty tons—but only one reached the African coast, where the skipper failed to find a



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suitable beach for his cargo of ammunition. On the night of May 8, German commanders signaled Axis ships lying offshore to jettison their fuel barrels, wanly hoping that a few would drift to shore on the tide. An announcement from Berlin that remaining Axis troops "will be withdrawn in small boats" brought derisive hoots from the German and Allied camps alike. Alexander's intelligence officer repeated Churchill's bon mot of 1940, when a German invasion of England had been expected: "We are waiting, so are the fishes."

The jig was up. The Fifth Panzer Army, which had occupied the northern swath of bridgehead from Tunis to Bizerte, recorded a last entry in its war diary at 3:23 P.M. on May 8: "The mass of our tanks and artillery is destroyed. No ammunition, no fuel left. Intention: fight to the last round. . . . In loyal performance of duty, the last fighters of the Fifth Panzer Army greet the homeland and our Führer. Long live Germany." The 90th Light Division ordered troops to smash all equipment, including wristwatches.

At Hammam Lif, a coastal resort ten miles southeast of Tunis, British tanks and infantrymen with fixed bayonets swept through six parallel streets on May 9, cleaning out snipers. The fighting surged up and down staircases and across rose gardens in the milky dawn. More than a dozen tanks outflanked the enemy with a bold sally along the strand, "kicking up waves like a steamboat as they circled through the water," one journalist reported. Two other squadrons bulled through town, turrets swiveling from side to side, as Arab mourners in a funeral cortège scattered into the alleys and giddy Frenchmen sprang from their cellars to offer the Tommies wine and pastry. In the blue-and-white summer palace of the bey of Tunis, a British lieutenant found the assembled Tunisian cabinet in the wrecked throne room. The bey soon emerged from an inner chamber and, with the sangfroid of a host welcoming guests to tea, politely inquired after the health of the British king and his queen. Perfectly well, thank you, the lieutenant assured him, then ordered the bey arrested for collaboration. Much keening was heard from the royal concubines, but his bodyguards, resplendent in scarlet and black, surrendered their weapons without protest and then looted the palace.

Like Terry Allen on the Tine, Montgomery had found consignment to the periphery a deeply frustrating fate. On the night of May 10 he launched his 56th Division against Zaghouan, twenty miles northwest of Enfidaville; the attack cost nearly 400 British casualties, a setback as unfortunate as it was unnecessary. On Tuesday the eleventh, Cap Bon was cleared, and Axis resistance dwindled to isolated pockets in the tor-

tured hills above Enfidaville civilians unfurled their tric-trickle. On May 12, for th-allowed to build campfires cocktails made of equal pa: "Looking back on the last s seems as if one has been ho! for the first time." A Gr described "the plain dotted shape of a Sherman tank; away to imprisonment; the resounding as the Germans ammo dumps."

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The prisoners came by tens of thousands; eventu: white flags made of mosqu: neat columns of field gray German trick of clipping bedraggled mob of *mangi*: sauntering platoons of Ital shoulders like the jackets of in dun-colored Afrika Kor: the tailgates; or in alcohol-E dogs; or in chauffeured Me in gorgeous uniforms with beautifully buffed that, on: tards were going to a weddi

"Germans were everywh light-headed." Many surre: drink. A Derbyshire Yeoma: teen German officers dini: Others groveled, waving ha: Tommy! British Tommy!" military hospital commanc: ments. As Barenthins and M: their cages, GI guards issu: Yiddish, then sang their ow

tured hills above Enfidaville. In a dozen liberated towns, jubilant French civilians unfurled their tricolors and draped the Tommies with honeysuckle. On May 12, for the first time since November, soldiers were allowed to build campfires; Sherwood Rangers celebrated with victory cocktails made of equal parts gin, wine, whiskey, and condensed milk. "Looking back on the last six months," a captain wrote to his father, "it seems as if one has been holding one's breath, and you have just let it go for the first time." A Grenadier Guard on the evening of May 12 described "the plain dotted with points of light, each reflecting dimly the shape of a Sherman tank; the tramp of feet as the Germans marched away to imprisonment; the sea shining in the moonlight; and the hills resounding as the Germans who were still at liberty fired their remaining ammo dumps."

On Cap Bon, Anderson turned to General Horrocks and said, "I have waited a long, long time for this."

The prisoners came by the hundreds, then the thousands, then the tens of thousands; eventually there were more than 200,000, waving white flags made of mosquito netting or their underwear. They came in neat columns of field gray, singing "Lili Marlene" with that annoying German trick of clipping the last note of each line. They came as a bedraggled mob of *mangiatori*, singing sad Neapolitan ballads, or in sauntering platoons of Italian paratroopers, overcoats draped on their shoulders like the jackets of boulevardiers on the Via Veneto. They came in dun-colored Afrika Korps trucks with palm tree insignia stenciled on the tailgates; or in alcohol-burning buses piled high with baggage and pet dogs; or in chauffeured Mercedes sedans, colonels and generals dressed in gorgeous uniforms with Iron Crosses at their throats and boots so beautifully buffed that, one GI said, "you would have thought the bastards were going to a wedding."

"Germans were everywhere," Ernie Pyle reported. "It made me a little light-headed." Many surrendering soldiers were light-headed, too; with drink. A Derbyshire Yeomanry patrol on May 9 reported: "Found nineteen German officers dining off champagne. Champagne rather dry." Others groveled, waving handkerchiefs and sweetly yoo-hooing, "British Tommy! British Tommy!" Lacking a sword to present in surrender, a military hospital commander handed his captors a case of dental instruments. As Barenthins and Manteuffels and Hermann Görings shuffled to their cages, GI guards issued orders in a hybrid tongue of English and Yiddish, then sang their own song:

Are ve not der Supermen?

Ya, ve iss der Supermen, super-doooper Supermen . . .

A few escaped, in dinghies or by lashing themselves to the undercarriages of the last overloaded Axis planes to leave. Ultra eventually disclosed that only 632 men were evacuated in the final days; Allied sailors netted another 700 at sea, including a German platoon that had cut down telegraph poles "on which," a Grenadier Guards account noted, "they sat astride and began to paddle hopefully" toward Italy. Stragglers from the 15th Panzer Division across the Medjerda River were persuaded to surrender by a couple of well-placed warning shots; finding the water too deep to wade, the men were ferried into custody on the dray horses of Arab farmers, who charged the Germans fifty francs per trip.

Into the stockades they swarmed—"the *Herrenvolk* like chickens in a yard," A. D. Divine wrote. To each new batch of prisoners, General Koeltz, the French corps commander, proclaimed, "The anguished of yesterday salute the vanquished of today!" Among the booty seized by King's Dragoon Guards were instruments from the 21st Panzer Division band, including a piano with all but two of its eighty-eight keys intact. German musicians serenaded the camps with "Roll Out the Barrel," and Wehrmacht officers organized songfests and soccer leagues and vaudeville troupes with costumes improvised from camouflage netting.

As recently as May 5, Eisenhower had assured Marshall that "the Axis cannot have more than a total of 150,000 men in Tunisia." That was wrong by nearly half; the surrendering host included acres of rear-echelon troops and Italian colonial officials. Within a week the prison population would grow to 225,000 and beyond, stuffed into camps built to hold 70,000. For reasons ranging from shipping shortfalls to poor delousing facilities on the piers of New York, the Allied system for transporting prisoners to Algeria and Morocco, and then to Britain or the United States, had showed signs of strain even before Tunis collapsed. Now things got much worse.

Carefully calibrated guard-to-prisoner ratios—one for every twenty Italians and three for every twenty Germans—were immediately scrapped; even so, the hordes eventually required 8,600 guards, equivalent to half a division. Prisoners were shoehorned into boxcars without latrines or sufficient water for the tortuous trip across Africa. One GI described Italian troops in trucks "packed together like sardines, urinating and vomiting." Liberty ships became prison barges, with life rafts improvised from empty oil drums, but many prisoners were also crammed onto Algerian coasters, where they were tormented by thieving

Senegalese guards and over chocolate on the bridge and

For some, that was the least mented at least twenty-one. 1943, some by American guards accidentally, others trying to never adequately explained. French camps also document hour days as railroad labor threat of attempted sodomy months . . . forty men without a cell with one window. And threw stones." Italian prisoners, even death, to being added. "At Camp #131, under the care of the French, men grooved intercede and refuse their reinforced into French buses." A "using their prisoners to cleave to international law. They either."

Neither starvation, nor misbefall the Axis generals, only late April and early May, cells ill with maladies that required among the invalids were dead Hasso von Manteuffel. A prisoner escaped. But the Allies bagged the Wehrmacht and two from They were fed C rations and Bradley's intelligence tent-Dickson plied them with whiplash plywood mapboard. The colonel as he observed, "The American

The biggest fish were caught Mussolini authorized the colonel offered Giovanni Messe the colonel then added in a message: "I never achieved, your Excellency Dickering followed, with whiplash

r Supermen . . .

mselves to the undercar-
ave. Ultra eventually dis-
e final days; Allied sailors
an platoon that had cut
r Guards account noted,
," toward Italy. Stragglers
rda River were persuaded
g shots; finding the water
astody on the dray horses
y francs per trip.

rrenvolk like chickens in a
tch of prisoners, General
imed, "The anguished of
mong the booty seized by
n the 21st Panzer Division
s eighty-eight keys intact.
"Roll Out the Barrel," and
soccer leagues and vaude-
camouflage netting.

ed Marshall that "the Axis
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it included acres of rear-
Within a week the prison
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Senegalese guards and overwatched by French officers who nibbled chocolate on the bridge and tossed morsels to the lunging men below.

For some, that was the least of it. U.S. Army provost marshals documented at least twenty-one Axis prisoners shot dead in the summer of 1943, some by American guards, others by French colonial guards; some accidentally, others trying to escape, and a few under circumstances never adequately explained. An Army investigation of mistreatment in French camps also documented Italian prisoners forced to work fourteen-hour days as railroad laborers. Among other allegations: "constant threat of attempted sodomy by Arab guards"; "no blankets for three months . . . forty men without shoes for three months . . . eleven men in a cell with one window. Arabs and children spat through the window and threw stones." Italian prisoners who managed to escape "prefer anything, even death, to being returned to the French," the investigators added. "At Camp #131, when 58 prisoners were ordered returned to the care of the French, men groveled on the ground, begging that Americans intercede and refuse their return. One asked to be shot. Finally had to be forced into French buses." A British general also observed French jailors "using their prisoners to clear minefields, while we consider it contrary to international law. They don't worry too much about feeding them either."

Neither starvation, nor mine-clearing, nor spittle, nor sodomy would befall the Axis generals, only the ignominy of defeat in a bad cause. In late April and early May, certain senior officers had conveniently fallen ill with maladies that required their return to Germany for treatment; among the invalids were division commanders Friedrich Weber and Hasso von Manteuffel. A few were also ordered home or otherwise escaped. But the Allies bagged more than a dozen generals. Four from the Wehrmacht and two from the Luftwaffe surrendered to II Corps. They were fed C rations and beans on May 10 before being ushered into Bradley's intelligence tent—known as the Playhouse—where Monk Dickson plied them with whiskey and cigars during a long chat around a plywood mapboard. The commander of the 15th Panzer reportedly wept as he observed, "The Americans have fought like sportsmen."

The biggest fish were caught farther south. At 11:15 A.M. on May 12, Mussolini authorized the capitulation of the First Italian Army. He offered Giovanni Messe the consolation of promotion to field marshal, then added in a message: "As the aims of your resistance can be considered achieved, your Excellency is free to accept an honorable surrender." Dickering followed, with white-flag emissaries dispatched to coax terms