

The Messenger

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CAPTAIN FOWLER WRITES HOME FROM NORTH AFRICA

The following is from a letter of Captain Herbert B. Fowler, to his father, Mr. Ralph Fowler, local citizen, telling what he could of the African Campaign.

"The radio announced last night that 150,000 Italians surrendered unconditionally on the Island of Patellieria. The island is so small I don't see how that many could get on it. They had been bombed continually and I guess the last one was too much.

"In Tunisia during the last days when they were surrendering en masse around Bizerte area, I rode down a rode in a ¼ ton (peep) and found myself surrounded by two battalions of Italians, who were only interested in knowing if they could use their own trucks to ride into the prison camp and what food and equipment they should take. Their Colonel finally came up and could talk excellent English and we ironed out the details right there. He was also worried for fear some of the Americans would get into a mine field they had on the beach. He sent one of his officers with me to show me exactly how it was laid out. He also showed me how to disarm and disassemble them and chewed the fat for some time in broken French.

"Those Italians just don't have "killing in their hearts", and I can imagine how hard they waved those white flags when those 200 fortress-es came over ready to unload again. Mussolini had just issued them an order to fight to the last man, but evidently they don't take much stock in old Muss any more, especially when the T. N. T. hangs heavy, heavy over their heads.

By the way, that ¼ ton I was driving, I had just taken away from 3 Germans who came out of the bushes with their hands raised and

wanted to know of they could drive their "moto-cah" to the prison camp. I was looking for some independent transportation so I immediately said "Nix" and they moved off disconsolate. I looked aver the bushes and saw an American ¼ ton they had captured in some previous battle. I immediately took possession in the name of the United States and had my own transportation for 5 or 6 days until I had to turn it in to the quartermaster as captured equipment. The Germans like the peeps too! They had run it pretty hard and the muffler was gone but it ran like a top and someone had named it Betty.

"I climbed in and started down the road ahead of the main units and the Germans and Italians were pouring out of the fields and groves. All they wanted to know was which road to take and once told they marched in perfect formation (Germans only) toward the rear. The Italians marched (?) in masses of bunches all over the road. All were subdued by the pounding of the Air Force, Artillery and the sudden advance of the Allied armies. They suddenly and sadly found out how it was to be on the receiving end of the line and the toughest were plenty meek.

"Jerry" has given me his personal attention several times but has never scored. I can best tell it when I get back and I have very little to tell. My part in it was small. It can wait.

"It looks small on the map of the world, but when you are on the ground and they say "Go from here to there", it looks like a million miles across an average valley and up the next slope. Distance on the ground doesn't mean a thing in war. It is all counted in what kind of resistance the enemy is making."

Destroying Unneeded SWIMMING POOL