

AFRICAN VETS HOLD REUNION

Renew Acquaintance During
Visit Of War Department
Official At Atterbury

CAMP ATTERBURY, June 6. — A major and a sergeant who landed in the first wave of American troops during the invasion of Africa met again Sunday afternoon to the sound of gunfire—but this time the battle was in Indiana, and it was just for practice.

Major R. Francillo, aide to Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson, was watching a demonstration of fire power put on by the 106th Division at Camp Atterbury when he caught sight of S. Sgt. Charles D. Weber, who wears the silver star for gallantry in action.

The major, who had recommended him for the decoration, bounded from his seat, greeted the sergeant warmly, introduced him to Undersecretary Patterson, and sat with him throughout the demonstration, reminiscing over battle experiences. And they certainly had something to talk over.

On November 9, 1942, the first wave of the First Division had landed on African soil and was advancing rapidly toward St. Cloud. There had been no resistance. In command of a rifle company was Capt. R. Francillo. With him was Cpl. Weber, an assistant squad leader. Suddenly an armored car plowed toward the company, mowed down a number of American soldiers, and sped on. The company dispersed along the road. Three more armored cars appeared and moved in to destroy the unit.

Cpl. Weber placed an anti-tank grenade in his rifle, took careful aim, and fired his first shot of the war against the enemy. There was a terrific explosion and the armored car jolted to a halt. The other two were blocked behind it, and in a matter of seconds were captured.

Two days later, Capt. Francillo was wounded by shell splinters, but insisted on rejoining his command after his recovery rather than returning to the States.

The company fought on throughout the African campaign, and two days before the Germans collapsed, Capt. Francillo suffered wounds which resulted in the loss of his leg.

Cpl. Weber finished the African campaign unscathed, and then took part in the Sicilian invasion, after which he was returned to this country for a well-earned rest. He later was assigned to the 106th Division and on April 29 was awarded the silver star in a ceremony at Camp Atterbury.

Capt. Francillo remained with the Army despite his injuries, and with the rank of Major has become aide de camp to the Undersecretary of War.

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