

# Fayetteville Lieutenant Makes Successful Dash for Freedom After Being Trapped by Germans in Central Tunisia

By HAROLD V. BOYLE  
 With U. S. Forces in Central Tunisia, Jan. 31 (Delayed) (AP)  
 Two Americans in a tank destroyer unit trapped twice by the Germans succeeded in a daring daylight dash to freedom and celebrated by eating 15 eggs apiece and some chicken in their first square meal after the adventure.  
 The two were Lieut. W. C. Stotts, Jr., of 1011 North College Ave., Fayetteville, Ark., and Sergt. Daniel E. Doney, 25, Lowell, Mass.  
 Lieut. Stotts today told the story of the trick.  
 It began at dusk Jan. 20 at a road junction in the Ousseltia valley where his tank destroyer unit had been sent to break up an expected German tank attack.  
 "Just after dark," Lieut. Stotts said, "a German armored force supported by a strong infantry detachment attacked us before our guns were in position.  
 "We were forced to get out as

best we could since we were too few to cope at night with enemy infantry.  
 "All night we lay hidden behind a bush in a ravine from which we could see German sentries with machine-guns. The next morning they pulled out about 10 o'clock and we broke across the plain.  
 "About 4 p. m. we met up with a battalion of the French Foreign legion and thought we were safe—only to learn a little later that they, too, were trapped by stronger-armed Germans.  
 "They gave us some candy, water and crackers and they tasted good after our long hike.  
 "The French had decided to try to fight their way out along the same route that we had come but delayed leaving that night after they heard 50 British tanks were coming up the valley.  
 "The next morning the German infantry opened fire at dawn on the trapped French with machine-



Lieut. W. C. Stotts, Jr.

guns and mortars.  
 "We were completely surrounded except for a short ravine leading to the open plain. We were told by the French we could make a break or stay and surrender.  
 "We decided to take our chance and at 8 o'clock started across the plain again sticking to a river bed for whatever cover it afforded. Some Goums—French native mountain troops—who also had escaped the German trap caught up with us and we slipped across the main German supply road despite heavy traffic and got to the foot of the mountains at dusk.  
 "We were so weary that we had to rest half an hour for every 10 minutes we spent climbing the mountain. The Goums were in their element, however, and crossed ahead of us. They notified French patrols who met us at the top of the mountain at midnight.  
 "They fed us about 15 eggs apiece and some chicken and gave

us a place to sleep.  
 "The next day they took us to French headquarters where we were overjoyed to meet two other fellows of our unit who also had escaped."  
 FHS Graduate. Attended U. A. Lieut. Stotts graduated from Fayetteville high school in May, 1938, and attended the University of Arkansas in 1938-39. He was a member of the Arkansas National Guard and entered the regular army shortly after Pearl Harbor. He was commissioned in September after completing his officers' training at Fort Sill, Okla., and went overseas in October.  
 Lieut. Stotts is the son of Mrs. Mary Powers and a brother of Mrs. Elmer Powers and Mrs. Lee Terry. The family had had no word from him since Christmas until called by the Times this morning with news of Lieutenant Stotts' heroic dash to freedom.

## Lieut. W. C. Stotts Missing in Action

Lieut. Wilcher C. Stotts, son of Mrs. Mary Powers, has been missing in action on the North African front since Feb. 22, according to a telegram from the War department received today by Lieutenant Stotts' sister, Mrs. Elmer Powers, 1011 N. College.

Lieutenant Stotts figured in a daring daylight escape from Germans whom he and a companion were twice surrounded Jan. 20 and 21, when their tank destroyer unit was sent to break up a German tank attack. Forced to abandon their positions, they lay hidden in ravines within sight of a German encampment and fled across the mountains to French headquarters. Lieutenant Stotts, a graduate of Fayetteville high school and a former student at the University of Arkansas, joined the army shortly after Pearl Harbor, was commissioned in September