

L^T-COLONEL ROULIN

LE 125^e

RÉGIMENT D'INFANTERIE

Origines, Campagnes, Uniformes, Drapeaux, Personnel, etc.



Ouvrage orné d'un dessin de L. SERGENT

ET DE NOMBREUSES PLANCHES HORS TEXTE

ORLÉANS

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17, RUE JEANNE-D'ARC, 17

125^e RÉGIMENT

D'INFANTERIE

HISTORIQUE

DES

CORPS D'INFANTERIE AYANT PORTÉ LE N^o 125

PAR

Le Lieutenant-Colonel BOULIN

DU SERVICE D'ÉTAT-MAJOR
ANCIEN LIEUTENANT-COLONEL DU 125^e
OFFICIER DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE



ORLÉANS

IMPRIMERIE DE GEORGES JACOB

8, RUE SAINT-ÉTIENNE, 8

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1890

(Pages 214-223)

125th INFANTRY REGIMENT

HISTORY OF THE INFANTRY CORPS BEARING THE NUMBER 125

By Lieutenant-Colonel Roulin

(Pages 214-223)

Advance on Sfax (from December 26, 1881 to January 6, 1882). - The column leaves for Sfax and takes the Métouïa road, that it had followed to arrive at Gabès; it camps at Métouïa on December 26.

27, from Métouïa, the column moves to Wadi el Akarit, close to which it camps. During the night of the 27 to the 28, the rain falls in abundance and the Wadi fills, which makes the passage very difficult.

28, the Wadi is crossed by part of the column; a battalion is left on the right bank to protect the convoy, which has not been able to pass the river.

29, the convoy is able to cross the Wadi and join the column on the other bank.

30, the road to Si Meheddoub is abandoned; it is forced to pass more to the west to avoid the Chotts; the battalion arrives at Bou Saïd at 3 o'clock.

December 31, march on Wadi el Kelba; following the sea at a distance of from three to seven kilometers.

1882. - On January 1, 1882, the column goes to Maharess and stops approximately seven kilometers from this city, at Wadi el Melah.

It arrives at Maharess on January 2.

On January 3, march on El Quennour while skirting the sea.

^{p215} On January 4, the column makes a turn towards the west and advances on Sidi el Aguerba, where dissidents from Sfax have taken refuge.

On January 5, the column remains in Sidi el Aguerba. The 125th battalion is sent on reconnaissance to Bir Chabet el Kleb; the enemy flees before it.

6, a very painful walk through the gardens of Sfax, the ground being softened by the rains; the column arrives in front of the city at one o'clock.

Camp at Sfax (from January 7), and march to Sousse (from January 11 to 25, 1882). - The column remains at the camp, at Sfax, from January 7 to 11.

On January 11, the column advances to Sidi Salah; it traverses 10 kilometers of well cultivated gardens.

12, walk on Macera el Bey, and camp at El Chabah.

13, arrival at Bir Salah.

14, arrived at El Djem; the camp is established 800 meters from the old amphitheatre. The Moulin column, two battalions strong, coming from Kairouan, joins the Logerot column. From January 15 to 17, the column remains in El Djem.

17, advance to the camp of Sidi Messaoud.

18, the column arrives at Oued Salah at half past midday.

19, arrived at Mahédia, after a most painful walk through three Sebkas and the gardens which surround the city. The camp is located on the beach.

p216 20, stay in Mahédia.

21, march on one road, through the gardens of Mahédia; arrived at Mhalia at one o'clock.

On January 22, arrived at Ksar Allah at two o'clock.

23, after a march of twelve kilometers, the column arrives at Monastir, campin there and staying until the 24th.

25, we arrive at the camp of Sousse at half past three, after a painful walk of 24 kilometers on sand.

Remain at the Sousse camp and operations from January 26 to June 5, 1882. - On January 28, large tents are distributed.

On February 2, the battalion leaves in a light column formation with the remainder the 1st group (65th and 135th) and the 28th battalion cavalry on foot, under the orders of General Sabattier; the column arrives the same day, at eleven o'clock, at Msaken.

On February 3, arrived at Menzel.

The 4th, the column camps in Djemal and remains there the 5th and the 6th.

7, arrived at Ouardenine at half past eleven in the morning, after a walk of 14 kilometers.

The 8th, the column returns to the camp at Sousse, and remains there until and including February 28.

On March 1, the 1st group, lieutenant-colonel Corréard, after an order received the day before, goes to Kalaa Kébira to return the war indemnities. It remains at the Kalaa Kébira camp until and including May 8.

p217 9, the battalion leaves at three o'clock in the morning to go to Heunia, between the camps of Oued Laya and Sidi el Iran, in order to cut the retreat north of a group of dissidents reported in the vicinity of Kairouan.

A raid is made on the territory of Ouled Saïd, and the battalion returns to the camp at five o'clock in the evening, after a march of 30 kilometers.

The dissidents were dispersed upon our arrival.

On March 11, the battalion remains in camp at Kalaa Kébira.

On the 12th, it is set out for Enchir Zembra.

The 13th, the column arrives at Dar el Bey; the camp is established close to the bordj belonging to the Marseilles company, in the middle of Enfida; it remains in the camp from March 14 to 17.

On the 18th, the battalion marches, in a southerly direction, to Sidi bou Ali.

19, it arrives at Sousse at one o'clock, after a walk of 20 kilometers; it remains in the camp in front of Sousse during the 20th.

The 21st, departure for El Djem; the column arrives the same day at Menzel and the 22nd at Bou Kerker.

The 23rd, the battalion arrive at El Djem, where it remains until and including April 17.

During this time, on March 25, the first three companies of the battalion are sent to El Farieia, in the territory of the Souessis, a part of which is involved with the dissidents; they return to camp the same day, bringing back with them the families of the rebels.

p218 On March 30, the 3rd company is left to guard the camp; the remainder of the battalion goes to the meeting of some groups of insurgents reported by the caid around El Djem. The companies speak together at four o'clock in the morning and return at half past midday. The insurrectionists had withdrawn at our approach, and could not be met up with.

On April 18, the battalion leaves El Djem and goes to camp at Bou Kerker; it arrives the following day, 19th, at Menzel.

The 20, it returns to camp at Sousse.

Dispatching a detachment for reinforcement (April 21, 1882). - A reinforcement unit, with the manpower of 1 officer and 216 troops, leaves Poitiers on April 21, by rail, for Marseilles; it arrives the 21st April and is embarked for Tunisia.

On May 11, the 3rd company, is dispatched to Dar el Bey, where it remains until June 4.

The three other companies are maintained at the Sousse camp until that date. Lieutenant-colonel Corréard leaves the command of the 1st foot regiment, which is dissolved. The battalion passes under the orders of major general Guyon-Vernier, in residence at Sousse, and general Etienne.

Commander Villot departs on leave for France and leaves the command of the battalion to captain adjudant-major Jeannerod.

Advance on Sfax (from 5 to 13 June, 1882). - The battalion receives the order to go to reinforce the garrison of Sfax.

On June 5, it goes to Zaouïet, where it remains the 6th, arriving at Menzel the 7th, Bou Kerker the 8th, El Djem the 9th, Bir Salah the 10th; on June 11 it is at El Chabah, p219 where the chiefs of the two tribes of the Mételitts come to make their submission to the captain commanding the battalion. The column arrives at Sidi Salah on the 12th.

The 13th, the battalion starts from Sidi Salah at three o'clock in the morning, and arrives at Sfax at seven o'clock, after a most painful route on sandy road.

Camp of Sfax (from June 13 to September 5, 1882). - The garrison of Sfax was made up of the battalions of the 136th, under commander de Dilly, and of the 55th, under commander Barthélémy. The *cercle militaire* (military club) of Sfax was commanded by lieutenant-colonel Dubuche.

The battalion sets up its camp to the north, against the walls of the city.

The French troops are received with enthusiasm by the population, which, on June 29, illuminates the houses to celebrate the anniversary of the day when the Europeans of Sfax, fleeing the Arabs, had fled to put themselves under the protection of the fleet.

The sojourn of the battalion in Sfax gives it a rest from its incessant marches, and this time is employed in improving its military instruction; it was mostly made up of young soldiers sent from France as reinforcement and to fill the voids made by tiredness and the climate,

On July 10, lieutenant-colonel Dubuche leaves Tunisia, and the command of the *cercle militaire* of Sfax passes to lieutenant-colonel Canard.

On July 15, the city decorates its houses and celebrates the anniversary of the capture of Sfax by the French.

The 22nd, the garrison is reinforced by the arrival of a squadron of the 11th Hussars, under the command of captain Saint-Mars.

p220 August 13 and 14, the battalion passed the inspection of general Etienne, delegate.

On August 19, major general Guyon-Vernier visits Sfax and the battalion passes in review.

The 26th, captain Lefournier arrives at the battalion and takes command.

Operations from September 5 to October 12, 1882. - On September 5, a column, under the orders of commander Barthélémy and made up of the 2nd and 3rd companies of the 125th, with staff of the battalion, a detachment of the 55th and the

squadron of the 11th hussars, is sent to a meeting of Djich, or group of dissidents, who, having just made raids on the gates of Kairouan, came towards the south, epulsed by the troops there.

The column leaves at eight o'clock in the evening for Si Aguerba, where it arrives at one o'clock in the morning.

The day of September 7 is employed with reconaissance over a distance of approximately ten kilometers.

On September 8, the column goes to Bir Chabet el Kleb, where it remains the 9th.

The 10th, it returns to Si Aguerba. where it remains the 11th.

On the 12th, the column goes by Bir Charbounix to Bir Khalifat, where the insurrectionists had come to water their horses; they still escape our pursuit.

12, arrived at Bir Aïoun el Mahel. The column remains in this camp, making reconaissance to Sidi Salah and towards the west.

p221 The 22nd, a reconaissance is pursued, by commander Barthélémy as far as Sidi Abd el Kifi.

Daily marches and reconnaissances continue thus up to the beginning of October, at which time the battalion joined the camp of Sfax.

Posting at Djilma wadi (from October 23, 1882 to May 30, 1883). – Barely has the battalion returned, under the control of commander Villot, who has returned from leave, than it is sent to the post of Oued Djilma in the circle of Gafsa, commanded by general Herve.

On October 13, it passes through Ben Zallouch; it reaches Wadi Djilma on October 22.

The battalion, charged only with guarding of this station, makes numerous reconnaissances, especially in the direction of Sbeitla. It was supplied by Kairouan, while passing by Enchir Hadjeb el Aloun, Ain Belda and Bir Sba.

Topographic mission of the 1st company (from December 17, 1882 to January 14, 1883). - From December 17 to January 14, the 1st company is sent on a topographic mission, and, marching every day, it traverses all the country between Kairouan and Djilma.

1883. - General Herve, accompanying general Forgemol, comes, in the middle of May 1883, to visit the station of Wadi Djilma: he finds, although very unhealthy, the camp perfectly maintained, and addresses congratulations to the battalion, and also to its chief.

p222 **Departure for Sousse (on May 31, 1883).** –

The order to return to France having arrived, the battalion leaves Wadi Djilma on May 31, and arrives at Sousse on June 6, passing by Kairouan, Sidi el Hani, and Wadi Laya.

Return to Poitiers (July 6). - On June 19, the battalion embarks on board the *Martinique*, with the effective manpower of 8 officers and 600 troops; it disembarks in Marseilles, the 22nd, goes from Marseilles to Clermont-Ferrand by rail from the 23rd to the the evening of the 24th, leaves Clermont-Ferrand on June 25th to go by stages to Poitiers, where it arrives on July 6.

At the time of the departure of the 1st battalion for France, the general ordering the subdivision of Gafsa addresses to the colonel ordering the 125th the following letter:

“My dear colonel,

“The battalion of the 125th, detached to the occupation corps, has just received the order to return to France.

“On separating me from this honest battalion, it is for me a duty to make known to you the excellent opinion that it been able to inspire in this country. The general-in-chief and the general commanding the division, who recently passed inspection of the battalion and the station of Gilma, were filled with wonder at the excellent arrangement of the camp, the spirit, the cheerfulness of the troops, as well as their good behaviour and their attitude while bearing arms; they expressed all their satisfaction with commander Villot, whom I recommend to you particularly.

p223 “The battalion leaves in Tunisia great memories; after having taken an important part in the acts of war which preceded pacification of the regency, it has devoted itself to the work of installation which will mark the trace of its passage.

“The 120th line regiment can be proud of its battalion detached for this service, which in this new country has so well supported the honor of the regiment.

“I finish by informing you that apart from the command of its battalion, commander Villot, who was at the same time senior commander of the circle of Djilma rendered me the best services by his particular competence in indigenous affairs.”

Awards granted to the battalion. - Commander Villot is named Officer of the Legion d' Honor and Commander of Nicham-Iftikhar, captain Monprofit is made Chevalier of the Legion of Honor; sergeant Dufour and trooper Lagarde are decorated with the Military Medal. Captains Giovannoni, Lefournier and Jeannerod, lieutenants Olivieri, Decrion and De La Costo are named Officiers of Nicham-Iftikhar; the adjudants Franceschini and Deville receive the cross of Knight of the same order.