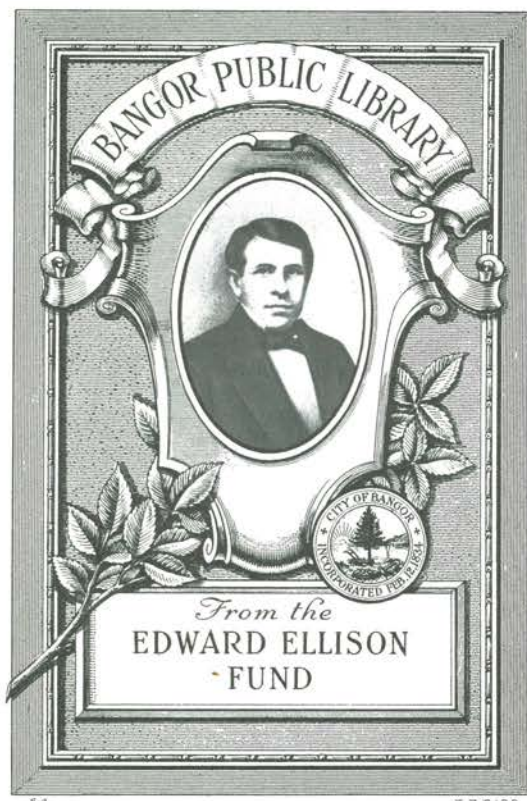


HISTORY of *840th*

ENGINEER AVIATION BATTALION

CONSTRUE TENE DEFENDE



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*"... Those who expect to
reap the blessings of freedom,
must like men, undergo the
fatigues of supporting it."*

THOMAS PAINE





This is our story - not all of it - but that part which printing can tell. No words, no photographs, no souvenirs, no recollections can fully recall nor retell the story of our life together as an organization. Here we have recorded some of the events in which we participated, the many places which, for short periods of time, we called home; our jobs and our accomplishments as constructors in an age of destruction;

But no page can record our emotions nor our thoughts as we wallowed through the never ending tasks which were our assignments in this conflict; No means of communication can transmit that spirit of hope which aided us to face that seemingly endless series of jobs which always confronted us; No medium can properly portray the worth of the friendships which we knew here, nor express the pleasure of those brief moments when we had a chance to enjoy ourselves. Here then is the story, our story of the thousand days of our lives which we gave to our country.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John M. Keane". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Lt. Col. C. E. Commanding
840th Engr. Avn. Bn.

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Training

The 840th Engineer Battalion (Aviation) was activated on 1 September 1942 at Bradley Field, Windsor Locks, Conn. and assigned to the First Air Force.

The unit, when activated, consisted of one officer, 1st Lt. E. E. Osborne, and a cadre of thirty-five enlisted men from the 834th Engineer Battalion (Aviation).

By the end of the month of September the strength had grown to twenty-six officers (three of which were medical officers) and five hundred seventy-one enlisted men.

These men were obtained by transfer from Induction Centers located at Camp Blanding, Florida, Ft. Bragg, N.C., Ft. McPherson and Camp Oglethorpe, Ga., Camp Claiborne, La., Camp Shelby, Miss., Fort Devins, Mass., and various others.

Lt. E. E. Osborne was commanding officer from 1 September 1942 until 24 September 1942. Lt. Osborne was relieved of command on 25 September 1942 when he was replaced by Major Pierre V. Kieffer, Jr.

A program of basic training was initiated. This program covered the school of a soldier as well as the various phases of a basic combat engineering course.

The second month five more officers were assigned to the unit and one hundred ninety-four enlisted men. This brought a total strength of thirty-one officers and seven hundred sixty-five enlisted men.

Many changes were made in the personnel of the Battalion, both officers and enlisted men. For the major part of the training period the Staff Officers were as follows: Major Pierre V. Kieffer, Jr., Commanding Officer, Lt. Witherall, Executive Officer, Lt. Richards, Battalion Adjutant, Lt. Osborne, S-3 Officer, Lt. Maloney, Personnel Officer, Lt. Casavina, S-4 Officer, Capt. Kusz, Battalion Surgeon, Capt. Moehn, Medical Officer, and Capt. DeChristeforo, Battalion Dental Officer. The Company Commanders were as follows: Capt. Thompson, commanding "H. & S." company, Lt. Ball, commanding "A" company, Lt. Humphries, commanding "B" company, and Lt. Thomas, commanding "C" company.



When the period of basic training was completed a program of technical training was initiated. Some of the heavy construction machinery was received and classes were given on operation, maintenance and repair. A tactical problem was assigned in the form of a section of the perimeter road on the base. Personnel of S-3 Section performed the preliminary engineering on this project and furnished supervision as the work progressed. When the project was completed a letter of commendation was received from Colonel Lovell, Base Commander, on the quality as well as the expediency of the road. The Colonel proposed that section of the road be named the "840th Engineer Aviation Battalion Drive".

On 10 December 1942 the Battalion was alerted for overseas shipment. Passes and furloughs which were then in progress were cancelled. The unit was restricted to Battalion area.

By the end of December 1942 the Battalion reached full T/O strength.

Battalion equipment was made ready for overseas shipment. Lt. Edward C. Knight, Battalion Motor Officer, Lt. Kenneth E. Bloodough, "C" company officer and twenty enlisted men were placed on detached service at Voorheesville, N.Y. for the work of waterproofing and crating heavy equipment. Lt. Knight was later returned to Bradley Field and replaced by Lt. Batchelder, Battalion Heavy Equipment Officer.

On 21 January Major Kieffer was promoted to Lt. Colonel.

In February 1943 the alert order was cancelled. Passes and Furloughs were again granted. The engineer equipment had been shipped to the Port of Embarkation and the men were given training in combat tactics. An air compressor was borrowed from Post Utilities and work was assigned in clearing timber on various sections of the base. The unit was also assigned the job of constructing three bomb shelters near Base Headquarters.

A distinctive insignia, designed by Capt. Gordon E. Thompson, H. & S. company and motto: "Construe — Tene — Defende" suggested by M/Sgt Anthony Colucci, Sgt. Major and Cpl. John Warlo, Jr., company clerk was submitted to the War Department for approval. The insignia was approved and an order placed for a standard.

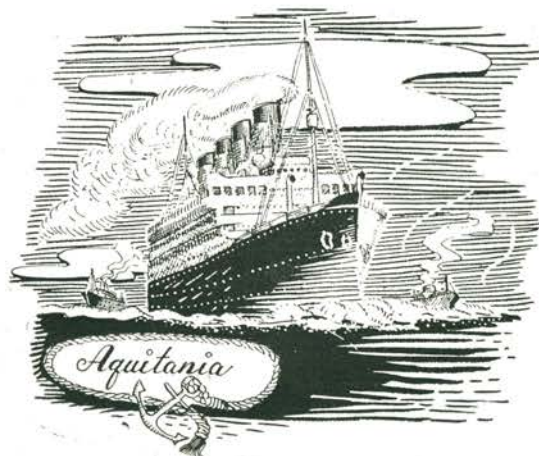
On 25 February 1943, five officers and one hundred fifty enlisted men of H. & S. company volunteered to donate one pint of blood to the American Red Cross Blood Bank.

In March 1943 the unit moved from the West Gate area to the Post Utilites area.

In April 1943 the unit was again alerted for overseas shipment. Men then on furlough were recalled.

On 1 May 1943 the unit moved to Camp Kilmer, N.J. staging area. The unit strength was at that time thirty-two officers and seven hundred seventy-eight enlisted men.

Unit left Camp Kilmer 9 May 1943 for Port of Embarkation. On 10 May 1943 unit sailed on "Aquitania", English luxury liner converted to troop ship.





England

Unit arrived in European Theater of Operations, Gourock, Scotland on 17 May 1943, traveled by rail to Sawbridgeworth, Essex, England, thence by truck to Matching Airdrome, Matching Green, Essex, England. Organization was there assigned to 8th Air Force and attached to S.O.S. for administration and supply.

The Battalion was to aid the 834th Engr. Avn. Bn. in the completion of Matching Airdrome, a heavy bomber base with concrete runways,

taxiways and access roads. The 840th was assigned the following phases of construction:

Complete construction of Living Sites 4 and 5, which consisted of Nisson living quarters, brick latrines, and a combination of brick, Nisson and Hertford materials for the construction of the ablutions and picket posts.

Complete construction of the Bomb Storage area which consisted of approximately three miles of 12 feet width concrete roadway, construction of bomb storage ramps, fragmentation dirt revetments, and numerous buildings.

Complete construction of a shooting-in butt, which was built with heavy equipment under the supervision of one grade foreman from S-3.

Complete construction of the "French" drain system on the three runways and the taxiways.

Grading work on 40 percent of the Communal Site, which consisted of brick, concrete, and Nisson construction.

Construction of 62 percent of latrines and picket posts in Living Sites 1, 2, 3, and 4.



Construction of 80 percent of Mess Site 2, which consisted of completing outside construction and all inside installations of the Sgt's. Mess, construction of Commanding Officer's quarters, Airmen's showers, ablutions and decontamination block, A/M's latrines, Officer's shower block and Sgt's. shower block.

Work was started on the aforementioned construction on 26 May 1943 by all companies.

On 27 May 1943 the unit was assigned additional work at Chipping Ongar Heavy Bomber Airdrome as follows:

Completion of the Bomb Storage Site, which consisted of all buildings, most of which were of brick construction; all Bomb Storage ramps, which consisted of brick retaining walls, concrete ramps and dirt fragmentation revetments.

Completion of Mess Site 2 which consisted of the A/M's showers, ablutions, and decontamination block, Officer's shower block, Sgt's latrine block and two brick water towers.

Construction of 4,000 feet of Foul Drainage and three small brick latrines in Living Site 4.

Company "B" was assigned this work.

On 8 June 1943 the unit was assigned additional work at Chipping Ongar consisting of 85 percent of the "French" drains and 75 percent of the storm drains. Company "A" was assigned to this project.

On 7 July 1943 all of the aforementioned work on Chipping Ongar Airdrome was completed. Companies "A" and "B" returned to assist in completion of work on Matching Airdrome.

On 10 August 1943 Lt. Colonel Kieffer was placed on detached service at 4th Engineer District Headquarters. During the absence of Col. Kieffer, Capt. John M. Keane, being senior officer in grade, present for duty, assumed command.

On 20. September 1943 the unit was assigned work on the Alconbury Advanced Repair Depot near Huntingdon, Hunts, England as follows:

Construction of the entire Foul Drainage system and construction of the Sewage Disposal Plant.

Complete construction of the Communal Site with the exception of Sgt's Mess and Recreation building.

This Communal site consisted of enlisted men's ablution, ration breakdown building, and Officer's Mess building. These buildings were built of brick, Nisson, and Seco material

Complete construction of Living Sites 3 and 4 which consisted of thirty-seven separate living quarters on each of the two sites, one shower and wash room on each site, two water towers in each site and one fuel compound on each site. Some of these buildings were pre-fabricated wooden structures and others were brick construction. Electric wiring and plumbing was installed and concrete walks laid.

Construction of four brick and concrete plinths for Power Distribution.

Construction of one type T-2 Hangar which was an all steel structure.

On 30 September 1943 the unit was relieved from attached to 925th Engineer Regiment and assigned to 924th Engineer Regiment.

All companies started work on the above projects at Alconbury Airdrome on 3 October 1943.

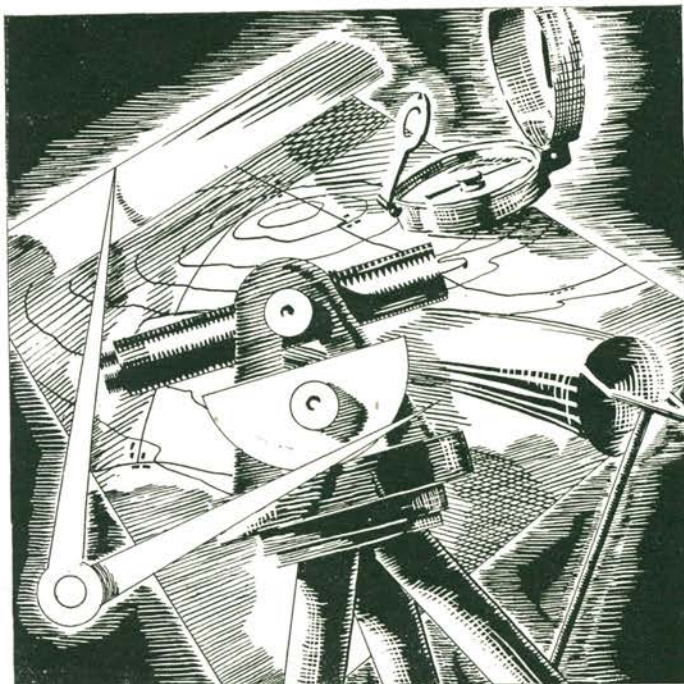
On 3 October 1943 the unit was assigned the re-surfacing of the Perimeter track at Alconbury Airdrome with a two and one-half inch coating of pre-mixed asphalt and aggregate. On 15 October 1943 this was extended to include re-surfacing of No. 1. Runway.

Three asphalt pug-mills with drying drums were obtained for mixing the asphalt and aggregate. Personnel for this operation were obtained from all four companies. Supervision was furnished by S-3 section and work began on 5 October 1943. The work ran continuously with two shifts working twelve hours each. This work was carried on simultaneously with the previously mentioned work at this Depot.

Much rain and fog caused a slowing of the progress of work on this project. Some sections of asphalt were replaced because of improper curing or a lack of bond with the concrete.

Major Keane assumed command of Battalion on 11 December 1943 when Lt. Colonel Kieffer entered hospital. Col. Kieffer was relieved from assigned to organization on 19. December 1943 and transferred to 108th General Hospital.

On 20 December 1943 the unit was assigned second stage construction at Burtonwood Repair Depot, Warrington, Lancastershire, England. This construction consisted of completion of work which had been started by the 347th and 360th General Service Engineers in Sites 4 and 5, complete construction of second stage construction of Site 3 which consisted of 184 living quarters, mess buildings, ablution buildings, latrines, showers, drying rooms, sanitary drainage, power distribution and cold water system. Paving of 21,000 square yards of Access Roads, 97,000 square yards of Aircraft Hardstands, and 24,000 square yards of Truck Parks.



On 23 December unit started moving to the new location. Unit was quartered at Site 10, Marbury Hall, near Northwich, Cheshire, England which was approximately 15 miles from work site.

Work was under supervision of S-3 personnel. Paving work ran continuously 24 hours daily. Personnel for this work were divided in three twelve hour shifts.

The organization was relieved from attached to the 924th Engineer Regiment on 24 December 1943 and transferred to the Western Base Section.

While the Battalion was working at Burtonwood Air Depot very effective liaison was carried on with the English No. 4 Works Area Air Ministry. The cooperation received was excellent. Supplies were received with the minimum delay.

Upon completion of assignment at Burtonwood Air Depot a letter of commendation was received from Western Base Section signed by Colonel Karl R. Shaw.

The Battalion was relieved from assigned to 8th Air Force on 18 April 1944 and assigned to 9th Air Force. On 23 April 1944 the unit was assigned to IX Engineer Command.



On 30 April 1944 the unit moved by truck to Matlask, Norfolk, England. The distance travelled was 250 miles.

The Battalion was assigned to 924th Engineer Regiment on 1 May 1944 and reassigned to 925th Engineer Regiment on 24 May 1944.

At Matlask, all effort was concentrated on repairing equipment, completing all echelon spare parts sets and re-issue of personal equipment.

On 7 June 1944 the unit moved by motor convoy from Matlask, Norfolk to Great Barrington, Oxford, England. At this station repairing of equipment and filling out of spare parts sets was rushed to completion. Camouflage nets were made for vehicles and equipment. All pieces of heavy equipment and all motor vehicles were waterproofed for cross channel shipment.

Capt. Clarence V. Kusz was transferred out of unit and Capt. John T. Moehn was appointed Commanding Officer, Medical Detachment.

The Battalion moved from Great Barrington, Oxford to Hiltingbury, Hants, England on 2 July 1944. The weather was rainy but the men were in excellent spirits.

On 6 July 1944 the first echelon moved to the Port of Embarkation. This echelon consisted of personnel only. The first motor convoy moved to the Port of Embarkation on 7 July 1944. In various stages the balance of the equipment was moved into the Port of Embarkation and was there loaded into the boats for the cross-channel trip.



Normandy Campaign

On 7 July 1944, D-day plus 31, the first echelon of 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion landed on the coast of France. Landing was made on Omaha Beach.

At this time the battle of St. Lo was in progress and the main battle lines were approximately six miles inland at this point. The Allied Forces were making an offensive drive on a 35-mile front from east of Carentan to the west coast of the peninsula. Steady gains were being made at all points along this front except in the St. Lo sector. Here the Germans were making a desperate attempt to hold this vital railroad center. A more substantial beachhead was needed, with sites for landing strips, particularly for fighter planes and light bombers. The proposed site of A-17 strip was in the contested area.

The 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion set up a temporary bivouac in an orchard approximately 2 miles east of Carentan, at the village of Catz. This area was in the midst of several batteries of heavy artillery. Here they awaited the capture of A-17 site, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile west of Meautis, France.

The St. Lo Sector was broken 18 July 1944. "Mopping up" operations were completed as the Allied Forces continued their advance.

On 27 July 1944 the Battalion moved into their first job site on the continent.

Officers and enlisted men were quartered in 2-man pup-tents. Mess hall facilities consisted of an equipped kitchen truck mounted on a $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton GMC and supplied with a canvas fly to serve as protection in inclement weather.

The scope of the project at Strip A-17 was the construction of a 5800 foot Hessian mat landing strip circled by a taxiway with hardstands. This strip was to be used as an operational base for P-47 bombing missions.



Work progressed according to schedule under supervision of S-3. A group of P-47s occupied the strip the same day it became operational.

During the early stages of operation on the continent, the procurement of supplies was quite difficult. Supply dumps were not well established, at that time. In many instances, when vehicles were dispatched for the procurement of supplies, they would arrive at the supply dump and find it in the process of a move. Local supplies were negligible in this area.

Lt. Edwin A. Champney was detailed as assistant S-3 Officer. His duties consisted mainly in the procurement and allotment of project supplies.

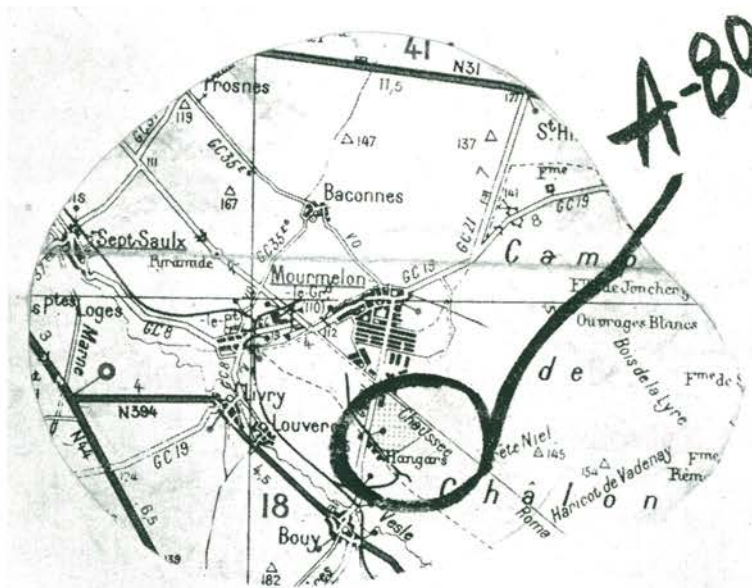
As the battle of Normandy continued, the German Seventh Army, instead of withdrawing from Normandy when the Americans broke through their lines to Avranches, tried to cut the corridor (3 August 1944) which the Americans had expanded over twenty miles from Avranches to Mortain and Domfront. Four Panzer divisions counterattacked (7 August 1944) at the north end of the corridor and penetrated the American lines for three miles. Although they forced our advance units to evacuate Domfront and Mortain they failed to break through to the sea. For four days German armor wasted its strength vainly in furious jabs at the American lines. When the enemy counterattacks were spent, the Americans secured the corridor by the recapture of Mortain and Domfront (13—15 August 1944).

Between Falaise and Argentan three Allied armies were pressing the enemy. The American First Army, the British Second Army, and the American Third Army were closing in from three directions, forcing the enemy into a receding pocket. Polish and Canadian troops fanned out to Trun (18 August 1944) and met American tanks driving north from Argentan to seal the pocket. The encircling Allied forces penetrated and sewed up the pocket during the next four days (19—23 August 1944). The Battle of Normandy was over, and the Germans were in full retreat.

Upon completion of strip A-17 the 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion received orders to move up to Poillay, France, near Fougères, approximately 89 miles from Meautis (19 August 1944). The three letter companies and the major part of H. & S. company moved into a section of woods and set up a bivouac area. The first convoy of heavy equipment was unloaded and dispersed in the woods in accordance with security regulations. All the available trucks were then returned to Meautis for more of the heavy equipment.

A-80 was the construction of a 5000 foot landing strip of Hessian mat. Contact was made with the Ponts et Chaussees, and an average of 80 civilians a day were secured. The service also secured and put at the disposal of the Battalion three French rollers and one crane. Throughout the Battalion's work in France the Ponts et Chaussees were cooperative, and in no instance failed to put forth every effort to fill the needs of the unit. Resident agents appointed at the various air-fields were all men of high calibre.

Work progressed very satisfactorily at A-80. The weather conditions were ideal. Within ten days after the starting of the project, the strip was operational.





Battle of Germany

As the spearheading American Third Army thrust forward, advance elements reached Nancy, twenty-eight miles south of Metz (5 September 1944). Under heavy enemy pressure, they were forced to withdraw as far as Toul, where they held their bridgehead on the Moselle.

The First Army captured Sedan (7 September 1944) and fought onward through the Ardennes Forest to liberate Luxembourg, entering the capital of the Duchy (9 September 1944.) Continuing their advance, the first unit crossed the Reich frontier about forty miles northwest of Trier (1045 hours 11 September 1944); another column crossed the frontier about fifteen miles south only a few hours later. Spreading out the bridgehead, the First Army surrounded Aachen (15 September 1944).

The Third Army consolidated their forces and continued their advance, occupying Nancy (15 September 1944) and pushing on toward Metz, where they met with strong resistance.

An Advanced Landing Ground, A-90, at Toul-Croix de Metz was planned and assigned to the 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion (21 September 1944). The original work order contained instruction for a 5000 foot Hessian Mat, Night Fighter strip, but changes in basic planning called for a revision of the airstrip to a Fighter-Bomber field after work had been under way for several days. A total of thirteen changes or work procedure were received during the progress of the construction.

From the very beginning work was impeded by a succession of heavy rainfall and the resulting mud. In fact, on several days, operations were almost totally suspended. The site had very poor drainage and the soil retained the water, making an almost marsh-like condition. Clearing and stripping were pushed as fast as the weather would permit. On the 1 October 1944 the runway had been completely cleared and stripping operations were well advanced.



heavy equipment, trucks and personnel on detached service assigned to assist the 843rd in the construction of Y-1. This field had been declared operational by the 843rd and was occupied by a Fighter Group (5 December 1944), but the 840th felt this was premature, due to certain conditions that precluded the use of the strip as a tactical element.

Of the seventy-five hardstands that the ultimate development called for, only forty-four were completed by the 3 December. Inclement weather had produced a highly saturated condition of the soil that made major drainage installations necessary. The access roads and service approaches to the existing hardstands were covered with a slough of mud which rendered them unserviceable. Some of the access roads were so situated that proper drainage was impractical. This called for a certain revision of plans.

The major operation was hauling an enormous quantity of rock fill which was required to build the roads, hardstands, and parking area to a satisfactory level for proper drainage. This material was hauled from two pits, each of which necessitated a haul of approximately fourteen miles. All available trucks were pressed into service for this hauling, working twenty-four hours daily.

Battle of the Bulge

Taking advantage of the winter weather, which screened the operations from the Allied Air Force, the Germans concentrated all available forces and materiel in a fifty mile sector between Monschau and Trier, on the borders of Belgium and Luxembourg (17 December 1944). The attack was directed against the southern flank of the American First Army and the first heavy blow was struck by the Germans since the invasion of France. The Nazis hurled their finest troops, tanks, planes and paratroopers in a drive to split the American Armies, wipe out the gains of the summer offensive, and relieve the Allied pressure against the Ruhr and Saar industrial areas so vital to the German military machine.

The Germans made skillful use of the weather, which, due to fog, sleet, rain and snow, kept the American planes grounded. The advance had penetrated approximately forty miles when the weather cleared enough to allow major air operations of Allied planes. Then the American Air Force went into action in an unprecedented scale, flying as many as 5,010 sorties in one day (24 December

1944). This large scale air offensive slowed the German advance to two or three miles a day and allowed the concentrating of American forces in this sector.

In German headquarters it must have been felt that, whatever the cost, something must be done to arrest these damaging attacks. Starting just before midnight (31 December 1944) and continuing on through the next day, the Jerries sent between 500 and 600 planes to attack Allied bases in France, Holland and Belgium.

Just before midnight, in the midst of a new Year celebration, a German plane flew over Strip Y-1 with a burst of strafing. It is not known if he carried bombs, but none were dropped on the strip. After he made one strafing attack on the strip, he circled over the town, Tantonville, and released another burst of machine-gun fire. No damage was done in either of these attacks.

During the total of between 500 and 600 raids perpetrated by the Jerrys, they lost almost 300 planes, but they succeeded, in this well planned, well executed attack, in destroying 155 Allied planes, but the force of the Nazi Air Force was spent.

At 24 hours 12 January 1945, construction of Y-1, Tantonville, France was completed. The Battalion applied itself to maintenance until such a time as orders were received to move to another project.

The Battalion was assigned to IX Engineer Command, Ninth Air Force on 12 January 1945.

Orders were received concerning the following assignments:

(A-62) Reims/Champagne — One platoon, "A" Company

(A-68) Guignecourt — Company "C"

(A-79) Prosnes — One platoon, "A" Company

(A-80) Mourmelon-le-Grand — Company "B".

The assignments at all the above locations consisted of general runway, taxiway and hardstand maintenance, temporary drainage ditch construction, and assisting Air Corps personnel in snow removal.

Headquarters and Service Company was quartered at Verzenay, France and Battalion Headquarters at Verzy.

Movement of the units to the various locations covered a period from 18 January 1945 to 28 January 1945. Progress of this movement was slowed, due to snow and icy condition of the roads.

Lt. Colonel Pierre V. Kieffer, Jr., after having led the Battalion more than two years, through difficult training days in the States, during heavy construction work in England, and the swift moving emergency projects in France, was transferred to IX Engineer Command on 5 February 1945.

Major John M. Keane assumed command of the Battalion on 8 February 1945. Capt. Morris G. Thomas became Battalion Executive Officer on 15 February 1945, filling the vacancy by Major Keane.

The platoon of "A" Company stationed at A-79, Prosnes, moved to A-64, St. Dizier on 11 February 1945, to join the platoon stationed there. Company "B" moved from A-80, Mourmelon-le-Grand on the same date, to aid Company "C" at A-68, Guignecourt.



Rhineland Campaign

By the time construction improvements at A-79, Prosnes and A-80 Mourmelon were completed the Allies were all set for the major offensive in establishing a bridgehead across the Rhine River. Using these two bases, as well as many others, the First Airborne Army launched a large scale attack, using both glider troops and paratroopers (23 March 1945). In conjunction with this air attack the American Third Army made a successful crossing. The Seventh Army,

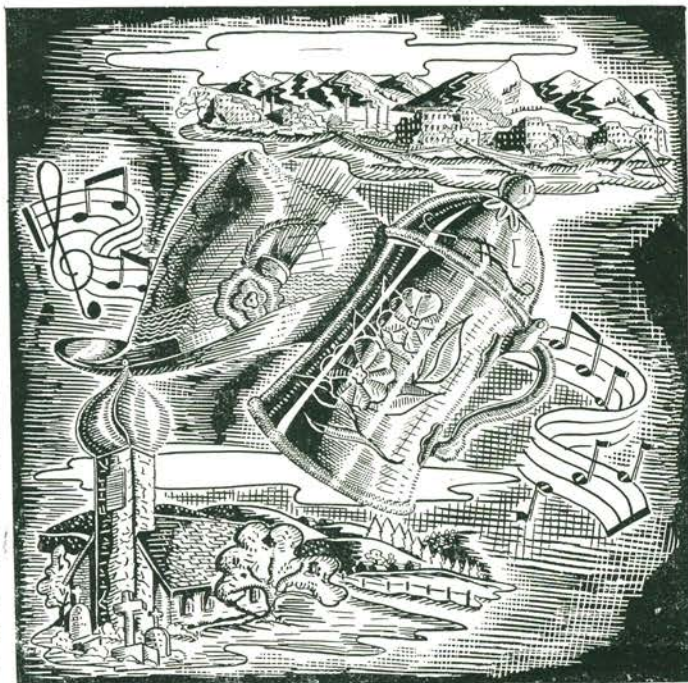
having already crossed the Rhine at Remagen (8 March 1945), pushed out to join with the Third Army. Meanwhile the British troops hurled a drive and broke out from their Rhine bridgehead (27 March 1945). The following day (28 March 1945) the American Seventh and Third Armies joined forces east of the Rhine and a substantial bridgehead was established for further operations in Central Germany.

Company "B" started a move up toward Frankfurt Rhein/Main (27 March 1945) and spent the first night just out of Trier, Germany proceeding the next day to Ober-Olm, Germany, near Mainz. There was fighting in progress at Mainz, as an enemy pocket had been left on the west bank of the Rhine when the crossing was made. The next morning (29 March 1945) "B" Company by-passed the Mainz pocket, crossed at Oppenheim under a screening smoke and proceeded to Y-73, Frankfurt Rhein/Main.

The American Third Army, pressing on into central Germany, took Frankfurt (29 March 1945) and continued on across the Main River. Sporadic fighting from small, isolated units of Jerry's was still in progress in the vicinity of Y-73 as "B" Company moved in, and various buildings were still burning.

On 26 March 1945, Company "C" moved up to Y-73, Frankfurt Rhein/Main and on the same day Battalion Headquarters also moved up.

The first convoy of heavy equipment was unloaded and left at Trier, Germany (25 March 1945) and trucks returned for another load. The balance of equipment,



including equipment left a Trier, was moved to Y-73 in various stages over a period from 29 March 1945 to 13 April 1945. With this equipment came the balance of H. & S. Company personnel.

Upon arrival at Y-73 it was found that there were 110 bomb craters, in the concrete runway, averaging 15 feet in diameter and 4 feet in depth. Taxiways were to be built. Local German labor was utilized as well as German construction equipment and materials which were found on the base.

Two platoons of "B" Company were assigned to assist the 832nd Engrs. at Y-64, Ober-Olm on 1 April 1945 and rejoined parent unit at Y-73 on 4 April 1945.

Company "C" was assigned to the 12th Corps on 1 April 1945 to assist in building E. & S. strips in forward areas.

The field Y-73, Frankfurt Rhein/Main became operational 10 April 1945. Balance of work consisted of improvement and repairs. Repairs became a major problem.

The original concrete runway, which had been constructed by the Germans had been allowed to freeze before it was cured. This concrete was so poor, in fact, that even the propeller blast of the planes would dislodge the surface. Constant patching was required and tarmac was used for this purpose.

On 16 April a recon team from "C" Company had gone to the Bayreuth area arriving at 1200 hours and in addition to making a recon of the field, a centerline was staked on the No. 2 and largest airdrome. Five large hangars were available with only one damaged, and it was found the longest run that could be made for an E. & S. Strip was 4,200'. The balance of the company arrived from Kronach the next day after considerable delay caused by the movement of armoured column. On 18. April, work was started on the E. & S. Strip and the field became operational that night. A 500 foot ditch on the east overrun was filled with rock, access roads were staked out, and the filling of some ruts in the runway area was carried on. The field was completed and two P-51s landed on the strip 19 April. The next two days were spent cleaning up the concrete surfaces in front of the hangars, filling in other ruts and making general improvements in the access roads. On 22 April, the company was enroute to the Battalion, arriving 1300 hours the following day. Orders were to load up immediately with gas, rations,

and ammunition and company moved out at 1600 hours for the 7th Army area. Spent the night and the following day at Mannheim and moved forward again 25 April for Goppingen, Command Post of the 925th Engr. Avn. Rgt., with the recce team in advance. The recce team went to Darmstadt and it proved to be of no avail for an E. & S. strip. One squad of the company was assigned the job of maintenance of R-44. The recce team again moved out, with one platoon, for Ersingen arriving at 2100 hours, 26 April. Work was started on the existing field at 0700 hours the next day with the balance of the company arriving at 1300 hours. The field at Ersingen was completed the following day. Company "C" arrived at Memmingen at 1600 hours 29 April.

Orders were received 25 April 1945 assigning the Battalion the rehabilitation of R-50, Stuttgart/Echterdingen. An advance party left for R-50 on 26 April 1945 and other units followed on successive days. All troops were moved from Y-73 by 30 April except a small group of H. & S. Company personnel who were left to assist in the movement of the remaining heavy equipment.

A sod runway 4600 feet by 120 feet was first opened 1 May 1945. This was used for air operations while work of repairing the concrete runway was in progress. Construction problems at R-50 consisted of back filling and surfacing 19 bomb craters, in the runway, averaging 40 feet in diameter and 15 feet deep and repairing of existing taxiways with concrete and tarmac. Work on the runway was completed 3 May 1945 but additional time was allowed for curing of the concrete. The strip was declared operational at 1200 hours 7 May 1945.

Orders were received 5 May 1945 assigning the Battalion the mission of rehabilitation of two more captured enemy airfields, R-72, Furstenfeldbruck and R-81, Oberpfaffenhoven.

H. & S. Company and "A" Company proceeded to R-81 where it was found that hangars and other buildings needed extensive repairs. Craters were found in the taxiways but none in the runway.

Company "B" moved to R-72 and began cleaning out buildings, repairing water lines and communications.

Both these projects were progressing nicely when orders were received to cease operations at R-81 and the entire Battalion, less "B" Company and certain small units of "C" Company at R-65, Rississen, R-88, Innsbruck, R-79, Schongau,

and R-67, Memmingen, would proceed to R-70, Kaufbeuren (13 May 1945). At Kaufbeuren a 5000 foot pierced steel plank runway was built, with P.S.P. taxiways and hardstands and a concrete access road. There had been no bomb damage on this field, and buildings, as well as water, sewage, and electrical service needed only minor repairs and cleaning.

The runway was declared operational 1500 hours 24 June 1945. Completion of taxiways and hardstands was delayed due to shortage of pierced steel plank which was shipped by rail. The final loads of P.S.P. were received on 12 July 1945 and completion of all taxiway and hardstands were accomplished 15 July 1945.

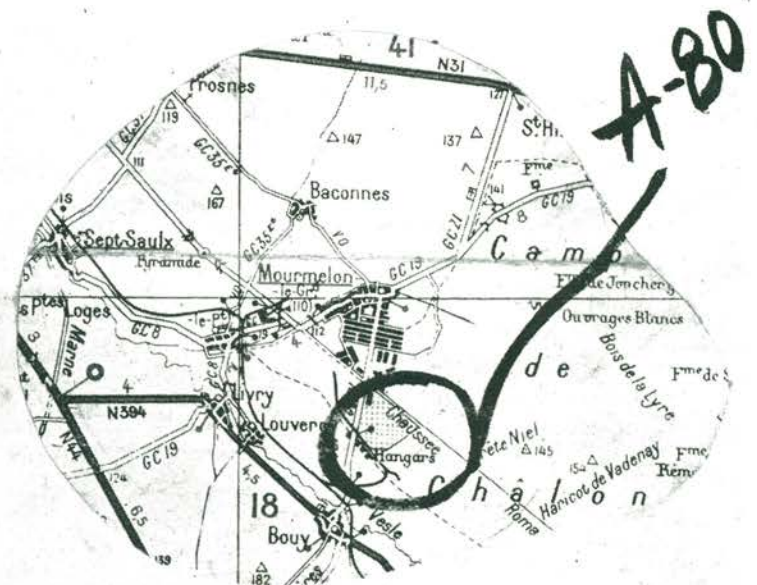
On 12 July 1945 a layout party and P.S.P. unloading equipment were sent to R-46, Roth, near Nuremberg. All elements of the Battalion completed movement by 22 July. Grading operations were started 24 July. Work on the east end of the runway was impossible, due to the presence of numerous bombs stored on the site.

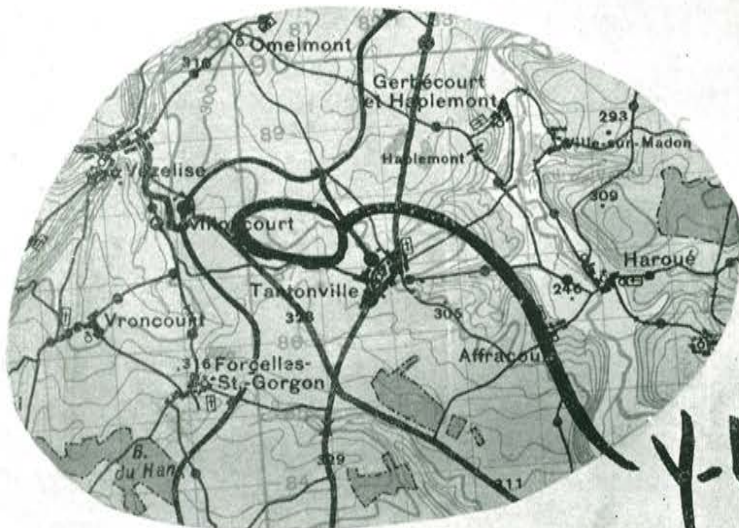
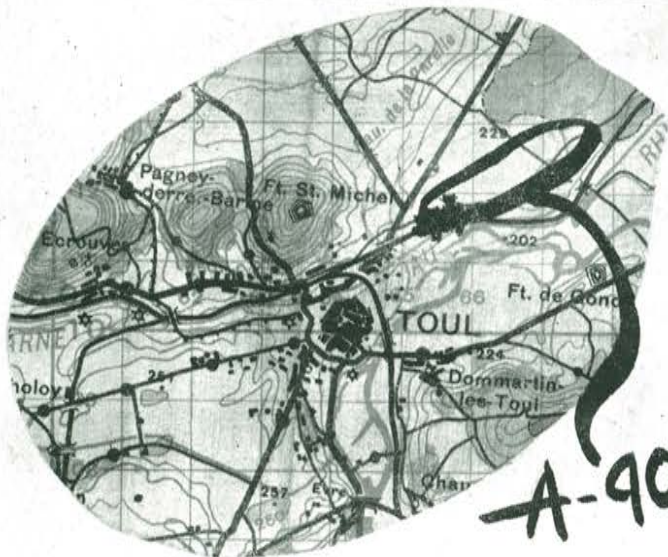
Work on this project was routine. Some difficulty was encountered due to excessively loose sand in the sub-grade, but rains allowed proper compaction to be accomplished.

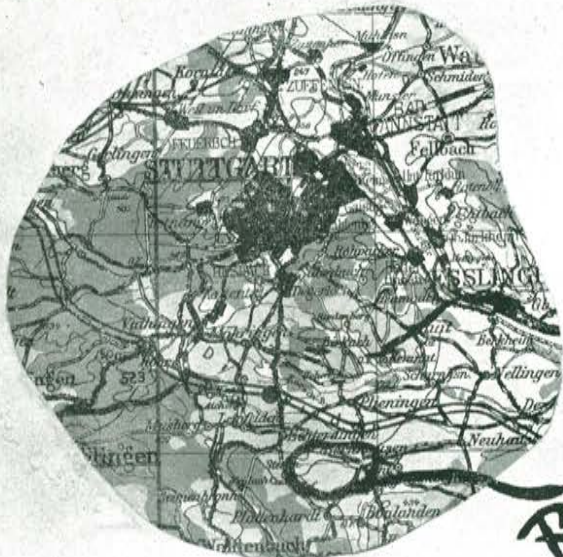
With the coming of V-J day work was completed and a movement to Y-74, Frankfurt, had been started.

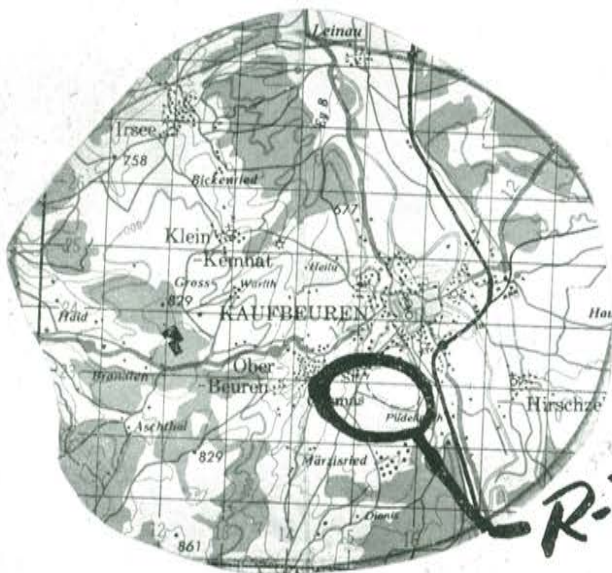
At present, the Battalion, with an average point score of 84, anticipates another long boat trip. Home — —. After three years of service.



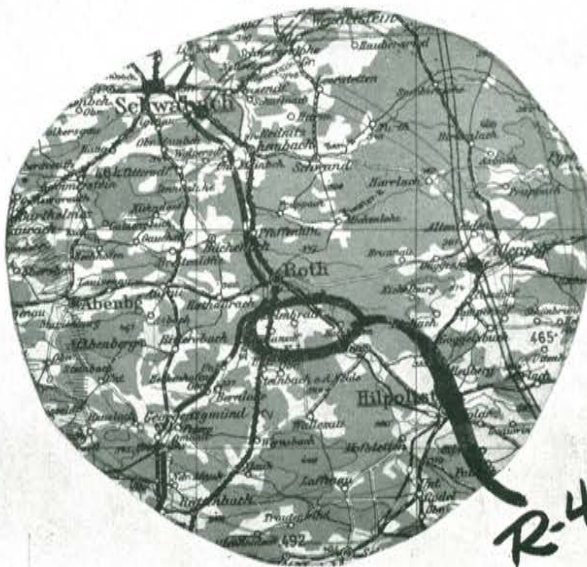
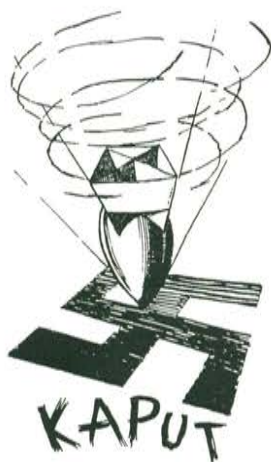








R-70



R-46



The Rookie

shifted his weight awkwardly from one foot to the other in his nervousness as he waited for his name to be called. Around him were other soldiers, equally nervous. The voice of the interviewing officer droned out the questions, then the, "Assigned to 'A' company" — or "B". "C" or "H & S". Finally his name was called. After a few questions about his civilian occupation and aptitudes he was told to stand with the group assigned to H & S company. He looked around at his new comrades, all strangers. Even the boy who had been his seat-mate on the train had been assigned to another company. He felt quite strange and alone. Having been a soldier somewhat less than a month he was now assigned to a newly activated unit. He was in Headquarters and Service company of 840th Engineer Battalion (Aviation) but he wasn't at all sure he knew what that meant



It was after three o'clock on a chilly September morning when he was marched to his new home, given a cup of hot coffee, assigned bunk and blankets, and allowed to go to bed. He slid gratefully into his bunk to catch what sleep he could in what remained of the night. Tonight he knew no one, not even a name, except that of the First Sergeant Hale Very who had seen to it that he had his coffee, bunk, and blankets and was settled for the night.

"Reveille will be at five-forty-five," Sgt. Very said as he walked out.

Was it rookies like these with which a war was expected to be won? Men who had so much to learn? And what part would this group play in the winning? Would they ever see service in the theater of war? And if so, would they be sufficiently trained when their time came? Did they have what it takes? Could they be molded into an efficient working unit?

In the days that followed the Rookie learned many things. He learned this unit was organized to construct airfields and landing strips, to maintain or repair existing ones, and to defend them when necessary. He learned his was a new type of unit, as yet untried. He learned how to tie knots and lashes, lay out barbed

wire entanglements, machine gun emplacements, dig fox holes, do right and left faces, handle a rifle and bayonet; in fact, all the things every soldier must learn: the basic training.

His first Company Commander was Lt. Karl Richards but in a few days he was replaced by Lt. Holliway. Lt. Holliway was followed by Capt. E. E. Osborne who was then transferred to S-3 and replaced by Lt. Bush. The Rookie began to feel like a step-child from the many changes of company commanders. They hardly stayed long enough for him to apply the term "Old Man". Each time, as he was at the point of becoming acquainted with them, and finding how far he could go with breaking the rules and "get by with it", there would be another change.

The Rookie served his share of turns at K.P. and learned it wasn't so bad as it was pictured if one knew how to "work it". Then there were also opportunities to sneak an extra swig of milk, or a can of fruit, or have a steak fried to his individual taste. However, at times, the stacks of dishes, silver, pots and pans seemed endless and after a long day's shift the bed was quite welcome.

One morning the Rookie was in Battalion Headquarters when in walked a Captain, a large man with the barrel chest of a prize-fighter. He carried himself with an admirable military air and looked every inch a soldier. He had a rugged, stern face marked by a mole on one cheek, which accounted for a name commonly used by the boys who were to work under him, not that the name carried with it any intentional disrespect. His name was Capt. Gordon E. Thompson and he was to be company commander of H. & S. company, but to the boys he will always be remembered as "Gordie" or "The Mole".

H. & S. company was made up of an approximately equal number of "Yankees" and "Rebels". Every man who was with the company in the early days at Bradley Field will remember the many friendly arguments in barracks, chow lines, etc.; in which the Civil War was discussed, pro or con; in the quick, clipped speech of the Northern boys and the slower drawl of the "nigger talking" South-
erners.

During this period furloughs were granted, starting Nov. 6, 1942.

As time sped by the Rookie came to know these boys as his friends and as these friends moved up in ranks to Corporal or Sergeant he would, as likely as not, upon receiving an order from one of them, tell them to "blow it out". He

Heavy Equipment



never actually became a soldier but merely a civilian in uniform. He may have learned to do things the army way: make beds with square corners, wash windows, arrange his equipment for the many inspections, march and drill like a soldier (Speak the army slang — some of which must be dropped when he returns to civilian life); but he never learned to like the army way. He was just a "civilian in uniform" for the duration and six months.

On December 3, 1942 our Battalion Commander, Major Pierre V. Kieffer, Jr. decided the basic training period was about complete and as proof of this the Battalion would take a three day hike and bivouac. The Rookie left Bradley Field that morning with the rest of the Battalion, loaded down with everything but the kitchen stove. After marching all day they finally arrived at Simsbury Rifle range. Simsbury will be remembered as the place where, after a long, cold ride in the back of an open truck, an attempt was made to qualify in rifle marksmanship.

With sore shoulders, aching muscles, and stiff, cold fingers the Rookie set up his shelter-half. As the mercury dropped to 10° below he wished he had brought the kitchen stove after all. After he had his shelter-half set up and his two blankets inside he did the next best thing to setting up a stove. He went to the town of Simsbury with some of his buddies to obtain a little? antifreeze in the form of alcoholic beverages. That night the stock of alcoholic beverages in Simsbury became sadly depleted as the majority of the men in the battalion seemed to have the same idea. Many interesting things happened that night. Some men came in and slept on top of their pup tents, some slept in their buddies pup tents, being unable to find their own. "Stash" Rawinski decided he was a P-47 and climbed a tree to make a forced landing. After much persuasion the boys convinced him a three-point landing would be much better, so he climbed down instead of jumping.

After this one hilarious night it was decided to return to Bradley Field and so they marched back in, a tired, shivering group, and spent several hours in the barracks arguing over who had the most or largest blisters on their feet.

Some men were sent out of the unit to form cadres for new units and some were transferred to O.C.S. or the Air Corps. The Rookie saw many of his buddies leave and there was a feeling of loss, but these men were replaced and new buddies were made.

Gradually the company was rounded out and divided into sections rather than platoons. Headquarters section consisting of company headquarters, S-1, S-3 and S-4 personnel; transportation section, repair section, and heavy equipment section. Many changes were made in the personnel of the different sections so for our story let us remember M/Sgt. Wm. L. Tanner as head of Engineering section, M/Sgt. Wm. E. Hull as battalion motor sergeant, T/Sgt. William H. Harrison as heavy equipment sergeant, T/Sgt. Hargrove, Repair section, S/Sgt. Autie L. Simmons, as company motor sergeant. These men were the section leaders over most of the three years of operations.

The period of technical training began.

On 10 December 1943, the Battalion was alerted for overseas shipment and H. & S. company began a series of showdown inspections, dry runs, and medical examinations which continued for almost six months. The helmet and gas mask must be worn at all times. The Rookie found the attic an excellent place to hide excess equipment during inspections and shortly thereafter several of the boys decided it was also place for a man to hide and sleep in the daytime. Blankets and pillows were kept there for these siestas. But First Sergeant Joseph Lubeck (Joe — to the boys) who replaced Sgt. Very, could not be fooled for long and with the aid of Capt. Thompson he found the "attic paradise". It was also during this period that the Rookie and his buddies discovered a convenient hole in the fence down by the fourth barracks, and despite the restriction, members of H. & S. company could always be found in the surrounding towns.

The alert order did not mean the cessation of work; it rather called for work, work, and more work. H. & S. company had nearly a million dollars worth of equipment and machinery to prepare for overseas shipment. The Rookie was caught in the whirlpool of crating, packing, packing lists, painting, stenciling, numbering, loading, etc. To make matters worse snow fell on December 13, 1942 and remained until March 15, 1943.

The first date

of departure was cancelled but the equipment was still kept ready for shipment so the time was taken up with classes and with "Gordie's" famous Wednesday night hikes. These hikes started after



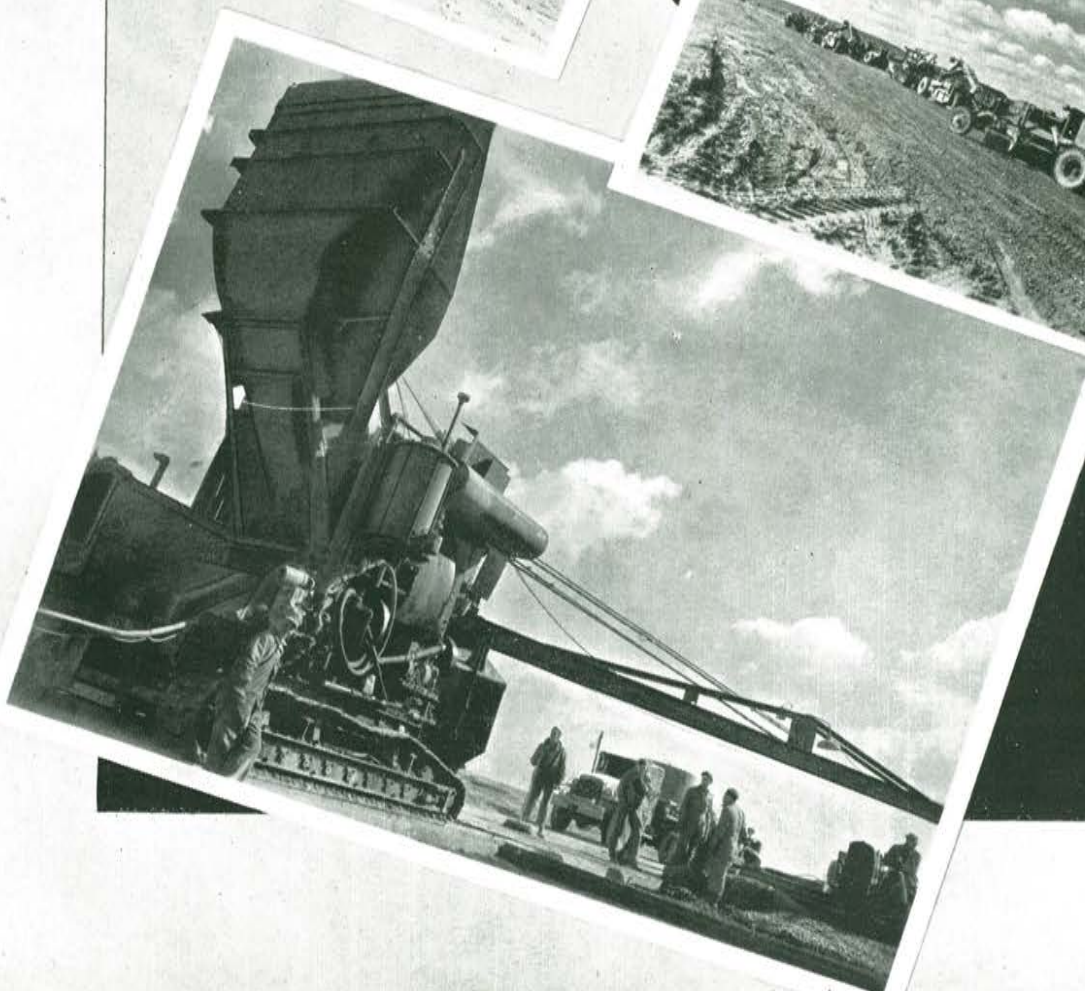
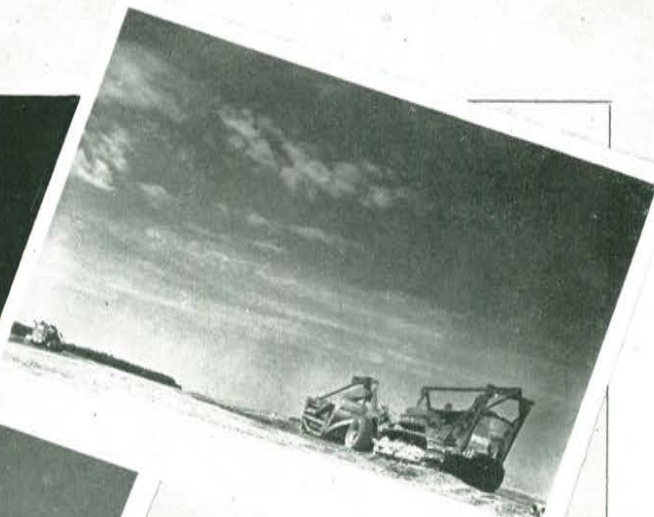
chow Wednesday evenings and ended just before chow Thursday evenings. Most of H. & S. company was busy either rubbing sore muscles and blistered feet or figuring out ways to keep from going on the hikes. There were always some amusing incident on these hikes which made them somewhat more bearable; such as the time Dave Dorfsman tried to splash the Farmington river dry and earned a nickname for himself, or the picture of "Snuffy" struggling along in the snow waist deep trying to keep pace with the boys with longer legs, or getting lost and failing to make connections with the "enemy", or coming in, a tired, bedraggled group, to be awarded by Capt. Thompson's famous statement, "Men, I'm proud of you. You've got more guts than brains." All of these things the Rookie stored in his mind for future reference. These little incidents served to draw the boys closer together, and although few of them would admit it at the time, they were proud to be in H. & S. company.

The period of training being completed the Rookie was no longer a rookie so we will leave him here and go on with the boys of H. & S. company.

After seven months of army life in the West Gate area the unit moved to the Post Utilities area. All the machinery, boxes and crates had been shipped out with the exception of some trucks and an air compressor so there was little left to do except drilling and inspections. During this period a replacement was sent in, a sergeant named "Harry". He was used as a drill sergeant and could get better cooperation from the men than the sergeants who had been privates with them in the beginning. Harry had quite a sense of humor and originated several standard sayings of the company, including the one about the telephone call. Remember that one?

While at the Post Utilities area passes and furloughs were again granted. Some of the boys received their second furlough of ten days. One group, on arriving at their homes were greeted by telegrams ordering them to report back to the unit immediately. The unit was again alerted for overseas shipment. This time it was no "dry run" but the real thing and soon they were in Camp Kilmer, N.J. Here the boys were subjected to inspections that were really SHOWDOWN inspections. Each day they must empty their "A" and "B" bag and every item was checked and re-checked for misfit or the slightest sign of wear. "Willy" Ware, the supply sergeant was the one who was caught in this landslide of salvage and exchange. The boys learned they could have a clean shirt and pants every day by merely wearing them, then salvaging them for new ones. All extra items must be

BIG BOY.



done away with (they thought). This was later proven to be untrue as many of the boys kept civilian shoes, khaki shirts, etc.

Of course the battalion was restricted to the area but nothing could keep the H. & S. boys from finding a way of going out. And remember the price that was paid for a quart?

Many of the boys were sick while at Kilmer. Some even missed the boat. Capt. Thompson just did make it and Lt. J. W. Paul was left behind to join the unit later in England.

A short train ride to the docks and a long, slow walk, carrying field pack and two barracks bags brought them onto the boat, the "Aquitania". "Benny" Parker nearly fell apart as pack, rifle, helmet, "A" bag and "B" bag came to a parting of the ways but he managed to keep up with the rest of the company although equipment was dragging all around him and wrapping around his legs.

For over an hour the boys climbed the stairs on the boat, making a step every five or ten minutes and dragging their equipment with them. They finally arrived on "A" deck to be quartered in what once been an open deck tea room. Bunks were built one over the other with just enough room to slide in and the aisles were so narrow one must walk through them sideways.

We can forget about the breakfast next morning on the boat and the meals that followed, the smell of the mess hall swimming in spilled tea and garbage — or can we forget? Can we forget the morning Frank Kwasnewski discovered his oatmeal was alive and about to crawl out of his mess gear? Can we forget the hours spent in "sweating out" the lines to the canteen to buy canned fruit, soup, and candy bars to supplant or replace the mess hall fare. And then the time Blackjack was chased up three decks by the O.D., Lt. Humphries, when he was caught with a case of apples and a couple of hams. When Lt. Humphries caught up with him he explained he was only hungry and wanted a share.

Rifle inspection became a part of the daily routine and it was discovered that although a rifle might pass inspection for one man the same rifle would not always pass for another.

It was impossible to stroll around the deck without running over a crap game or a game of poker or black jack. Fortunes were won and lost on that trip as "let it ride" became the most common expression in a crap game.

The expression "I'd court-martial you if I had my typewriter!" became part of the H. & S. vocabulary.

An occasional boat drill broke the monotony of the trip. Boat drill on the crowded Aquitania was like trying to shuffle sardines in a can without opening it. And then after insisting there would be no more "dry runs" another drill was called and it was a stampede in which several were hurt, although none seriously.

It is doubtful that any man in the company regretted the day when the shore of Scotland was sighted unless it was "Stash". It was a beautiful sight. Green hillsides divided into sections by white stone walls which crept across them in unbelievable true, straight lines, white houses capped with red tile roofs staggering down the green hills.

As the men stepped ashore, bags and baggage, they were greeted by a Scottish band and Red Cross girls who served a decent cup of coffee. A train was waiting and each man was assigned a compartment with four of his buddies. Just try sleeping five to a compartment, equipment and all, on Scotch train. That is quite an experience.

All day the train wound its way through Scotch and English towns and countryside; past narrow, winding roads and quaint, old world houses with tile or thatched roofs. From windows and by-ways the train was greeted with a friendly wave or the familiar victory sign. Near nightfall the train passed through York. It was after 2200 hours and the sun was still up. There the boys had their first



sight of German destruction, a sight they were yet to see multiplied a thousand-fold.

About four o'clock the next morning the train came to a stop and the order was given to unload. Trucks of the 834th Engineer Aviation Battalion were waiting to haul the men from the station, Sawbridgeworth, to Matching Airdrome. Here in the middle of the quiet Essex countryside cow pastures, grain fields and country estates were being transformed by the 834th Engineers into medium bomber base which the 840th would help them complete.

At breakfast that morning the boys had their first taste of powdered eggs and they tasted very good after the mess on the boat and the "C" rations on the train. However, in time to come, even the sight of powdered eggs was undesirable. That evening, after lectures on what they could and could not do, some of the boys went to the small village of White Roding and there they discovered a beer joint was called a "pub", that "mild and bitters" was a poor substitute for Schlitz or Budweiser, and that whiskey was only a memory except for an occasional drink of "Scotch". They also learned the English girls were not as conservative as they had been lead to believe.

In order to work, H. & S. company must have trucks and equipment. Many of the men left with Lt. V. C. Weed, the Battalion transportation officer and Lt. E. C. Knight, the Battalion motor officer to bring in the trucks and equipment from various depots in England and Wales. Slowly the equipment came in and at last H. & S. could try their mettle as a working unit.

Days were long and full use was made of the daylight hours (not to mention the hours of darkness when the drivers must clean their vehicles and spray them with diesel oil before turning in their dispatches and the heavy equipment service crew washed and greased the equipment.

Bowman, on the big 34-E paver, poured many a cubic yard of concrete, with the aid of a number of other men from H. & S. and the letter companies.

The drivers found driving on the wrong side of the road rather confusing at first, particularly on the narrow, winding English roads. The fact that the vehicles were wide and the steering wheel on the left side made it even more difficult. However, in time, they did become accustomed to it and gave the English many a bad moment with their speed and seemingly reckless driving.

As the equipment started working the Repair Section also started in business under the leadership of "Pop" Hargrove. Possibly due to the fact the drivers were more familiar with their vehicles than the operators were with the equipment there were more repairs to be made on the equipment. The Repair Section was fortunate in finding "Big Andy" in "B" company and drafting him into H. & S. The things Andy could do toward keeping a Galion grader running were nothing less than miraculous. The word Galion became synonymous with trouble.

"Sugar" Standridge and Harrison Chase introduced several of the boys to the operation of a grader. Sugar is the only operator who still operates the same piece of equipment he first started on at Matching and "Orvie" Lambdin and H. A. Shannon, the only drivers who still have the same trucks. This is a record of which they can well be proud. Shannon also has the enviable record of only one flat tire during all this time.

Riley, who was at this time the officer's orderly, was a very accomodating buddy. One day when some of the boys wanted him to make a trip to the Pub for a few "pints of mild" he borrowed the Colonel's jeep for the trip, leaving the Colonel afoot. On his return trip he overtook and passed the Colonel walking. He drove a short distance and stopped to inquire of the Colonel if he would like to ride. Then thinking the Colonel might be thrsty after his walk he offered him a drink of the mild.

The uppermost thing in the mind of nearly everyone in H. & S. company was a trip to London. London! The very name itself was enough to arouse the interest of even the most uncurious. Also the report of bombing damage made the trip seem even more appealing as it was, at that time, the most bombed city in the world. After the first days of confusion and getting settled in their new home each man was given one day off every week to visit London or any other surrounding town. From the nine month veterans of the 834th Engineers the boys heard amusing stories of Picadilly Circus and the general impression was that it might be even better than the world famous Ringling Bros. Circus. So they were rather surprised to learn it was not a circus, but rather a place that, in more peaceful times, catered to Londons' higher brackets of society.

Red Cross Clubs were the designated sleeping quarters but they were so crowded that many of the boys were forced to look elsewhere for accomodations. This offered no problem and after the first trip nearly all of them had located much better, more interesting, and more comfortable quarters.

The first trip to Buckingham Palace will always be remembered, with the traditional and colorful ceremony of the changing of the guard. John Koerner was among the first to see this ceremony as well as one of the few boys with a peak bill garrison cap. His cap seemed to confuse the English soldiers and John stood for a long while by the gate to receive salutes from those who passed.

Those interested in the more liquid type of entertainment could often be found in the Regent Palace or the Picadilly hotels. Gerard Street will remain a precious memory to some and to others a place where a vast amount of experience was gained.

Does anyone remember Josie?

Entertainment was plentiful in any part of the city. For those interested in sight - seeing the Red Cross Clubs gave a daily tour accompanied by expert guides. The boys who visited London will always have a warm spot in their hearts for the natives because of the wholehearted reception they received.



They learned the expression "Take the first turning on the right and the second on the left, then go straight ahead, you cawn't miss it," usually meant that you could and would miss it.

From a wooded spot of earth a sturdy taxiway took shape. In addition to the taxiway there were hardstands, a shotting in butt, a bomb sorage area, and the necessary access roads. In time this work was completed as well as giving the 831st Engineers a hand at Chipping Ongar and the boys of H. & S. had their first experience with large convoys of heavy equipment. Who was it that started to go in a pub for a drink without bothering to get of the grader? That was close enough! And then there was the Englishman who wanted to know which end of the "bloody" thing was the front.

The next job, covering the Alconbury Airdrome with a layer of asphalt, will be remembered ty the men of H. & S. company as the most strenuous grind of their army career. Three aspahlt pug-mills were set up and for three months they

ran twenty-four hours daily in two twelve hour shifts through cold, drizzling, almost continuous rain. Operators, drivers and mechanics reached a sort of stupor from this continuous routine. It required nearly fourteen hours to make a working day and another hour of scrubbing at asphalt, smoke and cement which made each man like a black-face comedian. At least one of the six pug-mills operators mastered the art of operating in his sleep. More often than not you would see him standing on the platform with one hand on a lever and the other on the rail, sound asleep. When a truck was loaded some sixth sense would cause him to shut off the dispensing hopper and open it again when another truck was under the belt without even disturbing his slumbers.

It was here H. & S. had their first major accident and lost one of their best operators. John Koerner lost a foot in one of the pug-mills and was consequently sent home after a long period in various hospitals in England and the States. John was well thought of by every man in the company. Good Luck, John.

By this time the boys in S-4 were familiar with nearly every road on the island having covered many miles in search of supplies. It is well understood that without supplies and spare parts it would have been impossible for the unit to function.

While at Alconbury Capt. Thompson was transferred to the 844th Engineers and Capt. M. G. Thomas became the company commander.

On our first Christmas overseas the company was in the process of another move. Part of the company had their "Turkey and trimmings" at Alconbury and others at Site 10, Warrington, but each man had all the turkey he wanted. However many of the boys thought of the folks at home and wondered if they, too, were having turkey.

The New Year was started with the company together again at Site 10, Warrington, England. Here they were to build a freight parking area for transports and heavy bombers. This airdrome, the Burtonwood Airdrome was the largest in England and consequently required a large freight area. The roads were narrow, English type roads and by no means wide enough to accommodate the heavy, U.S. Army vehicles. Existing roads must be widened and new ones built. This was another concrete project and "Father" Bowman and his boys bore the brunt of the work. The big 34-E paver ran continuously with three crews taking twelve hour shifts. It will also be remembered the repair section did a rushing business

here as most of the trucks and equipment had started to show signs of wear and breakdowns were frequent.

Remember the long, slow, 15 mile ride each morning from Site 10 to Burtonwood, with only blackout lights which could hardly be seen ten feet away in the thick fog? The men were already acquainted with the English fogs.

It was from the nearby village of Northwich that "Deacon" Davis ran his famous footrace. It is rumored that he had some assistance but no one could ever obtain proof of this fact.

Due to the fact Burtonwood was so far to drive in the early morning fog Nisson butts were constructed at Site 3 and the company moved into these before they were all completed, much to the dismay of the boys who had "homes" near Site 10.

As in every army unit the cooks hear more "bitching" than even the Chaplain. The mess sergeant has a thankless job. When the company was settled at Site 3 the chow improved greatly with the assistance of Lt. David W. Yee, the mess officer, who joined the company at Site 10. "Davie" was a familiar figure in the mess hall, passing along the tables asking the boys how they liked the chow or if they had any ideas that might improve it. And none seemed to mind the weekly "training days" under Lt. Yee.

Manchester and Liverpool were both conveniently near for the weekly pass day although many of the boys spent their time off in Warrington or some nearby village. The stay at Warrington will probably hold the best memories for most of the boys in the company.

By this time the boys had discovered that none of the English seemed to know that water was fit for drinking and many of them took up the habits of the natives. Andy made a daily trip to a nearby pub with two five gallon water cans for his daily ration of mild and bitter which was shared by some of his buddies.

The men of H. & S. company must always have their recreation and in off-duty hours or any time when the work was slack they were incorrigibly mischievous. However when there was a Job to do they left little to be desired. Regulations meant very little to them as they always took the attitude that rules were only made

waterproofing their machines and vehicles. Here, also many an hour was spent on weaving of camouflage nets; an item which each driver and operator viewed with extreme disgust.

Remember a certain officer's helmet that sprouted a small forest? This helmet was customarily worn well down over his face and it was often a question for debate whether he wore a pad to prevent the butt of his pistol from wearing a callous on his right knee. Any similarity between this officer and "Fuzzy" Knight of movie fame is purely coincidental.

In less than another month the equipment was waterproofed and ready to go. The unit moved to the Southampton Marshalling area. Here the equipment was arranged in serials for cross-channel shipment. On 7 July 1944, the first echelon of H. & S.. company set foot on French soil. This was called the "Walking Party" as no trucks or equipment came with this group.



As the boat neared the French coast the thing that struck the eye was an unbelievably large number of all types of vessels partially submerged. On the shore were many more which had been run aground by the assault troops on "D" Day. The rumble of artillery could be heard from about six miles inland. When the boys saw the damage along the shoreline a silent prayer of thanks went out from every heart to the boys who had established

this beachhead, which was now such a beehive of activity with the "Ducks" busily unloading the many ships standing offshore.

overhead when another came into view — and another — and another. Wave after wave they came. One hundred — two hundred — five hundred. As eyes turned to follow those that had passed overhead small puffs of smoke appeared in the sky around them, above them and below them. Then came the rumble of exploding bombs causing the earth to tremble underfoot. As the bombers unloaded their bombs they circled widely for the return. And still others came. One thousand — fifteen hundred — two thousand. It is impossible to describe the feeling of the watching men. Some raised hands toward the sky and shouted. Some spoke in hoarse whispers. Some were speechless with the feeling of pride and the magnitude of the sight. Then a small column of smoke spiraled downward — and there another — and yet another. Some of the brave lads would not be there that night when the “boys” talked over the days mission. The watching men clenched fists and cursed silently as the planes plunged toward the earth. But the waves of planes still swept in. Twenty five hundred — three thousand; bombers and escorts. Gradually clouds of flak disappeared as each successive wave of planes unloaded their bombs in an advancing pattern until at last all the “ack ack” guns were silenced. Then the last wave of planes circled and headed for the home base. Mission completed.

The infantry and tanks followed this wave of bombers and the St. Lo sector was taken. The site of the Battalion's first landing strip was captured and the unit moved in. Hedgerows were leveled and work was started. It was soon discovered that the thick dust of A-17 was as difficult to combat as the mud of England. After a shift on a machine an operator would accumulate such a heavy coating of dust that he would be unrecognizable. Dust bowls on equipment must be emptied several times daily.

The work progressed steadily, though not without the expected breakdown of equipment. The Galion graders now spent as much time in the repair shop as they did on the job. Much to the despair of Big Andy and "Galion" Horton.

At this time the repair section was given assistance by the 471st Heavy Maintenance unit. Most major repairs were made by the 471st and from this time on either a small group or a whole platoon were with H. & S. company to assist in these repairs.

While off duty the boys searched for recreation, liquid and otherwise. Normandy offered very little in the form of recreation. Beer could not be found

but hard cider was plentiful. With enough of this cider (if one could hold that much) the cares of the day could be forgotten and even the continual thunder of the big guns would grow faint. The boys also discovered a new drink, Calvados, more commonly called "White Lightning". It is customary to choose a place to "throw a fit" before taking a swig of White Lightning. The writer has never seen a man take a drink of this beverage without making a wry face.

It was learned that a "D" ration bar was worth much more than its weight in eggs (when they could be found) or even fresh vegetables to provide a change from the monotonous "C" or "K" ration. For the remainder of their stay on the continent a chocolate bar was the medium of exchange with civilians — and some of the things it would buy — "Ou la la!"

There were very few civilians in the Normandy area and the few still there looked quite dazed and war weary. To provide entertainment a movie was given in an old barn and "Van" became a permanent fixture in the entertainment of the men. He was transferred from "B" company to H. & S.

About this time "Big Frank" tried to "muscle in" on Georgianni's barber business and he had quite a persuasive way of obtaining customers. Many a bald pate appeared in the ranks of H. & S. as Frank did a very thorough job. Mitchell, in an effort to escape Frank's clutches, ran over Major Keane's and Capt. Szur's pup tent while these two were inside. Shortly thereafter Frank went out of business.

A-17 was completed well within schedule and the unit received orders to move to Fougères. Approximately half of the company moved into the woods there to take up a position — mostly horizontal. There were many more French civilians in this area than in Normandy and these liberated French were more than generous with what supplies they had, which were mostly of a liquid nature. This “Eau de Vie”, as it was commonly called, was quite potent. In a short time after their arrival it was difficult to find a man whose legs would permit him to stand guard or other necessary details. One man of H. & S. company never left his bunk during his stay in this strip of woods as a French friend kept him well supplied with “Eau de Vie”.



The balance of the company moved from A-17 to Dreux without stopping in the "Forest Paradise". The group at Fougères then moved on to Dreux. This move was an unfortunate one for H. & S. company due to the fact they lost one officer and four men.

Capt. E. E. Osborn, S-3 Officer; T/Sgt. Paddock and Sgt. Murray, both of S-3 section were riding in a jeep driven by Blackjack. This jeep and personnel was captured by the Jerrys. Blackjack later escaped and rejoined the company. The other three remained prisoners until liberated by the American forces.

Pfc. Leon Golinsky met with a fatal accident on the route to Dreux. The details of this accident are not available and no one seems to know if it was a result of enemy action.

The various convoys, while moving into Dreux, overtook and passed the infantry along the route. Many a bantering remark was exchanged, such as: "There go those damned engineer getting in our way again" or "What's the matter? Why can't you guys keep ahead of us?"

The first serial of equipment to arrive on the field found F.F.I. and Jerry snipers having it out in the wooded sector and the tanks still maneuvering about. This didn't stop them from unloading the equipment and preparing for the job at hand.

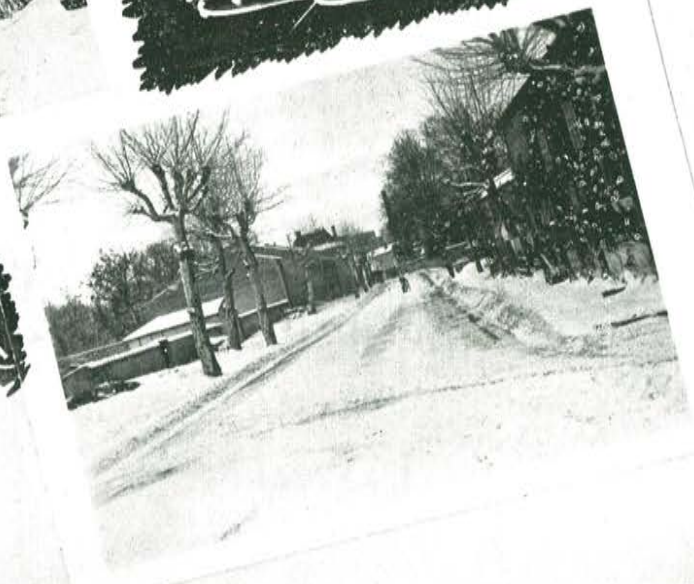
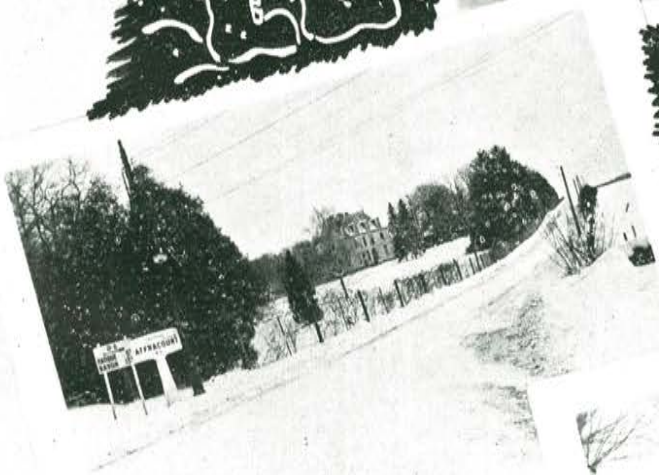
The job at Dreux, A-41, was repairing an existing air base which had suffered heavy bomb damage. Not much of the equipment was used on this project and the 471st undertook the job of completely overhauling some pieces of equipment; sending a whole platoon for this work.

Various methods were attempted for back-filling the bomb craters. Among these methods was the use of asphalt or such German material of that nature as could be found. Quite a mixture of the various materials was poured into the 1250 gallon asphalt distributor, through some misunderstanding, with disastrous results. Some of this material hardened in the tank and pump when heat was applied, causing a stoppage of the machine. Kerosene and diesel oil was poured into the tank to dissolve this hardened material and by some means (who knows?) this caught fire. All the available fire extinguishers were used but to no purpose. After two explosions the base fire-fighters arrived — but too late. What was left of the distributor was given to S-4 for salvage.

By the time one runway was complete, heavy transport planes were flown in with loads of precious gasoline which was necessary for Patton's forces to resume their sweep across France. It was quite a thrill to feel a part of this service.



Chiver



Most of the men had become seasoned veterans in the business of trading "D", "C", or 10 in 1 rations for eggs, fruit and vegetables. Many a semi-private feast was held, particularly in the woods where the Heavy Equipment and Repair sections were quartered, as this area was farther from the mess hall. The mess hall provided a continuous fare of 10 in 1 which had by this time become very tiresome.

With the liberation of Paris some of the boys in S-4 decided to look farther afield for rations. They didn't find any rations on this trip but did learn how many Parisian Mademoiselles a weapons carrier would hold. How about it Jack?

At Dreux, also, Sgt. Charles Drake was made the First Sergeant of H. & S. after having served in that capacity since the early days at A-17 when "Joe" became Sgt. Major of the Battalion.

Upon completion of A-41 the unit moved up to Mourmelon-le-Grand, A-80. The route to Mourmelon took the boys through Paris and a surprising number of vehicles stalled while passing through. A stalled vehicle would soon be completely covered by civilians, a large number of which were mademoiselles. Perhaps that had some bearing on the cause of so many motor failures. The convoy entered Paris with plenty of rations for the trip to Mourmelon but left Paris with practically no rations at all. Who ever said the Yanks weren't generous?

At Mourmelon they were to build their first all Hessian mat landing strip and the work moved very swiftly in the chalk soil, becoming operational only ten days after the work first began.

At A-80 the company was quartered in buildings for the first time since leaving Warrington. Some inner-spring mattresses were left here by Jerry officers. Also the indoor wash-ups and showers were quite a treat.

Chow at A-80 showed a great improvement with the addition of captured German stores and vegetables from gardens planted by the recent occupants. The morale of the company showed an upward trend while at this base.

The little town of Mourmelon was visited almost nightly by most of the company. Champagne was plentiful and cheap. Some souvenirs could be purchased. The people were the most friendly so far encountered near any of the bases on the continent. The price of champagne soon mounted like all prices do when the Yanks move into an area. Here, as everywhere, there were two prices; one for the civilians, and another, much higher, for the American soldiers.

The bridge between the base and a small village across the Moselle river had been blown out but there was a narrow, precarious cat-walk across the river on what remained of the bridge. Some H. & S. men are known to have never missed a night navigating that cat-walk on hands and knees during their entire stay at A-90.

While in the midst of the mud of Toul the company lost several "oldsters", veterans of World War I. "Pop" Hargrove, Crain and Garrity were all hospitalized and didn't return to the organization. Let's hope they are all home and in good health.



In spite of the mud and various changes of plans the strip was finally completed and the unit moved to Tantonville, Y-L. Here the 843rd had been laboring in the deepest mud the 840th had seen. Practically all the trucks and equipment of the 843rd had gone to pieces in this mud and the 840th must complete the job.



H. & S. company was billeted in various buildings in the town itself. This was the first time they had actually lived in a town. Although the quarters were nothing one could brag about they were much better than tents in the snow and cold of winter.

It was here that the boys really became well acquainted with Maribel. For the uninformed, maribel is not a mademoiselle but a small yellow plum from which a drink is brewed that is much stronger than one might imagine from the mild sounding name. Maribel was plentiful in Tantonvill and the boys used it as protection against the cold. (That is as good an excuse as any.)

Christmas packages began to arrive in great numbers as the second Christmas overseas came and went.

New Years was quite a celebration for the officers as well as the men. Maribel flowed freely that night. As if it had been timed to the split-second, a Jerry plane swooped in while the celebration was at it's height and sent strafing shots somewhere in the area.



In the enlisted men's quarters some men went through windows, some dived under bunks and some took the stairs three steps at a time. How did "Shorty" Harrison get down from the third floor so quickly? One man, who was in his sleeping bag, didn't take time to open the zipper but rolled off his bunk and under it, sleeping bag and all.

In the officer's quarters ther was also a shuffle. Lt. Klebs on his way out collided with a mattress. The recoil was terrific. Someone suggested he be reccomended for a purple heart as his hand was hurt in the fall. One officer, with pistol swung low on his hip, another tucked



inside his shirt and a carbine over his shoulder, uttered the now famous words, "I'll get those b-----s."

After the plane made two passes over the town it left and the celebration continued, accompanied by various versions of the night's activity. The next morning the only damage discovered was one dead duck which had been hit by one of the shells and one sore hand.

The streets were covered with snow and ice and driving became a hazardous occupation. The runway must be kept free of snow. Grader operators and sweeper operators spent many cold, miserable days and nights scraping and sweeping snow.

Then came a day, in the midst of this cold and snow, when the work at Y-1 was completed and the unit received orders to move on. This was a most perilous move, over ice-covered highways with drifts of snow banked on both sides. A trailer loaded with a D-7 tractor broke loose from a truck while it was going up a hill. This trailer started back down the hill, narrowly missing a truck which was following and came to rest against a tree. In another serial of this same move another trailer loaded with a tractor "jackknifed" and broke loose from the truck while going downhill. Truck and trailer made three complete turns and the trailer struck the front of the truck on one of these turns, damaging the radiator guard and one light. The trailer went over an embankment and landed on its side, tractor and all. The truck was brought under control after the third turn and the driver breathed a sigh of relief. No one was hurt and only very slight damage was done to truck, trailer, or tractor.

The company moved into a champagne winery at Verzenay, near Mourmelon. The quarters here were quite liveable and the company set-up very convenient. Movies were shown in the large mess hall. Heavy equipment park and repair shop was at Mourmelon. This necessitated a drive of fifteen miles morning and night. Some of the equipment and operators were placed with various platoons of the line companies; at Prones, A-79; Mourmelon, A-80; Reims, A-62-D; Juivencourt, A-68; and Laon, A-69.

The infantry became hard pushed for men so the engineers came forward with a helping hand, as always. Many valuable men from the company were transferred to the infantry. Although some good replacements came in there is still a feeling of loss.

Capt. Thomas was made executive officer of the Battalion and Capt. Kenneth E. Bloodough became the commanding officer of H. & S. company. Capt. Bloodough was by no means a stranger to the men of H. & S., having been in "C" company since the early days at Bradley Field.

Chow showed a great improvment at Verzenay. The cooks had much better facilities for cooking and S-4 was drawing better rations. The cooks, under the direction of Mess Sergeant Chase, put forth every effort to make the chow appetizing as well as nourishing and used all their ingenuity in preparing as much variety as possible.

Champaigne was very plentiful here. This little village sat in the hills in the midst of great vinyards and there were several champaigne winerys in the vilage itself. Several dances were given here and the mixture of champaigne, dances, mademoiselles, and men from other units caused some trouble. The champaigne also brought some amusing incidents. Remember a certain T/5 who was decorated with lipstick?

When the various jobs were completed, convoys were formed for another move. The first convoy moved up through Luxembourg and the eqipment was unloaded in Treier, Germany. After unloading, the trucks returned for another load of equipment. The next convoy moved on through Treier and the second night stopped in Ober-Olm, Germany where they spent the night sleeping in the vilage street. These men felt somewhat uneasy spending their first night in the open street of an enemy town. They stayed in Ober-Olm the following day awaiting orders to move up and cross the Rhine.



During the day of waiting the boys explored the vilage. Someone discovered the cellar of a house that had been occupied by a Nazi party leader. This cellar was stocked with wine, both red and white. Of course this wine needed to be sampled. Some of the boys sampled it very generously. The contents of the house

itself indicated the Nazi officials had left in great haste, perhaps never to return. Who knows? Or cares?

The second night most of the boys moved their bed-rolls into the vacant house and felt a little more secure when surrounded by four walls and a roof.

Orders came through to continue the move and the convoy passed through the wreck and rubble of what had once been the busy city of Mainz on the Rhine river. It was discovered the pontoon bridge at Mainz would not support the heavy loads of equipment and they moved along the river to Oppenheim where the combat engineers had constructed a sturdier pontoon bridge. This bridge was crossed without mishap and the convoy rolled into the heavily bombed Y-73, near Frankfurt-on-Main, the former base of the "Graf" Zeppelin.

Much Jerry equipment was on this base and some of it was pressed into service. A generator was found here which was large enough to furnish electricity for a small village. This was used to furnish lights and power for the Battalion. A narrow gauge locomotive furnished steam for pre-heating asphalt. Several Jerry concrete mixers were also used as well as Jerry rollers. The operation or repair of this captured equipment was no obstacle to the mechanically minded men of H. & S.

It was a long move to bring the balance of the equipment from France to Y-73 and the heavy truck drivers were on the road continuously, stopping only overnight at each place. The roads were full of bomb craters and very mountains. Even here in Germany, as in England and France, the men were greeted with the familiar victory sign.

One evening, just at dusk, some of the boys were seated in their barracks talking, writing letters, or just thinking. Then came the sound of a Jerry plane followed by a burst of machine gun strafing. There was an immediate scramble and all tried to pass through the doorway into the hall at the same time. Two men were knocked down in this scramble and one was trampled underfoot. Just as they all reached the hallway there was a loud explosion in the end of the building and the plane passed on overhead. Upon investigation it was discovered one shell had pierced the end room and blown pieces of the cast iron stove all over the room. No one was hurt except the man who had been trampled. He had a bruised hand from the heel of a G.I. shoe.

Some of the boys took long walks in the surrounding woods every evening. Possibly? this was in search of deer which were plentiful in this area. Several nice bucks were killed. These made a welcome addition to the meals at the mess hall. Many of the men "found" Jerry weapons of various sorts; knives, pistols, rifles. These were either sent home, kept for souvenirs, sold, or traded among the men. The average pistol would bring fifty to seventy-five dollars. There was also some traffic in German cameras.

One day a German jet-propelled plane made a landing on the field. When the Jerry pilot climbed out he asked Capt. Schaedel if he would like to go up for a ride. The Captain declined the invitation, pointing out that the plane was marked with German identification. The Jerry pilot said there would be no danger for nothing could catch the plane once it was in the air. This plane was dismantled and shipped to the States for study.

The men found "Schnapps" plentiful enough in the Frankfurt area and this drink had all the effects of various strong beverages tried while in France. Very good beer was also located here. Usually there was a keg at the mess hall and one at the motor pool. Most of the men decided this was the best beer they had tasted since leaving home.

On the move again. The unit had a small job at Stuttgart-Echterdingen, R-50. This was in the zone occupied by the French forces. In less than a week the work was completed and the second convoy of equipment moved from Frankfurt direct to Furstenfeldbruck, R-72, on the outskirts of Munich.

This was only a short job and another one at nearby Oberphaffenhofen, R-81 was also undertaken at the same time. Many displaced persons and repatriated prisoners of all nationalities were encountered in this area. On the site R-81 there were many models of the odd looking "push-pull" planes with which the Jerrys had been experimenting. These planes had a propeller on both ends and it was difficult to tell which end was the front.

When these projects were completed the unit moved on to Kaufbeuren, R-70. Here they had the best quarters they had found since leaving the States. They were possibly even better than the barracks at Bradley Field. These were well



built, permanent barracks built as quarters for pilot-trainees and officers of the German Luftwaffe. There were nice tiled showers on each floor of the buildings. The rooms were small, accomodating from four to six men. A Battalion mess was initiated in a very convenient, well equiped mess building. The boys considered the chow sub-standard and hardly in keeping with the mess hall set up. This was mainly due to the fact that rations had been severely cut and although the cooks had excellent cooking facilities they had only curtailed amounts of plain food to prepare.

The work progressed steadily with the equipment working two shifts daily. This was to be the last job and the men were quite interested in seeing it completed. All extra men in the Heavy Equipment and Transportation sections were busy cleaning and painting trucks and equipment in anticipation of turning them in to the equipment pool.

It was from Kaufbeuren the first men in the company started for home on the point system as well as those above forty years of age. Some of these men were high ranking N.C.O.s. Hull, Haessler, Parsons, 'Gramp' Lufkin, Dahl, and Joe Lubeck were among them. This necessitated a shifting and moving up of others to replace them.

The scenery around Kaufbeuren was quite beautiful. On any clear day the snow-capped Alps could be seen in the distance. On Sundays, trucks, weapons carriers and jeeps made trips to the Alps, carrying all who wished to go. Some of these trips extended into Switzerland, Austria, or Czechoslovakia.

At Kaufbeuren the men discovered another drink called "Halb und Halb". This probably meant half cough syrup and half perfume as it had about that flavor. "Halb und Halb" was very plentiful and was usually brought into the barracks a case at a time. After drinking one bottle of this it was necessary to turn one's stomach in for salvage. The turnover in stomachs was enormous.

On bright, sunshiny Sunday afternoons the favorite recreation was "spazieren" along the river. The river would be full of swimmers and the grassy banks lined with sun-bathing frauleins in abbreviated swim suits. Occasionally? a G.I. would engage in conversation with one of the frauleins — probably only to practice speaking German.

When this drome was completed it was the neatest drome the 840th constructed and when seen from a plane it was beautiful. It was the crowning ac-

What do they have to show for three years of service? A commendable record of work well done, a vast amount of experience, a peaceful world, here some grey hairs and there a nice "head of skin" or a few wrinkles, — SEVENTY-SIX — points and a question.

WHEN DO WE GO HOME???



NÜRNBERG

before & after



Golden Well

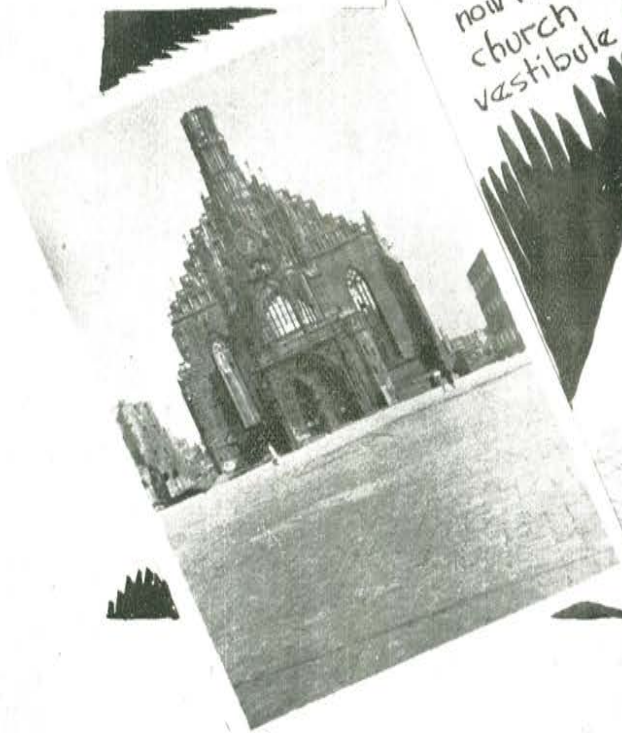


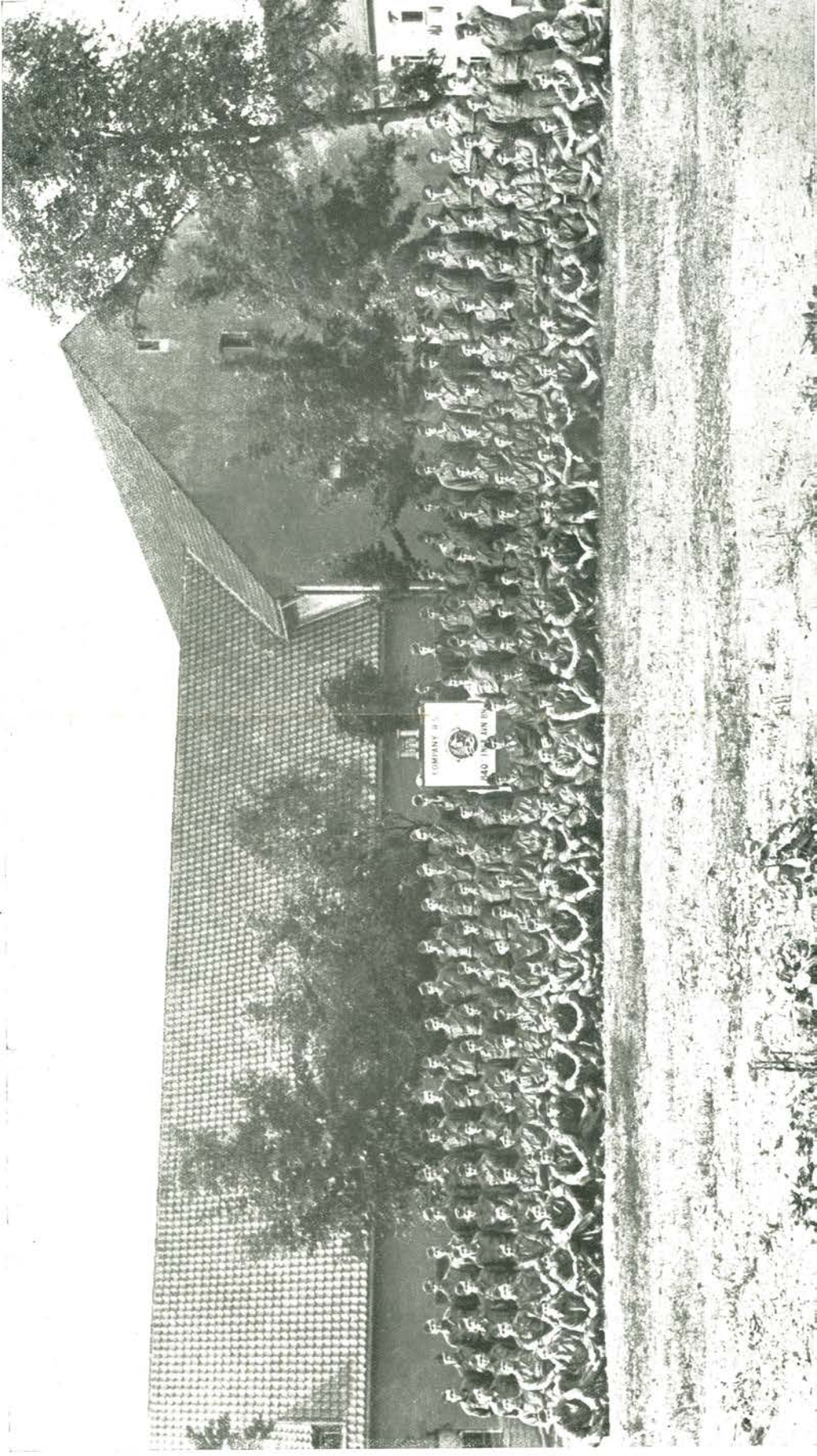
Albert Dürer



Frauenkirche

Church services
now held in
church
vestibule





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Chattanooga, Tenn.

McDonald, Fred D.
Rt. 2,
Blue Mt., Miss.

McGlyn, Joseph J.
2 Pavaonik Court,
Bayone, N.J.

McManus, Richard C.
Indiana, Pa.

McNamara, James E.
23 Dryden St.,
Worcester, Mass.

Memory, Luther C.
511 Penny St.,
High Point, N.C.

Mitchell, Ernest R.
1903 Main St.,
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Mohr, Lawrence A.
Tipton, Mich.

Moore, John E.
Rt. 1.,
Madison, Tenn.

Morris, Richard E.
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Murray, James D.
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Murray, W. P.
Squanton St.,
N. Quincy, Mass.

Nason, Gardner M.
Freeson, N.H.

Neighbours, George C.
Gen. Del.
Daisy, Tenn.

Newell, Herman C.
2505 1/2 17th St.,
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Norris, Charlton H.
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Norris, Paul R.
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Norris, Thomas W.
Gen. Del.,
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Noterman, Emil L.
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Edgwood, R.I.

Orr Raymond
Box 143,
Rachel, W.Va.

Osterweil, Philip
99 Cannon St.,
New York City, N.Y.

Owen, Bailey
Rt. 3,
Henderson, N.C.

Paddock, Clifford M.
Cove Hotel,
Panama, Fla.

Painter, Carl L.
Donora, Pa.

Parker, Benjamin W.
Leon St.,
Ocean Bluff, Mass.

Parlante, Pasquale C.
1 Lyon St.,
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Parsons, Floyd J.
Rt. 1 Box 235,
McCalla, Ala.

Patterson, Ferris H.
101 Virginia Ave.,
Macon, Ga.

Pecorio, Anthony J.
1524 Mifflin St.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Pelkey, Earl W.
228 Hight St.,
Dalton, Mass.

Pena, Albert L.
161 1/2 Las Cruces,
New Mexico

Perez, Henry J.
1013 E. 13th St.,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Peterson, Carl L.
83 Bowen St.,
Jamestown, N.Y.

Pilkenton, James C.
Rt. 2,
Ridgely, Tenn.

Polozzolo, Albert
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Bridgeport, Conn.

Porter, Clifford O.
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Prezpasniak, Edward
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Pruitt, Jacob A.
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Radko, Walter
Springfield Hollow,
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Rawinski, Stanley F.
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Read, George L.
224 Meridian St.,
Nashville, Tenn.

Remillard, Paul
13 Fountain St.,
Old Orchard, Me.

Richardson, William O.
238 Payne St.,
Auburn, Ala.

Ried, John P.
Patchaque, Ave.,
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Riley, Wilbur J.
Rfd 1,
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Rodrigues, Jose A.
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Roley, Thomas H.
Bay Minoette, Ala.

Roll, Buford E.
Rt. 1,
Hardtinsburg, Ind.

Rue, Samuel
Soddy, Tenn.

Russel, Noah J.
Butler St.,
Fountain City, Tenn.

Rutter, Lawrence E.
115 Lisbon St.,
Lectonia, Ohio.

Sadick, Thomas
37 Coram Ave.,
Shelton Conn.

Sabotka, Leonhard J.
1359 W. Christol St.,
Chicago, Ill.

Salreno, Anthony J.
367 Division St.,
Youngstown, Ohio.

Sanders, Fred S.
Fair Hope, Ala.

Schinto, William O.
Bruce Pk. Ave.,
Grenwich, Conn.

Schnabel, Raymond F.
689 Berkley St.,
Riveredge Manor, N.J.

Schroeder, Marvin W.
Rt. 5,
Enid, Okla.

Scott, Robert S.
Rt. 1,
Joelton, Tenn.

Shannon, Harold A.
Rt. 8,
Washington, Wash.

Shaulis, Lloyd W.
Listie, Pa.

Shimp, Delbert H.
Quinton, N.J.

Simmons, Autie L.
Old Deck, N.C.

Sluder, Embler D.
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Smith, Fred H.
10 W. Drive Lake Forest,
Wilmington, N.C.

Smith, Lawrence R.
204 Bowsell St.
Lexington, Tenn.

Smith, William O.
Powers, Ore.

Spangler, Mayford K.
Rt. 1,
Neuberes, Tenn.

Spiegen, James M.
Rt. 1,
Enterprise, Ala.

Standridge, William J.
211 Park Ave.,
West Minister, S.C.

Steakley, Lee L.
6519 Arthur St.,
Oakland, Calif.

Steward, Will, Jr.
Larkinsville, Ala.

Stitt, Thomas C.
Y.M.C.A.
Brewster, Ohio

Struthers, Evereth C.
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Stull, Donald F.
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Sturmer, John L.
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Swenson, William R.
49 Fountain St.,
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Santaeroce, Anthony J.
79 3rd St.,
New Rochelle, N.Y.

Tanner, William L.
64 Main St.,
Thamestown, Conn.

Thomas, Donald B.
5 N.W. St.,
Portsmouth, N.H.

Thompson, Lilburn P.
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Tomlin, Wilbur H.
247 Main St.,
Memphis, Tenn.

Turner, William C.
1596 Delta Ave.,
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Tymkins, William C.
85 Independance St.,
Rochester, N.J.

Urbanek, Walter C.
427 Willet St.,
Buffalo, N.Y.

Van Bergen, Edgar J.
McLain St.,
Mt. Kisco, N.Y.

Vischer, Walter
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Dundalk Branch C.
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Weaver, Kemp E.
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Weeks, Bryant L.
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Welch, Clift E.
Daisy, Tenn.

Wells, Floyd W.
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Wessels Henry J.
Crary N.Dakota

Whitlock, Clarence D.
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Ellerson, Va.

Whittaker, Christopher M.
5511 Main St.,
Elkridge, Md.

Wiener, Arthur N.
433 Beach 141th St.,
Rockway Beach, N.Y.

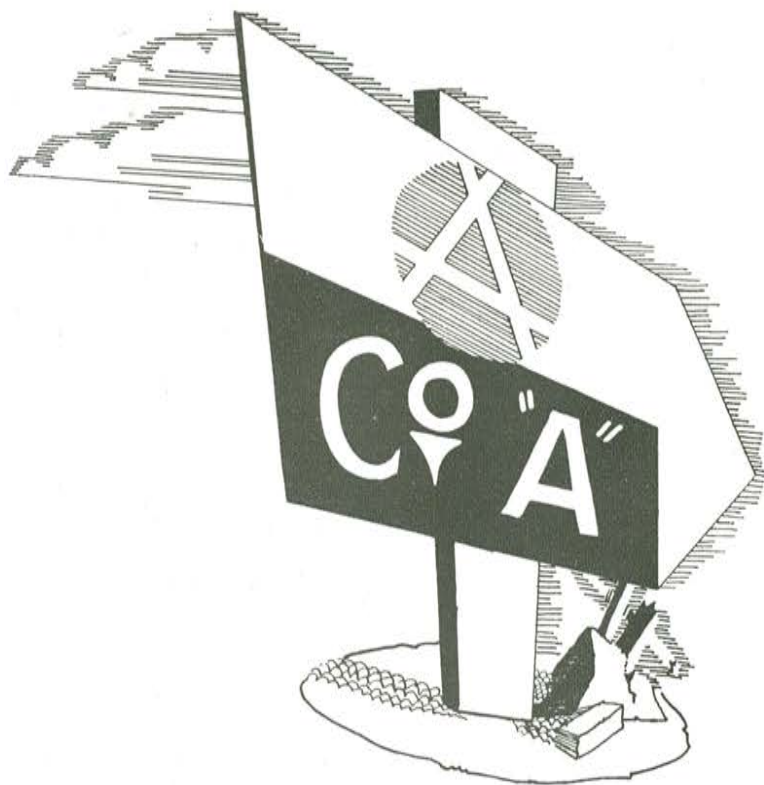
Wilburn, L. G.
242 N. 2nd St.,
Memphis, Tenn.

Williams, Arthur R. C.
Zionsville, N. C.

Wofford, Leon
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Perhaps the

blackest day of World War II came in the late summer and early fall of 1942. The Germans were storming the approaches to Stalingrad, the state of affairs in Africa, with Rommel threatening to move, was serious, while Europe itself was a seemingly impregnable fortress. These were days of darkness, too, and utter confusion for the trainloads of recently-inducted soldiers who had been arriving at the station near Bradley Field, Conn. bewildered and still half-shot, not because of the cup that cheers but as a result of the parting ministrations of a dead-pan sergeant with a fiendish gleam in his eye and a super-charged needle in his hand. The new arrivals were unceremoniously packed into trucks, hauled a tortuous distance, and promptly unloaded, with all the efficient abandon with which cattle are despatched to a slaughter-house. They were immediately lined up and interviewed, each one answering with the awkward tenseness of a groom stammering the fatal "I do". After this brief 'brush with the brass', in most cases their first, for, at the induction-centers, their destinies were directed by hardened Pfc's and rugged sergeants, they were duly assigned to the various companies and, with a taciturn non-com as chaperon, were led to their new quarters. To war-weary veterans who had lived years in makeshift shacks, foxholes, pup-tents, etc; these barracks would be the realization of a dream, a haven of sweet repose, but to eyes with the still-fresh memory of civilian comforts, the set-up was not particularly attractive, and the location, deep in the woods, far-removed from the nearest outpost of civilization, left much to be desired. However, the new civilian soldiers had already learned the first lesson of Army life: to take the bitter with the sweet (if any), and under the gentle "Let's go" prodding of newly-appointed leaders from their ranks, were making feeble, if sometimes futile, efforts to get situated in their new environment.

A day or two later, the men were informed that they were now members of the newly-activated 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion under the command of Major Pierre Kieffer, Jr., and that they were a new branch in the Corps of Engineers. In anticipation of the part that air power was to play, eventually, in World War II, they were to be especially trained in quick construction techniques to build airfields close to the front lines in order that there might always be a plentiful supply of air support of the advancing ground forces.

If one of these 840th men was assigned to "A" Company in the draw, he was



Suddenly, the order came through that we were to be on our way. Our destination, clothed in strictest secrecy, was a matter of conjuncture to all of us. A battalion formation was held and the ranks officially inspected. With A bag and B bag and all cumbersome equipment, we huffed and puffed our way to seats in the waiting coaches. We were pleasantly surprised to find our train routed through the old familiar station at Windsor Locks. Judging by the crowd that had gathered to witness our "secret" departure, about the only ones within a radius of 30 miles, who didn't know about our move were a couple of old farmers who perhaps knew but were too busy to come. Pulling out of the Locks, our minds were filled with strange, amusing memories. We thought of the snarled stumps that Floyd Homer and companions, because of some lapse in conduct had to extricate from the ground, and the big holes Lt. "Put another ten sticks in" Middleton had blown — to the fiendish delight of his boom-crazy assistant, Cheripecta. Other memorable scenes flashed in our minds; the "Icescapades" of that slippery New Year's Day, with conscientious non-coms falling down more often than the bibulous charges they were trying to sober up: Covaleski leading his "Lost Battalion" farther and farther into the forsaken, snow-bound woods until Biddle called a halt and led the squad back to camp: or, Fat Fraser and Big Provisa, scaling the wall on the obstacle course: and, O. B. Brown getting all splotted up with the measles at just the wrong time. Yes, we recalled many things as we waved goodbye: The pretty girls, dances and bars in Springfield and Hartford: and the Rainbow that had seduced so many of our boys from the "straight and narrow".

Our reverie was broken only when the sky-piercing structures of New York loomed into sight. Native New Yorkers in the group identified, with affectionate pride, the various gigantic buildings. As we turned a quick corner, someone, Ferdinando or Boccio, suddenly opened the window and started yelling "Ma, Ma", explaining between shouts, that he could see the corner of his home down the street a block or two.

But our trip across New York was a short one — as military journeys go. And the whisper that we were on the way to Camp Kilmer in New Jersey was confirmed very shortly. The week we spent at Kilmer was a busy one but not too unpleasant (except for Ken Daniels). The weather was fine and there was pretty good beer available at the P.X. As to be expected, there were plenty of clothes checks, equipment inspections and medical examinations. Then, on the glorious, sun-bright Sunday afternoon of May 9, Mothers Day, we pulled out — with a brass band blaring the "Beer Barrel Polka" as a final parting gesture.

During our seven months at Bradley Field, many changes had taken place. As company commanders, we had had, in rapid succession after Lt. Van Greenby, Lt. Halliway, Lt. Ball and, finally, Lt. Schaedel. Platoon lieutenants likewise had come and gone. Lt. Thomas was with us only a few months when he was promoted to the "C" Company's C.O. We had Lt. Woodworth a short while. Lt. Middleton and Lt. Paul were with us for sometime, but, just prior to our move to Kilmer, were transferred. On the eve of our departure overseas this was our command set-up: C. O. Lt. Schaedel; assistants, Lt. Warfield, Lt. Fiske, Lt. Humphries and Lt. Covill. We had long lost our first top-kick. Sgt. O'Brien had left with a small group going out on cadre. Other non-com ratings had been won and lost with the regularity of the rising and setting sun. There were more "busts" than there are showers in an English month.. By the time we reached Kilmer, we already had the nucleus of what came close to being the permanent staff group. First Sergeant Purvis; platoon sergeants, Alford, J. E. Smith and Stuart; Supply, Daniels; Motor, Carson; Mess, Brewer.. As for personnel, many old timers had been transferred out. We left "They can't make it too tough for me" Kraus back in Bradley Field, dishing out hamburgers to Wacs — which, come to think about it, is a pretty pleasant way to fight a war. At different times during the latter months of our stay at Bradley Field, the original unit was augmented by replacements from Mitchell, Westover and other air bases. We were fortunate in getting these men, for all of them were good spirited, capable, and conscientious. More important still, there were in these groups, several "killer-dillers", like Fortunato, who, in the days to come, were going to do so much toward making the 840th a fragrant memory in the hearts of women everywhere from Manchester, England, to Nuremberg, Germany.

So, though there were many new faces in the long line of "A" Co. men that trudged, heavy-laden with bags and full equipment, up the gang-plank late one night, a substantial majority of the original group had survived the natural process of transfer and discharge.

Each of us was given a little card, indicating the location of his berth and mess quarters and informing him that he was on the *Acquitania*, a hardy, sea-worthy veteran of many a perilous voyage. But, however impressive was its sea-faring experience through the years, we soon learned, to our chagrin, that in the matters of food, sleeping-quarters and bathing facilities, the *Acquitania* was far, far from being any sort of luxury liner.

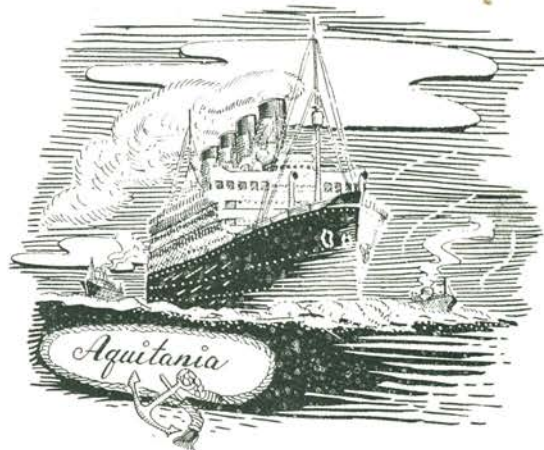
On the next morning, May 10, we pulled anchor. Sailing down New York Harbor, with the panorama of the sprawling, sky-jutting metropolis in the background is always a thrilling experience. But it takes a very rare and extraordinary imagination to savor any enjoyment out of visual delights that you can't see. With our imaginations atrophied by months of Army life, we could only stand around forlornly in the murky gloom of our quarters, with every view, large and small, of the outside world completely blacked out. And just to intensify our already low spirits, some helpful Henry, after the lapse of a few minutes, chirped up that we must be just about passing the Statue of Liberty. Well, the only meagre ounce of consolation we could squeeze out of our sad plight lay in the expressed resolution of someone that "You can bet it'll be different when we come back. We'll see the old Lady then, and everything else."

The trip across was filled with odd, exciting, and humorous incidents as well as many discomforts. The bunks had a compact four-in-a-Tier arrangement. And the individual bunk was not very long and, by no means, wide. The man who made them surely didn't take Wilcox into consideration. To avoid cluttering the narrow passageways, we had to pile our equipment onto our bunks. If ever there was an exasperating experience, it was climbing, in the semi-darkness into a third-high bunk where a sturdy M1, a gas mask, a cartridge belt, a full pack, a blanket-roll, and a mess kit were already solidly ensconced. Many a hard-won moment of sweet slumber was shattered by the clanging crash of a mess kit on the floor. If we were enough of a contortionist to get into the bunks, despite the accumulation of hindrances, we soon had regrets. For, by way of crevices and openings here and there, the fierce, raw night winds somehow infiltrated into the quarters and clutched us in a chill that made our teeth chatter and our bones tremble. It didn't take us long to discover that the inside passages, stairways, and small bathrooms were at least sheltered from the penetrating chill of the deck quarters. Night after night most of us were strewn along the inside corridors or ensconced in some snug stairway corner. Entering a little bathroom late one night we found George Reardon cosily curled up in the bathtub, his water wing harness forming a convenient pillow and the sweet half-smile of a sleeping baby on his cherubic face. Fact is,

these small bathrooms were used more frequently for sleeping than for ablution purposes, probably because a salt-water bath left one with the slightly unpleasant sensation of having had a sticky, glycerin rubdown.



After the trials and tribulations of a night like this, we were scarcely in a mood to appreciate the regular "Limey" breakfast that was served. The cereal must have come from the original stock of the Aquitania's maiden voyage 30 years ago. The tea had long since died of that malady called tea-anaemia due to too much water and to little tea. As for the marmalade, well you know what left-over marmalade, with all its stringy embellishments, is like. One morning, soft-boiled eggs were served. Harry Snodgrass, a man of vast experience, took a sniff and wouldn't touch one. "No Sir," he said, "I just heard the damn thing cackle."



All these little unpleasanties did, for a while, take our minds off the increasingly pressing fact that we were rapidly leaving the area of safety and security and heading straight into the hazards of the North Atlantic. Up along the coast of Nova Scotia, an escort ship was always in sight or an occasional plane hovered within view to bolster our confidence. But, strange to relate, the minute we headed into dangerous waters, instead of joining some formidable convoy, as we expected, we found we were on our own, absolutely alone, on the vast, sub-infested deep. Just when the dominoes were galloping and the blackjack stakes mounting, the shrill alarm would sound ominously. One was never sure whether it was the real thing or a dry-run, especially, when came at night. Rumors, of course, were rampant, one — which seemed to be confirmed by the log data — to the effect that news of a lurking wold-pack caused a sudden altering of our course, taking us from our northern land far down to the vicinity of the Azores. Yet the days passed without any serious mishap, and many of us quickly lost the haunting fear that had obsessed us. Then suddenly, one night the deck guns opened up with a shuddering volley, to the accompaniment of the shrill alarm. Though nothing happened, this was sufficient to shake even the most phlegmatic of us out of our complacency.

We breathed a deep sigh of relief a few days later when the first Catalina came into view, indicating that land was not very far away. We had been very fortunate in our voyage, not only in eluding subs, but also in the consistently fine weather we enjoyed. Daylight lingered almost till midnight, making the cold, danger fraught night blessedly short. The afternoons on the deck had a sun-shiny warmth that could be enjoyed despite the brisk, sharp, ocean winds. About the only

minor mishap of the trip, outside of the bankrolls that had vanished in games of skill and chance, was the regrettable experience of some of our guards, left at their posts a few extra hours because the corporal forgot or couldn't find them.

Most of us will never forget our feeling when the definite outline of land emerged out of the misty blur, or how beautiful the scenery was along the approaches to the harbor. The soft-green slopes, rising from a radiant shimmer of water, seemed to be neatly trimmed and tastefully decorated. And farther off, where the terrain was more rugged the sharp juts and promontories cleanly cut the vast panoply of blue. Within the cove of the harbor there was teeming activity, all sorts of boats and barges chuffing and puffing, and smaller craft slithering along in quite hustle. There was something about the juxtaposition of land and water and the strange combination of limitless placidity and concentrated activity that would make Mike Siegel yearn for his palette and brush. Some prosaic-minded G.I., definitely not McGlynn, shouted loud and bold "New Jersey was never like this."

Everything in the way of scenery during our day-long train trip down almost the length of England was an anti-climax. But it was a pleasant journey throughout: the wild, rugged charm of Scotland, the beautiful Lake country, the gently rolling hills and farmlands, placid under a glorious May sun, the women waving enthusiastically and the little tots timidly the thumbs-up "Victory" greeting.

In our stop at one of the big-city stations, Henry Robinson missed a cup of coffee and almost missed the train as he stood gazing, in awe-struck wonder at the robust build of a bosomy damsel who nonchalantly tossed around heavy baggage and boxes.

A short rumbling truck ride capped our long train trip and in the darkness of our first English blackout, we arrived at our destination, near Matching Green, a little, rather forlorn community about 15 miles from Chelmsford and 35 miles from London. Here we had our first contact with the "You cawn't miss it" casualness of English life and its quaint customs. At the little pub in the Green or at White Roding we tried and tried (but all in vain) to quench our gnawing thirst with countless draughts of "mild and bitter", the famed flat, tepid drink so dear to Englishmen, but so disappointing to the rugged tastes of Americans. In the

After a restive period of two weeks, passes for a trip to London were issued. So the 840th march on Piccadilly began. It can be recorded now that the march was quite successful, with casualties surprisingly low. The pass gave us an opportunity to view the many historic landmarks and enjoy the other attractions (mostly female) of one of the really great cities of the world. We were surprised to see that the seering wounds of 1941 had healed completely, only a few livid scars remaining to remind us of the devastating ordeal the people of London had to endure.

If, during the week, the whim for a little diversion seized us, the nearby city of Chelmsford had some attractions to offer. Many of us went there regularly to visit the Red Cross or to trip the light fantastic at the local dance hall.

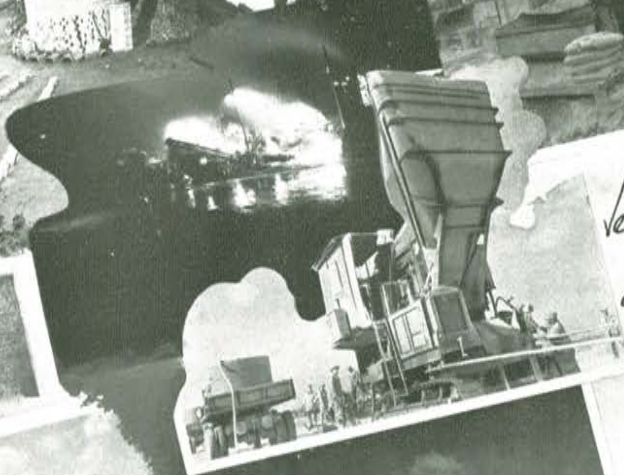
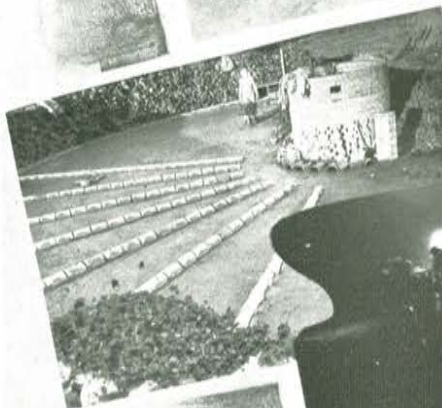
On July 17, the 840th, attired in all its finest, marched to Chipping Ongar to attend the formal exercises in honor of its completion as the first operational base for B 25s in the theater. We also celebrated in September the first anniversary of our activation. At a battalion formation, awards were made and Lt. Colonel Kieffer congratulated the men on their accomplishments to date and expressed his confidence that they would prove equal to the many tasks remaining before them. "How true!"

During our stay till late September, there were a few happenings worth mention. In a deal with Battalion Headquarters we got Lt. Maloney in exchange for Lt. Covill. Lt. Humphries was transferred out of the outfit. And just before our move, Corporal Murphy was relieved of command of the — well, to use a parlor room synonym, let us say — Incurable "Squad".

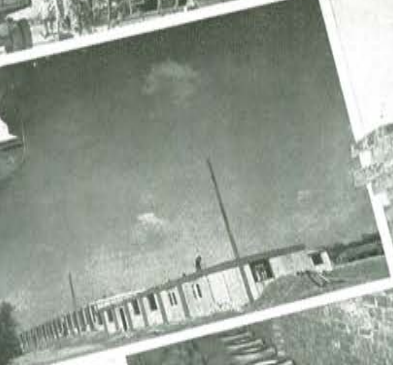
Our next move took us north to Alconbury, located near the town Huntingdon, not very far from Cambridge, the university center.

If we worked hard at Chipping Ongar, we worked harder still at Alconbury. "A" company not only built a disposal plant and laid sewage lines but also furnished regular details for work in the asphalt plant. John O'Brien and Grover Carmichael are supposed to have established some kind of record in the number of bags of cement handled. Every time John would praise Grover's prowess, Carmichael would be inspired to great efforts. By morning Carmichael was completely exhausted physically while John, strange to say, was almost run-down, verbally.

no
work
too
hard



versatility —
continuously



time
to
move

Most of us had neither the time nor the inclination for much social activity. Convoys were run occasionally to Peterborough or Cambridge. But the most popular rendezvous was the Red Cross Club in Huntingdon. Its excellent services, home-like atmosphere of comfort and cleanliness, and all-around attractiveness made this a "first" in the various Red Cross clubs of our experience. It was fortunate that we had such a pleasant place to go once in a while because, with the arrival of late fall, the dreary, raw, overcast days were short and the nights long and cold. And there wasn't any too great abundance of fuel for the greedy little stoves.

Here, at Alconbury, we had a few changes in the command set-up. A new officer, Lt. Parsons was assigned to the company. He was a most unusual character and quite unorthodox officer. His stay was short, very short. As someone very gaily remarked, "He came, he saw, but evidently, he did not 'concur'." We were grieved to bid goodbye to Lt. Fiske, who had been with us since Bradley Field. As for the non-coms, John Kasparzak was now Mess Sergeant and Sgt. Duke had replaced Stuart who had gone to the hospital.

We began to have grave misgivings about the future when the one-day a week training program was started, in which we were re-instructed in military fundamentals. But the training day had its highlight, the currant Events talk usually given by Lt. Maloney. Though admittedly degenerating at times into a kind of rumor-dissection clinic, we enjoyed the hour from beginning to end.

Because of the strenuous grind, our morale was low. But it was given a slight lift by the announcement that fourloughs were to be resumed. The old roster was taken from the bottom drawer where it had lain so long, dusted off, and the first lucky few took off. But the resumption was short-lived because of our impending move.

This time our destination was Site 10, near the city of Warrington in the north-west part of England. We arrived there just before Christmas. The location was ideal. Not only was there the sizeable town of Northwich just across the fields, but the big city of Warrington was within walking distance; and from there, if one wished, it was only a short train ride to Manchester or Liverpool.

A third of the company got Christmas day off and all of them descended, in gay holiday spirit, on the little town of Northwich. Later, they came back, one by one, each with same disappointed look on his face. Yes the town was a lively little place, and there were quite a few good-looking dames, and the girls liked Americans, in fact, were enthusiastic about them. But . . . and that "but" soured the whole experience. The Americans whom the girls had been going out with and liked so much were members, as the girls put it "of the American Indian" battalion that was stationed in the town. So Northwich was "Off Limits" to most of the boys even before the official order was issued. There was no sense, moreover, in going to Northwich when a big city like Warrington was so near at hand. It had every kind of attraction from dog-races to an Irish Social Club. Incidentally, our hardy Irish boys, Murphy and O'Brien, on the strength of their names and their handsome ruddy faces, were promptly elected to honorary membership. Palumbo, after some delay, was also admitted, having proved to their satisfaction that some cousin of a great, great grandmother was of Irish descent. Within a few weeks the company moved from Site 10 to Site 3 into the Nisson huts they had just built. From there on they were occupied in the big jobs of laying water and sewage lines (while Holliman played "hide and seek" with Willie Brady) building long stretches of concrete roads, erecting more huts, and working out in the big Burton Airdrome.

This was perhaps the happiest period of our stay in England. Despite the fact that it was winter, the weather was mild, even pleasant most of the time. We liked the officers in charge, Lt. O'Neil, Lt. Warfield and Lt. Weed. On the group passes we could visit Warrington or the "Long Bar" in Manchester. Several of the fortunate who got furloughs went to Blackpool, the famed pleasure resort, or up to one of the big cities of Scotland. And for those who wanted a good time without traveling too far there was always the Rose Inn, a stone's throw from the barracks. Ah, many of the boys hold dear memories of the gay social



life that revolved about the Inn. We knew that it was too good to last.

Meanwhile, the fact that our training program had been enlarged, coinciding with the stepped up air offensive against the continent and the persistent feeling that large-scale undertakings were about to be launched, all prepared us for the news that our next assignment would take us to the regimental training area, located at Matlask, far across England, on the east coast, overlooking the North Sea.

Matlask was quite a contrast to the Warrington district; in fact, the whole pattern of the little scattered communities was unlike any other part of England we had visited.

We soon discovered, once the intensive training had begun, that the muscles so hardened by our tramps over the hills and dales around Bradley Field, had softened considerably during our stay in England. It must have been particularly difficult for Lt. Yee, who had just come into the company, to match the long strides of Lt. Schaedel in one of the forced marches to a bivouac. Sore and weary we didn't sleep very good in our cold pup tents until the early morning sun provided a little warmth. Then the snores were so loud and all-pervasive that at reveille time no one, it seemed, could hear the whistle. So, the already over-worked sergeants had to go about tickling an extended toe and asking everyone to please hurry to breakfast.



It was at Matlask that Grover Smith was promoted to Staff, probably as a result of the excellent manner in which he had handled an extremely difficult situation back at Site 3. He was in charge of a special detail of Air Corps workers. They didn't like the idea in the first place and didn't like Engineers in the second. After several slurring remarks which were let pass, Grover accepted the implied challenge and proceeded to lay his adversary low with all the force, directness and precision of the Old Osgood depositing a nice load of brick exactly on the spot.

We don't know who Sgt. Isom had bested in bloody battle. Anyway he too was promoted to Supply Sergeant — the undoing of a likeable intelligent fellow who became so 32-form conscious that at a later date in France he wouldn't take to a foxhole in a bombing attack unless he had the precious papers in his possession.

A long hike to Kromer, overlooking the North Sea, was the piece de resistance of our training program. Tramping down one of the long inclines leading to the city we chanced upon one of those odd signs you see from time to time, whose origin and presence on a certain spot no flight of the imagination can explain. The huge, bold letters behind a kind of finger pointing forward formed the word ALABAMA. There were deep sighs and witty comments. Then a husky rebel voice, after softly pronouncing the word with a caressing drawl, suddenly sounded off "Gosh a Mighty, fellows. We're on the right road at last. Let's go."

But the end of the steep road was a long way from Alabama. It was a shaggy knoll that looked out on the broad expanse of the North Sea. As we viewed the strands of barbed-wire and the mined areas along the shore, our minds kept playing with might-have-been conjectures . . . what if the Germans had tried . . . etc.

These hikes were exhausting but you would never think so to see the hardier, pleasure loving boys come in, don O.D.s and, proceeding on the questionable theory that one blister is as bad as four blisters, set out on foot six miles to Holt, the only place within distance that had any semblance of social activity.

It's just as well that we didn't have many opportunities to visit Norwich, about 30 miles away. Almost every one who went this M.P.-infested city got into difficulties. Even the irreproachable Willie Brady and the gallant John O'Brien, intent only on making a good will tour of the city, fared not so good. Can you imagine what would happen had E. T. Lee who has a personal dislike for even good M.P.s gone along?

So no tears were shed in the murky hours of dawn when we pulled



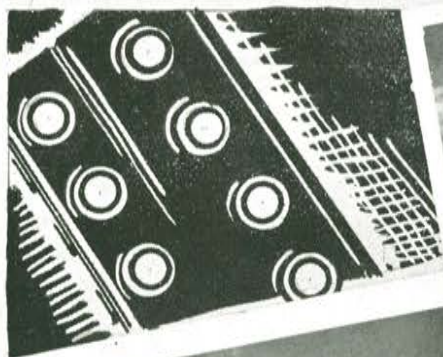
out of Matlask on the long journey south to Great Barrington, located near Oxford. If Matlask was a slight headache, Great Barrington was a migraine of major proportions. It was a G.I. as the off-spring of a major's Wac wife. At the routine medical examination we had to pull our shirt up over our cartridge belt and let our pants down with one hand while, with the other, we steadied the clumsily M-1 slung over our shoulders.

While special details waterproofed vehicles and strung camouflage nets, the rest of us wore deep cracks and crevices in the pavements of the long winding hills leading to and from the camp, raising tender ridges and watery blisters on our feet. The oppressive monotony was finally relieved by a 3-day trip to a nearby air field for practice in the quick techniques of strip-laying. Somebody had selected our bivouac area with malice aforethought. Digging a slit trench our pack shovel was like trying to cut a tough steak with a spoon-handle. Sleeping on the irremovable snaggy bumps and lumps of ground offered about as much comfort and restfulness as walking about with a shoe full of pebbles. But this didn't affect "A" Company's working prowess. Wire mesh was pulled up, laid down and pulled up again. Hessian mats were laid and tarred, planking moved and re-moved with all the ease and methodicalness of a housewife dusting off and arranging the parlor table. Oh Yes.

Meanwhile, June 6 had dawned and after the lapse of some hours, the news was given to a waiting world that the Normandy beaches had been stormed by Allied Forces and successful beachheads established. We felt that very soon we would be on our way. We knew that when an amount of territory sufficient for operations was gained, air-strips would be needed to facilitate the efforts of the Air Corps in supporting the advancing ground forces. After a week or so of routine clothing checks and equipment inspections we were on our way to the marshalling area near Southampton.

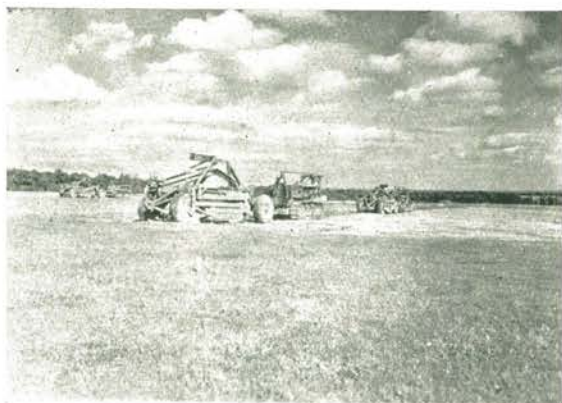


After Matlask and Great Barrington, this spot was a virtual Paradise, having the one and only governing rules that Paradises usually have — restriction to the area. Otherwise our time and activity was of our own choosing. There were no helmets or guns to lug along as we dashed from a show to the mess hall and back to another show. When we got fed



CONSTRUE





up on shows there were always card games where we could very quickly lose our few francs (just issued) and the Naffi social centers where refreshments were available. There was also a plentiful supply of that super-charged juice that bore the deceiving misnomer of beer — pronounced by hards experts as fully as potent as any equivalent amount of genuine

mountain dew. Too many cups of this liquid was responsible not only for Griffin's mad quest of the little fat man who was not there but also for the bloodiest bit of fisteuffing since the day back in England when Murphy boxed the cow. As a result Battler Calahan conceded to Hebert that youth must be served.

But an announcement from the bodiless voice that, all day called "Attention, Attention", put an end to these pleasant activities for a portion of the company. It indicated that the walking party would make ready for immediate departure. A second group left a few days later, leaving the rest of us to sweat it out almost a week. But it was an enjoyable kind of sweating except after midnight. For just about this time the Jerries perhaps informed that the 840th was in the area, really opened up. For several nights in a row the shrill alarm sounded followed by the distant sputter of gunfire. Then came the night when our peaceful slumber was shattered by a shuddering explosion. Our tents seemed to reel at the reverberating impact. The mess kits hanging along the sides, quivered and clanged. Next day we learned that a huge bomb had landed in the field adjacent to the road our vehicles were parked, showering the surroundings with huge chunks of turf. With the terrific force of its concussion it had broken the windows and ripped off the roofs of a whole line of houses in the vicinity. Feeling that the Jerries had the spot zeroed we were anxious to get going. Yet when the call did come, it was at a most unexpected moment. Assuming, with the advent of late evening that nothing

would happen till the morrow, some of us took to wandering off to slightly more remote attractions, only to find on our return that night, that the rest of the gang had gone leaving the several tents starkly empty save for a disordered bundle of equipment in the corners. This we hurriedly loaded into the small trucks and jeeps which cooperative offi-



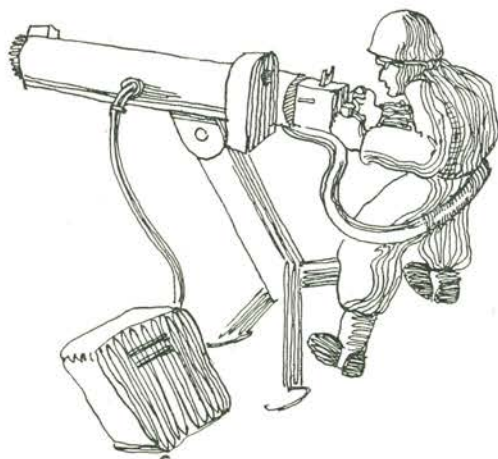
cers had kindly provided. We made a mad dash for Southampton, expecting to see our ship disappearing in the mists of the horizon. But we arrived in plenty of time to find our comrades sprawled out in all four corners of the wind-swept station. We, too, promptly stretched out on the concrete floor for a night of fitful slumber.

Early next morning we boarded a liberty ship and began one of the epochal moves of our long wanderings, the crossing of the English Channel to France. On our journey across the Atlantic we had been fearfully alone. On this Channel trip we seemed to have had the escort of a half dozen convoys. The Channel was like the Thames in Conn. on regatta day. Even the night was comparatively quiet with only an occasional flurry of activity in the skies. We arrived within sight of Omaha Beach the next day, but had to spend another night on ship awaiting our turn to be maneuvered into the proper spot for the unloading, since a considerable stretch of the shore was still cluttered with wreckage and equipment discarded in the heat of bloody battles only a few weeks before. The transfer of trucks and equipment from ship to "Duck" went along without a hitch with the exception of a jeep that was laid down rather roughly. When all of us, after an occasional nervous sway had descended the rope ladder the "Ducks" chugged up to the rim of the shore. The trucks took off up the long winding road. Thus had begun the first lap of a journey that, would take us far across the Rhine into the heart of Germany itself.

To increase the tension, the rumor was whispered that the German lines, not a great distance away, were restive and that infiltration movements preliminary to a counterattack were suspected. By strange coincidence, the guard was doubled, thus adding confirmation to the rumor. The following night the two guards in the outer area had a lively time of it. Twice they were forced to blow their whistles, warning of an imminent air attack, and the rest of the night they watched the varied display of tracer fire and listened to the sputter of ack-ack guns. Then in that strange black stillness that follows the noisy brightness of air activity the two guards checked the time and started on the final rounds of their stint. As they approached the far tree-shaded corner of the hedge-rows there was



suddenly a very definite, unmistakeable movement. The guards stopped in their tracks. In a hurried whisper they made their plans. By separate approaches they crept closer to their objective. One more they were paralyzed in their tracks by the same movement, definite unmistakeable. The loud hoars call of "halt" shattered the silence. There was no answer. "I will give you ten seconds. — One, two," the loud nervous voice continued on, one of the measured pauses broken by the persuasive click of the safety. While the count mounted critically there was a slight rustle and, evidently intrigued by the persistent human voice, Nancy, the cow, raised up her head and blythely peered over the hedge bush. Seeing nothing of interest she quickly went back to munching the delicacies under the tree.



Joining the rest of the company, at Isigny, we found everyone burrowed in camouflaged foxholes and brimming with stories of night attacks and wild aerial battles. We soon found out, that a dog-fight was a regular daily occurrence. There was the time when a Jerry plane, sneaking in with an Allied formation suddenly slipped away, sweeping down with the intention to pepper our area, but Tom Mitchell, who was manning a .50, whammed away at it. By this time the Jerry's identity had been noted in other quarters and there were soon two Allied planes on his tail. If the curl of smoke that became

visible as he disappeared in the distance was not evidence of a mortal blow, then he certainly had a very close call.

When the foxholes had been painstakingly deepened as a result of too many hasty night-shirt exits, the order came to move to an area near Carentan.

A big apple orchard was set aside for a bivouac area. Tents were pitched under the spreading apple trees. It was an ideal spot except for the fact that artillery guns were set up in the adjacent field. Each night when the crew went through its practice routine, every tent would quiver and every heart would skip

five or six beats, despite the fact that we more or less expected these regular exercises. You can imagine the effects when these guns sounded off in the silence of midnight, Yes, like Macbeth, they murdered sleep — the loud way. Not a night passed during these first weeks here that the umm-ahh-umm whine of a Jerry plane did not provoke the big guns into action. Awakened by the echoes of distant fire, we would take off to our foxholes and lie in quiet suspense, listening to the jumbled squealing of the radar instruments. Then the guns would boom as the Jerry's umm-ahh-umm faded away in the distance. These frequent visitations resulted from the fact that the front lines were still not very far away. Our whole area abounded in foxholes that had been used just recently. Everything imaginable was unearthed out of them from a woman's silk panties to a decaying corpse. But neither these gruesome sights nor the threats of booby traps deterred Baggart in his persistent scavenger hunt.

With the warm midsummer sun gently bronzing our bare backs we worked hard here but enjoyed it. We got the terrain into shape, laid the mats, staked down the wire-mesh on runways and taxiways.

One morning of a cloudless blue day in the latter part of July, the skies suddenly darkened with the rush of planes.. We saw the first group breaking formation to circumvent the storm of ack-ack and to meet the few hearty Jerries that rose to intercept the onrush. Several in those first groups lunged to earth in a curl of smoke and flame. But the way was soon cleared. Wave after wave kept coming over, every formation remaining intact now. Here were heavies and escorts and more heavies with P - 38s - hundreds of them and then thousands. It was perhaps the most inspiring sight we would ever behold. Just when a group of heavies disappeared in the distance the ground would seem to vibrate. We knew from all this that the big Saint Lo offensive, threatened for some time, had been launched. Watching the still on-coming planes, we noticed that one bomber of an approaching formation seemed to lag behind. And then suddenly something like a huge black sausage was plummeting through the air. We hit the ground as quickly as we could.



There was no time to look around for foxholes. It seemed the big sausage hurtling down could not miss the Orderly Room. There was a dull thud and a splash of dirt high into the air. Our hearts stopped beating while the seconds ticked away. But there was no explosion. After ten minutes, a few courageous G.I.s timidly investigated. The bomb was in good order. The release mechanism fortunately had not functioned. An explosion would have wiped out the Orderly Room as well as the Supply Room, killing probably about fifty of our boys. It was several weeks before the pallor left the faces of those who had been in the immediate area. It seemed to be the irony of fate that the nearest thing to a major tragedy resulted not from an enemy missile but from one of our own bombs.

The breakthrough had been successful and in the ensuing weeks the Allied Armies were pushing on at a rapid pace. We seldom saw Lt. Warfield and his Reconnaissance group. They had been busy since our arrival and now they were on the go all the time, turning up once a week or once every two weeks to scrape the accumulated grime off their faces. They had been all over the forward sector, sometimes in territory that the infantry had not yet taken. In these expeditions, they acquired valuable information, gave assistance to front line movements and even bagged quite a few prisoners. For these successful activities various members received many awards, including the Bronze Star, the Croix de Guerre. The only regrettable accident of these many thrusts into forward sectors was the injury sustained by "Porky" Smith, in setting up a booby-trap. So serious were his wounds that he had to be rushed to England. He was one of our original members and also one of the most conscientious, best-liked in the company.

Spearheads had thrust out in all directions. As a result, our next ride was a long one — far into the heart of France. The air-base at Dreux was our objective. All we knew was that rather indefinite front line swung in and around this territory. The farther on we went, the more enthusiastic the welcome we received. In our travels, we had become accustomed to a more or less warm reception, but this unusual display of affection rather baffled us. We pulled into a shelter that night and bivouaced in a drizzle of a rain. Next day we resumed our journey with some trepidation, for no one, in our lower ranks, seemed to know how far from the front-lines our destination was. In our frequent stops, French men and women would hurry up to the trucks and pass out sips of what, to most of us was a new

drink, Calvados. After the hard-cider of Normandy, the White Lightning though potent, was quite stimulating.

We got the surprise of our lives when we passed through the square of a small little village. Children came running out of the houses, old men waved their hats in the air, and the women cheered and threw kisses and flowers. This extraordinary welcome certainly overwhelmed us, but also gave food for some diquieting thought. The spontaneity of their welcome implied but one thing: not many Allied Troops had passes that way. The real high-point, however came farther on. As we approached a fork in the road we passed a group of rough-looking tankmen. If these hardened veterans give you any recognition at all it is just an indifferent nod, but strange to say, they all gave us friendly "Hi, there" pointing their thumbs up in the victory salute. As we passed, one of them yelled "Good luck boys. Go give it to them." The lead of the convoy promptly stopped at the fork in the road. We remember Lt. Anthony getting out and walking up and down, with a "What the Hell's this" look on his face. Deciding not to crowd the formidable array of tanks that were impressively lined up along the turn in the road, we took the other turn. It must have been a good choice because we safely arrived at our destination.

It was evident that the area was newly taken. We rather surmised that the infantry like the tanks, had just swept on, leaving the little pockets for the F.F.I. to clean up. Little groups of them were always moving hastily about on serious business, bringing in questionable characters and combing the wooded area for the several snipers reported still lurking there. Whether the occasional shots that punctated the twilight stillness was enemy action or some G.I. giving his trigger finger a little practice on some scurrying rabbit will never be known. And the two or three bullets that whizzed over our heads might not, after all, have been the last effort of some hastily departing sniper. But whatever the origin, they threw



the company into a frenzy of activity. Jeeps of armed G.I.s sped up and down the main roads while details trekked guardedly through the woods. Though no snipers were found, the efforts put a swift ending to further disturbances of mysterious nature. But we always kept a heavy guard in the night time.

That brings to mind the unfortunate experience of the corporal of the guard during our first night there. We had arrived rather late and found the amount of land with sufficient protective cover limited. Thus the tents were more or less bunched together and there was no definite path through them. The corporal of the guard had duly checked and noted the locations of the several tents, but he had not reckoned with the eerie distortion that black night gives to a pathless unfamiliar wilderness. No private of the guard, in any of his long, harrowing stints, ever had it as rough as that corporal. Insulted and reviled for waking up the wrong persons, he stumbled on, tripping heavily over tent ropes and gashing his head, brushing into thorny branches that scratched his face, twisting his ankle on snags in the ground, falling headlong into camouflaged foxholes. Next morning patched up, bandaged, and limping he looked like the only surviving member of a suicide squad. Yet he got no Bronze Star, not even a Purple Heart.

We spent several weeks at Dreux, repairing the concrete runways and getting the field in shape for future operations.

It was while at Dreux that Capt. Schaedel was transferred to S-3 and Lt. Warfield became the Company Commander of "A" Company.

Before we left for Mourmelon-le-Grande, we had the grand satisfaction of watching streams and streams of heavies come floating in, laden with tanks of gasoline, much needed by the fast-moving spearhead units.

The trip to Mourmelon gave us an opportunity to catch a passing glimpse of gay Paris. We went through the famed ornate section of Versailles and touched a part of the city proper. In the bright late summer sunshine the city seemed to be fast regaining its accustomed zip and sparkle. The people were healthy-looking and well-dressed. The curvacious, chic-attired women had a silky, slinky swish to their walk that lifted many a droopy eyelid. The streets were neat and clean. Superficially the city looked none the worse for its long months of German occupation.

Mourmelon le Grande was definitely the best set-up we had on the continent. We lived in large buildings which we affectionately called the "Dormitories". Some

of the more enterprising boys found a secret source of mattresses, the supply of which was soon exhausted. All sorts of handy gadgets, lighting fixtures, and technical equipment abounded in the many barracks in the area. Mourmelon had at one time been a famed French military school. It had been taken by the Germans when they overran France. It was immediately taken over by the 840th when it arrived.

"A" Company was busy during its stay here, which was all too thort, filling up the many gaping bomb craters and assisting in laying the Hessian cloth strip.

After Mourmelon came a job in the vicinity of Toul. Here, leaving all memories of the spacious comfortable dormitories behind, we went back to the life to wihch we were accustomed — pup tents in the cold wet ground. Since the work on the field was delayed by countless days of rain and endless seas of mud and there was plenty of spare lumber available, we decided to go in for something more solid than the fragile pup tents. Structures of all sorts, shapes, and sizes went up over night making a community of homes that could well serve as the inspiration for a Dall dream. But even



these structures couldn't keep out the damp penetrating cold. Suddenly a miscellaneous collection of stoves were unearthed, ranging from the over-sized pot-belly type (named for whom?) down to fragile oil-can imitations. The sturdy, luxurious woodland soon became sparse and bald. But we kept warm and had some means of drying off the mud accumulated doing drainage work.

Outside of an occasional visit to Toul or Nancy, there wasn't much in the way of diversion here. The fact that it began to get dark before six o'clock and the muddy going discouraged even the most restive from venturing forth. With memories of long, cold, frequent guard shifts we left Toul with very little regret with the possible eception of the gang of "blasting" fishermen.

Tantonville, at least, was a change. There was a slight degree of civilization visible from our tent quarters, located on one of the many subteranean passages of a huge brewery that sprawled here and there as a kind of underground city.

At last we could walk down a nearby street and see a human being instead of trees and more trees — not that we don't really love trees, in their proper setting.

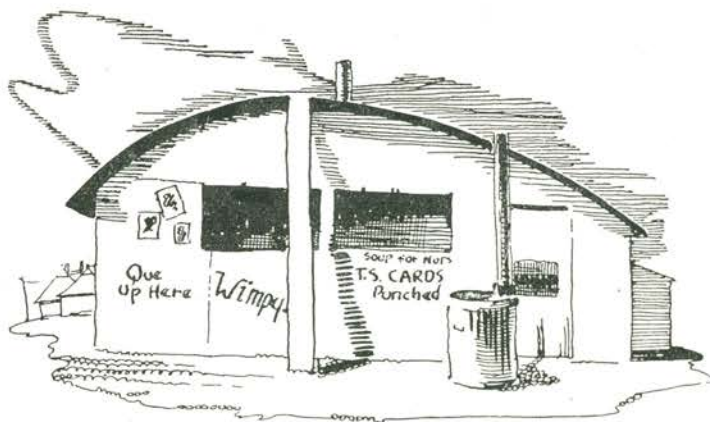
The 843rd Battalion had completed the pierce-plank runway but we inherited the surrounding guagmires on which access roads and a few hardstands had to be built. Work was carried on under the most trying conditions. It was winter. Raw, snow-peppered winds swept up and down the runway punishing the boys working knee-deep in water. We'd come in and spend hours trying to persuade an obstinate old stove to throw a little heat beyond the radius of a foot. But a solution was at hand for some of us. Mirabel, a not-too classy, but potent concoction was found to be available in the surrounding community. So the combination of strong internal heat and feeble external heat made the long nights a little more bearable for many of the boys. It was at Tantonville that ex-pilot (grounded) Carrol proved his fitness for Uncle Sam's infantry. At a distance of some few hundred yards, he put the bead on a wild boar who had paused in his ramblings. Bang! And the whole hindquarters were shattered. A jubilant group aided in tugging and hauling the gigantic carcass back to camp. Down the main street came the sweating procession while Frenchmen gawked and gaped in awed wonder. But suddenly the information reached the group that the Colonel's car was lurking down around the corner they were approaching. What in hell to do? An impromptu auction was decided upon. Fast-talking Jimmy Lee, with the help of a few "comme-ci comme-ca's" began his spiel, ending with the pointed "Combien"? After much confused haggling over the money-value of various items and the question of transportation, the carcass was "sold" for 3 bottles of Mirabel on the spot and a bottle of cognac to come.



Christmas time brought not only its abundance of packages but also a neat little surprise in the form of a strafing attack. Early in the night a plane zoomed out of the skies, gave the runway a peppering, swept low over the barracks, circled around to the field again and took

off. The men were bundled into tent corners, strewn beside brick walls and jumbled into the air-raid shelter. But the experience was soon forgotten in the gay festivities of Christmas time. Vincent O'Neil promoted "beaucoup" chocolates, gum and other sweets which were presented in a very touching ceremony to the orphans of the local parish. Small informal parties were held in the various tents while some of the boys accepted invitations from friends in the village. All in all, Christmas in France was a happy one.

In addition to leaving the whole airfield in a much improved condition we also left, on the wall of the building that had been "A" company mess hall, a grand, life-size picture of Roland Hebert, painted by the C.O. Lt. Warfield. We know that in the years to come the sturdy figure will be an inspiration to generations of mademoiselles.



After Tatonville the company was divided up, each platoon being sent to a different locality to do repair and maintenance work. One platoon went to Versay where, we hear, most of the boys, despite official opposition, hung around the open-air still as persistently as the yellow-jackets hung around the full mess-kits in Normandy. Another platoon went to St. Dizier where, we learn, sumptuous feasts came from the excellent cuisine of O'Brien, Scott, and Gouse, Inc. Such tales caused considerable unrest among the 3rd platoon boys at Reims who would have gone half-starved but for the shrewd conniving of Tim Ferdinando. A word of commendation ought to be slipped in for the excellent conduct of these boys at

Reims. Subjected to the persistent advances of flirtatious school girls, unattached wives and lonely grandmothers who were smitten by the masculine charm of "Vic Mature Souza", handsome Larry Weinberg, and the unrivalled Fortunato. As a result of the many fatherly talks by Lt. Freas, all these boys, in the gay surroundings of sparkling champagne, scorned the many temptations and concentrated their efforts solely on repairing runways and building flak towers.

When the whole company assembled together at Laon the bad news was confirmed. Many of our old pals had been transferred into the infantry, and we hadn't even had a chance to bid them God-speed on their way. It seemed a rough deal after years of back-breaking work.

Hearing all of us comparing notes on our experience while away from the company, one couldn't help thinking what rapid progress we all had made in the mastery of the French language and how readily we had adepted ourselves to French customs. Ah, Oui. But it was all to be of no avail now unless some good fortune and a kindhearted First Sergeant would present us sometime in the future with an opportunity to resume our "couchez avec" business on some return visit to France, for Patton had just crossed the Rhine, and catching his dust, we were to be on our way.

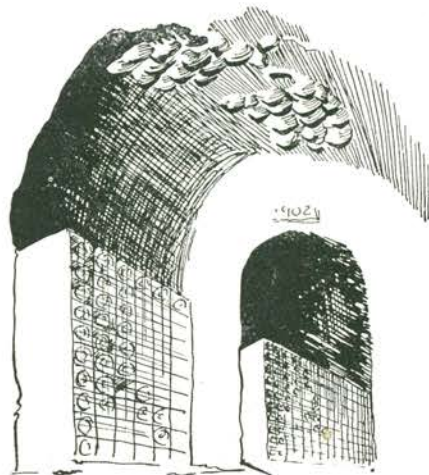
The trip was a long one, yet the novelty of entering a hostile area kept us all agog. Most of the people when not blankly indifferent seemed timidly eager to greet us. But during our first stretch of miles into Germany, we religiously adhered to the strictest observance of the non-fraternization rule by not lifting a hand of greeting. But little groups of children and smiling frau-leins soon eked out a little wave here and a slight nod there.

After a night's bivouac, we were on our way again in the early morning hours, passing through the rubble and debris of what had been the attractive city of Mainz. We rumbled over one of the longest tactical bridges ever constructed and found ourselves across the Rhine River. The surprising thing was the air of sober seriousness and the virtual hush that attended our crossing. The explanation is not difficult to find. From our history books we



remembered the Rhine and the part that it had played in the human affairs of Europe. It had been in every analyses of the Allied plans and campaigns for months. Only a year ago the Rhine had seemed as remote as Little America and more difficult to reach.

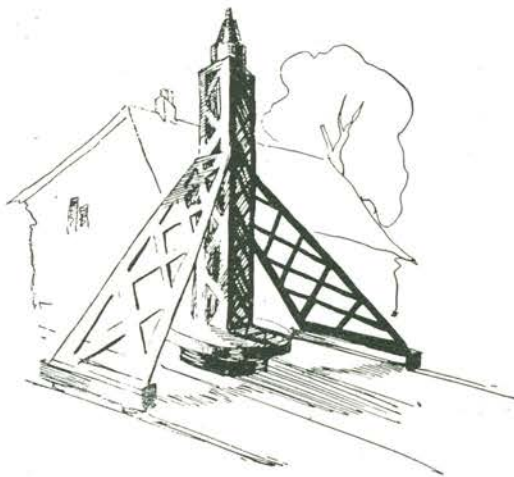
We could not help, weighing in terms of human blood and misery, the cost of this short two-minute crossing. But in these reflections there was also an exhilarating sense of triumph. Somehow, all the hardships and efforts seemed worthwhile.



Our advance party had readied the German barracks for us. We were greeted with tall tales concerning caches of all sorts of German equipment. And there were, we heard, several close calls for different ones, especially Sgt. Meulman, who had to deal severely with a rather tough customer. The company was in the process of rapidly becoming a completely mobile unit through the acquisition of "beaucoup" automobiles, motorcycles, and bikes when a decree ordering the immediate disposition of such vehicles, was issued.

We found that the big field at Frankfurt, like the city itself, had its share of Allied bombing. The field had been, in happier days, the home-base of the Graf Zeppelin. It was also here the Battalion had its first glimpse of a jet-propelled plane, when Major Schaedel had his unexpected guest from out of the skies.

For a change we looked on while the usual back-breaking work was done by somebody else. A huge, conglomerate crew of D.P.s had been secured and under the supervision of G.I.s proceeded to fill



up the craters, repair the concrete runway, and get the deeply pocked surrounding terrain and roads into first-class shape.

Our work at Stuttgart was essentially the same, socially it was a dull period. As for getting hold of those much-desired articles such as lugers, cameras, etc; by a little bartering here and there, we found that the French had just come, seen, and confiscated every thing of any value. The real high light of our stay here was enjoyed by only a few. That was the impressive Sunday services in the city for the colorfully clad French Moroccan troops. We will remember with a chuckle how, as the band started the troops on their departure, groups of Germans who had been watching the services, gave the Nazi salute for the French tricolor as it passed — which certainly seemed to be one for the books. The charred ashes of Hitler must have stirred in his unknown grave.

The next place in our itinerary through Germany was Oberpfaffenhofen, located in the south-western part of the country, not a great distance from the Swiss border. Undoubtedly it was as beautiful a spot as one could hope to find. The Alps were visible in the distance, their snow-caps glistening in the sunlight. We lived in barracks adjacent to a group of buildings that must have served as a clearing house for precision instruments, gadgets and technical equipment of every kind. In our spare time we set up a swimming pool. Little Jockey gave us some fancy, high-diving exhibitions while the before and-after combination of Mik and Jim made a “splashing” appearance.

It was a beautiful sunlit day, while we were in this ideal setting that the news of Germany's surrender was announced. Not one of that group back in Bradley Field almost three years ago would have dreamed that he would be standing within hailing distance of Munich, the birthplace of Nazism, when the last shot was fired.

We continued to work just as hard as ever, filling up craters and getting the field in readiness for the concrete job that was planned. But that, to our delight, would be done by some other outfit, for we received the order to move on. Beautiful as the spot was, it was just as well that we moved when we did. Too many



But our stay at Kaufbeuren had its moments of sadness. First, our C. O. Lt. Warfield was transferred. Having been with us so long, the bonds of affection were strong and we hated to see him go. We also lost at the same time Lt. Thompson, Lt. Weed and Lt. Freas. Capt Alden from the 843rd became our C.O. Lt. Paul who was no stranger to us returned to "A" company. Not only the officers but the exodus of the enlisted personnel that was to thin our ranks had begun with the departure of high-point men and old timers as well as other transfers. No longer did the corridors and passageways echo with O'Neil's melodious "Haloooo There" or Watermelon's plaintive "Talley Ho".

The many farewell parties moistened with tears and plenty of Schnapps as well as a new drink (Ugh, Ugh) Halb and Halb were, it is believed, very pleasant. That is to say, they started off very nicely, but how they ended, well, that is a question that nobody seemed to know very much about.

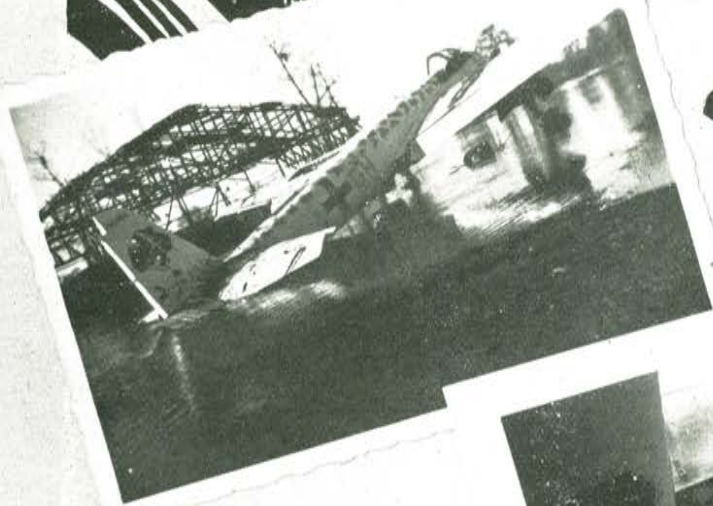
Content that our last work turned out to be a masterpiece, we were shocked to learn that there was yet another job to be done at the airfield at Roth. Once more we unloaded our bags and set up quarters in several rather decrepit-looking German barracks. In addition to getting these into shape there was plenty of work at the air field. After working on the hangars for several days, we broke all records, laying a pierce plank runway and several taxiways. We worked hard because, by so doing, we made a gang of S.S. prisoners really sweat.

Our stay at Roth proved more enjoyable than we had expected. As a result of Captain Alden's efforts we had an excellent Day Room with plenty of beer available at all times. Here we had many a grand farewell party and learned for the first time that we had an abundance of talent, first-class entertainers like Jim Vereen and "Magician Jacobson" and many others.

Up to date the only non-com staff change since Reece had become Motor Sergeant in France was Sgt. Homer's "elevation" to mess management.

It was in Roth that those G.I. experts, Broad and Eddington, engaged in a friendly little discussion with a colonel as to what constituted proper military attire. Who had the last word? Probably Major S.

Our job here in Roth was completed yesterday, Saturday, 1 September 1945. Today Sunday, we were all prepared to take it easy, relax and enjoy ourselves, after our strenuous efforts to complete the work before the end of the week. But

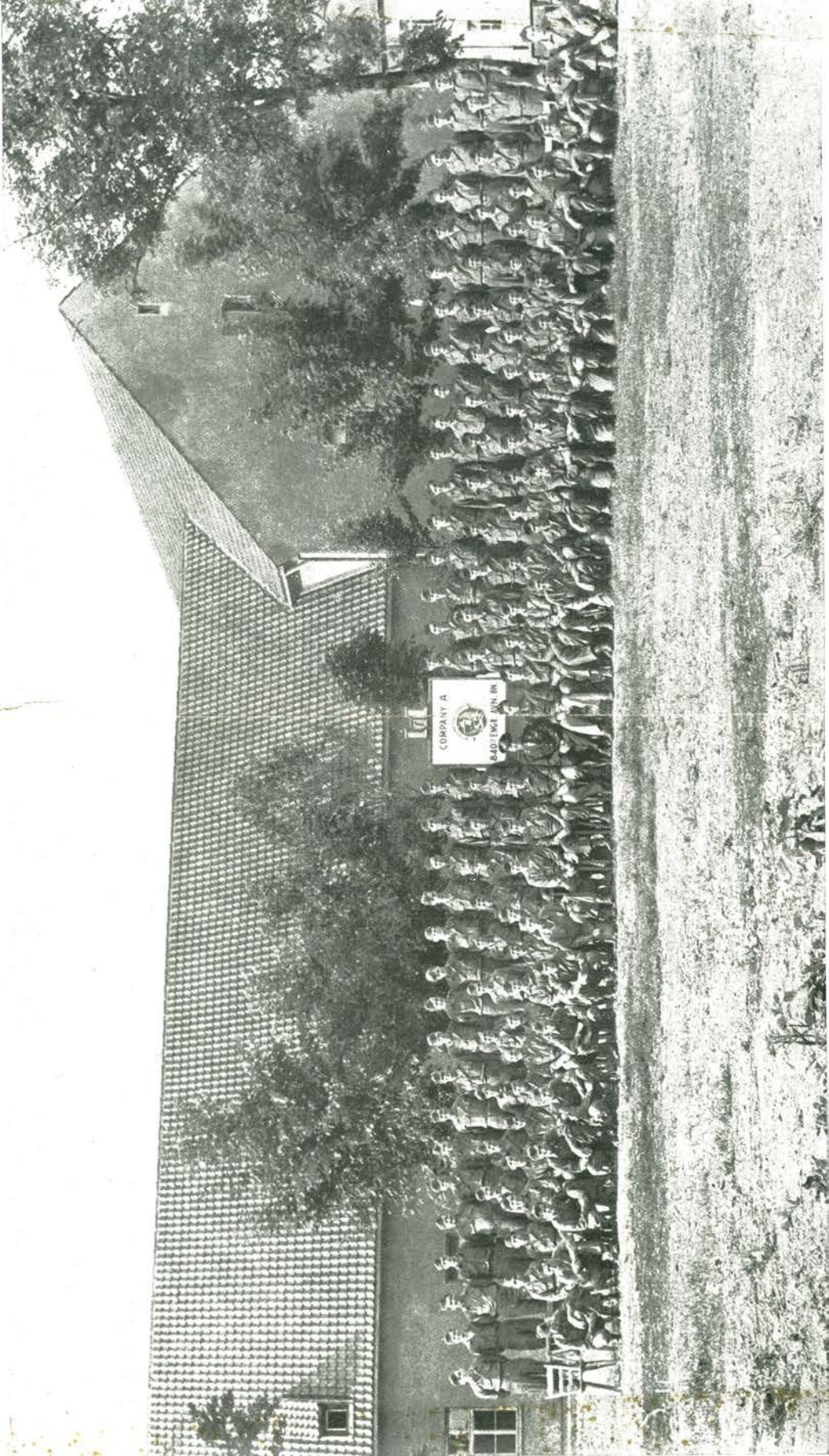


last night we received orders to move immediately to Frankfurt to finish up some work in that area. One platoon had to take off early this morning to get things in shape for the rest of the company. Yes we must be on our way again, despite the fact that this Sunday has also turned out to be V-J Day, in addition to being, as perhaps only a few will recall, the third anniversary of the activation of the unit. Three years . . . The Germans who attacked Stalingrad lie scattered in nameless graves. Not only Europe and Africa but the rest of the civilized world is at last at peace.



The activity outside doesn't seem to disturb the Sabbath hush. The mirrors, on the trucks that have just pulled up, catch and reflect the brilliant sunshine. Already the gang has begun to load up, as the little bronze T/5, with averted head, looks the other way. Some old familiar faces are there, Kaspar, Kelley, Porter, and few others. They look tired and weary, and no doubt they are disappointed. But they go about their tasks. During these three years, there have been many, many things they didn't enjoy doing. But, just as they are loading up the trucks today, they have always carried out their assignments. One more disappointment cannot dampen the flame of hope that glows deep in their hearts. They know that every day brings them nearer to the boat that will, some happy hour, steam into New York Harbour. They know the Old Lady is still there, looking more noble and majestic than she ever looked. And they are sure that this time they will really SEE her.





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Gen. Del.,
Catoosa, Ten.

Alford, David C.
Route 1
Carthage, Miss.

Altheuser, Bernard G.
RFD. 1
Bonnets Mill, Mo.

Ancell, Earnest T.
Route 5
Highbee, Mo.

Archuleta, Antonio
Rowe, New Mexico

Ashley, James J., Jr.
Route 2
Liberty, N.C.

Ashton, Donald
RFD.
Essex Junction, Vt.

Baker, Frank A.
Route 3
Sanford, N.C.

Bednarek, Frank Martin P.
Canby, Minn.

Beugue, Roger B.
Route 1
Atwater, Ohio

Bellemare, Clarence P.
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Turners Falls, Mass.

Bendes, Steven J.
Route 2
St. Charles, Mich.

Benner, Walter
Route 1
Liverpool, Pa.

Biddle, T. J.
Route 2
Belzeni, Miss.

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Route 6
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Cadet, Mo.

Brady, Willie
Route 1
Tarboro, N.C.

Brantley, Douglas H.
Route 3
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Breedlove, Elliott F.
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Gousse, Joseph J. L.
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Graham, Hoyt T.
Route 1
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Grantham, Lloyd B.
Tie Plant, Miss.

Graziano, Philip J.
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Griffin, Lawrence F.
9 Fourth St.
Haverstraw N.J. (N.Y.)

Groce, Harold W.
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Grzyb, Walter
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Tellico Plains, Tenn.

Hartis, Herman R.
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Huff, Ralph
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Kasprzak, John
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Laier, Arthur A.
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Youngstown, Ohio

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Biddeford, Me.

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Matthews, Hubert B.
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Wagran, N.C.

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Mitchell, Thomas J.
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Bentree, W. Va.

Moore, Mason T.
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Murphy, Lawrence J.
4263 Margaretta St.
St. Louis, Mo.

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Parrish, Vilas O.
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Parrott, Howard G.
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New Edinburg, Ark.

Pavlik, Mike, Jr.
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Porter, Thomas E.
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Posey, Robert W.
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Rice, Richard N.
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Richter, Arthur W.
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Carrollton, Ga.

Robinson, Lande G.
Canfield, W.Va.

Rogers, Erastus C.
Peteet, Texas

Roth, Robert E.
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Salmi, Edwin I.
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Sanders, Harry H.
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Schatzger, William F.
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Schuhmacher, Peter M.
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Scott, John N.
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Mexico, Me.

Schuler, Virgle A.
Route 4
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Schuster, Matt.
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Scott, Mallie L.
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Smith, Robert L.
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Snyder, Ralph
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Holland, O.

Soden, Charles E.
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Souza, Albert N.
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Spoon Bill
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Graham, N.C.

Stevens, Walter S.
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Stronjy, Edward
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Swain, Clifton S.
Anthony, Fla.

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127 Marshall St.
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White, Ermil W.
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Neubert, Tenn.

Wilcox, Merritt A.
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Troy, N.Y.

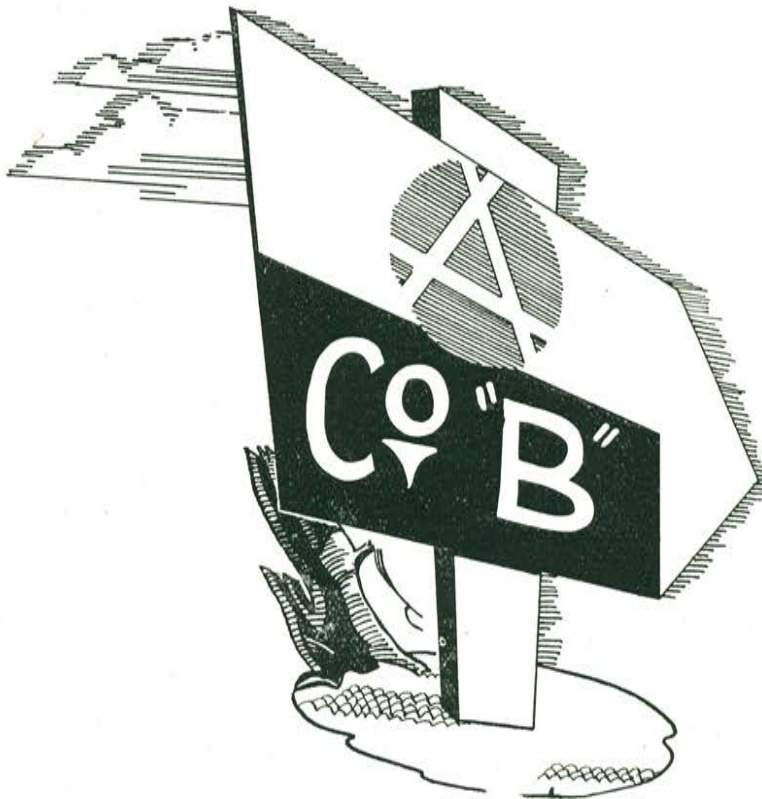
Williams, Lynwood C.
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Wilson, Earl N.
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Woodruff, Nelson D.
Route 5
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Woznakowicz, John S.
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On The

1 September 1942 Company "B", 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion was activated at Bradley Field, Conn.; thereby starting, for the men comprising this company, three years of joys and sorrows, scares and thrills, months of back-breaking labor, and days of pleasure.

The nucleus of this unit was a cadre from the 834th Engineer Aviation Battalion, consisting of one First Sergeant, three Staff Sergeants and one Corporal, plus four officers from Officers Candidate School.

Practically all the men were fresh from civilian life, with only a week or so in the army. They were so green they were apt to salute a P.F.C., but most of them were willing to learn and to get started off on the right foot in the army. After daily clases and drilling a couple of months they finally considered themselves soldiers.

At the beginning, the persennel were predominately Southern, therefore the rigors of the New England climate were a torture for them, but even this never kept the boys in camp when a pass to Springfield, Mass., or Hartford, Conn. was available. This weather was only a sample of what was in store for them in England, France and Germany.

On 10 December 1942 the Battalion was alerted for overseas shipment. Then came days of packing, crating of supplies and equipment, and numerous inspections. On 1 May 1943 they entrained for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey for a final processing before overseas shipment. On 9 May 1943 at the New York Port of Embarkation the unit boarded the Aquitania and on Mother's Day, 10 May 1943, set sail for England.

Sea-sickness, the so-called sleeping accomodations and, above all, the food made this an unforgettable voyage. Who could forget those mustard pickles, that wormy oatmeal, those socially outcast eggs and the tea. Soon everyone was looking forward to the brussels-sprouts, and mutton on which they were expecting to exist in England, although they had been horrified at the prospects of such a diet at the beginning of the trip.



After eight days at sea, the ship docked in Gourock, Scotland, near Glasgow on 18 May 1943. They remained on board for two more days. During this time they thoroughly policed the ship, much to everyone's disgust. On 20 May 1943 they boarded a train for the long trip through Scotland to Southern England. They arrived at Sawbridgeworth, England a little past midnight, where trucks were waiting to carry them to Matching Green, a small village in Essex and about thirty miles northeast of London. At this time they were expecting German planes to swoop down in the darkness and wipe them out. Everyone was very jittery when they saw the truck drivers smoking, with their cigarettes glowing in the darkness.

Upon their arrival at the Matching Grenn Airdrome, they were quartered in Nissen huts. These huts had been built by the 834th Engineer Aviation Battalion who had started construction of that base. Until the 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion had acquired trucks and tools, they busied themselves around the area by trying to make the place more liveable.

The weather, at this time, was all that anyone could wish for — with bright sunny days and only occasional summershowers. The days were long and darkness came around mid-night. Due to these facts, the first days in England made a better impression than the subsequent ones.

As soon as the equipment arrived, work was begun on the Chipping Ongar Airdrome, a medium-bomber base located a few miles from Matching Airdrome. That was their first taste of a real mission in a theater of operations. The company's assignment was as follows: form work, Nissen huts, sewage and drainage, concrete foundations and concrete slabs for bomb storage, with beautiful hand landscaped earthen revettments between all the slabs. The men of the company then realized their part in the war was indirect and not direct contact with the enemy. Also their lot would be endless, back-breaking labor under all conditions, building, landing strips and airdromes. These bases would enable the Air Force to hammer at the enemy's industry and shipping, thus shortening the war and saving the lives of thousands of American men.

Many men who had made a poor showing in basic training now came to



the front as carpenters, operators etc., working and teaching others the fundamentals of construction. By the time Chipping Ongar Airdrome was ready for the first contingent of B-26's most of the boys had lost their awkwardness and indecision. Later the company started work on Matching Green Airdrome. The work assignment was the same type as that at Chipping Ongar.

After the company was settled in their new home, trucks made nightly liberty runs into Chelmsford. Immediately little romances and crushes developed between the boys and the English girls. A great many men in the company acquired bicycles. Due to the war, bicycles were the main means of private transportation in England. A man thought nothing of riding his "bike" sixteen miles into Chelmsford or Bishop's Stortford or even making a day of it on his pass day, riding over the neighboring country.

At first everyone was disappointed in the warm beer, "mild and bitter". However, judging from the consumption, they soon disregarded temperature and acquired a taste for it. How strange it seemed to meet the people on the streets munching "fish and chips". It wasn't long before they were as "fussy" about them as the natives.

Many men were almost nightly visitors at the Corn Exchange dances. Many acquaintances were made with the local "belles" while dancing to both American and English music.

It was only a couple of hours by rail from Chelmsford to London. Many passes were spent in London. With the mention of Marble Arch, Victoria, or Piccadilly many memories come to the minds of the men of "B" company.

When the assignment was completed on this base the unit moved to Alconbury Airdrome, near Petersborough. No one can ever forget that mud hole, although it was only a forecast of what was to follow in the next two years. Here the men made the acquaintance of that prefabricated English brainstorm — the Seco Building. Not a man in the company will ever forget them, nor the training day when they were in the theater and the wind blew one of these uncompleted buildings over.

The weather is, and has been, a controlling factor in the morale and well being of the company. Rain, shine, sleet or snow the work continued; not, without plenty of griping about these conditions. An endless number of words could



England, with it's up-to-date buildings. It was also easier on a soldier's pocket-book than other places. Manchester will be a pleasant memory to most of the boys.

Living conditions were much better here. The barracks were warm and comfortable and the men had bathing conveniences of their own for the first time in England. However, there was a Battalion mess for the first time since leaving the States — remember those long, long chow-lines?

The airbase was several miles from the living quarters. Trucks shuttled to and from the work site, leaving early in the morning and returning late in the evening after a hard days work. The men returned to another long chow-line, but after supper came a good hot shower and much needed rest.

After working at Burtonwood Air Depot for a period of approximately six weeks, enough living quarters were completed at Site 3 to house the men. This was on the base where they were to work for the coming three months.

This particular air base was one of the most interesting in England. Before the arrival of the A.A.F. in England, this base was employed by the English as a commercial airport. Due to it's excellent location near seaports and being in the industrial center of England, the A.A.F. chose this base to play a very important role in the air-battle against "Fortress Europe" as both an air Depot and Repair Depot. Damaged and war-weary aircraft, which formely must be sent over three thousand miles of ocean to the States for repair, could now be made operational right in the Theater of Operations. This saved much precious time, shipping space and money. Valuable research and experimental work could be accomplished under combat conditions when necessary.

Due to the rapid expansion of the A.A.F. in Europe, this base became too small for the required operations. More space was needed for planes and most of all, more quarters for the many additional Air Force Technicians to be employed in the shops.

The work of enlarging this base was assigned to the 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion.



Many barracks of the Nissen type were built with other installations which are necessary for better living conditions, such as messhalls, ablutions, etc.

"B" Company's largest job was batching dry-mix for a large concrete apron on which planes could be parked. There are no "rackets" connected with concrete work but batching on a mass production scale was really and truly "rough".



Most of the work in the batching of concrete is done by machinery. That is, handling the tons of sand and gravel, placing it in the each truck. But the bags of cement must be put into the trucks by "G.I.s" and their "aching back's". Two men hold the sack cement over the bed of a truck which has already been loaded with sand and gravel. A third man draws a knife across the bottom of the sack from side to side; thus letting the contents of the sack spill into the truck.

This process may sound easy, but to one who has done it with a strong wind constantly blowing the cement into his face and on his clothing realizes this is akin to a night mare.

The batching-plant was operating twenty hours a day, with two shifts of men working ten hours each.

Soon the work in England was nearing completion and the 840th Engineers were headed for another job. This was the preparation for work on the Continent.

The men of "B" company had seen the result of their work in the past months reflected in each formation of bombers that assembled high in the air and droned steadily toward "Fortress Europe". Every Engineer watches this with pride knowing that their long months of toil and sweat had made these devastating, 8th Air-Force raids possible by "basing the attack".

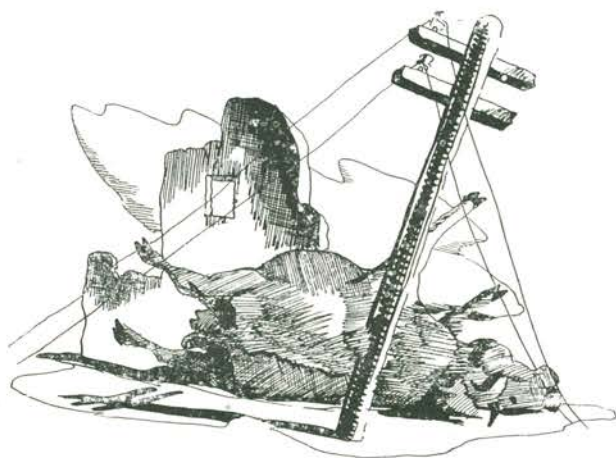
Now the men must proceed to training areas to brush up on their "soldiering" and prepare their equipment for another big job across the Channel.

On 1 May 1944 the unit arrived in Matlask, near the city of Norwich. Here began an extensive training for the job on the Continent: classes in combat tactics, mines and booby traps, fortifications, building advanced landing strips, hikes and bivouacs. This was quite a change from the endless tasks performed in the previous year. It had a sobering influence on the men. It made each man realize

face. The beaches were quiet now as far as combat was concerned, but every one was still very busy cleaning up the mess of knocked out vehicles, sunken barges, etc., also clearing mines and bringing supplies and fresh troops ashore. The men walked ashore carrying full equipment and climbed up a long steep hill. The route took the men past knocked out pillboxes, foxholes and debris over run a few days previous by the assault troops.

This contingent of men comprised only a small portion of the Battalion, a few men from each company. The rest of the Battalion were to come later with the heavy equipment.

Finally after reaching their destination, they pitched tents and heated some "C" rations. It was now quiet in their pup tents. The still black night had crept over the beach. Many of the men were very tired and soon were deep in dreams. Some others lay there just thinking how quiet it was in comparison to how noisy the thick of battle must have been.



Every man was in for a big surprise. Yes, the Americans had a few square miles of beach-head, but "Jerry" wasn't ready to give up yet. Suddenly whistles began to blow giving the warning of approaching enemy aircraft, and American ack-ack guns on this side of the Channel, took up the challenge.

The tracers streaking across the sky reminded the men of a "Fourth of July" celebration, but the danger and the meaning was fully appreciated by all who witnessed this spectacle. All the men of "B" company could do was to lie in their

pup tents or in foxholes hoping no bombs would drop.

The ack-ack became so intensive the attackers had to return to German territory. This was only the beginning of what happened every night for the next month when one or two "Jerry" planes would fly over. They were either shot down or chased away by the vigilant anti-aircraft guns. So the men appropriately named these planes, that kept them awake much of the night, "Bed-check Charlie".

The ack-ack, however was the worst offender. It not only made more noise than the airplanes, but the falling flak was more of a menace. Some of the men were hit by the falling flak but not mortally wounded. Most of the men built some kind of protection over their foxholes.

Soon the rest of the Battalion had arrived in France with the heavy equipment and the Battalion was together for the first time on the Continent. This particular base, which was located between Carentan and Isigny, and numbered A-10, was an already completed wire-mesh strip, with three squadrons of P-38's and P-41's operating from it. "B" Company's job here was to maintain the runways, reconstruct the airway, and build hardstands. The planes were operating from this base about 18 hours a day and the front was so close that several missions could be accomplished in one day. Due to these long operational hours, and also the fact that wire-mesh constantly needed repairing even during operations, the men worked in two shifts a day.

This was the busiest air base the men had ever been on. At all times during the operational hours one squadron of planes would be over the target, one squadron going to meet them, and one returning to the base for refueling and rearming. Therefore, it seemed, planes were almost constantly taking off and landing. Sometimes a plane would release its bombs, but they would fail to drop from their racks. Upon their return to the base for landing, only a slight jar would be necessary, such as the contact of the landing gear on the ground to jar the bombs loose on the runway. This was a great headache. When the bomb hit it would skip down the wire mesh. Everywhere it struck it would rip long holes in the runway. These had to be repaired immediately, or they would hold up operations. Fighter-bombers land at approximately 125 M.P.H. so it is easy to imagine what three squadrons of them can do to a runway after a few hours of operations.

This continued all day, making a few minor repairs here and there, just good enough to keep the runway operational. After operations ceased in the evening, the big job came.

The runway must be in perfect shape for the next days' operations. Sometimes large patches were required to make the wire strong enough to hold up.

Things were a little better now, though, because the kitchen had been set up and hot meals were served. Sometimes it was only "C" rations, but hot coffee was the main thing that raised the morale of the company.

Probably the most exciting moment at this place ,was the night the J.U. 88 was shot down and crashed with a terrific explosion about four hedgerows from the bivouac area. About two o'clock one morning enemy aircraft appeared over head as usual. The roar of the twin engines can never be forgotten by any soldier in that area, as the plane made an earthward plunge to death after receiving what is believed to be a direct hit from one of "B" company's anti-aircraft guns. One of the crew from the plane bailed out directly overhead. The plane had little altitude so his chute never opened. He struck the ground with a thud, just across the road from the company area. Another crew member did likewise about two hedgerows down. The pilot made his death-ride with the plane, where he crashed into the earth and was blown to bits as the aircraft exploded.

Another memorable sight was the bombing of St. Lo thousands of American planes based in England and France.

"B" company bivouac area was only a few miles from St. Lo where the front, at that time, had developed into a stalemate. The Germans were holding this very important communications center and, strong point at all costs. Despite all our armor and infantry could do, the Germans held out desperately.

General Patton's armor was lined up "bumper to bumper" on the roads leading to St. Lo and the stage was set. One morning huge formations of heavy bombers were sighted passing overhead. The strips of tinfoil, which were dropped by the planes to confuse the enemy's radar, were falling all over the Normandy Peninsula.

As the bombers roared over their target, small puffs of black smoke from the enemy ack-ack batteries could be seen in, and around the huge formations of bombers. Small observation planes spotted the position of these flak guns and radioed this information to our artillery. In a few minutes most of the ack-ack was silenced. On came wave after wave of heavy bombers. As the bombs reached their target the concussion could be felt in the bivouac area, and the clouds of dust and



smoke were clearly visible. Preceding these heavies came medium bombers, leaving a wave of destruction in the enemy's lines. Following closely behind the mediums were the fighter-bombers. They could be plainly seen as they gained altitude, and then dived on the target, dropped their "eggs" and swooped away to be followed by others.

This was one of the largest, if not the largest, tactical air-raid ever attempted by one air-force in history. It was the first raid by American planes "B" company had ever witnessed. Incidents like this showed them directly the effect of their own work in the war. They all realized that these thousands of planes could not operate without bases. It was men like these, and from the many Engineer units, who with a lot of hard work under adverse conditions, had made these bases possible.

As soon as the Allied Forces had pushed beyond Coutance, on the eastern side of Brittany, the unit was sent up to construct a fighter strip, A-17. There the men dug foxholes in an apple orchard and pitched pup-tents. Then started the grind with the "Stamp-lickers", the machines used to lay Hessian mat. The work was divided into two shifts of nine hours each, so it was not as strenuous as other jobs.

Some new officer replacements came to the outfit at this time. They were fresh from the States, and full of vinegar and enthusiasm. Who will ever forget the expressions, "I'll tell you when you are tired" and "Let's go, George"?

One afternoon the men were very ably entertained by a USO show featuring Spike Jones and his band. Edward G. Robinson also appeared. These shows, when the men were able to see them, were a bright spot in their existence.

Every night there were German planes droning overhead and their rest was interrupted by the fear they might locate the runway or the bivouac area.

This place was as dusty as England had been muddy. Everyone was coated with dust, sweat, and tar from the machines laying the paper mat.

To anyone watching this work, it would have seemed a slow and never ending process, laying row after row of tar paper four thousand feet long. But the men working could see the progress they were making. In this region the men didn't contact any of the lovely, vivacious mademoiselles beleived to be all over France. This was farming country, full



of slow, stolid peasant type of people, that were very uninteresting. They seemed very dazed by the invasion. Many were afraid to openly welcome the men, as they thought it possible they would be pushed back by the Germans.

The lack of girls was, in measure, made up for by the cider, calvados, and cognac, from the shell torn and abandoned farms. Cider was brought into the area in five gallon cans and enjoyed by all who liked hard cider.

At this time of the year the yellow-Jackets were very sociable. As the men squatted on the ground around the kitchen tent it was a race to see who could eat the most, the men or the yellow-jacketts. They buzzed around, in and out, of the mess kits. No doubt many were devoured by the men at each meal.

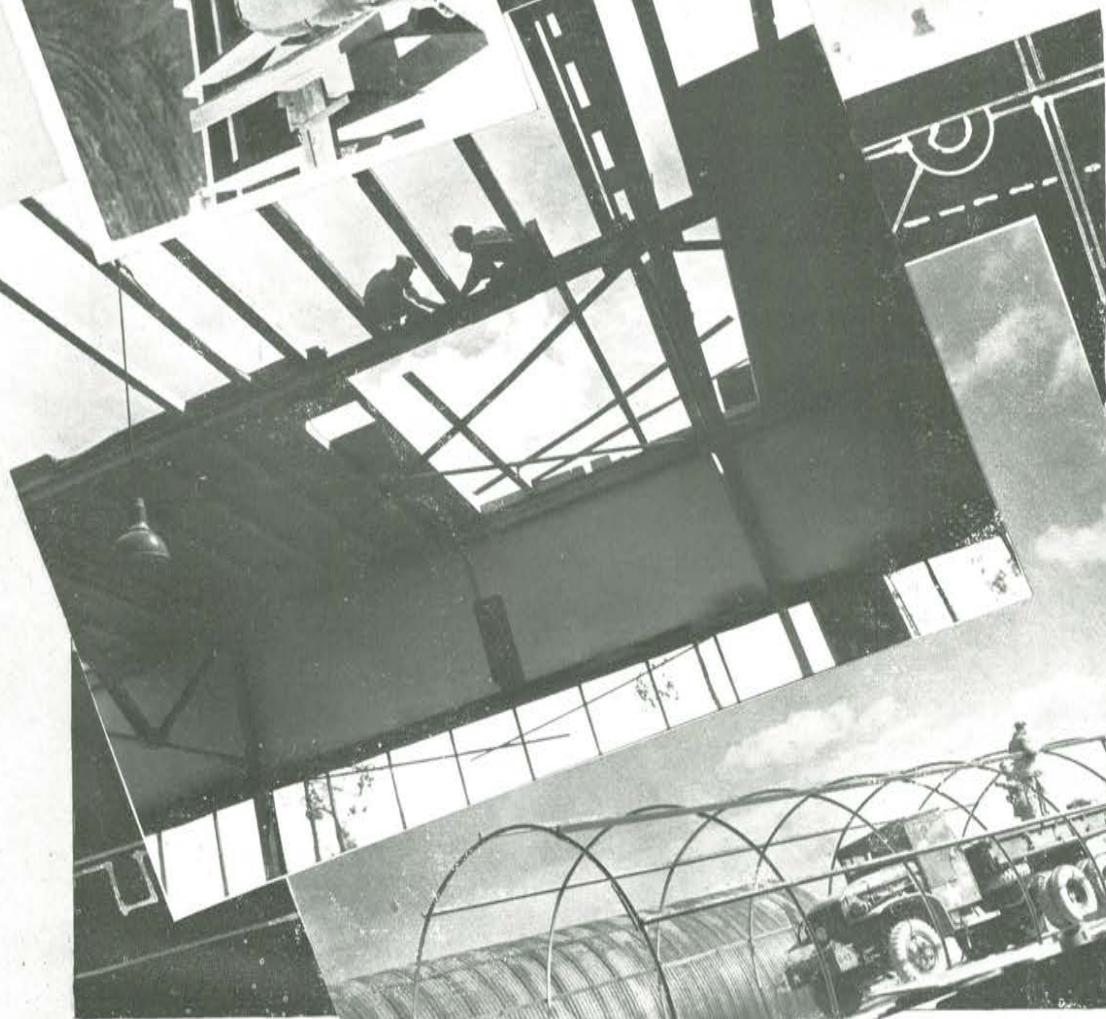
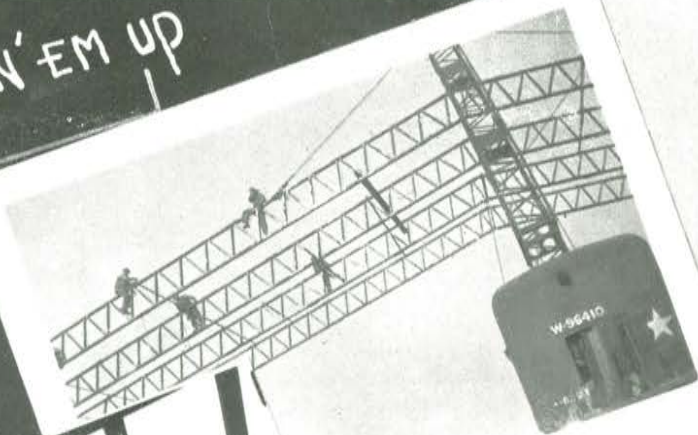
Any spare time a man had here, was usually spent writing home or searching the fields and hedgerows, where a few days previous vicious, bloody, battles had occurred. All kinds of objects were brought back to camp: helmets, rifles, ammunition, belts, mortar shells, and items of clothing. So many grenades and explosives were brought into the camp that the C.O. had ordered that no more would be permitted in the area. In this feverish search for souvenirs, caution was tossed aside. Many dangerous places, and things, were examined. Soon the men tired of these adventures.

When this strip was finished, our forces had all the airfields their limited territory could accommodate. The Company moved into a wooded area near Fougères. There they waited for our spearheads to penetrate Northern France, and gain additional ground for another strip. As all who were there can remember, the calvados, cognac and cider, flowed freely, and many felt no pain.

In a couple of days, orders were received to move to another field. One platoon with it's officers and the Company Commander, started east. After traveling all day neared their destination. Darkness was falling when they were ordered to a new location. The spearhead was going faster than had been anticipated.

They continued to move into Northern France, the route traversing newly acquired country where the armor had driven a wedge, only a couple of miles wide. There was a possibility of being cut off from the rear. Nevertheless the company pushed forward.

PUTIN' EM UP



The route given was reported clear of enemy troops, so the party breezed lustily along, as only Engineers can, shouting and waving at the people, tossing candy, gun and cigarettes to the children and pretty girls.

Nearing the town of Vernuil, they passed many tanks, half-tracks, and scout cars deployed in battle formation. The company thought nothing of it, and continued until there was only one hill between it and Vernuil. Then a jeep came careening madly by, the occupants, waving the convoy to a halt. During the night, the "Jerries" had retaken the town ahead, and were prepared to hold it with the aid of Tiger tanks. The platoon had passed the point of our armor which was moving up to drive the Germans out.

They stopped immediately and the men and vehicles were dispersed in a nearby orchard. No one fully realized the danger they had so narrowly escaped, until they saw the scouts on foot, creeping up the hill to get the "low down" on the enemy. With nothing but three .50 calibre machine guns, the party would have been a toothsome dish for enemy tanks.

A few minutes later they back-tracked in order to by-pass the town and proceeded onward. They reached their destination, Dreux, near Chartres, before dark and here, on an abandoned airfield caught up with the main spearhead. The repair of the base was to be the company's job. Two days later the rest of the company moved up. On the way passed many groups of prisoners along the road that had just been captured by the Infantry on it's mopping up operations.

Now started some black and heart breaking days.. The two concrete runways were pocketed with bomb and demolition craters.

One runway was to be repaired temporarily for immediate use by fighter planes, while the other was being repaired for more permanent use by medium bombers. This is the place where we became acquainted with the process of filling craters, and then digging them out again, until every ones' patience was exhausted and nerves were on edge. The craters were worn out by digging and refilling them so much. This is one instance in which progress was made in spite of the inefficiency. After several warnings that "the planes were coming in on such and such a date", (which naturally they failed to do) and working 16 to 18 hours daily, the temporary runway was finished.

After the rush period was over and the fighters were operating from the runway, the boys were able to visit the little city of Dreux. This. was the first chance to see the French "night life" and was some relaxation after so much hard work.

Another "big deal" on this job was removing five hundred feet of pierced plank, which had so painstakingly been used to extend the runway. Then it was discovered too much had been removed and some had to be re-laid. Shortening the runway, left the marshalling area stranded high and dry, some distance from the end of runway. This had to be moved. Such needless work as this helped the morale not a bit. Bed check Charlie did not bother the Company here, but nevertheless, they were dug in, and the rocks and roots here were no softer than in Normandy. They crawled out of holes every morning, feeling as tired as the night before.

About this time Paris was liberated and nearly everyone wanted to see "Gay Parée". One platoon went out on detached service to remove mines, and while away, got a chance to go to Paris for a few days. But most of the fellows had to wait until passes to Paris were allowed.

When the work here was finished, one platoon was left and the rest of the company moved to Mourmelon le Grand, near Reims. The platoon remaining at Dreux was waiting for a maintenance outfit to relieve them.

At Mourmelon the rest of the Battalion had completed the strip A-80. Company "B", after stopping over one night, moved to Toul to begin construction on A-90. The first job was making a living site as comfortable as possible. Trucks hauled in lumber from nearby bombed buildings, providing material for shacks, built to the individual taste of each man. Soon the woods in which they lived, began to look like a hoboes paradise.

About a week after their arrival the heavy equipment began work. The weather conditions somewhat hampered their progress. After two weeks of grading and filling the work stopped temporarily because of these bad weather conditions. Most of the heavy equipment had to be dead-lined and repaired, due to the wear and tear caused by working in so much mud.

The strip was to be of Hessian Mat, but, when work was resumed, the plan for Hessian Mat was aban-





done. Pierced plank was brought in and laid on a straw base. At one end of the field the Steel Plank was laid over the Hessian Mat that had been laid by original plans.

One of the officers had a "brain storm" turning the laying of the Plank into a race. The company draftsman made up a chart at the end of each day, showing the progress of each crew. The two crews were known as the "Reds" and "Blues". At the finish no one really knew who had won this race of sweat and blood. Everyone was too tired to be interested. Help on this job was given by French civilians. As the unofficial report stands, a record for the IX E.C. was set by company "B" for the largest amount of "Plank" laid one day, by any Engr. Avn. Bn. in the E.T.O. This report was achieved at the expense of the men who never received due credit.

Working and living conditions were very undesirable. Trucks would sink into the mud up to their axles and often to the fenders. Crossing a road almost required the use of a landing barge. Everywhere one looked, there was water. A bathing suit was needed to get in or out of the "day room" which was a tent loaned us by the Chaplain.

A drainage system of tile was necessary along one side of the runway. However due to the mud, trucks could not be used to cart away the spoil, but this slight problem could not stop the Engineers. A narrow gage rail road track, which had been used by the Germans was brought into play. This track was re-laid along the ditchline. As the ditching machine worked, the spoil dropped on to the waiting cart.

Each man was allotted one day off each week. Most of the fellows took advantage of the liberty run into Nancy. These occasions helped the morale of the troops immensely. However this liberty run did not last very long. The third army decided Nancy would be used as a place to send it's men on pass, therefore Nancy was placed "Off Limits" to all other troops.



Here, we were in a sector of the Maginot Line. Its fortifications were very interesting and were explored by many.

About two weeks before leaving Toul, the first snow came. It snowed quite hard that night, but by noon the following day the snow had disappeared, leaving more mud an water.

Anyone who had been on guard the previous night could be easily pointed out the following morning by their blackened faces. The guards on the out-posts, some distance from the area, who were guarding supplies and equipment were even blacker than the others. The tour of these posts consisted of longer hours and the sentinels were required to stay on the posts all through the night. They didn't have the opportunity to warm up every two hours, as did the other guards who went to the guard tent after a two hour shift. Because of the extreme cold the men built fires in cans of used oil in a position that could be blacked out immediately in case of an air-raid.

Their trip from Toul to Tantonville was ordinary. The men thought only of trying to keep warm. But the nearer they came to Tantonville the colder the weather became.

The hell hole could be a very appropriate name for air base, Y-1. As the men look back at the conditions that they worked under, it is as a nightmare. The pyramidal tents were pitched on a concrete floor in a bombed out brewery. The walls and floors were all that was left of this building.

The stay at Tantonville was an endless succession of mud and rain. When the brutal winter set in, the snow and frozen ground was just as wicked.

This base was started by another Engineer Battalion. Due to adverse weather their equipment was all in need of repairing. They were forced to cease work and the 340th was called in to finish the job. Before any progress could be made, rock and gravel had to be hauled in from a nearby mountain to counteract the mud. The runway was almost completed, but inaccessible. Trucks were busy from six o'clock in the morning until twelve o'clock at night, hauling necessary gravel to com-



plete the access roads. The main roads were slippery and narrow, making the driving extremely harzadous.

Work was slow and dirty. The fellows had to wear hip boots on the job. Even then, many individuals were covered from head to toe with mud.

Before their arrival quite a few men in this vicinity had been ill. There seemed to be a prevailing epidemic, which soon had its effect on nearly everyone in the company. At one time approximately seventy percent of the company was ailing. The cause of the illness was unknown. It was one of the most severe cases of Dysentery that the company had ever encountered. This was a combination of "the G.I.s" and "the heaves". A medical officer from higher headquarters was sent to determine the cause of the sickness, and to find an antidote. But his two months of research were of no avail. Some men had to be sent to the hospital to be cured, while others just "sweated it out".

As the work got under way again, the weather turned cold, and froze the mud. About the time the field was completed the heavy snows came. Instead of letting the men have a rest and attempt to keep warm, they were kept out in near zero weather. In snow ten inches deep the men made an attempt to chip ditches in the frozen ground.

The Air Corps Red Cross had a coffee and doughnut tent, which was a life saver. It was the hot coffee that kept the boys warm in the bitter cold. This was the first time in the army that all the Sergeants were seen working with gusto. They had to work to keep warm. The "staff" was more fortunate as a roasting fire was kept in the command post, making it a popular hangout for the brass. It was probably around such a fire that the order was dreamed up, that on a man's day off no fires were allowed in the tents. There was also an order forbidding fires on the job.

Special Service got on the ball for a change, with the result that a few dances were sponsored. Even though the G.I.s outnumbered the girls about 100 to 1, it was a dance. There were some good stage shows and movies. Thanksgiving and Christmas meals were very good. Each man had plenty of Turkey, with all the trimmings, and Christmas was a day of rest for everyone. A party was given for a group of French orphans on Christmas Day. These children received much pleasure from what was offered them. It was the first meal of such variety that they

had eaten in six years. For the younger ones it was probably the best they had ever eaten.

Due to the cold winter months here, guard duty was exceedingly uncomfortable. The guard inspections by one of the officers in the company detracted nothing from this discomfort.

Having been alerted due to the breakthrough in the "Bulge", the company was more or less jittery. On New Year's Eve they were notified to expect paratrooper attacks. All possible precautions were taken including the doubling of the guard. About mid-night small arms fire was heard nearby. Investigation proved inebriates were celebrating the new year.

Another exciting night, during the "battle of the bulge", was the one in which the area was strafed by a J.U. 88 and a FW-190. Luckily, no one was hurt.

The day orders were received to move from this field, was a joyous one. Everyone took pride in fact that the fighter group operating from this base, received a citation for being a decisive factor in turning back the enemy in the "Bulge".

When the company went to Mourmelon, it was the first time, since landing at Omaha, that they had been out of the combat zone. Ordinarily, when a base was completed, it was turned over to another outfit, to ride the "maintenance gravy train", while the 840th moved on to start another base.

At last company "B" was going to maintain a base. This job was quite different than the kind of work the boys had been doing in combat zones. It was to be a rest for the outfit while awaiting the big "push" into Germany. This strip, A-80 was built on what had once been a large French Artillery Training Ground with five barracks and buildings. When the Germans came in 1940, they changed it into an air-base by constructing many hangars but used as a sod landing strip.

About five months previous, another company from the 840th, hard in the wake of Patton's Army, had rapidly constructed a Hessian Mat strip here.

After living so many months in holes and tents, the boys were joyous at the prospects of good quarters. But when they unloaded in front of the stables they knew their hopes had been in vain. Clothes and equipment were stowed in the mangers and hung on the hitching racks. These high-roasted, cobblestone floored



stables were like iceboxes. At night many of the men huddled around the stoves made of oil drums, trying to keep warm.

The "snap" of maintaining an airstrip backfired and the boys found themselves daily sweeping the snow off the runway and patching the Hessian Mat, torn loose by the planes in their take off.

During their stay here, the fellows often attended the theatre of the 101st Air Borne Div. to see both movies and stage shows. It was almost like a theater at home, being very different from their previously improvised theaters in tents, wine cellars, outdoors, or any other convenient place.

While stationed here men were being transferred for Infantry training. There were many men who wanted to go, but were either in the wrong classification, or couldn't pass the physical requirements. When the first group left, everyone lost some good friends. Men cannot suffer the hardships with which they are confronted in the Army- without acquiring some feeling for their comrades.

When the spring thaw came, the subgrade of this strip became so mushy, that it had to be temporarily abandoned. Consequently the company was sent to Guignicourt to work on A-68.

Conditions were getting much better. In Guignicourt, the men were living in a town for the first time, and were out of the mud. The company was billeted in private homes in the villages. Each platoon in a home by themselves. These were, no doubt, the best quarters the boys had seen on the continent. Due to their previous quarters, these were more highly appreciated.

Guignicourt, France, was a rather small town, but the people were very friendly, and the boys occasionally managed to get a few drinks at the Cafe's. Each Saturday night the civilians held a dance and the G.I.s were permitted to attend.

Reims, which was nearby, is known to be the champagne center of the world. Since the Germans didn't take all the champagne with them, it flowed freely in

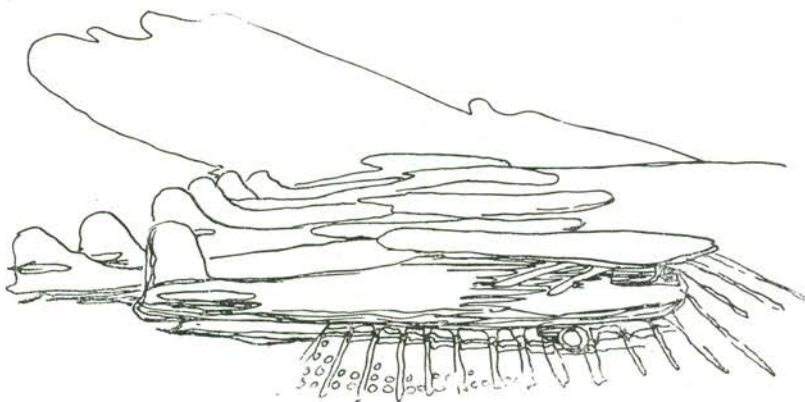


of the Engineer, if his back was not broken after a couple of years of work, he was sent to the front to let Jerry shoot at him for awhile.

No one figured out where they saved any manpower; although this might have helped to keep some 4-F out of the Army a little longer. Do not be misled by these statements; everyone is behind congress 100 percent. They did give the men a new variety in "C" rations after the war was almost over. After being overseas so long, it is somewhat difficult to understand things that go on back home. Why one Congressman thinks "K" rations are delicious. It says so in the "Stars and Stripes".

Strip A-80 at Mourmelon, being abandoned for a few months, was now being rebuilt for the use of the troop Carrier Command. Another Engineer outfit, after completing a Pierced Plank runway, was ordered to another job. Company "B" was again sent to A-80 to complete the taxiways and aprons, and maintain the field.

Many transport planes were on the base preparing for the paratrooper assault across the Rhine River, which was the main purpose for the rebuilding of this strip. While two platoons were working there, the other was working on A-79, being rebuilt for the same purpose.



It was quite a sight to watch the planes load with "troopers" and take off, never knowing if this was to be a dry run, or the real "McCoy"!

One day as the men watched the service crew attach supplies to the bellies of the planes so they could be dropped, they knew the big drive, which was intend-

ed to crush the German opposition, was at hand. This was the result of the company's hard work, once again.

One morning the boys were awakened, before sun-up by the roar of hundreds of plane motors warming up. They got out of bed, and standing outside their tents, watched the planes take off in rapid succession. Soon they were hearing the radio reports on the jump and the progress being made.

For forty-eight hours preceeding this, every man on the base had to carry a special pass issued by the Provost Marshall as a security measure. Due to the way the company mess hall and living quarters were situated, the personnel had to show their passes both going to, and coming from chow. Some of the boys who were off the base at the time the passes were issued, had quite a time gaining entrance.

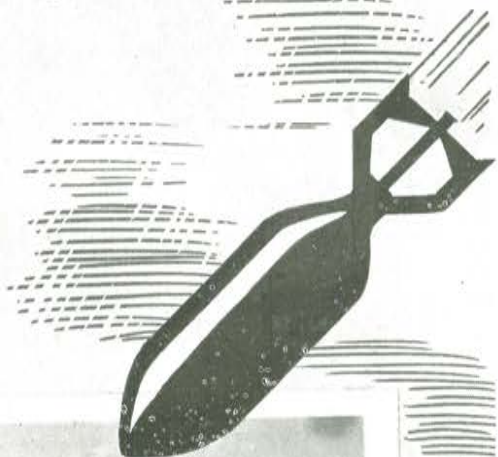
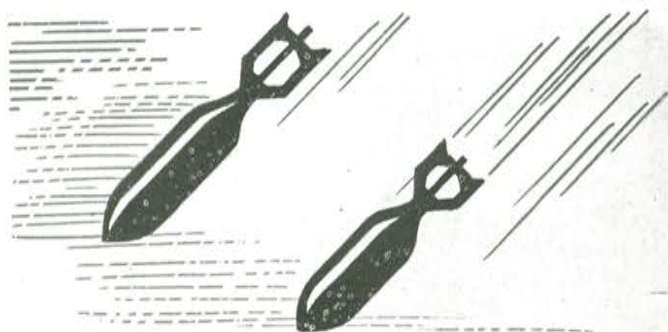
Ever since the unit had been on the Continent, the general opinion in the outfit, was that it would never go into Germany for the purpose of building airfields. But now that our forces had crossed the Rhine and were going strong, the distance between the bases in France and the front was becoming too great for the planes to operate most effectively. So the company prepared to move on.

Most men were a bit sceptical about going. They wondered how it would seem to be in daily contact with people that naturally could not like you and with whom you were forbidden to talk. It seemed as though there were more dreary days ahead.

When the company left Mourmelon, their destination was still in German hands so the trip was not as hurried as was generally the case. There were to stop in Trier, the first city in Germany, for further instructions. Almost the instant they crossed the border into Germany the men could see a vast difference in the people. There were no more friendly waves and smiles; nothing but scowls or an ignoring look.

The party had been in Trier only about an hour when word came to proceed to German barracks to sleep. The former Jerry occupants had left in a hurry. There was food cooked in the kitchen that they did not have time to eat.

Next morning the company went on within sight of the city of Mainz, and stopped at an air base that had been taken over by the 832nd Engineers. Jerry had been dropping an occasional "88" in this vicinity during the day from across the Rhine. There was an enemy pocket in Mainz on the main highway to Frankfurt. As they continued their journey the following morning, they went south to



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So after crossing, they came to one of Hitler's famous Autobahns, or Super Highways, that ran from Munich to Frankfurt. This led right to the field they were to rebuild.



Company "B" was the first contingent of the Battalion to arrive here. Buildings were still burning from the battle for the possession of this field, and the front was somewhere between them and Frankfurt, which was only four miles away.

As soon as they were housed, the men began filling the craters. About the second or third day at work, a German Jet plane was seen cruising around. Immediately the boys headed for deep holes, expecting him to strafe. Instead, he circled slowly and prepared to land. The first conclusion was that the pilot was unaware of the fact that this base was in American hands. The minute his wheels touched the ground, all the men jumped from their holes with their rifles ready

and ran for the side of the field where he would stop. The pilot surrendered to the first men to reach te plane.

This was the first Jet plane to be captured intact by the U.S. Forces and was very valuable to the Research Department. It was immediately placed under guard and soon shipped away for thorough examination.



From the surrounding towns, approximately four hundred German civilians were gathered to work on the field in order to expedite the repairs. After so much hard work in the past, every man was heartened to see the ones who had caused his predicament doing the work. The civilians were guarded, to insure that no sabotage would be attempted, and to supervise the work.

Along the paths and roads through the woods around the camp, anyone so inclined, could, with a bar of candy or a couple of cigarettes, do a nice job of fraternizing. Another pastime that appealed to nearly all the men was hunting deer, which were very numerous in the surrounding forests. The civilians weren't allowed to hunt these creatures in Germany, therefore they were so tame it was a pity it was a pity to shoot them, but the venison was a welcome addition to the menu.

One day, after the runway was operational, but the base not completely repaired, every one was surprised to see a German FW-190 circle the field as if to land. Our planes were parked all over the field and with one quick move the Jerry could have destroyed or damaged many of them. However, it looked as though he would land, so the ack- ack men held their fire. As the plane leveled off for the landing one of the company trucks drove out on the half of the runway that was still under repair. Not knowing that only half of the runway was operational, the pilot pulled up to circle again, giving the truck a chance to get out of the way. When he was half way around the around the field, one anti-aircraft gun

cut lose at him, and as quick as a flash every A.A. battery on or around the base, opened up. The plane never wavered but continued his circle through the flak and machine gun fire and landed without a scratch. When the plane stopped, the pilot stepped out, with his hands in the air. Fortunately he came with intentions of surrender rather than destruction.

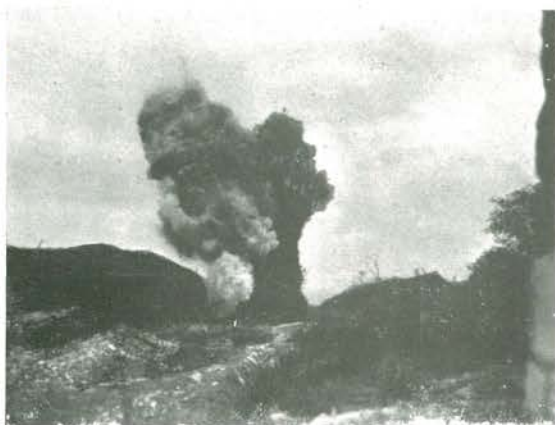


The night before the company left this base for Stuttgart, an ME 210 strafed the base but there were no casualties. He made one pass and was chased away by intense ack-ack fire. The following morning, 26 April 1945 the Company left for an airbase located at the village of Echterdingen, R-50, near Stuttgart, and arrived there late the same afternoon.

This airbase had a single concrete runway with concrete taxiways and excellent hangars. It was very large base and before the war, had been used as a commercial field for the city of Stuttgart. This must have been a very beautiful base. On one side of the base there had been a beautiful hotel for the convenience of travelers.

But when the war came along, the base was taken over by the Luftwaffe to be used as a repair base for fighter planes. On the same side of the base as the Hotel, a shop was set up with all the necessary machinery for repairing and rebuilding airplane engines. Hence it became a military target and was treated as such, by our Air Forces. They only bombed the repair depots and strafed the hangars and grounded aircraft, leaving the runways and taxiways undamaged.

The runways and taxiways had been rendered useless by the use of well placed demolitions. Upon inquiry, it was learned that the runway had been demolished by American bombs, but that they had not been dropped here by planes. In and around Stuttgart there were many military targets, consequently, they had been bombed many times. The "duds" which were dropped in these raids on Stuttgart were saved and placed in a dump. When the time came for the Luftwaffe to abandon this field, as the front lines moved closer, this runway had to be destroyed so that the American Air Forces could move right in and begin operations against them.



The German runways are so constructed with man-holes placed systematically along the sides, that in case of such an emergency the lids can be removed and a demolition charge placed in each one, rendering the air-base unoperational. This particular case is very interesting, due to the fact that the charges used were the duds dropped by the Americans.

The job here, of course, was to get the bomb craters filled, first on the runway, and then of the taxiways, making the base operational for our Tactical-Fighter Bombers.

Before work was begun, every able bodied civilian from the surrounding villages, was drafted to hasten the completion of the job. This was quite a break for the boys because they had been working a long time to get to Germany and now the tables were turned. The G.I. just stood around making sure that these "Supermen" of the "master race" did a good job and kept busy.

They seemed to be very polite toward Americans, worked hard, and did a fine job. But who wouldn't under these conditions? Only fools argue with guns.

After the craters had been filled with dirt, rock and dry-cement, then hand packed with tampers, the last six inches were filled with concrete. There were several captured concrete mixers in use here. The German laborers mixed the concrete right at the craters.

This job was completed much sooner than had been expected and proved to be one of the best bases that the unit had repaired, but American planes never operated from this base. By this time the Germans were ready to say "Uncle". Three squadrons of P-47's arrived here at approximately four o'clock on 12 May 1945. The surrender terms had already been signed by the German officials in Rhienms, France, and the war was to be officially ended at mid-night of that same day.

Just a minute or two before the arrival of the American planes at R-50, a Stuka bomber came in for a landing to surrender himself, his gunner, and the airplane. When the plane first circled the field, everyone recognized it as a German Stuka bomber (JU-88) but nothing happened. Knowing the war was over, it



was believed that he was coming in to surrender, as several others had done during the course of the war.

As he made his flight pattern to straighten out for a landing, the ack-ack guns opened up on him. One battery of .50 calibre machine guns was depressed so low that the bullets were cutting the grass around the men working.

The Stuka continued the decent to the runway. As he came nearer the ack-ack ceased firing. Although the pilot never fired a shot the anti-aircraft was a menace to the Engineers working there. When the plane landed, the crew crawled out with their hands up and surrendered. Imagine dodging American bullets on the last day of the war!

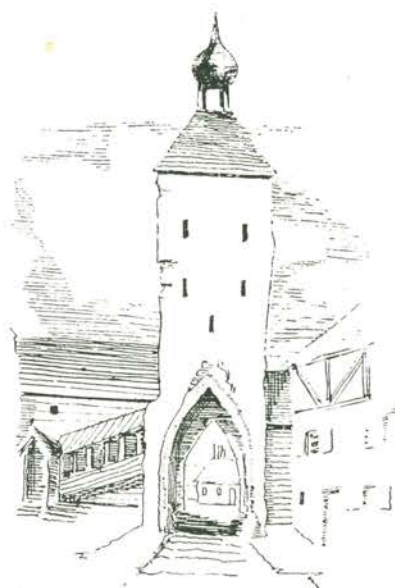
Just before the end of the war, part of the company moved south of Munich to Furstenfeldbruck, leaving some men behind to finish work on R-50.

This field, had been a training base for the Luftwaffe. On it were modern buildings; barracks and classrooms. Before the company was quartered in the barracks, they were in civilian homes. After hostilities ceased with the Nazis, they moved from the homes into tents, while the buildings on the base were being put in readiness.

The repair of this base was undertaken by the civilian contractors, who had originally constructed it. The army was merely supervising and coordinating the work and requisitioning the necessary material. This was rather pleasant work for the G.I.s.

Considering its importance, the news of the end of the European War was received with very little demonstration. Feelings of relief and gratitude were too deep to be expressed by a boistrous display.

A welcome addition to the schedule here was the time allotted each afternoon for study or recreation in connection with the I. and E. Program. A very nice swimming pool was cleaned out and filled.



For various reasons many men had long faces when the company was ordered to Kaufbeuren, to rejoin the Battalion.

Due to the end of the war, commencement of work was delayed on this field, R-70. When the company arrived there, the heavy equipment had started the preliminary work of grading and filling for the runway, taxiways and hardstands.

When the earth work was completed, this company in conjunction with Company "C" started laying a Hessian Mat and Pierced Plank Runway. They also laid a taxiway complete with hardstands.

This field, located in the foot hills of the Bavarian Alps, was in an ideal site. It was high and dry, having good natural drainage.

While in German possession, this base had been used for fighter planes and transports. There were beautiful buildings of stone and concrete construction, which afforded excellent quarters for the men. In the future they will also be used to house part of the Occupational Airforce.

While working here, the hopes of all the men were built up quite high by the orders of a certain movement. These orders were to the effect that the 840th E.A.B. would cease operations 15 July 1945, proceed to a marshalling area, and at an early date return to the U.S.A.

This order, however, was superceded by another, extending the date to 15 September 1945 and assigning an additional project at Roth, Germany, R-46.

Upon the completion of the work at R-70, the men were kept busy, as usual, until ready to move to this last job. Some men policed the base, others hauled the unused materials to one large stock-pile. The remainder, with nothing better to do, walked back and forth along the runway and taxiway looking for a place to drive one more clip. This stalling around came after the men had worked seven days a week in order to finish the job. After all, the attitude of hurry up and wait has always been upper most in the army.

Later a few minor repairs were to be performed on the runway. Instead of declaring the runway unoperational for a few days, Company "B" was permitted to make these repairs at night. This work was accomplished with the aid of the powerful search-lights on the base.

Company "B" was sent to Roth ahead of the other companies. An experimental strip was to be layed to determine the method of construction best suited for this job. The men also unloaded the material for the base at nearby railroads.

There were always spectators present, watching with wondering eyes, the machinery unloading the plank, mat, etc.

There was one little Blonde at one rail-head who completely captivated all the workers and drivers. She received much attention and the boys gave her many oranges and candy bars. But who does not like a four year old Kid?

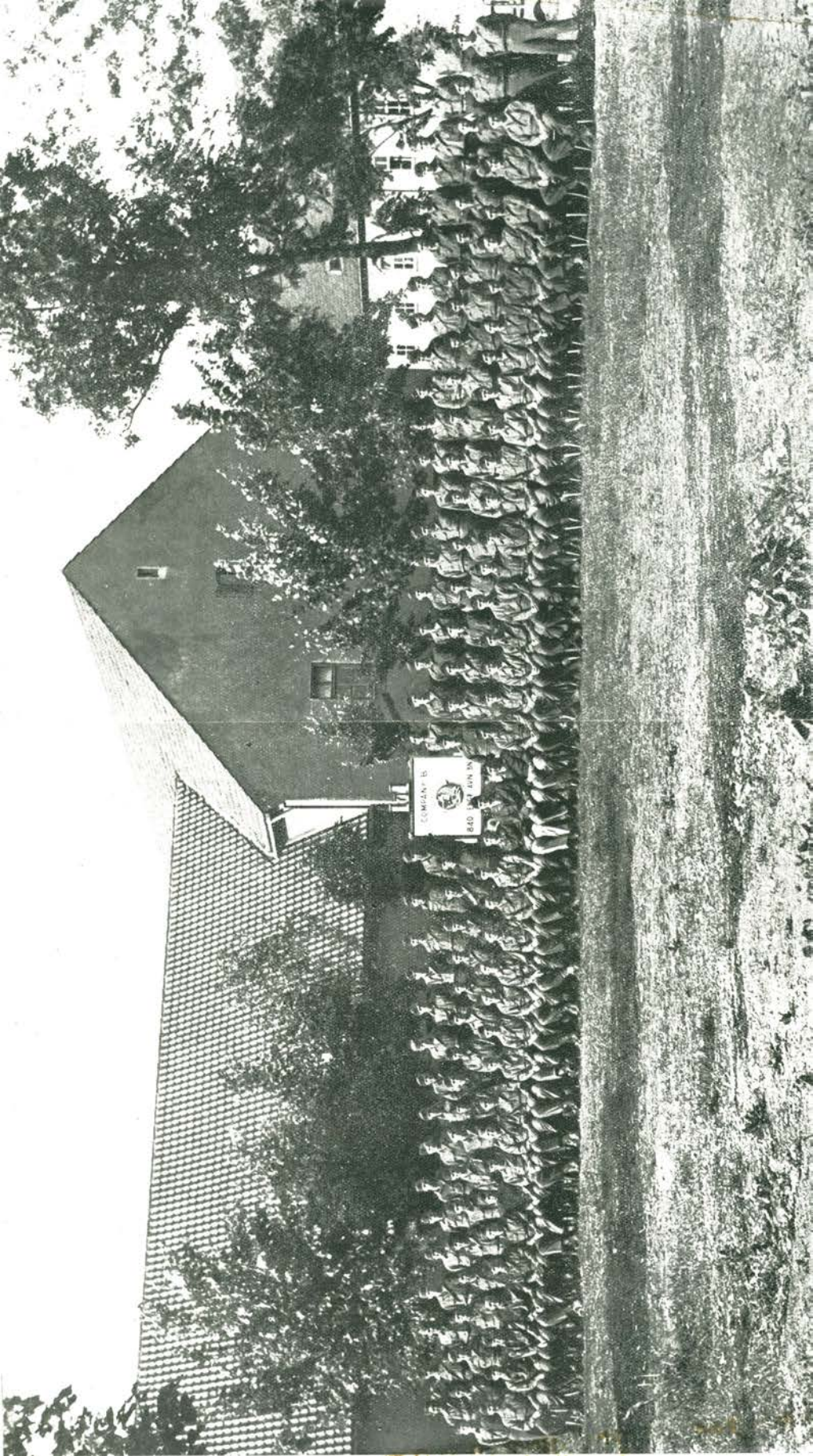
Every night there was a liberty run into Nurnberg. Although this city was practically demolishe dby bombing, it gave the men an opportunity for outside contacts. The Red Cross in Nurnberg was superb. It was housed in a former Stadium which had, in addition to other sport facilities, a swimming pool.

For once this company was not assigned the work of laying the runway but worked on the taxiways, hardstands and control towers.

Upon completion of this work everyone was surprised to see bombs and ammunition being stored on it instead of planes. A man never knows.

Now, after three years of service, the outfit is back in Frankfurt. It is hoped that this is in preparation for the scheduled trip HOME.





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Route 1
Dacatur, Tenn.

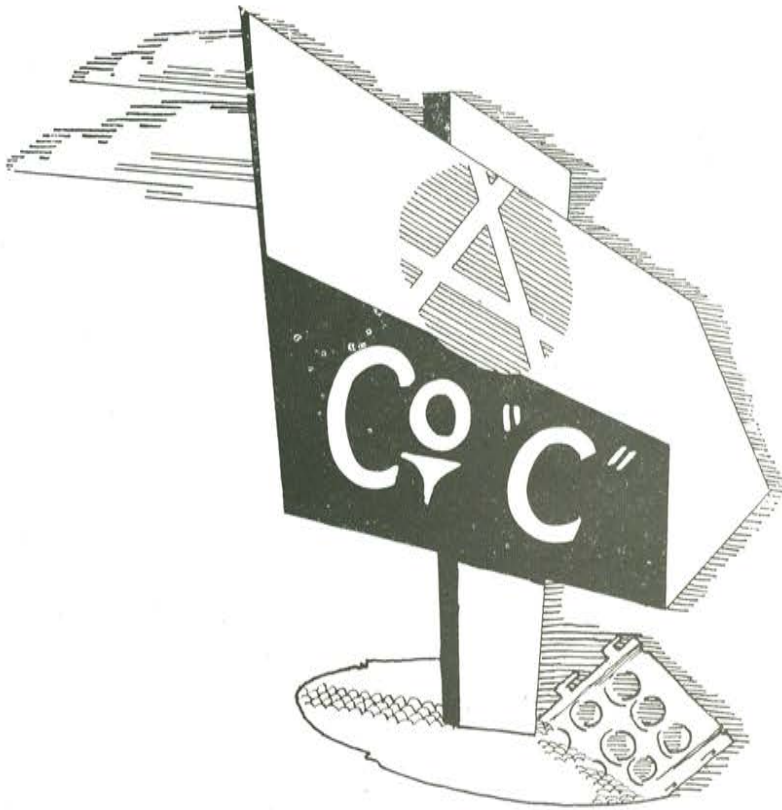
Watts, James B.
(No St. Add.)
Stevens Pottery, Ga.

Weaver, John W.
439 South Ave.
Wilkinsburg, Pa.

Woodworth, Roy D., Jr.
East Lynn, Mass.

Yonker, Thomas W.
1373 Lakeland Ave.
Lakewood, Ohio

Yost, William R.
10 Oakwood Blvd.
Hudson, N.Y.



It was

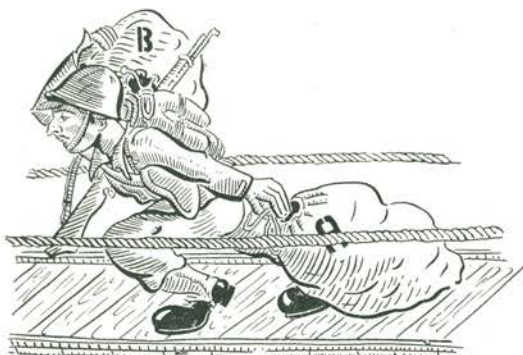
on 1 September 1942, the 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion was activated. Company "C" was staffed by a portion of a cadre with Lt. Earl F. Land as Company Commander. Later men from all parts of the States started to arrive and "C" company was formed in strength. After a week of shifting around, basic training, was started under a new Company Commander, Lt. Middleton.

Lt. Middleton directed the men during several weeks of intensive training and was then transferred to "B" Company and replaced by Lt. Morris G. Thomas (now Major). As time went by the men of "C" Company learned the hardships of Army life and accepted their responsibilities. When training progressed the company was awarded the battalion colors (a very high honor to any company), which it still holds.

One of the many incidents still remembered from Bradley Field is the three day hike and bivouac. The men were told to prepare for a three day hike and to be sure to have sufficient socks and warm clothing. No definite time was set for the hike, so the men went to bed with their clothes on in order to be ready to fall out on a moments notice. Early in the morning the Battalion was well on its way over the snow and the ice-covered roads. Upon reaching the first bivouac area they learned it was nothing but a frozen swamp. The company received the order to pitch tents. The men who chose to were allowed to visit the nearby towns. Most of the company took advantage of this priviledge and returned in such condition that they fell in garbage and latrine pits which had been dug since their departure from the bivouac area. After a very rough night the battalion started on its way back to camp. The "bottle happy" soldiers were put on a forced march. To those that had their canteens filled with other than water this only made a slight impression. It was an incident that fully amused the bystanders.

In early December 1942, Major Kieffer gave the good news that the battalion was alerted for overseas movement. Men were sent on detached service to the Port of Embarkation to water-proof the equipment. Dry run after dry run was pulled on the company until they ceased to be funny, but rather boring.

Two months later the battalion moved to a new location at Bradley Field through a blizzard. The men were still wearing full combat gear, a habit formed since the notification of the first alert. After four months of sweating it out, 1 May the battalion boarded a train for the staging area, Camp Kilmer, N.J. On 9 May



1943, after days of clothing checks and issue of new equipment, men were struggling up the gangplank for the journey overseas aboard the Aquitania. On 10 May the anchor was lifted and the men realized it was the real thing, the dry runs were over, and their journey began. Inspection of rifles was held every day. Steady KP was done by the men of the company. Air alerts were a constant ordeal. Calisthenics were required every day.

On 18 May, the ship arrived at Gourock and many men got their first view of Scotland. The next morning, after spending the night aboard, "C" company boarded a small craft to take them to shore. When they had stacked their barrack bags in a pile, coffee and doughnuts were served by the Red Cross. Then everyone loaded on the train for an 18 hour ride. They rode until early morning. With much satisfaction, as the train stopped at Sawbridgeworth, Essex, England, the tired and cramped soldiers stretched their legs. They boarded the GI trucks for the last lap of their journey to Matching Green, Essex, a little village 30 miles northeast of London, arriving on the 20 May 1943.

There they became acquainted with Nissen huts for the first time. These huts although flimsy in appearance, proved to be adequate means of shelter through such hazards as cold, damp fog, constant rain and thick heavy mud. It wasn't uncommon to find mud in some places over 12 inches deep. This was constantly menacing the heavy equipment.

It didn't take long for things to be organized. Company "C" was soon put to various tasks of building Nissen hut's, installing French drains, constructing taxiways and a large concrete site for bomb storage.

"C" Company found it rather difficult at times to pass the many rigid inspections in order to obtain 6-hour passes. The items most difficult to pass were overshoes, due to use in concrete, and occasionally rusty rifles or muddy shoes. Under these trying conditions the job continued to progress.



On the completion of the first detail which "C" Company was assigned, the building of Nissen huts in various living sites, all efforts were turned to the completion of French drains and taxiways. No time could be wasted as all jobs had a time limit. It became the habit of "C" company to beat these time limits.

Due to the lack of Aviation Engineers in that section of England a detail of men from "C" company was called upon to assist the 831th Engineer Aviation Battalion at Chipping Ongar, by laying French drains in the completion of a medium bomber base so that it would be ready for the dedication ceremony. This extra work was done at night in order to prevent work at Matching Green from falling behind schedule. This deprived the men, for a few days, of their extra privileges such as recreation and passes.

Shortly after this phase, they lost First Sergeant Warlo to Battalion Headquarters where he became Sergeant Major. S/Sgt. Harry Eastman was made First Sergeant of "C" Company. One of his first duties was to see that all bicycles in the company were registered and properly equipped because a few men had been hurt riding around at night, through the heavy fog, without lights. It is distinctly remembered by members of this company that one soldier borrowed a bicycle to visit a few pubs in the neighborhood. When the bicycle was not returned the next morning, the owner inquired as to its whereabouts. This bicycle was never found



because the soldier and the bicycle couldn't manage each other. A few hours later it was also discovered the soldier had lost his false teeth. This caused many laughs.

On the many work details, the most dreaded was the batching plant where cement was loaded on the trucks with the proper amount of sand and gravel. A few days on this detail would mean days of scrubbing to remove the cement dust, to say nothing of the raw, red, itchy hands and irritated eyes.

On the 30 September 1943, they moved to Alconbury, Huntingdonshire, where they had their first taste of living in pyramidal tents. They soon started working on pre-fabricated huts which went up rapidly. They were told they would be allowed to move in as soon as the huts were finished. This caused them to work a lot harder as well as faster. Finally they moved in, though not any too soon, as it began to get cold. Due to the shortage of fuel in England, they were allowed 8 pounds of coal per man per day. This small amount of coal didn't give enough of heat, but at least the buildings had an advantage over the tents. This time the asphalt detail was the most dreaded, especially the night shift. The day shift was not much better except that it allowed a little time for visiting pubs in Peterborough and Huntingdon.

It was on the asphalt detail the company had their first serious accident. One of the men's clothing caught fire, due to the grease and oil that collected on his outer garments. The memory of his flaming body, as he ran across the field before being stopped by another member of the company, is still vivid.



The days began to take on the steady monotony of work and sleep, but it gave them much pride, watching the planes gracefully lifting their load of destructiveness into the air. They realized that they and men like them were instrumental in the use of America's greatest weapon. Without their work these weapons would have been useless. It was at Alconbury that their Commanding Officer, Capt. M. G. Thomas, was transferred to H. & S. Company and 1st Lt. Bloodough (now Capt.) took command.

On 5 December 1943, most of the company moved to Cheddington to put up tents for the whole Battalion, who were scheduled to move there at a later date. The balance of the company, two small details, remained at Alconbury. One detail was working on the asphalt and the other trying to complete a T. 2 hangar in record time. In 5 days the company was called back to Alconbury.

Just ten days later the whole battalion moved to Marbury, Cheshire, better known as Site 10 of the Burtonwood Repair Depot and Airdrome. Their job was not as yet assigned. This left a few days to clean the area enough for suitable living conditions.

Christmas found many of them away from home the first time but this was soon forgotten because of the delicious turkey dinner which cost the cooks many hard hours of tedious work. Conditions returned to normal when, on the 19 February 1944 they moved to Site 3. This was closer to their job on the Burtonwood Airdrome.

Once again the dreaded detail was the batching plant. A request for prisoners to take their place on this job was refused. This caused a lot of gripes and eventually the officer in charge of the prisoners consented to allow a few to work. As the construction of various roads assigned to the company neared completion they learned the next job was to be an enormous hardstand to accommodate the



great quantities of planes, of all types, being assembled at Burtonwood Airdrome. They worked two 8-hour shifts in order to finish on schedule.

The next move was on the 1 May 1944. It required a little less than two days. They spent one night on the road. It was the end of the month and they were paid on that night. Stopping at Lutterworth proved to be a rather pleasant occasion as it gave them most of the afternoon to spend as they pleased. Most of the men played cards to the small hours of the morning, while others chose to walk to town in search of excitement.



The following morning, after a hot breakfast, they pulled out towards Norfolk. Arriving in Norfolk county they proceeded to Matlask, near the North Sea, where they received extensive combat and technical training. When "D"Day was announced there was considerable speculation as to when the unit would leave for the continent. On 11 June 1944, they arrived at Hiltingbury, Hants, which was to be their last stop in England. Training ceased while the company sweated out its orders for embarkation to France.. The

time was spent playing cards, going to the movies and with the girls at the Naffi. The company was split up into three groups: walking party, the main body, and rear echelon. All were scheduled to leave at different times.

The main body left Hiltingbury, Hants, on 7 July 1944, which was shortly after the walking party departed. The night was spent in the trucks at Southampton taking full advantage of continuous hot chow. Then came a sight that many members of this company will always remember, GI trucks reaching for miles from the water edge to the outskirts of the city, soldiers sleeping the best they could under, on top, and in the trucks. With typical American humor the night of suspense was soon passed and the next morning they boarded the LST's in the harbor. At last the were on their way to France.

On 9. July 1944, the main body arrived at Omaha Beach. When they had de-waterproofed their trucks they moved on to St. Pellerin where they joined the walking party and waited for the rear echelon. The rear echelon while sweating out the boat to France spent their time by going to the movies three times a day and visiting the Naafi where beer and sandwiches could be obtained. Two nights previous to their departure a buzz bomb hit very close and shook everything for miles around. When they got up the following morning most of the men went to the spot where the bomb had hit. They saw for the first time how powerful the buzz bomb was. This was the main topic of conversation for several hours. After waiting around all of the next day word came over the loud speaker to get ready to leave. This caused a lot of commotion getting all set to go. They reached the pier where they were to board ship and had to stop for the night in a warehouse. The men got up early and were loaded on a Liberty Ship and shortly were on their way to France. Things went well all the way over and they stood at anchor to be unloaded at Omaha Beach by ducks and barges. Because there were many ships in the harbor the men stayed aboard until the next day. That night Jerry came over and for quite a while it looked as though hell was blowing up. The air attack was finally beaten off and the men retired. They slept pretty well and got up very early to be taken ashore. They rode by truck to St. Pellerin where the balance of the company were bivouaced while waiting for them.

The Battalion was not given a job assignment for more than two weeks. It was necessary to wait for more territory to be taken before they could move up. They passed this time the best way they could; washing clothes, playing cards, writing letters and becoming accustomed to their foxholes through Jerry's occasional nuisance air raids. Throughout this waiting period their half tracks were continually used for reconnaissance in search of a locating for an air strip.

On the morning of the St Lo breakthrough they saw and felt the might of America's most powerful weapon as the Armada of three thousand bombers and escorts roared overhead. The skies filled with angry flak and the ground shook beneath their feet. The men stood horrified as they watched some bombers rapidly descend in a cloud of black smoke.



On 26 July, three days later they moved up to Meautis, the site of their first airstrip in France. Company "C" was assigned the task of clearing the glide angle, constructing the taxiways, access roads and hardstands. In addition, a portion of the company assisted in laying Hessian Mat surfacing on the runway. It was with a feeling of great pride that they watched the P-47's settle gracefully on their first airstrip in France, A-17 Meautis.

On the 18 August, orders were again received to move up. That evening they were deep in a beech forest about five miles from Fougères pitching tents and digging foxholes. When the usual details were completed the company relaxed for the night. It would indeed be very interesting if all could but remember what took place. Calvados, a fiery French liquor, (the first they had tried), flowed like water, much to the dismay of the officers. The following day the Commanding Officer, Captain Bloodough put the farmhouses, where this very potent drink was obtained, off limits. The next night half of the company was still doing the Irish Jig. Some of the men slept where they dropped in spite of the steady downpour of rain. Two men spent all day collecting eggs from the farmers. The last farmhouse had no eggs but offered Calvados in exchange for chocolate "D" ration bars. The men were delighted with the spoils of their days work and turned their dusty shoes toward camp. Being hot and dry they drank a liberal amount of Calvados and talked about their forthcoming meal of eggs. As the bottle was passed more freely between the two of them their footing became less certain and their heads groggier. It isn't known whether they collided with trees, rolled down the embankments, or just had a friendly tussle, but regardless of the cause, the eggs dripping from their pockets were no longer the makings of an appetizing meal.



Leaving 22 August for Marville, a few miles from Dreux, they learned their next job was to repair a heavily bombed German air field which had concrete runways. After repairing one runway in a short time, fighter bombers and transports were using it as an operational field. Food re-

tions grew steadily worse as they started to work on the adjoining runway. "C" Company's job at A-41 Dreux, was to prepare and fill with concrete many large craters.

The company made plans for its next move to Mourmelon-le-Grand, on the 9 September. This move gave the men their first glimpse of Paris. Such famous sights as the Eiffel Tower and Arc De Triomphe were easily spotted. It was surprising that the gay spirit of the French people still lingered, and was so amply displayed as they passed through the virtually undamaged city. This affectionate spirit was shown throughout France. It was intense at the start, but when the French people became accustomed to our presence it occurred less frequently.

Arriving at Mourmelon-le-Grand late in the afternoon, it was a pleasant surprise to find barracks and vegetable gardens, which were a change from pup tents and "K" rations. "C" Company's job this time was filling bomb craters and laying Hessian Mat.

One day while "C" Company was working, a P-47 in distress had to make a crash landing. Due to an oil covered windshield it was impossible for the pilot to see. The landing was accomplished with the aid of a fellow pilot in another plane.

When A-80, Mourmelon was completed, after a stay of 12 days, the company moved to Toul on the 22 September. At Toul, "C" Company was assigned the task of constructing taxiways, hardstands and marshalling areas. Progress of the job was delayed due to continuous rain. Plans for the taxiways and hardstands were changed several times by higher headquarters, much to the annoyance of those who had to do the hard work. After weeks of long hours and hard labor the field was completed, in spite of the cold, rainy, weather and resulting mud. Thanksgiving Day was spent at A-90, Toul, and a very excellent meal was prepared by the cooks with turkey and all the trimmings. It was here that the company started to receive a day off each week. This could be spent in the area washing clothes and attending to their personal needs or by visiting the neighboring towns or taking the recreational convoy to Nancy.

Not being satisfied with their pup tents in such disagreeable weather, the men began picking up peices of lumber here and there until they had enough to build suitable living quarters. It wasn't long until every man's shelter had a small stove

in it, for the nights and early mornings were chilly. It was a strange sight, the odd shaped huts built from doors, sheet tin, and Hessian Mat. A lot of them were built so pup tents could be used as roofs.



moments notice. After a few days of the the alert a Jerry plane came over at night and strafed the roads and living area. Everyone took cover just as they were dressed.

Christmas came once again and the men of the company shared their Christmas dinner with some French orphans from a nearby institution, giving the feeling of good will which is so commonly shared by all people at this time of the year.

After a few short weeks of finishing up the job an advance squad was sent out to Guignicourt. The company followed later and on 28 January they were all housed in an old French chateau. "C" Company's job at Guignicourt was the maintenance and improvent of Airfield A-68. The task of filling and pouring a concrete surface on bomb craters on the runways, the construction of hardstands, and new taxiways was a large order. Later on "B" Company was sent to assist them in preparing if for medium bombers. In spite of short notice the work was completed by the combined efforts of both companies. After leaving A-68 the company was highly commended for the good work they had done in preparing the base for operational use. Some of the men were taken about this time as replacements for

the infantry. Those unlucky few were filled with resentment, at leaving the outfit and the men they had worked with, over a period of years, sharing hardships and pleasures alike. Although there were only a few men leaving, their departure was felt very much by the rest of the company. It was while here Capt. Bloodough was transferred to H. & S. Company and 1st Lt. E. Burganics took command.



The men, who had become accustomed to hardships and sweat, were anxious to move up into Germany, away from these neat bunks, clean floors and the many regulations that come with being in "Com. Z." The men were restless. What could they accomplish toward the "great cause" back here in the communication zone? Once they were in there sweating out the doughboys advance, now they were stuck here, miles away from where they thought they should be. At this very moment plans were being made that would give them many restless hours, sleepless nights and the sincere wish that they were back in Guignicourt. Orders finally came to move up, on 28 March.

They reached Birkenfeld, Germany late in the evening and stayed overnight. Next morning they loaded back on their trucks and reached Ober Olm at dusk. There was a mad dash for quarters, everyone being tired and sleepy. The following day the men lined up at the kitchen trucks to receive their daily "K" rations, then started towards the Rhine River. The long, narrow pontoon bridge crossing the famous Rhine River was reached at Oppenheim at 1000 hours. The trucks halted to wait their turn. Great clouds of smoke covered the bridge. The men watched the long lines of trucks disappear into the smoke until almost before realizing it, their turn came to cross. Reaching the other side, out of the smoke, the trucks again picked up speed in the direction of Frankfurt.

When they arrived at a large airfield on the outskirts of Frankfurt, a few men were picked out for a burial detail of some unfortunate German soldiers. After spending the rest of the day cleaning the barracks for suitable living quarters they retired for the night. The work of filling bomb craters on the runway began the next morning. Then it was learned that they were to move up. This was on Easter Sunday, 1 April. The Chaplain held services. Except for the few who



had to remain with the loaded trucks, most everyone attended. When services were over the men returned to their waiting trucks, their minds filled with memories of days gone past and anxiety for the future. They knew that what they wished for at "Com. Z." had arrived. The

men were now wondering where they would be and what they would be doing next week, next month, and next year.

Later, as the order to load up came, the men were tense and excited. They were told what their job would be. There were to construct evacuation and supply strips with the 3rd Army XII Corps. It was late that afternoon when the trucks began to roll deeper into Germany, arriving at Offenbach the same day. They were quartered in large apartment buildings near XII Corps Advance Headquarters. The usual guard detail was placed around the company area for security reasons, and through the courtesy of the Corps an unexpected hot meal was served. This was really appreciated. The next morning the Company received orders not to advance, as a resisting pocket was on the route to our next destination. That afternoon excitement filled the air. Small arms fire was heard on the outskirts of the city. The Company was immediately alerted and the half track was sent to give added protection to the XII Corps Headquarters. Machine guns were set up, scouts sent out and battle stations were assigned. Hand grenades and bazookas were handed out the men, especially to the security guard which was posted immediately. A hush fell over the war-torn city as sounds of the sporadic fire drifted nearer. The scouts were dashing, creeping and dodging, through the alleys followed by columns of American soldiers. Through it all the German civilians were peeking from behind the curtains at our preparations, with a knowing grin on their faces insinuating "you got this far and now you might as well start back." But the thought of their own soldiers coming back was soon dismissed as the firing ceased and the tension lifted over a city still occupied by American soldiers. Even though the firing did cease the men on the machine guns and bazookas, still remained on their posts. With the feeling something was going to happen, the com-

pany passed the night. They arose the next morning none the worse off, except for the loss of some sleep.

The pocket being cleared up on the 3 April, the company moved forward passing the spot the trapped soldiers had chosen to make their last stand. There were many wrecked vehicles on the sides of the road, indicating the fierceness with which they held out. Hours later as the convoy rolled into Lauterbach the men were a colorful sight with their dust-covered faces and gay colored scarfs dangling in the breeze. The Company Commander, with the aid of the Mess Sergeant who spoke very good German, notified the civilians of the homes the company intended to occupy. The civilians were given but one hour to evacuate. One hour is really not quite enough time but whole families working together at top speed were able to move the necessities for living with their neighbors. They threw clothing and bedding out of windows. Waiting children put them in wagons and small carts and hauled them away. They disappeared, but only to return for another load. This continued until their hour was up. To the tired, dusty, and hungry men, that hour seemed never to pass. When the hour was finally up the men and women, old and young, left the houses, barely able to move under their heavy burdens, their faces filled with anxiety and sadness. It was an interesting and yet touching sight, watching the many changes of expression on their faces. Trying to be friendly and not knowing how to go about it, in spite of the fact that they were evacuated from their homes, proved quite an ordeal. This was quite embarrassing to some of the men who heard their numerous pleas such as: "Nich kaput mein hausen", and requests for permission to return later to obtain the possessions they were unable to get within the hours time, or to feed rabbits and chickens, or care for their gardens. However, they were not allowed to re-enter the buildings.

The Company stayed here for three days making markers for E and S Strips in order to have them ready for their first airstrip with the XII Corps. These



markers were painted black and white so they could be seen easily from the air.

Some of the men found time to take advantage of the civilian vehicles and bicycles which were numerous in that area. Some of them took great risks with them as they tried to relieve the tension stored under such conditions. It became not at all uncommon to see a sedan roar up the street, then with a screeching of breaks the car would turn completely around causing spectators to hold their breaths. Civilians seemed much concerned, but it was not certain who the concern was for, the soldier driving the car, or the car itself.

The men could not let all the preserves in the cellars go untouched. As a result most every meal was cooked in the kitchen in whatever particular apartment they were in. Some of the make shift meals were very elaborate in comparison to the conventional "K" rations. Some menus included such items as: fried potatoes, green peas, fried onions, preserved fruit, black German bread and butter, and bacon from 10 in 1 rations. Mixing the 10 in 1 rations with the canned fruit found in the cellars was done as often as possible. This was as often as they could get the rations out of the kitchen without anyone knowing about it. One night a few men decided they could use more bacon for the next meal, also milk and sugar, so they decided to make a trip to the kitchen after dark. Some time was spent in finding where it was stored. Finally, after locating it, they were in the process of throwing it through the window to the men outside when the unexpected appearance of an officer startled them all. They dropped the 10 in 1 rations where they could not be easily observed, then heard the officer ask; "What's going on here?" Immediately he was answered; "Airing out the kitchen, Sir." The kitchen was at that time very conveniently filled with smoke. Deciding everything was all right, the officer continued on his way and the men made off with the rations.

When the company left Lauterbach on 6 April, they travelled to Vache, a full days journey, where again civilians were ejected from their homes. It was here the men were issued fur-lined jackets captured from the enemy. Although most of the men later sent them home, some exchanged them for various other souvenirs. Most of the work done here consisted of reloading the trailers. The men also had the op-



portunity to wash dirty clothing accumulated on their long, dusty ride.

The time again came for the the company to move and they went through the usual procedure of loading and soon were on their way to Meiningen. The reconnaissance crew had already surveyed the field which was designated for the E & S strip. The company arrived there on 8th April. Civilian homes were again used. The weather was exceptionally fine for working conditions and the men were becoming accustomed to being on the move all the time.

The next morning work was started, laying the markers, clearing the glide angle and erecting wind socks. The strip was operational in two days. All through this time some men were working on new markers, to keep enough ahead for the next strip. The "Recon." party went ahead in search of the next strip, while the company caught up on its washing, wrote letters, and saw its first movies since leaving France. The half track returned with news of the location and the following day the company pulled out.

After riding all morning through the still smoking cities and rubbish covered roads, they were glad when stopped at Eisfeld, 12 April. This time the company was quartered in former German barracks which were conveniently close to the job. Large quantities of liquor were found in Eisfeld and distributed through the company. Care was taken to see that no one man received too much. However, some did, and general turmoil resulted while trying to put them to bed.

The next morning work was started on strip Y-8 and completed just four hours later. The afternoon was spent making more markers, and waiting for news from the half track to advance.

That night Jerry strafed the field. A convoy of Negroes had just pulled in. The lights from their vehicles drew his attention and fire. Immediately they stampeded for the barracks, which they thought would be better cover, and stayed there, sleeping the best they could in the halls for the remainder of the night. The next morning the C. Q. (Charge of Quarters) who spent the night at the C.P. (Command Post) located at the edge of town, not knowing of their presence, tripped over them in the pitch black hallway while waking the company with the



news of the forthcoming move. After breakfast the company was ready to leave. A squad of men was left behind for maintenance of the field.



Their next stop was Kronach, 15 April, where the the company spent a fairly pleasant two days. Most of them again taking advantage of the small motor-bikes they had picked up. It might be interesting to add here that the company had a large assortment souvenirs by this time such as bicycles, radios, pistols, enemy flags, and typewriters. There was generally at least one radio in each truck.

About the only work done here was the making of wind socks from German Parachutes. The sewing machines in the large apartment house they occupied were indeed handy, saving hours of sewing that the men wouldn't even do for their own clothing. The men were still eating their own makeshift meals, disposing of a great many stray chickens, at least they will tell you that they were stray, only eating regular chow with the company when their own resources were low.

The first night spent at Kronach they were again strafed by Jerry. The mad rush down the pitch black stairs, some having to come down three flights, was performed in what is believed to be record time. The only damages were a few scratches and bumps.

While the company was sleeping in the small hours of the next morning, perhaps dreaming of the loved ones at home they hadn't seen in over two years, the security guards were patrolling the company area. To these men fell the responsibility of the company's safety. As they patrolled their post, they passed time by talking of things long since past, and thinking of what might be yet to come . . . If one could but watch two men walking back and forth anxiously looking at their watches, hearing, seeing, all sorts of things and know that their very lives depended on their alertness, it would not be hard to understand how their imaginations can run away with them making even slightest detail a matter of importance.

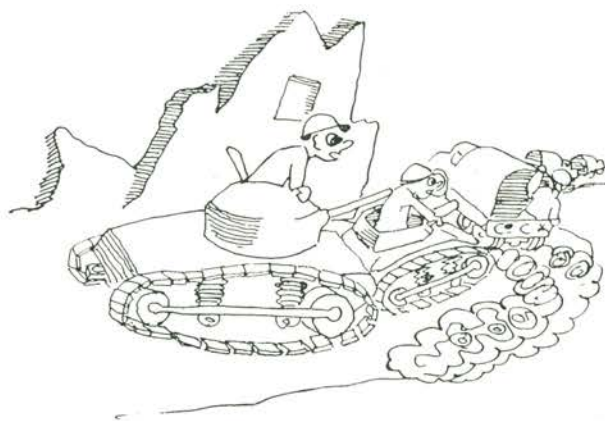
Two guards, while patrolling the area this night, were acting the same as any other guards would under these circumstances. The cold, damp chill of early morning had set in, the thick low clouds had shut off the welcome light from the moon

and time was passing very slowly. As they passed by low hanging branches and watched the shrubbery take on weird shapes, they heard something rustling in the dead leaves and tall grass. They stopped, their fingers tense on their M.l.s! . . . One turned to the other and said, "Can you hear anything"? The other straining his eyes said, "Yea, but I can't see a damn thing". "Neither can I," replied the first one. "Oh well, maybe we're hearing things." . . . But they weren't hearing things, for in a few seconds they heard it again, only to be followed by the sounds of something trying to put a lot of distance between itself and the two tense guards. "Halt! . . . Halt! . . . or I'll shoot!!!" Still no response. "Halt! For the third and last time!" Then as the guards cut lose with all their M.l.s had, they heard the frightened yelp of a very large, but unhurt dog as it dashed across the field.



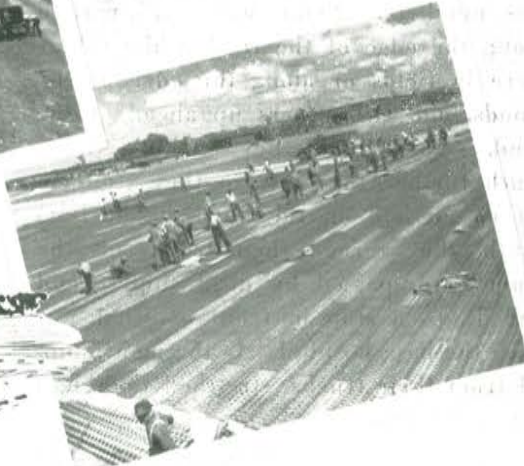
Leaving Kronach, 17 of April, they proceeded towards Bayreuth. They traveled most of the day and saw a great many wrecked vehicles along the dusty roads, some ours, others belonging to the rapidly retreating enemy. It seemed ages to these men since they had left home. It seemed they had been on the move forever. They were tired of it. What a nice hot bath, home cooked meal, and civilian clothes would be compared to washing in their helmets, shaving when they felt like it and wearing hot, dusty O.D.s. They weren't doing too badly as far as sleeping was concerned. Most of them always managed to find a nice soft bed some German family had not had time to remove.

The road grew more dustier, the roar of tanks louder. They passed by in countless numbers. Some were still parked along the edge of the road, while others were in fields or along the edge of the woods, and still others up ahead or behind. They knew they couldn't travel much further this day, so they stopped. At an airfield on the outskirts of Bayreuth, they turned their trucks off the main road, passed by dead snipers and rolled to a stop in front of what was once the base hospital. As the men jumped from their trucks, stretched their legs





Pierced Steel Plank-



in
the

Ditch



dig
it
out



fill
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and took a look around the still burning surroundings, they noticed an awful stench in the air. This place was the hottest yet. When they entered the hospital they noticed two dead Germans on the floor, one of whom's face was completely shot away. These, fortunately, had been discovered by the infantry when they passed through a few hours earlier. They were located in a position that could have commanded the entrance "C" company used. It is possible they would have made it very uncomfortable for the company.

Living quarters were immediately cleaned up. The two German bodies were removed and buried, the blood washed from the walls and stairs. The company electrician installed lights and hooked up the generator. This was not a civilian home, therefore no soft beds were available, so the men had to set up their own cots. Hot chow was served and radios started to blare from most every room.

That first night in Bayreuth was filled with tension as the men tried to figure what would happen next. There was nodoubt that most anything could happen, with the dough boys slugging it out not much more than five hundred yards away. They were behind the first line of defense and ahead of the second line of defense. The buildings on the base were still blazing, lightning up the area perfectly for any German plane that chose to investigate. To these men who had observed the strickest black out rules, this was not a very comforting thought. However the night passed without anything unusual taking place but there was plenty to keep the guard busy, investigating the many strange noises.

Many things happened to these men during their four day stay here. The strip was completed. Two men acting as courier and courier guard fought and captured two heavily armed snipers. (Later these two men were presented with Certificate of Merits.) Another two took as prisoners, three German soldiers, and afterwards found it difficult to turn them over to the proper authorities. The P.W. cages would all say the same thing, "Take them some where else. No room here."

On the afternoon of the third day, the courier brought orders from the Battalion informing them that their job with the Third Army was finished and they were to rejoin the Battalion as soon as possible. The next morning, 21 April, they started the 200 mile journey back across Germany to Frankfurt. They spent one night on the road, sleeping in what was believed to be an abandoned D.P. (displaced person) camp, with a German soldier acting as K.P. The next morning after breakfast they continued on the last lap of their journey. The roads were filled

with D.P.s on their way home, and countless German soldiers, trying to give themselves up. This made travelling very tiring as sometimes they were hardly moving. They also noticed there were still a great many vehicles lying twisted and torn along the roads.

When they arrived at the Battalion C.P., just as dinner was being served, they were told that as soon as they had received typhus shots and eaten chow they would leave for the 7th Army front. Just three hours after their arrival they left. When they had left Frankfurt less than one month ago they were considered green, but now, as they left again, they were classed as highly efficient and trained men, and were secretly glad that they were to leave. Yes it would be hard for these men to just sit and wait and hear of the news. They had a taste of it and wanted more. Well they were going to have more.



They left Frankfurt, and about 4 hours riding along the partially destroyed Autobahn brought them to Mannheim. There they joined the VI corps, and reported to the 7th Army Advance Hdq. They received their orders, spent the night, and next morning moved on.

The next strip was to be at Goppingen and there they arrived on 27th April. Here civilian homes were used while the men laid their first strip for the 7th Army. During the company's three day stay at Goppingen they were pretty busy

working on the field and making news markers. On the second day the half track and one platoon moved to Ersingen.

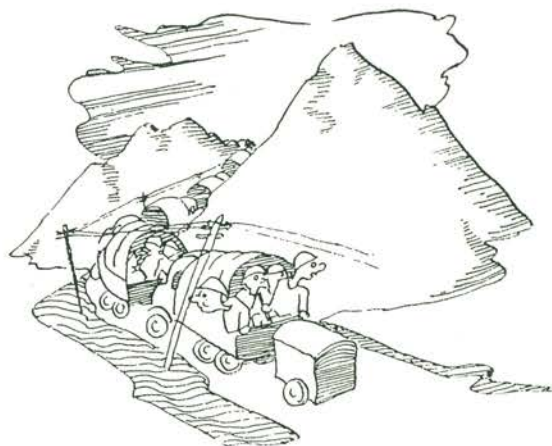
They reached there in time to be of help in stopping three hundred men of the German infantry, all heavily armed with automatic weapons. These men had been cut off from their own division and were running around behind the American lines. However they were intercepted and captured by an alert AAA Battalion. The following morning the platoon started working on the E and S strip. When the rest of the company left Goppingen, they left one squad behind for maintenance and discovered that the advance platoon had almost completed the strip at Ersingen. After spending the night there, they moved on, leaving another squad behind.

They reached Memmingen during a driving snow blizzard on 29th April. The men found it hard believe this was Bavaria, Germany's play ground. Instead it resembled some place in Alaska. This was Bavaria though. All the middle age architectural work and the small towns surrounded by high crumbling walls convinced them of that. Here in Memmingen they worked like mad. A company short two squads means more work for every one, and they all thought they had been doing as much as they possibly could before. But they did it. They filled craters, put up markers, made more markers for their next strip, and removed wrecked planes. It was on the second day at Memmingen that another squad left to move to Kaufbeuren, but on the next day the company joined them.

"C" company arrived at Kaufbeuren on 2nd of May. They hadn't expected it to be as large as it was, and neither did they expect it to be in such good condition. Many of the men thought it rather odd that it wasn't bombed. It must have been an important base to the Germans. Why would they erect so many large concrete barracks if it wasn't an important base? Well, their job was to construct bases, only destroying when it became absolutely necessary. They spent the night at Kaufbeuren and another squad was left when the company moved on in the morning.

Schongau was their next stop, on 3rd May. When they arrived in the morning they discovered that the barracks were already occupied by evacuees from Berlin. They were informed that they would have to move out. Shortly afterwards the company moved in. Work was started the same morning and was finished shortly after they had eaten their dinner of "K" rations, in spite of the fact they were three squads short. They also left another squad behind as they pulled out.

It was cold now and the ground was covered with snow in some spots. The small convoy began picking its way through the Bavarian Alps, over steep hills and snake like turns, into Austria. Many of the numerous bridges had been destroyed but the American Engineers had replaced them over the deep gorges. The men in the open trucks soon lost interest in sight seeing and wished they could get out of the cold. It was early afternoon when they arrived at Innsbruck on 4th May. The first thing to catch their eyes were the many undamaged planes on the field. Most of them were Germany's latest jet planes. After much trouble they located a large apartment house and here the company was housed. From here they had a splendid view of the Austrian Alps. Work was soon started on the field.



When the slower moving equipment convoy arrived they learned that an accident on a treacherous hill had taken the life of one man and had sent another to the hospital. The field was nearing completion, when on 8th of May Peace was declared. This was welcome news to these tired men. They had come a long way from home and lived under trying conditions, they had worked and prayed for this. At last it had come, but outside of a very few noise makers there wasn't much celebrating. The men did relax some though, and quite often would travel up the sides of the steep and towering Innsbruck Alps in a cable car. The VI corps informed the company that their work with the 7th Army had been completed. Once again they made preparations to rejoin the Battalion, but word was flashed over the radio telling them to join "B" company.

It was 10th May, when they left Innsbruck to join the other company at Furstenfeldbruck. There they helped improve a concrete runway before moving back to Kaufbeuren, on 14th May.

At Kaufbeuren they really enjoyed themselves. The whole Battalion was there; "C" Company's job was to raze some of the buildings on the field, clear the glide



angle, help lay the runway, taxiways and hardstands. They also had to clean out a great many buildings, landscape the grounds, and construct fences around all the living area and the field. There were a large number of German prisoners working for the Battalion. The heavy work was left to these prisoners. Most of the men in "C" company were acting as supervisors, except the clipping crew. This crew put the pierce plank in place, then drove small metal clips in the joints to hold the P.S.P. together.

The men were now wondering when they would be going home. They weren't long in receiving an answer. It was planned for them to leave for the States in late summer or early fall, where, after a 30 day furlough, they would be sent to the west coast as tactical reserves. After two months of sweating it out, and turning in some of their equipment, they were told to move to Roth.

On 16th July they arrived at Roth, another former German air base that had been heavily bombed. Here, also, a great many prisoners were available for the heavy work and D.P.s for the K.P. duty. Even though this extra help made working conditions much easier, the men found plenty to "gripe" about. That is typical of the Army. No matter how easy or how tough a job may be, a soldier will always "gripe". These men had to talk about something so spreading rumors and griping is almost a natural tendency for any G.I.

By this time a great many men from "C" company had left for home on the point and old age system. One of these was 1st Sgt. Eastman, who was replaced by Staff Sergeant N. J. Olive.

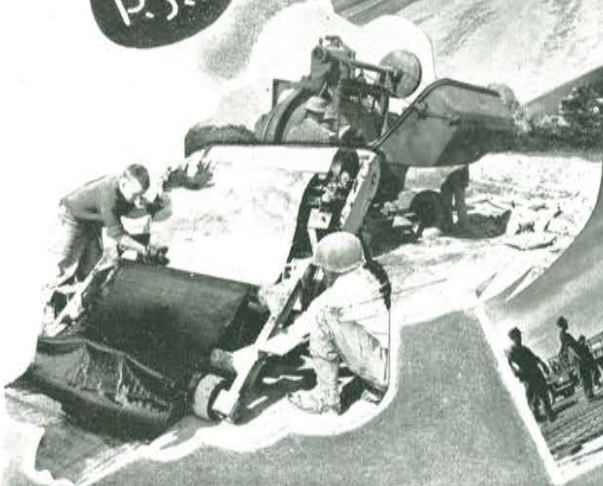
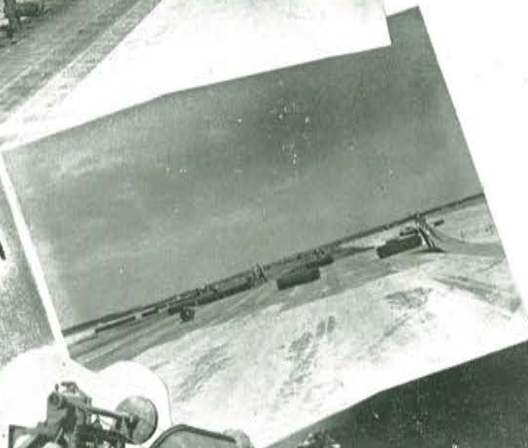
It was at Roth where some men were presented with the Certificate of Merit. These two men were the ones who captured the snipers. Also each member of the half track crew received the Certificate of Merit for their services.

Things were certainly much easier now and the men knew it wouldn't be much longer until the whole Battalion would be leaving for home. Home, the place they had joked about for so long. Maybe it is a small farm with a large red barn, or the top apartment in some apartment house. But to these ex-coal miners, railroad workers, lawyers, machinists, etc; it was every thing the world had to offer.



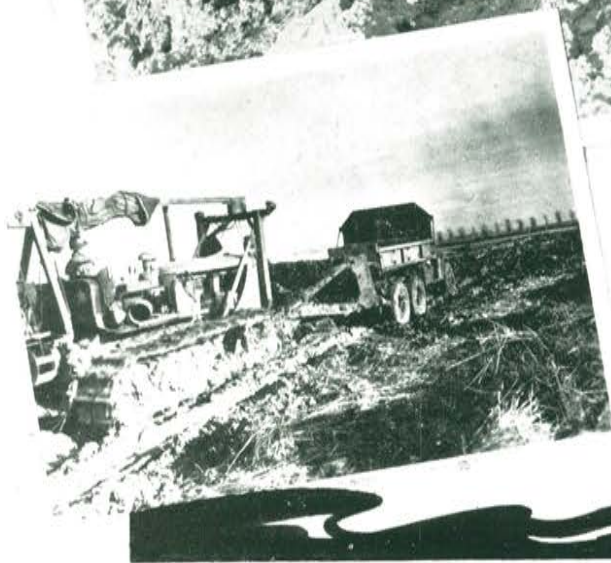
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When V.J. Day was announced they learned they had enough points for discharge. So September 1st, exactly 3 years after they were activated, they were at a new location in Frankfurt erecting tents, their last job before going home. Home, sweet home!





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McElroy, Jess D.
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Moyers, George
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Watson, Richard D.
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Wyzocki, Joseph A.
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Zdonomiz, Stephen
209 Conant St.
Gardner, Mass.

Zelber, Joseph V.
109-05 120th St.
Richmond Hill, N.Y.

Zombeck, Stanley A.
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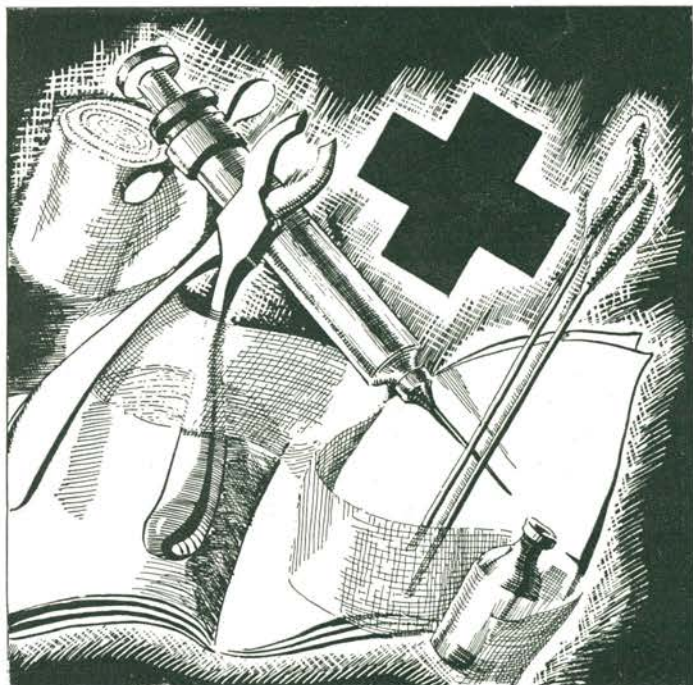




You have



up to reaching this page, read all about the men who helped win this war, namely the one and only 340th Engineer Aviation Battalion. However, his story would not be complete without seeing the other side of it. Yes! How they were able to survive is the picture I wish to bring to light. Friends, Engineers, and civilians, I have come here to praise the Medics not to bury them. So without further ado I shall go on with my odyssey.



The original Medical Personnel; S/Sgt. Leo Kamler, Cpl. Jerry Newman, T/5s Sid Rosenberg, Wm. Moore and Pete Kolatsky, Pfcs. Mike Mechanic, Dave Albus, Al Fenichel and Ernest Jeter, Pvts. Vito Gange, Rube Rosen, Ralph Nadeau, Mike Conaway, and Wm. Rutenberg, received their dreaded orders at their home, Dow Field Station Hospital in Bangor Maine to join the 340th Airborn Engineer Battalion at Westover Field, Mass. The army, after an intensive investigation, accepted our apologies for their error. Our orders were then corected and we proceded to Bradley Field, the home of our famous 340th Engineer Aviation Battalion. Three azmuth readings were needed to locate Battalion Headquarters. After an official greeting by the Adjutant, "loose wrists" Lt. Richards, the news gently broken that the unit was still in quarantine.

After depositing our belongings and our hopes we proceeded to chop our way through the woods to make our debut at the Battalion Dispensary. We were grilled by our new CO and Bn. Surgeon Lt. V. V. Kusz. He immediatelly called for (Doc) Lt. J. T. Moehn to see what the wind had blown in. All of a sudden we were given a direct order to open our mouths for dental inspection and so we met Lt. A. DeChristoforo, the dentist.

Our first official day at the Dispensary was one that few of us will ever forget, as we were, at the time, assigned our jobs. Rosenberg immediately took over as Doc. Moehn's assistant, dispensing those cure-all pills, asprins. This put Rosen-



berg in a good position to tell the Doc all about his ulcers. (Ah! What heart-breaking stories those were.) He certainly kept the bottles dusted. Even in those days the boy was bucking.

Kamler was assigned to the records, plus the allotting of the passes to the Medics. Passes came so few and far between that it was necessary for us fellas to dodge him when we visited Hartford. Kamler was very fortunate in being one of the few allowed to live off the Base because he was married and a member of the first three grades. It really took a lot of courage to ask for your mail. Kamler had such a gentle way of answering, "I'll tell you gosh darn goofs when you have any mail!"

Newman was assigned the job of training us in addition to being "overseer" of the Dispensary. The one place he couldn't help was on Kamler's job, as that was top secret even in those days. That was my first acquaintance with an essential man, Kamler, not Newman.

The polishing of the typewriter keys was left up to Rosen. It was not long before Battalion Headquarters got wind of his gifted talents and thus Rosen was even allowed to do some work for us now and then.

Meanwhile Fenichel assisted so ably by Conaway (or was it the other way around) kept the place in spick and span condition via a direct order from Doc. Kusz. Poor Kamler fell away to a ton trying to keep tabs on them.

Meanwhile, Gange, chauffeuring his proud ambulance, shuttled to and from the Hospital. Occasionally he was caught at the post exchange. Jeter also drove the "Love Wagon". (Ask the girls in Windsor Locks.) Kolatsky helped on sick call as did Mechanic when he was not eating at the P.X. Nadeau was kept very busy baffling medical science by his wife giving birth to a baby on the average or twice a month.

Moore and Rutenberg were assigned to the dentist working at the station Hospital fixing the tusks of the men in the Battalion. This proved to be quite assignment as they even worked nights and did not get through till after midnight. So you see the Medics did work and fight to achieve the goal of getting the men ready for over seas duty.

One cold day a certain Engineer, by the name of Pvt. Wm. Nadworny, was walking post outside of the Battalion Dispensary. At first relief he approached Rutenberg and cried out his tale of woe. (Yes, we filled in for the Chaplain even in those days.) Nadworny was a chiropodist prior to entering the army and was anxious to transfer into the Medics. After a talk with Doc. Kusz a lot of red tape was cut, thus placing Nadworny on detached service with the Medics. His duties were to instruct the men in the proper wearing of shoes. (One needs a little encouragement when they try something new) and proper care of the feet. Believe me there were plenty of hikes and therefore many feet to be doctored.

One memorable day in early December, 1942, we all filed into the post theater to hear Major Kieffer, and I quote, "Men, I have good news for you, the news we, or rather I, have been waiting for has come." (Or words to that effect.) "I am proud to inform you that we are slated to go overseas," unquote. Of course this meant the cancellation of passes and furloughs that we never did get. Thus it even reached the point when a fella could not visit the latrine without being snowed under with rumors. But our morale was still one hundred percent? At least that's what the reports read.

We were ordered to wear helmets at all times. This gave us the appearance of combat men. The medics were well acquainted with helmets having carried many a bed pan around while in basic training. When we joined the 840th we had all completed our basic training and had at least six months in the service.

On our first dry run (many followed) the Battalion C. O. inspected us. A look of astonishment came upon his face as we presented arms with our well used and never sharpened "hypos". About this time an emergency arose. One of the Engineers slipped on the ice. Nadworny and Rutenberg were on duty the night this accident occurred. The two medics diagnosed his injury as a broken leg, which required splinting. However all our property including the splints were packed, being made ready for overseas shipment. Thus once again the ingenuity of the medics was called upon. It was decided to use the only broom in the Dispensary as an emergency splint. This made possible the proper evacuation of the patient and prevented the simple fracture from becoming a compound fracture. This bit of ingenuity was paid for, by sweeping out the Dispensary for the remainder of our stay, with toothbrushes. Ah! but incidents such as these helped to break up the monotony of things.

Rube Rosen was accepted for officers candidate school. He was replaced by an Engineer, with the same qualifications, Christofer Whittaker then became our clerk. Our three officers received their captaincy and in the same big deal, Rutenberg, was promoted to private first class.



To get the men ready for overseas duty meant a lot of work for us, as there was so much to do. Giving them their full quota of injections and physicals. And these were really complete in all detail, from turning your head and coughing to bending over and saying, "Ah". So you can see that was far superior to the type of exams the draft boards gave them. I must confess the group they sent into this outfit had us stumped but if they accepted them for the army I would have hated to see those they turned away from the army. Then too the Docs that gave them their first physicals were higher ranking officers than our Docs so that closed the case of wondering.

In May 1943, we finally received orders to proceed to a P.O.E. We went by train to Camp Kilmer, N.J. Amidst all of our processing we still managed to make the most of our last remaining days in the USA. True we had no passes to visit our homes that were only a few hours away. Ah but we did have that spirit-raising nickle beer. Lt. Batchelder, unintentionally provided us with an evening of entertainment. Despite the fact that he was O.D., "Doc" Kusz pulled his rank and had him stand at attention for picking on the medical boys.

"Doc" Moehn's remedy for seasickness, to sit under a tree, was a good one, but the Aquitania did not provide trees. Our boys fared very well on the crossing. Each one managed to lean over the rail and throw it as far as the next fellow. After eight days of famine, we arrived in Scotland. It was here that even a cup of tea tasted good and we were even looking for "seconds" on "C" rations.

Upon arriving at Matching Green, we immediately began to unpack our equipment. There was a lot of it too, since we were instructed to bring a ninety day supply of aspirins and pro kits. Thus, the very next day we were open for

business. Come what may we had a full supply of aspirins. Capt. DeChristoforo was most unhappy because he had to come overseas without his dental chest, and believe me he was anxious to get started on his work on the men.

Our dispensary had several chests, including the one on which Sgt. Kamler made out his (no changes) morning reports. These, when placed together served as a workable first aid point. It became necessary for Doc Moeck to compound his own medicine, thus we had our own drug store set up. All that was missing from the atmosphere were the Drugstore Cowboys.

The much anticipated and talked about secret dental weapon, the M.D. chest No. 60, arrived in late June 1943. With proper Baptismal ceremonies this amazing chest was opened. Capt. DeChristoforo with his able assistants, proceeded to relieve the dental needs of the Battalion. Many a night the lights were seen glowing from the dental office, as someone looked over the books and sighed, "Ah what a business! Such a profit! And all I get is twelve dollars a day."

Now started the re-education of the men on the use of the toothbrush. Even though its name implies its proper function, the brushes were being used more for rifle cleaners and shoe polish applicators. Yes, and one began to notice the accordion pleated kissers soon were sprouting an "Ipana smile of beauty". Ah but those artificial teeth turned up in the strangest places. It almost became necessary for us to enlist the aid of the M.P.s in seeing that the men kept their dental appointments.

We had trouble with the one cuspidor on the left of the dental chair, (the proper place) as the boys preferred one at their feet. So another was placed there. As there was no electric power available, it was necessary to install a battery operated light. To this day, I can still hear that sweet, melodious voice asking, "Where is the battery for my light?" (Just ask the motor pool boys. They will verify the statement.)



We had a perfect plan for evacuation (had it become necessary) in case of an air attack. This was constantly being practiced but was never needed here.

A few changes took place in the medical personnel while here; Mechanic and Fenichel were transferred out. "Doc" Kusz was able to have Nadworny permanently assigned to the medics. Nadeau was transferred to the Engineers. Again, we lost our typist, as Whittaker was "requisitioned" by the Engineers.

As our billets were comparatively comfortable here, it was quite a let-down when we moved to Alconbury. I confess that England's weather is no myth, but has a sound basis for being so well known. Those days we lived in tents when the rain was pouring down were no treat. The result of this mode of living could be seen in the long queues at sick-call. The rations were also very poor at this time, so it was necessary to add stomach-powders to our collection of aspirin.

While still here at Alconbury, Capt. Kusz went on DS to a neighboring Hospital. He was replaced by Capt. Fierro. The Engineers were doing asphalt work day and night. This was hard and dangerous work. Thus we medics were always alert for any possible danger. On one night a fire had broken out at the asphalt plant. At once we were notified, and in thirty seconds we were ready for any emergency that could arise from such a fire. That night we were fortunate in not being needed.

There were two occasions while here that our services were really needed. The results were very gratifying to all. Yes, it paid to be prepared. With the boys working as hard as they were, there was no knowing that might happen.

Our first big accident occurred when Kerner, of H. & S. Company, had his leg caught in the asphalt machine. In seconds flat, Capt. Moehn was on the job. When Kerner was lifted from the machine the "Doc" administered plasma and also made him comfortable with a sedative. As the leg was badly mutilated, he made a cradle splint for it. The patient was then evacuated to a hospital for further treatment. Believe me, "Doc" did a wonderful job for all his boys. He was always going to bat for them, and was responsible for obtaining coal when we all needed it.

The second major accident occurred early one morning. De Shaies, of Company "C" was severely burned as fire enveloped his tar-soaked clothing. The injured man, ran from the scene of the accident towards the dispensary. In a short

time, Newman the medics C.Q. had notified the medical officers. It was a pleasing sight to see all the Medics working in such complete unison. All the training we had, was evident now, when it was needed. We worked with great precision to administer morphine to lessen the boy's pain. This done, we removed his remaining clothes and placed him in a shock position. As the "Doc's" worked steadily, removing the burnt skin, we administered blood plasma. All the while, a sterile condition prevailed, so as not to cause any further damage. Next came the preparing of a Sterile Saline Solution, with which to wash the injured areas. This having been done, sterile gauze with sulpha-diazene was applied to the entire length of both legs, which were then wrapped with bandages and cotton padding. When this was finished the patient was given a dose of sulpha, orally, and one more unit of plasma. The report from the hospital next day, to which he had been evacuated, was very encouraging as to the condition of the patient. The hospital staff thanked us for our splendid work which prevented any complications from setting in. These are just a few of the case histories of the work the medics have done. It is for emergencies such as these that we received our intensive training. To be available in case of such misfortunes, is the reason medics are assigned to a unit.

Upon moving to Marbury Hall, we were invaded by two replacements, Pvt's J. Godwin and R. Lewis. For the first time, we were almost up to strength on our quota of men. Our home here was a building intended for a dispensary. (Including plumbing facilities.)

Due to heated barracks for the men, the number on sick-call dropped to normal. There was an adjoining building which we used as a Battalion Infirmary. The infirmary was a feature inaugurated by the medics since our arrival in England. In it, we were able to give the not-too-sick men a chance to laze around in a warm building, getting the rest they needed to put them on their feet again. Kolatsky, with the assistance of Conaway, took charge of the infirmary. The patients were fed in bed and were given a lot of fruit juices, plus the necessary medicines. "Doc" Kusz and "Doc" Moehn checked the patients daily. Due to this watchful care, the men were returned to duty in a few days.

Our first New Years' Eve party overseas was celebrated with the aid of some "spirits" purchased through the black market. We also had a light "snack" to help us down our sorrows. It must have been a successful party as next morning all swore off drinking. (Who has a bottle?)

The fellows spent most of their off-duty hours in nearby Warrington. When we moved to Site 3, we were much nearer town. This was much more convenient for the men going on pass. We installed a Pro station for the protection of the men.

At this place, our quarters were Nisson huts. One was used for an infirmary, another, to house the dispensary and dental clinic.

The Engineers were doing a lot of concrete work here, so it became necessary for us to obtain a special skin cream. It seemed that the cement was causing a rash on the boy's skin. We were always busy washing out their eyes. Truly we would have saved the Government a lot of money if we had salvaged the cement that came from their eyes.

During our stay at Site 3, "Doc" Moehn went to a General Hospital on D.S. During his absence we had Lt. Green, who proved to be a very friendly and efficient medical officer. Shortly after the return of "Doc" Moehn, Battalion Headquarters received a letter from the Commanding Officer of the hospital, praising the excellent quality of the services rendered by Capt. Moehn during his stay there.



It was while here that we received our fourteenth medic. A WAC had invaded our inner circle, her name was Inky. She could sleep in one of Rutenberg's shoes and have room to spare. You can easily see why Rutenberg was assigned to the Dentist to provide the power (by pedaling) for the dental drill. It was a good thing he was not payed by the mile.

Matlask was our next stepping-stone. Since there were several Engineer outfits on the base, it was decided to set up a joint infirmary. This provided greater facilities than one Battalion could have had.

During the month of May 1944 we were all on pins and needles awaitng the news of D-Day. Capt. DeChristoforo was relived from duty, per Par. 3, Special Order 142, HQ, 231st Station Hospital. A short time later, and to the astonishment of the whole battalion, the dental department was taken over by a "wobbling



Ouch!
Doc—
Take it
Easy—



THE
Pill Rollers

When the first of winter came, we were set up in tents pitched in the mud of Toul, France. It was so cold in them that we had to dress to go to bed, rather than undress. It was while here that the medics, with the aid of about thirty bottles of champagne, celebrated the end of three years in the Army. Here, also, to the satisfaction of all, "Doc" Lach attained his captaincy.



No sooner had we finished with the field at Toul than we moved on to Tantonville. This was just before Christmas. Our Battalion was sent down here to relieve the 843rd Engineers. This was necessary as 85 % of the men were unfit for duty due to an epidemic of diarrheah. They had been unable to check this illness. The Battle Cry of this unit was, "Quick Henry, hand me the paper!" The men of our Battalion likewise fell prey to this illness. During this time there was no sick call. The medics attended their patients where ever they found them stopping. However shortly after our arrival, this epidemic was checked with the aid of a new water point.

We were here when the German break-through, or the "Battle of the Bulge" began. Amidst all the war, we Medics had ourselves a Christmas and New Years Eve party that was a "humdinger". We even had the Luftwaffe drop in on us unexpectedly. We retired to an air-raid shelter and carried on with the party.

From here, we doubled back to the Reims area, to a small village called Verzy. It was supposedly for a rest that we came back. While the Battalion was working on five jobs at once, a call came for men to go to the infantry. This meant that all the men had to receive a complete physical examination and be reclassified. (Not like those 5 A.M. surprise physicals.)



Junior Quacks



Kolatsky, along with almost a hundred Engineers, left for the Infantry. This meant that our Medical unit was now two men under strength.

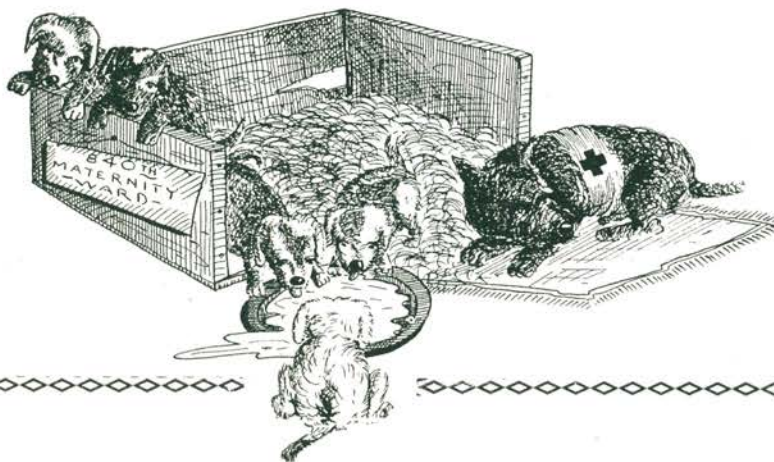
Inky, our mascot, became the proud mother of five bouncing puppies. These were brought into the world with the help of (midwife) Rutenberg. Inky's family certainly brightened up things. Each one of the company aid men received a puppy. "Morphine", a cute brown and white pup, went to Godwin of Company "A". "Pin-up", a long, tan pup, went to Albus, of Company "B". Nadworny of Company "C" got "Penny", a cute little black fellow, while "Tippy", a larger, black puppy with white spots on his paws and tail, went to Jeeter, of H. & S. The Radio Room boys received the fifth pup and named him Static. He was small and tan.

Our first stop in Germany, was Frankfurt on Main. While here we received two replacements, Pfc's Gus Larson and Ben Atkinson. Now, at last, we were up to strength.

While our Dispensary was still here with the rest of the Battalion, Company "C" made their move across Germany into Austria and on to the Czech Border. They were accompanied by two Medics, Nadworny and Lewis. Later on Godwin relieved Nadworny who went on pass to Paris. Thus there were always two medics with the company.

We were at the Dornier Air Base, outside Munich, when V-E Day came. Doc Moehn gave us a swell party. He had been saving his liquor rations for just such an occasion. We had a grand time, all promising to accept the Doc's invitation to visit him at his home in Iowa.

With the aid of some captured equipment, our Dispensary now began to take on a classier appearance. There were white tables and polished cabinets, even a scale. Of course we raised the price of our Asprins.



Kaufbeuren was the place Rutenberg liked best, for here at last he acquired a regular German dental drill that was electrically fed. Now, even he had a racket.

It was here, too, that orders came through transferring the following medics, Kamler, Rosenberg, Newman, Gange, Albus, Jeter, and Warford, all high point men, and Lewis who was low in points.

This really took the entire back-bone out of the Medical Detachment. There were tears and a general choked up feeling as we said good bye to one another. We had been together through it all for a long time.

After moving on to what to be our truly last job here at Roth, we lost two more medics, Nadworny, and Larson. Our MAC Lt. Klebs was replaced by Lt. Kodaek. Now we received a complete new group of EM, Sgt. J. Mogannam, T/5 R. Lloyd, M. Smith, L. Armstrong, and M. Engle, Pfc's J. Trepkus, E. Ginsburg and R. Lohrer.

Then came Doc Lach's orders. He was replaced by Capt. Stingle, who took over the duties of the Battalion Dentist. Ginsberg and Trepkus were transferred out.

Sgt. A. Simone came in as dental technician, thus the dental Department had three attendants. It was now possible for Rutenberg to fulfill the wishes of the men in the Battalion, making it possible for them to have their teeth cleaned. Lt. Kodaek was replaced by Lt. Edward Erickson, our new MAC.

For the purpose of this record our history ends with the arrival of V-J Day on Sept. 2, not solely because it was Victory Day, but mostly because Doc Moehn had received his orders and was leaving us. During recent weeks all our old officers as well as the majority of the old-time enlisted men, had gone. But as long as Doc Moehn remained the medic section still retained its identity, for his presence brought to mind Dr. Kusz, Dr. DeChristoforo, Dr. Lach, Lt. Klebs and the many activities and accomplishments in which they all had played their parts. We had hoped that he would be with us on our return to the States. Yet we are happy that he is on his way and wish him God-speed. His departure we feel, puts an appropriate period-mark to our little chapter on the activities and efforts of the medical section during its three years of service.



Albus, David D.
8735 Bay, Parkway
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Atkinson, Ben W.
Route 3
La Junta, Col.

Armstrong, Lewis F.
900 Rayon Drive
Parkersburg, W.Va.

Conaway, Merrill M.
Snow Shoe, Pa.

Engle, Mahlon H.
Route 3
Middleburg, Pa.

Gange, Vito
2781 86th St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Godwin, James C. Jr.
7808 3rd Ave. So.
Birmingham, Alabama

Jeter, Ernest A.
1213 N. St.
N.W. Washington, D.C.

Kamler, Leo E.
204 Harlow St.
Bangor, Me.

Kolatshy, Peter
665 Van Houten Ave.
Clifton, N.J.

Lewis, John R.
121 E. Franklin St.
Roadhouse, Ill.

Lloyd, Ralph D.
1720 Walnut St.
Everet, Washington

Lohrer, Robert A.
3841 Indiana St.
St. Louis, Mo.

Mogannam, Jasir B.
1042 Polk
San Francisco, Calif.

Moore, Wm. L.
Treemont St.
Chelsea, Mass.

Newman, Jerry
2310 83rd St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Ostrowsky, Al.
1230 James Ave., North
Minnneapolis, Minn.

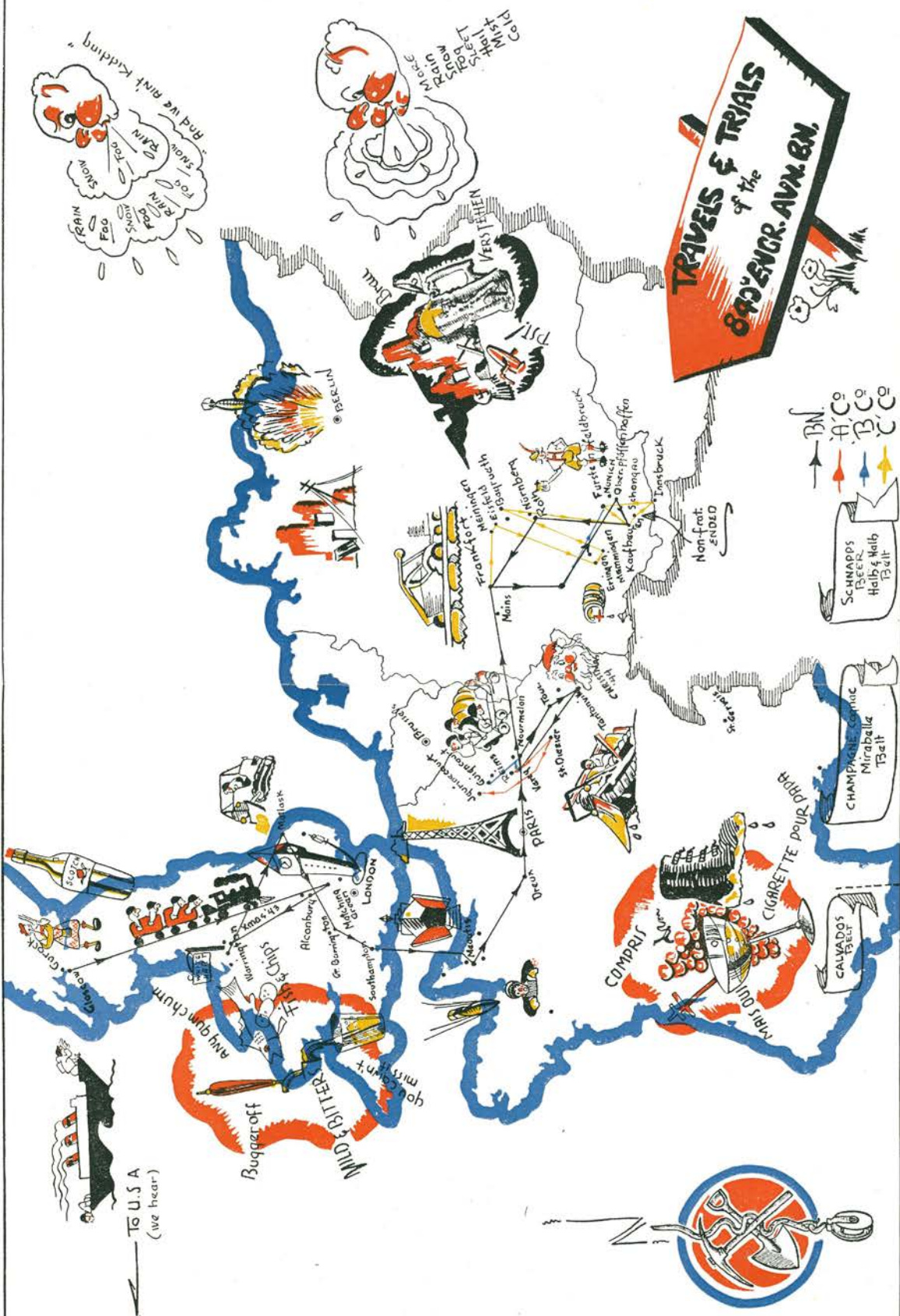
Rosenburg, Sidney
20 72 73rd St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

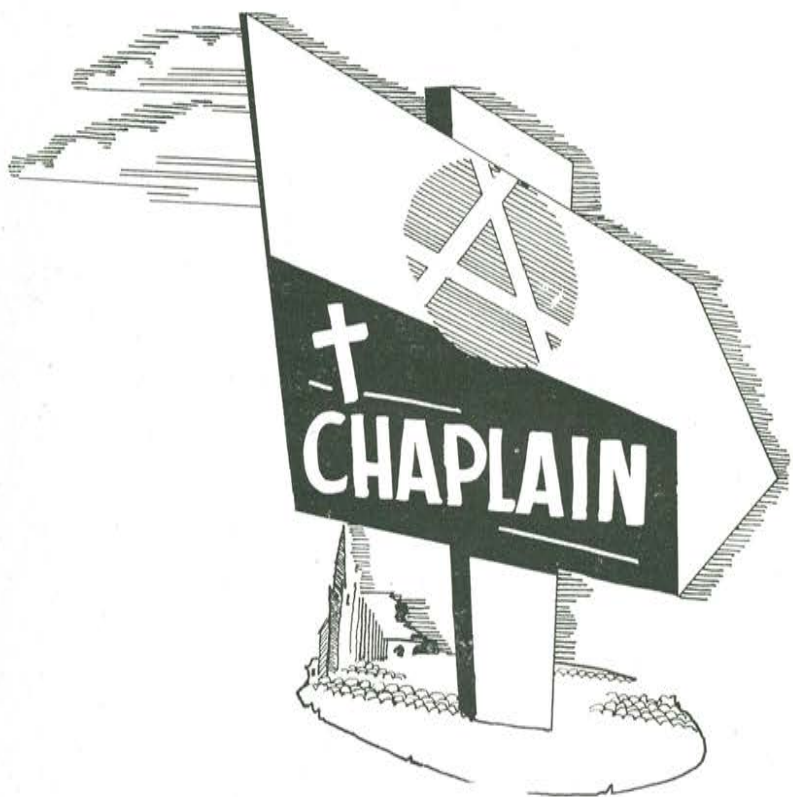
Rutenberg, William A.
548 Alda Road
Mamaronuk, N.Y.

Simone, Alfred
609 Union Ave., (Roar)
Providence, Rhode Island

Smith, Marvin R.
909 North Bond St.
Peoria, Ill.

Stingle, Raymond J., Capt.
737 West Franklin St.
Appleton, Wisconsin

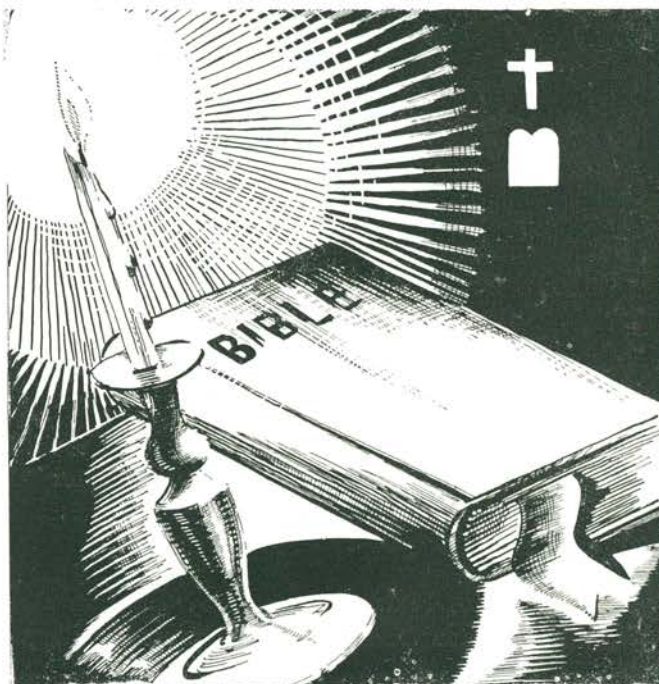




“There is a destiny that makes us
brothers;
None goes his way alone:
All that we send into the lives of
others
Comes back into our own.

I care not what his temples or his
creeds,
One thing holds firm and fast —
That into his fateful heap of days
and deeds
The soul of man is cast.”

Edwin Markham



This section is dedicated to the work of the Chaplains. These men have freely exposed themselves to hardships and danger, in order to keep ever fresh in the minds of soldiers, sailors and marines everywhere, the spiritual feeling of the brotherhood of men.

Men will forget. It is so easy when one is far from home and among strangers, to forget the creeds that govern life and conduct. This is especially true with the soldier. A soldier loses so much of his individuality. He dresses like his comrades, eats like them, sleeps in the same sort of bed. He is seldom alone, with time to think, undisturbed. He becomes one of a group and thinks as part of that group. He emulates others of the group. By losing his individuality he loses the feeling of a need for his God.

In far flung battlefields, strange foreign towns; stretches of wild woods or on board ships the Chaplains try to help the men hold fast to their creeds. Chaplains serve as counselors for the men in their personal problems, giving brotherly advice as well as spiritual. Many a tough problem has been eased with the wholehearted aid of a Chaplain. In some units the Chaplains needed a two-pronged punch for the T.S. cards.

During the training period at Bradley Field, Conn. Chaplain Charles E. Titus was assigned to the unit. On the first Sunday with Chaplain Titus the Battalion



marched into the wooden frame Chapel at the West Gate Area. So began the three years Chaplain Titus was associated with the Officers and Enlisted Men of the 840th Engineer Aviation Battalion. Through the many months that followed Chaplain Titus lived and worked with the men of the Battalion.

When the unit shipped overseas Chaplain Titus accompanied them. Through all their wanderings over England, France and on into Germany he offered his counsel and guide. He initiated a weekly journal when the Battalion became so scattered he could not make the rounds for Sunday services. These weekly letters were delivered to the various job sites by the courier and were enjoyed by the men.

At Frankfurt, Germany Chaplain Titus was transferred to 833rd Engineer Aviation Battalion and replaced by Chaplain Scott Irons.

Chaplain Irons immediately set about the task of getting acquainted with the "boys". Throughout his time with the Battalion he attempted to maintain a close personal contact with the men; asking them their problems and offering help or advice. During his comparatively short stay with the Battalion he performed many personal services for the boys in addition to holding the regular Sunday church service.

It is with a feeling of loss we realize these two friends, men of God, are no longer with us. This passage should have been written by them both. It is with a feeling of unworthiness we attempt to write here some of the things they would possibly have wanted to write:

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

He said unto him, "What is written in the law? How readeſt thou?"

And he answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

And he said unto him, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

But he, willing to justify himself, said, "And who is my neighbor?"

The Master answering said.

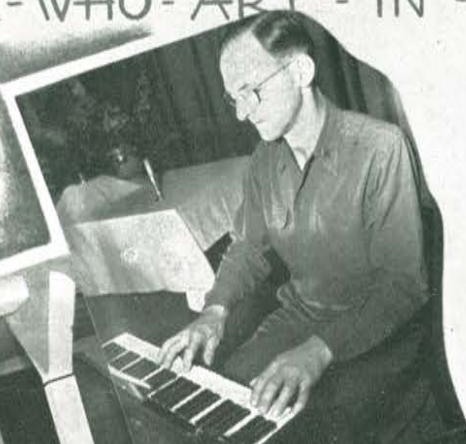
“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by one the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked at him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, ‘Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.’ Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among thieves?”

And he said, “He that showed mercy on him.”

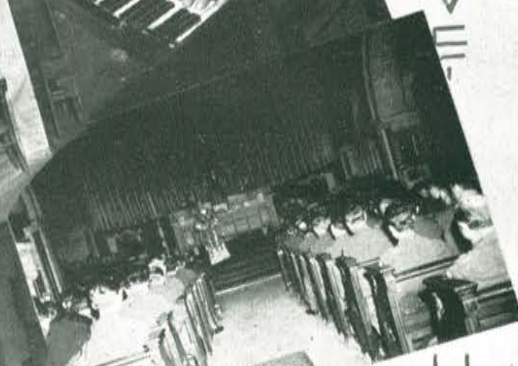
Then said the Master unto him, “Go, and do thou likewise.”



OUR-FATHER-WHO-ART-IN-HEAVEN-GIVE



U



Catholic
Protestant
Hebrew



A Prayer for United Nations

by Stephen Vincent Benét

(Read by the President of the United States, June 14, 1942)

God of the free, we pledge our hearts and lives today to the cause of all free mankind.

Grant us victory over the tyrants who would enslave all free man and nations. Grant us faith and understanding to chernsh all those who fight for freedom as if they were our brothers. Grant us brotherhood in hope and union, not only for the space of this bitter war, but for the days to come which shall and must unite all the children of earth.

Our earth is but a small star in the great universe. Yet of it we can make, if we choose, a planet unvexed by war, untroubled by hunger or fear, undivided by senseless distinctions of race, color or theory. Grant us the courage and forseeing to begin this task today that our children and our children's children may be proud of the name of man.

The spirit of man has awakened and the soul of man has gone forth. Grant us the wisdom and the vision to comprehend the greatness of man's spirit, that suffers and endures so hugely for a goal beyond his own brief span. Grant us honor for our dead who died in the faith, honor our living who work and strive for the faith, redemption and security for all captive lands and peoples. Grant us patience with the deluded and pity for the betrayed. And grant us the skill and the valor that shall cleanse the world of oppression and the old base doctrine that the strong must eat the weak because they are strong.

Yet most of all, grant us brotherhood not only for this day but for all our years — a brotherhood not of words but of acts and deed. We are all of us children of earth — grant us that simple knowledge. If our brothers are oppressed, then we are oppressed. If they hunger, we hunger. If their freedom is taken away, our

freedom is not secure. Grant us a common faith that man shall know bread and peace — that he shall know justice and righteousness, freedom and security and equal opportunity and an equal chance to do his best not only in our own lands, but throughout the world. And in that faith let us march toward the clean world our hands can make. Amen.





IN MEMORIUM

Leon F. Golinski
Raymond J. Cypher
Barney D. Fletcher
Alvin B. Stinnet, Jr.

William D. Barnes
Gibson C. Blaylock
Robert Voss
Ignsti Zawacki



No history

Special Service Activities

of a military unit would not be complete if mention were not made and proper tribute paid to the organizations and personalities who have helped to lighten the long, dark, lonely hours of men isolated from all the normal enjoyments and amusements of civilization. In this connection, we should like to express our gratitude to the U.S.O. organization and civilian groups as well as to Special Service itself for the entertainment they have brought us from time to time during our almost thirty-month stay overseas.

We were very fortunate at Matching Green, where we viewed several U.S.O. shows, one of which was the appearance of Bob Hope and his famous troupe, including Frances Langford. It was at Matching Green also that many of us got a chance to shake hands with the Movie Star, Adolph Menjou. We also celebrated, at Matching Green, the anniversary of the activation of the outfit with a big party and variety show. The talent was provided by a splendid U.S.O. troupe. Coffee, beer and sandwiches were served.

At Alconbury, Billy Gilbert and his troupe entertained the 840th and 831st boys. The Red Cross at Huntingdon also arranged musicals and provided a special evening of entertainment occasionally.

The Air Corps theatre at Warrington had frequent variety shows which we enjoyed very much, especially the Special Service productions with G.I. casts. Some of these were light drama efforts and others musicals. The appearance of several English troupes gave us an opportunity to compare the great difference between the American and English types of entertainment.

Our stay at Matlask was rather short. Yet we did see one first-rate variety show by a very good U.S.O. troupe and rather enjoyed the occasional musical in the Red Cross Club.

Another G.I. group and band put on a splendid show for us at the marshalling area near Southampton. It was a rare treat to hear real American music played in an up-to-the-minute fashion.

But perhaps the two most memorable of all the shows we have enjoyed up to date were put on at A-17, near Carentan. In the first place, they were open-air





affairs in an area that was still "hot". Seated and sprawled comfortably on a gently rising hillside with a perfect view of the huge stage that had been hastily constructed on several huge trailers, we watched Jam "Grab-a-brush" Murray and his acrobatic ballet troupe put on a lively performance that held everyone's interest from start to finish. A few days later Spike Jones's colorful band made its appearance. In the warm midsummer sunshine, with the air vibrant with harmonies "sweet and hot", the war seemed far away. The comely blond twins were applauded into encore after encore. (Incidentally, after the show we learned that a member of Headquarters Company, Harrington, was a relative of the twins.) In the middle of the fast-paced routine, a short, stocky sunlight we recognized the rugged features of none other than Little Caesar himself, Edward G. Robinson.

Robinson's appearance and the versatility of Spike's orchestra with its comedians and the blond twins made this a most enjoyable afternoon for everyone. With the brilliant sunshine, picturesque setting and the artists' willingness to pose for snapshots, plenty of pictures were taken, which no doubt will be treasured through the years.

Our stay in Dreux and Mourmelon covered a rather "hot" period. That, and the fact that we left these bases before the air-force was well-established, explain our not being fortunate enough to catch any Special Service entertainment here.

At Toul, in addition to the regular movies made possible through the facilities of the Air Corps, we had one rather gala affair, a dance with many very pretty mademoiselles from nearby villages on hand to help our boys trip the light fantastic. This was the first dance since our departure from Warrington. Almost as interesting as the dance itself was the setting in which it was held. In just a day's time our company artists and interior-decorators, with the help of some wrapping-paper murals, tracing tape and bandages, transformed a virtual barn into a gaily-decorated almost palatial ball-room. It took the French girls only a few minutes to get the swing of the music furnished by a G.I. band.

At Tantonville we attended the first drama we had seen in a long time, the stage production of "Junior Miss", very ably performed by a U.S.O. cast. The G.I. production of "The Muddy Engineers" made a big hit with the boys as might be expected. Also, while we were at Tantonville, a battalion Day Room, with Mike Siegel of "A" company in charge, was set up in very attractive artistically decorated quarters. Through cooperation with the American Red Cross, Mike al-

ways had a plentiful supply of coffee and doughnuts for the boys. Several dances and bingo games were also held here.

Most of the company were fortunate in being in the vicinity of Reims when the dramatic hit "The Barretts of Wimpool Street" starring Katherine Cornell and Briand Aherne, was staged. For many it was their first glimpse of the "First Lady" of the American Stage and, with the exception of "Junior Miss", the first bigtime dramatic production they had seen overseas. In this same attractive municipal auditorium, several French musicals and variety shows were held. Despite the difficulties in language they were very successful. From this time on until the conclusion of the war, we had practically no opportunity to enjoy the services of these organizations.

For many reasons, including the shows, we will remember Kaufbeuren, Germany, as one of our pleasant stops. The Continentals, the regimental band, visited us twice, making a great hit each time. Also we had several variety shows, featuring all sorts of European talent as well as a few light dramas put on by very capable U.S.O. players. There was also a Special Service production "G.I.s A. Poppin," with, as the name suggests, a G.I. cast.

A Light comedy, very appropriately titled "Anything Can Happen" was the offering of a U.S.O. troupe that visited us at Roth. But there weren't many shows on this base, for the simple reason that all the headliners were appearing at Nurnberg, which is not a very great distance from Roth. Special convoys were run to Erlangen when the Bob Hope show was there, and to Nurnberg when the dramatic hit "Love's Idleness" starring the famous "Lunt-Fontaine" combination, was produced. Many who went to Nurnberg on the regular convoys managed occasionally to see other headliners appearing there. On Sundays, the boys took advantage of the fine midsummer weather and visited the spectacular exhibitions in the grand Nurnberg pool or attended the ball game, one of the big E.T.O. play-offs, held in Soldiers' Field, the mammoth Stadium in the city.

Yes, we have enjoyed the many hours of entertainment made possible by the visits of these artists to our area. Yet, between these visits were huge gaps, for, there were times when we were lucky to have one show a month. To fill these gaps was the job of Doc. Moehn and our Special Service boys, Luce, Van Bergen and Anderson. Our little projector had its obstinate moments and film was oftentimes

very difficult to obtain. Nevertheless, Van Bergen, and later, Anderson and his assistant Bob Smith were always on the ball as far as getting film was concerned. They got the film if it could be "got". So, as we express our appreciation to all our visiting artists we also extend a word of praise to our own Special Service boys for their conscientious efforts to keep our movie projector well-fed and in good condition.

Implicit in the story of our amusements and social activities are the efforts and hard work of our Special Service boys. But it doesn't suggest the wide field of their activity. All arrangements for visiting artists, plans for special convoys and sight-seeing trips, requisitions for sports equipment and Day Room material, had to be made and handled by them. They planned the company tournaments, maintained the battalion rest home and ran the movie projector. Doc Moehn and all who worked with him at one time or another, Luce, Lombardo, Dessault, Van Bergen, Anderson and Smith are deserving of much credit.



noel



Christmas Party

We had little opportunity to enjoy the Christmas we spent in England because we had just moved from Alconbury to site 10, arriving there on Christmas Eve. Our second Christmas, in France, was very different. We were located at Tantonville, and not only did we have a sumptuous meal, but many of the boys were acquainted with families in the town and accepted invitations to join them in their holiday festivities.

But the highlight of the day was the presentation of gifts to the French orphans of the local parish. A few days before Christmas a representative in each company collected whatever he could in the nature of chocolates, gum, hard candy and any other delicacies that may have come in the Christmas packages. A quantity of "goodies" was collected. Those of the 840th who were present were quite unprepared for the spontaneous welcome they received from the children. They proceeded to entertain our boys with pantomimes and fervant renditions of the old familiar Christmas carols. Then the gifts were distributed. The unconcealed delight of the little ones was something to behold. After each had received a generous share there was still some left so it was decided to give each of the Sisters a share. They were as eager and enthusiastic as the children; in fact, on receiving the gifts they were even more excited. Then came the big surprise of the afternoon. The G.I.s discovered that the role of Santa Clause wasn't exclusively theirs. The little group also had its own plans. And those who came to give stayed to receive. The Sisters had prepared tasty little cakes which were served with drinks from the several bottles of choice cognac and champagne, a special gift to the G.I.s from the little group. The parish priest expressed his deep gratitude to the members of the 840th for all they had done to make the childrens' Christmas a happy one.

Confirmed in the mind of everyone who attended the party was the age-old observation that without the joy and happiness of little children no Christmas holiday is complete.



Leave Centers and Rest Homes

The memories of these years that will be always sweetest are the recollections of the times when we got a chance to shake loose the heavy harness of military routine and renew for a little while our acquaintance with the comforts and delights of civilization. Passes, welcome as they are, are only slight breaks that afford little opportunity for this. What we look forward to with high hopes and backward to with fond memories are the furloughs. But furloughs were always "few and far between". And there were long stretches in the three years when none was issued. In England, for example, they were given out only during our stay at Warrington. Though that city is a time-consuming distance from London, some made the trip. But most of the boys took advantage of the opportunity to visit Scotland and its big cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as the famed English pleasure resort of Blackpool. And within easy distance were Manchester and Liverpool.

After Warrington, furloughs were suspended until, towards the end of the war, they were resumed at Tantonville. From here a few got an opportunity to visit Paris in the first months of its rebirth. With a few interruptions, due to company movements, the furloughs have continued up to date.

Since the conclusion of the war, rest homes have been set up in attractive spots and special leaves, in addition to the regular furloughs, have been granted.

The Ninth Engineer Command had a rest home at St. Gervais les Bains, France. It was a large hotel of the better type, located in the very scenic section of the French Alps near Swiss, French and Italian border junction. The perpetually snow-capped mountains surround the spot on three sides. In the valley below is the body of water known as the "Three Lakes" where the excellent swimming was made more enjoyable by the presence of the Mademoiselles displaying the latest French creations in and out of bathing suites. Tennis, golf and fishing were other popular pastimes. For those seeking the added excitement of the unusual there was mountain-climbing or a dizzy, thrilling ride in the téléphérique (cable car to you). All in all a vacation in setting of scenic beauty would have been most enjoyable were it not for the long, tiring trip by truck and train. During the late summer months those going to St. Gervais didn't have these transportation difficulties to contend with. They stepped into a plane, soared into the blue and were on their way.





Each month about twelve men, three from each company, visited the Ninth Engineer Rest Home on Rue de Chateau in Paris for a three day stay. The quarters here were very attractive, a typical French chateau surrounded by well-kept, green lawns and big, tall shade-trees, and elaborate in every sense of the word, from the large sun-roof on top, from which one could see the Tour d'Eiffel, to to the beautiful terraced grounds in back, with its rock-gardens and fountains spewing water. But the best part of the whole set-up was its convenient location near the famous sights and multiple attractions of the city of Paris. The meals were cooked as only French masters can cook. The three days slipped by all too quickly with the prospect of the long tiresome journey back.

Those who were fortunate enough to get an opportunity to spend a week at the 925th Regiment's rest center in Nancy, France, enjoyed their stay there very much. The building, suggesting an average-sized big-city hotel, was conveniently located on one of the main thoroughfares of the city. It was built into a gentle incline of ground so that the second floor opened into pretty gardens that rising softly, merged into an attractive terrain of foliage and trees. There was a well-stocked bar in the lobby downstairs. On the second floor the commodious dining hall was located near a spacious, attractively appointed lounge. And since feminine guests were permitted, several happy couples and mixed groups could be found here, enjoying themselves, throughout the day. The lightsome sleeping quarters were very pleasant. Downtown, were all the usual attractions, a splendid Red-Cross, as well as several theaters, G.I. and civilian.

In the early summer the 340th decided to set up its own rest-home, selecting a spot situated at the edge of Starnberg Lake near the Bavarian Alps.. A spacious summer home, the property of a German major, was renovated and put in first class condition. When it was first opened it was in charge of Sgt. Luce and, upon his departure, Sgt Lombardo took over, under Doc. Moehn's general supervision. Four men from each company were permitted to spend three days here. In quiet, comfortable surroundings, with plenty of good food, they had opportunity for all the rest and relaxation they wanted. They spent most of the time during the long, lazy days, on the lake. There were several row boats and one makeshift "out-board motor boat" that was very powerful and slightly dangerous, as several who took an unexpected splash would testify. Fish, of a small species, were plentiful. And one of the favorite pastimes of the boys was helping the attractive Polish girl who came regularly in quest of sufficient fish for a meal, to make a successful catch. There was only one slightly unpleasant factor in the whole set-up. That was the

ubiquitous presence of the German major who lived in the next house. He seemed to be lurking behind bushes and trees, obviously ready to report any irregularities such as a G.I. talking to some cute little child not quite twenty years old. To most, the pleasant lazy three days were just a teaser and if they could "wangle the deal" they soon came back for seconds.

In addition to the leaves permitted to these rest homes, small quotas went on furlough, during successive months, to Brussels, Paris, London, and the Riviera. Most of those who visited Brussels had a very enjoyable time. Paris, sparkling as of old, was the city where a bankroll melted like an ice-cube on a hot stove. London, with all the lights on again, was a revelation, while the Riviera, with a slightly G. I. complexion proved to be the luxurious, swanky pleasure resort we had read about so often. Luckiest of all were the boys whose visit to these cities coincided with some big day of celebration like VE-Day or VJ-Day. They certainly had a time of it.

Though the boys have enjoyed these big European cities and met many interesting people of all nationalities, they are content with their pleasant memories. For the only cities they are interested in today are those located along the Atlantic coast of the United States. For a misty gleam of one of these they'd give the grandeur of London and the gaiety of Paris.

J and E Programm

In the spring of 1945, the 840th, like all other units in the E.T.O., began to make preparations for its I and E program. All the necessary literature had been obtained from the I and E division headquarters and distributed to men. Interviews were held and courses selected. At the conclusion of the war in late spring, the program, under the supervision of Captain Morio, was well under way. Almost all of the men who had signed up had signed up had received their USAFI courses. The 840th took more USAFI courses than any other unit in the Ninth Engineer Command.

Unit classes in blue print reading, Basic English, Spanish, Auto-mechanics, Sketching, Review Mathematics, Automobile driving and maintenance, and surveying were established and well attended. As a supplement to the courses, orientation lectures were delivered and discussions and debates were held.

Sports



"all work & no play-"

All in all the program was successfully under way until the departure of key men and officers, frequent moves by the battalion and, most important, the psychological reaction stemming from the general expectation of an early return to the States, presented almost unsurmountable obstacles to its effective continuation.

However, many men had meanwhile satisfactorily completed their USAFI courses and received written certification of the fact from the I and E headquarters.

Despite its abrupt termination, the I and E program was, in some measure, successful in that it aroused in many men a desire for additional knowledge in some particular subject. They intend after their return to the States, to resume these studies at the earliest opportunity.

Sports

Ordinarily, in the history of a real he-man outfit covering a period of three years, the section devoted to sports ought to be a large and impressive one. Yet, as far as the 840th is concerned, a scanty few pages will easily embrace the gamut of its activities in all sports. Today, strangely enough, we are very proud of this. It seems to confirm, beyond words, the fact that for the greater part of three years all the effort and energy of everyone in the battalion was devoted exclusively to the essential business of helping to win the war. Opportunities for participation in any organized sports program were extremely limited by lack of time and lack of proper facilities. We were on the move continually and felt ourselves quite fortunate if we had the time to improve our temporary living quarters. Any basket ball court or baseball diamond that we got into shape, say, back in England — was utilized not by us but by those who came after us.

Yet a keen healthy rivalry has always existed among the companies. And the boys have been only too eager to seize upon any chance to settle the ever-recurring question "Which is the better team?" That question still remains unanswered today despite the abortive football games played in the tall grass at Bradley Field, the baseball contests at Isigny, France, where the outfielders had to avoid the many foxholes in their area, or the softball battles held in a neck of the woods at Frankfurt.

shape. Luce and Anderson handled the thousand and one details involved in the management of a tournament contender, while Parlante provided the inspirational leadership on the courts. The following participated in the playoffs: Strojny, Orr, Grover Smith, Johnson, Vaughn, Garvin, Davis, Babbitts, Dodson and Contestable.

Baseball

As for baseball, the battalion had a late start. The sport was out of season while we were at Bradley Field. The long, lingering English twilights afforded us the first real chance to get out on the diamond. Several company teams were organized and from the ensuing contests a battalion team selected. Handicapped by poor playing facilities it nevertheless piled up a nice little string of victories before early fall descended on the English countryside. Somehow it always seemed to have the "what-it-takes" to wallop Air Corps opponents.

With the exception of a few company games at Isigny, interrupted by an occasional dog-fight in the skies, the game was not resumed until the conclusion of the war. In the meantime, we lost several good ball players to the Infantry, including Bergman, who had before the war, received several big-league offers.

At Kauffbeuren, Germany, a diamond was laid out, and, in the prolonged daylight of early summer, a game was held almost every night. A league was formed, with teams representing the companies, the officers and several other units in the area. Company "A" emerged as the champ.

Meanwhile, word had come through that the Ninth Engineer Command intended to hold an elimination tournament to select a team that would represent it in the Air Corps playoffs. Right away Charlie Anderson, Doc Moehn, Lt. Klebs and Captain Morio got down to the serious business of selecting a battalion team. There was an abundance of material and the big job was to select the best man for a certain position and get him to fit into a smooth-working combination.

The 840th drew as its first opponent the 820th. The game, played at Furth, was a grand air-tight pitcher's battle all the way to the last of the ninth — with our 840th boys pushing over the tie — breaking talley in that inning, 1-0. After this creditable showing we felt that we were now on our way. Next in our path

was the 926th Regiment. Please note that this was a regiment team, not, like ours, a battalion nine, which means that they had a much larger unit of men from which to select their team. However, the 840th took them in stride, trouncing them 8-0, with Ashburn allowing only one hit. The 925th Regiment offered more formidable opposition and the 840th was content to squeeze out a close 4-3 decision. The 924th Regiment team was disposed of much more easily 7-4, and the 840th thereby copped the championship of the Ninth Engineer Command and entered the big Ninth Air Force play-offs.

The boys were not dismayed by the common talk to the effect that the Air Corps teams were garnered from larger units; that there were "big-timers" playing; and that many of the teams were smooth, experienced combinations which had been playing regularly since early spring. Of course our boys were well aware of the fact that the Ninth Air Force umpires would lean over backwards to avoid giving the benefit of a doubt to a team of Engineers.

Boyed up with the confidence that comes of success, the 840th met the 9th Tactical Air Corps. For nine grueling innings neither team could enlarge its score of two runs. The end of the ninth found the teams deadlocked in a tie 2-2. Because of prevailing conditions it was decided, not to call the game, but to post-



pone its continuation until the next day. If we are properly informed, this was a most unorthodox baseball decision. The game went four innings the next day when the Air Force nine luckily pushed over a talley, thus breaking the deadlock. So the game went on the records as a 13-inning 3-2 victory for the 9th Tactical. Their elimination in these Air Corps playoffs, our boys regarded as "just one of those things". They had won what they sought most, the Engineer Command Championship. That seemed a fitting compensation for all their efforts. Our championship team comprised the following: Coach, Anderscn; Business Manager, College; Trainer, Doc Moehn; Captain Derico; Players: L. Murphy, Blum, Richter, White, Bendes, V. Murphy, Hammonds, Weaver, Parlante, Contestable, Garvin, Asburn, Coffey, Cecere, Brunetti, Ascenzi, Moore, Yost and Begue, a fine ballplayer, who was transferred out just when the tournament got under way.

As we pointed out in our introduction, our history of sports activities covering a period of three years, is a comparatively short one. Yet these few scanty pages glow with achievements made in spite of great difficulties. Everyone in the 840th may well be proud of its ballteam's impressive record.

Ping - Pong

The sports section wouldn't be complete without some little write-up of the most popular indoor game of all, Ping-pong. The first article in demand in any Day Room we've set up- has been a Ping-pong table. Many a one who had never held a racket in hand before had, within the past year or two, become a real capable player. And many pleasant hours have been spent whamming the little celuloids back and forth over the net. Rivalries have developed not only between company groups but also between individuals. Consequently, tournaments were arranged and under way many times but always something arose, battalion movements or furloughs, which delayed the final selection of a champ. So, for the purpose of the records, W. Matthews of H. & S. company, on the strength of his consistently fine playing up to date, must be regarded as a still in possession of the crown he won in our first and only concluded tournament back in Bradley Field.

Diving Honors

At the time the announcement of the coming Third Army's swimming and diving exhibitions was made, the battalion was finishing up what everyone believed was our last job. With the prospect of immediate departure for home, our many "aqua-marvels" were completely, uninterested in any swimming competitions to be held sometime in the dubious future. However, one of our 840th boys did file his entry. It so happened that we did linger in the area long enough for him to participate. So, our single representative, Thomas W. Yonkers of "B" company proceeded to cover himself with glory. He took a "First" in the one-meter board diving exhibition and now carries a precious memento of his achievements, an attractive medal awarded him by Third Army officials.



Remember

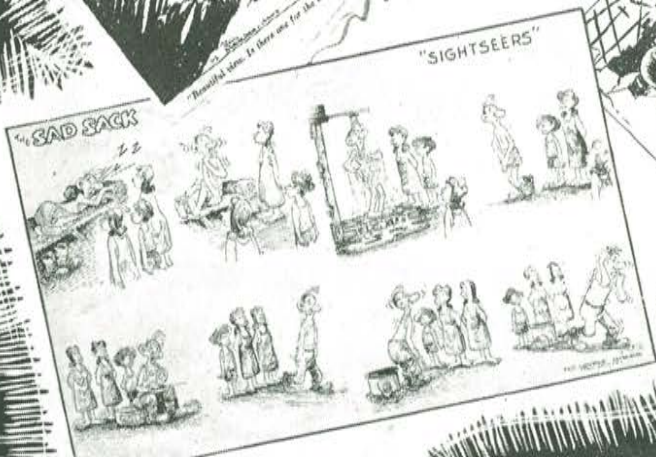
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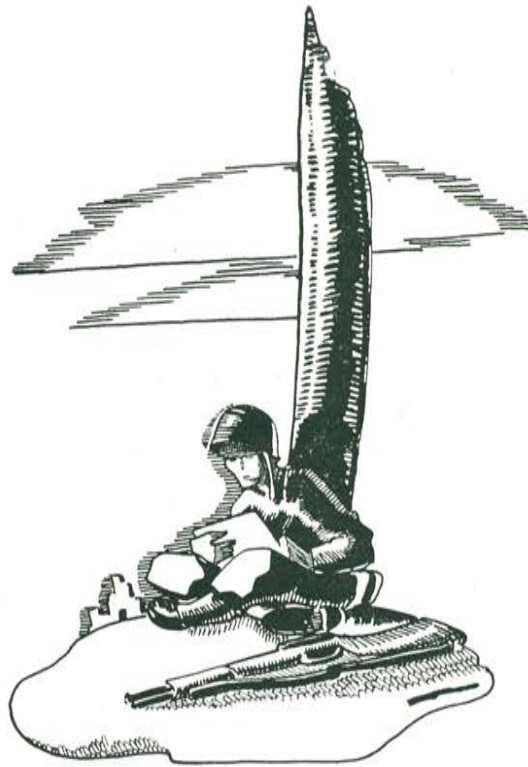
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YANK



THE ARMY





Meditations

Too often we allow the past to shape the future. Let us take the future in our hands like a well sharpened tool and use it properly. — Ed.

Spoils of War

In the quiet hush that comes
after the roar of war's cruel guns,
Man then must think, betimes,
through winter's snows and summer's suns;
What has been gained?

Majestic buildings, old and dear,
lie heaps of rubble;
Lone chimneys point accusing fingers
at leaden skies.
Is this called gain?

Young lives and old,
sacrificed on war's exacting alter,
Broken homes and spirits crushed
by these relentless wheels;
Where is the profit?

Must we then say:
all this was done in vain?
Where is the gain?
Where is the gain?
Where is the gain?

The Tyrant's hand has been halted;
bound hand and foot is he.
The "Master Race" no more exalted;
those long oppressed are now set free.
This is the gain!

Let us then guard this gain
which cost so dear.
Let not oppression rise
some later year.
Make fast this gain!

T/Sgt Ernest L. Gruver

We do not strive for ourselves alone. Whether we intend it or not, when we strive for good, we strive also for others. — Ed.



— Charles Lamb

The Frog and the Goose



A frog and a goose went to war one day
And set up as Engineers.
The goose had a transit, the frog had a Jeep
And they both had the company's jeers.

The frog dressed himself in an overcoat
that was several sizes short.
Says the goose "As for shoes,
I'll wear what I choose."
And he put on some boots that he bought.

The frog had a job and the goose had a job.
They worked 'till they almost expired.
When a man wouldn't work they called him a "jerk"
And said, "Take a powder! You're fired!"
Their arms stayed the same,
As all the stripes came.
The company continued its jeers,
But the frog and the goose
are still on the loose,
And they still call themselves Engineers.



S/Sgt. Charles C. Davis

If we aren't big enough to make good ourselves, we shouldn't belittle those who are. — Ed.

All men are by nature equal.

What is an American?

Whatever a man's parentage,
His race,
His creed;

That man
is at heart
an American.

A just cause lives longer than armaments and right than embattled walls.
— Ed.

When our liberty is threatened we must rise in arms. No sacrifice is then too great. — Ed.

Thoughts at Dachau

You may remember:

How death came,
In sudden descent,
Sometime.

And how it laughed
With a booming,
Convulsive Flame.

Perhaps, some shadow-splotched night,
You felt

Death's swift intent,
As it hummed by —
Chilling the blood
Into tangled clots,
Frozen
To the heart's,
Persistant pound.

But did you see

Death, in stench-fraught ease,
Idly pick at flesh
That sobbed,
And with claw-sharp fingers,
Squeeze
The marrow out of human bones —
Drooling, the while,
Over the tortured consciousness
That writhed in pain?

Pfc. Thomas J. Kennedy Jr.

Some are so gifted as to be able to see a certain beauty in all things, no matter how horrible they may seem to others. — Ed.

Tantonville Address

(with apologies.)

Two score and seven days ago our battalion brought forth upon this continent a new project, conceived in a foxhole, and dedicated to the proposition that all Huns are created evil.

We are now entrenched in the cold snow and slush of this hellhole, testing, whether this project or the Engineers shall long endure, we are all together slipping and sliding as we do this, but in a larger sense, we can not cultivate, we can not harrow this ground for the great snow which made this slush has made it impossible, far above the poor power of all but the "Cats".

It is for us Engineers, rather, to be enslaved here by this menial labor which they who are in charge have thus so freely advanced, it is, rather, for us to be here sickened by the dish of hash set before us, from these cans we took our nourishment: nor devotion to these cooks, for our stomachs have an everlasting measure of commotion.

The world will little note nor long remember what we built here BUT — we shall never forget the Calvados and Mirabelle we drank here. Let us resolve that we have not sweated in vain; that this battalion shall have many days of freedom in the UNITED STATES, with plenty of cognac for all.

Cpl. Erwin E. (Bing) Wendorf

The habit of looking at the bright side of things is worth more than a thousand a year.
— Samuel Johnson.



A man who is too lenient in judging himself is prone to judge others too harshly. — Ed.

Engineers Again!

An "Engineer" is the kind of a guy
Who never flies planes up in the sky,
Floating majestically up in the blue,
Where everything seems so fresh, clean and new.
The Engineer's portion is muck, sweat and work,
From this kind of duty he must never shirk;
Give others the glory, give others the name;
To him it's no matter, he works just the same.

The boys in the Infantry deserve credit, it's true;
Do no forget it, whatever you do.
They're hard fighting fellows and tough is it their lot;
Whatever it costs them they give what they've got.
But who builds the bridges on which they must cross?
'Tis the Enginer builds them and counts not the loss.
When a road is demolished who fills up the hole,
As mechanized units press on to the goal?

When materials are needed and the going is rough,
Who fixes the docks for unloading the stuff?
A mechanized army needs lots of fuel.
Someone laid a pipeline and worked like a fool.
Planes must have landing strips built here and there,
They can't just forever remain in the air.
Machines must work days and into the night
So planes will all have a safe place to light.

When the score is all counted, each one did his share,
If we didn't admit this it wouldn't be fair.
From the ground to the clouds, all the way through;
Infantry, Air Corps, each one his due.
So when songs are written concerning the war,
Give each one his share, no less and no more.
When lists of men's lives lost seem ever to mount,
Remember, not glory, RESULTS are what count .

T/Sgt. Ernest L. Gruver

Gone with the signs

(Or Torment To The Sign Painter)

The mighty chorus formed itself
Into a stealthy mass;
Dressed in fatigues and painting buckets,
Giving out with class.
The Meistro raised his slim baton
And silence filled the air:
There's Keeney, Kulow Sullo, Latrine — —
Every body's there!
Then PHIL Harmonic raised a brush
And lettered off a line.
We looked and stared and looked again — —
And saw — by God — a SIGN!!!
Like pixies at a carnival
He painted everything — —
Trash cans, arm bands, posters, signs,
Show cards, tickets, menus, "Wines",
Schwimming pools, boulevards, avenues, streets,
Rooms and exits, fire-points and seats,
Day rooms, mess halls, motor pools, bars,
2¹/₂s, four tons, six tons, cars,
Tractors, ditchers, graders, barriers,
Trailers, command cars and then weapons carriers;
Painting and stenciling with lightning speed,
Eating up work with an OBVIOUS greed.

§ § § § § §

Ah yes! but that was yesterday
And time in passing has a way
Of changing round of situations
And altering of our relations:
Now comes no signs from off the brush,
And from the chorus comes a hush.
No signs — no work — no fun — no play — —
For all of that was yesterday.

S/Sgt. Charles C. Davis

A laugh is the "bouncer" who throws sadness out the door.

— Ed.

Life sometimes rewards the valient very inadequately — but theirs is the
proud consiousness of having deserved better. — Ed.

A Cause

Sink or swim,
Live or die,
Survive or perish,
I give my hand and my heart to this cause:
for all people — freedom from oppression.

People,
My people,
Your people,
All people; young and old, fair and dark, weak and strong,
alike must share this freedom.

It is true,
Indeed,
In the beginning,
I did not count the cost,
in numberless strenuous days and lonely nights.

So let it be,
If it need be:
Count not the cost;
I am repaid when I but know I have a share,
in this proud cause.

T/Sgt. Ernest L. Gruver

He is certainly not a wise man, who folds his arms — — seeing with unconcern the flames that have invaded his neighbor's house, without any endeavors to extinguish them.
John Dickinson

True manhood is reflected in a man who fights bravely for a just cause, and
justly deals with the vanquished. — Ed.

Fox-hole Prayer in Normandy

Now I lay me down to sleep —
(I wonder where my dream house went)
If I be slain before I rise,
Dear God, remove the tears from eyes
Of those at home who wait for me;
Never let them know or see
How false, how small, how cheap, how low
This hero of this their thoughts could go.
Let them think that was strong
And nothing that I did was wrong.
Do this for me, Dear Old God,
If I should fall on foreign sod.

S/Sgt. Charles C. Davis

One who is able to admit a weakness is to be commended above the one who
evidences no weakness. This shows an inner strength of character. It shows a will
to make amends. — Ed.

Bear this in mind
Through each bright tomorrow:
Joy needs sharing
Much more than does sorrow.
— Ed.

Smiles are as catchin' as measles and a whole lot more pleasant.

— Harvey Hamlin

On suicide

my life's a mess
my shoes don't fit
my pants won't hold their crease
whichever way
i tie my tie
it never seems to please
i think that i
shall kill myself
to give myself some ease

the water's damp
the gas does stink
from guns i always
seem to shrink
my razor's dull
the building's high
that is an awful
way to die
an acid burns
when from the cup
i do attempt
to take a sup

aw heck!
i give it up.

T/Sgt. Ernest L. Gruver

A little nonsense, now and then, is relished by the best of men.

— from an old proverb.

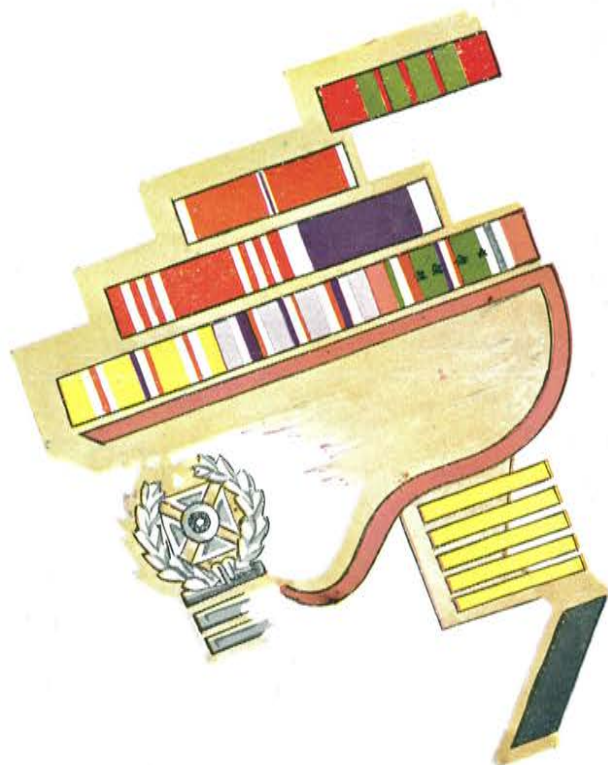
840th Album — 1965

In the hush of the autumn midnight,
The last, lingering echoes of day,
Its joys and its many sweet sorrows
Have quietly faded away.
Fall winds are whispering softly
Out where the moon glows bright,
And thoughts of other days
Come stealing forth tonight.
So I'll take the little volume
That holds memory's magic key
And live, for the passing hour,
The days that used to be.
Faces, time-blurred, forgotten,
Are all as familiarly clear
As the mud and the slanting sunlight
Of that dim and distant year.
Here is the boy who was brave and bold;
And here is the one so fair;
And the many lads who, "come what might",
Had never a worry or care.
Safe from time's erosion,

Tonight they're the same tough men
Who marched from Holt to Kromer
And from Kromer back again.
They sweat in the burning sunshine,
And wade in the muddy goo;
And in drizzle or sleet or biting cold
They do what they have to do.
Pages of work, pages of play,
Alive with youth's bright glow;
As I close the book it doesn't seem
It was all so long ago.
Somewhere in this peace-blessed land,
Though scattered far and wide,
Do the comrades of old oft-times pause
And with a thrill of secret pride,
Recall, on some lonely midnight hour,
The days that used to be,
The golden years of youth they gave
To the fight that set men free.

Pfc. Thomas J. Kennedy Jr.

Lightness of heart, loyalty of spirit, and steadfastness of purpose — — —
these we expected and received of the comrades of our wanderings. — Ed.



Bronze Star Awards

"For meritorious service in connection with military operations."

In June 1945 a Battalion Review was held at Kaufbeuren, Germany. Bronze Star Medals were presented by Col. Thomas E. Glass of the 925th Engineer Aviation Regiment to the following Officers and Enlisted Men:

Lt. Col. John M. Keane
M/Sgt. William H. Harrison
T/3 James C. Pilkenton.

At a Battalion formation held at Roth, Germany in August 1945, Bronze Star Medals were presented by Lt. Col. Nelvin C. Grinn of the 926th Engineer Aviation Regiment to the following Officers and Enlisted Men:

Maj. Henry J. Schaedel
Pfc. Ernest C. Knight.

On an order from the Ninth Engineer Command, dated 19 September 1945, Bronze Star Medals were awarded to the following Officers and Enlisted Men:

Maj. Morris G. Thomas
Capt. Kenneth E. Bloodough
1st Sgt. Mannin L. Purvis
1st Sgt. Royal E. Stockely
M/Sgt. William L. Tanner
S/Sgt. Louis Centanni
S/Sgt. Neander J. Olive
T/Sgt. Howard Rabin
T/4 William J. Stebulis.

The following Officers and Enlisted Men have been recommended for the Bronze Star Medal. These recommendations have been approved by the Ninth Engineer Command and now await the approval of the Ninth Air Corps:

Capt. Earl E. Osborne
M/Sgt. William L. Hull
T/Sgt. Clifford M. Paddock
S/Sgt. Joseph J. Haessler
T/4 Raymond R. Thibault
T/4 Herbert Spies
T/4 Earl Kurra
T/5 Edward Szuplita.

Croix de Guerre avec Etoile de Bronze

"For meritorious service in the liberation of France".

In May 1945 at Ober Pfaffenhofen, Germany. Brig. General Newman of the 9th Engineer Command presented the Croix de Guerre avec Etoile to each of the following Officers and Enlisted Men:

1st Lt. Carl J. Warfield	T/5 James Clarence Smith
Sgt. Garrett Meulman	T/5 Birge A Vaughn
Cpl. James Claude Smith	T/5 Mitchell H. Siegel
T/5 William E. Lautenschlager	Pfc Edward M. Cherepica
	Pfc Perry W. Cates.

Four Stars

Officers and Enlisted Men of the 840th have been awarded Battle Stars for participation in the following:

The Normandy Campaign
Campaign of Northern France
Campaign of Central Europe
Rhineland Campaign.

Five Battle Stars

The following Enlisted Men were in the Ardennes area on detached service or special duty during the period of extensive military operations there and have been awarded the Ardennes Campaign battle star, their fifth battle star:

Sgt. Walter R. Clark	T/5 Edward R. Habe
T/5 James Campbell	T/5 James C. Smith
T/5 John R. Hubbs	Pfc Salvatore Palumbo
T/5 William A. Lautenschlager	Pfc Carl L. Painter.

Good Conduct Awards

At Matching Green, England, in September 1943, the 840th observed the first anniversary of its activation. Lt. Col. Kieffer presented Good Conduct Medals to seventy nine Enlisted Men.

AWARDS-CITATIONS



PURPLE HEART

BRONZE STAR

CROIX de GUERRE

GOOD CONDUCT



1920 - 1921 - 1922 - 1923 - 1924 - 1925 - 1926 - 1927 - 1928 - 1929 - 1930 - 1931 - 1932 - 1933 - 1934 - 1935 - 1936 - 1937 - 1938 - 1939 - 1940 - 1941 - 1942 - 1943 - 1944 - 1945 - 1946 - 1947 - 1948 - 1949 - 1950 - 1951 - 1952 - 1953 - 1954 - 1955 - 1956 - 1957 - 1958 - 1959 - 1960 - 1961 - 1962 - 1963 - 1964 - 1965 - 1966 - 1967 - 1968 - 1969 - 1970 - 1971 - 1972 - 1973 - 1974 - 1975 - 1976 - 1977 - 1978 - 1979 - 1980 - 1981 - 1982 - 1983 - 1984 - 1985 - 1986 - 1987 - 1988 - 1989 - 1990 - 1991 - 1992 - 1993 - 1994 - 1995 - 1996 - 1997 - 1998 - 1999 - 2000 - 2001 - 2002 - 2003 - 2004 - 2005 - 2006 - 2007 - 2008 - 2009 - 2010 - 2011 - 2012 - 2013 - 2014 - 2015 - 2016 - 2017 - 2018 - 2019 - 2020 - 2021 - 2022 - 2023 - 2024 - 2025

Certificates of Merit

"For outstanding skill and efficiency in the performance of duty".

Certificates of merit have been awarded by the 9th Engineer Command to the following Enlisted Men:

H & S Co.

M/Sgt. William L. Tanner	S/Sgt. Joseph J. Haessler
S/Sgt. Autie L. Simmons	T/5 Hubert G. Churchwell
Pfc Anthony F. Salreno	

Co. A.

S/Sgt. David C. Alford	T/4 Arther E. Fowler
T/4 Earl F. Kurra	T/5 Harold W. Moore
T/5 Edward R. Habe	

Co. B.

S/Sgt. Edwin Franklin	S/Sgt. James S. Rice
S/Sgt. Raymond Hamby	T/4 Earl A. Graham
T/4 Marvin Sellers	

Co. C

Sgt. Vernon K. Gredd	T/5 John D. Barnhart
Sgt. Albert Ferguson	T/5 George W. Jenner
T/5 Albert Smith	T/5 Phillip Napolitano
T/5 Carl F. Parks	T/5 Loyd Hayes

Medical Detachment

S/Sgt. Leo F. Kamler
T/3 Sid Rosenberg

Letters of Commendation

The 840th has received many letters of commendation. Back in Bradley Field, Col. Lovell sent congratulations to the battalion upon its completion of the Perimeter road constructed in that area, warmly praising the excellent quality of the work performed.

A letter from Lt. Gen. L. M. Dreretton of the First Allied Airborne Army, and bearing the endorsement of Gen. Carl Spatz, commander of the U.S. Strategic Air Force in Europe, commended the speed and efficiency with which "B" company of the 840th had put strips A-79 and A-80 into excellent shape for immediate operations.

Excerpts from other special letters of commendation follow:

HEADQUARTERS
2ND AIRFIELD MAINTENANCE REGIMENT (PROV)
APO 126, US ARMY

"From personal observation, I know this commendation to be well-earned. The manner in which your organization prosecuted the work at A-68 and workmenlike appearance of the project upon your relief from this regiment are sources of considerable pride".

DONALD P. BARNES
Lt. Col., C.E.,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
2ND ENGR. AVN. BRIGADE (PROV)
APO 126, US. ARMY

"It is with sincere pleasure that I forward to the officers an enlisted men of the 840th EAB this well earned commendation".

R. E. SMYSER, JR.,
Colonel, C.E.,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
925th ENGR. AVN. REGT. US. ARMY

"I am pleased to send this commendation to your unit. All your work since being reassigned to this regiment has fully justified the appreciation and congratulations expressed in basic communication and above indorsements".

THOMAS A. GLASS
Colonel, C.E.,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
9th BOMBARDMENT DIVISION (M)
APO 140, US. ARMY

"By overcoming supply shortages and unfavorable working conditions and mustering the whole hearted cooperation of your organization, you enabled the 410th Bombardment Group to make greater use of their field and to carry out vital operations under far more favorable conditions. The value and significance of this work in assisting us to fulfill our assigned missions are inestimable. The leadership and efficiency evinced by this outstanding record are contributions to the war effort".

SAMUEL E. ANDERSON
Major General, USA,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
IX ENGINEER COMMAND (MAIN)
APO 126, US. ARMY

"The efficient and cooperative manner in which you and the men of your company have accomplished assigned duties has been as to constitute a credit both to yourselves and the entire IX Engineer Command".

JAMES B. NEWMAN, JR.
Brigadier General, USA,
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
9th BOMBARDMENT DIVISION (M)
APO 140, US. ARMY

"I desire to commend you and the officers and enlisted men of your Battalion for the efficient manner in which the taxiway system of Station A-68 was extended. Confronted with a critical shortage of supply materials and unfavorable road conditions, you surmounted these obstacles by setting up your own gravel pit near the airfield. Through your capable planning and unremitting devotion to duty, the task was completed in record time."

SAMUEL E. ANDERSON
Major General, USA.,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
IX ENGINEER COMMAND (MAIN)
APO 126, US. ARMY

"By its outstanding work and devotion to duty, your unit has brought credit upon itself and to the entire Command of which it is a part. Your officers and men may justly take pride in a job so thoroughly well done."

JAMES B. NEWMAN, JR.
Brigadier General, USA.,
Commanding.

OFFICE OF BASE SECTION ENGINEER
WESTERN BASE SECTION
SOS US ARMY APO 515

Through the efforts of your unit, additional facilities were placed in the service of the Air Force at an early date, thereby enabling them to more efficiently accomplish their mission."

CARL R. SHAW
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
Base Section Engineer.

HEADQUARTERS
BASE AIR DEPOT AREA
UNITED STATES STRATEGIC AIR FORCES IN EUROPE
APO 635, AAF-590

"The past few months have seen operations at this Station expand at a phenomenal rate, and activities are growing almost daily. The important role of the units and personnel under your supervision in bringing this Station to its present degree of effectiveness is a contribution in which all officers and men concerned can take a marked pride."

I. W. OTT
Brigadier General, USA.,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
925th ENGINEER AVIATION REGIMENT A-G-18
APO 126, US. ARMY

"The organization and rapid execution of the work in rehabilitating the runway at Y-73, Rhein/Main reflects great credit on the officers and men of your Battalion. The prompt and efficient use of all available equipment, supplies and labor indicates the highest caliber of initiative and energy. Bearing in mind the fact that your equipment and troops employed on other construction, your successful efforts completed the task assigned in the minimum of time are especially noteworthy."

THOMAS A. GLASS
Colonel, C.E.,
Commanding.

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE



TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE:

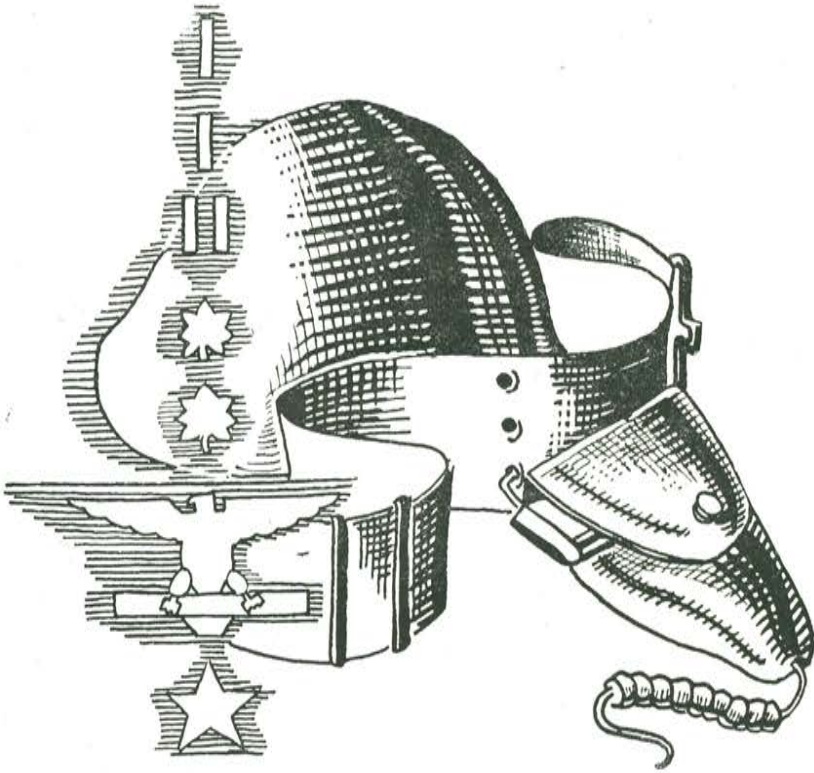
The task which we set ourselves is finished, and the time has come for me to relinquish Combined Command.

In the name of the United States and the British Commonwealth, from whom my authority is derived, I should like to convey to you the gratitude and admiration of our two nations for the manner in which you have responded to every demand that has been made upon you. At times, conditions have been hard and the tasks to be performed arduous. No praise is too high for the manner in which you have surmounted every obstacle

I should like, also, to add my own personal word of thanks to each one of you for the part you have played, and the contribution you have made to our joint victory.

Now that you are about to pass to other spheres of activity, I say Good-bye to you and wish you Good Luck and God-Speed.

Dwight D. Eisenhower



Officers

In Conclusion

Very little has been said concerning the part played by the officers in the moulding of the battalion and guiding of the men through the various phases of the work. Many of the officers whose efforts had a great influence in making the battalion an efficient working unit are no longer with us. Others have been able to stay with the battalion from the early training days through the various jobs until the battalion began to dissolve. Disregarding the customary and expected "bitching" by the enlisted men, as a whole, the men feel well satisfied with the destinies and accomplishments of the unit under the guidance of the officers who staffed the battalion.

The staff of this book wish to take this opportunity to extend their word of appreciation to the various officers who forewarded every possible co-operation in gathering and compiling the unit history. Particular thanks are extended to Maj. Thomas for his supervision and to 1st Lt. Rodriguez for the sketches he made to be used in illustration of the H. & S. Company history.





Lt. Col. John M. Keane

"This is our last job"

"My cherubs"



"Can you hear me down there?"

Maj. Morris G. Thomas



"See Keeney!"

Maj. Henry J. Schaedel



1st. Lt. Thomas V. Hines

"Right George"



"Gentlemen-I have good news for you"

Lt. Col. Pierre V. Kieffer Jr.



"Ban!"
"What have you got to eat"

1st. Lt. Edwin A. Champney



Capt. George F. Morio Jr.

"Get 'em!"



Capt. Geza A. Szur



"I need more help in the P-X"
1st Lt. Glenn W. Coull



Capt. Sam E. Alden

"And so on and so forth"



1st. Lt. James W. Paul Jr.

"Bring my jeep up to the Blister"



1st. Lt. Robert W. Russell

"I'll get it for you"



1st. Lt. Robert F. Rodriguez



1st. Lt. Edward Buganico

"I always get the dirty end
of the stick"



"Another accident
report -"

1st. Lt. Heyward R. Addison

"Damn it"



1st. Lt. Joseph A. Shaw



Capt. Kenneth E. Bloodough

"I can't get the parts"

"I need more mechanics"



1st. Lt. Ernest M. Pagano



1st. Lt. John W. Strapp Jr.

"Most interesting"

1st. Lt. David W. Bro





Capt. Roy D. Woodworth Jr.

"I haven't any men"



1st. Lt. Earl F. Lamb



"You a what Army"

1st. Lt. Carl J. Warfield





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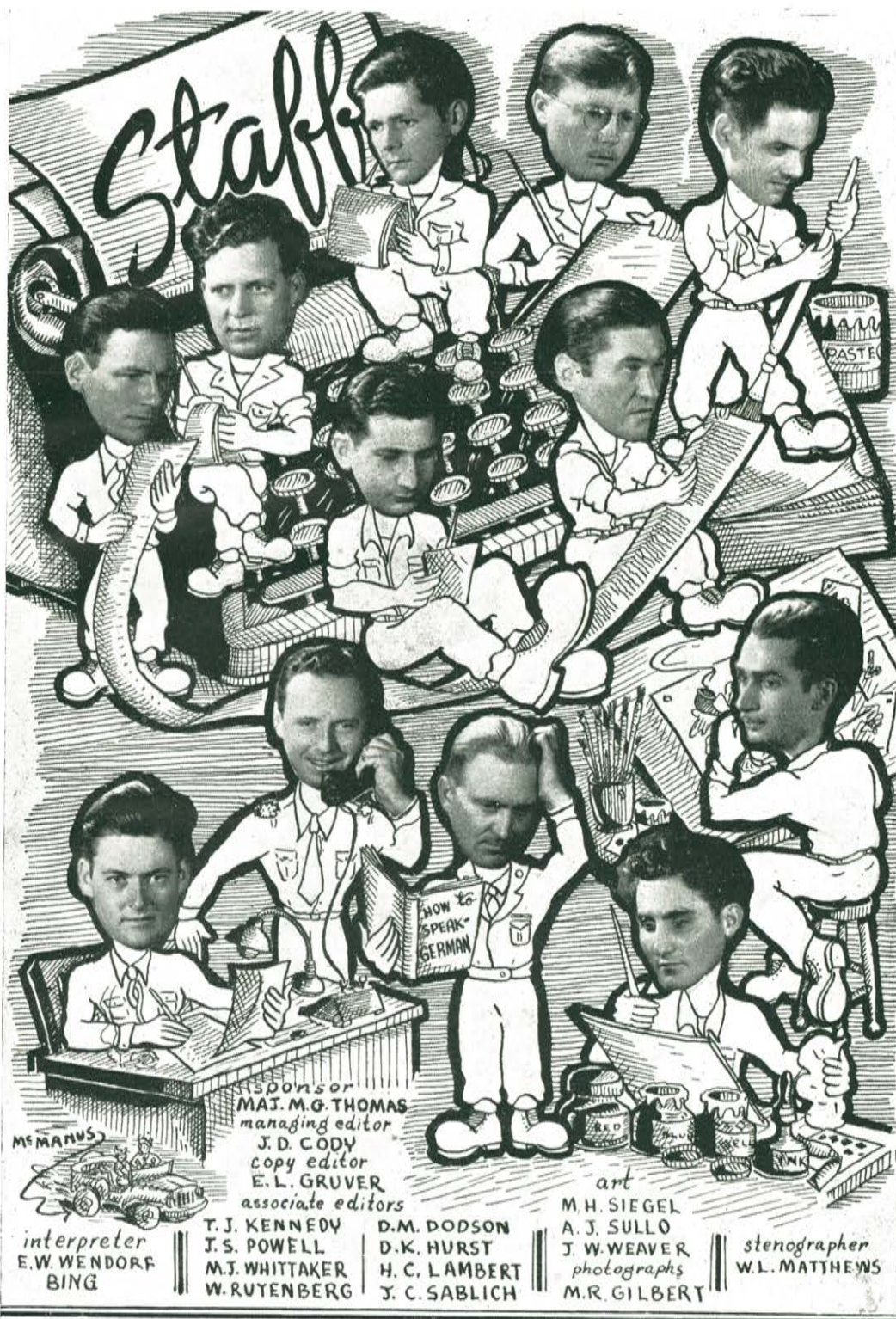
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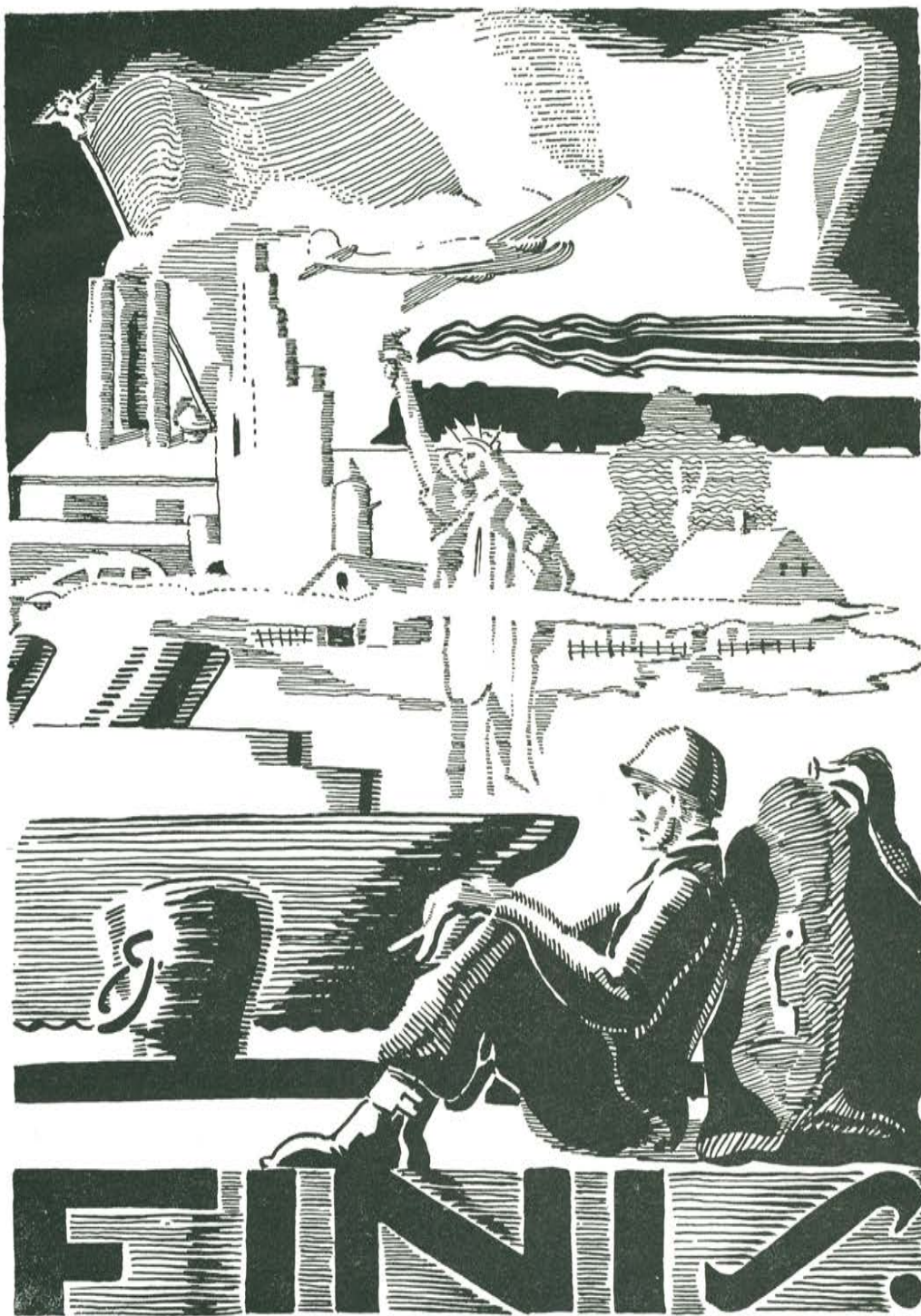
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Printer:

Zimmermannsche Druckerei
Nurnberg (Germany)

Engraver:

Wilhelm Reinhardt, Nurnberg
