



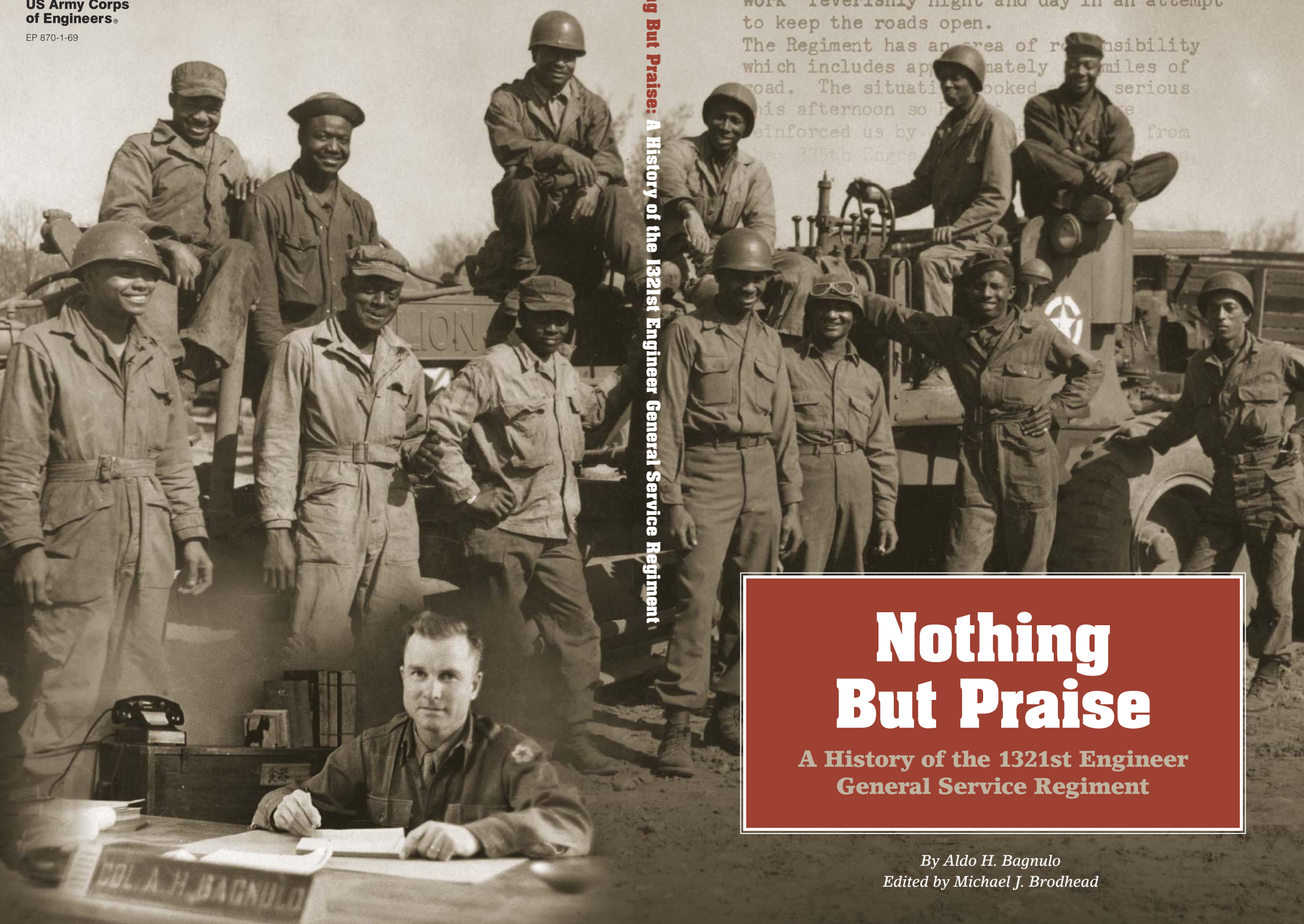
US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

EP 870-1-69

Nothing But Praise: A History of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment

The last few days have brought us approximately 15 inches of snow. This has caused us to work feverishly night and day in an attempt to keep the roads open.

The Regiment has an area of responsibility which includes approximately 100 miles of road. The situation looked serious this afternoon so I reinforced us by bringing in the 335th Engineer



# Nothing But Praise

A History of the 1321st Engineer  
General Service Regiment

By Aldo H. Bagnulo  
Edited by Michael J. Brodhead

**Nothing But Praise:**  
**A History of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment**

*By Aldo H. Bagnulo*  
*Edited by Michael J. Brodhead*

**OFFICE OF HISTORY**  
**HEADQUARTERS, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS**  
**ALEXANDRIA, VA.**

2009  
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## Foreword

Over the course of World War II, the U.S. Army deployed 325,000 engineers to the European Theater of Operations. Among the units that saw action in Europe were fifty-four engineer general service regiments. These heavily equipped units, which were attached to field armies or corps headquarters, performed general construction, road maintenance, or bridge work on the main routes of communication. During the war, the Army established seventy-nine such regiments, and in keeping with the policy at the time, engineers were segregated into predominantly white or African American units. Twenty-nine of the regiments were composed entirely of white soldiers, while the remaining fifty were African American. The 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment was one of those African American units.

*Nothing But Praise: A History of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment* chronicles the training and battlefield experiences of one unit that served in Europe during World War II. Yet, in many ways, the experiences of the 1321st mirrored those of other engineer units—both black and white—that served during the war: arduous training followed by prolonged deployments overseas. It is often said that Army engineers labored in the shadows of history, but if white general service regiments received little attention, the African American regiments often toiled in obscurity. This publication not only fills some of the gaps in engineer history, it attests to the crucial role engineers played in the Allied victory in Europe.

The officers and men of the 1321st Engineers learned their profession in the piney woods of the Carolinas and Tennessee. After completing basic training, they learned how to become engineers, acquiring the specialized skills that they would put to good use in Europe. The 1321st compiled an enviable record of accomplishment during World War II. In support of the Allied drive across France and into Germany, the 1321st repaired bridges and cleared roads. Later, when spring thaws and disintegrating roads threatened to disrupt

the desperately needed flow of supplies to the front, the regiment repaired and maintained hundreds of miles of roads, highways, and bridges. The regiment's well-trained carpenters, electricians, welders, machinists, and heavy equipment operators also renovated buildings, constructed hospitals, and built sprawling supply depots. At the end of the war, the Army transferred the 1321st to Korea where it served with distinction until 1946.

Although this history of the 1321st Engineers is largely the work of the unit's commander, Col. Aldo H. Bagnulo, and therefore reflects his perspective and interpretation of events, the regiment's record speaks for itself. This history of an accomplished unit also sheds new light on the role of African American engineers during World War II and in the process enriches the history of the entire Engineer Regiment.



R. L. VAN ANTWERP  
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army  
Chief of Engineers



## Preface

Army engineers were an integral part of the war in Europe. They were among the first ashore at Normandy, and in the months of hard fighting that followed they played a pivotal role in supporting the Allied advance into Germany. Many engineers served in combat engineer battalions assigned to infantry or armored divisions. These combat engineers constructed field fortifications, built bridges, conducted river crossings, and built and maintained roads in direct support of combat forces and sometimes under hostile fire. Other Army engineers served in units that performed a range of tasks—usually, but not always, behind the front lines. Among these units were the engineer general service regiments. The mission of general service regiments was to perform “general engineer work—particularly that requiring most skilled labor—throughout the army service area and communications zone of a theater of operations.” The specific duties of a general service regiment included “general construction work and work on roads and bridges,” and at “ports, bases, depots, airdromes, and of the construction of roads and railroads at these points.”<sup>1</sup>

A general service regiment consisted of a headquarters, a headquarters and service company, a medical detachment, and two battalions of three companies each (A, B, C and D, E, F). The general service regiment received more types of special equipment than other kinds of engineer units. Its mechanical equipment included an earth auger, air compressors, bulldozers, road graders, and power shovels. Other equipment consisted of portable water supply sets, basic tool sets, and basic drafting equipment. The authorized weapons were M-1 rifles, carbines, bayonets, pistols, rifle grenades, and .30- and .50-caliber machine guns.<sup>2</sup>

Although the authorized strength of a general service regiment varied throughout the war, in general it was 39 officers, 11 warrant officers, and 1,221 enlisted men. It had a larger headquarters organization and a greater number of specialists than most other engineer units.<sup>3</sup>

It was the Army’s intention that the soldiers of the general service regiments would have a skill level greater than those in

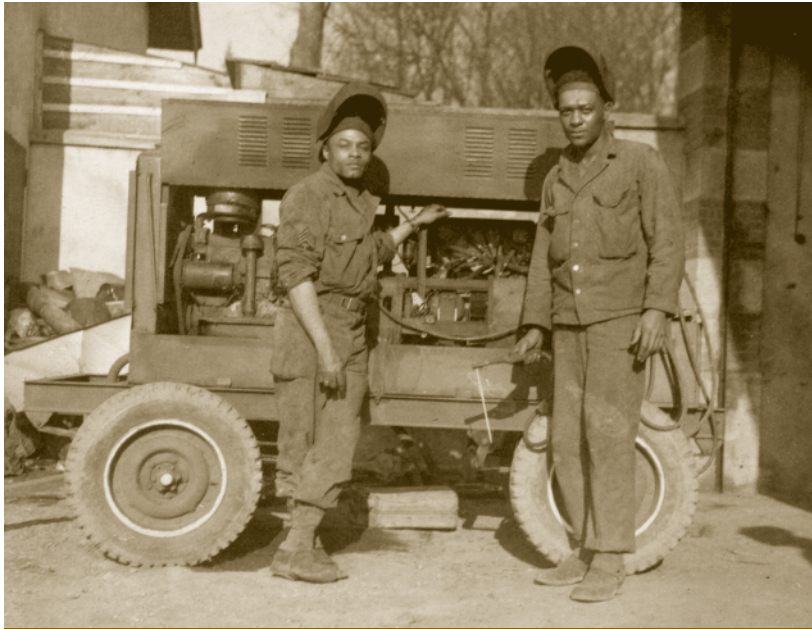
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<sup>1</sup> U.S. War Department, *FM 5-5 Engineer Field Manual, Engineer Troops*. 11 October 1943 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 149, 152–53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 149–50.

<sup>3</sup> Karl C. Dod, *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Japan* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1966), 687.

the labor battalions of the First World War.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the Army provided training in specialties such as electrical wiring, welding, and the operation of heavy equipment. Also, the table of organization and equipment for a general service regiment authorized a variety of military occupation specialties and equipment that required a degree of technical proficiency.<sup>5</sup>



Soldiers of the 1321st operating an arc welder in France, 26 March 1945.

Many of the Army's engineer units were composed of African American soldiers. The United States Army maintained a policy of segregation of white and African American troops until 1948. From the late nineteenth century until World War II, the Regular Army had but four regiments of black soldiers, two of infantry and two of cavalry. These units had mostly white officers. Several black regiments served in the volunteer forces during the Spanish-American War, and many African Americans enlisted or were drafted into the armed forces in

4 Blanche D. Coll, Jean E. Keith, and Herbert H. Rosenthal, *The Corps of Engineers: Troops and Equipment* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1958), 576–77.

5 Table of Organization No. 5-21, Engineer General Service Regiment, 1 April 1942. Tables of Organization and Equipment, Box 1, Folder 2, Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, Va. (hereafter cited as CEHO).

World War I. Some served in the combat arms, but most were placed in engineer and quartermaster labor battalions.

The assignment of most black troops to non-combat and non-technical units continued into the World War II period, ostensibly because most of the black soldiers came from the rural South, with little or no education and many lacking experience with machinery. Although some African Americans saw action in the Army Ground Forces as infantry, artillery, armor, and engineer combat troops, the belief of Army leadership was that they would perform best behind the battle lines in support of the fighting forces. Accordingly, the Army once again assigned most blacks to quartermaster and engineer units. Black engineer troops (and many whites as well) served in light ponton companies, heavy ponton battalions, and dump truck companies. However, many African American troops served in the more technical engineer aviation battalions (which built airfields and related structures) and engineer general service regiments. By 1942, 42 percent of all engineer units were African American, whereas the Army's manpower was only 8.6 percent African American by 1943.<sup>6</sup> In most cases, a white officer commanded the black units, and white and black officers were his subordinates. All of the enlisted personnel, including noncommissioned officers, were African American. As of 30 June 1945 there were seventy-nine general service regiments, fifty of which were made up of black soldiers.<sup>7</sup>

In the spring and summer of 1943 the War Department created several new African American general service regiments, among them the 1321st. For most of its existence, Lt. Col. (later Col.) Aldo Hector Bagnulo commanded the regiment. Born of Italian immigrant parents on 4 April 1914 in Revere, Massachusetts, Bagnulo ("Al" to his friends and associates) graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1936 with a degree in sanitary engineering.<sup>8</sup> That year he accepted a reserve commission in the Coast Artillery Corps and went on active duty. In the following year he transferred to the Corps of Engineers after passing a competitive examination. Until 1939 he was with the 1st Engineer Regiment stationed at Fort DuPont, Delaware, where he performed the usual duties of a company grade officer and the special duty of supervising Works Progress

6 Coll, Keith, and Rosenthal, *Troops and Equipment*, 118, 237; Ulysses Lee, *The Employment of Negro Troops* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1966), 128.

7 Coll, Keith, and Rosenthal, *Troops and Equipment*, 238, 311–12.

8 Biographical information on Bagnulo and his career is found in "Biographical Sketch, Colonel Aldo H. Bagnulo, CE," 24 February 1953, Aldo H. Bagnulo Papers, Box 2, Folder 1, and "Résumé," March 1967, Box 7, Folder 2, CEHO (hereafter cited as Bagnulo Papers), and the *Official Army Register, Volume 1* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 1:30.

Administration projects at the fort. From 1939 to 1943 Bagnulo oversaw the construction of Army cantonments and airbases in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the British possession of Antigua. Promotions to first lieutenant and captain came in 1940. He became a major in 1942. He concluded his Caribbean duties in the position of

Department Engineer, Puerto Rican Department. For his work in the West Indies the Army awarded him the Legion of Merit.



Aldo H. Bagnulo as a young engineer officer.

Bagnulo completed the Engineer Field Officers Course at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, in 1943. In the fall of that year he served on the Engineer Board, also at Fort Belvoir. At his duty station on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, he conducted experiments to test the feasibility of laying pipelines under the English Channel for delivering petroleum products for the impending invasion of the European mainland.

On 21 November 1943,

Bagnulo, a lieutenant colonel since February, took command of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment, the African American unit whose history he later chronicled. As the history he wrote will show, the regiment trained primarily at Camp Sutton, North Carolina, and at the Tennessee Maneuver Area.

The 1321st sailed from Boston on 7 October 1944 and arrived in England eight days later.<sup>9</sup> The regiment moved to France on 6 December and began providing engineer support for the Seventh Army in the Alsace-Lorraine region. There it maintained roads, repaired bridges, laid pipe, erected prefabricated structures, supplied lumber, and built hospitals, engineer depots, and other facilities. Bagnulo recorded the regiment's strength at approximately 55 officers and 1,200 enlisted men. Other units attached to the 1321st, including equipment detachments and companies of German prisoners of war, increased the unit's strength by an estimated one thousand.<sup>10</sup>



9 Shelby L. Stanton, *Order of Battle, U.S. Army, World War II* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1984), 563.

10 "Résumé," Bagnulo Papers.



Regimental staff in France, 13 March 1945.

Soon after the regiment entered Germany, the war in Europe came to an end. Rather than being discharged, the men of the 1321st found themselves on transports bound for the Far East. They learned of Japan's surrender during a stopover at Pearl Harbor. Eventually they reached Okinawa and concluded their service in Korea in 1946. For the construction efforts in Korea, Bagnulo received the Army's Commendation Ribbon.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout it all, the regimental commander, who had been promoted to colonel (temporary) in June 1945, saw to it that his men received the necessary equipment and the proper training in the many and varied skills required of a general service unit. Bagnulo pushed them hard but showed them the respect that black troops did not always receive from white officers. His confidence in his soldiers paid off in a commendable record in which he and they could take pride.

Soon before he and his regiment sailed to England, Bagnulo married Helen Montesinos of Baltimore on 13 September 1944. The couple was to have five sons.<sup>12</sup>

Bagnulo's postwar years followed a pattern typical of career engineer officers, with military assignments alternating with civil works duties. With the Tactical Air Command, at Langley Field, Virginia, he served as chief of the Construction Division and as post



11 The Army Commendation Ribbon, created in 1945, was to be awarded to those commended for meritorious achievement or service on or after 7 December 1941. In 1949 the award became the Army Commendation Medal. Philip K. Robles, *United States Military Medals and Ribbons* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1971), 160.

12 Michael Bagnulo, personal communication, 16 September 2008.



engineer, 1946–47. He returned to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1947 and earned a master's degree in civil engineering the following year. From 1948 to 1952, at the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Washington, D.C., he was assistant chief of the Construction and Operations Division of the Military Construction Office.

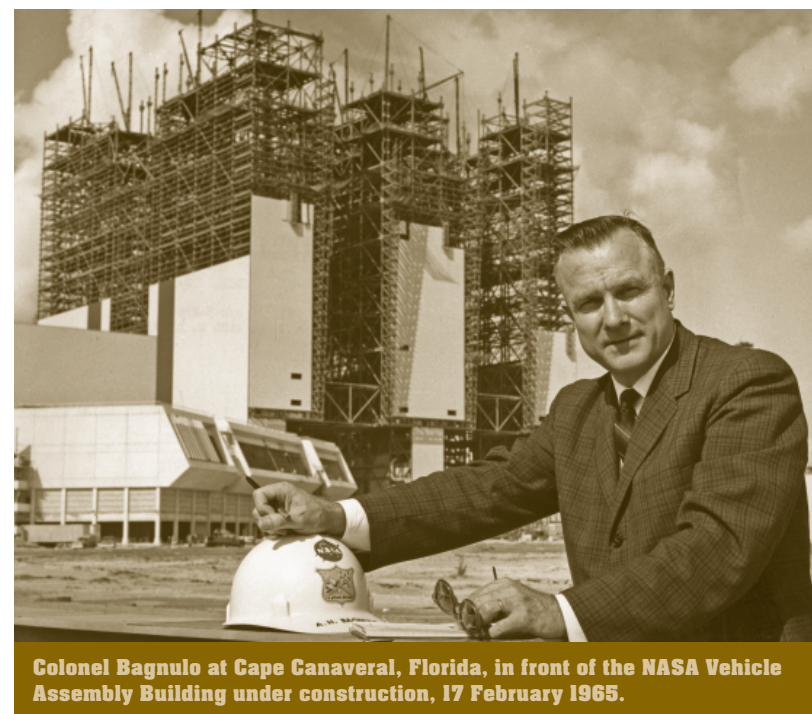
As district engineer of the Corps' St. Paul District, 1952–54, Bagnulo oversaw projects throughout a 170,000-square-mile area that covered much of the upper Midwest. These projects included flood control, improvements in navigation, water conservation, and the operation and maintenance of locks and dams. He also represented the United States on a joint committee concerned with the control of bodies of water shared with Canada.

From 1954 to 1958 Bagnulo served in the Corps of Engineers' Eastern Ocean District, headquartered in New York, as assistant district engineer and later as district engineer, as well as area engineer for Iceland. In 1958–59 he was assistant director of the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Laboratory at Fort Belvoir. Next he attended the U.S. Army Air Defense School at Fort Bliss, Texas, where he took the Atomic Weapons Orientation Course, and the U.S. Cold Weather and Mountain Training School, Fort Greely, Alaska, where he completed the Winter Orientation Course. His military education culminated with the regular course at the U.S. Army War College.

Bagnulo's cold weather training prepared him for duty as chief engineer, assistant chief of staff for logistics, and chief of staff at the Army's headquarters in Alaska, 1960–63. His last years with the Army were with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). At NASA's John F. Kennedy Space Center, Florida, he served first as chief of facilities engineering and construction; next as assistant director for engineering and development; finally as deputy director, design engineering. In recognition of his "exceptionally meritorious service" from June 1955 to June 1965, the Army awarded him a second Legion of Merit for "consistently demonstrat[ing] decisive leadership, professional skill, resourcefulness, and mature judgment."<sup>13</sup>

Bagnulo retired from the Army in July 1965. Retirement, however, brought little change because he remained at the Kennedy Space Center in the same capacity—deputy director of design engineering—but as a civil servant. He retired from NASA in 1967.

Aldo and Helen Bagnulo spent the last seventeen years of his life in northern Virginia, at the Fairfax Retirement Community outside of Fort Belvoir.<sup>14</sup> He continued to be active in his profession, performing environmental engineering work for Pope, Evans and



**Colonel Bagnulo at Cape Canaveral, Florida, in front of the NASA Vehicle Assembly Building under construction, 17 February 1965.**

Robbins, Inc., of Fairfax County, and the Bechtel Corporation.<sup>15</sup> He retained membership in the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Society of American Military Engineers. In addition, he was actively involved in church and community affairs.

Colonel Bagnulo died 21 February 2004 at age 89 and was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. His life's work had begun with routine garrison duty in the pre-World War II Army and concluded with important leadership positions in America's space program. It was a career rich in accomplishments as a soldier and an engineer. Yet he was no martinet or soulless technician. The written record he left behind reveals a man of intelligence and compassion and with a sense of humor. Lt. Gen. John W. Morris, Chief of Engineers, 1976–80, remembered him as "just one of the nicest men you'll ever meet."<sup>16</sup>

The title of this work comes from the 15 May 1945 entry of Bagnulo's diary, in which he writes that the regiment had received "nothing but praise for our performance in connection with that work on the autobahn."

<sup>13</sup> Legion of Merit citation provided by Michael Bagnulo, 16 September 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Bagnulo, personal communication, 16 September 2008.

<sup>15</sup> "Aldo Hector Bagnulo: Army Colonel," *Washington Post*, 11 March 2004.

<sup>16</sup> *Engineer Memoirs: Lieutenant General John W. Morris* (Alexandria, Va.: Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2000), 37.

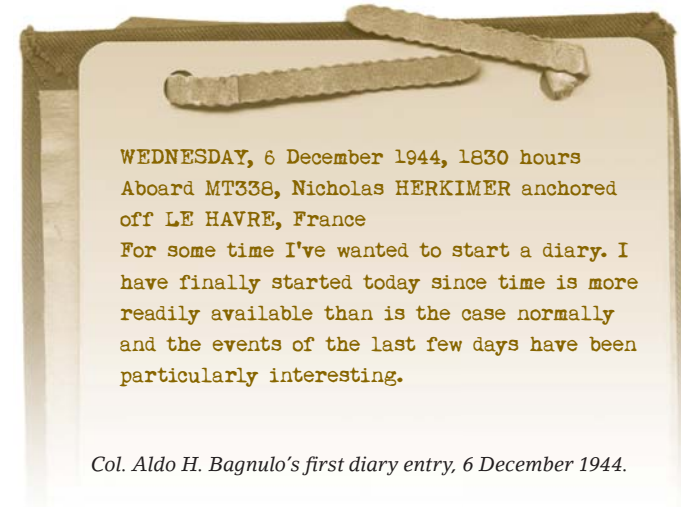
### The Bagnulo Donations

In 2007 Michael and Marcella Bagnulo, son and daughter-in-law of Aldo H. Bagnulo, donated his father's papers to the Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, Virginia. The collection well documents Colonel Bagnulo's long and productive career as an engineer officer. Shortly after the donation of the Bagnulo papers, another son, John Bagnulo, gave his father's World War II diary to the Office of History.

Included in the first donation was Colonel Bagnulo's typescript history of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment. It consists of thirty-seven double-spaced pages, with a disproportionately large part of it devoted to the unit's training in the United States. The narrative is straightforward, gracefully written, and with occasional touches of humor. Oddly, Bagnulo never explicitly indicates that the 1321st was an African American unit. Bagnulo the author refers to Bagnulo the commander but a few times, and then only in the third person. It will be obvious to the reader that he is proud of what the 1321st achieved, yet nowhere does he give himself the credit for the success of the regiment; its accomplishments were those of the officers and men under him.

Whereas the history covers the story of the regiment from its beginnings in North Carolina until its inactivation in Korea, the diary entries span only the months spent in Europe. The diary is, of course, more personal in nature. Although Bagnulo could feel freer to express emotions and opinions, he exercises restraint and rarely comments negatively about anyone. Unlike the history, the diary contains a few references to black officers and to racial issues. He confesses to a feeling of uneasiness when he watched black officers dancing with white French women, but adds that he was trying to overcome such reactions. In fact, he appears remarkably free of the prejudice and condescending attitudes one might have expected in the era. Somewhat unusual for a diary, it is typewritten. Physically, it is bound by detachable front and back covers and consists of sheets of 7 ¼ x 4 ¼ inches. Some of the sheets are lined; others are unlined onionskin. Usually there are intervals of a few to several days between entries.

Included in the Bagnulo donation were hundreds of photographs of the personnel and activities of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment in the United States, Europe, and the Far East. A number of the photographs were probably taken by one of the regiment's dental officers, Capt. Robert E. Harris, who also served as regimental photographer.<sup>17</sup> Other photographs in the collection were taken by the Army's Signal Corps.



Col. Aldo H. Bagnulo's first diary entry, 6 December 1944.

Perhaps the most challenging part of preparing the history for publication was knitting together three related elements from the Bagnulo collection—the history of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment, the colonel's diary, and dozens of photographs—into a cohesive narrative. Readers will note that Bagnulo's history of the 1321st comprises the first two-thirds of the book, while the remainder consists of the colonel's diary. Also, the editor embedded excerpts from the diary into the preface and history section in a format that mirrors that of the original diary. The images in this publication not only illustrate the story of the regiment, they offer readers a glimpse into the lives and experiences of the men who served in the 1321st.

### Editorial Procedures

Histories of black engineer units are uncommon, especially of the quality of the Bagnulo manuscript. Accordingly, the Office of History made a decision to edit, annotate, and publish the history and diary soon after receiving the donations. Colonel Bagnulo had explored the possibility of publishing the manuscript, which he wrote while in Korea.<sup>18</sup> Although nothing came of his efforts, he had written the manuscript with publication in mind, so it is a fairly smooth piece of prose. Nevertheless, the Office of History felt that some annotation and other editorial attention to the decades-old manuscript were necessary. The footnotes supplied by the editor mostly identify persons, places, events, military units, vessels, and construction terms. Identifications made in the notes for the history are not repeated in the notes for the diary. Some of the notes expand

<sup>17</sup> *1321st Dispatch* [regimental newsletter], 4 March 1945, Bagnulo Papers, Box 1, Folder 25; Harris to Bagnulo, 4 October 1946, Bagnulo Papers, Box 4, Folder 5.

<sup>18</sup> Robert B. Reed, Newsphoto Publishing Company, to Bagnulo, 31 December 1945; Bagnulo to Reed, 14 January 1946, Bagnulo Papers, Box 1, Folder 21.

upon the author's information. The editor has identified the persons mentioned wherever possible, but many persons proved difficult if not impossible to identify. Most of the photographs carry extremely scant written identification, and some none at all, which will explain the often general captions given them in this publication. Many of the images taken in Europe include dates, however, allowing the editor to assume the general location depicted based on where the regiment or its companies were operating on that day. Almost none of the people portrayed in the images are identified by name. Some of the footnotes at the bottom of the pages are offset with images of unidentified soldiers and officers of the 1321st. All photographs in this publication come from the Bagnulo Personal Papers at the Office of History unless otherwise indicated.

Although the history received a light edit, every effort was made to retain as much of the author's original prose as possible. The editor found it occasionally necessary to correct silently a few misspellings and obvious typographical errors, such as transposed letters or the hitting of a wrong key. Here and there needed punctuation has been inserted, also silently. The editor sometimes updated the treatment of dates, abbreviations, proper nouns, and the like for the sake of consistency and to reflect current style conventions. Where appropriate, italics and accent marks have been added in the history, but not the diary.

The same procedures have generally been followed in the editing of the diary. Here, however, the editor has supplied most corrections in brackets, such as missing words and conjectural readings. Typographical errors and misspellings of French and German words and place names have been corrected. For the sake of readability, the layout of the diary portion of the publication does not duplicate the irregular formatting and erratic spacing in the original diary entries, much of which may well have been the result of a malfunctioning typewriter. The editor has adjusted some of the diary entry headings to reflect a consistent style and arrangement but has not altered Bagnulo's prose or his use of abbreviations, capitalization, numbering, and underlining.

Among the more useful materials the editor consulted to prepare the annotations were items in the Aldo H. Bagnulo Personal Papers, Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, such as lists of the officers of the 1321st, regimental newsletters, and biographical data about Bagnulo. Copies of newsletters from Camp Sutton are in the Office of History's military files in the research collections. A small but valuable collection of the regiment's records was found in RG 407, Records of the Adjutant General, Box 19697, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

The most helpful published sources were *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany*, by Alfred M. Beck, Abe Bortz,

Charles W. Lynch, Lida Mayo, and Ralph F. Weld (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1988) and *The Corps of Engineers: Troops and Equipment*, by Blanche D. Coll, Jean E. Keith, and Herbert H. Rosenthal (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1958). Also rewarding were: *Final Report of the Chief Engineer, European Theater of Operations, 1942-1945*, 2 vols. (n.p., n.d.); *FM 5-5 Engineer Field Manual, Engineer Troops. 11 October 1943* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943); *Official Army Register, Volume 1* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946); and *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, James A. Moody, editor, 8 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Naval History Division, 1959-81).

### Acknowledgments

Our greatest debt is to Michael and Marcella Bagnulo, of Roswell, Georgia, and John E. Bagnulo, of Annandale, Virginia, for the thoughtful and generous gifts that made this publication possible and for answering numerous questions about Colonel Bagnulo.

William A. Dobak and Frank R. Shirer, both of the Center of Military History, supplied helpful information; so too did Larry D. Roberts, Command Historian, U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and Davis Elliott of the Navy Department Library. Thanks also to the Modern Military Records staff at the National Archives, College Park, Maryland, for making available records of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment. Francis X. Hartigan, of the University of Nevada, Reno, gave the benefit of his expertise in French history. Debbie Cox, Metro Archives, Nashville, Tennessee, identified an elusive place name. Meschelyn Barrett, Director of the Stokely Memorial Library, Newport, Tennessee, provided a newspaper account of the "Tennessee Fire." Deborah Keller, HECSA Library, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, Virginia, obtained needed volumes through interlibrary loan. Bruce M. Arnold of Sam Houston State University provided information on Ulithi Atoll and the islet of Mog Mog. Thanks to Professor Richard Polt, a collector of typewriters, for the image that illustrates the opening page of the diary section.

Special thanks go to Marion Chard, founder and guiding light of a website devoted to the history of VI Corps Combat Engineers, WWII. Although the 1321st was not a component of VI Corps, Ms. Chard knows where to find information about almost any engineer unit participating in the war. She put the editor in touch with John R. Wall of the Department of Special Collections, J. D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi, who supplied a copy of the oral history transcript of C. C. Pinson, a veteran of the 1321st. Marion also sent out a call through her extensive network. Answering the call was Michael Kirby of Sandpoint, Idaho, who located Mr. Pinson in

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Oxford, Mississippi, and in many other ways materially assisted the editor. Telephone conversations with Mr. Pinson provided helpful recollections of life in the regiment and confirmed and reinforced much of the information found in Colonel Bagnulo's history and diary. Also responding was Jack Clay of Monroe, North Carolina, who freely gave of his considerable knowledge of Camp Sutton, North Carolina, and donated copies of a run of the camp's newsletter, *The Carryall*, and the notebook of a 1321st soldier.

All of the staff members of the Office of History lent time and talent to the production of this book. Paul K. Walker, former chief of the office, approved the project and gave every encouragement. His successor, John C. Lonquest, energetically supported this effort. He headed a project delivery team whose other members were James T. Garber, Douglas J. Wilson, and the editor. The team scanned photographs, wrote captions, and made recommendations and decisions regarding layout, illustrations, editorial procedures, and stylistic matters. Michelle S. Tyler assisted the team in many ways and did most of the work of indexing. Eric A. Reinert freely shared his extensive knowledge of military equipment. Matthew T. Percy kindly volunteered to transcribe the Bagnulo history manuscript. Anna Punchak and Patricia K. Paquette (Corporate Information, HQUSACE) helped us navigate through new funding and printing procedures. John T. Punchak processed the many photographs that came with the Bagnulo donation. Former staff member William C. Baldwin supplied information on French history, geography, and language. Four volunteers provided valuable assistance with processing the Bagnulo Personal Papers, scanning the Bagnulo photograph collection, organizing image captions, and reviewing the manuscript: Joseph Liddle, Anne Musella, Marie Pfefferle, and Justin D. Wood. Everyone's support and hard work are greatly appreciated.

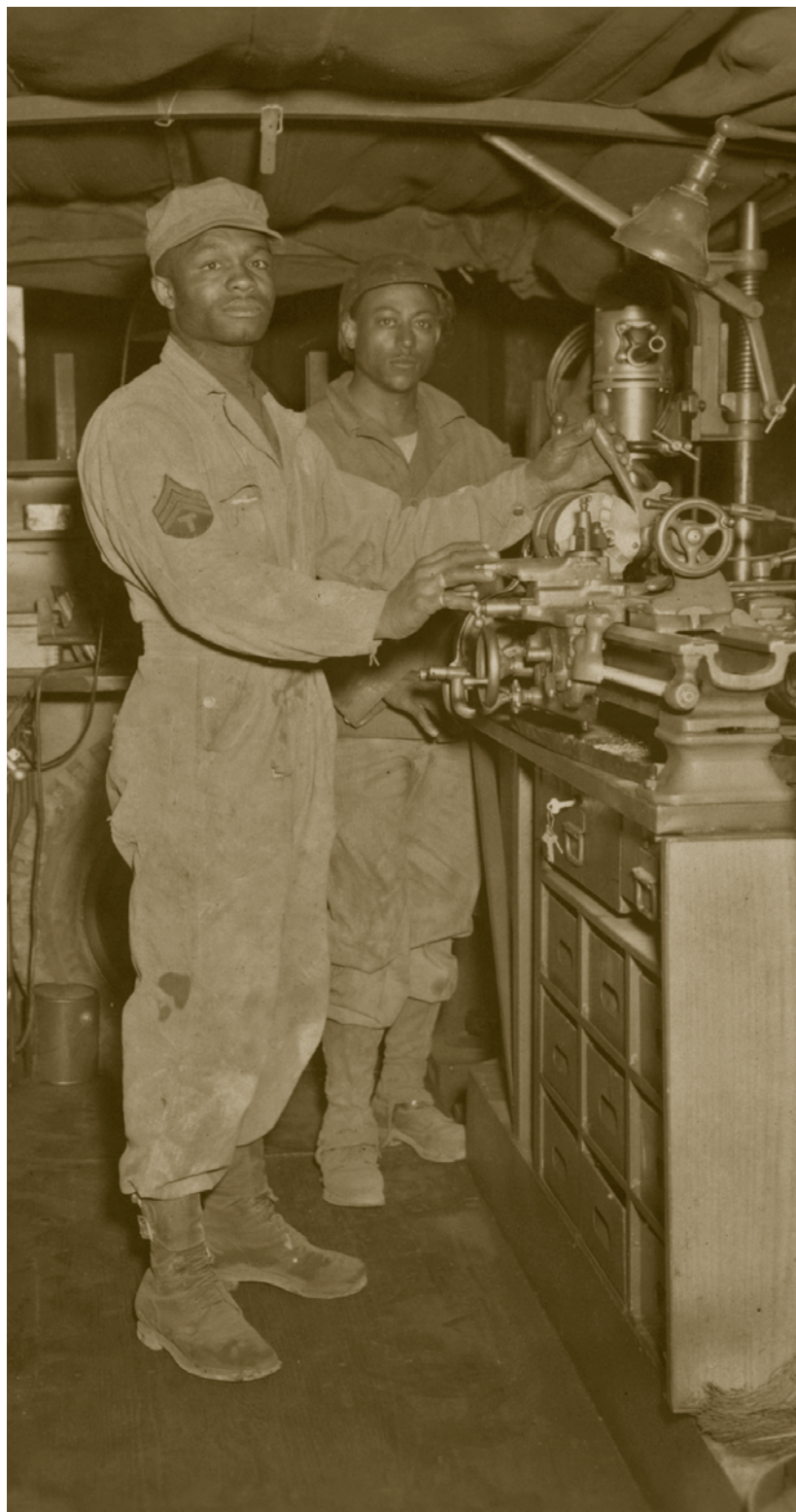
Gwynn Fuchs of the Creative Services Department at the Government Printing Office used her considerable talent to design the publication. Gordon Clark, also of GPO, assisted with the publication process along the way.

A final thanks goes to the author, Col. Aldo H. Bagnulo, for having written the history of the 1321st and for having kept a diary during his time in Europe. Both texts are over sixty years old, but they remain historically valuable as a reflection of one man's experiences during World War II and as an account of the activities and efforts of one of the less-well-documented engineer regiments of the era as told by the man who commanded it for most of its existence.

Bagnulo attributed the regiment's successes not to himself but to the officers and men who served in it. Nevertheless, his history of the unit is a highly personal, subjective view (and his diary, of course, even more so) and apparently based largely on his own recollections. ★

# The History of the 1321st Engineers





Engineers of the 1321st working in a mobile machine shop.

2

### Beginnings

The Thirteen Twenty-First Engineer General Service Regiment was activated at Camp Sutton, North Carolina, on 16 August 1943.<sup>1</sup> Our first commanding officer was Lt. Col. Paul J. B. Murphy. To say that our first days were trying days would be expressing it too mildly. They were hectic days. There were a great many factors which contributed to a bad start. First of all, we did not have a full complement of officers, and among those we had there were several who lacked the experience with troops so necessary during the initial days. Our cadre was furnished by the 1310th Engineer General Service Regiment of Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, and like our officers, they lacked the necessary experience. Among them were good and bad ones. We knew that the 1310th had not sent us all of their good men; units do not operate that way, at least not to the extent that it would weaken their own outfits.

Our fillers, too, which came in three different groups, were not of the caliber that would make a crack outfit immediately. They came from practically every other branch of the service, being from deactivated units that were no longer considered essential. Few, if any, had had any previous engineer experience. The first group, which arrived on 16 August 1943, came from the 533d Quartermaster Service Battalion of Camp Gordon, Georgia, and from various air base security battalions of Camp Rucker, Alabama, and Camp Butner, North Carolina.<sup>2</sup> There were approximately six hundred in this first group, which, despite its lack of engineer experience, produced some of the best soldiers in the regiment, such as Technical Sergeant Herbert of Headquarters and Service (H & S) Company, First Sergeant Hall of Company E, and Staff Sergeant Bufford of Company F.<sup>3</sup> The second group, like the first, was made up of men from various branches of the service. By 1 September we received the last group, approximately four hundred, which made the regiment 15 percent over strength. We were not proud of that last group. In an all-out effort to obtain

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- 1 Located near Monroe in Union County, Camp Sutton was established 7 March 1942 as an engineer training center. The War Dept. declared the reservation surplus property on 1 October 1945. Robert B. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts: The Military, Pioneer, and Trading Posts of the United States* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1988), 624.
  - 2 "Unit History, 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment," Box 19697, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, National Archives, College Park, Md. (hereafter cited as "Unit History," National Archives).
  - 3 S. Sgt. Clarence Bufford of Calvert, Texas, received the Bronze Star Medal on 13 May 1945. By "his outstanding display of leadership and willingness to work as hard and long as any of the men in his platoon he inspired his men to accomplish a remarkable amount of loading of captured enemy material threatened to be recaptured by the enemy." "Unit History," National Archives.

the men we needed, Fourth Service Command had emptied many of its stockades and hospitals.<sup>4</sup> Our efforts to develop them into good engineer soldiers were not to be successful. So much of the officers' and noncommissioned officers' time was occupied with matters of discipline and administration in connection with these men that the training program suffered. Our foster parents, the Engineer Unit Training Center (EUTC), did little to pour oil on our troubled waters. Indeed, they also were inexperienced and refused stubbornly to understand our problems, and with this background they wielded a big stick that saddled the units in training with additional difficulties.

### Training in the Carolinas

Despite the problems of the first days, basic training got under way on 3 September 1943. The period from 3 September to 3 October was spent on basic fundamentals such as close-order drill, care and cleaning of equipment, military courtesy, and discipline. We found it necessary to conduct night schools for officers and noncommissioned officers who lacked the experience required to conduct the training properly. Because of the shortage of officers, it was often necessary for one officer to conduct the training of a company of 200 to 250 men.

It was really a sad story when we began our rifle marksmanship training. Only seven M-1 rifles were available for the entire regiment, and it was not until 2 October, the day before we began our march to the firing range, that we received our full complement of rifles. At approximately 1730 hours, 3 October, we started our trip to the rifle range, which was adjacent to Pageland, South Carolina, and was approximately seventeen miles from Camp Sutton.<sup>5</sup> The move, a tactical march, was part of our basic training. After about three hours of marching, we went into a tactical bivouac with outposts and all of the trimmings. We did not get much sleep, for by the time we had our bivouac in shape, it was time to break camp and be on our way.

We arrived at the Pageland Range at about 1100 hours, 4 October. After getting ourselves as comfortably situated as we could with the existing facilities, we settled down to earning marksmanship medals for ourselves. Our two-week stay was pretty routine, highlighted only by long hours of work, firing and cleaning our



Faces of the 132nd Engineer General Service Regiment.

weapons, night classes for officers and noncommissioned officers, and inspections by members of the training center staff. The return trip was a forced march, also under tactical conditions. We left Pageland at 1600 hours on 17 October 1943. As part of the training, planes and tanks simulated strafing our columns. We used the training we had received and deployed off the road to take cover. Six and a half hours later, those of us who could stand the pace were back in Camp Sutton.

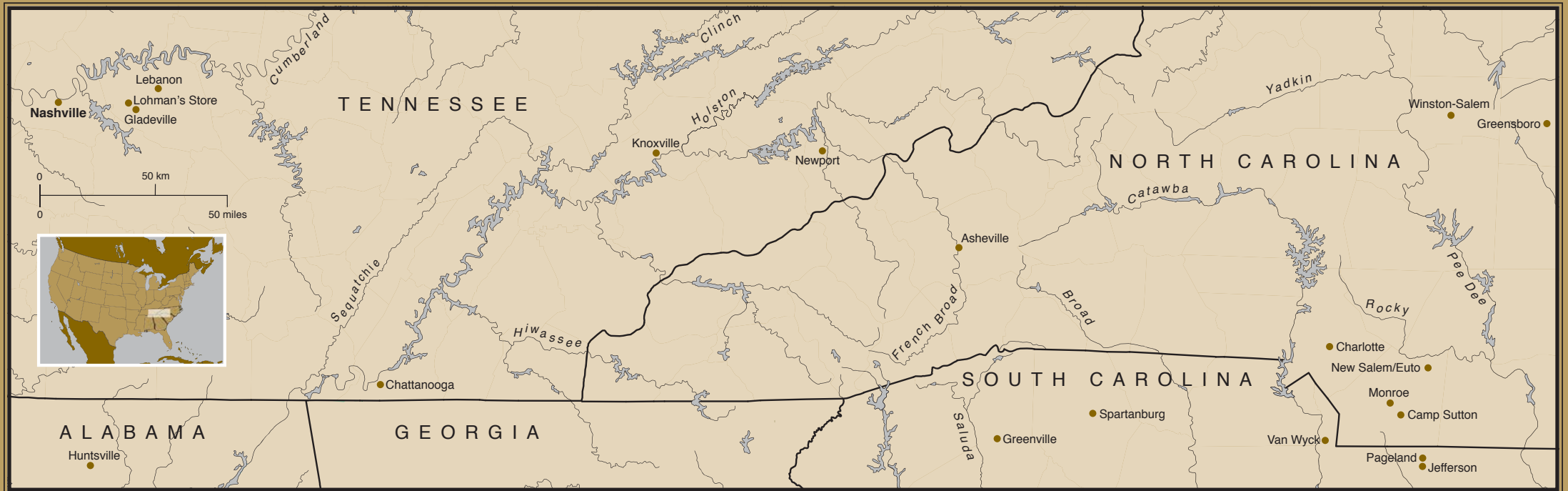
Immediately after our return to Camp Sutton, we resumed basic training. According to the time schedule of Military Training Program 5-1, we required only one more week to complete basic training. It was decided, however, to add another week to correct deficiencies. Then we began the second phase of our training, that phase known as technical

<sup>4</sup> Service Commands were the field agencies of the Army Service Forces. Blanche D. Coll, Jean E. Keith, and Herbert H. Rosenthal, *The Corps of Engineers: Troops and Equipment* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1958), 219. Maj. Gen. Edward H. Brooks directed the Fourth Service Command.

<sup>5</sup> The Pageland Combat Training Area was situated west of the town of Pageland, Chesterfield County, and consisted of 6,904 acres. Real Estate Records, Box 10, Folder 5, Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, Va. (hereafter cited as CEHO).



# 1321st Engineer Training



**Activated on 16 August 1943, the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment began basic training at Camp Sutton, North Carolina. There and in the surrounding areas they learned how to be both soldiers and Army engineers. In early 1944 their training took them to Nashville, where they repaired roads**

**and bridges damaged during war games in the Tennessee Maneuver Area. By the end of summer 1944, the 1321st was a well-trained engineer unit ready for deployment to Europe.**

6

training, to make us, finally, into engineering soldiers. We began to learn about bridge building, demolitions, construction of roads, mines and mine fields—in fact, just about all of those things that an engineer soldier has to know in order to keep up his end of the battle.

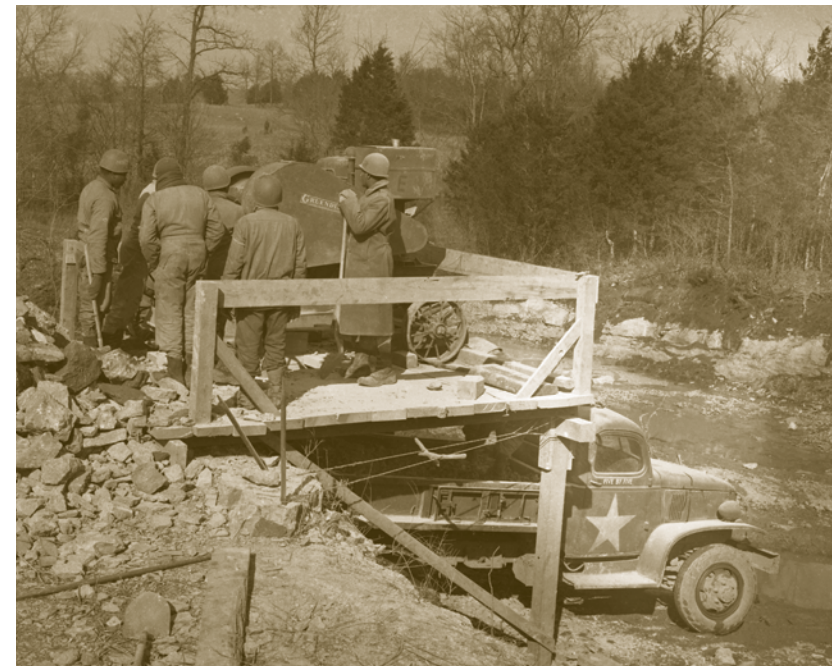
During this period Lt. Col. (later Col.) Aldo H. Bagnulo took over the regiment as commanding officer. He assumed command on 21 November 1943.

On 28 November we left Camp Sutton again, this time for Van Wyck, South Carolina, on the Catawba River, for training in floating bridges.<sup>6</sup> We found we were to get more training like we received going to and from Pageland—this time longer and tougher marches. To reach the floating bridge area required a 28-mile motor march. The move down was uneventful except that we wondered many times whether our vehicles would continue to carry us with all the equipment we had piled on them. Upon arrival we assumed a tactical situation, bivouacked in pup tents, and immediately began to play like the enemy were just on the other side of the river. Our tents had to be camouflaged



<sup>6</sup> Floating bridges included ponton, treadway, and footbridges.

7



**Learning to operate a rock crusher, soldiers of the 1321st make gravel for road repairs.**



An engineer learning to operate a bulldozer, which would become one of their most effective tools in Europe.

Soldiers training on dragline power shovels, used primarily by the 1321st for quarrying and excavation.



perfectly, no lights of any kind were allowed at night, and our outposts were foolproof. A man could go to sleep with the assurance that no Japanese or German was going to slip up and put a knife through him while he was sleeping—and besides, it was South Carolina. We learned a lot at Van Wyck. For the next six days we put up footbridges and floating bridges of all types, constructed barges, and actually made a crossing of the river under conditions that we thought we might encounter if and when we were to start playing the game for keeps.

Our return trip was one of the highlights of the training period—another tactical foot march. We broke camp two hours before dawn in a downpour of rain, rolled our packs in the mud, and for the first hour slogged through sticky mud slightly more than ankle deep. If the Carolinas had any bad roads, we certainly succeeded in finding them. Our spirits were not high when we started, but during the morning the weather cleared, and with the thought in mind that we would be sleeping again in dry beds and enjoying the luxury of hot showers at the end of the jaunt, our bodies held out. We covered the twenty-eight miles in six hours and forty-five minutes. Any unit would be proud of that record.

After our return to Camp Sutton on 5 December, we continued our technical training. The training proceeded without interruption until the day before Christmas when we received the most demoralizing news we had yet received. We were ordered to move to the Pageland Range to undertake some rush work. The news was bad from several viewpoints, but mainly because we had expected furloughs or, at least, passes at Christmas time. All Christmas Day we prepared for the move—that is, those of us who were left. Many of the men on their own accord decided to take Christmas Day off as well as the several days following.

On the morning of the 26th the unit started out on its new mission. The move to the range was made by using the only available vehicles and shuttling them until the move was completed. We did not have to hike this time. Upon arrival we bivouacked in pup tents, except for a few who found shelter in nearby old, dilapidated buildings. The weather was extremely cold with occasional snow, and under these conditions we were miserable and uncomfortable most of the time. The work consisted of constructing a combat village (sixty-six structures) and logging operations.<sup>7</sup> The 1st Battalion,

<sup>7</sup> In March 1944, the Camp Sutton newspaper reported on the regiment's work at Pageland: "The handiwork of the 1321st is seen in the 'Combat' village at Pageland where the unit built houses, churches, sheds, barns, wells and a graveyard with white crosses. The village, which took a fortnight to build, is used for training purposes. It gave the men their first construction experience in this type of work and their unofficial opinion is that [it] is the favorite job of their training." *The Carryall* [Camp Sutton newspaper], 24 March 1944, Military Files V-23A-2, CEHO.



then commanded by Maj. W. T. “Bill” Myers, constructed the combat village; the 2d Battalion, then commanded by Maj. G. W. “Bull of the Woods” Trindal, engaged in the logging operations.<sup>8</sup> Skills heretofore unknown were discovered and we began to realize that, regardless of what we had done in civilian life, we could contribute to the Army as engineers. We worked long and hard hours. Up before dawn, we were on the job by daylight, and we were eating supper long after the sun had gone to rest. This job, which had been started by the 1316th Engineer General Service Regiment, was completed by us in good time. We returned to Camp Sutton on 5 January in a new year, 1944.

*Tout de suite* (a phrase we picked up in France, which means “right away”) we started school again. This time a number of the men attended schools conducted by the training center for the purpose of developing specialists and technicians, those men who hold the key positions in any engineer unit. Men who were formerly barbers, tailors, general handymen, and students were to become bulldozer operators, shovel operators, truck drivers, demolition experts, bridge carpenters, and a score of other specialized workers. Schooling did not last long, just a week to be exact, for orders were received to move the regiment to the Tennessee Maneuver Area.<sup>9</sup>

### Training in Tennessee

On 12 January, after only a few hours’ notice, an advance party consisting of Maj. William Jaques, Capt. Don Nichols, and Lt. Cloyce Campbell, commanding a platoon of Company B, started for the Tennessee Maneuver Area.<sup>10</sup> During a confused three-day period and by a process known only to Houdini, approximately fifty trucks were assembled from Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and Camp Sutton. Some of the vehicles hit on three cylinders, some fared better, but all were

10



- 8 Glen W. Trindal served in the Army during World War I and with the National Guard, Army Reserve, and Regular Army in the interwar years. He retired from active duty in 1955 as a lieutenant colonel and died in 1980. “Glen W. Trindal, 85, Dies, Officer in Army Engineers,” *Washington Post*, 5 December 1980.
- 9 From September 1942 to March 1944 nearly one million soldiers participated in large-scale war games in the Nashville vicinity in preparation for combat in Europe. Frank Burns, “Second Army (Tennessee) Maneuvers,” *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, Tennessee Historical Society, <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/imagegallery.php?EntryID=S015>.
- 10 William H. Jaques, Akron, Ohio, regimental S-3 (Operations Section); Don L. Nichols, Mandan, N.Dak., 2d Battalion adjutant; Cloyce Campbell, commander 2d Platoon, Company B. Unless otherwise indicated, information about personnel mentioned in the text was found in “1321st EGS Regt. List of Officers, with civilian addresses, 1945” and “Officers of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment While in Europe,” Aldo H. Bagnulo Papers, Box 1, Folders 26 and 27, CEHO (hereafter cited as Bagnulo Papers).



Soldiers of the 2d Battalion preparing hogs for the “Collis Pig Fry.”

held together by baling wire. Two officers and a few men per company, with the organization’s equipment loaded in the vehicles, started out on a trip that turned out to be far from pleasant. Under normal conditions, with vehicles in good mechanical condition, it would have been difficult to travel over the steep, winding mountain roads leading to the maneuver area, but additional hazards were imposed by the sleet that formed on the roads as the rain fell and froze. The main body of approximately eight hundred officers and men traveled to the maneuver area by rail.

11

Our mission in the Tennessee Maneuver Area was to repair damage done by maneuvering troops—mainly repair of bridges, roads, and fences. It was here that we received our first view of combat troops in action. Tactical convoys, driving blackout, used the roads that we were maintaining. At times they got in our way or we in theirs, whichever the case may be. Their guards were always halting us and asking for the password. The 1st Battalion set up west of Lebanon between Highway 70 and the Cumberland River and the 2d Battalion between Highway 10 and the maneuver boundary south of Highway 70. The things we remembered most clearly about our stay in Tennessee were the fairly warm days and cold nights, the incessant rain, the mud normally knee deep, Lohman’s Store, and Nashville.<sup>11</sup> The mud was the stickiest we had ever seen, unless it was the mud we encountered later on Okinawa. We lived in pyramidal tents, which had beds and stoves—this part of our stay was not bad. Major Trindal tried to build a

11 Lohman’s Store was formerly a populated community in Wilson County, Tennessee, so called because it was the site of a family business established by Louis Lohman. Dixon Merrit, ed., *The History of Wilson County* (Lebanon, Tenn.: County Court of Wilson County and Tennessee Historical Commission, 1961), 234–35.

## TRAINING IN TENNESSEE

road into the 2d Battalion's camp. It was reverently referred to as "Trindal Boulevard." Rock was hauled onto this road throughout most of our stay, and at the end it was still found better to detour it if we could. We operated two quarries, one at Gladeville and the other at Lebanon.

One of the highlights for the 2d Battalion was what was referred to afterwards as the "Collis Pig Fry." Lt. (later Capt.) L. F. "Spike" Collis, then company commander of H & S Company, procured some well-fed 250-pound hogs and proceeded to produce for us a real old-fashioned barbecue.<sup>12</sup> The men went into Nashville on Saturday nights via company convoys. Invariably it was necessary for the officers to make more trips than the men, for they would have to go in on Sunday morning to bring back a few who had declared some sort of war on the local police. We received some officer replacements, some of whom remained with the regiment to the bitter end—Lieutenants Samuel Benzing, Douglas Gunter, Gerald Trail, and James Bramlet.<sup>13</sup> It was good to begin receiving a sufficient number of officers to occupy the positions. Then, when February was almost over and almost as abruptly as we had departed from Camp Sutton, we began the long trip back to North Carolina. That trip is a story in itself, because during our return occurred the famous "Tennessee Fire."

The night before we departed for Camp Sutton was one of those wild, messed up affairs further dampened by a heavy rain. At midnight—we were to leave in the morning—we still did not have sufficient trucks to carry all of our personnel and equipment. Shortly after midnight some boxcars were obtained and much of our equipment was hurriedly loaded on them. At 0500 hours, with all personnel loaded on trucks, we were ready for the first leg of the two-day trip. What had been a bad day at the beginning turned out to be a lovely one. During the day the weather was the best that we had had during our whole time in Tennessee. The convoy proceeded along



Smoldering remnants of Army vehicles following the fire in Newport, Tenn.



Although vehicles sustained extensive damage, the 1321st reported no injuries during the "Tennessee Fire."

without interruption, except for the few vehicles that broke down or ran out of gas, and arrived at Newport on schedule. The first serial arrived at 1600 hours and the last at 1730 hours.<sup>14</sup>

Our bivouac site at the completion of the first leg of the return trip was the Municipal Park, Newport, Tennessee. Vehicles were parked on both sides of the race track, a circular road within the park, leaving a lane for traffic through the center. H & S Company vehicles were in the lead; Company F vehicles were in the rear. Kitchens were set up, and the men found sleeping accommodations in their pup

<sup>12</sup> L. F. Collis, later commander of Company C.

<sup>13</sup> Samuel G. Benzing, Grand Rapids, Mich., commander 2d Platoon, Company C; Douglas L. Gunter, Santa Ana, Calif., heavy equipment officer, H & S Company; Gerald T. Trail, Oakland, Calif., commander 3d Platoon, Company A; James B. Bramlet, Harrisburg, Ill., commander 3d Platoon, Company B.

<sup>14</sup> "Serial" is the military term for a subdivision of a military force in movement, such as by marching, by air, or over water.



Training on road graders, which the 1321st would put to heavy use on muddy European roads.

tents or in the grandstand. Some of the men were granted permission to go into town. Arrangements had been made previously to have a commercial tank truck refuel the vehicles by proceeding along the lane of parked vehicles. While this was being done, all hell broke loose. It was difficult to discover definitely what happened, but a very thorough investigation by Major Trindal indicated that it started when one of the civilian employees of the oil company lit his cigarette and threw the still lighted match on some gasoline that had spilled onto the road. The gasoline burst into flames. The driver of the tank truck became alarmed and jumped into his truck to drive away from the danger. In his haste he failed to turn off the gasoline then flowing into the tank of an Army vehicle. When he drove forward, the nozzle was jerked out of the tank and the stream of gasoline also caught fire. The tank truck proceeded down the line of vehicles, pouring flaming gasoline under the remaining vehicles of H & S Company—indeed, a very efficient way to spread fire, for the trucks quickly became consumed by flames that shot up forty to fifty feet. The entire sky assumed a frightening red color. To the confusion of moving the unharmed trucks away and the attempts by the local fire departments to put out the fire was added the din of exploding tanks and tires. Twenty trucks and trailers were completely burned, along with a great deal of equipment and valuable records. At first it was thought that all of the service records were lost, an irreparable blow to any unit, but fortunately they had been loaded on a truck that had developed engine trouble and had straggled into the bivouac area too late to take part in the “Tennessee Fire.”<sup>15</sup>

15 Exercising wartime self-censorship, the *Newport Plain Talk and Tribune* of 28 February 1944 gave a brief account of the incident but did not mention the name of the regiment and its route. The story does note that local firemen were able to do little to extinguish the blaze because of low water pressure. The newspaper estimated the damage at nearly \$50,000 and reported that some members of the regiment remained in town “for a few days to salvage whatever was possible of the vehicles.”

After the fire was under control, the officers assembled to appraise the extent of the damage. We reorganized and redistributed the vehicles, and the regiment turned in for the night. The fire was not all that happened that night. Some of the men who had gone into town expended their excess energy by breaking into splinters a “joint” that apparently had attempted some unfair practices. Lt. (later Capt.) William Pahl stayed behind with forty men of Company F to clear the park of the debris.<sup>16</sup> Major Trindal and Capt. Percy Guthrie remained to conduct the investigation into the demolition incident, the report on which constituted a volume worthy of any vacant spot in the Congressional Library.<sup>17</sup>

### Return to North Carolina

On 28 February 1944 we were back at Camp Sutton. For the next three weeks we continued with the technical phase of our training. Then on 20 March the regiment was reorganized and redesignated the 1321st Engineer Construction Battalion.<sup>18</sup> We spent 20, 21, and 22 March reorganizing troops and rearranging the area. This reorganization cut the number of companies from seven to four and gave us an excess of about three hundred personnel, which provided the opportunity to rid ourselves of most of the “undesirables” whom we had not been able to convert and who were the source of most of our problems—the turning point for the unit. For the next nine weeks we were able to devote our entire time to the technical training of personnel and to the improvement of discipline and esprit de corps within the unit. Things began to take shape. Capable noncommissioned officer material was discovered, and the officers were beginning to see the fruits of their labors, so when we were again reorganized into a general service regiment on 25 May, we had a good nucleus on which to build.



16 William C. Pahl, La Porte, Ind., commander Company F.

17 Percy L. Guthrie, Birmingham, Ala., 1st Battalion adjutant.

18 According to Camp Sutton’s post commander, “The new Construction Battalion, although reduced in strength, is equipped with more and heavier engineering equipment. As a result, the percentage of specialists has been materially increased. In fact, the number of Basic Privates in the company has been reduced to about 10 per cent.” *The Carryall*, 24 March 1944, Military Files V-23A-2, CEHO.

The decision to convert general service regiments to construction battalions aroused much controversy. An Army Service Forces memorandum of January 1944 maintained that “the construction battalion was comparable to the engineer aviation battalion in earth-moving capacity and to the Seabees [naval construction battalions] in equipment and grades for skilled personnel.” The Office of the Chief of Engineers strongly disputed this reasoning, asserting that the general service regiments had been performing at a higher skill level than the Seabees and aviation battalions. A few months later the construction battalions were redesignated general service regiments. Coll, Keith, and Rosenthal, *Troops and Equipment*, 236.



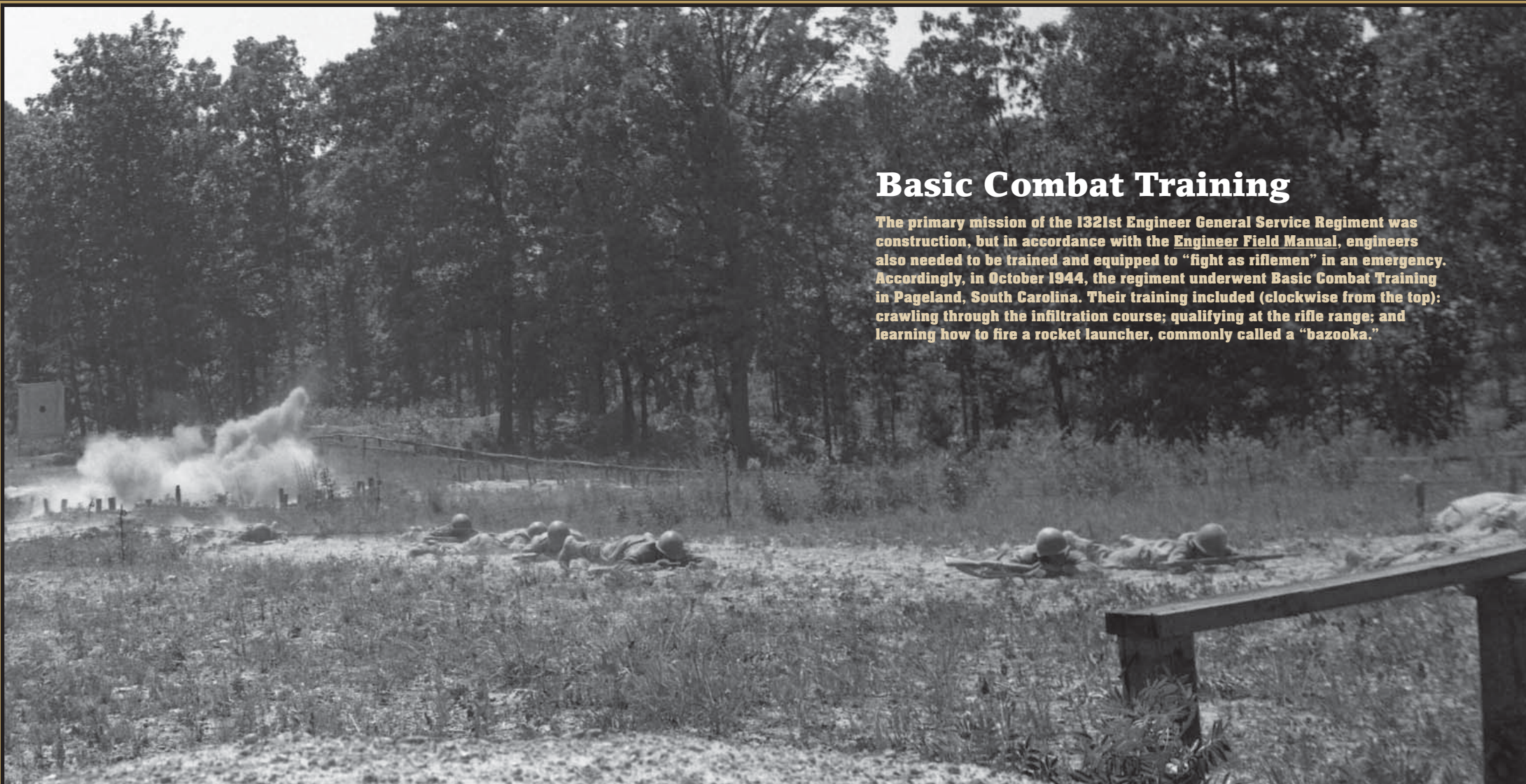
## Bridge Construction and Repair

During their training in the U.S., the soldiers of the 1321st built and repaired numerous bridges in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Some examples of their bridge work include (clockwise from left): construction of a masonry abutment; placement of steel stringers to simulate construction of a bridge; and a completed timber trestle bridge. Engineers often used timber for bridge construction because it was readily available from supply depots or could be harvested on site or salvaged from nearby buildings.



## Basic Combat Training

The primary mission of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment was construction, but in accordance with the Engineer Field Manual, engineers also needed to be trained and equipped to “fight as riflemen” in an emergency. Accordingly, in October 1944, the regiment underwent Basic Combat Training in Pageland, South Carolina. Their training included (clockwise from the top): crawling through the infiltration course; qualifying at the rifle range; and learning how to fire a rocket launcher, commonly called a “bazooka.”





Soldiers of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment.

20

Soon after our reorganization, on 1 June, training tests were given to all men. By this time we were beginning to know the answers and we did pretty well on the tests. On 3 June we received 260 recruits as fillers to bring us back to regimental strength. These men had received no previous military training, and 42 percent of them could neither read nor write, but they turned out to be the backbone of the regiment. We proceeded to give them their basic training, which was very successful, for they were hindered by no bad habits or distorted ideas acquired in previous units. They were ours to mold into good soldiers, and we undertook the task with a full realization of our responsibility.

While the recruits were getting on with their basic training, we started a review of basic training for the "old timers." On 6 June a one-week school started for all company motor officers and sergeants. On 12 June we began field training for the unit, less the recruits who

were engaged in basic training. The 1st Battalion, now commanded by Maj. Stewart Worley, moved out into bivouac to rebuild the road leading into Euto.<sup>19</sup> The 2d Battalion, then commanded by Capt. Harold Lee, moved out by companies.<sup>20</sup> Company D moved to the Pageland Range to do some construction and to provide messing facilities for our recruits who were firing there. Company E moved to the floating bridge area on the Catawba River for the purpose of dismantling and moving all of the equipment back to Camp Sutton. Company F went to Jefferson, South Carolina, to rebuild a stretch of road and a bridge. In performance of these tasks, previous training began to make itself evident. While the 1st Battalion bivouacked on the Euto Road, they were inspected by a team from the Office of the Chief of Engineers (OCE). They found our men building bridges and operating dozers, pans, shovels, and graders. They claimed that the water point set up by Technical Sergeant Williams and his men could be considered an example for any unit to follow.<sup>21</sup> They found all of the bivouac areas in excellent shape, but especially the bivouac of Company A, which they declared was the best one they had ever seen. The OCE team inspected the other regiments stationed at Camp Sutton and in their final report rated us the best trained and prepared for service overseas, which was good news. In just a few months the 1321st had pulled itself out of the cellar position to first place.

While we were engaged in field training, a number of officers were assigned to the regiment to bring it closer to full strength. Maj. Franklin Mohler joined us and was assigned the command of the 2d Battalion.<sup>22</sup> Capt. Glenn Pickrel took command of Company D.<sup>23</sup> From the EUTC came Capt. George Rogers, Lt. Horace Smith, and Lt. (later Capt.) "Pop" Cross, who assumed command of Companies B, E, and H & S respectively.<sup>24</sup> Lt. (later Capt.) Norman Kellogg came to us from the 1315th Engineers.<sup>25</sup> Also from the Camp Sutton staff came Lt. Robert Cowie, who was assigned as regimental supply officer, and

21



19 Stewart E. Worley, Forest Hill, La. Euto is the former name of a community in northeast Union County now known as New Salem. William S. Powell, *The North Carolina Gazetteer* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968): 350.

20 Harold D. Lee, later regimental S-2 (Intelligence Section).

21 Probably Johnnie Williams, H & S Company. See *You Name It* [regimental newsletter], 14 January 1945, Bagnulo Papers, Box 1, Folder 25.

22 Franklin C. Mohler, Des Moines, Iowa, commander 2d Battalion.

23 Glenn E. Pickrel, Nelson, Nebr., commander Company D.

24 George H. Rogers, Elm Grove, W.Va.; Horace C. Smith, Hedrick, Okla.; and probably Robert Cross. Bagnulo's diary entry for 25 January 1945 refers to "Bob Cross."

25 Norman P. Kellogg, Adams Center, N.Y., a Company F officer, later commander of H & S Company.

## RETURN TO NORTH CAROLINA

Lieutenants John Bayliss, Charles Hurme, and Daniel Geller, who were assigned to various companies as platoon leaders.<sup>26</sup>

Several men, exclusive of the recruits, had not fulfilled all of the preparation for overseas movement (POM) requirements in firing. Accordingly, the regiment assembled once again at the Pageland Range on 1 July. Firing was completed and we returned to Camp Sutton on 8 July. The next few weeks were spent in review of all the training we had ever had. On 20, 24, 25, and 26 July we took training tests conducted by the EUTC. Meanwhile, the rumor became persistent that the unit would soon be moving overseas. With that in mind, we took our final leaves and furloughs. On 17 July the fillers started their technical training. We strove earnestly to train them to fill the table of organization shortages, for by this time training had become a bore and we were all anxious to eliminate any deficiencies that might prevent our being sent overseas and that would require our remaining at Camp Sutton, the latter being our chief concern.

On 7 August we started a heavy equipment school for the officers and motor sergeants, which provided them with the basic fundamentals in operation and maintenance of engineer heavy equipment. On 18 August a school started for company mess officers in the H & S Company kitchen. This school was conducted by Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Wetzel, who had joined the regiment two weeks previously as executive officer. In the school, which lasted a week, the officers actually performed the various functions of mess personnel, down through KP duties.<sup>27</sup> Although they could not be considered expert cooks, they learned, by actual experience, the problems confronting a mess sergeant.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, Fourth Service Command conducted a school of one-week duration for company motor officers. EUTC gave us another training test on 19 August, and

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<sup>26</sup> Robert A. Cowie, Pasadena, Calif., later regimental S-1 (Personnel Section); John R. Bayliss, Charlotte, N.C., administrative officer, Company B; Charles H. Hurme, Brooklyn, N.Y., commander 1st Platoon, Company B; Daniel Geller, Long Beach, N.Y., regimental S-4 (Supply Section).

<sup>27</sup> Kitchen Police, a practice in which enlisted men were detailed to assist the cooks of a mess.

<sup>28</sup> The next month, Camp Sutton's newspaper reported on the KP experience: "To familiarize the Company Mess Officers of the Regiment with the various duties, means and methods of preparing meals, they took over the job of cooks and K.P.s in the H & S Company Mess Hall. On one of these days they prepared and served dehydrated foods. Some valuable information was gathered on how the meals are prepared and served in a Company Mess." "The officers learned that close supervision in every respect is necessary to keep the organization running smoothly and successfully. They learned some of the causes of wastage and shortage of servings. Some of the officers, at the end of the day, emerged with dishwasher hands." *The Carryall*, 2 September 1944, Military Files V-23A-3, CEHO.



Officers of the 1321st in camp during field training.

Engineers of the 1321st during a vehicle inspection.





Engineers of the 1321st parading at Camp Sutton before deployment to Europe.



During off-duty hours, sports like baseball helped soldiers of the 1321st pass the time.

the results were the best up to that time, indicating two things. First, our training had been thorough and effective; second, an esprit de corps had developed among the troops which made them want to make the regiment look good.<sup>29</sup>

On 3 September 1944 we started a hike that had been ordered by camp headquarters as a conditioning march and was intended to last ten days. As an endurance march or a method of physical training, it was unparalleled. The weather was hot—typical Carolina weather for that season with no rain. We traveled mainly on dusty county roads. The dust, it seemed, was not only on us but inside us. The first three days were the hardest. For the first half-day everybody stayed up

in good shape, but by afternoon some began to fall out. The 1st Battalion was leading at the start, and by mid-afternoon it was rather mixed up. At one time we found 1st Sgt. Albert Pettis of Company A down beside Company D.<sup>30</sup> He claimed to be gathering up some stragglers, but he had a hard time convincing us. Blisters developed on our feet, and it seemed as though everyone had from one to a dozen scattered from toe to ankle. After a night in pup tents and a hardy breakfast, we would begin again on feet that felt like they were made of raw beefsteak. The ten-day hike was cut short, and we returned to Camp Sutton on 11 September after eight days. We were never so glad to see anything as we were our area. Beds and showers are the greatest medicine in the world for tired bodies.

We did not have much time to rest up, however, for on 12 September the Fourth Service Command gave us some more tests. We certainly were not in any condition for them, either physically or mentally, but we passed apparently, for the next day we began preparations for movement overseas.

<sup>29</sup> In addition to their rigorous training, the men of the 1321st attended church, dances, and parties and participated in baseball games, track and field competitions, boxing matches, war bond drives, and musical affairs. Company C sponsored a pin-up contest. *The Carryall*, 1 April, 29 April, 6 May, 1 July, 22 July, 19 August, 26 August, 2 September 1944, Military Files V-23A-2 and V-23A-3, CEHO.

<sup>30</sup> Albert A. Pettis, First Sergeant, Company A. *You Name It*, 28 January 1945, Bagnulo Papers, Box 1, Folder 25.





## Road Maintenance and Repair

Road maintenance and repair constituted a large part of the regiment's training in the United States. Using earthmoving equipment and hand tools, the engineers improved local roads and repaired the damage caused by military training exercises. The bottom image depicts engineers using a bulldozer and scraper to grade a road. The photographs at the top reveal the striking improvement brought to a muddy country lane after the 1321st dug drainage ditches and surfaced it with crushed rock.



### Preparing to Deploy

There is a great deal of work involved in preparing for movement overseas. All kinds of showdown inspections were in store for us, which resulted in great lists of clothing and equipment to be requisitioned and issued. Boxes and crates had to be made, but, fortunately, not in great numbers, for our travel orders specified minimum essential equipment only. On the night of 23 September 1944 Service Club No. 3 gave a farewell party for us. It had been the custom with units getting ready for departure to stir up some sort of commotion, and we were not to be outdone, but we certainly picked the wrong time to do it, for it so happened that Brig. Gen. Lehman W. Miller was there.<sup>31</sup> A few men who had worked themselves up into a frenzy showed disrespect toward him. It was certainly a black mark on the regiment's record. We had always been able to conduct ourselves as soldiers before—and have since. General Miller was very unhappy—maybe angry—and as a disciplinary measure made us take a ten-mile hike the night of the 24th. Hiking by this time had become our forte and we breezed through this one, singing all the way. We were, however, truly repentant. The next day we continued our preparations for movement, and on 28 September we departed from Camp Sutton for the port of embarkation.

We left Sutton on three separate trains. The first train had Companies C and D plus part of H & S, and the third train had Companies E and F and the remainder of H & S. During the trip the only thing that caused us any concern at all was the stretch over the RF & P (the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac) Railroad. It took us longer to cover that “slightly over hundred mile of rail” than it did for the remainder of the trip. We arrived at Camp Myles Standish, the marshalling area for the Boston Port of Embarkation, about twenty-eight hours after we had left Camp Sutton.<sup>32</sup>

We found Myles Standish one of the best coordinated and supervised camps we had yet encountered. Our final inspections of clothing and equipment and records were received there. The hard work spent in preparation bore good results, for the regiment was found in excellent condition. We all managed to get passes into Boston and Providence, our last passes in the States for many months.



U.S. Army photo, SC-174384

Aviation engineers building Nissen huts, similar to those that housed the 1321st during their time in Britain.

### From Boston to Britain

On 7 October 1944 we moved up to the Boston Port of Embarkation by rail and boarded the USS *Mount Vernon*. Late that afternoon we sailed from the United States and headed east across the Atlantic.

Before the war the USS *Mount Vernon* had been one of America's three largest luxury liners, and although she was converted to a troop carrier, she lost little of her dignity.<sup>33</sup> The crossing was pleasant except for one day of rough weather. On the fifth day out, the ship pitched and tossed in heavy seas typical of the Atlantic in October. Some sick men leaned over the rail; some never reached it. The entrance to Liverpool Harbor on 15 October was very interesting because, for most of us, this was our first view of the “old” world. Results of the German blitz could be seen in the damaged docks, buildings, and sunken ships whose masts stuck above the water. We were promptly disembarked, and by

<sup>31</sup> Brig. Gen. Lehman W. Miller, commandant of Camp Sutton. Coll, Keith, and Rosenthal, *Troops and Equipment*, 311.

<sup>32</sup> Established in 1900, Camp (later Fort) Myles Standish was situated on Lovell's Island, Boston Harbor. It served as a staging area for the Boston Port of Embarkation until its inactivation on 7 January 1946. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts*, 411. The 1321st arrived at Myles Standish on 29 September 1944. Shelby L. Stanton, *Order of Battle, U.S. Army, World War II* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1984), 563.

<sup>33</sup> The New York Shipbuilding Co. built the SS *Washington* in 1933. The Navy acquired it in 1941, renamed it *Mount Vernon*, and converted it to naval use at Philadelphia. After several voyages transporting troops to the Pacific, it began sailing from Britain to the Mediterranean in 1944. Decommissioned in 1946, it was delivered to the Maritime Commission and became the *Washington* again. James A. Moody, ed., *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, 8 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Navy Dept., Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Naval History Division, 1959–81), 4:449.



Officers of the 1321st relaxing at an engineer depot.

midnight of the 15th most of us had boarded trains and were headed for Camp Stapley, south of Taunton in Somerset County.

Traveling at night in a strange land gave us an eerie feeling, but when daylight came, our eyes and minds were absorbed in the scenery of the passing English countryside. A lush green even at this time of the year, neat and giving the impression of antiquity, the landscape was beautiful. The ride on an English train with its individual compartments was an experience in itself. The train moved along at a good clip, and by noon of the 16th we had reached Wellington Station where we detrained and climbed aboard trucks for the ride to our bivouac. Heavy rains usually accompanied our truck movements, and they did not fail us on this ride to Camp Stapley. The trip to the camp over narrow, winding roads gave us a better view of the English countryside, and we had our first glimpse of a custom to which we would soon have to adjust ourselves—that of driving on the wrong side of the road. Stapley, a small camp of Nissen huts,

was about eleven miles out of Taunton and was just large enough to house our regiment.<sup>34</sup> We settled down to comfortable living, struck up acquaintances with the neighboring Englishmen, dropped our *Hs*, and picked up new words for our vocabulary. We found the Englishmen to be friendly people with little or no imagination, hearty fellows with strong patriotism, a thirst for “ile,” and a hunger for crumpets, and hard workers who had sacrificed much that England might survive.

Our main objective while at Camp Stapley was to obtain the equipment and supplies required to bring us up to full strength in accordance with the Tables of Equipment for our regiment. The task was accomplished during the next six weeks by drawing from depots scattered all over England and Wales, and doing so provided an opportunity for those engaged in the task to see much of the country. At the same time, we conducted refresher courses on those phases of training that we thought would concern us most directly, even sending several of the officers and enlisted men to a three-day mine school near Salisbury. Company C improved and added to some of the facilities at the 23d General Hospital in Taunton, and bivouac areas were prepared for other units arriving from the States. The officers were granted leaves in London, and their stories indicated that they enjoyed the sojourn immensely. The Buzz Bombs were bad around London at the time, interfering especially with Captain Lee’s and Captain Harris’s program to the extent of forcing them out of bed prematurely.<sup>35</sup>

The procurement of equipment was a complicated and difficult task not only because the depots were widely scattered but also because priorities were involved. Our priority was not high, but our colonel made it his personal mission to convince the staff sections of the United Kingdom Base Headquarters, who controlled the issue of equipment, that we were urgently needed in France to help finish the war.<sup>36</sup> He was successful in obtaining necessary releases, and the procurement task was completed earlier than expected.



<sup>34</sup> Designed in World War I by British Royal Engineer Lt. Col. Peter N. Nissen, the huts served as cheap but functional structures for a variety of purposes, including offices and housing for military personnel. They were the forerunners of the American Quonset hut. Julie Decker and Chris Chieffo, eds., *Quonset Hut: Metal Living for a Modern Age* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 4–6.

<sup>35</sup> The term “buzz bomb” refers to Germany’s V-1 flying bomb, used extensively in the aerial attack on Britain, 1944–45. Captain Harris was Robert E. Harris, Albany, N.Y., 1st Battalion dental officer.

<sup>36</sup> Perhaps the author means the United Kingdom Base Section. Alfred M. Beck, Abe Bortz, Charles W. Lynch, Lida Mayo, and Ralph F. Weld, *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1988), 351.

# The 1321st in Europe

The 1321st arrived in Liverpool, England, on 15 October 1944 and in Le Havre, France, on 6 December 1944. The regiment went to work repairing roads and bridges, establishing depots, and constructing facilities in the northeastern Vosges area of France to support the Seventh Army's advance towards Germany.

The 1321st crossed the Rhine on 24 April 1945 and rebuilt damaged roads and bridges along the autobahn. Fifteen soldiers from the regiment received bronze stars for their service in Germany. Following the Allied victory in Europe, the 1321st redeployed to the Pacific Theater, where they served in Korea.





Office of History

**Soldiers of the 373d Engineers catch their first glimpse of France at the heavily damaged port of Le Havre.**

### Across the Channel

Accordingly, we were alerted for movement to the Seventh Army sector in eastern France in lieu of the regiment originally scheduled for that assignment. On 30 November we moved to the Romsey Marshalling Area near Southampton.<sup>37</sup> Vehicles and equipment went over the roads; the majority of the troops made the trip by rail. Our stay at the marshalling area was characterized by

<sup>37</sup> The Romsey Marshalling Area was one of several camps in southern England used as staging areas for the Normandy invasion of June 1944.

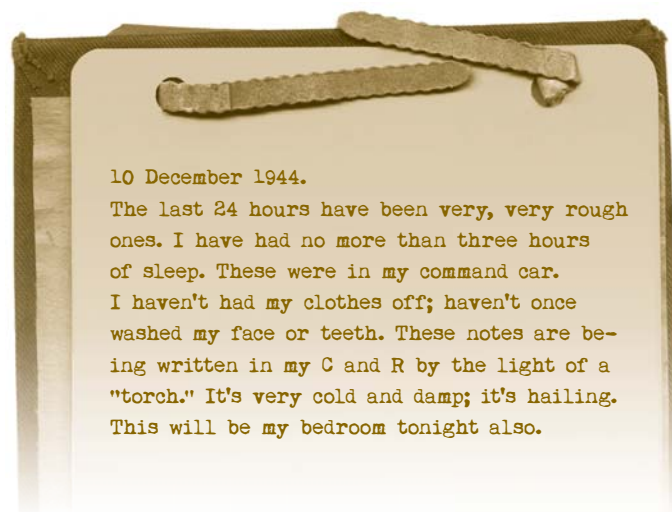
more rain and mud, but it was brief, for on 1 December we started loading on various vessels at the Southampton docks. The vehicles and equipment of H & S Company were loaded on two LSTs (landing ship, tank), and all of the vehicles and equipment of the lettered companies, plus approximately 280 officers and men, were loaded on the *Nicholas Herkimer*, a Liberty Ship. The main body of troops boarded the *Leopoldville*, a Belgian cargo line vessel operated by the English. (At the end of the war we learned with interest that two weeks after discharging our troops, the *Leopoldville* had been sunk, resulting in the second greatest loss of life during the entire war.)<sup>38</sup>

The crossing on the *Herkimer*, as we tenderly called her, was anything but a pleasure cruise, for it took longer in crossing the Channel than the USS *Mount Vernon* had taken in crossing the Atlantic, and under much less comfortable conditions. On the first two attempts it was necessary to turn back to safe anchorage because of the high winds and heavy seas. Some of the cargo was damaged during these attempts when it tore loose

from the lashings and shifted. The third attempt, on 6 December, was successful and the crossing was made on water smooth as glass, but after the crossing the *Herkimer* had to wait four days off Le Havre for a pilot to guide her over the sandbar to a berth.

<sup>38</sup> The Southeastern Shipping Corp. built the Liberty Ship *Nicholas Herkimer* in 1943; it was scrapped in 1967. Walter W. Jaffee, *The Liberty Ships from A (A. B. Hammond) to Z (Zona Gale)* (Palo Alto: Glencannon Press, 2004), 264. A German U-boat sank the *Leopoldville* in the English Channel on 24 December 1944 near Cherbourg, France. Eight hundred and two American soldiers, most from the 66th Division, died. Allan Andrade, *S. S. Leopoldville Disaster, December 24, 1944* (New York: Tern Book Co., 1997).

The entrance into the harbor at Le Havre had a profound effect on us, for it brought us in close contact, for the first time, with the ravages of war. The dock facilities and the city were in shambles—piles of rubble and twisted steel.<sup>39</sup> The damage we had seen in England did not begin to compare with Le Havre. The LCTs (landing craft, tank) landed us on the beach for our first amphibious operation. Two days were required to unload the vehicles and equipment and assemble them along the side of a road in Transit Area B. The troops traveling on the *Leopoldville* had arrived three days earlier than those on the *Herkimer*, but their three-day bivouac in pup tents in the rain and cold and mud was a miserable episode. Several men caught bad colds, and a few were left behind with pneumonia. Meanwhile, the vehicles and equipment loaded on LSTs went up the Seine River to Rouen to be discharged there.



10 December 1944.

The last 24 hours have been very, very rough ones. I have had no more than three hours of sleep. These were in my command car. I haven't had my clothes off; haven't once washed my face or teeth. These notes are being written in my C and R by the light of a "torch." It's very cold and damp; it's hailing. This will be my bedroom tonight also.

### Eastern France

Our instructions for movement from the Channel ports directed us to Dijon, which is located in the eastern section of France, but gave us no clue as to our specific assignment. Duly impressed at the time with the necessity of secrecy and having a naïve faith that "they" knew what "they" were doing ("they" being a mystical body who guided our destiny), we started on the cross-country jaunt. The movement was made in different groups, over different routes, and by different modes of transportation, but in general it started on 10 December and, except for stragglers, was completed on the 15th—not



Members of the 1321st on one of the "forty and eights," inscribed with "Golden Gate in Forty-Eight with Aldo's Boys."

at Dijon but approximately 120 miles north of there at Les Forges. Those who crossed the Channel on the *Leopoldville* started at the Le Havre station and traveled on "forty and eights," French boxcars which bore the inscription "40 hommes ou 8 chevaux."<sup>40</sup> Pop Cross started at Rouen and arrived safely at the destination with all vehicles intact. The vehicles unloaded from the *Herkimer* started from Transit Area B in three serials but filtered across into Les Forges in dribbles. For all of us the movement afforded the opportunity to see the effects of Allied might as evidenced by the wrecked German equipment strewn alongside the roads and the destruction wrought on France. We received our first intimate glimpse of Frenchmen and heard our first French as children surrounded us at halts and asked, "Avez-vous des bonbons?"—somewhat of a change from the familiar, "Any gum, chum?"<sup>41</sup> Each group can claim many features of interest, but there can be no question that those who traveled on the "forty and eights" are entitled to the spotlight.

Not until we arrived in Dijon did we learn that we were assigned to the Continental Advance Section (CAS), a base section whose mission was the direct support of the United States Seventh Army and the French First Army, and that Col. Chauncey K. Smullen,

<sup>39</sup> The Allies subjected German-held Le Havre to heavy bombardment by air, sea, and land, destroying nearly two-thirds of the city. Before the Germans surrendered Le Havre they inflicted further damage, especially to the port facilities. Beck, et al., *War Against Germany*, 360.

<sup>40</sup> "40 hommes ou 8 chevaux" is French for "40 men or 8 horses," which indicated the capacity of the railcar. American soldiers became acquainted with these cars in the First World War, when they were used extensively to transport troops to the front.

<sup>41</sup> "Avez-vous des bonbons?" is French for "Do you have any candy?"



Snow and cold weather dominated the regiment's experiences in France during the winter of 1944-45.

A view of Epinal, one of the first locations of regimental headquarters for the 1321st in France.



Maj. W. H. Jaques' regimental operations office, 29 January 1945.

CAS Engineer, was our new boss.<sup>42</sup> We were introduced to officers with whom we would have many contacts in the future and who would prove good friends—Maj. Bill Alsyn, roads section; Major Addis, design section; Major Impson, supply officer; Captain McKenna, operations officer, and Major O'Toole, chief of engineering, who gave us the impression initially of being a sourpuss but who, as we learned later, was a sound engineer with a delightful sense of humor.<sup>43</sup> During this first visit to Dijon we were assigned the responsibility of maintaining certain roads and bridges on main supply routes, which linked base and army depots, and we were advised that our initial location would be Les Forges, a town north of Dijon roughly in the direction from which we had just come.

Les Forges, three miles west of Epinal, was a typical small French village of tiled roof houses, manure piles, poultry, cattle, and French peasants all intimately intermingled. A brick and tile factory provided housing for a short time but proved inadequate, and on

<sup>42</sup> The Continental Advance Section was originally the Coastal Base Section; on 10 September 1944 it became the Continental Base Section and was renamed the Continental Advance Section on 26 September 1944. CONAD, not CAS, was the accepted acronym. Beck, et al., *War Against Germany*, 449. CONAD was the advance section of the southern assault on the Continent. *Final Report of the Chief Engineer, European Theater of Operations, 1942-1945*, vol. 1 (n.p., n.d.), iii, CEHO.

<sup>43</sup> Impson (first name not known) was the engineer supply officer of CONAD. See Bagnulo's diary entry for 23 January 1945.



A curious child peers through the window as members of the regiment take a break from their work in France.

French barracks which had suffered very little damage in the war. Reconnaissance of buildings to be used for the rest center had already been accomplished by officers of CAS headquarters and our Captain Lee, so upon arrival the troops went to work immediately rehabilitating the Casernes Gareson, Stainville, Pallestiere, Busarine, and the Château Stanislas.<sup>46</sup> We were impressed particularly by the grand Château Stanislas, which had been damaged considerably by German and then American troops (who had used it for billets) but which still gave testimony of a glorious past in the remnants of its spacious mirrored ballrooms, marble stairs, luxurious living rooms, exquisite chandeliers, and large courtyards whose soft lawns had been deeply scarred by the wheels of military vehicles.<sup>47</sup> The companies of the 2d Battalion worked furiously, for all were keenly interested in providing as much as possible for the combat troops, but after seven days the project was abandoned suddenly. The Germans had started their winter offensive, denying the troops any hope of rest.<sup>48</sup>

15 December 1944, regimental headquarters and the 1st Battalion (Companies A, B, and C) moved into French military barracks, Caserne de Courcy Annex, in nearby Epinal.<sup>44</sup>

The solution to inadequate housing for the 2d Battalion came when orders were received on a Saturday night, 16 December, to create a division rest center at Lunéville, approximately thirty miles north of Epinal. Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch of the Seventh Army wanted this rest center for his divisions, some of which had seen long, continuous frontline service, like the veteran 3d, 36th, and 45th Divisions.<sup>45</sup> The following day, Sunday, the 2d Battalion moved to Lunéville to undertake the project and occupied the Caserne Stainville, a fine old

<sup>44</sup> "Caserne" is French for "barracks" or "garrison." For more details on the movements and whereabouts of the regiment's battalions and companies in France and Germany, see "Unit History," National Archives.

<sup>45</sup> Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch was named commander of the U.S. Seventh Army on 2 March 1944.



<sup>46</sup> The Caserne Stainville is in Lunéville; the other three mentioned could not be identified.

<sup>47</sup> Stanislas I Leszczyński was elected king of Poland in 1704 but was deposed by the Russian army. Stanislas fled to France, where his daughter married Louis XV. After Stanislas was again elected king of Poland and again deposed, France granted him the Duchy of Lorraine in 1737. The duke often held court in the Château de Lunéville. It is unclear if Bagnulo is referring to this château or one in Commercy known as the Château Stanislas. James Breck Perkins, *France Under Louis XV*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1897) 1:113-23, 155-58, 160, 168.

<sup>48</sup> The Germans launched a surprise offensive in the Ardennes region on 16 December 1944. They succeeded in creating a huge salient in the Allied lines in Belgium and Luxembourg, and the fighting that ensued is known in English as the Battle of the Bulge. The Allies blunted the German advance on 24 December and began pushing the enemy back into Germany. Several general service regiments, but not the 1321st, fought as infantry in the combat area. *Final Report of the Chief Engineer*, vol. 1, 143.





## Repairing Roads in France

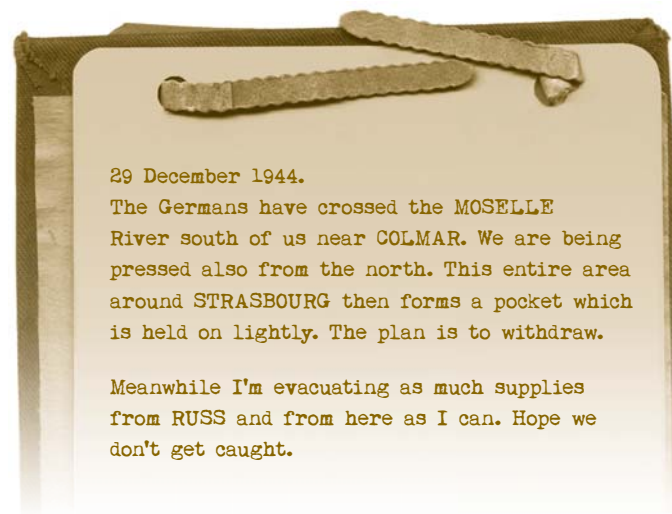
In Europe, road maintenance was one of the 1321st's most important tasks because the Allied advance depended on the steady flow of men and supplies toward the front. The regiment maintained hundreds of miles of roads, largely by improving drainage and reinforcing surfaces with crushed rock. In mid-February 1945, the 1321st was working on roads between Epinal and Lunéville, France. Clockwise from upper left: engineers using logs, later to be covered with dirt and crushed rock, to repair a heavily damaged roadbed; struggling to free a bulldozer caught in a road collapse; and working to reinforce a failing roadbed as Colonel Bagnulo supervises.

## GERMAN ADVANCES

### German Advances

Yes, the picture changed abruptly. All units were alerted against the dangers of enemy paratroopers and the activities of enemy agents disguised as American soldiers.<sup>49</sup> Security measures were increased, and plans for withdrawal were prepared in all echelons of command in the event the enemy were successful in their offensive. The Germans had crossed the Rhine River south of Strasbourg near Colmar in French First Army territory and were pressing the U.S. Seventh Army north of Strasbourg at Haguenau. The entire area around Strasbourg was held only lightly by Seventh Army troops and was a potential pocket. The plan was to withdraw from this area, to evacuate valuable materials, and to demolish any installations that might be of value to the enemy. On 27 December 1944 the regiment received instructions to evacuate captured enemy engineer materials from depots in Strasbourg, Obernai, and Russ and also to organize ten demolition squads to be readily available to demolish bridges and valuable installations. As the combat troops withdrew to more favorable positions, men of Companies E and F moved forward to undertake these tasks and established efficient loading organizations at the captured enemy depots for the convoy of trucks assembled from the 46th Quartermaster Truck Group, the 28th Quartermaster Truck Group, the 791st Engineer Dump Truck Company, and our own regiment. We made our first contact with "Jerry," having our convoys en route to and from the depots strafed and being in several patrol clashes near the depots.<sup>50</sup>

44



<sup>49</sup> As part of the German offensive, Operation *GREIF* involved sending German soldiers (about 150 of whom could speak English) to infiltrate American-held areas wearing American uniforms. The infiltrators had some success in creating confusion among the Allies, but the airborne phase proved largely a failure. Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1965), 269–71.

<sup>50</sup> "Jerry" is a slang term for Germans, commonly used by the Allies during the war.



132nd regimental staff, 22 March 1945.

Back at Epinal, a distance of 150 miles, the 1st Battalion unloaded the cargo of the returning convoys in their bivouac area and before it was over found themselves literally buried under pipe, nails, wire, skis, commodes, sinks, and electrical fixtures, all of which had to be sorted and shipped to the rear by rail to our own depots. Under different conditions the trip between the two points would be most enjoyable, for the route is through the picturesque Vosges Mountains, but the lieutenants who commanded the convoys had little opportunity to absorb the beauties because of the difficulties encountered in traveling over the winding mountain roads with heavily loaded trucks. On one of the trips, Lieutenant Ellner was seriously injured when his weapons carrier skidded on the icy road and crashed into a tree. On 1 January 1945 our troops were ordered out of Strasbourg and Obernai (a platoon of Company E under Lieutenant Wilburn remained at Russ because this was farther to the rear) after having evacuated approximately twelve hundred tons of valuable engineer materials.<sup>51</sup>

45

### Work Near Epinal

During the period that the 2d Battalion was engaged in the activities in Lunéville, Strasbourg, and Obernai, the 1st Battalion commenced a number of additional projects at Epinal. The first of these tasks, which was assigned to Company C, was the rehabilitation of a French military prep school to provide facilities for the 236th

<sup>51</sup> J. Wilburn, commander 3d Platoon, Company E.



Hospital construction using prefabricated components in Lunéville, France, 30 January 1945.

Bridge over the Moselle River, rebuilt by Company B of the 1321st in Epinal, France, 27 January 1945.



General Hospital. They started the job on 22 December 1944 and continued for approximately one month. Skills heretofore untried were called upon to accomplish the work, for major electrical, plumbing, and sewer installations were required along with work involving difficult carpentry. Wounded men were received at this hospital shortly after we started work. Not only were the people actually working on the project busy but also those responsible for the procurement of supplies. Supply personnel were faced with a job entirely new—the procurement of construction supplies from depots in Dijon approximately 120 miles to the rear. As the captured enemy materials that were being evacuated became available, this problem was greatly simplified. As part of our principal mission of road and bridge maintenance, Lieutenant Bayliss and his platoon of Company B rebuilt a bridge across the Moselle River under the most severe conditions. The 1st Battalion became involved in many lesser jobs like installing an office in the Seventh Army post exchange warehouse and painting directional signs for our friends in the Quartermaster Trucking units, who were not good map readers like the engineers. Lieutenant Meyers of Company A was assigned the task of guarding and operating a lumber dump at Vincey, north of Epinal.<sup>52</sup>

The many and varied tasks which were assigned to us were sufficient to keep the average regiment busy, but in our case they were in addition to our primary mission of maintaining three hundred miles of roads and bridges. During the month of January 1945 we encountered our coldest and most severe weather conditions, and all companies of the regiment locked horns with a stubborn snow removal problem. The few snow plows that were available were drawn from the depots along with additional graders and bulldozers, and more plows were procured in nearby villages from the *Ponts et Chaussées*, the highway department of the French government, in an all-out “get the supplies through” effort.<sup>53</sup> Rail transportation had become completely congested, and supply trucks rolled day and night up to the front. We labored night and day to keep the roads open. One night while answering a call with his platoon to spread sand on an icy slope, Lieutenant Price’s weapons carrier skidded and crashed into a tree, resulting in his permanent disability, our second officer loss.<sup>54</sup> The heavy work during January took its toll on two other officers, Lieutenant Colonel Wetzel and Captain Cross, both of whom had to be sent to the hospital and eventually back to the States.<sup>55</sup> Capt.

<sup>52</sup> E. E. Meyers, administrative officer, Company A.

<sup>53</sup> The *Ponts et Chaussées* is the French government’s bridges and roads administration.

<sup>54</sup> A. E. Price, commander 3d Platoon, Company D.

<sup>55</sup> See Bagnulo’s diary entry for 25 January 1945.



When heavy snows gave way to spring rains, the engineers' mission changed from snow removal to road repair.



Shin deep in rain and mud, an engineer inspects road damage from spring thawing and heavy vehicle use.

48

John Dabbs was moved up to the position of executive officer and Lieutenant Kellogg was transferred from Company F to replace Cross as commanding officer of Headquarters and Service Company.<sup>56</sup>

It was in January also that we undertook a job that required only a few men and a small amount of equipment but that made an indelible impression on those of us who came in contact with it. The Quartermaster Graves Registration Company was falling behind in digging graves in the solidly frozen ground for the soldiers, American and German, who had been sacrificed in the winter offensive. The company commander came to us with his problem, and we responded with all of the air compressors and dirt-digging tools that could be made available. We saw the corpses as they were removed from the mattress covers in which they had been transported by the truckloads to the "bull pen"—paled in death, bloody, and frozen stiff in the various grotesque positions in which they had died. Normally the men sang, joked, and indulged in a certain amount of horseplay as they worked, but they undertook this job with a grim determination and with the thought in their minds, "but for the Grace of God, there go I."

Early in February the rains came and the snow disappeared. We had looked forward hopefully for a period of rest when the snow and ice would disappear, as the men and equipment had worked



<sup>56</sup> John N. Dabbs, of Bessemer, Ala., executive officer of the 1321st, was later promoted to major.

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relentlessly through December and January, but such was not to be the case. Following closely on the heels of the retreating snow came the early spring thaws, and with the thaws came our most trying and difficult problems. All Frenchmen know that certain sections of their roads will fail completely during the thaws if subjected to any traffic, and our friends at the *Ponts et Chaussées* advised us of this, emphasizing their point by referring to what had happened to their roads during World War I. The German winter offensive had been stopped and preparations for our spring offensive were underway, which meant hauling mountains of supplies forward over these roads in spite of the warnings of the Frenchmen. Certain stretches, true to their prediction, very quickly, almost suddenly, became quagmires under the constant, heavy pounding of the supply vehicles that streamed forward in an endless chain. As we tackled our new problems, we looked back to the period of snow and ice and sighed, "At least we had roads then."

Covering three hundred miles of road, we were spread out thinly, and each section of road that failed presented a difficult task requiring feet, not inches, of solid fill to replace the mud or the construction of corduroy road.<sup>57</sup> All of the men and equipment, assisted somewhat by the *Ponts et Chaussées* and German prisoners



<sup>57</sup> A corduroy road is one constructed with logs usually laid crosswise. Solid fill is generally crushed rock and is essential to any horizontal construction project.



**Soldiers unloading timber at the lumber yard in Vincey, France, 9 February 1945.**

of war (PWs), were thrown into the battle, and even Captain Harris, our dental officer, put aside his dental drills temporarily to supervise the repair of a bad stretch of road north of Epinal. By ditching and draining and hauling in rock, by constructing by-passes, by laying corduroy, and by pulling the trucks through the mud with bulldozers, we kept the supplies moving up to the front.

While our immediate objective during the early part of February 1945 was to keep the roads open, our eyes were pointed generally north toward Nancy and Metz as future sites from which to provide support for the Seventh Army, whose spring thrust was expected to be north and beyond these points. The area to which we were looking had already been taken by the Third Army, but it was planned that this area would be turned over to the Seventh Army because the effort of the Third Army would be farther north and slightly to the west. Colonel Bagnulo, Major Jaques, and Captain Lee reconnoitered for depot and billet sites in the vicinity of Nancy and Toul, and Major Jaques and Captain Dabbs made one wild sortie north beyond Metz in which they tangled with Third Army MPs (military police), artillery, and anti-aircraft batteries and were grateful that they managed to return unscathed. An extensive military installation in Toul, the Caserne Bautzen, was selected as the site of billets for engineer troops and also for covered storage and shop space for engineer depot operations. South of Toul at Domgermain—a triangular area formed by railroad tracks, two legs of which could not be used for through traffic because of a demolished bridge beyond the point where these two legs joined to form the apex of the triangle—was selected to be developed for open storage. Captain Lee established the advanced regimental command post at Caserne Bautzen and Company C, reinforced, was moved to this location to undertake the



**Engineers of the 1321st in late March as they supported Allied advances toward Germany.**

development of the two depot sites as well as rehabilitating the Hotel Europa and doing some carpentry work at the MP station in Nancy.

In February our lumber enterprise at Vincey blossomed into a thriving business. The 1392d Engineer Forestry Company was attached to the regiment with the mission of hauling lumber from the mills scattered throughout the Vosges Mountains to our yard at Vincey, where we provided for all the operations, including the hiring of our first steam locomotive to shift cars. To the Seventh Army alone we shipped fifty thousand board feet of tactical timber daily for a period of approximately one month, and by the time we completed this assignment in March, we had handled 3.4 million board feet of lumber.<sup>58</sup>

Early in March Company E was detached from the regiment to help form a team whose mission was to lay pipe for the supply of gasoline to the advancing divisions of the Seventh Army. This

<sup>58</sup> In the original manuscript, Bagnulo writes that the unit handled “three million four hundred board feet of lumber.” While it is possible that he was being extremely precise (3.0004 million), it is likely that by accident he omitted the word “thousand” from the phrase “four hundred thousand” (3.4 million).



## Engineer Depot at Domgermain

Beginning in February 1945, the 1321st spent several months building an engineer supply depot at Domgermain, France. With the help of four companies of German prisoners of war, the regiment prepared the site, operated rock quarries that produced thousands of yards of crushed stone, and built access roads and hard stands for open storage. Activities at the depot included (clockwise from the bottom): depot site preparation and road construction; prisoners pushing railcars loaded with construction supplies; and operation of a rock crusher by the 1321st.

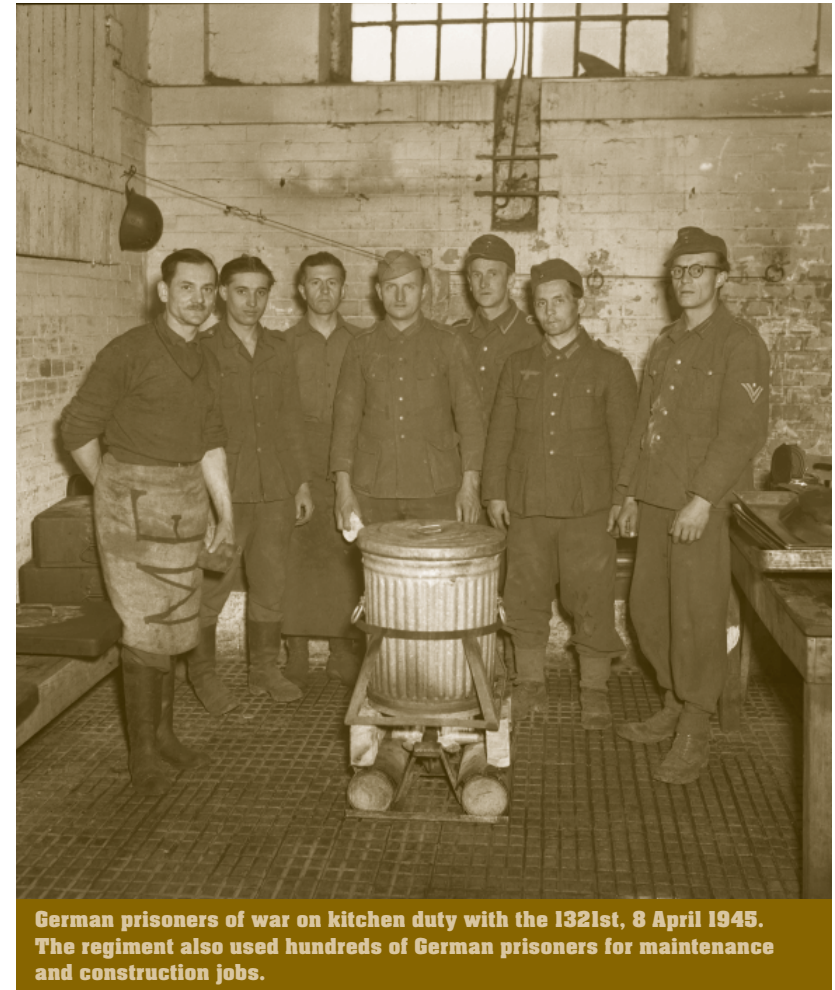


Soldiers of the 132nd repairing one of the regiment's many vehicles.

assignment carried Company E right into the battle zone, laying pipe as fast as mine sweepers could clear a path. On 15 March Company D moved north of Metz to Woippy to take over from the Third Army a captured enemy engineer depot.

### Spring Offensive into Germany

By the end of March 1945 the spring offensive was well underway. It appeared that Lt. Gen. (later General) George S. Patton and his Third Army would reach the Rhine in a few days. The direction of General Patton's thrust, however, shifted in an easterly direction more than initially contemplated, causing General Patch and his Seventh Army to advance in an easterly instead of a northerly direction. General Patch called on CAS to relieve some of his engineer combat battalions of road responsibilities so that they could prepare for the Rhine River crossing, and CAS in turn called on us, marking the beginning of a period characterized by many movements, more rush jobs, and our first achievement medals. We started off by moving into the area that Seventh Army had captured, lost, and recaptured and where they subsequently spent the winter of 1944–45. Regimental headquarters, 1st Battalion headquarters, H & S Company, and the 791st Engineer Dump Truck Company, which was attached to



German prisoners of war on kitchen duty with the 132nd, 8 April 1945. The regiment also used hundreds of German prisoners for maintenance and construction jobs.

the regiment for this mission, moved to Sarrebourg. Company A moved to Baccarat, Company B to Château de Ketzling, Company C to Château-Salins, Company D to Hofmuhl near Saverne, and Company F to Haguenau, where for a period they were subjected nightly to enemy air raids. Company E was farther north, spread out over a large area and still engaged in pipeline operations. At this time the regiment had two companies of German PWs, totaling five hundred men, one of which was attached to Company B and the other to Company D.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> To alleviate the shortage of American engineer soldiers, German prisoners of war were pressed into service. American labor supervision units oversaw the work of the prisoners, who were organized into 250-man construction, depot, maintenance, and forestry companies. *Final Report of the Chief Engineer*, vol. 1, 144–45.

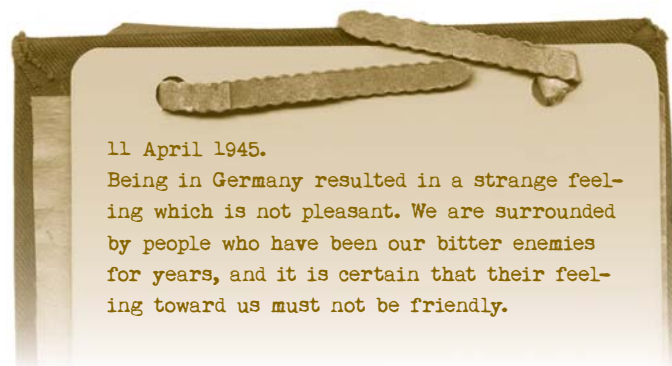
## SPRING OFFENSIVE INTO GERMANY

Road conditions were such that any repairs short of complete reconstruction were inadequate. Rock was shipped by rail to various distribution centers located throughout our area of responsibility, from where it was hauled to the roads as needed. Along with road maintenance, the regiment was engaged in operating water points at Blâmont, Sarrebourg, and Saverne and in pipeline construction. The main supply route (MSR) from Sarreguemines through Homburg and Kaiserslautern to Mannheim suddenly loomed in importance and required considerable work. Company C moved near Kaiserslautern with one of its platoons under Lt. John Collins at Bad Durkheim.<sup>60</sup> Company A moved to Sarreguemines and Company B to Homburg with the company of German PWs attached. Advance regimental command post moved to Bad Durkheim also.



Engineers of the 1321st and a newly completed water point, which purified and distributed potable water, 8 April 1945.

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On 23 April 1945 the regiment was given its largest single assignment yet—that of opening an MSR from Karlsruhe to Stuttgart for the final drive of Seventh Army into Munich. Our first companies, Companies F and D, crossed the Rhine on 24 April. The 2d Battalion

<sup>60</sup> John E. Collins, Philadelphia, Pa., commander 1st Platoon, Company C.

headquarters and Company D, with its attached company of German PWs, moved to Singen, Germany; advance regimental command post and Company F moved into position at Leonberg, Germany. Company E was pulled off pipeline construction and moved into Heimsheim roughly halfway between Companies D and F. The task was to reopen an MSR by rebuilding stretches of road and bridges that had been demolished by the retreating Germans along a route which consisted of sections of the autobahn (famed German superhighway) and a parallel highway with connecting roads located so as to bypass those obstacles that could not be removed in the time allotted. Specifically, the jobs involved were as follows:

- Fill and surface bomb craters north of Karlsruhe.
- Fill and surface a crater two kilometers northwest of Singen.
- Provide support for the partially destroyed concrete stringers by cribbing and repair the hole in the concrete floor of the bridge in Singen.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Stringers are the longitudinal members that support the bridge flooring. For the bridge at Singen the engineers built crib piers, frameworks of logs filled with rubble, to support the damaged stringers.

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Brig. Gen. Ralph M. Immell presenting Bronze Star medals to members of the 1321st with Colonel Bagnulo looking on, 13 May 1945.

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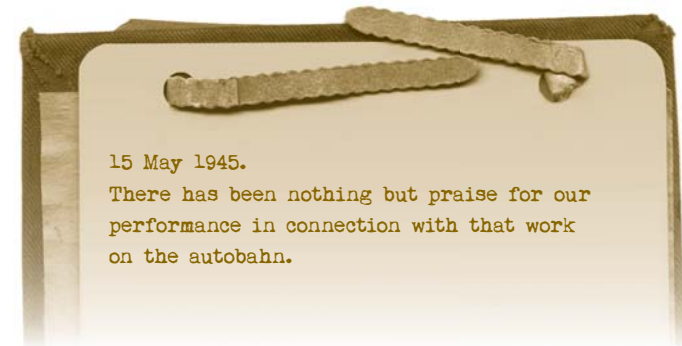
- Widen by six feet approximately a mile of road and a masonry bridge at Wilferdingen.
- Construct a masonry abutment to support eighty-foot concrete beams at the east end of a bridge where they had been sheared by demolition. This bridge on the autobahn provided an overpass for German Highway 10 about three kilometers northwest of Pforzheim.
- Construct approaches to provide for one-way traffic entering and leaving the autobahn north of Pforzheim.
- Fill two gaps, each eighty feet, the result of demolished overpasses, on the autobahn, one at Neubärental and one at Wimsheim.
- Clear the block created by dropping a built-up, steel girder overpass on the autobahn near Rutesheim.
- Fill three more gaps similar to the ones listed previously at Heimsheim, Perouse, and Rutesheim.
- Construct a two-lane bridge, 150-foot span, over a double line railroad track south of Leonberg. For this job, I-beams and hardware were found at Stuttgart, timber for cribs were cut from adjacent forests, and lumber was collected from nearby hills.
- Prepare and post signs along the entire route for the proper guidance of traffic.

Sunday, 6 May, was given as the completion date. At first glance, the job looked big; closer scrutiny indicated that it was impossible, but the companies of the 2d Battalion wasted no time in getting to work, setting that date for our target. We hit it; we still shot expert.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion was relieved of its road responsibility near Kaiserslautern and crossed the Rhine to repair an MSR generally parallel to the one being opened by the 2d Battalion but considerably north. The 1st Battalion headquarters and Companies A and C moved to Mühlacker. Company B moved to Heilbronn with one platoon at Heidelberg. Later all of the company, including the attached German PWs, moved to a huge castle at Fürfeld. Company A, supervised by Lt. James Gray, built a bridge which spanned a two-line railroad bridge at Bruchsal and maintained the road west of that bridge to Mannheim.<sup>62</sup> Company C constructed a transfer point at a railroad siding in Mühlacker, maintained by building one approach to the autobahn just beyond Wilferdingen. Company B maintained highways 37 and 38 between Heidelberg and Heilbronn and developed a system of roads for a prisoner of war enclosure at Heilbronn.

On Sunday, 13 May 1945, Brig. Gen. Ralph M. Immell, commanding general of CAS, inspected our achievements on the autobahn and made on-the-spot awards of the Bronze Star Medal to six officers and nine enlisted men of the regiment.<sup>63</sup> We were proud that day.<sup>64</sup>

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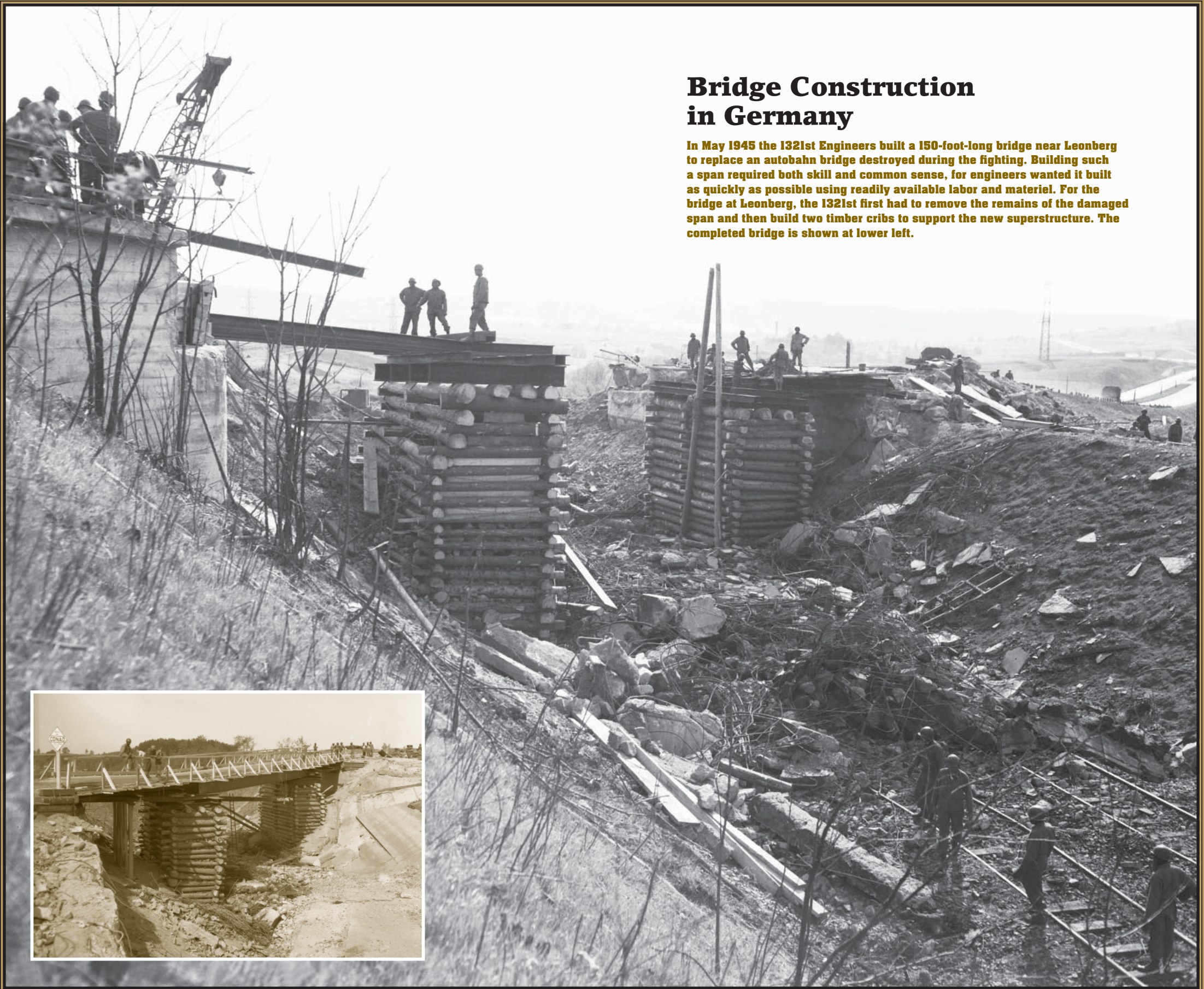
<sup>62</sup> James R. Gray, commander 1st Platoon, Company A.

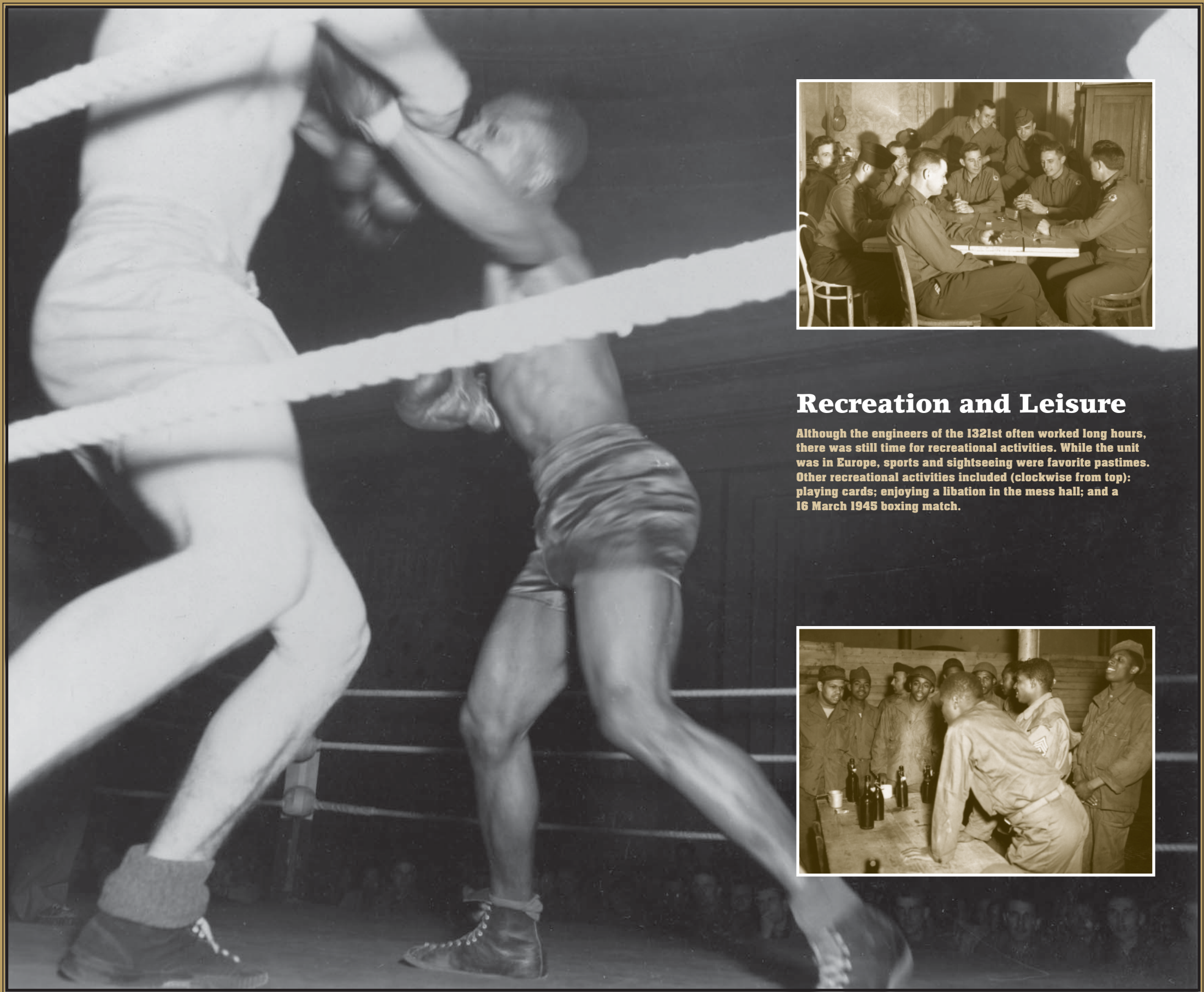
<sup>63</sup> Ralph M. Immell served as an infantry officer in World War I. Between the wars he became a brigadier general in the Wisconsin National Guard and the state's adjutant general. On active duty in World War II he performed in various capacities with the Services of Supply/Army Service Forces in North Africa and Europe. Frank R. Shirer, Chief, Historical Resources Branch, U.S. Army Center of Military History, personal communication, 23 May 2008.

<sup>64</sup> The recipients were Capt. William C. Pahl; Capt. Glenn E. Pickrel; 1st Lt. Carl J. Hopper; 1st Lt. Cecil C. Levister; 1st Lt. Vincent Ream; 2d Lt. Robert S. Parker; S. Sgt. Clarence Bufford; S. Sgt. Philip M. Bagley; S. Sgt. J. D. Cox; S. Sgt. Fred D. Dickey; S. Sgt. Louis Tanniehill; S. Sgt. Paul Triplett; S. Sgt. Isaac S. Wynn; Sgt. Franklin E. Duncan; and T/4 (Technician Fourth Grade) Dossie Hammond. In addition, S. Sgt. Aaron L. Smith was awarded the Soldier's Medal for "rescuing a fellow soldier from drowning in a stream near Singen, Germany, 13 May 1945.... The heroism displayed by Sergeant Smith on this occasion reflects great credit upon him and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service." "Unit History," National Archives.

## Bridge Construction in Germany

In May 1945 the 1321st Engineers built a 150-foot-long bridge near Leonberg to replace an autobahn bridge destroyed during the fighting. Building such a span required both skill and common sense, for engineers wanted it built as quickly as possible using readily available labor and materiel. For the bridge at Leonberg, the 1321st first had to remove the remains of the damaged span and then build two timber cribs to support the new superstructure. The completed bridge is shown at lower left.





## Recreation and Leisure

Although the engineers of the 1321st often worked long hours, there was still time for recreational activities. While the unit was in Europe, sports and sightseeing were favorite pastimes. Other recreational activities included (clockwise from top): playing cards; enjoying a libation in the mess hall; and a 16 March 1945 boxing match.



### Leaving France

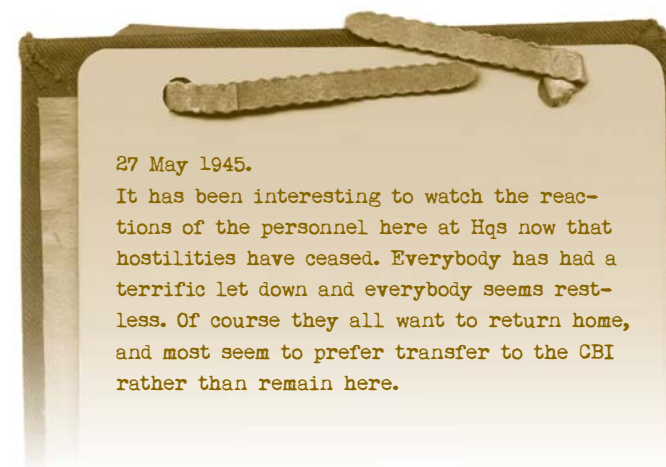
On the afternoon of General Immell's inspection we learned that the regiment was selected for direct redeployment to the Pacific Theater.

On 4 May regimental headquarters and H & S Company had moved to the Caserne Hindenburg at Kornwestheim. This caserne, which consisted of five large barracks, each with capacity for seven hundred men; two battalion sized mess halls; extensive garage and shop space; parking areas; and recreational facilities, had been completed in 1938 and was left in excellent condition by the Germans only a few days before we arrived. We decided to use it as an assembly point for the regiment prior to movement to the staging area. As the companies cleaned up the various jobs on which they had been working, they moved into Caserne Hindenburg, and for the first time since we left Camp Stapley in England, the regiment was assembled in one place again. For approximately one week we worked on our vehicles and equipment, exchanged some which were beyond repair, and received some enlisted and officer replacements. Lieutenants Edwards, Puckett, Shaffett, and Stevenson joined us at Kornwestheim to fill some of the officer shortages which had developed since arrival

Following V.E. Day, the 1321st enjoyed a respite while mobilizing to move to the Pacific Theater.



in Europe.<sup>65</sup> On 20 May vehicles and equipment of the 1st Battalion moved out for the staging area; the 2d Battalion and H & S Company convoy left the following day; and the main body of personnel plus heavy engineer equipment departed by rail on 23 May, our last trip on our beloved "forty and eights."



The staging area to which we moved was at Calas, about ten miles northwest of Marseille, France, and was still in the initial phase of construction when we arrived. Our transportation was taken from us for processing and none substituted, the chow was poor, the dust was plentiful, and the staging personnel were still in the process of being organized. Confusion, however, was not something new to us. Our readiness date was set as 3 June, so we worked furiously to procure clothing and equipment. Lt. Vincent Ream, the officer who had supervised the construction of our boxes and crates way back at Camp Sutton, went to work again to make bigger and better boxes and in much greater quantities.<sup>66</sup> It was satisfying to observe the ease with which the men constructed the boxes and crates in comparison with their performance in the same task upon starting our journey at Camp Sutton. This simple operation was indicative of our improvement—we had developed into a seasoned outfit.

We processed as quickly as the facilities at the staging area would permit, and by 10 June 1945 all personnel and equipment were ready. Our equipment was loaded on the USS *White Squall*, along with Lt. Horace Smith as ship's transport quartermaster, and the ship set

<sup>65</sup> Edwards is probably William T. Edwards, Rotan, Tex.; James A. Puckett, Kaufman, Tex.; Alvin B. Shaffett, Port Arthur, Tex.; and Carl A. Stevenson, Dawson Springs, Ky.

<sup>66</sup> Vincent A. Ream, Paxton, Ill.

sail for the Pacific on 28 June.<sup>67</sup> We picked up additional enlisted men and officers to fill shortages resulting from losses that occurred as the result of readjustment. The officers who joined at this time were Capt. David Curtis and Capt. Robert Marquardt, Chaplain James Stewart, Lt. Thomas Brinkley, and Warrant Officer Gerard Dore.<sup>68</sup> Although the personnel had completed processing by 10 June, we had to kill time for a little more than a month in sporadic review of training, assorted athletics, and hoping that the war would end, resulting in our being sent home. Finally, after almost two months at the staging area, we were alerted, but personnel of the regiment were split into two groups for the movement. The 1st Battalion headquarters and Companies A and B loaded on the USAT *Fred C. Ainsworth* on 13 July and set sail the following day.<sup>69</sup> The balance of the regiment boarded the USS *Admiral R.E. Coontz* and set sail on 21 July 1945.<sup>70</sup> Thus on three different ships the personnel and equipment of the 1321st were en route to the Pacific to put an end to hostilities there also.

### To the Pacific

Our first stop was at Cristobal, the Atlantic end of the Panama Canal. The ship took on fresh provisions and ice and refueled. It was here in Panama that we had our first taste of bananas since we had left the States—incidentally our last. Being restricted to a fenced-in area on the docks, we did not do much sightseeing in Cristobal, but inside the stockade the Red Cross did wonders to provide for our recreation. Everything from ice cold Coca-Colas to a USO show was



67 The North Carolina Ship Building Co. launched the *White Squall* in 1943. After its war service it sailed for the Matson Navigation Co. under the name *Sonoma*. *Lloyd's Register of Shipping, Register Book, 1950-51*, 2 vols. (London: Lloyd's Register of Shipping, 1950), 2:76946.

68 David T. Curtis, Toledo, Ohio; Robert B. Marquardt, Binghamton, N.Y.; James E. W. Stewart, Boston, Mass; Thomas M. Brinkley, Los Angeles, Calif.; and Gerard V. Dore, Adams, Mass.

69 The *Fred C. Ainsworth* was a War Department troopship built by the Ingalls Shipping Corp. in 1943. Initially, it carried soldiers from San Francisco and Seattle to the Pacific. In June 1945 it sailed to Marseille and from there transported troops of the 1321st to Ulithi and Okinawa. Roland W. Charles, *Troopships of World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Army Transportation Association, 1947), 26.

70 The Bethlehem Steel Corporation built the troopship *Admiral R. E. Coontz* in 1944. The ship transported troops from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor and Ulithi until mid-1945 when it sailed to Europe. It cleared Marseille 21 July 1945 with soldiers of the 1321st aboard and arrived at Okinawa in September 1945. The *Coontz* was decommissioned in March 1946, turned over to the War Department, and renamed the *General Alexander M. Patch*. Moody, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, 1:12.



A view from their ship as the 1321st prepared to sail from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to Okinawa, Japan, 14 August 1945.

made available.<sup>71</sup> There were sandwiches, doughnuts, coffee, and movies, and a post exchange, a souvenir stand, and a post office.

The trip through the Panama Canal highlighted our journey. We were fascinated by the strange country which bordered the canal and were inspired by the canal itself, which is a tribute to American engineering, tenacity, and ability to do big things.

We entered the Pacific on 3 August 1945 and headed for Pearl Harbor. It was during our three-day stopover at Pearl Harbor that the false pre-surrender celebrations occurred and President Harry Truman made the official announcement of the Japanese surrender. To be at the very site where the war started on the day it ended was a thrill. Many theories were advanced on the cause for the Japanese surrender—the atomic bomb, our aerial might, the blockade, and others—but we knew that the Japanese had learned of our coming and that was the real reason for the surrender.

To the seas again on the 15th. We stopped for a short time at Eniwetok, then proceeded to Saipan, where some of the small units

71 The USO (United Service Organizations) is a private, nonprofit organization that supports troop morale by providing entertainment, welfare services, and recreational activities.

travelling on the *Admiral Coontz* unloaded. From Saipan we sailed to Guam, where the 1325th Engineer General Service Regiment was put ashore. We then sailed to Ulithi, a naval anchorage approximately four hundred miles south of Guam, where we were to wait for two weeks until called for by the port authorities at Okinawa.<sup>72</sup> It was here that we caught up with the USS *Ainsworth*, which was carrying 1st Battalion headquarters, Companies A and B, and the USS *White Squall*, which had our equipment aboard. While at Ulithi we were permitted to go ashore to the tropical enchanted isle named Mog Mog. Some recreational facilities were available, as were plenty of beverages, hard and soft. The “Battle of Mog Mog,” as it was designated, was a unique experience for all of us.<sup>73</sup> After almost two weeks, the *Ainsworth* set sail for Okinawa, and the personnel aboard landed in time to experience the first minor typhoon, while the *Coontz* left Ulithi a few days later and caught this typhoon on the high seas.

### Okinawa, Korea, and the Last Days of the 1321st

By 20 September 1945 all personnel had been unloaded at Okinawa and we started in earnest to develop our tent camp.<sup>74</sup> Our camp site was located on cultivated fields, bordered on the west by the beach that had been the scene of considerable fighting, and the bones and decomposed bodies of Japanese soldiers were strewn along the length of it. In spite of the lack of materials and equipment (our regimental equipment was still on the *White Squall*) and the rains, which converted our area into a sea of mud, we developed a credible camp by 7 October. On that day, Saturday, an inspection was made of the entire area. The colonel was very well pleased, as what we had developed would compare favorably with any other camp on the island.<sup>75</sup>

The credible camp was not to last long, however, for the typhoon of the afternoon and night of 10 October changed all that. In the worst storm that the island had suffered in twenty years, the wind



<sup>72</sup> Ulithi is an atoll in the western Caroline Islands that was occupied by American forces in September 1944. It became a major base for the offensive against Japan.

<sup>73</sup> The “Battle of Mog Mog” is likely a reference to an alcohol-induced brawl on the island between Navy pilots of the USS *Bunker Hill* and those of the USS *Essex* in March 1945. Arthur L. Kelly, *BattleFire! Combat Stories from World War II* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 42.

<sup>74</sup> Before arriving at Okinawa, the regiment, on 12 August 1945, landed at Ie Shima, a small island about two miles off the west coast of Okinawa. Stanton, *Order of Battle*, 563.

<sup>75</sup> At Okinawa the regiment was consolidated and assigned to XXIV Corps, Tenth Army, in anticipation of movement to Korea. “Unit History,” National Archives.



Office of History

A storm-ravaged camp in Okinawa after the typhoon of 10 October 1945.

having attained a velocity of 120 miles per hour, the camp was reduced to a total wreck without one tent escaping the fury of the driving wind, rain, and sand. We had had no warning of the storm, but as the wind increased we scattered to find protection behind stone walls, in the cellars of ruined houses in the nearby villages, and in caves. Those who took refuge in some of the caves had to dispose of Japanese skeletons before moving in. The morning of the 11th found us looking out on a dismal setting, a ghost town. There was little material with which to rebuild, but within a few days our camp had again taken shape. Where we had squad tents before, however, we now lived in pup tents; where once we had some sort of bed, we now slept on the ground.

On 13 October we drew some equipment for the purpose of maintaining the roads throughout the south end of the island, developing a water point, and doing odd jobs like constructing an amphitheater with a capacity of five thousand for the troops bivouacked in our general area. During October we lost many of our key enlisted personnel and some officers by readjustment, and when the regiment loaded on LSTs early in November for movement to Korea, it left many more enlisted men and officers to be readjusted.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Prior to the war, Japan controlled the Korean Peninsula completely. After Japan’s defeat, the U.S. and the USSR agreed to a joint trusteeship of Korea, and both nations sent troops to the country. The Soviets occupied the area north of the 38th parallel; the Americans were in the south. In 1948 the two areas officially separated into the Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.



A Korean man in traditional hanbok clothing as photographed by a member of the 1321st Engineers, ca. 1946.

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When the regiment landed at Inch'on, Korea, it consisted of thirty-six officers and less than nine hundred enlisted men.<sup>77</sup>

Korea was the strangest of all countries in which we had served. Here we encountered people whose dress, customs, and civilization were different from anything we had known before, and here we saw the rice paddies, which were new to our eyes although centuries had been required for their development. Regimental headquarters was set up in building F-6, a former Japanese factory for the manufacture of small arms ammunition, and the personnel were billeted in Area Q, former workers' quarters, both located in ASCOM City. ASCOM City, a derivative of Army Service Command, was the name given by the XXIV Corps Service Command to the huge industrial center that had



<sup>77</sup> Companies C, D, E, and F, H & S Company, and the Medical Detachment departed from Okinawa on 31 October 1945 and arrived at Inch'on on 6 November. Companies A and B and "remaining rear echelon troops" sailed from Okinawa on 5 November 1945 and arrived at Inch'on on 11 November. "Unit History," National Archives.



Staff Sergeant Billing, 1321st Engineers.

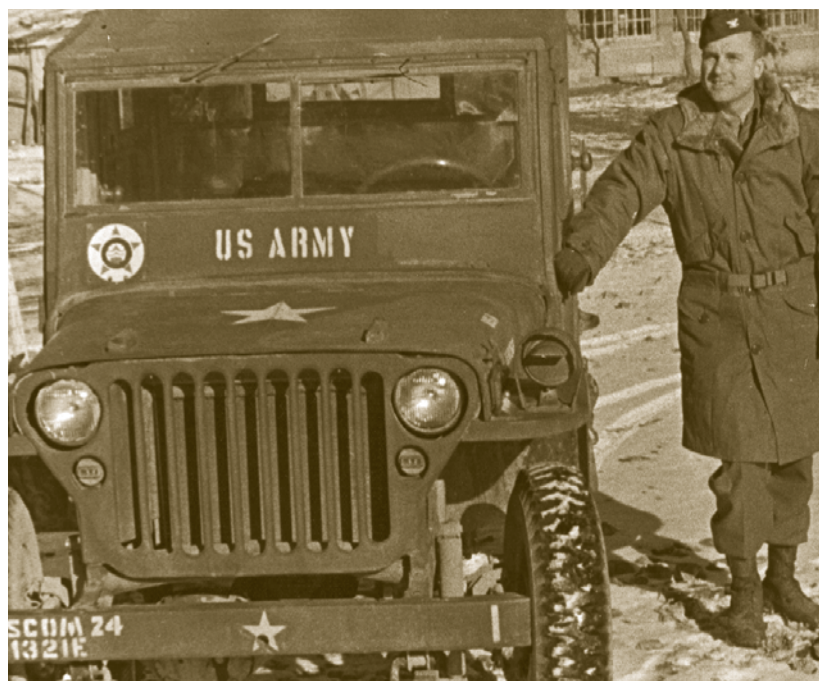
been developed in the broad valley east of Inch'on as an arsenal for the production of small arms and small arms ammunition.

Upon arrival, a number of engineer units, including a construction battalion, two light equipment companies, a combat battalion, two maintenance companies, a dump truck company, and a utilities detachment, were attached to the regiment. With these units attached, the regiment was assigned the responsibility for all construction in the general area, which included ASCOM City and Inch'on, and regimental headquarters assumed the additional designation of Headquarters, Inch'on Engineer Area. In this capacity the regiment performed its last service for the Army—the development of troop housing, road and bridge maintenance, construction of two station hospitals, development of depot facilities and ammunition storage areas, and the construction of Quonset Hut barracks and the installation of a water distribution system in Area A at Kimpo Airdrome.<sup>78</sup> The regiment processed all administrative matters in connection with the readjustment of large numbers of personnel, the inactivation of a number of its attached units, and the consolidation of remaining personnel to achieve maximum efficiency. During the severe winter months and during a period when personnel were being changed frequently, the regiment

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<sup>78</sup> For further details see "Semi-Monthly Construction Reports for Inch'on Area Engineer," Military Files X-63-7, CEHO.



Colonel Bagnulo and his jeep on New Year's Day, 1946, near ASCOM City, Korea.

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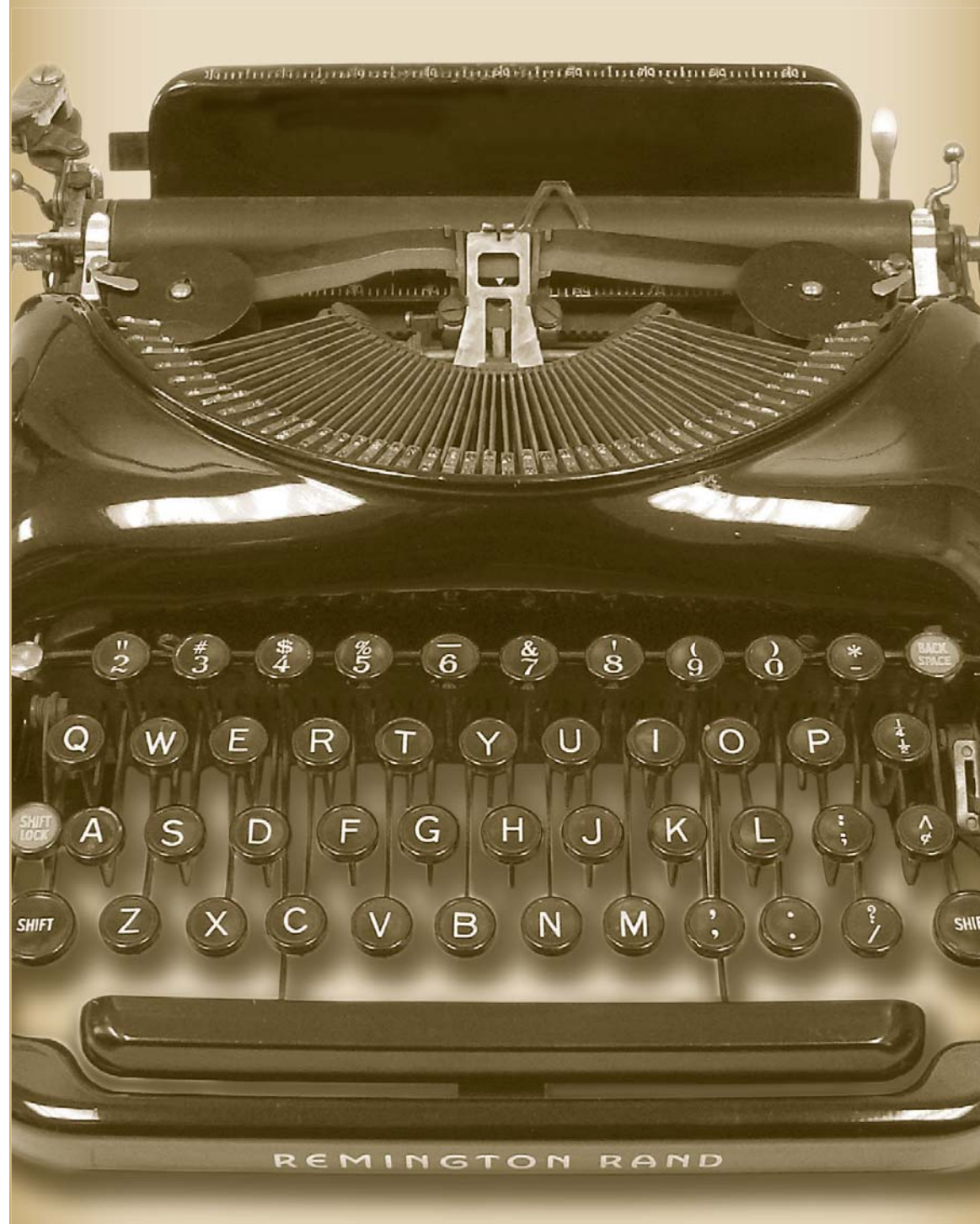
performed this service in a manner that heaped additional credit on a record of which we were already proud.<sup>79</sup>

Losses in personnel by the readjustment continued so that by February only a handful of men of the original regiment remained. New life was injected into the unit by the transfer of personnel and equipment from the 1331st Engineer General Service Regiment, but the story of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment that had activated at Camp Sutton; trained, worked, sweated, and erred in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee; fought mud, snow, and ice in England and France; rebuilt roads and bridges for the Seventh Army in Germany; traveled to the far Pacific to do its last bit there in Korea; and throughout its career made up for lack of experience and skills by a desire to do its best in any assigned task, big or small—the story of that regiment ended in February of 1946.



<sup>79</sup> The 1321st served in Korea through the end of 1946. It received credit for service in the Rhineland and Central European campaigns and the Pacific Theater. Stanton, *Order of Battle*, 563. Bagnulo did not command the regiment during its last months in Korea. His successors, and the dates when they assumed command, were Joseph J. Mackey (20 September 1946); Hugo T. Shogren (temporary, 1 October 1946); Herbert H. Glidden (5 October 1946); Neil S. Edmond (16 November 1946). "General Orders—1321st Engineer General Service Regiment," ENGR 1321-1.13, Box 19697, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 407, National Archives.

## The Diary of Col. Aldo H. Bagnulo





**WEDNESDAY, 6 December 1944, 1830 hours**  
**Aboard MT338, Nicholas HERKIMER anchored off**  
**LE HAVRE, France**

For some time I've wanted to start a diary. I have finally started today since time is more readily available than is the case normally and the events of the last few days have been particularly interesting.

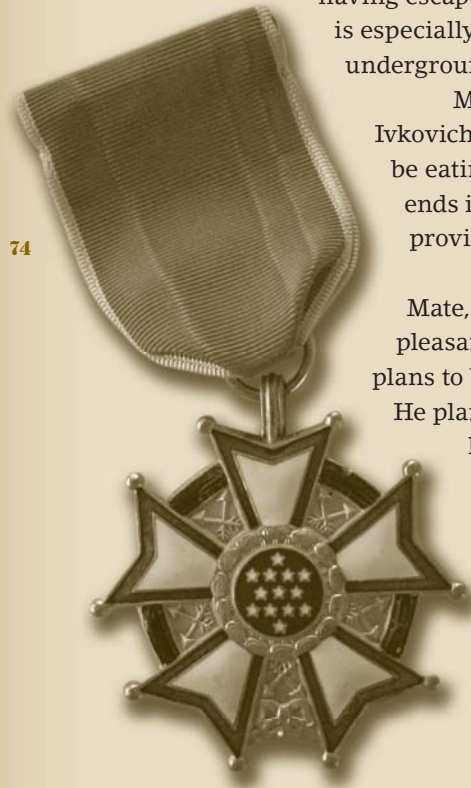
Approximately 200 men and all of the vehicles and equipment of the lettered companies were loaded on this vessel 4 December 1944 and we left Southampton, England, the morning of 5 Dec. Twice it was necessary to turn back to safe anchorage because of heavy seas and high wind. Some damage was done to our equipment, which broke loose from the lashings and shifted. Today, however, we crossed the Channel on a very calm sea.

There are two French Officers aboard ship, Maj. LEYDET and Capt. TROTTER, who are returning to France for the first time since having escaped to America in 1941. Capt. TROTTER is especially interesting, having been involved in underground activities.

Maj. Worley, Maj. Mohler and Major (Doc) Ivkovich share a stateroom.<sup>1</sup> We are supposed to be eating C rations but manage to get odds and ends in food which we cook on a gasoline stove provided by Doc.<sup>2</sup> Each meal is an adventure.

Right now I'm in the cabin of the 1st Mate, Mr. Luther G. Youngs, who is a very pleasant fellow. He is acquainted with P.R. and plans to buy land there sometime in the future.<sup>3</sup> He plans to buy a schooner which he will use to haul supplies to and from P.R.

*Aldo Bagnulo earned a Legion of Merit for his service in the Caribbean before WWII and a second for his service from 1955 to 1965.*



1 Paul I. Ivkovich, the 1321st's regimental surgeon. As in the history section, officers of the 1321st, unless otherwise indicated, are identified in "1321st EGS Regt. List of Officers, with civilian addresses, 1945" and "Officers of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment While in Europe," Aldo H. Bagnulo Papers, Box 1, Folders 26 and 27, Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, Va. (hereafter cited as CEHO).

2 C-rations typically consisted of canned meat, vegetables, and dessert, along with candy, gum, hot beverage mix, hard biscuits, crackers, cheese, salt, sugar, cigarettes, toilet paper, and can openers.

3 P.R. is Puerto Rico.

**THURSDAY, 7 December 1944, 1815 hours**

We are still anchored off LE HAVRE waiting for Naval authorities to send pilot aboard who will guide us over sand bar.

Nothing of unusual interest occurred today.

After breakfast this morning, I went out on deck and engaged in conversation with Lt. Senior Grade McGown who is Naval Officer commanding gun crews stationed on this ship. He is from Providence and has heard of Colonel Garbish and Grace De Ware.<sup>4</sup> He seemed to enjoy my accounts of the experiences in the West Indies.

This afternoon I had a nap, read for a while, then strolled on the deck.

It was my turn to wash the mess gear after the evening meal. I'm reading the book UNDER COVER by John Carson.<sup>5</sup>

**FRIDAY, 8 December 1944, 2015 [hours]**

Another day spent at anchor off LE HAVRE. A high wind has blown all day and it has been quite cold.

The Chief Mate came into our cabin earlier in the evening and he, Maj. Worley, Maj. Mohler, Doc Ivkovich and I engaged in a delightful "bull" session. The chief mate here has been at sea for 17 years and, of course, has many tales to tell.

I didn't sleep well last night since my body was sore all over. I feared that I had the flu, but during the course of the day I've improved and feel pretty good this evening. Waiting at anchor as long as we have leads one to believe that there is faulty planning somewhere along the line. I understand that a ship of this size costs the government \$18,000 daily. There are many other ships lying at anchor as we are.

The Mate tells many stories of mismanagement in connection with transporting cargo across the channel. Perhaps this waste is inevitably a part of the war.

4 Probably Edgar William Garbisch, who graduated from the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) in 1925 and was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers. He resigned that year but returned to the Army in 1942 and served as executive officer and acting district engineer of the Corps of Engineers' New York District. In 1944 he became district engineer of the Providence District and, later that year, district engineer of the New York District. Charles N. Branham, ed., *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York Since Its Establishment in 1802. Supplement, Volume IX, 1940-1950* (n.p.: Association of Graduates, U.S. Military Academy, 1950), 481. Grace De Ware is not identified.

5 John Roy Carlson (not Carson) [Arthur Derounian], *Under Cover: My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America—The Amazing Revelation of How Axis Agents and Our Enemies Within are Now Plotting to Destroy the United States* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1943).

**SATURDAY, 9 December 1944, 1630 hours**

We have crossed the sand bar and are approaching LE HAVRE. We are now passing a ship whose stern only is above water. It seems to have broken midships.

As we approach LE HAVRE, on the left is a high cliff. This cliff is studded with gun emplacements. This is my first experience of the ravages of war. Approximately seventy five percent of the bldgs are damaged or completely destroyed. We are now entering the breakwater, a massive concrete wall. Very close on our right is the mast only of a ship sticking out of the water.

This city is really in shambles. As we come closer it becomes apparent that a very few bldgs have not been damaged at least slightly. This damage, I understand, was done by allied sea and air power in wresting the city from the Germans. Some of the destruction is so complete, however, that I would guess that it is the result of deliberate demolitions on the part of the retreating Germans. As we come closer to the docks I'm more convinced that the destruction here was accomplished by the Germans.<sup>6</sup>

They have done a thorough job. These sights have had a profound effect on me. I couldn't begin to estimate the extent of the damage.

The two French officers are with me now pointing out the various bldgs. Capt. TROTER is now telling me about the GARE MARITIME Du HAVRE. The framework only of this railroad station remains.

Although some ships are tied up to docks, most are anchored in this slip thru which we are moving and are discharging their cargos into lighters and DUKWS.<sup>7</sup>

Two tugs are jockeying us now. It's 1720. I'm going to eat in case we have to debark hastily.

It is 2000. We have tied up along another ship. Nothing will happen until tomorrow morning.

2200: The picture has changed again. We are now being unloaded by Doc Bn.<sup>8</sup> Operations will be continued until we are completely unloaded.

I still do not know where the rest of the regiment is or when we will marry up with them.



<sup>6</sup> See note 39 in the history section.

<sup>7</sup> A lighter is a large barge used for delivering goods to or unloading goods from a cargo vessel. A DUKW is a 2½-ton, 6 ft. by 6 ft., amphibious truck.

<sup>8</sup> "Doc Bn" might be Dock Battalion.

**SUNDAY, 10 December 1944, 1800 hours**

The last 24 hours have been very, very rough ones. I have had no more than three hours of sleep. These were in my command car. I haven't had my clothes off; haven't once washed my face or teeth.

We were unloaded last night on an LCT and made a beach landing at LE HAVRE. At approximately 0200 this morning we arrived at our bivouac area, which is merely a stretch of road on which we parked our vehicles. I saw Maj. Wetzel upon arrival at Bivouac Area; he departed for DIJON by train this morning with approximately 1,000 troops.

These notes are being written in my C and R by the light of a "torch."<sup>9</sup> It's very cold and damp; it's hailing. This will be my bedroom tonight also.

Today I made arrangements for gas, water and release on our movement for Tuesday, 12 Dec. Not all of our equipment has been unloaded yet—approximately 80%.

**TUESDAY, 12 December 1944, 0830 [hours]**

Did not manage to write notes last night since I got involved in the complicated task of unrolling my bedding roll in the C and R and worming into same.

We're still at the transient area (B) awaiting clearance for convoy. As a matter of fact, these notes are being written at Area B Hqs where I have come in an attempt to expedite clearance.

At every meal (C rations, of course) which we have had, a number of women and children have gathered to ask for food. They really do not look starving so I don't know whether they have resorted to begging as the only means of obtaining food or whether they witness no shame in the matter.



<sup>9</sup> "C and R" is a command and reconnaissance vehicle, developed to give officers and staff mobility on the battlefield. "Torch" is the British term for "flashlight."

**12 December 1944, 1800 [hours]**

As the result of some "fast" talking, I obtained clearance for my convoys this morning. We left the bivouac area in three serials:

First Bn vehicles minus heavy equipment

2d Bn vehicles minus heavy equipment.

Heavy equipment.

Heavy equipment departed 0900, 1st Bn at 1100, 2nd Bn at 1130.

Riding in my C and R with Lt. Yonally and Dan Brown (Driver),

I lost 1st and 2nd Bn convoys and passed Heavy Equipment.<sup>10</sup>

These notes are being written at the mess hall of an MP detachment in Beauvais where we stopped off to ask for a meal.

Fortunately we ran into the mess sergeant who gave us first: steak, potatoes and corn, then followed this up with a hamburger and spaghetti. I ate everything.

The road, so far, has been interesting in that both sides are strewn with wrecked German vehicles, the results, no doubt, of our strafing of the retreating German columns. A huge railroad bridge was noticed demolished. We're going to shave and wash at the MP Det.

**THURSDAY, 14 December 1944**

After riding practically all night Tuesday, we arrived at DIJON (Engr Section of CAS) at approximately 1100 Wednesday morning.<sup>11</sup> There we were advised that the Regimental bivouac area was located at LES FORGES approximately three (3) miles west of EPINAL. Without delay we proceeded to LES FORGES, arriving at approximately 1800 Wednesday.

The route followed from LE HAVRE to LES FORGES is: LE HAVRE N14, St ROMAIN GC 134, LILLEBONNE GC 29 to RD Jct GC 40 to RD Jct N14, YVETOT, ROUEN N30, GOURNAY N31, BEAUVAIS, CLERMONT, Compiègne, SOISSONS, FISMES N386 RD Jct N51 Right on N51 to EPERNAY N3, CHALONS N4 to VITRY LE FRANCOIS, ST DIZIER N67, JOINVILLE, CHAUMONT N19, LANGRES, N74 DIJON.

We retraced our steps part of the way in order to arrive at LES FORGES.

*Army Engineer lensatic compass.*



Upon arrival at LES FORGES I found everything pretty much in a mess. Nothing much could be done at night so I turned in for the night in a room of the caretaker's house. There was no stove and it was cold.

Today I spent most of the time at EPINAL reconnoitering a site for another bivouac area. I found one place, a previous French Bks [barracks] (occupied by US troops in the last war) which struck me very favorably.

I decided to move 1st Bn and Hqs to that site.

These notes are being written at LES FORGES. We will move to EPINAL tomorrow.

**MONDAY, 18 December 1944**

The events of the last few days have happened in such rapid succession that I even forgot to note them. (Last notes were written on 14 December.)

Friday, 15 Dec, I rode to DIJON, CAS Hqs. On that day Regt'1 Hq, H/S Co and the 1st Bn moved to EPINAL.<sup>12</sup> I went to DIJON principally to confer with Colonel Smullen, CAS Engr, and also to obtain the general picture on work, supply, administration, etc. Colonel Smullen, however, was not there, having gone to Switzerland to contract for prefabricated bldgs.

Both Friday and Saturday were spent at CAS Hqs. Friday night was spent at CENTRAL HOTEL, DIJON.

Upon my return to EPINAL, Saturday evening, I received a telephone call from Capt. Lee from LUNEVILLE. Capt. Lee had been sent there to reconnoiter site for division rest camp. He explained that job was hot, so I decided to send 2nd Bn and went that night to LES FORGES to notify Bn Cmdr of 2nd Bn [Major Mohler].

The 2nd Bn moved to LUNEVILLE Sunday and I drove up in the afternoon to make a hasty inspection. Returned to EPINAL Sunday night; learned that we have also been assigned the task of rehabilitating certain bldgs in EPINAL (the site of a military prep school) for a general hospital.

Monday morning, Maj. O'Toole, Maj. Worley and myself made the reconnaissance of these bldgs.

In the afternoon Maj. O'Toole and I drove to LUNEVILLE.

These notes are being written at the RIVERA HOTEL, LUNEVILLE. I'm tired; its 2300.

I'm ready for bed.

<sup>10</sup> James N. Yonally, Akron, Ohio, regimental information and education officer; Dan Brown was apparently an enlisted man who was Bagnulo's driver.

<sup>11</sup> See note 42 in the history section.

<sup>12</sup> Regimental headquarters, Headquarters and Service Company, and the 1st Battalion.

**WEDNESDAY, 20 December 1944, 2100 hours**

I'm back at EPINAL again.

After a great deal of scurrying about, making plans and mobilizing for the task of developing a division rest camp at LUNEVILLE, the General (Maj. Gen. Arthur Wilson) informed us this morning that the entire scheme has been dropped.<sup>13</sup> It seems as though our Armies are being "Tussled" by the Germans at present and there is not much chance of a division being pulled back from the front lines for rest.<sup>14</sup>

I decided to leave the 2nd Bn at LUNEVILLE at the CASERNE STAINVILLE. It is an excellent site and promises to be close to the center of gravity of activities. After giving Maj. Mohler instructions, I drove to SAVERNE to visit Engr Section of 7th Army reference road maintenance.

The road from LUNEVILLE to SAVERNE was heavily congested with trucks going both ways. The scars of battle were readily noticeable en route. It appeared that a good portion of the disabled equipment seen is allied.

Tonight I'm apprehensive about the amount of work being accomplished by the staff. They may require some "jacking up."

**TUESDAY, 26 December 1944, 0845 [hours]**

It is difficult to realize that six days have passed since I wrote notes last. These notes are being [written] at HQ, 2nd Bn, LUNEVILLE.

I drove up here yesterday afternoon, attended a party last night, now I am waiting for certain papers before proceeding to OBERNAI, then STRASBOURG. OBERNAI is the site of a 7th Army Engr Dump which we are taking over as per orders from Engr Sect, CAS.

Mohler, Gunter and I are going to STRASBOURG reference captured enemy equipment. Major Keller, CEM, is the officer we want to see there.<sup>15</sup> The party last night turned out to be a drunken brawl. I didn't enjoy myself at all. During the night a number of planes flew overhead and aerial bombardment could be heard to the east.

The night before last a number of men, Free French I suspect, fired on my wrecker as it was towing a disabled vehicle of the 94th

[Infantry Division]. Who was with him received a bullet wound in the leg.

In the last few days, Maj. Wetzel and I have had a number of "run-ins" reference division of responsibility and staff functions. Yesterday, I wrote six pages outlining proper staff functioning, which Maj. Wetzel has read and which apparently has clarified the situation. The "poop" also contained definite instructions on certain things that I want accomplished.

Two German prisoners have just entered 2d Bn HQ under guard. Approximately 150 such prisoners are being worked by the 2nd Bn. Of these two who just entered, one is approximately 45 years, the other is 35 years. Just a little hand signaling was necessary to put them to work cleaning the floor.

**THURSDAY, 28 December 1944**

The situation is, at least, lukewarm.

I went to OBERNAI Tuesday to reconnoiter the captured enemy dump. I was surprised to see what was there. The dump at OBERNAI apparently was built by the Germans with permanence in mind. Spur facilities, shops, warehouses and office space were all provided. Large stores of Engr materials were left intact. In the afternoon we went to STRASBOURG to contact Maj. Keller, head of the CEM board, (Captured Enemy Materials) but did not find him. We visited another captured enemy dump where all classes of materials were stored, from cannons to horse equipment. At this location, we were within two miles of the front lines. Large caliber guns could be heard constantly, and occasionally machine gun fire could be heard at not too great a distance.

Wednesday morning we visited the dump at RUSS. A great deal of misc supplies were available there also.

My reaction resulting from observations was to establish a permanent dump at OBERNAI, but this was changed Wednesday night when I received telephonic instructions from Engr Officer to evacuate all supplies from OBERNAI and RUSS as quickly as possible and to have ten demolition squads alerted and mobile. These instructions lead me to believe that a German breakthrough is expected. This is more or less confirmed by news from the front.

Between LUNEVILLE and OBERNAI we travelled through some beautiful mountain country very much SWISS in character. Along these roads the remains of German-prepared obstacles still are in evidence.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur R. Wilson was commander of the Continental Advance Section (CONAD). Roland G. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1953), 1:10.

<sup>14</sup> A reference to the Battle of the Bulge.

<sup>15</sup> CEM is captured enemy material. See diary entry for 28 December 1944.

**FRIDAY, 29 December 1944, 2015 [hours]**

**OBERNAI**

**SATURDAY, 30 December 1944, 1900 [hours]**

**OBERNAI**

Just as I started this last night the lights failed, and I was compelled to discontinue. This has been a very interesting week: On Tuesday, I came to OBERNAI with a view of taking over dumps both here and RUSS. Upon my return to EPINAL I was advised to evacuate these dumps since they may be in enemy hands within a few days. Within the last three days we have loaded approximately 200 truckloads of supplies from here and RUSS.

This morning I went to STRASBOURG to obtain information of the tactical situation. This what I was told:

The Germans have crossed the MOSELLE River south of us near COLMAR. We are being pressed also from the north. This entire area around STRASBOURG then forms a pocket which is held on lightly. The plan is to withdraw.

Meanwhile I'm evacuating as much supplies from RUSS and from here as I can. Hope we don't get caught.

**MONDAY, 8 January 1945, 0800 [hours]**

**EPINAL,**

On New Years day, troops of the 343 Engrs (III Corps) took over the guard of OBERNAI and we departed, having evacuated approximately 1,000 tons captured enemy material.<sup>16</sup> On the return trip I was convoy commander for six Italian Service Unit trucks, the last group of trucks to come out of OBERNAI.<sup>17</sup> Since then I've spent two days in DIJON conferring with Col. Smullen. (I'm expecting him to visit me this morning.)

This morning is the first time in a week that I have felt like living. I have a cold and apparently I was pretty much worn down as a result of the intensive and nerve wracking work.

One of the platoons of Co E is still at RUSS evacuating that place. Co D has moved back to LUNEVILLE to maintain a 17 mile

<sup>16</sup> 343d Engineer General Service Regiment, a white unit.

<sup>17</sup> After the fall of the Mussolini government, Italy became a cobelligerent of the Allied armies. Italian prisoners of war were given the choice of remaining prisoners or joining Allied non-combatant units. In the U.S. Army these were company-size units, usually in the Quartermaster or Transportation Corps. A majority of Italian PWs in American hands voluntarily joined the Italian Service Units. Their status was ambiguous—although considered soldiers of the U.S. Army, they were technically PWs. Charles T. O'Reilly, *Forgotten Battles: Italy's War of Liberation, 1943-1945* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001), 165-67.

stretch of road for 7th Army. I have failed to note that HQs, 7th Army moved back to LUNEVILLE and took over the CASERNE STAINVILLE being occupied by 2nd Bn. Co F moved in with 51st Sta[tion] Hospital at LUNEVILLE.<sup>18</sup> Bn HQs Cos D and E moved back to LES FORGES.

**TUESDAY, 23 January [1945], 1200 hours**

**NANCY**

Last notes were written on 8 Jan 45.

I'm at the Grand Hotel, NANCY, having been here for two days as a result of the fact that CAS area has extended considerably to the west beyond NANCY. I don't know the exact line as yet.

Col. Smullen asked me to come up to NANCY to find the following:

- a. Depot Site
- b. Office space for Engrs Sect—8,000 sq ft<sup>19</sup>
- c. Billet for Engr Sect Personnel
- d. Billet for my personnel

I've found what I believe will be an excellent depot site at TOUL. Maj. Impson, Engineer Supply Officer, CAS, and Capt. Lee are investigating the site more in detail today.

I've found, also, an excellent caserne in TOUL to house my regiment or part of it.

Maj. Carey, Real Estate Officer, CAS, is working on the office space and billet.

Nothing very exciting has happened since writing my last notes. "Mike," my brother in law, came to visit me.<sup>20</sup> He seems to be a swell fellow.



*Engineer branch insignia.*

<sup>18</sup> The 500-bed 51st Station Hospital at Lunéville was originally intended to be a neuro-psychiatric facility in support of the Third and Seventh Armies but was used to care for medical and surgical patients during the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign. Graham A. Cosmas and Albert E. Cowdrey, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1992), 386.

<sup>19</sup> Engineering Section, Seventh Army.

<sup>20</sup> Maj. Miguel Montesinos was the brother of Bagnulo's wife, Helen. During the war he served as an intelligence officer in the Seventh Army. His unit came across the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau, which they helped to liberate. Miguel J. Montesinos interview, 25 January 1980, by Elizabeth Jacobs, Box 3, Folder 65, Fred Roberts Crawford Witness to the Holocaust Project files, Special Collections Dept., Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

**FRIDAY, 25 January [1945], 2000 hours**  
**EPINAL**

We (Captain Lee and I) left NANCY at approximately 1400 yesterday, stopped off to see Col. [Ralph D.] King, Engr Sect of 7th Army HQs, then Co F at LUNEVILLE, and arrived here at approximately 2000 last night. Had a meeting with the staff to discuss my plans regarding the move of Hqs and 1st Bn to TOUL.

Wetzel has been ill for a week or ten days. This morning at 0500 I heard him calling for Dabbs and went into his room to find out what was wrong. He asked me to call "Doc." I did and when we returned, Wetzel started to cry and explained that he has been in constant fear of something. It seems that he has completely broken down and is a PN case.<sup>21</sup>

This surprised me for Wetzel is the last one whom I would suspect to "crack up." He will report to the hospital this morning for admission.

With both him and Bob Cross in the hospital we are running pretty short of personnel. [one and a half lines blacked out]

**SATURDAY, 26 January 1945, 2100 hours**  
**EPINAL**

The last few days have brought us approximately 15 inches of snow. This has caused us to work feverishly night and day in an attempt to keep the roads open.

The Regiment has an area of responsibility which includes approximately 300 miles of road. The situation looked quite serious this afternoon so HQs at DIJON have reinforced us by sending two graders from the 335th Engrs and issuing, in addition, 2 more graders and a D-7.<sup>22</sup> Maj. Jaques made arrangements with the 926th Avn Engr Regt to take over the roads in the NANCY area.<sup>23</sup> This is the area which, I believe, will be given to us, but which, at present, is nobody's responsibility.

I'm tired so I'm going to bed.

Made out efficiency reports today and tonight.

<sup>21</sup> It is possible that Bagnulo meant NP, or neuropsychiatric, case.

<sup>22</sup> 335th Engineer General Service Regiment, a white unit. A D-7 is a medium bulldozer.

<sup>23</sup> 926th Engineer Aviation Regiment, a white unit.

**FRIDAY, 2 February [1945], 2120 hours**  
**EPINAL**

Much has transpired since the writing of the last notes on 26 Jan.

Col. Wetzel has been transferred out of the regiment. He was admitted to the 236th [General Hospital] as a mental case and transferred from there to an unknown hospital. There is much speculation in the regiment to the effect that he has "goofed" off after receiving his promotion. Many things lead one to believe this.

Three days ago it rained and we have had a thaw since then. Practically all snow has disappeared off the roads. Now we are worried about excessive floods and our bridges going out.

I returned from TOUL after a quick trip up there to review Capt. Lee's plan for occupying caserne BAUTZEN. He and a platoon of Co C are there now. The staff is going up there tomorrow to look over the scheme which Lee and I have agreed upon.

Capt. Dabbs has been assigned as executive. Lt. Yonally as S-1.<sup>24</sup> Capt. Lee is very much disturbed that he was not given executive's job.



*"Doc" Ivkovich, surgeon for the 1321st, and nurse.*

<sup>24</sup> S-1 is the personnel staff officer.

**SUNDAY, 4 February 1945**  
**EPINAL**

Last notes were written 2 Feb.

An interesting episode happened today. This morning I went into Capt. Dabbs' office to advise him that I was leaving for church. In his office was a French female soldier. She was blonde, small, dressed in American G.I. coat and French motorcyclist headgear. She was searching for a hospital which was reported to have French soldiers in it. Since I was going to the 35th Sta[tion] hospital to church, I offered to show her the way to it and to the 236th Gen Hosp which was very close to the 35th. (She could not speak a word of English so we had our interpreter (Velasquez ) interpret.) Before letting her off at the 236th I asked her to have lunch with us, which she gladly accepted, and I went off to church. Capt. [R. A.] Watson, CO [commanding officer] of 791st DT [Dump Truck] Co also had lunch with us and had with him an excellent interpreter. I learned that Mademoiselle Lemoine was attached to the "Regiment de March Legione Etrangere" (Foreign Legion) as a social worker.<sup>25</sup> A most interesting conversation ensued for approximately one hour. Her driver arrived and she left, but before she did she gave me the regimental insignia of the RMLE in gratitude for our hospitality.

My memories of her are that she is intelligent, keen and gracious; attractive but not beautiful.

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*An engineer from the 1321st poses upon an abandoned field artillery piece.*



<sup>25</sup> Régiment de marche de la Légion étrangère, a unit of the French foreign legion.



*Members of the 1321st at church service in France.*

**MONDAY, 12 February 1945**

Last notes were written 4 Feb.

During the past week, I went down to DIJON and returned, then I went to TOUL through LUNEVILLE to watch the corduroy job being done by Co F on the road.

I returned from TOUL Saturday at approximately 1800, and no more than 20 minutes after having arrived I received a call from Col. Smullen to go to THIONVILLE, 28 Kils [kilometers] north of METZ, to reconnoiter a site for its possibilities as an Engr Depot. Since he wanted the information by noon, Sunday, I went to TOUL Saturday night, remained there overnight, and Maj. Jaques and I were on the road 0600 Sunday. We went to THIONVILLE, but learned that there is no Engr Depot there, but that there is one at WOIPPY, just a few kilos north of METZ.

We retraced our steps to WOIPPY where we found a captured enemy engineer depot.

It was a huge depot; 300,000 sq ft closed storage, 200 acres hard standing, and siding for 100 cars, but it was badly damaged as the result of air bombardment by our air force.<sup>26</sup> I reported my findings to Col. Smullen by phone and returned to EPINAL. I'm really tired after those trips.



<sup>26</sup> Hardstand or hardstanding is a hard-surfaced area, often used for vehicle maintenance or storage.

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**THURSDAY, 15 February 1945**

**EPINAL**

Last notes written 12 February.

The roads have been failing badly since the thaw and in many places they are impassible. Yesterday, I conducted an experiment using gravel. Since all officers (here) are busy, I put Capt. Harris, my dental officer, in charge of the detail. He did an excellent job.

I'm going out again now with Capt. Harris and the detail to work some more on the particular spot. We spread a thick layer of gravel over a bad spot. This morning I want to check it and run a grader over it.

I expect Smullen to visit me later this morning.

**FRIDAY, 16 February 1945**

**EPINAL**

Colonel Smullen arrived at approximately 1700 yesterday. He had supper with us and departed at approximately 2100. Maj. Baldwin, a former SOLOC [Southern Line of Communications (Rhône Valley)] officer now with Engr Sect CAS, accompanied him.

The conference was very satisfactory. In connection with the 1392nd Forestry Co, we will ship out of VINCEY 50,000 bd ft [board feet] of tactical lumber to 7th Army daily. 7th Army and 1392nd vehicles will haul from mills to VINCEY. We have been authorized to become engaged in lumber business to certain extent by helping mill owners.

In addition, we are to commence drawing lumber from MEURTHE MOSELLE Dept.<sup>27</sup> Our allocation in VOSGES is 5,000,000 bd ft; in MEURTHE and MOSELLE it is 2,000,000.

This lumber is to be procured by 31 March.

Col. Smullen could not honor our request for more dump trucks. Problem of providing 400 tons of rock or slag to 7th Army daily was explained. Nothing definite was reached. Maj. Jaques is reconnoitering in connection with this. Col. Smullen explained that it is contemplated that considerable road maintenance area would be taken from us in the south so we could take over Nancy area.

We are pleased with these prospects.

**MONDAY, 19 February 1945, 0915 [hours]**

Last notes written 16 Feb.

Saturday morning I went to Hqs 7th Army to obtain consolidated signed receipt for all of the lumber furnished to them up to 15 Feb.

I then went to BLAINVILLE to visit Co F in their new location, then proceeded to TOUL.

Remained at TOUL Saturday night, went into NANCY Sunday morning to try to make arrangements for shipment by rail of rock or gravel to DOMGERMAIN. Maj. Jaques and I were together and had little success. Maj. Jaques will follow through.

Then proceeded to DOMGERMAIN to inspect Co C in process of developing depot. It promises to be an interesting job. At present Capt. Collis is constructing additional unloading hard standing and hard standing for open storage.

I return[ed] to TOUL Sunday afternoon.



*Unwinding in the mess hall.*

<sup>27</sup> Department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. A French department is roughly equivalent to an American county.



**TUESDAY, 20 February 1945**

**TOUL**

I have moved my office and belongings to TOUL. This move was prompted by the fact that I intend to move my Hqs and one battalion to TOUL eventually and also by the fact that four German PW [prisoner of war] companies are to report to me in TOUL within the next day or two.

These four PW companies (216 PWs in each company) are to be used for depot operations, and until depot personnel can take care of them, I am to be responsible for them.

After arriving here, I went around with Lt. Geller to obtain information on how they will arrive. Information indicates that they will have personal equipment only. Accordingly we made arrangements for cooking facilities and rations.

**WEDNESDAY, 28 February 1945**

Last notes written 20 Feb.

The events of the last two days are worthy of being noted. The German PWs arrived yesterday afternoon, 704 in number. Today the four companies, 9041, 9042, 9043 and 9044, were engaged in cleaning and improving their quarters. Captain Lee, who has been made P/W officer, has done an excellent job of whipping things into shape rapidly. The prisoners have taken hold without much instructions. Capt. Lee seems to be enjoying his assignment immensely.

Today 20 4-ton dump trucks were made available to us for our work here. It has been a great source of pleasure to observe the amount of rock being hauled by them. Two of the main roads at DOMGERMAIN are practically complete. Stone is being applied to the third.

Our progress at DOMGERMAIN has been cause for many favorable comments. Capt. Collis has done a fine job so far.

We have had excellent weather for approximately 2 weeks.

**THURSDAY, 1 March 1945**

These notes are being written in my C&R while at site of E 257 Depot project, DOMGERMAIN.<sup>28</sup>

At a conference yesterday afternoon (Col. Baldwin, Maj. O'Toule, Maj. Radki, Capt. Dabbs and myself) it was decided that the 334th Engr would take over construction work at E 523 and I would continue at E 257.<sup>29</sup> This morning I had a conference with Col. [G.] Bloodgood, CO of the 334th Engr, in which I outlined to him the features of the work, as given to me in yesterday's conference, at E 523. Col. Bloodgood and I decided that 10 (ten) of his 4-ton dump trucks would continue to haul for me; the others would haul for him. He also agreed to take over operation of 3/4 Link-belt shovel which is being provided by the Dept. At present I am operating a 3/4 yard BUCKEYE and a 1/2 yard OSGOOD.<sup>30</sup>

**MONDAY, 12 March 1945**

**TOUL**

Notes have not been written for many days.

Today, Colonel Baldwin asked me for an estimate on completion of the Depot at DOMGERMAIN. Estimate given:

- 1 - Original area 23 March
- 2 - Area within south cover of triangle 31 Mar
- 3 - Area south of triangle 10 April

The information I received regarding sending a company to La FORGE (South of SARREBOURG) was confirmed tonight. Co E will be sent.

28 E-257 is perhaps the Engineer Supply Installation at Domgermain.

29 It is uncertain if "Col. Baldwin" is the same as the Major Baldwin mentioned in the entry of 16 February 1945 and if "Maj. O'Toule" is the same as the Major O'Toule mentioned on 18 December 1944. The 334th was the 334th Engineer Special Service Regiment. E-523 was the Engineer Supply Installation at Toul. *Final Report of the Chief Engineer, European Theater of Operations, 1942-1945*, vol. 2 (n.p., n.d.), Appendix 20-A and Appendix 20-B, CEHO.

30 Link-Belt, Buckeye, and Osgood were companies that manufactured power shovels and other construction equipment. Eric Reinert, CEHO, personal communication, 1 May 2008.

**THURSDAY, 15 March 1945, 0830 hours  
TOUL**

Yesterday was a very full day. In the morning Col. Baldwin advised me that he desired that the 334th take over construction of the area at DOMGERMAIN south of the triangle. I contacted Colonel Bloodgood, C. O. of 334th, and advised him of same and made arrangements for his proceeding with this work.

Later in the day Colonel Baldwin advised me that rear boundary of CAS would be coincident with MEURTHE – MOSELLE – VOSGES boundary and that, in all probability, troops would be frozen in present locations. In view of the fact that he desired that all of my regiment be with CAS, he suggested that I take steps to move those, who are not already there, into proposed CAS area. Accordingly Hdqs, 2nd Bn is moving to BLAINVILLE with Co F and Co D is on its way to WOIPPY just north of METZ.

Tuesday I went to La FORGE to reconnoiter area into which Co E is moving. I learned that Co E will be part of a team whose mission is to keep a pipeline within 10 miles of front line as 7th Army moves forward. It promises to be an interesting assignment for Co E.



*Colonel Bagnulo at a field conference to determine the boundaries of the Domgermain depot.*

**SUNDAY, 18 March 1945  
HQs in vicinity of St. NICOLAS**

Yesterday "Mike" came to visit me but I was at CAS HQs. Today I've come to visit him, but he is at 6AG HQs.<sup>31</sup>

This morning I delivered to Colonel Smullen in person a tabulation of the results of our survey of METZ.

(He gave the regt the assignment of surveying available facilities.) He explained that he desired two companies in the new area to be taken over from 7th Army and that he wanted to find location (sidings) along which he could establish stockpiles of rock. Maj. Jaques and Maj. Alsin are reconnoitering those areas today.<sup>32</sup> Last night Captain Collis got drunk and raised hell with his officers so that they are ready to "quit." I intend to investigate the matter tonight. It appears that we might have to start reclassification proceedings on Collis.

**FRIDAY, 23 March 1945  
TOUL**

Last notes written 18 March.

The events of the last few days have happened with lightning [speed]. My regiment is moving forward to take over certain areas as the 7th Army moves forward.

Three out of 5 G[eneral]. S[ervice]. Reg'ts have been selected to support 7th Army as it advances. The 1321st is one of the three.

This morning Colonel Bloodgood and I are going to 7 A[Army] Hdqs to report.



<sup>31</sup> 6th Army Group, commanded by Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers.

<sup>32</sup> "Alsin" is probably the Maj. Bill Alsyn mentioned in the history section.

**TUESDAY, 27 March 1945**  
**SARREBOURG**

I moved to this location yesterday. The rest of the Reg't HQs will move here today and tomorrow. The disposition of the Reg't at present is as follows:

Reg'tl HQs H/S Co - SARREBOURG  
Hdqs, 1st Bn - SARREBOURG  
CO A - TOUL  
Co B - RECHICOURT  
Co C - CHATEAU-SALINS  
Hdqs 2nd Bn and Co D either SAVERNE or PHALSBOURG  
Co E - SARREGUEMINES  
Co F - HAGUENAU

**WEDNESDAY, 4 April 1945**  
**SARREBOURG**

Last notes were written 27 March, 1945.

Saturday, I was ordered back to NANCY to attend a ceremony given by the French to honor General Sebree, who liberated that city.<sup>33</sup> In a very colorful ceremony at the Hotel de Ville, Nancy, the General was made an honorary citizen of Nancy. The ceremony took place in a large ballroom. Lined up along one side of this room were the American Officers like myself who were ordered to the ceremony and on the other side were French officers, French civilians and city officials dressed in bright colored ermine robes.

Lieutenant General Patch, 7th Army commander, attended the ceremony. He is a tall, impressive soldierly man. My eyes were fixed on him in admiration throughout the ceremony.

Sunday morning I went to TOUL to make arrangements for picking up some equipment and releasing the men of Co A from guard at E 523 and E 524.<sup>34</sup> On the return trip from TOUL between Toul and Nancy, I saw what was left of a horse which has stepped on a mine. What remained consisted only of the rear portion of the body and the two hind legs.

Engr Sect, CAS, moved to MANNHEIM yesterday (forward) and rear moved to KAISERSLAUTERN.

<sup>33</sup> Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree was the assistant commander of the 35th Infantry Division through February 1945. A task force under Sebree liberated Nancy on 15 September 1944. Hugh M. Cole, *The Lorraine Campaign* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, U.S. Army, 1950), 95.

<sup>34</sup> E-524 is not identified. It does not appear in the *Final Report of the Chief Engineer*, vol. 2, Appendix 20-A.

**SUNDAY, 8 April 1945, 1330 hours**  
**SARREBOURG**

Two interesting episodes occurred since the writing of the last notes which are not "in the line of business."

Friday afternoon, Maj. Worley and I went to HEMING to investigate the site for unloading rock. While we were there, two white American soldiers, very much excited, came to us to report that three girls had approached them and asked them for protection. A colored guard, they related, had struck one of the girls and had threatened to return with a pistol. Thinking it was one of my men, I accompanied the soldiers to the home of these girls. Worley entered first to find a number of young girls, one of whom had nothing on but a skirt and a blouse which was unbuttoned so that her breasts were bare. She had covered up by the time I entered so that I did not get in on the show. In my best French, I investigated and learned that soldiers frequented this home. That day a slightly dark soldier had asked one of the girls if she would "coucher" with him, whereupon she slapped him on the face.<sup>35</sup> He in turn slapped her. I asked if she knew who the soldier is, and she replied in the affirmative and led Worley and me to an adjacent house.

*Corps of Engineers half-pound blocks of TNT.*



<sup>35</sup> In this context, "coucher" is meant as "go to bed."

There I found that a number of Ordnance soldiers were billeted and it was one of these who had done the slapping. Things were worked out satisfactorily and the girls asked us if we would return to their home for some coffee, whereupon I decided that it would be advisable to decline and continue our investigation of the rock situation.

Six months ago yesterday we set sail from Boston P of E [port of embarkation] and we had a party last night. Arrangements for approximately 25 girls had been made at the major's office. They were fairly attractive but mostly young. Both colored and white officers were there and it was somewhat of a disturbing sight to see the colored officers dance with the white girls—although I have tried to eliminate any such reaction.

Toward the end of the dance I met a Marie Houssier who had been a dancing instructor and who is an excellent dancer. I enjoyed dancing with her immensely. The party ended at midnight and all seemed to have enjoyed themselves. Many of the girls asked me if we would have another.

**MONDAY, 9 April 1945**

**German border north of WISSEMBOURG**

This is the first time I have set foot on German soil. I left SARREBOURG at approximately 0930 hours and proceeded to HAGUENAU. Between SARREBOURG and DETTWILLER, Co D had a number of prisoners on the road. Their work resulted in considerable improvement on the condition of the road. I stopped off at Co F for a short time at HAGUENAU, had a cup of coffee, then proceeded on my way.

It's a beautiful spring day. The trees are in full bloom and the grass is a luscious green. Dan Brown and I have just completed lunch, and having written these notes we will be on our way.



*German prisoners of war attached to the 1321st.*

**WEDNESDAY, 11 April 1945**

**SARREBOURG**

I returned from my trip to Germany late yesterday afternoon. I left HAGUENAU about 1100 Monday, proceeded north to WISSEMBOURG, NEUSTADT, LUDWIGSHAFEN, cross the Rhine over to MANNHEIM and proceeded to CAS Hqs which is approximately six kils southeast of MANNHEIM. Arrived CAS Hqs mid afternoon.

LUDWIGSHAFEN and MANNHEIM have been practically beaten to a pulp. We crossed the RHINE on a reinforced pontoon bridge.

Being in Germany resulted in a strange feeling which is not pleasant. We are surrounded by people who have been our bitter enemies for years, and it is certain that their feeling toward us must not be friendly. With the non fraternization policy now in effect, the occupation troops will be similar to confined men.<sup>36</sup>

Most of the land seen is farmland and mostly vineyard



<sup>36</sup> As the Allied troops were entering Germany, General Dwight D. Eisenhower issued a directive prohibiting "mingling with Germans upon terms of friendliness, familiarity, or intimacy, individually or in groups in official or unofficial dealings." In practice, the non-fraternization policy proved nearly impossible to enforce. Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1990), 329–30.

cultivated. It is beautiful. The Germans were hard at work in their fields and in the cities setting everything right.

It was alarming to see the large number of [young] German men in civilian clothes working.

There can be no question that these men are German soldiers who have thrown away their uniforms and returned to civilian life. They may be dangerous.

Colonel Smullen directed me to take over maintenance of the road from SARREGUEMINES, HOMBURG, KAISERSLAUTERN and relieved me of responsibility of the road from LUNEVILLE to SARREBOURG.

That means at present we are maintaining the road from SARREBOURG to Haguenau in addition to the road mentioned above. Co's A and C will be sent up to take over the SARREGUEMINES-KAISERSLAUTERN road.

**SUNDAY, 15 April 1945, 2145 hours  
SARREBOURG**

Last notes were written Wednesday 11 April.

Today being Sunday, I decided to take it off this afternoon and take a ride up into the nearby mountains. Maj. Worley, Capt. Dabbs, Lt. Thomas, and Lt. Geller and I made the trip.<sup>37</sup>

It was a perfect day and the scenery along the mountain roads was beautiful.

Near the town of DABO, we could see in the distance a church which stands on the top of the highest mountain in that area. At about the same time we passed two religious processions, of approximately 200-300 people in each procession, headed in the general direction of this church. We learned that today is the day set aside to commemorate Pope LEO who was born in this area and that these processions were headed for the church.<sup>38</sup>

We decided to visit the church also. We had to leave the car at the road and travel the rest of the way by foot, which was a 20 minute climb. The views from the top of that mountain thrilled me. These small French towns with their red roofed houses setting on the sides of the hills formed a delightful picture. Some of the views showed cultivated land, towns and some areas just forests.



<sup>37</sup> George M. Thomas, Saco, Maine, regimental motor officer.

<sup>38</sup> Probably St. Leo IX, who was born in Alsace and was known as Bruno of Toul. His papacy lasted from 1049 to 1054; his feast day is 19 April.

**THURSDAY, 26 April 1945  
SINGEN, GERMANY, CP, CO D.<sup>39</sup>**

The last notes were written 15 April.

I have not been prompted to write since there has not been much of interest.

The last two days, however, have brought about a completely new picture.

Monday of this week, I moved my advance CP to BAD DURKHEIM, GERMANY with a view to being closer to CAS HQ. Tuesday morning, when I reported to CAS HQ, I learned that instructions had been issued to rear HQ to move Co's D and F into position to accomplish repair work on the autobahn from KARLSRUHE to STUTTGART. Yesterday I reconnoitered the entire route and these are the jobs involved.<sup>40</sup>

- a. Fill a crater two kilometers NW of SINGEN.
- b. Jack a bridge back into position 1.0 kils SE of SINGEN.
- c. Raise and crib one end of autobahn bridge which had been partially dropped.

This is a reinforced concrete stringer bridge, 10 stringers (5' x 2'), 60' span. Location is at intersections of Hwy 10 and autobahn a few kils NW of PFORZHEIM.



*Army Engineer  
welding goggles.*



<sup>39</sup> CP is command post.

<sup>40</sup> In the original diary, items (a) through (f) on this list are preceded by a check mark; items (g) through (j) are not. The significance of the marks is unknown.

- d. Provide 2 way connection from Hwy 10 to autobahn north of PFORZHEIM.
- e. Build 80' bridge along autobahn over cross road E of PFORZHEIM.
- f. Build 80' bridge along autobahn over cross road 1 kil SE of WIMSHEIM.
- g. Fill gap on autobahn caused by dropping bridge on cross road below, 3 kils north of HEIMSHEIM.
- h. Fill gap on autobahn caused by dropping bridge on crossroad below, 3 kils slightly east and north of HEIMSHEIM.
- i. Fill gap on autobahn 1 kil SE of RUTESHEIM.
- j. Build 150' span over RR crossing 2 kils SW of LEONBERG.

Co D is now located at SINGEN. Co F at LEONBERG. Capt. Lee and I stayed with Co F last night at Leonberg after having travelled from BAD DURKHEIM to LEONBERG.

The autobahn is a magnificent road which equals anything we have in the States, and the countryside surpasses in beauty anything we have in the States. Co F is located in barracks originally built for German military, which are on a hill overlooking LEONBERG. The picture of the town cannot be described by anything less than poetic expressions.

As we were approaching LEONBERG yesterday, we passed a 2 mile column of German prisoners marching to the rear.

**MONDAY, 30 April 1945, 0730 hours  
LEONBERG, GERMANY**

Last notes were written 26 April.

I'm writing these notes hurriedly before I go out to the projects this morning.

Yesterday a French Medical officer, a French lieutenant and three French (female) Red Cross workers came to this site to look over the barracks which we had contemplated to use for Regt'1 Hqs. They want to use it as a transient bivouac for repatriated Frenchmen returning to France. I told them that if I could find another suitable site I would be willing to let them have it. Accordingly we went to the office of the military Govt who made arrangements for us to inspect other available sites in LEONBERG, none of which were very suitable; then we all had dinner at LEONBERG, a long drawn out French affair.

After lunch Dr. FASSIN, the French Lieutenant and I went to DITZINGEN to reconnoiter that place. DITZINGEN had been occupied only 8 days previously and very few troops had been there. As we entered the town, children would run and hide, and people watched us from behind partially drawn curtains.

We contacted the Burgermeister who showed us possible sites. It annoyed me to see the number of well equipped machine shops in this small community.

They apparently had been organized as part of the war industry. French, Polish, and Russian drafted labor did the work in these plants.

**FRIDAY, 4 May 1945  
CASERNE HINDENBURG, KORNWESTHEIM, GERMANY**

Last notes were written 30 April.

This is, indeed, amazing!!

Headquarters and H/S Co are moving from SARREBOURG today. For a number of days Capt. Lee and I have been reconnoitering possible sites without too much success. Captain Lee located this Caserne but did not pay too much attention to it since he believed that this is French territory. We learned this morning, however, that the French are moving out, making this 7th Army area.

This caserne is quite new and in excellent shape. It contains 5 barracks (700 man capacity ea), 8 garages (300' x 30'), 1 repair shop (350' x 60'), 1 gymnasium (200' x 75'), drill field, paved (500' x 500'), Officer's mess to house 100 officers. In each of the barracks, except one, there is one family. These families originally lived here with their soldier husbands. We decided to occupy the barracks which has no family. The families are all concerned as to whether or not we plan to kick them out. They have all started to clean this barracks. Each barracks has two small apartments, complete with kitchen and bath. Apparently, the C.O. and perhaps his first sergeant occupied these apartments with their families.

We had one of the ladies, who claimed that she was a hired cook, prepare our noon meal. That perhaps was not wise, but it was good. (At present Capt. Dabbs, Sgt. Velasquez, Johnnie Shaw and Dan Brown and I are the only ones here waiting for troops to arrive.)

I'm writing these notes in one of the rooms of the apartment which I plan to use as my quarters.

Apparently, the German soldiers left in a hurry for some of their uniforms still remain in the wall lockers.

**TUESDAY, 15 May 1945, 1600 hours**

Saturday morning, while at CAS Hqs, I was informed that the unit was alerted for movement to Marseille Staging Area on call of CG, Delta Base Section.<sup>41</sup> This means, undoubtedly, that we will be going to the Pacific Area.

Sunday morning, General Immell, CG, CAS, inspected the work we have done on the autobahn and gave on the spot awards to six officers and nine enlisted men for the excellent work we have accomplished.<sup>42</sup>

There has been nothing but praise for our performance in connection with that work on the autobahn.

The entire regiment has been instructed to move into this area in order to prepare for the move. Co C has started and the entire Regiment should be here by the end of the week.

Once again the Regiment will be together, which is a rare thing.

**TUESDAY, 22 May 1945  
SECKENHEIM, GERMANY**

I'm in the billet for transient officers at CAS Hqs, having reported to find out if any arrangements have been made yet for an interview with General Lee in connection with my promotion.<sup>43</sup>

Last Sunday I was interviewed by the CG of CAS, General Immell, who sent the papers forwarded approved. CAS Hqs is trying to expedite action on this matter since the Regiment has started its movement to the Marseille Staging Area.

The 1st Bn Motor convoy departed yesterday, the 2nd Bn and H/S convoys departed this morning, and the personnel of the Regiment will depart tomorrow night by train.

Oh, yes, real important news!! Last night I received 2 V-Mails from Helen, V-Mail from her mother and a card from sister Dora announcing the birth of my son [Michael] 12:50 PM 5 May.<sup>44</sup> I am the father of an eight pound nine ounce boy.



<sup>41</sup> CG is commanding general. Delta Base Section (DBS), established 1 October 1944, provided logistical support for the forces in the Marseille area. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support*, 2:40.

<sup>42</sup> See notes 63 and 64 in the history section.

<sup>43</sup> Maj. Gen. John C. H. Lee, was commander of the Communications Zone, European Theater of Operations. The Communications Zone, an Army organization in the rear part of the theater of operations, provided logistical support (supply, communications, administration) for combat operations. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support*, 1:198-206.

<sup>44</sup> V, or Victory mail, was a type of mail used during World War II to conserve shipping space. The sender wrote a letter on special letter-sheets, folded it into its own envelope, and mailed it. The correspondence was then reduced onto microfilm, which was shipped to a receiving station, where facsimiles were created and then delivered to the recipient. Christopher H. Sterling, ed., *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21st Century* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 489.



*Aldo Bagnulo's wife, Helen, and son Michael.*

**SUNDAY, 27 May 1945, 1000 hours  
CAS Hqs, Near MANNHEIM, GERMANY**

I've been waiting here at CAS Hqs since this past Tuesday for a call from Paris (COMX) advising me that arrangements have been made for an interview by General Lee on my promotion.<sup>45</sup>

The regiment has already arrived at the Marseille Staging Area and I have been very uneasy being separated from it. If nothing comes through today I shall have to leave tomorrow to join the unit.

It has been interesting to watch the reactions of the personnel here at Hqs now that hostilities have ceased.<sup>46</sup> Everybody has had a terrific let down and everybody seems restless. Of course they all want to return home, and most seem to prefer transfer to the CBI rather than remain here.<sup>47</sup> Some have received word that they will remain as Army of occupation personnel and are not too happy at these prospects.



<sup>45</sup> "COMX" is possibly a typographical error, with "COMZ" being intended.

<sup>46</sup> On 7 May 1945 the German High Command surrendered all land, sea, and air forces to the Allies; on 8 May President Harry S. Truman proclaimed V-E Day, victory in Europe.

<sup>47</sup> CBI is China-Burma-India Theater.

**MONDAY, 28 May 1945, 1400 hours**  
**Airfield near FRANKFURT, GERMANY**

This is better. Yesterday evening a message came through from COMZ, directing me to report to CG, COMZ, Tuesday morning for an interview.

I left the MANNHEIM airfield at 100[0] hours this morning and flew to this location where I am now waiting for a plane to Paris. SHAEF Hqs is at present in FRANKFURT and we had lunch there.<sup>48</sup> This Hq is in a huge building which was one of the main offices of I. G. FARBEN, owner of the largest chemical industry in the world. We had chicken, potatoes, beans and ice cream—the first time in eight months I have had ice cream. We set a small table with table cloth—clean, well organized. It was a treat. The building is a new structure built on modernistic lines. It is quite impressive.

**THURSDAY, 31 May [1945]**  
**Aboard Plane (C-47) en route to MARSEILLE**

Last notes were written 28 May 1945.

We have just taken off from ORLY field (Paris). So far flying conditions are sufficiently smooth to permit my writing these notes without difficulty.

I arrived in Paris Monday afternoon and after signing in and arranging for billet, I had supper at the officers mess at the MAJESTIC Hotel. As I was leaving the dining room, I encountered Capt. MICKLE who, as a civilian, dug wells for me both at St Croix and Antigua. He accompanied me to my billet at the Hotel FREMTIER to visit with me for awhile. (This hotel is near the TROCADERO and the EIFFEL TOWER.)

The following morning I reported to the G-1 section of COMZ and was instructed to return at 1130 for the interview by the General. At 1130 General Lee saw approximately 10 of us Lieutenant Colonels who had been recommended for promotion to Colonel and 3 WAC Captains who had been recommended for promotion to Major.<sup>49</sup> We reported individually, but he spoke to us in a group. He spoke of the responsibility which we had and of the necessity of setting the example for military courtesy and in appearance.



<sup>48</sup> SHAEF is Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force.

<sup>49</sup> WAC is Women's Army Corps.

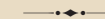
Before the interview, I called on Colonel CANAN, chief troops division, OCE, then visited with Col. DEMERY, Maj. BIRD and Capt. MICKLE, all of the pipeline service.<sup>50</sup>

At lunch I met Maj. MALSTROM who accompanied Capt. MICKLE and me while arranging for transportation to MARSEILLE.<sup>51</sup> I had supper with Colonel MATHIOS that evening (I had met him also that morning) and after supper we walked for miles thru the Paris streets, in the Vicinity of the EIFFEL TOWER. It was 1030 Tuesday night when I returned to the hotel.

Wednesday morning I met Lt. Col. H. TUMIN (an acquaintance of the FO course at Belvoir) with whom I had lunch.<sup>52</sup> He was busy during the afternoon but made his car available which I used in transferring my billet from the FERMTIER<sup>53</sup> to the Hotel Du RHONE. TUMIN and I had a delicious steak dinner together, then he drove me through the city. We have nothing in the US which compares with Paris. We covered most of the city including the MONTMARTRE District, the park districts, the Opera House and finally we drove up to the SACRED HEART CHURCH which is atop the highest hill of Paris and which affords a breathtaking view of Paris. It remained light until approximately 1030. At 1130 I returned to the Du Rhone.

The girls of Paris are beautiful, not some of them, but all of them. They dress and make up more expertly than any I have seen. It would be difficult to remain faithful to one's family and principles if he stayed there any length of time, and very, very few of those who are stationed there can manage to remain untainted. Between the French girls, the English civilian girls who have been imported to work at Hqs, and the WACs, the temptations are more than the average man can withstand.

Now I'm on my way to Marseille. A new phase of my military career is unfolding.



<sup>50</sup> Howard V. Canan, USMA 1918, served as chief of the Troops Division of the Office of the Chief of Engineers (OCE) from 15 April 1943 to 3 May 1946. Branham, *Biographical Register*, 280. Major Bird is possibly Clayton A. Bird. *Official Army Register, Volume 1* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 1:91. The Military Pipeline Service was under the control of Headquarters, Communication Zone. Alfred M. Beck, Abe Bortz, Charles W. Lynch, Lida Mayo, and Ralph F. Weld, *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1988), 412.

<sup>51</sup> Possibly Einar A. Malmstrom, an Air Corps officer. *Official Army Register*, 1:701.

<sup>52</sup> The Field Officer course at Fort Belvoir, Va., trained captains and senior first lieutenants. Larry D. Roberts, Command Historian, U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., personal communication, 27 May 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Bagnulo spells the name of the hotel both "Fremtier" and "Fermtier," though possibly both are misspellings.



**THURSDAY, 14 June 1945, 1900 hours**  
**DBS Staging Area, NW of MARSEILLE**

Last notes were written 31 May 1945.

I arrived at the MARSEILLE Airfield in time for the noon meal 31 May 1945. It took approximately 2 hours before transportation was arranged to the Staging Area. In the Staging Area, I found everything very much in a state of confusion. The Staging Area was not yet complete and the Staging Area personnel were inexperienced and were not properly organized. Dabbs had done a good job of accomplishing as much as he had under the circumstances, and now we are almost 100% ready as far as being re-equipped, packed and crated.

Tonight we will start transferring all of our equipment, except TAT, down to the pier where it will be loaded on a cargo vessel.<sup>54</sup> I would estimate that two weeks will lapse before the personnel is loaded.

This area and especially Marseille is completely different from any other part of France that I have seen. It is a semi desert country and resembles, to a certain extent, the hills of St Croix and Antigua. Marseille is a dirty, stinking port city. It has the reputation of being one of the world's most wicked cities and what I have seen of it confirms that reputation.

Venereal Disease among the soldiers is going to be a real problem and it is for that reason, primarily, I am anxious to leave here as quickly as possible. It is reported that the VD contracted here is more virulent than similar diseases any place in the world, and in a great many cases the normal method of treatments does not give satisfactory results. Already this month 15 cases of VD in this regiment have been reported to me.

The Staging Area at present is Staging, primarily, Engineers and I have been able to renew many old acquaintances. I have met the following:

Colonel Sorley, who was my Commanding Officer and who is now CO of 1325th Engineer Gen Serv Regiment; Lt. Col. Dunn, Commander of 1318th; Captain Autilio, S-3 of a construction Battalion; Lt. Col. Jiminez, whom I knew in P.R. and who is now commander of a Quartermaster Trucking Group; Lt. Colonel Angelopoulos, Executive Officer for the 375th Engineer Gen Serv Regiment; Captain Peterson, one of the Officers whom I knew in P.R. and who is now commanding



<sup>54</sup> TAT stood for "to accompany troops" and referred to specific equipment, tools, kits, etc. that went with the troops themselves as opposed to heavier equipment and vehicles that were shipped separately. Larry D. Roberts, personal communication, 28 May 2008.

1535th Engineer Dump Truck Company.<sup>55</sup> Maj. Ken Foster is assigned to the transportation section of DBS Headquarters and I have already had a number of meals with him. He has been very hospitable in his attempt to make my stay here a pleasant one but, of course, I am anxious to get going to tackle a new job which lies ahead.

Since writing the last notes, the following promotions in this regiment have come through: Dabbs, promoted to Major, Kellogg and Guess, to Captain.<sup>56</sup> My Eagles have come through.<sup>57</sup> The date of rank for all these promotions is 1 June, 1945.



*Brass collar insignia for U.S. Army officers.*

**SUNDAY, 17 June 1945, 1730 hours**

Last notes were written 14 June 1945.

All of our organizational equipment except TAT was hauled down to the pier during the last two days for loading on a Liberty Ship.<sup>58</sup> Lt. Horace C. Smith was appointed Ship's TQM and will accompany the cargo on the ship.<sup>59</sup>

This morning I attended nine o'clock Mass and received communion. This afternoon, Captain Peterson and I went swimming; it was the first time for me in approximately a year. The Staging area



<sup>55</sup> Merrow E. Sorley, USMA 1924, assumed command of the 1325th Engineer General Service Regiment, an African American unit, on 2 June 1945. Branham, *Biographical Register*, 427. A. W. Dunn was commander of the 1318th Engineer General Service Regiment. The 1318th and the 375th were African American units. E. J. Peterson led the 1535th Engineer Dump Truck Company, also an African American unit.

<sup>56</sup> Ralph A. Guess, Houston, Tex., special service officer.

<sup>57</sup> Bagnulo's promotion to colonel was in the Army of the United States. He attained the rank of colonel in the Regular Army on 12 February 1962. *U.S. Army Register, Volume I, United States Army Active and Retired List, 1 January 1965* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), 24.

<sup>58</sup> Assembled with prefabricated parts, the mass-produced and slow-moving Liberty Ships accounted for half of the merchant vessels constructed in the United States during World War II.

<sup>59</sup> TQM is transport quartermaster.

beach is approximately nine miles from the Staging area and is quite a long beach which extends one mile or so.

It was crowded to capacity today with military personnel who wore little if anything as swimming suits. The temperature of the water was just right and I enjoyed the swim very much.

Last night I saw Mickey Rooney along with a number of other enlisted men in a GI show.<sup>60</sup> The show was held in the Amphitheater which is constructed in a huge ravine and accommodates approximately 10 to 15 thousand. This makes an ideal setting.

The Staging Area is located on a high plateau and is designed to accommodate 75 thousand to 80 thousand troops.

In this Staging Area there is still much construction to be done in the way of shower facilities, sewer and water lines, but sufficient water is already available so that it is not too uncomfortable. The chief objection, at present, is excessive amount of dust.

Rock is out cropping everywhere throughout the area and there is not a sprig of vegetation. The weather so far has been almost perfect. Days are quite warm but the evenings are delightfully cool and nights are cold.

**SUNDAY, 23 June 1945<sup>61</sup>**  
**DBS Staging Area, CALAS, France**

Last notes were written 17 June, 1945.

Not much has transpired since last Sunday. The ship, SS WHITE SQUALL, has not left Marseille yet. All of our equipment, except TAT, has been loaded. A 4-ton and a 6-ton Prime Mover was lost in the Ordnance processing yards and they cannot be replaced.<sup>62</sup> Lieutenant H. C. Smith will make the trip on the WHITE SQUALL as ship QM.

Friday, I accompanied Maj. Foster on an inspection trip of some of his vehicle assembly parks and TCPs.<sup>63</sup> On the return trip we stopped off at a large airfield to visit Lt. Col. Johnson, a friend of Foster, who commands the 837th Avn Engr Bn and who is in charge of

the construction work being done there.<sup>64</sup> The field is located on a huge natural plain that is approximately 12 miles long and 5 miles wide. It was constructed originally by the French; the Germans took it over later but demolished, quite thoroughly, all of the installations before leaving. Col. Johnson and his forces are putting it back in good shape.

Col. Johnson knew Bill McCrone, having served with him in Corsica.<sup>65</sup>

I obtained Bill's address and wrote to him yesterday.

**THURSDAY, 5 July 1945**  
**DBS Staging Area, CALAS, France**

Last notes were written 23 June, 1945.

We are still at the Staging Area without any definite news of when we can expect to be moving. All of us are restless and anxious to get going. Lieutenant Smith on the WHITE SQUALL set sail with our organizational equipment, 28 June 1945.

I have "stepped out" during the past week more than I have in a long time. I "lazier" around all day Sunday, became restless and proposed an expedition into town with Dabbs, Worley and Guthrie as the other expeditioniers. We went to the Engineers' Club. After arrival, Dabbs and Guthrie went to the 235th Gen[eral] Hospital, where approximately 2,000 nurses are being staged, and picked up an Elizabeth Josephson and Helen Jaeger. Worley and I left early with Colonel Sorley whom we met there.

Last night Dabbs and I went to the club again with Elizabeth (Joe) and Jerry Bell (a date arranged for me by Joe).

It is quite a circus at the Nurses Staging Area at the times when officers pick them up and bid them goodnight

Oh, yes, I met Maj. Rice at the Club, an officer who was on Thomason Act Duty with the 1st Engrs in 1938 or 1939.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Film star Mickey Rooney served in the 6817th Special Services Battalion and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. Alvin H. Marill, *Mickey Rooney: His Films, Television Appearances, Radio Work, Stage Shows, and Recordings* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2004), 34-37.

<sup>61</sup> In 1945, 23 June was a Saturday and 24 June a Sunday. It is unclear which day Bagnulo wrote this entry.

<sup>62</sup> A prime mover is a heavy cargo truck used for moving trailer-mounted equipment. U.S. War Department, *FM 5-5 Engineer Field Manual, Engineer Troops. 11 October 1943* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 131.

<sup>63</sup> TCP is traffic control post.

<sup>64</sup> J. O. Johnson led the 837th Engineer Aviation Battalion, an African American unit that served in Bermuda, North Africa, Italy, and France. Shelby L. Stanton, *Order of Battle, U.S. Army, World War II* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1984), 583.

<sup>65</sup> Possibly Lt. Col. Willard P. McCrone, an engineer officer. *Official Army Register*, 1:736.

<sup>66</sup> The Thomason Act of 30 August 1935 authorized as many as 1,000 reserve officers to serve for up to one year on active duty as second lieutenants with the Regular Army. *U.S. Statutes at Large*, vol. 49, pt. 1, 1028. It is likely that Bagnulo himself went on active duty through the Thomason Act. The "1st Engrs" is the 1st Engineer Regiment, in which Bagnulo also served in the 1930s.

**SATURDAY, 7 July 1945**  
**DBS Staging Area, CALAS, France**

Last notes were written 5 July 1945.

Yesterday at 1100 Ken Foster picked me up to accompany him on what was supposed to have been an inspection trip but actually turned out to be a tour of some of the historical sites in this section of France. Lt. Wilburn was invited to come along since room was available in the jeep.

We started at 1100, went north through SALON and stopped for lunch at a truck assembly park which is one of Foster's installations. After lunch we proceeded northwest to AVIGNON which is a walled city of considerable interest. A massive masonry wall surrounds the city, which in one section has very old buildings and narrow streets, and in another section has modern structures, wide streets, street lights, and so forth. It is a most fascinating spot. The chief item of interest is the Pope's Palace. Over a period of time five or six different Popes lived there. This was strange for I never realized that any of the Popes had lived anyplace other than Rome. Another thing that sounded strange to me, as explained by Foster, is that at one time there were three separate Popes, one in Italy, one in France and one in Spain.<sup>67</sup>

Another point of interest is the Pont Saint-Benezet just east of the city across the Rhone River. The construction of the Bridge was begun in the year 1177 by Pastor Benezet, native of Vivarais, who presented himself to the Bishop of Avignon as sent by God to build a bridge over the Rhone River. The construction, which lasted eight years, was paid for by gifts and bequests. The Bridge is about 900 meters long and 4 meters wide and consisted of 19 slightly raised elliptical arches. Only four of these arches remain today, upon one of which stands the Chapel of Saint Nicholas (Patron Saint of Ferryboatmen). In this Chapel is found the Tomb of the Founder Saint Benezet.

We then proceeded beyond NIMES to see the PONT du GARD which is a huge aqueduct constructed approximately 2,000 years ago by the Romans. This is an arch structure approximately 1,000 feet long and 200 feet high at its highest point. This is the oldest structure I have seen. Construction required approximately 50 years. I purchased some souvenirs there.

We drove through the towns of NIMES, ARLES, and SALON on our return trip and in NIMES and ARLES saw coliseums and other items of interest constructed by the Romans.



67 During the Avignon Papacy (1305-76) seven popes, all French, reigned there. The papacy returned to Rome in 1377, but the new pope soon died. The French cardinals elected a pope, as did the cardinals in Rome. The Council of Pisa (1409) tried to end the controversy by electing its own candidate, resulting in three claimants, residing in Avignon, Rome, and Pisa. The Council of Constance (1412-15) settled the issue by approving the Roman line of popes.

At SALON we stopped off at the Red Cross for coffee and doughnuts (our supper) and arrived back at camp at 2100.

[Handwritten:] (The Pont St-Benezet is known also as a bridge on which the people used to dance. A song explaining this has been written.)<sup>68</sup>

**THURSDAY, 12 July 1945, 1930 [hours]**  
**DBS Staging Area, CALAS, France**

Last notes were written 7 July.

Not much has transpired since writing of last notes. Sunday afternoon I had a conference with Capt. Harris and Capt. Cooke, both colored officers, to discuss the colored situation and to foster better understanding.<sup>69</sup>

They were interested in learning whether or not there were any limits on how high colored officers could rise in this Regiment. I assured them that performance was the chief prerequisite for promotion. They also indicated that they believed that a colored officer in the I and E position would prove to be more satisfactory.<sup>70</sup> I agreed. We touched many subjects, however, and talked for approximately three hours. The meeting appeared to be very, very satisfactory and I was asked to talk to the colored officers as a group since they felt that they could not convey all I had expressed.

Last night I spoke with all of the colored officers. I fear that I did not obtain the same satisfactory results as had been obtained Sunday. As some white people are definitely prejudiced on this problem and cannot be made to think rationally, so some of the colored officers are prejudiced only by the unfair practices and discriminations which exist without acknowledging any of the advancements. This situation is made even more difficult by the fact that some are really concerned only with personal, selfish interests and not the problem as pertains to the race as a whole. Some, however, especially Mr. Bailey, appear to be sincerely and genuinely interested in the problem as pertains to the EM.<sup>71</sup> This is encouraging.

The Regiment will make the trip to the Pacific in two groups. Companies "A" and "B" and First Battalion Headquarters will load on the S.S. AINSWORTH tomorrow. It is expected that the rest of us will load in a week or so.



68 "Sur le Pont d'Avignon."

69 John A. Cooke, Akron, Ohio, commander of Company A.

70 I and E is information and education.

71 Edward C. Bailey, Savannah, Ga. The reference to "Mr." Bailey indicates that he was a warrant officer. EM is enlisted men.



Slow Down IT's Rough  
you are driving on roads  
maintained by The  
Mighty D  
1321st Engrs

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