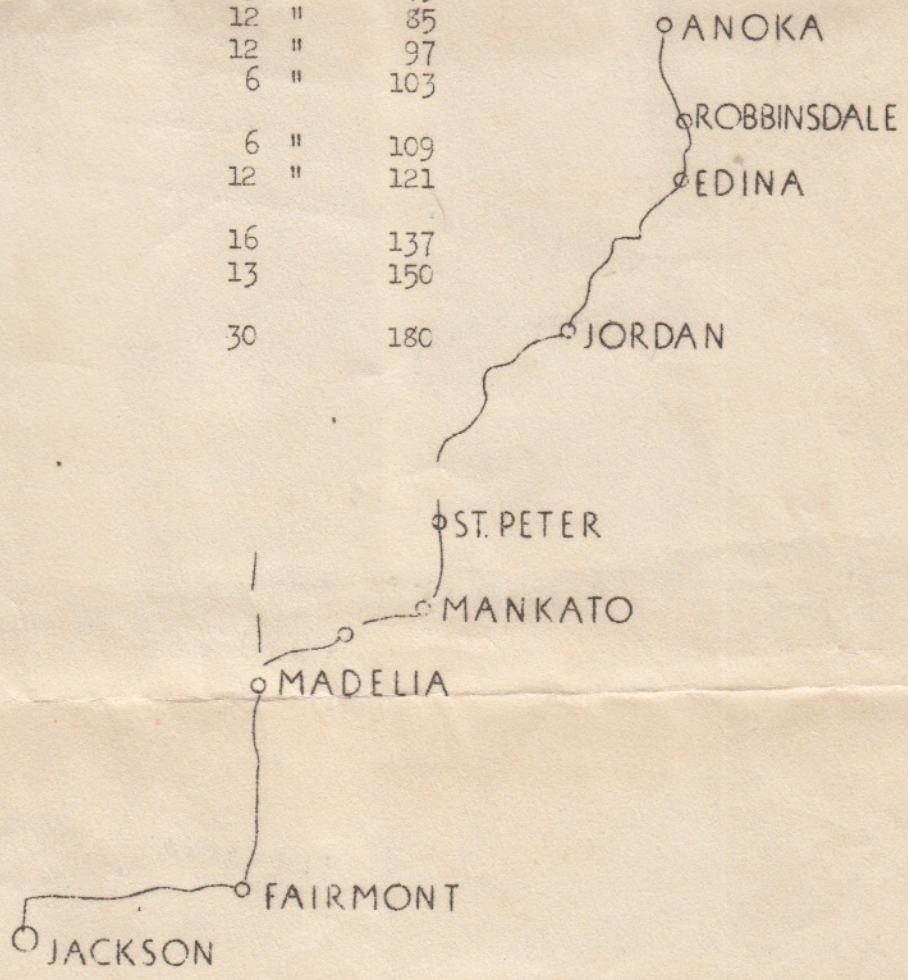
1ST DAY ANOKA TO JACKSON, MINN. 180 MILES

2-27-41

DINNER-GAS

ST. PETER

Anoka to Robinsdale on State 100	17 Miles	17
Jct with US 169 near St.Louis Park-Edina		
Park-Edina	10 Miles	27
US 169		
Shakopee	11 "	38
Jordan	12 "	50
Le Sueur	23 "	73
St. Peter	12 "	85
Mankato	12 "	97
Jct. with State 60	6 "	103
State 60		
Lake Crystal	6 "	109
Madelia	12 "	121
State 15		
Truman	16	137
Fairmont	13	150
US 16		
Jackson	30	180



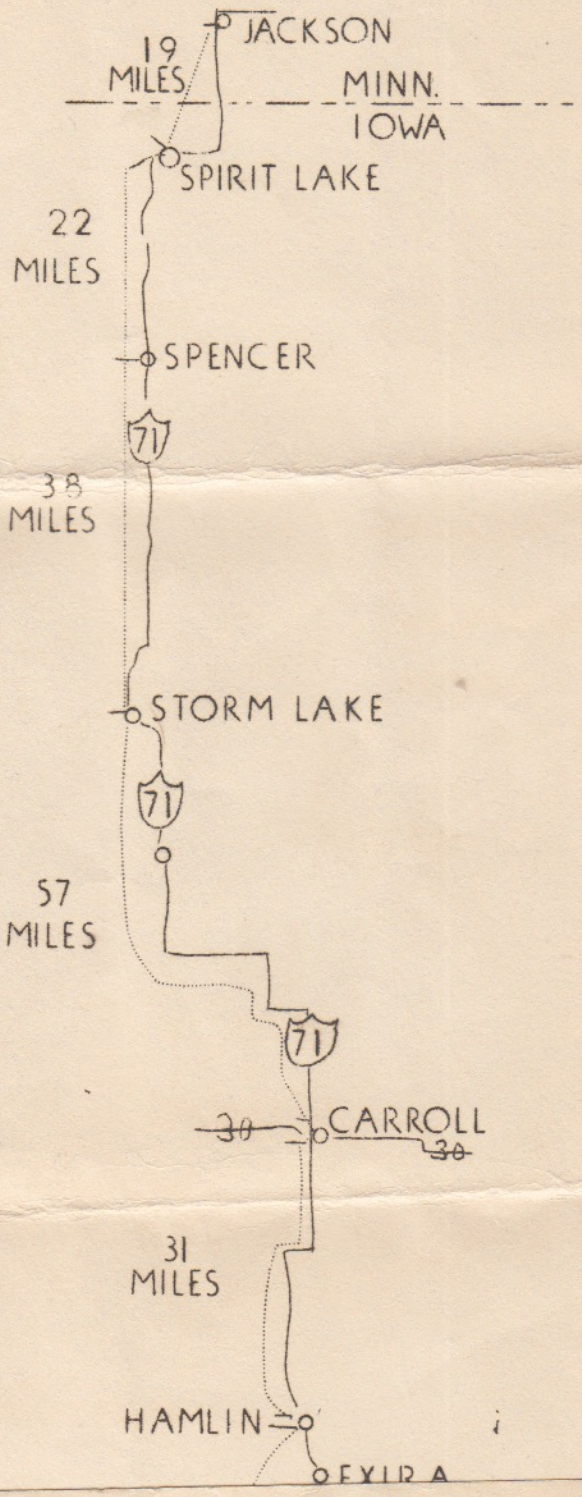
ROUTE MAP 2ND BN. 125 F.A. 34 DIV. U.S. ARMY

2ND DAY JACKSON, MINN. TO CLARINDA, IOWA 237 MILES

ALL ON U.S. 71

2-28-41

DINNER - GAS
CARROLL

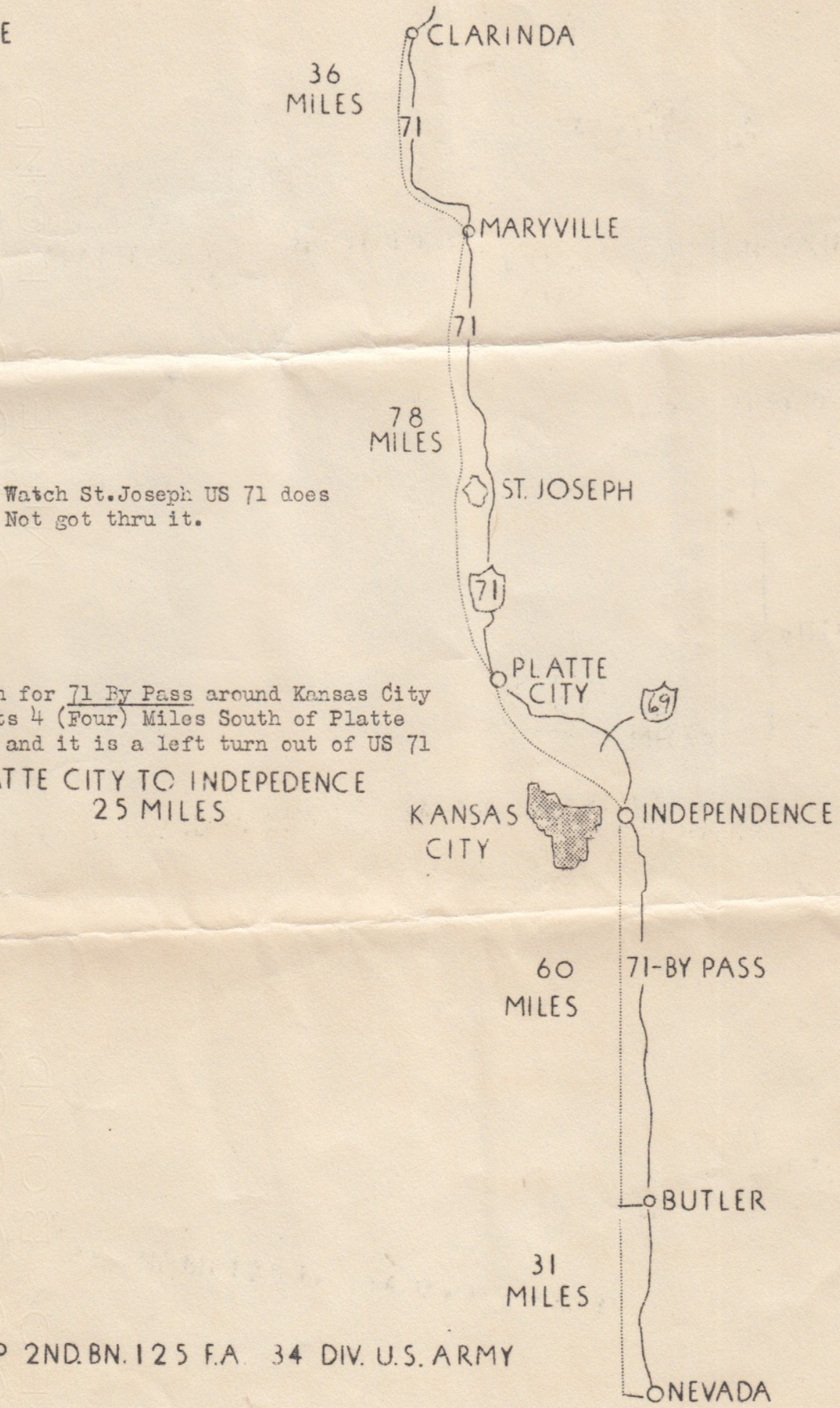


3RD DAY CLARINDA.IA. TO NEVADA.MO 229 MILES

3-1-41

ALL ON U.S. 71

DINNER-GAS
INDEPENDENCE



Watch St.Joseph US 71 does
Not got thru it.

Watch for 71 By Pass around Kansas City
Starts 4 (Four) Miles South of Platte
City and it is a left turn out of US 71

PLATTE CITY TO INDEPEDENCE
25 MILES

ROUTE MAP 2ND.BN.125 F.A. 34 DIV. U.S. ARMY

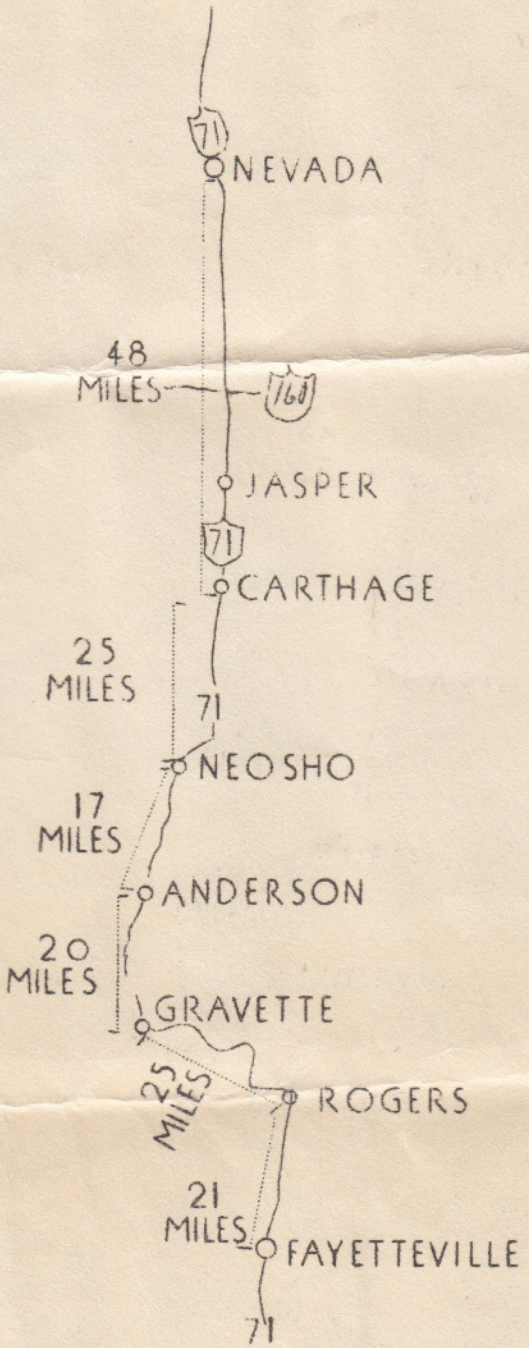
4TH DAY NEVADA, MO. TO FAYETTEVILLE, ARK. 156 MILES

ALL ON U.S. 71

3-2-41

DINNER-GAS

NEOSHO



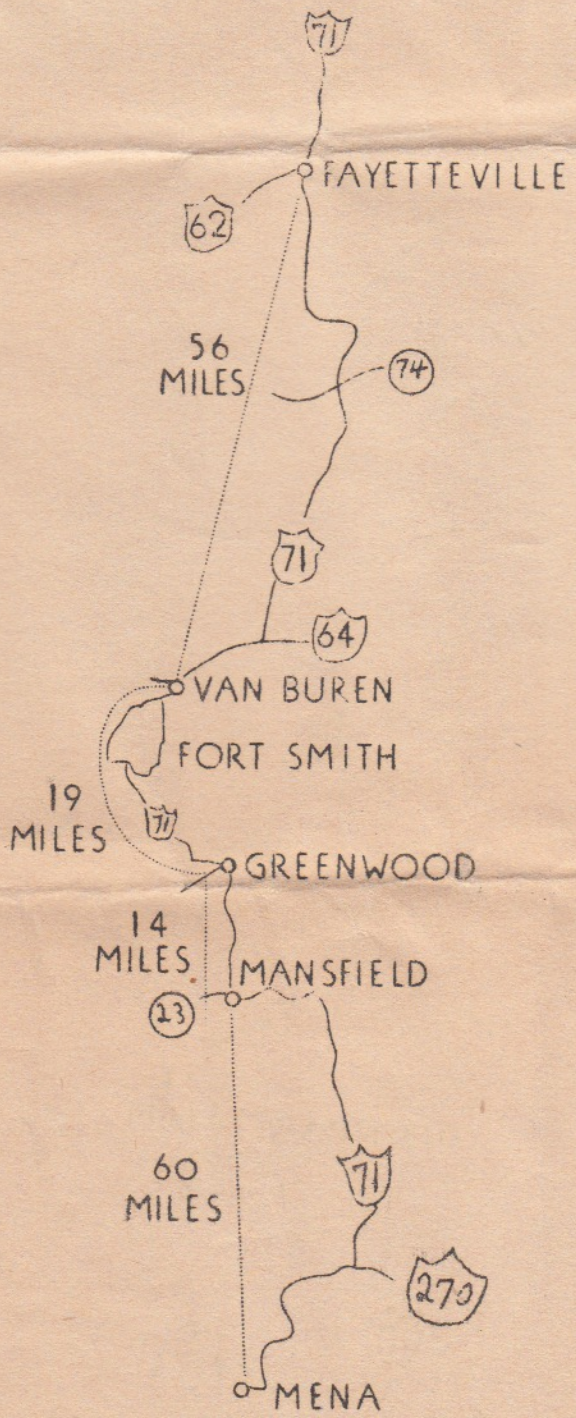
ROUTE MAP 2ND BN. 125 F.A. 34 DIV. U.S. ARMY

5TH DAY FAYETTEVILLE TO MENA 148 MILES

ALL ON U.S. 71

3-3-41

DINNER - GAS
VAN BUREN

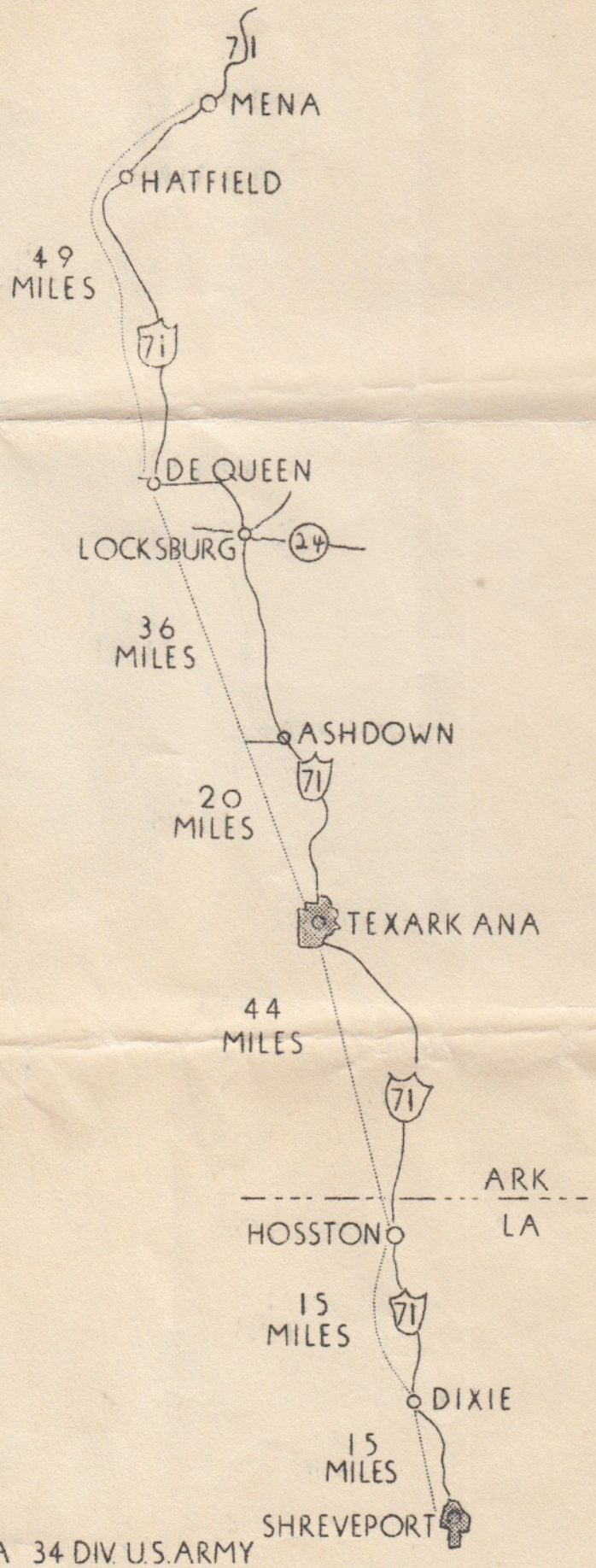


ROUTE MAP 2ND BN. 125 F.A 34 DIV. U.S. ARMY

6TH DAY MENA TO SHREVEPORT 179 MILES

3-4-41 ALL ON U.S. 71

DINNER-GAS
TEXARKANA



ROUTE MAP 2ND BN 125 F.A. 34 DIV. U.S. ARMY

7 DAY

3-5-41

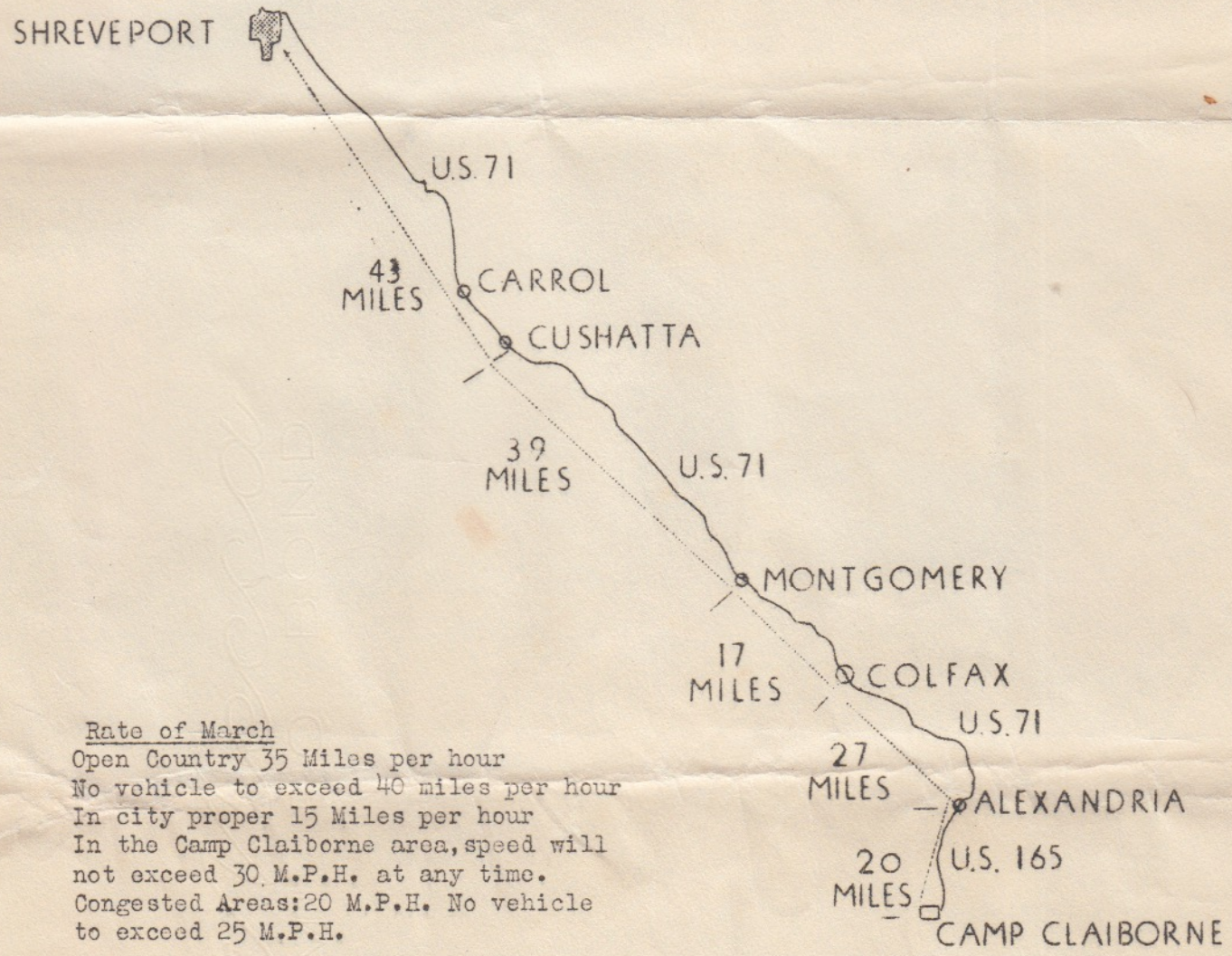
DUE AT 2 P.M.

GAS AT

MONTGOMERY

SHREVEPORT TO CAMP CLAIBORNE 146 MILES

ON U.S. 71 TO ALEXANDRIA TO CLAIBORNE US 165



Rate of March

Open Country 35 Miles per hour
No vehicle to exceed 40 miles per hour
In city proper 15 Miles per hour
In the Camp Claiborne area, speed will not exceed 30 M.P.H. at any time.
Congested Areas: 20 M.P.H. No vehicle to exceed 25 M.P.H.

ROUTE MAP 2ND BN. 125 F.A. U.S. ARMY

CHANGE OF STATIONS

Hq & Hq Co, 1107th ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP

29 Jan 44 - Disembarked from Ship SS NY 38 1630 hrs enroute by rail to destination.
30 Jan 44 - Arrived new station, Delamere Park Camp, Cheshire England at 0300 hrs.

4 May 44 - Departed Delamere Park Camp, Cheshire England, 1400 hrs.
4 May 44 - Arrived new station, Delamere Bivouac Area, Cheshire England.

26 May 44 - Departed Delamere Bivouac Area, Cheshire England at 1000 hrs.
26 May 44 - Arrived new station Westwood Park, Droitwich, Worcestershire England, at 1400 hrs.

12 Jul 44 - Departed Westwood Park, Droitwich, Worcestershire England at 0830 hrs.
12 Jul 44 - Arrived RCRP C1, 1730 hrs.

13 Jul 44 - Departed from RCRP C1, 0800 hrs.
13 Jul 44 - Boarded U.S. Military Transport George W. Goethals at 1830 hrs.

16 Jul 44 - This unit departed UK 2130 hrs.

18 Jul 44 - This unit disembarked at Utah Beach at 1400 hrs.
18 Jul 44 - Arrived at bivouac area at 2200 hrs.

18 Jul 44 - Departed old bivouac area.
18 Jul 44 - Arrived new station 1/2 mi W of Barneville, France at T023953 at 1730 hrs.

28 Jul 44 - Departed bivouac area 1/2 mi W of Barneville, France at 1400 hrs.
28 Jul 44 - Arrived at new bivouac area Neufmesnil - 1 mi E, T199862 at 1532 hrs.

2 Aug 44 - Departed Neufmesnil - 1 mi E T165592 at 1300 hrs.
2 Aug 44 - Arrived new location St. Malo De La Lande - 1/2 mi SW, T165592 at 1800 hrs.

3 Aug 44 - Departed old area St. Malo De La Lande - 1/2 mi SW, T165592, at 0800 hrs.
3 Aug 44 - Arrived a new area Tanis, 3/4 mi NE T221063 at 1400 hrs.

7 Aug 44 - Departed bivouac area vic Tanis at 1000 hrs.
7 Aug 44 - Arrived new area Dol-deBretagne 1/2 mi E, S996028 at 1100 hrs.

8 Aug 44 - Departed old area vic Dol-de-Bretagne at 1500 hrs.
8 Aug 44 - Arrived at new area Cour Poree X823958 at 1615 hrs.

18 Aug 44 - Departed old area Cour Poree at 1200 hrs.
18 Aug 44 - Arrived new area Lameur 1 mi SW R522214 at 1915 hrs.

23 Aug 44 - Departed old area vic Lameur at 1000 hrs.
23 Aug 44 - Arrived new area Kergoueznou 1/4 mi SW R039180 at 1545 hrs.

28 Sept 44 - Departed old bivouac area vic Kergoueznou at 1000 hrs.
28 Sept 44 - Arrived Y101765 vic Bois De Soubon at 1930 hrs.

29 Sept 44 - Departed old area vic Bois De Soubon at 1000 hrs.
29 Sept 44 - Arrived VR060085 vic La Loupe at 2000 hrs.

30 Sept 44 - Departed old bivouac area at 0900 hrs vic La Loupe
30 Sept 44 - Arrived 6 miles of St. Quentin at 2000 hrs.

1 Oct 44 - Departed old bivouac area at 1000 hrs vic St. Quentin.
1 Oct 44 - Arrived at P593689 vic Houffalize, Belgium at 2150 hrs.

4 Oct 44 - Departed area vic Houffalize, Belgium at 1300 hrs.
4 Oct 44 - Arrived new station at P703896 vic Vielsalm, Belgium at 1400 hrs.

18 Dec 44 - Departed area vic Vielsalm, P703896 at 1215 hrs.
18 Dec 44 - Arrived new station at P448874 vic Amonines, Belgium at 1830 hrs.

19 Dec 44 - Departed area vic Amonines, P448874 at 0730 hrs.
19 Dec 44 - Arrived new station vic Pont d'Oie, P515282, France at 1600 hrs.

21 Dec 44 - Departed area vic Pont d'Oie, France, P515282 at 1100 hrs.
21 Dec 44 - Arrived new station Puilly, France, P175220 at 1500 hrs.

23 Dec 44 - Departed area Puilly, France P175220, at 1230 hrs.
23 Dec 44 - Arrived new station vic Mohimont, Belgium, P296193 at 1400 hrs.

24 Dec 44 - Departed area vic Mohimont, Belgium, P296193 at 1500 hrs.
24 Dec 44 - Arrived new station P138021, Laneuville, France at 2030 hrs.

30 Dec 44 - Departed area P138021, Laneuville, France at 0830 hrs.
30 Dec 44 - Arrived new station P296193 vic Mohimont, Belgium at 1015 hrs.

1 Jan 45 - Departed area vic Mohimont, Belgium, P296193 at 1400 hrs.
1 Jan 45 - Arrived new station P166380 vic Auby, Belgium at 1600 hrs.

15 Jan 45 - Departed area P166380 vic Auby, Belgium.
15 Jan 45 - Arrived new station P358568 vic Moircy, Belgium.

Change of Stations, continued Hq & Hq Co, 1107th Engr (C) Group

29 Jan 45 - Departed area P358568 vic Moircy, Belgium.
29 Jan 45 - Arrived at new area vic Beho, Belgium, P742817.

4 Mar 45 - Departed area P742817 vic Beho, Belgium, P742817 at 1300 hrs.
4 Mar 45 - Arrived new station P896832, Steinebruck, Germany.

7 Mar 45 - Departed area P896832, Steinebruck, Germany at 1300 hrs.
7 Mar 45 - Arrived at new station L064794 Prum, Germany.

8 Mar 45 - Departed L064794, Prum, Germany at 1300 hrs.
8 Mar 45 - Arrived new station L159805, Büdesheim, Germany at 1630 hrs.

15 Mar 45 - Departed area L159805, Büdesheim, Germany, at 0900 hrs.
15 Mar 45 - Arrived new station L533941, Virneburg, Germany at 1400 hrs.

23 Mar 45 - Departed L533941, Virneburg, Germany at 0900 hrs.
23 Mar 45 - Arrived new station L888617, Riegenroth, Germany at 1600 hrs.

28 Mar 45 - Departed area L888617, Riegenroth, Germany.
28 Mar 45 - Arrived new station L981718, St. Goar, Germany.

29 Mar 45 - Departed L981718, St. Goar, Germany at 1445 hrs.
29 Mar 45 - Arrived new station M074742, Lautert, Germany.

2 Apr 45 - Departed area M074742, Lautert, Germany at 1300 hrs.
2 Apr 45 - Arrived new station M243831, Kettenbach, Germany at 1500 hrs.

3 Apr 45 - Departed M243831, Kettenbach, Germany at 0625 hrs.
3 Apr 45 - Arrived new station H223526, Oberaula, Germany at 1800 hrs.

5 Apr 45 - Departed H223526, Oberaula, Germany at 1300 hrs.
5 Apr 45 - Arrived new station H642657, Gerstungen, Germany at 1630 hrs.

6 Apr 45 - Departed H642657, Gerstungen, Germany at 1500 hrs.
6 Apr 45 - Arrived at new station H703702, Herleshausen, Germany at 1630 hrs.

10 Apr 45 - Departed H703702, Herleshausen, Germany at 0900 hrs.
10 Apr 45 - Arrived new station H990597, Waltershausen, Germany at 1030 hrs.

12 Apr 45 - Departed H990597, Waltershausen, Germany at 1330 hrs.
12 Apr 45 - Arrived new station J267532, Arnstadt, Germany at 1500 hrs.

13 Apr 45 - Departed J267532, Arnstadt, Germany at 1300 hrs.
13 Apr 45 - Arrived new station J497614, Bad Berka, Germany at 1500 hrs.

15 Apr 45 - Departed J497614, Bad Berka, Germany at 1300 hrs.
15 Apr 45 - Arrived at J717514, Kahla, Germany at 1500 hrs.

16 Apr 45 - Departed J717514, Kahla, Germany at 1230 hrs.
16 Apr 45 - Arrived new station K042504, Weida, Germany at 1400 hrs.

13 June 45 - Departed K042504, Weida, Germany at 1400 hrs.
13 June 45 - Arrived new station J695664, Jena, Germany at 1600 hrs.

HEADQUARTERS
1107th ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP

UNIT HISTORY

We stood jammed between decks of a lowly "Hoboken Ferry" now serving proudly as one of Uncle Sam's troops ships. It was nearly midnight and a canvas had been hung at each end of the ferry to further hide us from inquisitive eyes. As we churned up the Hudson the lucky ones peeked around the canvas and attempted to orient themselves by the New York skyline. After what seemed an eternity the bell in the wheel house clanged for 'Half Speed', then 'Stop' as we eased into the slip.

We picked up all our worldly possessions and struggled up the gang plank and there looming beside us was the huge gray bulk of ship with the Majestic words 'Queen Mary' still discernable beneath her drab war paint. Inside the pier all was orderly confusion as thousands of troops waited to embark and as we waited Red Cross women served us coffee, doughnuts, chocolate and a friendly smile that was more than welcome in this bleak business of embarkation.

About 1:30 AM we disappeared into the vastness of what was to be our home for the next week and proceeded to get lost on "A" Deck, "B" Deck, "Red" area, "White' Area and other strange places. This was one of His Majestics greatest ships and at all hours of the day and night the loudspeaker was continually invading the most remote corner of the ship saying in clipped British tones "Black Out is now in effect" or Lieft-tenant Billingsley is wanted in the Adjutant's "Office".

Being on a troop ship in a war zone is a grim and serious business and we proceeded to learn the rules and regulations of "Abandon Ship Drill", the most dreaded command at sea, and "Air Raid Drill" while still tied up at the pier in the North River waiting for the tide and whatever else troops always wait for. The British Colonel in command, talked to the Officers later and in typical English fashion said we had a "good show" for the first time and then proceeded to tell us what to do to make it better.

About 1600 hours we backed out into the river and slowly gained headway downstream. Where was the Goddess of Liberty was the cry through the ship and everyone scurried and squirmed until he got a last longing look at the old girl as we slid by Bedloe's Island. Nothing mattered now and except for seeing the submarine nets the most important question was food..We had been on board ship less than 24 hours and had not become accustomed to eating only two meals a day. It is a long stretch from Breakfast at 0800 until Supper at 1700 and there was much munching of biscuits and bitter British chocolate between times.

The North Atlantic in mid-January is not the most enjoyable place to be and for several days no one was allowed on deck and for one day all attempts to serve meals were suspended. The big ship took water in through the promenade deck and several of the lower corridors were awash. The elevator shafts resembled a small Niagara and up in the lounge, tables, chairs, lamps, and everything moveable had to be tied down and the few stalwarts up and about relaxed sprawled unconcernedly on the carpet. One day as Major Hahn stepped from the elevator the ship gave a particularly violent roll and he

was swept up by an avalanche of nurses and deposited spread eagle fashion at the bottom of the heap of tangled arms and legs with the muddy water swishing over him.

All days were not stormy and on the better days even the greener of our companions came up on deck for a while to watch the zig-zag wake made by the ship at regular intervals or to marvel at Mother Carry's chickens, those mysterious sea birds that exist in the landless world of mid-ocean who, when tired, can alight on the water to sleep.

We had our share of ship board rumors emanating usually from the head but always unmistakably reliable and the latest. Chief speculation was always our time of arrival and toward the end dis - cussions of English customs and money occupied our time.

Our first view of land was the misty Emerald Isle about 1600 hrs and later even the forbidding west coast of Scotland was a reassuring sight after the landless days at sea. Overhead now were two ever-circling RAF Spitfires providing the first air cover for this Queen of the Seas. Night came early in this northern latitude and with the coming of blackout time all went below to conjure up ideas of what the port would be like on the morrow, and to argue the proper pronounciation of Gurock and Greenock, the probable ports of debarkation.

That night a party of high officers including Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr and British Lt. Gen Sir William Thompson came on board to welcome us to the UK and outline in unmistakable terms the job ahead of us there in preparation for "D" day, the curtain-raiser to the ultimate victory.

As we were not scheduled to debark until 1600 hours the next day, when the blackout was lifted we streamed on deck to view a rain-swept harbor filled with more ships and shipping activity than most of us had ever seen. There were aircraft carriers, battle cruisers destroyers, corvettes, landing craft, ocean liners, cargo ships and Navy lighters and tugs as far as the eye could reach. By straining our eyes we identified a Scotch castle in the distance and were all soon quoting the proverb about if you can't see the hills of the Clyde bank, it must be raining and if you can see them it is going to rain. Silly as it sounds we thought ourselves already veteran travelers and competent to discuss any phase of a wartime ocean crossing with the certainty of an expert and deep in our minds was the firm conviction that ours was the roughest crossing yet made, the ship having listed to an angle of 34 degrees.

After enviously watching other troops disembark throughout the day we were more than ready when the call came for us to report to the port unloading door to board the lighter that was to take us to Greenock. As we chugged toward shore in the gathering gloom and after one last affectionate look at the Queen Mary, all eyes turned shoreward to attempt to pick up the details of the houses nestled there on the banks of the Clyde. Here was a new land, the first of many soon to be visited and adventure.

The dock was not an imposing sight and there among the squat smokey buildings and piles of naval stores we planted our feet on good old terra-firma once more. A Sergeant from the R.T.O. was there to meet us and led us up a winding passageway to the Greenock Rail Road station where we got our first look at some English rolling stock. There in the dim light of the station, as we entrained was enacted a miracle of hospitality. We could hardly believe our eyes as she came toward us carrying a tray of "sinkers" but when she smiled and spoke to us the issue was no longer in doubt. She was an American Red Cross girl and an American. We appreciated her presence even more than the refreshments..

Our train contained about 400 officers and men and as we pulled out of the station, bound for [illegible] were not quite sure what or where, we were handed a newspaper with words of welcome by Winston Churchill. Yes, this was the U.K of bombings, strafings, and four years of war and personal sacrifice such as we had never known and as the train strained up the steep slope our noses were pressed against the glass in an attempt to see where "Jerry" had blitzed the town back in 1940. The rubble had been cleared but blocks of gaping cellars gave mute testimony to the thoroughness of the devastation. We had been cautioned against throwing candy and gum from the cars to the children but they were still there and without doubt many a piece was thrown surreptitiously in response to the shrill cries in that soon to be familiar "Got any American Goom".

As the wheels clicked off the miles we rolled through the Stygian night and inside we dozed, played cards or munched a "K" ration. About 2300 hours the train slowed to a stop and we were at Carlisle. We filed out on the platforms with our canteen cups and filed through a line where English women served us coffee with milk and sugar but the sugar was very scant. The platform was filled with English soldiers who were as much a novelty to us as we were to them. A hooded sign spelled out N.A.A.F.I. over a door and a few pioneers ventured within to find the equivalent of our P.X. where for "Thruppence" could be secured an "E.T.O." sandwich (Spam on national wheat bread). These were our first dealings in English currency and we acted very unsophisticated and in the eyes of the natives probably very immature. Perhaps this was what the orientation booklet meant by not throwing our weight about. We soon learned.

About 0200 hours we arrived at our detraining point, Acton Bridge Station, Cheshire, and were met by our advanced party Major McVay and Capt. Harst. We thought we were in the bowels of the earth it was so dark and as we stumbled to our trucks throught if this is England, they can keep it. As we drove through the narrow English country roads we marvelled at the new found prowess of our advanced party of driving on the left hand side of the road and wondered how it would feel to take the wheel ourselves. After a few minutes we came to a sentry in a little box by a stone post who passed us into Delamere Park Camp, our home for the next 4 1/2 months.

Our reception party had cakes, cookies and tea ready for us before we turned in wearily for a few hours sleep on our first night in England expecting no less than three air alerts and one parachute attack before the daylight hours. Such was our attitude on first arriving.

With the coming of dawn we awoke to find that our new home was an English hutted camp supplemented with American built Nissen huts.

Our advanced detachment of Major McVay, Capt. Harst, M/Sgt Palminteri and M/Sgt Haslam had arrived at the Firth of Clyde 9 Jan. Debarked at Greenock, Scotland, 10th Jan, entrained and arrived at new Station Camp Bewdley, Kidderminster. They were there 15 days before receiving orders to report to Delamere Park Camp. During this period they were treated like step-children. No one knew where they were to be assigned, what Base Section was going to supply us nor could they obtain any information on the scheduled arrival of our unit about the 25th of Jan. Like a bolt from the blue, a Lieutenant from the 91st Med Gas Treatment Co., came to see them and asked if they could be ready to depart in 30 min. for their new station about which they had heard nothing. After checking with Corps Hq. they left within the hour.

On arrival at Delamere Park Camp, Cheshire, England they discovered that, by virtue of Colonel Hobart's seniority, 2 officers and 2 enlisted men, namely our advanced party were commanding a 6,000 man post, lock, stock, and barrel. The present camp commander wouldn't allow them to move in until he had inventoried all the supplies. So Major McVay signed over for the entire camp less what they were living in, two days before our unit arrived and the quartering party went to work in earnest, preparing for our unit. Meanwhile they had made many contacts at Western Base Section in regards to picking up our unit supplies and also the camp accomodation stores. Captain Long, the District Engineer, was very helpful in all initial details of supply and billeting and proved to be the same throughout our stay at Delamere.

During our stay at Delamere the supply section of our organization functioned as the Camp Quartermaster in charge of billeting and arranging parking areas. The camp commander preceding us, through no fault of his own, turned over much of the camp in a run down condition. The camp was overcrowded as the housing capacity of each building was usually increased and under the British system officers were billeted outside of the camp. British sergeants were billeted in separate quarters in one part of the camp and the initial camp didn't lend itself to any systematic billeting of our forces with all types and sites of organizations arriving at unexpected times. The stay of most units was very brief but before we left we had units occupying nearly the entire camp. The British scale for furnishing kitchen equipment was considerably lower than ours and considered inadequate. However, an arrangement was made with Capt. Casey, British Officer in Charge of Barracks at Chester whereby additional kitchen equipment was obtained comparable with the upgrading of the camp capacity. There were many supply difficulties but certainly none through lack of cooperation by the British or our own supply agencies. Gasoline was short and rationed, units were required to travel from 50 to 200 miles in order to get their equipment and then rarely if ever did they get their total authorization. The Royal Engineer and Royal Army Service Corps were very cooperative and cordial and whenever it was in any way possible they gave us what we wanted. In as much as Colonel Hobart was primarily concerned with the training and equipping of the tactical units of the Group which were scattered in many camps at considerable dis-

tances from Delamere the internal management of the camp was made the responsibility of Lt. Col. Clark, Group Executive Officer, with T/4 John Krafchik to assist with the administrative details and reports required of the camp.

As has been previously stated there was ample room for improvement in the camp and during the time we were there the following programs or projects were organized, carried on and completed: All the streets in the camp were named in typical American fashion and signs posted; the area around Camp Hq was seeded and landscaped; a weekly program of street cleaning started and a major grading project converted a dump into a motor park for 200 vehicles; camp incinerators for burnable trash were cleaned and operated; and arrangements concluded with the British to dump all tin cans directly into a goods wagon at Cuddington Station which was removed weekly, all kitchens were repainted and cleaned and special construction carried out to prevent soot coming back into kitchens through ventilators; the entire system of guard was revised and the guard house cleaned and new bunks installed; a stores building was converted to a fire station and as the British Fire Sergeant was withdrawn crews from various units were trained and placed on duty for a week at a time and unscheduled drills held weekly; the sewage disposal system required constant supervision and inspection and as a result the procedure for skimming grease traps was revised and several new ones installed; the solid fuel situation was kept under strict regulation and after reconstructing storage bins, correcting initial inventories and physical rearrangement of stock piles of coal and coke were made our camp was one of the few that was able to operate within the prescribed allowances and during one month even furnished coal from our quota to another camp. In the entire matter of solid fuels which were supplied by the British the most cordial and mutually helpful relationship was maintained with Mr. Donovan, a civilian, in the Chester Office of the R.A.S.C. His advice proved valuable on many occasions. Contacts were made and a barber shop was set up on the post operating two days per week. Country roads bounding camp were widened to permit two way traffic of heavy engineer vehicles and all fences rebuilt. Throughout this entire period much of the work of improvement would have been impossible but for the cooperation of Mr. Evans, the Clerk of the Works. He worked hand and glove with us and cooperation could not have been better. One of the most serious problems was that of garbage removal and constant inspection of the returned cans and checking of collection schedules by the civilian contractor were maintained at all times as the British standard was not always up to American standards.

USO and motion pictures shows were arranged for the benefit of all camp personnel.

All of the above was possible only because the helpful cooperation of the units stationed at Delamere Park Camp as there were no station complement troops of any sort available for these details.

Around Delamere Park, Cheshire, the absence of a Catholic church in the neighborhood worked a hardship on Catholic parishioners especially with the strict rationing of Petrol (gasoline to us). After proper consideration of security measures, arrangements were completed whereby the neighboring civilians were permitted to enter camp and attend the regular Sunday Mass conducted by Chaplain Savage.

This was very much appreciated.

Shortly after the unit's arrival in the United Kingdom Capt. John McCormack, Intelligence Officer of the 13th Cheshire Bn of the Home Guard contacted Major Troy, Group S-2. Through this liaison, mutual security plans were established and coordinated between this unit and the British authorities in the area. The defensive plans of the Home Guard were made known and a defense plan of our own formulated to work in conjunction with theirs.

Through Capt. McCormack, we were able to obtain maps of the surrounding country and the training areas used by this Home Guard unit were placed at our disposal.

Capt. McCormack was also instrumental in obtaining for us some first hand information on the English Civil Defense setup. Capt. Robert C. Dewhurst, in charge of air raid wardens in the sector, came over and lectured the entire unit on the origin, progress and operation of the Air Raid Warden service and its relationship and coordination with the Home Guard and police.

The cooperation encountered with this British agency was mutually beneficial in maintaining security measures and in obtaining the maximum benefit of existing training facilities.

Liaison was also carried on with units of the R.A.F. observation and reconnaissance schools through Capt. Kaplan, Asst. S-2 of this organization. The R.A.F. helped greatly in the training of both officers and men of the 1107th Engr (C) Group, in air-ground work and aerial reconnaissance.

Through the efforts of S/L Morris, Major Dacre, Capt. Bogley, F/L Nelson, of the R.A.F., this organization was able to have all officers participate in aerial flights. These flights constituted engineer aerial reconnaissance over Bridge sites, camouflage areas, and throughout the entire training area allotted the 1107th Engr Group. In addition RAF observation personnel were sent over areas where engineer troops were known to be engaging in military construction on bridging training and told to report type of activities being engaged in.

The enlisted men of the group were given valuable training in combined air-ground panel code signalling. The RAF sent reconnaissance planes over these troops and cooperated in all phases of this operation.

The slightest request of this organization upon the RAF was immediately granted, without any long preamble or necessity of red tape. No duplication of effort at any time was experienced.

Operations and training liaison was carried on while this unit was in the U.K. with the A.D. Claims Office of the British Government both in Chester, Cheshire, and Droitwich, Worcestershire in securing training and bridge sites for the use of this Hqrs, and attached units.

Cooperation of this British agency was excellent. When a request for a site was made, this agency immediately sent out a representative to check on the availability of the propsosed site and gave full assistance on securing or setting up the site. On several occasions, where there was no doubt as to the availability of the site for the purpose requested, immediate verbal permission to use the site was granted without awaiting the arrival of any orders. No duplication of effort was experienced.

Three enlisted men from our Hq Co put on a demonstration for the Civil Defense unit of the Norley District to enable them to distinguish between a German parachutist and an American soldier. This unit was charged with the responsibility for rounding up parachutists and did not want to mistake our people for "Jerry". Cpl. Ferguson acted as the model and Sgt. Marks explained in detail each item of clothing and equipment including the full-field pack, gas mask and Carbine M-1. Much was gained as the members of this unit had thought the U.S. and German helmet to be similar but after a comparison were able to note the difference and recognize each for what it was.

One of the major projects of the Group while stationed at Delamere Park Camp, Cheshire was conducting a mine and booby trap school for Eighth Corps. The school lasted for one month and approximately fifty men were trained every four days. Some courses were for Officers and others for N.C.O.'s.

Capt. Carmon C. Greer organized the school for the Group. Other Group personnel teaching in the school were Capt. E. Harst, T/Sgt Ernst, T/Sgt Wells, and Sgt. Bruck. Lt. Sol. Kaplan was in charge of administration and billeting. The school used one other officer on the teaching staff. For two weeks it was Lt. Simonetti from the 511th Engr L. Pon Co. and for the last two weeks the officer was Lt. Thompson from the 44th Engr C Bn.

There were no serious casualties during the course of instruction, although the majority of students in the school were from non-engineer units and had never seen or handled any of the firing devices or mines prior to this time. Classes were given in all the latest methods of mining and booby trapping, demolition, and various types of mines used by the enemy. Live mines were used throughout the instruction. There were three problems for each class that were conducted late in the lovely wet English nights.

The success of this school was due not only to the careful preparation of the schedules and material by all instructors but to the energy of Capt. Greer in either securing samples or having constructed models of the AP and AT mines that were used in the school. Capt. Greer received a commendation from the CG, VIII Corps for his excellent work as a result of reports received by the CG from Commanding Officers of units sending students to the school.

All was not work at Delamere Park and it soon became apparent to all in the Group that the so-called English reserve was a thin veneer beneath which was a whole-hearted spirit of friendliness and a burning desire to make our stay in the U.K. as pleasant as possible with the facilities that were at their disposal after four years of war. We were invited to very pleasant teas and social

events of all kinds and iron clad promises exacted of us to return again and again.

We could not write of our stay in England without devoting a paragraph to the bicycle that is part and parcel of the English war-time way of life. We cursed them when driving in our jeeps, especially at night, and blessed them as a handy way of getting around camp and out into the really lovely Cheshire countryside as spring burst forth into early summer. Of course, they were English bicycles that we had with the brakes on front and rear which operated from the handle-bar and many an American "G.I." found to his dismay that his seat was not as solid as he thought especially after riding home from the Blue Cap Inn after partaking of a few"mild or bitters".

Healthy males were as much in demand in Cheshire as they are in the U.S.A. and our attendance was as much in demand at the A.T.S. dances in Chester, as they were at the local affairs of Weaverham, Norley, etc. Needless to say this show of sincere hospitality was indeed appreciated as the time since leaving home lenghtened from days into weeks and into months and the shadow of the ever impending "D" Day became stronger.

The list would be too long to mention all the grand people of Cheshire who madeour stay at Delamere so enjoyable but surely we cannot overlook Capt. and Mrs. George Wilbraham affectionately known as the 'Bertha and Squire", whose ancestral home was Delamere Park, and whose new home Delamere Manor was always open to us.

We had a date with the future to make history so when the order came to move to Westwood Park, near Droitwich, Worcestershire on the 26th of May we were happy to be on our way toward the continent but sorry to leave Delamere.

Lt.Col.Clark and Major McVay had left with an advance party on the 25th of May and when the main body arrived at Westwood Park after a rainy trip they found hot showers, a hot meal, and bunks waiting for them. This camp was on a much smaller scale than Delamere and onlythe kitchens, messhalls, showers and dispensary were of permanent construction and all living quarters for Officers and men were pyramidal tents and canvas cots. The camp was situated on the estate of Lord Doverdale and overlooked a beautiful lake. Little did we realize what elegeance this was at the time. We were the first using unit and found the usual faults with rush construction jobs. The water mains had been laid under roads too near the surface and were broken by truck traffic. The water tank had no top and bird waste and trash from nearby trees caused contamination so that it was necessary to chlorinate all drinking water until the tanks and piping system were cleaned. No contractor could be secured by the British for removal of human feces from the honey-buckets and this odious detail had to be performed daily by members of the command when the time could have been used to better advantages training and checking new equipment. The garbage contractor was unreliable and uncooperative. The R.A.S.C. personnel responsible for helping us were cooperative but the Royal Engineers were of little or no help and made few attempts to help us remedy any of the above conditions and others that came up. As at Delamere, in Westwood we were in charge of the East Camp but since most of the other occupying units were also part of

the Group, supervision and control was easier and more direct.

One of our main tasks again was the running of a mine school for Third United States Army. The school was set up and run on similar lines as the one for Eighth Corps. This school was for two weeks and the classes lasted five days each. The students for two classes of approximately fifty each were drawn from XII and XV Corps units.

While at Droitwich units under the Group for training and checking new equipment built three bridges in the town of Droitwich, through the courtesy of Mayor Platts in making the sites available.

These bridges were of the rustic type and designed by T/Sgt Konikoff, Group Bridge Designer. Under the supervision of M/Sgt Grether, Group Construction Foreman, they also removed two sets of heavy canal gates to facilitate drainage and improve a municipal park. The gates were old and water logged and it would have been impossible to remove them without engineer equipment.

Droitwich was a progressive town under Mayor Platt's leadership and many civic events took place in which we cooperated by furnishing details of men for parades and equipment from the 632nd Engr Lt. Eqtip. Co. for display purposes.

A Royal Army Pay Corps unit here under the command of Lt. Col. H.E. Warr assisted us in many small ways and invited us to many of their variety shows and dances. We found the Officers and men of this unit very friendly and helpful and they did much to make our short stay in Droitwich pleasant.

The procession of events was accelerated by the invasion of Normandy on June 6th and from then on it only becme a question of when we would be called to the Marshalling area. Our equipment priority became the best and we proceeded with the supply and administrative reports required. Our attached units were in the same phase and equipping was the order of the day because no one knew when the call to the port would come.

In line with this equipping phase, a ten man team of Officers and men from the Group including Lt. Col. Clark, Major McVay and Capt. Lewis journeyed up to Hull, England and spent the better part of a week inspecting, advising on the serviceability, and helping the units of the 2d French Armored Division, which were completely equipped with American equipment, get straightened out before submitting the the shortage lists and requisitions required in P.O.M. Many amusing incidents grew out of the language difficulties but we were very favorably impressed with the care they took of what they had and the seriousness and workmanlike manner in which they approached their job. This organization under General Le Clerc had already made history by their dash across North Africa to take the Germans in the rear in Tunisia and was soon to add further glory to the name by being the first Allied unit to enter Paris and later Strasbourg on the Rhine.

Many of our men in the attached units were attending schools throughout this period. The Engineer Bridge School at Wallingford conducted courses in Camouflage, Bailey Bridge Construction, Construction of Snake M-1 and others at which we had proper representation,

Various traveling teams came to Westwood and classes were arranged in the "Dinah"; non-metallic mine detector, intelligence and camouflage technique for all group units.

The British ran a school for PAD, (Passive Air Defense), to train their own civilian personnel, which was made available for training Incident Officers of the American Army. This officer was to be the Unit S-3 and therefore Major Hahn attended the course. In this school, they gave to us the benefits of their experiences in the art of defense against robot bombs, air raids, and artillery. Altho gh called passive because there is no activity directed against the enemy, the actual work of passive air defense is very active in itself. It includes the control and coordination of the rescue squads both light and heavy, ambulances, fire fighting units, and utility repair and maintenance. Although all these things didn't apply to the military, it enable us to understand what is required all along the line, and as such, be able to do a better job in our capacity when the time comes. The school included many demonstrative problems, and interesting lectures on experiences from people actively engaged in this work.

In addition to the PAD school, the British also ran schools for the light and heavy rescue squads, in order that the men doing the actual work could learn the best methods, and what was expected of them. Quotas at these schools were made available to all our units, down to the companies in order that all units would have properly trained personnel.

Throughout, the spirit was one of complete cooperation, and a great deal was gained from these schools.

During the entire time in England Protestant Churches were thrown open for our use and urgent invitations came to us to fill pulpit engagements at various places which we were glad to do. The British clergy, civilian as well as military, were eager to exchange services. On two different occasions, allied services were held in which all nations who had military personnel near at hand participated. In Droitwich, Worcestershire, the Toc-H club for Allied personnel gave us a fine reception in two services of worship followed by musical concerts by T/5 Harry Lock and Pfc Newman. Also, here in Droitwich, we were able to make the acquaintance of the Rev. Dr. D. Tait Patterson who, in the last war was the Deputy Chief of Chaplains of the British Forces and who is now the Honorary Chaplain of the British Army. He gave us every support possible in maintaining our religious program while we were stationed there. Mention should also be made of the Rev. Arthur Grey, a divinity student and a member of the British forces who, on two different occasions came to our camp and led our services of worship. He also served as pianist for our vocalists.

It was through the efforts of people like Dr. Patterson and Mayor Platts that our stay in Droitwich was very pleasant. At Platt's suggestion as many of us as possible investigated the mysteries of the brine baths for which Droitwich Spa is famous and although we didn't feel as weak on coming out as custom said we should we experienced other phenomenon such as scaling salt off various parts of our anatomy for days afterward.

Trips were arranged and as many men who desired made the trip to Stratford-on-Avon to view the Anne Hatheway Cottage, other Shakespearean Museums and to attend a Shakespearean Play at the beautiful new theater on the banks of the river.

As June slid into July our departure became more imminent the tempo of preparations increased. By the time that we actually left for the Marshalling Area everything was ready and our supply shortage amounted to only a few non-essential minor items.

The trip to the Marshalling area was uneventful and after checking in at RCRP No. 1 and being guided to the place where our vehicles were to be left we dismounted and hiked through the grounds of Lord Mountbatten's Castle to our more frugal quarters. Here we met Major Hahn, Capt. Harst and the balance of our men who had moved from Droitwich to the Marshalling area by rail as we did not have sufficient transportation to move the Group equipment and all personnel. They had drawn our PX rations, anti-seasick pills, and vomit bags, insect powder and enough other things so that no one knew where or how he was going to carry everything. People were offering to give cartons of cigarettes away and there were no takers. We changed our money from the now familiar English 10-shilling and Pound notes to the new French currency. Little did we realize then how few opportunities there would be in France for spending money. We all drew our basic load of ammunition and loaded our clips and weapons because we didn't know when the call to the ship would come. The personnel for this camp was British and did their best to make our stay tolerable.

The next morning about 0700 as we were washing, a messenger came with the word that we were to move out as soon after breakfast as possible. We were on the road by shortly after 0800 hours and by 0930 had passed through Southampton with a military escort and were on the dock waiting for our vehicles to be loaded. The army crews doing the loading were experts and by 1600 all vehicles were stowed away and we were on board ready to sail as scheduled. As the time passed and nothing happened and as other ships of the convoy began pulling downstream we began to sense that something was wrong and it certainly was.

The ship was the George W. Goethals, a liberty ship, commanded by Captain Pederson. The trouble was that the First Mate and a key member of the crew were AWOL plus the fact that two other members of the deck crew were out of action, one in the hospital, the other drunk and in jail as the result of a fight that morning. We had to clear the dock to permit another ship to load but we went no farther than 1/2 mile downstream where we anchored for three days. Here was a ship loaded with the sinews of war being held up by a few slackers who were waxing rich on the wages of war and the skipper hamstrung by union meddling and regulations owing to the fact that the ship was in port and not on the high seas. After three days of promises and bickering via the ship's radio had availed nothing the troop commander ordered that he be taken ashore and the situation reported to the highest authorities if necessary. The next day we pulled anchor and steamed to the convoy rendez-vous near the Isle of Wight without the missing crewmen but with two substitute deck hands.

That night under conditions of lowering fog we weighed anchor again for Utah Beach. The continual sounding of fog horns and whistles made sleep impossible and several times it was necessary to throw the engines to Full Speed Astern to avert another ship. At about 0800, the next morning we were suddenly surrounded by several naval patrol vessels who hailed our ship and asked our course and destination. We were lost and no mistake and had we continued much farther we would have made a new beach-head, unpremeditated to be sure, in the vicinity of Le Havre then in German hands.

The English Captain gave us a corrected course that would take us to Kansas Light Ship. The course was 287 degrees and by looking at the map it will be evident that we weren't where we should have been. As a parting thought the Captain added "This is an unswept channel". We all looked at one another and said, "Is this it"?

Luckily we hit nothing as small but lethal as a mine but did ram an L.S.T. on the way to the beach springing the bow plates of the George W. Goethals. As preparations got under way for disembarking we warmed another "C" ration in the hot water barrels on deck not knowing when we would eat a hot meal again. We could hear the distant booming of the big guns and as we rode at anchor in the choppy sea the silver barrage balloons bobbing above each vessel and the wreckage of the half sunken ships served to further remind us that at last we were nearing action and that at this point on "D" Day a terrific struggle had been fought. "This was it".

HEADQUARTERS
1107TH ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Fourteen officers and thirty-five men of the 1107th Engineer Combat Group arrived off Utah Beach on the Liberty Ship George W. Goethals 17 July 1944. Half of the organization disembarked that night, and under the command of Major F.C. McVay went to the assembly area. Colonel Hobart and the rest of the officers and men arrived on the beach the following morning. They reached the assembly area at 1600.

Orders were received from the 5th Special Brigade, at this time, for the unit to be prepared to move out in convoy with three other units for Bricquebec. There a guide would meet the group and lead it to the bivouac area.

Prior to sailing acrossthe English Channel and before leaving the staging area the Group was divided so that 32 EM under the command of Major I.H. Hahn and Lt. Harst would travel by train to the embarkation point. This was because the Group lacked organic transportation for its personnel.

In the Channel crossing the ship which carried the men with Colonel Hobart lost its place in the convoy. It was halted by an English destroyer as the fog lifted and the Captain told that he was heading in the general direction of LeHavre. When he asked for directions to the Kansas Light Ship he was given a bearing that changed the course of the ship 284 degrees. On the way to the Kansas Light Ship the George W. Goethals was rammed by an LST. Minor damage was suffered by both ships; no one was injured.

No unusual incidents occured to Major Hahn and his men on their crossing. But on reaching the beach there was no transportation awaiting them and they marched nine miles to the assembly area.

Members of the Group with Colonel Hobart arrived at the new bivouac area, 1/2 mile West of Barneville, France T023953, at 1730. At 2000 the Group Commander received orders attaching the 1107th to XV Corps.

Major Hahn, Lt. Harst and the EM with them arrived 19 July 1944 at 1730B.

About 0900 19 July 1944 Colonel Hobart, Lt. Col. Clark, Major Troy and Major McVay visited Hq, XV Corps Engineer, Orders were received showing the 608th Engr L. Equip. Co., 513th Engr L. Pon Co., and 970th Engr Maint. Co. were attached to the 1107th Engr C Group These units were visited that morning by Colonel Hobart, Major Stratte and Major McVay.

On the 20th of July the 998th Engr Treadway Bridge Co and the 168th Engr C Bn were attached to the Group.

Information was received from Corps MP's that no specific restrictions were on men walking on roads in vicinity of bivouac area However, all houses, villages, and hedges were "off limits" to troops. This was rescinded two days later. Five men from various units had been killed by booby traps in hedges.

By 22 July 1944, the Group had made arrangements for the bivouac of troops assigned to it. Also, arrangements had been completed by Major Hahn for a Bailey Bridge training site and by Lt. Greer for a machine gun range for all units under Group command. At 1930, Colonel Hobart received a telephone message from Colonel Warner of XV Corps to notify 513th Engr L. Pon Co, and 608th Engr L. Equip Co., that they were alerted and were to be ready to move on six hours notice.

The following day Major Hahn was contacted by Engr Section of XV Corps with regard to Mine team operating with Corps. This team had all latest equipment and explosives used by the enemy in laying mines and fixing booby traps. It was decided to give a demonstration to the different units under Group. Major Hahn and Lt. Blackburn the officer in charge of the mine team, visited the units in the morning and arranged a schedule.

The organization was notified at 1200 that the 159th Engr C Bn was attached to it. Major McNamara and the staff Officers of this battalion reported to Colonel Hobart about 1400.

Lt. Col. Clark received a message from Colonel Warner of Corps the morning of the 24th stating that a jeep belonging to an artillery unit was blown up on a road north of the bivouac area. He asked for an investigation. Major Troy and Lt. Allen Kaplan were sent out to get the facts.

About 0900 Corps contacted Major Hahn regarding a water main in Barneville that had been broken by a tank recovery unit. Lt. Greer, M/Sgt Grether, and T/Sgt Reidelbach from Group and one squad of men from the 168th Engr C Bn went into town to make repairs. These were completed about 1700. Repairs consisted of welding hole and crack in pipe caused by steel picket of hold-fast striking pipe.

Major Troy and Lt. Allen Kaplan reported the men from the Artillery unit had been trying to get down to the beach. They had taken a road through a mine field. The road had not been cleared. They realized this once they were in the field and stopped the jeep to investigate and find a way out. One of the Lieutenants stepped on an S-mine. The mine exploded killing one officer, wounding two, and riddeling the jeep.

On the 27th of July Colonel Pohl of Corps called Major Hahn and said that the 1107th Engr C Group was to join VIII Corps for duty. This would take place that afternoon or the following day. The Group was to be ready to move on a two-hour notice.

The next day Lt. Col. Clark and Major Troy left for VIII Corps. They met Colonel Campbell of the Engineer Section and were given the new bivouac location. The unit departed from their bivouac area at 1400 and arrived at the new area at 1532. Colonel Hobart and Major McVay visited VIII Corps Engr Section at 1900.

The Group was assigned the responsibility for the upkeep of roads in the Corps rear area. Also, mine teams from the combat battalions would be used for clearing areas to be used by Corps troops. Four

Water Points were to be taken over and operated by Group battalions.

Maintenance of roads could have been expedited if Engineer Supply Dumps had had asphalt heating units or tar cookers on hand. Lack of these limited amount of work that could be done. Also, tar patching of holes was not satisfactory because of heavy equipment being moved. It was found that a cut-back asphalt was much better for this road maintenance. It was Colonel Hobart's idea that these supplies should be kept in stock.

The Group, and units under it, was bivouaced in vicinity of La Haye du Puits. The net work of roads in this area was being used by Corps and Army to move up troops in preparation for the attack and breakthrough above Coutances. The roads were in fair shape, but heavy equipment moving all the time kept repair crews busy. The Germans had mined the country extensively and all areas used by our troops had to be checked thoroughly. The result of good training showed immediately. S-mines, Schu mines, and standard German teller mines were removed without any casualties.

One of the road repair crews from the 159th Engr Combat Bn had two men killed and two injured. They had to step off the road when two large trucks were passing each other. One of the men leaned into the hedge and set off a trip wire attached to an S-mine.

Lt. Allen H. Kaplan and nine 2 1/2 ton cargo trucks of the 159th Engineer C Bn with full load of lumber and timber left the vicinity of La Haye du Puits on 30 July for the River Sienne at the town of Heugenville to aid the 79th Division in putting a bridge across the river. The cargo arrived in time after break-down of two trucks which were brought in within one hours time. The men and drivers of the 159th Engr (C) Bn did exceptionally fine driving down the congested roads of the Normandy Peninsula.

At 1530 on the first of August, Corps notified Group that the 159th Engr C Bn was relieved of attachment and attached to Task Force A. This was the Task Force that swept across the North of the Britanny Peninsula after the break-through at Avranches.

The following day, 2 August, the 1107th Eng. received orders to relieve the 1101st Engr C Group. Also, the 202nd Engr C Bn and the 513th Engr L. Ponton Co. were attached to the 1107th Engr C Group. The Group and units in its command were to support divisions under Corps, and keep open lines of communication between division rear boundaries and Army forward boundaries.

The Group moved West of Avranches, 3/4 of a mile from Tanis. The road running West from Avranches to Pontorson, N176, was the main supply line for the 6th Armored Division and the 83rd and 8th Infantry divisions. At night, it was constantly strafed and bombed by the Germans to stop the flow of supplies. Snipers were also active in this area.

The bridge just West of Avranches was a constant target and highly regarded military objective for the Luftwaffe. It was the connecting link between the Normandy and Britanny Peninsula and was the point for which the German Seventh Army was supposed to be driv-

ing when encircled and trapped by General Patton's and General Bradley's forces.

Division engineers had put a treadway bridge below the main highway bridge in case it was knocked out.

The 202nd Engr C Bn was bivouaced in the vicinity of the bridge and one company was kept alerted to assist elements from the 513th Engr L Pon Co in construction of a Class 70 Bailey bridge in case the bridge was demolished.

During one of the raids a bomb dropped in the 202nd Engr C Bn area. Lt. Col. Unger, Capt. Gross, and Lt. True were wounded along with eight EM. One of the men died in the hospital after evacuation from the company area.

Prior to the movement of Group in this area the German planes had been dropping flares then lining up the bridge with a tall brick factory chimney in order to make the bombing run. T/Sgt Ernst and demolition crew from Group blew the chimney after Group had received permission from Corps to do this job. The Germans never did succeed in knocking out the bridge.

Between 4 August 1944 and 8 August 1944 Corps assigned Group the road network between Route A and Route C (Exclusive of C) to reconnoiter and maintain.

Major Troy and Lt. A.H.Kaplan, S2 and Ass't S2, did most of the reconnaissance work.

Enemy activity was limited to snipers in the day time and short air raids at night. Snipers were especially active around water points. A machine gun crew with the assistance of the Free French killed 11 German snipers at one WP operated by the 168th Engr C Bn during this period. The Group bivouac area was fired into on two successive occasions. No casualties resulted. Patrols led by Major Hahn and Lt. Greer failed to find any of the snipers. T/Sgt Reidelbach and Cpl Ferguson killed one at a WP the next day.

The battalions, and the 513th Engr L Pon Co built several Bailey bridges. They widened and strengthened other bridges put in by division Engineers.

Wrecked equipment was cleared off the roads by the Engineers and numerous road blocks were blown. General George Patton stopped where one squad was removing a road block and complimented Colonel Hobart, who had come up to inspect the work, on the job the Engineers were doing.

On the 8th of August Colonel Winslow of Corps gave verbal orders to Colonel Hobart changing boundaries from Route C to Route B and ordered that extensive reconnaissance be made.

Colonel Hobart, Lt. Greer, Sgt. Marks and Cpl. Crockett made first reconnaissance to St. Caradec. There it was decided to put in Bailey bridge in addition to treadway already in. A lieutenant from the 202nd Engr C Bn was killed by snipers on this same route two days later.

Lt. Col. Clark with M/Sgt Grether and T/Sgt Reidelbach in one jeep and another jeep with EM for security made a reconnaissance to Huelgoat. Colonel Hobart, Major Troy and Lt. Greer went to St.Brieuc to determine guard necessary for key railroad bridge. Lt. A. Kaplan and two Sgts., Bruck and Wells, from S2 department did thorough reconnaissance of secondary roads to be used for by-passes.

This work was carried on while the 1107th Engr (C) Group was in the vicinity of Dinan.

Lt. Harst, Liason Officer between Group and Corps, phoned on the 17th of August that German prisoners were to be picked up at Corps area. They would give information regarding mine fields laid in de - fense of Dinard and St. Malo. Lt. Greer, Sgt Bruck and draftsman with security squad from the 168th Engr C Bn picked up prisoners and proceeded to mine fields. The location of approximately 4,000 S-mines was sketched. Sketches were later turned over to Corps Engineer.

On the 17th of August, Group was given the job of making a reconnaissance and repair of air field near Morlaix. Air field was to be made ready at once for use by fighter bombers who would support VIII Corps in the attack on Brest.

Major Brennan of the 168th Engr C Bn made the reconnaissance by air. He estimated job could be done in maximum of three days provided material and equipment was available.

Group, 168th Engr C Bn, and the 2nd Platoon of the 628th Engr L Equip Co (attached to Group for this job) moved near Morlaix on the 17th and 18th of August to begin work.

The Germans did an excellent job of blowing the reinforced concrete runway of the airport. A total of 54 craters were blown. The average width of the craters was approximately 35 feet. They were about eight feet deep. When a crater was blown the concrete around the lip of the crater would be heaved slightly upward. This slight rise would extend backward for a distance of four to six feet and make necessary the breaking off of all this concrete before work on the fill could be commenced. Two or three of the craters had to be dug out after their supposed completion. This was because all of the wet clay had not been removed and the fill continued to settle. Every sixth anti-glider obstacle around the field had an 88mm shell with firing device and trip wires attached to it. The Free French told the Commanding Officer that the Germans lost 11 men in fixing these booby traps. "A" Company of the 168th Engr C Bn removed them without any casualties.

The air strip, 1300 yards long, was ready at 2100 on the 21st of August.

During the period the air strip was being fixed the Group Hq demolition squad removed several road blocks. These blocks had caused wrecks on supply route to new landing beach at St. Michel. M/Sgt Grether and T/Sgt Ernst experimented with various methods in removing blocks made with channel iron. They developed a plan by which a block could be removed in one and a half hours. Equipment needed was a compressor and demolitions. The plan was written up and with sketches submitted to Corps.

The 202nd Engr C Bn operated water points in the rear area and maintained Route A from Dinan West to Morlaix. One company was used to guard vital bridge at St. Brieuc.

The 513th Engr L Pon Co was used to move a Corps supply dump to the vicinity of Carhaix. The rest of the time this unit was held in reserve.

- 2 -

Colonel Hobart visited Corps the 22nd of August. He was given boundaries and information concerning the use of the battalions under Group in the attack on Brest. The 1107th Engr (C) Group was to support the 8th and 29th Divisions in addition to maintenance of supply lines and operation of water points.

The Group bivouaced at RO39180, about 11 miles North of Brest in the vicinity of Kergoueznou. Eggs, French refugees, rain, and the sound of artillery fire were plentiful. Constant reports of enemy infiltration came through, but all the Germans the Group saw was prisoners.

Lt. Allen Kaplan discovered, after looking at the G-3 report of Corps, that he had been a mile inside the enemy lines the day before. He didn't see any activity but had remarked to his driver on how quiet everything was.

Major Hahn made a reconnaissance where a bridge had been blown. It was decided to by-pass the bridge and not repair it.

One company of the 168th Engr (C) Bn was left at Morlaix to maintain the air-strip. On orders from Corps one mine team from the company was ordered to an SOS unit in Morlaix to remove booby traps. These had been set by the Germans in the rear of their offices and residences to prevent the Free French from making night attacks.

One non-commissioned officer lost his foot removing these traps when he stepped on a new type of mine. It was a concrete block about the size of a brick and was filled with a pound of TNT. They were the same size as real brick used in a flight of steps. The mine had a Buck type ignitor, like those in the Mustard Pot. Eighteen mines were found in one flight of steps.

The units supported the division in their work, repaired roads, cleared mine fields, ran water points, provided security, dug gun emplacements, and did various other engineer jobs. German prisoners were sent to Group. They located mine fields which were sketched by a team under Sgt Bruck. They located 40,000 mines in approximately four miles. The Group also learned for the first time that the Germans had a machine to lay their Holtz mine. In one field a Sgt. stepped on an S-mine. The propellant charge kicked it out of the ground and it hit a man on the cheek as it went up in the air, but it failed to go off.

On the 5th of September Group and the units under Group were relieved from assignment to 3rd Army and were assigned to 9th Army.

A shell from an 88mm gun and a jeep with an officer and two EM from the 168th Engr C Bn arrived at the same spot on a road near St. Rennin. All the men were killed.

The 8th Division was pulled out and sent to clean up resistance on the Crozon Peninsula.

One company of the 202nd Engr C Bn was attached to this Division. The Engineers were used to build an entirely new road because it was known that the existing road was zeroed in by enemy artillery. This enabled them to fire at any point at any time on the road when they expected troop movements. The new road was built and troops were moved up for the attack without casualties.

Brest appeared about to fall. Corps requested one of the best mine teams to report to Corps Hq. They were to stand by until the city fell and then rush to German Hq. with the CIC team. The team was sent from the 202nd Engr C Bn. This was on the 10th of the month. The city fell 18 September 1944 at 1500 hours.

Brest had been bombed and shelled to rubble. Engineers cleared a couple of streets so traffic could move. The 168th Engr C Bn was put to work demolishing the walls of several buildings after one wall had fallen on a truck load of soldiers killing four from another unit.

Nearly all troops visited the submarine pens and surrounding hills where resistance had been stiffest. Germans had ample food, and strong points. They lacked water and medical supplies.

German Marines who were killed by shell fire, or who died or were wounded on the front line were buried outside the sub pens. They were sewed in canvas, weights tied to their feet and they were dropped in the water. Some of them were left with one arm outside the canvas. At low tide they could still be seen giving the Nazi salute.

HEADQUARTERS
1107TH ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP

After the fall of Brest Group received orders to be prepared to move by September 26. Units were ordered to carry as much ammunition, food, P.O.L. as possible and were to draw winter clothing and blankets.

The 1107th and the 168th Engr C Bn with 969th Engr Maint. Co. atchd for duration of movement moved out in motor convoy 28 Sept. 1944. They were to travel 533 miles; the journey to take four days; at the end of which they would join other units of VIII Corps somewhere in front of the Siegfried line. This march, by units of VIII Corps, was the longest made by any troops in the European Theatre of Operations.

While in convoy near Dinan, Brittany, France Major Alf K. Stratte, O-266098, MC, by his heroic achievement in connection with a truck fire earned the Bronze Star. Major Stratte's citation reads as follows:

Major Alf K. Stratte, 0266098, Medical Corps, United States Army, for heroic achievement on 28 September 1944 in France. Major Stratte, near Dinan, Brittany, France, administered medical attention to the enlisted personnel of another unit who had been injured when the truck in which they were riding caught fire. With complete disregard for the resulting explosions of gasoline and ammunition and without consideration for his personal safety, Major Stratte's actions greatly alleviated the suffering of the enlisted personnel injured as a result of the accident. The skill and disregard for personal safety displayed by Major Stratte reflect the highest credit upon himself and the military service. Entered military service from Minnesota.

The Group arrived near Houffalize, Belgium, at 2150A the 1st of October. The weather and country were quite different from that encountered in the western part of France. It rained or misted continually. The dense woods in which the Group was bivouaced prevented any equipment from drying and gave everyone a perpetual chill. Although the bivouac area was on high ground, roads and trails that led off of the main highways quickly became impassable.

The 202nd Engr C Bn was left at Brest. The 44th Engr C Bn was attached to Group 2nd October 1944. Other units which were subsequently attached during the month for operations in the new sector were the 527th Engr L Pon Co, 552nd Engr Hv Pon Bn and the 2nd Platoon of the 628th Engr L. Equip Co. The Equipment company was later attached to Corps but the 2nd Platoon remained in support of Group. In order to provide assistance in maintaining Engineer Equipment in zone of responsibility 1 Off. and 15 men with necessary Shops and Equipment from the 467th Engr Maint. Co were placed in support of Group and located at Gouvy with the Light Equipment Platoon. The status of the 168th Engr C Bn, which traveled with the 1107th from Brest, was not changed.

Group's new assignment was the support of the 2nd Division which had a front of approximately 18 miles in and facing the Siegfried line.

There was a tremendous amount of engineering work to be done. Roads were bad or nonexistant as in this area between the German and Belgium frontiers the absence of roads was part of the defense plan of both countries. The rain was constant. Quarries with suitable rock had to be located, opened and operated; fortifications dug; new roads capable of handling heavy traffic had to be built; sawmills operated; snow plows constructed, and a plan made for keeping main MSR's clear when snow commenced to fall.

Because of the continuous bad weather and the prospects of more to come, Corps gave orders that all units would get under cover as soon as possible. Several reconnaissance parties went forward from Group Headquarters to search for a suitable place. Lt. Col. Clark found the best location. It was Chateau Rencheux near Vielsalm and was large enough to house all personnel in the Group Hq. The Group moved in 4 Oct 1944. During this entire phase Gp Hq was reception party for new troops of Gp and located billets for all incoming units.

Colonel Hobart's decision was to let the 168th Engr C Bn give direct support to the 2nd Engineer Bn and let the 44th Engr C Bn take care of the rear area. A boundary was finally established between the two battalions running in a North-South direction from St. Vith to Malscheid.

When Group was assigned to support the 2nd Division, the 2nd Engr were building a road from the top of a mountain, SE of Burg Reuland, to the little village of Heckhuscheid in German territory. This road was necessary to deliver supplies to Artillery Bns, a combat team, and other units fronting the dragon teeth of the Siegfried line. Company "C" of the 168th Engr C Bn moved forward and went to work with the 2nd Engineers on the road. They operated a quarry, hauled rock, dug ditches and fought the mud. It was a battle between the engineers and the mud to see if traffic would move or stand still. The Germans helped the mud in the fight by shell fire, patrols at night, and the use of rockets. A day seldom passed without rain, but the road was kept open and traffic moved.

Some of the side roads leading off to the bivouac areas became impassable. They were brushed, rocked, and planked, and kept open. There was one stretch on the main road which was under direct observation of the enemy. Any heavy traffic brought immediate fire from the ridge occupied by the Germans. After an inspection trip on this particular stretch of road Colonel Hobart decided it could be camouflaged to prevent enemy observation.

A series of holes 6 ft deep and fifteen apart were dug parallel with the section of the road under observation. These holes were thirty feet away from the road toward the enemy. A second series of holes were dug at an off set from the first holes. They were also parallel to the road but about forty feet away.

Medium size pine trees were cut and set in the holes. They were cut and trimmed so the bottom limbs of the tree touched the ground. About 100 trees were placed in this manner. After the job was completed vehicles could pass up and down the road without being observed by the enemy. There was no further shelling.

During the construction of this screen the crew on the earth-auger was fired upon the afternoon of the first day. From then on most of the work was done at night, with the exception of cutting the trees. Company "B" of the 168th Engr C Bn with equipment from the 628th Engr were used to do this screening. They started work on the 9th of October and completed the job on the 13th.

About this time Corps secured a crusher from Army and gave it to Group to operate. The crusher was turned over to the 44th Engr to operate as this Bn had previous experience and to the 628th Engr Light Equipment Co. for maintainance. The crusher was put in operation at Steinebruck. Rock obtained from it was to be used for patching and stockpiling along MSR's. After 3 days operation at Steinebruck, the crusher moved back to the vicinity of Couvy where it could serve a larger network of roads. Operation of the crusher was taken over by the 1128th Engr C Gp, relieving the 44th Engr for more important work in the forward areas. Shortage of spare parts and maintainance on this crusher proved a major item in limiting its output.

The tactical situation was such on the 10th of October that Corps decided to establish a barrier line near the middle of the Corps sector.

This line was to be defended by all troops under Corps if the enemy attacked and broke through the forward defenses.

Major Troy and Capt. Kaplan made plans for this line in the 1107th Engr C Gp area. Reconnaissance was carried out by both Bns and the reconnaissance section of Group. Reports were consolidated and plans for road blocks, mine fields, and defensive positions were made. A week of intensive work was put into preparing the plan. However, Corps was given one more infantry Division and an Armored Division and no actual work was done in the field because there were sufficient troops on the front line to prevent the Germans from making an effective push.

One of the major problems in Group area was maintainance and repair of roads. The importance and size of this project was expected to increase when snow started to fall. In the forward area the 168th Engr was operating two quarries, one sawmill and using all available men to keep existing roads in good condition and make new roads passable.

Colonel Hobart made repeated attempts to secure an entire Engr Equipment Co. to support the Group as the one Platoon of the 628th Engr was very inadequate and owing to the urgency of the work servicing schedules often were postponed to the detriment of the equipment. In addition, a Dump Truck Co. was asked for several times but could not be furnished. It is recommended that for efficient operation of a Corps, Group in normal operations, a minimum of one Light Equipment Co., and one Dump Truck Co. be attached.

HEADQUARTERS
1107TH ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP

From St. Vith to the Corps rear boundary six of the main roads were divided between the 552nd Engr and the 527th Engr. They were to maintain the roads and at the same time make stockpiles of rock or cinders on steep hills and curves to combat ice and snow. This was an expedient as a Hv Pon Bn lacks the organic transportation in 2½T Dumps or Cargo's to carry on road work and both the Lt. Pon Co and Hv Pon Bn lack sufficient quantities of small pioneer tools to work their men efficiently. Extra tools were borrowed, and trucks in Group juggled to provide maximum efficiency possible.

The 2nd Inf Div decided to occupy a new defensive position and on the 17th of October the 44th Engr was ordered to move their company's forward to dig emplacements, lay mine fields, and stretch wire for the 23rd Infantry. The size of the task is shown by the following quantities of materials used: 5400 lbs assorted nails; 267 rolls of tar paper; 19,075 sand bags; 15 rolls of chicken wire; 400 reels of barbed wire; 210 concertinas; 1300 long pickets; 2560 Anchor pickets; 11,000 rolls of burlap; 60,716 bd ft of lumber; 63,700 linear ft of timber; and 1200 AP mines.

The efficient construction job done by this Bn is best told in the letter of commendation it received from General Robertson, a commander of the Division and the endorsement by General Middleton, VIII Corps Commander. The letter of endorsement follows:

HEADQUARTERS 2D INFANTRY DIVISION
APO #2, U.S. ARMY

4 November 1944.

SUBJECT: Commendation.

THRU: Commanding General, VIII Corps, APO #308, U.S. ARMY
Commanding Officer, 1107th Engineer Group.

TO : Commanding Officer
44th Engineer Battalion,
APO #230, U.S. Army.

1. On 18th October 1944, the 44th Engr Bn was requested to prepare a new defensive position for the 23d R.C.T. This task required the construction of 41 machine gun emplacements, 34 Tobruk shelters, 58 squad shelters, 1375 feet of trenches, 7 company command posts, 6 company kitchens, 2 battalion command posts, 9,000 yds of tactical wire, and 8,925 ft of mine fields. A deadline of 1 November 1944 was set for the job.

2. Many difficulties were encountered, the two largest of which were enemy action and shortage of materials. In order to avoid casualties, 35% of the work was accomplished at night. When one position was shelled, work did not stop but units were temporarily shifted to another site and progress continued. Approximately 392 tons of material were used on this task. Supply

dumps were set up in rear and where possible prefabricated units were assembled in rear which speeded up progress and minimized work in shelled areas.

3. The task was completed by the deadline set, and the combat team was given more structures and better positions than had originally been requested, with only 6 casualties due to enemy action.

4. It is my pleasure to commend this unit for the organization, ingenuity and efficiency it displayed on this assignment.

W.M. ROBERTSON,
Major General U.S. Army
Commanding

AG 201.22 G-1 (4 Nov 44) 1st Ind.
HEADQUARTERS VIII CORPS, APO 308, U.S. Army, 9 November 1944.

TO: Commanding Officer, 1107th Engineer Group, APO 230, U.S. Army.

The Corps Commander notes with pleasure the fine tribute paid the 44th Engineer Battalion and wishes to add his appreciation for their cooperation and performance of duty.

By command of Major General MIDDLETON:

KENNETH CLARK,
Lt. Colonel, AGD
Actg Adj General

The winterization program required a tremendous supply of 1" and 2" x 4" lumber and building materials and Major McVay, S-4, was kept busy requisitioning timber and finished lumber.

The first saw mill operated by unit of this group was started by the 168th Engr near the little town of Maldingen. The first lumber and timber from this mill was used by the 168th Engr to plank a road that had become impassable because of mud and continuous rain.

There were two changes in units under the 1107th Engineer Combat Group during November. Because of extensive road work, and operations of saw mills the Group was given "B" Company of the 202nd Engineer Combat Bn. which is attached to the 1102nd Engr C Group. This company moved to Hinderhausen in the 1107th area 18 November 1944. It was assigned the task of running one saw mill at St. Vith, the maintenance of two MSR's running North out of St. Vith to the Group Northern boundary, and the maintenance of the MSR used by the artillery units of 2nd Division from Burg Reuland to Winterspelt.

Group lost the 552nd Engr Hv Ponton Co.22 Nov 1944. Road work that had been done by one company of this Bn was given to the 44th Engineer C Bn.

With the completion of the defensive positions for the 2nd Division, the 44th Engr C Bn was given the job of prefabricating tables and bunks for the troops of the 2nd Division. There were 200 tables 12 feet long to build and 809 three decker bunks. The design of the table is shown in Engineer Field Manual 5-35, page 134. The following modifications were made to this design; two side boards 1" x 6" x 12' were not used in the table top and the same size board (used as a batter board) was eliminated from each seat. This saved lumber and construction time on each unit.

For this work the Battalion took the production and helped run a saw mill in Vielsalm. The mill was put on a twenty-four hour basis after the first week. The civilian employees worked from seven in the morning until 12 at night and the Engineers ran the 'graveyard' shift.

M/Sgt. Grether and Sgt. Bruck from Gp. Hq., a crew from the 44th Engr and three men from the 467th Maintenance Pl. went to St. Vith and put a demolished mill in operation in five days time. They installed a new transformer and power line, rebuilt part of the band-saw equipment, fixed an edger, cut-off saw, and cleared out the debris. The mill was turned over to the 44th Engr for operation.

Capt. Greer located a small saw mill, still uncrated, at SPA. Corps gave instructions to get this mill and see if it could be made into a portable outfit. It was the usual procedure in erecting one of these mills to bolt the base to concrete to prevent the band saw from getting out of line and give the machine the required stability. Two new ways were found to mount the base. One was by cribbing with 10" x 10", (see pictures 1,2); another was by driving piles and bolt 10" x 10"s to the piles, and use this for a base.

The mill lacked two electric motors, saws, and belting. Major McVay secured this equipment in Brussels.

M/Sgt Grether with a crew from the 44th Engr erected the mill and tested it. The mill will be carried by the 628th Engr Light Equipment Company. It is estimated the mill can be erected and put in operation in three days time.

Units under Group were operating four sawmills. The 168th Engr C Bn was running two, the 44th Engr C Bn was running one, and "B" Co. of the 202nd Engr C Bn was running one. Trucks urgently needed for other engineer work were being used for logging. To alleviate this condition it was decided to take the 527th Engr L Ponton Co off road maintenance and let it log for all the mills. The 527th Engr had a crane, pole-type trailers. They did an efficient logging job with this equipment and kept all mills supplied.

At the end of the month the mills were manufacturing about 20,000 board feet per day.

Army and Corps requirements for lumber in Belgium were large. If the Germans had taken the time to sabotage the sawmills during their retreat the lumber situation would have been critical. As it was, many mills were found intact.

However, this Group believes that more efficient operation in the procurement of lumber would be possible if Engineer Dumps would carry a good, small, American, portable saw mill. It should be driven by a gasoline or Diesel engine and not depend on electric power. One of these mills would have twice the output of any mill requisitioned in this area. It could be operated by a Combat Bn.

The 1st of November Colonel Hobart received permission from Corps to construct a bridge across a railway cut on the Highway (N28) to St. Vith. It had been blown by the Germans. Building of this bridge would save vehicles using a by-pass 2.2 miles long. This by-pass was rough and required a platoon of men, dump trucks, and an R4 at all times to keep it repaired.

T/Sgt Konikoff of Group drew plans for the bridge and they were submitted to Corps for approval. Work on the bridge was started by the 44th Engineers 4 November 1944. They were hampered by rain, snow, and the usual bad weather and also in using salvaged equipment. Their story of the construction of the bridge, along with pictures, is attached as Annex 1 to this report.

Like all other military operations and services in Belgium during the month of November the water points were troubled with

mud. Turn-around roads were kept rocked at all times and constant maintenance was given them. But the mud seemed to be bottomless and roadways absorbed hundreds of yards of rock.

The water point at St. Vith, operated by the 168th Engr C Bn, was just off the highway. Trucks could be filled while parked on the shoulder of the road. Although traffic was congested at this point, at times, the benefits gained in avoiding the mud and the quick filling of water cans more than outweighed any disadvantages caused by one way traffic.

It is suggested in future operations of water points that this practice of locating WP's near hard surface roads be followed. It will save wear and tear of equipment on almost impossible turn-arounds and will also make available more men and materials for more important work elsewhere.

Winterization of water points was started 15 November 1944. There was no equipment authorized for this work. Major McVay obtained permission from Army to draw one pyramidal tent and one stove for each unit. This would take care of all the equipment except the 3,000 gallon storage tank. There was also sufficient room in the tent for the operators to sleep. After the tents were winterized it was estimated the equipment would be protected in temperature that was 10 degrees above zero.

Most of the hose is outside the tent and is drained every night during cold weather. This precaution is also taken with the complete unit.

The storage tanks were painted inside and outside with waterproofing. Then they were placed on platforms with 2 inch board flooring. Tanks are rotated, dried and repaired every two weeks. This has increased the life of the tanks approximately 100%. All first and second echelon maintenance of equipment at the water points is done by the operators. Their big problem with equipment has been the carbon that forms in the head and around the valves of the motor. This has to be cleaned out about every 10 days or 75 hours of operation.

On the 30th of the month a team of inspectors from First Army consisting of one Officer and three non-coms made an inspection of Group water points.

In company with T/Sgt Reidelbach, Group Water Sergeant, they checked points for construction, motor maintenance, equipment maintenance, and H20 quality. T/Sgt Reidelbach was commended for originality and supervision of the water points. The overall rating by the inspection team given to the units was excellent.

Local inhabitants have said that the weather this fall and winter has been the worst this section of the country has had for the last 70 years, however, only one water point has been closed because of flood waters. There has been little trouble with turbity. So far it has not exceeded 100 ppm with an average PH of 7.0

The 168th Engineer C Bn had the toughest road problems confronting any unit under Group. Heavy traffic, constant rain, limited equipment, soft ground, and long hauls to suitable quarries gave them a job seven days out of the week.

One road became so bad there was no solution but to plank it. This road led to an Artillery Bn and a Combat Team bivouac area and CP. It was between map coordinates P903769 and P900769. From available information it is believed this is the longest road of this type constructed in this theatre of operations.

The road was two lane and 5,772 feet long. It required 3,610 planks, size 3" x 8" x 12'; 52,000 nails, and 5,772 feet of double curbing. The road was started 26 October and traffic was turned over the road 9 November. The curbing was finished on the 15th of November.

Artillery units required special attention from the 168th Engr because of the size of their equipment. The Battalion furnished these units with technical advice and Engineer equipment, and in some instances provided labor when construction was difficult. At one time the mud was so bad around one Artillery Bivouac that the big guns could not have been moved if the tactical situation had demanded it. This problem was remedied with help from the Engineers. Sommerfelt track material was used. One layer was not sufficient so small pine brandes were placed on the first layer and then another layer of sommerfelt was placed on the pine boughs. The road then had sufficient bearing and would support heavy equipment. Steel R.R. rails were laid along both edges for curbs and also to hold down the outer edges of the track.

The 9th of November rain turned to snow and continued throughout the night and well into the next day. It did not stick on the wet pavement and roads in the vicinity of Vielsalm, Salmchateau, and southward along the highway to Beho. There was a lot of slush along the roads in this area. An extensive reconnaissance was not made of all the roads in Group area at this time. It was assumed that the roads would all be in similar condition to those in the immediate vicinity of Group Hq.

However, a reconnaissance made by Lt. Colonel Clark the morning of the 10th found that roads along the high ground and ridges west of Vielsalm and near the Group rear boundary were in bad condition and snow had drifted to such an extent that traffic was impeded. Assignments were made to each unit for constant road patrols, and were asked to send reports twice each day to Group Hq.

The roads found blocked by snow were immediately cleared. Units built snow plow attachments for their prime movers and wreckers. (See pictures 3 through 8) R4's and D7's were rigged with sled runner attachments, under the arms holding up the blade, so these machines could be used in cleaning or moving heavy drifts. These runners were built in such a manner as to hold the blade about an inch above the surface of the roadway.

On reconnaissance patrols during snow the 527th Engr found they could chain a 10" x 10" at an angle back of a jeep and knock a lot of slush off of the road and shoulders.

The Our river reached the flood stage (See picture no. 9) on the 19th of the month. Several bridges in and around Burg Reuland were reported under water.

On inspection it was found that all of the road running across the valley of the Our, (See picture No. 10) just Northeast of Burg Reuland, was under water. When Engineers had replaced a bridge across this river they had filled in two bays of the old bridge with rock to make a roadway leaving only one-third the normal space for the water to flow under the bridge. In this remaining space they had erected a log crib for connecting two spans of the new bridge. This left less than one third of the original stream bed for the Our. The valley was soft and marshy and the Engineers had constructed a rock road from both sides of the valley to connect the bridge. This road was to be used by the 2nd Division artillery units as a MSR between Burg Reuland and Winterspelt. When the stream became swollen, the narrow channel under the bridge caused it to overflow its banks and rapidly spread over the valley. The road acted as a dam and backed the water up until it commenced to overflow all along the road and wash it away. At some places the road was under a foot of water. The bridge washed out the night of the 19th.

Colonel Hobart's decision after looking at the situation the morning of the 20th was to blow a gap in the road on the far side of the valley so the dammed up waters could get through without washing the rest of the road away, (See pictures 11 & 12), then bridge the gap with a Bailey Bridge. It was also decided to put a Bailey in where the other bridge had washed out. This was done. (See pictures 13 & 14). Sand bags were placed to prevent the shoulders of the road from scouring along the upper side. The road was rocked and ready for traffic the afternoon of the 21st. Although water continued to rise the morning and afternoon of the 21st and the following day, it did not cover the road or stop traffic. "B" Company of the 202nd Engr C Bn built the two Bailey bridges and repaired the road. One bridge was 80 feet long and one was 50 feet long.

ACTION AFTER BATTLE REPORT FOR DECEMBER

1107th Engineer Combat Group

Engineer work during the first part of the month of December was routine and a continuation of that undertaken during October and November. The big job continued to be road maintenance. This task took on gigantic proportions in the forward areas where roads had to be built over ground where it was impossible to get a good sub-grade.

Another problem was the long hauls from good quarry sites. This caused many breakdowns in equipment and it was found necessary to borrow trucks from a Light Ponton Company and give them to the Combat Battalions to haul rock. This enabled the line companies to give the required amount of maintenance to their vehicles but cut down on the efficiency of road repair.

If such a problem should again present itself to a Corps, where a large road network had to be kept open under adverse conditions it would be advisable to obtain one platoon from a Dump Truck company to aid in this work. Then, Equipment of Combat Battalions would not get in such condition that it could not do an efficient job when an emergency arose.

Another shortage that slowed down road maintenance was the lack of parts for the rock crusher. Small gears, shafting, belt lacing and belt were not available at the Engineer Dump and seriously curtailed production.

Snow fell the tenth of the month and the new plows were put to work immediately. The big plows did not do too efficient a job because the snow did not reach enough depth. It was found for light snows a drag made of I beams was the best method for clearing the surface of the roads. The plows had their blades set to clear the surface of the road by about one inch. In a light snow this tended to pack the snow and not clear the surface.

VIII Corps was supposed to be holding a static front. Troops on the front line did patrolling but did not engage in any large offensive. There was sporadic shell fire from the Siegfried defensives and one road parallel to the front line was named "Purple Heart Alley" because it was under direct observation. The 168th Engineer Combat Bn built a road to by-pass a particular dangerous stretch in the vicinity of Bleialf. German activity seemed to be limited. There was not too much indication that the big German counter-offensive under Von Runstedt would break through and over-run the VIII Corps sector from North of St. Vith to South of Bastogne.

The first serious indication that Tiger Tanks were on the move was a teletype from Corps attaching the 168th Engr C Bn to the 106th Infantry Division. It was arranged to send trucks from

the 527th Engr L Pon Co to Arlon to pick up men from the 168th Engineers who were at the rest camp there, also to assist in moving the 168th Eng C Bn CP. Equipment of the 628th Engineer Light Equipment Co. being used near the front was ordered to return to Gouvy. The 44th Engr C Bn was alerted. Bridges in the vicinity of Burg Reuland were ordered to be prepared for demolition. This was on the 16th of the month.

The German counter-attack was under way and events moved rapidly on the 17th and 18th. A D-7 from the 628th Engineers was sent to the ASP at Bourcy to stand by but to be ready to help move ammunition in case of hits on ammo supply by enemy artillery. The 7th Armored Division started to move in the vicinity of St. Vith and arranged through Group to secure critical maps. The 44th Engr C Bn was attached to the 28th Division and moved out of Vielsalm and southward to meet the German thrust. Heavy Engineer Equipment was concentrated at Gouvy under supervision of the 628th Engineer Light Equipment Co. It was decided to leave a water-point at Salmchateau in place with enough transportation to move it when it looked as though the enemy would over-run it. The morning of the 18th all units remaining under Group control were told to load and be ready to move at once, After all units of Group had reported out, Group moved out at 1215 and arrived at the new bivouac area in the vicinity of Amonines at 1830. Colonel Hobart attempted to go to Corps but could not get through because of heavy vehicular traffic on the highways. He contacted Colonel Winslow of Corps Engineer Section by phone from Marche, and received instructions to move to vicinity of Neufchateau the morning of the 19th. From Amonines Group moved to vicinity of Pont d'Oie.

The next morning Group was given definite assignments in the preparation of road blocks and strong points at St. Hubert, Paronpre and Vaux-lez-Rosieres. Road blocks and strong points were to be defended by Engineers operating under Group.

On the 21st, an advance CP was established by Group headquarters at Libramont. Orders were to defend the strong points established by the 35th Engineer Combat Bn and the 527th Light Ponton Co., prepare bridges East of town for demolition, and prepare trees with charges so they could be felled and create abatis if units had to withdraw to the south and west of the town. There was also an Engineer supply dump in Libramont which was to be destroyed in the event of an enemy breakthrough.

Lt Col Clark met General Perry of the 28th Division in the afternoon and was informed that the 527th Eng had been put in the line and given a sector to defend near Vaux-les-Rosieres. They had been given a battery from a TD outfit to supplement the defense of their sector. The CG of the 28th Division refused to release the 527th Engr for necessary Engineer work.

Units, including elements of the 28th Division, a tank destroyer outfit, and some artillery, pulled out of Libramont early in the afternoon leaving Group Forward CP and part of the 35th Engr C Bn as the only troops in town. Group moved out at 2300 blowing abatis and road blocks as they pulled back. The Engineers were prevented from blowing the bridge at Moircy when elements from a German Panzer Division siezed control of the bridge earlier in the evening. Group bivouaced for the night in Boullion with part of the 35th Eng C Bn. One demolition squad of the 35th Eng was sent to Recogne with the 7th TD Gp to execute demolitions when and if that unit had to withdraw.

During the next two days Colonel Hobart was instructed to have the 35th Eng take over responsibility for security of crossings of the Semois River. He also contacted General Cody at forward 28th Division CP with reference to relief of the 527th Eng. They effected the release of the 527th Engr L Pon Co from defense of their sector 1300 on the 23rd of December. The 527th Engr L Pon reported 13 men killed or missing in action. At this time the front was so fluid no definite boundary had been established between Corps Rear and Com. zone. The Commanding Officer of Com. zone ordered his MP's to prohibit the placing of charges on the bridge at Boullion. However, Lt Col. Clark gave instructions for the charges to be placed as the area was being organized by Corps as a defense sector.

On the 23rd of December the 511th Engineer Light Ponton Co., the 628th Engr L Equip Co., 159th Eng C Bn and the 202nd Engr C Bn were attached to the 1107th Engr C Group. Sectors for defense of the Semois River were re-assigned upon arrival of the 159th Eng C Bn and the other units were instructed to move West of the Meuse River in the vicinity of Stenay, France. Headquarters of the 1107th Engr C Group moved to Mohimont, Belgium. The next day Group moved to Lancuville, France just west of Stenay across the Meuse River.

Christmas Eve the 1107th Engr C Group was assigned the defense of the Meuse River between Sedan and Verdun inclusive. Troops assigned to Group included two General Service regiments, 5 Combat Battalions, 2 Light Ponton Companies, 3 Bn's of French Infantry, 2 Regiments of the 17th Airborne Division, 2 platoons of AAA and elements of one TD Group. At one time Group had 12,300 men under its command for the defense of its sector.

The 366th GS Regiment had the defense sector between Sedan (inclusive) and Stenay (inclusive). The 1308th GS Regiment was between Stenay (exclusive) and Verdun (inclusive). These two regiments were for protection against any crossings between the large towns. They also had reconnaissance units operating for a distance of 10 miles East of the Meuse River. Each bridge in the large towns was defended by a battalion of troops from the 17th Airborne Division. The French Battalions manned the gun emplacements and pill boxes on the west bank of the river.

When the defense plan for the Meuse was first set up the sector between Givet and Verdun was under control of the CG of the 11th Armored Division. On the 26th, responsibility for this defense sector passed to the CG of the 17th Airborne Division. The 11th Armored Division was used as a mobile reserve to defend the main bridges. Their Cavalry screen operated well to the East, keeping contact with the enemy.

The most important defenses of the Meuse river were the bridges on which the MSR's crossed. In the 1107th Engr sector there were six of these bridges. They were defended by troops, road blocks designed to slow down traffic, tanks of the 11th Armored Div., and each bridge was prepared for demolition.

After much experimenting and changing, it was found best to set up the demolition charges on the bridges in the following manner: Have three or more methods of setting off the charges and have two different types of charges and three if possible. Make one charge a shearing charge, the second charge the pressure type, and if possible put in an abutment charge. All non-electric charges should have open ends of prima cord dipped in parafin or sealed with some kind of wax. This kept the ends from deteriorating because of weather. All electrical connections should be taped. Firing positions were dug in and concealed, and in each firing position there was to be an automotive storage battery in case the exploder did not generate sufficient current. As most bridges had charges on bents and I beams it was assumed a 10 cap exploder would not be sufficient and additional precautions had to be taken.

Mines were secured 27th December and orders issued to lay mine fields and make an impassable road block for tanks. T/Sgt Ernst of Group Hq was loaned to the 366th GS Regiment to give technical advice in the construction of the road blocks. The following day M/Sgt Grether, T/Sgt Konikoff, and S/Sgt Sefcik were sent by Group to aid the 366th Engr GS Regiment. T/Sgt Ernst took two squads of men, an air compressor, and 500 mines to Sedan to put in a road block there for one regiment of the 17th Airborne Division. Altogether, 4,500 mines were laid on approaches to the bridges in Group area. Traffic was not stopped but fields and blocks were laid in such a manner that roads could be completely mined 15 minutes after a warning of the approach of the enemy had been given.

Group was not only concerned with the defense of the Meuse but still had its Combat Battalions defending the roads crossing the Semois River. The 35th Engr and 159th Eng C Bn's had a sector E of Bouillion and were supported by remnants of the other Bn's who were finding their way back from the battle areas around St. Vith and Bastogne.

Traffic control was another major problem that had to be dealt with by the 1107th Engr C Group. This task included the screening

of civilians and all vehicular traffic across the vital bridges. At each bridge American and French guards were posted to check everyone and everything that desired to cross these main arteries. The CIC issued a memorandum and a set of regulations which were to be followed by all civilian personnel desiring to travel in the defense area. In addition to precautions taken at the bridges, guards were posted at all cross roads in the area in order to spot any Germans riding in American vehicles and keep them from getting to strategic defense points.

Other defense measures taken in the zone controlled by the 1107th Engr Group included the equipping of forward outposts and road blocks with pyrotechnics for warning signals; the removal of all ferries and boats to the West bank of the river; the placing of a responsible officer in charge of each bridge with orders to blow the bridge only on orders of the CG of the whole sector, or orders of Colonel Hobart. It was understood if the enemy had overpowered the bridge defenses and was preparing to cross the officer in charge would blow the bridge, but only in that event would he take the initiative.

During the time when the Meuse defenses were being organized there were constant rumors of enemy paratroopers. There were so many of these, orders were issued that any one reporting such a rumor should identify himself; giving his name, rank, and organization and in case it was found such a person was spreading a rumor he would be subject to serious disciplinary action. At one time a bomber pilot seeing supplies dropped by airplane reported 100 enemy paratroopers dropped in Group area. These rumors enabled the defenders to find out how quick their personnel could be organized to fight in a particular locality but also tended to make everyone a little more trigger happy.

Lack of coordination between the French and American forces in the use of pass words resulted in the death of three French soldiers and one American soldier. A pass word that could be understood by both parties was worked out after a patrol of the 17th AB and the French had engaged in a fire fight one night. One soldier from each side was killed.

At 0600 30 Dec 1944 the defense sector of the 1107th Engr C Group was taken over by the 17th Airborne Division. The Group was assigned the job of supporting the 87th Division in the new drive by VIII Corps to cut off St. Hubert. It was given two combat battalions, the 202nd Eng C Bn and the 243rd Engr to support the Division. Group moved 0800, 30 December 1944 to vicinity of Mehimont, Belgium in the first step on the road back to Germany.

ACTION AFTER BATTLE REPORT FOR JANUARY 1945

1107th Engineer Combat Group

The first day of the new month Major Troy was given the mission by Corps of reconnoitering the Lesse River in the vicinity of Maissin to determine the effectiveness of the river as a barrier. The 87th Division was driving in a NE direction from Bertrix. The British XXX Corps was coming down from the NE. The two units were to meet East of St. Hubert. But in case the Germans did not withdraw or were not killed as the pincer closed the flanks would be vulnerable to attack. The 4th SAS French Parachute Bn was maintaining patrols and was the only force between the American and English troops in this area. For this reason the Division Commander wanted some kind of a barrier line established.

The reconnaissance report indicated that the Lesse river did not constitute an effective barrier line for the protection of the Division's exposed flank. The land was hilly and rolling, but the river valley was flat. The stream had a good bottom which could be forded and the forests were not dense enough to stop mechanized units. The Division Commander gave orders to prepare road blocks and obstacles no matter how poor their location. The enemy was to be slowed down, if he attacked, even if the period of time was only for an hour. Blocks on the road between Bouillon and Massin, and parrallel roads, were established on the 2nd of January.

The following day it was determined there were no Germans in force west of St. Hubert. When Corps received this information, the 243rd Engr C Bn, newly assigned to Group was given the job of removing the blocks blown the day before. But at this time information regarding the withdrawal had not reached all echelons of the Division. When the 243rd went to remove the blocks they found a platoon of Division Engineers strengthening them.

The 2nd of the month Group had moved from Mchimont, Belgium to Auby, Belgium.

Trouble for the S-2 department commenced to assume gigantic proportions in their new area. Mine fields and barriers had been constructed by all units who had participated in the Battle of the Bulge in the Division sector. There were mine fields laid by the 87th Division, the 28th Division, Engineers fighting under the 1107th Group when the withdrawal was made, armored units and recon elements. The Germans had laid mine fields using American mines captured at Bourcy and had done extensive booby-trapping. There was a report for each mine field, often conflicting, often overlapping, and not so very often showing great accuracy. To add to this confusion there were the reports of the civilians on German activities and where they were supposed to have laid mines. All these reports had to be coordinated. Their accuracy had to be established and a majority of the fields removed.

It required constant work, night and day for the better part of the month, before all reports could be checked, coordinated and an accurate picture formed.

The heavy snow that had been anticipated for so long commenced with the new year. Now, there was no equipment to handle it. The snow plows had been left behind at St. Vith and Vielsalm. The Battalions rounded up a few old type V-shaped snow plows from the civilians and hitched them to cargo trucks. The 527th Eng Light Ponton Co. made a drag of Bailey Bridge panels that was quite effective. Corps sent one road patrol from the 628th Engr L Equip Co. With this equipment MSR's were kept open. By the 10th of the month each Battalion had sent two vehicles to Luxembourg, and Third Army had put snow plow attachments on them.

In addition to maintenance of roads the snow presented other problems to Engineer operations. Construction of bridges was a difficult matter and the detection of mines was almost impossible. The latter was especially true around abatis where snow had drifted and trip wires were covered.

To prevent casualties it was decided to mark known mined areas and leave them until the snow melted instead of removing them. If the snow was too deep to probe for mines and too deep to insure 100% efficiency with a detector it would have been impossible to send in a report saying a minefield had been cleared. The deep snow brought up another major problem that still requires an answer. What is the best manner to clear a road, suspected of being mined, when this road is covered with deep snow and heavy drifts? There is now way to by-pass this road and it is necessary to open it with a minimum loss of equipment. The job has to be done in a hurry and it might have to be a silent operation. HOW CAN IT BE DONE?

During the first part of the month the 202nd Engr C Bn were in support of the 87th Division. In past operations our battalions had worked smoothly and efficiently as supporting troops. This time there were multiple problems caused by Division using its engineers in support of combat teams and as Infantry, instead of letting them perform normal engineer work.

In effect, this made the 202nd Engr the Division Engineers. The tactical situation was such at one time that Division wanted to use them as infantry. If this had happened there would have been no troops to do Engineer work in the Division area. Colonel Hobart retained rigid control over his Engineers. All orders for their use and work was first approved by him. A boundary was set up to insure them a definite work area. In this manner the required Engineer work was done and best use of Engineer soldiers assured.

Training of new units did not seem to have been as thorough before shipping them to combat zones, as it had been in the days before the invasion. This was true in Division Engineers and in the Engineers attached to Group. Battalions could not construct a Bailey Bridge efficiently and in a minimum amount of time. There was a lack of knowledge in the correct use of demolitions. Not knowing these fundamentals caused loss of time and a waste of manpower on several occasions. The same "old" mistakes on the submission of mine field reports were made. But a soldier and a unit quickly gets the "know how" technique in constant operations. And as the advance continued they become more proficient in their work. But they had to learn the hard way.

As corps moved forward Belgium commenced to look like sections of Northern France where the war had passed through and around. Billets were hard to find. Parts of all towns were bombed and destroyed. Roads were shot up. Fields were littered with wreckage. The snow and sleet continued unabated, disrupting all types of communication.

In addition to the destruction there was ample evidence of the Hun's brutality in the counter-offensive. When the Group moved near the little town of Moircy elements of the 87th Infantry were leaving the building. In the back, stretched out under an old tarp, were members of a patrol which had disappeared earlier in the week. They were dead, but they had not been shot. They had been beaten to death and there were no marks on the bodies below the neckline.

On the 17th of January the 17th A/B Division relieved the 87th Infantry Div. and added another problem to those of the 202nd Engr. The A/B Engineers did not have any heavy equipment to do Engineer work, with the exception of demolitions, and during most of their advance they were used as infantry or with combat teams.

The 202nd Engr became Division Engineers in all phases except their actual attachment on paper to the Division.

The majority of the work continued to fall in three main phases; the removal of mines, snow clearance and maintenance of roads and bridge building.

Evidence of the haste of the German withdrawal from St. Hubert was found when an ammunition dump on a highway leading out of town to the NE was reported booby-trapped. American artillery shells were stacked along the road for a distance of six miles, left there when the Germans over-ran the "The Bulge". Visibile among these stacks of ammunition were German Holtz mines, placed there when the Huns found they could not make Paris by New Year, and when they decided to go back to their heart-land. Inspection proved they were not booby-trapped but the Holtz mines were to be used as a prepared charge with a time fuse and a non-electric cap to destroy the ammunition. The Germans had left in such haste they had not taken the time to light the fuses. However, all precautions were taken in removing the mines. Cases containing shells and mines were pulled off the stacks with a rope, one at a time, from a safe distance. The job required three days for completion. The 243rd Engr C Bn did the work.

If the Germans made a mistake in not blowing up equipment they didn't miss a trick when it came to constructing road blocks. There wasn't a bridge intact in the Division area. Trees were felled across the roads at every opportunity and booby-trapped. And our Air Force created quite a bit of work for the Engineers by blasting vehicles on and off the roads. The real problem created by the Air Force was at Houffalize. What we once knew as a thriving town was no more. No buildings, just rubble and gapping cellars showing where a dwelling had vanished or had been knocked over as by a giant hand.

Changing the TE and providing new combat battalions with three D/7 Bulldozers proved a good idea between the time Corps started the attack until they reached their orbjective. The 243rd Engr removed snow drifts, filled craters, and saved uncountable man hours in clearing the streets of towns like Houffalize.

During the retaking of "The Bulge" Corps had a very narrow front but the sector assigned to Group for Engineer work was about 35 miles in length. This created several problems. One was making good MSR's out of secondary roads, another was the cutting and building of new roads across the frozen ground in order to by-pass mine fields or deep defiles that had been filled with snow, and a third was the large amount of bridging that had to be done. Culverts and bridges were blown on all secondary roads. Lack of timber necessitated the use of large amounts of Bailey Bridge.

To facilitate bridging operations 110' of DS Bailey Bridge was taken from the 527th Engr L Pon Co. and sent forward to the company working in closest support of Division. Then, a small bridge was always ready and could be brought up immediately. It was proven in numerous instances that having the 110' of bridge in a forward area was a big time saving factor. Communications were never good. There wasn't any suitable bivouac for all of a bridge company in the forward area and there was never any necessity for using a large bridge. Keeping the small amount of bridge with the supporting combat battalion enabled the Division Engineer to save hours when it had been impossible to make reconnaissance or an estimate of the situation in regard to the roads to be used.

About the 26th of the month the 87th Division relieved the 17th A/B Division. While supporting the 17th A/B Division, the trucks and engineer equipment of the 202nd Engineers which were already well worn from continuous use in Ireland and the Normandy and Northern France campaigns were further worn and needed immediate maintenance. For this reason the 243rd Engr and the 202nd Engr changed assignments, with the 243rd Engr supporting the 87th Division as soon as it moved in place. Corps had notified Group a few days previous that the 168th Engr C Bn would soon be attached to it again. This Battalion had been in a quiet area getting re-equipped and getting reinforcements after the battle around St. Vith.

Third Army had given Corps the mission of driving straight through the Siegfried line to the Rhine river with the changing of the 87th and the 17th A/B Divisions. There were four Infantry Divisions, the 87th, 90th, 95th and 4th: and an Armored Division, the 11th, to take part in the drive. Engineer work for this drive was one of the biggest problems facing commanders. The Divisions would move forward on such a narrow sector that all roads would be crowded. There was only one good road, N-26, leading to Schonberg. This road led through St. Vith, which was impassable because of the constant surge of battle that had raged around the town. Northeast of St. Vith, craters, wrecked vehicles, mined shoulders, pill boxes, deep snow, and enemy artillery made it a superhuman task, and there were still the inevitable bridges to put in. Forward reconnaissance indicated that four Bailey Bridges would have to be placed within a two-mile stretch. This would have to be done before the Artillery or the tanks could move up.

Group received orders on the 28th to clear roads through St. Vith immediately. Any equipment needed for the job would be furnished. The following morning there had to be a by-pass for N-26 through the town so part of the 87th could move forward.

St. Vith had been on the receiving end of a thousand plane bombing raid. It had changed hands twice in a bitterly contested house to house struggle. There were mines and booby-traps in the rubble. The highways coming into town from the South and West were totally obliterated. Either buildings had been blasted over them, or craters had been blown in them. Two of these roads had rail-road over passes one about a mile out of town on N-26 and two about one-quarter of a mile out on N-27. Pressure charges had been placed around the existing tons of concrete. Going out of town on N-26 the highway crossing the RR had been blown necessitating a 110' TS Bailey Bridge. In fact, you couldn't tell St. Vith without a score-card.

All of this had to be opened up so three divisions could move through town in the next couple of days.

Work was put on at 24-hour basis and a by-pass over frozen ground was opened in 16 hours. It would accomodate one-way traffic only, but did expedite movement to the front. By the end of 36 hours a fair two-way by-pass was completed. Then the big job commenced of opening up the old highway N-26 through St. Vith. This had to be done because part of the by-pass was around and across a hill which could not hold traffic in the event of a thaw.

It was strictly an equipment job. D 7's, five of them, two Osgood shovels, and dump trucks from all the battalions were used to build a new road approximately three-quarters of a mile long. After a hectic 43 hours that saw much frenzied work, Corps was notified that the road was ready to carry a Division load.

During construction of the by-pass shelling caused work stoppage on three different occasions. Nine shells hit within fifty yards of the road where it followed along the railroad fill. One prime mover was damaged because of shell fire from the 88's.

Mine clearance crews from the 243rd and 202nd Engr C Bn's worked around and in front of the D-7's and removed several mines by careful operation. This was undoubtedly instrumental in saving the "cats", for the 51st Engr C Bn working on a by-pass just North of town failed to do this and lost two D-7's with three casualties.

The few remaining walls of buildings standing near the scene of operations in St. Vith were demolished by M/Sgt Grether and T/Sgt Ernst to provide needed material to fill the craters. A lesson learned at Brest was another reason for doing this. There a wall caved in as a truck from the 44th Engr C Bn was passing killing several men.

In four days time two-way traffic could pass through this demolished town on all roads except the highway coming in from Vielsalm.

The worst stretch of road to be kept open in all of the Group area was NE to Schonberg and Andler from St. Vith. Craters were numerous and rain with the subsequent thaw caused settling of fills and breaking up of patched potholes and ravelled shoulders became more evident as ice melted away. There were four bridges that had to be built under difficult conditions. These were not caused by the enemy but by the narrow road and heavy traffic.

When a Bailey Bridge was built along these roads it was impossible to bring the bridge up and unload it and then start to build according to SOP. In every instance except one, the trucks had to be backed to the bridge site, and at times this distance was as much as 400 yards. Backing a truck and a trailer, with a convoy lining one side of the road caused many lost hours in construction of the bridges.

The 527th Engr L Pon. Co expedited matters by loading its trucks in such a manner that the Bridge was hauled by bays. When this is done personnel building the bridge can build directly off the truck, taking tie rods, transoms, pannels, etc from the same vehicle. A bridge built from trucks that are loaded according to SOP requires at least four trucks to be backed in and pulled out before operations can commence and when the bridging from these trucks has been unloaded the operation has to be repeated each time. Battalions building bridges hauled by the 527th Eng which loaded the bridge according to bays, found that they could construct a bridge about two hours faster than they could when building a bridge carried by sections.

Because a bridge is seldom constructed where all parts can be stored correctly it is recommended by the 1107th Group that the bridge be loaded on the trucks one bay at a time.

During the month units under Group had cleared roads thru two main communication centers, built 13 bridges, made 19 fills and placed 19 culverts on MSR's alone, removed 57 road blocks, 220 minefields, and swept hundreds of miles of roads for mines.

By the end of the month the Corps was once more fighting inside of Germany and had recaptured all but a minute part of the Ardennes salient lost in the German drive which commenced 16 December 1944. Next on the list is the cracking of the Siegfried line and the crossing of the Rhine with the Engineers on the job as usual to "Keep 'em moving".

HEADQUARTERS
1107TH ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP
APO 403 U.S.ARMY

ACTION AFTER BATTLE REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 1945

This chapter of the Action After Battle Report of the 1107th Engr (C) Group for the month of February could be begun and concluded with one word- ROADS. For the members of Group Hq. and units under Group that one word will always bring back vivid recollections of long hours of backbreaking toil; of a race against time and the elements to keep supply lines open; of seeing those supply lines disintegrate and go to pieces one by one because of constant traffic and bad weather until there was only one road in all of Corps area by which supplies could be moved to the front lines; of thousands of yards of rock put on one small stretch of road; of hundreds of yards of corduroy road built in Group's area; of men and equipment working 24 hours a day and still losing a road; of travelling a good black-top highway in the morning and coming back over that same highway in the afternoon and have to be pulled through stretches of quagmire which started as frost boils.

It is just as well to take the last first, i. e. frost boils, in discussing these roads. They were the source of most of the trouble. When roads started to thaw and frost came out of the ground it pushed the clay up through the surface of the road as high as 18 inches in long ridges. Sometimes this thawing and the rupturing of the surface of the road took place in as little as four hours time. An hour of traffic over these frost boils would find trucks sticking in the mud or running belly deep in ruts. This happened so fast and over such a wide area it was impossible to drain, haul enough rock, or find enough engineers for maintenance of the roads.

The roads in this section of Belgium were never designed to carry heavy military traffic and the sub-grade had very little aggregate in it. Where the drainage was poor, which was along about 50% of the highway, there did not seem to be any bottom to the clay. The 168th Engrs dumped as much as 52 truck loads of rock in one 25 yard stretch and still the road did not hold. Heavy traffic pounded the rock out of sight. This condition existed in stretches from 100 yards to a half mile in length.

Snow turned to rain and the thaw started about the first of the month. Day by day the network of roads feeding the front line divisions shrunk and became impassable, swallowing material, man-hours, equipment, and threatening to disrupt the Corps offensive.

Finally, there was only one road open into St. Vith from the Army ASP's. That road being by way of Beho, Salmchateau, Vielsalm, and over two by-passes which rejoined the original route N27, at Poteaux, then into St. Vith, and out N-26 to Schonberg.

Before this route became the only MSR, traffic had gone from Trois Vierges up N-12, had used N-26 until its junction with N-12; or followed N-27 past Vielsalm, cut North to Recht, and then down the Malmedy road into St. Vith.

The last of these roads to go was the one into Recht. Reconnaissance on 11 February indicated this road would not hold up two more days. The bottom was literally dropping out of it. Holes would fill with water and the holes were so big and wide that water would go over the tail-gate of a 3/4 ton truck when it climbed out of one of them. All supplies from the railhead at Gouvy and from a Class I and III dump below Beho travelled over this road to the 87th, 90th, and 4th Infantry Divisions plus supplies being delivered to Artillery and supporting troops.

By the 12th of February it was evident this last remaining road was going so fast a regiment of Engineers would not be able to hold one stretch of it. Reconnaissance patrols from all sections of Group Hq., were sent out to find any trail, cowpath, firebreak, or even a mirage which could be used to carry traffic. Lt. Col. Clark, Major Hahn, Major Troy, Captain Kaplan and Captain Greer were all trying to find a by-pass. Reports compiled at the end of the day indicated that Lt. Col Clark's and Captain Kaplan's plan to use existing roads, an old rail-road bed, and a by-pass to the railroad bed would handle the traffic.

Prior to the German break-through large quantities of ballast had been taken from this railroad to use on the roads. There were four stretches where this had to be replaced. Also, where the by-pass had to meet the highway going into St. Vith a ramp had to be built. The railroad ran through a cut at this point, the cut being about 25 feet deep.

Lt. Col. Clark was put in charge of constructing the new by-pass because there would be Engineers from several units working on it. Captain Greer and M/Sgt Grether supervised the building of the ramp.

Because of the shortage of Engineers all available personnel from Group Hq, were used to haul timbers to the ramp, and to salvage as much chess from a demolished Bailey bridge near the site as possible.

T/Sgt Ernst, T/Sgt Reidelbach, S/Sgt Sefcik, T/Sgt Konikoff; S/Sgt Chamberlain, Sgt Ferguson and T/4 Swift worked in one crew.

Another crew under 1st Sgt. Pike consisting of Cpl. Tacy, T/5 Sacrison, T/5 Crockett, T/5 Shanik, Pfc Petrosky, Pfc Rue, Pvt Ruggiero, Pvt Cullington, Pvt Wroblewski and Pvt Coulter, hauled the timbers for constructing the ramp.

Work on the new by-pass was completed in the next 48 hours the crews working all but eight of those 48 hours. The last 24

hours of work was continuous, construction starting 0730 the morning of the 14th and ending 0725 the 15th. The ramp constructed was 215' long and contained about 50,000 board feet of timbers, It was virtually floated over the swampy places, caused by underground springs, that came to light as the dozers cut away the side of the fill.

On the by-pass itself, an Osgood, R-4, eight dump trucks, one company of Engineers, a D-7, and one road patrol were used by Lt. Col. Clark to construct approximately 700 yards of road. Improvision was at its best on this job. Timbers, retaining walls, parts of houses and hundreds of yards of ballast were used to get the job done.

When the job was completed the road between Gouvy and St. Vith utilized the best part of four highways and three by-passes. The majority of the road had good drainage and it was believed this entire road could be held. It has been held.

During the time this road was being constructed the other routes bogged down completely. Men working the by-pass could see miles of stranded vehicles on the road to Recht. There was a period of 7 hours when there wasn't a truck moving in this section of Corps area. During the first 72 hours after the new road was opened 1,731 vehicles moved over it, none larger than a two and a half ton truck.

Although this road was capable of carrying all necessary supplies Corps felt that troop movements would require the opening of more MSR's.

There were not enough Engineers to do this job so other Corps troops were assigned to do the work of opening up and making passable another road and were to be supervised by the Engineers.

As previously mentioned the bad spots were so bad it was a waste of time and material to put rock in them. The only way they could be made passable was by the use of corduroy. Corps wanted N-12 opened up into St. Vith and one impassable spot on this highway between Gruflange and St. Vith was over a mile long. Other bad places varied in length from 15 to 50 yards.

Two batteries of the 770th FA were attached to the 243rd Eng C Bn for work on this road. This was in addition to the civilians and members of a TD outfit they had working on this stretch of road since the first of the month at one time or another. The 243rd Engrs had started to corduroy part of this road but their area had been shifted to St. Vith-Schonberg road.

By the end of the month, the corduroy road constructed by the FA and engineers on the road between Gruflange and Schonberg totalled 3,091 yards. The longest stretch was about 2,000 yards. This type of road was also built on one section between Beho and Salmchateau and on a section between Vielsalm and St. Vith. This

was in addition to the 3,091 yards.

All of this road work required the constant use of every piece of available equipment. Part of it worked 24 hours a day, especially that working in the quarries. At one time, units under Group were operating four quarries and unloading an average of 15 cars of rock a day from the rail-head in Gouvy.

To haul this rock and the material for road construction a dump truck company, the 1369th Eng and 20 cargo trucks from a QM outfit were attached to Group. Men and trucks from 2 Bn's of the 277 FA were also used to quarry and haul rock from the quarry at Salmchateau.

From all sources: quarries, slate piles, railroad ballast, rubble in St. Vith, gondolas at Gouvy, the Engineers under Group were hauling and spreading on the roads about 1100 yds of rock per day during one week.

Other equipment, used during this time, included four Osgood shovels, one quickway crane rigged as a shovel, nine air compressors, 10 D-7 dozers, and two R-4's, all used for the maintenance of roads or on work that contributed to their maintenance.

During the latter part of the month two more Combat Bn's, making a total of four, were attached to the 1107th Engr Group. They were the 188th and 1252nd Eng. Group's area was then extended to include 47 miles of MSR's, all of which were first priority.

Each Bn had an officer who patrolled the roads constantly and noted the bad spots as they commenced to appear. Work crews could then be shifted before the road became impassable.

When possible, a road repair crew would dig around a frost boil and down to about a depth of 2½ feet. After all the clay had been taken out flat stones would be placed in the bottom of the hole and then a couple of loads of rock would be dumped in it. Generally, this method of repair was successful.

Of course it continued to rain, but the snows melted very slowly. Adequate drainage then became the problem of major importance. Bleeders along the shoulders would become clogged and unusable after passage of one convoy. In many places it was not possible to tell where the shoulder of the road stopped and the ditches commenced. To combat this problem an R-4 dozer was used to cut away the shoulder of the road wherever possible and provide wide drainage sluices. On some stretches of the road this was done every 20 or 30 yards. Use of an R-4 for providing drainage and getting mud out of the way proved more advantageous in some cases than using a road patrol because of the nearness of trees to the road.

As the snow melted away it revealed a lot of mines in areas thought to be cleared. This was true along the shoulders of the

Action after Battle report for February, continued, 1107th Eng C Gp

roads where plows had piled the snow to such a depth that detectors did not work efficiently. In one spot six S-mines were found within 50 yards of a sign stating that the road had been swept for mines only two weeks prior to the time they were found.

It is interesting to note that two of the S-mines had a new composition bottom in place of the old lead plate under the propellant charge. This composition bottom had rotted out in the course of a month's time and rendered the mines ineffective.

In the 1107th Eng C Group area the Germans had made extensive use of the Stock mine and the Holtz mine. A few of the new German Riegal mines were found. Three soldiers from the 243rd Eng lost their lives and two were seriously injured by the Riegal mine when they disregarded their training on this type of mine and put it into a truck to carry home. They forgot that this type mine either explodes under 800 pounds of pressure, or explodes under a slight jar. The one they picked up was set to go off the latter way.

Much of the success in moving supplies during the month for Corps troops can be credited to the S-2 Section of Group under Major Troy and Captain Kaplan. Their reconnaissance and the coordination of reconnaissance by the Bns was responsible for finding by-passes, making a success of the Corps traffic circulation plan, and locating materials for road work.

Group was unable to fully undertake another important project in its area; the building of a road and maintenance of this road for an artillary supply dump in the vicinity of St. Vith. However, on request, S/Sgt Sefcik and S/Sgt Chamberlain were sent to the unit operating the dump to give technical advice and immediate supervision of the men from the QM unit building the road. Major McVay had over-all supervision of the whole project, which required two weeks to complete.

During the first part of the month bridges were constructed at a furious pace, 11 Baileys being constructed during the first four days. The last week in February the Bn's started replacing these with fixed bridges.

Colonel Winslow, Corps Engineer, was taken ill and sent to England to a hospital about the middle of February. Colonel Hobart of the 1107th Engr C Group was asked by General Middleton to act as Corps Engineer in Colonel Winslow's absence. Colonel Hobart was acting Corps Engr from the 20th of February until the end of the month.

Colonel Hobart and Lt. Col. Clark received the Bronze Star award for meritorious service during specific Group operations. Their citation reads as follows:

COLONEL KARL E. HOBART, 0116922, Corps of Engineers, 1107th Engineer Combat Group, United States Army, for meritorious achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy from

16 December to 30 December 1944, in Belgium. At the time of the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes sector, Colonel Hobart with engineer units, executed an effective delaying action against the enemy west of Bastogne. Later, Colonel Hobart organized the defense of the Meuse River from Sedan to Verdun. His extreme devotion to duty, extensive professional knowledge and excellent leadership were in great part responsible for the prompt and expert organization of the engineer troops in the flank defense of the Corps during its retrograde movement. The continuous efforts exhibited by Colonel Hobart contributed much to the delay of the enemy pending the reinforcement of the Corps. The meritorious achievement displayed by Colonel Hobart illustrates the highest traditions of the Armed Forces and reflects great credit upon himself. Entered military service from Illinois.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL PERRY P. CLARK, 0348008, Corps of Engineers, 1107th Engineer Combat Group, United States Army, for meritorious service in connection with military operations against the enemy from 1 October to 24 November, 1944, in Belgium and Germany. Lieutenant Colonel Clark showed indefatigable attention to duty in supervising activities of subordinate units of his command. During construction of a Regimental combat team defensive position, he coordinated the needs and desires of the Regimental Commander and Division Engineer by personal contact and inspection. By close supervision of this job, he was able to solve operational and supply problems associated with completing the work on time. Lieutenant Colonel Clark consistently showed his skill and resourcefulness in coordinating all the Group's activities in support of Corps and its combat divisional units. The foresight, technical knowledge and zealous devotion to duty displayed by Lieutenant Colonel Clark symbolize and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Armed Forces and reflect great credit upon himself. Entered military service from New Jersey.

HEADQUARTERS
1107TH ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP
APO 403 U.S.ARMY

AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR MARCH 1945

It was with a feeling of relief members of the Group received the news the third of March that the 1107th Engineer (C) Group would move from Beho, Belgium, the following day. The new CP was to be at Steinbruck, Germany.

At this point, the nightmare of bad roads would be behind, or at least Group and its battalions would be in the process of leaving them. Bad roads were expected in Germany. However, it looked as though the Corps, and Divisions under it, would be rolling so fast the roads would not disintegrate like they had in Belgium.

Group was successively in support of three divisions who were punching through the Siegfried line defenses. They were the 87th Inf., the 4th Inf., and the 11th Armored Divisions. Any Engineer work that had to be done was usually a rush job. When such work was called for, it was a round-the-clock proposition and usually involved putting in a bridge, or repairing a short stretch of road. There was very little work to do in removing mines or booby-traps.

Entrance into Hitler's Germany, the home of the super-race, didn't create any lasting impression. It rained just as hard and the mists were just as cold as they were in Belgium. The roads got just as muddy, the homes were just as poor, and the peasant stacked the manure by the front door just like his brother did across the border. Every rail road track and freight yard proved Goering a liar as burned and shattered box cars gave mute testimony to America's air-power. Everywhere, there was evidence of the fighting man's "know How", acquired through bitter weeks of retaking the bulge and Siegfried forts. Blasted pill boxes, sprawled bodies in greenish uniforms, and knocked out tanks were everywhere. The American Army was commencing to roll toward the banks of the Rhine.

Obstacles in the way of this advance, besides the enemy, were numerous small streams and bomb craters. Large quantities of Bailey and Treadway bridge were used in overcoming these. They were replaced as fast as possible with fixed bridges by another Group in support of Corps.

No difficulty was experienced in putting in Treadway bridge. The problem was keeping up with the bridge after it was once put in. With few exceptions the spans were 36' and 48' long. They were put in by the 4th Infantry Division and the 11th Armored Division. In the course of a week the majority of bridge in the Treadway Bridge Company was committed at about twenty different locations. Sometimes it was thrown over a crater. By the time the location of the bridge had been forwarded to headquarters, the crater had been filled and the bridge moved to another location. With boundaries constantly changing because of the tactical situation, it took a constant check

by two reconnaissance teams to keep the bridges located.

From the first of March until the middle of the month, there were no large engineering jobs. But there was at least one vital road to be kept open through the tried and true method of corduroy or the dumping of large quantities of rock in a bad spot.

Filling a bad spot with rock was a more involved problem than the statement leads one to believe. When a particular bit of road had to be saved by this method; Osgood shovels, Quickway cranes, (rigged as a shovel), D-7's, and numerous dump trucks were all concentrated and used. The majority of the work was done at night to avoid heavy traffic. By morning the road was usually passable.

By the middle of the month, Group had moved by the way of Prum, Büdesheim, to Virneburg, Germany. Here the situation was reversed from the same time a month earlier. Then there were not enough Engineers to do the work, now there was not enough work for the Engineers to do. For a few days, the big job was filling holes with hot patches.

The little town of Virneburg nestled in a deep valley and attached some historical significance to itself because the ruins of a big castle dominated the town. The castle, built in 1300 had evidently attracted a few tourists if the picture post-cards could be believed.

To the American soldiers, the interesting thing about the town was the fact , it was one of the first ones in Germany they had entered that had been totally by-passed by the war. That is, it had not been bombed or fought over, and all buildings were intact.

More amazing still, was the attitude of the people. Women cried and complained of the cruel Americans who took over their homes for a few days. They did not remember or think of the thousands their soldiers had made homeless or murdered. Adjoining Group headquarters, was a home occupied by 27 Polish workers who had been used as slaves before the liberation. The woman who owned the house came to headquarters and complained those Poles were ruining her home and furniture and wouldn't the Americans throw them out. Other Germans in the town refused to assume the responsibility for feeding the Polish refugees. They were made to see the light by those occupying the town.

The people were peaceful. They acted like those in France and Belgium. The girls smiled shyly, and the children got so they asked for candy. It was hard to believe these were the same children who started off each day of school by declaring allegiance to Hitler; the girls were the ones who had been taught their only duty was to produce more to feed the German war machine; and the old people who went about their daily chores were the ones who bore the taxes and sent their sons off to conquer the world.

It was necessary to remind everyone of these things and make certain no one violated the policy of non-fraternization.

While at Virneburg, Colonel Hobart was informed by Corps it was possible that Third Army boundary would be changed and Corps would make a crossing of the Rhine river below Koblenz. If this was done, the 1107th Engr C Group would assist in the crossing.

The approximate location of the assault crossing was given. On the 21st of March, Colonel Hobart, Major Troy, and Major Hahn went to St. Goar and made a preliminary reconnaissance.

The following day Group moved to Riegenroth, a small town south of the Moselle River.

As soon as the new CP had been established, Colonel Hobart, Lt Col Clark, and Major Hahn contacted the Corps Engineer. They were informed the crossing was to be made within the next 72 hours and the 1107th Engr C Group would be responsible for the success of the crossing in the southern part of Corp's sector.

The assault was to be made by the 89th Infantry Division. The river was to be crossed at three points.

A preliminary reconnaissance was to be made at once. Major Troy and Capt. Kaplan divided the work between the 188th, 168th and the 1107th Engineers. Reconnaissance was to be made that night and be submitted by 0600, the following morning so it would get to Corps in time for the staff meeting. Major Troy and Captain Kaplan made one of the reconnaissances and returned at three in the morning to consolidate the reports.

The next 48 hours were filled with frenzied activity. Supplies had to be drawn, assigned, and distributed. Plans were to be coordinated between battalions, the Infantry and supporting units, which included part of the U.S. Navy.

In a meeting at Group Hq, with Bn commanders it was decided to let the 168th Engineer (C) Bn make the assault crossing with the Infantry. The 188th Engineer (C) Bn was to have charge of construction of rafts and all ferry equipment; the 243rd Engineer (C) Bn was to build the floating treadway bridge. The 1252nd Engineer (C) Bn were to be alerted and held in reserve.

For the operation Group had under its control four combat Bn's, the 1010th Engineer Treadway Bridge Co, the 548th Engineer L Ponton Co (less L Equip Pltn), the Light equipage platoon of the 509th Engrs, one platoon of the 162nd Smoke Generating Co., and four storm boat operators from the 178th Engineer (C) Bn.

A short 24-hours existed before the assault crossing was to take place and a multitude of things had to be done and coordinated under the supervision of Group.

Crossing sites had to be approved by the Infantry commanders, the amount of equipment to be located at each site decided upon, the locations for equipment before dark and the assembly area for this equipment after dark had to be found, a communication system involving the use of radios and telephones had to be planned, the amount of personnel needed for each phase of the operation had to be determined; and as all these things were subject to approval or change by the Division or Corps Engineer because of the tactical situation, alternate plans had to be made.

Two radical changes came up at the last moment. The original plan called for the crossing of two companies of Infantry at site one, Oberwessel; one company at site 2, St. Goar; and two companies at site 3 which was North of St. Goar. This was changed the evening of the crossing and the new plan was to put a Bn across at Site 1, two companies at site 2 and three companies at site 3. This change necessitated new allocations of equipment and men.

Another problem was the securing of operators for the motors to be used after the first assault wave crossed. The 527th Engineer Light Ponton Co. which had been under Group for several months had 52 trained motor-boat operators. However, this Company had been detached at the last moment and sent North to assist the 1102nd Engr (C) Group in it's operation, leaving the 1107th Engineer (C) Group with no trained personnel of this type.

The promised operators for the assault crossing did not arrive and as the hour approached there were only four available for each site..

The 243rd Engineer (C) Bn chose a spot about 6 miles from the river to inflate the pontons and assemble the bridge. When the word was given to build the bridge after the enemy had been cleared from the far shore, they could bring this bridge by sections to the river and begin construction. Debris from a blown overpass coming into town was to be cleared by the 188th Eng (C) Bn while the crossing was being made. Two routes would then be open over which equipment could be moved.

The 188th Engineer (C) Bn took the nedessary equipment to construct three 5 boat Infantry support rafts, for each site about two miles from the river just after dark on the night the crossing was to be made.

The 168th Engineer (C) Bn drew their equipment from the Engineer dump early in the afternoon. The assault was to take place 0200 26 March 1945. Assault boats to be manned by the 168th Engineer C Bn were moved to the final assembly areas 2200 hrs 25 March 1945.

The assembly areas at site no. 1, and site no. 2 were in the towns of Oberwessel and St. Goar. Site No. 3 was in a wooded area about 3 miles farther down the river. At site No 1 and 2, the streets of the towns ran parallel to the river and trucks could be unloaded on these streets without being exposed to observation from the other side.

The CP for the control of the whole operation was established in an old castle on the cliffs overlooking St. Goar. The castle was built in 1200 and destroyed by the French in 1650. From this CP telephone lines were run to the three sites, to the various assembly areas, to the 1107th Engineer Rear CP and to VIII Corps. The CP's of supporting Corps Artillery, the division crossing the river at this point and that of the 1107th Engineer C Group were established at this castle.

Although the division was crossing at three points, opposition was not expected to be in great strength at any one point except St. Goar. The day prior to the crossing, the Germans had announced on their radio that a crossing had been made at St. Goar.

After the equipment had been assembled, there were 55 assault boats, 4 storm boats or power boat operators, two utility boats and 10 motors at each site. It was felt that the biggest shortage would be in motor-boat operators because most of the trained personnel was still with the 1102nd Engr C Group.

Group established a forward CP at 1800 hrs the night before the assault. An advanced party composed of Lt. Col. Clark, M/Sgt Grether and T/Sgt Ernst went down at 1400 hours to make preliminary preparations. The rest of Lurdan Tac composed of Colonel Hobart, Major Hahn, Major Stratte, Capt. Greer, T/Sgt Glauberman, T/4 Krafchik, arrived at the appointed time. T/5 Sacrison and T/5 Shanik who were atchd to the 1010th Engr Treadway Bridge Co were dropped off at the CP while enroute to the site. Major Troy and Major McVay coordinated movement of equipment and material from rear CP.

The communication section had been busy all day laying the necessary lines to insure the success of the operation. The crew working under Lt. Blatchley and M/Sgt Palmintori composed of T/5 DeLuca, T/5 Argol and Pfc Clock were on the job 48 hours without relief and kept communication channels open through the whole period of operations. At one time, they had 24 lines operating off of 18 drops.

Prior to the time the assault was launched, the shelling was fairly constant by the Germans from the east bank of the Rhine river. Our artillery was quiet, also our MG's because it was hoped that this would be a surprise operation similar to that which took place in XII Corps to the south of VIII Corps.

In the fading moonlight, it was possible to see the 1st assault boats putting out from the shadowy shores at 0200. They had gone

about a third of the way across the river when it seemed that all the hell that could be concentrated in one spot broke loose upon them. Most of it was from 20mm guns. Boats were seen to disintegrate and go up in a geyser of flying wood and sprawling bodies. The boats not caught in the cross fire drifted down the near shore and were able to land on the enemy side while guns were concentrating their fire on boats in the middle of the river. Then all was quiet.

Prior to the crossing, it had been decided that a certain number of boats would be equipped with 22 1/2 HP motors and these boats would be used to tow as many boats as possible back across the river. This was to prevent boats from getting too far down-stream on the return crossing when they had to be paddled by three engineers. If both crossings had to be made by man-power it was estimated the boats would be at least 3 kilometers down stream by the time they returned to the friendly side. This was because the Rhine river current was about 5 miles an hour at this point. In the crossing, there were three Engineers and 9 Infantrymen in the boat.

By 0400 hours, no information had been received as to the number of boats that had reached the other side or had returned to the west bank of the river. On the 1st assault wave at St. Goar, thirty-one boats were taken in the waters edge. Three of these were knocked out by fire from an 88 before they were launched. One shell killed three of the four-motor-boat-operators, injured 6 other enlisted personnel of the 168th Engr C Bn and killed Colonel Montgommery, Chemical Officer on the staff of the Corps Commander.

The Engineers available for manning the boats at this site had gone in the 1st wave. As none had returned in the first two hours after the assault was launched, it was felt all the boats were lost on the far shore and what Engrs were able to get across were fighting with the infantry.

One company of the 1252nd Engineer (C) Bn was alerted early in the evening. At 0400, this company was ordered to report to the St. Goar site as all Engineers from the company of the 168th Engineer (C) Bn at this site had been comitted. The other two companies were to be alerted and moved forward as soon as possible. This was done because no information had been received from the other two crossings and it was possible they might have had the same situation as was at site two.

It was evident that some of the infantry had gotten across to the town of St. Goarhausen across the river. Lots of small arms fire could be heard. When daylight came, it was possible to see them advancing toward the center of town, cleaning it out house by house. Also, one could see shattered assault boats lining the other bank, along with numerous dead and wounded.

Word had been received that the crossing at site No. 1 had gone well. There was not much opposition. The construction of rafts could be started. But at site No. 3, there had been strong opposition. As at site 2, most of the murderous fire had come from 20mm flak guns and heavy machine guns.

At 0900, it was decided to send another wave across. Fourteen boats were put in the water and all of them reached the other side without a shot being fired at them. It was then deemed safe to start sending the boats across as fast as possible. However, when boats of the third wave started across the river, they were met with intense fire from 20mm guns emplaced on the high ground up the river. Five of the first 6 boats starting across were shot up.

American artillery and SP guns fired at German emplacements the rest of the morning and the greater part of the afternoon. At 1700, under cover of smoke, two boats were able to get across the river with medics and ammunition. Boats following them were not fired upon. At 1730, the far shore was secured.

Colonel Hobart had given Lt. Col Allen of the 188th Engrs orders to start constructing the rafts at site one, at 1000. The order for site two was given at 1800. Lt. Col. Allen was to use his own judgement and confer with the Infantry commander as to when to construct the rafts at site three.

At site one and site three, the engineers had had storm boats and utility boats running since fairly early in the morning. At both sites, they had been able to bring both engineers and boats back from the far shore. But at site two, three of the four operators had been killed before the initial assault and the other operator had not been able to accomplish very much.

To expedite future crossings, after the first waves had established a bridgehead, more motors and boats were brought down from the engineer dump by the 1252nd Engineer (C) Bn. The motors were not much help because they were still packed in grease and had never been used. It was late in the afternoon before the Utility boats were working at site No. 2, along with three 22 1/2 HP motors on the assault boats.

In a conference between Colonel Hobart, Lt. Col. Skinner, and the Infantry commander at 1700, it was considered safe to start construction of the treadway bridge. Work on the bridge was started at 1930 hrs on the 26th and was finished at midnight on the 27th. It was 828' long when completed.

The swift current of the Rhine upset plans for a speedy completion of the bridge. It was thought the pontons could be held in place without using a cable. Additional anchors were made using Bailey Bridge panels with spikes welded to one side of them. Construction of the bridge started, but when only a short way from shore the current washed cable and anchor in under the pontons. Plans had to be

remade and a cable strung across the river. Two power boats were lost in this operation.

As soon as the enemy had been cleared from the surrounding hills at site one, six LCVP's of the U.S. Navy were put into operation. These craft could carry men and heavy equipment. It did not take long with these LCVP's to put the rest of regiment across at this site.

While the bridge was under construction, the 188th Engineer (C) Bn was supposed to construct a log boom as a temporary expedient to halt floating mines. The 1301st Engineers were sent down from Army to construct two booms. One was to be anti-personnel and the other one would stop heavy barges loaded with explosives.

Other measures taken to guard the bridge included SP guns from the 174th FA. These were equipped with radar attachments that would disclose any movements on the river at night. There were four searchlights, two on each side of the river. And on the bridge itself, a platoon of Engineers were placed with orders to shoot at any floating objects in the water that looked like mines.

Major Hahn and the communication section stayed at the forward CP during the whole operation, which was from the night of the 25th until the morning of the 28th.

Major McVay, S/Sgt Sefcik and Sgt. Marks relieved part of the personnel in the forward CP for the second and third days. Major Troy and Captain Kaplan were at Group headquarters and coordinated the movement of supplies and equipment when needed.

To assist in the engineer phase of the operation an aid station was set up by Major Stratte, and the Group medics.

This river crossing was one of the major tasks undertaken by the 1107th Engineer (C) Group. Also, it was equal in importance to any operations done by other Groups or any contemplated operations. For this reason, it is best to review a few important points in the operation in case a river crossing of this magnitude has to be undertaken in the future.

First: The Engineer officer at each site should have a final conference with the Infantry commander in charge of the crossing at his site. A definite understanding should be reached as to the number of boats at his disposal, the number of Engineers that will be used to man the first and successive assault wave, and the number in reserve after the first wave is launched.

Second: Immediately after the loss of any Engineer personnel, and especially key personnel like motor boat operators, the Infantry commander at the site should be informed.

Third: Have a reserve at each site equal to the personnel and equipment to be used in the first assault wave.

Fourth: Detail and officer to go to the dump and check all equipment that is to be used. At St. Goar, motors were delivered to the crossing site that had never been unpacked and still were coated with cosmoline.

Fifth: Have plans made and coordinated to fit any situation so the assault boats can be brought from the enemy shore back to the friendly shore.

Group moved to St. Goar on the 29th and passed across the newly constructed treadway on the 30th.

Most of the work in the new sector East of the Rhine included removal of road blocks, filling craters and checking the towns occupied by the different units for German soldiers who had escaped the American Blitzkrieg.

The last day of the month, the 188th Engineer (C) Bn started the construction of a floating bailey bridge over the Rhine at Lorch. It was to be 1540' long. When this bridge was completed, two way traffic could flow with ease across the river.

It looked as though the end of the road leading to Berlin was in sight.

HEADQUARTERS
1107TH ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP
APO 230 U.S.ARMY

AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR APRIL 1945

The first 16 days of April, the 1107th Engineer Combat Group moved nine times and advanced approximately 280 miles into Germany. During this period Group supported the 89th Infantry Division, and for a short time the 4th Armored Division.

All engineer work of first priority was with one objective in view, keeping a good MSR open for the divisions.

The Germans had blown numerous bridges on the autobahn and on the secondary roads leading to this super-highway. Their second method of slowing down the advance of American troops was road blocks. These blocks were of timber construction and were poorly defended. The old tried and true method of laying extensive mine fields was virtually abandoned by the Germans as the Army penetrated deeper into the Fatherland.

Bridges on the autobahn were huge affairs. Fortunately, only one span was blown in the majority of bridges. When a Bailey Bridge would not take care of the span, a by-pass was found and usually involved the construction of a treadway bridge. Twelve of these bridges were built by the battalion supporting the division or by the division engineers during the advance.

Nearly every blown bridge presented different engineering problems. For example, one gap was so wide and materials so scarce, the gap was filled with earth using D-7's, an Osgood, and dump trucks. (See pictures Nos. 1, 2, and 3). Some Bailey Bridges were so long and Bailey Bridge was so scarce that bents were used to bring a DS Bailey Bridge up to Class 40. This also saved time in the construction of long spans. (See photograph No. 4).

A report from the 243rd Engineer C Bn tells of another construction problem. Attached pictures 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 supplement their report which is as follows: "On the autobahn at K027654, Germany, German engineers set off four pressure charges in an effort to destroy the first span of the overpass; but the charges merely buckled the two center stringers of the four stringer bridge, and blew four holes through the concrete roadbed destroying 25 feet of the roadbed.

A Bailey Bridge and two spans of steel treadway were constructed to temporarily provide means of two-way traffic across the obstacle. Two timber bridges 24 feet wide and 31 feet long replaced the temporary bridges, and provided four lane traffic. Fourteen 31 ft. I beams were used for stringers in the wooden bridge.

As a result of the demolition, it was necessary to strengthen the buckled stringers of the original bridge with piers. The ground

directly beneath the stringers was steeply sloped and a leveled area 50 ft by 15 ft was cut for the base of the piers. The steepness of the slope made the use of a bulldozer impractical, so the leveling work was done with pick and shovel. To provide a firm foundation for the piers, two layers of railroad ties were laid in the levelled area, the bottom layer perpendicular to the roadway, the top layer parallel to the roadway. Care was taken to insure a level foundation. One platoon was employed in preparing the site for the construction, another platoon was used to secure the necessary timber--thirty posts 30 ft long with a minimum diameter of 10 inches and thirty posts 17 ft long with the same diameter. In addition, timber for caps, sills and bracing of bents had to be obtained.

Because of the steep slope and the difficulty of handling the timbers, the bents were constructed on level ground about 60 ft from the site. The distance from the ground to the stringer necessitated a pier 45 ft high consisting of 6 bents, a bottom section of three bents 30 feet high and a top section of three bents 15 ft high. Each of the three bents in the bottom section were built with five posts placed four feet from the center on the sill and 2 ft from center to center on the cap. Transverse bracing was used. The 3 bents in the top section were built with five posts placed 2 feet from center to center on the sill and on the cap. Transverse bracing was also used. All posts were fastened to the cap and sill with drift pins and scabbing.

The bents were moved into position by block and tackle fastened to the stringers of the wooden bridge and powered by the winch of a truck. The three bents forming the bottom section of the pier were placed into position and braced to each other by means of longitudinal bracing. The three bents forming the top section were placed into position in the same way and braced longitudinally. At the junction of the two section of the outside bents, guy cables were attached. On the top of the pier, 15 inches of cribbing was placed and the stringers jacked up and wedges driven in to allow the pier to offer support to the stringer.

A second pier was constructed in the same way as the first one and was placed in position to complete the job.

The job required one platoon for erection and the total construction of the piers took eight days."

Because of the rapid changing tactical situation, XX Corps was shifted from the Corps North flank to the right or southern flank, and about the same time VIII Corps was attached to First US Army. Group took over the entire XX Corps area for road maintenance and engineer work in addition to its assigned zone in VIII Corps.

By the middle of the month, after the advance had stopped and area assignments had been made to the different battalions, it was

apparent that the big job would be the replacing of military bridges with fixed bridges.

During the next 15 days Group's Bn's removed 23 Bailey Bridges and 13 treadway bridges.

About half of these were replaced with fixed bridges. The total number of feet of bridge (fixed) constructed during the month was 1073 ft with an additional bridge, 217' in length, being completed the 2nd of May.

Many things about Germany and the German war machine were of more than passing interest as the American spearheads made their lightning advance to the east. There were the vast number of undamaged war plants and manufacturing centers, and the vast supplies and materials on hand. American troops saw their first slave labor and concentration camps. (Pictures 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17, taken by Corporal Henderson at Ohrdruf. There was the seeming ignorance of the civilian population of the cruelty and sadistic tendencies of their army.

Units in the forward areas usually became a military government detachment whether they wanted to or not. Group turned its troubles over to the S-1 department and here is the story of Lt. True and the problems he had to deal with.

"Immediately after our arrival in Weida, the German Civil Authorities came to us as the nearest representatives of American Military Authority. There had been an AMG Detachment in town for one day but had gone, leaving a wide-open problem on our hands. A meeting with the Burgomeister, Chief of Police and an interpreter was arranged by Lt. Colonel Clark, at which I was a spectator. Then the town and its problems were handed over to me. The principal problems encountered were:

1. Looting and plundering by the displaced persons in the town.

2. The lack of transportation and communications to bring food into the city.

3. The issuance of passes to those necessary people, such as doctors, nurses, food producers and policemen and arming of the latter to cope with the crowds.

4. General civil problems caused by the occupation of the town by American troops, some 10,000 displaced persons and an undetermined number of German refugees.

The objective was to get the civil administration going well enough to keep the problems from interfering with our operations

without letting the Germans have too many privileges or too much independence. In several conferences with the Burgomeister, the key people were selected, given passes and instructions as to the limitations imposed by the American Military Government. Within four or five days that much of the problem was going very well. The Polish and Russian laborers were practically uncontrollable until liaison was established between them and the Burgomeister. A meeting was arranged with two Russian representatives, the burgomeister and two other German officials, myself, and three interpreters. The decisions reached were:

1. The Russians, Poles and all other Eastern European DP's would be controlled by the Russian leader. He would establish his own police to work with the German police to do this. The Russian leader would stay on the job and see it through until proper Russian Governmental Agencies arrived. He would survey and determine the needs of his people and place demands on the Burgomeister to fill them. The pillaging would stop.

2. The Burgomeister would inspect the DP Camps and see for himself their needs. He would furnish all essentials for their health and well being, commandeering what he needed, from whatever German source he so desired. He was impressed with the fact that the DPs were brought here by the German Government and therefore were his problem.

3. Liaison would be maintained between the two factions; food and clothing would be procured and issued in an orderly manner. The American troops would not be called upon for help again unless their problems could absolutely not be solved on some other common ground.

Since the day of the meeting, things have gone very well under the circumstances, for both the Germans and DPs.

During the period some 36 German soldiers turned themselves in and were evacuated. Also 8 civilians of doubtful political views, suspected high positions in the Party, SS, Gestapo, and other Nazi affiliations were brought in by members of the Group, evacuated to CIC screening points and subsequently released.

In various contacts with the civilian population, several were found who were anxious to inform us about Nazi party members, activities, etc. None had information of any great value. The Burgomeister gave us a tip about a suspected arms cache, which was investigated and netted two German soldiers, one a captain, who were driven to surrender by gunfire.

The civilian problem can definitely be a millstone to tactical units. The above summary is only a small part of the various problems brought to me, ranging from births of babies to civilian crimes. Having had no experience or instructions in such matters, all decisions were not made by the "book" as much as by "horse sense". I would recommend that all unit S-1's be given a short course in Military Government and furnish a comprehensive handbook to assist them in these situations. Of course, this was not a normal set-up since the regular AMG units were not numerous enough to cope with all the over-run area, and it is not the mission of tactical units to deal with them, but it would facilitate subsequent AMG activities if

all concerned were equipped to start the "ball rolling" along uniform lines. I found the people very cooperative and willing to follow my word to the "letter". "

As each Battalion or unit moved into a new area a search would be made of all towns in the area for German soldiers who had decided not to fight any more and had changed into civilian clothes. Usually a few were picked up every day. Sometimes the haul was large as in the case of the 168th Engr C Bn which captured 132 soldiers and five officers hiding in a house in Greiz the day after the Burgomeister said the town was cleared and it had surrendered.

There was a little sniper activity in a few towns but none like the amount promised by Hitler, Himmler and Goebbels. After a house was burned down by the engineers in one town and nine SS troopers laid out to be viewed by the public there was no more trouble. In succeeding towns, it was impressed on the Burgomeister what would happen if any disturbance took place causing the discomforture of American soldiers. Troops slept very well from then on.

The preceding month, Bronze Stars were awarded Major Troy and Captain Greer. The citations read as follows: "MAJOR THOMAS E. TROY, 0336752, Corps of Engineers, 1107th Engineer Combat Group, United States Army, for meritorious achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy from 17 July 1944 to 1 February 1945, in France, Belgium, and Germany. During and after the break-through of the Enemy in the Ardennes sector, Major Troy was of great assistance to the Group Commander in operating the forward command post. His duties were successfully executed as he supervised activities of attached units, defended roadblocks, maintained engineer construction works and directed the laying of minefields. The devotion to duty, excellent judgement and disregard for his personal safety displayed by Major Troy constitute the highest traditions of the Armed Forces and reflect great credit upon himself. Entered military service from New York."

"CAPTAIN CARMON C. GREER, 01647917, Corps of Engineers, 1107th Engineer Combat Group, United States Army, for meritorious achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy from 28 January to 1 February, 1945, in Belgium. During this period, Captain Greer was in complete charge of opening roads through the important road center of St. Vith. With "round the clock" supervision, working under adverse conditions and under enemy artillery fire, Captain Greer was directly responsible for opening routes and keeping essential military traffic moving to and from the Corps front. The energy, resourcefulness and efficiency exhibited by Captain Greer constitute the highest traditions of the Armed Forces and reflect great credit upon himself. Entered military service from North Carolina."

On the 26th of April, Group received an order awarding Major Hahn a Bronze Star.

HEADQUARTERS
1107TH ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP
APO 339 U.S.ARMY

AFTER ACTION REPORT FOR MAY 1945

About the first of May, the tactical limiting line was reached and a static situation ensued. The 1107th Engineer Combat Group, and the units under Group resumed the normal role of supporting Corps operations. On the fifth of the month, one company of the 188th Engineer (C) Bn and a forward CP of the Bn. was established at Zwickau in order to give close support to the 314th Engineers of the 89th Division. The division was to attack in an easterly direction south of Chemnitz and straighten the line between Chemnitz and Pilsen and cover the left flank of Third US Army.

In the North, the German armies were surrounded and collapsing; and in the South, General Patton was well into Czecho-Slovakia. Ninth US Army, which assumed operational control of VIII Corps on the sixth of the month, called off the attack and the 188th Engineers moved back to its old area.

With the cessation of hostilities M.G. assumed responsibility for routine road maintenance and it was apparent that other Engineering work was going to be slight. Plans were made to establish several schools.

The new commanding officer of the 1107th Engineer Combat Group, Lt. Col. Clark, desired as full a schedule as possible in all phases of recreation and training to keep the men occupied.

During the course of the month, a modified treadway bridge school, motor boat school, equipment school, and water supply school were set up and run under the supervision of Group. Certificates were issued to those who successfully completed the courses given in the water supply and equipment schools.

The treadway bridge school was established for the purpose of experimenting and demonstrating with a modified treadway bridge designed to carry the new M-26 tank and the big tank recovery units. The school was run by the 997th Engineers and each battalion sent its officers and key NCO's to the school. Eighty-two men were trained. After they had been trained they were given the bridge for use in instructing the men of their command.

A few changes in the method of construction of the bridge were suggested by Group and a written report submitted to the Corps Engineers.

The motor boat school was run by personnel of the 511th Engineer Light Ponton Co. Twenty-Four men were sent to the school for a 2-day course in first echelon maintenance and use of the motors on assault boats. Lack of trained personnel at the Rhine river crossing showed the value of always having a large number of operators in each unit.

During the month, the 628th Engineers established a school to train operators in the use of equipment carried by a light equipment company. The school ran for 3 weeks and 108 men were trained from the units. Officers, particularly those receiving direct commissions or detailed in the Corps of Engineers from other arms or services attended a two-day familiarization course.

A water supply school was supervised by T/Sgt Reidelbach. The purpose of the school was to make additional competent and efficient water supply personnel for each of the units. The overall purpose of these schools was to have replacements ready for those who might be fortunate enough to go home on the point system. The whole training program under Group was set up with this in mind. If men were lost the efficiency of the units would not be impaired, and before the month had passed, the unusual dispersion of water points to service all parts of the Corps Area made it necessary to use many of these newly trained operators.

Other units in addition to those under Group were allowed to send men to the different schools for training. The division engineers of the 89th Division and the 76th Division both participated, and some men were sent up from the 1102nd Engineer Combat Group.

In addition to the above mentioned schools, the 188th Engineer (C) Bn and the 243rd Engineer (C) Bn went in for extensive training in fixed bridges. Three pile bridges were built along with various types of fixed bridges. Near the end of the month, a suspension bridge was started by the 188th Engineer (C) Bn.

Other training included demolitions, range firing, rigging, and a comprehensive program for reinforcements. These reinforcements mostly converted infantry riflemen or air corps ground crew were organized into provisional platoons.

During this period, the 168th Engineer (C) Bn was evacuating Released Allied Military Personnel. One collecting point was Gera, and another at Zwickau. They shipped the liberated prisoners out by rail, truck and by air. Sometimes they moved as many as 5,000 during a 48-hour period. During this month, supply lines were long, transportation was scarce, and the 168th Engineers had a big problem in securing food for their PW's. Most of it was requisitioned from the Germans. RAMP's were evacuated to Czecho-Slovakia, Russia, France, Belgium, Holland, and the Baltic states. On the 26th of the month, Group was ordered to open a reception station for German PW's at Erfurt. The station was opened at the German artillery barracks. "C" Company of the 243rd Engineers was moved to Erfurt to handle the prisoners.

On the Ninth of the month, a forest fire broke out in the woods north of the autobahn between Gera and Jena. The fire was south of the town of Eisenberg. There was a German ammunition dump in the woods containing approximately 48 thousand tons of explosives and bombs of all types. Because of the violence of the explosions, the autobahn was closed for several days. The 188th Engineers and 243rd Engineers

used dozers to cut fire breaks and hold the flames in check.

Because of the time of the first explosions, it is believed they were caused by the German 28-day delay firing device. The German troops had pulled out of the area about one month prior to the time the fires and explosions started. When the fire subsided, a detail from the 188th Engineers detonated all unexploded explosives that might have endangered passing vehicles on the autobahn and after clearing the resulting debris, the autobahn was reopened .

The 16th of the month, Group was given the mission of evacuating all Engineer materials in the area. First priority was to be one inch lumber, second priority was all other lumber and third priority was to include iron, steel, pipes, roofing paper and other building supplies.

Upon a verbal request from Engineer Section, VIII Corps to report the condition of all railroad lines, yards and siding facilities in our assigned area to facilitate the evacuation of engineer materials, an extensive reconnaissance was initiated by the 1107th Engineer (C) Group. Daily reconnaissance reports were submitted by our subordinate units, the 188th Engrs and 243rd Engrs. A consolidated report was turned in to the Engineer Section, VIII Corps daily, containing the desired information as to the rehabilitation of the RR. The submitted information consisted of the earliest possible completion date of interrupted railroad lines, yard and sidings. Our reconnaissance was made in conjunction with the 341st Engineer Railway Bn. Most of the damaged rail-lines and bridges were being repaired by this unit. Equipment consisting of one crane, one air-compressor and one welding outfit was loaned by Group to the 341st Engineer Railway Bn to enable them to finish a railroad bridge on schedule at Gera.

Reconnaissance teams were sent out to find the nearest available lumber yards to Gera and Werdau which were to be the first shipping points. Trucks started hauling on the 17th and by the 20th the work was coordinated in such a manner that four additional points for loading were opened up. Group was supported in these operations by the 3810th QM truck company.

The bottle neck developed in the securing of engines to take the trains away. They were at a premium and could not be secured through Corps. Major Hahn contacted Sgt. Zimmerman of the 25th Regulating station in Zeitz. It was agreed that he would arrange for empty cars when contacted 24 hours in advance and also for clearing trains from Zeitz. Trains would be delivered to Zeitz and empties would be hauled back. There would have been another bottleneck in the securing of cars for loading if it had not been for the iniative of the battalions.

By the end of the month, 4,102,125 bd ft of lumber had been loaded along with cars containing roofing paper, plywood, beaver board and tar paper. By the end of the month, two hundred and thirty cars

had been shipped with 506 cars on sidings awaiting shipment. The majority of the lumber was one inch stock. It was found an engineer company from a Combat Bn could haul and load a 40 car train every 3 days when the lumber was available.

The recreation program set up by the different units revolved around swimming and softball. All units had nice pools at their disposal. A softball league was formed with units in or near Weida participating.

During the month, the subordinate units of this headquarters were spread out to distances up to 25 miles, and beyond the talking range of field wire. Switches of larger headquarters were not available, so maximum use was made of existing commercial open wire circuits. These circuits require considerable attention, as such problems as cross-talk, swinging shorts, and hum arise. It was found that good connections, and doubling the pairs helped reduce the hum where field wire had to be connected to the copper. Cracked insulators, sagging lines, and improper field wire ties around the arms and insulators have all contributed to swinging shorts and cross-talk some of which can be eliminated without the use of special equipment. With the aid and advice of Signal Corps specialists and the experience gained by the unit wiremen, working continuously to improve these conditions, this headquarters has maintained good communications over open wire circuits.