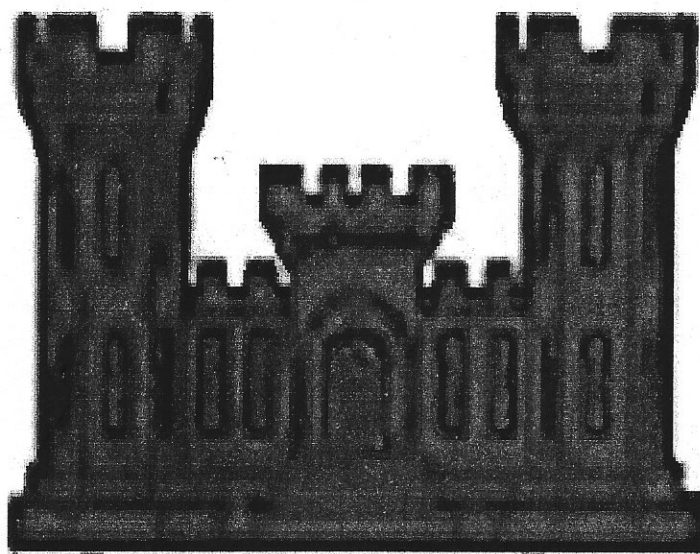


**339th Engineer
Construction Battalion**



World War II

Introduction

This book contains the history of 339th Engineer Construction Battalion and their role during World War II. All of the pages in this book are original documentation secured from the National Archives in Washington D.C. several years ago. My name is Bob Klocek and my Father, Stanley served in Company "B" of 339th Engineer Construction Battalion from its activation in August 1942 until discharge in December, 1945. Several years ago I became interested in researching my Father's time in the service and through this research was able to obtain this information from the National Archives. There were over 400 pages of information photocopied about the various projects and orders for the 339th Engineers. However, I tried to condense the most important information into some logical order to give a clear and concise picture of their role in World War II. Keep in mind this original information from 1945, paperwork which has only been photocopied. My intent is to pass along a little bit of history to Veterans and /or family members of the 339th Engineers. I hope that you will enjoy this and share it with as many people as possible.

Reproduced
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HEADQUARTERS
339TH ENGINEER CONSTRUCTION BN
APO 70

The 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) was constituted as an Organized Reserve unit on 5 September 1923, and allotted to the Ninth Corps Area. Effective 1 October 1933 it was reallocated to the Eighth Corps Area.

On 18 August 1942 the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) was activated at Camp Butner, North Carolina. The Basic Training Period for the Regiment began on 12 October 1942 with eleven hundred seventy-two enlisted men.

The Regiment was ordered to Camp Stoneman, California and left Camp Butner, North Carolina for the coast on 29 March 1943 arriving at Camp Stoneman on 3 April 1943. Personnel strength at this time consisted of forty-five Engineer officers, two Dental officers, one Special Service officer, one Chaplain, two Warrant officers and twelve hundred forty-two enlisted men.

On 14 April 1943 the Regiment departed from Oakland Bay aboard the USAT Willard S. Holbrook (formerly the Dollar Line Steamship "President Taft") for duty overseas. Late in the morning of 2 May 1943 the Regiment landed at Brisbane, Australia and went immediately to Camp Doomben, five miles north of Brisbane.

On 11 May 1943 the Regiment boarded the S.S. Cremer of the Dutch Merchant Marine and proceeded to Milne Bay, New Guinea, landing at a small cove known as Jock McMillan Bay on 18 May 1943.

The Regiment after nearly eleven months at Milne Bay was alerted for participation in the forthcoming Tanahmerah-Hollandia operation. The first echelon left Milne Bay on the morning of 16 April 1944, landing at Tanahmerah Bay on 22 April 1944. The second echelon left Milne Bay on 24 April 1944, landing at Hollandia on 30 April 1944.

The 1st of August 1944 the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) was redesignated the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion with an authorized strength of 31 officers and 870 enlisted men. Personnel rendered excess by the reorganization were transferred to other units.

The next major move of the 339th was to Leyte Island, Philippine Islands. The Battalion made the move in four echelons. The first echelon landed on A-Day, 20 October 1944, the second echelon on A plus 2, the third on A plus 4 and the fourth on A plus 30.

After a little over 90 days on Leyte, the Battalion moved to Luzon Island, leaving Leyte on 25 January 1945 and landing on Luzon in the vicinity of San Marcelino on 29 January 1945.

During the Battalion's stay on Luzon it was engaged in work on many and varied projects extending all of the way from Malolos, Bulacan Province in the south to Aparri, Cagayan Province in the north.

ENBN-339-0

Master

HISTORY OF THE 339TH ENGINEER GENERAL SERVICE REGIMENT

On August 18, 1942, the 339th Engineer General Service Regiment was activated at Camp Butner, North Carolina, per letter AG 320.2 (7-10-42) MR-M-GN War Department, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D. C., dated July 11, 1942.

The cadre from the 105th Engineer Combat Battalion, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, was composed of seven officers: Captain Harmon H. James, First Lieutenants Fred M. Wyatt and Norman L. Hall, Second Lieutenants James T. Finnegan, Robert W. Fletcher, Ray H. Frazer and Robert A. Hill, and ninety-five enlisted men. Prior to the activation of the Regiment, Second Lieutenants Pierce Butler III, Nicholas M. Cestari, Samuel C. Cummings Jr., William T. Lane, Robert Hacken, William R. Koblik, Daniel E. Kobs, Edwin G. Moran, Henry G. Nichols, Leon J. Sorensen, Harold H. Thomas and Robert E. Dorlon reported for duty on August 6th from the Engineer School, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

General Orders No. 1, Headquarters 339th Engineer Regiment (GS), August 18, 1942, announced the activation and assignment of Staff Officers to duty with Captain Harmon H. James as Acting Regimental Commander, First Lieutenant Norman L. Hall as Adjutant, Second Lieutenants Robert Hacken and Harold H. Thomas as Personnel Officer and Supply Officer, respectively.

Special Orders No. 1, August 18, 1942, announced the assignment of Company Officers and enlisted cadre with First Lieutenant Fred M. Wyatt as Commander of Headquarters and Service Company, Second Lieutenants Henry G. Nichols as Commander of Company A, James T. Finnegan as Commander of Company B, Robert W. Fletcher as Commander of Company C, William D. Koblik as Commander of Company D, Ray H. Frazer as Commander of Company E, and Robert A. Hill as Commander of Company F.

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph W. Cox Jr., Class of 1927, West Point, formerly on duty in the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Washington, reported for duty August 19th as per Special Orders No. 210, War Department, Washington, August 6, 1942, and immediately assumed command of the Regiment as per General Orders No. 2, Headquarters 339th Engineer Regiment (GS), August 19, 1942.

Captain James was made Executive Officer on August 20th while Lieutenant Hall was placed on Special Duty with 10th Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, the unit which exercised control over all Second Army Special Troops at Camp Butner. Also on August 20th, Second Lieutenants Robert E. Berkefeld, William M. Allen, Albert A. Bourg, Walter F. Fathke, Robert J. Thompson, Lewis R. Whitford, John H. Williams and Charles T. Simpson reported for duty from the Engineer School, Fort Belvoir.

The Medical Detachment received its initial officer personnel when Captain Comiel M. Malstaff and First Lieutenant Thomas V. O'Brien joined on August 28th. On this date the first vehicles were received which included four one-quarter ton trucks, two motorcycles and four Diamond T. trucks.

Second Lieutenant Clarence B. Calaway reported for duty from the Heavy Equipment School, Fort Belvoir on August 31st, thereby increasing the strength of the Regiment by the end of August to twenty-nine Engineer officers, two Medical officers while the enlisted personnel remained at ninety-five. No fillers had been received by the month end and technical training for the cadre continued. At this time the Regiment had 10% of its motor transportation, 25% of its organization equipment and 40% of its individual equipment on hand.

Second Lieutenants Michael T. Broderick, Donald A. Arthur and Gordon W. Knapp reported for duty September 3rd from the Engineer School and on the same date Lieutenant Moran assumed the duties of Plans and Training Officer.

Captain William T. Bradley, Class of 1939, West Point, formerly on duty with the 27th Engineers, Puerto Rican Department, joined the Regiment on September 6th and on September 8th assumed the duties of Regimental Adjutant. On the

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latter date, a Special Court Martial was set up with Lieutenant Wyatt as President, Lieutenant Frazer as Trial Judge Advocate and Lieutenant Thompson as Defense Counsel.

September 9th brought an increase in officer personnel when Chaplain Frank E. Helsel, Captain Benjamin M. Schenker, MC, First Lieutenants Jere B. Faison, MC, and Milton M. Sandler, DC, reported for duty. Lieutenant Simpson was appointed Salvage Officer and Lieutenant Lane was appointed Athletic Officer on September 12th.

The Regiment received its first inductees, forty-nine in number, on September 19th from Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. The Second Dental Officer, First Lieutenant Morton C. Weinrib, joined the Regiment on September 20th.

The first promotions took place on September 21st when First Lieutenant Fred M. Wyatt became Captain and Second Lieutenant Harold H. Thomas became First Lieutenant. Forty-six inductees were received on September 22nd and forty-nine the following day from Camp Shelby, Mississippi. At this time, there was 14% motor transportation, 70% organization equipment and 40% individual equipment on hand.

Captain Peter Rowe, MC, reported for duty September 29th, in addition to one hundred fifty inductees from Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, increasing the Regiment's strength to thirty-three Engineer officers, five Medical officers, two Dental officers, and three hundred eighty nine enlisted men by the end of September.

October 2nd's report showed an increase to 28% in motor transportation on hand, 80% in organization equipment and 100% in individual equipment. One ambulance, sixteen trailers, nearly all types of trucks, air compressors, road graders, shovels and tractors had not been obtained to this time, in addition to all Ordnance property.

On the 3rd of October, one hundred nineteen inductees reported for duty

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from Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. First Lieutenant Henry Y. Harper, MC, joined the Regiment on the following day and on October 5th Second Lieutenants Samuel A. Gupton, Ray H. Hollar, Benjamin N. Wyche reported for duty from the Heavy Equipment School, Fort Belvoir, in addition to four hundred eight inductees from Fort Thomas, Kentucky and Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. Also on October 5th, Lieutenant Williams assumed the duties of Special Service Officer and Mess Officer for the officers of the Regiment and the 60th Medical Battalion. Fifteen men were received from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and seventy-six from Fort Sheridan, Illinois, on October 6th and on October 7th forty-nine reported from Camp Wheeler, Georgia.

Two men were transferred to the Medical Detachment for its first enlisted personnel from the Regiment on October 9th, the same date that thirty-nine additional inductees reported from Fort Sheridan, Illinois. On October 10th Second Lieutenants Thomas C. Newman and Myer A. Rice reported for duty as well as seventy-seven recruits from Fort Sheridan, Illinois. The following day a Special Court Martial was appointed with Captain James as President of the Court, Lieutenant Allen as Trial Judge Advocate and Lieutenant Berkefeld as Defense Counsel.

The Basic Training Period for the Regiment began October 12th with eleven hundred seventy-two enlisted men. Motor transportation by October 15th had increased to 39% while other equipment remained unchanged. On the same date, forty-two additional recruits reported for duty from Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

Lieutenant Hall returned to the Regiment from 10th Headquarters October 14th, was made First Battalion Adjutant and was immediately put on Special Duty with Regimental Headquarters.

Lieutenant Finnegan assumed the duties of Plans and Training Officer on October 17th, replacing Lieutenant Moran who was transferred to Company B with duty as Commanding Officer. Lieutenant Newman received his promotion to First Lieutenant on this date and was relieved of duty with Company E and made Commander

of Company A. Lieutenant Nichols remained on duty with Company A as Platoon Commander. Second Lieutenant William H. Cook reported for duty with Company E from the Engineer School, Fort Belvoir.

The Regiment lost its first officer when Lieutenat Weinrib was transferred to the 30th Infantry Division, Camp Blanding, Florida, on October 19th. Captain Dan Wright, DC, filled this vacancy on October 21st. On the following day Captain Schenker was transferred to Station Hospital Camp Butner, reducing the number of Medical officers to five. The following changes in Staff Assignments became effective October 26th: Captain Bradley assumed command of the First Battalion, Captain James assumed command of the Second Battalion, Lieutenants Hall and Dorlon became Executive officer and Regimental Adjutant respectively. Also on this date, Second Lieutenants Alton L. Cardinal, Jacob F. Coffman, Lester C. Persson, Arthur M. Sullivan, John R. Ulery, Phillip R. Walls and George E. Ryan reported for duty and on the following day Second Lieutenant Lawrence E. Davis joined the Regiment, all being recent graduates of the Engineer School, Fort Belvoir. The strength of the Regiment at the end of October had increased to forty-seven Engineer officers, five Medical officers, two Dental officers and twelve hundred thirty-three enlisted men. Ordnance property amounted to four caliber .50 machine guns, heavy, with fourteen mounts. Motor transportation had increased to 56%, organizational equipment to 96%. Tents, field ranges, etc. would be issued at Port of Embarkation. The Regiment at this time was increasing its strength to 25% overstrength in officers and 5% overstrength in enlisted men. No additional Ordnance property had been received and training was continued without the use of small arms.

Word was received November 3rd from the War Department that Colonel Cox had been promoted to a full colonel, effective October 30th. On Saturday morning, November 7th, the Regiment held its first review in honor of Colonel Cox. Colonel Sidney S. Eberle, Commander of all Special Troops, Second Army, stationed at Camp

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Butner, pinned the eagles on Colonel Cox. The Regiment then passed in review for its newly promoted Commanding Officer.

Lieutenant Cardinal, Assistant Engineer Officer, left the Regiment November 1st for Fort Belvoir, Virginia, to attend a two week's course in Camouflage.

On November 3rd organizational equipment had increased to 98% when seven field ranges were received this date. The Regiment was now in its fourth week of MTP training. By November 10th, the Regiment possessed nine caliber .30 machine guns, heavy, but it still had no small arms. Only 5% of its enlisted personnel had completed third priority firing, these men being the original cadre. Lieutenant Cardinal returned from the Camouflage School November 15th.

On November 17th Lieutenant Nichols was relieved from duty with Company A and made First Battalion Adjutant while Lieutenant Williams was relieved from duty as Special Service Officer and made Second Battalion Adjutant. In addition to these changes, Lieutenant Ulery assumed the duties of Special Service officer and was placed in charge of Officers' Mess and Officers' Club Fund on the same date. The regiment was now authorized a permanent Special Service Section with one Captain and two enlisted men.

November 19th brought promotions to fifteen officers. They were Second Lieutenants Ray H. Frazer, Robert W. Fletcher, Henry G. Nichols, Clarence B. Calaway, Robert Hacken, James T. Finnegan, Edwin G. Moran, Donald A. Arthur, John H. Williams, Robert A. Hill, Michael T. Broderick, Charles T. Simpson, William M. Allen, William D. Koblik and Robert E. Dorlon.

The Regiment began cadre training November 20th with Lieutenant Cestari in charge of Supply, Lieutenat Whitford in charge of Engineering and Lieutenant Hacken in charge of Administration. Seventy-five additional recruits reported for duty on November 22nd from Fort Thomas, Kentucky, and also on the same date Second Lieutenants Morris G. Anderson, Theodore E. Andresen, Phillip Y. Boshart, Woodrow W. Colclough, Robert W. Elms, Ransom B. Long and Charles J. Pickett joined

the Regiment from the Engineer School, Fort Belvoir.

The Regiment was in its seventh week of MTP training by November 25th. On the 28th a letter was received from Headquarters Second Army announcing an intensive training program for the Regiment for overseas service and placing the Regiment in an A-4-22 priority for equipment. This letter was the authority to bring the Regiment to T/O strength. Captain Wyatt was placed on Detached Service on the same date at the Ordnance Motor Base Transport School, Atlanta, Georgia, for the purpose of attending the Preventive Motor Maintenance Course. A new Special Court was appointed on November 30th with Captain Bradley as President, Lieutenant Andresen as Trial Judge Advocate and Lieutenant Butler as Defense Counsel.

The Regiment received its first Major when Captain William T. Bradley accepted his promotion on November 31st.

By the end of November, the strength of the Regiment had increased to fifty-four Engineer officers, five Medical officers and two Dental officers and thirteen hundred four enlisted men. There was still only 56% motor transportation on hand while organizational and individual equipment remained unchanged.

On December 6th First Lieutenant Max E. Lamb reported for duty and was assigned to Regimental Headquarters with the Engineer Section. Also on this date Captain Wyatt returned from Preventive Motor Maintenance School. Second Lieutenant Raymond A. Murray joined the Regiment on December 8th and on the 13th the officer personnel once more received an increase when Second Lieutenants Paul M. Callahan and Richard L. Craumer reported for duty from the Engineer School, Fort Belvoir.

First Lieutenant Norman L. Hall and Second Lieutenant Ray H. Hollar were promoted to Captain and First Lieutenant respectively on December 14th. Ordnance property had increased at this time to fourteen caliber .30 machine guns, heavy, and seven caliber .50 air cooled machine guns. On December 26th

the Regiment was in its eleventh week of MTP training. No tests had been given nor had any of the recruits completed their firing. Motor transportation increased to 70%, organization equipment to 99%. Principal items short were trailers, dump trucks, prime movers, air compressors, and road graders. Cadre training was now in its fifth week. On December 28th a change in Staff Assignment was made with Lieutenant Lamb assuming the duties of Plans and Training Officer and Lieutenant Finnegan as his Assistant. At the end of December there were present for duty fifty-seven Engineer officers, one Special Service officer, five Medical officers, two Dental officers and twelve hundred ninety-four enlisted men, thirty-nine of whom were in the Medical Detachment and two as Special Service assistants.

A secret letter was received on December 31st from Headquarters, Camp Butner, North Carolina, with reference to War Department letter, S.O.S., Office of the Adjutant General, Washington, dated December 25, 1942, placing the Regiment in Priority A-2-a for the distribution of controlled items of equipment, and designating departure from Camp Butner not before February 1, 1943.

MTP training ended January 1, 1943 with tests being conducted January 25th. Second Unit training began on January 2nd. The following day Lieutenant Harper was transferred to Lawson General Hospital, reducing the Medical Staff officers to four, 80% of the Regiment's motor transportation had been received by January 5th. Captain Harmon H. James accepted his promotion to Major on January 5th and the following day became Commander of the First Battalion with Major Bradley assuming command of the Second Battalion.

A confidential letter was received from Headquarters, Camp Butner, on January 8th informing the Regiment to be in readiness for movement overseas February 1st and authorizing items of individual and organizational equipment to be taken.

On January 11th, the following changes were announced: Lieutenant Calaway to First Battalion as Battalion Adjutant; Lieutenant Fletcher from command of

Company C to Headquarters and Service Company; Lieutenant Koblik from command of Company D to Company A; Lieutenant Nichols to Company C as Company Commander and Lieutenant Broderick to Company D as Company Commander.

The Regiment received its movement orders on January 13th. It was to be known thereafter as Unit No. 9812-K with a new address - APO 3582, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, California. The time of arrival, however, at the Port of Embarkation was yet to be determined by the Port Commander but the Regiment was wasting no time in its final preparation for immediate movement. There were also included in these movement orders two Ordnance Medium Maintenance Companies, one Engineer Aviation Battalion, two Engineer Airborne Battalions, three Signal Aircraft Warning Companies, an A.A.F. Radar Personnel Casual Detachment, two Engineer Dump Truck Companies, one Engineer Maintenance Company, two Ordnance Medium Maintenance Companies, Aviation, and one Signal Battalion. If movement for overseas duty were not made, this change would be a permanent change in station. Final instructions were included in these orders regarding equipment which was to accompany the unit. Organization equipment had to be prepared by February 1st, readiness date, for movement to the San Francisco Port of Embarkation. This was accomplished in two weeks' time. A crew of thirteen enlisted men with Lieutenant Sullivan, all from Company C, was to accompany the shipment by rail.

Lieutenant Bourg received orders to report for training at the Pre-flight School, Maxwell Field, Alabama, and departed from the Regiment January 13th. The Regiment at this time was reclassifying personnel unfit for overseas duty and discharging men under the thirty-eight year age law. As a result strength had decreased below T/O figures and so on January 20th sixty-one trained replacements were received from Camp Rucker, Alabama, to make up for this shortage. On January 30th, the two battalion commanders returned to their original battalions. At the end of January, there were present for duty fifty-six Engineer Officers, four Medical officers, one Special Service officer, two Dental officers and twelve

hundred ninety-four enlisted men.

The equipment train, with Lieutenant Sullivan in charge, left Camp Butner for Fort Mason, California, February 1st. Movement orders for personnel were not received at this time.

The two vacancies for Warrant Officers were filled February 2nd by enlisted men from the Regiment. Master Sergeant John R. Edwards, Motor Section, and Staff Sergeant Harven A. Crouse, Supply Section, accepted their commissions on this date as Warrant Officers Junior Grade.

At a review held on the Regimental Parade Ground February 3rd a commendation for quick-witted and gallant action outside of the line of duty was read to the officers and men of the Regiment. The third platoon of Company B with Lieutenant Walter F. Fathke in command took action and prevented possible loss of life and serious damage to government property by fighting and extinguishing a gasoline fire in the Regimental Motor Pool on January 26th. Private Vernon A. Emkey of that platoon was especially commended for removing his field jacket and smothering the flames enveloping a comrade soldier, thereby saving him from possible severe third degree burns.

A telegram from Second Army was received on February 3rd authorizing a representative from the Regiment familiar with Supply to proceed to Fort Mason, California, so on February 5th Lieutenant Thomas, Supply Officer, departed for California to act as the Regiment's Liaison Officer.

Training continued but was seriously handicapped by lack of equipment. The Medical Detachment was reduced to T/O strength in officers when Captain Malstaff received orders to report to the 341st Medical Regiment at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, on February 5th. Also on this date Lieutenant Finnegan was relieved of duties as Assistant S-3 and made Platoon Commander, Company A. In accordance with letter dated November 25, 1942, Headquarters Second Army, authorizing adjustment of Regimental strength to T/O figures, personnel was re-

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duced when the following officers were transferred to the 602nd Engineer Battalion (Cam), then being activated at Camp Butner: First Lieutenants Robert Hacken, Robert W. Fletcher, William R. Koblik, Second Lieutenants Charles J. Fickett, Jacob F. Coffman, Ransom B. Long, Phillip Y. Boshard, Gordon W. Knapp, Phillip F. Walls, Woodrow W. Colclough and Robert W. Elms.

Lieutenant Ulery, Special Service Officer, was promoted to First Lieutenant on February 8th and on the 11th Lieutenant O'Brien, Medical Officer, accepted his promotion to Captain. Major Carl M. Michaelson reported for duty from the Command and General Staff School February 13th and was assigned to Regimental Headquarters. On February 16th Second Lieutenants Lester C. Persson and Myer A. Rice accepted their promotions to First Lieutenants.

The Regiment established its Guard House and Stockade on February 20th. Men from the Regiment confined in the Camp Butner Stockade were transferred to the Regimental Stockade where closer supervision could be maintained over the prisoners. This was done because a prisoner's confinement at hard labor proved to be a vacation for the men in the Post Stockade and "gold-bricks" in the Regiment always looked for an opportunity to go to the Post Stockade. Lieutenant Whitford was made Prison Officer with a permanent detail of one Sergeant, three Corporals and eighteen Privates.

Lieutenant Pierce Butler III accepted his promotion to First Lieutenant on February 21st. On the 23rd Major Bradley became Regimental Executive officer, Captain Hall assumed the duties of S-3, Captain Lamb was made Commander of E Company and Lieutenant Frazer was made Platoon Commander in E Company. Also on the 23rd Major Michaelson assumed Command of the First Battalion. On the following day Chaplain Frank E. Helsel accepted his promotion to Captain. The Regiment's strength at the end of February was forty-six Engineer Officers, three Medical officers, two Dental officers, one Special Service officer, one Chaplain, two Warrant officers and thirteen hundred forty-six enlisted men. The increase

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in enlisted men occurred on February 27th when one hundred twenty trained replacements joined the Regiment from the 78th Infantry Division, Camp Butner. A survey had been made of personnel in the Regiment who were to be reclassified or discharged prior to overseas movement and a requisition for one hundred twenty replacements was submitted and accomplished before the transfer and discharge of unfit personnel was made.

Camp Butner was honored on March 2nd by a visit from Lieutenant General Ben Lear, then on an inspection tour of Second Army Troops. A review was held in the General's honor that afternoon with over five thousand troops present. Colonel Cox was in command of the Brigade with Captain Hall as the Brigade Adjutant. At an officers' call in the evening, the General applauded the appearance and marching ability of this Regiment. Also on March 2nd Lieutenant Andresen accepted his promotion to First Lieutenant.

The Regiment left the camp area for a three-day maneuver on March 4th held in the Southwest Sector of the reservation. During the maneuvers on March 5th an unfortunate accident occurred to Captain Hall when an aerial torpedo bomb exploded in his right hand, ripping the index finger. Captain Hall was taken to the hospital where it was necessary to amputate the finger from the first knuckle. On the afternoon of the 6th the Regiment returned to camp. On March 8th the Regiment again departed for maneuvers at the Durham-Raleigh, North Carolina, airport. Bivouac was made there on the night of the 8th and on the following morning a change was made to Crabtree State Park, approximately eight miles East of Raleigh. On the 9th of March Captain Peter Rowe accepted his promotion to Major, filling that vacancy in the Medical Detachment. Light maneuvers were held until the morning of the 12th when the Regiment returned to camp to prepare for a review including all Second Army Special Troops with Colonel Cox in command of the Brigade, Colonel Eberle, Commander of Second Army Troops at Camp Butner and Colonel Huntley, Post Commander of the Camp, as Reviewing Officers. Lieutenant Newman acted as

Brigade Adjutant.

The Regiment left for maneuvers again on March 15th at Crabtree State Park, engaging in light field tactics. At this time, to aid morale and to alleviate nervous tension, Colonel Cox authorized furloughs which had been denied members of this command when basic training was completed because of the alert status of the Regiment. The men were subject to immediate recall if movement orders were received. The Regiment returned to Camp Butner March 21st in a cold driving rain.

On March 26th movement orders to the San Francisco Port of Embarkation were received from the Commanding General, Fort Mason, California, ordering the Regiment to arrive at the Staging Area, Camp Stoneman, California, April 3rd.

Thirty-nine trained replacements joined the Regiment March 28th from the 480th Engineer Company (HM), Camp Butner, to fill vacancies created by recent discharges and reclassifications. Also on this date Lieutenant Morris G. Anderson was transferred to the 458th Engineer Depot Company which reduced officer personnel to T/O strength. At 0700, March 29th, eleven additional trained replacements reported for duty from the 480th Engineer Company (HM).

At 0900, March 29th, the first of three troop trains departed from Camp Butner for Camp Stoneman, California, with Major Mikaelson in command of the train. The second section departed at 1100 with Major James as Train commander and at 1350 the third section departed with Major Bradley as Train Commander. Thirteen prisoners from the Regimental Stockade accompanied the unit under guard. At the end of March, there were present for duty forty-five Engineer officers, two Dental officers, one Special Service officer, one Chaplain, two Warrant officers and twelve hundred forty-two enlisted men. The strength of the Regiment was one over authorized T/O at the time of departure from its home station.

The trip across the Continent was uneventful. The first section arrived at Camp Stoneman, California at 0530, April 3rd, the second section arrived at 1500 and the third section arrived at 1100 on the same day. A final show-down inspec-

tion was held for the men and a last check-up on supplies and equipment was made with rifles and pistols being issued on April 10th. Training at Camp Stoneman was devoted to hikes and toughening up exercises. A last review was held on the 8th with the men carrying rifles for the first time. On the day of departure for overseas duty from Camp Stoneman the Regiment was at T/O strength, Lt. Thomas and Lt. Sullivan having joined the Regiment at the Staging Area. At 1600 on April 13th the last of two river vessels left Camp Stoneman transporting the Regiment to Oakland Bay where the U. S. Army Transport Willard S. Holbrook, formerly the Dollar Line Steamship "President Taft", was moored at Pier Six. The men transferred to the Holbrook at 2000 and 0845, Wednesday, April 14, 1943, the Holbrook slipped its moorings and headed to sea without escort or convoy. One vessel and one plane were sighted the second day out but proved to be friendly craft. The voyage proceeded uneventful until late in the afternoon of the 20th when two periscopes were sighted about two hundred yards off the stern. General Quarters was sounded and gun crews on the two three-inchers and one five-incher, located on the stern of the ship, went into action. The Holbrook put on full steam and was rapidly out of temporary danger, no torpedoes having been fired. Easter Sunday, April 25th, was passed at sea with Sunrise Service being held on deck by the ship's Chaplain at 0600. At the end of April the Regiment was one under T/O strength, one enlisted man having been returned to California due to illness a few hours out of port. Late in the afternoon of May 1st, an American destroyer picked up the Holbrook for escort into Brisbane, Australia. She was joined that evening by a friendly PBV flying boat. Port was reached May 2nd, the boat docking at 1120. The Regiment debarked and marched to its new base area, Camp Doomben, five miles north of Brisbane. The Regiment operated at Camp Doomben in an administrative capacity only, furnishing large details for unloading crews at the docks. Colonel Cox was placed on Temporary Duty May 6th with Base Section 3, flying to Sydney, Australia.

Movement orders were received May 6th for the Regiment and the 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company attached to the Regiment May 4th. At 0400, May 11th, the Regiment embarked on the S. S. Cremer, KPM Lines, Dutch Merchant Marine, under charter to the United States, to an unknown destination. The following day the 198th Engineers, with Company B of the Regiment, Lieutenant Faison and two Medical enlisted men embarked for the same destination on the Australian ship, S. S. Taroonna. Lieutenant Sorensen, Regimental Motor Officer, with a detail of fifteen men from the Regiment and five men from the 198th Engineers, departed from Australia on May 16th aboard the Liberty ship, S. S. Allison, with a cargo of trucks and heavy equipment. At 1100, May 16th, the Cremer dropped anchor in the harbor at Townsville, Australia, located on the Northeastern Coast of the continent, about five hundred miles from Brisbane. Also on this date, Lieutenant Butler, who remained at Brisbane, began a ten-day course at the Chemical Warfare School in that city. The Cremer sailed at 0300 the following morning in the company of one Australian destroyer, one U. S. Corvette, one Liberty ship and the Taroonna which met the convoy the morning of the 17th. On May 18th, the three vessels entered Milne Bay at the Southern tip of the island of New Guinea and dropped anchor in a small cove known as Jock McMillan Bay, about thirteen miles East of Gili Gili, location of U. S. Advanced Sub Base A, Headquarters USASOS. The unloading of equipment began immediately while personnel was ferried to shore on barges. Work continued throughout the day and night and while still in the process of unloading on the night of the 19th at 2230, an air raid alarm was sounded and for thirty minutes bombs rained on the air strips at Gili Gili. The Cremer was not touched, nor were any of the Regiment's personnel. As soon as unloading was completed, sometime in the early morning of the 20th, the Cremer put out to sea.

The area assigned to the Regiment was overgrown with dense underbrush and trees with swampland throughout. Clearing the land for a suitable bivouac area

was a difficult task. It appeared that the Regiment would be assigned the job of assisting in the construction of a huge base on the Northern side of Milne Bay. Until definite orders were received to commence operation, work was begun on the road leading East and West of the bivouac area. Neither road nor telephonic communication could be made with Base Headquarters. The single means of an air raid warning had to be commuted by lights at Gili Gili harbor which could be seen from Regimental Headquarters. K. B. Mission, a site established by the Church of London, six miles West of McMillan Bay, was the location of one company of the 96th Engineer General Service Regiment (Colored) and the proposed area for Headquarters Sixth Army, Lieutenant General Walter F. Kreuger commanding. Three miles West of the Regimental bivouac area was located a small Australian camp whose men were reconditioning Japanese landing barges used in the assault on the Bay in August 1942. A few yards East of the bivouac area was a platoon of the 69th Engineer Top Company which had seen much service in Port Moresby, Oro Bay, Buna and Tufi. Two miles East was located the 158th Infantry Regiment and the 495th Engineer Heavy Shop Company. This area was known as Ahioima. Location of troops ended at this point. Further East were several native villages.

Lieutenant Thomas accepted his promotion to Captain May 20th and on the following day, May 21st, Lieutenant Faison accepted his promotion to Captain. On May 21st, the Service Battalion was organized, composed of Headquarters and Service Company and the 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company with Captain Fred M. Wyatt as Battalion Commander. Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis, Sixth Army Engineer, and Colonel W. H. Mills, Commanding Officer of the 46th Engineer Regiment (GS), which latter unit had moved into Ahioima area the previous day, paid a visit to the Regiment on the 22nd. The following day, Lieutenant Colonel William B. Ely, Executive Officer of the SOS Engineer Organization at Pemmican, code name for the area at K. B. Mission, visited the Regiment with Colonel Sturgis and Colonel Mills. A floating dock was constructed by the 198th Engineers, work starting on

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the 23rd. This dock was to be used for passenger and cargo traffic for the ferry which plied between Gili Gili, Waga Waga (on the Southern shore of Milne Bay), Jock McMillan Bay and Ahima. The ferry was the only means of communication between Base headquarters and the Regiment. Mail service was especially good for this section of the Theater, being received daily at Gili Gili. On May 24th, Lieutenant Goepfert, 198th Engineers, Lieutenant Craumer, Company E of the Regiment with two Sergeants of the Regiment, left for Wagga in New South Wales, Australia, to attend a Bomb Disposal School for one month from June 7th to July 3rd. On May 27th, Lieutenant Sorensen with his men and equipment, arrived on the Allison which safely completed the movement of the Regiment. Major Baker of the Engineering Section, VI Army, arrived in the area to assist in locating the sites for lighter jetties, along with Major Liles, Operations Officer of the Engineering Section, USASOS, Headquarters, Port Moresby. Lieutenant Lane, C Company, was placed on Special Duty with S-3 Section May 30th and also on the same date Captain Ernest L. Proud of the Engineer Sub Base Section and Captain Walter C. Ernest Jr. of the Engineer Staff, Port Moresby, arrived to give assistance on the construction of the first dock, test piles for which were driven May 31st. Lieutenant Cestari, Headquarters and Service Company, was placed on Special Duty as Construction Supply Officer with three enlisted assistants on the 31st. Another red alert sounded the night of the 31st but no raid took place. At the end of May, there were present for duty forty-five Engineer officers, five Medical officers, one Special Service officer, one Chaplain, two Warrant Officers and twelve hundred thirty-seven enlisted men.

On June 1st, one platoon from D Company with Lieutenant Cummings in charge was detached to Waga Waga for loading piling and lumber for dock construction and general engineering in that vicinity. Native labor was being obtained to erect thatch huts, recreation halls, mess halls and a chapel. The Regiment's first court martial overseas took place June 7th. Several American soldiers had been

killed by their comrades in the vicinity through careless discharge of firearms and to avoid reoccurrences, a Regimental order forbidding the firing of small arms except in case of an enemy attack, was published. A court martial against the accused was the result of disobedience to this order. On June 10th, Lieutenant Butler reported from the Chemical Warfare School. Lieutenant Colonel Cary G. Hutchinson, newly appointed Sub-Base Headquarters Commanding Officer, visited the Regiment on June 13th with Brigadier General Hanford MacNider, on an inspection tour. An alert was received at 1000 Sunday morning, the 13th and at 1213 information was given out to be on the constant alert for a raid that afternoon, night or early Monday morning. At 2220, Sunday night, the red alert was received and blackout immediately went into effect. The All Clear sounded twenty minutes later however, with no raiders having approached this area. Full moon was now beginning with the nights clear and bright, making bombing ideal. A flag pole was erected Flag Day, June 14th and Retreat was blown for the first time since landing in New Guinea. It was learned that the enemy raiders had struck at Port Moresby Sunday night, having passed close to this area to reach that point. Construction of a field hospital for the Regiment, modelled after native pattern, was begun on the 15th with Medical Detachment personnel furnishing the labor. When the Cremer returned to Milne Bay on this date, two officers' footlockers and two field desks were recovered, property that was lost during movement to New Guinea.

Five cargo ships anchored along shore by the bivouac area on the afternoon of the 17th. The Liberty Ship, Goethals, was the first vessel to moor at the partially completed new dock, coming into port at 0800, June 18th. Progress on the dock had advanced far enough to accomodate unloading of the first two holds of the ship. The two main roads extending from the jetty areas to the 46th Engineers were opened to traffic on the 18th. Results of the work accomplished in a short period of two weeks when heavy equipment became available was astounding. Large

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areas for sorting and storing supplies and equipment from ships and a net work of roads were ready for use. The 18th of June completed the first month the Regiment had been on duty in New Guinea.

The largest convoy to enter Milne Bay arrived in the afternoon of the 18th. Twelve cargo ships led the convoy, followed by eleven landing Craft Tanks and a Landing Ship Tank. All twelve tank barges docked at Jock McMillan Bay. Lieutenant Andresen, Personnel Adjutant, became Native Labor Coordinator, allotting natives to units East of K. B. Mission in accord with priorities of work. Captain Fred M. Wyatt departed on the afternoon of the 18th for Port Moresby to obtain parts for road graders and bulldozers which parts could not be obtained in this area. Another red alert was sounded that night, lasting fifteen minutes. No enemy raiders came over the area.

Major Bradley, Executive Officer, and Captain Proud, Sub Base Engineer Officer assisting in the dock construction, departed on the morning of the 19th in one of the new LCT's to Sideia, an island about twenty miles East of Milne Bay. Purpose of the trip was to obtain piling for the docks. On the afternoon of the 19th, the 6th Malaria Control Unit with Captain James O. Bennett and eleven enlisted men arrived from Australia and were attached to the Regiment for rations and administration. The unit was assigned the area for malaria control from the bivouac area East to the 158th Infantry. The red alert was sounded that night at 2000 but proved to be a false alarm. However, all precaution was being taken when an alert sounded.

Lieutenant Edwin G. Moran, Commanding "B" Company, was transferred to Regimental Headquarters on the 19th with duty as Assistant to the Executive Officer, pending receipt of transfer orders to a Combat Battalion. Lieutenant Donald A. Arthur assumed command of "B" Company. Both changes were to become effective June 24th.

Lieutenant General Kreuger landed at Jock McMillan Bay 0900, June 20th,

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but did not stop in the area, continuing to the 46th Engineers. The General's announced inspection tour did not include the Regiment this day. After a week of sunny weather, during which time work progressed very rapidly on the roads, heavy rains began to fall. All possibility of enemy air attack was assumed to be nil but at 1200 on the 20th a yellow alert was received warning units of pending air or sea attack either that night or the morning of the 21st. The All Clear was sounded at 2200 that night, no enemy planes having appeared over the area. Major Bradley and Captain Proud returned safely from their trip to Sidea Island on the 21st. First Lieutenant Alfred E. Stein with eleven enlisted men of the 11th Malaria Control Unit was attached to the Regiment for rations and administration on the 21st. Captain Wyatt returned from Port Moresby, Monday morning, June 21st, with parts for the Galion graders but none for the tractors. The 209th Coast Artillery, temporarily located North of the Bivouac area, emplaced a 40mm Antiaircraft gun on the point off Regimental Headquarters for additional protection in this location. The 744th Field Artillery with one hundred thirty-eight officers and men moved into the area North of Headquarters and Service Company. The second Liberty ship, the Rachel Jackson, moored at the dock on the morning of the 21st.

News received by wireless on the Rachel Jackson was consolidated with excerpts from the Guinea Gold, an Australian daily paper from Port Moresby, to form the nucleus of the Guinea Hen Cackle, name of the new 339th Engineer newspaper. Copies of the Guinea Gold were limited and delivery irregular so to give the men in the Regiment a daily resume of news, the Guinea Hen Cackle was founded, its first edition published June 22nd with Lieutenant Andresen as Editor. Plans were made to include a week end supplement featuring jokes, cartoons and interesting bits of news about the men in the Regiment. The paper was received with great enthusiasm by men in various units throughout the area.

The Regiment received its pay for May the 23rd of June. It was the inten-

tion of higher headquarters to make payment regularly each month. As there was no place to spend money in the area, many of the personnel took advantage of a new system that authorized funds to be sent to the United States free of charge by Army Radio. Bad weather had caused the Nips to stay close to their bases and seven days passed without an alert.

Milne Bay at this time was congested with ships of all sizes and descriptions: LCV's, LCM's, LST's, PT's, SB's, MS's, destroyers, tug boats, barges and merchant craft.

General Douglas MacArthur arrived in the harbor by plane with an escort of twelve P-38's late in the afternoon of the 28th. The following morning the General paid a visit to Ahioma but did not stop at the Regiment. Captain F. H. Dy, Philippine born Malerioligist, assigned to the area for coordination of the Malaria Control Units, was attached to the Regiment for rations June 29th. Lieutenant Andresen turned over his duties as Native Labor Coordinator to Captain F. L. Doverspike of the Sixth Army. All natives in the area were pooled for construction of the new Sub Base A, plans calling for movement to the Ahioma area. Work on the dock had continued at a rapid pace and on the evening of the 30th, the last flooring was laid, completing the 330' dock in exactly one month. Time was lost in its construction through lack of materials. The strength of the Regiment at the close of June stood at forty-five Engineer officers, five Medical Officers, one Special Service Officer, one Chaplain, two Warrant Officers and twelve hundred thirty-three enlisted men.

The Special Service Section was functioning in good style now. Two movies were shown each week in D Company area, mostly in the rain as the rainy season was well advanced. This did not detract from the attendance. An Australian Group presented a show July 4th and more were forthcoming, sponsored by the USO. Magazines and books were plentiful.

Company C, with one platoon from the 198th Engineers, was moved to K. B.

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Mission for construction of a new hospital, warehouses and roads, on July 5th. One platoon from B Company relieved C Company's platoon on the Sub Base construction at Ahiona.

The Regiment was treated to fresh water showers July 7th when the pipe line laid by Company B was completed throughout all companies. Pumps were furnished by the 744th Field Artillery, the motor by the 391st Engineer Depot Company and personnel for operation by Headquarters and Service Company of the Regiment. The health of the command was in excellent condition. Daily sick call had been limited to foot infections, minor cuts and bruises. Malaria had shown in only five or six cases and patients were discharged after a few days confinement. The strict malaria discipline set down by the Medical Detachment was showing amazing results. If rubber boots could have been secured the greatest number on sick call would be eliminated as men were working twenty-four hours a day through all weather and feet were impossible to keep dry. The Medical Detachment was now furnishing medical aid and temporary hospitalization to cover two thousand troops in the area. The native-styled hospital was barely adequate for the need.

Construction on a second dock began with A Company working on the East approach and F Company working on the West approach on July 2nd. Work continued at a rapid pace but slackened due to material shortage. F Company was relieved from the dock when this occurred. Captain Proud, dock supervisor, left the Regiment July 8th for Goodenough Island. Captain Earnest remained to continue supervision of dock construction.

In conversation with the Sub Base Adjutant, it was learned that the Regiment had earned itself a high reputation by the amount of work accomplished under adverse conditions since its arrival in New Guinea. The Regiment was regarded by high ranking officers in the area as a well commanded, well disciplined organization with the ability to accomplish any class of work given it. Evidence of this could be seen throughout the area wherever one looked.

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Major General I. Palmer Swift, Commanding General of the First Cavalry Division, visited the Regiment July 18th for an inspection of the area. On the 21st Lieutenant Lane was relieved from Special Duty with S-3 Section and reported to Company C for duty. Major Rowe, the Regimental Surgeon, through efforts in compiling a malaria control form, later adopted by the Base Surgeon for use of all units in the area, received commendation from Base Headquarters for his excellent work. Lieutenant Murray, A Company, left for Brisbane, Australia, on the 20th to attend a ten-day course at the Chemical Warfare School. Company A completed construction on the second three hundred and thirty foot dock in exactly three weeks on July 23rd. Captain Earnest left the Regiment when this dock was completed, on July 25th, returning to Headquarters, Sixth Army.

July 27th Lieutenant Goepfert and Lieutenant Craumer returned from Wagga, New South Wales, Australia, where they had been attending a class in Bomb Disposal. Lieutenant Allen from D Company and Lieutenant Hauser from the 198th Engineers departed Thursday, July 29th, for Brisbane to attend the third class at the Chemical Warfare School.

At 1830, July 30th, the officers of the Regiment gave Colonel Cox a surprise birthday party supper. Facilities for a banquet were limited but ice cream and cake added a touch to the occasion. Later in the evening a private showing of Tales of Manhattan was held for the Colonel and his guests.

Lieutenant Cestari was relieved of duty with Headquarters and Service Company and assigned to Company B July 30th. At the month end the strength of the Regiment stood at forty-five Engineer Officers, five Medical officers, one Special Service officer, one Chaplain, two Warrant Officers and twelve hundred nineteen enlisted men. The reduction in enlisted personnel was due to transfers and hospital patients evacuated to the mainland. Company C remained at K. B. Mission while Lieutenant Cummings and his platoon were still at Waga Waga on the the South shore of Milne Bay. The remainder of the Regiment was still intact at Jock McMillan Bay.

Automotive and heavy equipment maintenance in the field was growing into a sizable problem. Machines were being heavily operated over bad terrain, used in salt water which could not be prevented and the freezing of all spare parts by Sixth Army put an added stress on the Motor Section of the Regiment. Schools were conducted by Lieutenant Hollar in operation and maintenance of heavy equipment and motor vehicles. The continued twenty-four hour schedule however, still placed a strain on equipment and vehicles which were increasingly showing the results of usage. The Regimental Motor Section with Lieutenant Sorensen in charge, Lieutenant Hollar and Mr. Edwards, Assistants, was doing a super human task of keeping equipment rolling.

On August 9th, Company F began construction on a small fuel dock in Sanderson Bay, four miles west of the bivouac area. Lieutenant Williams was ordered to the Chemical Warfare School for a ten-day course on the same date. One week, beginning with August 9th, the Regiment and adjacent units were treated to three USO shows and two movies. The top performance of these shows was on Friday, the 13th, with Ray Bolger and Little Jack Little. In the middle of the show, the first red alert in four weeks sounded. The alert lasted thirty minutes with no action in the area. On this day, Lieutenant Andresen and Lieutenant Moran left on a sub chaser which was acting as escort to a convoy bound for the Kirwina Islands. They returned safely on the 17th.

August 18th was a big day for the Regiment. It marked the first anniversary of the Regiment's activation. Colonel Cox declared the day a holiday in way of celebration and for the first time since arriving overseas, the Regiment shut down completely and vacationed for one day. A special double header movie was shown for the men that evening.

Lieutenant Murray returned from the Chemical Warfare School at Brisbane on August 20th. On the 23rd Lieutenant Finnegan was relieved from duty with A Company and transferred to Headquarters and Service Company. He was then placed on

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Special Duty with S-3 Section. Captain Hall and Lieutenant Dorlon departed on the 24th on sub chaser serving in a convoy bound for Buna. Company F finished construction on the fuel dock on August 25th. The dock was sixty feet long and thirty feet wide. Lieutenant Allen and Lieutenant Hauser returned on the 25th from the Chemical Warfare School at Brisbane. Lieutenant Cardinal accepted his promotion to First Lieutenant on August 27th and on the same date Captain Hall and Lieutenant Dorlon returned safely from their trip to Buna. Word was received this date that sixty five trained replacements were en route to join the Regiment.

U. S. Advanced Base A, formerly Sub Base and now located at Ahima, announced that leaves and furloughs would be offered units that had been on Active Duty in New Guinea for a period of four months. The Regiment would become eligible for leaves and furloughs on September 18th. This was a tremendous morale booster to everyone. Furloughees were permitted to travel as far South as Melbourne, Australia, with a time limit of seven days actual furlough exclusive of travel time. The total permitted on furlough at one time was 10%, including any on Detached Service. The 198th Engineers moved its second platoon to Gili Gili August 29th to aid the Australians in road construction. Word was received on this date of the acceptance of seven enlisted men for Officer Candidate Training in Australia. This was the first group to receive orders for Officer Candidate School since leaving the United States. The following day Lieutenant Sullivan departed for Brisbane to attend the ten-day course at the Chemical Warfare School. By the end of the month the Regiment had on active duty forty-five Engineer Officers, five Medical officers, one Special Service Officer, one Chaplain, two Warrant Officers and twelve hundred eleven enlisted men.

Captain Lamb, Commander of E Company, departed September 1st as an observer on an LCT assigned to carry troops and equipment for the coming push against Lae

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News was received on the 2nd that the greater majority of the Regiment's heavy equipment would be earmarked for shipment to the Combat Zone Northeast of Milne Bay. This left the Regiment with but a few pieces of equipment in operation on the numerous projects being completed at this Base. The sixty-five trained replacements arrived for duty on this date. These men had recently completed their Engineer training at ERTC, Fort Belvoir and Fort Leonard Wood. A majority of them were specialists in Engineer subjects. They were an intelligent, efficient and young group of men, definitely an asset to the Regiment.

Lieutenant Moran received his transfer orders September 6th to the 114th Engineer Battalion (C), part of the 32nd Infantry Division, then located in Australia. Lieutenant Moran departed from the Regiment that evening at 2000. Captain Lamb returned safely from his trip to Lae with interesting accounts from the time the LCT entered the combat zone, discharged her cargo and left the area. He was the first officer of the Regiment to observe actual combat operations. On September 11th, Lieutenant Simpson departed on Detached Service to attend the Chemical Warfare School at Brisbane.

Permission was obtained from Base Headquarters at this time to permit furloughs to leave on the 12th. As transportation was critical, the original group was divided in half, 5% sailing on that date and 5% sailing one week later. The six officers granted leave, Captain Hall, Lieutenants Calaway, Newman, Sorensen, Broderick and Davis departed via air on the same date.

Major Peter Rowe, Regimental Surgeon, received orders September 13th which transferred him to USASOS Advanced Section for duty in the Office of the Surgeon. Captain Dan Wright assumed command of the Detachment.

At noon, the 14th, the red alert was sounded, the first in three weeks for the Regiment. Antiaircraft guns at Gili Gili went into action but the enemy craft, a Jap reconnaissance plane, departed safely after ten minutes over the area. As Base Headquarters was considerably understaffed, thirty-four enlisted

men were transferred on the 15th. This did not effect the Regiment as key personnel were not touched. A contingent of Army nurses arrived in the area on the 16th, bringing to Milne Bay the first nurses seen here. But the Bay was not destined to enjoy their company for more than a few days as they were earmarked for Oro Bay. On the 17th, the General Court of which Colonel Cox was President, Major James a member, Lieutenant Andresen and Lieutenant Butler Defense Counsels, met at Base Headquarters for the trial of a negro of the 96th Engineers accused of murder.

The remaining 5% furloughees departed September 23rd via water to Australia. In this group were included six men discharged under the thirty-eight year old law.

Announcement of promotions was received September 25th. Lieutenant Calaway and Lieutenant Dorlon accepted their promotions to Captain on this date, both promotions being effective September 19th.

Colonel Cox received a letter of commendation from Colonel Samuel D. Stur-gis, Jr., Sixth Army Engineer, on the 26th, applauding the fine work accom-plished by the Regiment in a short period under adverse conditions. The letter included commendation from General Kreuger, Commanding General of the Sixth Army.

Lieutenant Cestari's application for transfer to the 69th Engineer Topo Com-pany was approved on September 26th. This transfer reduced officer personnel by two Engineer officers. Lieutenant Simpson returned from the Chemical Warfare School on the 27th. Transportation from the Continent was considerably improved as Lieutenant Simpson returned from Brisbane in two days. In the afternoon of September 27th orders were received transferring Major Mikaelson to Engineer Headquarters, Communication Zone 1, USASOS, Brisbane. Major Mikaelson departed on the 29th. Lieutenant Nichols, Company C Commander was made Acting First Battalion Commander.

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The men selected for Officer Candidate training departed from the Regiment on September 30th for class beginning October 2nd. At the end of September the strength of the Regiment stood at forty-two Engineer officers, four Medical Officers, one Chaplain, one Special Service Officer, two Warrant Officers and twelve hundred twenty enlisted men.

Construction was begun by Company A October 1st on a new dock located in Jock McMillan Bay. The dock was to be four hundred eight feet long and forty-three feet wide. Lieutenant Callahan made several trips to Sideia Island to secure the necessary pilings. Also on October 1st Lieutenant Milton M. Sandler, Dental Corps, accepted his promotion to Captain, effective September 26th.

Transfer orders were received October 2nd assigning Major Alexander H. Stephens, Base Section 4, USASOS, to the Regiment to fill vacancy created by Major Mikaelson's departure.

Training in Chemical Warfare for all personnel at this Base began for the Regiment October 4th. Classes were conducted by a Chemical Warfare Service team headed by Captain Robert J. Ingraham with five enlisted men. Each man was given a thorough two-hour course with stress placed on decontamination, first aid and care of equipment.

Second Lieutenant Charles G. Cordon, graduate of the Engineer Officer Candidate School October 1st class in Australia, was assigned to the Regiment on October 6th. This assignment brought the Regiment up to T/O strength in Second Lieutenants. Captain Hall, Captain Calaway, Lieutenants Broderick, Newman, Sorensen and Davis returned from leave in Sydney, Australia, October 7th, having been away from the organization three and a half weeks. No enlisted personnel had returned at this time. Captain Calaway, First Battalion Adjutant, replaced Lieutenant Nichols as Acting Battalion Commander.

A club for the officers of the Regiment featuring ping pong, darts, cards and a small bar was opened Friday evening, the 8th. The club was welcomed by all

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as a spot for relaxation and discussion of problems arising from duty in the field.

Major James, Captain Wyatt, Lieutenants Wyche, Nichols and Gupton of the Regiment and Lieutenant Anderson of the 198th Engineers departed October 10th for their seven-day leave in Sydney.

Information was received on the 11th that Major Stephens, although assigned would not join the Regiment. Major David J. Skaff of the 1001st Communication Zone Section, Engineer Headquarters, USASOS, was recommended in Major Stephens' place.

Lieutenant Murray, A Company, was committed to the 2nd Field Hospital in Gili Gili October 14th for treatment of asthma caused by heavy dust which increased as dry weather lingered. It was the opinion of Medical Officers that Lieutenant Murray would be lost to the Regiment as his illness was severe.

Assignment orders to the Regiment were received on the 16th for Major David J. Skaff. Also on this date orders came from Headquarters Sixth Army transferring Second Lieutenant Warren A. Johnson from the 69th Engineer Topo Company to the Regiment. This caused complications as Lieutenant Johnson had been transferred September 28th from the 69th Engineer Topo Company to the 114th Engineer Battalion (C) on orders from Sixth Army Headquarters.

Plans for enlarging the storage area of the 453rd Engineer Depot Company, located on the Eastern adjacent of the Regimental bivouac area, included half the area now occupied by Companies A and B and the 198th Engineers. This necessitated movement of squad tents and sundry buildings, crowding the companies.

Lieutenant Ryan, Platoon Commander, Company F, was transferred to A Company October 17th to relieve shortage in officer personnel caused by Lieutenant Finnegan's transfer, Lieutenant Wyche's absence and Lieutenant Murray's hospitalization.

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A survey of the Regiment at this time disclosed that 98.76% of all personnel were insured under the National Service Life Insurance Company. The average amount of insurance per man was \$9,193.00, the highest of any amount in this area. Amount of insurance for the Regiment totalled \$10,992.500.00, a commendable record. Insurance was not forced upon the uninsured as they were without dependants.

On October 19th, Captain Faison, Medical Corps, on active duty with the Regiment since September 9, 1942, was appointed Regimental Surgeon, effective September 12th, to fill the vacancy created by departure of Major Rowe. Lieutenant Murray was transferred to the 105th General Hospital, APO 923, on the 25th for further treatment and observation, reducing Engineer officers to forty-three.

Major David J. Skaff, transferred to this Regiment from Engineer Headquarters 1001st Communication Zone Section, reported for duty October 25th and immediately assumed command of the First Battalion. Orders were also received on this date rescinding Lieutenant Johnson's transfer to the Regiment.

Tuesday evening, the 26th, Captain John T. Lambert, Medical Corps, reported for duty without prior notification to the Regiment, from the 105th General Hospital, Brisbane. Captain Faison became Second Battalion Surgeon while Captain Lambert assumed the position of Regimental Surgeon. This increase in officer personnel brought the Medical Detachment up to T/O strength.

Lieutenant Edwin G. Moran, one of the original officers when the Regiment was activated and who was transferred on August 29th, returned for a visit on October 30th when his unit, the 114th Engineer Battalion (C), part of the 126th Combat Team, was stationed at K. B. Mission for organization of the Team. Lieutenant Gupton and Lieutenant Nichols returned from their leave in Sydney, Australia, on October 30th while Lieutenant Anderson, 198th Engineers, returned on the 31st. Orders were received from USASOS Headquarters on the 31st relieving Major Stephens from assignment with this Regiment and assigning him to Headquarters

Sixth Army. At the end of October, 1943, there were present for duty forty-two Engineer officers, three Medical officers, two Dental officers, one Special Service officer, one Chaplain, two Warrant officers and twelve hundred seven enlisted men.

Effective November 1st the following changes in officer positions were announced: Lieutenant Hill, Commander of Company F to Company D; Lieutenant Allen, Company D, to Company F as Commanding Officer; Lieutenant Simpson from F Company to C Company; Lieutenant Gupton from D Company to F Company; Lieutenant Finnegan from Special Duty with Regimental Headquarters and assignment with Headquarters and Service Company to Company E; Lieutenant Craumer from Company E to assignment with Regimental Headquarters as Assistant Engineer Officer; Lieutenant Ulery, Special Service Officer, from duties of that Section to Company A; Lieutenant Andresen as Special Service Officer in addition to his duties as Personnel Adjutant; and Lieutenant Cordon, newly assigned officer to the Regiment, to Company B. On the afternoon of November 1st, Major Bradley was detached to Waga Waga to supervise completion of various Engineer jobs. Captain Hall temporarily occupied the position of Executive Officer while Lieutenant Cardinal assumed the duties of Plans and Training Officer. Also on November 1st Lieutenant Hollar and Mr. Edwards departed from the Regiment for their seven-day leave in Sydney.

Lieutenant Wyche, Company A, returned from his leave on the 2nd, Lieutenant Ulery was relieved of his duties as Regimental Exchange Officer on this date, being replaced by Lieutenant Andresen who assumed this position in addition to other duties, Lieutenant Ulery and Lieutenant Whitford on the following day departed on leave for Sydney, Australia. On the 4th, Thursday evening, Major Bradley returned from Waga Waga. Fourteen enlisted men from the 5th Replacement Depot, USASOS, APO 711, were assigned to and joined the Regiment on November 5th. They were well trained and appeared to be an efficient group of engineer soldiers.

Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis and Lieutenant Colonel William B. Ely, both of the

Engineer Section, Headquarters, Sixth Army, paid a visit to the Regiment in the afternoon of November 6th, departing the following morning.

First Lieutenant Lanny Ross, famous radio singer, now in Special Service work and assigned to Base A Headquarters, presented a two and half hour show of music and songs with the aid of several men from surrounding units on Sunday night, November 7th. Lieutenant Ross, arrived in the area on the 6th, prepared the show and wrote a song dedicated to the 339th Engineer Regiment by the following night.

Major James and Captain Wyatt returned from leave in Sydney on the 8th and Captain Lamb and Captain O'Brien departed on the 11th.

The Regiment had its first casualty on November 15th since activation over a year ago. Private First Class Lowell Engle, Company B, in poor health and mentally deranged, committed suicide with his .30 calibre rifle. Death was instantaneous.

First Lieutenants John R. Williams, Second Battalion Adjutant, and Thomas C. Newman, Commanding Officer of Company A, accepted their promotions to Captain on November 16th, both promotions effective on the 11th. Promotion orders to First Lieutenant were also received on the 16th for Lieutenant Raymond A. Murray, transferred from the Regiment on October 25th.

Company B began construction of Wanaduela Dock November 17th located a short distance West of the Regimental Bivouac Area. The dock was the second largest to be constructed in the Bay, measuring three hundred sixty-three feet in length and forty-three feet, six inches in width.

Thursday, November 18th, marked the completion of six months' field duty for the Regiment at Milne Bay, New Guinea. It was now one of the oldest units at Base A, USASOS. On this day, Colonel Cox was appointed, in addition to his duties as Commanding Officer of this Regiment, Base Service Commander under Colonel Elmer F. Wallender, newly appointed Commander of the redesignated Base. Colonel Cox was

given direct supervision over the coordination of all USASOS services at this Base.

Major William T. Bradley, Executive Officer, accepted his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel November 19th, effective the 14th. On the 20th Company A began construction on the Small Ship Dock in Kaloi Bay, East of the Regiment. This dock, when completed, would be two hundred eighty-five feet long and thirty feet wide. The following day, Lieutenant Hollar and Mr. Edwards returned from leave. Captain Clarence B. Calaway, First Battalion Adjutant, departed on this date for a one month course in the Jungle Defense and Camouflage School at Brisbane, Australia. On the 23rd Captain Wright of the Regiment and Capt. McNeil of the 198th Engineers departed for leave in Sydney. Present leaves and furloughs were now fifteen days; however six month's service in New Guinea was required before personnel became eligible.

Troops in this area had a complete turkey dinner on Thanksgiving, November 25th. The Regiment ceased work at 1400 and began operations again at 1900 that evening. Also on this date Lieutenant Robert A. Hill, D Company, was transferred from the Regiment to Headquarters Base A, to serve in the capacity of War Bond and Insurance Officer for this Base.

Lieutenant Whitford returned from leave on the 26th while Lieutenant Ulery returned on the 27th. Also on the latter date, Lieutenant Samuel C. Cummings, D Company, accepted his promotion to First Lieutenant, effective November 22nd. Lieutenant Rice and Lieutenant Ryan departed for their fifteen day leave in Sydney on the 29th. The following day, Lieutenant Cummings with his Platoon returned from Waga Waga to join his Company at Jock McMillan Bay.

At the end of November the strength of the Regiment was forty-one Engineer officers, three Medical officers, two Dental officers, one Chaplain, one Special Service officer, two Warrant officers and twelve hundred two enlisted men.

Thursday, 2nd of December, the regiment was visited by three Hollywood

residents: Gary Cooper, Phyllis Brooks and Una Merkle. The Officers' Mess where dinner was scheduled for the visitors, burned at 1430 and at 1800 a new Mess Hall had been erected so the dinner party proceeded without interruption. The entertainers, accompanied by the 126th Infantry Band, presented a two hour show at 1930 at the Regimental Theater.

Captain O'Brien and Captain Lamb returned from their leave in Sydney on the 5th. Arrangements had been made by these officers for a shipment of spirits to the Officers' Club but a regulation by GHQ, in existence but previously not enforced, forbade all alcoholic beverages to be shipped North. At 1015, December 6th, the first red alert in more than three months was sounded. A reconnaissance plane was sighted at Gili Gili but departed safely from the area after a few minutes of flight. On this date Company A completed work on the Small Ship dock and on the following day Company B completed the Wanaduela Bay dock giving the Regiment a total of six docks constructed during the first seven months of field duty.

Captain Faison and Lieutenant Finnegan departed on leave December 8th. Also on this date Mr. Edwards accepted his promotion to Chief Warrant Officer, effective December 4th. On December 9th First Lieutenants Theodore E. Andresen and Henry G. Nichols accepted their promotions to Captain, effective December 4th.

Lieutenant Whitford, Company B Platoon Commander, received a letter of commendation on the 11th for his fine work in building a small unloading ramp for the Fifth Air Force Service Command on December 5th in record time. December 15th a commendation was received from Colonel E. F. Wallender, Base A Commander, applauding the fine work accomplished by Company B in constructing the Wanaduela Bay dock. Lieutenant Arthur and his Company performed a splendid job in record time, taking a little more than three weeks for a job estimated as four and one-half weeks. Captain Wright and Captain McNeil returned from leave on this date. Colonel Cox returned to the Regiment December 16th from Base Head-

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quarters, having completed his temporary duties as Base Service Commander. Orders were received on the 21st announcing the promotions to Captain for Lieutenant Michael T. Broderick and Lieutenant Donald A. Arthur, promotions effective on the 16th.

Lieutenant Gupton received promotion to First Lieutenant December 22nd, effective the 18th. He also received a personal commendation on the 22nd from the Commanding Officer of the 125th Station Hospital, with indorsements thereon by the Base Surgeon and Base Engineer, for his splendid work and supervision of the construction of that hospital. This date also completed six months' daily publication of Regimental newspaper, the Guinea Hen Cackle.

Major Harmon H. James, Commanding Officer of the Second Battalion, accepted his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel December 23rd, effective the 19th. On the 23rd Lieutenant Colonel Bradley, Captain Sandler, and Lieutenants Frazer, Kobs, Thompson and Berkefeld departed by the regular leave ship to Sydney. Request from GHQ was received this date to publish General MacArthur's Christmas Message to his troops in the Guinea Hen Cackle as it had a fairly good circulation at this time.

Operations were suspended from 2300 Christmas Eve until 2300 the following night. The vessel carrying Christmas turkey to troops in this area grounded in the Coral Sea and delayed the turkey from arriving in time for Christmas dinner. However, canned turkey was served. Christmas in New Guinea apparently was a happy one for the troops. Many packages had been received and many more were coming in daily.

Captain Calaway returned from the Australian Jungle Defense School on the 26th. At the end of December, 1943, the Regiment's strength stood at forty-one Engineer officers, three Medical officers, two Dental officers, one Chaplain, one Special Service officer, two Warrant officers and eleven hundred eighty seven enlisted men.

S Y N O P S I S

The 339th Engineer General Service Regiment, Colonel J. W. Cox, Jr., Commanding, upon activation at Camp Butner, North Carolina, August 19, 1942, entered the first phase of Mobilization Training October 15th with forty-six officers and eleven hundred seventy-two enlisted men. On November 28th, the Regiment entered on an intensive training program for overseas service. Training progressed satisfactorily in all phases except rifle marksmanship and this was due to not being issued small arms. On December 25th, the Regiment was placed in A-2-a priority and was designated for departure from Camp Butner February 1, 1943. The Equipment train departed for Fort Mason, California on that date but orders did not include movement for personnel. Training for the following two months was devoted to toughening up exercises, bivouac and light maneuvers accomplished without equipment or vehicles.

Personnel departed from Camp Butner March 29, 1943 and arrived at Camp Stoneman, California, April 3rd. On the 14th, aboard the USS Willard S. Holbrook, the Regiment left the United States for field duty in the South West Pacific Area. Landfall was made May 2nd at Brisbane, Australia, and on May 11th, the Regiment was again at sea. On the 18th, field operations were begun at Milne Bay, New Guinea, located on the Southwestern end of the island.

After several weeks, during which time was devoted to hacking out a camp site in the New Guinea jungle, work was begun on the huge base to be located on the Northern side of Milne Bay. In the last seven months of 1943, the Regiment was engaged in the construction of docks, jetties, hospitals; erection of buildings and clearing areas for Medical, Chemical Warfare, Signal, Ordnance, Quartermaster and Engineer Depots; clearing sorting and storage areas; building forty-five miles of two-way graveled roads with bridges constructed of dressed lumber and local materials; installing sewerage plants, pipe lines to supply water for merchant and naval shipping; and individual jobs such as refrigeration plant,

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bulk oil installations, sawmill, water pumping station, water points, naval signal tower and clearing and graveling of numerous bivouac areas for Army, Navy and Marine personnel. In addition, the Regiment was charged with the maintenance of completed work.

Vehicles and equipment were kept rolling by the constant efforts of the Regimental Motor Pool. Deadlined equipment was due only to lack of or the freezing of spare parts. Motor Stables were installed and preventive maintenance aided materially in the upkeep of rolling stock.

Personnel were well quartered in tents with wood floors. Supplies were housed in small huts and company kitchens and mess halls were comfortable and well screened. The Special Service Section organized soft ball and volley ball leagues which afforded great relaxation and developed good competition between companies. Movies, shows, literature and music furnished other recreation for the men. The Regimental Bank, started in late November, was progressing rapidly and should prove a great morale builder for the Regiment and troops of adjacent units. The health of the command had been surprisingly good since January 1, 1943. The venereal rate has been maintained at a very low level (eight cases within the year); malaria has been controlled exceptionally well by atabrine therapy and various malarial control measures. A very small number of cases broke through the atabrine suppression. Spinal Meningitis has been held to a strict minimum. Accident cases have caused the loss of more men hours than any other cause. These cases have been less than expected since personnel work with heavy equipment and perform the hardest type of labor. Two minor diarrhea epidemics throughout the year speak well of the adopted sanitary measures. Through a well executed plan, the considered maximum insurance for all personnel was reached at 98.76%, a total of \$9,193.00 for each man in the Regiment.

1943 closed with this Regiment very well experienced in all types of con-

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struction work and with the feeling, produced by high esprit de corps and success of past labors, to face the new year equipped with knowledge and strength to successfully undertake and complete, in any locale, under adverse conditions, any type of engineer work which may be assigned to it.

HISTORY OF THE 339TH ENGINEER GENERAL SERVICE REGIMENT

1944

At the beginning of the year 1944, the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) was stationed in Milne Bay, New Guinea, actively engaged in construction of a supply base for the SWPA. Company C of the Regiment, detached since June 1943, was bivouaced at K. B. Mission, six miles West of the Regimental Area, constructing roads, bridges and buildings; installing water tanks, water lines and sewerage lines for several Station Hospitals nearing completion in and around the K. B. Area. All other Companies of the Regiment, the Medical Detachment and the 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company, attached, remained bivouaced in their same areas where camp was established on 18 May 1943. The Regiment had made no move since entering on field duty that date. Headquarters and Service Company was a well coordinated unit rendering its many services and maintaining equipment and vehicles in good serviceable condition. Line companies were operating on a twenty-four hour basis, engaged in road and bridge construction; clearing staging and storage areas; and constructing docks and other installations.

Colonel J. W. Cox, Jr., Class of 1927, West Point, was Commanding Officer of the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS). Lt. Colonel W. T. Bradley, West Point, 1939, was the Executive Officer. The remainder of the Staff included Captain R. E. Dorlon, Adjutant; Captain T. E. Andresen, Asst. Adjutant and Special Service Officer; Captain Norman L. Hall, Plans and Training Officer and Captain Harold H. Thomas, Supply Officer. Second Lieutenant Richard L. Craumer was assigned to Regimental Headquarters as Assistant to Captain Hall. Captain Frank E. Helsel was attached to the Regiment as its Chaplain.

The First Battalion was commanded by Major David J. Skaff, assisted by Captain Clarence B. Calaway, Adjutant. Under Major Skaff's command were Captain Thomas C. Newman, Commanding Officer; First Lieutenants John R. Ulery and Benjamin

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N. Wyche; Second Lieutenants George R. Ryan and Robert E. Berkefeld of Company A; Captain Donald A. Arthur, Commanding Officer, First Lieutenants Lewis R. Whitford, Second Lieutenants Paul M. Callahan, Walter F. Fathke and Charles W. Cordon of Company B; Captain Henry G. Nichols, Commanding Officer, First Lieutenants Pierce Butler III, Charles T. Simpson, Second Lieutenants Arthur M. Sullivan, Jr., and Robert J. Thompson of Company C. Lt. Colonel Harmon H. James was Commanding Officer of the Second Battalion with Captain John R. Williams as Adjutant. Under Colonel James' command were Captain Michael T. Broderick, Commanding Officer, First Lieutenants Myer A. Rice and Samuel C. Cummings of Company D; Captain Max E. Lamb, Commanding Officer, First Lieutenants Ray H. Frazer, Daniel C. Kobs, James T. Finnegan, and Second Lieutenant William H. Cook of Company E; First Lieutenant William M. Allen, Commanding Officer, Samuel A. Gupton, Lester C. Persson and Second Lieutenant Lawrence A. Davis of Company F. Headquarters and Service Company was commanded by Captain Fred M. Wyatt with subordinates First Lieutenants Alton L. Cardinal, Assistant Engineer Officer, Leon J. Sorensen, Motor Officer, Ray W. Hollar, Heavy Equipment Officer; Chief Warrant Officer John R. Edwards, Assistant Motor Officer and Warrant Officer (JG) Harven A. Crouse, Assistant to Captain Thomas in S-4 Section. Captain John T. Lambert commanded the Medical Detachment with Captain Jere B. Faison and First Battalion Surgeon and Captain Thomas V. O'Brien as Second Battalion Surgeon. Captain Dan Wright was Regimental Dental Surgeon assisted by Captain Milton M. Sandler. The 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company, attached to the Regiment, was commanded by Captain James C. McNeil and assisted by First Lieutenants Trent G. Anderson and Carl C. Houser.

January 1, 1944, was not a holiday for the Regiment. The hours of 1130 to 1400 were reserved for dinner. On the 2nd Captain Faison and Lieutenant Finnegan returned from leave in Sydney while on the 6th Lieutenant Rice and Lieutenant Ryan returned from their leave.

Major Skaff, Commanding Officer of the First Battalion was placed on T/D with

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Base A Engineer under date of January 8th, replacing Major Bernard C. Hibler, Commanding Officer of the 1004th Communication Zone Section, who was placed on T/D with the Regiment the same date. Captain Calaway assumed temporary command of the First Battalion. Also on this date, 30 men from the Medical Detachment were loaned to the 198th Engineers for duty as truck drivers and mechanics.

Notice was received January 10th of a personnel rotation policy to become effective March 1st. Under the provisions of this system, personnel were eligible to return to the United States after 18 months service in this Theater. Major Skaff and Lieutenant Cordon were the only two qualified men in the Regiment. The Regiment would not be eligible until 14 October 1944. Orders from Base A Headquarters assigned Major Hibler to the Regiment on January 13th. The following day he departed for leave in Sydney.

Company E completed the Sanderson Bay dock on January 21st. Rapid construction was retarded by use of the dock during this period by the Army Transport Service. Further delay ensued when a few minutes after the dock was originally completed, a Liberty ship coming in to moor, attempted to tie up bow first and rammed through four bents. On three occasions time and labor had been lost repairing damages to docks caused by careless handling of ships.

Unofficially, the Regiment, in latter March or early April, was to pass to control of Sixth Army moving up to the forward zone. However, until such orders were received, USASOS Headquarters maintained operational and administrative control over the Regiment. Work continued at Base A.

The Regiment's Commanding Officer, Colonel J. W. Cox, Jr., departed January 22nd for 15 days' leave in Sydney, Australia, accompanied by Captain Harold H. Thomas, Supply Officer. Lieutenant Colonel Harmon H. James, Commanding Officer of the Second Battalion assumed temporary command of the Regiment. Also on this date Captain Faison, First Battalion Surgeon, was placed on T/D with the 18th Station Hospital at K. B. Mission.

Lieutenant Colonel Bradley, Captain Sandler, Lieutenants Kobs and Thompson returned to duty from their leave on the 26th. Colonel Bradley replaced Colonel James as Acting Regimental Commander. On this date all heavy equipment assigned to Engineer units under control of Base A was placed in an equipment pool by order of Colonel C. T. Hunt, Base Engineer, whose office made assignments of equipment where needed.

On January 27th Captain Arthur, Chaplain Helsel and Lieutenants Callahan and Cook departed for leave in Sydney. Captain Milton M. Sandler was transferred to the 18th Station Hospital January 28th.

Requisition for personnel replacements for the fourth quarter period of 1943 had not been filled by January 31, 1944. The strength of the Regiment at this time was 42 Engineer officers, 3 Medical officers, 1 Chaplain, 1 Dental officer, 1 Special Service officer, 2 Warrant officers and 1195 Enlisted Men.

Lieutenants Frazer and Berkefeld returned to duty from their leaves 2nd February. From the 2nd through the 7th a CWS team inspected all gas masks within the Regiment. All weapons were also inspected during this time by the Ordnance Department.

Captain Norman L. Hall, Operations Officer, was placed on TD with Base A Engineer 3rd February. Lt. Cardinal assumed the temporary duties of S-3 officer. On the 4th Captain Faison returned to duty with the Regiment from the 18th Station Hospital, being replaced by Captain O'Brien.

The Medical Detachment men on TD with the 198th Engineers returned to the Detachment on the 6th to begin an intensive training program. All cargo trucks at the Base were pooled on this date to expedite unloading of merchant ships anchored in the harbor.

On 12 February 250 men were placed on DS with the Regiment from the 4th Replacement Depot. Personnel were casuals awaiting shipment orders. These men contributed badly needed hand labor for engineering tasks at the Base, they were re-

lieved of DS however, at the end of the week.

Dock No. 10 was started 23 February by Company B and Dock No. 11 was started 29 February by Company E. Major Hibler's orders for transfer from the Regiment to Headquarters USASOS were received on the 28th.

At the close of February 1944, the strength of the Regiment stood at 41 Engineer officers, 3 Medical officers, 1 Chaplain, 1 Dental officer, 1 Special Service officer, 2 Warrant officers and 1194 Enlisted Men.

Major Skaff was relieved of T/D at Base A and rejoined the Regiment on 3rd March. Also on this date Captain Andresen and Williams and Lieutenants Allen and Cummings departed for leave in Sydney. Lieutenant Wyche and three non-commissioned officers left this date to attend a Tournapull School in Sydney beginning 6th March.

Dock No. 12 was begun 9 March by Company D. Dock No. 10, begun 23 February by B Company, and Dock No. 11, begun 29 February by E Company, made a total of three docks under construction by the Regiment at one time.

On 13 March Captains Dorlon and Lambert and Lieutenants Sullivan, Simpson, Cordon and Fathke departed for leave in Sydney via the regular leave ship. Major Skaff was admitted to the 227th Station Hospital at Milne Bay. Captain Thomas Newman assumed command of the First Battalion this date.

Dock No. 10 was completed 14 March. Company B finished work in twenty and one-half days, bettering their previous time for dock construction by one-half day.

Pursuant to authority contained in letter Headquarters I Corps, 15 March 1944, the 339th Engineer General Service Regiment was assigned to I Corps for operational control effective that date for participation in the forthcoming Operation "G". The Regiment was to be attached to the 24th Infantry Division in furtherance of proposed plan of operation and for training and planning purposes. In connection with this operation, Colonel J. W. Cox, Jr., 339th Engr. Regt.

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Commanding Officer, departed via air to Finschhafen on the 18th to attend a conference of Engineer Officers, returning the following day.

One platoon of Company B was detached to Waga Waga, on the South shore of Milne Bay on the 16th to repair the Liberty ship dock. The platoon returned on the 20th, the job having been taken over by the 1706th Engr. Avn. Bn.

During a flash flood on the night of the 18th, four bridges were damaged which made traffic impassable on the Ahiona-KB Road. By morning the Regiment had fixed all bridges so as to be passable. Two were completely repaired the following day and the other two were rebuilt in six days. Rain storms of vicious intensity would sweep down from the mountains at regular and frequent intervals giving tremendous speed to the streams that would literally carry everything in their path to the sea. The rains continued until eleven inches had fallen in two days. Pile bridges held remarkably well against these sudden onslaughts. Colonel Hunt, Base A Engineer, wrote a letter of commendation for the dispatch and efficiency which the Regiment had shown on the night of the flood by almost immediately making the bridges passable until repairs could be effected.

Letter from Headquarters USASOS dated 17 March 1944 quoted authority contained in letter, Headquarters USAFFE dated 16 March, relieving this Regiment from assignment to USASOS and assigning it to Sixth Army effective upon transfer of control. This transfer was covered by General Orders No. 51, Sixth Army Headquarters, dated 27 March, which assigned this Regiment to Sixth Army effective upon embarkation at Milne Bay. General Orders No. 47, Headquarters Sixth Army, dated 23 March, relieved this Regiment from assignment to Sixth Army and assigned it to I Corps, effective upon arrival at NOISELESS, code name of Tanahmerah Bay, Dutch New Guinea, for Operation "G".

Letter from Headquarters U. S. Forces, A.P.O. 565, the non-secret designation of I Corps, dated 23 March, quoted authority from General Orders No. 1, Headquarters U. S. Forces, 23 March, attaching this Regiment to the RECKLESS TASK

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FORCE, code name of the forthcoming Operation "G", effective on the above date.

The Reckless Task Force was aimed at Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea, in a bold strategic move that would bypass the Japs at WEwak and Hansa Bay, and if successful, capture the three airdromes, Cyclops, Sentani and Hollandia on Lake Sentani, approximately fifteen miles inland from Hollandia town. The Reckless Task Force was composed of two sections: Letterpress, which covered Hollandia-Humboldt Bay Area and Noiseless, which covered Tanahmerah Bay Area, twenty-five miles Northwest of Hollandia. The Regiment, less the First Battalion and half of the personnel of Headquarters and Service Company and Company A, was to land on D Day in the Noiseless Area. The remainder of the Regiment was scheduled to land on D plus 8 also in the Noiseless Area.

Authority was received from Sixth Army on 24th March allowing the Medical Detachment and the Chaplain to be issued weapons.

At month's end the strength of the Regiment stood at 40 Engineer officers, (5 understrength), 3 Medical officers, 1 Chaplain, 1 Dental officer, (1 understrength), 2 Special Service officers, 2 Warrant officers and 1185 Enlisted Men, (56 understrength). The decrease in enlisted personnel was occasioned by transfer of hospital patients and transfer of men to other units, approved only when they were deemed to be in the best interest of the military service.

On 31 March Lt. Cardinal was made Assistant S-3 in the Special Service Section; Lt. Hollar was transferred to Company D as Platoon Commander while Lt. Wyche became Heavy Equipment Officer. Lt. Craumer, assigned to Regimental Headquarters became Intelligence Officer.

Colonel Cox again departed for a conference on 2 April at Goodenough Island. Authority was granted by I Corps to immediately equip the Regiment with jungle equipment and clothing.

Pursuant to authority contained in General Orders No. 7, Headquarters I Corps, 3 April 1944, this Regiment, attached to the Reckless Task Force for Oper-

ation "G", was additionally attached to I Corps, and was further attached to the 24th Infantry Division of the Noiseless Landing Force. On the 5th, at the request of I Corps, the Regiment was released from all work at Base A. A jungle firing range was prepared and intensified training in all weapons and amphibious operations was undertaken.

Capt. Faison, MC, was transferred to the 47th General Hospital on 9 April. This vacancy was filled on the same day by Capt. John Morris of the 18th Station Hospital.

An inspection was made of the Regiment 9 April by representatives of the Engineer office of Alamo Forces. A rating of Excellent was given on all phases of training; messes and areas; weapons; morale and discipline; clothing and equipment; malaria control and combat efficiency. It was remarked that the Regiment will be able to accomplish its mission and that strength should be brought up to T/O figures. Previously, personnel requisitions had been denied by Headquarters USASOS due to the pending conversion of the Regiment into an Engineer Construction Battalion.

Loading of the Gannymeade, US Naval Liberty vessel assigned to transport the First Echelon of the Regiment to the operational area, began on the morning of the 11th. Equipment and supplies were completely loaded by the evening of the 12th at which time the Gannymeade moved from the dock to drop anchor in the Bay. A radio was received on the 13th from Headquarters I Corps which designated departure of the Gannymeade on 16th April.

Company A personnel were to operate 35 Storm boats and 15 Penn Yan boats assigned to this regiment for boat to shore operation. On the morning of the 15th voyage rations were loaded, deck facilities completed and bunks for the troops installed. The Gannymeade had returned to the dock for embarkation. At 0700 on the morning of the 16th personnel boarded the vessel, 27 officers and 530 enlisted men from the regiment. Accompanying Colonel Cox of his staff included

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Lt. Col. William T. Bradley, Executive Officer, Capt. Clarence B. Calaway, Acting Adjutant and Capt. Harold H. Thomas, Supply Officer; Lt. Col. Harmon H. James, Second Battalion Commander; Company D, Capt. Michael T. Broderick in command; Company E, Capt. Max E. Lamb in command; and Company F, 1st Lt. William M. Allen in command; 70 men from Headquarters and Service Company, Capt. Fred M. Wyatt in command; 60 men from Company A with Capt. Thomas C. Newman in command and 20 men from the Medical Detachment under command of the Regimental Surgeon, Capt. John T. Lambert. The Dental Surgeon, Capt. Dan Wright, and Capt. Frank E. Helsel, Chaplain, also accompanied the First Echelon. Additional personnel attached to this regiment were 12 enlisted men from the 542nd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment who were to operate the three LCM's, transported on the Gannymeade, for landing operations; 40 enlisted men and two officers from the 929th Signal Battalion; Colonel Gerard B. Troland, C.E., member of the Army Ground Force Board, acting as observer; and 1st Lt. Trent G. Anderson of the 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company which Company is attached to this regiment for operations. Total personnel embarked were 610 officers and enlisted men.

The Gannymeade sailed from Milne Bay at 1100 hours 16 April 1944. Full convoy was formed on the 17th which included troop transports, landing craft, destroyers, cruisers and aircraft carriers.

The mission of the Reckless Task Force, Operation "G", supported by Allied Naval Forces, Allied Air Forces and the Fifth Fleet, by a simultaneous attack within the Noiseless and Letterpress Areas, was to seize and occupy those areas and rapidly exploit the success of the landings by capturing the three airstrips, Cyclops, Sentani, and Hollandia; prepare the airstrips for immediate use for fighter groups and subsequent additional air facilities; and to establish naval, port and base facilities in the captured areas.

Naval bombardment of the landing beaches and surrounding areas in Tanahmerah Bay began at dawn and H hour, 0700, elements of the 19th and 21st Infantry Regi-

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ments of the 24th Infantry Division landed and captured Red Beach 1 and Red Beach 2 without opposition. Dense jungle had slowed the advance of the Infantry from Red #2 towards Intermediate Beach, later to be known as the 339th Beach. 339th Beach, located between Beach Red 1 and Beach Red 2, had not been prepared for landing by either fire from ships or by bombing. Immediately upon learning of the general lack of resistance by the enemy, Colonel Cox ordered that the landing operation be started. Troops were brought ashore in small engineer outboard storm boats, which had been carried along on the ship for this express purpose and for possible use for flanking attacks on Lake Sentani in case the enemy resisted and established defense lines east and west of the airfields between the lake and the Cyclops Mountains. The first wave established a beachhead on 339th Beach at 1005 before any other American troops had entered the area, troops working south from Red 2 passing through later. The movement ashore of all troops save detail left to unload ship was completed by 1300, and equipment continued to come ashore for the rest of the day. No shore or jungle fortifications opposed the Allied landings and there was only evidence of the enemy having occupied this area in small numbers.

The mission of the Engineers with the Noiseless Landing Force included construction of bridges for one-way traffic, later to provide for two-way traffic; one-way roads with turn outs, with provisions for expansion to two-way; establishment of water distribution points; and supply to units of initial Class IV supplies and other task force supplies. In addition, continuous Engineer reconnaissance had to be maintained.

The initial mission of the 339th Engineer Battalion was to construct a road joining Red 2 and Intermediate Beach and Red 1 Beach. Also for immediate construction were several jetties and two floating docks, the first to be completed by D plus 8 and the second by D plus 18. This work was dropped when higher headquarters abandoned Tanahmerah for Hollandia.

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Regimental Headquarters, Companies D, E and H&S were established on Intermediate Beach while Company F was located on Red 1.

It was decided that the Hollandia-Humbolt Bay area should receive the main development of the new Base and Tanahmerah Bay to receive but a small part of the original plans due to harbor anchorage and terrain facilities.

On 24 April the Regiment was released from attachment to the 24th Infantry Division and control reverted to I Corps. This evening Japs attempted to infiltrate through the Battalion's perimeter but without success. During the skirmish, one man from Company E was slightly wounded.

On the 28th Company F took over construction of the road begun by the 3rd Engineers, Combat Battalion of the 24th Infantry Division, leading to the air-strips. Colonel Cox left this date by Cub observation plane and landed on the strips for the purpose of estimating the necessary to prepare the dromes for immediate use of fighter groups. He and the pilot of his plane were the first to land on any of the captured strips, since the initial landing, as no plane had previously landed. Lt. Colonel Bradley left by LCS at 0830 on this date for Hollandia.

Colonel Cox and Lt. Colonel Bradley returned on the 29th with information that the 2nd Echelon would land at Tanahmerah Bay the following day. However, at noon on the 30th a wire was received from Colonel Robinson stating plans were changed and the 2nd Echelon was to land at Hollandia and transportation was being arranged to move the First Echelon to Hollandia also. All projects except the road, proposed oil jetty and pipe line to the air strips were to be abandoned.

The strength of the First Echelon at the close of April 1944 was 20 Engineer officers, 1 Medical officer, 1 Chaplain, 1 Dental officer, 1 Special Service officer and 1 Warrant officer, and 534 enlisted men.

Lt. Col. Bradley moved to Hollandia on the 1st of May to assume command of the 1st Battalion which landed in that area 30 April. On the 2nd of May Capt.

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Andresen moved to Tanahmerah Bay to assume administrative duties of the 2nd Battalion.

Capt. Lamb and six enlisted men from the regiment were injured, one seriously, when a blasting charge exploded prematurely. All men were hospitalized but none evacuated. Capt. Wright, Capt. Calaway and Capt. Newman and sixty men of Company A moved to Hollandia on the 4th. Capt. Wright took over his duties as Dental officer, Capt. Calaway assumed his duties as 1st Battalion Adjutant and Capt. Newman with his Company intact assumed his duties as Company Commander. Jap organized resistance had been eliminated from this area but regimental survey and working parties were frequently running into small isolated groups of the enemy. At this time Company E was blasting a channel through coral rock from the bay to the shore and constructing a small jetty, while E Company and 1 Platoon of D Company were working on the airdrome road.

On May 7th Lt. Col. James was placed on DS with the 1st Battalion at Hollandia. Company E was placed in charge of clearing a storage area on Red Beach #1. On 11 May two platoons of Company D were organized into three shifts for construction of an oil jetty approximately 18' wide by 1000' long.

Colonel Cox relinquished his duties as Sector Engineer 12 May at Tanahmerah Bay and took up the Engineer's duties for the Hollandia Sector. Colonel W. H. Mills, formerly Hollandia Sector Engineer, was placed in charge of airdrome construction. Lt. Col. James returned to Tanahmerah Bay resuming his duties as Battalion Commander and assuming additional duties of Sector Engineer.

Progress on the Tanahmerah-Airdrome Road had advanced a distance of 17 miles so that the first vehicle with Capt. Wyatt, Capt. Andresen and Chaplain Helsel made the trip to Hollandia on the 19th. Total distance covered on the entire road was approximately 24 miles.

Lt. Kobs and his platoon from Company E began construction of a Cub air strip on the 17th of May on Red Beach #1 and completed this assignment the following day.

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The 600-foot air strip was the first constructed by the regiment.

Company F moved to an area known as Maroboe, about 3 miles south of Tanah-merah Bay, continuing road construction. Company D's platoon returned to Red Beach 1 to aid in the construction of the oil jetty begun on the 11th of May.

On the 28th the regiment had its second fatality since activation 18th August 1942. Japs had entered the bivouac area of the few remaining personnel from Company A and during the night's skirmish Pvt. Jerome K. Voss of that company was fatally stabbed.

The strength of the First Echelon at the close of May 1944 was 18 Engineer officers, 2 Medical officers, 1 Chaplain, 2 Special Service officers, 1 Warrant officer and 533 enlisted men.

On June 1st the advanced Echelon of Regimental Headquarters and Company E moved to Maroboe while Company D moved to Red Beach #1 from Intermediate Beach. This date Company E began laying a pipe line from the oil jetty to the airstrips. The job was completed June 5th and on the following day water was pumped thru the line for testing.

SECOND ECHELON

After departure of the First Echelon, the remaining personnel of the Second Echelon began preparing for shipment on 24 April 1944 the bulk of the Regiment's heavy equipment, vehicles and organizational impedament. Orders were received on the 17th transferring the First Battalion Commander, Major David J. Skaff, hospitalized in the 227th General Hospital, APO 928, to that hospital. This reduced Engineer officer personnel to six officers under T/O strength.

Final training of personnel and preparations for loading were completed 19 April. Loading of equipment was begun in the early evening of the 19th aboard the U. S. Liberty "John Burroughs", and was completed at 1230 Sunday, the 23rd, when the vessel moved from the dock to anchor in the Bay. The remaining personnel

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of Company A boarded ship at 1800 that night as advance detail party. At 0425 on the 24th Second Echelon troops began to load from Ducks and were aboard by 0545. Captain Norman L. Hall, Engineer Officer of the Regiment, was in command of the Second Echelon, accompanied by Staff Members Captain R. E. Dorlon, Adjutant, Captain Theodore E. Andresen, Assistant Adjutant, and Second Lieutenant Richard L. Craumer, Intelligence Officer; Company B, Captain Donald A. Arthur in command; Company C, Captain Henry G. Nichols in command; and the remaining personnel of Company A, First Lieutenant John R. Ulery in command; Headquarters and Service Company, First Lieutenant Leon J. Sorensen in command and the Medical Detachment, Captain Thomas V. O'Brien in command. Personnel totalled nineteen officers and five hundred one enlisted men from the Regiment with two officers from Alamo Task Force Engineers who procured three hundred-fifty tons of engineer spare parts, and two officers and thirty-six enlisted men of the 736th Engineer Spare Parts Detachment. Personnel for the Second Echelon totalled five hundred sixth officers and enlisted men.

All officers had returned from leaves in Australia but there were still one hundred and two enlisted men absent on furloughs.

The "John Burroughs" sailed from Milne Bay at 0935 hours 24 April, dropping anchor off Buna at 1200 on the 25th to await assembly of convoy. At noon on the 26th an eleven merchant ship convoy, escorted by Destroyers and Corvettes, departed Buna for Noiseless. At 1800 the following day additional ships were added to the convoy at Finschhafen. The convoy continued without mishap.

Early in the morning of the 30th Hollandia Bay was sighted. The LCT's in the convoy preceded the merchant ships into the Bay, landing at Letterpress, code name for the Sector. The "John Burroughs" was ordered to discharge its personnel and cargo at Letterpress instead of at Noiseless due to change of plans in landing and shore operations and the Second Echelon of the Regiment therefore became attached to the 41st Infantry Division operating in this Sector pursuant to author-

ity in General Orders No. 7, Headquarters I Corps, 3 April 1944.

Anchor was dropped in Hollandia Bay at 1200 hours 30 April. Unloading of personnel by LCM's began at 1600 and was completed at 1730. Bivouac area was decided 1/4 mile North of I Corps Headquarters which was located two miles North of Pim Jetty off Hollandia Bay.

At the end of April, there were present for duty with the Second Echelon eighteen Engineer officers, one Medical officer, one Special Service officer, one Warrant officer and four hundred ninety-nine enlisted men.

Unloading of the "Ring Lardner" on which the 198th Engr. Dump Truck Co., attached to the Regiment for operation, and the 490th Engr. Heavy Equipment Co. made the trip, was begun 1 May, having first priority. Proposed work project as outlined by Colonel William H. Mills, Hollandia Sector Engineer, was a two-way road extending from I Corps Headquarters to Pim Jetty. The existing road was a single lane which would never stand up under the traffic it would soon receive.

Colonel Cox and Lt. Colonel Bradley visited Hollandia Sector on 2nd May. Colonel Cox returned with Captain Andresen, leaving Lt. Colonel Bradley in Command of Second Echelon troops.

On 3 May a new camp site was chosen approximately nine miles West of the present area, located on Lake Sentani, midway between Hollandia Bay and Cyclops Drome.

The work project assigned the Battalion was changed to improving for one-way traffic by 12 May road four miles East and West of the new bivouac area. This later was to be widened to a two-way road.

Unloading of the "John Burroughs" began 4 May, all equipment being temporarily pooled at the old camp site. Captain Calaway returned from Tanahmerah Bay to assume his duties of First Battalion Adjutant on this date. Chaplain Hiesel also returned this day.

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Co. B and C moved to the new camp in the afternoon of the 4th. These companies dispatched road crews on 5th May, equipped with only shovels and axes to repair impassable spots on the road, to be known as the MSR (Main Supply Road). Equipment had not been unloaded to aid in this work. First Battalion Headquarters was established at the new camp area on 6 May.

Traffic was halted on the MSR 6 May so work could be accomplished unhampered. Three D-8's, 4 carryalls, 2 pull graders of the Regiment, trucks from the 198th Engineers and one borrowed Buckeye shovel were now working. Hand labor was being used on bade spots, culverts and bridges. Japanese roads were never built to withstand the traffic of US heavy vehicles and equipment.

Colonel Cox visited the new area 8 May inspecting progress on the road with Colonel B. L. Robinson, Task Force Engineer, and Colonel W. H. Mills, Sector Engineer.

One and one-half miles of road for one-way traffic were completed on the 10th. Three-eighths miles were widened to two-way by side hill cuts. The Battalion was given five and one-half additional miles of road to build and maintain. At this time, no section of the road was impassable but much improvement was needed. The MSR was opened to traffic on the 12th. That evening the Battalion turned over to Colonel Mills, now in charge of airport construction, 4 tractors and 4 carryalls. Work on the Battalion's section of the road was badly handicapped but airport construction needed high priority.

Effective this date Regimental Headquarters was established in the Hollandia Area. Capt. Andresen remained at Tanahmerah Bay for Administration to the Second Battalion.

On the 18th a platoon from Company B began installation of a 1000' 4" pipe line for a water point. This project was completed on the 20th. Also on this date 6.3 miles were ready for two-way traffic on the MSR while 4.7 miles were usable for one-way traffic.

On 24 May the A.P.O. address of the regiment was changed from 928 to 565.

Companies A, B and C remained engaged in construction of the MSR during the ensuing days of May. Lt. Whitford and his platoon from Company B were assigned on the 26th to build a Jetty at Pim Landing on Jautefa Bay.

The strength of the 1st Battalion at the end of May 1944 was 25 Engineer officers, 1 Medical officer, 1 Dental officer, 1 Chaplain, 1 Warrant officer and six hundred thirty-two enlisted men.

The total strength of this Regiment on 6 June 1944, the closing date of the Hollandia Operation was 40 Engineer officers, 3 Medical officers, 2 Special Service officers, 1 Dental officer, 1 Chaplain, 2 Warrant officers and 1177 enlisted men.

7 June 1944 control of this Regiment reverted from Sixth Army to U.S.A.S.O.S.

The following Summary of Lessons Learned and of Special or Noteworthy Data of Value is given here as a part of the historical journal of the 359th Engineer Regiment (GS) covering the Hollandia operations from 17 March 1944 to 6 June 1944:

SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED:

"Trigger Happiness" was introduced to personnel of this Regiment the third night defense perimeter had been established. It is believed a very valuable lesson was learned which will not be forgotten.

No less than a week prior to an expected advance into jungle country inhabited by the enemy schooling should begin for all personnel on "Trigger Happiness". It should be brought before troops constantly so that they are thoroughly indoctrinated and understand the serious results caused by shooting at jungle noises.

SPECIAL OR NOTEWORTHY DATA OF VALUE

The following observations are offered for value in future operations:

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1. Signal communication lines to be not less than 100' from roads:
 - a. Road construction parties will not interfere with lines.
 - b. Damage to Signal equipment lessened.
 - c. Elimination of wasted time while broken lines are being repaired.
 2. Hand grenades make good booby traps.
 - a. Some personnel feel results produced more effective than bounding mines.
 3. D-4 tractors too light for necessary work in first echelon.
 4. Spare parts for trucks and heavy equipment should be brought along in sufficient quantities.

When control of the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) reverted to USASOS from Sixth Army, Companies A, B, and C were engaged in road and bridge construction on the Main Supply Road. In addition one platoon of Company B was constructing buildings at Hollandia for Base "G" Headquarters.

The first entertainment offered troops in the Tanahmerah Area was given on the 10th of June when movies were shown on Beach Red #1. The Guinea Hen Cackle, the Regimental newspaper, born 22 June 1943 at Milne Bay, resumed publication, which was suspended during the recent move. This paper furnished the only reading matter for troops at this time.

Lt. Kobs and his platoon from Company E moved to the First Battalion area by Lake Sentani on the 11th to prepare a new bivouac area for the Second Battalion scheduled to move to Hollandia in the near future.

Company "A" began road construction and clearance of a large area 14 June for a Divisional Staging Area.

The Regiment's third fatality since activation occurred 15 June. Sergeant Clyde M. Johnson, Company D, died after receiving severe third degree burns

caused by a gasoline stove explosion on the 14th.

General Orders No. 96, Headquarters VI Army, dated 21 June 1944, quoting authority from USAFFE letter of 7 June 1944, was received 23 June announcing the relief of the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) from assignment to I Corps and attaching this Regiment to USASOS as of 7 June 1944.

Company B was engaged in road construction and installing 1950 yards of pipe line in the Staging Area while two platoons of Company C were road and bridge building in the Staging Area and one platoon constructing buildings at Headquarters "I" Corps.

Company F, bivouaced at Maroboe, two miles South of Tanahmerah Bay on the airdrome road, was assigned the construction and maintenance of 14 miles of the airdrome road. Company D was bivouaced on Beach Red #1, Tanahmerah Bay, engaged in stevedore work.

Company E completed its move to Hollandia on the 27th. Information was received the following day of the assignment to the Regiment of three Second Lieutenant Engineer officers from the 5th Replacement Depot.

At the close of June 1944, the strength of this regiment was 39 Engineer officers, 1 Dental officer, 1 Chaplain, 2 Special Service officers, 2 Warrant officers and 1127 enlisted men, 114 under T/O strength.

The regiment was paid in Netherlands East Indies currency for the month of June.

One platoon of Company A began construction of a "Grizzly" 1 July, located at the I Corps gravel pit, completing the job 8 July. The rest of the Company remained engaged in road construction in the Divisional Staging Area. Companies B and C were also engaged in road construction on the Main Supply Road and in the Staging Area.

On 2 July Company E began construction of a 5600-gallon steel water tank and construction of MT and Diesel Oil Bulk Storage tanks and Petroleum Truck Loading facilities. The water tank and platform were completed on the 20th.

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Confidential letter dated 30 June 1944, was received 3 July from Headquarters USASOS quoting authority from letter USAFFE, 26 June 1944, relieving the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) from assignment to Sixth Army and assigning the regiment to USASOS effective 1 July 1944. Also on the 3rd Captain John H. Williams, Second Battalion Adjutant, was placed on TD with the 490th Base Equipment Company, APO 565, as Commanding Officer.

The Regiment was allotted its first leave and furlough quota at this station on 4 July 1944. One officer and 5 enlisted men departed this date for Brisbane. Sydney was now "Off Limits" to leave personnel.

Capt. Theodore E. Andresen, Personnel Officer, was placed on TD with Base G Headquarters in the Judge Advocate General's Department on 6 July. Also on this date a detail from B Company was assigned the job of blasting stumps and clearing up the area for the new Engineer Dump, a mile northwest of Hollandia town. The following day First Lieutenant Lewis R. Whitford, Platoon Leader, Company B, was transferred to the Detachment of Patients, APO 501, and was evacuated from the 36th Evacuation Hospital after 3 days' hospitalization for severe arthritis.

General Orders No. 105, Headquarters VI Army, 5 July 1944, received 9 July, confirmed the regiment's relief of assignment to Sixth Army and assignment to USASOS effective 1 July 1944.

Captain Michael T. Broderick, Commanding Officer, Company D, was transferred from the Regiment on 10 July when he was evacuated from the 36th Evacuation Hospital because of advanced stage of dermatitis.

First Lieutenant Pierce Butler III, Company C officer, was placed on DS 11 July at Base "G" Headquarters with duty in the Technical Intelligence Section, Unit 1.

First Lieutenant John C. Head, C.E., reported for duty from Headquarters Base E, APO 713, on 13 July 1944. Lt. Head was assigned to Company "D". Also on this date a platoon from A Company began construction of a Spare Parts Build-

ing in the Engineer Depot, completing the job on the 19th.

Second Lieutenants Flave A. Fledger, Neil B. Ratcliff and Lloyd E. Reeser, Corps of Engineer officers, reported for duty with the Regiment on the 19th and were assigned to Companies B, A and F respectively.

Company A was relieved of work in the Divisional Staging Area on 21 July and began clearing ground for the 12th Station Hospital. On this date Lt. James T. Finnegan was appointed Unit Soldier Voting Officer and Capt. Harold H. Thomas was appointed Post Exchange Officer vice Capt. Theodore E. Andresen.

Lt. Colonel William T. Bradley was relieved of assignment with Regimental Headquarters 25 June and assigned to Second Battalion with duty as Commanding Officer while Lt. Colonel Harmon H. James became Commanding Officer of the First Battalion. Also on this date Capt. Fred M. Wyatt was appointed Fire Marshal for this Regiment in addition to other duties.

Lt. George E. Ryan, Company A, was placed on TD with the Base G Engineer Depot 27 June. That evening Second Lieutenant Howard J. Grieb, C.E., reported for duty with the Regiment and was assigned to Company D.

General Orders No. 136, Headquarters USASOS, 25 July 1944, quoting authority from letter USAFFE, 27 June 1944, subject: Reorganization and Activation of Engineer Units, was received 28 July, reorganizing the 339th Engineer General Service Regiment 1 August 1944 without change in station assignment, with an authorized strength of 29 officers, 2 Warrant officers and 870 enlisted men. Upon completion of the reorganization, this regiment would be redesignated as the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion. The above General Orders activated the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1179th Engineer Construction Group effective 1 August 1944, with Station at Base G, with an authorized strength of 12 officers, 2 Warrant officers and 80 enlisted men. Personnel rendered excess as the result of the reorganization of this regiment were to be utilized for the new Construction Group.

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Also on the 28th Lt. Pierce Butler, on TD with Base "G" Headquarters, was relieved of assignment 339th Engr. Regt. (GS) and assigned Headquarters 2nd Port (TC) and placed on TD with 5250th Technical Intelligence Company.

Final decision on the reorganization of the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) placed the following officers with the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion: Lt. Colonel William T. Bradley, Commanding Officer; Capt. Clarence B. Calaway, Executive Officer; Capt. Harold H. Thomas, Adjutant; 1st Lt. Charles T. Simpson, Asst. Adjutant; Capt. Norman L. Hall, Engineer Officer and 1st Lt. William M. Allen, Supply Officer. Capt. Frank E. Helsel was Battalion Chaplain; Capt. John J. Morris, Battalion Surgeon and Capt. Dan Wright, Battalion Dentist. Company A was commanded by Capt. C. Newman with 1st Lieutenants John R. Ulery, Samuel A. Gupton; 2nd Lieutenants Arthur M. Sullivan and Howard J. Grieb; Company B was commanded by Capt. Donald A. Arthur with 2nd Lts. Paul M. Callahan, Lloyd E. Reeser, Walter F. Fathke and William H. Cook; Company C was commanded by 1st Lt. Ray H. Frazer with 1st Lts. Lawrence E. Davis, Lester C. Persson, 2nd Lts. Robert J. Thompson and Arnold F. Chariott. Lt. Chariott had been assigned to the Battalion but was at this time en route to duty. Commanding H&S Company was 1st Lt. Leon J. Sorensen with 1st Lt. Benjamin W. Wyche, 2nd Lts. Richard L. Craumer, Flave A. Pledger, Charles C. Cordon and C.W.O. John R. Edwards.

Personnel recommended for assignment to the 1179th Engineer Construction Group activated 1 August 1944 composed of personnel from the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) were Colonel J. W. Cox, Jr., Commanding Officer; Lt. Colonel Harmon H. James, Executive Officer; Capt. Robert E. Dorlon, Adjutant; Capt. Henry G. Nichols, Orientation Officer; Capt. John T. Lambert, Medical Supervisor; 1st Lt. Alton L. Cardinal, Asst. Engineer Officer; 1st Lt. Samuel C. Cummings, Special Service Officer; 1st Lt. Daniel E. Kobs, Commanding Officer of Headquarters Company; 2nd Lt. Neil B. Ratcliff, Asst. Commanding Officer of Headquarters Company; and C.W.O.

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Harven A. Crouse, Asst. to Supply Officer. Capt. James C. McNeil, Commanding Officer of the 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company was recommended as Supply Officer and Capt. William B. Ward, Commanding Officer of 490th Base Equipment Company was recommended as Operations Officer. These assignments in Group Headquarters left one vacancy in the Engineer Section.

Captain Theodore E. Andresen, now on TD with the Judge Advocate Base G remained in that assignment pending transfer in the near future to that Branch of the Service.

Capt. Fred M. Wyatt and Max E. Lamb were to be transferred to office of the Engineer, Base G.

Recommendation for transfer to the 490th Base Equipment Co. was submitted for Capt. John H. Williams.

Recommendations for transfer to the 870th Engineer Aviation Battalion was submitted on 1st Lts. Ray W. Hollar and John C. Head. 1st Lt. Myer A. Rice, 2nd Lts. Robert E. Berkefeld and George A. Ryan were placed on TD with Base G awaiting reassignment.

HISTORY OF THE 339TH ENGINEER CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

On the 1st of August 1944 the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion was formed. Lt. Colonel William T. Bradley assumed command. Under his command Capt. Clarence B. Calaway was made Executive Officer; Capt. Harold H. Thomas, Adjutant; Capt. Norman L. Hall, Engineer Officer; 1st Lt. Charles T. Simpson, Asst. Adjutant and 1st Lt. William M. Allen, Supply Officer. Capt. Frank E. Helsel was Battalion Chaplain; Capt. John J. Morris, Battalion Surgeon and Capt. Dan Wright, Battalion Dentist. Company "A" was commanded by Capt. Thomas C. Newman with 1st Lieutenants John R. Ulery, Samuel A. Gupton, 2d Lieutenants Arthur M. Sullivan and Howard J. Grieb. Company "B" was commanded by Capt. Donald A. Arthur with 2d Lieutenants Paul M. Callahan, Lloyd E. Reeser, Walter F. Fatke and William H. Cook. Company "C" was commanded by 1st Lieutenant Ray H. Frazer with 1st Lts. Lawrence E. Davis, Lester C. Persson, 2d Lts. Robert J. Thompson and Arnold F. Chariott. Lt. Chariott had been assigned to the Battalion but was at this time enroute to duty. Commanding H&S Company was 1st Lt. Leon J. Sorensen with 1st Lt. Benjamin N. Wyche, 2d Lts. Richard L. Craumer, Flave A. Pledger, Charles C. Cordon and CWO John R. Edwards.

Personnel recommended for assignment to the 1179th Engineer Construction Group activated 1 August 1944 composed of personnel from the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) were Colonel J. W. Cox Jr., Commanding Officer; Lt. Colonel Harmon H. James, Executive Officer; Capt. Robert E. Dornon, Adjutant; Capt. Henry G. Nichols, Orientation Officer; Capt. John T. Lambert, Medical Supervisor; 1st Lt. Alton L. Cardinal, Asst. Engineer Officer; 1st Lt. Samuel C. Cummings, Special Service Officer; 1st Lt. Daniel E. Kobs, Commanding Officer of Headquarters Company; 2d Lt. Neil B. Ratcliff, Asst. Commanding Officer of Headquarters Company; and CWO Harven A. Crouse, Asst. to Supply Officer. Capt. James C. McNeil, Commanding Officer of the 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company was recommended as Supply Officer and Capt. William B. Ward, Commanding Officer

of the 490th Base Equipment Company was recommended as Operations Officer. These assignments in Group Headquarters left one vacancy in the Engineer Section.

Capt. Theodore E. Andresen on TD with the Judge Advocate Base "G" remained in that assignment pending transfer in the near future to that branch of the Service. Capt. Fred M. Wyatt and Capt. Max E. Lamb were transferred to the Office of the Engineer, Base "G". Recommendation for transfer to the 490th Base Equipment Company was submitted for Capt. John H. Williams. Recommendations for transfer to the 870th Engineer Aviation Battalion were submitted for 1st Lts. Ray W. Hollar and John C. Head. 1st Lt. Myer A. Rice, 2d Lts. Robert E. Berkefeld and George A. Ryan were placed on TD with Base "G" awaiting reassignment.

The Base Engineer, Base "G", issued verbal orders for the entire Battalion to move to Mariboe in the Tanahmerah Bay Sector. "A" Company started moving on the 3rd of August and one platoon of "C" Company was moved the following day. The excess of personnel of authorized T/O consisting of 169 enlisted men and five officers were transferred on TD unassigned to 79th Engineer Construction Battalion, Base "G", pending arrival of orders from Intermediate Section, USASOS, APO 503.

Lt. Colonel Bradley, Commanding Officer, moved to Tanahmerah Bay on the 4th of August to arrange for a suitable campsite. Pvt. Raymond O. Junemann, of Company "B", was accidentally hit by a jeep on this date and died two days later in the 87th Station Hospital.

On 5th August Capt. George W. Lacy was placed on TD with the Battalion. He was sent immediately to Tanahmerah Bay per instructions of the Base Surgeon in order to fill the vacancy left by Capt. John J. Morris who was sick at the 27th General Hospital. The same Special Order placed Capt. Max E. Lamb on TD with

the Base Engineer and Capt. Thomas V. O'Brien MC was relieved from this organization and assigned to the 87th Station Hospital, Base "G". Capt. Fred M. Wyatt was placed on TD with Base Engineers and 1st Lts. John C. Head Jr. and Ray W. Hollar were assigned to the 870th Engineer Aviation Battalion.

H&S Company began moving to Tanahmerah Bay on August 8th. 56 enlisted replacements arrived from 5th Replacement Depot, APO 711, for assignment to the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) of which 18 EM were transferred to the 79th Engineer Construction Battalion, attached unassigned pending orders from Intermediate Section, USASOS.

2d Lt. Charles L. Gross joined the Battalion on August 9th and was assigned to Company "C". The following day 1st Lt. John R. Ulery was transferred from Company "A" to Company "B" and 2d Lt. William H. Cook was transferred from Company "B" to Company "A". Battalion Headquarters moved to Mariboe at Tanahmerah Bay on the same date.

The next evening all officers formerly belonging to the 339th Engineer Regiment (GS) got together for a farewell dinner and party at the newly built house located on Lake Sentani. It was a most enjoyable affair.

On August 12th Company "B" completed moving to the new area. Two platoons of this company had been left behind to complete work on staging area, roads, bridges and water lines. The following day was one of rejoicing throughout the Battalion. For the first time overseas the unit was issued beer at the rate of six cans per man.

On the fifteenth of the month work was well underway. Company "A" was busy maintaining and improving the main road 8 miles back from Tanahmerah Bay. The construction of a 10,000 gallon storage tank at the tank farm located at the bay was begun on August 12th.

Company "B" had the job of maintaining and improving the road a distance of another five miles. This company also began work on another 10,000 gallon storage tank. It was Company "C"'s job to finish the Liberty dock in the west cove

at Tanahmerah Bay which was originally started by Company "D" before the date of reorganization. At this date the dock was 40% completed and more than 2500 cubic yards of earth had been removed from a side hill cut and hauled out into the bay to provide a causeway to the deck which had been built several hundred feet from the shore because of shallow water. An estimated 10,000 to 15,000 cubic yards of fill was still needed to complete the causeway.

A letter of commendation was received from Brigadier General L. J. Sverdrup, Acting Chief Engineer, Southwest Pacific Area. The letter was reproduced for the benefit of all officers and enlisted men concerned.

On August 19th two tanks under construction by "A" and "B" Companies were 60% completed. "C" Company's Liberty dock was 70% completed but work was slowed up because of lack of materials; also 8,000 cubic yards of dirt was hauled to date to complete 250 feet of causeway.

Both "A" and "B" Companies continued to maintain and widen the main road. During the period from 16th to 19th 4,431 cubic yards of gravel was hauled.

2d Lieutenant Charles L. Gross was transferred to the 1307th Engineer Regiment (GS) at APO 928 on the 24th. 1st Lieutenant Meyer A. Rice was also placed on temporary duty with the Engineer Section, Base "G".

At the close of the week on 26th of August, the Liberty dock under construction by Company "C" was 85% completed. Shortage of materials delayed construction. Construction of 10,000 and 5,000 barrel gasoline and fuel tanks continued on a twenty-four hour basis. Road maintenance, installation of culverts, bridge repairs and hauling of gravel was accomplished during the week. One platoon of Company "C" was engaged in stevedore work unloading tank parts.

A considerable amount of rain fell during the week, thereby making working conditions very unfavorable. On August 27th Captain John J. Morris, MC, returned from sick in hospital to duty. That evening eight truck loads of enlisted men were taken 12 miles to the airdrome area to see Bob Hope and his troupe. Work on causeway, tanks and roads slowed down on the 29th of August on account of unusually hard rain.

At the close of the month organization strength consisted of 29 officers, 1 Warrant Officer, 1 Medical Officer, attached and 897 enlisted men.

On 1st September 1944 the Battalion was notified by letter from USASOS that they were relieved of duty with USASOS and attached to Sixth Army effective on the 1st of October. The Battalion was ordered to remain status quo until required for movement. General Orders No. 142 Headquarters Sixth Army confirmed our attachment for operational purposes.

A Liberty ship with 8,000 drums of V 80 gasoline and motor fuels arrived at Tanahmerah Bay on the 2d of September and Company "C" was assigned the job of unloading. Captain Thomas C. Newman, Company "A", left this date on leave to Australia. Nine cans of beer were also issued to all personnel on this day.

During the week ending 2 September Company "C" had completed 93% of the work on the Liberty dock. The causeway to the dock was completed. Two platoons of Company "B" completed another 10,000 barrel tank and the third platoon had another tank under construction with 27% completed. Company "A" finished work on a 10,000 barrel tank. The rest of the company rushed a 5,000 barrel tank through to 90% completion. A 5,000 barrel tank being constructed by H&S Company was 75% completed. One platoon of Company "B" installed 120 feet of culvert, graveled two miles of road and widened two miles to Two-way.

To date four 10,000 barrel tanks were completed by the Battalion. Other tanks constructed by the 1384th and 781st Petroleum Distributing Companies brought the total number of completed tanks to eight. Orders from the 27th General Hospital transferred Captain Fred M. Wyatt attached unassigned to Detachment of Patients of that hospital.

On the 4th of September orders were received from the 27th General Hospital transferring Captain John J. Morris to the Detachment of Patients. Captain Theodore E. Andresen, Captain Max E. Lamb and 2d Lieutenant Robert E. Berkefeld were transferred to the 1179th Engineer Construction Group on the 6th of the month. On the following day 38 enlisted men formerly on DS with the 79th Engineer Construction Battalion were transferred to the 5201st Engineer Construction Brigade.

2d Lt. Charles G. Cordon, H&S Company, left the Battalion on 13th September on rotation to the United States. On this date $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches of rain fell in 4 hours. Roads were considerably damaged. Mountain slides along the road were numerous and tractors worked all through the night to clear the road. The Liberty dock at Tanahmerah Bay was now completed. Work on tanks was considerably delayed because of lack of tank parts. One platoon of Company "B" continued to maintain and improve roads. A new gravel pit was opened alongside the main road about two miles from Tanahmerah Bay. It was the best gravel found throughout the area.

Letter from Sixth Army dated 18th September stated that our priority would be 5A1 and every effort of base supply installations would be made to furnish us with all equipment and supplies.

On the week ending 21 September the road to the Liberty dock was 80% completed, the drum filling plant was 80% completed. The Battalion had completed 11 - 10,000 barrel tanks and 2 - 5,000 barrel tanks. The 781st and 1384th Engineer Petroleum Distributing Companies had completed 3 - 10,000 barrel tanks and 2 - 5,000 barrel tanks making a total of 13 - 10,000 barrel tanks and 5 - 5,000 barrel tanks completed to date.

Our work on roads continued until the 23rd of September. Captain Williams, Lt. Rice, Lt. Finnegan and Lt. Ryan left on leave to Australia; Lt. Davis returned the same date.

A training schedule was begun on the 28th embracing such subjects as perimeter defense, rifle marksmanship, automatic weapons, camouflage, scouting and patrolling, booby traps, hand grenades, defense and infiltration. All companies availed themselves of the opportunity to fire all weapons and use the Infantry fixed target range and the range laid out by our own Battalion. The period between the 23rd and 28th was used to finish all the odds and ends and polish up all the jobs that we had previously completed.

On the 1st of October 1944 the Battalion came under the control of the

Sixth Army. All our equipment was brought in for last minute repairs and preparation was made by S-3 to plot the placement of our equipment on the LST's which were to be assigned to us for the movement.

Captain Harold H. Thomas was relieved of his duties as Adjutant on the 4th of October and was transferred to the Transportation Corps Sixth Army per VOCC Sixth Army. 1st Lt. John R. Ulery was relieved of his duties with Company "B" and took up his duties as the new Adjutant. On the same date Chaplain George B. King arrived from the 43d Infantry Division to take up his duties as Battalion Chaplain. Chaplain Helsel went to the 43d Division to fill the vacancy created by this transfer.

On Thursday the 5th of October Lt. Colonel W. T. Bradley had an Officers' call to acquaint those officers going with the forward echelon their missions in the King 2 Operation and gave all the officers present the general outline of the whole operation. The officers of this group were to be prepared to load their men on call.

General plans called for the embarkation of troops and equipment in four echelons. The first echelon was to go with the 24th Division. This echelon was composed of three sections. The first section was to go with the 19th Infantry. Personnel were assigned to three ships. Lt. Chariott, Lt. Thompson and Lt. Fathke being in charge of our troops on these ships. The second section were assigned to proceed with the 34th Infantry. Personnel of this group were also divided on three ships. Lt. Craumer, Lt. Grieb, and Lt. Cook being in charge of troops of this unit. The third section were to go with the 24th Division troops. Lt. Callahan was in charge of this group. The above completed the first echelon, being scheduled to arrive at destination on A day.

The mission of the A day group was to unload ships from lighterage to dock and after unloading of ships to proceed to bivouac area to join our troops landing on A plus 2. Bulldozer operators and our troops after completion of their mission were to be assigned to the 532d until A plus 2 on which date the Battalion

was to be assigned to X Corps to facilitate landing of troops and in general to be ready to assist the 24th Division.

The second echelon was comprised of personnel of Company "B" and H&S Company and were to arrive on A plus 2. The third echelon with Lt. Gupton in command was scheduled to arrive on A plus 4. Personnel of this group was composed primarily of Company "A" and Company "C". The rear echelon of approximately 60 men was to remain at Hollandia to pack tents, cots and all company equipment and bring forward at a later date. Lt. Simpson was in charge of this group.

On A plus 2, the day of assignment to X Corps, our engineer mission was to work behind the 24th Infantry Division. We were to be ready to rebuild any demolished bridges, to assist in clearing mine fields, and to operate water point facilities. We were also to construct and maintain roads, to erect and maintain directional signs, to establish and improve medical facilities and to assist in establishing division dumps and access roads thereto.

On the 8th of October Lt. Callahan and his group of 50 enlisted men boarded the AKA 3 (Hercules). Lt. Thompson and his detachment of 120 enlisted men boarded APA 54 (USS John Wayne). Lt. Cook and the 80 enlisted men of Company "A" assigned to his group bivouaced with the 2d Battalion of the 34th Infantry, the following day they arrived at Pie Beach at 1400. The troops were loaded in LCV's and proceeded to the USS Ormesby where boarding was effected. Lt. Fathke and 30 enlisted men boarded AKA 1 (the Aquarius) at Hollandia on the 9th of October.

On the morning of the 10th Lt. Craumer and his group of 50 enlisted men from H&S Company boarded LST 26. Lt. Chariott and 49 enlisted men assigned to him arrived at Pie Beach at 1400. Supplies were loaded on LST 456, being completed by midnight. Troops slept on the beach during the night and boarded the LST the following morning. The LST pulled into the bay at 1500 hours. Lt. Colonel Bradley boarded APA 54 this date traveling on the same ship with the group under Lt. Thompson. As these ships were waiting in Humbolt Bay for the formation of the A day convoy, LST 986, the ship assigned for the second echelon

arrived at Tanahmerah Bay at noon. H&S Company immediately started the loading of equipment. That night Capt. Calaway called a meeting of the officers who were to land on A plus 2 to instruct them with the pertinent information imparted by Lt. Colonel Bradley before his departure.

The A day convoy remained in Humbolt Bay through the 12th of the month. Several of the Infantry outfits made practice landings throughout the day. H&S Company continued loading the equipment of the A plus 2 group and by Friday morning all equipment was loaded and lashed down. By the afternoon of Friday the 13th the A day convoy had been formed. Anchors were weighed and the convoy set sail for its destination. On the same afternoon troops boarded the LST 986 but remained anchored in Tanahmerah Bay for the night. The following morning the ship sailed at 0600 and arrived at Hollandia about 1000. The ship remained in Humbolt Bay until Monday morning at which time the A plus 2 convoy pulled out to sea. This same date the third echelon left their Battalion area and boarded LST 554 at Tanahmerah Bay. The ship sailed the following morning arriving at Humbolt Bay at 1030. After maneuvering for position the A plus 4 convoy sailed for its destination.

During the days at sea the officers in charge of the different groups held orientation classes to acquaint the men with what to expect on landing. Pamphlets describing the Philippines, the customs and language of the Filipinos were distributed to all personnel.

October 20th was the designated A day. The convoy landed in Leyte Gulf at daybreak. After the beach-head bombardment the group under Lt. Cook were loaded in LCV's and proceeded to the Titania and began unloading at 1100. Lt. Craumer's group on LST 26 were temporarily beached at 1105. The group under Lt. Thompson began unloading cargo from LST's, LSM's and a LCT that afternoon. At dark the troops of this group dug in for the night at Red Beach. Lt. Fathke's group also unloaded their ship on this date. The ship on which Lt. Chariott and his men were assigned experienced difficulty in landing, the ship being hit by enemy artillery twice. There were casualties on the ship but no personnel of this unit was

injured. After two attempts at landing the ship was brought to shore at 1700. Troops slept aboard ship during the night. Wounded soldiers were also brought aboard for evacuation to the rear hospitals. The ship on which Lt. Craumer and his men were aboard experienced no unusual incident on landing. A direct hit however was made on the adjoining LST by a Jap motor which necessitated a day's delay in unloading.

On the 21st Lt. Cook contacted Lt. Colonel Bradley, reporting the location of his area. Due to continued rain during the day everything was soggy and wet. The next day the groups under Lt. Callahan, Lt. Chariott and Lt. Craumer started unloading their respective ships. Lt. Thompson's men put in an LST dock after which LST 168 and 264 were unloaded. This group were subject to sniper fire but no damage was done. The troops later worked on a road across from the beach to route #1. Lt. Craumer's group spent the night bivouaced at coordinates 59.7 - 53.3. Lt. Cook and party were working on laying a corduroy road through rice paddies from Highway #1 toward Red Beach. A sniper fired into the party and after hearing splashing in the near vicinity, the party withdrew into the lines of Company "L" of the 34th Infantry.

On the morning of the 22d no transportation was available to take supplies to shore with the result that the unloading of LST 456 was temporarily suspended. Unloading was completed later in the afternoon after which the men proceeded to bivouac for the night. LSM 18 was unloaded by a detail of Lt. Craumer's group, a patrol detail was sent to Palo, the balance of the men working on the causeway. Groups under Lt. Callahan, Lt. Fatke and Lt. Cook continued to work on the stretch of road from Red Beach to Highway #1. In the afternoon the A plus 2 the-convoy including our second echelon on LST 986 arrived in Leyte Gulf. The ship was unable to land equipment that day as the water was too shallow to bring the LST to shore.

On the morning of the 23rd LST 986 was unloaded in the record breaking time of thirty-five minutes. This was the fastest unloading up to that time according

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to the beachmaster. Troops then proceeded to their bivouac area, coordinates being 59.0 - 52.3, where during the afternoon and the following morning the A day personnel rejoined their respective companies. Later in the afternoon, the third echelon, A plus 4 group, landed and unloaded and set up in the Battalion bivouac area. Road construction was not interrupted and continued on to the intersection of Highway #1.

On the 25th three gravel pits were opened and operations begun, each line Company being in charge of a pit. The following day Captain Hall and a 16 man patrol went on an Engineer reconnaissance to Palo. Road maintenance was begun on the main roads in Palo as well as south of that city to Tanauan. Road work continued throughout the month. Repairs on the water system which serviced Dagami, Palo and Tacloban was begun on the 31st of the month. During the period of A day and the close of the month, personnel of the organization had experienced many air raids. Considering the number of raids, casualties were extremely light, only two being wounded by falling flak. Morale and discipline were excellent throughout the period.

At the beginning of November the Battalion was working on road construction and maintenance on stretches of the road from Pawing to Palo, Palo south to Tanauan and also the main roads in Palo. Company "C" was operating a gravel pit at Palo, Company "A" a gravel pit one mile west of Palo and also constructing a coconut pile bridge at Red Beach #1. Repair on the Dagami-Palo-Tacloban water system was started by Company "B". Two platoons of Company "A" went to Jaro and one platoon to the Palo hospital area one mile west of Palo to start on operations there. A new Battalion bivouac area closer to the work projects was found east of Highway #1 and north of the San Joaquin river.

During the week of November 5th, the clearing for the Naval oil storage sites and depot was completed. Work on the Signal Center facilities was started and the Battalion Operations Section began a topographic survey. Heavy rains at this time retarded all engineer work. General Orders #9, Headquarters Army Service Command, dated 7 November 1944, were received on the 10th of November, this

order attaching the Battalion to the 5201st Engineer Construction Brigade to be effective as of 27 October 1944.

On the 12th the Battalion with the exception of Company "A" moved into the new bivouac area. Company "A" was located on the Palo-Barugo road near Jaro. An oxygen-acetylene plant was begun for the 1041st Engineer Gas Generating Unit by Company "A".

November 14th one platoon of Company "A" moved to the Battalion bivouac area. Also on this date Company "C" turned over the operation of the gravel pit at the Palo bridge to another engineer unit.

On November 15th Company "A" started work on a two-way emergency ford at the Mainit river. A hydrographic survey from the mouth of the Palo river to one half mile north of the joint Army and Naval oil storage depot was also started. The Battalion was relieved starting this date of the maintenance work on the Pawing to Palo road, the work on the Signal Center facilities and the oxygen-acetylene plant. Special Orders #305 were received from Headquarters USAFFE, 3 November 1944, promoting Captain Norman L. Hall to Major, 1st Lt. William M. Allen to Captain and 2d Lieutenants Paul M. Callahan, William H. Cook, Walter F. Fathke and Robert J. Thompson to the grade of 1st Lieutenant.

Sunday, November 19th, the first church services were held in the new Battalion area.

Operations ceased for three hours on the 23d of November while all personnel celebrated Thanksgiving Day, enjoying a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. The work on the Dagami-Palo-Tacloban water system was cancelled this day.

The rear echelon coming from Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea, landed November 24th at White Beach. The unloading of personnel and equipment was accomplished by nightfall and the men were able to spend their first night in the Philippines in the Battalion bivouac area.

Letter AG 200.3, Headquarters Sixth Army, dated 19 November 1944 was received on November 25th assigning one Captain, Corps of Engineers, to this unit.

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The following day one platoon of Company "A" returned from Jaro being relieved of maintenance of the road from Mainit river to Barugo. Also on this date letter KXP 210.68, Headquarters Base K, was received giving the Battalion a quota of one enlisted man for the December rotation quota.

The work order on construction of the emergency ford at the Mainit river was cancelled on the 27th of November. The project was 80% complete. On this night word was received from Headquarters Base K that an enemy airborne landing was attempted and repulsed. One-half of the Battalion was alerted for action and the guards on the defense perimeter doubled.

A report on the night of 29th November was given this headquarters that Japs were in possession of a bridge located 3 miles west of Palo. Lt. Colonel Bradley and Captain C. B. Calaway went to investigate as a platoon from Company "A" was operating near this section. It was found that a Jap patrol was reported as seen by the M.P.'s guarding the bridge and that one of the enemy had been killed. Company "C" began operations of the gravel pit at Vigia Point this date.

The last of November found the Battalion with three gravel pits in operation. One located one mile west of Palo, one at the Mainit river and one at Vigia Point. Road and bridge maintenance along with other assigned projects were progressing in spite of extremely adverse weather conditions.

During the first part of December the Battalion had been relieved of the operation of the Mainit River pit. Other work being done included the 117th Station Hospital, the Palo Ordnance Center, Signal Corps facilities, and maintenance of two stretches of road from Palo to the Mainit River and Tanauan to San Roque.

On the 5th of December the 118th General Hospital was started by Company "A". During the early morning hours on December 7th, Tec 5 Cecil L. Ross of Company "B" while working on the San Joaquin River Bridge accidentally lost his balance and fell into the river and drowned, despite the efforts of Tec 5 Zegmound L. Niemczyk and Pfc. Howard F. Kuhns of Company "B" to rescue him. The

morning of the following day his body was recovered and taken to Tacloban Cemetery for burial with full military honors. Chaplain George B. King had a memorial service in the Battalion Chapel.

About 0200 hours the morning of the 12th December, approximately 40 tons of high explosives blew up at the Engineer Dump at Red Beach. Private Vernon A. Emke of Company "B", driving a truck for the 198th Dump Truck Company was hurt in the accident when the wind-shield of his truck blew in. The cause of the explosion has not been determined. On the same day, one of the more fortunate members of the organization, Private Erwin O. Streeter, left for the States on rotation.

On the 13th of December Captain Lawrence P. Spencer reported for duty with the unit and on this day the West Palo pit was taken over by another unit. The week of 17th December was a rather active one. The week started off with the news that a quota of 5 enlisted men had been allotted the organization for rotation through Headquarters Intermediate Section. Special order #331 Headquarters USAFFE dated the 30th of November came through on the 18th making Captain Clarence B. Calaway a Major. Captain Lawrence P. Spencer left on TD for duty with ASCOM to work in the Petroleum Section. An order came down from higher headquarters increasing the size of the Signal Facilities by three buildings, one Wire Operations Building and two Power Buildings. Work continued on all projects being augmented by the opening of the Dagami pit and construction of two log platforms for the Red Beach water point. The day before Christmas was greeted with gusto for the Battalion drew a month's supply of beer. Morale rose perceptively and was at a new high. Christmas packages were coming through after a long delay.

Christmas Day was celebrated by a turkey dinner and a half-day holiday.

Orders came through on the 26th of December for the promotions of 2d Lt. Richard L. Craumer and 2d Lt. Arthur M. Sullivan, USAFFE Special Orders Nos. 345 and 346 effective December 14th and 15th respectively.

The interim between December 26th and 31st was uneventful, work continued on as usual. On the 31st of December Lt. Joseph L. Pelletier, O1106393, CE, by Special Orders #2 issued by the Leyte Engineer Command was relieved of duty with the 842d Engineer Aviation Battalion and became a new member of the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion.

At the termination of the year 1944 the operations of the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion were as follows: Repair and maintenance of the road south of the San Joaquin River to the Labiranan River which was 41 percent complete. The 117th Station Hospital was 56 percent complete and the 118th General Hospital 16 percent complete. The Signal Facilities lacked 34 percent of being finished and the Ordnance Center was one-eighth finished. Two gravel pits were in operation, one at Dagami and one at Vigia Point. The Battalion was assigned to the Leyte Engineer Command by their Operational Instruction #1 effective the 26th of December. The strength of the Battalion at the close of the year was 30 Officers, 1 WO and 832 Enlisted Men; 1 WO and 41 Enlisted Men understrength. Morale was high in spite of the fact that work had been delayed by blackouts, heavy precipitation and difficulties with worn out equipment. The Battalion was looking forward to a New Year, hopeful of success and a step closer to ultimate victory and home.

HISTORY OF THE 339TH ENGINEER CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

1 9 4 5

On the first day of the New Year the Battalion was notified through the medium of a General Order from Headquarters Sixth Army that it was relieved of attachment to the Sixth Army and ASCOM and reverted to USASOS. This could not be considered an unusual event as the change in the status of our attachment to various Armies, Corps, Divisions, Bases and Groups had taken place many times before. December 26th 1944 was the effective date of the change.

On the 3rd of January 1st Lt. Leon J. Sorensen received Special Orders from USAFFE informing him that he had been a Captain since the 20th of December 1944. On the same day by Special Orders from the Leyte Engineer Command Lt. Ray H. Frazer was transferred to the Real Estate Section of the Engineer Department at Base K.

On the following day Lt. Samuel A. Gupton was transferred from Company "A" to Company "C" where he assumed command of that Company. A newcomer entered the organization the same date - Lt. Joseph L. Pelletier reported for duty and was assigned to Company "A". Lt. Pelletier had formerly been with the 842d Engineer Aviation Battalion and was assigned to this unit by Special Order from Sixth Army.

From the first of the month until the 6th construction activities were normal, however, on the 6th of January the Battalion became restless as a rumor persisted that we were to prepare for another operation. Actually Headquarters was informed verbally that the Battalion was to be assigned to the Eighth Army for the Mike 3 operation on the preceding day. On the 6th of January the 1897 Engineer Construction Battalion took over the construction of the 118th General Hospital which was about 30 percent complete. Then in rapid succession the Battalion turned over all its jobs to various Engineer Units except the 117th Station

Hospital, all of Company "A" having been assigned to that job to hurry its completion. The final date of completion was 15th January.

The 339th Engineer Construction Battalion during the period from the "A"-Day landing until the day it was assigned to Eighth Army for the M-3 operation had carried a major portion of the construction on Leyte in their sector.

On the 11th of January we received a letter order from USASOS attaching us to the Eighth Army as of January 10th. Letter Headquarters Eighth Army 10 January listed our attachment to their Headquarters and reattached to the 38th Division.

With the completion of the 117th Station Hospital the Battalion started on training. The training schedule was streamlined to include only those subjects that would aid us in the fulfillment of our mission.

Each company spent a day on the assembly and disassembly of landing mats. Classes were conducted on Aircraft Identification, First Aid, Sanitation, Perimeter Defense and the principles of road building were reviewed and theories of the construction of airstrips undertaken. All personnel had the opportunity to fire on the range.

At an undetermined date the Mike 3 operation was cancelled and all plans were dropped and planning started for the Mike 7 operation. Attachments, commitments on supplies and equipment remained the same. Headquarters was notified of this change just after training had started.

On January 19th a meeting was called by Colonel D. W. Heiman of the 1112th Engineer Construction Group to whom the Battalion was attached for operations. The meeting was held at the Battalion in the S-3 building. Present were representatives of the 1112th Engineer Construction Group, 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company, the 492d Engineer Base Equipment Company and our Battalion. Lt. Colonel Bradley assisted by Major Calaway and Major Hall were to assume the responsibility of the construction of an airdrome at San Marcelino, Luzon. Details were discussed on final preparation for movement and the operation. Loading date

was to be the 20th of January.

On January 20th we were prepared to load, however, the LST's did not arrive until the 21st. At 1430 hours loading began. Late arrival of bulk cargo to be carried for the Air Corps slowed up the procedure but everything was straightened out and at approximately 0400 hours loading was completed.

LST 552 carrying H&S Company and LST 555 carrying personnel of Company "A" pulled off shore to spend the night at anchorage. LST 556 and 565 carrying personnel of Company "B" and Company "C" spent the night on the beach, as those LST's had been grounded by heavy seas. On the 24th LST 556 was able to maneuver away from the beach and it spent the night at anchorage. LST 565 was still hopelessly grounded and it was discovered later that it sailed one day after the convoy left and caught up to the convoy enroute at sea.

The convoy sailed at 0830 hours on January 25th. On the date of sailing on the Mike 7 operation the Battalion strength consisted of 30 Officers and 876 Enlisted Men. 1st Lt. Ranald O. Whitaker of USAFFE was attached as an observer. The Battalion had left 5 Enlisted Men behind to bring up a negligible amount of Engineer equipment left behind because of inadequate shipping facilities.

The journey at sea was uneventful. A Navy PBV was sighted on the 26th of January and everyone was startled by a call to General Quarters, however, it was identified and all was peaceful until January 29th when the convoy arrived at its destination.

At H-hour 0830 the 38th Division started to unload its troops. A previous signal from the beach and a subsequent message from the shore carried to one of the Navy warships had advised the Task Force Commanders that the enemy had retired some days before and no opposition would be met.

At 1400 hours Lt. Colonel Bradley landed by LCV and proceeded to the San Marcelino Agricultural College for a meeting with Colonel Heiman, who was to arrive at 1800 hours. At 1800 hours the meeting was held and preparation was made to start the airdrome at San Marcelino the next morning. That night all

of the LST's carrying our personnel and equipment beached at 2200 hours and started to unload. A temporary bivouac area was established on the outskirts of San Marcelino and by morning all the equipment and personnel of these three companies had arrived. Company "B" did not land until the following morning at approximately 1200 hours. The last of our personnel, equipment and supplies were unloaded by 1700 hours that day.

On the morning of January 30th despite the fact that the Battalion had spent the early hours from midnight on, unloading equipment and supplies, work was begun. At 0800 hours a survey party under the direction of Major Hall started on the preliminary surveys for the strip. Construction was begun on the strip, on the construction of a Base Operations Building and Control Tower, and on the Fighter Sector Building.

The last day of a very busy month was spent in moving to a semi-permanent bivouac area approximately one mile north of the San Marcelino drome. Operations continued without interruption on our usual twenty-four hour basis. The job was undertaken in an enthusiastic manner by both Officers and men. Morale was excellent.

All during the month of February the spotlight was on the San Marcelino airdrome and facilities for the 5th Air Force. The 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company and the 492d Engineer Base Equipment Company were put under our operational control the 1st day of February by the 1112th Engineer Construction Group so that construction at the strip could be better coordinated.

On the following day our survey parties were augmented by those of the 67th Engineer Topo Company. One officer and 30 enlisted men were attached to the 339th Engineers for duty, rations and quarters.

February 4th was a big day. At approximately 0940 hours a flight of P 47's circled the strip and at 0945 hours the first plane named "Mamie" made its landing. The pilots spoke highly of the strip and everyone felt very pleased. The Air Corps was anxious to put the strip in operation immediately. Buildings were

rushed and completed as rapidly as possible. On the 4th of February one hundred by six thousand feet of dry weather runway with forty hard-stands, four service aprons, two five hundred foot over-runs, one transport apron and connecting taxiways were completed. The Control Tower and Base Operations Building started on the 30th of January were completed and ready for use meeting all requirements on the target date. A letter from USAFFE was received this date relieving the Battalion from attachment to the Eighth Army and attaching the unit to the Sixth Army as of 30 January 1945. On the same date we were attached to XI Corps. The Fighter Sector Building started on the 30th of January was usable on the 4th of February and completed on the 6th.

On the 8th of February the Commanding Officer commended the Officers and Men of the Battalion by letter for the splendid spirit of cooperation shown in the construction of the drome and the expeditious way all target dates were met. Six thousand feet of strip were completed by February 4th - B plus 6 when actually the task was to complete only five thousand feet by that date.

On the 11th of February Lt. Ranauld O. Whitaker went from duty to the hospital and was relieved of attachment to this organization.

The Battalion had an interesting job to do on February 14th. At approximately 2200 hours the night of the 13th, Group Headquarters informed Lt. Col. Bradley that a cub strip 50' by 700' was to be built and usable for L-4 Artillery observation planes by 1000 hours on the 14th of February. The strip was started at 0600 hours the morning of the 14th and completed at 0955 hours. At 1000 hours a cub plane landed on schedule.

Company "B" moved to Olongapo in the Subic Bay area on the 15th of February. Among the jobs that they completed in that area during the month were rehabilitation of permanent building for the Signal Corps, an 84 foot trestle bridge at Balsic, and a spare parts building at Olongapo.

On February 19th a letter was received from Colonel D. W. Heiman of the 1112th Engineer Construction Group commending the Battalion for its initiative,

energy and cooperation. Attached to Colonel Heiman's letter was a commendation from Colonel N. D. Sillin in behalf of the 309th Bomb Wing and Fifth Air Force Units in the San Marcelino area for superior work done by the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion. 2d Lt. Flave A. Pledger, one of the younger members in service with the organization was transferred from H&S Company to the 492d Engineer Base Equipment Company by Special Orders from XI Corps on the 25th of February.

During the month of February the Battalion strength increased by 26 enlisted men transferred from the 108th Combat Engineer Battalion. Morale was excellent. Due to the efforts of the men of the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion under the able direction of Lt. Colonel Bradley, Majors Calaway and Hall, the individual Company Commanders and Company Officers, all who worked untiringly, the Battalion successfully completed their Engineering mission in the First Phase of the operations on Luzon.

During the first week and up into the latter part of the second week of March much of the work of the Battalion was in the area of the San Marcelino Drome. There was the maintenance of the Drome perimeter road and bivouac access roads which we had built and the building of additional facilities for the Fifth Air Force. However, by reason of the fact that the attention of everyone was focused on the important drome, the other important work we had of maintaining, widening, draining and resurfacing of the main transportation arteries to the various supply points in the area and the Main Supply Road to the Naval Base at Subic Bay was not allowed to get behind schedule. The Battalion maintained and resurfaced approximately 25 miles of road during the period from January 30th to March 10th.

All of the companies, with the exception of Company "B" which was stationed at Olongapo, moved to Pio on March 11th. A bivouac area was established and the Battalion started improving, widening and resurfacing the stretch of road from San Jose to Porac. The purpose of the road was to facilitate the handling of

supplies from the various supply dumps on the Bataan peninsula to the Florida Blanca airstrip about to be constructed, then to join a network of roads to Clark Field.

On the 13th of March Company "B" moved to Castillejos in the area of the San Marcelino drome where their prime mission was maintenance of the airstrip.

On March 21st, 1st Lieutenant John R. Ulery, Battalion Adjutant, was promoted to the rank of Captain by Special Orders USAFFE effective March 13th. The promotions of 2d Lieutenants Arnold F. Charlott and Lloyd E. Reeser were received on the 24th, the promotions were effective as of March 13th.

Battalion work was of short duration in the area of the Florida Blanca airstrips and on March 25th all companies with the exception of Company "B" moved to San Fernando, Pampanga. At San Fernando work was begun at the Ordnance Service Center providing a two-way all weather road, construction of nine service buildings with concrete flooring and other facilities. Much of the miscellaneous construction in the San Fernando area during this period was concerned with providing all weather facilities for supply and service dumps.

The most important job during this period was the construction of the San Fernando all weather cub strip begun during the last week in March. Specifications called for a 50' x 1200' all weather strip with one 100' x 700' apron and two 50' taxiways, a cub hangar, spare parts building and a 400' over-run.

During the remainder of the month the Battalion was concerned with usual routine activities. Movies were being shown on a schedule of three shows weekly, beer and PX supplies were available.

The month of April could be called a "slack" month for the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion. Everyone was expecting to move further north to higher ground to establish a Rainy Weather Camp. The 90 foot pile bent bridge at Santol, Pampanga Province, begun by Company "A" in March, was completed the third of April. This was the last job to be completed in the vicinity of our previous bivouac area at Pio. Work continued on all-weather roads for various installations in

the San Fernando area, and additional hardstandings were added in the Ordnance Service Center.

On the 13th of the month the Santa Rita cub strip was begun. This strip was to be a dry weather strip and the only work involved was the levelling of dikes in rice paddies and some minor grading. The strip was completed in three days.

On April 28th most of our assigned work in the San Fernando area was completed. Headquarters, Company "A", H&S Company and the Medical Detachment moved to Rosales. A platoon of Company "A" had moved up a few days earlier to prepare the area for occupancy. Company "C" remained behind to finish the facilities for the San Fernando Cub Strip. Just after the convoy had set out for Rosales, Chaplain Fred L. Zimmerman arrived at the bivouac area to take up his duties as the new Chaplain for the organization. He stayed with Company "C" for a few days and also visited Company "B" at Castillejos before joining the Battalion Command Post at Rosales.

Company "C" finished the San Fernando Cub Strip on the 29th of April. On this date Chaplain George B. King was relieved of duty with the Battalion by letter order from PHIBSEC and assigned to the 80th General Hospital.

The Battalion which had heretofore worked as a complete unit now was spread thin over the island of Luzon. Headquarters, H&S Company, Company "A" and the Medical Detachment were at Rosales, Company "B" was still at Castillejos and Company "C" was in San Fernando. From the work reports for the month of May it appeared as if the Companies would also be spreading their platoons over a still wider area.

The month ended with the usual Battalion activities.

The month of May could be called "Cub Strip Month". Almost simultaneously job order came through for strips at Rosales, Rosario and Neguilian. Company "A" was assigned all three jobs.

A platoon of Company "B" moved to San Fernando the first week of May and

started work on the 23rd Field Hospital. Their job was to construct buildings for Surgery, X-ray Laboratory, Kitchens and Mess Hall and other hospital facilities as well as to provide access roads and in general prepare the area for the rainy season.

On the third of May Chaplain King left the organization for Manila to take up his duties under his new assignment. The following day USAFFE issued orders announcing the promotion of 1st Lieutenant Samuel A. Gupton, commanding Company "C", to Captain.

The most outstanding job of the month was begun on May 7th, that of installing three spans of Bailey Bridge over the Amburayan River. Company "C" to whom the job had been assigned left the San Fernando area on the 5th of May and proceeded north to Sudipen, La Union, far beyond any other U.S. troops. Four hundred feet of new bridge had to be constructed and a temporary timber bridge put into operation. It took approximately one week to haul materials for the job. Original steel casings were dug out and cleaned for new bents. The bents were built by placing a cluster of piling in the former steel casings. The casing then being filled with rocks and five feet of concrete. By the second week the Bailey bridge was being assembled on the remaining spans of the original bridge.

The early part of the third week the launching was started. Two Diamond-T trucks hooked in tandem were used to push and two GMC trucks, one on each side of the launching nose guided it by means of cables. Two 160' spans of triple double bridge and one 80' span of double single was in place by the latter part of the third week.

Company "B" moved from Castillejos on the 20th of May and joined the rest of the Battalion less Company "C" at Rosales. The Rosario cub strip was completed on that date.

A platoon of Company "C" started back south to Baguio the 21st of May to work on the construction of a large mess hall for the 92d Evacuation Hospital

and to make major repairs on a pre-war hospital damaged by bombing and strafing in the capture of that city.

On the 23rd one platoon of Company "B" left to work on a road and on drainage for the Neguilian strip. Several changes in assignments took place on the 25th of May. First Lieutenant Charles T. Simpson was relieved from assignment as Assistant Adjutant and took up new duties with Company "C". First Lieutenant Lester C. Persson of Company "C" was transferred to Company "A" and Second Lieutenant Howard J. Grieb took up the duties of Assistant Adjutant, having been relieved of assignment with Company "A".

Another junior officer made the grade when Second Lieutenant Howard J. Grieb was taken out of the "Shave Tail" class and joined the ranks of the First Lieutenants. His promotion was effective on the 22d of May.

The Battalion did considerable maintenance, resurfacing and ditching of roads in the Rosales, Carmen, Urdanetta area during the month. The continuous task of building roads as part of the regular curriculum of the 339th Engineer Construction Battalion, no matter what other construction was in process of being undertaken, was as inevitable as the eventual defeat of the little men from Japan.

On the 31st of May, Company "C" less one platoon came under the control of I Corps and Colonel Volkmann's forces in the vicinity of Aparri. Major Norman L. Hall was assigned the duty of Task Force Engineer. During the busy month of May the Administrative Section had a busy time with the various ramifications of the Readjustment Plan changing with the wind. Morale of the organization varied, raising and lowering as the possibilities of returning home changed.

On 1 June 1945 the Amburayan River Bridge was completed. Company "C" began their planning for the impending move with Colonel Volkmann's forces. Lieutenant Davis' platoon of Company "C" was moved to Baguio as it had been decided that they would not move with the Volkmann forces.

Chief Warrant Officer John R. Edwards was promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant on the third of June 1945.

Colonel Volkmann's Task Force "B" moved forward on the 4th of June with Company "C" moving from Sudipan, La Union Province to Claveria on the northern tip of Luzon Island. The mission of Company "C" was to establish ferry points and to repair Highway #3 for use by the Infantry and Artillery moving forward to take and secure Aparri.

By the 5th of the month the Battalion had completed a number of projects started at earlier dates, including the cub strips at Negulian and Rosales, the 23rd Field Hospital, and the San Fernando all-weather strip with hanger and access roads.

On 10 June 1945, Company "A" and Company "B" moved from Rosales to Santa Fe. Company "A" started the construction of the road from Kapintalan to Santa Fe. Company "B" started the construction of a stretch of road from Santa Fe to Aritao, this being part of the vital route through the Cagayan Valley. Also on the 10th of June the Battalion was relieved from assignment to resurface the road from Carmen to La Paz. Second Lieutenants Harry W. McDowell and Ernest G. Patton joined the Battalion this date, being assigned to the Battalion from the 6th Camp Battalion, per Special Orders 146, Headquarters Base "K", USASOS, dated 27 May 1945.

Lieutenant Patton was assigned to Company "A" on 20 June 1945.

On 24 June 1945 Lt. Colonel Bradley left for Okinawa for the purpose of gathering Engineer data for a report of Engineer Operations on the Island. Lt. Colonel Bradley had been placed on Temporary Duty with the 10th Army to

fulfil this mission. Also on the 24th of June, First Lieutenant William H. Cook was relieved of assignment to the Battalion and reported to the Disposition Center Base "X" for transportation to the United States under the readjustment program.

Lieutenant Davis' platoon of Company "C" finished the work at the 92nd Evacuation Hospital on June 25th and moved to Bangar to repair a section of Highway #3.

On 27 June 1945, letter order from Sixth Army was received relieving the Battalion from attachment to Sixth Army and attaching the organization to the Eighth Army, effective 1 July 1945.

June 30th found Company "C" on the move again, this time from Ballesteros to Camanuigan in Cagayan Province.

On 1 July 1945, Lieutenant Davis' platoon of Company "C" was attached to USAFIP for operation control and supply by orders from XIV Corps. This change in status was of short duration for on the 4th of the month the platoon was relieved of this attachment and reverted to Battalion control.

Second Lieutenant Marvin F. Stehwein reported for duty with the Battalion on 5 July 1945, having been assigned to the Battalion per Special Orders No. 69, Headquarters 5th Camp Battalion, APO 75, dated 25 June 1945.

The 7th of July 2nd Lieutenant Harry W. McDowell was relieved from assignment to Headquarters and assigned to Company "C" with duties of Platoon Commander.

Lieutenant Colonel Bradley returned from Okinawa on the 10th of July and having completed his mission with the 10th Army was relieved of temporary duty with 10th Army. Orders for Lieutenant Colonel Bradley to go to the United States on temporary duty had been received in his absence and upon his return from Okinawa he began immediately to make preparations to return to the United States.

Major Clarence B. Calaway had assumed temporary command during Lieutenant

Colonel Bradley's absence in Okinawa and was to continue in command of the Battalion.

Major Norman L. Hall returned from his assignment in Aparri on July 12th and resumed his duties as Battalion S-3.

Company "C" having finished their mission with the Colonel Volkmann forces prepared to return to the Battalion for a new assignment and, with the exception of Lieutenant Thompson's platoon, left Camlaniugan, Cagayan Province on 16 July and arrived at Salano, Neuva Vizcaya Province where the major portion of the Battalion was located on 17 July 1945. Also on the 16th of July, Lt. Thompson's platoon left Camlaniugan for Aparri and arrived there the same day.

Lieutenant Colonel Bradley left on temporary duty for the United States for rest and recuperation on 18 July 1945.

On 19 July 1945 Second Lieutenant Marvin F. Stehwein was assigned to H&S Company to assume duties in the S-3 Section. Lieutenant Davis' platoon of Company "C", which had been located at Baguio, arrived at Salano on the 19th to join the rest of Company "C".

First Lieutenant Fred L. Zimmerman, Battalion Chaplain, received his promotion to Captain on 23 July 1945.

During the remainder of the month operations continued without incident. The rear echelon consisting of Battalion Headquarters and H&S Company were busy during the month on administration matters and keeping the widely separated elements of the Battalion properly coordinated on the many work projects.

On 1 August 1945 Company "C" started to build the road from San Felipe to Santiago and at the same time Company "A" started a C-47 strip at Bagabag.

Radio message from Sixth Army dated 5 August 1945 relieved Company "C" from attachment to I Corps effective 1 August 1945 and Company "C" reverted to Battalion control.

On 11 August the Battalion was relieved of assignment to AFWESPAC and assigned to Sixth Army effective 3 August 1945.

The Troop List for the Blacklist Operation was received by the Battalion on 18 August and preparations were begun immediately to have the Battalion relieved from work commitments so that work on equipment conditioning and repair could be started at the earliest possible date. However, it was not until 25 August 1945 that the Battalion was finally relieved from these commitments. A cable from Commanding General Base "X" informed the Battalion that it was to await further instructions from the 5201st Engineer Construction Brigade.

On 19 August, Captain Dan Wright, Battalion Dental Officer, and 42 enlisted men were relieved from assignment to the Battalion and transferred to the 21st Replacement Depot for return to the United States under the Readjustment Program.

Captain George W. Lacy, Battalion Surgeon, was relieved from assignment to the Battalion on 22 August and transferred to the 21st Replacement Depot to await return to the United States for discharge.

All of the far flung elements of the Battalion had returned to the Rosales area by the 27th of August and plans were being readied for re-equipping and generally getting the Battalion in shape for the scheduled Blacklist Operation.

By the 29th of August orders had been received relieving the Battalion from control of Eighth Army and XIV Corps, also orders placing the Unit under control of the Fifth Amphibious Corps for operation, effective 15 August 1945, also orders placing the Battalion on movement order from Luzon to destination secret.

During the first part of September the organization started to re-equip and to get all heavy equipment in shape for movement. The S-3 Section published a training schedule which was put into effect on the 6th of the month. Under this schedule the mornings were to be devoted to training and the afternoons to organized athletics.

On September 1st, twenty-nine enlisted men were relieved of assignment with the Battalion and transferred to the 21st Replacement Depot for return

to the United States under the Readjustment Program.

Great jubilation attended the news that the peace treaty with Japan had been signed on September second. Speculation began immediately as to when the members of the Battalion would be sent home. The majority of the personnel having served 29 months overseas.

First Lieutenant Richard L. Craumer was placed on temporary duty with the 5201st Engineer Construction Brigade and left for Japan on the 7th of September to make a reconnaissance for a possible camp site for the Battalion.

On 8 September 1945 First Lieutenant Eugene M. Coven, Dental Corps, joined the Battalion with duties as Dental Officer.

First Lieutenant Lester C. Persson was relieved of assignment with the Battalion and was assigned to the 198th Engineer Dump Truck Company 11 August 1945 with duties of Commanding Officer.

Major Norman L. Hall, Captain Thomas C. Newman and Second Lieutenant John R. Edwards were transferred from the Battalion to the 21st Replacement Depot on 13 September 1945 to await transportation to the United States for relief from active duty under the Readjustment Program. Also on the 13th the following changes were made in assignments in the Battalion: Captain Leon J. Sorensen was relieved of command of H&S Company to take up duties as Battalion Executive Officer, Captain Samuel A. Gupton was relieved of command of Company "C" and took up duties as S-3 Officer, First Lieutenant Benjamin N. Wyche was made Commanding Officer of H&S Company, First Lieutenant Arthur M. Sullivan became Commanding Officer of Company "A", First Lieutenant Robert J. Thompson was put in command of Company "C", First Lieutenant Arnold F. Chariott was transferred from Company "C" to H&S Company with duties of Battalion Motor Officer, First Lieutenant Lloyd E. Reeser was transferred from Company "B" to Company "A".

On 16 September 1945, 94 enlisted men joined the Battalion being assigned from the 6th Replacement Depot. Four days later 5 additional enlisted men were

assigned to the Battalion from the 3193rd Engineer Base Depot Company. Five more replacements were assigned to the Battalion from the 28th Tank Battalion and reported for duty before the close of the month.

On 4 October 1945, Captain Delbert M. Buchman (MC) from the 25th Evacuation Hospital was attached for temporary duty as Medical Officer with the Battalion.

Letter from GHQ, AFPAC, AG 370.5 (11 Oct 45)GC, dated 11 October 1945, subject: "Assignment of Units (164)" effective 11 October 1945 relieved the Battalion from assignment to Sixth Army and assigned the unit to AFWESPAC.

On the 14th of October 1945, First Lieutenant Richard L. Craumer returned from Japan, being relieved from temporary duty with the 5201st Engineer Construction Brigade.

Radio message from the Commanding General AFWESPAC dated 15 October 1945 stated that effective 11 October 1945 that the Battalion was assigned to Luzon Area Command and attached to the 37th Infantry Division and further that the Battalion was scheduled for inactivation.

Letter 384-LACY, Headquarters Luzon Area Command (Provisional), APO 198, dated 16 October 1945, subject: "Attachment Orders," stated that the Battalion was attached to the 37th Infantry Division, APO 37, for all purposes effective 16 October 1945.

Chaplain Fred L. Zimmerman was relieved of assignment to the Battalion and assigned to Headquarters Far Eastern Air Forces per Special Orders #127, Headquarters AFWESPAC, dated 24 October 1945.

Warning Order for Shipment RK-601, Headquarters 37th Infantry Division, APO 37, dated 30 October 1945 stated that units of the 37th Division were to prepare to move to the United States and that priorities for movement would be established as shipping was available.

The last day of October the strength of the Battalion was 23 Officers and 580 Enlisted Men assigned, and one Officer attached.

At the start of November the Battalion strength was 23 officers assigned, one officer attached and 881 enlisted men assigned. Of this personnel, 2 officers and 10 enlisted men were on temporary duty in the United States.

Per General Orders No. 271, Headquarters AFWESPAC, APO 707, dated 2 November 1945, the Battalion was ordered to be inactivated, effective 5 November 1945 under authority of letter GHQ, AFPAC, AG 321 (25 Oct 45)GC, dated 27 October 1945 and pursuant to authority contained in War Department radio number 14871, dated 23 October 1945.

November 5th, Captain Delbert M. Buchman, who had been on temporary duty with the Battalion in the capacity of Medical Officer was relieved from attachment to the Battalion.

Special Orders No. 60, Headquarters Luzon Area Command (Provisional), APO 198, dated 3 November 1945 ordered the following disposition of Battalion personnel to units of the 37th Infantry Division, to be effective 5 November 1945: 111 Enlisted Men to the 117th Engineer (C) Battalion; 72 Enlisted Men to the 6th Field Artillery Battalion; 106 Enlisted Men to the 135th Field Artillery Battalion; 79 Enlisted Men to the 104th Field Artillery Battalion; 7 Officers and 191 Enlisted Men to the 129th Infantry Regiment; 161 Enlisted Men to the 145th Infantry Regiment, and 8 Officers to the 148th Infantry Regiment. Making a total of 15 Officers and 720 Enlisted Men relieved of assignment to the Battalion and assigned to the 37th Infantry Division

Special Orders No. 61, Headquarters Luzon Area Command (Provisional), APO 198, dated 4 November 1945, effective 5 November 1945, relieved from assignment to the Battalion 2 Officers and 10 Enlisted Men who were on temporary duty in the United States and assigned them to Headquarters Company, 37th Infantry Division.

Special Orders No. 62, Headquarters Luzon Area Command (Provisional), APO 198, dated 5 November 1945 ordered the following disposition made of Battalion

personnel, effective 5 November 1945: One Officer to the 108th Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon, APO 198; one Officer and 30 Enlisted Men to the 1267th Engineer (C) Battalion, APO 198; two Officers and 49 Enlisted Men to the 1284th Engineer (C) Battalion, APO 198; one Officer and 65 Enlisted Men to the 1294th Engineer (C) Battalion, APO 198; one Officer to the 34th Field Hospital, APO 198; 6 Enlisted Men to the 1157th Engineer (C) Group, APO 198; and one Enlisted Man to the 1127th Engineer (C) Group, APO 198. This group, totaling 6 Officers and 151 Enlisted Men relieved of assignment to the Battalion and assigned to the units enumerated, was composed of the personnel not eligible to return to the United States, all having less than 60 points, the current critical score for redeployment.

The 339th Engineers in its three years, two months and seventeen days of active service had set an enviable record. Working on a wide variety of projects under conditions that were frequently far from favorable, the 339th received numerous commendations as well as the award of the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque.

A total of twenty-one individual awards were made. The officers receiving individual awards included: Lieutenant Colonel William T. Bradley received the Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medals were awarded to Major Clarence B. Calaway, Major Norman L. Hall, Captain Donald A. Arthur, Captain Samuel A. Gupton, Captain Thomas C. Newman, Captain Leon J. Sorensen, First Lieutenant Richard L. Craumer, First Lieutenant Benjamin N. Wyche, and Second Lieutenant John R. Edwards. Enlisted men receiving individual awards included: Purple Heart Medals to Technical Sergeant Joseph J. Slantz, Technician 4 Donald T. Fought, and Technician 5 Benjamin C. Frampton; Bronze Star Medals were awarded to Master Sergeant James W. Clemo, Master Sergeant Ralph Mooney, Technical Sergeant Robert V. Angarola, Technical Sergeant George W. Copley, Technical Sergeant Philip M. Zannella, Sergeant James H. Gross, Technician 5 Howard F. Kuhns Jr.,

and Technician 5 Zegmound L. Niemczyk.

After 2 years, 6 months and twenty-one days overseas, during which time the majority of the personnel had earned a Bronze Arrowhead and three Bronze Service Stars on the Asiatic Pacific Theater Ribbon besides two or three Bronze Stars on the Philippine Liberation Ribbon, the 339th Engineers felt that the motto of the 339th, "Honor and Achievement," had been upheld and all were ready to return to the United States for a well deserved rest.