

1945

926 Engineer Aviation Regiment: September 6, 1945

United States Army

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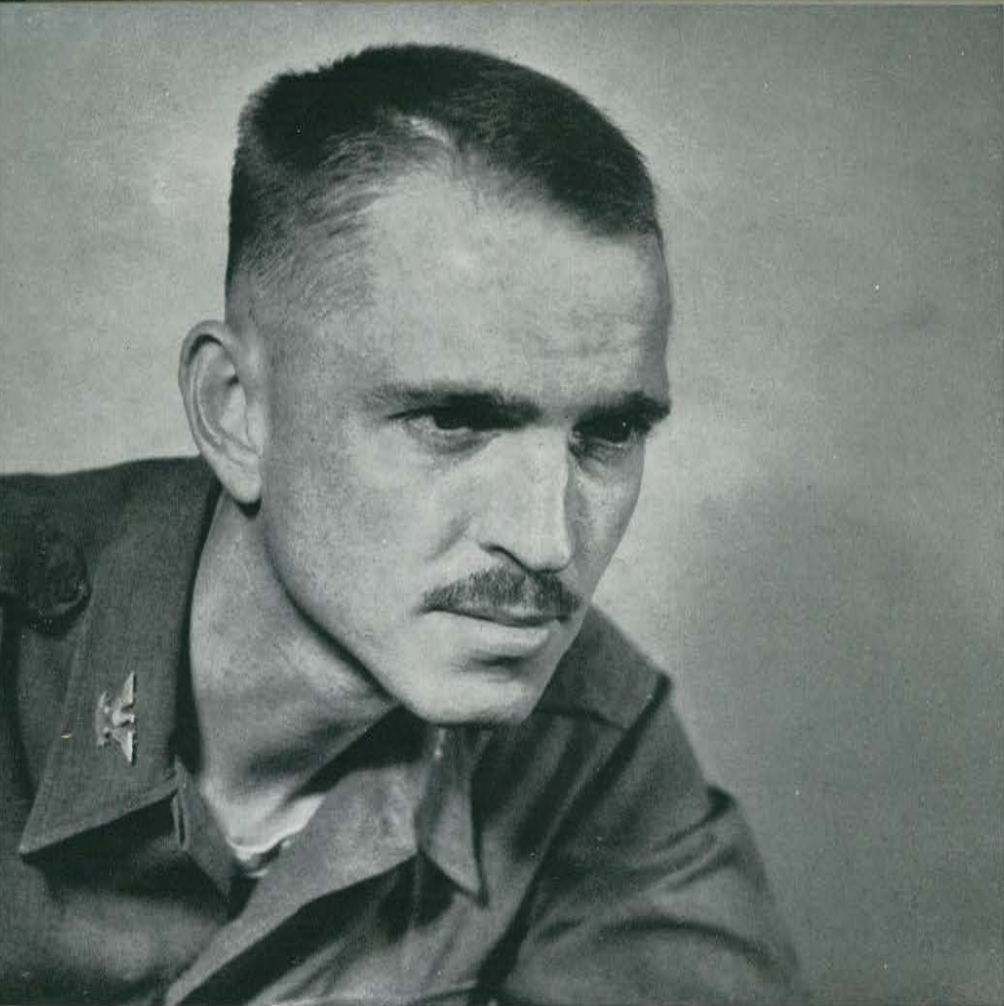
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ENGINEER
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926th ENGINEER AVIATION
REGIMENT



Col. Eric Dougan
Regimental Commander

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ENGINEER
AVIATION
REGIMENT

September 6, 1945

LIFE WITH THE 926th

Richmond Army Air Base, famous for much, added to its glory on 20 June 1943 by being designated the home of the second 926th Engineer Aviation Regiment (there had been an earlier one at March Field, California). After that, nothing happened to the regiment until 28 June, when the first personnel began streaming in from the 928th Regiment, the 805th, 1878th, 1896th and 1897th Engineer Aviation Battalions, from the First Air Force, from the 939th Camouflage Battalion.

For the next few weeks the company acted like the next best thing to a repple depple, with literally hundreds of men coming in, answering once or twice to 1st Sgt Lyons' bull-roar, then moving along. Except a few who held on and stuck. Even the officers flew in and out, Lt. Stiegele, Lt. Levkoff, Dr. Bernarkewicz.

Because it was alerted for overseas movement the day it was activated, the 926th found itself always in a steady turmoil. Because it was coming over as a Hq and Serv Co, more than as a Regiment, all the officers had to double up on their jobs, filling both company and regimental positions. Captain Jaffe was CO of both the company and the regiment.

Because of this alert, too, the "pass, leave and furlough" situation was tight. Some who qualified "expert" got their two-day passes, and everyone in the company was supposed to have a three day pass. Sad though, were those who, stopping to pick up their passes, only had them torn up — "Too far for four days". (Remember, Whitey?).

In between passes, though, came a hectic refresher in basic, four weeks per man. It even included a little marine drill, by Lt Chicazola. But invariably two squads got going one way, and two the other way and never the twain could meet, without falling out and in again. Then, too, special machine gun firing at Virginia Beach, accompanied by heroic rescues of the drowning machine gunners, helped keep all busy, and the little walk the company took, one day, for a rest and a swim, only to find after a long hike that the "lake" was a mud puddle two feet deep.

But despite the air raid practices, the endless checks to see that none had a plastic top for his canteen, and the ten-hour train ride for pass-men from Richmond to Washington, the company was finally ready. Or if not ready, it was going anyway, by train to Camp Shanks on the night of 14 August, followed by a hurried 4 days of rechecking.

And then, at midnight, the long, almost endless march, loaded down with full field packs plus barracks bags, from the barracks at Camp Shanks to the train, 1:00 A.M., 20 August 1943. From the train, loading

again up on to the ferry. After crossing the Hudson, the colored band's greeting with "Alexander's Rag Time Band". From the ferry it was up the long stairs to the pier, on to the Queen. The Lizzie; B deck, that is B deck with bunks half the time — seagazing the other half.

But the Queen made her regulation crossing, with her regulation rumors, and arrived safely at Gourock, Scotland. Greeted by the Scots Red Cross with tea and cakes, the company disembarked, 26 August, via lighters, to the shores of the River Clyde and a waiting train. After a twenty hour trip through the miniature, green country of England, they unloaded at Bury St. Edmunds, to move four miles to Honington Airfield, Honington, Suffolk.

The company was met at Gourock by Lt Col Dougan, who accompanied it back to Honington, where he had a new staff of officers picked. It was also met at Honington by a gentle rain, which continued thru most of the first week they were there, prompting Lt Kohnert's brief description, "Rough".

Rough, indeed, to many, seemed life out in the tents, out in the middle of nowhere. Tents where breakfast was a "hat meal", because it was too cold to take your hat off to eat; tents where it warmed up enough by noon to cause the first of a series of "Battles of the Bees"

But the company soon built itself up out of the mud, into "American Pre-fabricated Huts." It was possible, though difficult, to get down to the base to the movies, or to the Red Cross for doughnuts and coffee. We built a road past the mess hall to the Motor Pool, although at least three men (including one officer) walked through it before it had set. We survived inspections by the John C. H. Lee, always ending up with coffee at the mess hall.

As a regiment, we were very busy, with seven battalions, and jobs on at least thirty-three fields. The supply department took care of construction materials for Honington Airdrome, besides the company supply and special problems from the Battalions. Its four telephones were always busy; trucks wandered to the four corners of the United Kingdom; the narrow streets and crooked, signless roads became familiar to the drivers, as did the custom of driving with almost no lights through a dreary, lightless country. And on the wrong side of the road.

The company, itself, was given jobs of construction — huts at Ruffing, at Rattlesden, Knettishal, Snetterton Heath, Great Ashfield. Surveys were made for drainage at G23, for Lighting for night flying at Deopham Green. Faces began to change — Lt Hamlen, Lt Davies, Capt Jaffe, Lt Dean out, Lt Arehart, Lt Arnold, Capt Saari, Capt Whitt, newcomers. Mitchell Wright off to cartoon for Yank, Sgt Stonehill out; Fandel with all his expectations of going home, off to cook for 8th District, Sgt. Lyons finally "bellered" his last", OK you pencil pushing

chairborne commandoes." There was the case of the rank that went only part way off its rockers, but Sgt Turso went out to construction supervision. Incoming, though, was Sgt Moran from the 819th. Bn. Bury St. Edmonds was the local Pub-furnisher, with many a fog-bound trip back home. Cambridge became the mecca of all the steady time-offers, except those that took theirs as a "delay in route" at Leicester. London was not completely inaccessible, as witness those who were slightly delayed in getting back from there.

Meanwhile, events of interest took place: the first air raids, with great whistle blowing, running and shouting, and Godsey landing in the garbage pit instead of the shelter. Bartlett's six by six (truck, 2½ ton) had an encounter with a B-17 which had lost its brakes, and thereby lost its prop. Another air raid sent Sgt Guzik to inquire if there was anyone in a particular tent, and the reply "No" satisfied him so that he went to rout out the sleepers in the next tent. And, too, he who was told to "Blow it out" had it blown back in again, with proper words of apology, before the entire company. Thus Sgt Lyons' equanimity was restored.

One way or another, in work or play, the time went by. The dedication parade took place at Honington, on a field that had never been inoperational, in a fog which hid the reviewers from the reviewed. It did afford those reviewing a good study of how to get out of Parade formation, as the vehicles performed that duty directly in front of the reviewing stand.

The asphalt jobs were carried out, at Horsham, Framlingham, East Harling (where the fishing, too, was good). The charts were made, both big and small, but all were made to seem unimportant by the last and final one, purporting to show construction status on thirty jobs by a bouncing red ball.

The Christmas party was a great success, with the visiting children, as was the Urofsky-Webster expedition into Thetford to pass out the last of the candy. Christmas had enough turkey, although Thanksgiving had not. And while alcohol was scarce, it was not unheard of through the New Year Season.

The New Year brought with it the first winds of INVASION. Too, it brought new officer faces — Henderson, Coco. But with thoughts of invasion came plans to move, and a great reading up of all EBS (Eastern Base Section) directives, including "There will be no mud."

The move came 26 January to Great Barrington, Glos (short for Gloucestershire, but don't pronounce it "GLOSS", or you will be shot by the British just as you are if you pronounce "OXEN" for the abbreviation O-X-O-N for Oxfordshire). The move also came to a camp extremely unprepared for inhabitants, in the park of the Winfield's Lodge over the Windrush River. The camp was not yet ready, and the

Winfields were never ready, to receive the company. But back into tents everyone moved (except the officers of the staff who lived in the Right Wing of the Lodge, and froze to death). And into training everybody went, with much protest from the sections that were trying to function. But the marches began, and progressed, and nobody died off, although some may have wanted to. Among the prize maneuvers was the hike to Lodge Park, the bivouac, and home the next morning. No one was warm again until the company was almost home, because it took so long to work the cold out of bones and joints.

Then there were practice loadings, and weighing of vehicles (still being paid for six months after the Regiment got to France), making boxes and burning up camouflage nets (Winklbauer). There was the "Maidenhead Interlude" for many who reveled in no training at Engineer Command Headquarters. There were walls knocked down, and firing ranges built. There was firing on the range, with the cardinal sin (I shot a bullet in the air, and if it hit, I know not where) done by one officer sacrosanct enough to be clothed in discreet silence.

That was the period of greatness of Bourton on the Water, and the first introduction to Oxford, due to prove valuable later on. The dance held in "The Goat's" Hall in Great Barrington seemed to have almost too many women for men, but can also be remembered for Sgt Goldman's girl, who kept biting everyone's ear, and the entertainment by the men from the company among whom were Halpin and Frischmann.

At Barrington, too, the habit grew to "live with nature". At least, with a herd of deer grazing nearby most of the time. And all learned of India Grass in the Cricket Pitch.

There were changes, too, with Major Houck and Lt Arehart gone, and Capt Whitt; Capt Henderson with the company, Lt Zeno in S-3. There was the presentation parade, with Brigadier General Newman giving the Legion of Merit to M/Sgt Owens of the 818th, with one unique feature, the gun for retreat delayed until after the entire ceremony. There were other occasions of distress over that daily explosion, when it failed, or was too light, or was so heavy it showered dirt and nearly blew in the windows of S-3. The first water proofing tests took place with their accompanying bath in the ice cold pool at Farmington. And Captain Rountree came, letting Capt Henderson return to the Staff.

The completion of two months' training at Barrington (interspersed with the problems of running the Station Command), found the unit turned back to the control of EBS for a month. That involved a move back to East Anglia, to AAF Station 170, Wethersfield, Essex, England. That month proved to be the most valuable time the company had to prepare for overseas movement, short sea voyage. Witness to that fact were the endless showdown inspections, each the last one. And the maneuver "Boomerang", when some 60 honored individuals had the

pleasure of drowning two D-8's in 10 feet of sea water in an incoming tide of the English Channel.

May 1944 saw the Regiment move back to the Oxford area, at Cokethorpe, near Witney, spelled without an "H". It was a month mostly of waiting, interspersed with occasional practice moves (i. e., from Cokethorpe at 2100 one night out to Home Woods, set up camp, bivouac, have breakfast, break camp, and move back to Cokethorpe, all the time remembering camouflage discipline). There were hurried officer couriers to London and Bray Court. The "Top Secret" War Room made its appearance, guarded night and day. The Company was split into A, B, and C serials, having already lost "X" serial and also Lt Kohnert, who went out with the first echelon of the 819th Battalion. There was, too, a bird which desecrated hallowed ground by defecating over S/Sgt Usmar. A mob of "parasites" descended, looking for a ride over to the continent. Two Air Technical Intelligence Officers with two Non Coms, one German speaking Air Force POW Interrogator, and assorted Brass from IX Engineer Command.

D-Day found the company ready but still waiting. "C" Serial had gone off to Blandford Camp, where the trucks were used to haul everyone else to the Marshalling Area, and the Reproduction unit reproduced for IX Engineer Command in between visits to Salisbury.

A recital of the 926th's assault on the Continent can't be done chronologically, but must be done as the "serials" moved. For the convenience of those who want to read about only their own moves, each section is set apart. Lt Kohnert, "Z" serial, lived in Camp K-7, near Totnes, Devon, with the 819th; loaded on an LST on 27 May at Brixham, sailed 4 June to arrive off Utah Beach on the afternoon of D-Day, landed the next morning, and moved with the 819th, to Ste Marie Du Mont, and from there to their site at Beuzeville.

Detachment "X", Major Ray's task force of three officers and seven men, left Bray Court on D plus 3, moved to Southampton, loaded on LST 571 the next day, 10 June, sailed from Southampton 11 June and debarked on Utah Beach that same day, with only one of the three vehicles drowning out in the water. After the first night spent at A-6, Beuzeville, they picked out and set up a bivouac at Ste Mère Eglise. Their only problem proved to be that Seventh Corps decided it liked the same spot. So the detachment moved to the area one mile east of Chef-du-Pont, Marne, on Route GC70. There, except for occasional disturbances such as Lt Kohnert's falling out of the trailer where he was at a meeting, they carried out their job of watching the maneuvers of the Fourth Division, of looking for airfield sites, of braving the bridge at Carentan (and the snipers there too), of checking the Battalions' constructions of some of the first airfields on the continent. It was there that the rest of the company caught up with them.

Detachment A moved out of Cokethorpe, the heavy equipment at 1800 on 10 June, the lighter vehicles at 0100 on the 11th, following a send-off midnight pancake supper put on by "B" serial. With only one or two minor mishaps and misturns, they arrived, together, at Marshalling Area D-5, Broadmayne, Dorset, in time for lunch, 11 June. Due to the lack of parking space in that area, all the heavy equipment was moved to the "starting point" (a large parking area on the spit between Weymouth and Portland Island) where it waited in or near the gravel pit.

Back at the marshalling area the detachment as a whole had been broken into three sections for movement across the channel, just to add to the elements tending toward confusion. The first section, headed by Lt Col Dougan, 12 officers and 75 men (less equipment operators who were already at the parking lot at the "starting point") spent a quiet night at the marshalling area, spent the next day getting all of its special equipment (life preservers, seasick bags etc.) and moved out at 1800. Stopping at the starting point, they collected their heavy equipment, waited there until 0200 the next morning, staying long enough to get a steak dinner at midnight. Moving on down to the "hard" at three o'clock, they watched some fancy maneuvering by the LST, which finally made fast. Then followed some fancy loading in the dark. The top deck of the LST took trucks until it seemed it could take no more. The wobbly wheel roller was put in place behind a steel column, lifted in by hand, and the last truck went on with its front tires sticking out over the side of the elevator well. Only some fancy placing under Sgt John Harris got the top deck in, and some fancier work by Lt Orsay and his men on the Tank Deck got all the equipment on and still left some (but only some) lights in the ceiling. But with the patience of Job and the help of an extra D-8 from the later shipment, everything got settled in the boat, and the men found a spot to bed down. By ten o'clock the ramp was up, the folding doors were shut, and LST 1084 was ready to sail. They left Portland Harbor the same day, arrived off Utah Beach on 14 June. Waiting (some say for the tide to go down and leave the beach dry, others say for the Germans) until midnight. They began their dry debarkation auspiciously enough. But just at that moment the Germans decided to make their nightly check of the beaches. They dropped flares, and, not to be outdone, the beach defenses threw back up at the Germans everything they could muster. The fireworks display surpassed that of any Fourth of July celebration ever held. So did the resultant traffic confusion surpass the normal tie-ups on a holiday night. MP's seemed always to have just been posted, told to "keep 'em moving down that way." Capt Kelley, as a one man beach traffic control, got trucks pulled out of the water, out of the sand, and sent them scurrying down the beach amidst the constant clamor of ack-ack, and in the light of the German chandeliers. With Captain Legler at the head of the first lot of vehicles, the detach-

ment slowly collected itself in a field of Transit Area A, bedding down about 0400. An early check by Captain Kelley located the other detachment at Chef-du-Pont, and at ten o'clock on the 15th of June, camp was made at that site.

Section two of the detachment, (Lt. Zeno, six men, two D-8's, one 12 yd scraper and one grader, road, towed) moved out of the "Starting Point" with the first section, and loaded on LST 1085, right next to 1084, at the same time, early on the morning of 13 June. They sailed in the same convoy, and unloaded at the same time. Although their ship's colonel thought it would be a good idea if they got off last, so he could take off his ammunition first. They got off first, but got on the beach a bit farther up North than those from LST 1084. So they were shunted, in the complete dark, toward transit area B - a long way with a "walking" cat and a wide load on behind. They made it, though taking apart only one wall, and they also got to Chef-du-Pont in the morning of 15 July, despite their discovery on waking that, in the "cleared" field where they had put up for the night in the rain, there lay a tellermine just 50 feet from where Gordon's cat had passed in the dark.

Section three (Lt. Norton, four men, 2 D-8's, each with a 12 cu. yd scraper) waited at the "Starting Point", for an LCT. After helping LST 1085 load, they waited some more. A tie-up in that particular size ship kept them for two days in the gravel pit, eating regularly at 6 and 12, 6 and 12, the only steady customers the place had. They moved into the Red Cross trailer, broadcast the records and news to the passers-through, had beer brought down from town, and waited. Finally at 1830 on the 15th, they moved to the hard, got on their LCT and collected the three signal trucks that were their only company. Those 30 signal men decided that engineers worked hard, after they manhandled a 12 cu yd scraper full of diesel oil into place on the LCT. They sailed the 16th, landed with two feet of water at 1800 the 17th, went to the 819th site at A-6, Beuzeville. The next morning they moved to Chef-du-Pont.

Detachment B's greatest asset was that it was really detached. Left at Cokethorpe, with nothing to do but wait, it made the most of its opportunity. Oxford, even Bourton-on-the-Water, felt the influence of that detachment. Movies ran from nine in the morning to four the next morning. The best description might be "a good time was had by all." But the end came, and at 1830 on 21 June, they pulled out of Cokethorpe to move to Weymouth. Due to a slight miscalculation by the Transportation Corps, they took the long way round, and that long way involved going over a very narrow, curved bridge. Only part of that bridge is still standing. But they got to Weymouth at 1400 on the 22nd. There they, too, were split into the vehicle and the "walking" parties.

Lt. Arnold, with two officers of the staff, and 99 men went by truck on the 27th to Weymouth Harbor. The intervening five days had not been unhappy. There at the harbor, after waiting two hours for coffee and doughnuts to be heated and made, they were ferried out to the LSI PRINCE HENRY. They sailed that night, unloaded on Utah Beach on the afternoon of the 28th and proceeded to march over ten miles up the hot, dusty road to field 30, Transit Area B. From there they went by truck to Chef-du-Pont.

The vehicle party had also had its heavy equipment sent down to the gravel pit by the Starting Point, so the heavy equipment men spent five days merrily on the sands, keeping the Red Cross girls there well entertained, and making a good name for the engineers. But those days came to an end, and on the 26th the vehicle party moved to the hard, loaded on LST 1752 (at least most of it), sailed on the 27th, arrived off Utah Beach late on the 28th, unloaded at 1500 on the 29th, moving to Transit Area B. The next day they all arrived at Chef-du-Pont.

Detachment C, mostly the Reproduction Section and two prime movers and trailers, were the first part of the Company to leave Cokethorpe, and the last to reach the continent. The intervening time they spent at Camp Blandford, where they hauled other units' equipment to the Marshalling Area and for IX Engineer Command. Except for occasional encounters with Lt Green and Salisbury, life there proved peaceful enough. Finally on 8 July, the majority of the equipment and men left Blandford, embarked at Southampton on LST's and LCT's on 13 July, sailed that day, and debarked on both Utah and Omaha beaches, and drifted piecemeal into Chef-du-Pont. The prime movers that brought over someone else's rock crusher and left its own trailer behind, got home to Chef-du-Pont, too, and the trailer turned up two months later with the 825th Battalion. So finally the Company was complete again in one spot.

The first things most people saw at the site at Chef-du-Pont were hedgerows and cows. But the place was finally taken away from the Bovines, the kitchen was set up by the stone wall, pup-tent areas for each section's men selected along the hedgerows, and the motor pool was installed in the next door field. Bit by bit the camp expanded, S-4 moved into the motor pool area, Lt Arnold extended his orbit to include a neat shack, the medics hid out under the trees after being chased out from across the road (not before Major Jump cured Lieberman's sore back with a haircut, however), and Lundquist put up the second Tower of Babel to furnish all with hot showers. Those were the days, too, of much scrounging for souvenirs, of the expanded construction section for the furnishing of offices and homes made out of crashed glider bodies. Those, too, were the first trigger-happy days, epitomized by the unhappiness of the two who joined the colored troops

(who surrounded us) in firing M-1's at an escaped barrage balloon over a mile high in the air. And it was rumored from unstated sources that the source of many paratrooper boots was through those same colored troops. The first out-door movies started at 2300 and lasted until 0300 in the morning. There it was that "Foxhole Wilson" earned his name, darting underwear-clothed, from one prone shelter to another, deeper, prone shelter. And there, too, Draper did his best to break up Col Dougan's speech by firing at Van Leer's crowd.

But those were days, too, of work as well as scrounging. As the Army progressed, the recce team followed as close as possible (sometimes too close, so that a hasty retreat had to be made). That's where "Trailblazer Saari" and "Fearless Zeno" gained early fame, as well as "Let's get out of here Bushby" and the M. P.

And when a proper site was found at Picauville, it was Hq & Serv Co and Lt Kohnert who were given the site to plan and to start construction, to clear of hedgerows and trees, of dead cows and dead Germans. There the first man of the company was wounded, when Milburn's cat ran over and exploded what is thought to have been a German hand grenade, and a piece of shrapnel lodged in his arm. (It's still there). This was the beginning of a summer of long hours and much work, scattered, almost at one time, over the entire Cherbourg Peninsula (and even farther to the East, almost to the British Territory by Bayeux). Normandy was also where we had the first introduction to Calvados (white lightning, which the man who drank even brake fluid declared undrinkable). It was the time of many bumpy trips back down to the beach, even out to anchored ships in DUKWS, hunting for needed supplies. Many were the crossings of the now famous Tucker Bridge at Carentan, and many were the curses at the dust and bumps on the one-way detour around that city.

But work progressed, and Sgt Corbin surveyed Querqueville and Maupertus amongst the mines; the runway was changed four times at A-23-CND; the clearing was done at Creteville with one last row of trees left up to shield the work from the Germans' direct view.

Along about this time Major Ray left for the 850th Battalion, and Lt Col Grimm joined the Staff; then within a month Capt Bartmess left to go to the newly formed 2d Brigade. Lt Orsay's loss had already been felt, following his illness and Lt Carey and Lt Wickler had joined us. During this time too, Sgt Gordon had been injured by a clash with a tree (one he was pushing over with his cat), had gone to England, and had found his way back on his own hook, despite red tape.

Foreshadowing the end of this period, as if (according to rumor) he could see into the future, Sgt Moran sent Boudreaux to hunt for culvert pipe at St Lo, but sent him there a week too soon. The place wasn't

taken. But it was taken shortly after, and the First Army made its break-through, and the Third began to exploit it.

The first "advance headquarters" of the regiment took off. Setting up near Avranches, they checked the country-side for hasty-construction airfield sites, getting the 819th into Pontorson before anyone knew they were at it. They also got directions to go check the field at Lorient, and almost did so. Fortunately they discovered that the Germans still held that city in some strength, before they drove on into town. But they got some excellent lessons in how quiet it can be in the country, and how lonesome, without another American soldier within miles.

But with the 826th at Gonfréville, the 833rd at La Haye de Puits, the 819th at Pontorson (right by Mont St. Michel, the historic landmark at the junction of the Cherbourg and Brest peninsulas), and the 850th about to go to Vannes out on the Brittany Peninsula, the regiment was off-center from its work. So on 9 August it packed up and "infiltrated" to south by sections. It was a long, hot, dusty trip, and was the first of many moves, so there was much to learn of the techniques of "déménagement", as the French call Moving-Day. It was the first session with strip maps on the continent. But bit by bit we all collected in the heavy "Forêt de Fougères" one hour from Rennes, the heart of Brittany.

The country was a revelation, as different from the dusty, battered Cotentin Peninsula as could be imagined; there wasn't a constant struggle to find "oeufs", to see through the dust whenever you moved. There were even things to be bought in the stores, if you wanted a banjo head, that is.

But all was not strictly pleasure. At Fougères we had our first contact with the ideas of distance. Whereas formerly it had seemed a long ways from Chef-du-Pont to Cherbourg for supplies, now it was necessary to retrace all the way, up past the Mortain - Falaise Pocket, to Cherbourg; ninety miles for spare parts, clothes, everything but food and gasoline. Instead of taking an hour to get to a battalion it would take half a day. Yet the same work had to be done, the same reports carried, the same materials transported or found locally.

But there, too, the movie "Hat Check Honey" brought its first rainstorm (to be repeated at two more attempted showings) and the tri-daily officer inspection for serviceability of the salt shakers was instituted. There were dug the only fox-holes of most of the Company. Also well learned by many were the details of a proper latrine box.

But Fougères didn't last long. In fact, the Advance Headquarters left four days after the main part of the company moved in. And the stream of night couriers driving off to find the new camp tucked away in the woods at St. Denis D'Orque began, and continued steadily

until we all got the word to move to Alençon. On 19 August we pulled up the tent stakes and moved out on a much less uncomfortable trip than the first (at least less traffic and less dust and fewer bumps). The new site, on a dirt semi-circle between Fyé and Bourg-le-Roi, seemed to be a spot well chosen.

Well chosen because Fresnay was nearby, so all could meet and "faire la connaissance de" Marie, because it had a big field where S-4 could park overnight the floods of material-convoy trucks that Command sent down to the "Regimental Check Point" before it notified the Regiment that it was to have a Check point. Because it was near Lonray, to become A-45, the second field on which Hq & Serv Co began construction by itself, after doing the layout and design.

Convenient, too, for our Company Commander who liked on occasion to cut down Pup Tents, and for chemists who believed in doing away with howling dogs. Convenient, also for a party.

Organization Day; Rountree's Roast; a Good Binge; Fyé Folly; what a Hell of a Day. Many are the terms that have been given to 27 August 1944. Born of a desire to mark the year's existence of the Company (which was too busy to celebrate on the actual anniversary, 20 June), set to coincide with one year overseas for the Company, that celebration was a thing to remember. Following a session by R— 's Rustlers, the cooks did a most masterful job of barbeque. Then, too, Bushby's Beerhounds had dug up the necessary wine (and some other items of interest, including the famous Rountree - Jarvis exchange, "That's my hand, Jarvis, do you mind?" "Oh go away, Pop"), at Vannes. There was also Calvados to be had in the vicinity. A guard was borrowed from the 850th so that all could enjoy the day, and the officers were to do KP following the dinner so that all others could relax.

But most everyone got to relax before dinner. There was a first-three-grader vs. officers softball game, which the officers won, by the way. And there was a preliminary to a horse race, (that is, the horses were seen in the paddock), but the race was cancelled when the irate owner found Baber and Moose riding them, Indian style, back and forth through the camp. And then after dinner things began to get really gay. The local civilians came in, went out, came in again, finally stayed. Colonel Dougan presented the Purple Heart Medal to Tec 3 Milburn for his wound received at Picauville. The local talent show, produced from somewhere in Le Mans, tried dutifully to produce a show, despite a raucous audience, a very poor talent, disturbances at their dressing-tent door (guarded majestically by Lt Arnold) and the interjection of sundry and various local talent items from the Company, paced by a well-liquored, red-headed, be-brassière first sergeant. In the late afternoon, when a visit to many parts of the Company area

would have revealed little but sleeping forms, General Newman arrived for the celebration. Probably the happiest beings at supper that night were the everpresent, buzzing bees.

Anything that happened at Alençon after that party was but an anti-climax. There were other dinners at Marie's; other excursions here and there, even other auto accidents, and other work problems, but the first recce parties left to follow Patton across France within a few days, and Alençon was a memory even before we left it.

This recce party, with the Advance Headquarters set up at Romilly, proved to be the first big one. Things were getting organized. All battalion recce parties found themselves at the same spot; and camp, complete with officers' mess, was set up.

Also set up was the morale of the men, when a whole warehouse of Wehrmacht liquor was found. Enough was carted away (when we could get in between the Third Army trucks) to give away to the battalions and also higher Headquarters. Incidentally, sites for construction also were found, and on 6 September the Company set out for a "Transit Point" at Ste. Sophie, near Connantre, where it was to meet the advance party which had moved up from Romilly. Arriving there just before, and all during, that night, it found a comfortable woods but no advance party. Bedding down for the night, they spent the night without casualties (except for the S-4 section, whose rustic shack, chosen as a shelter, leaked like a sieve and nearly drowned them all). Morning brought a message as to where the Advance Party had finally settled, and the company moved on out to Larzicourt, near Vitry-le-François. That was flat, plain country, abounding in level grassy spots which could be marked out, wind socked, and used as flying fields for some time (until wet weather set in).

Also marked out were the rows for the pup-tents, for the company was past the combat stage, and needed to readjust itself to soldiering. But, nevertheless, it could disport itself chasing Germans across the Marne, even if they did turn out to be Frenchmen. There were Germans in the vicinity, though, as Schiraldi proved by picking up three who came out to surrender.

Surrender, too, was the final step of the NCO's in running the bar for the men in the Special Service tent. The idea was finally abandoned after an incident or two discouraged any continuation. But never discouraged were the fishing expeditions in the Marne. While possibly the system was not "cricket," the result was a couple of good fish fries.

The stay at Larzicourt was brief, and enlivened at the end by a visiting USO troupe. Their show may have been dulled a bit, but their evening parties were apparently worth the result. Combined with a birthday celebration, a promotion or two, Big Ick's champagne, and

the ever-present Romilly stock, those few days proved hectic. Another advance recce had put out however, and saved the day by finding, from its base at Toul, enough airfield sites to warrant moving. (It provided, too, a story about Lt Kohnert's almost running through a brick wall at Toul. It sounded a little merry).

Since winter seemed about to descend, it behooved one and all to find a spot to keep out of the cold, and it was found (although none could dream how long the company would stay there) at the Caserne Felix Douai, St. Nicolas de Port, to the east of Nancy. When it moved in on 20 September the bridges weren't even in, but they were well worn by the time it left.

Many things happened in the six months and seventeen days spent at St. Nicolas. Neighbors came and went, the area changed from one Army territory to another, to Com Z. Winter came and stayed, and left. Airfields got built, by dint of much labor and many cold hands and feet. Fields planned in Hessian Mat changed to Pierced Plank over thick layers of stone. Instead of in days, construction then figured in months. But through it all there was a steady trend of events to keep all busy or entertained. The social events increased with dances nearly every week. Passes to Paris started, then to England, to Brussels, furloughs to the Riviera. French became the favorite study, even for Major Jump, who learned his from the kids he treated, to practice on his other, older friends. That social life kept busy is evidenced by the marriages to girls in the vicinity of St. Nicolas.

Warlike events had also taken place, as for example, when at supper hour one night, all hell broke loose (and also Sgt Bushby's calibre .45 pistol) at an enemy plane overhead. And after that threats of court-martial seemed to be the only thing that would keep certain men from shooting calibre .50 machine guns at anything that went overhead. The threat of having the lights shot out through un-blacked out windows, too, was made, but finally peace and darkness descended on St. Nick.

But there were other things, besides an anti-feces campaign complete with lectures, and shovel details scouring both inside and outside the fence. There was the French kid who blew himself up with a grenade just outside the wall. There was the episode of "who manjayed the poulay," which threatened to bring the house down upon its occupants.

From St. Nick went out the Advance Party that wasn't an Advance Party, but a recce party that just waited to get into its objective for eight days. Famous mostly for "Bed-check Charlie," the German plane that came over every night between 8:30 and 9:00 (2030 and 2100) and the poem it produced, "The Storming of Hagenau". That recce group came back to camp after being away only from 28 November to 15 December.

There at St. Nick were passed Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, and Easter Sunday. Christmas dinner in the dayroom, with beer for all and announcement of some few promotions. New Years day with a summary by Colonel Dougan of the work done by the Regiment.

But some of the company weren't "home" for Christmas, for the Regiment had a show "on the road" most of the winter. Sponsored by Lt Baum, it had men from both Regimental Headquarters Company and the Battalions, and toured the Engineer Command as well as front line units such as the 101st Airborne Division. And then there was Sgt Blanchard, who had ridden away on the mail truck one day, and ended up in the infantry, where he wanted to be.

More changes came about — — Capt Rountree had left, Capt Sproul was in S-4. Capt Saari had taken the company in the fall only to give it up to Lt Zeno in March. There were, too, the demands for the Infantry, when many familiar faces left. (Later often proving not to be Shanghaied, but actually sped homeward soon.)

One change that generally turned out to be a headache was the attachment of a French Battalion to the Regiment. Their habits of red wine and roquefort cheese for breakfast didn't kill off any of the men attached to them, and some of them found a home (ask LaBarre and Spurlock), but their habit of driving trucks and tournapulls through the sides of houses brought despair to the spare parts men.

But winter turned to spring, and spring brought better weather. It brought, too, the reconstruction of blown-up Haguenau, and construction in the Rhine Valley. A second advance headquarters was set up at Haguenau, this time right on the field. That was in March, the month of Remagen, the bridging of the Rhine on all fronts, the beginning of the end.

Parting brought much sweet sorrow, but the company was off, away from Nancy, across the Rhine, off to follow the galloping armies in the dash across Germany. On 3 April they set up in tents in the woods, at a spot variously called Darmstadt, Biblis, or Lorsch. They had the first introduction to "Autobahnen", to keeping out enemy civilians, to non-fraternization. Colonel Dougan left for 1st Brigade, taking Litsinger and the Doughnut with him, and Lt Col Cook took command. Lt Kohnert left, changing places with Lt Parrish from 2nd Brigade.

The reconnaissance parties, now under Capt Sullivan who joined the Regiment in March, never stopped, when the company moved this time, but kept hot on the trail of Seventh Army, switched to Third when the 925 and 926 Regiment swapped areas. The rapid advance made supply, and evacuation, by air, imperative, and the recce parties became in reality "Marking Parties", marking out captured fields as soon as they were taken. But already operation "Eclipse" was getting set, the preparation for the Occupational Air Force. And while fighting was

still going on, battalions moved onto fields for permanent construction, and the regiment's activities compelled another move. So they went across $\frac{1}{3}$ of Germany, into the heart of Bavaria they went. Another long haul, not over the best of roads.

As a matter of fact, that first trip to Fürth is a memorable one for many, particularly those who followed Lt Arnold across hill and dale, through field and forest (and mud), on as hectic a jaunt as was ever known to man.

Set up comfortably on the airfield at R-28 at Fürth-i-Bayern, near Nurnberg, the regiment undertook its part in the O. A. F. construction program. It was there that V. E. day found them, and also V. J. day. There had been outdoor movies every night, swimming after work at Linde Stadium in Nurnberg, baseball games (both soft and hard), an end to non-fraternization.

The regiment opened its Rest Home in Nancy, to supplement those lucky few who could get back to Command's homes in Paris and St. Gervais, or to the Riviera. The point system came out, and everybody started "sweating it out." The low-pointers went, and, bit by bit, the high-pointers. Life seemed sort of dull, as it always is when you're waiting for something to happen. There were little events like the cat's trying to eat up the chicken one day before it could be cooked for dinner, and several memorable farewell parties for the 208th Medics. There was the "Junior Organization Day," celebrated this year on the 4th of July, but for most even it was a let-down after the year before. Although some braved the green wine long enough to get happy, most of them regretted it later. Recognition of the work of some of the men came in the presentation of Bronze Star Medals to M/Sgt Wilson, T/Sgt Corbin and M/Sgt Moran.

A thorough change of company officers took place, with Lt Carey, Lt Wickler, Lt Arnold, Lt Zeno, Lt Dabrowski (the last of the Richmond officers) all leaving, and the officers from the 850th Battalion coming in: Capt Bushby in command, Lt Hopkins, Lt McLaughlin, Lt Nyborg. Lt Koenig joined the staff.

Colonel Dougan's departure for the ZI (Zone of the Interior, or the United States) towards the end of August 1945 pointed towards the cessation of operations, and the rapid completion of assigned work. The growing desire on every hand to finish up and go home indicated that the existence and function of the 926 were nearing an end. Only those busy with redeployment, and Sergeant Desilets in his unceasing work to compile a publishable history, had much to occupy them other than routine tasks. Instead of looking back upon a job well done, patting themselves and each other on the back and otherwise passing timeworn compliments back and forth, most turned their thoughts to the future, a peaceful civilian future which (though they never thought of it), they had helped bring back.

WHAT THE 926th DID

The foregoing record was written to recall the personal side of the Headquarters Company, to remind you of the men you knew, the things you did. It says little about the accomplishments of the Regiment, or of its battalions. And yet that record is an enviable one.

The 926th Engineer Aviation Regiment, when it arrived in England, was assigned to the Eighth Air Force, but was attached to Eastern Base Section of SOS (Services of Supply) for operations, to assist in the program of heavy bomber field construction then in progress. Begun by separate battalions, it had grown to tremendous proportions, and needed the controlling influence of an intermediary headquarters, between the separate battalions and E. B. S. For that purpose, regimental headquarters were introduced from the States. One regiment came over completely staffed from the States, but the 926th, upon arrival in England, was staffed from the battalions which were assigned to it. In that way, a staff was set up that was (it was hoped) more considerate of the battalions' problems, and well aware of the hostility felt by units that had already served over a year in the United Kingdom when another, "green" unit was put in to control them.

Under E. B. S. direction, the regiment had considerable control over its battalions, and the 926th had seven to control, 818th and 819th working on the Depot facilities at Honington, where the Regiment was located; the 820th at AAF Station 470, Wattisham, Suffolk, and the 844 and 846th both working on the Depot at that same station; the 826th at Station 123, Horsham St. Faith, near Norwich, Norfolk; and the 830th at Station 505, Watton.

By virtue of attachment, the battalions were left free to continue their own administration, supply, personnel classification, histories, etc; the regiment governed only their construction activities, and helped on construction supply only when help was needed (except that the regimental supply did all construction supply for the job at Honington, carried on by the two battalions and Hq and Serv Co.).

In addition to the major assignments listed, there was such a successive flow of work assignments from VIII District of E. B. S. that record of them is well nigh impossible. Work was carried out on at least 32 airdromes in addition to the major construction; at one time the regiment had over 100 active work orders. From Ludham and Matlack through Leiston and Ruffing, to Rattlesden and Framlingham,

men and equipment of the 926th were spread. One of these far-flung jobs was the construction of housing facilities at 15 stations (16' nisson huts). The hutting material, ordered by VIII District before notification of the job assignment to the Regiment, was delivered before the battalions to do the building knew they were ordered. Some eleven huts, confused with another assignment of huts for AAA installations, never were found.

Another project carried out (once rechristened the "rat race") was a contest in laying a pierced steel plank runway at Bottisham, Cams. One company of the 846th Engineer Aviation Battalion defeated a company of the 346th Engineer Regiment (GS), laying its half in 60 hours and 15 minutes.

Indicative of the hours put in on extra work, two ten-hour shift days, and construction planning, is the list of construction equipment above the regular allotment (which in itself includes Caterpillar tractors and a $\frac{3}{4}$ cubic yard shovel) used by the regiment, covering more than three single-spaced typed sheets. This list of extra equipment included 3 rock crushers, 5 Barber Greene Ditchers, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cu. yd. shovels 3 Quickway cranes, and a collection of British equipment ranging from an old-fashioned steamer (roller) through 87 or so Bedford lorries (trucks) to 3 Adnum-Foote pavers.

But towards the end of 1943, heavy construction projects were drawing to a close. The Ninth, the tactical Air Force, had arrived. Eyes were focused on the continent, seeking out points for invasion. Minds dwelt on rapid, emergency construction; on conditioning; on mines and booby traps; on combat.

On 26 January 1944 the 926th was transferred to the Ninth Air Force, and entered upon a period of training, and of waiting, of preparation for overseas movement. In order to cope with its tremendous problem of preparing fields for advanced fighters and fighter-bombers to support the ground forces as closely as possible, the Ninth Air Force created its IX Engineer Command, under command of Brigadier General James B. Newman, Jr. That Command operated with the regiments directly under its control until the beginning of August 1944, when it created two Brigades, to follow more closely in the footsteps of the two armies then functioning in the field; later, each Brigade had two army territories to cover, when the First, Ninth, Third and Seventh Armies all were aligned on the Western Front. These Brigades kept in touch with the Tactical Air Commands, which were divided themselves, likewise, to work with the Army Areas.

However, before the invasion itself, sites for possible fields in the assault areas were studied from aerial photos, and from "Multiplex Maps", made by machine from stereo-pairs (pictures taken of the same

site from almost identical positions, but not quite), which showed contours, and from ground samples and reports received from the continent itself. Regimental areas were assigned, and battalions selected for the earliest landings.

The 926th was selected to work on "Utah" Beach, the one actually on the Cherbourg Peninsula, while the 922nd was given "Omaha". The 819th Battalion was selected to be the first battalion ashore on Utah, followed by the 826th. One company of the 819th sailed so as to arrive off Utah on June 6 (with Lt. Kohnert of the regiment with them). Part of the Battalion landed, and completed an emergency landing strip (for disabled craft to use for crash landings if they couldn't make it back across the Channel) on D-Day. The rest of the first company got ashore the next day, and they all moved to Beuzeville, the site of field A-6. (Fields were not numbered in order of their construction, but were numbered prior to the invasion). The first section of the 826th arrived along with Major Ray's detachment of the 926th, on D plus 5. The small detachment took over supervision of the two battalions' work, and the 826th was sent at once to the site for A-10, Carentan. Other sites earlier proposed were not yet captured. Within four days, the 819 had begun work on A-7, Azeville, a bit to the north of A-6. Meanwhile, on June 15, the main serial of the Regiment arrived, and set up at Chef-du-Pont. It was kept busy scurrying about the Cherbourg Peninsula (as far as it was safe) looking for airfield sites, and finding more souvenirs than it did sites. It found Picauville, A-8, however, and the Headquarters Company began actual construction on that site, before it was turned over, 10% complete, to the 826th. The first Hessian Mat runway built by the regiment was put down there.

In England, all the battalions had built concrete runways. Now their problem was entirely different. Hasty construction, actually only temporary work, was in order. For this, certain types of material had been developed. The first fields built were made of a very heavy wire matting. It was actually heavier than wire, almost a metal rod netting. It was called by two names, Square Mesh Tracking (SMT), and British Reinforcing Concrete Mesh (BRC), and it closely resembled the reinforcement wire put in concrete. It could be unrolled, and one roll covered an area 77' long and 7' wide. It was held together with specially manufactured clips.

Another emergency surface, much more durable, but also much heavier, was Pierced Steel Plank. It was just that. One plank was 15" wide and 12½' long; it fastened by the hooks on each plank fitting into slots in the adjoining one. In the later stages of construction, sometimes Pierced Aluminum Plank was substituted. While of no less bulk, its weight was less than one third that of steel plank.

The third surface used was called variously Hessian Mat, Prefabricated Bituminous Surfacing (PBS), or Prefabricated Hessian Surfacing (PHS). It was a burlap-like cloth, impregnated with Bitumin, then rolled, with a dry powder to keep it from sticking together. When unrolled, and passed through a machine called a "stampmaker", it was moistened with a mixture of diesel oil and gasoline or tar and gasoline (it varied with the different manufacturers) that was already in the machine. This softened the bitumin in the cloth. When laid down with a 50% overlap, each layer fastened itself to the one underneath, and, when sealed along the cracks with tar, made a waterproof coat over the previously constructed firm foundation.

Often either Mesh or Plank was put down over a Hessian coat, which thereby protected the sub-base from excessive moisture, but couldn't be damaged by prop-blast or locked wheels of turning aircraft.

Just before Cherbourg fell, the 850th Battalion began to arrive, and collected itself in time to move up to A-15, Maupertus, and shortly thereafter, to the other side of Cherbourg, where it carried on the simultaneous construction of T-3, later rechristened A-23-CND (for Cargo, Night-fighter, Depot), Querqueville. Piling or bridging material or anything to put a runway over the sea was for a while the problem of the 850th on that job, as extension to the desired length in the desired direction created the need for moving a mountain, a village or the coastline. But at length an equitable agreement was made, the center line finally laid down. Thereafter nothing but wind, rain and soft spots delayed the completion of the job, except the damage wrought by an over-exuberant B-17 which jockeyed into one of the hangers.

The 850th was after a while assisted by, and then relieved by, the 877th Airborne Engineer Aviation Battalion, on the job at A-15. That unit, too, was assigned to the regiment for the duration of the job.

Meanwhile the 833rd Battalion arrived on the Continent, on 2 July. It was given the job of a medium bomber pierced plank, two-runway field at A-13, Tour-en-Bessin, on the far side of the 922nd's territory, on the border of the British Sector of operations. The 846th Battalion was also attached to the regiment to help the 833rd on that one job. For two days, the 843rd Battalion was attached to the 926th, with the assigned job of building A-16, Brucheville, another field surveyed and laid out by the 926th, but the Regiment was relieved of that assignment and the Battalion reverted to the 925th Regiment, which had reached the continent.

The succession of jobs went on with equal rapidity during the entire summer. Battalions were attached and detached in accordance with construction needs, and finally the administrative channels got accustomed to changing, and so each switch was complete. Such a system tended to work more satisfactorily than having four battalions

for administrative control, only two of which were working for the Regiment, and seven battalions for operational control, with only two of those under administrative control of the Regiment.

The focus of attention, after Cherbourg had been taken, turned to the South, and sites were picked near Creteville, Gonfréville, and La Haye du Puits. And just at that time the First Army made its break-through, and the Third went through to exploit it.

This began the period of rapid expansion, during which the system of "clutches" or groups of fields became more prominent. Each group was put as near to the front as possible, so that by the time it was finished and had planes stationed on its fields, they could give close support to the front line troops, which meanwhile had moved ahead some distance.

The clutch of fields in Brittany was anything but a close group, scattered from Pontorson out to Vannes, but the next group, built around the Alençon area, was much more concentrated. This worked for ease of communication, not only among the constructing battalions and the regiment, but among the occupying units later.

One of the most important functions of the Regiment, after supervision of construction, was the supervision and coordination, and the proper reporting, of reconnaissance for new sites. The searchers followed close on the heels of the advancing armies, particularly anxious to find sites suitable for marking out transport strips, so that air supply could be furnished to keep the armor on the advance. This supply and evacuation field program had its initiation in the advance across France, but had been developed to a finer degree in time for the push east of the Rhine. The Fields thus set up were often the ones later developed into fighter and fighter-bomber sites. These reconnaissance parties were far from always being safe, but had a remarkable record for avoiding real trouble. The number of possible sites, from abandoned German sites, destroyed by bombs or German demolition, or intact, to stabs in the dark at places that just looked possible on a map of the area, that were visited by the reconnaissance parties under the control of the regiment goes into the hundreds. There were 150 formal reports made on sites considered worthy of consideration. More than twice that number were dropped merely after an initial visit to the spot.

Following the Third Army across France, the next crop of fields done by the Regiment was around Vitry-le-Francois—St. Dizier. Some 12 fields were done here. One, A-82-C, marked out as a transport field by Headquarters Company, and called Etain, was later made into a Pierced Plank field by the 925th Regiment, and rechristened Verdun.

Mid-September found the Regiment beginning another clutch of fields in the Nancy area, but the Fall rains found them still beginning. The weather delayed construction; mud, snow, ice all hampered operations. Sites originally scheduled for Hessian (which cannot be laid in wet weather) were changed to pierced plank over thick sub-bases of rock. It was a matter of building the fields up out of the mud, and at the same time of keeping fields built earlier operational throughout this same bad weather. Construction time was stretched to months instead of weeks, but the fields were finished.

February brought one new problem, the attachment of a French battalion, which added language difficulties to its other construction problems. While it has been the studied opinion of some that the problems they created were more bother than the construction they actually completed was of use, the unit finished up several odds and ends of jobs that otherwise would have held American units, and also brought in one Supply and Evacuation strip which was used to supply French Armored units in Germany.

March 1945 brought improving weather, and construction of fields in the Rhine Valley around Strasbourg, including the rebuilding of the field blown up at Haguenau in front of the German push in the first week of January. It also, following the crossing of the Rhine, brought the reconnaissance teams into the flat, eastern Rhine River valley. In early April the Regiment crossed the Rhine, and built the clutch of fields around Darmstadt and Mannheim.

Later that same month, the 926th switched Army Areas with the 925th, and moved out to the Nurnberg area to follow the Third Army, giving the Seventh and First French Army Areas to the 925, and also the French Battalion. There, besides finishing out the Supply and Evacuation Field program, the Regiment began the Occupational Air Force construction that was to keep it busy through V-E-Day and V-J-Day. Permanent construction brought a return to concrete pouring, to asphalt programs. But it also brought into sight the final end of the work.

Little mention is made anywhere of the actual work of the men who operated the heavy equipment for long hours, sometimes within artillery or mortar range of the enemy, or of those who moved that equipment over long miles of bad roads in good and bad weather, with C Rations often their only food for days. On occasion, true, these men found a "home" along the way, finding pleasure and entertainment as well as rest and comfort, but not always.

No idea is given of the hours spent by clerks, handling routine matters and emergency reports, in cold (or hot) tents, or in buildings, as chance would have it. Nor of the draftsmen who made charts, preliminary drawings, drawings of changes, final drawings.

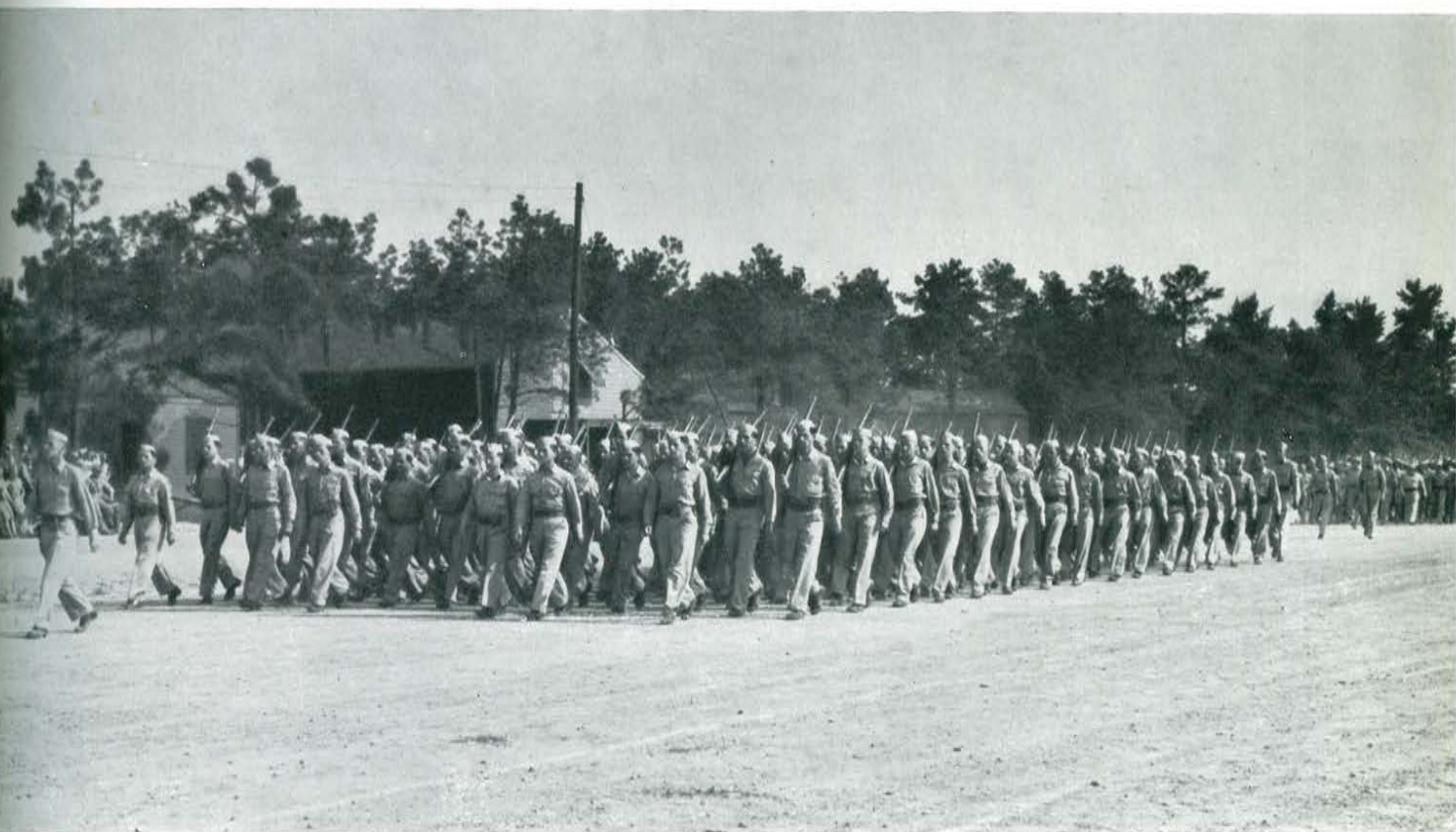
Nor yet of the drivers who, with or without patience, carted officers from airfield to airfield, or from site to unsafe site in search of information, or back to Paris over ice and snow to chase supplies or attend a school. Of the cooks who fed their company three meals a day for 27 months, on the move or in permanent stations. Of the thousands of hours spent encoding, decoding, transmitting and receiving signal messages, or of the thousands of calls placed to Paris, "Roadbed", "Rowdy" or "Research."

And yet, it takes all of that to add up to the total mission accomplished.

The photographs in this book deal mostly with the men who made the Nine Two Six a real outfit. No attempt is made to record their military accomplishments. It is hoped that these pictures will help perpetuate friendships made in times of war.

Grateful thanks are extended to Capt. Norton for writing the foregoing history, and to Paul Yaloures, Michael Shuga, and Joseph Wickes for their untiring assistance in getting this book to press.


Paul Desilets.



U. S. A.



Chicazola's soap and water brigade, getting ready for Saturday's inspection.



Shuga sweating out a Saturday night pass. Byer and Krizer next.



Jarvis and Black listen closely as old soldier Blanchard explains the M-1.



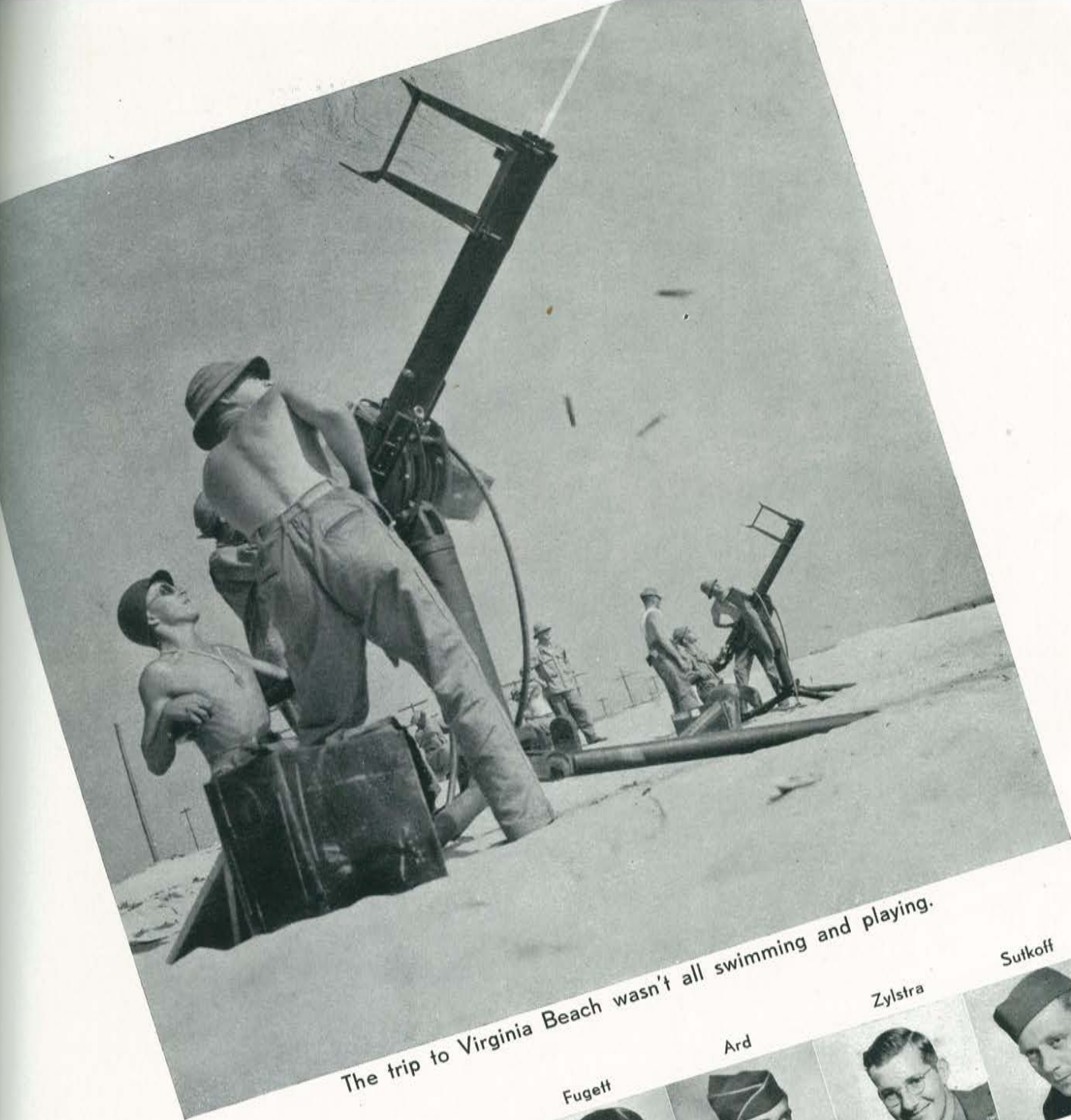
Siciliano points out a camouflaged installation on an aerial photograph.



Stonehill makes a sketch while Smith and Hymie hold up the job.

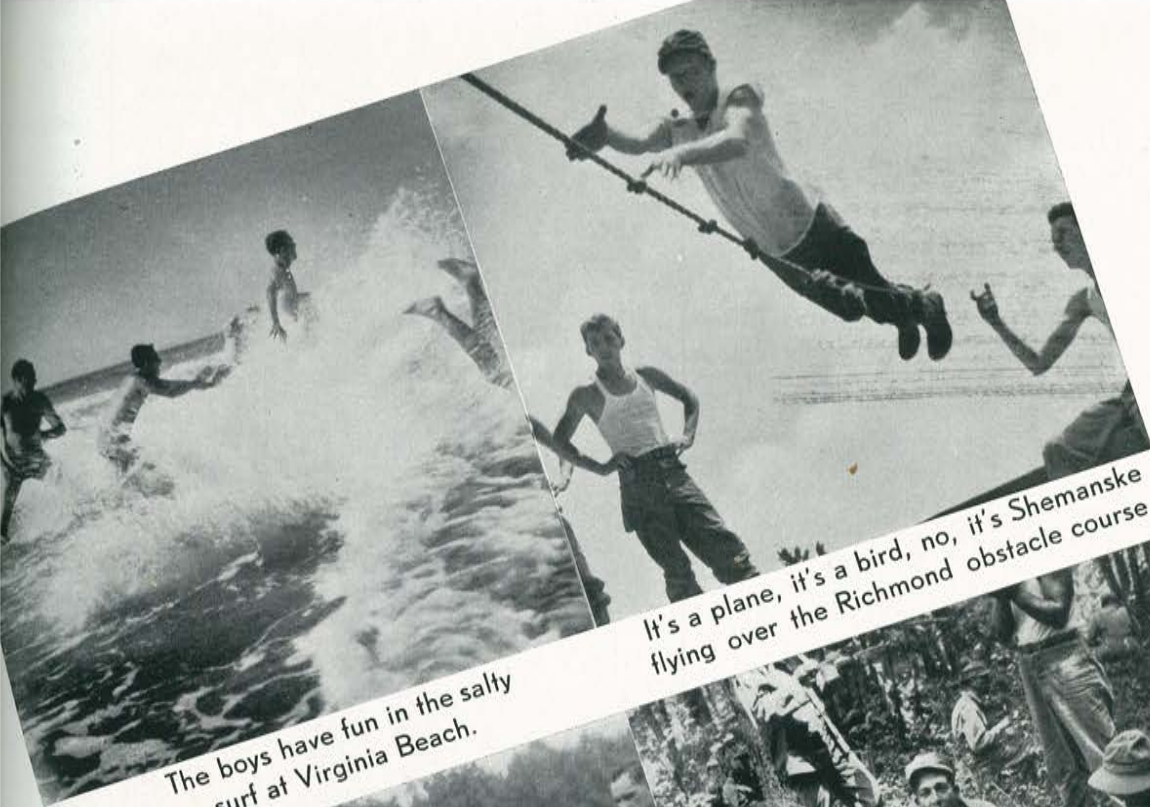


The gang would think it funny if Hurwitz blew himself up.



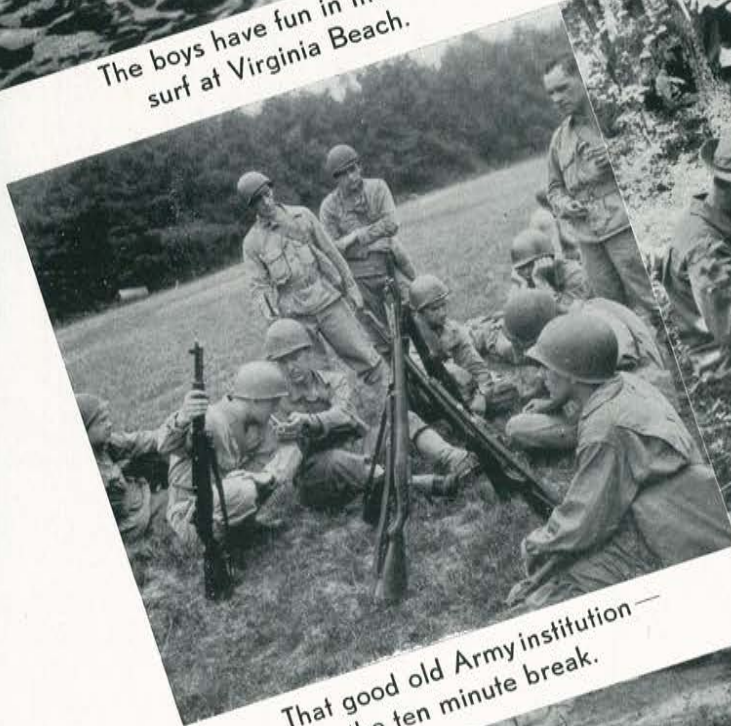
The trip to Virginia Beach wasn't all swimming and playing.





The boys have fun in the salty surf at Virginia Beach.

It's a plane, it's a bird, no, it's Shemanske flying over the Richmond obstacle course.



That good old Army institution—the ten minute break.



Eating from a mess kit was a novelty in those days.



Bet 'em if you have 'em.
Halpin solos for the boys.



Lts. Stiegele and Levkoff controlled firing from the target pits.
Maggie's drawers flew high and wide those days
at the range.

A bit of fancy shooting at Virginia Beach.
Engineer training would never be complete without
knot tying.



Learning the squad system of laying hasty mine fields by the numbers.



Green's haircut went well with his goose-stepping as we did commando calisthenics.



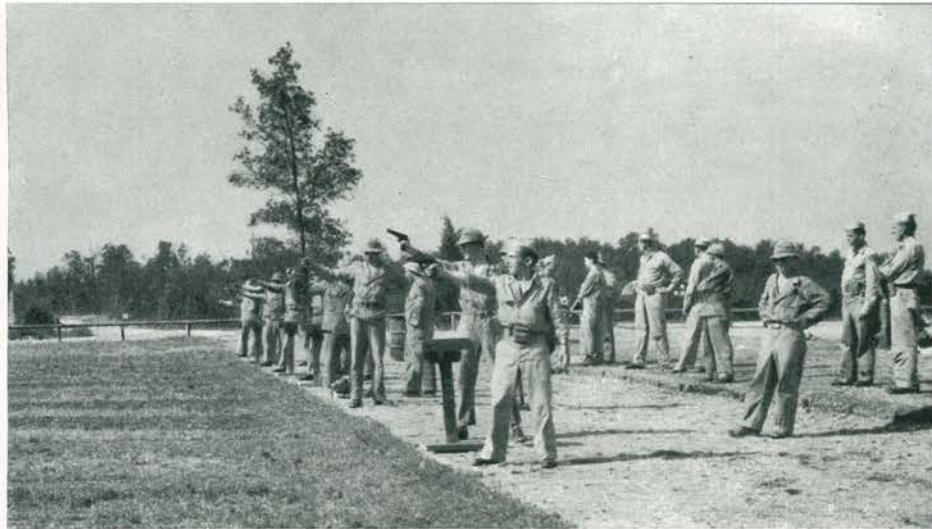
Turso's old campaign hat was a familiar sight at the rifle range.



Those snappy uniforms were not so sharp after the dusty retreat parade.



Remember Lt. Levkoff's booby trap that didn't work?



A large part of training in the states was devoted to marksmanship. Above the boys are mastering the 45.



Even in the U.S.A. the repair section kept the equipment in shape.



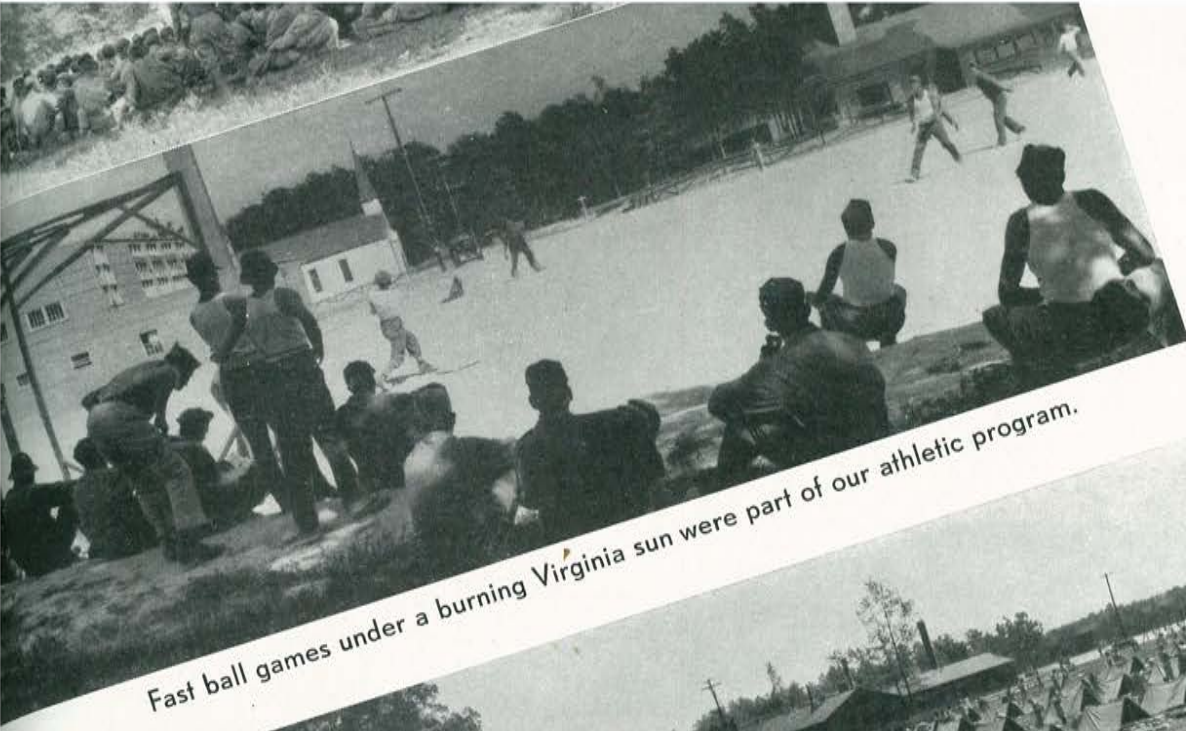
Lt. Davies was range officer the day we first heard the classic remark, "who fired that shot".



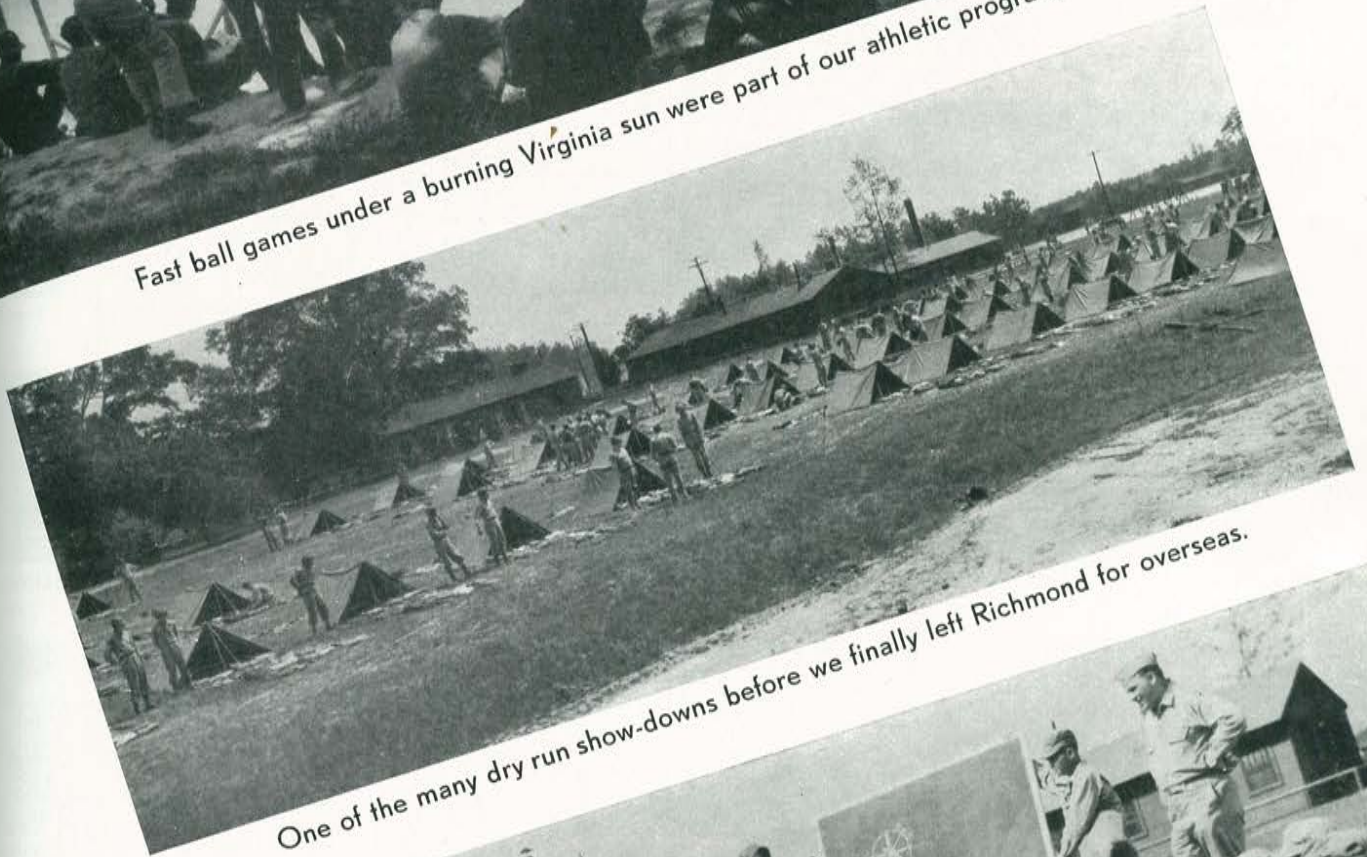
Turso left-shouldering his A bag for another dry-run.



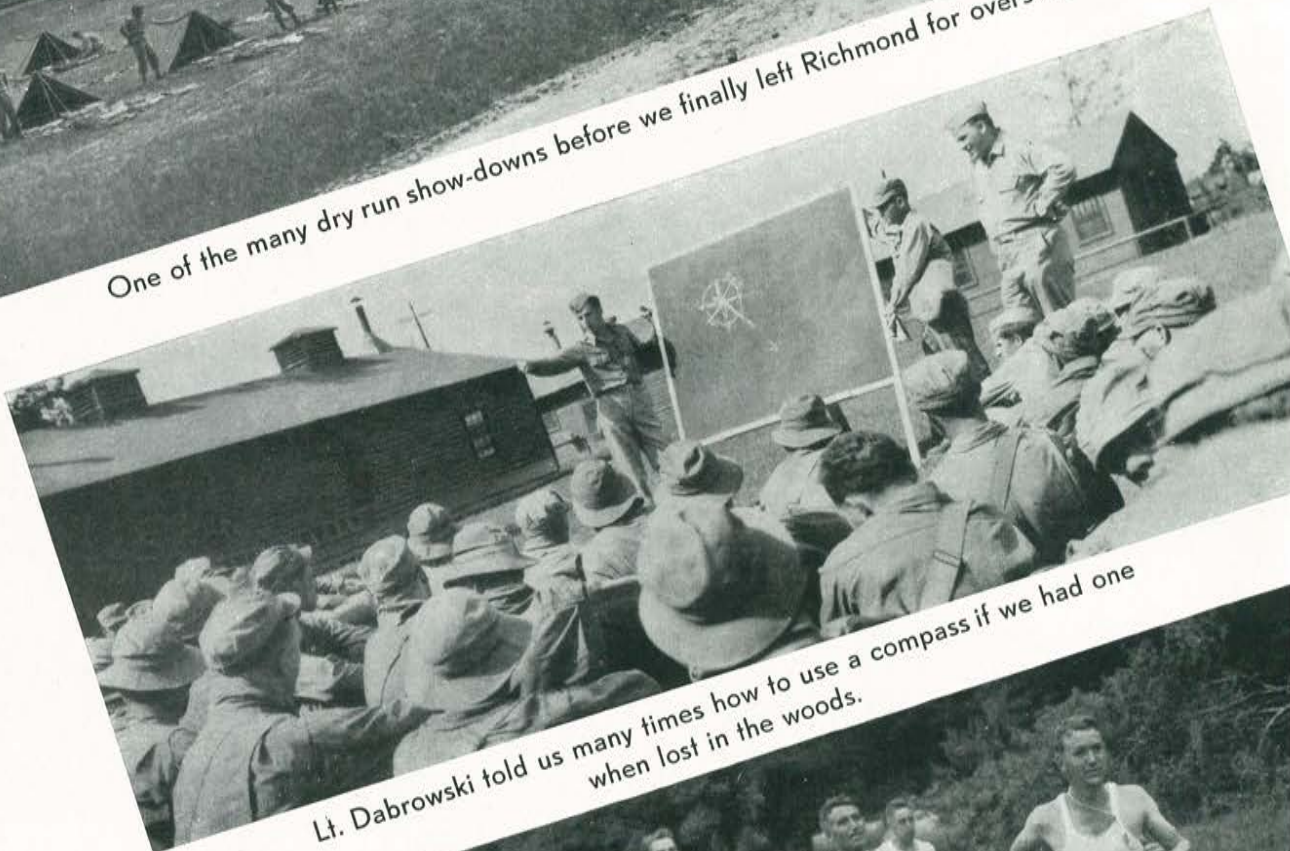
Making sure that Girton hasn't forgotten anything. A complete check before going overseas.



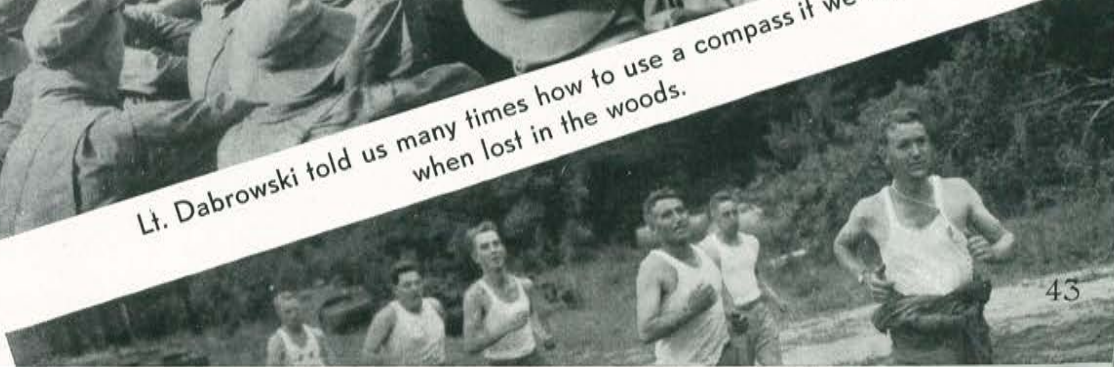
Fast ball games under a burning Virginia sun were part of our athletic program.



One of the many dry run show-downs before we finally left Richmond for overseas.



Lt. Dabrowski told us many times how to use a compass if we had one when lost in the woods.





Caldwell Blackmon Harman Brannon E. Miller Friery Hrovat Brown

Mitchell Regafuso Reilly De Benedetto Lyell Salisbury Corbin Lapp

Yausy Leverett Izaquirre Capt. Saari Sipolino Newman Ray Morris Heinis

Boudreaux Capt. Sullivan Schuchman Magann Holen Kempton Dietl Biagioni

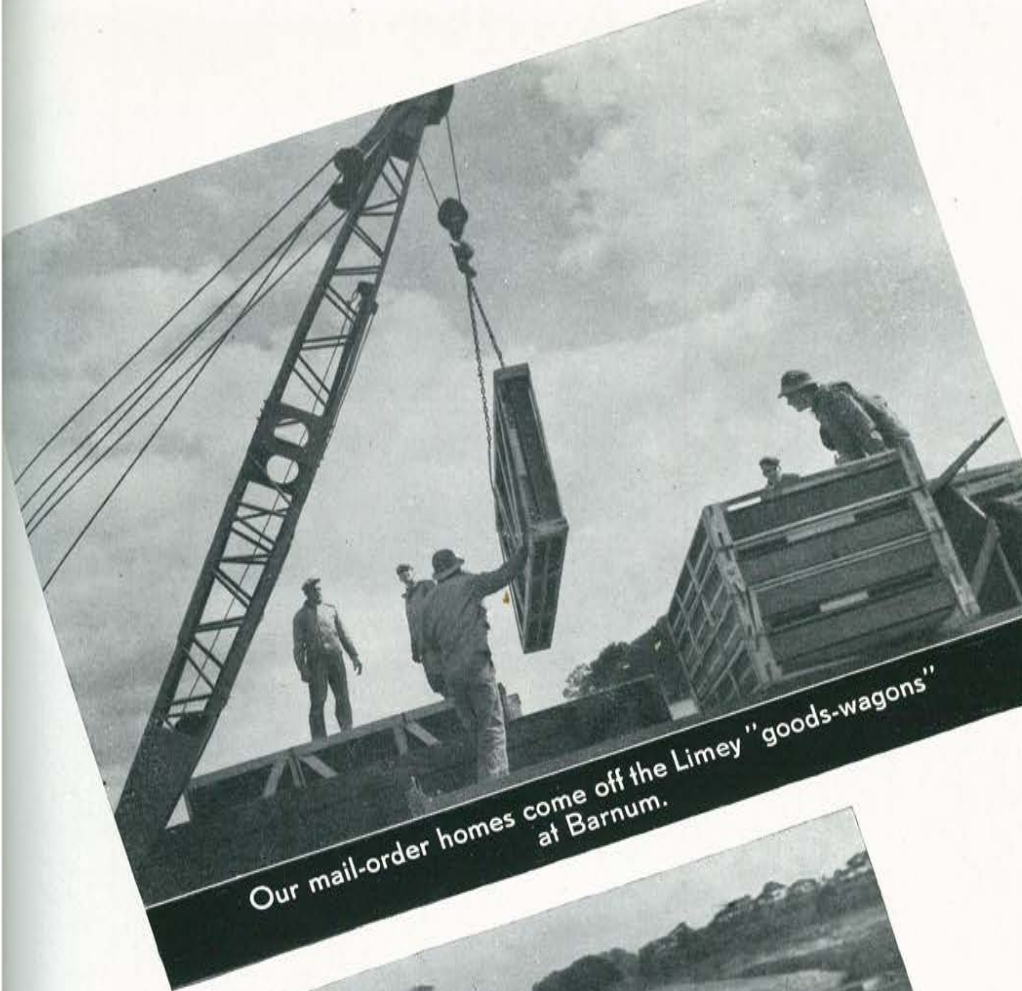
Lisinger Barnes Dworniczek Ulbright De Marco Binford Larson Axson

Van Leer Derrick Capt. Sproul Kuykendall Hanchey Moreno Myers Girtton

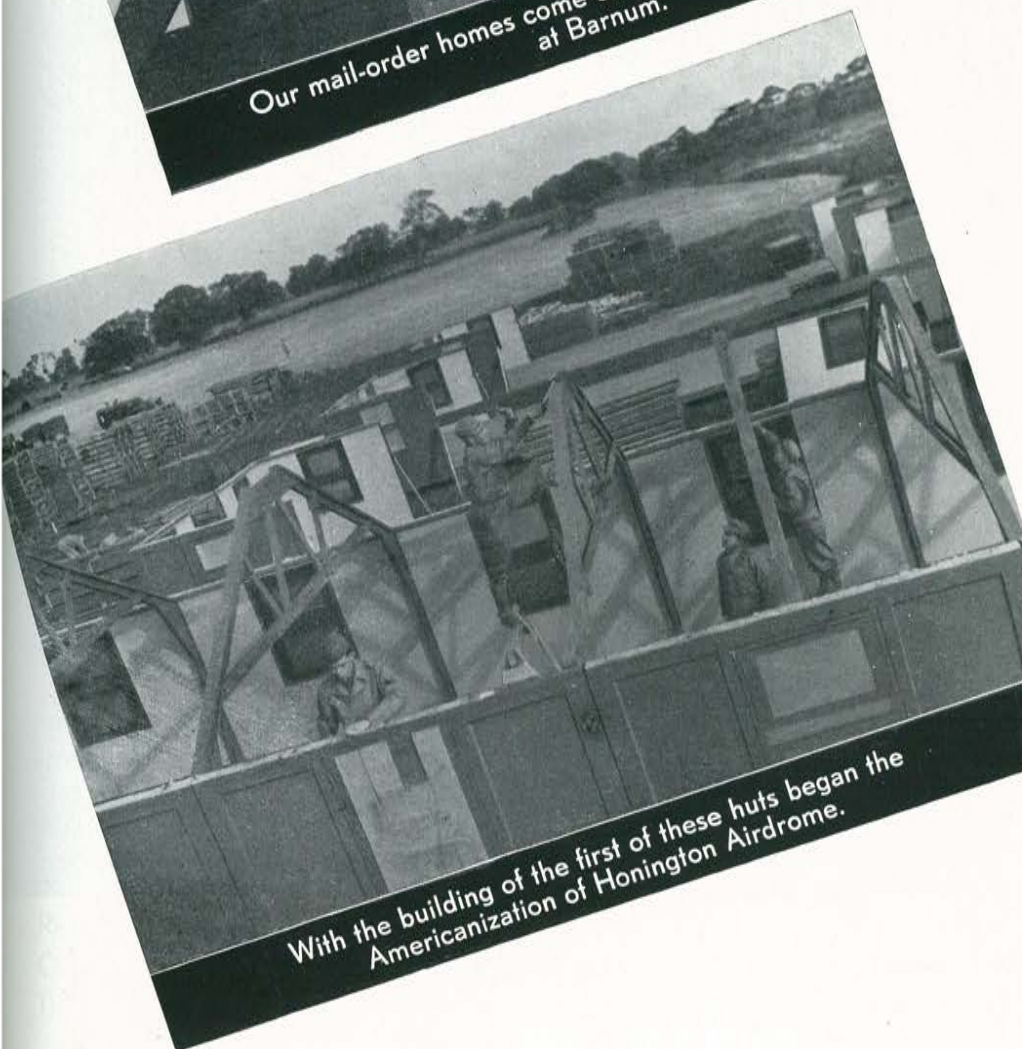
Safford Stevenson W. Bailey Curry Holke Infinger J. Robinson Carlin



ENGLAND



Our mail-order homes come off the Limey "goods-wagons" at Barnum.



With the building of the first of these huts began the Americanization of Honington Airdrome.



Saturday training.
A go at bridge building.



This stamp licker didn't come from the post-office.



Jaramillo, Walton, Dec, and Roberts,
wrestle a cement block.



Red Cross Clubmobile's first visit to us at Honington. Our boy Neely cuts a mean rug with a Red Cross doll. There's a time and a place for everything.

Sings While You Wait — Louis Fox, Prop. Maxine Martin makes Ekerman's eyes pop. And a good time was had by all at Barrington.



Klinger
Lauer

Gordon
Post

Baggiano
Lewis



Lt. Arnold
De Vitis

Kroupa
Killion



Hup, two, three, four. Hup, two, three, four. Same damn thing every training day.



Paris
Birbas

Bartlett
Mann



Dennie
Briley

Lt. Col. Grimm
Reed

Milburn
Winter

One of the many lectures in the field, discussing military methods.



Close order drill at Honington — hup, two, three, fouring on the hardstand behind the company area with incomplete work in the background.



Laying pierced plank for the review at Honington.



An advance under the protection of small arms fire. This, of course, is a dry run. The location is still Honington.



We even learned how to handle Supermen — hell, that was easy.



This is when we almost blew up half of England. Lt. Orsay is making with the words of wisdom.



A little bit of England is suddenly elevated. Result is on the left. 55

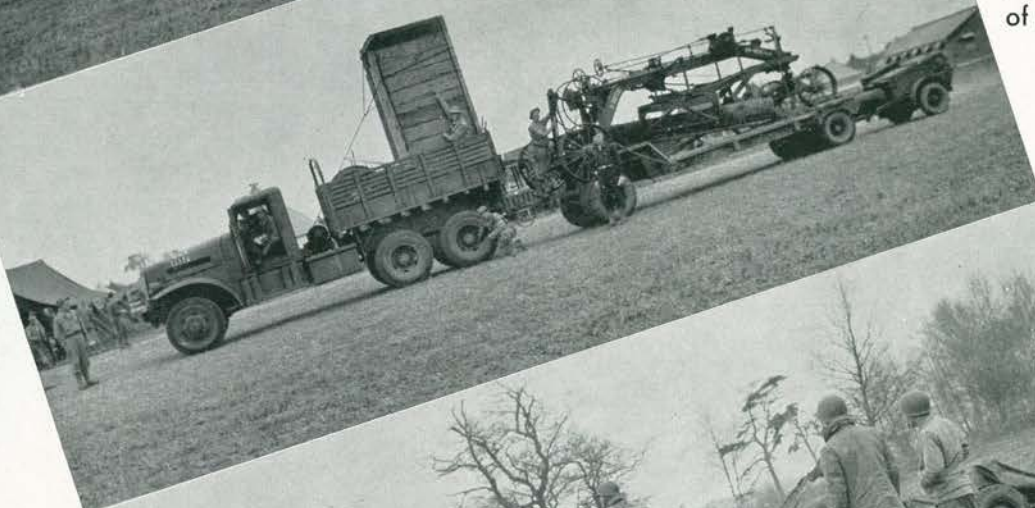


John Trask sighting the centerline for a new runway.



Lt. Coco, Lt. Chicazola, Capt. Whitt,
Lt. Col. Dougan, Major Houck,
Capt. Ray, Capt. Henderson,
Lt. Orsay, Capt. Rountree.

Lt. Arehart, Lt. Norton, Capt. Kelley,
Capt. Bartmess, Lt. Saari,
Lt. Dabrowski, Lt. Arnold, Lt. Legler,



The outfit really started
rolling with the arrival
of new equipment.

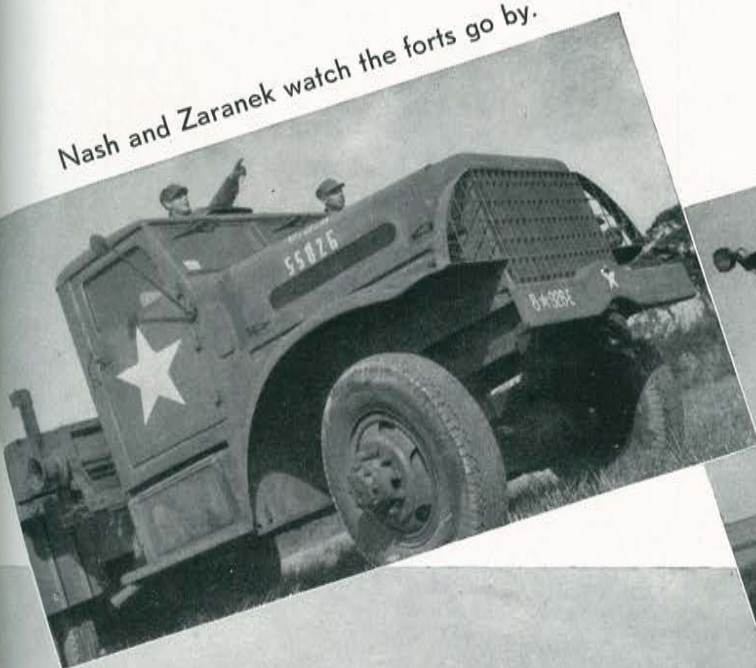


Using a camouflage net on a
37 mm. gun on one of those
cold, foggy, English mornings.

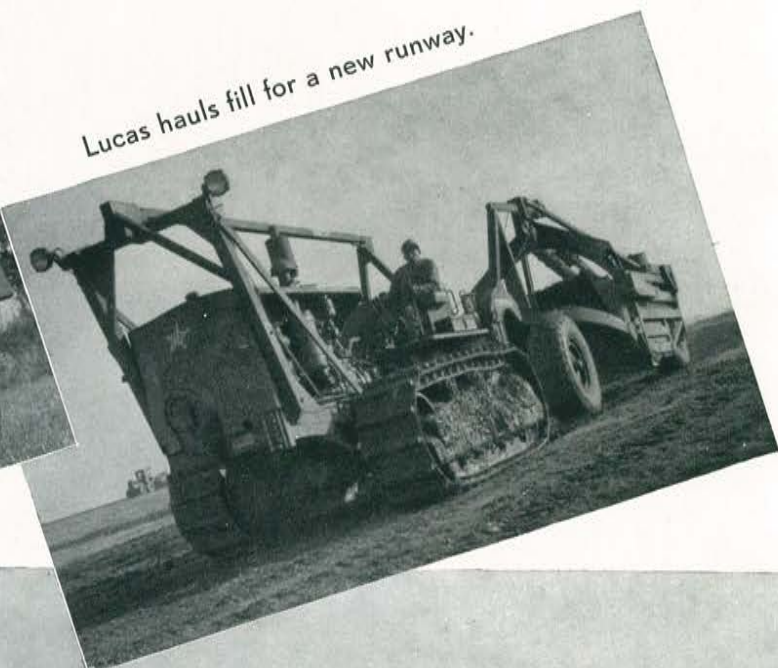


We ran out of lumber in the middle
of this bridge, but what the hell, it
was only training.

Nash and Zaranek watch the forts go by.



Lucas hauls fill for a new runway.



Our system of construction amazed the British and made deep raids with B-17's possible. Our war became offensive.



Solid old England — Cambridge University — built to live centuries.



A warm welcome in a British home— this is in Thetford, near Honington.



Enjoying an afternoon off with a couple of English kids — the bridge at Bury St. Edmunds.



The British kids we entertained at Honington helped make Christmas more of a holiday.



"Santa" De Marco and his helpers spread the true Yuletide spirit by calling at village homes on Christmas Eve with gifts for the children.



The deer in our company area at Barrington.
The only shot in captivity of Baber working.
Alaska shows us the lubricating trailer.
Smiley Newton and friend pause for picture.

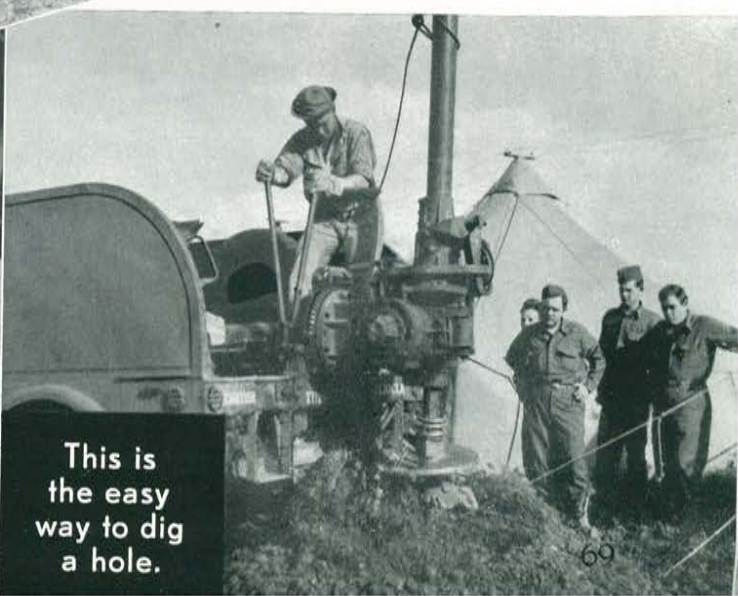
You guessed it — another lecture.
Pulling the 8th A. F. out of a hole.
Izzy De Marco away from the poker table.



This experiment with Hessian helped prepare us for future operations.
Loads like this rounded square corners and straightened crooked streets.



Nowicki
and his
washing
machine.



This is
the easy
way to dig
a hole.



Top to Bottom:
 Captain Jaffe with some visiting brass after
 an inspection.
 Wilson and his crew talk over a day's work.
 Capt. Dunn, Lt. Brown, Major Kaufman,
 Lt. Scharnberg, Lt. Zeno, Capt. Kielkiewicz,
 Lt. Kohnert, Lt. Oliver.
 A demonstration team tells us about the
 Jerry, his uniform and his equipment.



Guzik

J. Lacy

Lt. Wickler

M. Moran

Capt. Legler



A general view of Oxford, showing famous landmarks.



Street scene at Bury St. Edmunds.

This bit of landscape at Barrington is typical of rural England.





Hutton

Roberts

Usmar

Cannella

Sapulak

Shemanske

Zaraneck

Holappa

Harris

Sikora

Stevens

Gluck

McCoy

Moorer

Ostapowicz

P. Miller

C. Moran

Lieberman

Scribi

Shuga

Walton

Queirolo

Barlow

Dauble

Jarvis

W. Morris

Tirone

Morrison

Nowicki

Knight

Ventura

Capt. Johnson

Harrah

Drago

Goldman

Williamson

Black

Kramer

Lammers

Kreitler

Lucas

Wright

Langendorfer

Cook

Bigham

Baber

Crews

Freeman

Cox

Mattison

Karasik

Stark

Wickes

Pellegrino

Capt. Bartmess

Yaloures



F R A N C E



This trailer, like Col. Dougan's, was made from wrecked gliders by this crew.

One of the many jobs turned out by Hansel in the B unit.



Mason

Veitz

E. Bailey

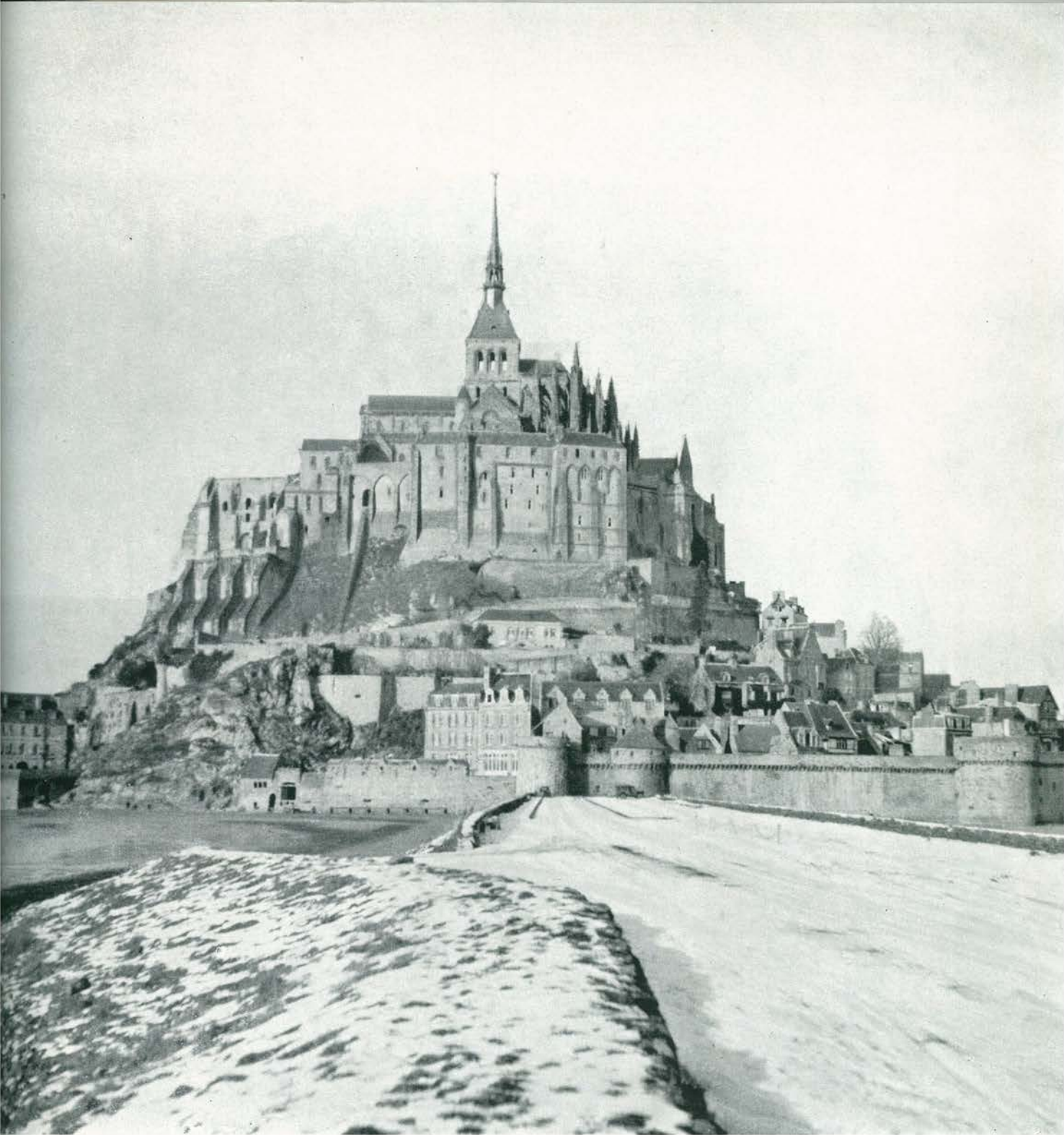
Kistner

Capt. Cunningham

Huggins



With only makeshift materials, Pop Zink and Freeman could always be relied upon to improvise for our benefit.



Mont St. Michel, at the junction of the Cherbourg and Brest peninsulas, is one of France's oldest landmarks.

Those of us who saw it will never forget it.

Borgeson
Byer
Griggs
Weaver
Yeglic
Lt. Caperton
Dominy
V. Neeley

Many long hours of our gypsy life were spent loading and unloading trucks

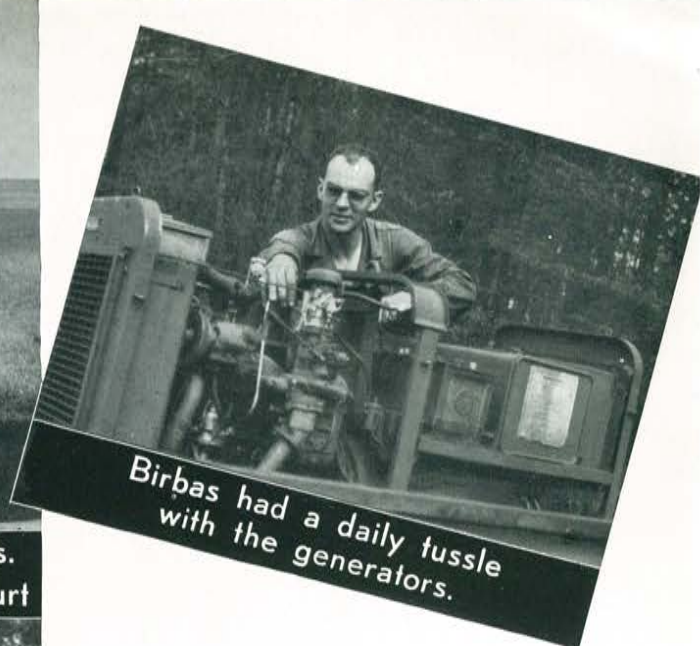
Hot, dusty Carentan was typical of the early fields in Normandy.

A D-8 had to support the stage while Tiny Day entertained us in the woods near Fougères.

Turner
Boyd
Corbeil
Gillespie
Gertz
H. Wilson
Hodges



The photo trailer posed with Bill Phillips and Desilets.
one of Lt. Kohnert's many recce parties as it left Larzicourt



Birbas had a daily tussle
with the generators.



Wickes, the whip-cracker
of the drafting room.



The mechanics had a cold job at St. Nick

Johnston

Kriegler

H. Robinson

Hicks

J. T. Moore

Kemper

Blair

Mohr





The brick shack at Larzicourt made a good dispatch office.

French hospitality along the road made our trips seem shorter.

The tent already gone, Urofsky prepares to close shop.



Grace was said by Col. Dougan before our feast at Alençon.



Our cooks did a great job of preparing Capt. Rountree's steer.



This line was worth sweating out. A swell dinner was at the end of it.



Awarding Milburn the Purple Heart was the only formality of the day.



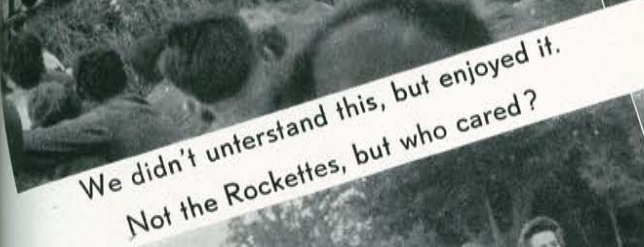
Col. Dougan made one of his "Three thousand miles by Christmas" speeches.



Beaucoup French civilians helped us celebrate our Organization Day.



We understood this. They were good.
Stark showed the makings of a family man.



We didn't understand this, but enjoyed it.
Not the Rockettes, but who cared?



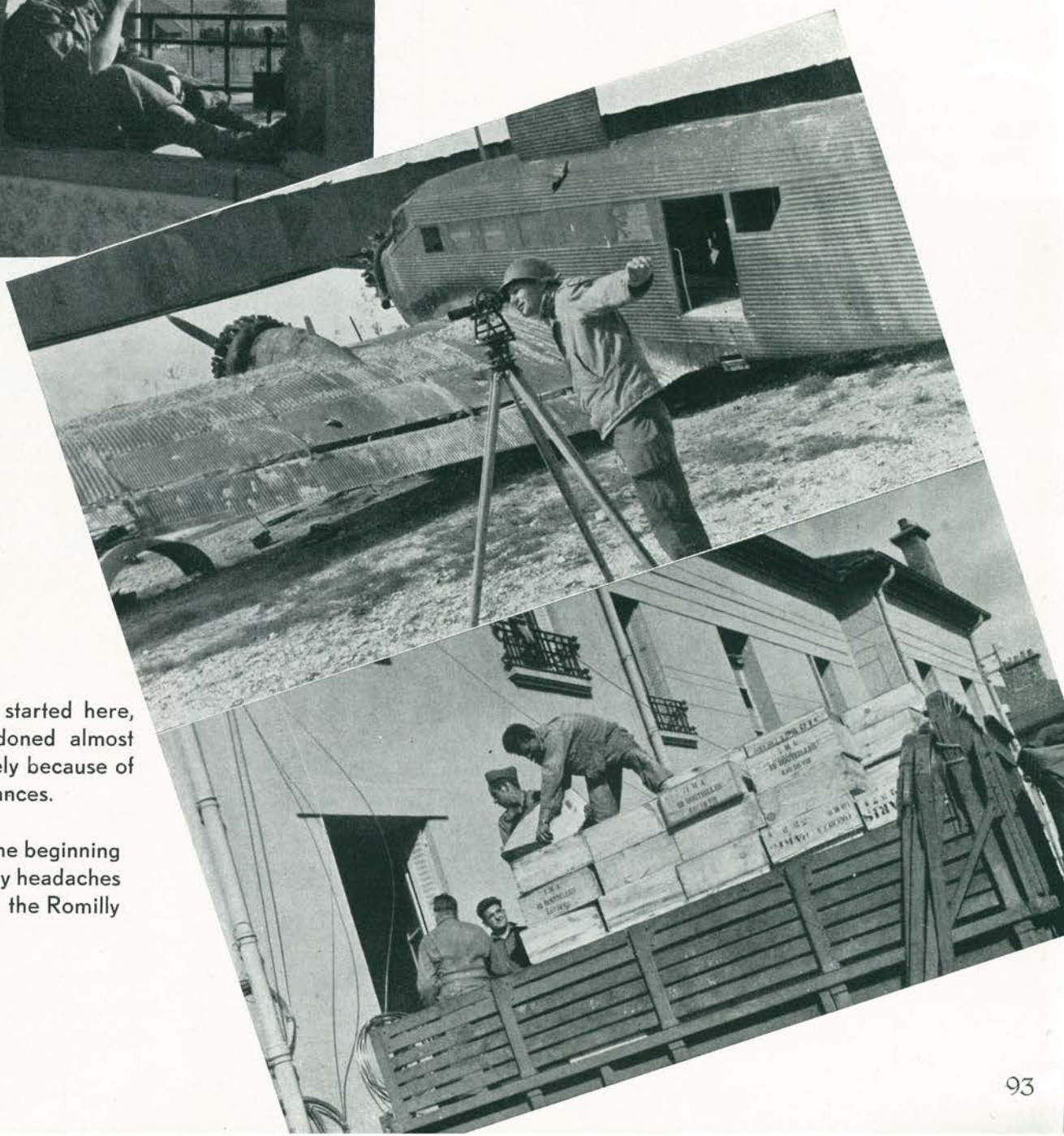
"Red Hot Mamma" Urofsky tried to entertain
us, but he was flat in spots.



Dec made many appearances during the day,
but was cooled off by a dunk in the pond.



The French flag at the masthead of our Romilly camp was an unusual sight for us.



Work was started here, but abandoned almost immediately because of rapid advances.

This was the beginning of the many headaches caused by the Romilly stock.



Johnny Butina, alias "Bunny Mysto", before the exhibition fight with the pre-war French middleweight champ.

Here's the bout — round two, and the Frenchman takes a hard right to the heart from Bunny.



Capt. Norton
Salzman

Iannazzo
Dietrich

Regardless of the method used to make this catch, it made a delicious fish fry.





Whenever we were in Paris, the Opera was more of a landmark than a place to visit.

We found that the original Trocadero is not a night club, but a beautiful gallery.

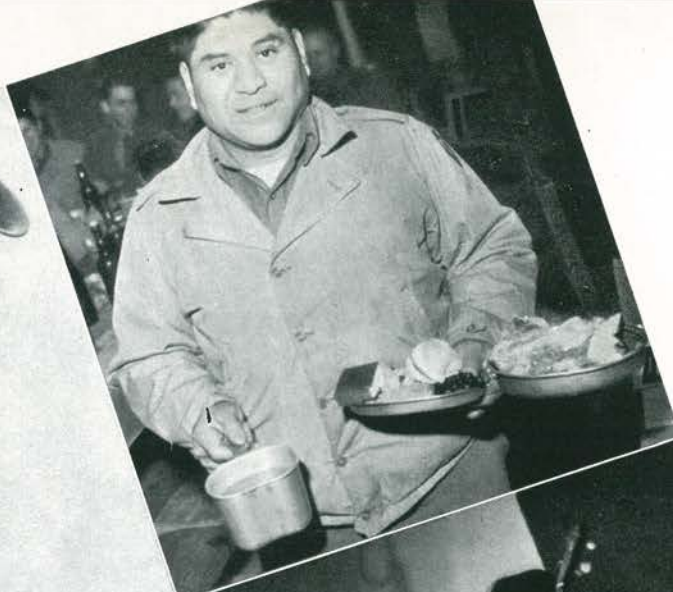
Army food never tasted better than when it was served in our Paris rest home.



Pinochle — it must have been just before pay day.
Mike trimmed all the boys in the outfit.

Frischmann and Schulwitz in the reproduction trailer.
The mud and Lewis fought it out at St. Nick.

At Romilly, we found American armament being refitted for German use.



The best call of all —
"CHOW".

Christmas dinner with all
the trimmings.

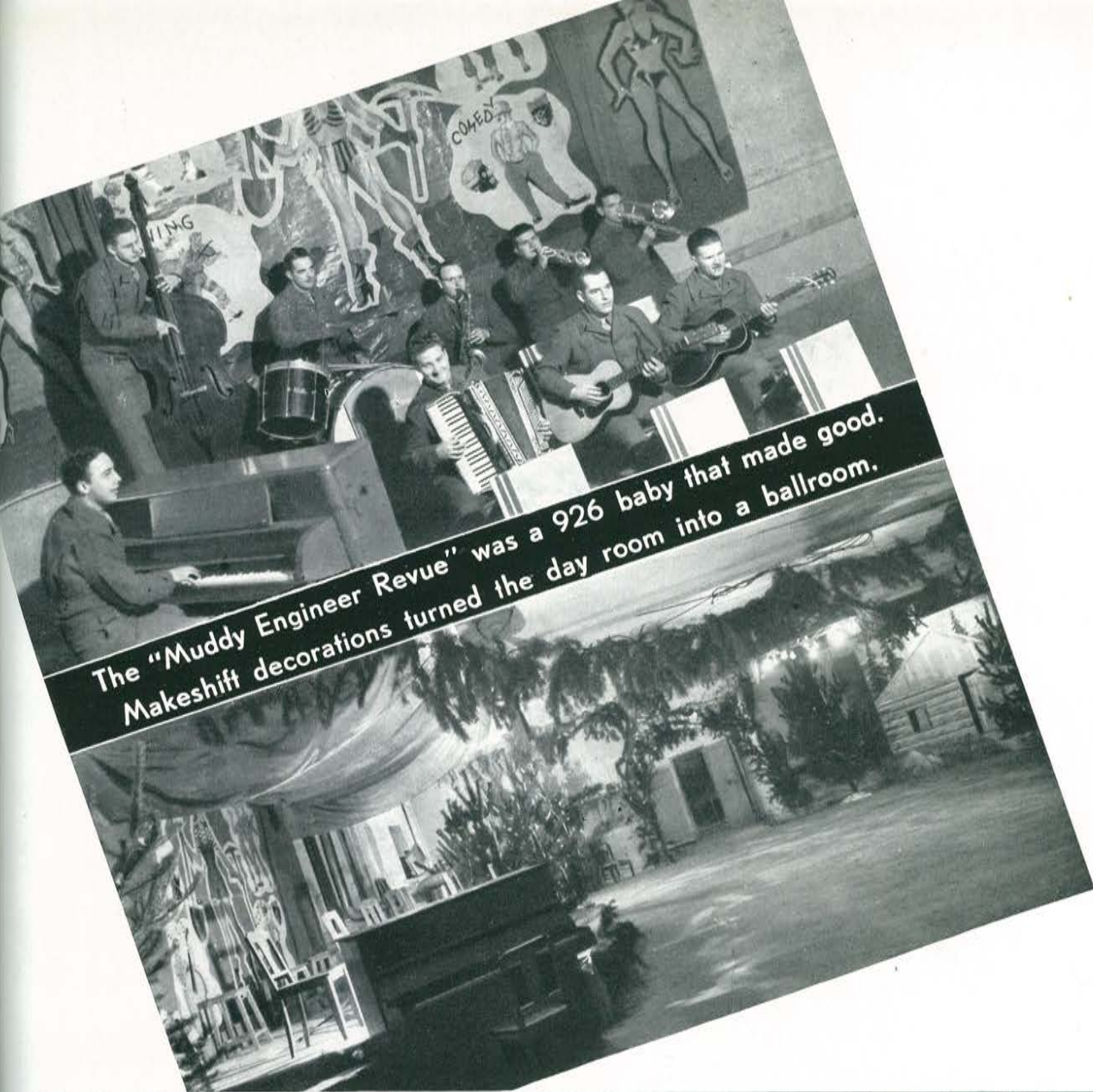
This always happened to
boxes from home.

Grace Drysdale and
Freddie Morgan double
up on banjos.



Many a beer crossed this bar at St. Nick.





The "Muddy Engineer Revue" was a 926 baby that made good. Makeshift decorations turned the day room into a ballroom.



The staggering stag line led to the beer kegs.



Their English was bad, and our French was worse, but language was no barrier at the snack bar.





GERMANY



"Mother" De Marco not only mended our clothes, but kept them clean as well.

Thanks to Frank and that water heater, we managed to have hot showers wherever we went.

Cool breezes through our open air showers discouraged lengthy soakings.

Jerry planes were always a good excuse to pose for a corny picture.

No wonder we had trouble finding Jerry airfields. They used stretches of the Autobahns as runways.





Pat Thomas, the best part of Hope's show.

"There'll be no promotion this side of the ocean."

These swank top-hatters are German chimney sweeps.

We laughed as "Hot Lips" Hope stood up to play.

At Furth, everyone took a crack at ping pong.

Elbow bending was also a popular pastime.

We regret that it was impossible to obtain portraits of the following men:

Thomas E. Bellore

Harry A. Lundquist

Vincent W. Butler

Bernard Nichols

Delmar J. Dopp

Henry Ouimet

Arne Ekerman

Russel Phillips

George C. Hansel

William R. Phillips

Hymen Hurwitz

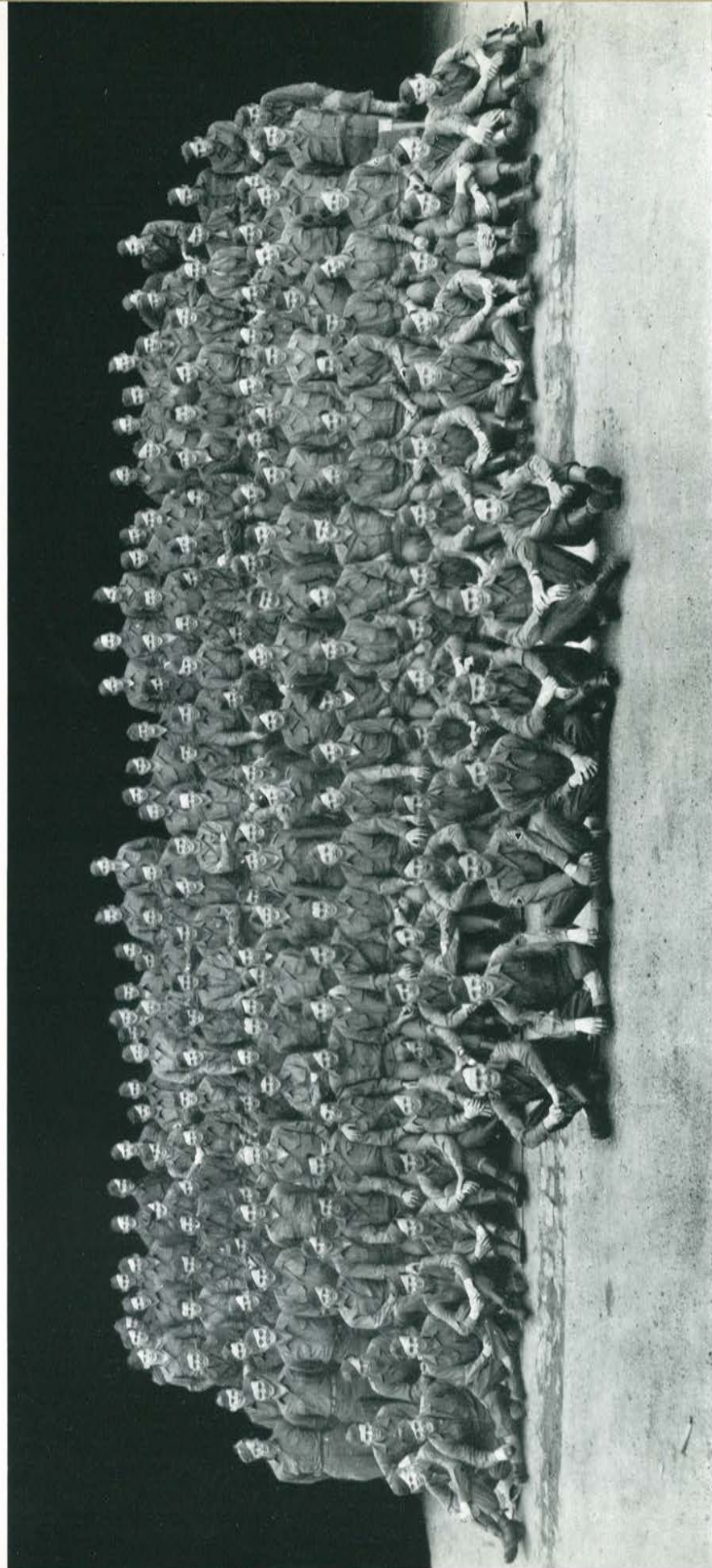
William Schiraldi

Kenneth Keller

Edwin A. Schutte

Frank J. Lezu

Arthur Webb



There were many old faces missing when this company picture was taken on July 4, 1945.

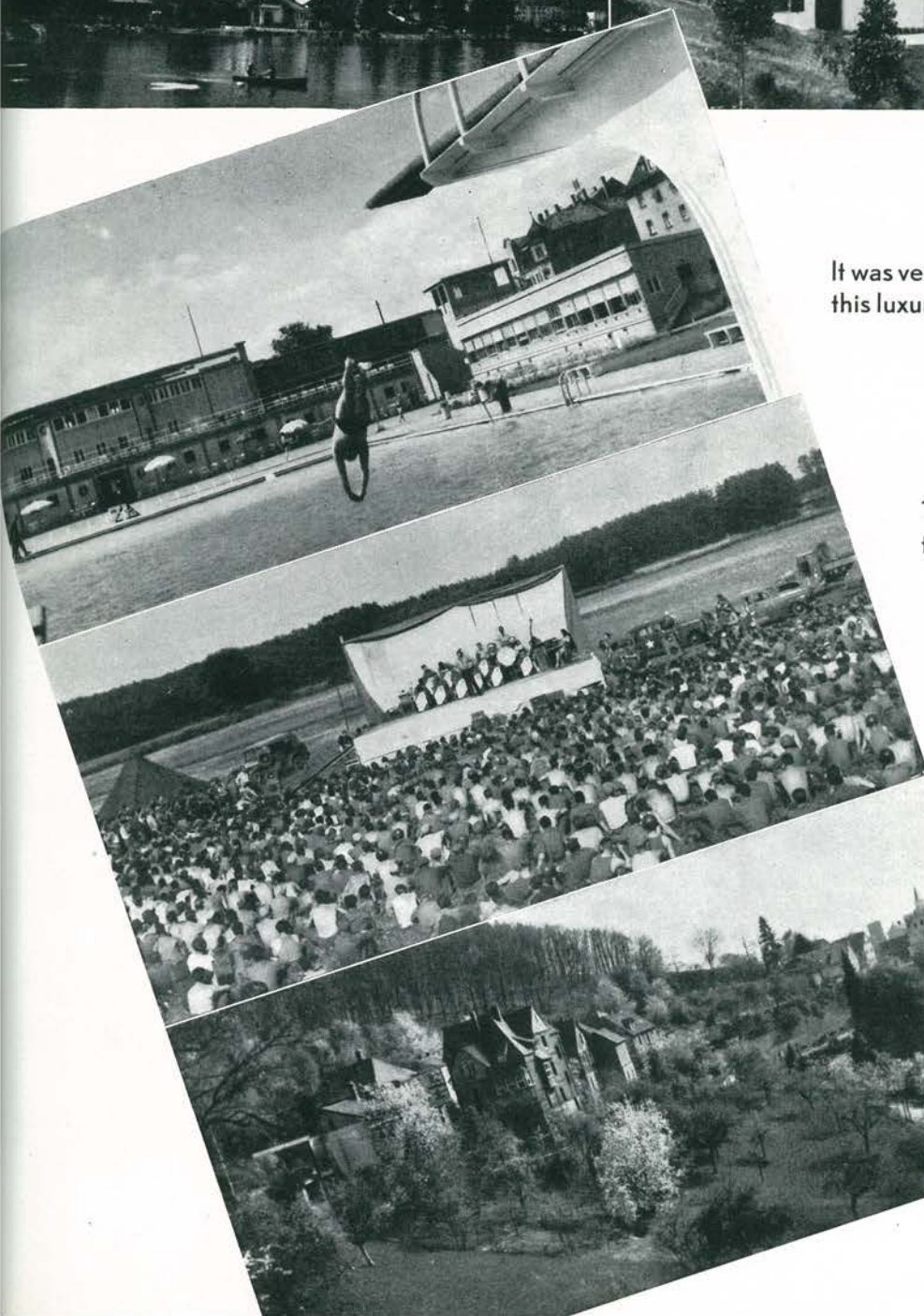


Tec 5 Hicks – The end of the Luftwaffe

The boys who went to St. Gervais on furlough will long remember such scenes as this.



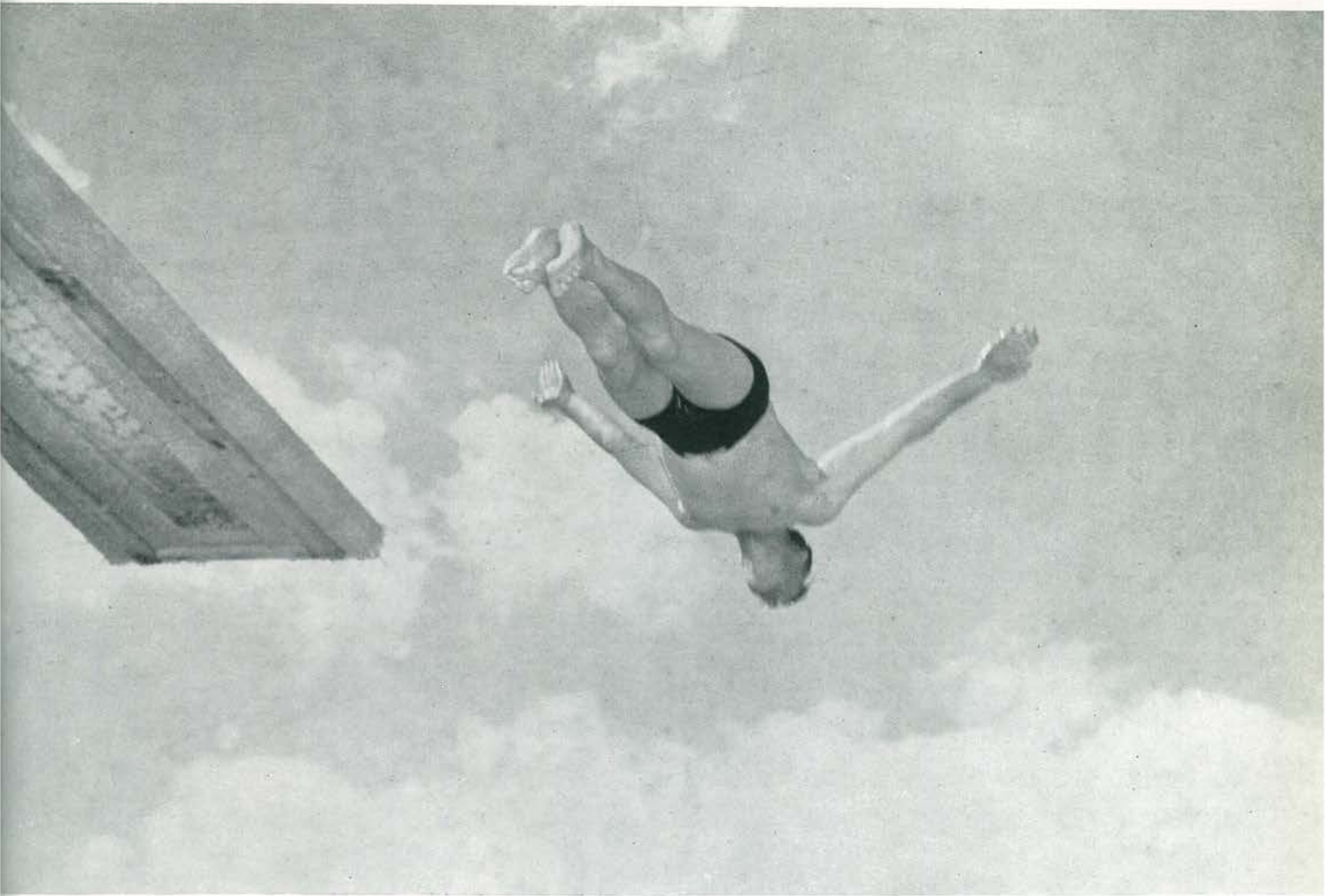
When we saw the ruins of Hitler's home, we wondered what it had looked like. This postcard shows us.



It was very thoughtful of the Jerries to leave this luxurious swimming pool for the G. I.'s around Nurnberg.

The Bob Hope show was probably the only show that could keep so many G. I.'s out in a hot sun.

Rural Germany was usually very picturesque and sometimes seemed a little unreal.



Between outdoor athletics and sweating out redeployment, we managed to keep busy after V.E. Day.



Lt. Oliver
Glenn
Davis
Draper
Desilets
Trump
Selleh
Tennant
Mimms
Ostronic

Wade
O' Toole
A. M. Smith
Green
S. Lacey
Ruberia
Dau
Sicilano

Walker
Akens
Lippincott
Fennel
Harvel
Jaramillo
Winklbauer
Hill
Buchfuhrer
S. Lacey
Acevedo
Neely
Nordenstrom
Karasik

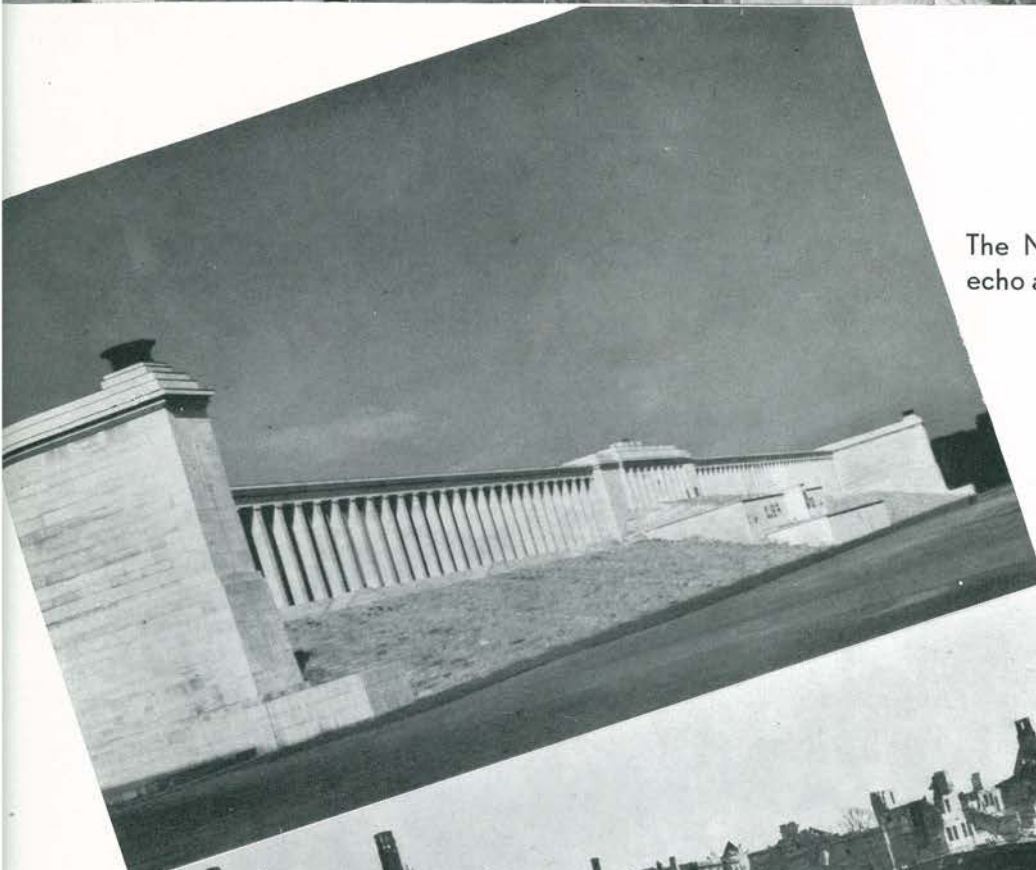
Dames
Henkin
Cat. Dunn
Maj. Jump
Chandler
Bordinski
Clause
Judich
Chiccotti
Noonan
Field
Heltman
Beckstedt
Mc Call

Klose
Halpin
Hoehne
Frischmann
Lauterhahn
Williams
Mortimer
Schulwitz
Leahy
Parrish
Bennett

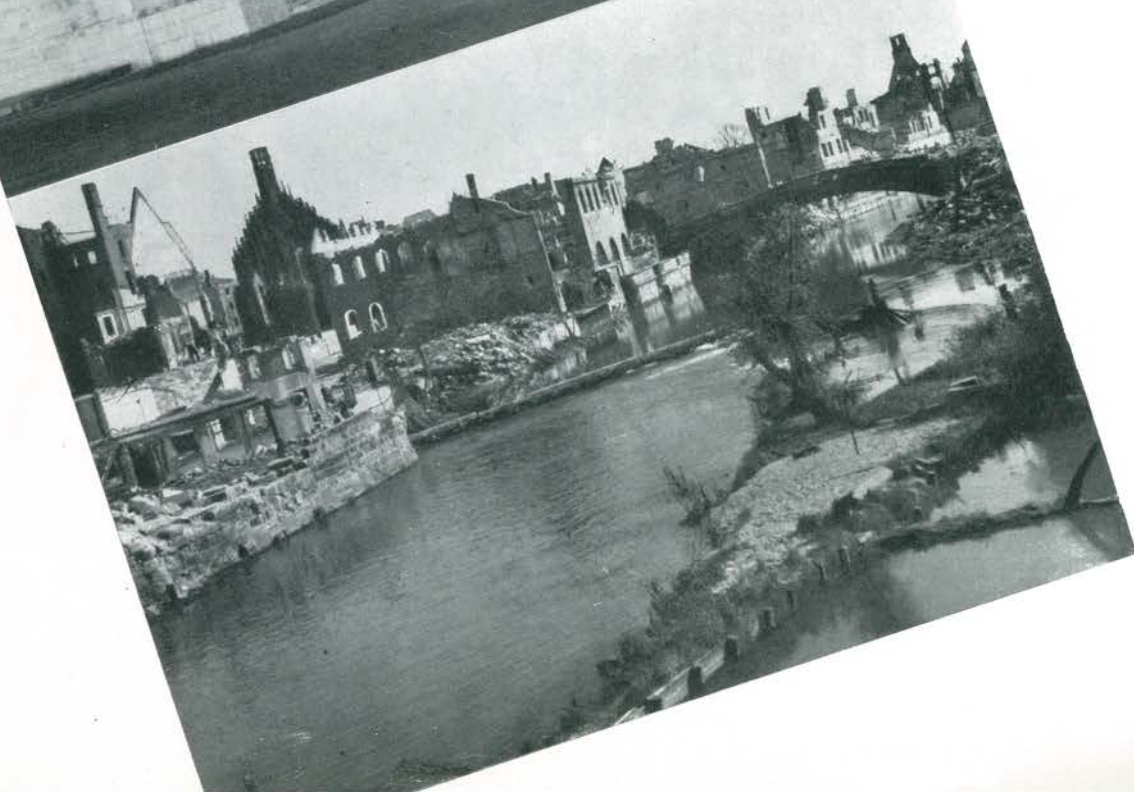




Lee	Risley	Dunbar	Monat	Zink	Webster	Urofsky	Lt. Chicazola
Juarez	K. Smith	Lt. Laz	Torrez	Capt. Dunn	Southard	Walsh	Lt. Zeno



The Nurnberg stadium will never again echo a thunderous "Sieg Heil" in response to Hitler's hollow promises.



Let the Germans remember the rights of other people as they pick their way through the ruins of their once proud cities.



Our job finished, we payed homage to the flag.

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Elmer Davis 31—74 29 St. Astoria, L. I., N. Y.	Leonard Dworniczek 18 Rue des 7 Tours a Chouse Varangeville (M et M) France	Donald L. Glenn Lockport, N. Y.
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Charleston, W. Va.

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Natural Bridge, Va.
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Frank Hervol
287 Wylie Ave.
Strabane, Penna.

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Emerson, Ark.

William J. Hill, Jr.
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Maspeth Queens, N. Y.

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Route 3
Rutledge, Tenn.

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R. F. D. 1
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Minot, N. Dak.

Earl F. Holke,
Greenwood, Nebr.

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Eugene Kuykendall 83 Sheridan St. N. E. Washington, D. C.	Clyde Leverett Menard, Texas	William Mann, Jr. Hellem, Penna.
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James T. Moore
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REAL 20



AIRFIELDS BUILT ON THE CONTINENT BY THE 926th

No	Name	Date Operational	Type Surface	No	Name	Date Operational	Type Surface
E-1	Poupeville	6 June 1944	Dirt - Crash Strip	Y-69	Mittlebraun	22 March 1945	Sod
A-6	Beuzeville	15 June 1944	Square Mesh	Y-72	Braunschardt	17 April 1945	Rehabilitated Soil Cement and Pierced Plank
A-7	Azeville	24 June 1944	Square Mesh	Y-78	Biblis	5 April 1945	Square Mesh
A-8	Picauville	26 June 1944	Hessian Mat	Y-79	Sandhoefen	2 April 1945	Sod
A-10	Carentan	19 June 1944	Square Mesh	Y-88	Wertheim	5 April 1945	Sod
A-13	Tour-en-Bessin	18 July 1944	Pierced Plank (2 Runways)	Y-89	Mannheim	10 April 1945	Sod
A-14	Cretteville	4 July 1944	Hessian Mat	Y-90	Gieblestadt	15 April 1945	Concrete
A-15	Maupertus	4 July 1944	Pierced Plank (2 Runways)	Y-92	Dornberg	4 April 1945	Sod
A-16	St Marie-du-Mont	Reid. responsibility on 7 July 1944		R-6	Kirzingen	3 Aug 1945	Tarmac
A-23	Querqueville	6 July 1944	Hessian Mat	R-10	Illesheim	1 Aug 1945	Pierced Plank
A-25	Bolleville	7 July 1944	Hessian Mat	R-24	Warrzburg	17 April 1945	Sod
A-26	Gorges (Gontreville)	16 Aug 1944	Pierced Plank	R-26	Bayreuth	22 April 1945	Sod
A-28	Pontorson	10 Aug 1944	Hessian Mat	R-27	Sachsenheim	25 April 1945	Rehabilitated Asphalt
A-30	Courtils	13 Aug 1944	Dirt	R-28	Furth	20 April 1945	Sod (Later Pierced Plank)
A-31	Gael	11 Aug 1944	Sod	R-29	Herzogenaurach	26 June 1945	Sod (Later Brick, then Asphalt, then Pierced Plank)
A-33	Vannes	29 Aug 1944	Rehabilitated Concrete and Asphalt				
A-41	Dreux	26 Aug 1944	Rehabilitated Concrete	R-30	Furth Industriehafen	3 July 1945	Rehabilitated Concrete and Pierced Plank
A-43	St Marceau	31 Aug 1944	Hessian Mat	R-41	Schwabisch-Hall	21 April 1945	Sod
A-44	Péray	2 Sep 1944	Hessian Mat	R-42	Buchschwabach	12 May 1945	Sod and Hessian
A-45	Lonray	3 Sep 1944	Hessian Mat	R-43	Nurnberg	24 April 1945	Sod
A-62	Reims	3 Sep 1944	Sod	R-45	Ansbach	4 July 1945	Pierced Plank
A-63	Vertus	5 Sep 1944	Sod	R-46	Roth	29 April 1945	Sod
A-64	St Dizier	10 Sep 1944	Rehabilitated Concrete	R-47	Ottigen	26 April 1945	Sod
A-65	Perthes	9 Sep 1944	Sod	R-48	Ingolstadt	27 April 1945	Sod
A-66	Orconte	15 Sep 1944	Hessian Mat	R-63	Weiden	28 April 1945	Sod
A-67	Vitry	15 Sep 1944	Square Mesh	R-64	Cham	28 April 1945	Sod
A-76	Athis	4 Sep 1944	Square Mesh	R-66	Regensburg/Pruifening	28 April 1945	Sod
A-77	St Livière	11 Sep 1944	Sod	R-68	Straubing	7 Aug 1945	Pierced Plank
A-82	Etain-Rouvres	10 Sep 1944	Sod	R-69	Landau	1 May 1945	Sod
A-90	Toul-Croix-de-Metz	14 Sep 1944	Sod	R-73	Ergolding	2 May 1945	Sod
A-95	Azelot	31 Oct 1944	Hessian and Pierced Plank	R-76	Pocking	4 May 1945	Sod (Later Pierced Plank)
A-96	Ochey	29 Oct 1944	Pierced Plank	R-83	Muhlthori	5 May 1945	Sod
A-98	Rosieres-en-Haye	21 Nov 1944	Pierced Plank and Corduroy	R-87	Horsching	7 May 1945	Rehabilitated Concrete
Y-1	Tantonville	3 Dec 1944	Pierced Plank	R-89	Pilsen	8 May 1945	Sod
Y-2	Luneville	25 Dec 1944	Pierced Plank	R-90	Wels	8 May 1945	Sod
Y-7	Dole-Taveaux	Nov 1944	Rehabilitated Concrete and Pierced Plank	R-91	Erding	12 May 1945	Sod
Y-39	Hagnenau	20 Dec 1944	Pierced Plank	Valognes	Valognes	July 1944	Liaison For ASCZ at Valognes
Y-40	Strasbourg-Entzheim	6 April 1945	Rehabilitated Concrete	Valmont	Valmont	21 Dec 1944	Liaison For XIX TAC.
Y-42	Nancy-Essey	20 March 1945	Pierced Plank				
Y-53	Colmar	21 March 1945	Pierced Plank				

