

1946

The history of the 341st Engineer Regiment, July 29, 1943-March 22, 1946

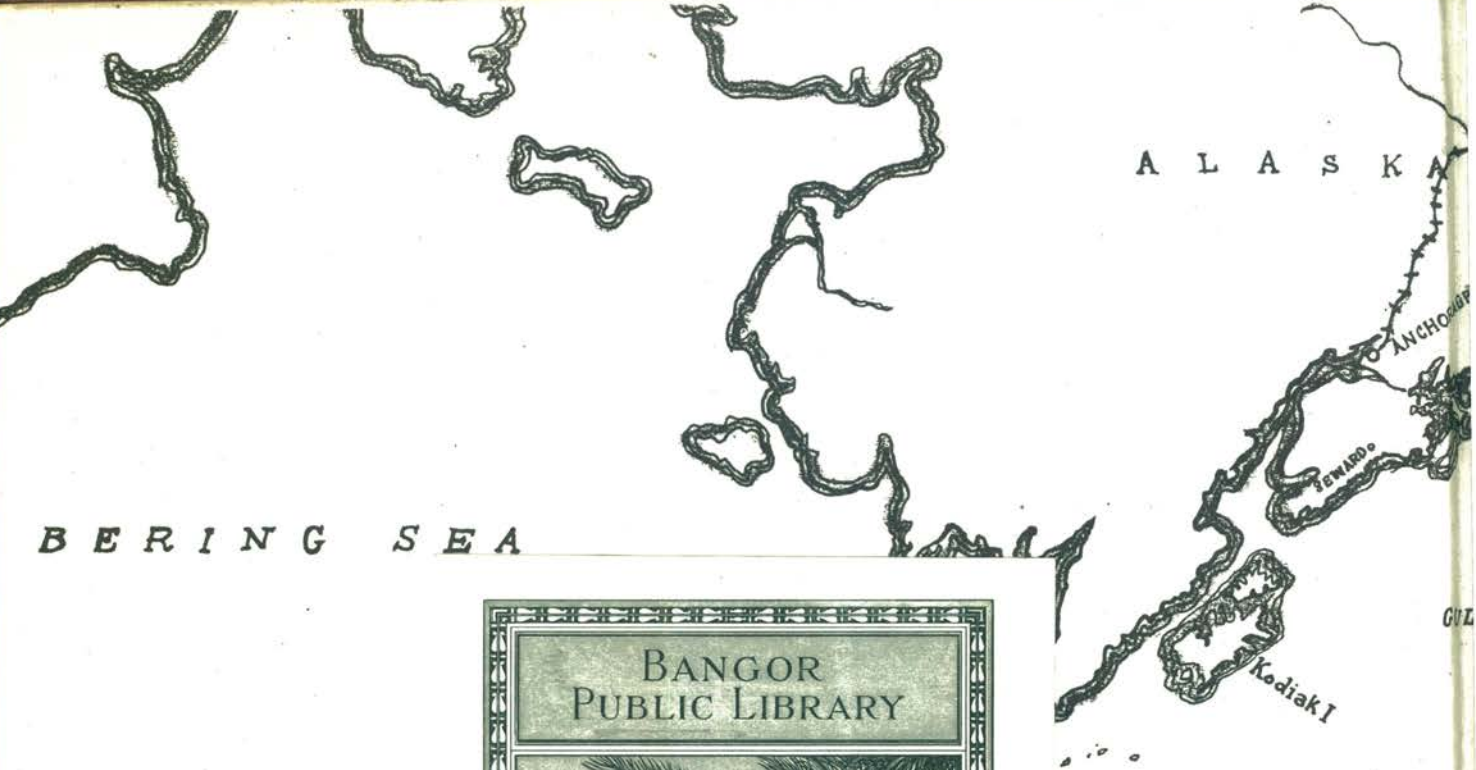
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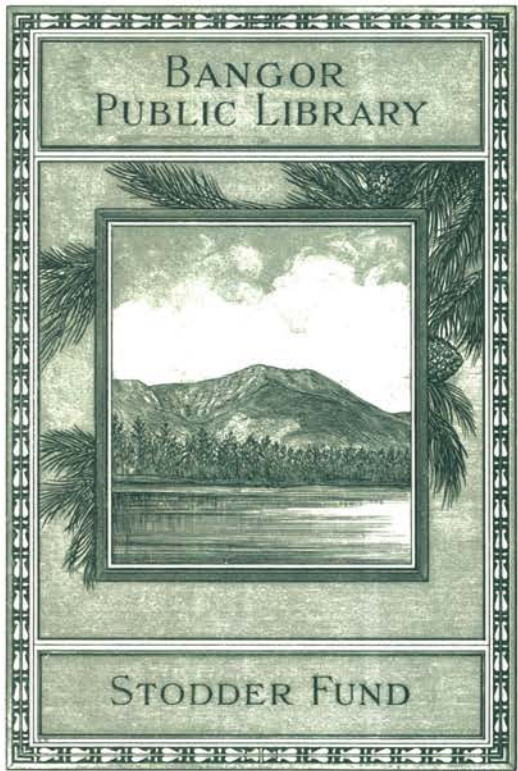
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BERING SEA

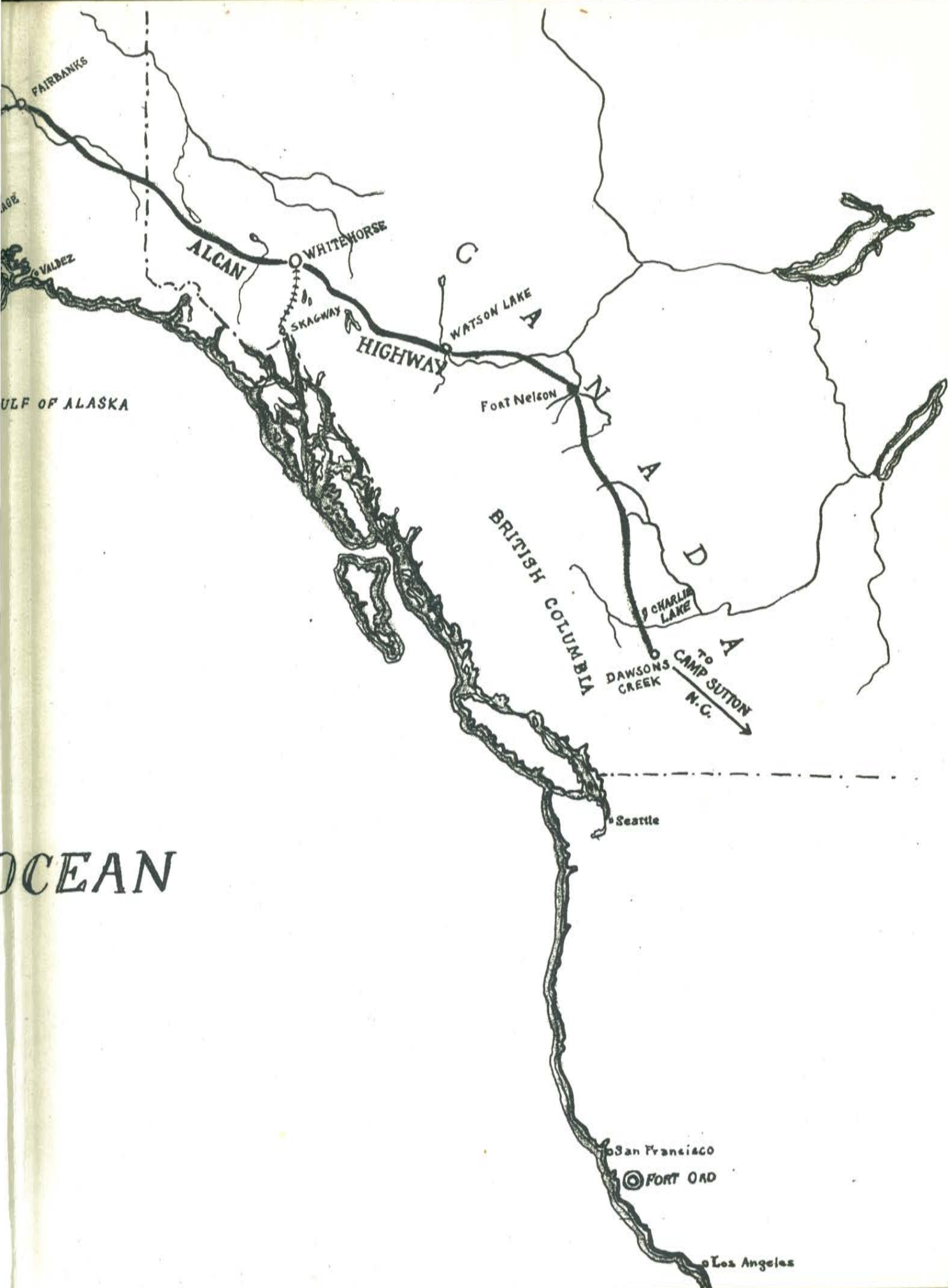
ALEUTIAN

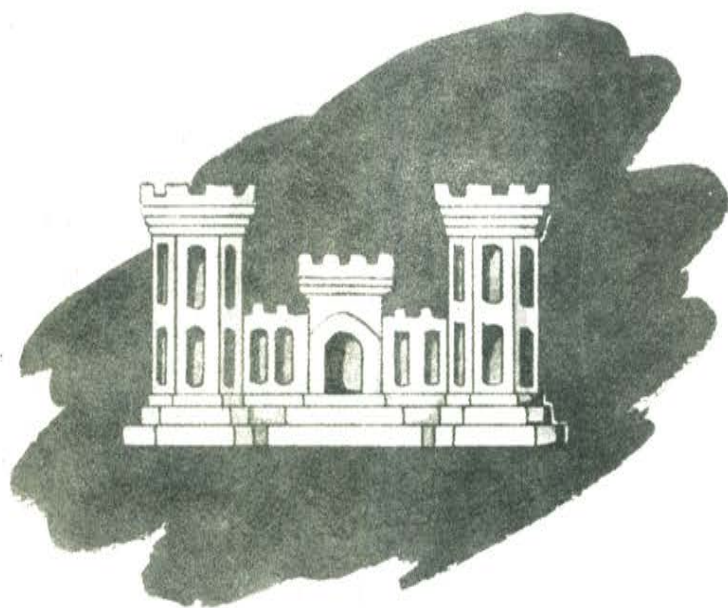


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THE
HISTORY
OF THE
341st ENGINEER REGIMENT

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JULY 29, 1943 - MARCH 22, 1946



MEMBERS OF THE THREE FORTY-FIRST:

Joining with you in the pleasure and satisfaction of looking over the record of the 341st Engineer Regiment, I feel anew that warmth of joy and pride which came over me every time I visited your jobs. It made no difference whether the dust was at Briquebec or Coutances, the mud at Roanne Coo or Ettelbruck, the snow at Bastogne or St. Vith, or you were getting in the steel at Koblenz or at Bamberg, you were there and I saw you, day and night, overcoming impossible difficulties.

You built 110 bridges, more than two miles of them, and the 341st target painted on them was a symbol of a job done well and in time. The Armies depended on you to do more than your part, and they knew that you would not, and did not, fail them.

Our losses were few, and that also is a credit to the superb leadership of the officers and non-commissioned officers, and to the perfect teamwork of every part of the organization. Let us join as we have joined before in thanks to Almighty God for His care and for His continued guidance.

Sincerely yours,

Edward H. Coe





Preface

341ST ENGINEER REGIMENT HISTORY

In November, 1922, a General Service Regiment of Engineers was organized in Boston, Massachusetts, and designated the 341st Engineer Regiment (General Service). A number of reserve officers were assigned, and although the unit was not activated until World War II, this group of officers was very active in reserve affairs, and earned for the regiment a fine record of interest and achievement.

The active history of the 341st Engineers starts on March 6, 1942, pursuant to orders from Headquarters, Northern California Sector and VII Army Corps, San Jose, California; on that date, Captain William E. Leonhard reported at Fort Ord, California, and received a cadre of one officer and 96 enlisted men from the 35th Engineers. The nuclei of company organizations were formed from this cadre, and ten days later the staff of officers arrived from Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and the outfit was under way.

In April, 1942, Colonel Albert L. Lane arrived from Fort Belvoir, Virginia and assumed command of the regiment. There followed 400 men from Fort Leonard Wood and Fort Belvoir. An intensive program of training was immediately set in motion, to prepare the regiment for work on a project outside the United States.

On April 25, 1942, the Regiment received orders to proceed to Dawson Creek, British Columbia. Shortly before departure from Fort Ord, 300 replacements from the 115th and 13th Engineers were added to the Regimental Roster. Movement started by rail.

"ALCAN HIGHWAY"

The mission assigned the 341st Engineers was to construct an all-weather pioneer road from Fort St. John, located 60 miles north of Dawson Creek, to Fort Nelson—a distance of 265 miles. Upon arrival at Dawson Creek, a temporary regimental camp was set up a mile from town, while aerial reconnaissance was made of the proposed route of the highway to be constructed. These reports forecast that it would, indeed, be a "Long Trail."

In a few days, the regiment (less A Company), moved by truck to a camp site at the foot of Charlie Lake, located a few miles above Fort St. John. Company A remained at Dawson Creek for two weeks, to construct storage facilities at the railhead.

From the camp at Lake Charlie, one company was detailed to erect CCC buildings for Sector Headquarters at Fort Alcan, and two other companies were assigned to improve the existing Provincial Roads in the vicinity of Fort St. John. Company B, alone, was available immediately for work on the road. The initial task at the southern terminus of the highway was to drain, clear and corduroy across a 500 foot stretch of muskeg adjacent to camp.

Company E moved by water to the head of Lake Charlie, nine miles from base camp, with the purpose of proceeding thence to the right-of-way opposite that point for clearing operations. On May 15, 1942, a ponton raft operated by the 74th Engineer Company (LP) and ferrying two officers, 15 enlisted men, a radio car and a small angledozer to the detached company, was caught in a sudden squall near the center of the lake and swamped in near-freezing water. A lone trapper, Gus Hedin, at home in his cabin a mile away, rushed to the scene of the accident, in his small rowboat, and at continual risk of his own life, succeeded in rescuing five enlisted men from drowning. The men who sat in the boats that night, searching for those who were lost, will long remember the display of Northern Lights—the first and the most brilliant display during their 15 months stay in the North.

In a tactical move to strike the road in the flank, base camp and the 2nd Battalion moved to the Bedeaux Trail, via Montney, near Milepost 17. Companies D, E and F worked on the road north from this point, leaving the 1st Battalion to continue hand clearing to Bedeaux Trail. This was during the first mosquito campaign. A later attack by the "No-see-em" specie, came in July.

The problem of road location through this unmapped wilderness was among the most difficult of the entire project and one which required immediate solution. From aerial observation it was decided that the road must swing generally Northwest to a point near Pink Mountain in the chain of the Rockies, seek a favorable crossing of the Sikanni Chief River, and thence North along the Minnaker and Prophet Rivers to Fort Nelson.

Aerial photo strips were made along the proposed route and by matching stereo pairs a three-dimensional image was obtained on which could be plotted the approved line. Field parties were organized to transfer the line of photographs to flags on the ground. The first of these survey crews, with Master Sergeant Raymond M. Hallowell in charge, took to the brush in May, and kept well ahead of the clearing operations until they reached Fort Nelson on August 20th. Colonel Lane joined the advanced road location party and remained with it most of the summer.

Shipments of D-8 "cats" arrived at Dawson Creek and on June 11th, six of them were assigned to the Regiment. The seasonal rains had already begun, however, and throughout the month of June it rained almost continually. Traffic churned the road into a quagmire; operations at the front were slowing down for lack of fuels. For two weeks, Athey Wagons towed by heavy "cats" in tandem, were the only traffic moving along the "canal" between mileposts 30 and 37; all, that is, except for men on foot, loaded down with rucksacks, sleeping bags, and pioneer tools trudging north.

Early July witnessed a change in the weather, and additional shipments of heavy and medium sized "dozers". Thus reinforced, work went forward with vigor and determination, and in 56 days, Fort Nelson was reached—215 miles away.

Within the 2nd Battalion, a provisional company was organized, with Lieutenant Louis C Goldberg, in charge. This organization was immediately titled "Cat Camp", and pushed ahead with the clearing operations at maximum speed. Approximately twenty D-7 and D-8 "cats" and fifteen D-4 "cats" were assigned this organization. This equipment operated 20 hours daily—in three shifts.

A group of mechanics worked the graveyard shift from midnight to 4:00 A.M., cleaning and repairing the "cats" for use by the first shift at daylight.

The strength of this provisional company totaled more than 200 men, and consisted of cooks, K.P.'s, all available equipment operators and mechanics in the 2nd Battalion, plus 20 equipment specialists from Headquarters and Service Company. Heavy road equipment in the hands of the 1st Battalion consisted of four heavy "cats", five medium "cats", three Galion road patrols, two 12-yard carry-alls, two tow-type graders and a Quickway shovel. The function of this equipment was to open drainage lines, backfill completed culverts, cover stretches of corduroy, and in general to construct and maintain a pioneer road sufficiently good to guarantee our supply line to the rear.

This was the plan of operation that carried through in July and August of 1942. Out ahead were the survey parties, flagging the center line, supplied by pack trains. At the front, on the road itself, was the "Cat Camp" moving every day in advances of three to six miles. Forests of jackpine, spruce and poplar were slashed within a 100 foot clearing. Sidehill developments requiring considerable movements of earth and rock were carried out with good speed. Patches of muskeg were eyed with much speculation.

The six lettered Companies, working approximately one day behind the clearing operations were concerned mainly with construction of culverts and bridges, laying of corduroy across muskeg and swamps, and opening drainage lines from the outfall ends of culverts.

The 1st Battalion heavy equipment section, operating on a full 24-hour basis, kept up with the increased pace ahead. Men who had been ribbon clerks and farmers only a few months before, now were experienced equipment operators, lumberjacks and bridge carpenters.



Originally it was planned to locate the road on the west side of Pink Mountain, but now the plans were changed and at milepost 90, the road abruptly turned to the north. It crossed the Beatton River at J-100, and 15 miles further, the Sikanni Chief River. The river at this point lay in a deep canyon, and the development down the south wall, with a switchback near the bottom, was one of the most interesting engineering problems on this section of the road.

At milepost 30, the road crossed the Buckinghorse River, then up on the buttes for 20 miles of beautiful scenery looking toward the Canadian Rockies to the west. The last 100 miles followed east of the Minnaker and Prophet Rivers. Interest heightened as the goal drew near.

On August 26, 1942, the pioneer road had been completed to Fort Nelson and the 341st Engineers settled along the Muskwa River to launder and bathe in the cloudy waters, and to overhaul equipment.

The second mission had already been assigned, and within three days, all companies were again on the move, headed north along the road built by the 35th U. S. Engineers. The Regiment had left just a single-track trail for 70 miles over the back of the Rockies, and it was the job then to widen and improve this trail for all-weather, two-lane traffic. The road shaped up quickly under continued hard work.

The road was open for traffic now from Dawson City to Fairbanks. Several thousand trucks were being delivered to Dawson Creek, and the warehouses were being filled with supplies to house, clothe and feed all the troops on the project. Each company was responsible for moving all Alcan vehicles to and from the adjacent company to the north.

Among the first supplies hauled up the road were frozen meats, fresh fruits and vegetables. Butler huts replaced tents and by Thanksgiving Day, all companies were in comfortable barracks.

A sawmill at J-35 was taken over by the 341st, and provided lumber for the construction of barracks, mess halls, shops, etc. A 70-mile access road was constructed at this time, to the Beatton River flight strip.

In January, 1943, Colonel Albert L. Lane was assigned command of the Post at Dawson Creek, and Lieutenant Colonel William E. Leonhard assumed command of the 341st.

A Quartermaster Truck Regiment arrived in January, and, after being distributed along the road, relieved the 341st from their duties of driving the Alcan trucks.

In February, 1943, orders were received to move north and take over the construction of the highway between the lower crossing of the Liard River (N-210) and Teslin (W-172)—a distance of 315 miles—including repair and maintenance of the road itself, and operation of all stream crossings. The Regiment was distributed along this new section of road in company and platoon camps, with the 2nd Battalion in the north, the 1st Battalion in the south—the division point being at Lower Post. Each camp was assigned a section of road to maintain and repair, and certain bridges to replace in case of loss.

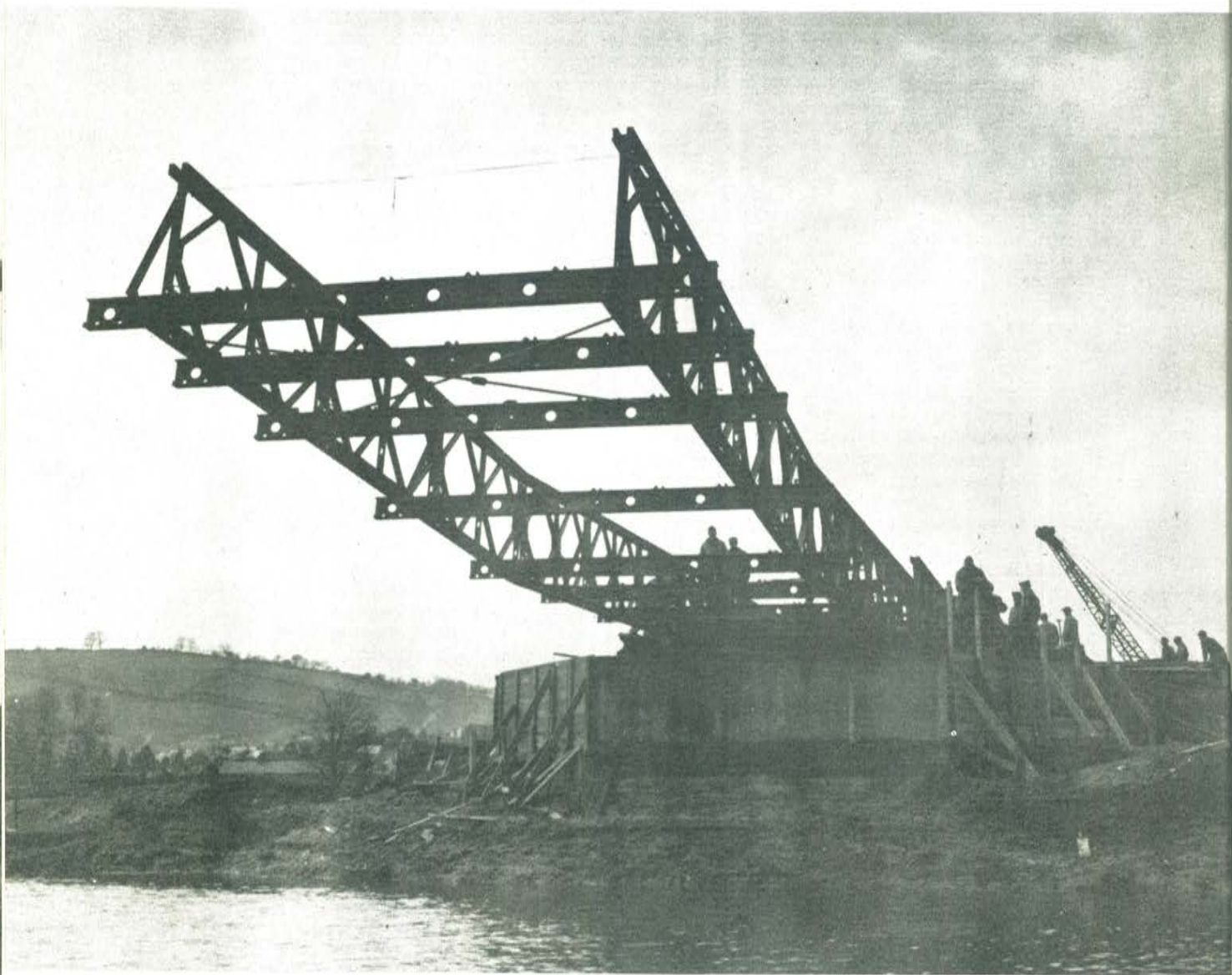
Road maintenance until the middle of April, 1943, consisted of snow removal, sanding of dangerous hills, and drainages of small sidehill glaciers. With the spring thaw the bottom dropped out of the road, which took on the aspects of a canal.

Four sawmills along the Liard River were operated by the 341st to build up stockpiles of timbers to replace bridges lost during the Spring breakup. Sixteen bridges were constructed during the spring and summer of 1943, including two each at the Lower Liard and Coal Rivers.

Companies continued work on the road through the early part of the summer. By concentrating all the heavy equipment into Companies A and B, they were able to construct 12 miles of balanced-design highway north from the N-260 Relay Station. In July, 1943, final orders were received, and beginning July 20, 1943, the 341st Engineers began its last journey down the road to Dawson Creek where southbound trains were waiting.

The foregoing active history of the 341st Engineer Regiment, covering a year and three months of rigorous duty on the Alaska Highway, is covered by the first volume of the History, titled "THE LONG TRAIL."





341st ENGINEER REGIMENT HISTORY

TRAINING AT CAMP SUTTON

Three trains carried the 341st Engineer Regiment to Camp Sutton, North Carolina, the first arriving 29 July and the last 4 August 1943. The Regiment was already scheduled to reach the European Theater of Operations by a certain time, and the period available for refresher training was all too brief. Even with furloughs cut to an absolute minimum, causing a real hardship to the men just back from Canada, less than two months remained to qualify with new weapons, practice with new bridge material, learn about mines, and train for combat.

First of ten regiments under training in the new Engineer Unit Training Center, and with their ranks refilled by selection of trained men from a Quartermaster truck regiment, the 341st immediately set the pace in training progress. For many training subjects they built the training aids required, executed the assigned tasks, and went on to the next. Overcoming all handicaps and condensing the program, the 341st progressed so rapidly that before 1 October the Inspector General found them ready to go.

Lieutenant Colonel Leonhard met with a serious accident on his way to look after an injured man on the target range, and was unable to go on with the Regiment. Colonel Edward H. Coe, who had started the Training Center and directed the Regiment's preparation, was assigned to command 23 September 1943.



COLS. COE AND LEONHARD, MAJ. HEILIG AND MRS. (CAPT.) SPENCER LEAVING CAMP SUTTON

ENGLAND

Leaving Camp Sutton 9 October and staging through Camp Shanks, N. Y., the 341st Engineer Regiment embarked 20 October 1946 on the "USS SIBONEY." With the whole of that small transport to themselves, they found nearly enough bunks to go around, reasonable facilities for entertainment, and the added interest of sailing as the flagship for the convoy. The trip was without extraordinary incident, and the Regiment disembarked at Cardiff, Wales, on 2 November 1943.

A short train ride brought the outfit to Devizes, in Wiltshire, where the advance party under Lieutenant Sewell and Warrant Officer Champ had started to collect the unit equipment. There, after a brief orientation period, the Regiment was inspected by the Base Section Commander, duly complimented and put to work. They were ready; with a strength of 52 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 1244 enlisted men, 76% of the men and 80% of the officers had served in Canada.

Regimental Headquarters moved immediately—10 November—to Wiveliscombe, Somerset. There was much work to be done, to prepare for the coming of the great American Invasion Force, and Engineers were scarce. The men began to realize why they had been hurried to England.

The First Platoon Company "A", commanded by 1st Lt. Frederic H. Groeninger was moved to the vicinity of Timberscombe to undertake projects at Porlock, Dunster, Dulverton, Timberscombe and St. Audries in Somerset County. These projects consisted of minor camp expansion work. The Second Platoon of Company "A" commanded by 1st Lt. John T. Sewell remained at Wiveliscombe Camp and carried out alterations in that camp as well as work at Tremlett Hall, Greenham, and Milverton. Work at Wiveliscombe consisted of installing new showers, construction of coal storage facilities and platform for wash-up. At Tremlett Hall the mess hall capacity was expanded and latrine facilities improved. Only minor Expansion work was accomplished at Milverton. The Third Platoon of Company "A" commanded by 2nd Lt. Kenneth B. Jacobson was moved to Maunsel House in vicinity of North Newton to prepare accommodations for a 250-man camp. The following construction was accomplished: 24 x 16 cook house, 24 x 16 Recreation Hall, 24 x 36 Mess Hall, 87 tent bases, 12 Ablutions, 22,000 square feet of hardstanding and foot paths. The total assigned work for Company "A" consisted of preparation of accommodations for approximately 1,000 men under the camp expansion program.

Company "B" was moved to Stoke sub Hamdon to undertake camp expansion projects at Stoke sub Hamdon, Merriot, Montacute, South Petherton, Crewkerne, Hazelbury Plucknett and Misterton; to assist in work at Montacute one company of the 118th Infantry was attached to Company "B" for duty. Work accomplished at Stoke sub Hamdon consisted of installing plumbing in the officers mess; adaptation of a building for use as a dispen-

sary; the addition of a wash-up to the cook house; laying of 19 tent bases and camp structure for ablution. At Merriot a 24 x 54 cook house was constructed; nine tent bases and 700 feet of paths laid. Montacute work consisted of general repair work of huts with installation of additional dormers, plumbing and sewers. At South Petherton, two Nissen huts were erected, one 16 x 36 and one 16 x 16. Plumbing was installed for showers, kitchen and officers' mess, and four tent bases laid. At Crewkerne, one 24 x 54 cook house was constructed; one camp structure erected as an ablution; sewage system installed and foot paths laid out. At Hazelbury Plucknett, the following Nissen huts were erected: two 16 x 36, one 16 x 54 and one 25 x 48. Thirty-two tent bases, ablutions and latrines installed; road and necessary foot paths constructed. At Misterton, one Nissen hut 16 x 24 was constructed, officers' showers installed, seven tent bases poured and necessary foot paths made. Total accommodations prepared by Company "B" in these assignments was approximately 2,000 men.

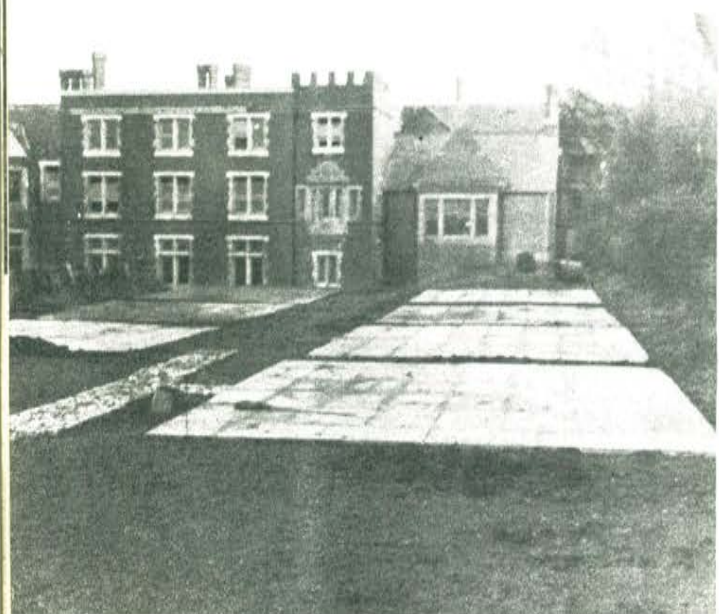
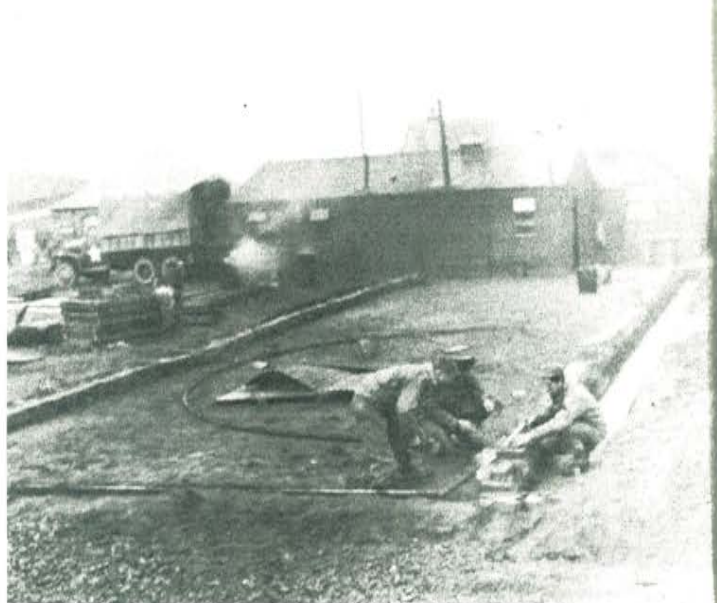
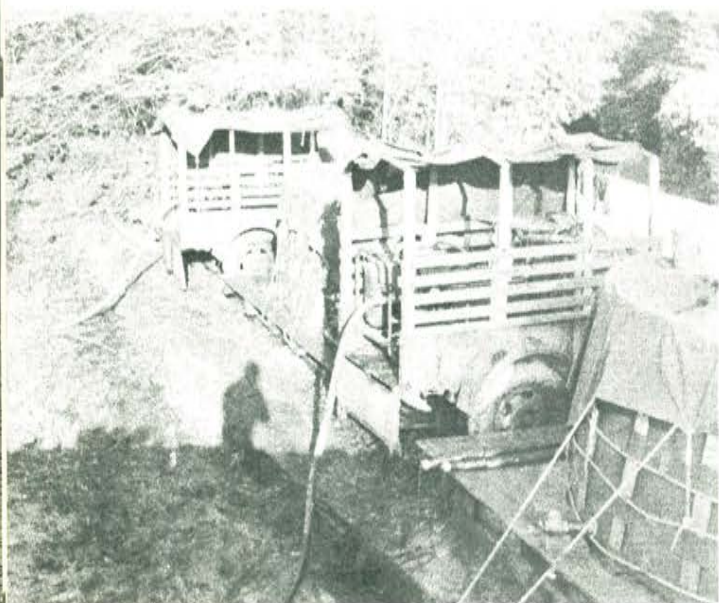
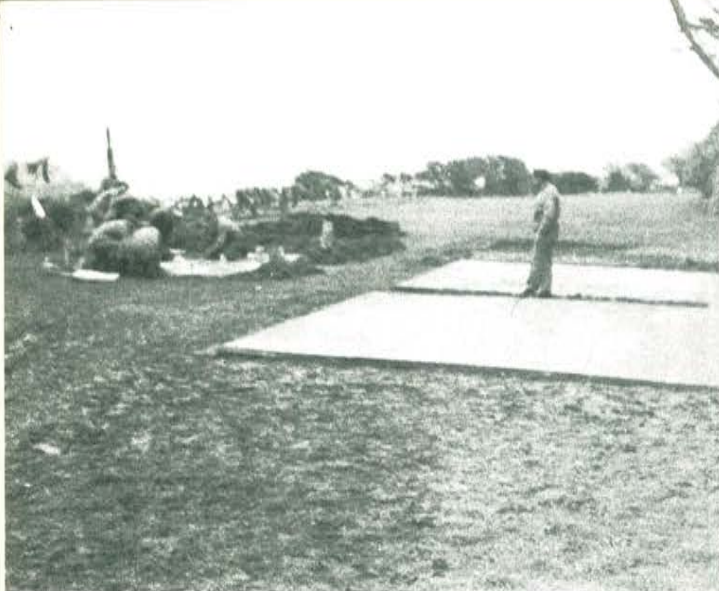
Company "C" was moved to the vicinity of Okehampton, South Devon, to undertake work at the Okehampton Practice Range, Show Ground Camp, Beaworthy, North and South Tawton, South Zeal, Sticklepath, Morchard Bishop, Bow and Heatherly. The work on these projects consisted of camp expansion for the 29th Infantry Division. Details of accomplishments are as follows: Okehampton Practice Range—adaptation of buildings for needed use and painting and construction of necessary black-outs; construction of 4,700 square feet coal yard; necessary foot paths constructed. Okehampton Show Ground—five thousand square yards of hardstanding constructed, forty tent bases poured, ventilators installed in 57 huts and necessary foot paths constructed. Camp expansion of a minor nature was carried out at Beaworthy. North and South Tawton—six tent sites built; showers, ablutions and latrines installed; officers cook house built and slabs for seven tents laid. South Zeal—work consisted of adapting existing buildings to a guard room, company offices, quartermaster stores and a barber shop. Sticklepath—ablutions, latrines and an officers cook house were erected. Morchard Bishop—six tent slabs laid as well as a concrete floor for a shed; a boiler was installed in the cook house and necessary foot paths constructed. Bow—plumbing was adapted to various buildings, accommodations were prepared for approximately 15,000 men.

In addition to the projects assigned to the line companies of the First Battalion the construction staff of the Battalion Headquarters organized and supervised construction of the Langport Detention Training Center expansion. Prisoner labor was furnished for this project and the following work was accomplished: nineteen Nissen huts erected along with the installation of showers, latrines, ablutions, a cook house, small walk and foot paths.

Company "E", commanded by Captain



MAUNSELL HOUSE, NORTH NEWTON, SOMERSET—Camp Expansion



BUDE, DEVON—Camp Expansion and Landscape



BARNSTAPLE, DEVON—Foundation for Kitchen and Dining Room



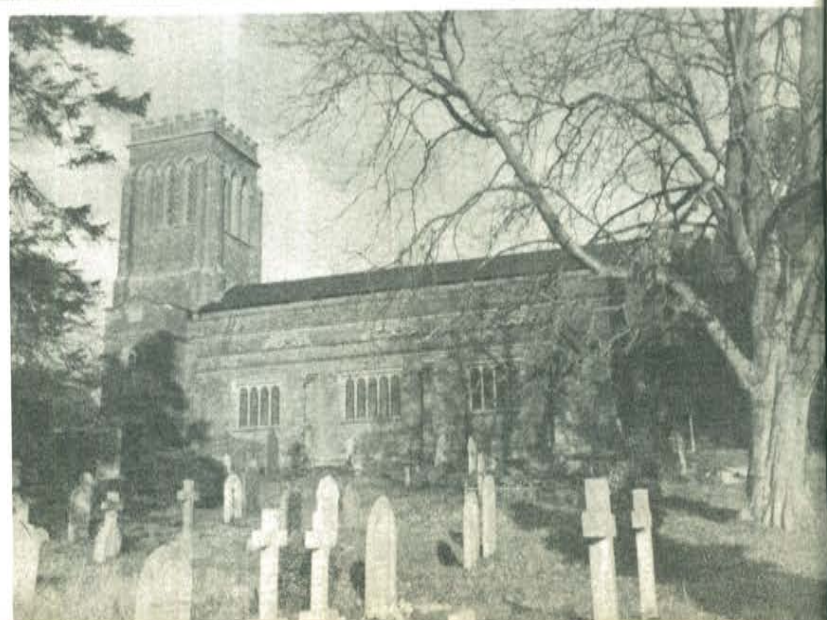
CHARD, SOMERSET—Part of Tent Slabs and Foot Paths
296th Engineers

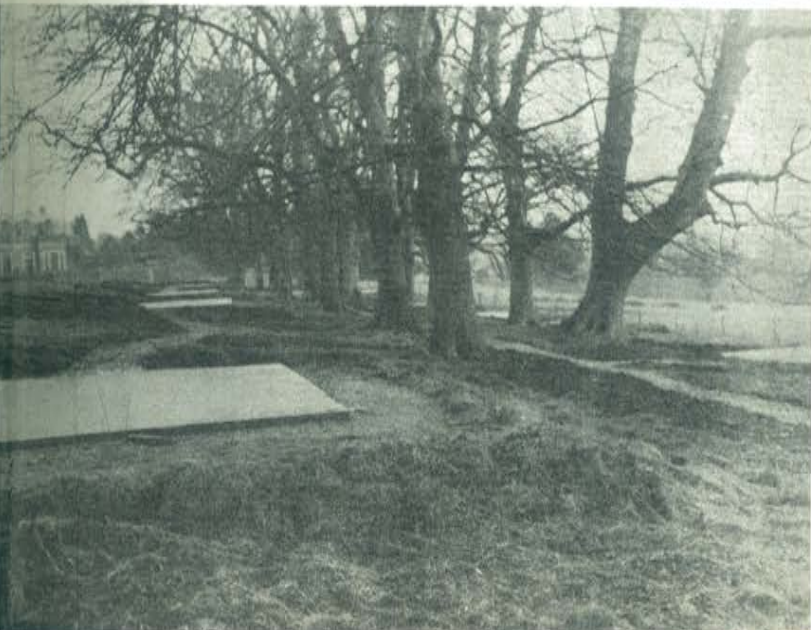


TORRINGTON, DEVON—Cross House Dining Hall

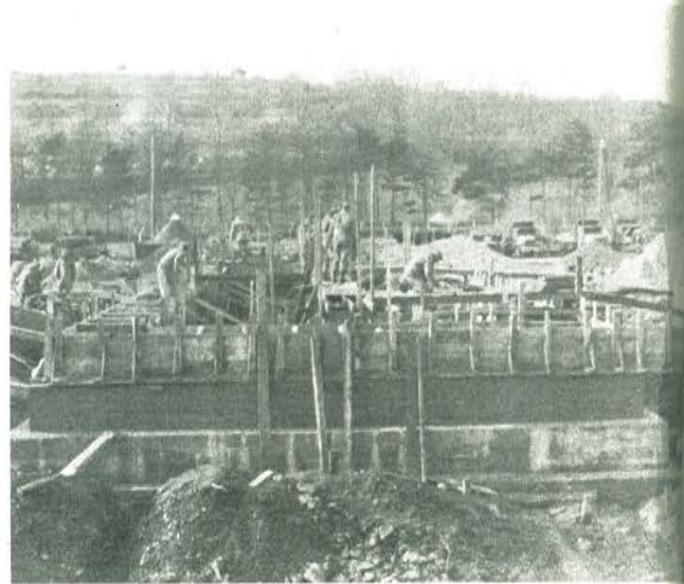
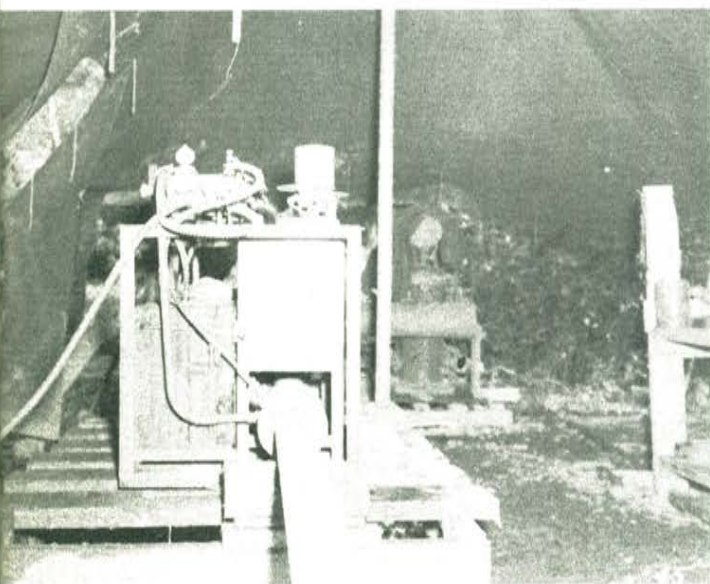
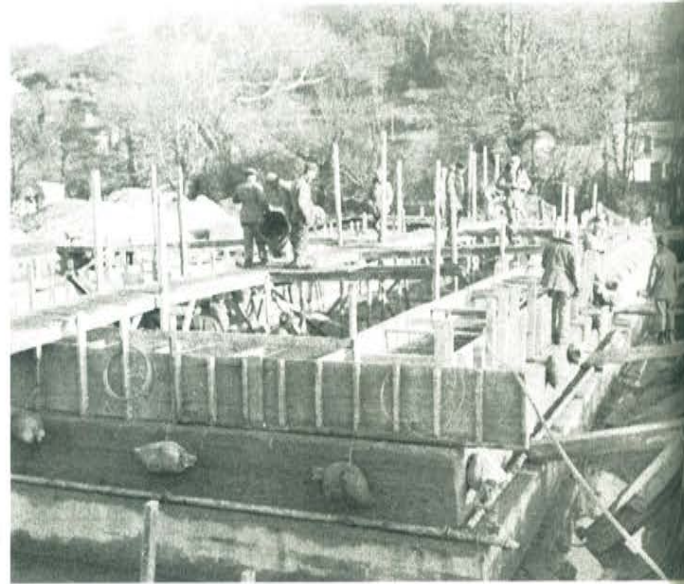
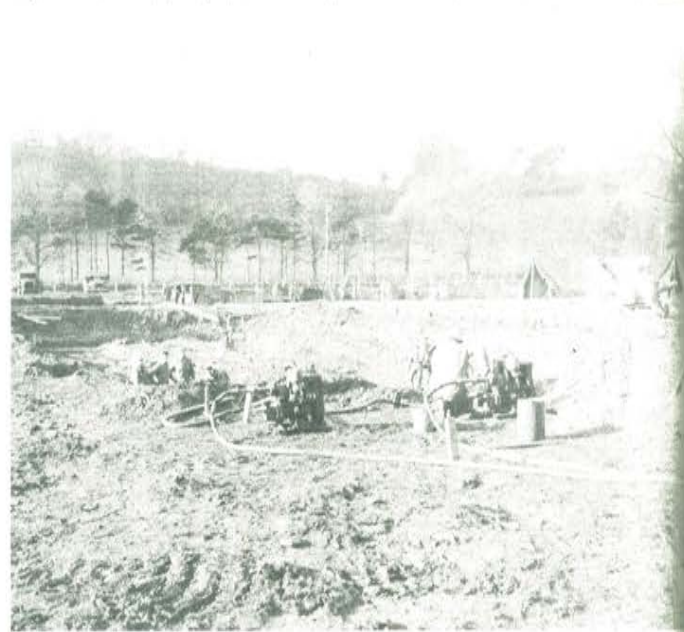
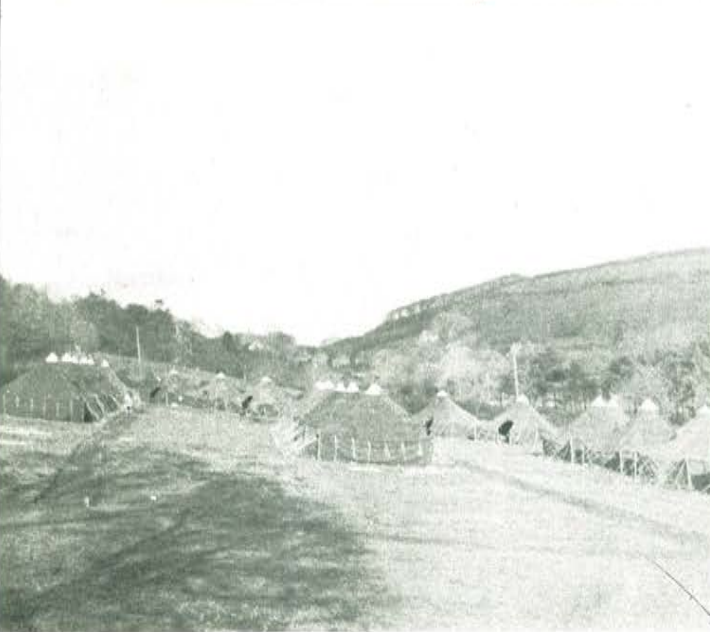


WIVELISCOMBE

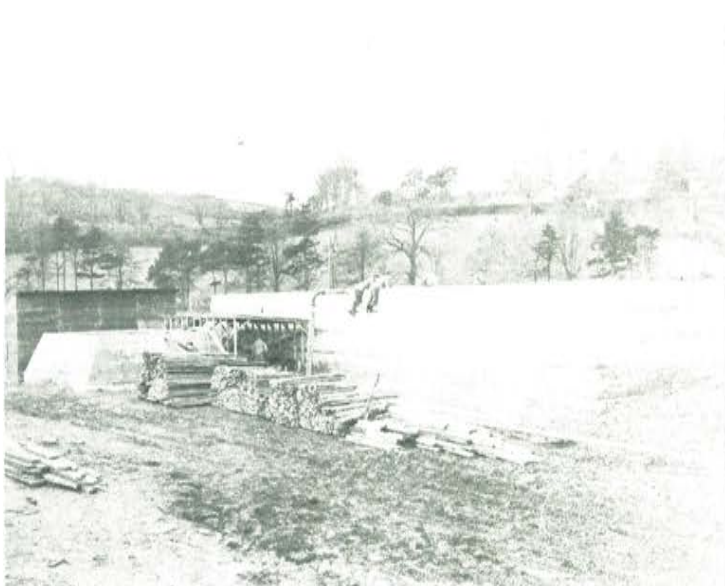
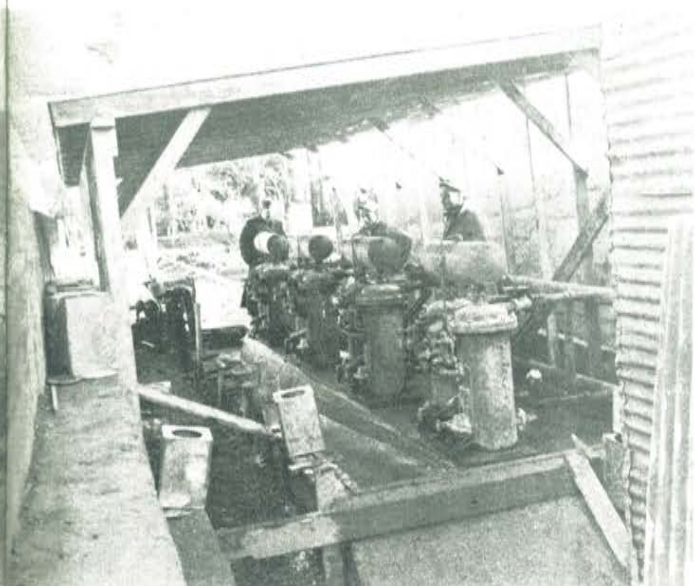
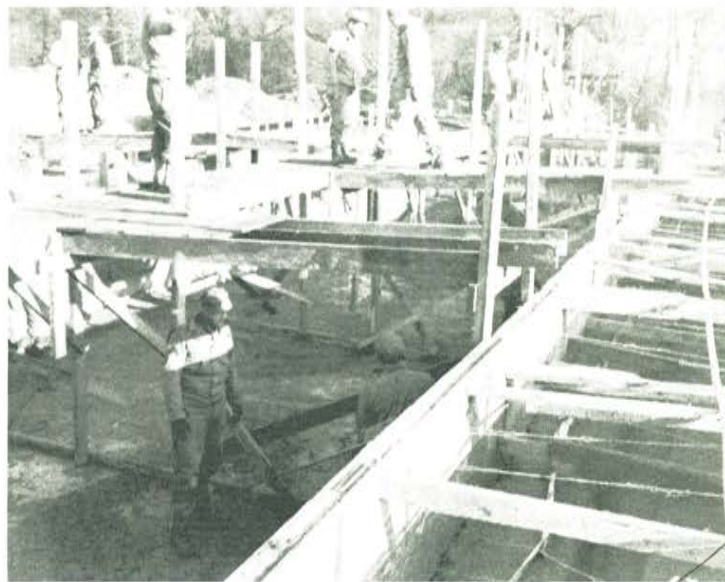
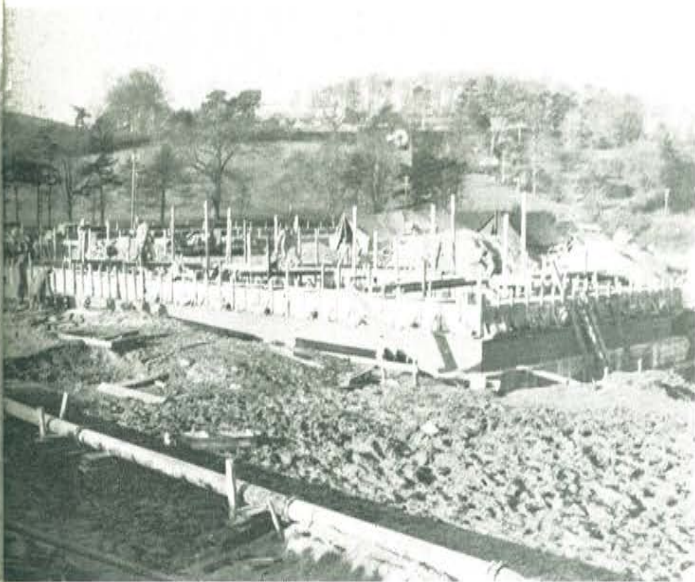




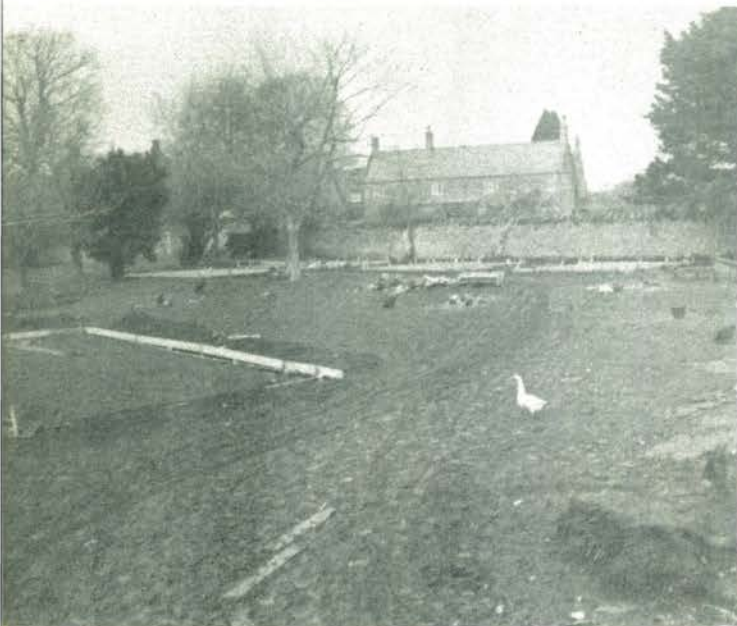
TORRINGTON, DEVON
STEVENSTONE HOUSE



BRAUNTON, DEVON



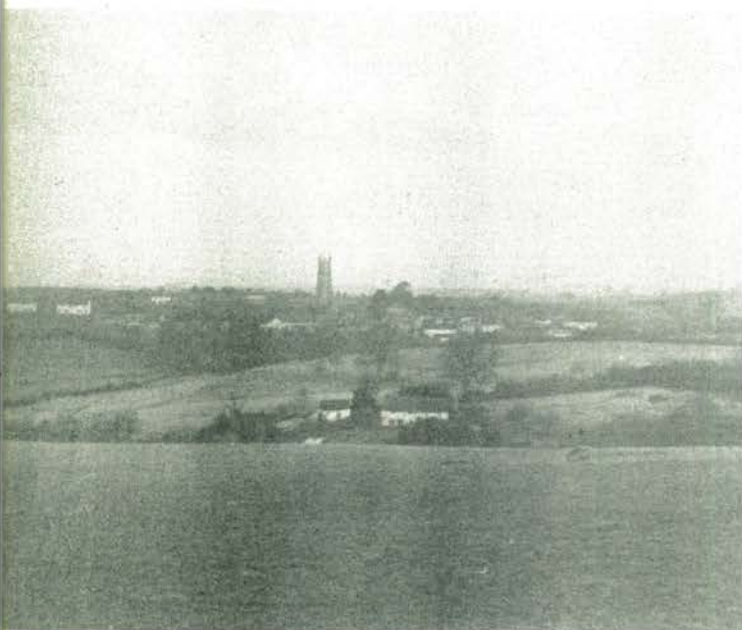
WATER PURIFICATION SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION



SOUTH PETHERTON, SOMERSET—CAMP EXPANSION



Foundation for and the Completed Bath House



LANDSCAPE AND VILLAGE



WELLINGTON LANDSCAPE

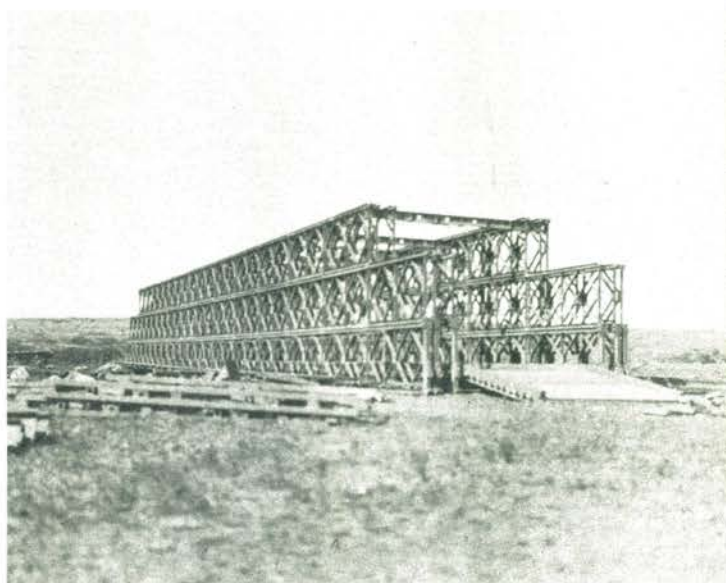
Armin F. Fick was moved to the vicinity of Braunton, North Devon to construct a 150,000 gallon water purification plant for use by the Assault Training Center Camp at Saunton Sands, North Devon. This project was of very high priority. Great originality and technical skill was displayed by the commanding officer of Company "E" in the design and construction of the project. The water purification plant served troops at the Assault Center and may well act as an excellent source of water supply in post-war days.

Company "F", commanded by Captain George S. Meyer, less one platoon, was moved to Torrington, Devon, and undertook projects in that vicinity which consisted of construction of one 16 x 36 Nissen cook house, repair of two houses and the laying of 11 tent slabs. General repairs were made to house and foot paths built. The 1st Platoon of Company "F" commanded by 1st Lt. Clifford J. Rodgers was moved to Bude for the construction of the Bude Camp expansion project. This project essentially consisted of the installation of a 24 x 60 cook house; the making of 350 square feet of hardstanding and necessary foot paths. Improvements to the existing accommodations for approximately 1200 men were made in the vicinity of Torrington and Bude by this company.

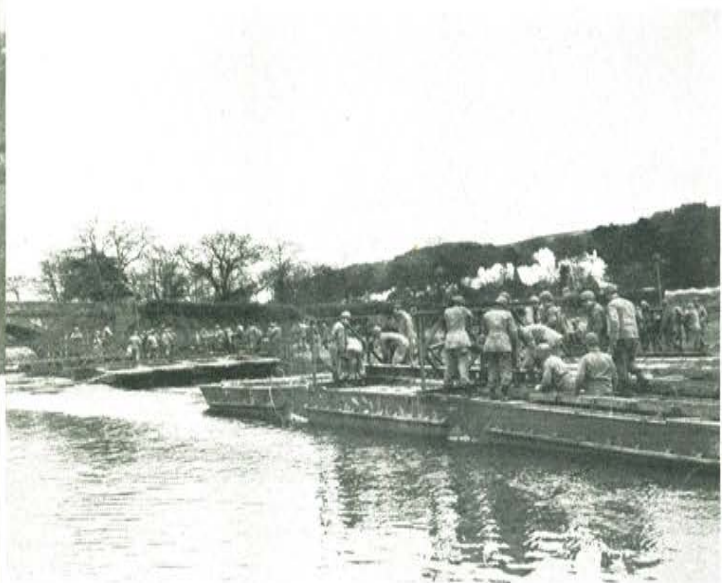
By the 15th November 1943 (13 days after arrival in the United Kingdom) the initial disposition of all units of the Regiment was complete and all companies were engaged in construction projects with the exception of Company "D".

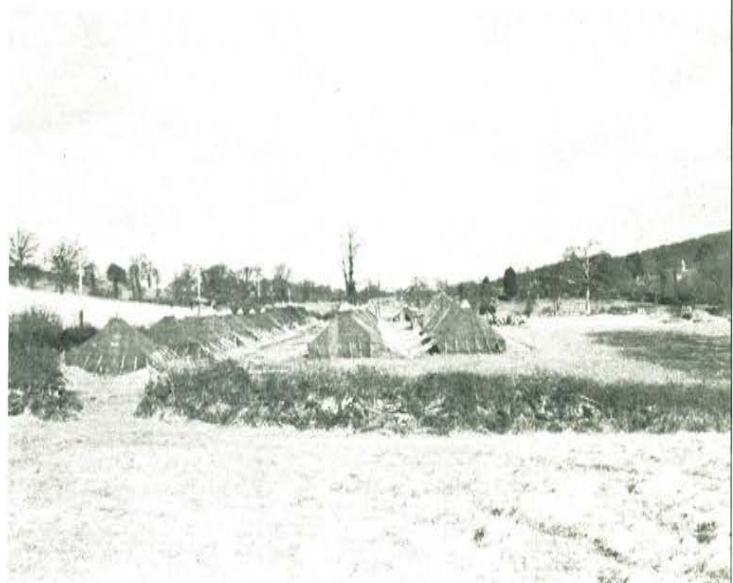
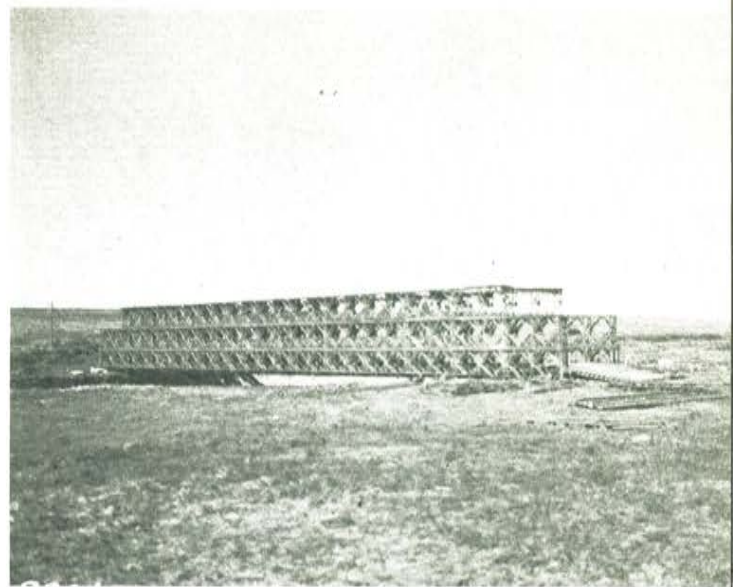
On the 19th November 1943 this Regiment was assigned to Group "B" by Special Order No. 53, Headquarters XIX District, SBS, U. S. Army, dated 18 November 1943 and Colonel Edward H. Coe was appointed Group Commander in addition to his duties as Regimental Commander. The 291st Engineer Combat Battalion, commanded by Major David E. Pergrin and the 296th Engineer Combat Battalion commanded by Major Jack C. Jeffrey were the other units assigned to the group. Seven Companies of 118th Infantry were attached for duty. Rather than organize an elaborate group headquarters it was the decision of Colonel Coe to utilize the staff of this Regiment to assist him in exercising tactical and technical supervision of the construction and training of Group "B".

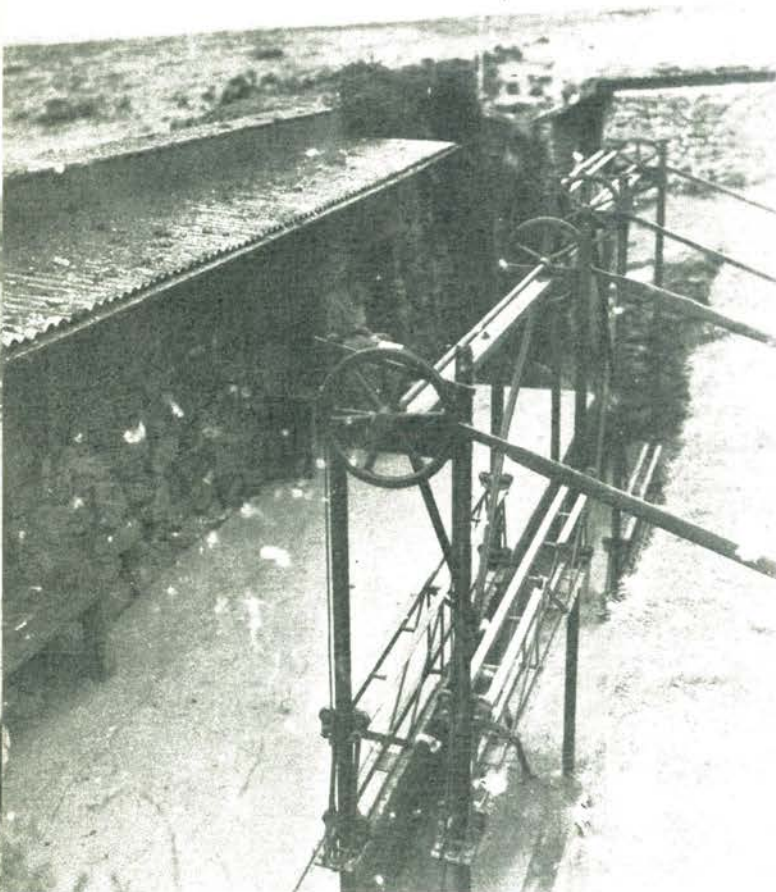
On the 22nd of November 1943 secret orders were received to assign one company for use in preparation of an Assault Range in the vicinity of Slapton Sands to be used for the exercise "Duck" and succeeding invasion exercises. Immediate and detailed reconnaissance of the area was made by Captain Goldberg, commanding Company "D", and liaison established with the allied combined staff who were preparing the details of the exercise. Company "D" was moved into the area on the 24th November 1943. This project consisted of evacuating 35 square miles of land in the area consisting of Tarcross, Stoke Fleming, Halwell and Kingsbridge, including the movement of civilians, harvesting of crops, protection of churches, historical monuments and points of



TRAINING EXERCISES







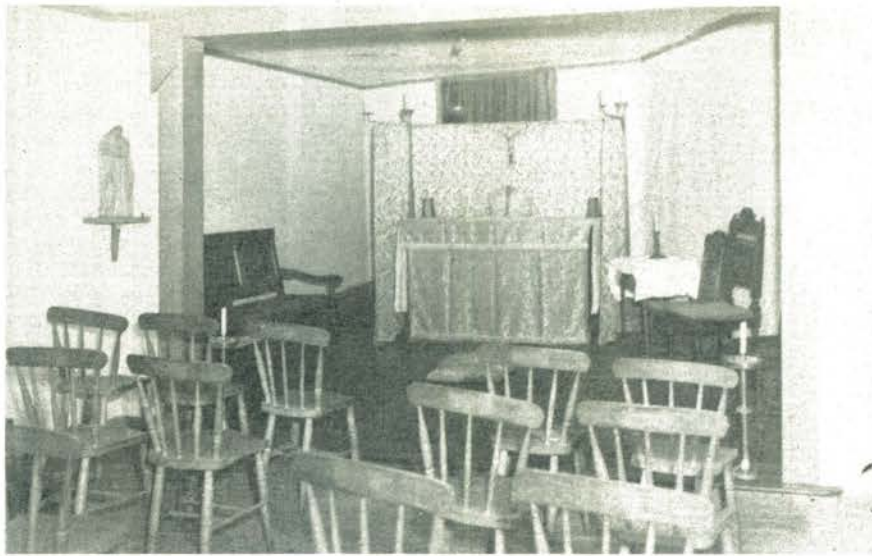
scenic interest, marking of danger areas and barricading of restricted areas, preparation of plans for feeding and movement of assault troops away from the area, police and traffic control of all roads in the vicinity, the establishment and operation of a range headquarters and the repair and maintenance of all property damaged as the result of the exercises. Captain Goldberg and his organization were commended for the careful planning and execution of the initial phases of this project, by letter of commendation from Colonel Theodore Wyman, Jr., Commandant XIX District, Southern Base Section. The Bishop of Exeter also personally commended Captain Goldberg. Other troops of the Regiment have operated during the exercise as detachments for special missions. These consisted of special work and police details as well as a kitchen force under Staff Sergeant Harry Abrahms of Company "C". It was the responsibility of Sergeant Abrahms to establish an officers mess in Torquay. Commendations were also received for this work from Colonel Charles R. Broshous, Deputy Base Section Commander, Headquarters Southern Base Section, SOS ETOUSA.

To facilitate control and supervision of the 2nd Battalion, commanded by Captain Robert W. Price, Battalion Headquarters were moved to Torrington, North Devon on the 23rd of November.

The Regimental training program for the remainder of 1943 and the first quarter of 1944 was published on the 27th of November 1943 and was written to emphasize future possible combat activities by the organization as well as furthering the esprit de corps of the unit as a whole and the technical skill of each individual soldier. The program included selected training days, officers and non-commissioned officers schools and special chemical warfare and lectures given by combat engineer soldiers recently returned from the North African and Sicilian campaigns.

During the last week in November and first part of December 1943, additional projects were assigned the Regiment in the vicinity of Bideford and Launceston, Cornwall.

Having completed the original assigned projects with the exception of the Maunsell House expansion, Company "A", less 2nd Lt. Kenneth B. Jacobson's platoon, moved on 7th of December 1943 to Launceston, Cornwall to undertake camp expansion projects at Scarne Cross Camp, Penny Gillham, Trebartha Hall, and Launceston. Work accomplished at Scarne Cross consisted of construction of a 16 x 36 Nissen dining hall, and a drying room 24 x 84. Showers, plumbing and sewers were installed and tent slabs laid. Penny Gillham—six 16 x 36 Nissen huts were erected. An addition was made to the mess hall and sick bay; slabs were laid for 290 tents; ablutions, latrines and showers were constructed. Trebartha Hall—one 24 x 102 Nissen hut was erected; showers and a boiler were installed and alterations made to water and drainage systems. Launceston—additional facilities were installed at Manaton House, St. Stephens Hall, and Baptist Hall, necessary foot paths laid out, plumbing and showers installed and painting; additions were made to Nissen huts. Expansions



CATHOLIC CHAPEL

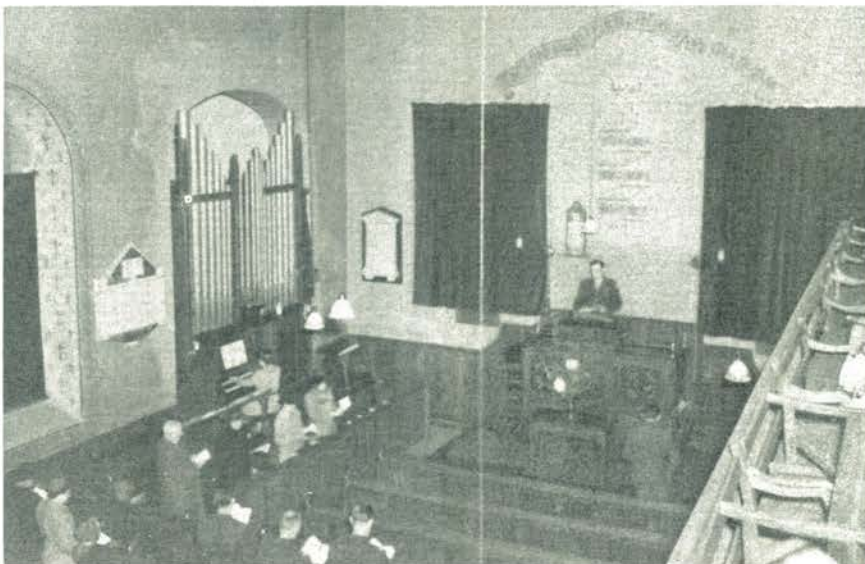
on accommodations to house approximately 2,500 men were included in this assignment.

Company "F" completed camp expansion projects in the vicinity of Torrington and Bude and moved to Buckleigh House, Bideford, North Devon to construct the 500-man Handy Cross hutted camp. Second Battalion Headquarters was moved at this time to Westward Ho!

Preparations began for the establishment of a permanent Regimental Headquarters at Tremlett Hall, Greenham, Somerset and consisted of construction of 20,000 square feet of hard standing and the cleaning and painting of requisitioned buildings. Company "C" completed construction activity in the vicinity of Okehampton during the last week of December 1943 and moved to the vicinity of St. Blazey to undertake the construction of the 600-man Consols Winter tent camp.

On the 29th of December 1943 Regimental Headquarters, H&S Company and 1st Battalion Headquarters moved from Wiveliscombe to Tremlett Hall, Greenham, Somerset.

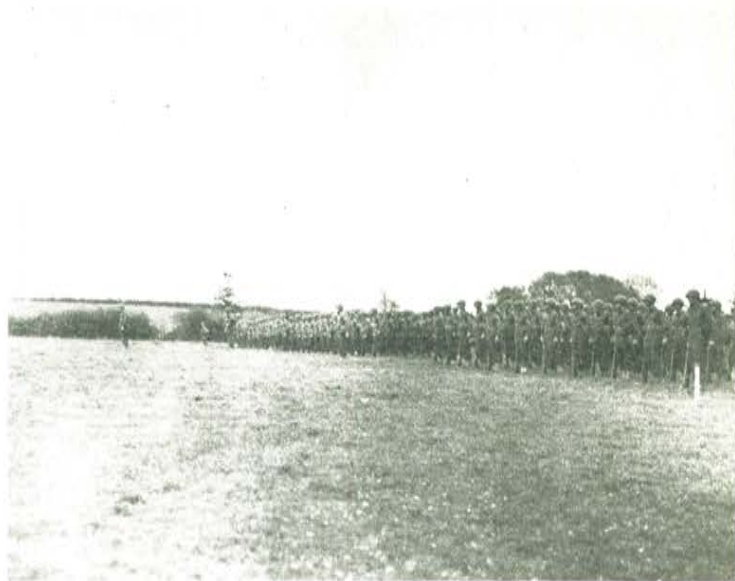
Emphasis was placed on schools in various subjects pertaining to Engineer training with very favorable results. Sgt. Bernard Ziner, Gas non-commissioned officer, after thorough preparation in the subject of chemical warfare, presented a lecture to each company of this Regiment during period 28 November/43 to 4 December/43. The subject was presented in a highly interesting and informative manner and drew praise from every audience for the clarity of its presentations. During the period covered by this history four officers of this Regiment attended a Bailey Bridge School. One officer attended a school and conference for speakers. Another attended a school in loading landing craft and two officers attended a school in heavy railway bridging. One officer attended a school on reconnaissance. Seven enlisted men attended a school on ordnance small arms. Full advantage was taken of all schools offered in the theater.



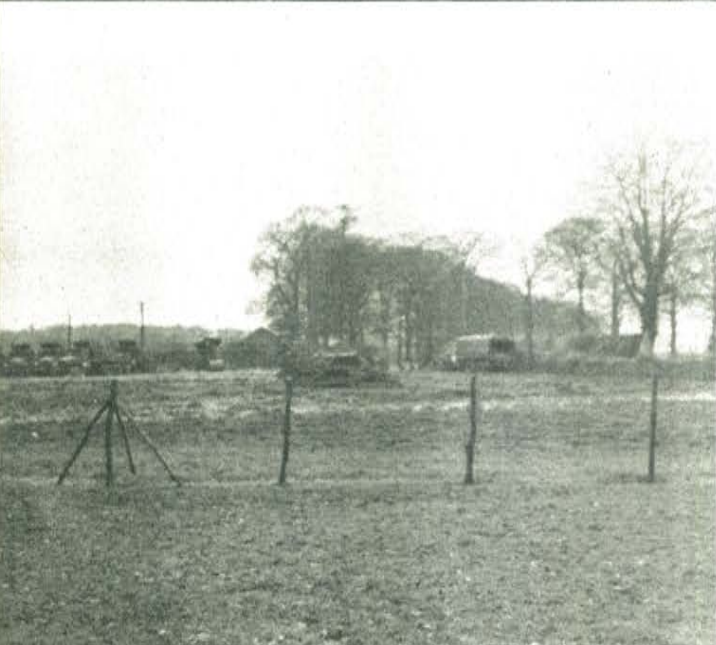
THANKSGIVING SERVICE



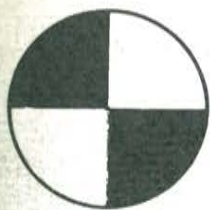
DANCE—25 NOVEMBER 1943



PRESENTING BIBLES, TROOPS AT INSPECTION, COLOR GUARD



OKEHAMPTON, DEVON—Camp Expansion



DANCE
December 11, 1943

TRIO OF "TOP", "BABY", "JOHNS"



PICKING HOLLY



MAKING WREATHS



LAUNCESTON, CORNWALL—Camp Expansion



STOKE SUB-HAMDON, SOMERSET—Camp Expansion



MERRIOT, SOMERSET—Camp Expansion



DIVINE SERVICES-CHRISTMAS 1943



KID'S
CHRISTMAS
PARTY





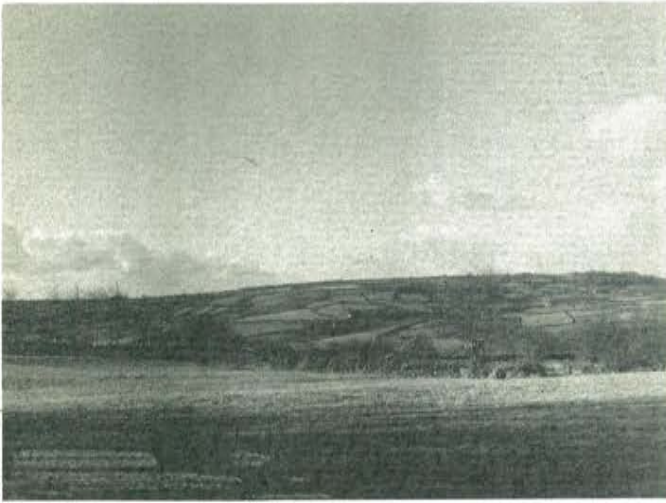


CHRISTMAS

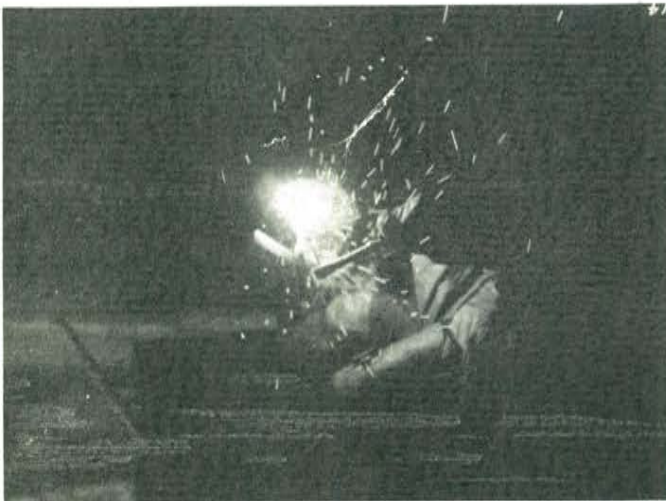


DINNER

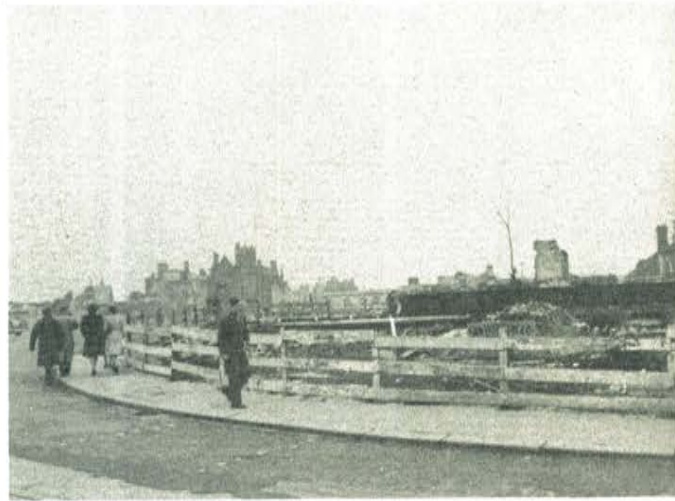




LANDSCAPES



DI BRAUGO WELDING



RUINS OF PLYMOUTH



SCOTCH PIONEERS



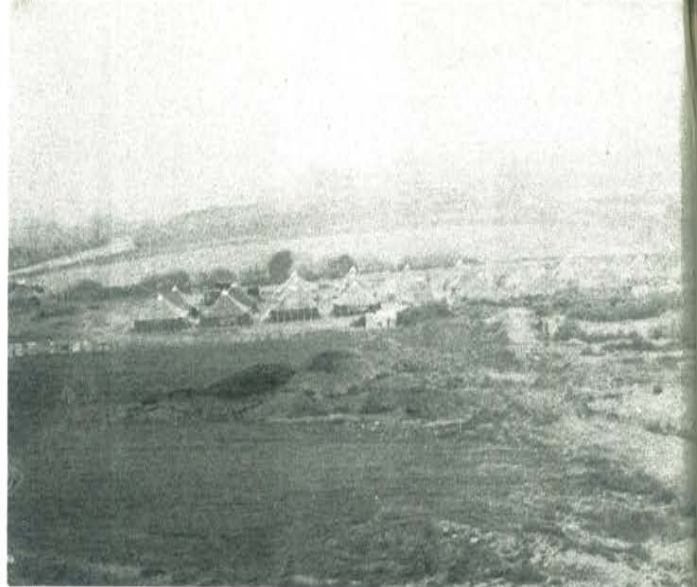
"D" COMPANY



PUB



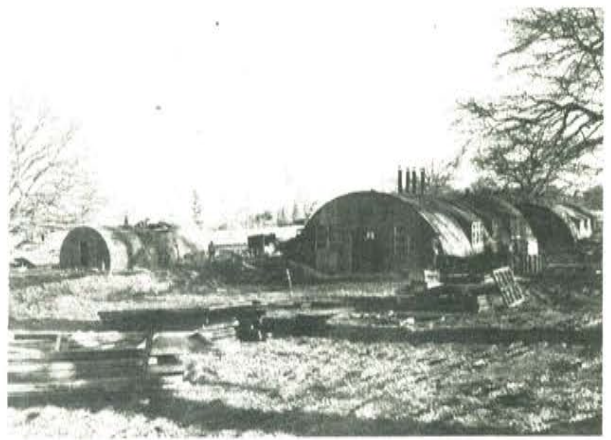
MESS HALL



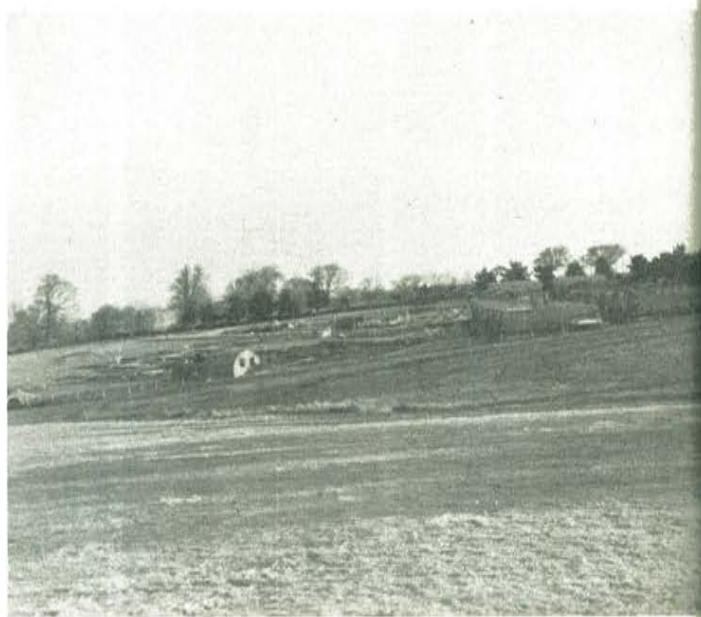
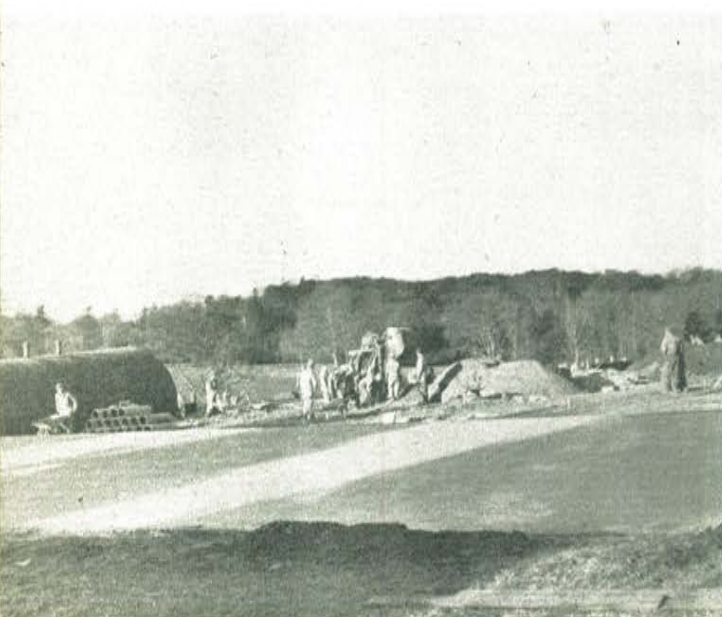
ST. BLAZEY, CORNWALL—Consols 600 Man Tented Camp



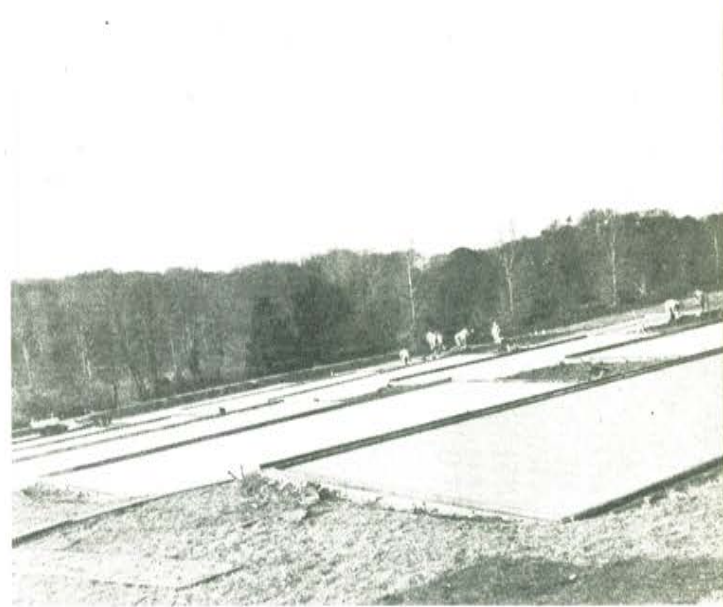
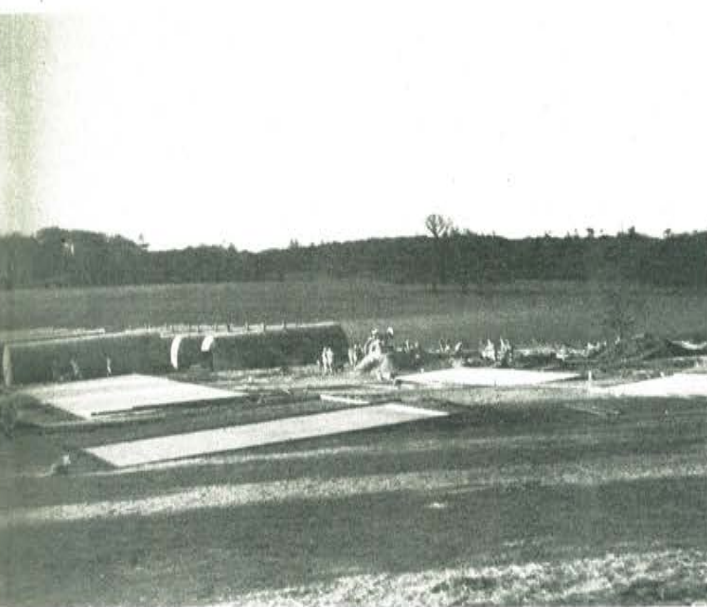
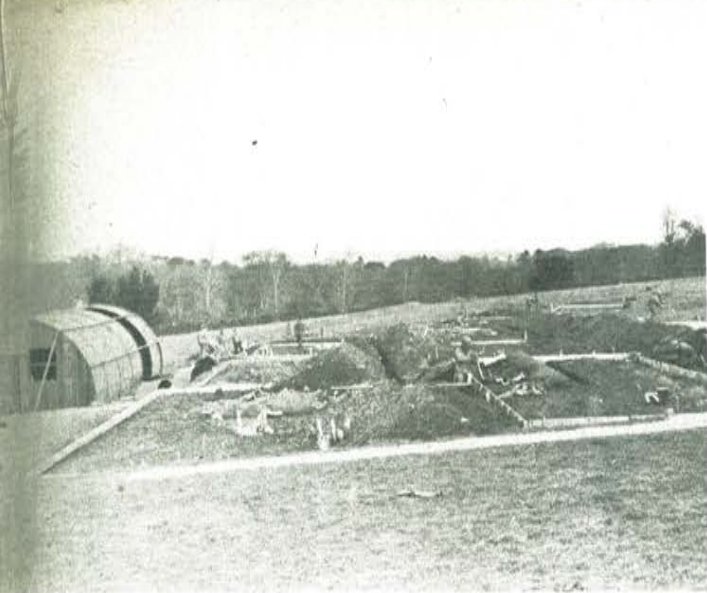
HAZELBURY, PLUCKNETT—Camp Expansion



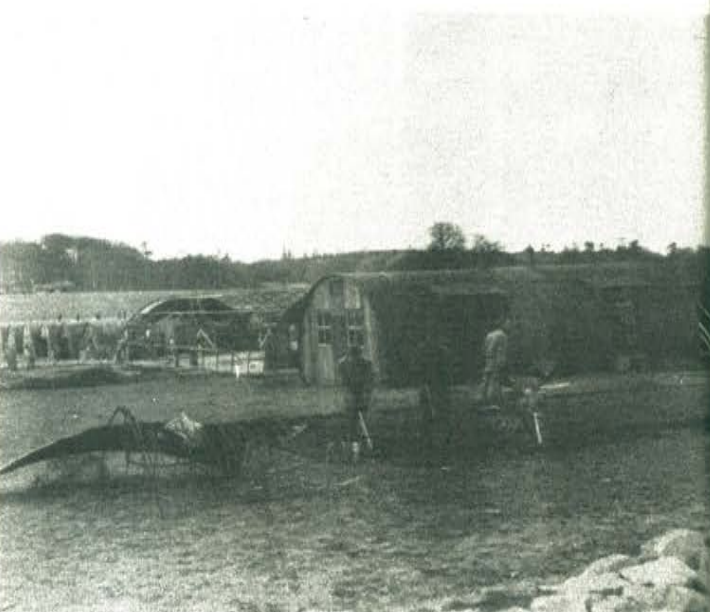
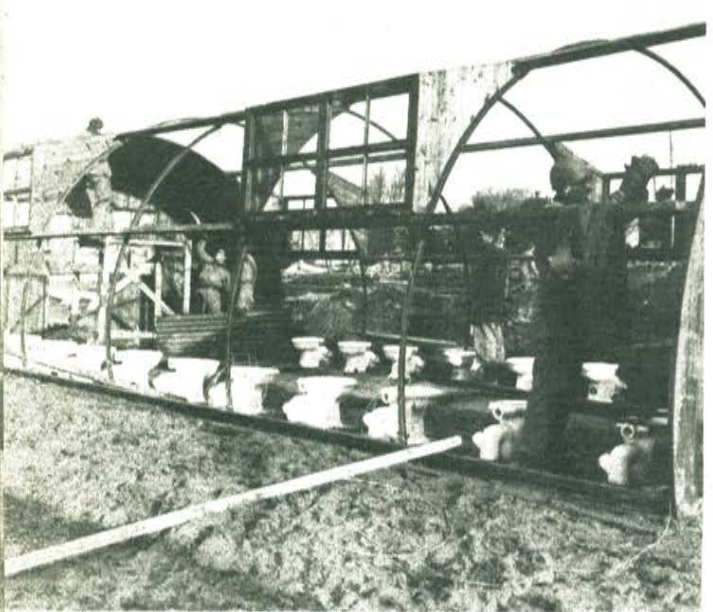
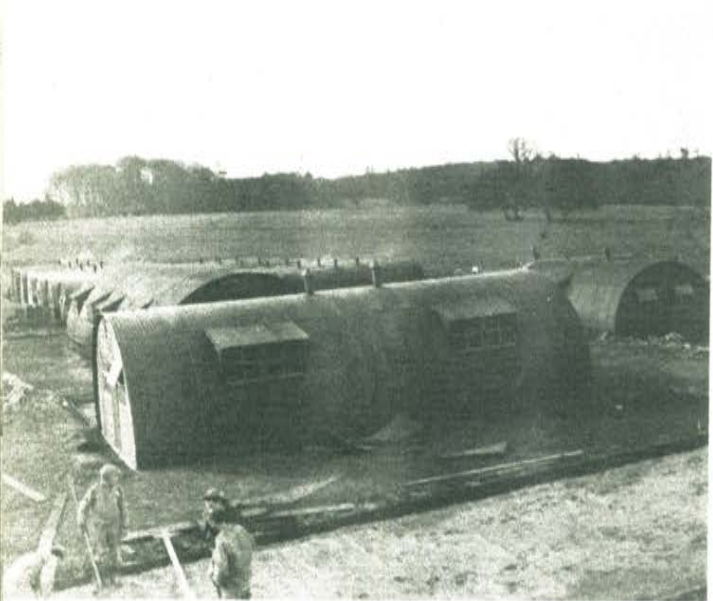
HINTON ST. GEORGE, SOMERSET—Summer Tented Camp



BIDEFORD, DEVON—Handy Cross 500 Man Tented Camp



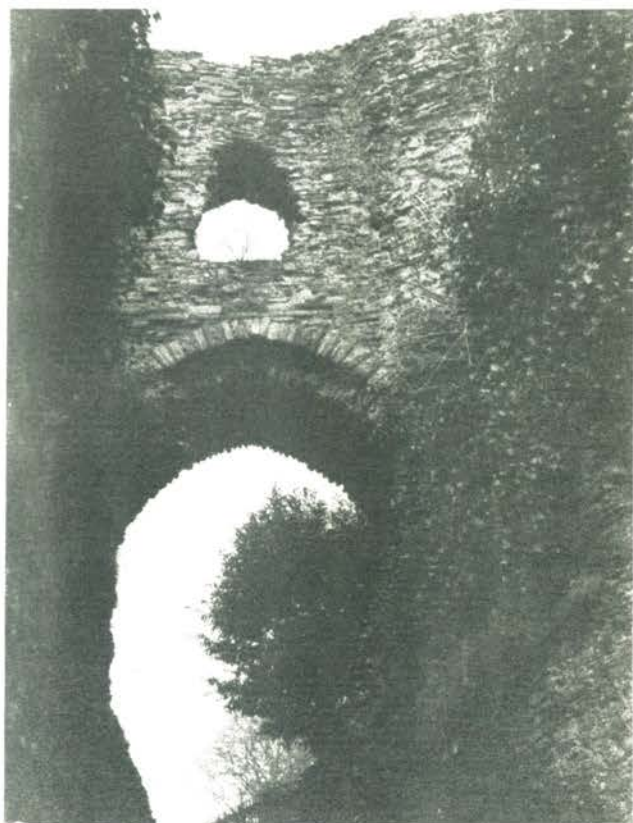
SHOWING PROGRESS OF CONSTRUCTION



MISCELLANEOUS PICTURES AT HANDY CROSS

LAUNCESTON, CORNWALL

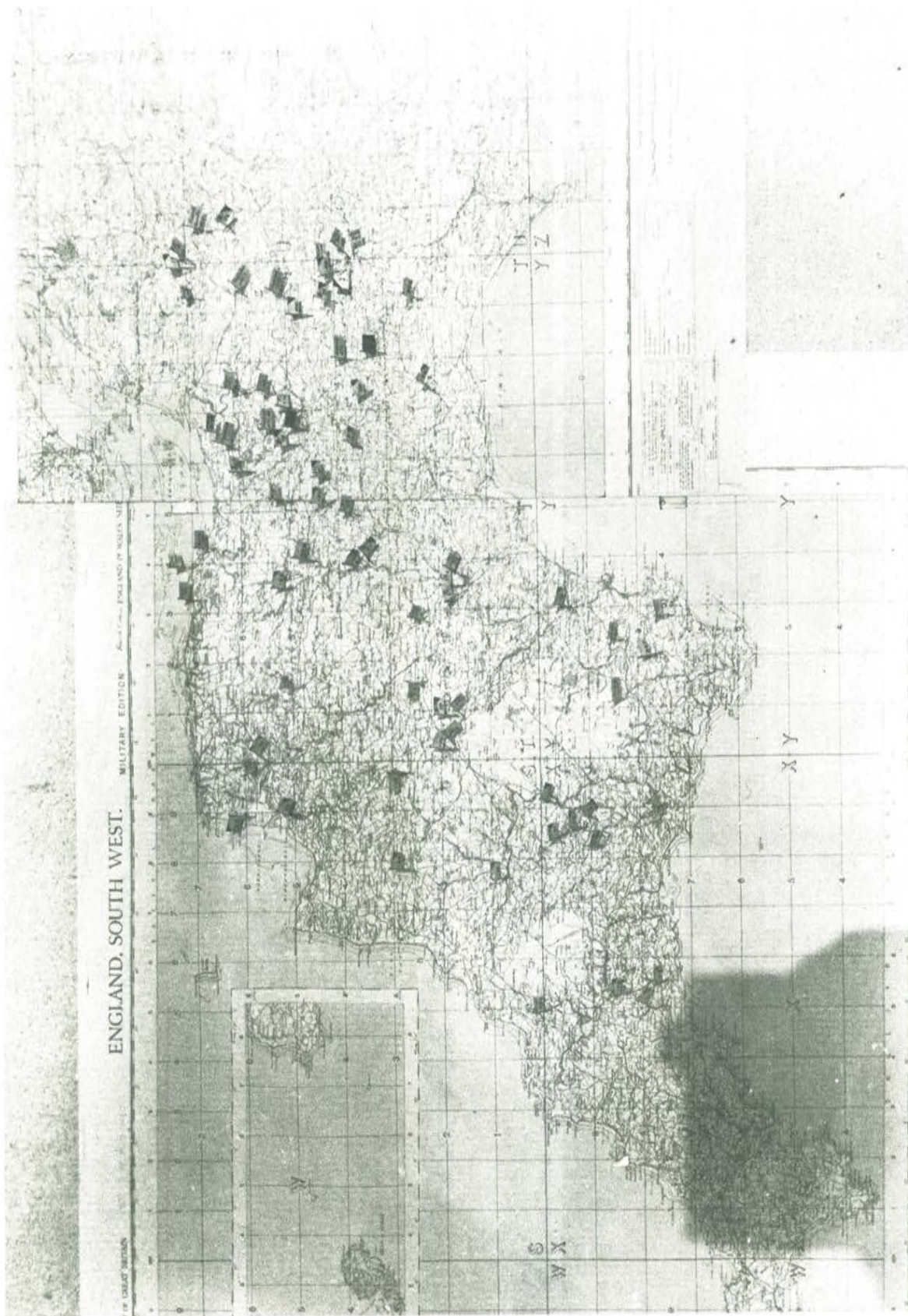
Scarne Cross—Camp Expansion

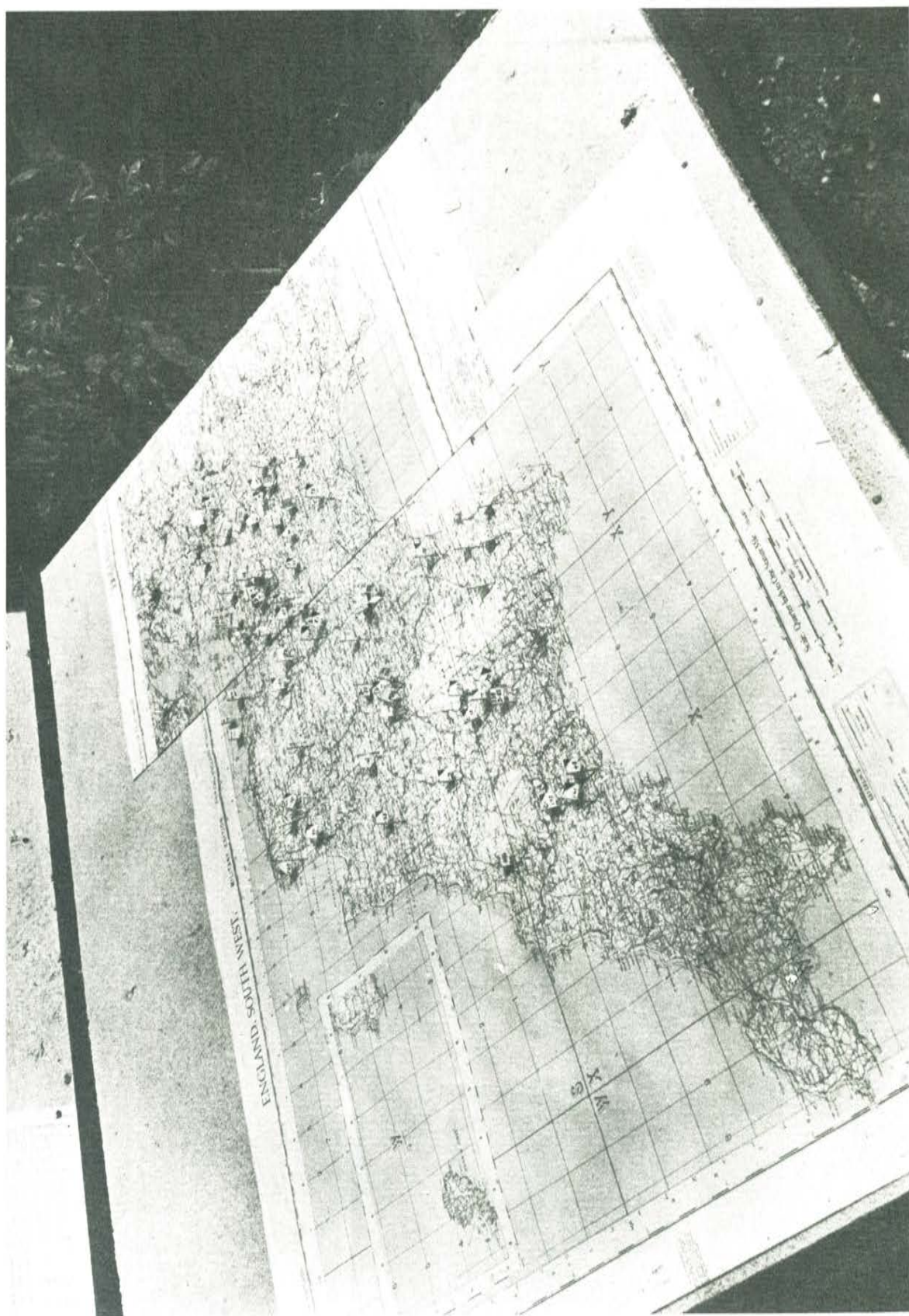


LAUNCESTON, CORNWALL

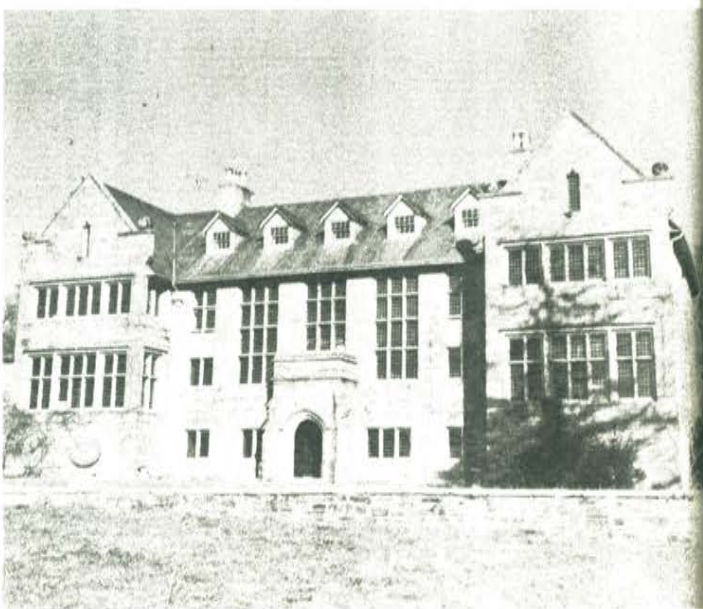
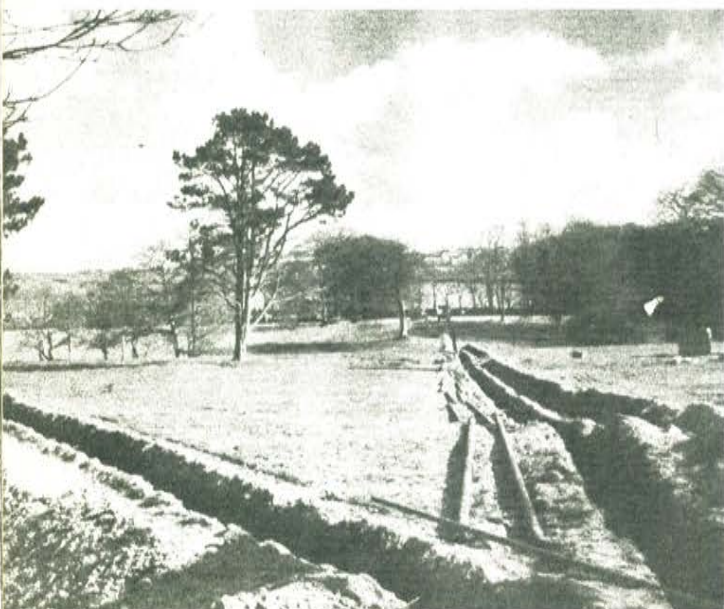
Old Hack Gate, William of Cornwall (1100)







PROJECT MAP



HENGARS, CORNWALL—Summer Tented Camp

HIGHLIGHTS OF 1944

The roads in the Avranches neck.
The first railway line across the Moselle River.
The longest high railroad bridge rebuilt on the continent.
The first railway line running into Paris.
The first railroad bridge in Northern Germany.

These are the highlights in the reconstruction schedule of the 341st Engineer General Service Regiment during 1944, a year in which the Regiment completed its pre-invasion housing construction in England, moved to the continent to play an active part in assisting the Armies, and travelled with them from Normandy, through France, Belgium and Luxembourg to the Reich's own home soil.

For more than nine months of the year the Regiment was assigned to, and a part of, Advance Section Communications Zone. Most of its work on the continent, however, was done

not in Advance Section zones, but in Army territory, oftentimes under heavy shellfire and in advance of the artillery. Two companies of the Regiment, Company "E" and "B", were the first U. S. units to build railroad bridges on German home territory. And four companies, Company "B", "D", "E" and Headquarters and Service Company, were suddenly transformed into combat troops at the year's end to help stem the German counter-offensive north of Arlon and south and east of Aachen, while waiting for reinforcements from the First and Third Armies.

CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLAND

At the beginning of the year 1944 the 341st Engineer Regiment was busy with extensive work on housing and allied projects in preparation for the influx of invasion troops in England. This work had been started immediately after the arrival of the unit in England on November 2, 1943.

Regimental Headquarters at the start of the year was located in Greenham, Somerset. The companies, however, were stretched throughout Devon, Somerset and Cornwall counties. Company "A" was in Launceston, Cornwall, engaged in camp expansion projects for 2,500 men in the area. Company "B" was located at Stoke-Sub-Hamdon, Somerset, building camps for 2,000 men in that area. Company "C", at St. Blazey, Cornwall, was constructing the 600-man Consols Winter Tent camp. Company "E" was in Braunton, North Devon, building a 150,000-gallon water purification plant for use by the Assault Training Center at Saunton Sands, North Devon. And Company "F", at Buckleigh House, Bideford, North Devon, was at work on a 500-man hutted camp at Handy Cross. Headquarters and Service Company, of course, was everywhere.

Company "D" was engaged in preservation rather than construction work. The company was located in Halwell, Devon, and was busy preparing the assault range for the Army-Navy exercise "Duck" to be held in the area. Its job consisted in preserving the historical buildings in the area against possible damage and in preparing the area for the exercise. In addition it was to operate the range headquarters and to repair and maintain all property damaged during the exercise.

This, then, was the situation at the start of the year.

On January 1, Company "E" completed on schedule its work of pouring some 800-yards of concrete, assembling misfit equipment, engines and material to get the 150,000 gallon water purification plant in operation. This was done despite handicaps of knee-deep

mud, broken high pressure mains and unfavorable rainy weather. On January 2, the company moved to Bideford to assist Company "F" in the construction of the Handy Cross hutted camp. Also early in January Company "B" was assigned the projects of summer tent camps at Houndstone (facilities for 1,000 men), Hinton St. George (1,500 men) and Crickett St. Thomas (750 men).

Meanwhile "C" Company, working on the Consols Winter Tent Camp, received word that its camp must be ready by the 20th of January for occupancy. Despite a shortage of materials, equipment, and, most important, time, the project was completed by the deadline. Great initiative, excellent planning and a fine sense of ingenuity were displayed in accomplishing this task. The work of the company did not go unnoticed. A commendation was received shortly afterwards from Colonel Wyman, Commandant, XIX District, Southern Base Section.

During January and February several changes were made in the organization of Group "B" (of which the 341st Regiment was a part, and of which Colonel Coe was commanding officer). The 291st Engineer Combat Battalion and the 296th Engineer Combat Battalion were assigned to other duties out of the group. They were replaced by the 374th Engineer General Service Regiment, commanded by Lt. Col. Barko. Later the 751st QM Truck Company was attached to the group and located at Emborough camp with the first battalion of the 374th Engineer Regiment. Shortly after, the 398th Engineer General Service Regiment, with its projects, was added to the Group.

Orders also were received during the first week of February to receive and orient the 374th Engineer General Service Regiment and the 1302nd Engineer Regiment, both of which had just arrived in England. Housing for the units was arranged and all personnel were lectured by officers of the 341st on the required orientation subjects.

Other projects conducted during this period included supervision of work on the Langport Detention Training Center and the hard standing for the Taunton depot. These pro-



jects were under the supervision on the First Battalion Headquarters.

Meanwhile construction work continued. Company "B", having completed its assigned projects, started work on February 5 on summer camps at Walford House and Tetton Park in Somerset County. The same week Company "C" began work on a 1500-man summer tented camp at Wadebridge in Cornwall County.

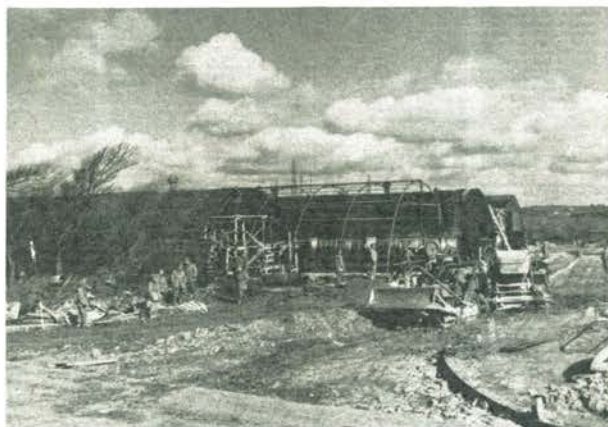
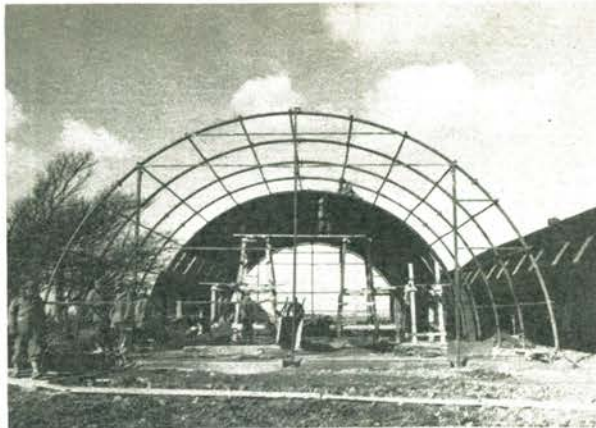
The imminence of "D-Day" made it necessary that all housing projects be completed as early as possible. Directives ordering that this be done were issued to all companies of the unit. This was important, not only to be sure that the incoming hordes of soldiers would have adequate places to stay, but to enable the Regiment to undergo a period of last minute training before that all-important day.

With this training period in mind, Colonel Coe selected Hengar's Estate, near St. Tudy, Cornwall County, as a camp site for the organization. Company "A" was given the job of building the camp to prepare for the Regiment and started work on the project on February 26. The next week a platoon of Company "C" also was moved to the location to assist in an early completion.

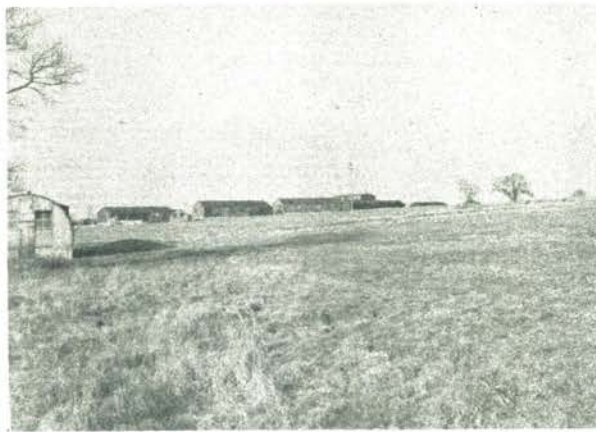
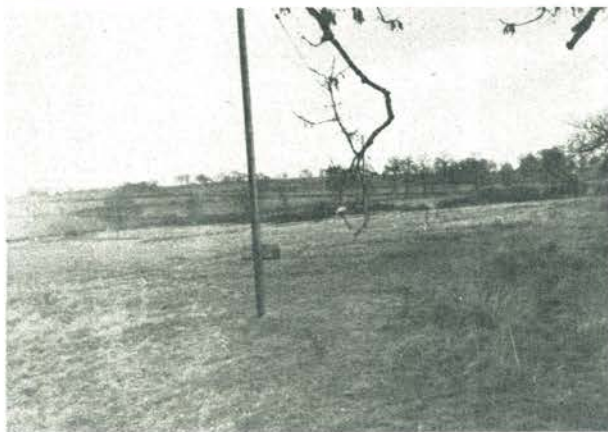
A new project—one of destruction instead of construction—was assigned to the Regiment on March 2. Second Lieutenant Pullen's platoon from Company "D" was given the job of destroying concrete pillboxes near Yeovil. These pillboxes were located on the edge of an airport filled with parked aircraft. One pillbox was within 50 yards of a greenhouse. It was necessary that the job be done without damage to the aircraft and with as little damage as possible to the greenhouse. British officials estimated that it would take two weeks to complete the project. Lt. Pullen and his platoon destroyed the pillboxes without damage to any of the adjoining property or aircraft in less than five days.

The pace of construction was now rapidly reaching its climax. Movements of platoons of one company to assist another company to complete its job on schedule were numerous. The Wadebridge 1500-man summer tent camp project was transferred to another unit. On February 28 two platoons of Company "C" were assigned to assist Company "B" in order to rush the completion of the Walford House and Tetton Park camps.

Then came orders that all camps were to be ready for occupancy March 15. Emergency measures immediately were taken to procure construction materials urgently needed for all camps. First Lieutenant John T. Sewell, of H & S Company, was sent to London on March 4th to make arrangements to pick up approximately 80 truckloads of plasterboard hutting direct from the British manufacturing companies. In all, more than 100 trucks were dispatched to various depots throughout all of Great Britain to obtain pre-fabricated materials direct from manufacturers. These supply convoys during this period were operated by all regiments and truck companies in Group B as well as by truck units loaned to the Group by XIX District Headquarters.



WESTWARD HO!—Special Construction



YEOVIL, SOMERSET—Houndstone Summer Tented Camp (Camp Site)



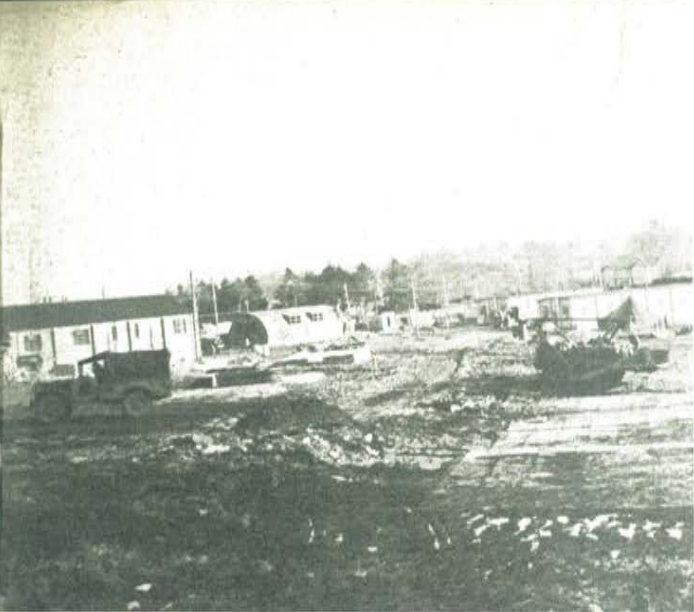
MASDBURY, SOMERSET—Masdbury Depot, Special Construction
291st Engineers and 374th Engineers



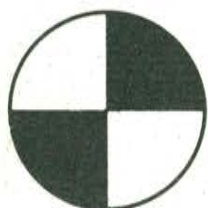
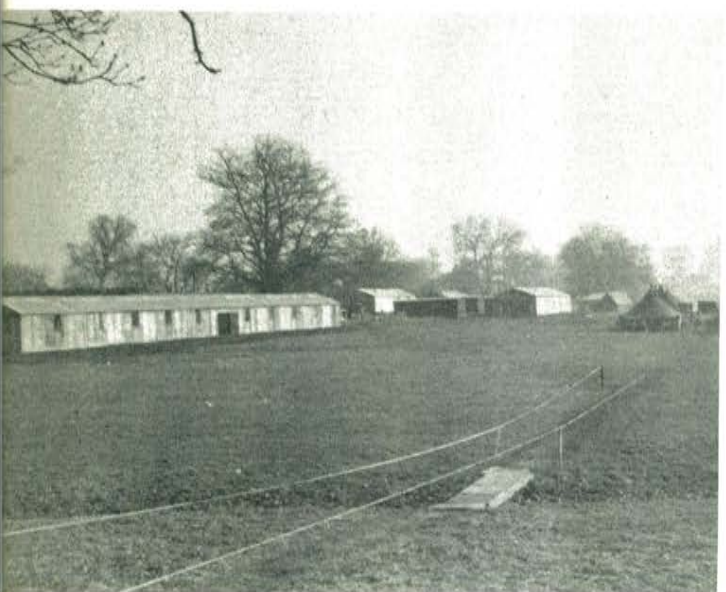
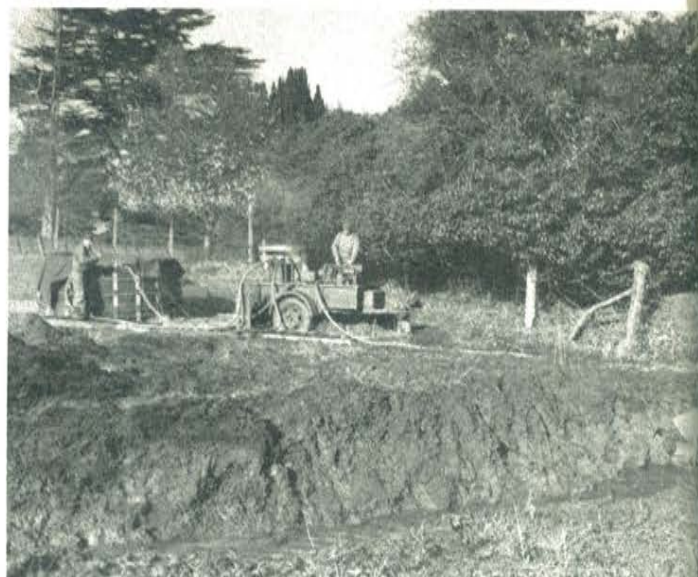
CRICKETT ST. THOMAS—750 Man Summer Tented Camp



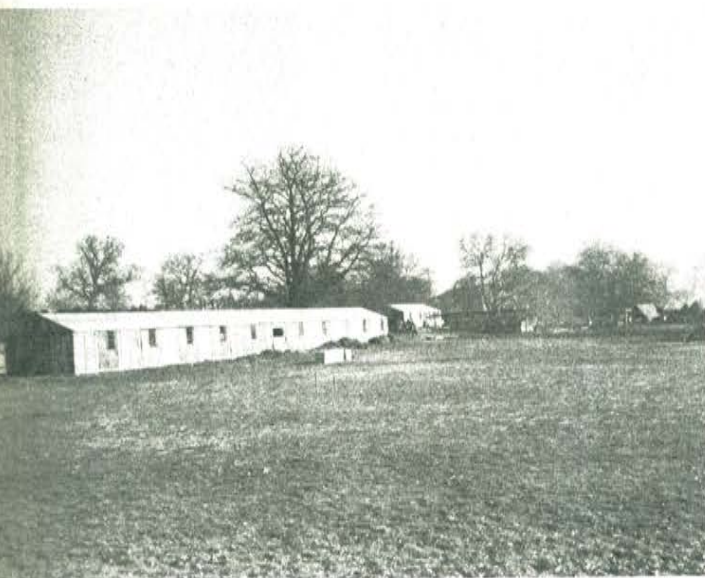
WELLS, SOMERSET—Stobury Park, Winter Tented Camp
291st Engineers and 374th Engineers



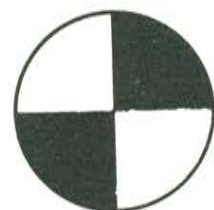
LAUNCESTON, CORNWALL—Penny Gillam Camp Expansion



TAUNTON,
SOMERSET



WALFORD
HOUSE





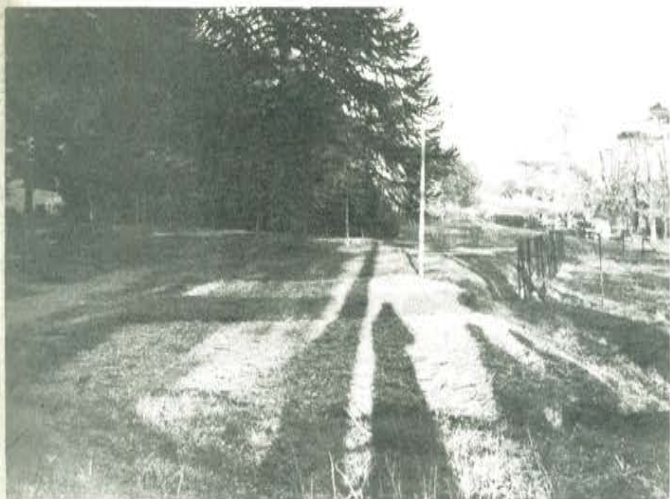
TIVERTON—Tank Retriever Stuck in Narrow Street



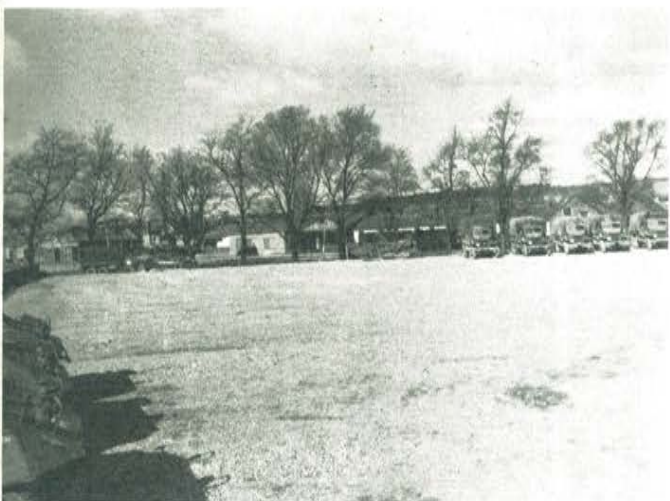
ILFRASCOMBE—Landscape and Coast Line



CULVERHEAD



NORTH TAWTON, DEVON—Camp Expansion



NORTH WALK, BARNSTAPLE, DEVON—Hardstanding



OKEHAMPTON, DEVON—Range Road



KINGSTON
SOMERSET

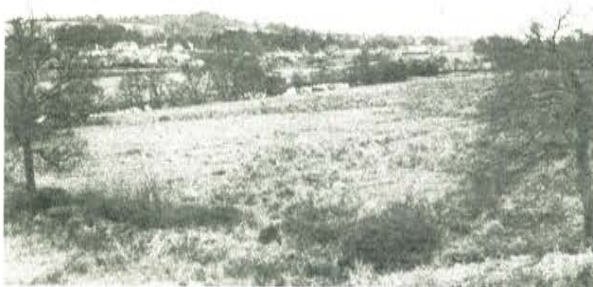
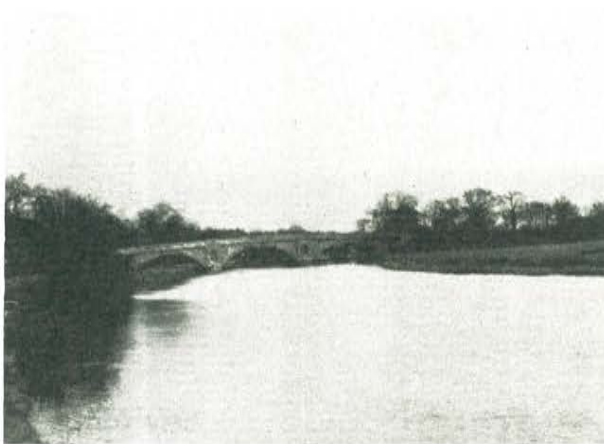
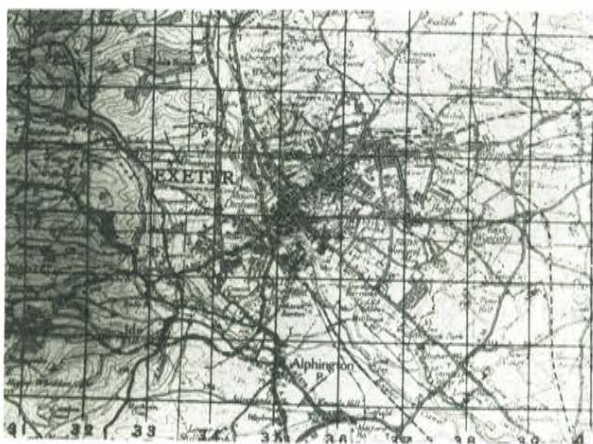


SUMMER
TENTED
CAMP





STOKE SUB-HAMPTON—Scene of Accident



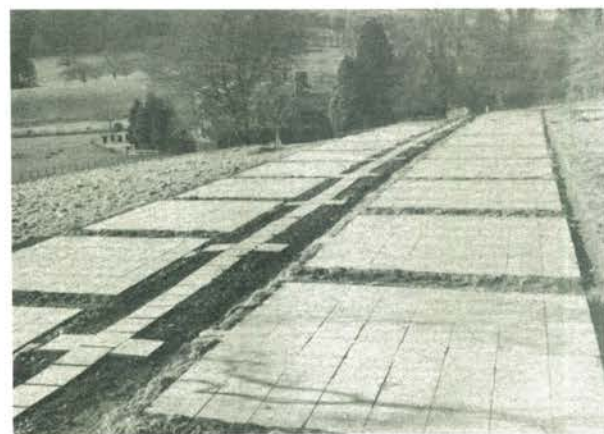


TETTON PARK—First Shots of New Camp





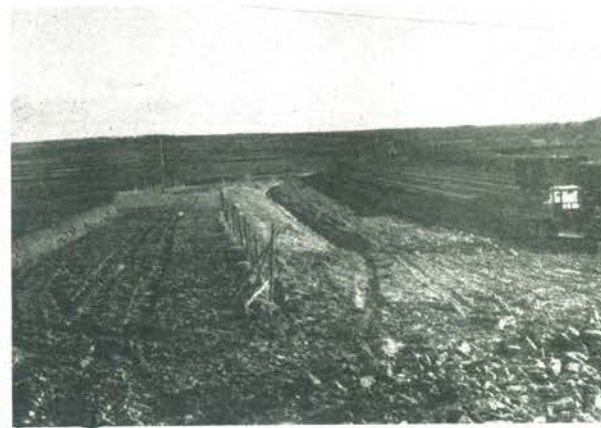
LANGPORT, SOMERSET—Special Construction



LAUNCESTON, CORNWALL—Trebartha Hall Camp Expansion



EMBOROUGH, SOMERSET—Summer Tented Camp. 291st and 374th Engrs.

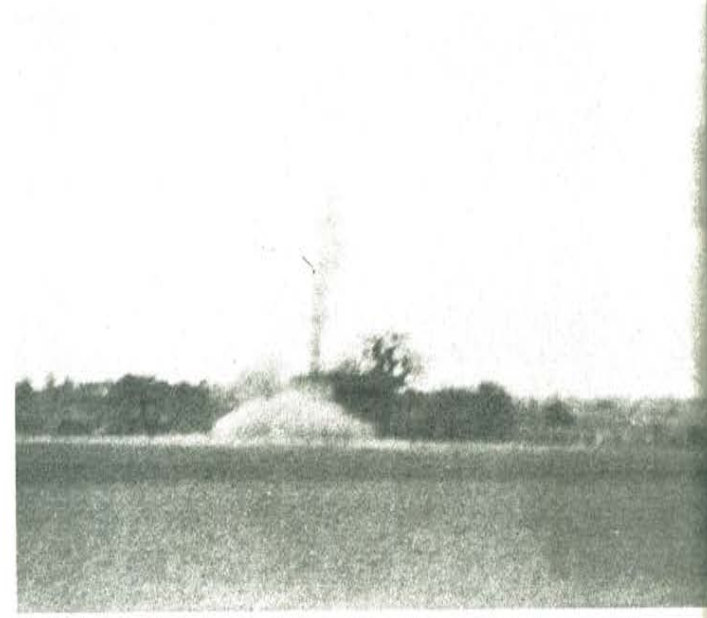


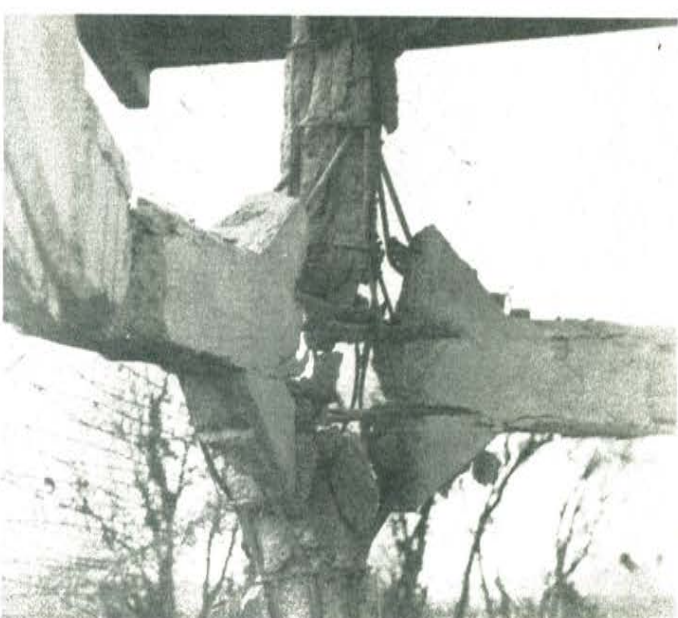
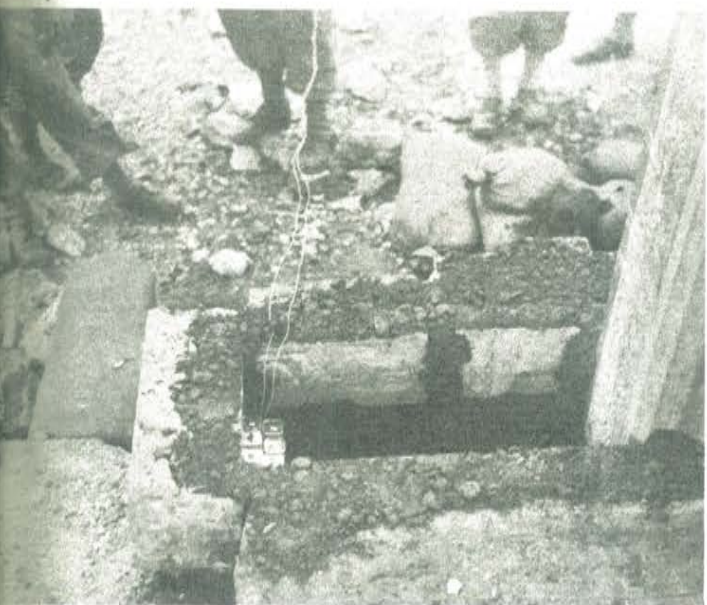
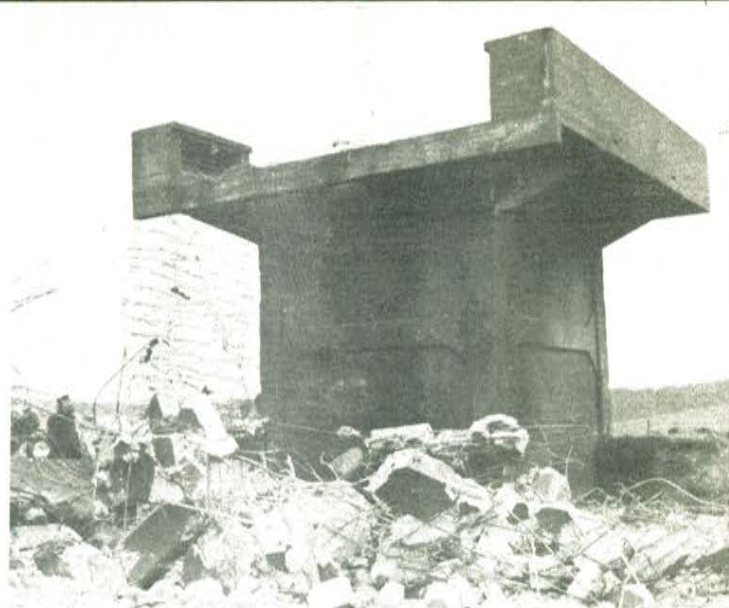
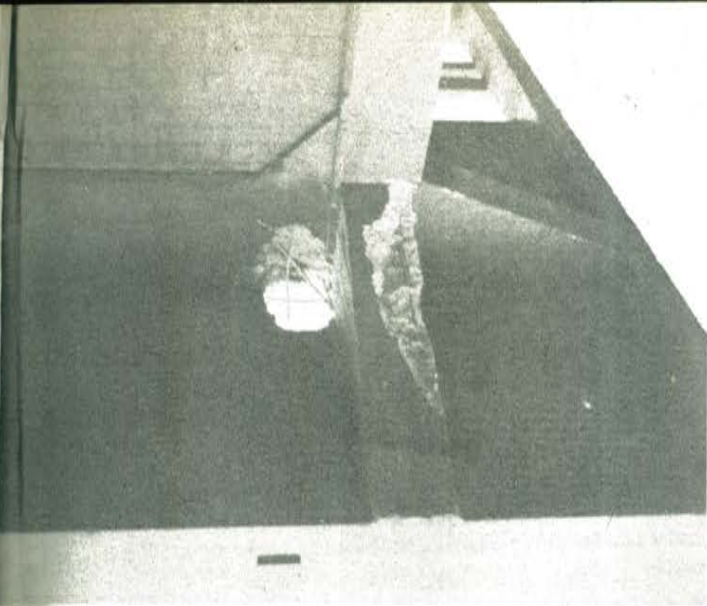
HARWILL JUNCTION, DEVON—Beaworthy Depot, Special Construction

OFFICER'S

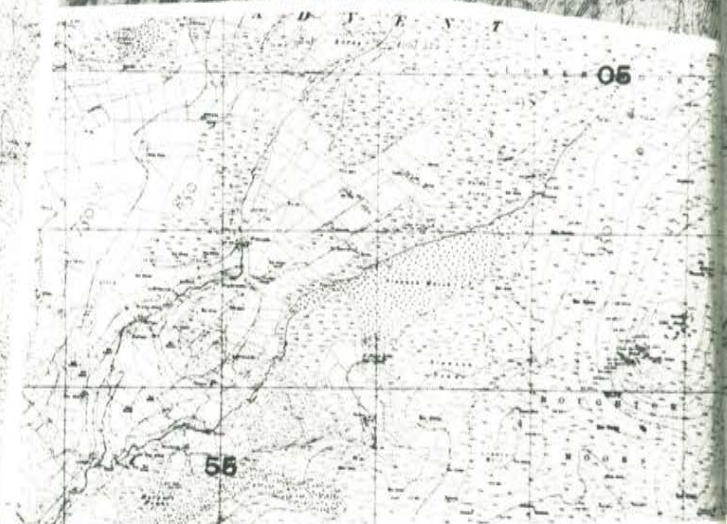


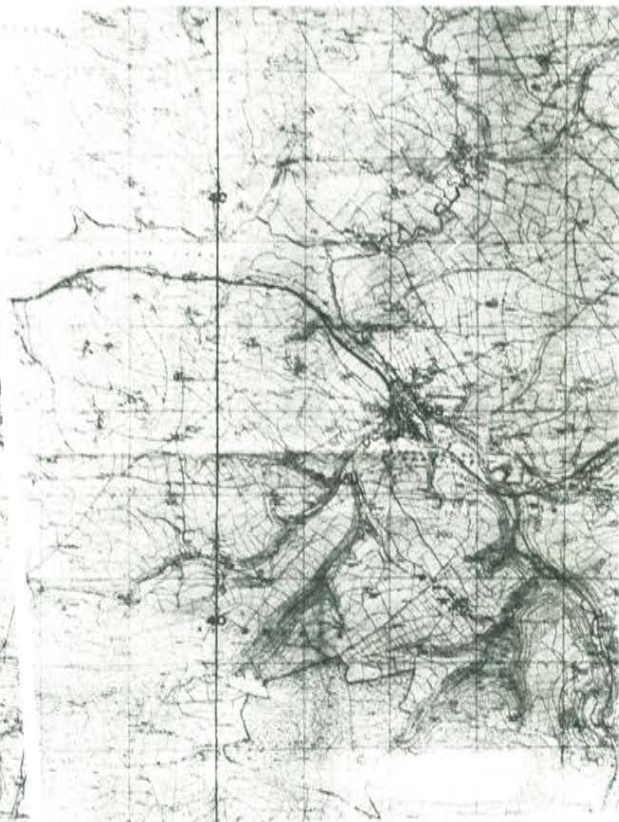
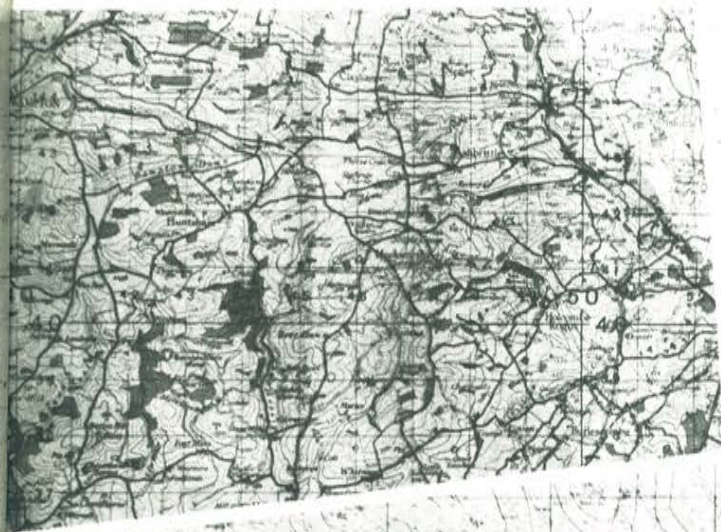






DESTRUCTION OF PILL BOXES





PRE-INVASION PREPARATION

Although completion of the housing construction claimed top priority during the first three months of the year, training for the bigger job ahead was by no means forgotten. During January, February and March a total of 11 officers and 12 enlisted men attended specialist schools in various parts of Great Britain. In addition the Regiment conducted its own school on Bailey Bridge construction and on mines. This school was held in a 50-acre area between the Exe and Ye Rivers two miles north of Exeter, a site known as Cowley Bridge.

Preliminary work for this training school was started the first of the year when detailed reconnaissance was made of the area and plans laid for the school by the S-3 section of the Regiment. On January 5th one platoon of Company "E" was moved to the site to prepare it for use.

On January 24th Company "B" (less one platoon) joined the "E" Company platoon at the site and this group formed the first training class. The training period, of one week's duration, consisted of work in the erection and removal of Bailey Bridges and proper methods of placing and removing various types of land mines.

On succeeding weeks other companies attended the school until every platoon had undergone the training. The second class, which started on January 30, consisted of Company "E" (less the one platoon) and the remaining platoon of Company "B". On February 5th Company "F" (less one platoon) and one platoon of Company "C" were at the school. The next week the other platoons of Company "C" and a platoon from "D" Company underwent the training, followed by Company "A" (less one platoon) and one platoon of Company "F". The final scheduled class was started February 27 and was composed of one platoon of Company "D" and a platoon of Company "A". Lt. Pullen's platoon from Company "D" was unable to attend a scheduled class because of its work in pillbox demolition. So a special class was held for this platoon the following week. During this week the platoon held a joint exercise with the Royal Engineer Home Guard in the construction of a floating Bailey Bridge.

As the companies completed their assigned construction jobs they moved to Hengar's camp, near St. Tudy, Cornwall county, to take part in a Regimental training period, designed to cover all phases of Engineer work and basic combat tactics so as to prepare the men for their work on the continent.

Company "A" was given the task of preparing the site for the camp and had started work on it on February 26. On March 1 Headquarters and one platoon of Company "C" moved to the camp to assist "A" Company. Two days later First Battalion Headquarters moved to the site. The Third Platoon of Company "C", its job of road construction at Cleave Camp Anti-aircraft range completed, also joined the group.

Second Battalion Headquarters moved to Hengar's camp on March 17. Company "F" finished its Handy Cross camp on March 20 and immediately moved south to the training camp, followed on March 25 by Company "B" which had completed the Walford House and Tetton Park camp projects. Regimental Headquarters was moved to the site on March 27 and 28.

Thus, by the end of March all companies of the Regiment except "D" and "E" were encamped, ready for the training period which was scheduled to start April 1, and last for possibly eight weeks, or longer, depending upon the war situation. A reduction in the number of men taking part in the program came about almost at the last moment. On March 25 orders were received placing 190 men and six officers of the Regiment on detached service in the marshalling areas. They were to assist in various service capacities—cooks, camp supervisors, surgeon, etc.—in the assault exercise "Beaver."

The two complete companies absent when the training program started, Companies "D" and "E", were busy with important duties in another section of Southern England. Company "D" was in Halwell rounding up its work in operating the Assault Range Headquarters in that area as well as repairing damage done by artillery and Navy gunfire in the amphibious exercises. It was released from this assignment on April 5th and entered into the training program at that time.

Company "E" was unable to join the other companies because of an operational bridge construction assignment in the Totnes area. This bridge, a steel and concrete structure spanning the River Dart, was important from both an engineering and a military viewpoint. Considered as an engineering feat, it marked the first time that a Bailey Bridge, designed as a temporary span was to be erected as a semi-permanent structure. Considered from a military standpoint, it was to be the main thoroughfare by which troops crossed the river into the marshalling areas in that vicinity in preparation for their journey to the continent.

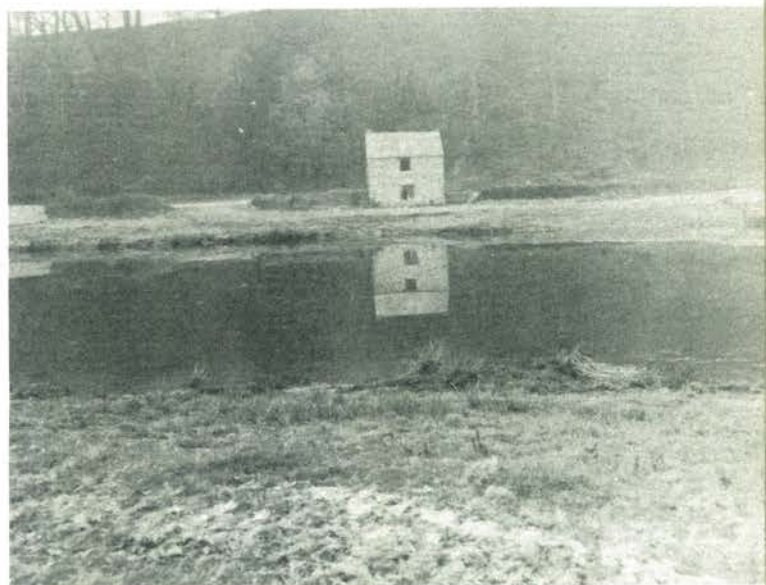
Secret orders for the construction of the bridge were received on March 16. When the project was assigned to Company "E", Captain Armin F. Fick, commanding officer, immediately made a detailed reconnaissance of the site to determine equipment needed to get the job done in a hurry. Even before the company arrived at the site, heavy equipment was being gathered from far-removed points—Salisbury, Bristol, and the Hengar-Wadebridge area—to insure completion of the project on schedule. One hundred tons of quick-setting cement had been obtained and delivered to the site within five days after the original orders were received. Trucks from the Regiment were dispatched direct to Liverpool to get the reinforcing steel needed.

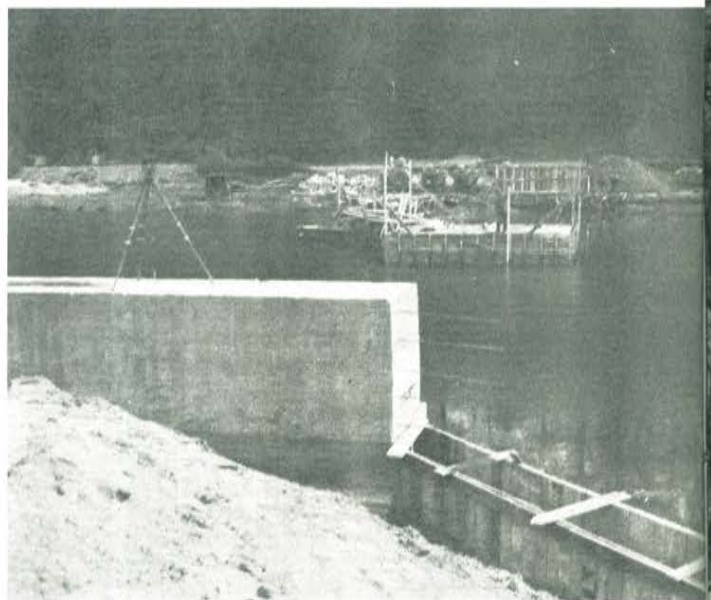
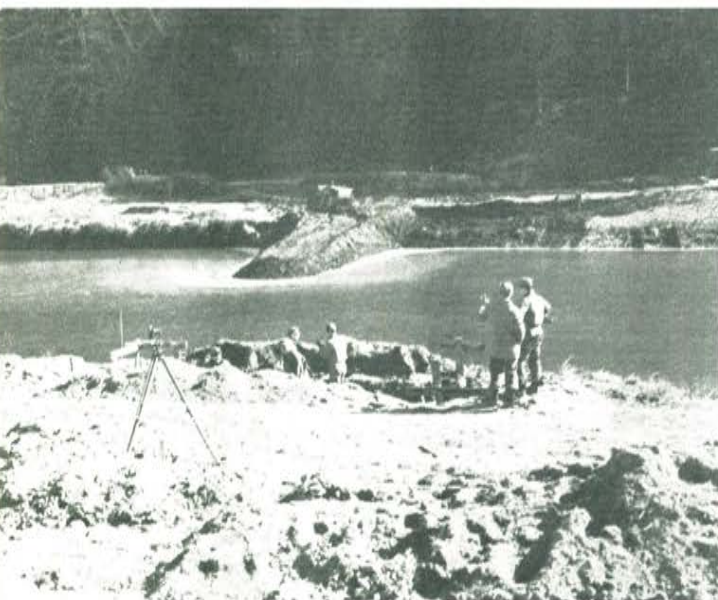
With the supply and equipment problem under control, Captain Fick's company turned to the construction task. On March 19 work was started on the span. The job was not a simple one. It was necessary that the bridge be at least 22 feet high so that landing craft being assembled up-stream for the invasion could pass under it. It was for this reason that a simple Bailey Bridge was not sufficient. The bridge, therefore, was to consist of two 90-foot spans of double-double Bailey bridging, supported by two abutments and a center pier of monolithic concrete. Construction of the bridge itself was only part of the project. In addition, the company had to build 600 feet of approaches to the structure, which included a concrete road on fill averaging four feet in depth. In making one of the approaches it was necessary to span a leat or small canal. This meant the erection of a second bridge, a 20-foot concrete deck, steel stringer structure.

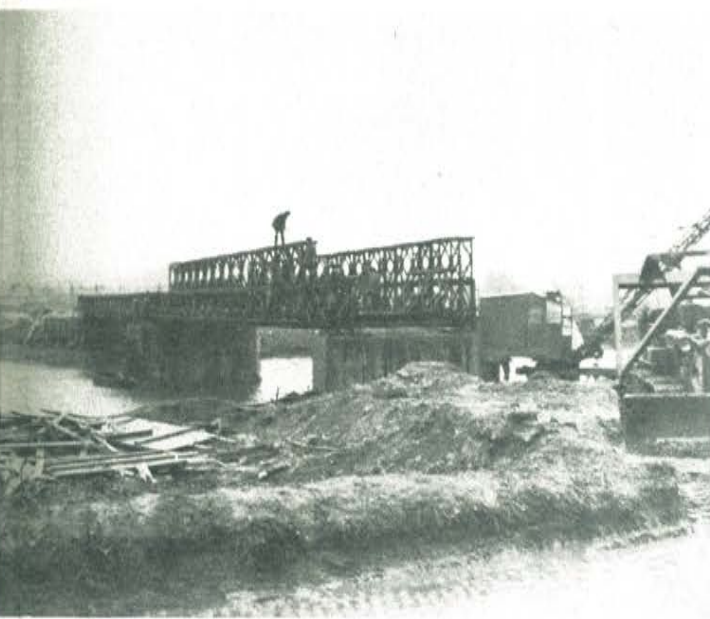
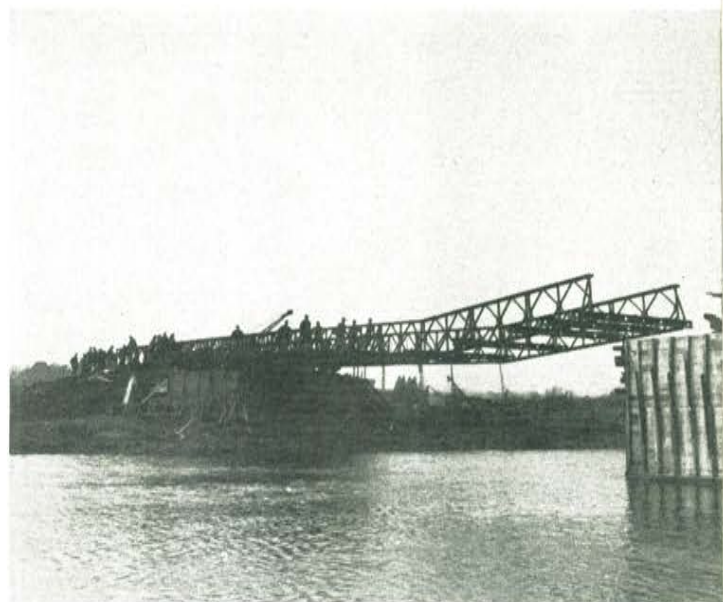
Actual construction problems confronted on the project, and they were numerous because of the newness of the job, were only a part of the difficulties encountered in getting the whole job completed on schedule. It was spring—work was started on March 19—and the usual spring tides were expected to handicap the workers. Only this year, 1944, the tides were higher than usual, rising as much as six to eight feet. This fact especially complicated the erection of the center pier. The work was done, but 40 per cent of the pier had to be poured under water. The total concrete work was about 1100 cubic yards.

By working two shifts, taking advantage of all the daylight hours, the company finished the bridge and approaches in record time. Once again a commendation was received from higher authorities for the way and speed in which the project was completed.

A formal, official opening of the structure was held on April 17, attended by numerous high ranking American and British officials, including the Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. McCloy, Lieutenant General McNarney and Lieutenant General Lee. The members of Company "E" were not present, however, to hear their work praised. Immediately after the job was done the company had moved to Hengar's camp to participate in the training program now in full swing there.







TOTNES BRIDGE



WATER
SPECIALISTS



PROOFING
SCHOOL





GENERAL LEE...



INSPECTION



Just as the training program was being prepared for the troops at Hengar's camp, orders were received which assigned the 341st Engineer Regiment to Advance Section Communications Zone. With the knowledge—or at least an indication—of what the Regiment's work was to be after D-Day, those in charge of training were able to emphasize those subjects felt to be most needed in coming operations.

Thus it was that a large proportion of time was spent on the subjects:

- Engineer Reconnaissance
- Explosives and Demolitions
- Bailey Bridging
- Map and Photograph Reading
- Mines and Booby Traps
- Combat Exercises
- Camouflage
- Design Timber Trestle Bridge
- Hasty Field Fortifications
- Establishing Water Points
- Hasty Bridge Repair
- Hasty Road Repair

In addition to these subjects, and a review of all basic subjects necessary for the Engineer soldier, the following special technical topics were studied: Operation of quarries, crushers and central mix plants for production of bituminous patching materials. Construction and maintenance of draining structures. Maintenance operations, including bituminous patching, under heavy traffic. Major road repairs to subgrade, base and wearing surfaces, and new construction in cut and fill areas.

But study needs application for best results. Actual performance was the watchword, with every man handling the mines, booby traps, weapons, and bridge materials himself. In addition, members of the regiment attended practical specialist schools. Two officers and 55 enlisted men attended a school on "Bituminous Paving and Road Construction" in Harleston, Norfolk from May 1 to May 6. Instruction there was held in conjunction with the construction of an airport by aviation engineer units.

The Regiment set up its own quarry school in charge of Major Price, Second Battalion Commander, and one non-commissioned officer and six enlisted men from each company were given instruction at a nearby quarry. Four men from each company also attended a delousing school set up by the Regiment.

Bailey Bridge training was brought to a climax with the construction of the largest Bailey Bridge ever built for training purposes. Each company in turn erected a triple-triple Bailey Bridge, 130-feet long, for class 70 loads, as a graduation test, working continuously through the night under tactical conditions.

A full 10-hour day training schedule was followed. Night problems were numerous, and they extended the day's activities to from 12 to 15 hours. There was much to learn—and time was short.

The pressure of time, however, didn't prevent the Regiment from taking one day off on

April 15 to observe its Organization Day. The feature of the day was a review at which the non-commissioned officers of the first three grades assumed all officer's posts. Athletic tournaments scheduled for the rest of the day had to be curtailed because of inclement weather. A movie was shown instead.

On April 25 the first of a series of practice alerts for overseas movement was held. This exercise included detailed loading and movement practice in accordance with ETO SSV. The next week, on May 3 an alert order was received from Headquarters, Advance Section Communications Zone and final preparations were completed for the movement of all units to the concentration area. Another practice alert was held on May 19, followed by a Regimental all-night field problem that lasted until 0600 hours May 20. Regimental, Battalion and Company CPs were set up on the field and march was made by squads from camp to the field CPs by aid of compass.

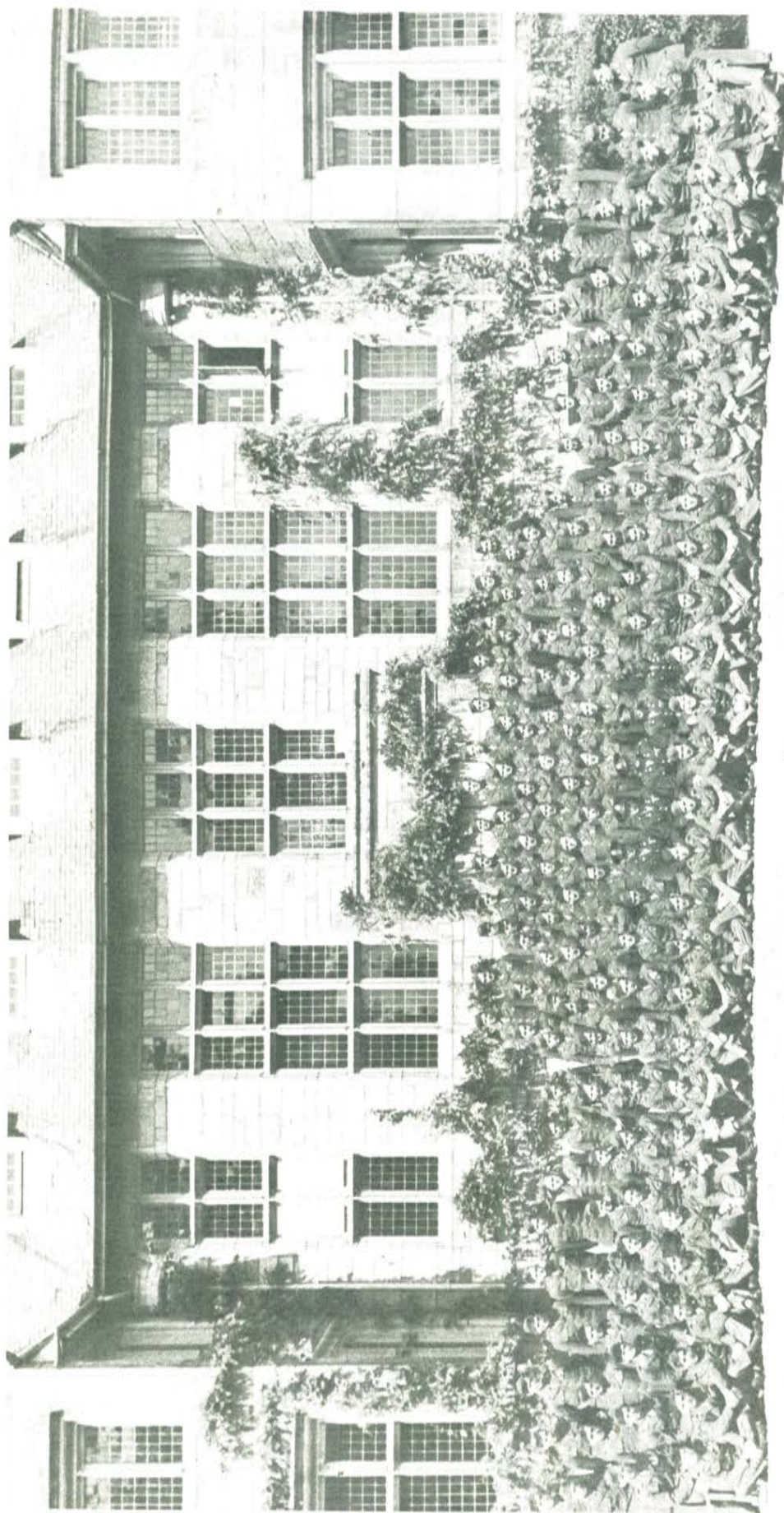
The 1213th Fire Fighting Platoon was attached to the Regiment on May 20 for training. Inspection also was made of the 420th Engineer Dump Truck Company by members of the Regimental Staff.

The climax of the training period at Hengar's camp came on May 25 when the Regiment was reviewed by Lt. General Lee, Brigadier General Thrasher, Commanding General of the Southern Base Section, and Colonel Wyman, Commandant XIX District, were also in the reviewing party.

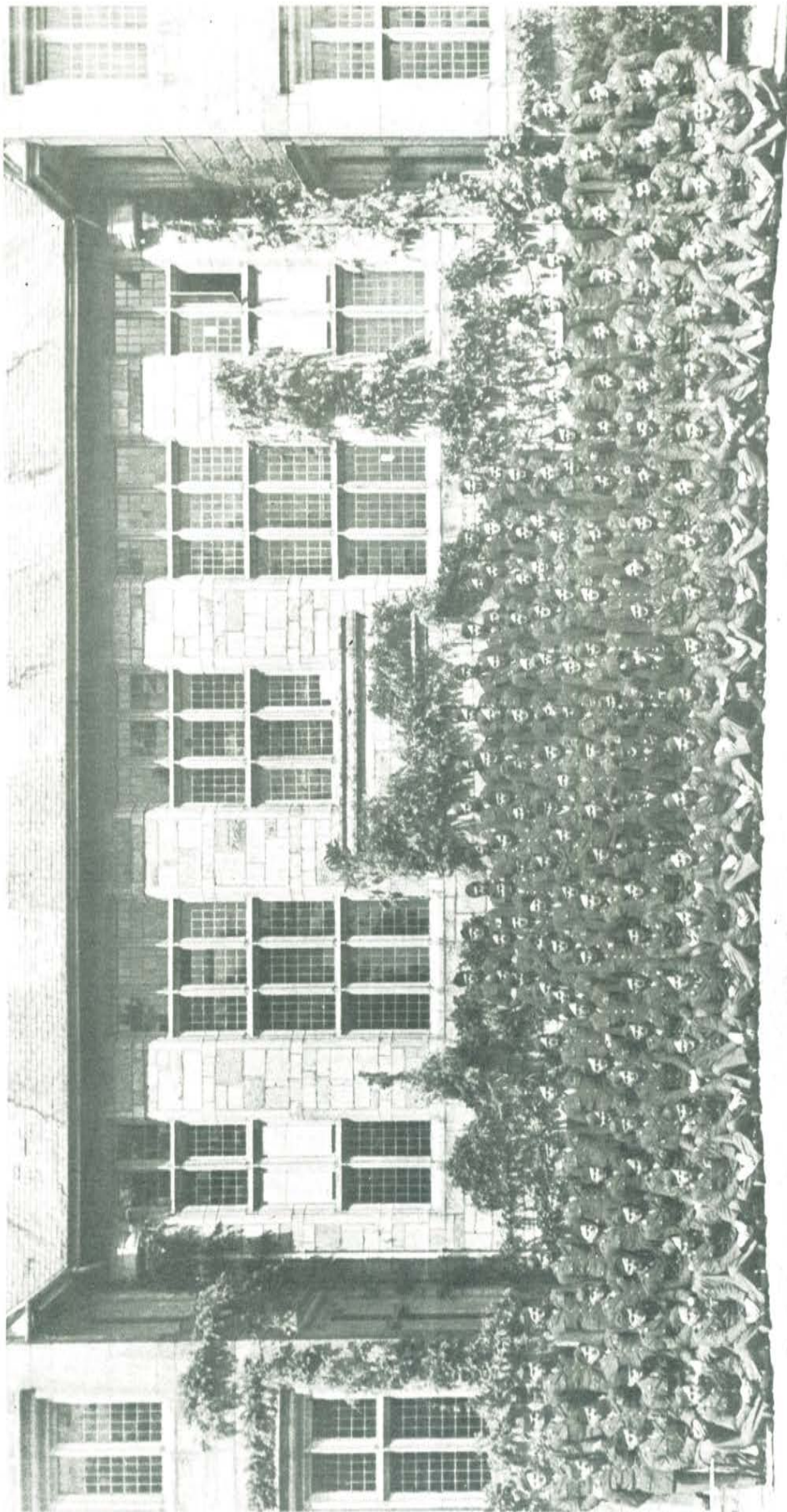
Two days later, May 27, both Battalions of the Regiment were alerted, awaiting orders, to provide security for Radar stations against possible paratroop attacks. The following day on orders received from XIX District, a reconnaissance was made for the disposition of troops at coast radar stations from East Loe to Hartland Point, and on May 29 all companies except "E" Company and two platoons of "D" Company moved to the points selected to become security guards. The men remaining at Hengar's camp continued in reserve, with an abridged training schedule. Company "E" replaced Company "F" in its tactical duty and the other two platoons of "D" Company were given a security position on June 4.

The advent of "D-Day" on June 6, changed the pace of events for the Regiment from fast to furious. On June 9 orders were received to move to a concentration area at Wimborne St. Giles Park, Dorset county. Regimental Headquarters, First Battalion Headquarters, H&S Company and Medical Detachment moved to the area on June 10 and set up a bivouac. During the next five days all the companies were relieved of their security responsibilities and all companies, except "A", moved from Hengar camp to St. Giles Park by train and motor transport.

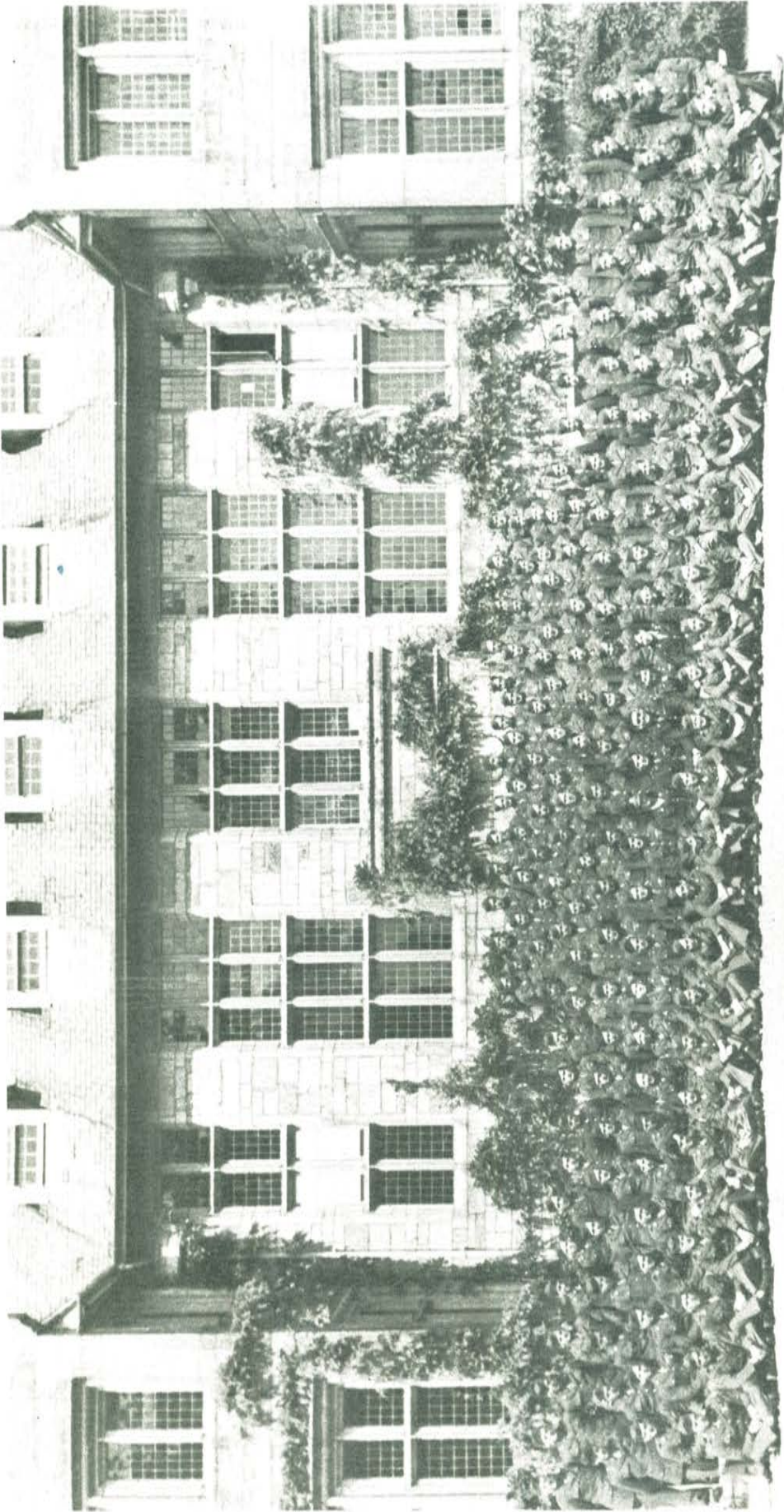
Company "A" was designated as the advance party for the Regiment and moved to the concentration area at Walditch, Dorset county. On June 19 it moved to Area "C-21" marshalling area. The following day the remainder of the Regiment moved to its marshalling area, Area "C-9."



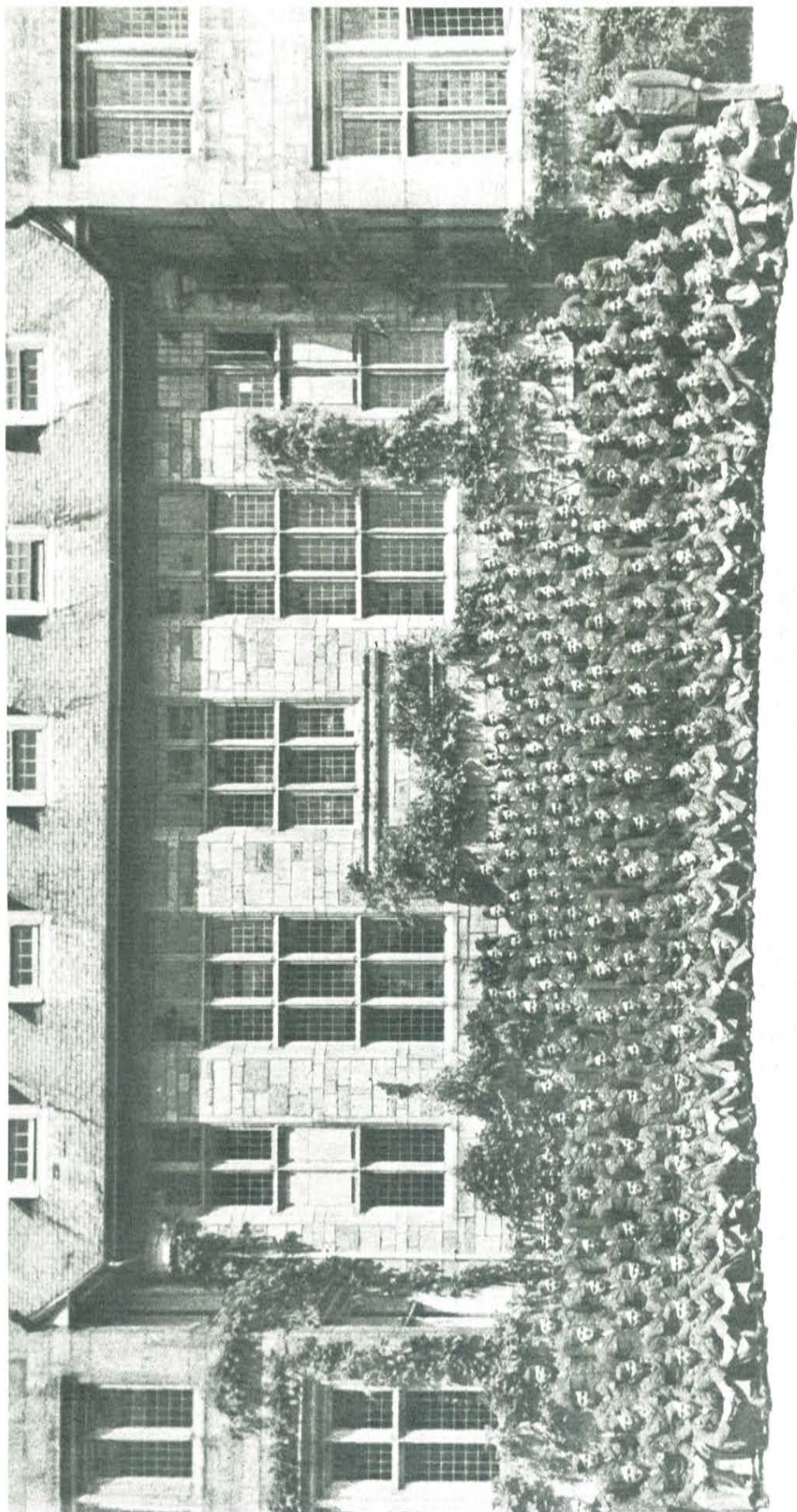
COMPANY A



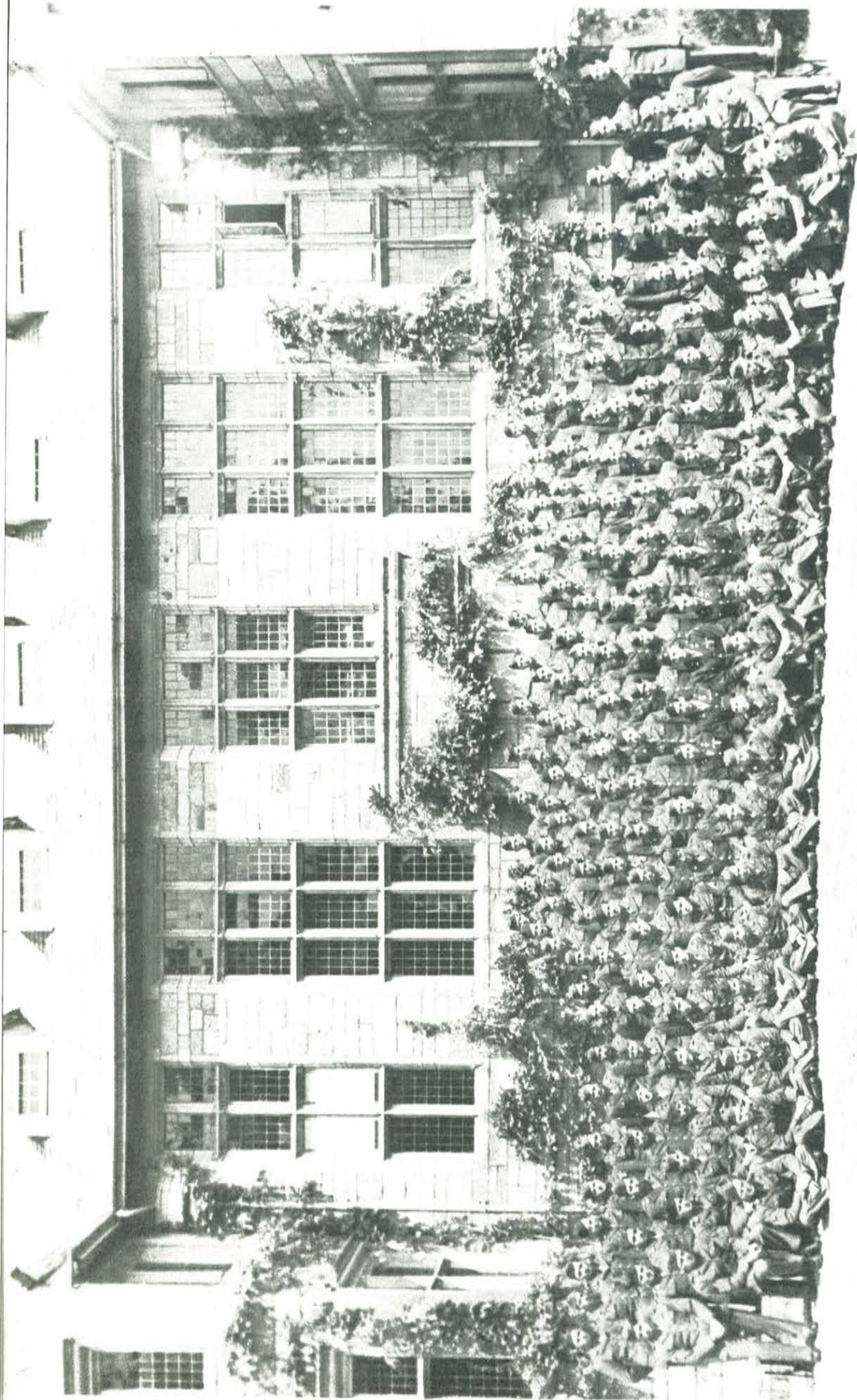
COMPANY B



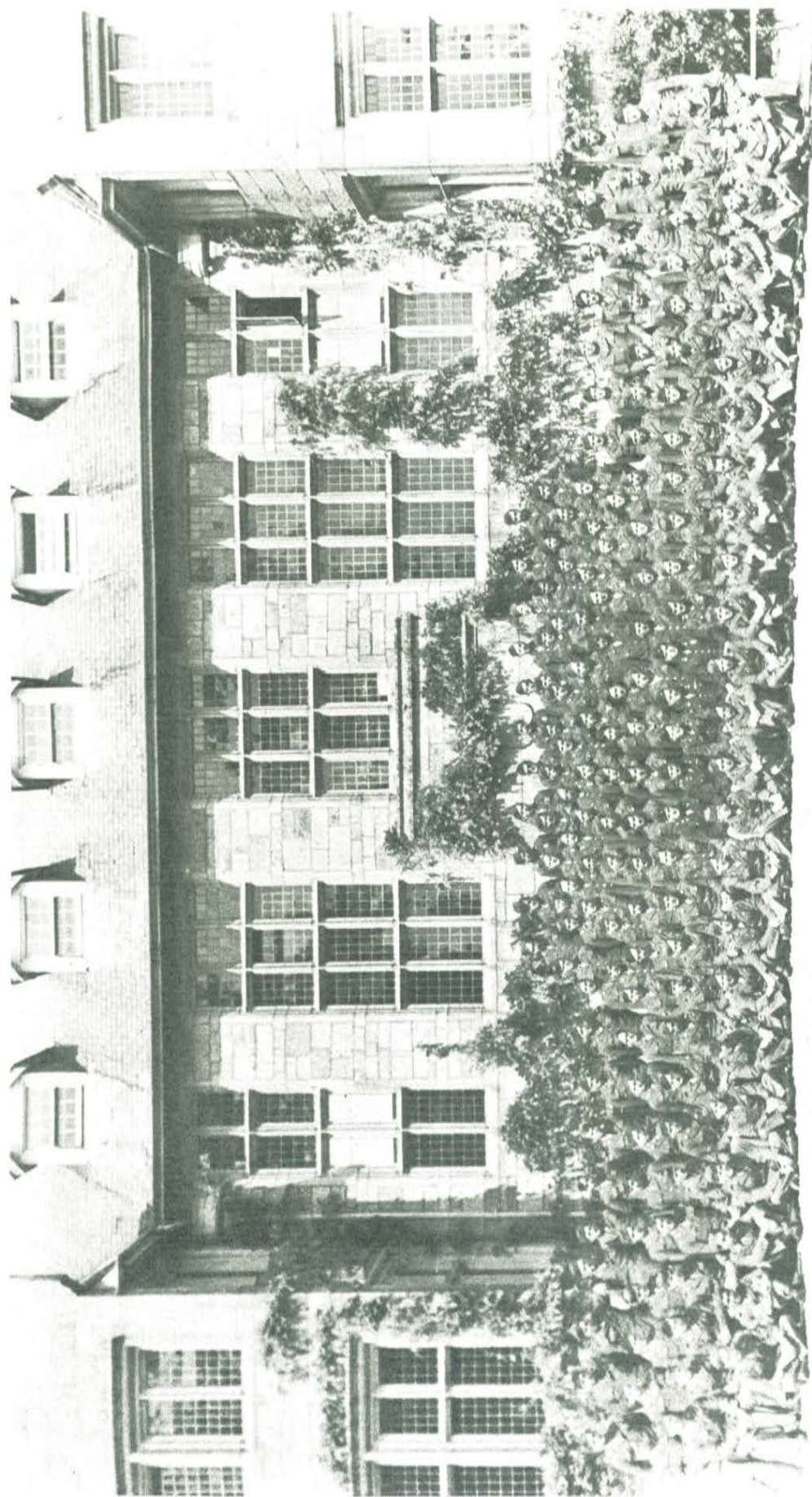
COMPANY C



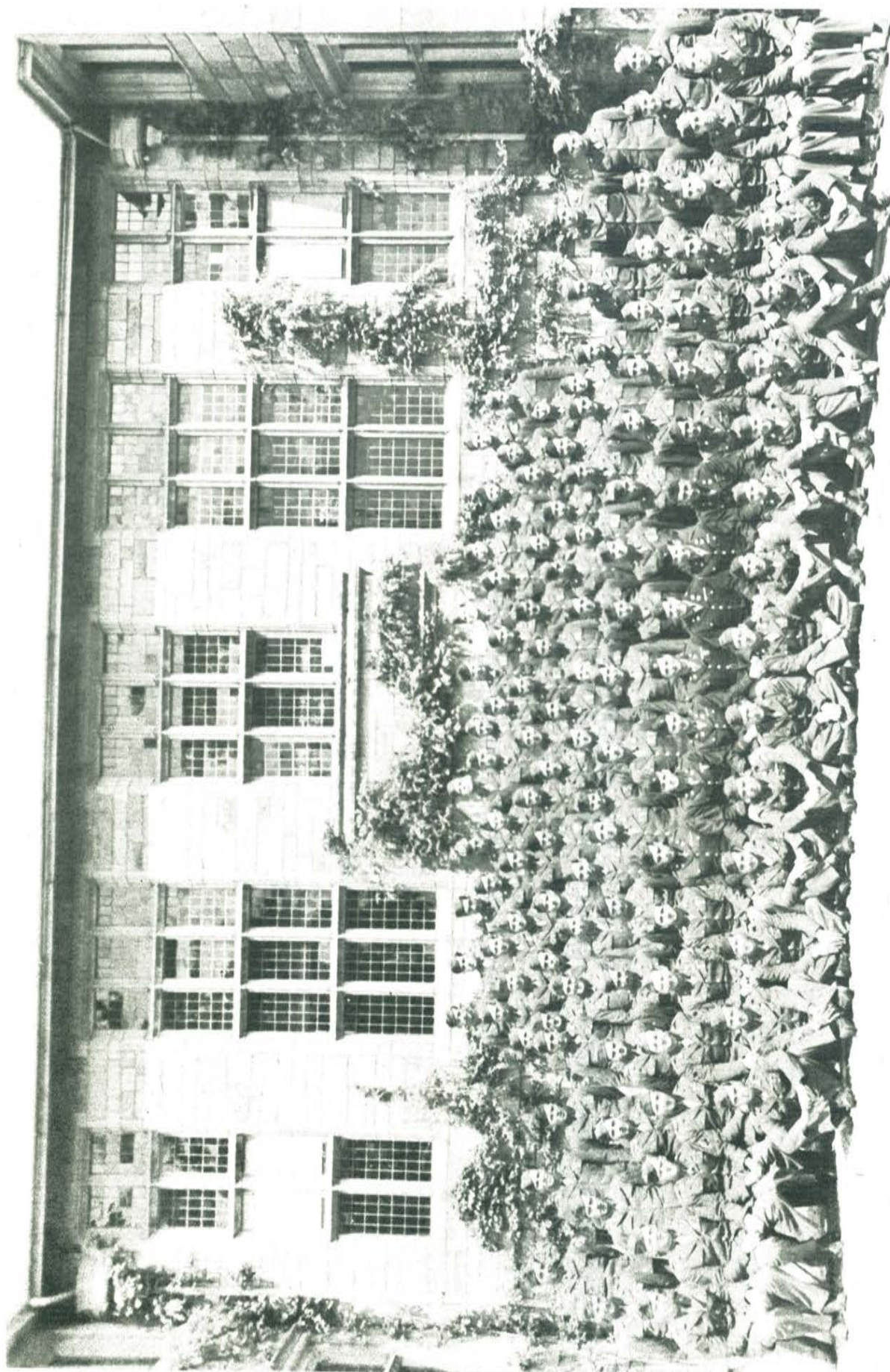
COMPANY D



COMPANY E



COMPANY F



HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY

WADEBRIDGE, CORNWALL

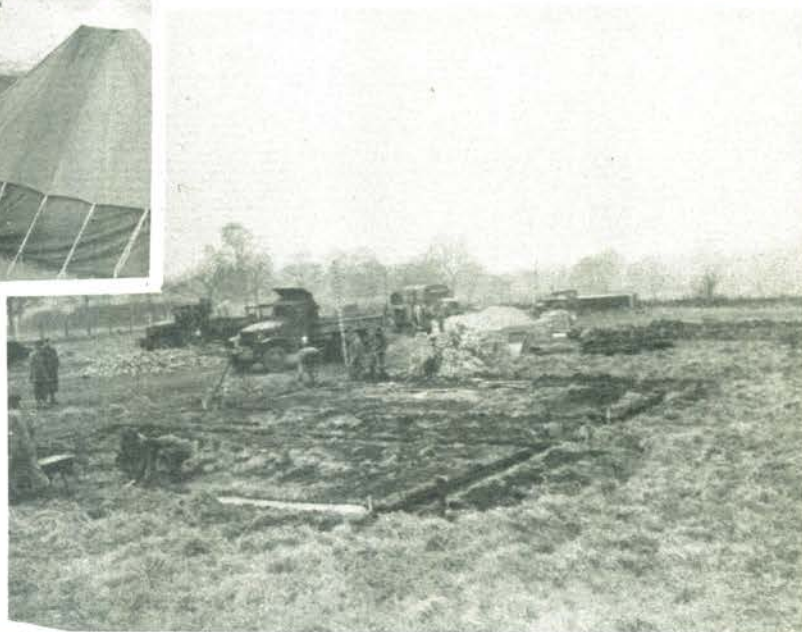
Summer Tented Camp

Dining Hall Frame Blown Down



MARSTON BIGOT, SOMERSET

Winter Tented Camp



Camp Construction



BUDE, DEVON

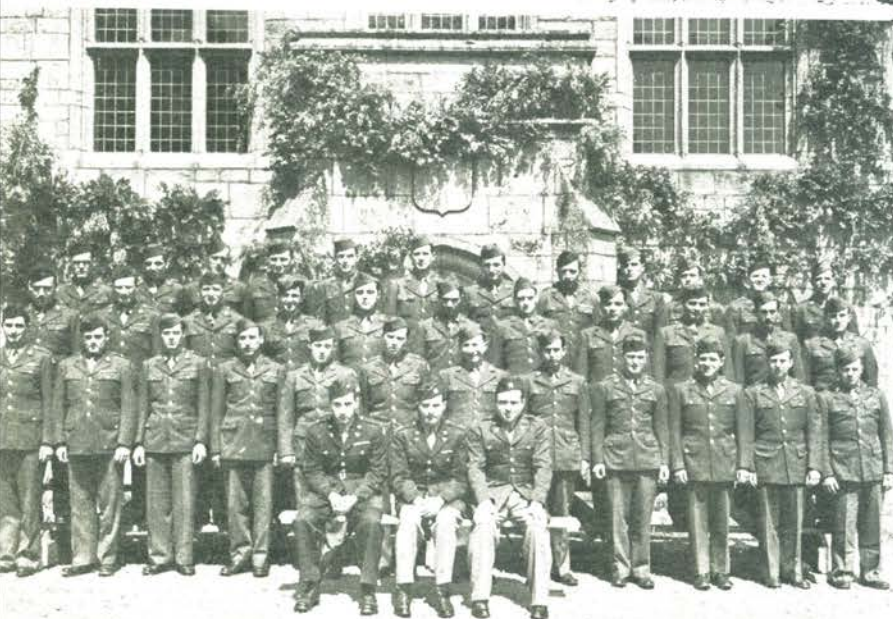
Cleave Camp



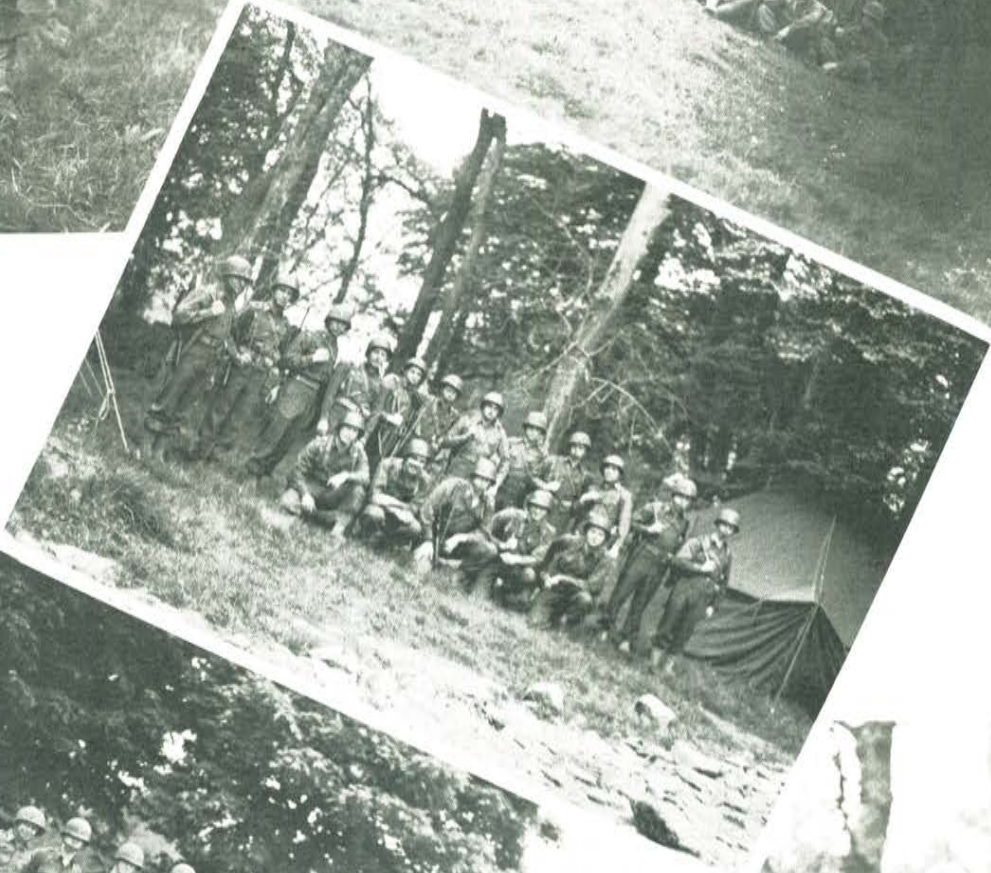
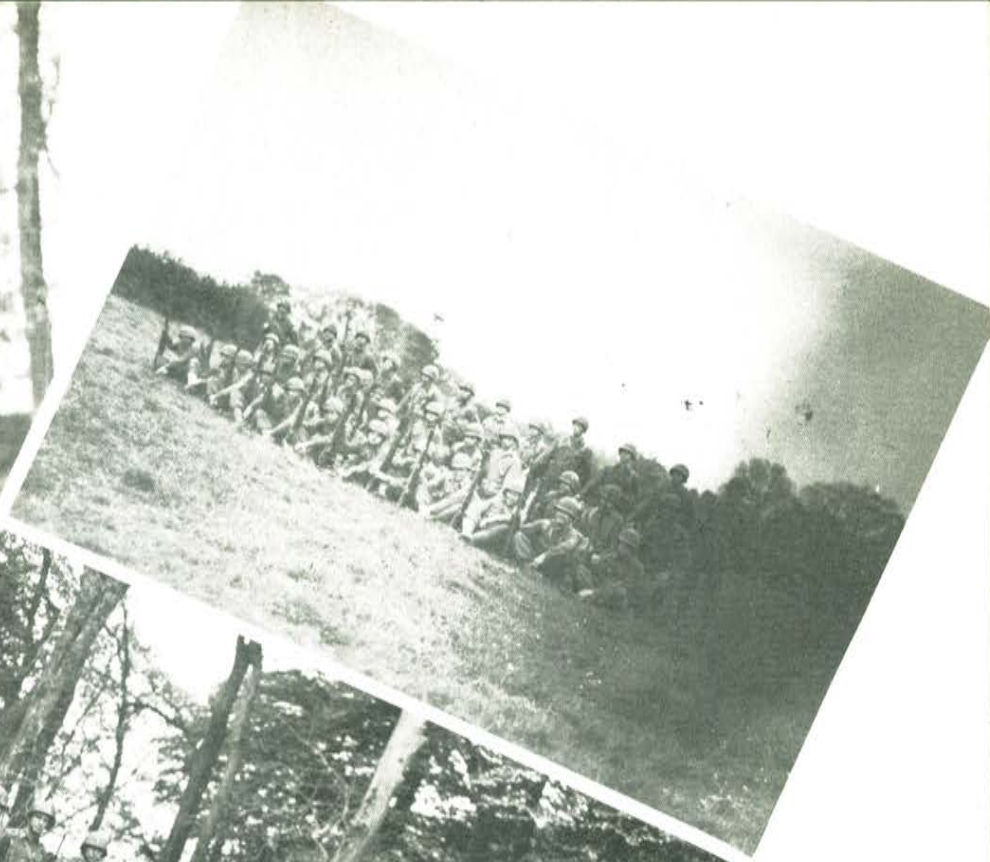
Four Members of the Regimental Staff



2nd Battalion Hq.



Regimental Medical Detachment





TAUNTON, SOMERSET
WAREHOUSES



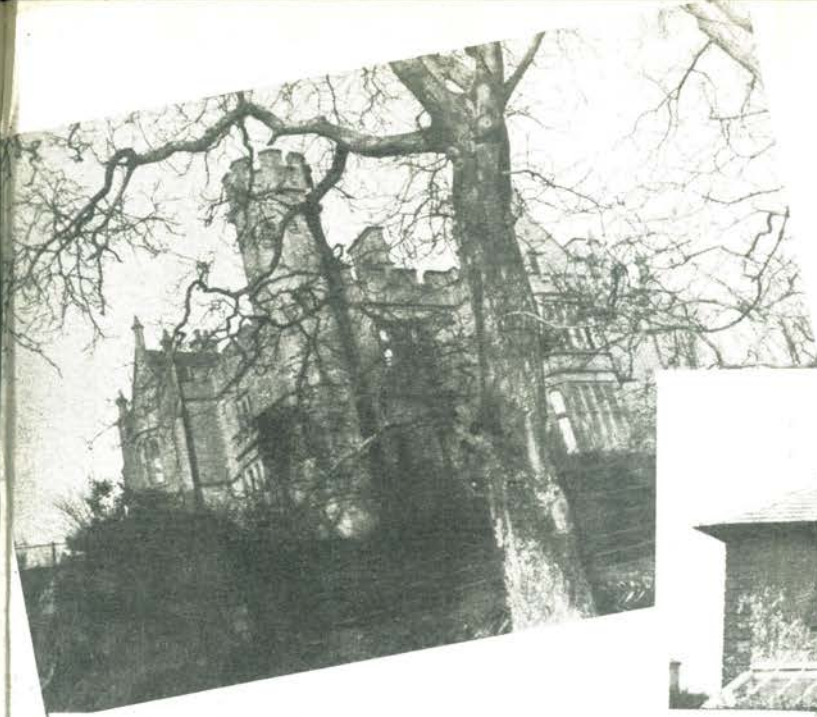
KELLY MANSION



RED CROSS VAN-COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS







TREMLET HALL



MAJ. NELSON, MAJ. STROHICKER,
CAPT. CRICKET

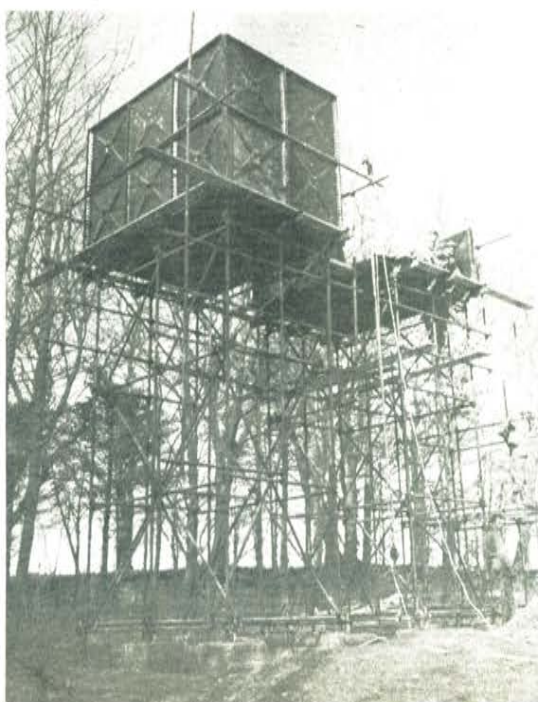


ROTARY CLUB—COL. PRICE



TIVERTON—COLLIEPRIEST
10 Bay Office Building





JOURNEY TO THE CONTINENT

The great storm which rocked the English Channel the third week of June and practically shut off all shipping had its effect upon the movement of the 341st Engineer Regiment into France. Vehicles and equipment which were supposed to accompany the men arrived nearly a week later. Company "A", which was supposed to precede the unit over, arrived the same day as the rest of the Regiment. Its vehicles also did not come until days later.

Company "A" was loaded aboard its assigned ships for the trip on June 21 and 22. The rest of the Regiment, minus vehicles and Regimental Headquarters, also left marshalling area C-9 on June 21 to embark, but due to the heavy sea, orders were changed and the men returned to the marshalling area. The next day, however, was not a dry run. The men were loaded, most of them on the ship Empire Battleaxe. The journey to France had begun.

On June 23, D-17, at 1400 hours the first contingent of 341st Engineer Regiment landed on "Utah" beach of the Normandy beachhead. The final ship to shore movement was made in practically every type of landing craft available, including LCM, LCT, LST, LSI and LCAs.

As is customary with that type of landing, many of the men had to wade ashore the last 200 yards in waist-high water.

Temporary camps were set up by the companies in Transit Area B for the night. During the next three days movements were numerous. New camps were established practically daily. Most of the companies were forced to march inland while waiting for the arrival of their trucks and equipment. During these first few days, while the men were living in fox-holes, many without blankets and shelter halves (which were with the vehicles), they were subjected to bombing, strafing and shell fire. Luckily there were no casualties.

On June 26 Regimental Headquarters and the first contingent of the vehicles landed on Utah beach. A Regimental camp was set up 4½ miles northwest of St. Saveur Le Vicomte. The remainder of the vehicles and equipment arrived between June 27 and July 1.

Even before all the equipment was unloaded, however, the companies had received orders concerning the tasks assigned to them and preparatory work was started. By July 2, seven days after the first group had landed, the companies had moved to their first assigned camps and work was well under way.







FIRST ASSIGNMENT—ROAD REPAIR

The first task assigned to the Regiment was the reconstruction and maintenance of the main highways, N-13 and N-800, leading from the Cherbourg area south to Valognes. Cherbourg has just fallen and preparations were being made for the offensive to the south. It was a critical period and the roads were badly needed for the transportation of men, equipment and supplies south to the new battlefront. These particular roads had been heavily bombed as well as cratered by demolitions.

To Company "F" and Company "E" was given the job of repairing highway N-13, the main thoroughfare between Valognes and Cherbourg. Company "F", taking the southern sector of the road, set up camp two miles northwest of Valognes. Company "E", on the northern half of the road, established its camp adjoining Regimental Headquarters, 1½ miles northeast of Brix.

Company "B" and Company "D" shared the work of repairing N-800. Company "D" on the northern half, set up camp 4½ miles southwest of Cherbourg. Company "B", working on the southern section, was established near Rauville le Bigot.

Company "A" opened a quarry near St. Vaast, and the road along the east coast. Company "C" restored the road running east and west through Valognes.

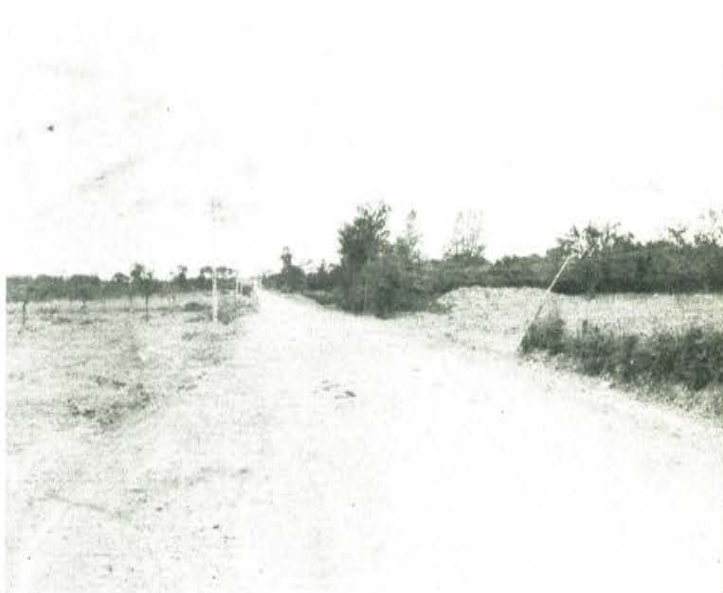
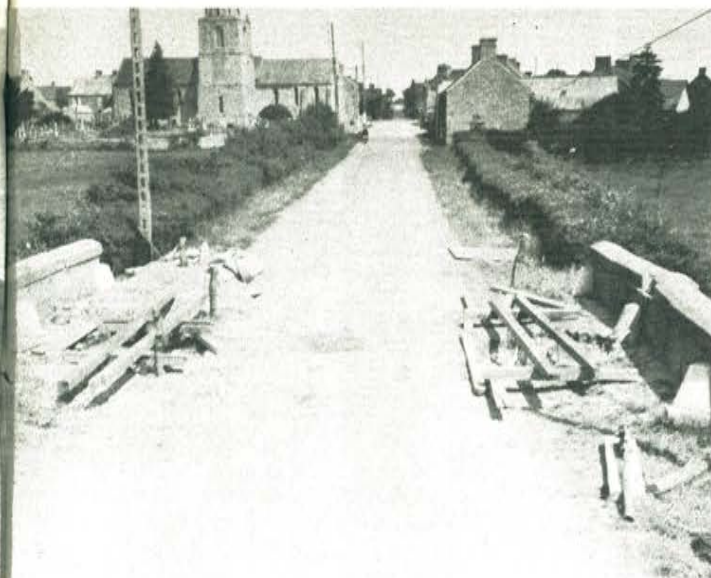
Repairs to these main highways took the rest of July to complete. The numerous craters that had to be filled consumed much of the time, and while the repairs were under way, traffic, of course, had to be maintained on the roads. The difficulty experienced in repairing highways while the routes were carrying as many as 2,900 vehicles in 24 hours needs no further amplification.

The Germans, themselves, unknowingly, contributed to the work. It was discovered that captured German cook wagons made excellent kettles for heating tar to be used on the roads. Other German captured equipment of all kinds, including air compressors, also were used.

In order to speed the work, the Regiment set up and operated the first standard asphalt batching plant used on the continent. This plant was established at a stone quarry near Quettetot, which was being operated by Company "B" and specialists from H & S Company. The machinery was installed during the week of July 8 and the plant was in production by July 15. It had an output of 125 cubic yards per day. A total of more than 2,473 tons of "pre-mix" was produced here for Advance Section Communications Zone and Third Army units. This project was especially complicated because Class IV bitumen equipment as received was incomplete and many fittings required improvisation. A continued rainy spell further complicated the production problem.













Further improvisation in the bitumen field included the use of a complete batching plant in the huge rocket installation at Brix, near Valognes. This plant, as assembled by Company "E" from abandoned German equipment, consisted of improvised aggregate drier, tar kettles and concrete mixers. This plant turned out over 1,200 tons of "pre-mix", the majority of which was used on routes N-13 and N-800.

Repairing ravelled edges of bituminous pavements was a big problem in these road projects. For this work a combination of vehicles and equipment was worked out that was very effective. Without this treatment the older pavements of the peninsula would have been damaged beyond repair.

Although the main emphasis during the month of July was on road repair on the main highways N-13 and N-800, the Regiment did not limit its work to these two. Practically all roads in that section of the peninsula received treatment from units of the Regiment. Company "A" located first two miles north of Quettehou and repaired roads in that area. Later, on July 11, it moved to Senoville for repairs on N-804. Company "C", situated five miles northeast of Valognes and later $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile northeast of Bricquebec, repaired roads in those areas.

Both "A" and "C" Companies the latter part of the month worked on the construction of roads leading to the Communications Zone Headquarters being built near Valognes. On August 12 a commendation was received from Lt. General Lee for the work done on this project.

In addition to the work outlined above, the Regiment during the month of July was called upon to do numerous other tasks, which were successfully performed. In preparation for the "hedgerow offensive" the Regiment cleared mines from the beaches to facilitate the removal of some 750 steel obstacles which were critically needed in the fabrication of anti-hedgerow devices for tanks. In addition mines were cleared from an abandoned French radio station area wanted by the U. S. Navy, and from many roads in the Cotentin Peninsula.

Company "D" on July 19 started work on a 500-man disciplinary training camp near Flattenonville. The work was completed two days later. It also constructed between July 24 and 29 a POW camp for 500 men near Cherbourg.

Other accomplishments during the month included:

Posting of standard road and traffic signs on all principal roads in the peninsula north of a line from St. Vaast, Valognes, Bricquebec and Surtainville.

Repair of abutment overhang on the Cherbourg-Valognes railroad.

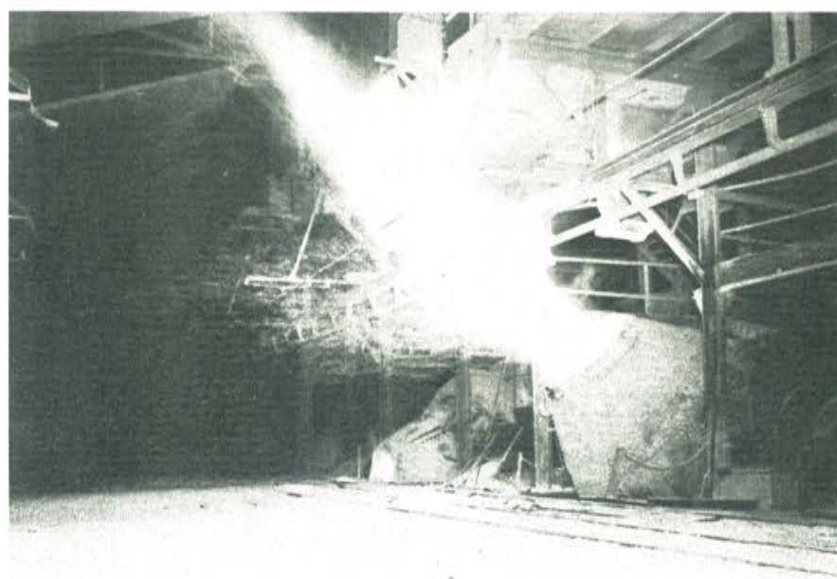
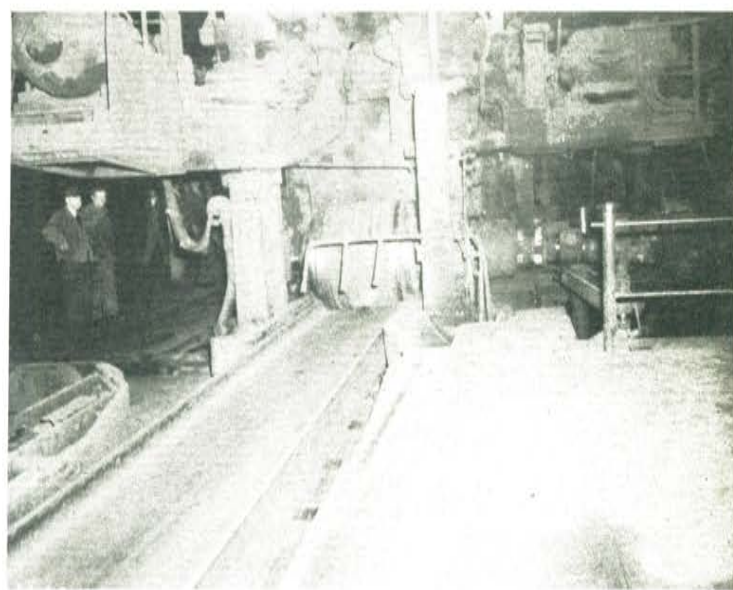
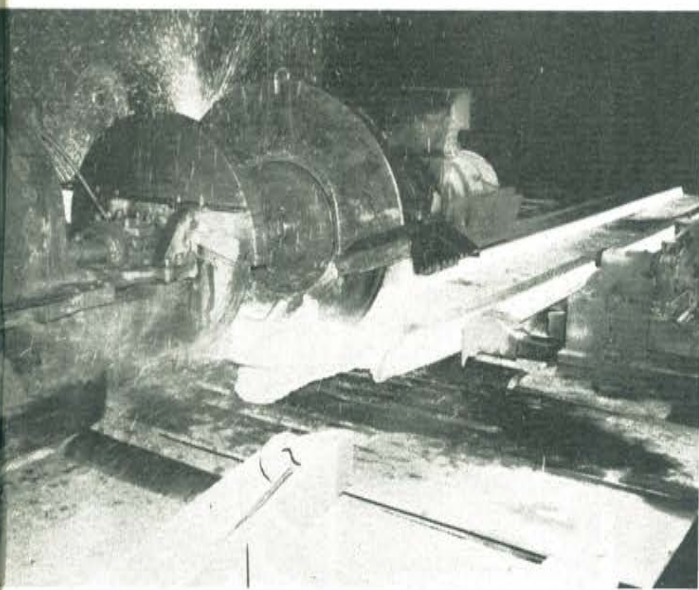
Design of a bridge over the double railway tracks on highway N-800.

Maintenance of water points for the units in the area.

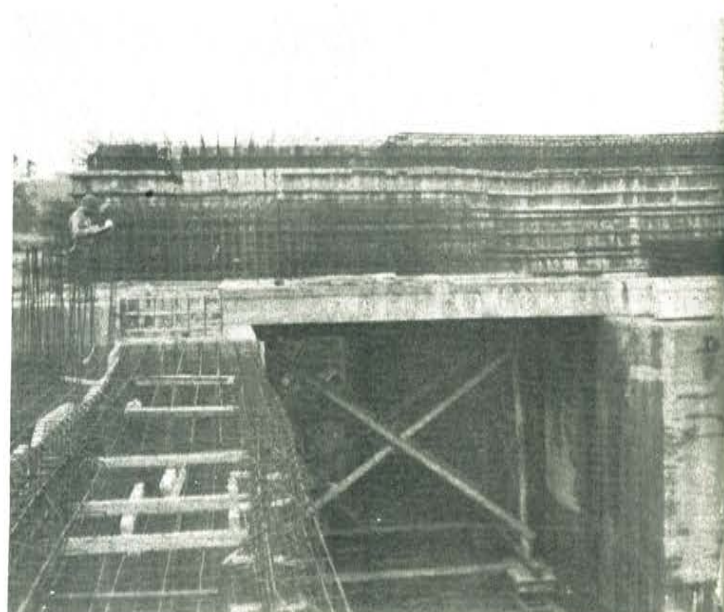
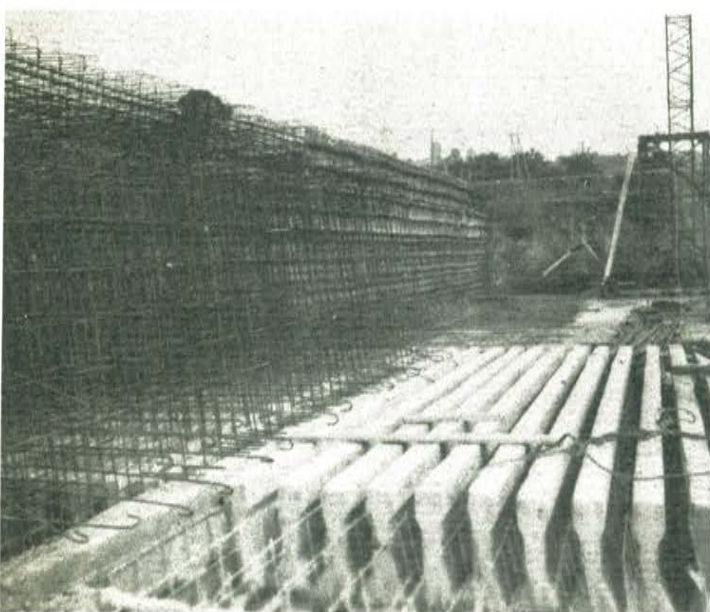
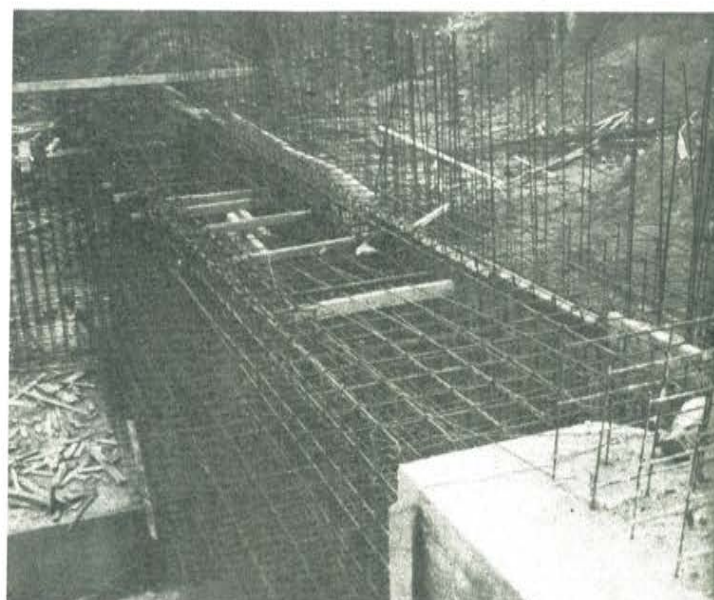
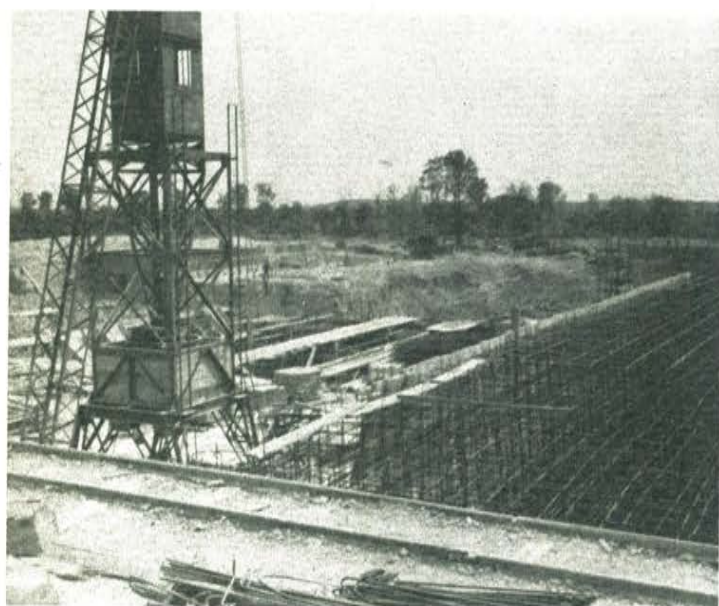
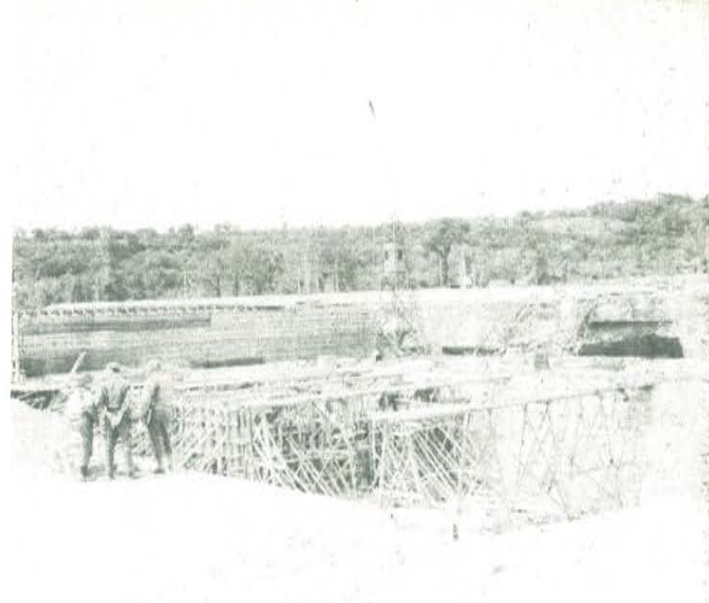
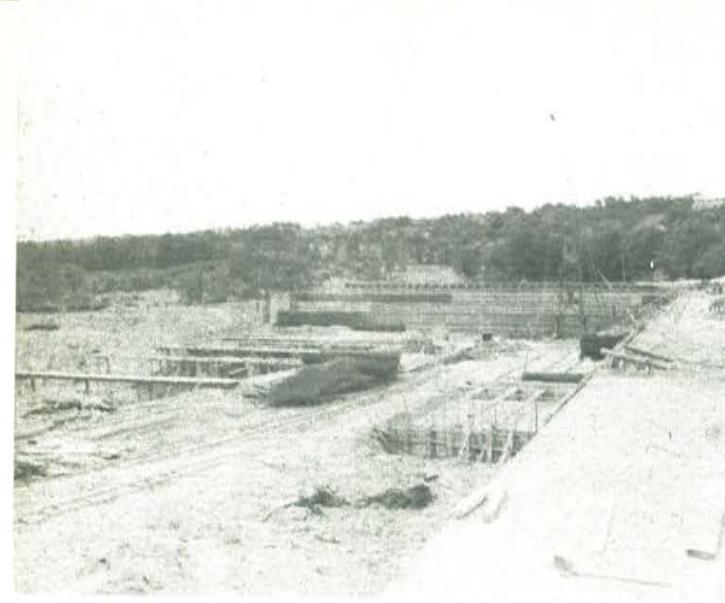
Operation of numerous stone quarries.

Levelled field for artillery liaison planes.

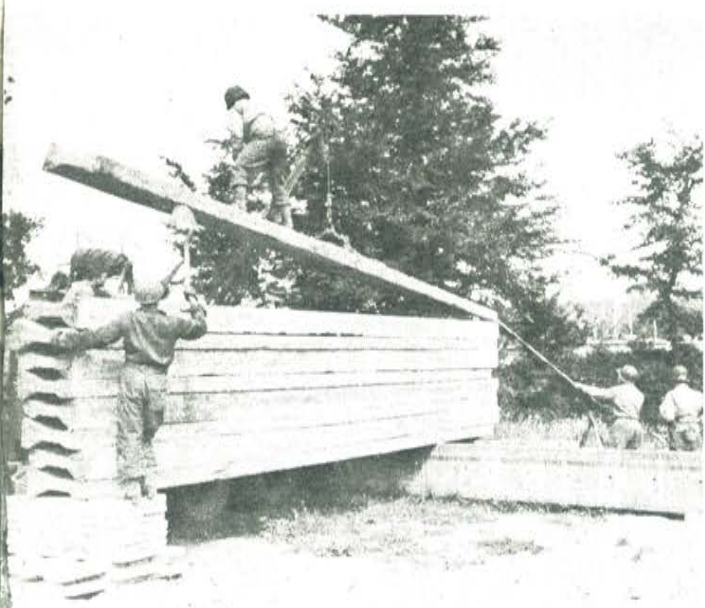
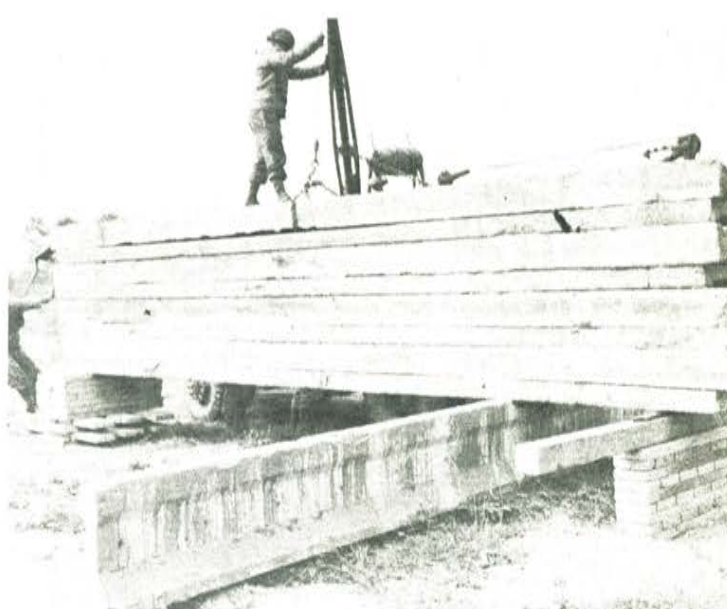
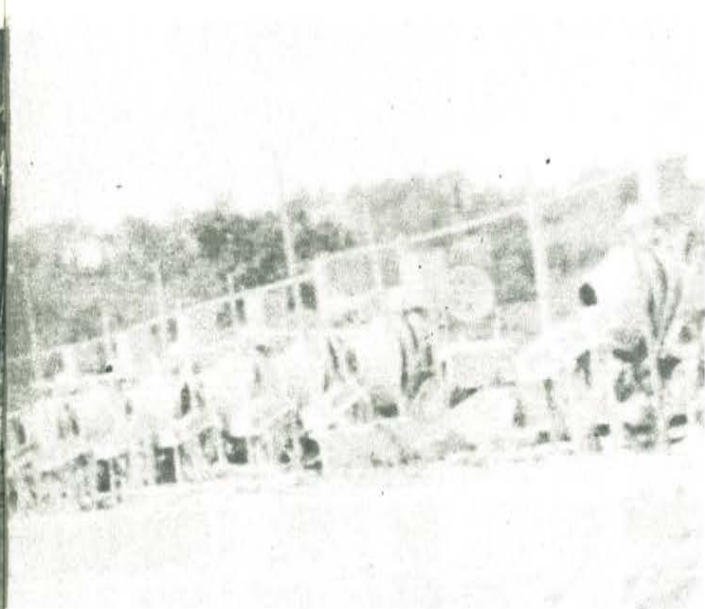




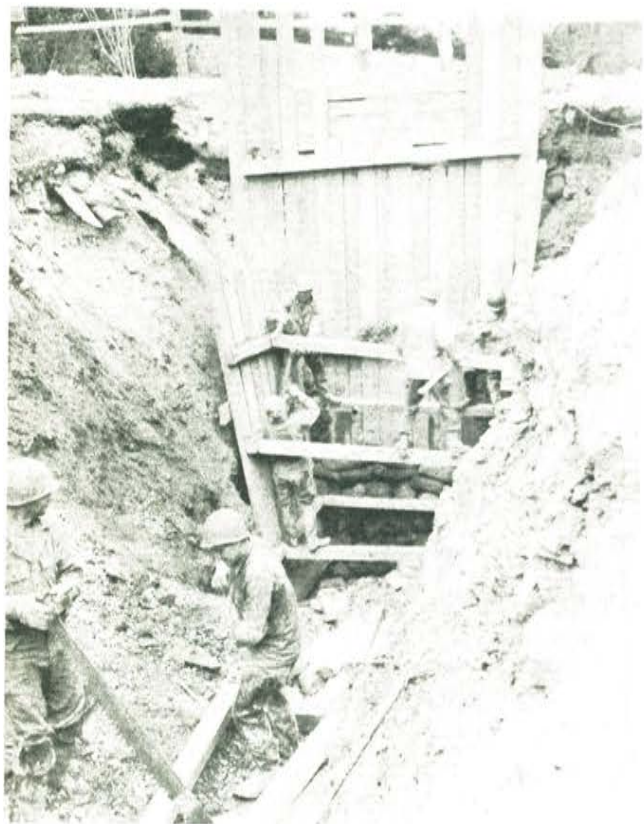
HADIR STEEL PLANT

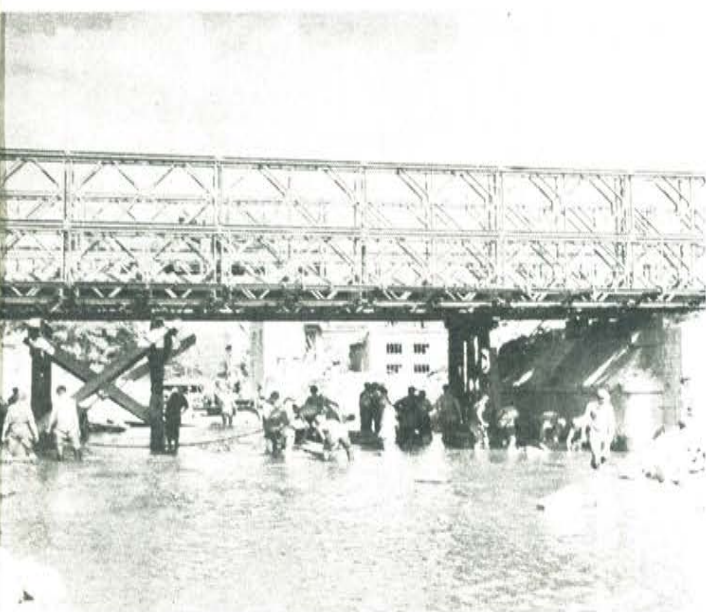
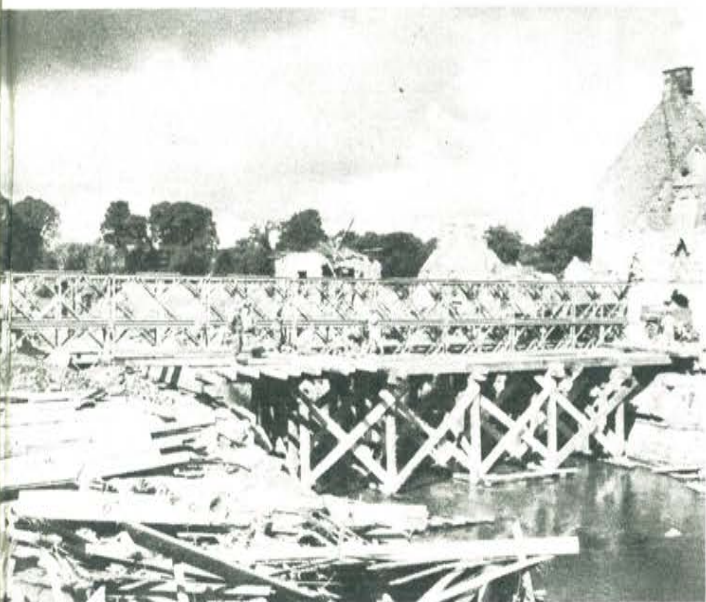
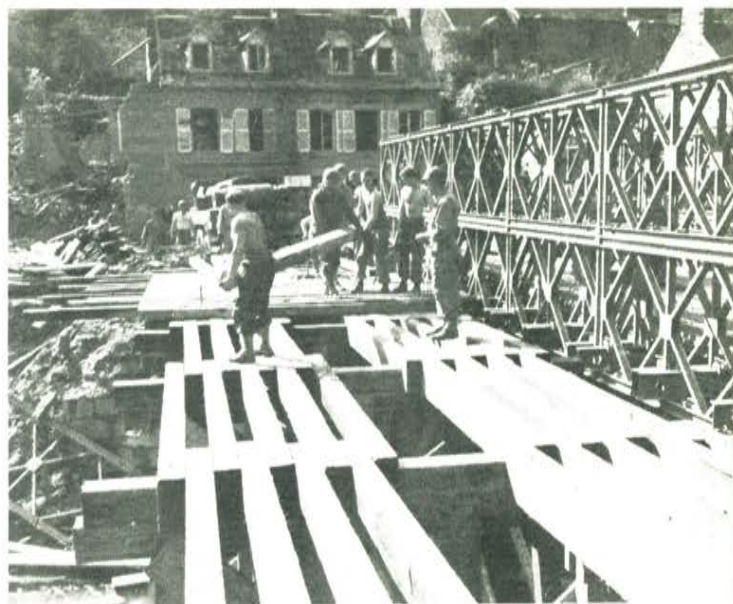
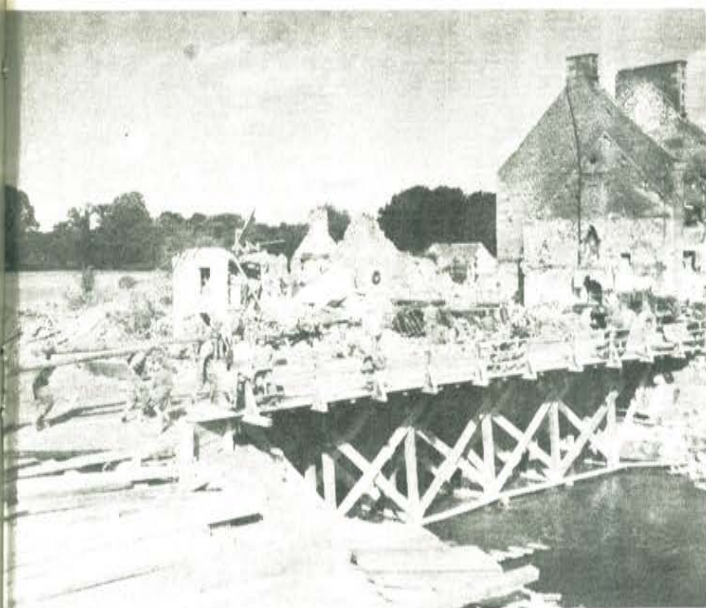


INTERRUPTED GERMAN CONSTRUCTION



TESTING GERMAN BEAMS







The first of August, following the "break-through" at St. Lo, the Regiment moved south close on the heels of the Third Army, repairing roads in the Periers sector. And then, when the Third Army made its spectacular drive down the west flank of the peninsula to sweep through Brittany and then to Paris, this Regiment made one of its most important contributions to the field forces. The Third Army's entire force passed rapidly through the narrow bottleneck of the Coutances and Avranches area. The 341st Regiment was assigned the task of holding the roads together at this vital time and place. It was here that the utmost capacity of officers and men was taxed. More than 5,000 tons of stone were laid in six days to reinforce one ten mile stretch of road on GC 7, the main supply route. Working by shifts and using all the daylight hours, the men hardly saw division after armored division, the supply columns and a large part of the First Army move through the gap in the dust and mud.

More than 280 miles of highway was maintained during this period. In addition to GC 7, the Regiment also worked on highways N-799, N-176 and GC 33.

The Regiment also constructed its first bridges on the continent while it was in this section. Company "B", was given the job of building permanent trestle bent bridges of Class 70 and Class 40 across the Sienne River at Gavray. These were to replace a double-double Bailey bridge and a double-single Bailey. Work was started on August 14. Six days later the Class 40 bridge was completed. On August 22 the Class 70 bridge was finished. Company "F", meantime, was repairing a bridge over the La See River at Ponts Avranches, also replacing a Bailey bridge with a Class 70, two-way structure of steel and timber.

A change in the routine—and an indication of events to come—occurred on August 12, when part of the Regiment was assigned the task of assisting in the reconstruction of railway lines badly needed in the area. Also, on March 14, Company "D" assisted the 347th Engineer Regiment on the approach tracks for a railroad bridge west of St. Hillaire. Working 24 hours a day, the whole line was opened in two days.

For this work on the railroads the Regiment received the following commendation from Colonel E. C. Itschner, Engineer, Advance Section Communications Zone on September 1:

"On August 12, 1944, due to the rapid advance of the Third Army toward the south, it became evident that the rehabilitation of rail facilities required the highest priority to provide the additional transportation required to keep this army supplied. Consequently, Engineer Operations Order No. 7 assigned you the mission of assisting in repairing the single track main line Folligny to Montvion-Sartilly. The completion date given was noon 15 August 1944. This mission was expeditiously and satisfactorily accomplished. Therefore, it affords me great pleasure to commend you and the officers and men of your Regiment for their noteworthy accomplishment. This will be recorded in Engineer history as a highlight of the war."

The work in the Avranches area was not without its dangers. A German counter-attack through Mortain came within six miles of the units of the Regiment at one time. Fragments of German bombs landed in a quarry operated by the First Platoon of Company "F" three miles west of Brecey.

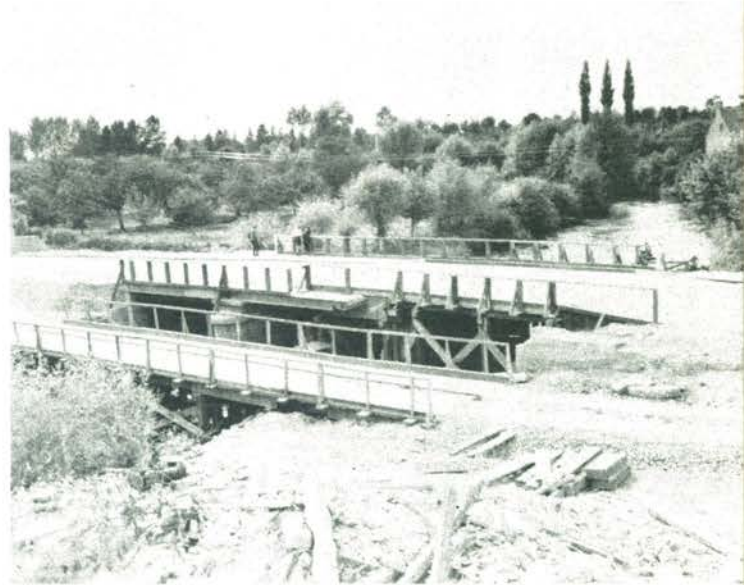
In addition to the operations already noted, a completed and detailed reconnaissance, including work estimate, was made on major power lines during August. This mission included all of the Cotentin peninsula and the area as far south and east as Anger. Much of the reconnaissance was made in combat areas.

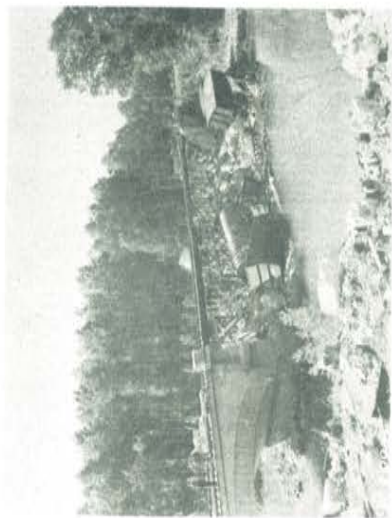
Company "E" during August started out on a special project and ended the month being assigned semi-permanently to 12th Army Group Headquarters as a result of its proficiency in carrying out this detail. On August 4 it was given the task of building an air strip at St. Sauveur Lendlin for the 47th Air Liaison. From this date on the company was never a working part of the projects assigned to the Regiment. Its new job consisted of reconstructing airports and doing miscellaneous work required in establishing and maintaining the Eagle Headquarters. The loss of this well-trained company naturally cut down the effective man power and equipment of the Regiment.

On the other hand, not off-setting the loss of Company "E", but never-the-less adding to the available man power that could be used on the roads, the Regiment early in August was assigned 1,000 German Prisoners of War. The first contingent of 250 was received on August 4 and was assigned to Company "A". During the next few days 750 more were received, and were divided equally between Companies "C", "D" and "F". The organization of these POW Labor companies at first presented many difficulties. How this problem was solved is indicated in the fact that the Regimental SOP was later distributed to all ASCZ Engineer units as a suggested model by ADSEC.

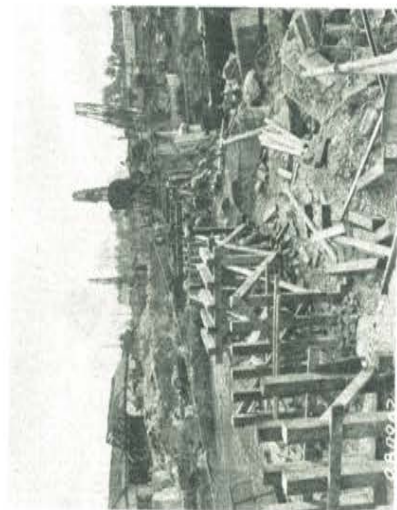
During the latter part of August, as the First and Third Armies were making their spectacular and furious drive eastward through France to Paris and beyond, it became apparent that the need for road construction engineers was less important than the need for railroad engineers to put the transportation system in a working order as soon as possible and keep supplies rolling to the front. It did not come as a complete surprise, therefore, when on August 24, the mission of the 341st Engineer Regiment was changed from roads to railroads.

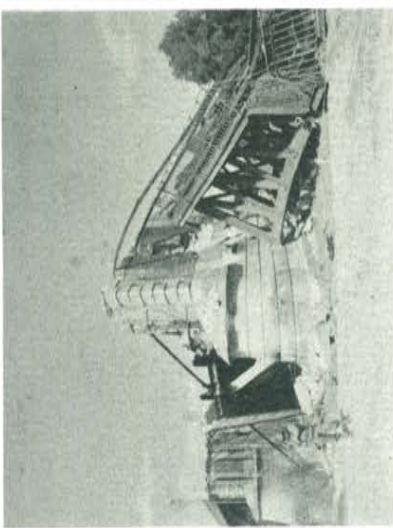
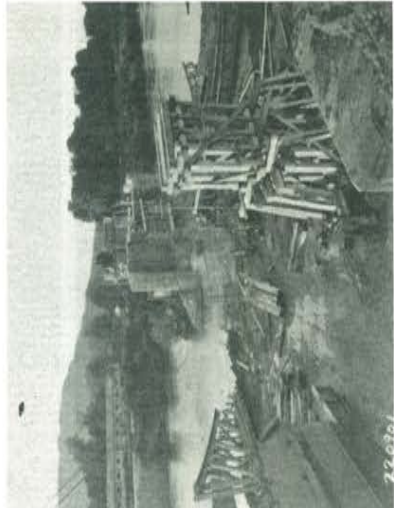
The fact that the Regiment had had more than two years experience in road and bridge building and repair, both on the Alaska Highway and on the continent, but had had practically no experience in railroad work didn't faze the officers and men. They tackled the new job in the spirit in which the work was assigned, a spirit of confidence that the Regiment could make as excellent a name for itself in the new field as it had made in road building. That this confidence was not misplaced nor overemphasized is proven by the record since August 24, 1944.



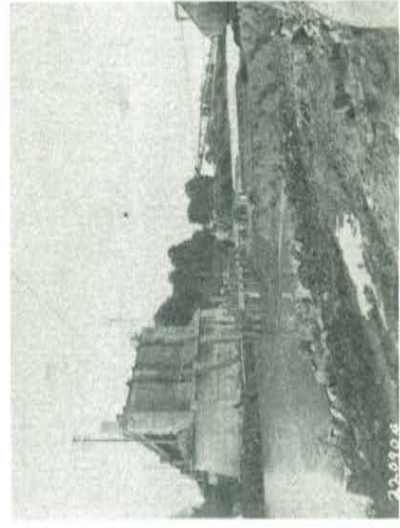
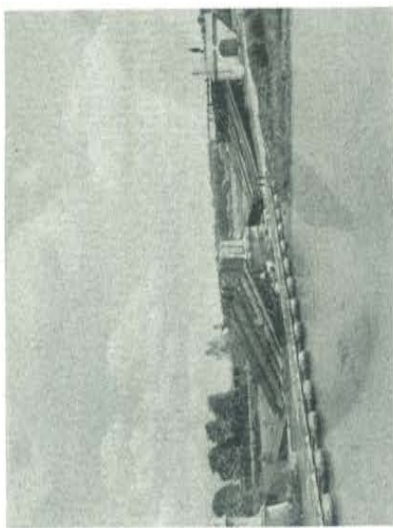
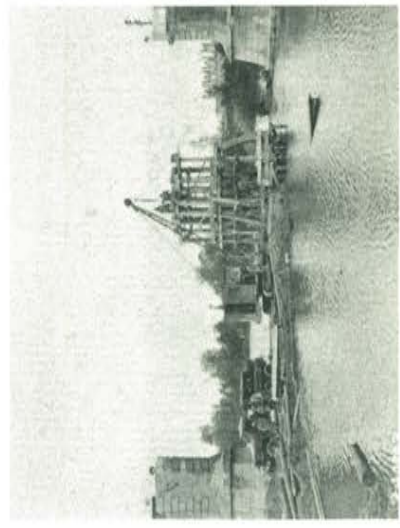


SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
 VITRY LE FRANCOIS - FRANCE
 Coord. T-680180
 Project No. E-61
 Const. By Cos. "A" "B" "C" & "D"
 341st Engineer Regiment
 5 Sept. 1944 - 14 Sept. 1944



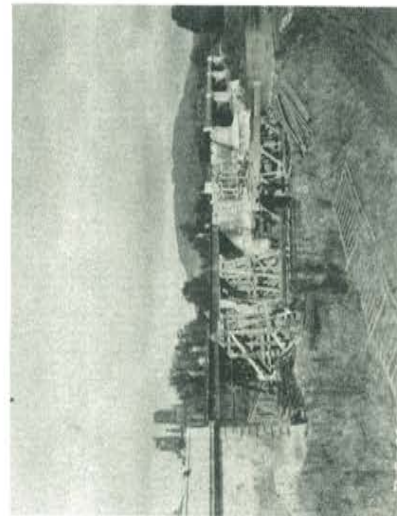
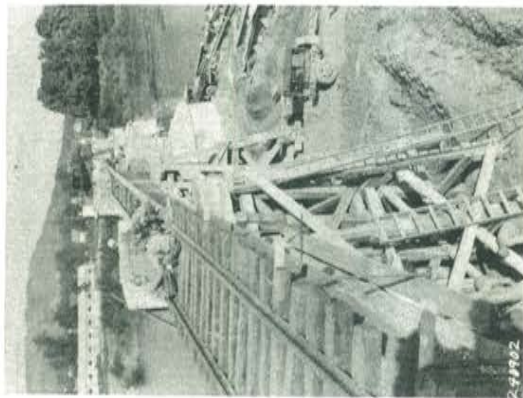
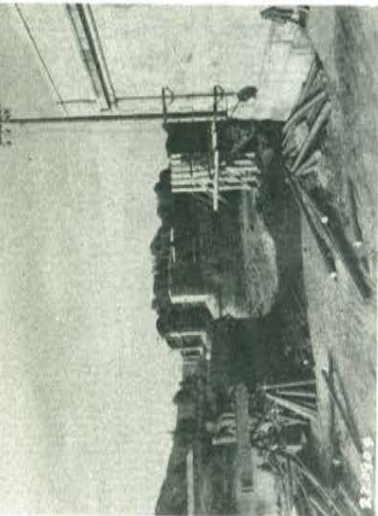


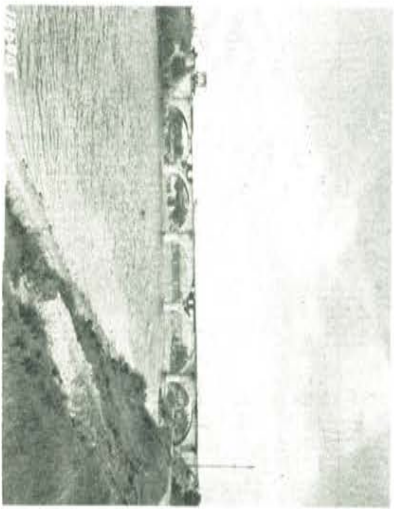
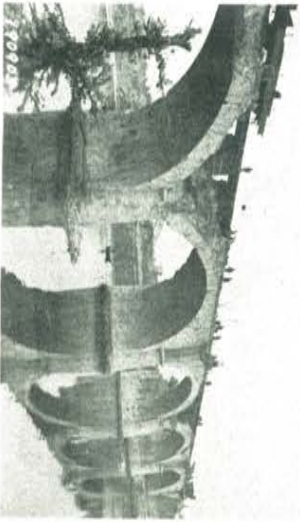
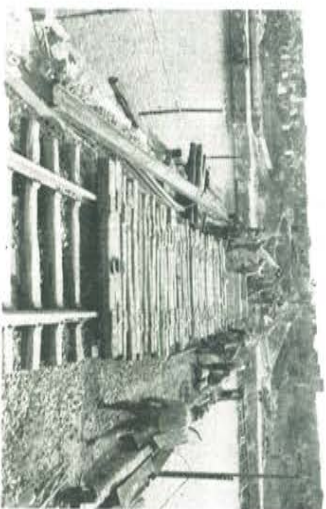
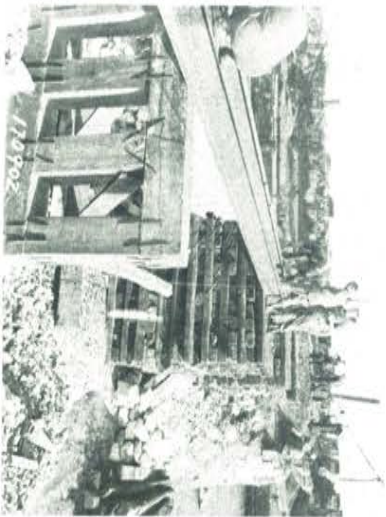
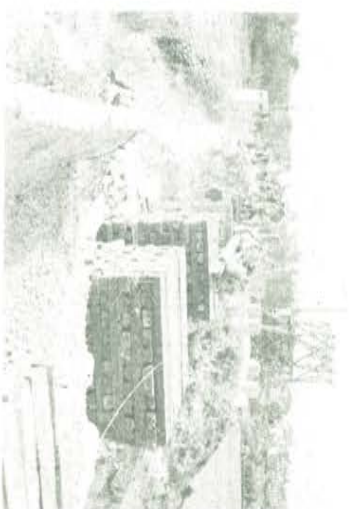
SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
TOUL, FRANCE
 Coord. U-648100
 Project No. E-67
 Const By Co'C" & Co"Y" - 341st Engr. Regt.
 15 Sept. 1944 - 2 Oct. 1944
 275' ST 5-Span RR Bridge



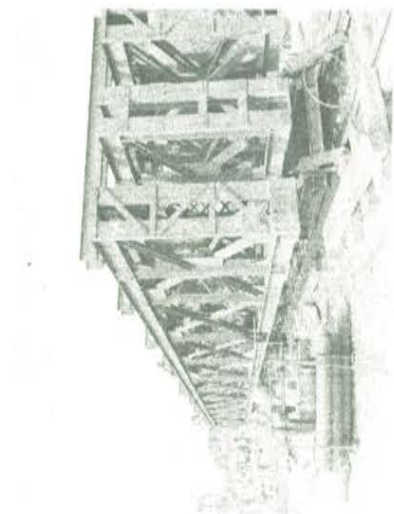
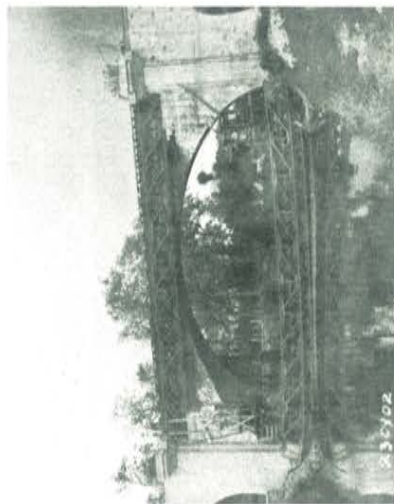
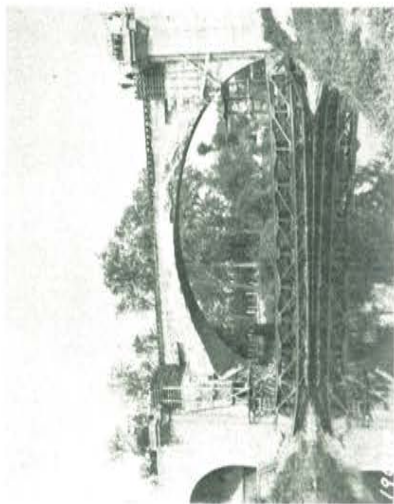


SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
TOUL, FRANCE
 Coord. U-648100
 Project No. R-67
 Const By Co "O" & Co "F" - 341st Engr. Regt.
 15 Sept. 1944 - 2 Oct. 1944
 275, ST 5-Span RR Bridge

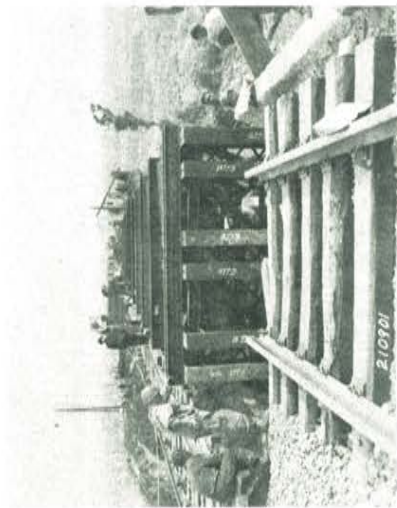
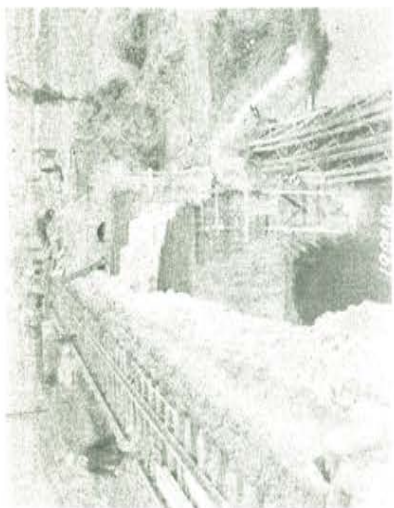


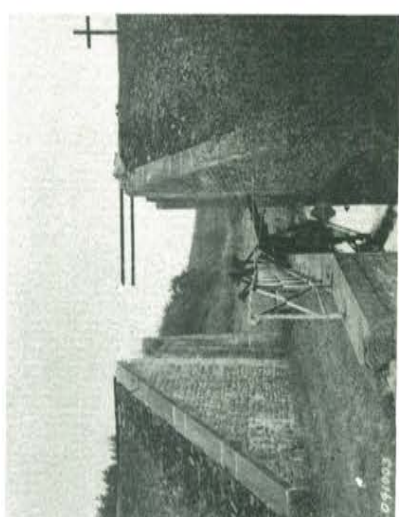
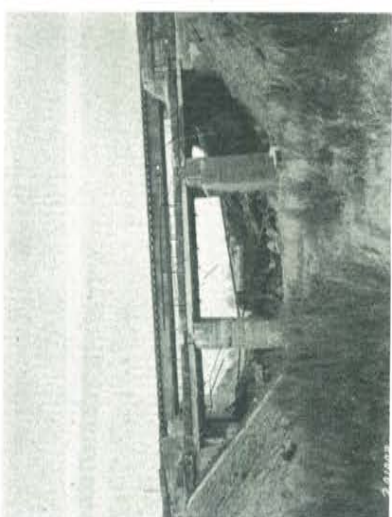
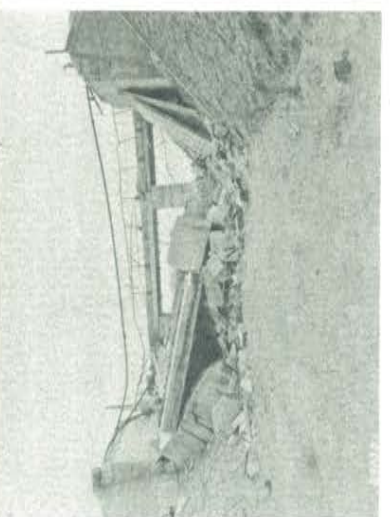
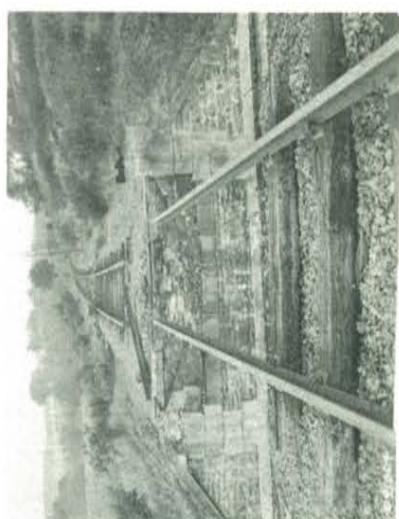
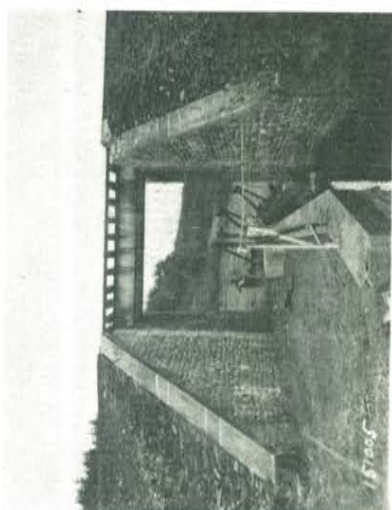
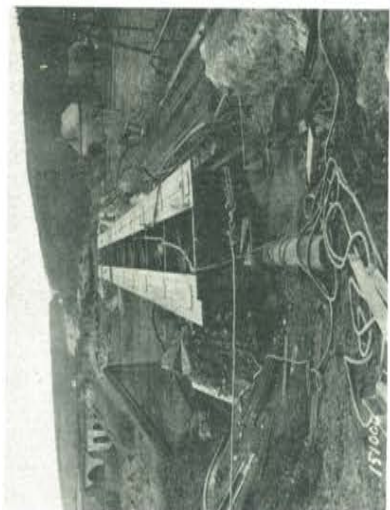


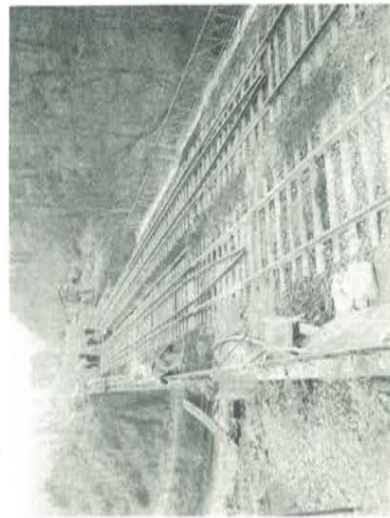
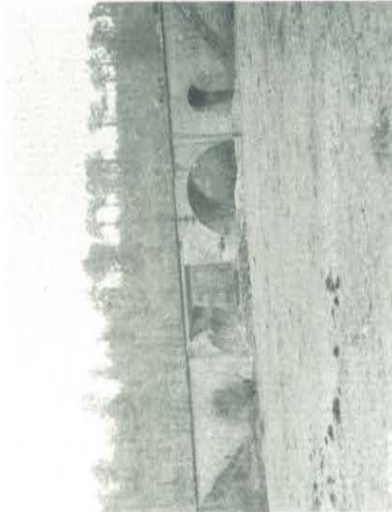
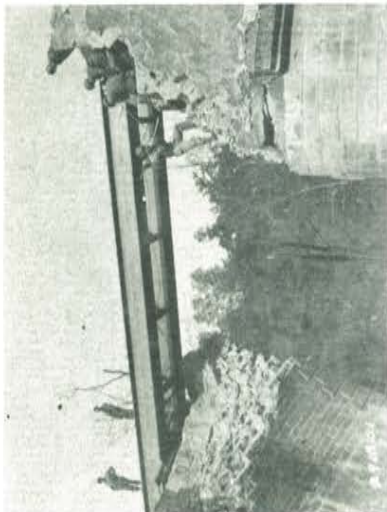
SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
SARNOUVILLE, FRANCE
 Project No. F-64
 Const. by Co "J" - 341ST ENGR REGT
 13 September 1944 - 1 October 1944



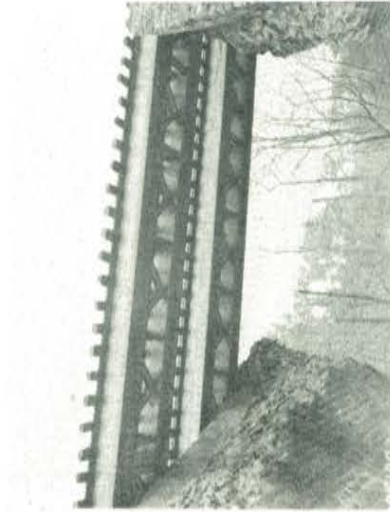
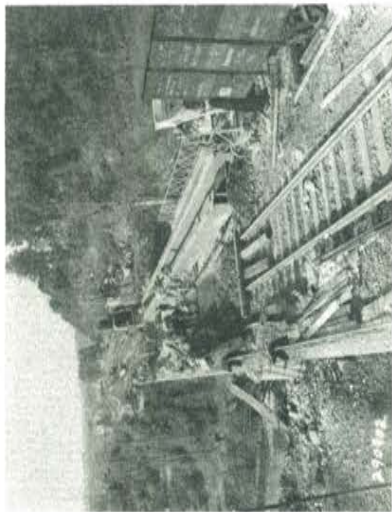
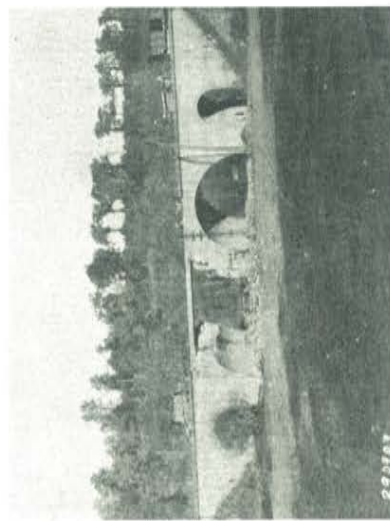
SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
MAISON LA FITE - FRANCE
 Project No. R-64
 Const. By Co. "D" - 341st Infr Regt
 13 September 1944 - 1 October 1944

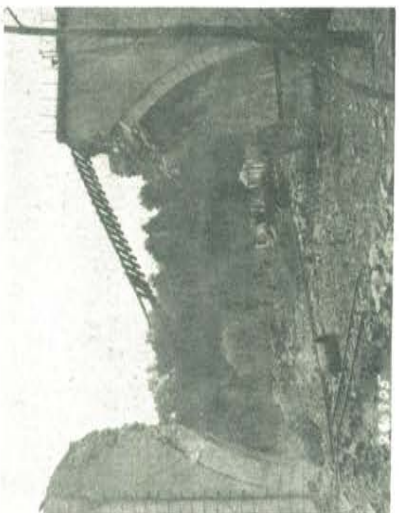




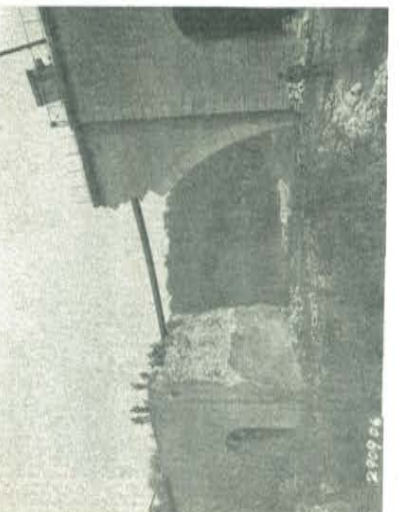


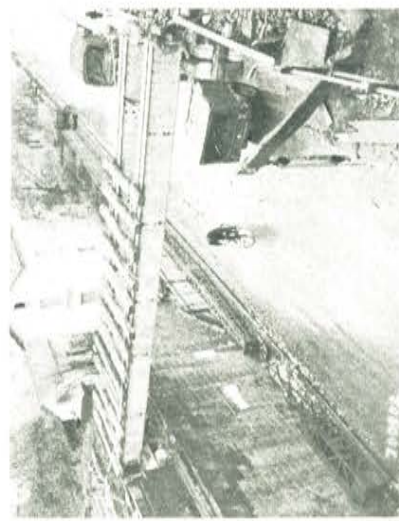
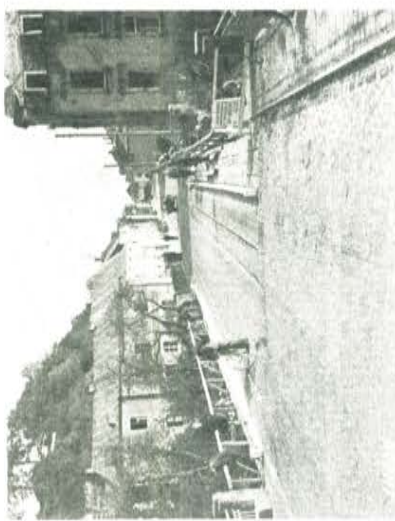
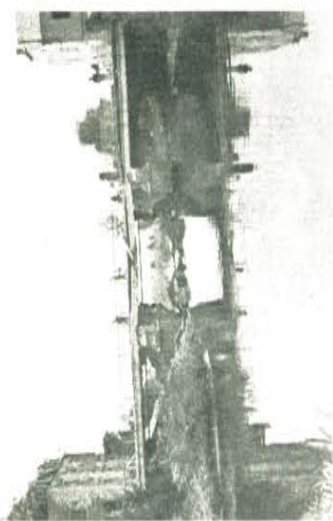
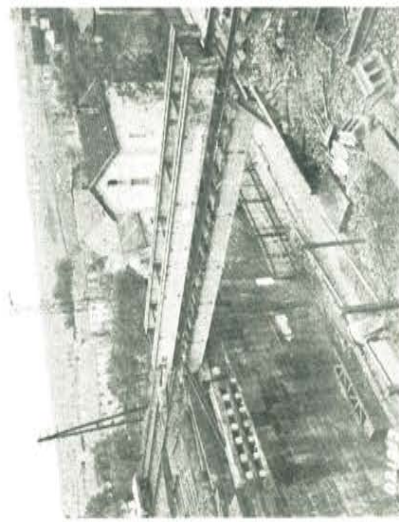
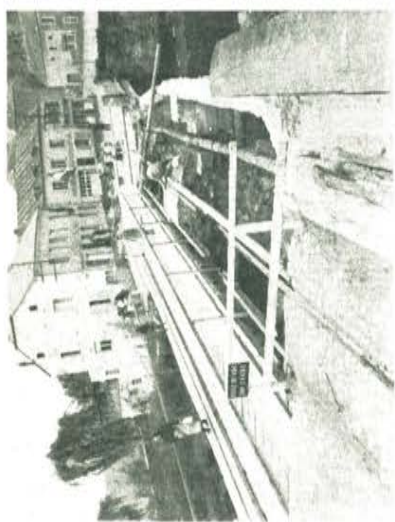
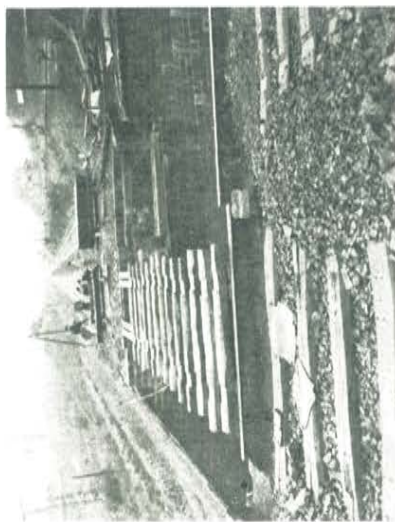
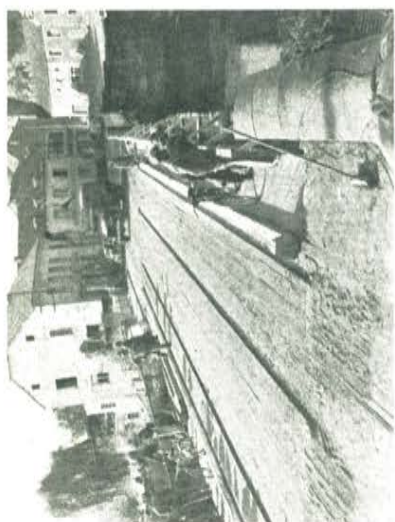
DOUBLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
CONS LA GRANVILLE - FRANCE
 Proj. No. E-78 (P-527004)
 Const. By Co "A" - 341st Engr Regt
 25 September 1944 - 4 October 1944
 108' DT RR Bridge
 Height Rail above Ground 34'

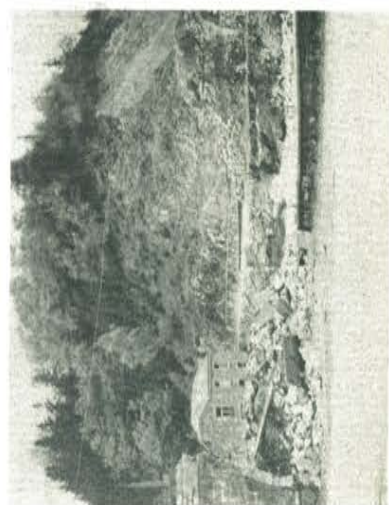
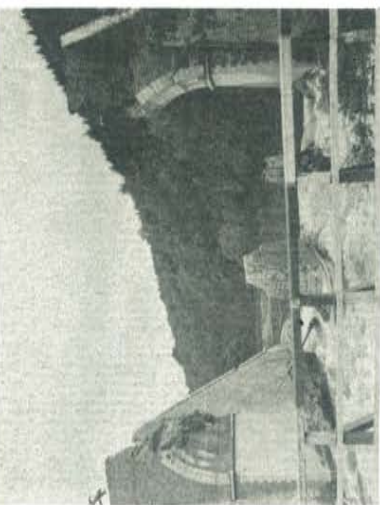
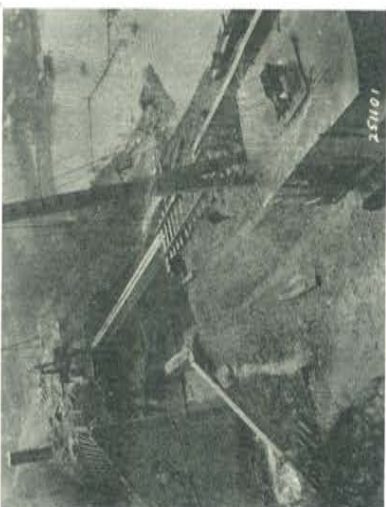
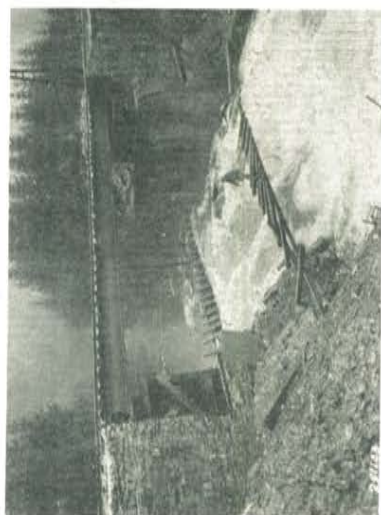
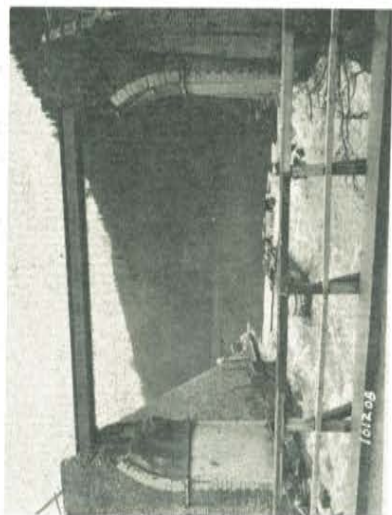


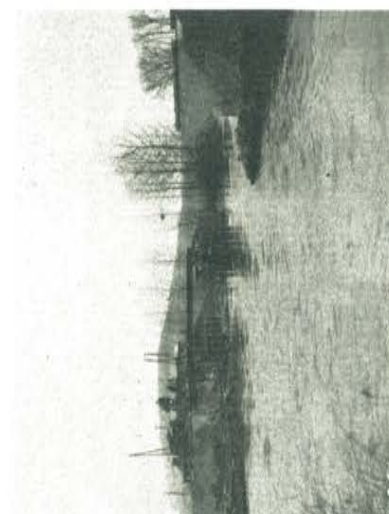
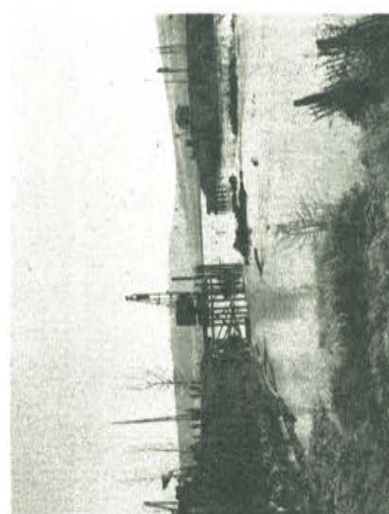
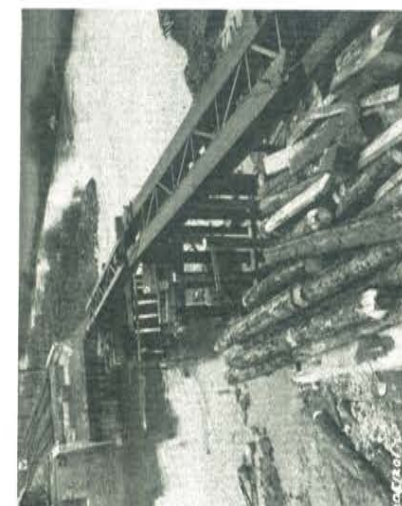
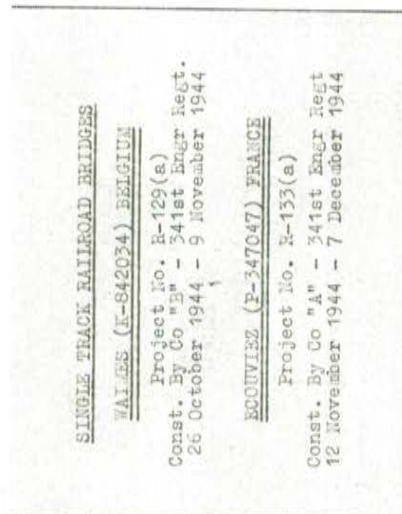
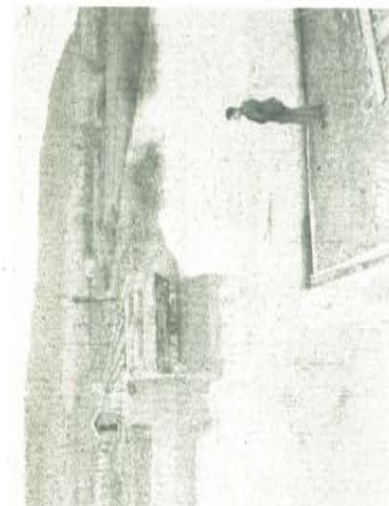


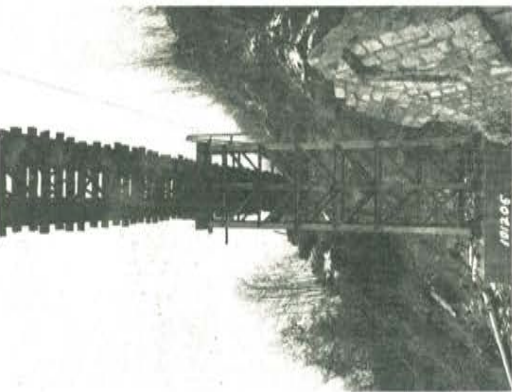
DOUBLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
CONS LA GRANVILLE - FRANCE
Proj. No. R-78 (P-527004)
Const. By Co "E" - 341st Engr Regt
25 September 1944 - 5 October 1944
78' DT RR Bridge
Height Rail above Ground 41.5'



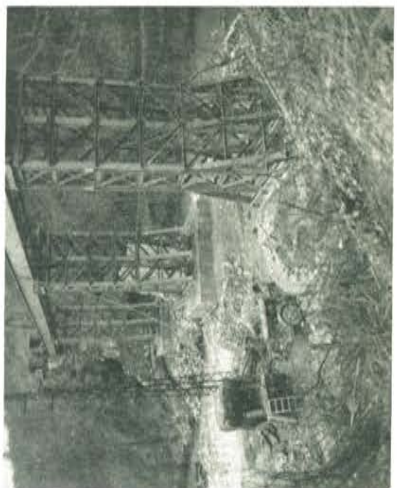
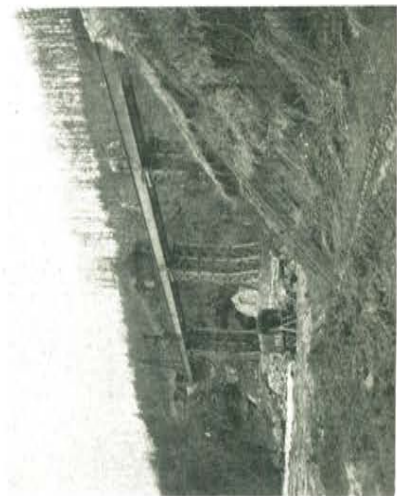








SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
MALMEDY, BELGIUM
 Coord. K-772038
 Project No. R-129
 Const. By Co. "B" - 341st Engr. Regt.
 25 Oct. 1944 - 30 Nov. 1944
 251' ST 4-Span RR Bridge.



WORKING ON THE RAILROADS

Between 24 August and 31 December, 1944, the members of Colonel Coe's Regiment rehabilitated nearly 500 miles of railroad. These included the following main lines:

Chatres - Orleans - Montargis
Dreux - Maintenon - Versailles - Paris
Versailles - Maison Lafitte - Argenteuil - Epluches
Bar-le-Duc - Commercy - Arnaville
Commercy - Toul - Nancy
Conflans - Longwy - Arlon - Luxembourg
Longwy - Esch - Luxembourg - Wecker
Arlon - Neufchateau - Bastogne - St. Vith
Luxembourg - Ettelbruck - Stavelot - Spa-Pepinster
St. Vith - Malmedy - Monschau - Stolberg

In addition, railroad bridges were rebuilt at Vitry Le Francois (across the Marne), Maison Lafitte (across the Seine), Toul (across the Moselle), Charleville (across the Meuse) and at Malmedy, Trois Ponts, Kalterherberg, Stolberg and Kornelimunster.

The same time that the Regiment started railroad work, it became a part of ASCZ Group C, similar to the group set-up in England. Once again Colonel Coe, Commanding Officer of the 341st, was placed in command. The Group, which included the 95th and 355th Engineer General Service Regiments in addition to the 341st, was given the primary mission of railroad reconstruction.

In order to get started on the railroad work, the companies had to move more than 200 miles from the Avranches area. The first phase of operations consisted in lending assistance on an emergency line to Le Mans. A major shortage of railroad tools added difficulty to the Regiment's share in the work.

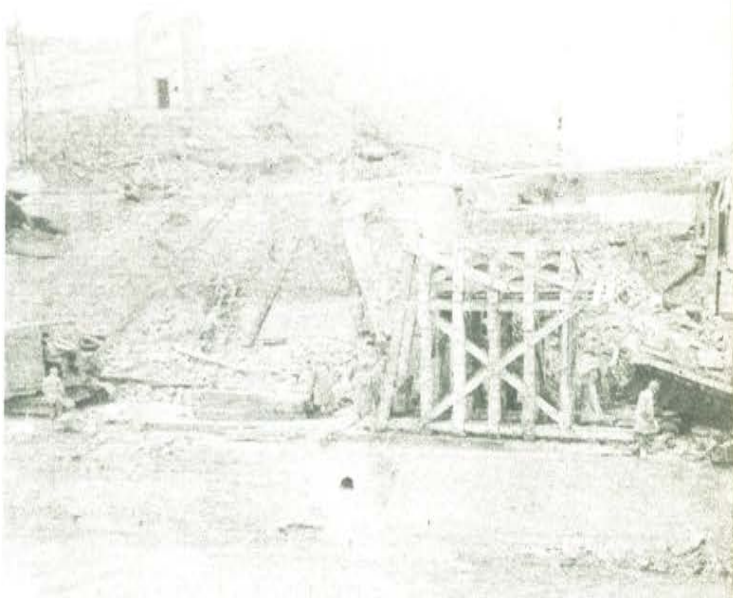
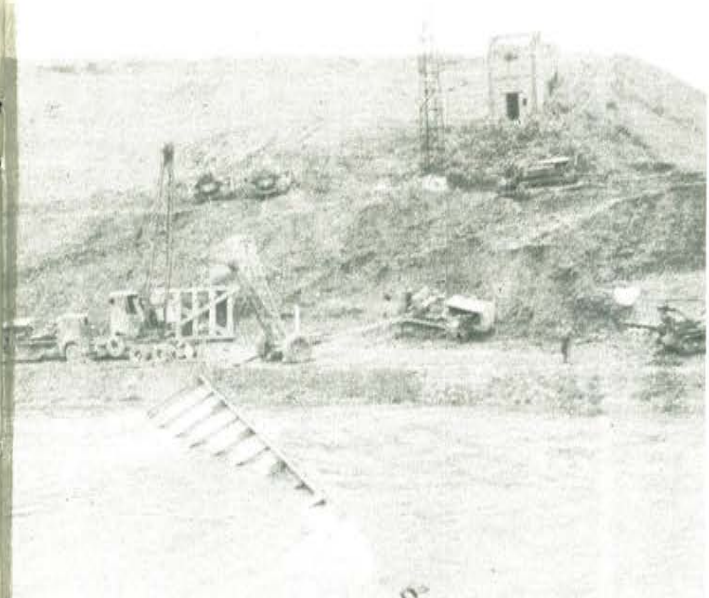
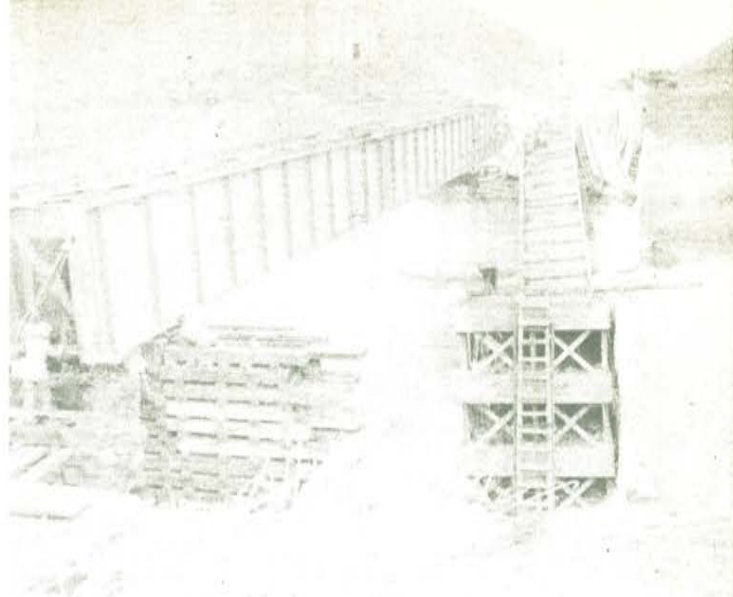
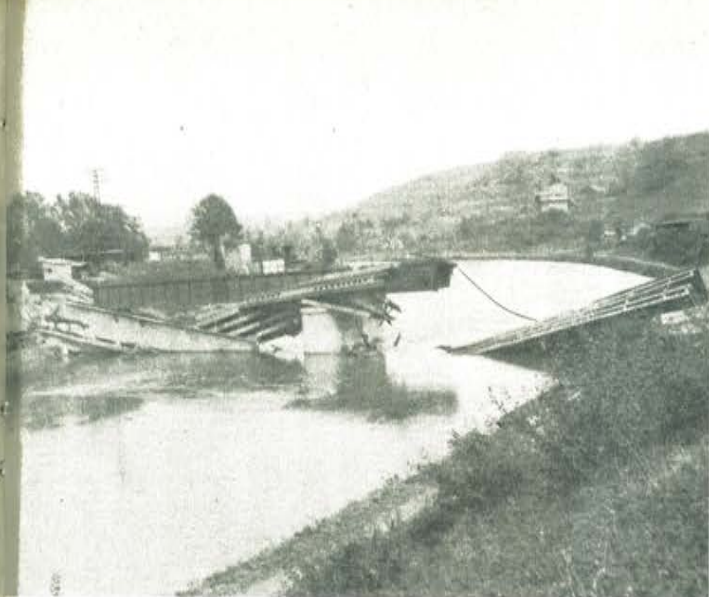
At first the work, for the most part, consisted mainly of making repairs to railroad lines. Company "A", on August 24, moved to Civry to repair bombed yards at Chateaudun. Later it moved to Montargis to replace a small railroad bridge over the Canal du Laing. Company "B" on August 24 started work on the Yover yards, while "C" Company was busy on the yards near Orleans. Company "D" moved to Epernon to repair the lines and replace switches there, and Company "F" was busy rehabilitating lines in the La-Verriers area. German troops moved out of La Verriers at 0700 hours on August 25. Company "F" started to repair the yards at 0900 hours the same day.

On August 27 an urgent mission was given to the Regiment, namely to complete immediately the railroad between Rambouillet and Versailles and thereby to reopen the Paris-Brest line. Company "F" and Company "B" were given the job. The men worked for 20 continuous hours and completed the work on schedule the following day. This event marked the opening of the first line running into Paris.

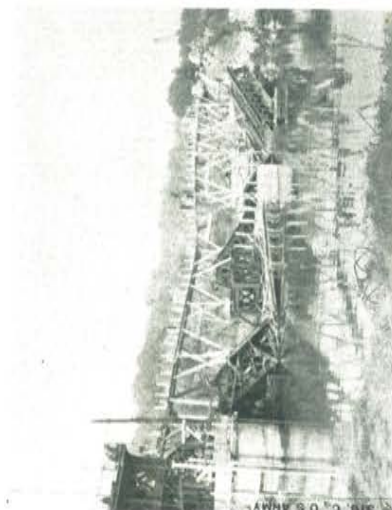
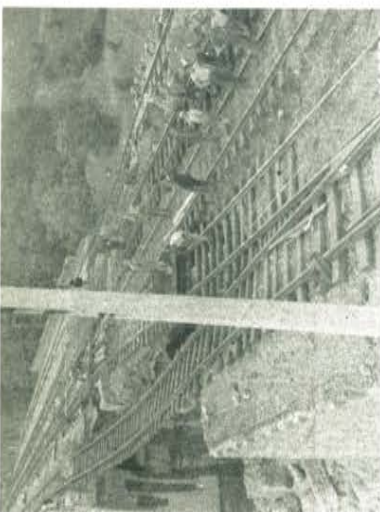
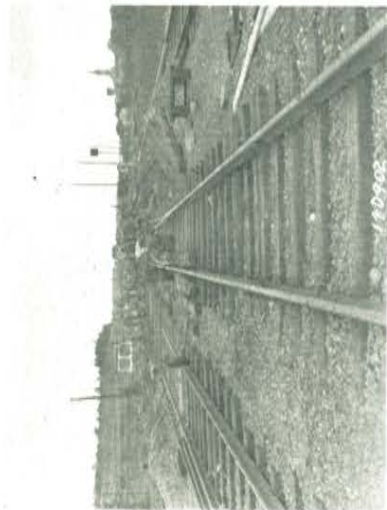
It was during the opening of this line that Lt. Colonel E. Warren Heilig and Pvt. Harry Smith, his driver, entered Versailles on reconnaissance and were received by officials and great crowds as the first American troops to enter Versailles on the heels of the departing Germans. From August 31 to September 3 most of the Regiment, supposed to be on the move again to railroad lines further north and east, were stymied due to the gasoline shortage at that time. On September 3, however, sufficient gasoline was obtained to enable the companies to move to their new location.

With the advent of September the Regiment started its important work of reconstructing railroad bridges. The first railroad bridge built by the Regiment was a small 40-foot span constructed by Company "D" at Epernon. Work on it was started on August 26 and completed on August 30.

This bridge, however, was merely a foot bridge compared to the larger structures put up in September. The first important bridge was one spanning the Marne River at Vitry Le Francois. The demolition had left a tangled mass of wreckage, as the bridge was destroyed with a train standing on each track. The replacement was trestle-bent structure of eight bents, a total of 220 feet long, and was to carry a single track. Companies "A" and "B", who were located in the area together with Regimental Headquarters, were given the assignment. Work was started on September 5 and was continued 24 hours a day until the job was completed six days later. This task marked the initial use by the Regiment of flood lights in spite of German snipers, to permit men to work both day and night.

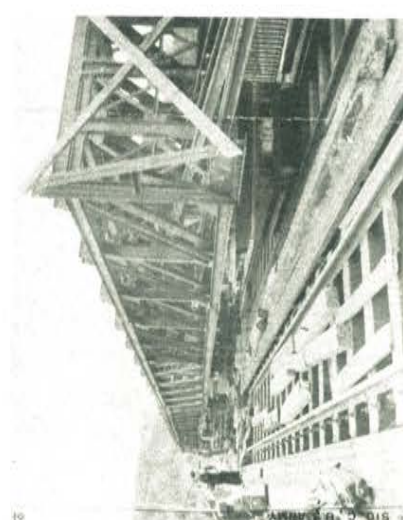
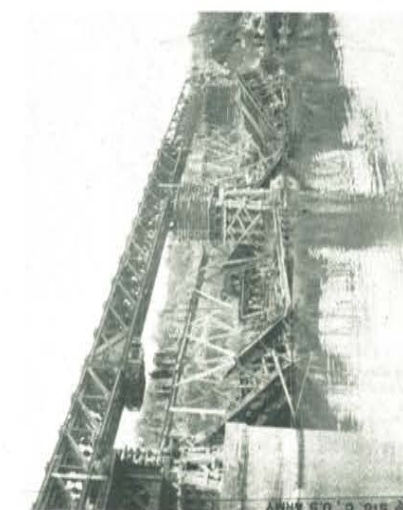
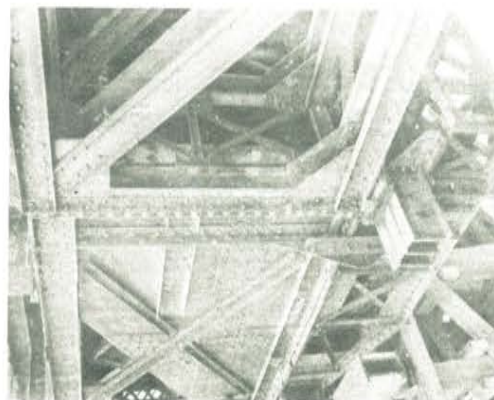
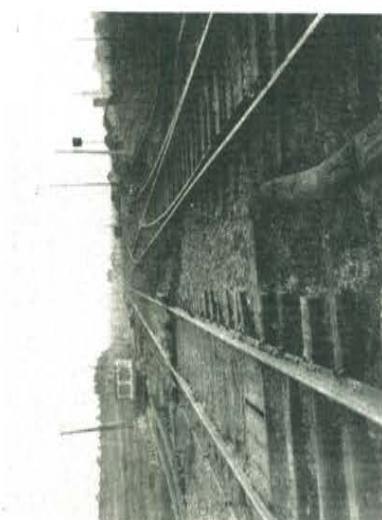


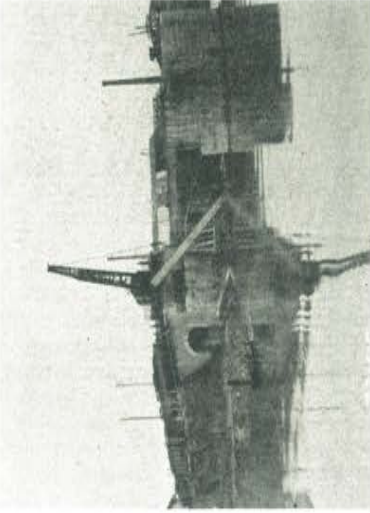
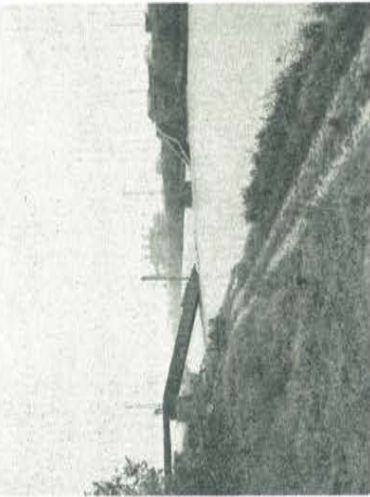
SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE, CHARLEVILLE, FRANCE



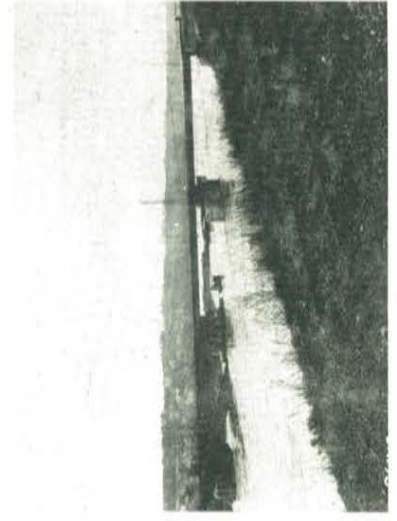
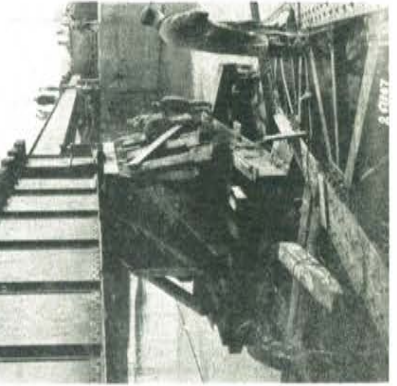
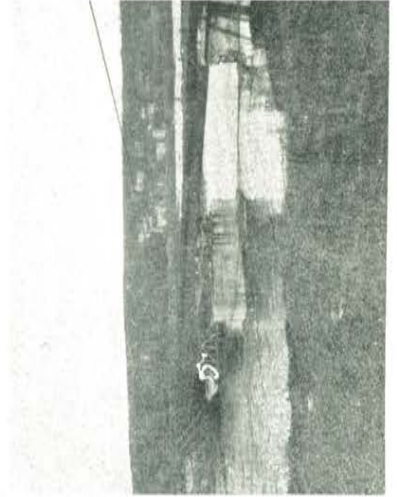
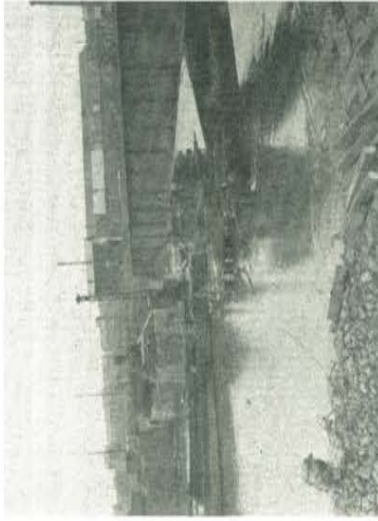
THIAUCOURT
Co "F" - 341st Engr Regt
September 1944

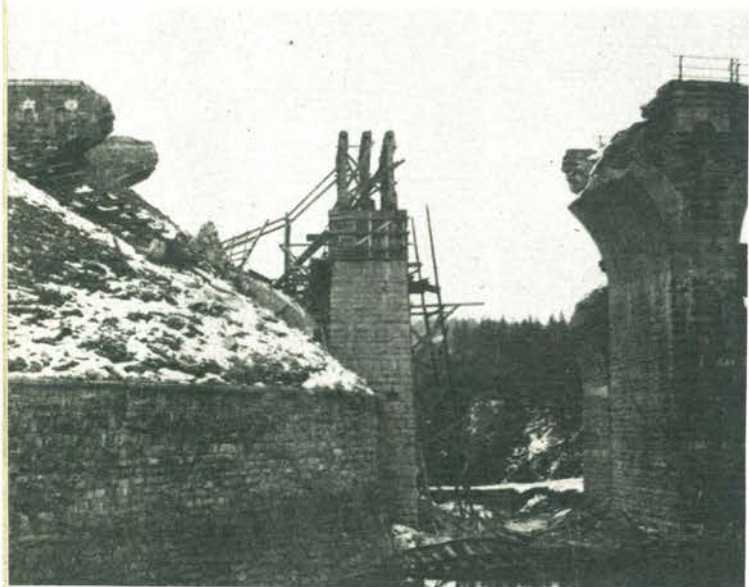
CHAPONVAL
Oise River, France
Co "F" - 95th Engr Regt
September 1944





SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
THEUX (O-836329) FRANCE
 Project No. R-113
 Const. By Co "C" - 341st Engr Regt
 17 Oct 1944 - 20 Nov 1944
 304' ST RR Bridge
 Height Rail above Water 27'





SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
KALTERHERBERG, GERMANY (K-916148)

Company "D" on September 13 moved to Maison Lafitte, the home of the world's fastest racetrack. The interest of the company was not at the racetrack, however, but at the main railroad bridge over the Seine, damaged by bombing, and another over the canal, which had been destroyed by the retreating Germans. French civilians assisted Company "D" men in repairing these structures. The job was completed on September 20, one week after it was started. With this mission completed the company started to repair water and coal facilities and to make necessary yard reconstruction on the Vero-Epluches rail line.

Company "F", meantime, had moved to Toul, once again becoming the Regimental unit closest to the front lines. At 1200 hours on September 7 the Company arrived at Toul. At 1800 hours the same day the artillery arrived and began shelling the German lines, two miles away.

The first task of "F" Company was to make a reconnaissance of all rail lines in the area to determine which were in need of repair. These reconnaissance patrols several times went beyond the Infantry lines in order to obtain complete reports and underwent shell fire and bombing. Three parties, at different times, were pinned down for from five to thirty minutes by machine gun fire in the Nancy area. All were able later to escape without injury, however.

These patrols uncovered two bridges that needed repairs. One was across the Rupt de Hae river in Thiaucourt. This job was started on September 12 and completed on September 14. The second, and more important damaged bridge was across the Moselle River near Toul. This bridge originally consisted of five 139-foot steel arch spans on masonry piers and abutments. Two of these sections were demolished by the Germans, who placed explosives in the center of the steel arches and dropped the entire spans. One of the demolished spans was over land; the other was over water, approximately 10 feet deep.

Two platoons of Company "C" were sent to the area to assist Company "F" in repairing this damage. Skilled technicians were furnished by H & S Company. Design calculations and details for the reconstruction were prepared by the Regimental S-3 section. Captain George S. Meyer, of Company "F" was in charge of the construction, assisted by 1st Lt. Robert L. King and 2nd Lt. R. C. Spencer, both of Company "C".

Work on the project was started on September 15. The first job was to remove the steel from the demolished sections. This presented no serious difficulty for the section over the land, although the lack of steel cutting torches delayed the work. The steel was cut into sections and moved away by using three D-8 tractors. Steel in the span over the water furnished more of a headache. The part that was out of the water was first cut into sections and pulled out by tractors. This left the majority of the span in the 10-foot water. It was necessary to use TNT explosives to cut this steel into sections and remove it to shore. Work on this phase of the project was com-

pleted on September 23, eight days after it was started.

On September 19 actual work on the structure started. The reconstructed section was to consist of two 67-foot, one 82-foot and one 53-foot steel spans. Each of the 67-foot spans was to use five 39-inch steel beams, supported by a skewed three-bent, double story timber pier supported by piling. The 82-foot span was to use two 39-inch steel beams supported in the center by a normal two-bent double story timber pier and piling. And the 53-foot span was to have four 31-inch steel "I" beams, supported by a skewed three-bent double story timber pier on spread footings.

At first, from September 15 to 23, the men worked only during the daylight hours. Starting on September 23, however, anti-aircraft protection was secured and work was continuous on a 24-hour basis. Difficulty of obtaining timber for the piers complicated the job. A local saw mill finally had to be taken over and operated by the men. Timber was hauled from five miles away to get adequate supply. Despite this difficulty, and the fact that two-thirds of the job was done in rainy weather, the entire project was completed on October 2, just 17 days after it was started.

The opening of this span was an important milestone. It was the first railroad bridge completed across the Moselle River, and it made possible the opening of the first rail line from Toul to Nancy, a line that this Regiment had put in working order. This line later became the principal route furnishing supplies to General Patton's Third Army in its thrust to Germany.

The other companies of the Regiment were not inactive during this time. They moved northward to put the railroads leading to Belgium and Luxembourg into operation. Companies "A" and "B" on September 24 moved to the area of Cons La Granville, near Longwy, to replace two destroyed arches on the main Cherbourg-Paris-Luxembourg line. Both arches, which were destroyed by the Germans with 1,000 pounds of dynamite, were 95 feet long and were located within two miles of each other. The gaps were spanned with steel "I" beams. A double track was laid on the reconstructed spans. Company "A" completed its project in eight days. Company "B" finished one track in seven days (on October 1) and the second on October 5.

Company "D" moved east on Steinfort, Luxembourg, on September 27 and began work to remove the wreckage of two extraordinarily heavy highway bridges from the railroad tracks in the vicinity of Arlon. By working 24-hour shifts the railroads were cleared of the wreckage in three days.

Meanwhile innumerable reconnaissances were made of railroad lines in the area and complete reports were submitted to the Engineer Section, Advance Section Communications Zone. Many of these reconnaissance missions were performed under enemy observation and fire. During this time, too, considerable number of German prisoners were picked up by the Regiment.



SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
STOLBERG, GERMANY (K-947406)

The supply problem of railroad and other engineer materials, always a serious one, assumed even more importance with the units in Belgium and Luxembourg, near Germany. Colonel Coe's Regiment played an important part in solving this problem.

The first of October marked the start of reconnaissance work at the Paul Wurth Steel Fabricating plant and the Hadir Steel plant in Luxembourg to prepare for the opening of these plants by the U. S. Army. The Hadir plant, world famous for its meter-depth beams, was returned to production on October 14. Much of the success of this production miracle was due to the procurement by this Regiment of coke and lime supplies vital to the life of such a great industry. On October 17 a formal ceremony was held at the Hadir plant to celebrate the opening of steel production. From this time on, a source of "WF" beams necessary for the reconstruction of destroyed railroad bridges—high priority projects—was assured.

Timber also was badly needed. So the Regiment took over and operated eight sawmills producing approximately 80,000 feet a week. Selected men from practically all companies were active in the operation of these mills during October, November and December. Men from Company "F" on November 29 also took over the operation of a plywood factory and sawmill at Gilly, Belgium.

The problem of accumulating necessary supplies for Group "C" railroad projects was given to Company "D" during the first week of October. During the next three months stocks of prefabricated bridging, piling, meter beams, and bridging hardware were accumulated in the dump set up at Arlon. The 250 POWs remaining with the Regiment (750 were turned in to the Central Enclosure at Compiègne between October 10-13) were used in unloading these supplies.

To augment the dwindling timber supplies and take the place of pre-fabricated light steel trestles, the Operations Section of the Regiment designed and placed into production a steel railroad pier. This was soon designated as standard equipment in the Advance Section Communications Zone. Up to the end of the year more than 218 feet of this pier was used in railroad bridges.

Other production problems handled by the Regiment's Operations Section included the fabrication of a standard steel highway pier designed by the 371st Engineer Regiment, another unit in Group "C". Forty-eight of these bents were produced in the last 10 days of November for shipment to units constructing a critical crossing over the Albert Canal north of Maastricht, Holland. In addition the Regiment fabricated and had ready for delivery more than 24 semi-romney huts.

All of these production and supply accomplishments were made despite a shortage of materials, and absence of labor, and an existing political and economic disorganization.

While these problems were being solved, the line companies carried on with their important reconstruction work. Companies "A" and "C" moved to Charleville during the mid-

dle of October to rebuild two railroad bridges over the Meuse River. Both of them were more than 300 feet long. These two bridges were the longest constructed by the Regiment during 1944.

Company "C" was assigned the Theux Railroad bridge, a four span, single-track structure, 304 feet in length. One of the biggest difficulties encountered was the removal of demolished sections. In order to clear the center channel it was necessary to remove five meter beams, 75 feet long, and four box girders weighing 80 tons. A diver was used to fasten slings around the steel. Then a P & H crane, operated from two barges fastened together, removed the steel from the channel.

Rain, continuous rain, hampered the work. The men labored in two 10-hour shifts under practically flood conditions. Between November 14 and 16 the river rose more than three feet. The following day, while jacking an 80-ton girder, 96 feet long, up to the pier, the water was so high that it almost reached the jacks. Despite these handicaps the bridge was completed in 35 days, including the laying of tracks and ties. On November 22 it was in operation. The reconstructed bridge consists of one span of 33-inch "I" beams, 65-feet long, one span of four meter beams, 74-feet long, one span of five meter beams, 84-feet long, and one span of a box girder, 7 feet deep and 96 feet long, which had been salvaged from the stream.

Company "A" encountered the same difficulties as "C" Company in its task of rebuilding the Charleville 316-foot bridge, also a quadruple span. It completed its job however, in 28 days, finishing it on November 21. The bridge, almost identical with the "C" Company bridge, consisted of one span of six meter beams, 90 feet long, one span of two meter beams 43 feet long, one span of two 33-inch "I" beams, 37 feet long, and one span of a salvaged girder.

The unusual feature about both of these bridges, aside from their length was the use of the cantilever principle in joining the meter beam to the salvaged girder. The girder extended beyond the center of the pier which supported it, and a stringer seat was built on which the meter beams rested. Design for the bridges was prepared by the S-3 section of the Regiment.

Company "E", which since August had been working for the 12th Army Group Headquarters, was assigned to that Headquarters permanently on October 23, and redesignated as the 1776th Engineer General Service Company. A new Company "E" was activated on October 27 at Theux, Belgium. To enable this company to work in the field with the least possible delay, officers and whole squads of enlisted men were transferred from within the Regiment and equipment was loaned, pending assignment of personnel by the higher Headquarters and the receipt of new equipment by requisition. Capt. Raymond Codrea (then 1st Lt.) was placed in command. The first task of the new unit was to repair railroad yards at Stavelot.

During October, November and December the work of the Regiment reached a new peak. Two bridges already have been mentioned. Other railroad bridges in Belgium and Luxembourg were reconstructed at:

LUXEMBOURG

A single 40-foot span, double track structure. Started Sept. 18 by Company "A". Completed Oct. 1.

HOUEMONT

A 40-foot span, built by Company "C" between Sept. 29 and October 2.

BASTOGNE

A 38-foot single span, also built by Company "C". Construction started Oct. 4. Completed Oct. 16.

ST. VITH

Reconstruction here consisted of four 82-foot "I" beams. Built by Company "B" between October 10 and 15.

MALMEDY

A demolished 265-foot arched stone bridge, 45-foot above water level, which originally took a year to build, was rebuilt by Company "B" from October 25 to November 30. The new span consisted of a welded steel girder. It was supported by three high steel pier bents, two of which were 31 feet high and one 33 feet high. Footings were 20 feet long, 17 feet wide, two feet thick, made of reinforced concrete. Flood, rain and mud complicated the construction.

WAIMES

An overpass bridge, 39 feet long. Started on October 26, also by Company "B". Completed November 9, after waiting a week for material. This overpass made possible the delivery of steel girders to the Malmedy bridge.

SALMCHATEAU

Two bridges, 35 and 106 feet long, were reconstructed by Company "F". Both jobs were started on October 30. The smaller one was finished November 4, the larger, November 25.

LA RIED

Started by Company "E" on October 30, was finished a week later. A 41-foot span.

SPA

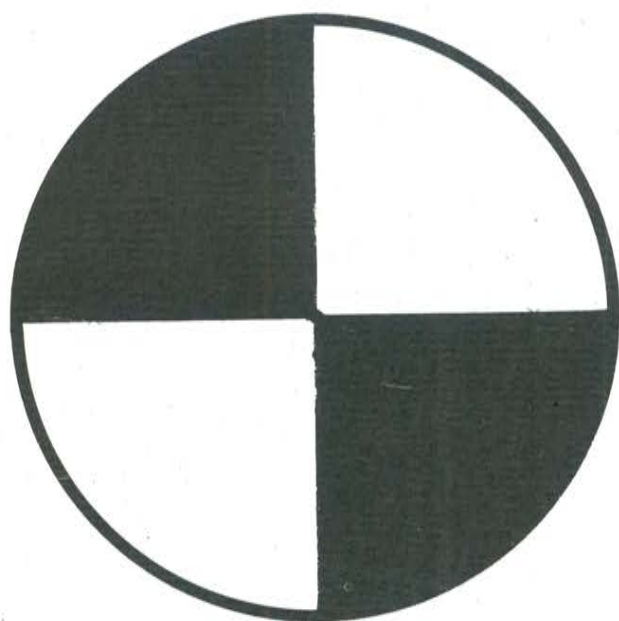
Two bridges, 57 and 55 feet long, were reconstructed by Company "E". Both spans were in operation by November 16, after 11 and 13 days work.

TROIS PONTS

Two bridges in this area also rebuilt by Company "F". A 66-foot span was started on Nov. 11 and finished November 28. The other 60 foot above the water, was the longest single span built in the Advance Section. The 95 foot meter beams had a clear span of 92 feet 6 inches. This bridge was started on November 2 and completed on November 23.

ECOUVIEZ

A 146-foot triple span, single track structure. Started by Company "A" on November 12, completed December 7.

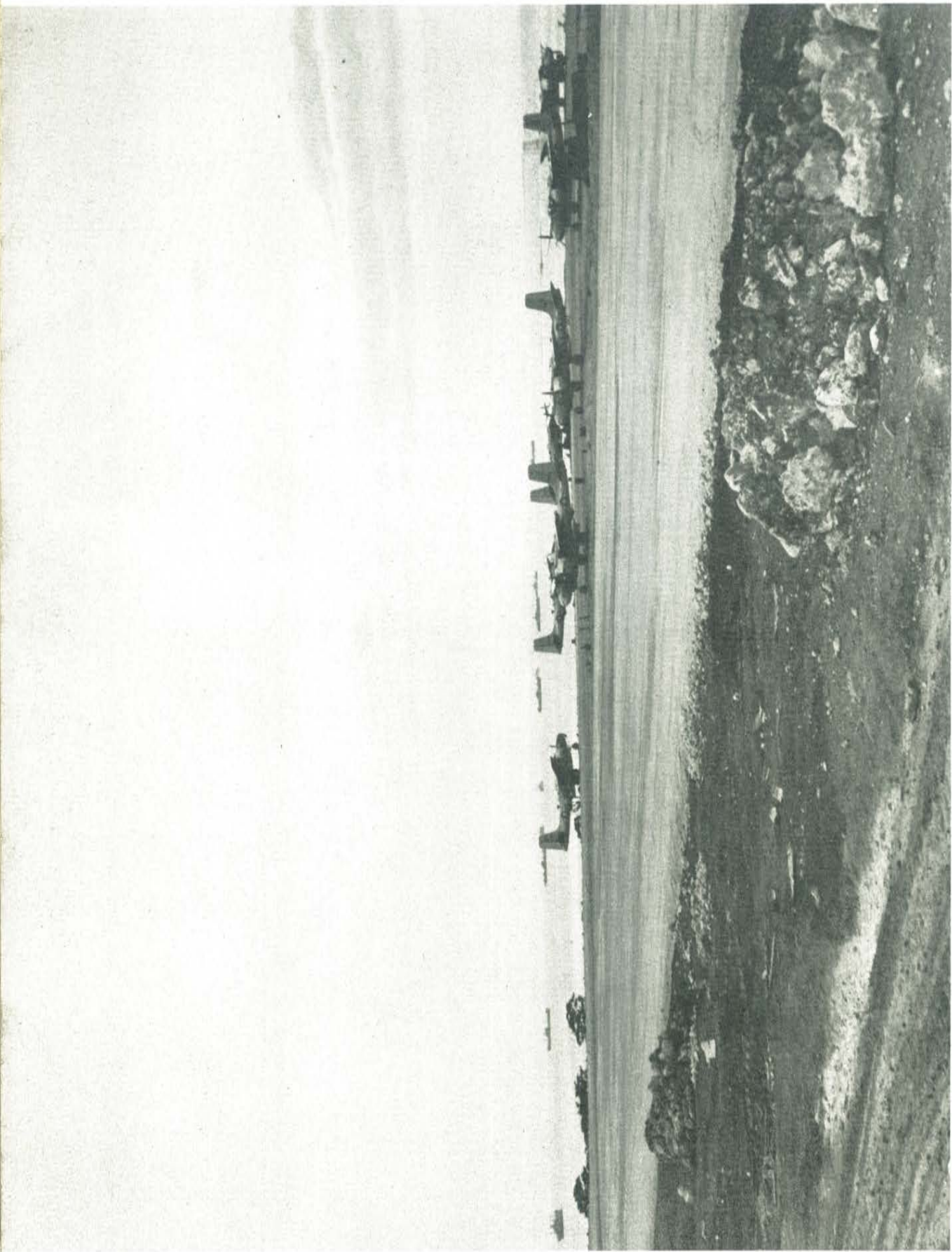




THIS WAS DISTINCTLY AN ENGINEERS WAR

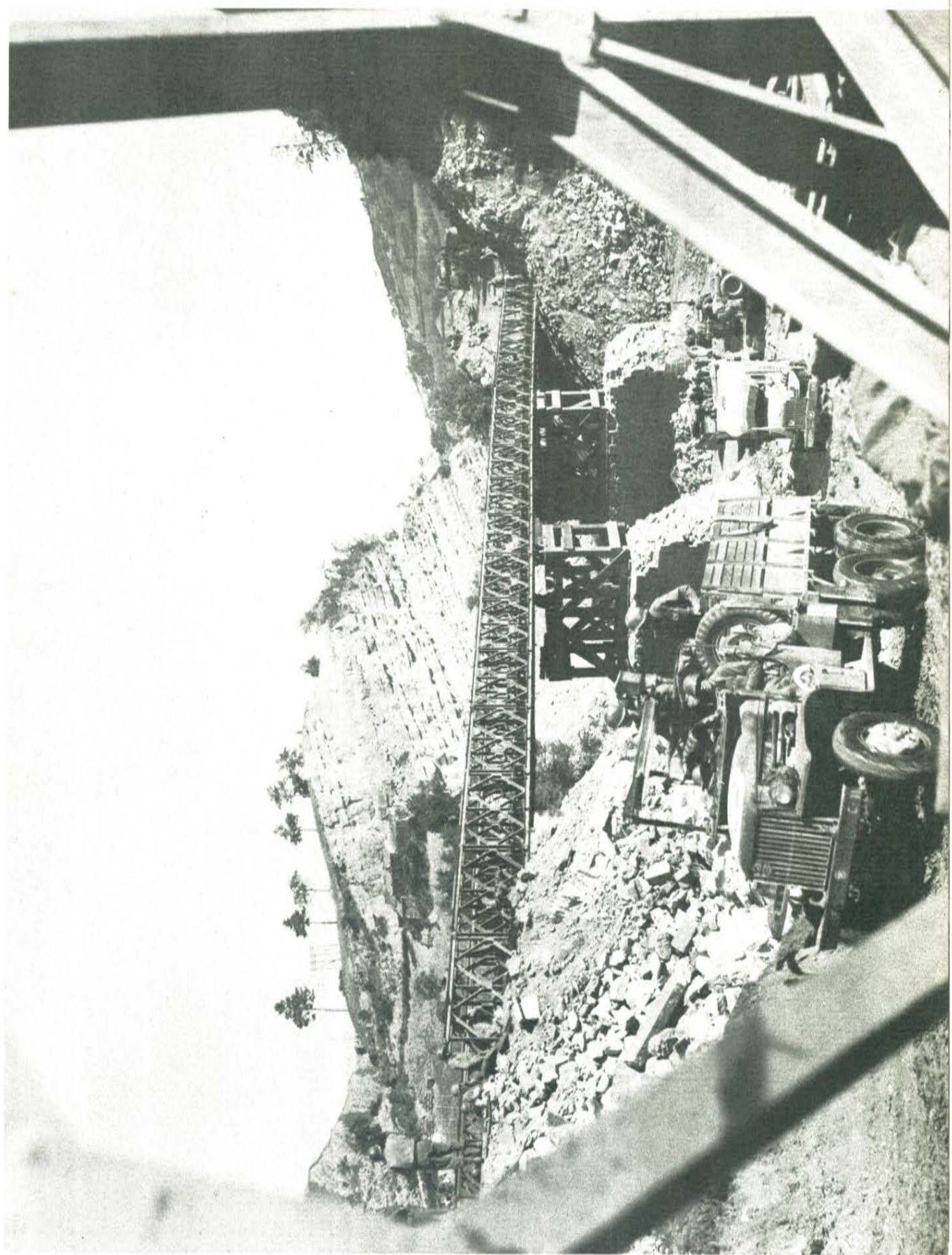
We changed the face of the earth with seven modern wonders
to meet the urgent needs of air and amphibious warfare.

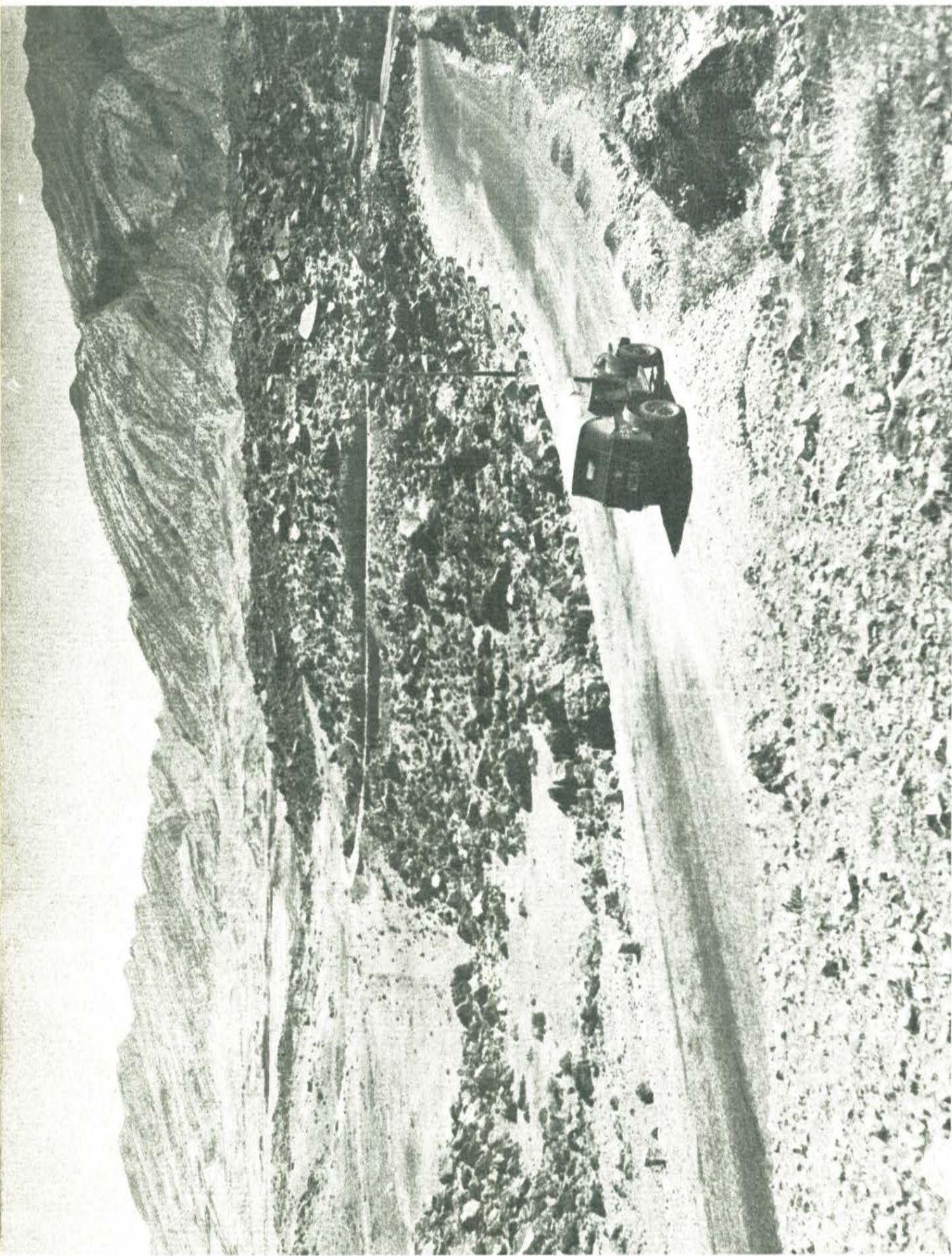
THE SEVEN ENGINEERING WONDERS OF WORLD WAR II:



AIRFIELDS

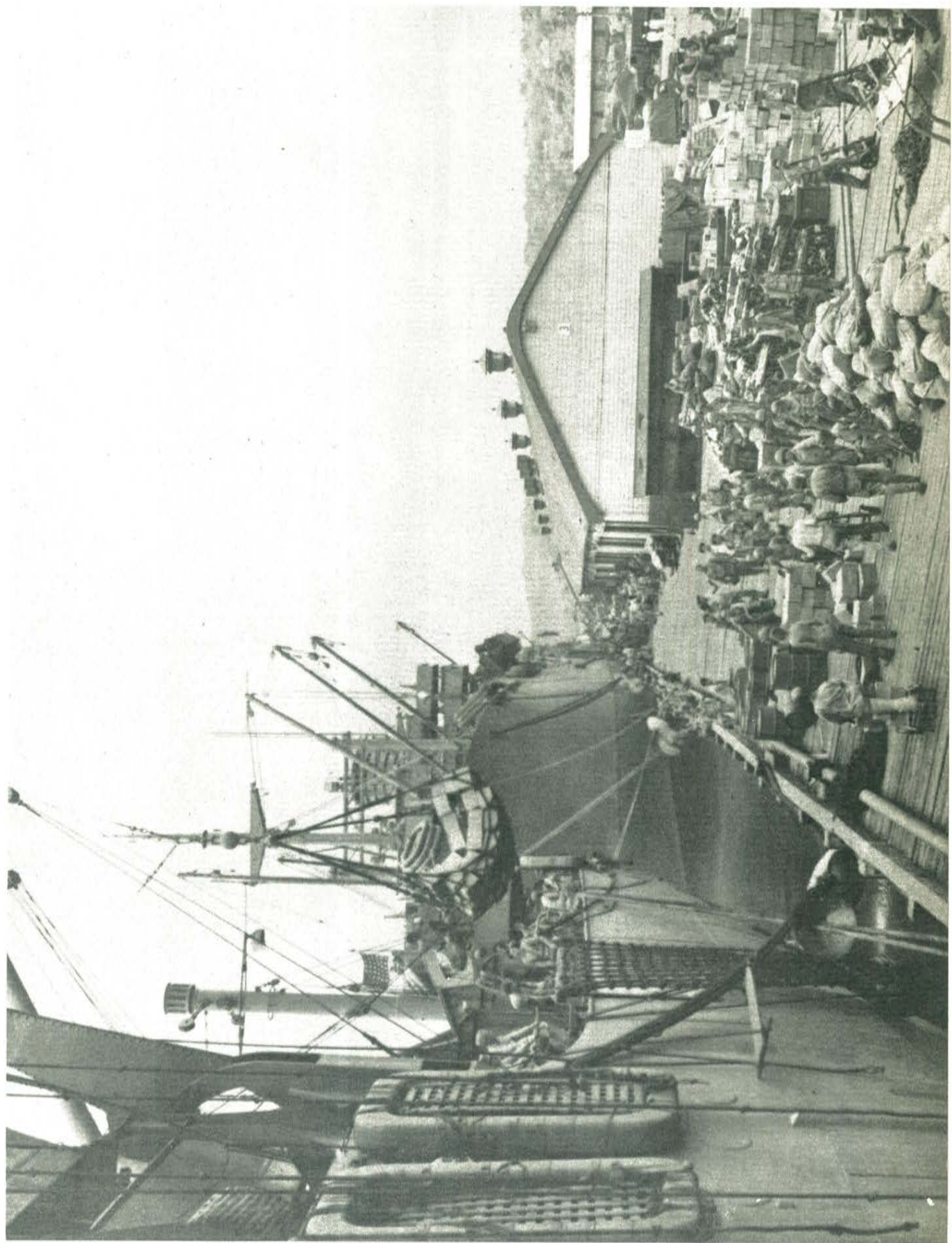
BRIDGES

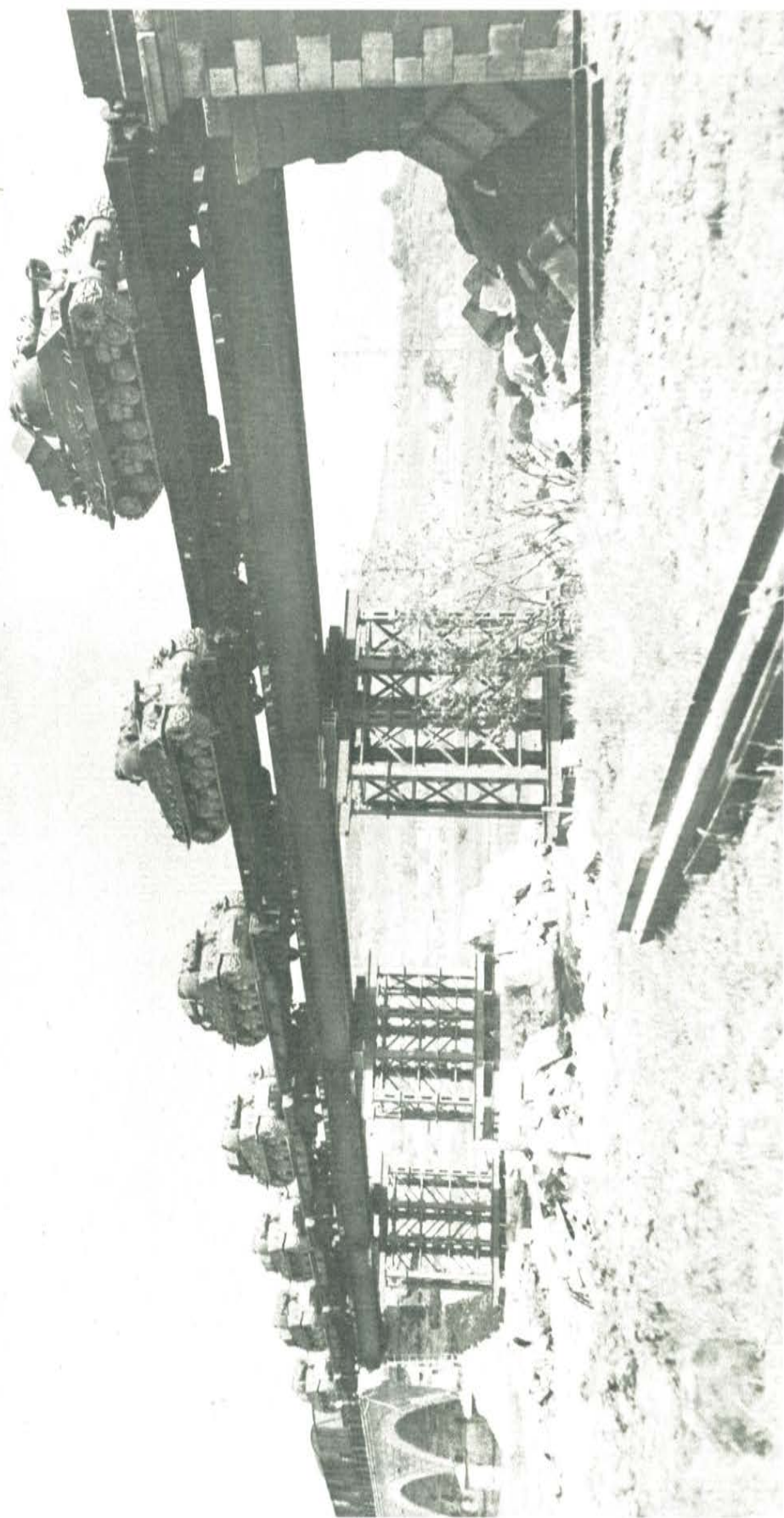




ROADS

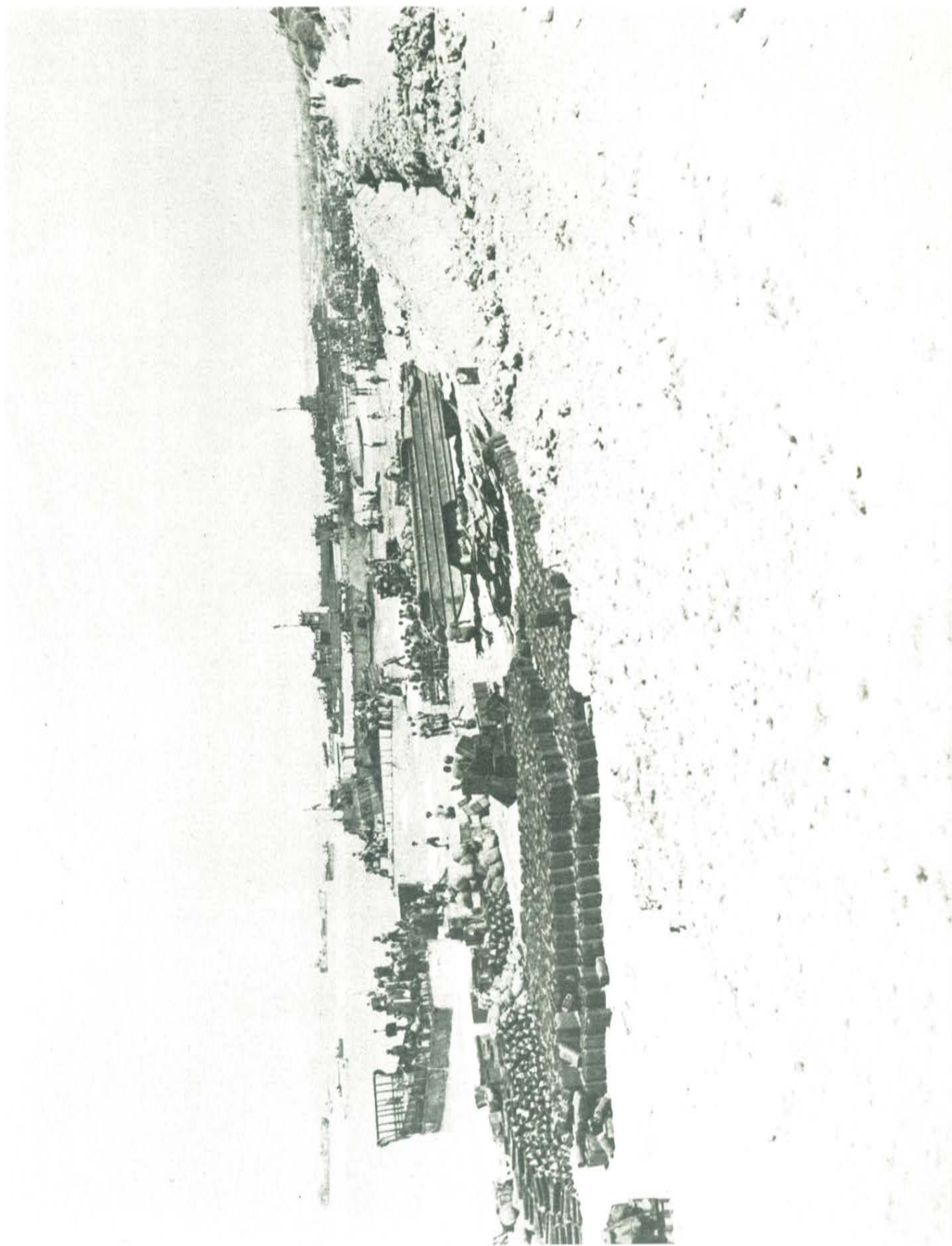
PORTS





RAILROADS

BASES



SEVEN ENGINEERING WONDERS OF WORLD WAR II

AIRFIELDS

Smooth carpets for planes appeared as if by magic in all parts of the world.

BRIDGES

Never before were so many spans of so many types needed so quickly and in so many places.

ROADS

Fleets of trucks rolled swiftly through arctic and equatorial wildernesses on war's errands.

PORTS

New ones were created almost overnight; old ones repaired after destruction.

RAILROADS

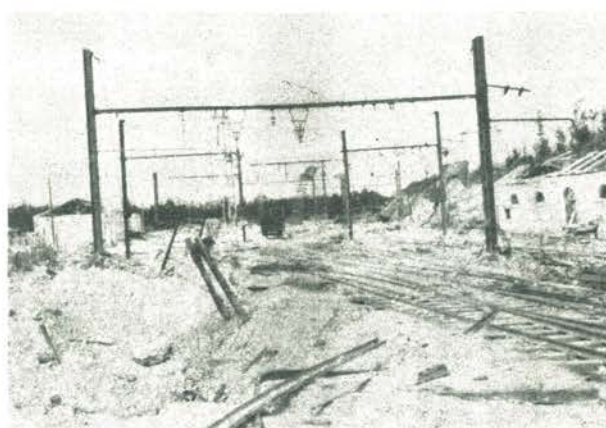
Were restored—in France alone would link up Tokyo and New York.

PIPE LINES

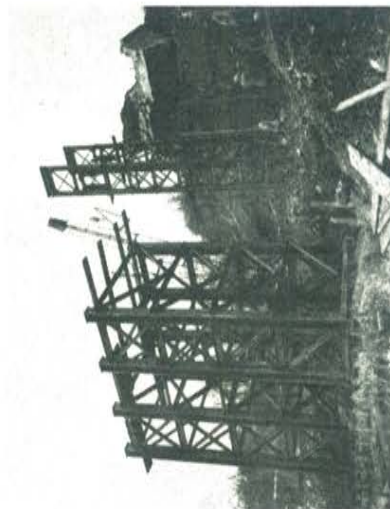
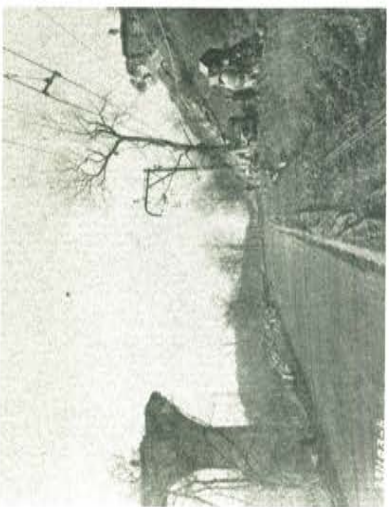
Kept up with advancing armies to supply fuel.

BASES

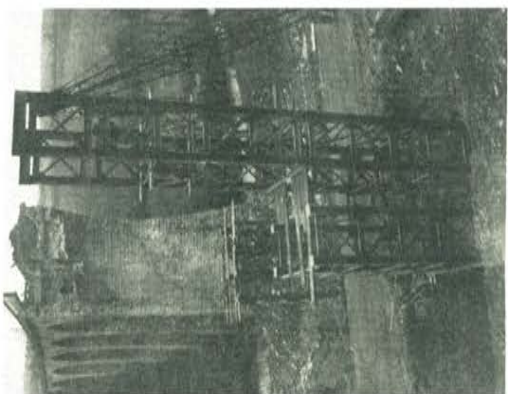
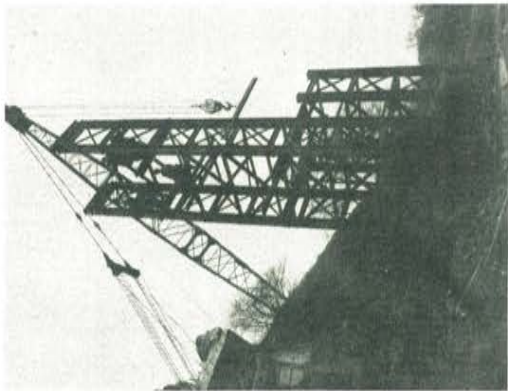
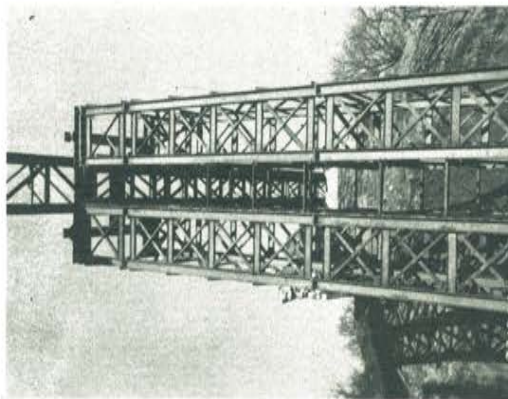
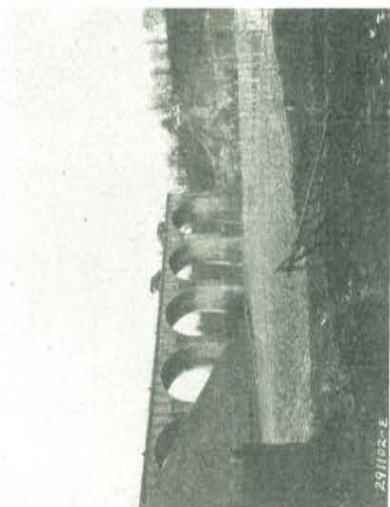
Built as fast as beachheads were taken—handled 700,000 items of supply.

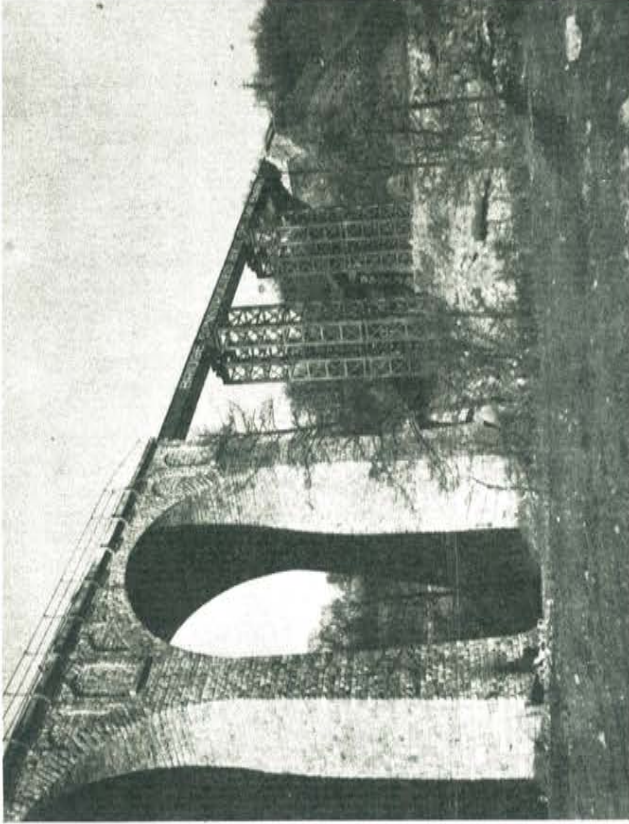
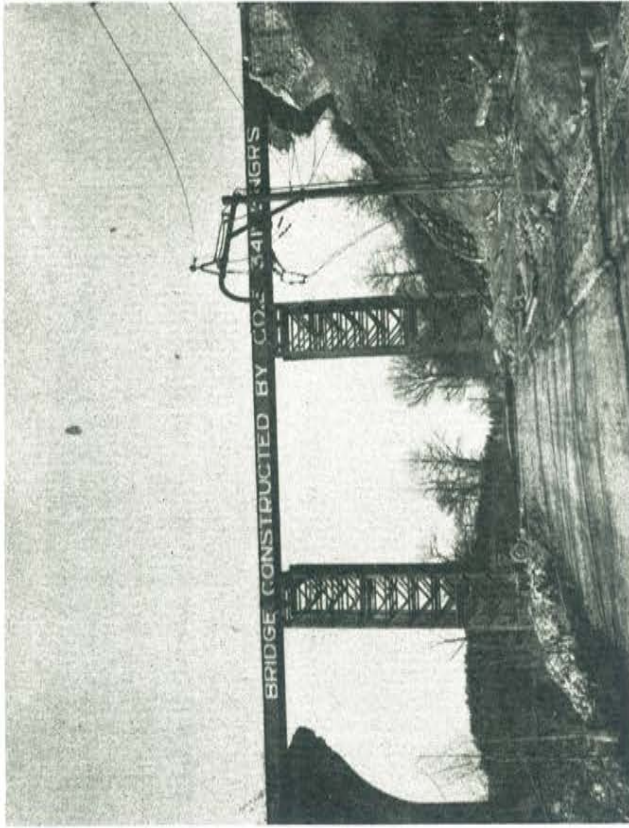


In addition to bridge work, rehabilitation of rail yards was completed at Arlon, Gouvy, Trois Ponts, Stavelot, Abaucourt, Luxembourg, St. Vith, Bastogne, Courtil, Stolberg and Liege.



SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
KORNELI MÜNSTER, GERMANY
 Coord. K-91427Q
 Project No. E-145(a)
 Const. By Co. "E" - 341st Engr. Regt.
 27 Nov. 1944 - 29 Dec. 1944
 232' ST 4-Span Railroad Bridge





On October 30 a Group "C" Railroad School was started at the 341st Regimental Headquarters in Arlon, Belgium. The school was divided into three phases: Phase I—a school for company grade officers. Phase II—a school for first four grade non-commissioned officers. And Phase III—practical instruction of unit personnel by unit leaders covering the subject matters outlined in the first two phases. This school elicited another commendation from Colonel Itschner, Engineer, Advance Section Communications Zone, on November 29.

Other operations conducted by the Regiment during this period include: Construction of repeater stations at Charleville, Aubange and Jemlin, also installation of roads and hardstanding for four depots.

The front line of the battle zone was never far enough away for most of the Regiment at any time to allow the men to forget that their work was making a vital contribution to the war's end. All companies operated most of the time in the combat zone. Flying bombs began

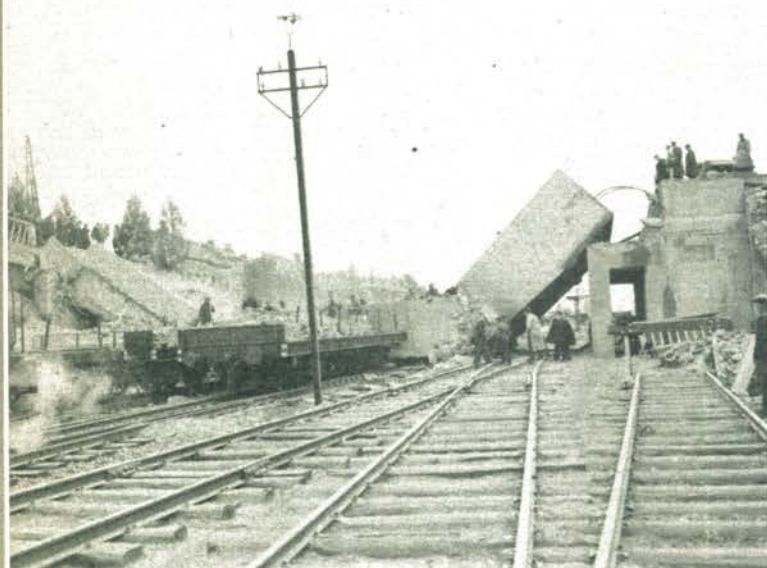


to make their appearance with regularity at this time in the areas in which the units were located. On November 18 a robot bomb landed 100 yards from the railroad bridge at Salm-

chateau, under construction by Company "F" men.

As a result of the flying bombs, Company "C" was moved to Liege on December 5. Its job was to repair 5,500 feet of railroad track and fill 16 big craters, damage caused by these "buzz bombs". While the men were working on this project, the area underwent numerous strafing attacks as well as attacks from the flying bombs, several of which landed near the work and camp sites. During December 16-18 approximately six bombs per hour landed in the area.

By the end of November three companies, "B", "F" and "E", had platoons working in Germany proper. On December 3 Companies "E" and "F", which were located near Stolberg, underwent a strafing attack by German planes. Men from Company "F" were repairing a double railroad track in that vicinity when they were strafed and shelled by 88s. Company "E" was strafed at its camp in Stolberg and at the railroad bridge under construction at Kornelimunster. On December 5 this company underwent another strafing.



Three important railroad bridges were under reconstruction in Germany during December by units of Colonel Coe's Regiment. And it was a race to see which of the three would win the title of being the first railroad bridge to be built by American forces on German home territory. The race ended in practically a dead heat. Company "B"'s bridge at Kalterherberg, completed on Dec. 23, won the title by one day. Company "E"'s bridge at Stolberg was completed on Dec. 24. The third structure, at Kornelimunster, which also was being constructed by Company "E", was finished on December 26.

Before any of the spans were completed, however, the men had received first hand experience in building a bridge under combat. These General Service Engineers became Combat Engineers and Infantrymen for awhile in assisting the regular Infantry to hold off General Rundstedt's counter-offensive in the area. At the same time they had to, and did, complete the bridges. It was impossible to test any of the structures after completion, because the enemy by that time had control of both terminals leading to the spans.

The Stolberg bridge, reconstructed by Company "E" was the smallest of the three, 145 feet. Two spans and one pier had been demolished of the single-track, three-span structure. Work was started on December 1. Almost immediately enemy activity delayed the repairs. The air attack of December 3 already has been mentioned. On December 15 work had to be delayed while the men thoroughly searched the area for butterfly bombs, reported to have been dropped during the night by the enemy. They found no butterflies, but did find and capture five paratroopers, including a captain. Enemy planes during the day again were active in the area. A large-scale air attack by the enemy on the following day delayed work for more than four hours. And on December 19 all reconstruction stopped when the platoon was placed under the command of the 148th Engineer Combat Battalion, to be used as guards on road blocks during the existing emergency. Work was resumed, however, on December 23 in the face of enemy attacks, and the bridge was completed, except for fastening the rails and aligning the track, on December 24. VII Corps requested that the rails be left off, and immediately prepared the bridge for demolition if the Germans came any farther.

The Kalterherberg bridge over the Breiden River, which Company "B" started repairing on November 24, was not troubled with enemy action until the counter-offensive started on December 17. The last three days the company worked on the structure, however, the men were on front lines defenses during the night

and worked 10 hours on the bridge during the day. And enemy action was vigorous including small arms fire and strafing as well as heavy artillery bombardment.

Approximately 168 feet of this structure, consisting of three spans and one pier, was reconstructed. The bridge itself was 60 feet above water level. The pier presented the greatest difficulty in this project. It was to consist of a triple, wooden bent, 12½ feet high, erected on top of the undemolished 50-foot column of the bridge. The problem was pouring a seven-foot-thick concrete slab on top of this column as a base for the pier. To do this, a narrow gauge rail bridge, 50-feet long, was constructed leading to the column. A tipping car, controlled by a truck winch, was used to haul the mixed concrete to the form. Then the wooden bent was placed into position by a railroad crane and an R-4 winch. With the pier in place, it was a comparatively simple matter to construct the three spans.

This, then, was the first bridge built by the U. S. forces in Germany. It also was the second highest bridge constructed in 1944 by the Regiment. In height it was exceeded only by the "E" Company bridge at Kornelimunster.

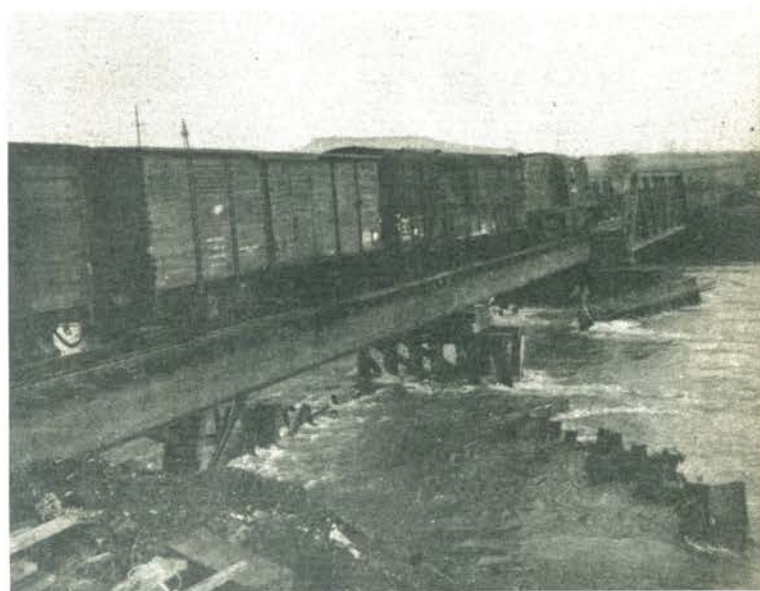
The Kornelimunster bridge constructed by Company "E" had many outstanding features. It was the highest bridge built during the year by the Regiment. It was the longest bridge of its height reconstructed on the continent. And, most important, it was built entirely of materials fabricated on the continent.

The original bridge was an arched-stone, single-track structure, consisting of eight spans, a total of 470 feet long, and 74 feet high. Three of the spans—a total of 172 feet—were demolished by the Germans as they retreated.

Work on the structure began on November 27. The biggest task was building two steel piers to support the new spans. These piers were to be 65 and 50 feet high. They were built of steel rolled in a mill which had been opened with the help of the Regiment, and fabricated in another mill operated under 341st supervision.

It was discovered that one of the spans not destroyed was too weak to carry the required load, so it had to be removed and a meter beam span installed. The final length of the reconstructed section of the bridge was 229 feet. The entire project was completed on December 26, one month after the work was started. Five days of working time during this month were lost when the entire crew was called out to assist in protecting the area from the German counter-offensive.

During the entire construction of the bridge, the men were subjected to numerous enemy attacks, small arms fire as well as air attacks.



THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

That Colonel Coe's Regiment was in the midst of the German counter-offensive into Belgium the last of December and that it played an active part in helping to hold this offensive, has been indicated above. Not all the story has been told, however.

Companies "E", "B" and "F" were located in the northern sector of the German salient. On the first day of the attack, December 15, Captain Codrea and members of the First and Third Platoons of Company "E" captured five German paratroopers in the vicinity of Stolberg. These were the first paratroopers reported in the VII Corps' front. Later in the day both Company "E" and "B" underwent bombings, shelling, mortar fire and strafing while attempting to work at their bridge sites. One "B" Company Platoon, working on a span at Butgenbach, Belgium, was forced to vacate, abandoning a crane high on the abutment, when the bridge came in line of fire of our own forces.

On December 18, when enemy action was anticipated in the area, part of Company "E" men were placed on road guards in the vicinity, under the jurisdiction of the 148th Combat Engineers. At Kalterherberg, where Company "B" was located, there was much shelling. Artillery and anti-aircraft units in the city started to move out.

The next day additional Company "E" men were converted into guards in the Stolberg area. Members of this company also worked on gun emplacements for 240 mm guns. And Company "B" moved to Liege when all the remaining units in Kalterherberg, including the Infantry Command Post vacated, leaving no means of communication.

Company "B", however, returned to Kalterherberg and its bridge job the following day, December 20, when it was learned that the 47th Infantry Regiment of the Ninth Division was in the city. A portion of the front line immediately was assigned to this unit to defend. Meanwhile work was resumed on the bridge, despite the nearness of the enemy and numerous shellings and strafings. On December 22, a German paratrooper was captured by men of this company. During its siege on the front lines, Company "B" suffered one casualty, one man was hit by shrapnel.

Both "E" and "B" Companies, it already has been noted, continued work on their bridges at Stolberg, Kalterherberg and Kornelimunster until the structures were completed on December 23, 24 and 26, respectively. At no time during the last week's work, were the men free from danger of enemy shell fire, mortar fire or strafing. Enemy lines could be measured in yards away from the spans, rather than miles. When the bridges were completed the companies moved to the vicinity of Arlon, for use on new emergency work. This trip, normally not much more than 100 miles, was more than 200 miles at this time, for the vehicles had to travel far to the west to find a road through that was not in enemy hands.

Company "F" also was caught in the

northern thrust of the German salient when the counter-offensive began. Part of the company was located in Stolberg, part in Courtil, Belgium, and the rest was moving from Courtil to Stolberg. On December 18 the company was forced to abandon the camp and leave some equipment at Courtil, when all units in that area also retreated. Because the company was in the process of moving, sufficient trucks were not available to take all the men. Twelve men had to leave on foot, and work their way as best they could to Regimental Headquarters in Arlon. All of them eventually reached Arlon, but not until after many of them had spent several days with Infantry and Armored units.

On December 20, when additional vehicles had been obtained, an attempt was made to re-enter Courtil to rescue the abandoned supplies and personal equipment. The attempt was successful, despite the fact that the village was almost entirely cut off by enemy forces.

At the time of the counter-attack, Company "F" had many men guarding bridges in the area. Several of these men were picked up before vacating. Others worked their way back, oftentimes through enemy-held territory. At the year's end, three men were still reported missing, but these three were later found to be attached to fighting units in the area. On December 29 this company also moved south to Luxembourg to take up a new task nearer Regimental Headquarters.

Company "D", H & S Company and Regimental Headquarters were caught in the southern sector of the German thrust. These companies had no bridge to build under enemy fire, but they, under Lt. Colonel Heilig's direction were given the vitally important task of organizing and supervising the defense of the city of Arlon. They, plus an MP detachment and three other ASCZ units, were the only troops in the area.

Company "D" built seven road blocks on the highway leading to Arlon and constructed a barrier line from Martelange southeast to Redange. Thirteen individual barriers were constructed, including mine fields, bridges prepared for demolition, and abatis. H & S Company built and manned machine gun emplacements and placed bazooka teams at all entrances to the city.

The night of December 19 was a critical one. Enemy troops and tanks were reported at Martelange and there was no troops except the Engineers to keep them from advancing into Arlon. All the available man power in "D" and H & S Company, including cooks and clerks, were called out. They, together with men from the three other ASCZ units in the city, all armed only with carbines and M-1s, traveled to Martelange to prevent the enemy from coming south. The enemy did not get through the lines that night. The following day tank and infantry reinforcements had arrived from the Third Army and the men of this Regiment were called back to be used as reserves

Company "D" had other contacts with the Germans. At the approach of the enemy, three of the barrier lines, erected and manned by the company, were blown. One barrier was breached by enemy armor and the protective parties were driven off by small arms and automatic weapons fire. All the men from this post were able to make their way back to the unit.

One barrier was surrounded by the enemy. After it was demolished, the "D" Company men escaped with a German officer prisoner. They made their way to Martelange, where they were attacked by enemy troops. The NCO, in charge, was able to escape. The other two men were reported missing, later found to be prisoners of the Germans. Several patrols were sent out in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue these men. One patrol killed two SS Troopers in its reconnaissance.

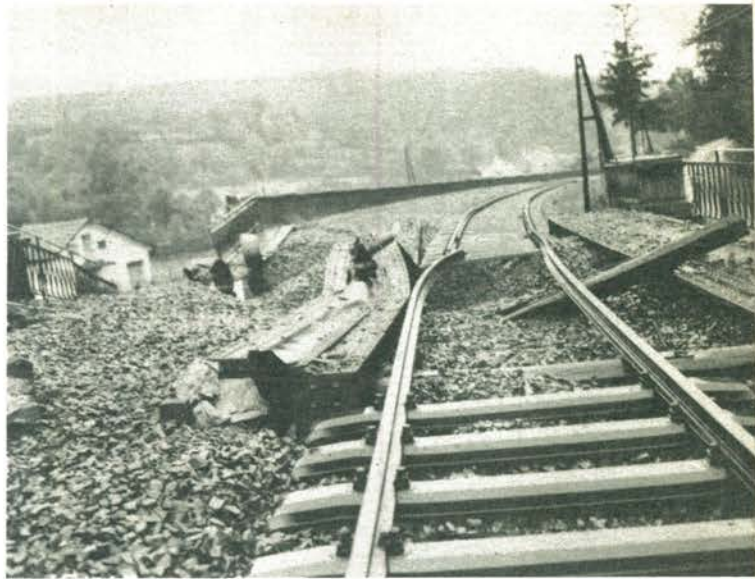
By December 21 men of the unit had been relieved of their work on the barriers by Infantry men. Both companies, however, continued on 24-hour out-post duty around the city of Arlon to guard against paratrooper and air attack. During this period, the area underwent heavy strafing and bombing attacks, especially near the Arlon rail yards. On December 24 and 25 Company "D" men repaired damaged rails in the area, as well as rails wrecked by bombs on the Athus-Longwy line.

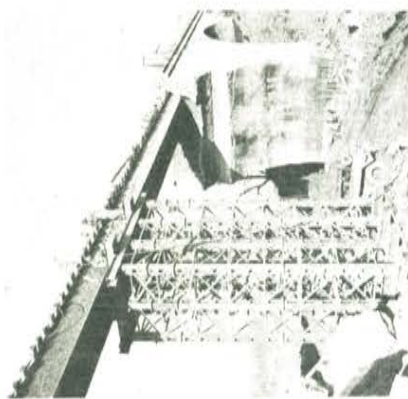
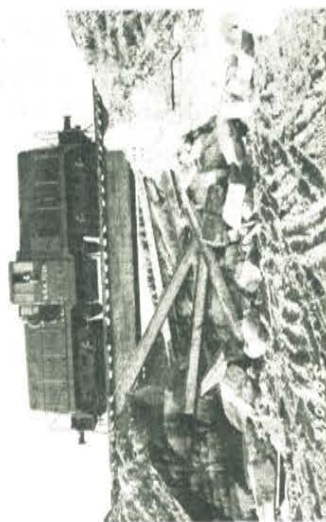
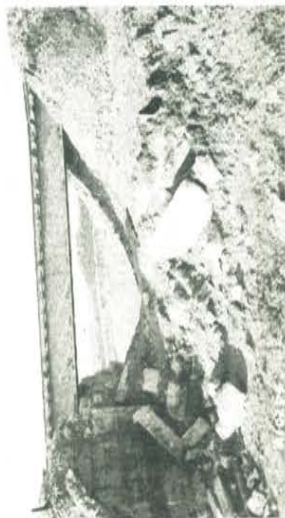
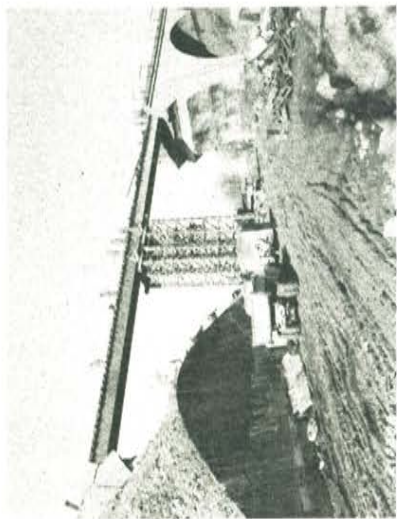
The men of Arlon even became fire-fighters during this emergency. A fire broke out at the Engineer Dump at Libramont, on December 29 and all available men were dispatched there. The fire was brought under control before morning, saving innumerable supplies from destruction.

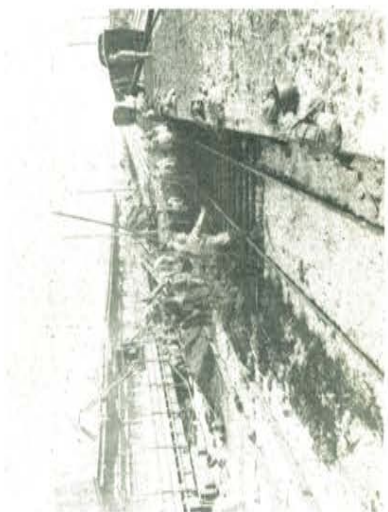
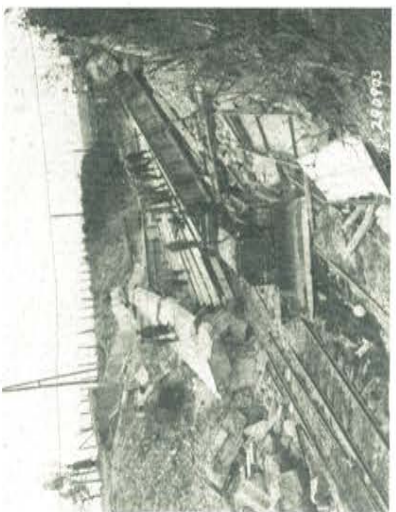
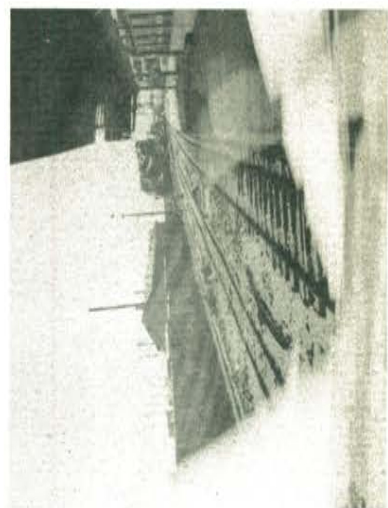
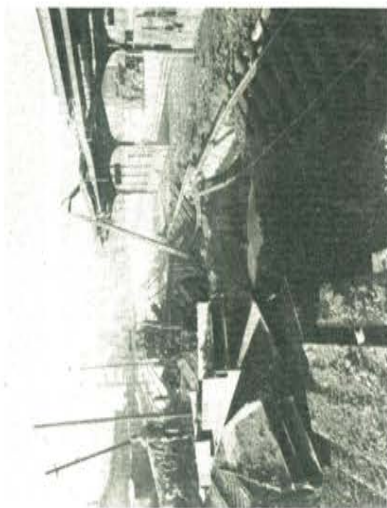
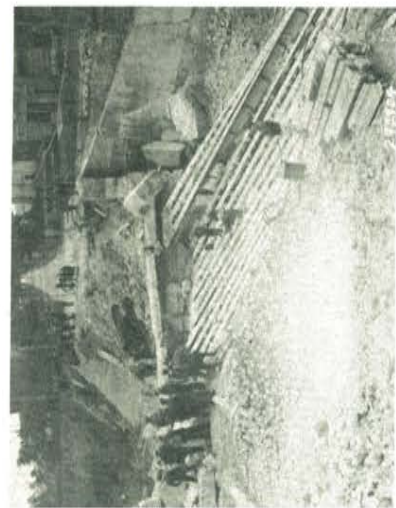
Companies "A" and "C" were the only companies of the regiment not directly touched by the counter-offensive. "C" Company, at Liege, continued to live and work in the midst of the buzz-bombs. Company "A" at Charleville, was out of the immediate battle zone. However, there being no U. S. troops between them and the Germans this company was commandeered by the tactical commander, and wired the bridges in the vicinity for demolition, in case the front should suddenly engulf that area. And the 250 POWs, which had been moved to "A" Company early in December, were transferred to Reims on December 16.

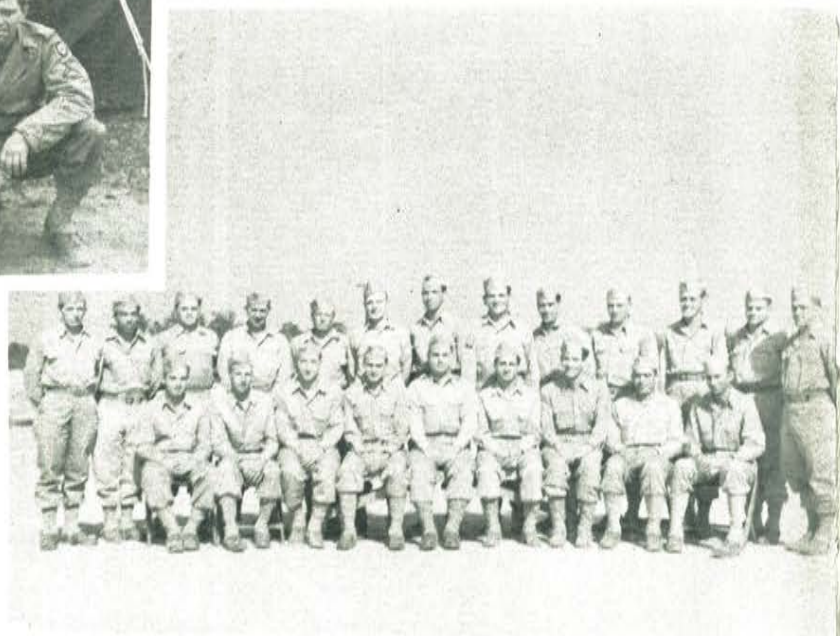
By December 31, the critical situation had eased around Arlon, except for air attacks. Outposts still were maintained by the Regiment, however.

The end of the year saw units of the Regiment closer together than they had been at any time since they first landed on the continent. Companies "D", "E" and H&S were in the Arlon area. Company "F" was in Luxembourg, and Company "A" and "C" were in Charleville. (Company "C" moved back from Liege the last week in December.) The unit was poised, awaiting orders for whatever might come in 1945, confident that the new year would bring Victory—and greater tasks and glory to the 341st Engineer Regiment.









PERSONAL AND WELFARE ACTIVITIES

The history of the Regiment in 1944 would not be complete without a brief mention of its personal and welfare activities.

The Medical Detachment, under Major Lester Harwell, kept the Regiment in a healthful condition. As a result of this detachment's careful supervision over cleanliness, the Regiment passed every inspection both in England and on the continent with ratings of excellent or superior.

During the counter-offensive, when the 341st Medical Detachment had the only First Aid station in the Arlon area, the men worked long hours in caring for and evacuating casualties brought in from the battle front.

The Chaplain, Captain Benjamin Willetts, looked after the spiritual needs of the Regiment. This task was complicated by the fact that for most of the year the companies were seldom located close to one another. During the time the Regiment was in France, Belgium and Luxembourg, the Chaplain traveled an average of more than 500 miles a week in order to conduct services at all companies.

Off-duty recreation during the year was governed by the military situation, and 1st Lt. Jerome C. Patterson was constantly on the jump to make the most of every opportunity. In England, athletics, especially boxing and softball and volley ball, were popular with all companies. Company "F", whose men were especially interested in boxing, organized a boxing team and won several tournaments.

During the Regiment's stay at Hengar's camp, softball and baseball tournaments were held between the companies. Company "B" won the Regimental title from Company "D".

Movies, both in England and on the continent, furnished the number-one entertainment. Special Service Companies supplied the movies in England. The first movie in France was shown on July 9, two weeks after the Regiment landed. It was shown through the courtesy of the 342nd Engineer Regiment, who loaned their equipment and projectionist. Thereafter movies were shown intermittently when they could be obtained from Special Services. In September the Regiment was able to procure its own projector and from that time on, a definite movie schedule was followed, with each company seeing at least one movie a week, usually two.

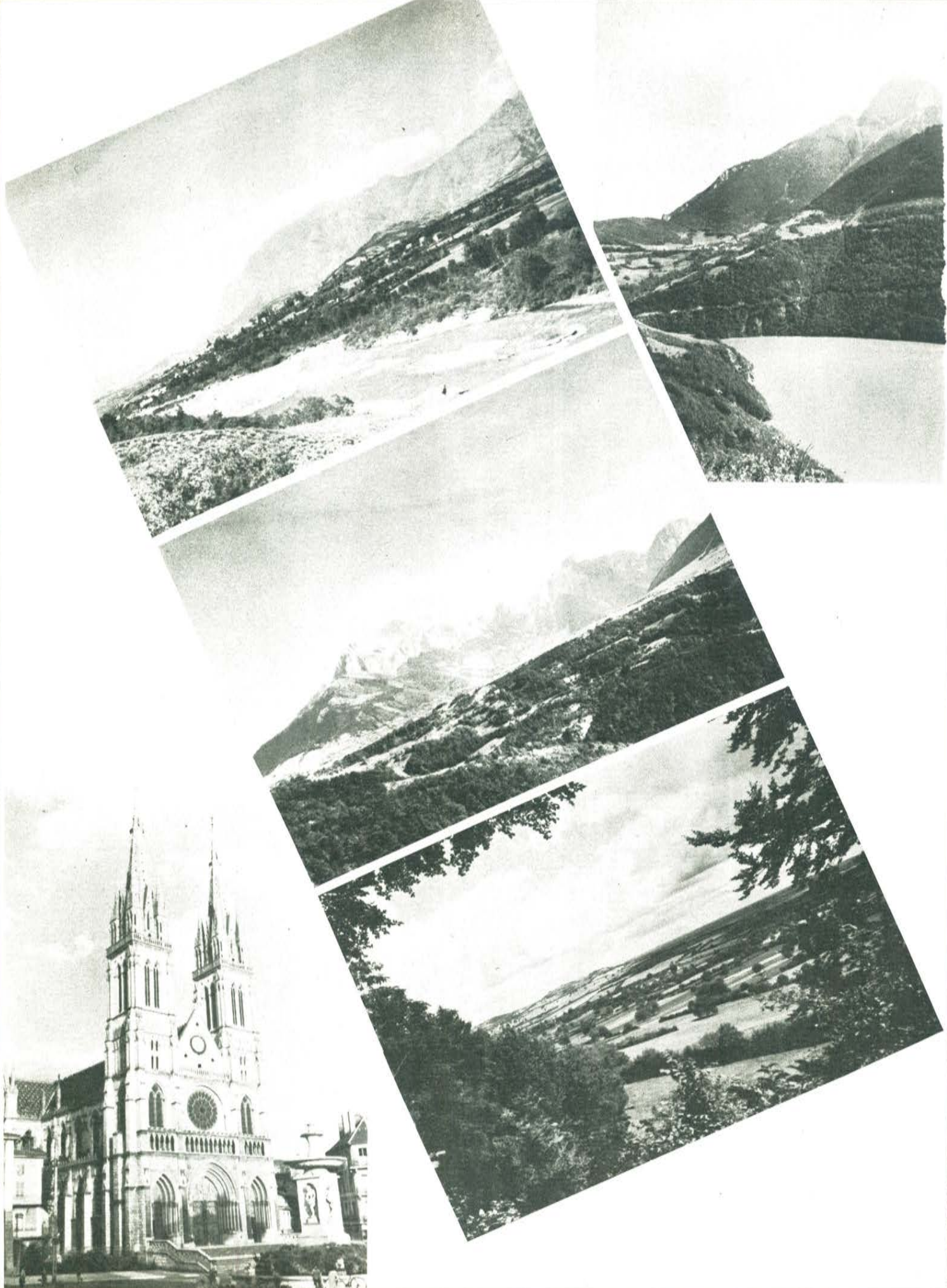
On July 21, the 421st Army Service Force Band was activated and assigned to the Regiment. For more than three months, however, personnel equipment and leader were not available. By the end of the year the leader and some of the personnel and equipment had been obtained, and prospects were excellent that the band would actually be able to present entertainment for the Regiment, and other units, early in 1945.



421ST BAND IN ACTION



TOM LONG AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT



BRIDGES TO VICTORY

When the European phase of World War II came to an end on May 9, 1945, the members of the 341st Engineer General Service Regiment felt—rather, they knew—that they had contributed an important part in the job of bringing Germany to her knees. Although assigned to Advance Section Communication Zone, they had worked with, and fought with, all four American Armies on the Western front. Few other units can equal that claim.

In keeping with its justly-won tradition of leading the field of General Service Regiments, the 341st during 1945 again hung up an enviable list of records. Among the highlights were:

Helped construct the first railroad bridge across the Rhine.

Built the first railroad bridge across the Roer.

Re-built one of the highest railroad bridges in Belgium.

A study of figures and statistics is even more imposing. During the first four and a half months of 1945, the Regiment re-built 85 railroad bridges. These totaled 8,475 feet in length, an average of 99 feet per bridge. In the eight months since the Regiment started working on railroad bridges in France in September 1944, it had constructed some 110 bridges, for a total length of 11,863 feet. More than two miles of railroad bridges! An average length of 108 feet per bridge.

But railroad bridges without lines in working order leading to them are worthless. So, although building bridges was its primary duty, the Regiment also rehabilitated approximately 625 miles of railroad track from January to May, including the following main lines:

Luxembourg-Ettelbruck-Diekirch — 33 miles.	Waimes-Kalterherberg — 12 miles.
Arlon-Libramont-Namur — 129 miles.	Eschweiler-Duren — 29 miles.
Libramont-Bastogne — 12 miles.	Bonn-Koblenz — 62 miles.
Bastogne-Bourcy — 10 miles.	Marburg-Kassel — 86 miles.
Gouvy-St. Vith — 28 miles.	Kassel-Warburg — 86 miles.
Trois Ponts-Stavelot — 38 miles.	Rudesheim-Frankfurt — 47 miles.
	Bamburg-Marktschorgast — 50 miles.

Add to these 625 miles the 500 miles of track rehabilitated from September to January, and you have a grand total of some 1125 miles of railroad put in working order in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. This is farther than the distance between New York and St. Louis, Missouri.

All this work, heavy work obviously, was accomplished despite the fact that during this period the efficiency of the Regiment was seriously hampered by the withdrawal of able-bodied soldiers for Infantry, approximately 25 per cent of the Regimental strength, and by their replacement with limited assignment men. This meant that the remaining able-bodied men had to do not only their job, but also much of the work that the new replacements, though willing and zealous, were unable to do. Despite this handicap—and, rest assured, it was a big handicap—the work was done.

In carrying on its activities during 1945 the 341st Regiment continued to be the spearhead element of Advance Section Communications Zone Engineers. At no time during the period, in fact, at no time since it landed on the continent, was the Regiment located outside of the combat zone. All its work was accomplished deep in Army territory. Company and Regimental Headquarters were located in Division and Corps areas and reconnaissance parties to check on rail damage often went far into enemy territory ahead of the Infantry. Instances in which the parties were tied down by enemy small arms fire for ten minutes to an hour were so numerous as almost to become common place. The Regiment from January 1 to the end of the war in Europe suffered 16 battle casualties, most of them injuries from mines. In addition one fatality was recorded when the Remagen bridge collapsed. From June 1944 to May 1945, the period the Regiment was on the continent, it has a total of 23 casualties, two of whom were lost in action during the bulge and one presumed to be dead.

The work of the Regiment from January 1 to the end of the war in May roughly can be divided into three phases: (1) The German counter-offensive in January; (2) Re-entry into Germany, February to the middle of April; and (3) East of the Rhine, April to May.

THE GERMAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

The German counter-offensive, when it started in December, was entirely surrounded by the 341st Engineer Regiment. Companies "E" and "B" were located at the northern end in Germany, building railroad bridges under artillery fire. Company "F", at Courtil, was in the very center of the attack. Companies "C" at Liege and "A" at Charleville, were at the outer, western fringe as the counter-attack advanced, and Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters and Service Company and Company "D" were on the southern flank at Arlon, south of Bastogne.

By the first of the year, however, the Regiment, after retreating in some places, joining with Infantry to hold the line in others, regrouped itself for work in the southern flank of the "bulge". This period during most of January was one in which companies of the unit did their most diversified work, being called upon for anything and everything the Third Army needed in addition to the normal work on railroads.

At the start of the year the companies in the Arlon area still were guarding road blocks, etc., in the area. As the Infantry passed through, however, this job was taken out of their hands.

Company "B", located at Differt, south of Arlon, practically became a saw-mill company early in the year. It operated saw mills at Neufchateau and Arlon and St. Marie. A total of 15,000 board feet of 12 x 12 bridge timbers were produced from these three mills a day. On January 17 the company was assigned four additional saw mills to operate near Habay Le Neuve.

Company "D", in Arlon, was guarding the Arlon water point and operating the Group "C" Engineer Dump in Arlon at the start of the year. But this turned out to be only part of its job. On January 4 a locomotive and a work train carrying Belgian civilians collided between Arlon and Stockem, killing several persons. One platoon of men from "D" Company with an R-4, plus cats and other heavy equipment manned by personnel from Headquarters and Service Company were dispatched to the scene of the accident to remove the debris and clear the track for use.

Six days later on January 10 the two companies were called out again to assist in another train wreck in the area, this time at Messancy. A ration train and an ammunition train collided. The burning ammunition train with its exploding shells proved too dangerous for much work to be done early in the day. But by nightfall the men, working with the BDS, were clearing the wreckage away and removing all unexploded ammunition and duds. The track was cleared, repaired, and ready for use by January 12.

Company "E", meantime, also located in Arlon, was given the assignment of rehabilitating the railroads, yards and engineer depot at Libramont. On January 1, the first day of the project, work had to be stopped because the area was the center of target for enemy shells. As soon as the shelling stopped, the

men with Lt. James B. Wall in charge, returned to their job. The project was completed on January 16.

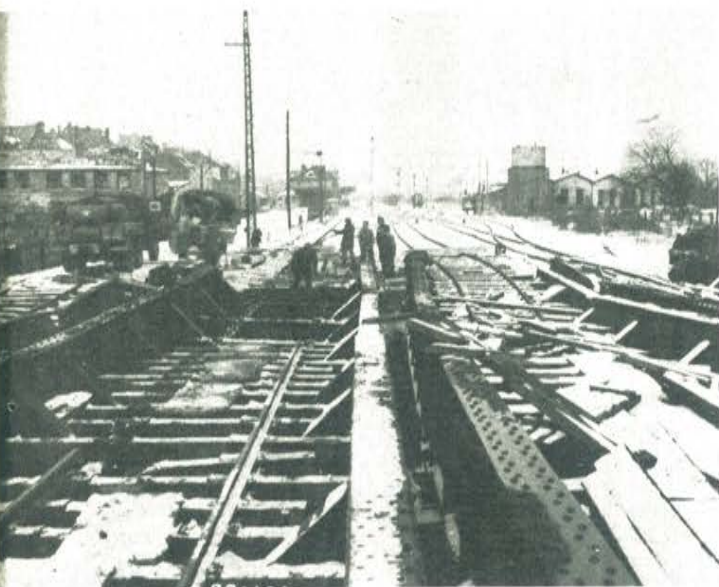
Enemy shell fire also interfered with the work of this company in its task of repairing the badly damaged railyards in Bastogne. Lt. J. D. Moore's platoon started on this project on January 13. Two days later, January 15, the heaviest shell fire occurred. Sgt. Lonnie Brown suffered a shrapnel wound in his leg from the attack. Overcoming these handicaps, the job was completed on January 23.

Of all the companies, however, Company "F", located in Luxembourg, was the closest to the firing line. Men from this company, surrounded by the Infantry, worked in the very shadow of the Germans. The company was assigned the task of repairing the rail line in Manternach. Here, as in Company "E", the platoon, under Lt. Charles K. Helwick, was forced to suspend work for one day due to the heavy artillery fire of the enemy. Work was resumed the following day.

Shortly after the first of the year the company was given the job of removing two demolished highway bridges over railroads south of Ettelbruck. At this time the bridges were less than two miles from the front lines. On January 8 and again on January 9, work had to be stopped temporarily because of the intensity of German shelling. Despite the delay, the work was completed on January 20.

In addition to these projects, the Second Platoon of Company "F", under Lt. James L. Trowbridge, was guarding railroad bridges and tunnels in Kruchten and Manternach, oftentimes in full view of the Germans on opposite hills. On January 12 a German 88 shell fell on one of the tunnels east of Manternach. Luckily, it was a dud.

Companies "A" and "C" at Charleville-Mezieres, France, were the only companies of the Regiment located any distance from the front lines during the early part of January. Company "A", on January 1 started assisting French contractors in rebuilding a 162-foot single-track railroad bridge at Rethel. The presence of American soldiers on the job speeded construction considerably, and the bridge was completed on January 13. Company "A" also resumed on the first of the year its work of clearing the Meuse River channel at Charleville, work temporarily abandoned during the counter-offensive threat. On January 4 additional channel clearing jobs were assigned the company at Lumes and Anchamps. The channel at Lumes also had to be widened. The swift current and freezing weather provided serious obstacles to these jobs. At one point when a civilian diver refused to enter the river to work on an obstruction because of the swiftness of the river, Lt. William A. Reynolds donned the diving suit and descended. But the current proved too fast (even for the 250 pounds of lead in the suit) and he was swept off the ladder as he descended. Due to quick work on the part of his men, he was pulled up without injury. A noose later was used to remove the obstruction.



To deepen the channel at Lumes a crane with dragline attachment was mounted on a platform supported by two 100-ton barges. Because of the prevailing frigid weather, operation of this dragline proved dangerous. Oftentimes the bucket would catch on an obstruction and cause the crane to slide precariously on the icy platform.

On January 12 a platoon of the company started work on building a repeater station for the Signal Corps at Jemelle. The job was completed in eight days, on January 20.

Company "C" also was doing miscellaneous jobs in the Charleville area. It had two platoons building supply sheds at Depot E-518 at Engne-Meuse; one platoon constructing bunks at the 11th Reinforcement Depot, Givet; and an officer and 23 men assisting civilians in the construction of a railroad bridge at Anseremme, Belgium. Work on the sheds, started the first of the year, was completed on January 17. The bunks were built between January 14 and January 24. On January 26 the company was relieved of the project at Anseremme.

By the middle of January practically all companies had completed their miscellaneous work resulting from the German counter-offensive and had returned to their primary job—building bridges and rehabilitating railroad lines. Mines, usually a comparatively minor problem on the railroads, assumed great importance as we worked our way forward through the "bulge" area. The Americans had mined the railroads when they retreated in December and the Germans had mined them again when they, in turn retreated, in January.

More than 300 mines were recovered by units of the Regiment during the last ten days of January and the first week of February, most of them by Companies "B" and "F", Company "B", opening up the heavily-mined railroad from Gouvy back to St. Vith, recovered the largest number. The yards at Gouvy had plenty of both American and German mines, frozen in under two feet of snow. Mine detectors were of little use. The men were forced to use shovels, uncovering each yard of track as they went. On January 28 they uncovered four American and three German box-type mines. The following week accounted for 130 American anti-tank mines, all in the Gouvy area. Near Beho 39 additional American and German mines were found.

Company "F" ran into its first extensive mine field while building a railroad bridge at Ettelbruck. Here on January 21 the men, under Sergeant Francis V. Maroney, found 22 mines in one day. Later 91 American anti-tank mines were recovered at Weywertz, Belgium, on February 8. The following day 14 German Teller Tank mines were removed near Waimes, Belgium.

All this work with mines was not without its casualties. On February 4 a Company "F"

welder backed over a German Teller mine at Ettelbruck, injuring four men, two men from the Company, Pfc. James L. Robinson and Tec 5 Henry J. Scheiper, and two men attached from the 1058th Engineer Port Construction Group. The welder was demolished.

On February 3 Lt. James B. Wall and Pvt. John L. Miller, both of Company "E" were injured when a Weapons Carrier they were riding hit a box mine near the railroad between Gouvy and Bourcy. Company "D" had an earlier casualty when an R-4 ran over a German mine near Poix St. Hubert. Tec 5 Robert J. Mulford and Tec 5 James M. Price were injured in this accident. And on February 13, Tec 5 George W. Sandman and Pvt. Frank Lambert, both of Company "F" suffered head injuries when a mine exploded near the Company CP at Malmédy. None of these injuries, fortunately, proved fatal.

The entire area of the Ardennes "bulge" had always been 341st territory in the railroad sphere. Bastogne, Ettelbruck, Stavelot, Malmédy, St. Vith—341st men had lived and worked in all of them. But the Germans had learned during the counter-attack how closely the railroads were following the front and greatly improved their demolition technique. Only four of the many bridges bearing the Regimental symbol were destroyed, but it took nine new bridges to restore the line from Bastogne to St. Vith, and six more to get back to Malmédy. As rapidly as the enemy withdrew from his costly salient, the railroad builders returned, and, with burning tanks, frozen bodies and snow-buried mines for a background, repaired the damage.

In the midst of this busy and hazardous period came the thaw, and the complete breakdown of the roads in eastern Belgium and the Siegfried belt. The men found themselves again rushing the railroad while the C-47s were flying overhead, fighting against time to get "Patton's gas" forward in spite of impassable roads. It was clear to all that only the railroads could sustain the American follow-up attack. Deployed all along the lines, building several bridges at once, the troops could not wait for the railroad to bring materials successively to each bridge. Here the Regimental Supply Section, under Captain William J. Lehmann, and Headquarters and Service Company, under Captain Samuel A. Spencer, were called upon for supreme effort. By straining every resource day and night, improvising new means, and gambling on the skill of the kind of men that make their own luck, they delivered beams and piers for some 35 bridges by road where there were no roads.

Among the bridges being reconstructed at this time were a 120 foot railroad bridge across the Sauer River in Ettelbruck, blown out by the Germans in their retreat after the counter-attack; a 250 foot bridge over the L'Homme river; two bridges over the highway at

Grupont, totaling 116 feet long; a bridge at Lesterny, over the L'Homme River, 110 feet long; two small bridges Beho; a 92 foot bridge at Trois Ponts; small bridges at Braunlauf and Limerals; a 155 foot bridge at St. Vith; and a 124 foot structure at Malmedy.

The Ettelbruck bridge was rebuilt by Company "F" between January 22 and February 2. Company "F" also reconstructed the Malmedy bridge, completing the 124 foot structure in 20 days on February 15. The highway overpass at Grupont and the 250 foot structure across the L'Homme river also at Grupont were in the hands of Company "A". The former was completed in twelve days, on January 28, and the latter, which really was two 125-foot structures was finished on February 1.

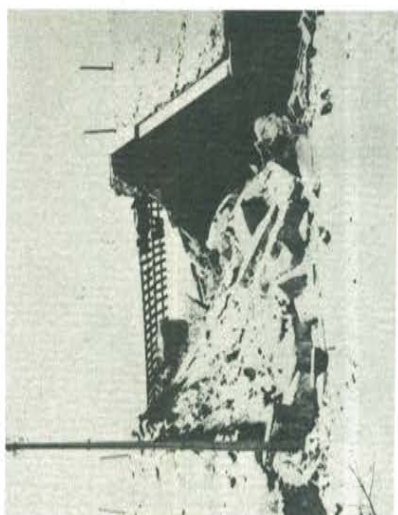
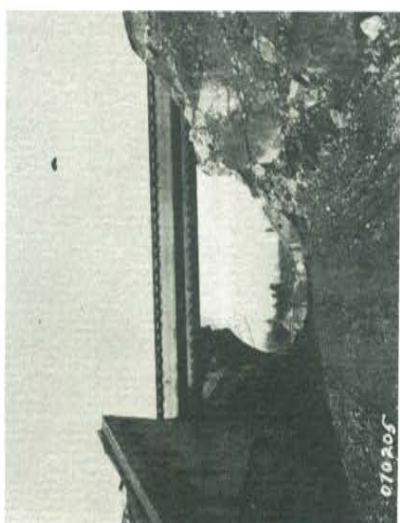
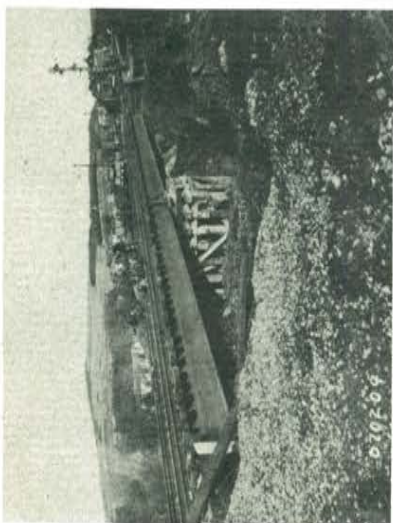
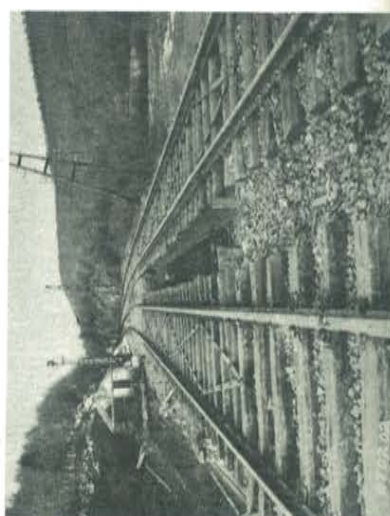
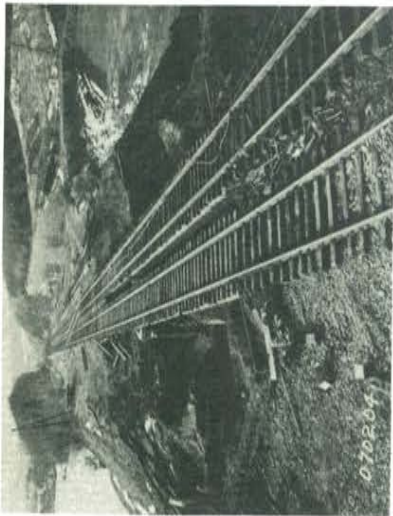
The method of launching the steel for this Grupont bridge was unusual. Steel for the first span of the two demolished stone arches, was launched in the usual manner. The second span presented a different problem. The road used to launch the steel for the first of the 125 foot structures followed the center line of the second so there was now a bridge on one side, a 30 foot drop on the other, and no place from which to use the P & H crane. Usually the steel is launched directly from one supporting element to the other. In this case it could not be done easily. So the leading end of the steel was grounded in front of the abutment site. The abutment was built and the P & H crane placed just behind it, where by reaching over with the boom it picked up the steel and put it in place. A mere instance of resourcefulness.

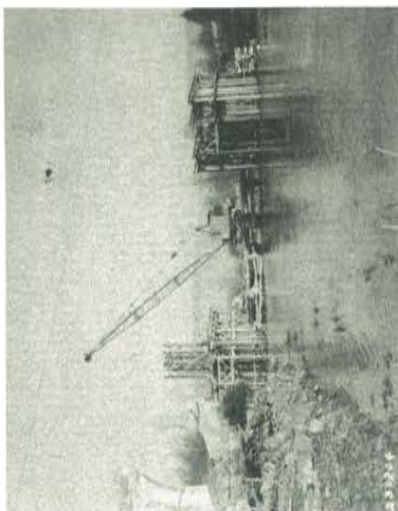
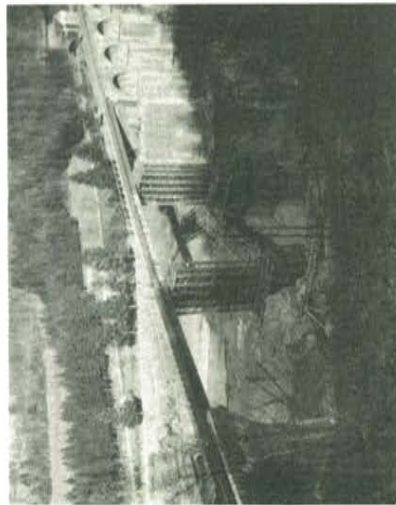
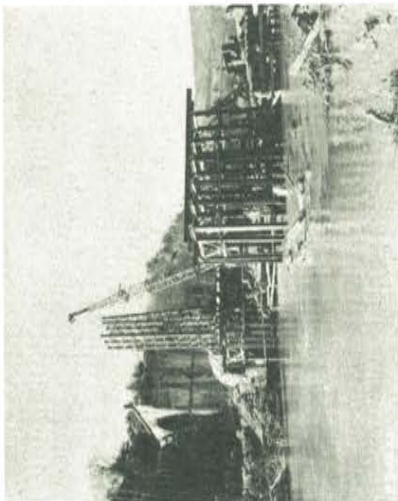
The 140 foot Lesternay bridge, over the L'Homme River was built by Company "C". Construction was started January 21 and completed January 31, just ten days. Company "E" constructed the Trois Ponts bridge between January 25 and February 9 and also built the 50 foot structure at Limerle, finishing this project on February 14.

Company "B" built two small bridges at Beho early in February and then built three more to reach St. Vith, where they had to reconstruct a railroad overpass 155 feet long and 35 feet high. A Class "E" type pier, the only upright support for the span, was finished on February 17, ten days after work was started. Meter beams for the structure were delivered on February 18, and were launched at 2 A.M. February 20. By working a welding shift continuously the bridge was completed and open for traffic on February 20.

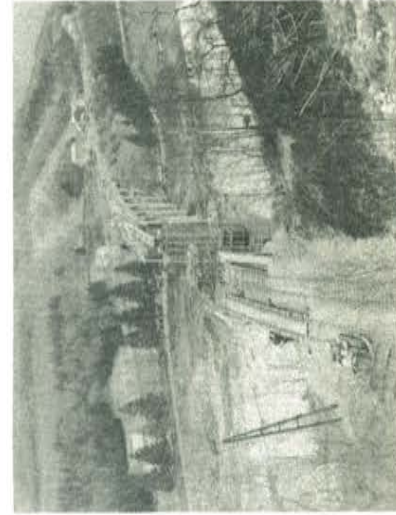
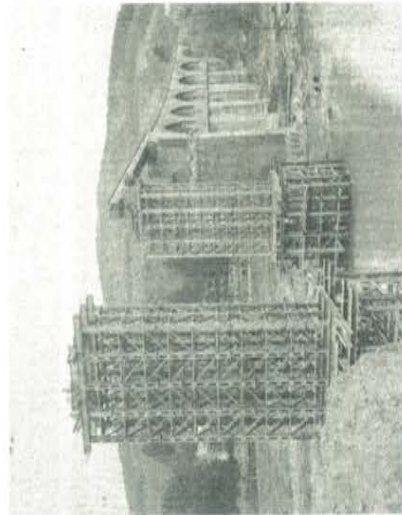
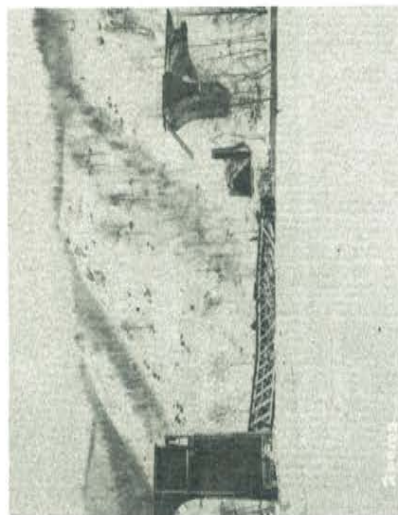
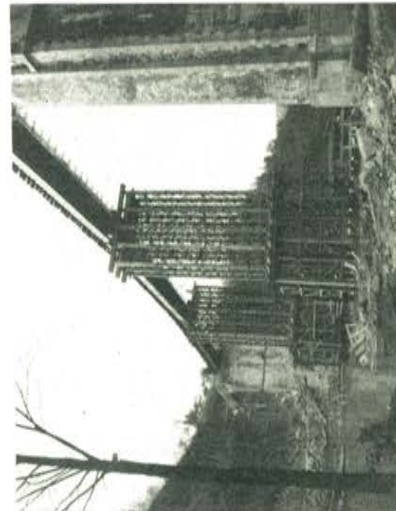
Meantime the lines leading to these bridges were being repaired and opened up. Company "D" between January 14 and 18 removed a demolished bridge from the main rail line between Libramont and Grupont and then removed damaged railroad cars from the same line. On January 19 it started repair work on the line between Ciney and Jemelle to free 15 locomotives trapped in the area. The job was completed on January 21.







SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
HOANIE COO, BELGIUM
 Coord. K-668022
 Project No. K-182(e)
 Const. By Co. "D" - 341st Engr. Regt.
 24 Jan. 1945 - 6 Mar. 1945
 263' ST 3-Span RR Bridge



Company "E", after repairing the Bastogne to Borcy line on January 30, continued on to open the Gouvy to Borcy line. Company "C" finished its repair work on the Jemelle-Grupont line on February 1. And Company "F", opened the Arlon to Luxembourg line on January 31, the Luxembourg-Ettelbruck-Diekirch line on February 3, and the Malmedy-Waimes line on February 9.

Company "D" was busy with its toughest assignment, the reconstruction of the railroad bridge at Roanne Coo. This bridge, picturesquely located in a resort area over the Ambleve River was one of the highest railroad bridges rebuilt by U. S. Army Engineers in Belgium. The two piers each 72 feet high had to be constructed to support the 265 foot span. Work was started on January 23 to clear away the debris from the site. Trouble started almost immediately. Pile driving operations were delayed due to a premature spring thaw and a resultant rise in the river. A jetty, which was being pushed out into the river to support the pile driver, completely washed out during the night of February 1. On February 2 construction was begun on a wooden pier, supported by piling—in other words, a Class 70 bridge—to be used to support the pile driver, in place of the jetty.

When the pile driver did move into place to start driving piles for the first pier, an additional difficulty was encountered. It was discovered that sufficient penetration could not be obtained with wooden piles. So steel piles had to be substituted. By the end of the week of February 10, two steel piles had been driven for the first pier. On February 13 a night shift from 1800 to 0400 hours was instituted at the site to rush completion of the structure. But the elements again contrived to force another delay. Rising water on February 14 weakened one bent of the Class 70 bridge supporting the pile driver, and valuable time was spent in making the repair. Meanwhile on top of the bridge a detail was unloading, and welding together the massive DIN 100 steel beams in preparation for launching of the entire bridge as a unit.

On February 26 the DIN 100 beams were launched out to the first pier, and on March 2 the launching was completed to the opposite abutment and the spans were cut apart and jacked into their positions conforming to the curve of the bridge. A crew under Sgt. William H. Ridgeway prefabricated track and ties to be placed on the "I" beams, and this was pulled into place and fastened down with bolts on March 6. The entire time to reconstruct this bridge, despite all handicaps, was 45 days. Capt. Louis C. Goldberg was in charge of this project, probably the most difficult bridge built by the Regiment in 1945.

While "D" Company was finishing this bridge, the other companies were moving into, or near, Germany. On February 1 Companies "A" and "C" had moved to Eschweiler when it was less than seven miles from the front lines. Company "E" moved to Kalterherberg on February 9. On February 15 Company "F" moved into Berg, Germany. And on February 26 Company "B" moved to Duren, Germany, shortly after it was captured by the Infantry.

Regimental Headquarters also moved. After being located nearly five months at Arlon, the longest any unit of the Regiment has been in one location since the Regiment left the Alcan highway in July 1943, the Headquarters and Headquarters and Service Company set up "housekeeping" in a train at Raeren, Belgium, close to the German border and the Siegfried Line, on February 6. This train proved to be home and office for the Headquarters for two months.

Several important changes in personnel also occurred during February. Capt. George S. Meyer, commanding officer of Company "F" was transferred on February 17 to the Engineer Section of the Third Army. Captain Meyer was with this company since it was organized in Fort Ord, California, on March 1942 and had been CO of the unit since September 1942. Captain Winston F. Littlefield was assigned as the new Commanding Officer of Company "F" and 1st Lt. Clifford J. Rodgers took Captain Littlefield's position as Second Battalion Adjutant.

A Rhine River Bridge Planning Board was formed in Regimental Headquarters on February 15 to make plans for building a railroad bridge across the Rhine. Captain John W. Miles, Commanding Officer of Company "C", Captain John R. Browning, Assistant S-3, Major Carr, of the 1058th PC & R Group, and Master Sergeant Joseph Cundari, of the S-3 Section, were members of this board. Captain Conger assumed command of Company "C", taking Captain Miles' place.

Two field commissions were given men of the Regiment during this period, First Sergeant Roy Hunt, of Company "D", on January 16 and Warrant Officer Bruce E. Scott, H & S Company on February 24. Lt. Hunt was reassigned to Company "D", and Lt. Scott was assigned to Company "C".

RE-ENTRY INTO GERMANY

Although the advance into Germany in February was the first time in Nazi land for some, it was not the first time units of the Regiment had been in that country. Before the December counter-offensive Companies "B", and "E" had built bridges in Germany, and other companies had sent in reconnaissance parties. So for them it was re-entry, not entry into Germany.

Companies "A" and "C", moving into Eschweiler on February 1, immediately started the work of repairing track damage in the area. This section between Eschweiler and Duren was probably the most badly damaged of any railroad section the Regiment worked on. During February and the first week of March the two companies built a total of 16 bridges in this area, in addition to repairing track damage. Most of the bridges were small; altogether they totaled 947 feet in length. Company "C", however, did reconstruct a long bridge, a 210 foot span, 50 feet high, at Langerwehe. The job was completed on March 3 in 17 days.

These jobs were not without danger, for the front line was not far away. During most of the period Duren, across the Roer River, had not been captured. German bombing attacks were numerous. On February 14 one bomb landed in the adjoining block to the "C" Company headquarters. On February 22, during a bombing attack, Pfc. Paul A. Deboesser, of Company "C" suffered a leg wound from flak from our anti-aircraft guns. The following day the Second and Third platoon of "C" Company were bombed and strafed while at work, but no one was injured.

Company "A" also ran into trouble while building a bridge at Dhorn. Enemy artillery in Duren fired on the men working and handicapped the early completion of the span.

Mines too presented a problem. On February 26, Sgt. Bernard Esser and Cpl. Alfred Pietrowski, both of Company "C" suffered injuries when they ran into German concrete stick mines while making a railroad reconnaissance across the Roer River toward Duren.

As soon as the city of Duren was in our hands Company "B" started its task of building the first railroad bridge across the Roer river. This structure, 300 feet long, and 25 feet high, was of the highest importance so that supplies could be sent to the First Army on its advance to the Rhine. Work on the bridge was begun on March 2. Deadline for its completion was set for March 12. The span was to have four piers and two bents. Two LST type B piers were to lead out from the western bank. The two other piers were to be pile bents, one a double bent and the other a triple bent. The speed of the river, faster than six miles an hour at that point, added to the difficulties of the job.

By working 24 hours a day as soon as the tactical commander would permit lights, and with the assistance of a crew of "A" Company, the bridge was completed and ready

for use ahead of the deadline date, on March 10. In tribute to this accomplishment, five Bronze Stars were awarded to key men on the project at a ceremony March 13 at the bridge site. Those receiving the awards were Captain Paul A. Fodor, commanding officer of Company "B", Lt. Howard Angell, 1st Sgt. Harold Pothier, Sgt. William H. Leach and Sgt. Glen W. Brinkman.

While the First Battalion was occupied in the Eschweiler-Duren area, the Second Battalion was repairing rail lines and rebuilding bridges east of Malmedy toward Stadtkyll. The two companies built two small bridges at Butgenbach. Company "F" also reconstructed a 70 foot structure at Honsfeld and removed a demolished highway bridge over the railroad at that city.

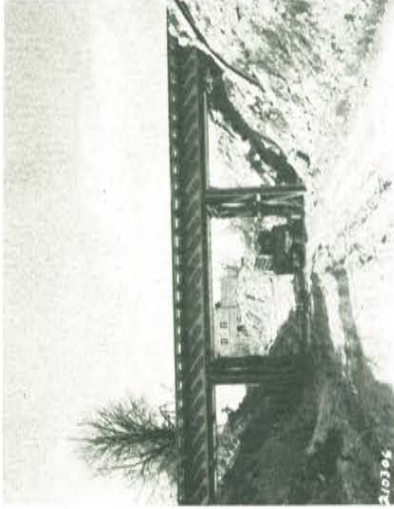
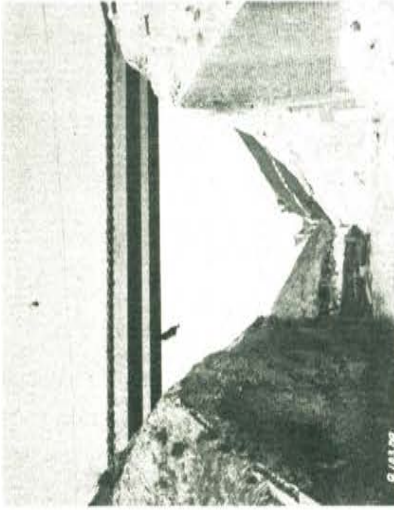
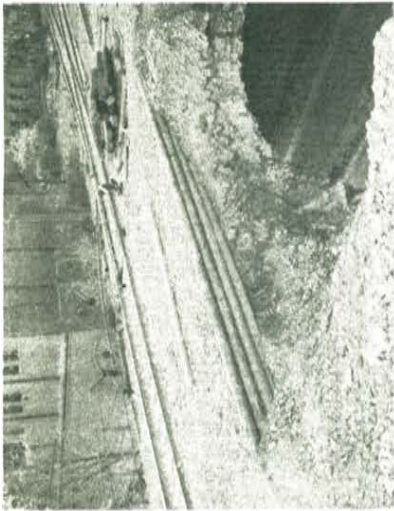
Railroad lines running from Duren to Buir and Butgenbach to Honsfeld were rehabilitated by Company "F" during the first week of March. Company "F", rebuilt two bridges at Merzenich, 78 and 35 feet long, and 40 foot and 35 foot structures at Buir. Company "E" built 55 foot and 42 foot spans at Durscheven. Company "E" worked on the line from Monschau to Lammersdorf and Rotgen. Company "D" when it finished its work at Roanne Coo moved into the area and worked on the Merzenich bridge and the track between Duren and Buir.

And then the companies moved down into the Rhine Valley area. When the Remagen railroad bridge was captured intact, it became necessary that railroad lines leading to this spot be put into operating order as soon as possible.

Company "F", which moved to Euskirchen, began rehabilitating the track through the utter destruction of the Euskirchen yard as well as reconstructing two bridges in the area, one a 116 foot structure across the Erft river, the other a 124 foot highway overpass. Both structures were started on March 14 and completed in five and six days, respectively.

On March 17 the Remagen bridge collapsed. Two men of the Regiment who were assisting the 1058th PC & R Group in making repairs on the bridge were casualties in this catastrophe. Cpl. George H. Chandler, of Company "A", was drowned. Tec 5 Phillip Gradon of Company "F" suffered serious injuries but was rescued from the river and removed to a hospital.

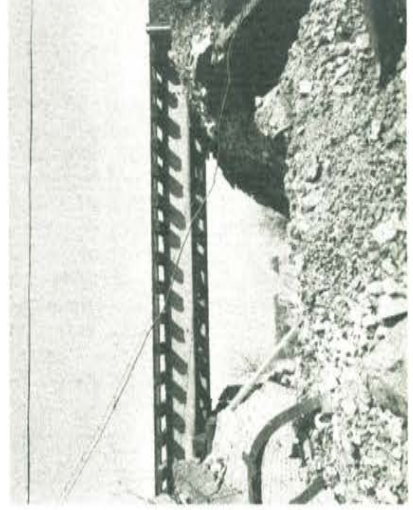
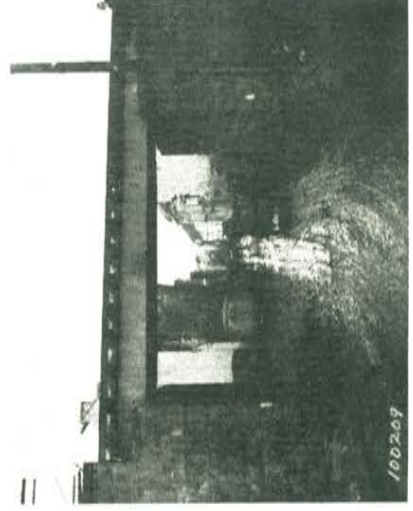
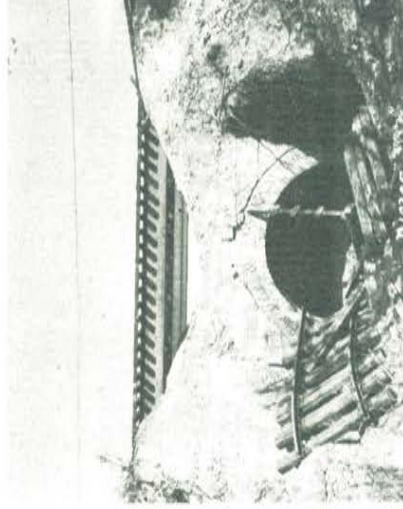
The first company to set up camp on the banks of the Rhine itself was Company "D". It moved to Bad Godesberg, former scene of the Chamberlain-Hitler conference, and started the construction on March 15 of four demolished bridges, 45, 49, 70 and 65 feet long. The last two bridges were completed on March 21 and 24, respectively. Completion of the other two bridges was held up because of the difficulty of obtaining steel. When it arrived, the bridges were put in operation by March 27. This company also assisted Company "F" in the rehabilitation work at Euskirchen.

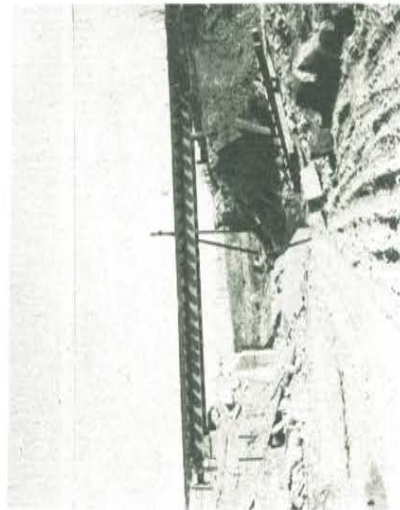


Company "E", located at Kerpen, reconstructed five bridges during this period. The largest was a 108 foot span at Euskirchen, which was started on March 15 and completed in eight days. Other bridges were located at Manheim (36 feet long), Sindorf (48 feet), Meckenheim (25 feet) and Odendorf (25 feet). All were completed by March 26.

Companies "C" and "A" following "D" Company's lead, also moved down to the Rhine river near Bonn for a short stay. Company "C" worked on the Euskirchen-Stadt Meckenheim line between March 17 and March 25. The company also rehabilitated the yards at Odendorf and Rheinbach and constructed two small bridges at Odendorf and Meckenheim.

Company "A" was located at Bonn in the middle of U. S. artillery. It rehabilitated the tracks running from Duisdorf to Stadt Meckenheim, putting it in operating shape by March 17, despite enemy shells landing in

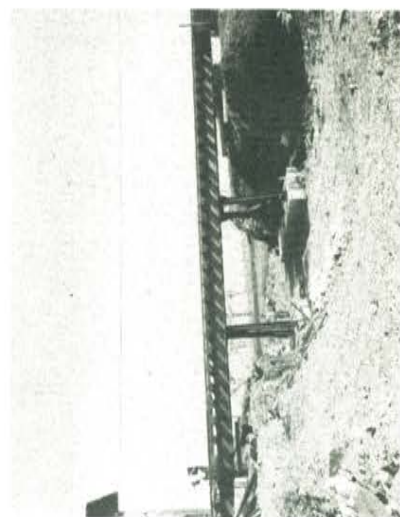
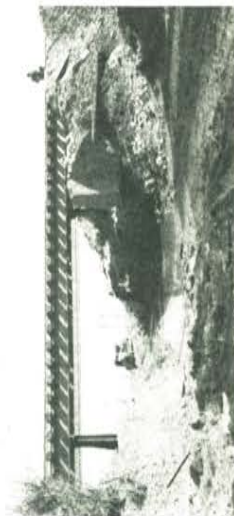




the area of the working men. The company also constructed 94 and 98 foot railroad bridges in the Bonn area. While obtaining steel for the piers for the former bridge almost on the banks of the Rhine, approximately 20 artillery shells landed within 400 yards of the truck on which the piers were being loaded. The bridges were completed on March 25, despite enemy activity.

And then, during the last week in March the First Battalion was ordered on special duty to help in the construction of the Ninth Army railroad bridge at Wesel, the first railroad bridge to be built across the Rhine river.

The First Battalion's assignment in this huge project was to construct the east approach to the main span. Company "A" was given a job of building a separate bridge, 465 feet long, 18 feet high, spanning the Lieppe river, which runs into the Rhine at Wesel. The structure was to consist of six spans of 77½ foot lengths. It was to be built on the





SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGES

BINGEN (M-112522) GERMANY

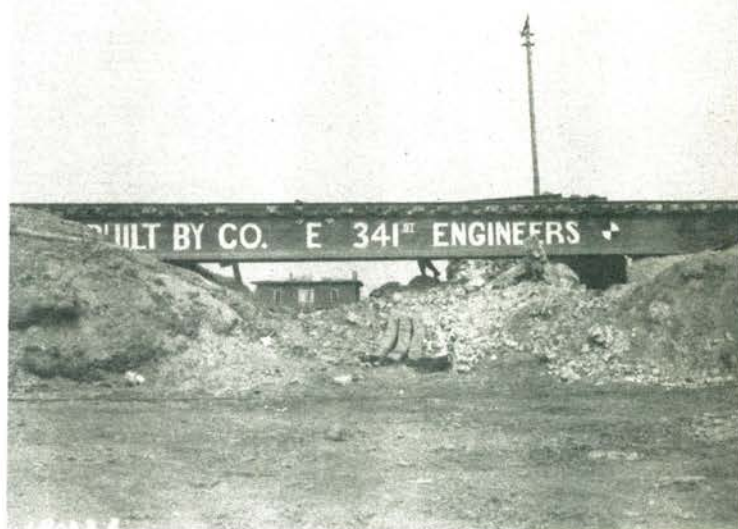
Project No R-304(b)
 Const. By Co "F" - 341st Engr Regt.
 23 April 1945 - 8 May 1945
 48' ST - 4 Spans - 62', 62', 58', 64'.
 2 Timber Pile Piers
 Height Rail to NAHE River 21'.

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SINZIG (F-658173) GERMANY

Project No. R-257
 Const. By Co "D" - 341st Engr Regt.
 27 March 1945 - 10 April 1945
 Repairs to 261 Ft Truss Span





SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGES

DUREN - EUSKIRCHEN LINE

MEZERNICH (F-138470) R-224(b)
Const. By Co "D" - 341st Engr Regt.
; 180304.

DURSCHEVEN (F-279311) R-228(b)
Const. By Co "E" - 341st Engr Regt
060302; 180323.

DURSCHEVEN (F-280310) R-228(c)
Const. By Co "E" - 341st Engr Regt
060308; 180324.

EUSKIRCHEN (F-330291) R-228(d)
Const. By Co "E" - 341st Engr Regt
180318; 030414.

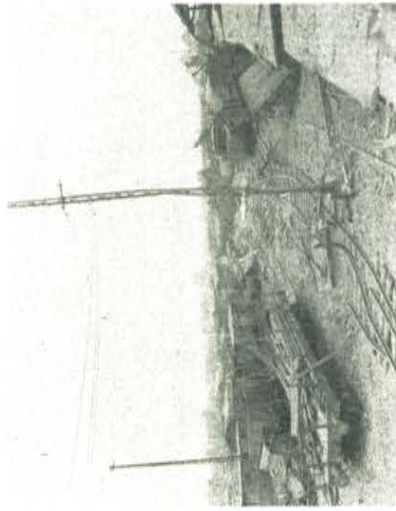




SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGES

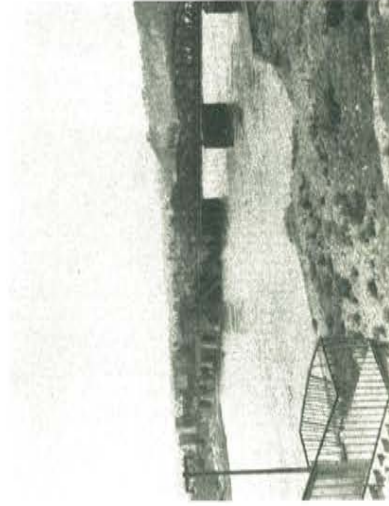
DUREN - EUSKIRCHEN LINE

EUSKIRCHEN (No 2) (P-341294)
Const. By Co "P" - 341st Engr Regt.
180320; 030403.
EUSKIRCHEN (P-343295) R-229(c)
Const. By Co "P" - 341st Engr Regt
180319; 030403.
EUSKIRCHEN (P-344296) R-229(d)
Const. By Co "P" - 341st Engr Regt
180317; 030404.
EUSKIRCHEN RR YARDS (P-341294)
Const. By Co "P" - 341st Engr Regt
Euskirchen; 210316.





SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
KOBLENZ, GERMANY
 Coord. I-897962
 Project No. R-304(c) & (d)
 Const By Cos "D" & "E" - 341st Engr Regt
 23 April 1945 - 10 May 1945
 Approach Spans - 183' ST 3-61' Spans
 2-18' Ft High Type "D" IST Piers
 Water Spans - 300' ST 4-Spans (80, 70, 75, 75')
 2-15' Ft High Type "D" IST Piers
 Height Rail to MOSELLE River 36'



site of the former road bridge that crossed a small valley and the Lipppe river. The abutments and two center piers of stone of the original bridge were intact but too high and had to be cut down. An additional pier had to be constructed between each of the existing piers.

The first pile on the structure was driven at 1730 hours 30 March. Ten days later the bridge was completed, the longest bridge built by the 341st Engineer Regiment on the continent. The job was accomplished before deadline time despite troubles encountered from poor weather. Rain made hauling the nine-ton beams to the structure a real engineering feat. They were hauled two at a time on dollies. Soon the low land on which they were being hauled turned into a morass, and it became necessary to hitch a D-8 cat to each truck to assist it to the destination.

Rain also hampered the work of the welders. Their equipment continually shorted out when it became wet.

Company "B" meantime built a single-track bridge, 149 feet long and 30 feet high, over a valley crossing. The structure was completed on April 7, one week after it was started. Company "B" men also laid 1075 feet of track for the bridge and approaches. The Second platoon of "B" Company, in addition, remodeled the river barge which was successfully used for a pile driver for the Wesel bridge.

Company "C" worked on the east approach to the main structure itself. This approach bridge consisted of three spans totaling 226 feet long and it was located on a curve, a fact that increased the difficulties of construction. Three piers 22 feet high and an abutment had to be built for the structure. In addition the company had to make a 300 foot fill, 8 feet high, and lay more than 415 feet of track. The piers had a piling base, driven in sandy loam. All driving was done on dry land by means of a crawler crane and a two-yard Lorain, each with a hammer attachment and leads. Resting on the cap of each pier was a type "E" pier, 11 feet high. A stringer span was in turn supported by the LST pier. The stringer span consisted of four DIN 100 tied together by means of bolt and channel. Steel was hauled to the site by means of the steel dollies and by barge across the river and it was set in place by direct lift by the cranes.

The work of all three companies in completing their share of the first Rhine River railroad bridge did not go unrewarded. Three men were awarded Bronze Stars at an official opening ceremony on April 11, attended by General Lee and General Plank. Those receiving the awards were: Lt. Col. Paavo D. Carlson, battalion commander; Sgt. Willie Dworshak, Company "C", Tec 5 John H. Walls, Headquarters and Service Company.

While the First Battalion was working on the Rhine River bridge, the Second Battalion was busy getting the rail lines in shape between Bonn and Koblenz. Company "D" reconstructed a 261 foot demolished bridge at Sinzig, completing the job in seven days on April 1. Company "D" also built four more small bridges in the area of Bad Godesberg to make a double track running from Bonn south. Work on the structures was started on April 2 and 3 and completed on April 7.

Company "E" was engaged in rehabilitation work, getting the double track in shape from Sinzig to Koblenz. This work was started on March 28 and finished on April 9. Company "F" during this period was rehabilitating the track north between Sinzig and Bonn. On March 29 a crew from this company worked until 2300 hours to install switches at Bonn so that a train load of gas could proceed to the front. The first track was opened and tested, all the way to Koblenz, on 31 March, and all work on this section of the line also was completed on April 9.

Regimental Headquarters, meantime, which had moved from Raeren to Duren on March 12, moved again on April 1 to Urmitz, Germany, in its train. On April 12 when the Headquarters followed the Line Companies in moving across the Rhine River, the train had to be abandoned.

ACROSS THE RHINE

It was originally thought that the 341st Engineer Regiment, with the 1058th PC & R Group and other units of ASCZ Engineer Group "C" would be called upon to build a railroad bridge across the Rhine somewhere between Dusseldorf and Koblenz. To make plans for that project a Rhine River board had been set up, as mentioned previously. However, with the swift advance of the First Army across the Rhine after the Remagen bridge crossing, the need for repairing railroads in the forward echelons assumed greater importance, and orders were received that the 341st Regiment would skip the Rhine and put into operation at once the line between Marburg and Kassel and on to Warburg, then to connect with the Hannover line. So all Rhine River bridge plans had to be scrapped and the project was turned over to another group.

The Regiment moved across the Rhine River between April 10 to 12. Long before that, however, during the middle of March, reconnaissance patrols from the Second Battalion had crossed the historic river on their missions to determine railroad damage.

Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters and Service Company moved to Kassel. Company "D" settled at Marburg, Company "E" at Borken, Company "F" at Oberswehren. The First Battalion, after finishing their Rhine River bridge project also moved into the area north of Kassel.

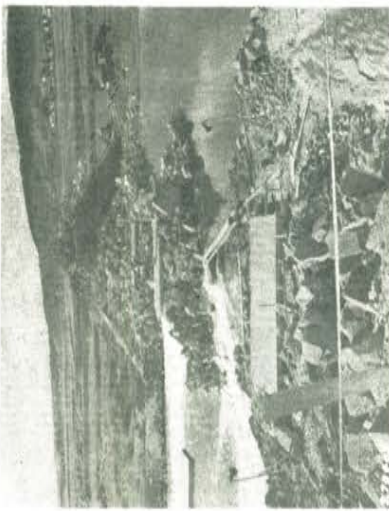
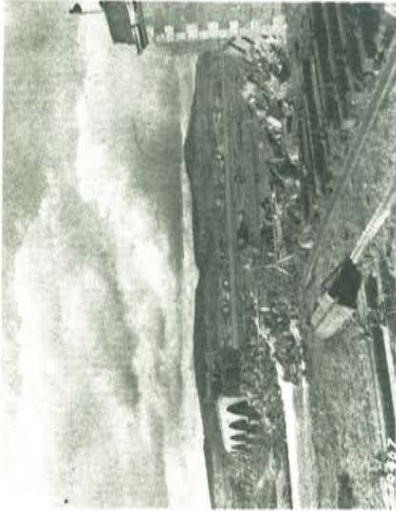
The month of April was characterized by many moves for all companies including Regimental Headquarters. Orders were received from higher Headquarters for work in a certain area, and the companies would move into the area. Then, almost as soon as they started work, the projects would be cancelled and the companies had to move to new locations, sometimes 200 miles away, and the whole process would be repeated. As a result of these changes, caused by the rapid disintegration of the German Army, the amount of work done by the Regiment during the first part of April was the smallest of any corresponding period in its history. This was especially true of the First Battalion. Every project given companies of this battalion from the 13th to the 24th of April was cancelled before more than one or two days of work could be done.

The Second Battalion was more fortunate. Company "F" rehabilitated the lines between Warburg and Kassel. Company "E" repaired the tracks between Colbe and Kassel and between Warburg and Altenbeken and also repaired the 428 foot span at Wolfershausen. Work on this bridge was started April 13 and completed April 19. And Company "D" reconstructed a stone-arch bridge at Colbe, damaged by bombing in two places. The 60 foot and 57 foot gaps were completed in six days on April 16. Company "D" also repaired the railyards in Colbe and Marburg.

Between April 19 and 21 the Second Battalion moved some 200 miles back across the Rhine to work on the railroads between Koblenz and Bingen. Company "F" was given the job of building a three-span, 250 foot railroad bridge across the Nahe river at Bingen. Company "E" and "D" were assigned the single-track railroad bridge across the Moselle River at Koblenz. The bridge in reality was two bridges, "D" Company constructing a 300 foot span across the river, and "E" Company a 185 foot structure over dry land. Both companies started work on April 23. "E" Company finished its bridge on May 6 and moved to Munchburg (back across the Rhine) to build two small bridges in that area as well as rehabilitate rails on the Marktschorgast-Munchburg Line.

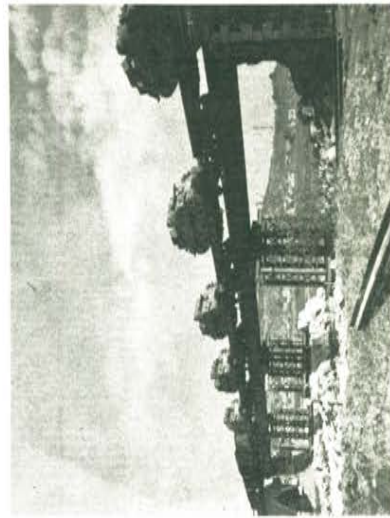
Company "D" finished its 300 foot bridge at the Moselle on May 11. Company "F", which started its Bingen Bridge on April 21, completed it on May 10.

Meantime the First Battalion, after its many cancellations of projects, was able to get settled long enough to get to work. Its assignment was part of the high-priority line between Bamberg and Nurnberg, then 80 kilometers of line north out of Bamberg toward Hof. Company "A" made land fills to replace three small bridges near Bamberg and reinforced the bridge at Bamberg. The line into the city was opened on May 6, and trains started

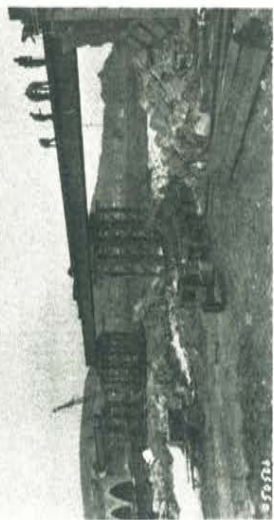
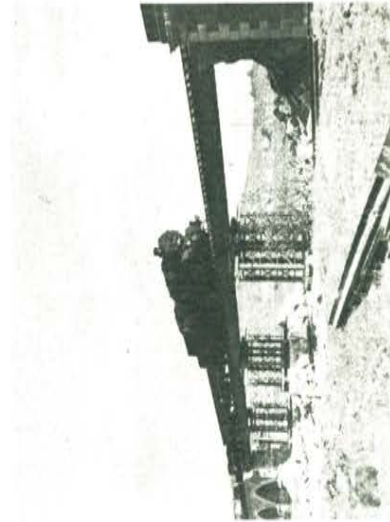


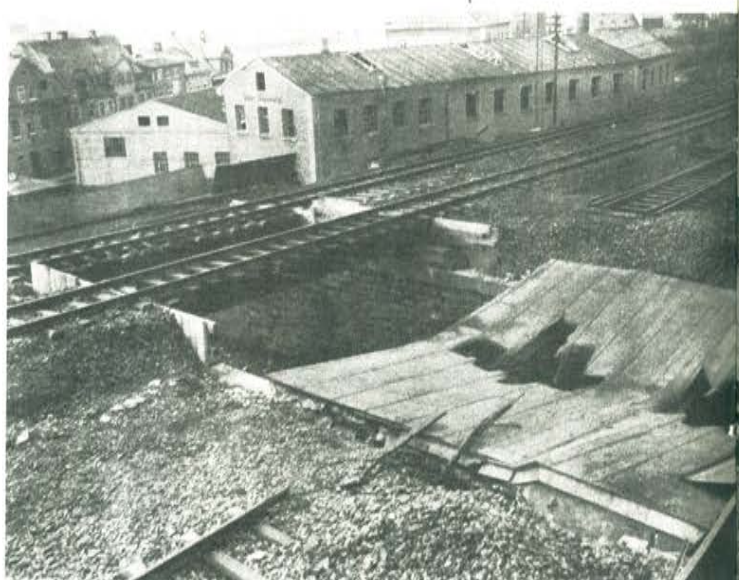
SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
RAABERG, GERMANY
 Coord. O-242520
 Const. By Co. "C" - 541st Engr. Regt.
 25 Apr. 1945 - 3 May 1945
 273' ST 4-68+ Ft Spans
 2-20' & 1-16' High Type "B" 1ST Piers.
 Height Rail to Water 25'



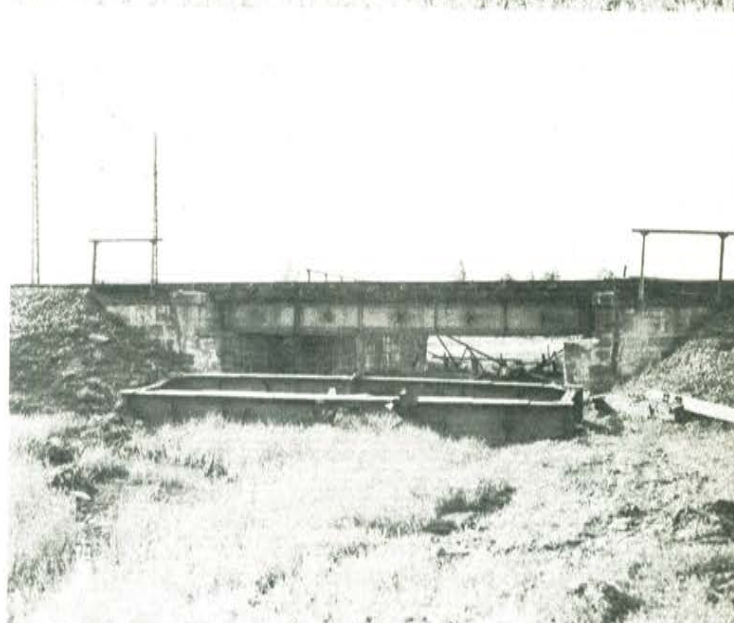
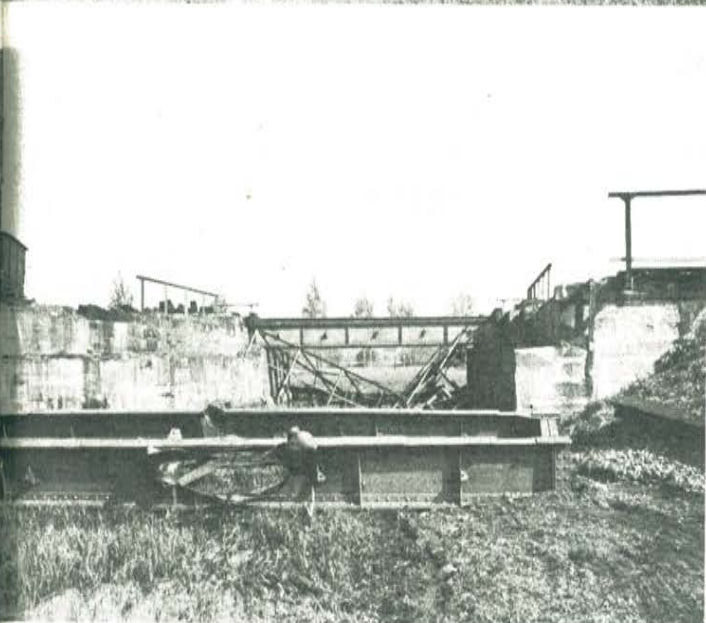
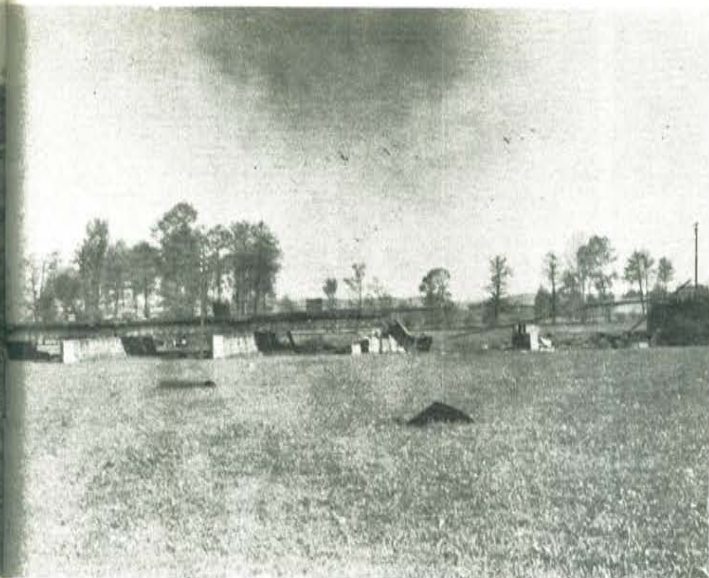


SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGE
BAUBERG, GERMAN
 Coord. O-242520
 Project No. E-310 (b)
 Const. By Co. "C" - 341st Engr. Regt.
 25 Apr. 1945 - 3 May 1945
 273' ST 4-68' + Spans
 2-20' & 1-16' High Type "B" 1ST Piers.
 Height Rail to Water 25'

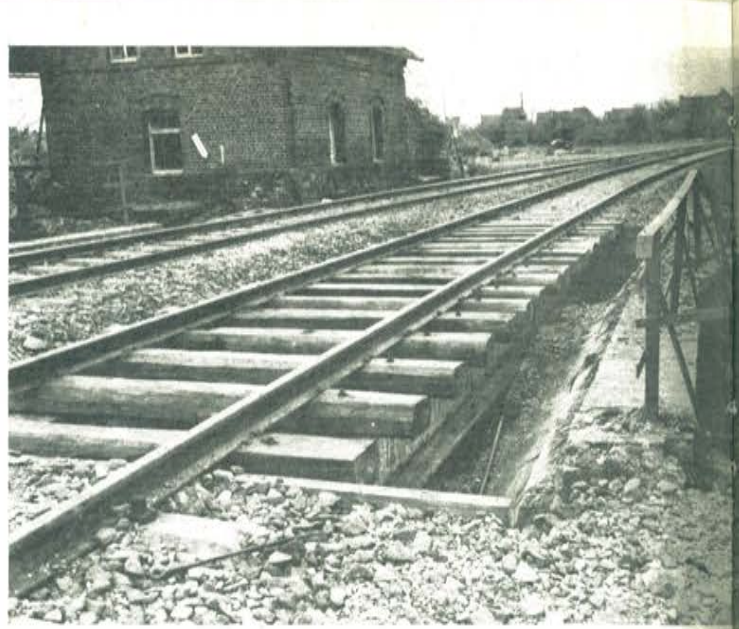




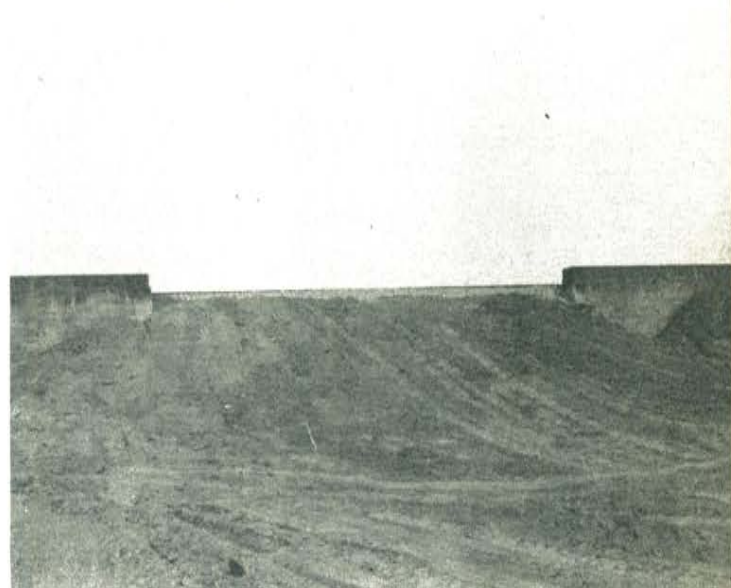
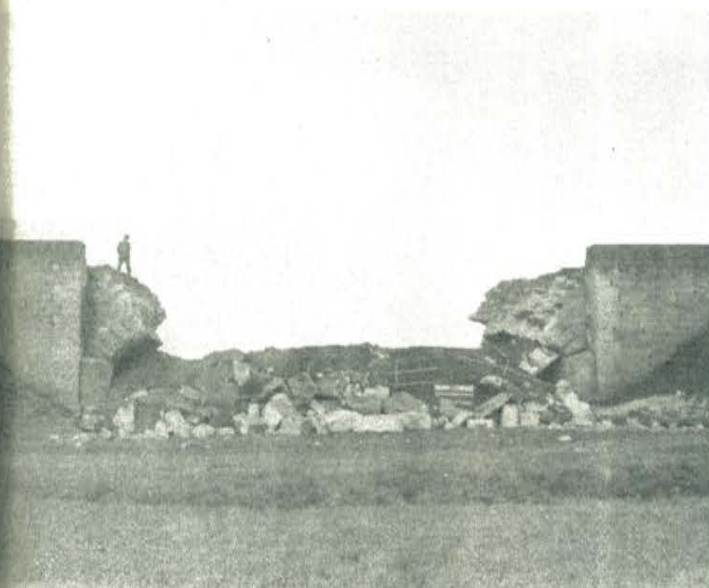
MUNCHBURG, GERMANY



HOCHSTADT, GERMANY



RAILROAD BRIDGES-EUSKIRCHEN-BONN...



FURTH, FORCHEIM, AND BAMBERG



SINGLE TRACK RAILROAD BRIDGES

DUREN - HORREM LINE

Const. By 2nd Bn. - 341st Engr. Regt.

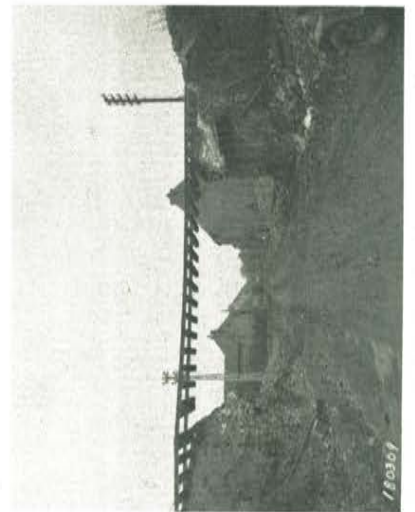
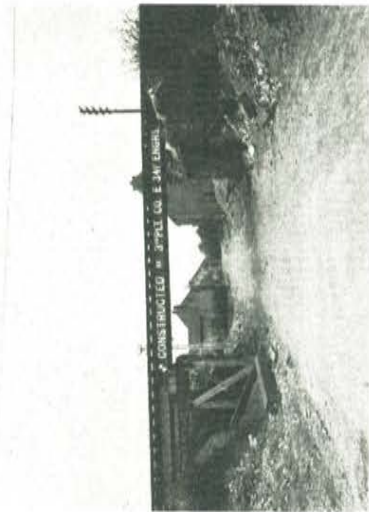
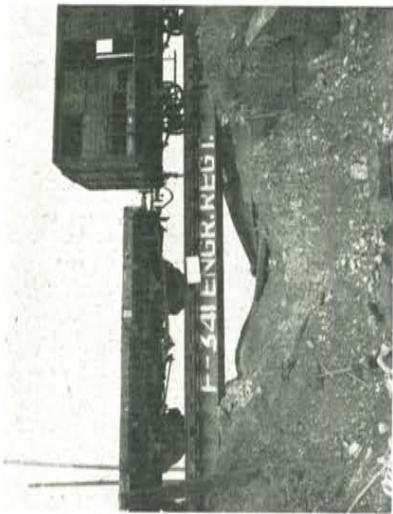
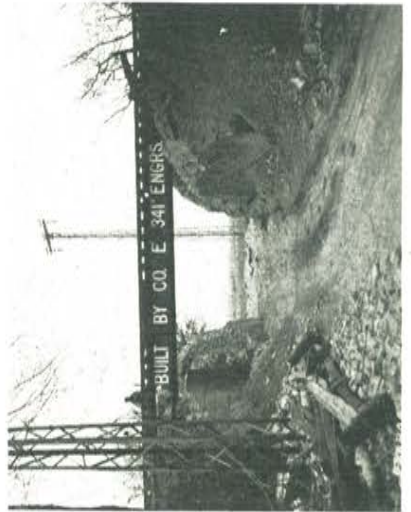
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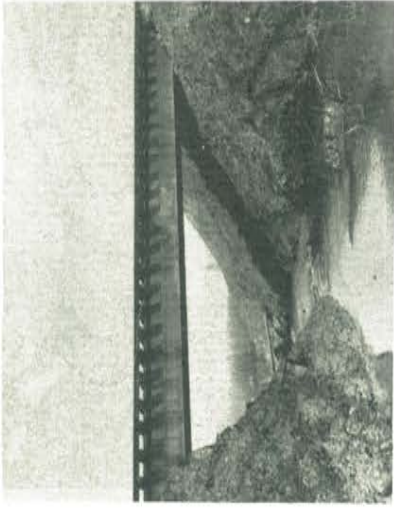
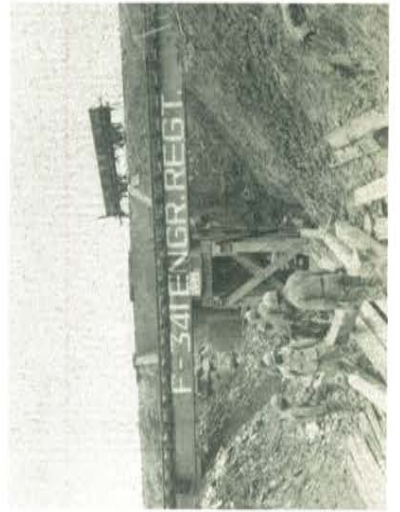
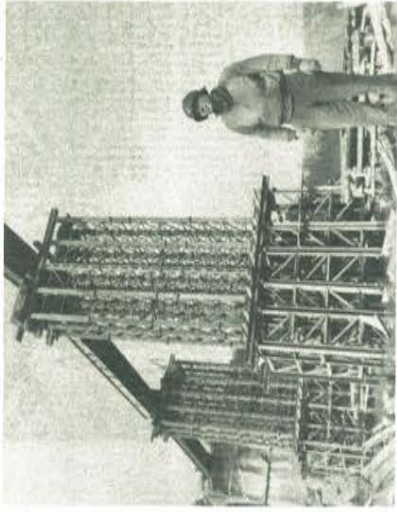
BUIR (F-191527) R-223(e)
180306

MANHEIM (F-206536) R-223(g)
180307; 030410

SINDORF (F-255563) R-223(k)
180309; 030411

MANHEIM (F-210538) R-223(h)
180308; 030408







using it immediately. It then began work to open the Bamberg-Hof line. This job included moving a partially destroyed ammunition train, a highly dangerous job but one that was accomplished without incident. The line was opened for traffic on May 10.

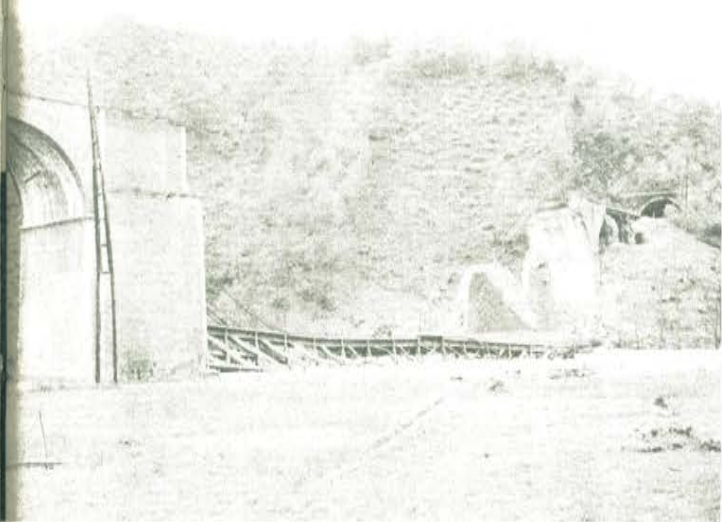
Company "B", at Forsheim, repaired a 45 foot bridge near Furth, rehabilitated the Bamberg-Furth line, and then built a 32 foot double-track bridge at Forsheim, which was finished April 30. On May 6 the company moved to Kulmbach to work on three bridges. Two were small bridges near Kulmbach. The third was a 56 foot two-span structure near Unter-Steinbach. Work on these bridges was completed on May 12.

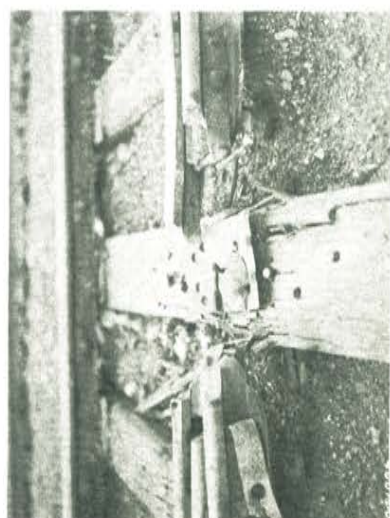
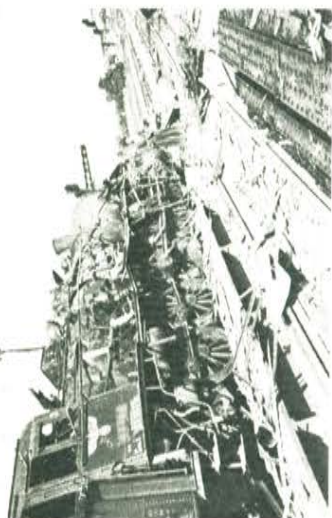
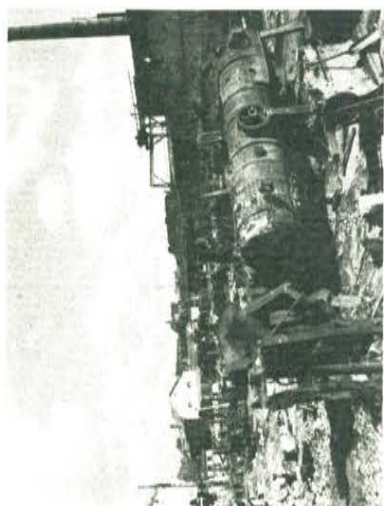
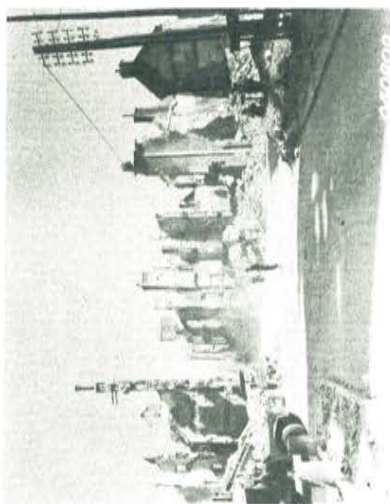
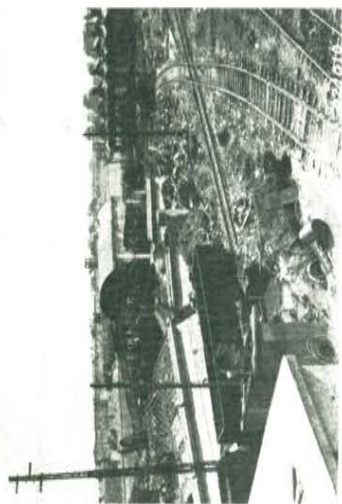
Company "C", however, had the most and the longest bridges to build. Starting work on April 24 on the 268 foot span at Hallstadt, it completed the structure on May 4 by working 24 hours a day. Then the company was given five bridges to build between Lichtenfels and Burgkunstadt. These bridges were 200, 115, 110, 321 and 32 feet long. Work was started in their reconstruction on May 5. Since it was a rush job, the company again worked 24 hours a day to meet the deadline. The deadline was met and the line was opened on May 12.

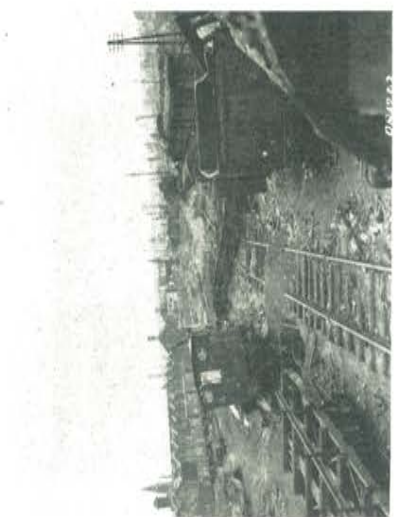
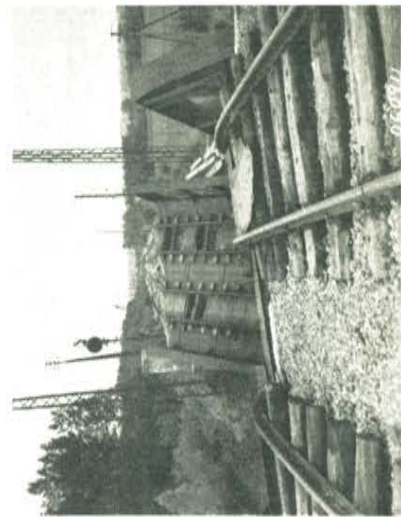
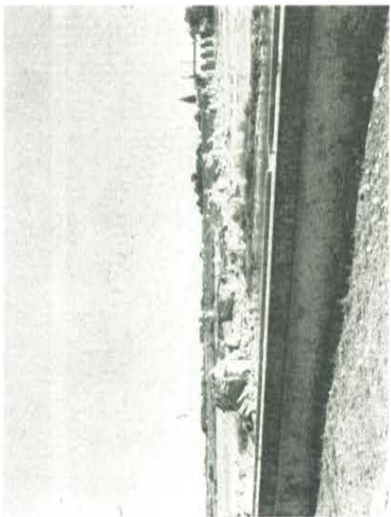
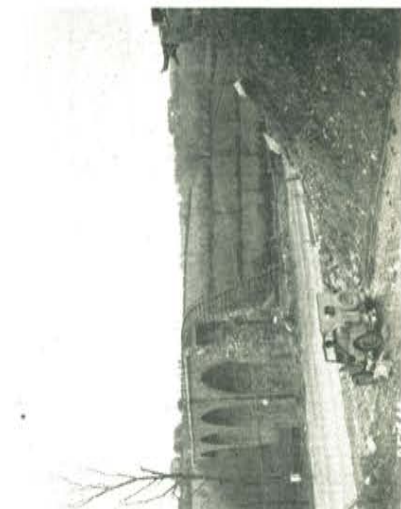
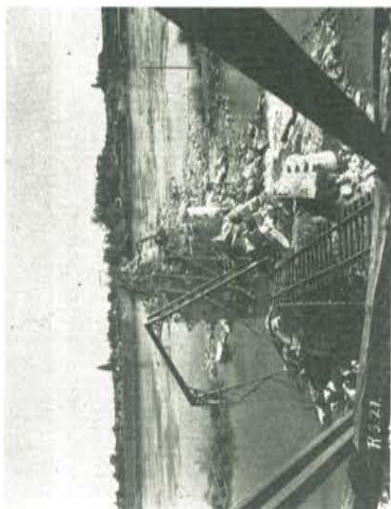
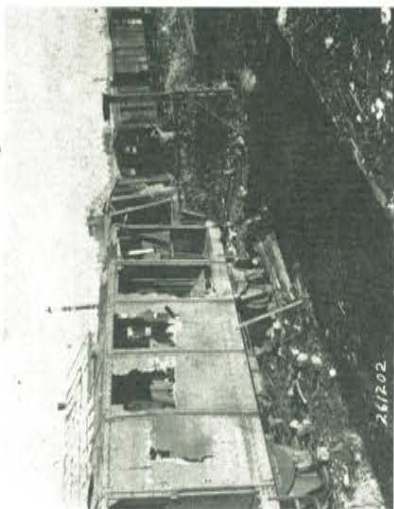
Fourteen bridges opened from the 5th to the 12th of May: a total of 43 spans replaced: more than 2160 feet of bridges reconstructed! That is the record of the last week on railroads in Germany. Eleven of these bridges, all double track, were started and completed in the last six days!

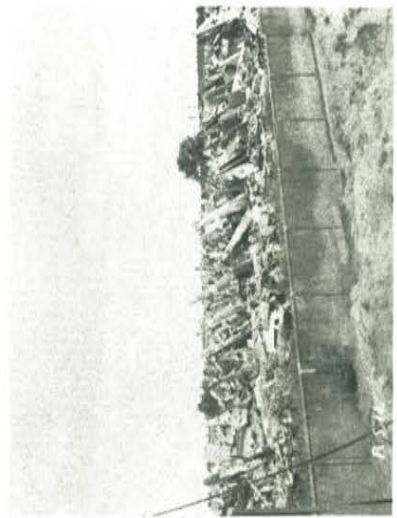
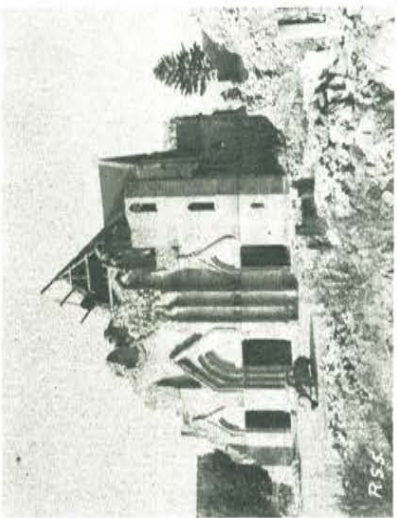
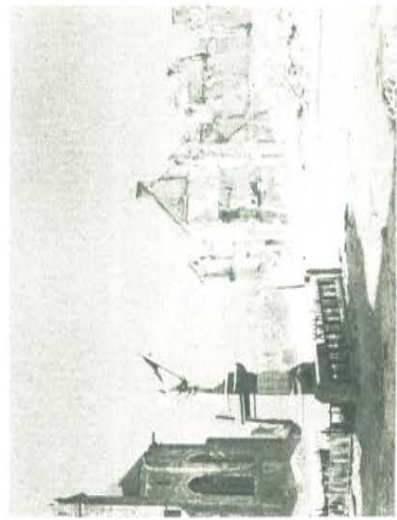
V-E Day meant little or nothing to the men of the the 341st Engineer Regiment. All companies on May 7 and 8 were busy working on projects which had a definite deadline set by higher authorities. That deadline had to be met, come victory or defeat. And so—V-E Day was just another working day to the men. It was not until May 12, when the projects were completed, that the men were able to take a well-deserved day off, and read the Stars and Stripes to learn how V-E Day was celebrated in other parts of this continent and the United States.

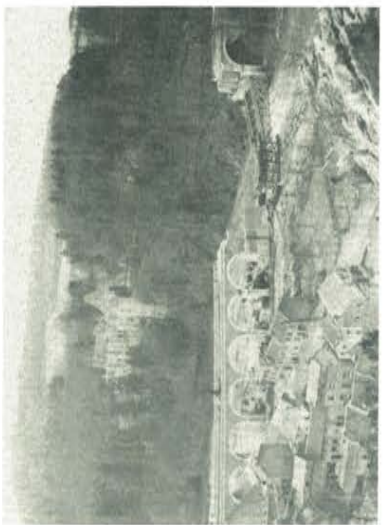
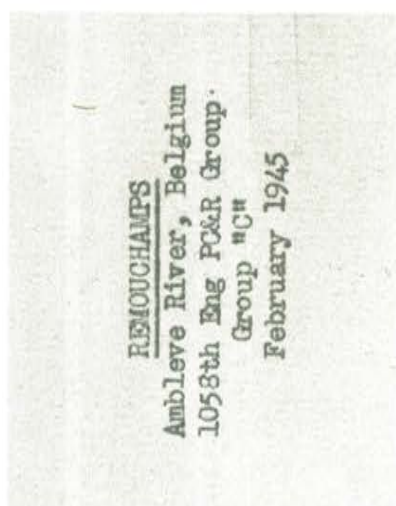
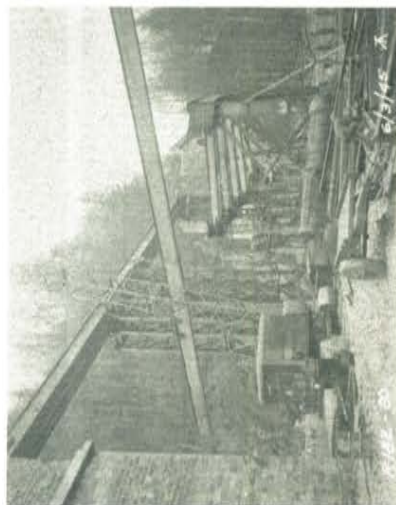
At the cessation of hostilities, Regimental Headquarters was located at Weimar, where it had moved on May 1 from Ansbach. (During the numerous moves in April, Headquarters had moved to Ansbach, South of Nurnberg, on April 19 shortly after the Infantry captured the town.) Companies "D" and "E" were located at Witzenhausen. The remainder of the companies were near the Bamberg area. Company "E" at Munchburg, "A" at Lichtenfels, "B" at Kulmbach, and "C" at Burgkunstadt. In other words the Regiment was spread over a width of some 300 miles on V-E Day. This was nothing new for the organization. It had been spread that far apart most of its time on the continent, from the time it landed on D plus 17. It is no wonder that with this wide spread of activities that the name of 341st Engineer Regiment was well known among all the armies on the front.











REMOUCHAMPS
 Ambleve River, Belgium
 1058th Eng FC&R Group.
 Group "C"
 February 1945

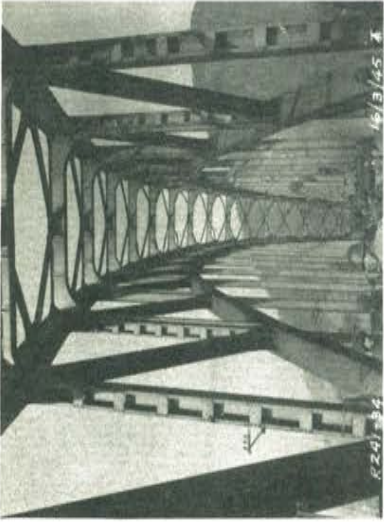
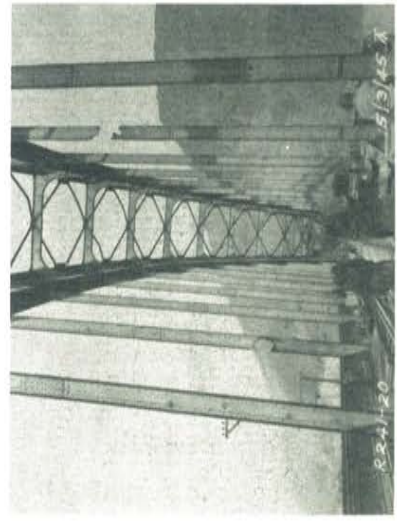
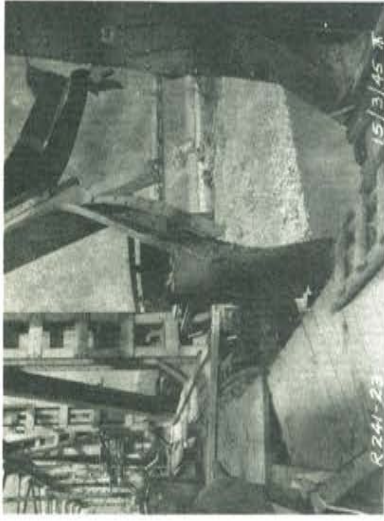
R 182-67

R 182-10

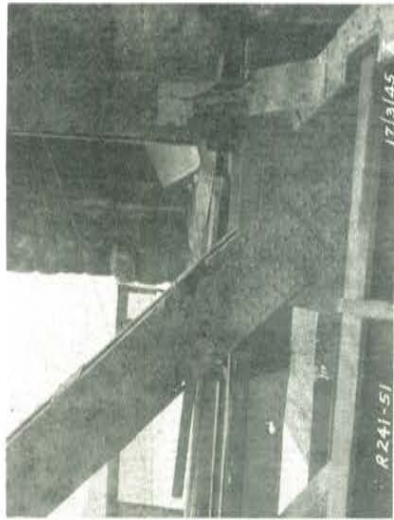
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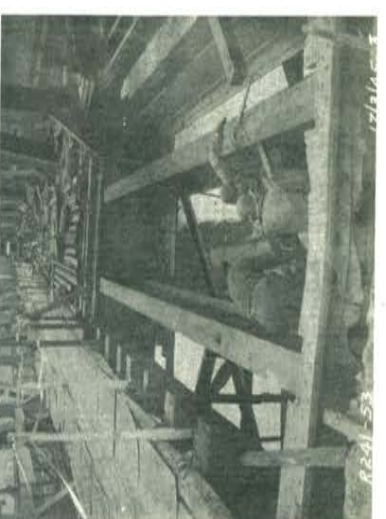
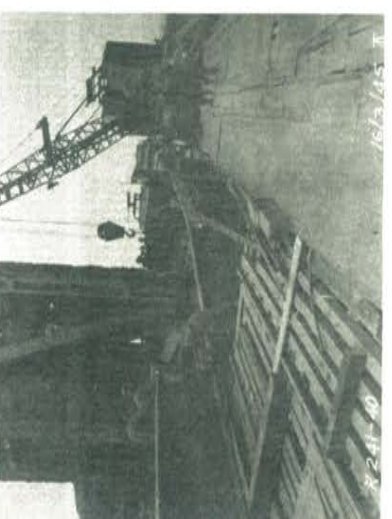
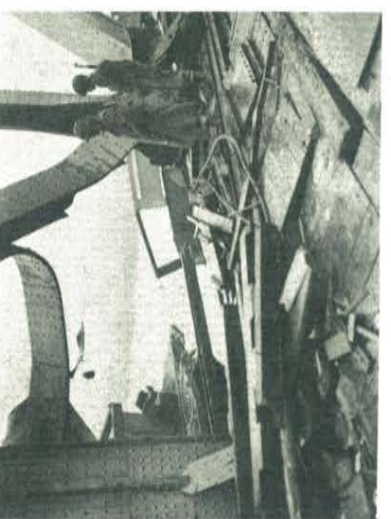
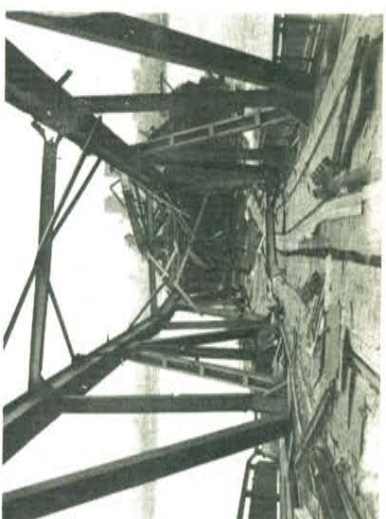
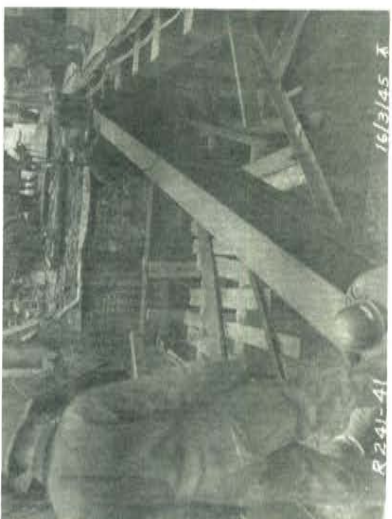
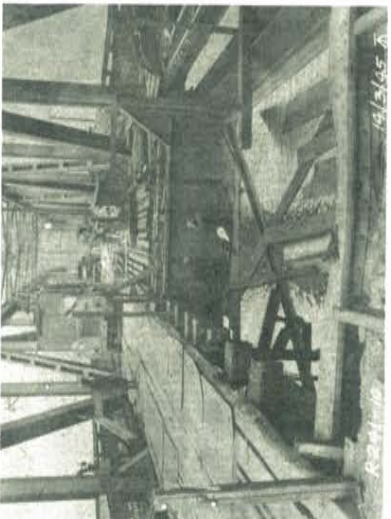
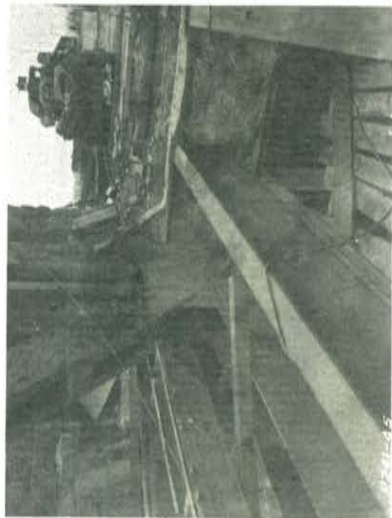
R 182-45

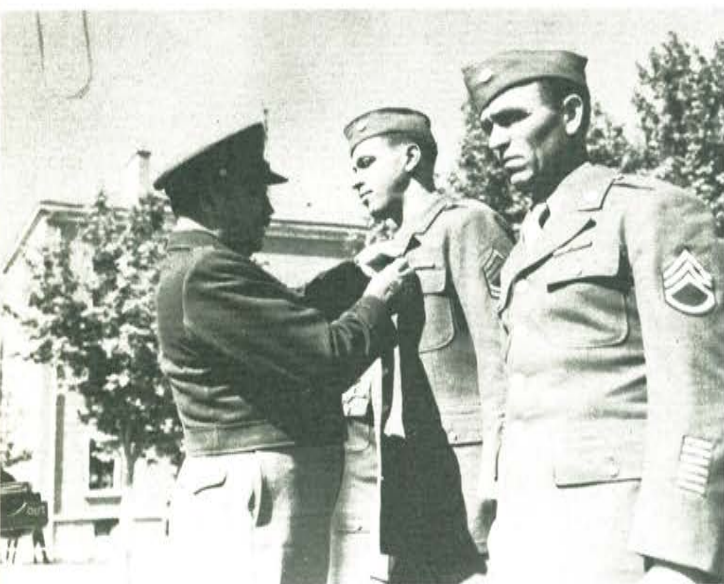
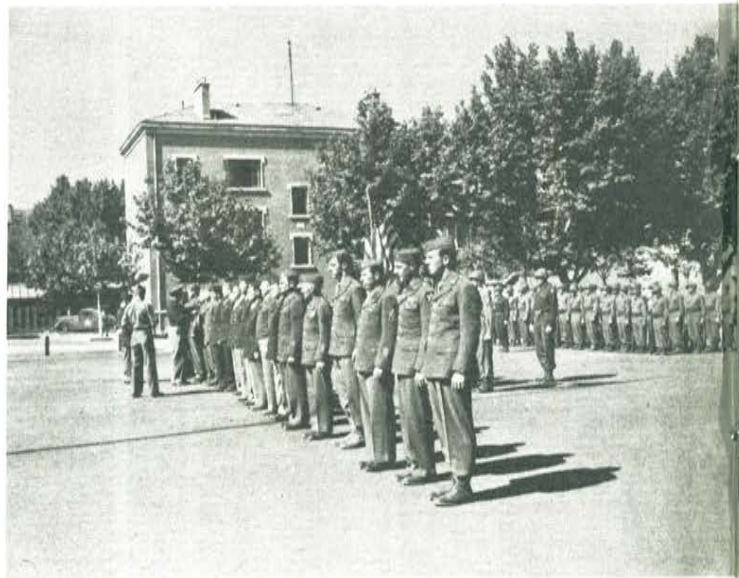
R 182-62



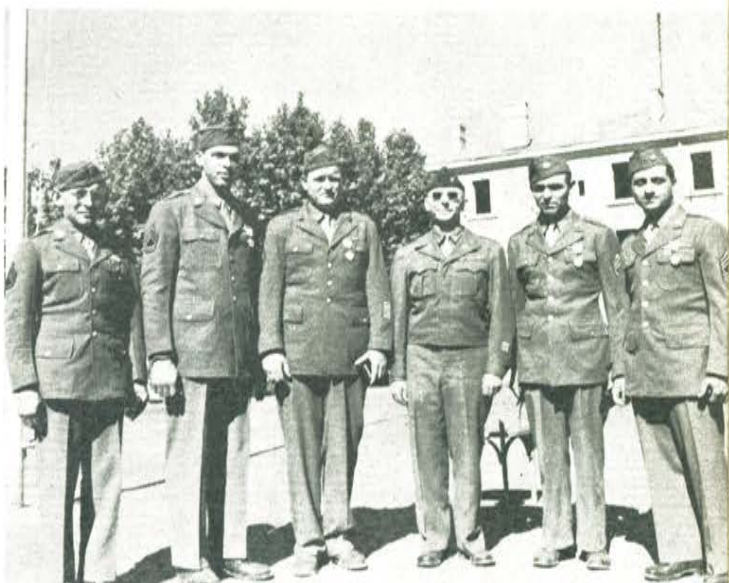
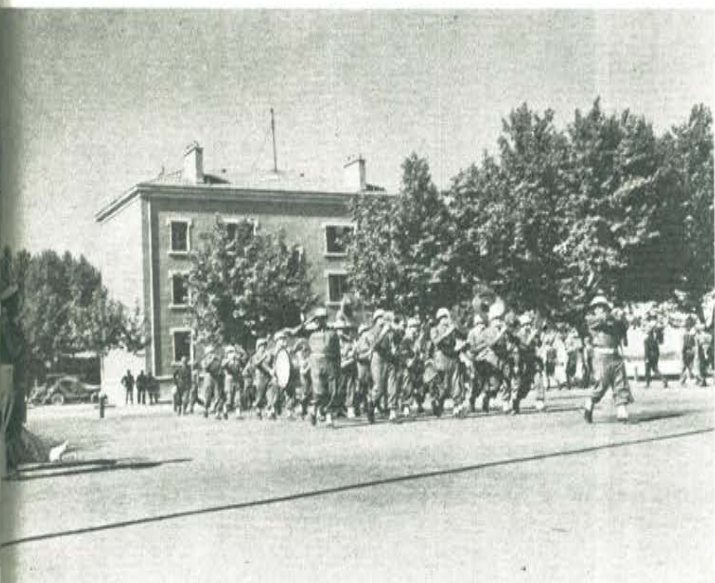
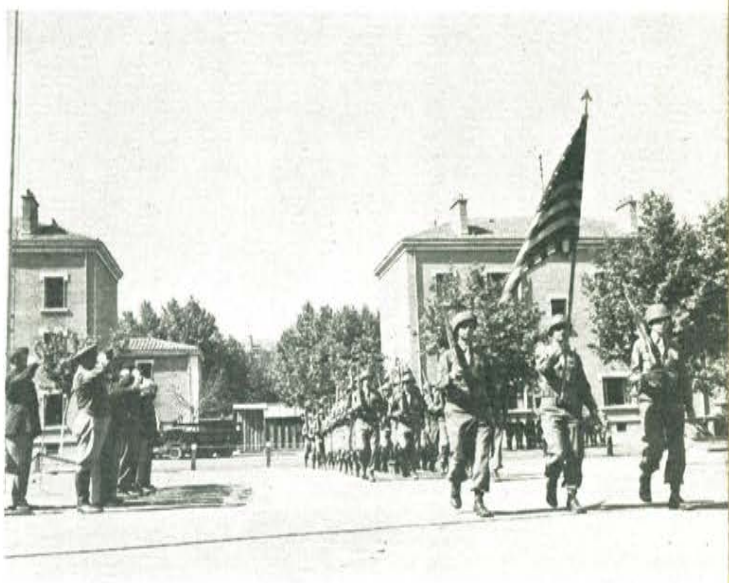
REMA GEN







PRESENTATION



OF AWARDS

The fact that the Regiment before D-Day had been trained for road building and then during most of its stay on the continent, worked on railroads and railroad bridges, and still was able to compare favorably with other outfits who had been especially trained for railroad work, speaks well for the accomplishments of Colonel Coe's Regiment.

In attesting to the excellence of work, four men of the outfit have been awarded the Legion of Merit, and eleven the Bronze Star. The Legion of Merit awards were given to M/Sgt. Joseph Cundari and T/Sgt. Vincent Senhouse, both of Regimental S-3 section, S/Sgt. Clifford G. Srievers, of Company "A", and Sgt. James M. Anderson, of Company "C". Bronze Stars, in addition to the ones previously mentioned for the Roer River and Rhine River bridges, have been given to Sgt. Bernard Ziner, of H & S Company and Sgt. Louis C. Prellwitz of Company "C". The Regiment also won the Superior Service Operations and Administration Flags of ASCZ for the month of February. The operations flag was given for work involved in reconstructing three bridges on the railroad line between Gouvy and St. Vith, railroad bridges near Malmedy and Ettelbruck and reconstruction of a single track line from Kalterherberg to Weywertz to Waimes.

Colonel Coe, commanding officer, also was given the Croix de Guerre in recognition of the early work accomplished by his Regiment during the liberation of France.

A history of the 341st Engineer Regiment would not be complete without including the work of its attached units and detachments.

The Medical Detachment, under command of Major Lester Harwell until December 29 and under command of Captain Charles Antonini from that date, played an important part in the achievements of the Regiment by keeping the health of the command to a high level. Through corrective measures, and constant instruction and following of these measures, the Regiment suffered no ill effect of the cold months. Trench foot did not occur despite the fact that men worked in the open, wet country all day. Intestinal disorders, dysentery, etc., were few in number. Sanitation was kept at a high level by frequent inspections by the medical officers and by suggestions to the unit commanding officers.

The dental department kept the troops in Class 4 category. It was not possible, with the Regiment separated into so many units, to bring the men to the dental officer. So the dental officers went to the men, visiting the various units with their equipment and bringing the dental situation to where it should be.

During times of accidents and battle casualties, the medical detachment acted expeditiously and efficiently. Its true worth was proven during the German counter-offensive in December when it was the only medical installation in the Arlon area that could treat casualties. The small force was kept busy on a 24-hour shift, giving supportive treatment, so that the injured could safely be moved to rear medical installations.

The 421st Army Service Force Band, which was activated and organized by the 341st while it was in France, came into its own during 1945. Warrant Officer Charles V. Banner, commanding officer of the band, was able to get reinforcements for his outfit in January. After a few weeks spent in rehearsals the unit was able to present a concert for each company in the Regiment, starting with Headquarters and Service Company in Arlon on January 29. During February it played for two weeks at a Third Corps Rest Camp in Huy, Belgium. Altogether, since January it has presented 34 concerts for members of the 341st Regiment and other units in the areas in which it has been located.

The work of the 420th Dump Truck Company, under the command of Captain Harlan F. Strader, which was attached to the Regiment in Normandy, also played an important part in the accomplishments of the Regiment. Without the use of the transportation furnished by this company, many projects would not have been completed on the set deadline. The 420th kept up an exceptionally efficient maintenance program, and was commended by General Plank for its high standard of maintenance.

And so, another phase of the history of the 341st Engineer Regiment had ended. From road building on the Alaska Military highway, to general construction in England, back to road building in Normandy and then reconstruction of railroads and railroad bridges in France, Belgium and Germany—it was a long, long trail. The Regiment had reached another intersection. Where would the new road lead? To the majority of men—the more than 50 per cent of the Regiment who had 85 and more points, there was hope that that long, long trail at last would lead home. To the others—well, they hoped, too.

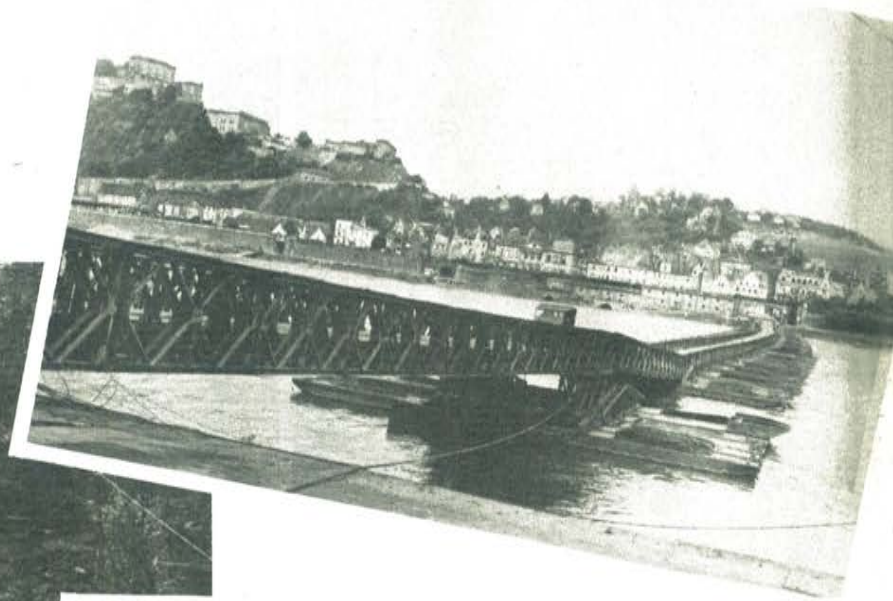
PARIS



FRANCE



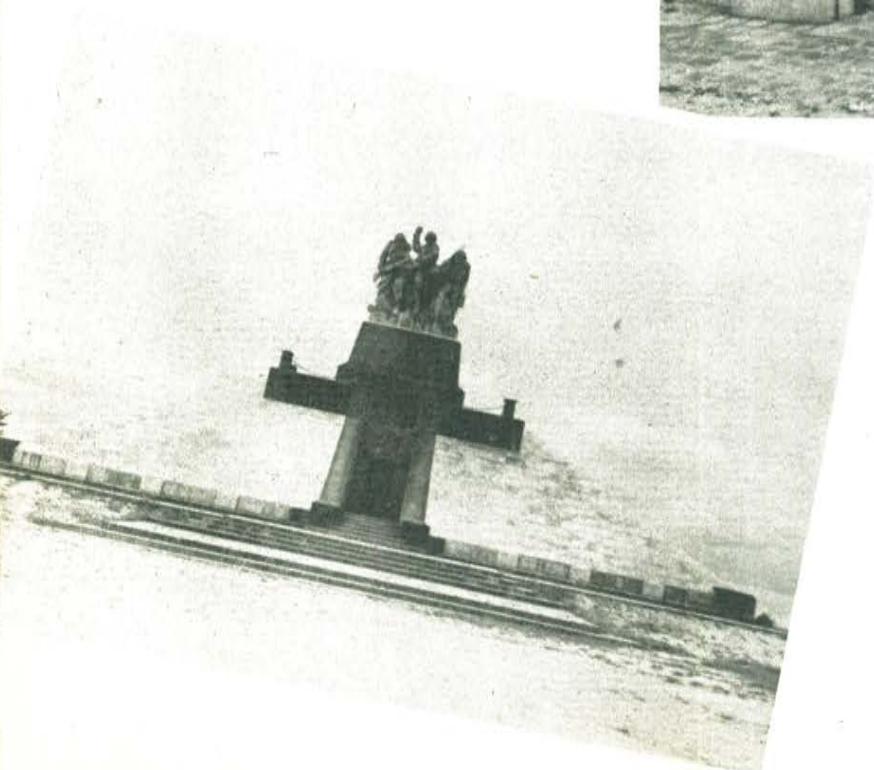
KOBLENZ



HURTGEN FOREST

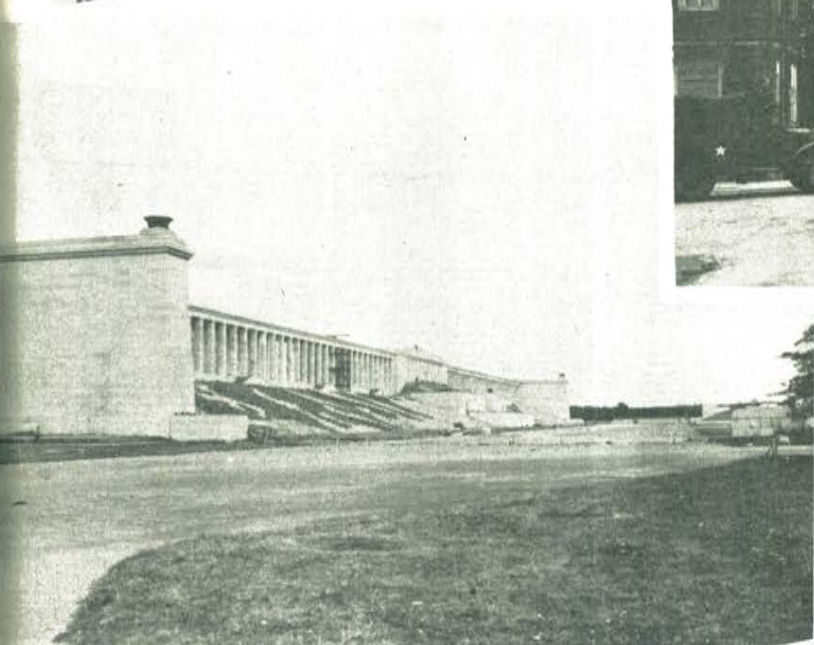
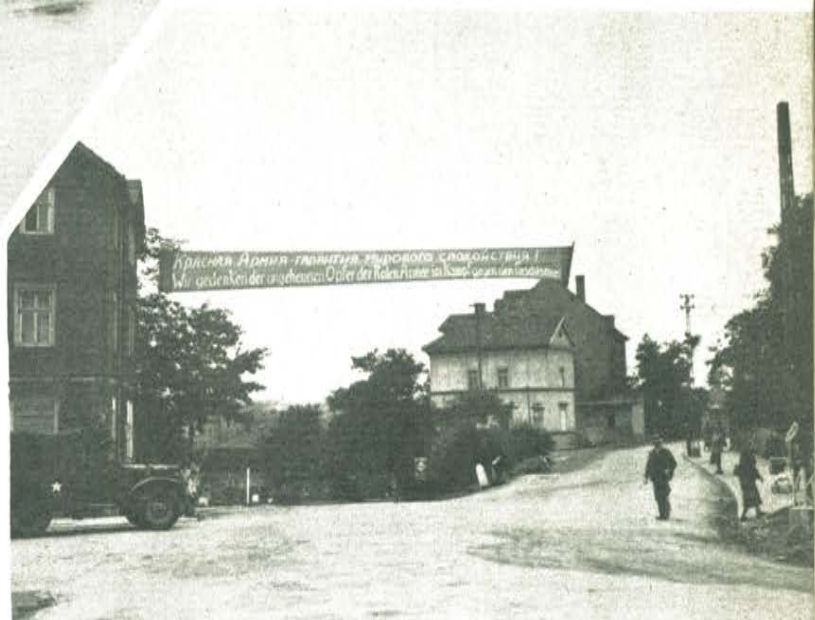


WORLD WAR I CEMETERY



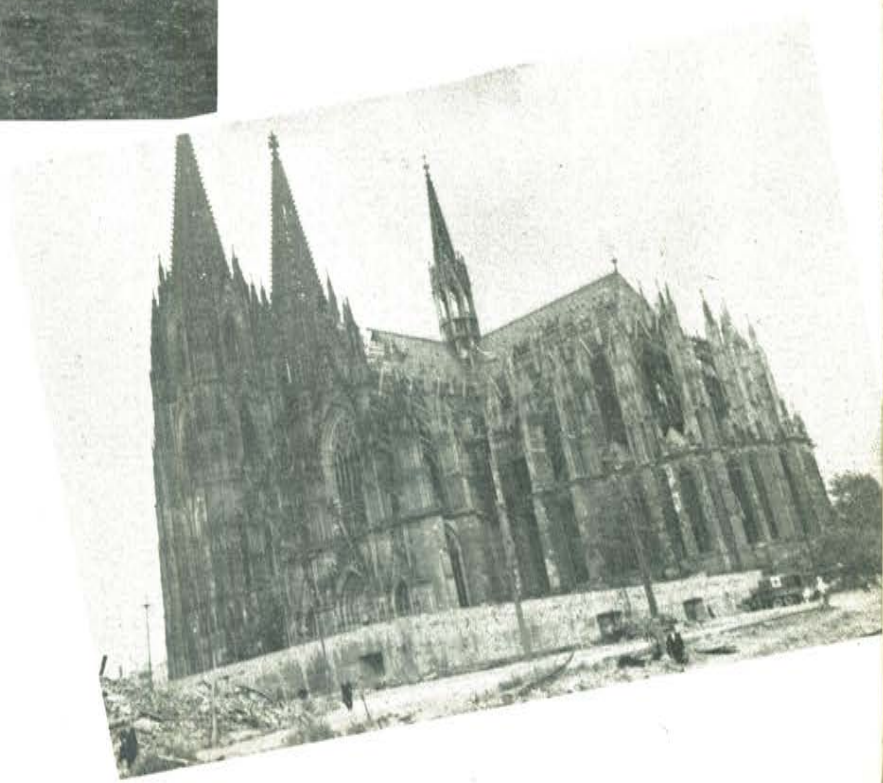
VERDUN

KOBLENZ



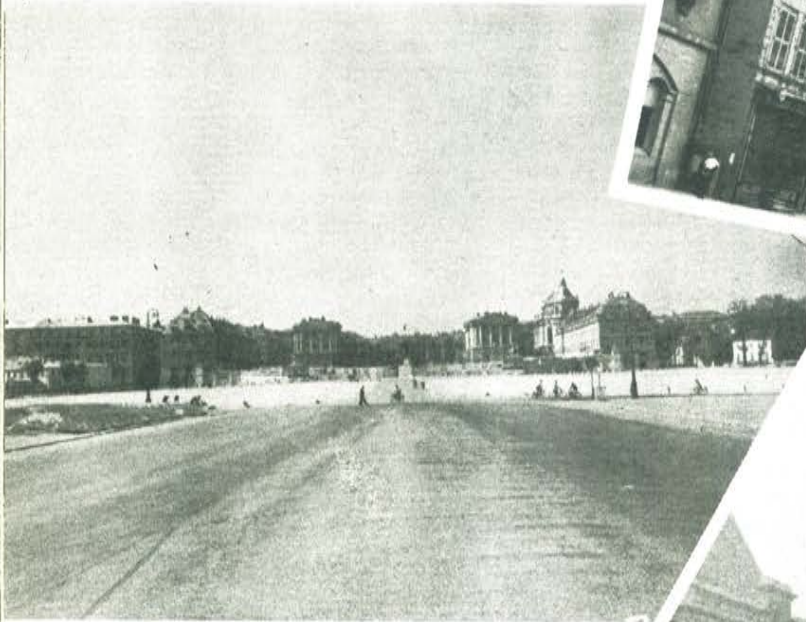
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NURNBERG



COLOGNE

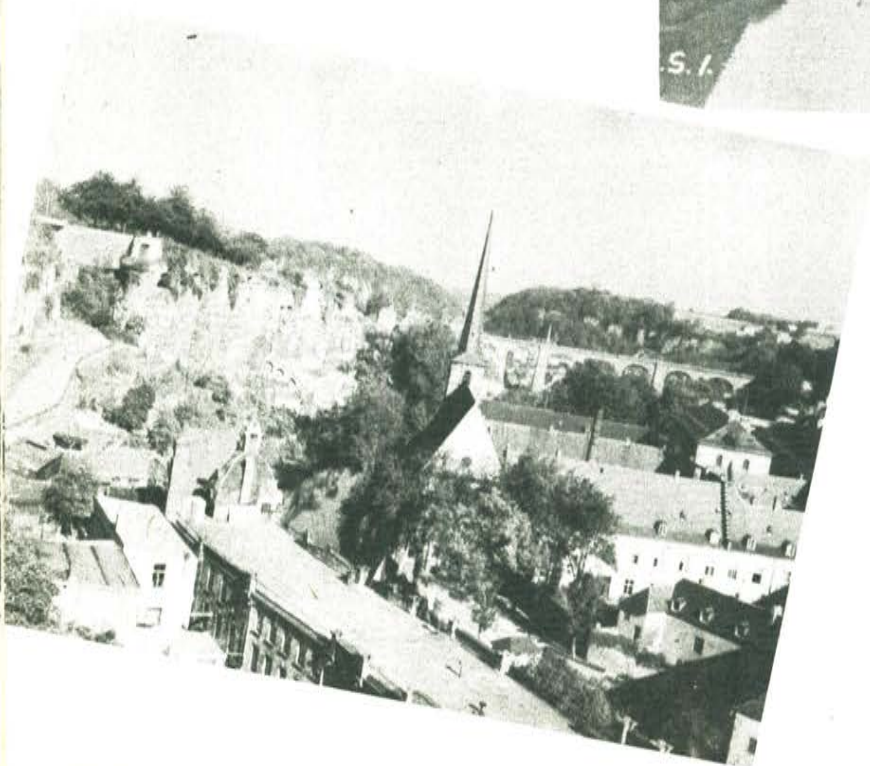
TOURNUS, FRANCE



VERSAILLES



BRUSSELS



LUXEMBOURG

AFTER GERMANY

Almost immediately after the German surrender, orders were put into effect to speed the transfer of U. S. Forces to the Pacific Theaters. Headquarters of First Army was still moving out of Weimar when orders were received to inactivate Group "C", detach the 341st Engineer Regiment from ADSEC, and move with all possible speed to a new job near Marseille, more than 700 miles away.

The advance party moved out at once, and the Regiment followed by convoys and troop trains within three days. The Command Post was opened at Mirabeau, a suburb of Marseille, on 25 May 1945, and the entire organization was closed in its new bivouacs by the end of the month, after turning over its tremendous stocks of special equipment and supplies to its teammate of old Alcan days, the 95th Engineers.

At Marseille the Regiment passed to the command of Delta Base Section, and was placed in charge of construction of the Calas Staging Area. This camp for 75,000 men had been under construction for some time, and was approximately half completed. It now became necessary to speed up completion, meanwhile letting the staging troops move in. One of the staging units was the 1308th Engineer General Service Regiment, from whom the 341st took over the construction job. The camp included hundreds of prefabricated buildings and concrete block structures, water and power systems, showers, and water-borne sewage. Attached to the 341st for the job were three other regiments, two Italian battalions, and 5,000 German prisoners.

Company A took over the concrete block plant, producing 15,000 precast blocks a day for buildings. Company B erected tent frames and installed screens on kitchens and mess halls. Company C completed the water system. Company D operate a production line fabricating doors, windows and tent frames. Company E built prefabricated buildings. Company F built the hospital. Headquarters and Service Company managed and maintained the extra mechanical equipment for the entire project; the 80 air compressors in use give an index to the size of the job.

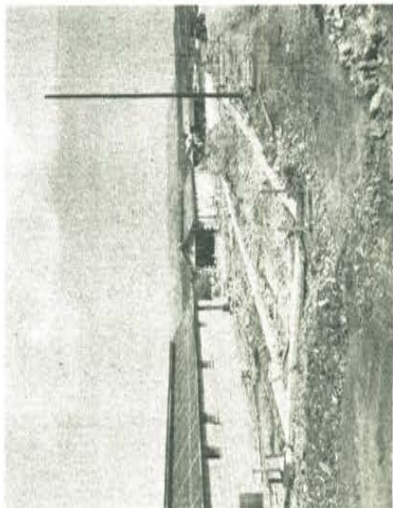
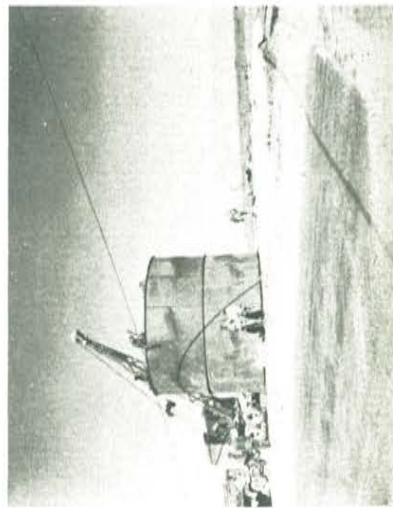
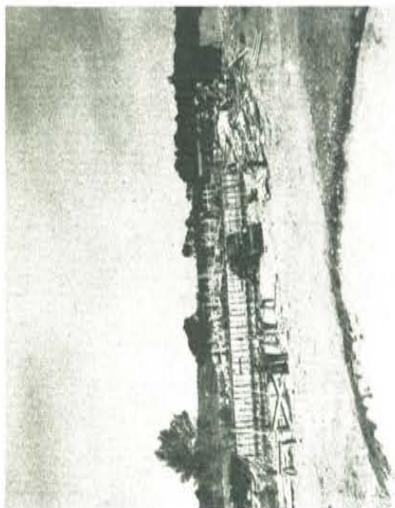
Recreation was plentiful in the Marseille area, and the men were able to make up for a long period of scarce facilities and non-fraternization. All of the companies had excellent bivouacs near the staging area, which they improved in many ways with ball fields, showers and even dance floors. In addition to dances and movies in camp, pass trucks made regular trips to nearby towns and a fair quota managed to go to Nice.

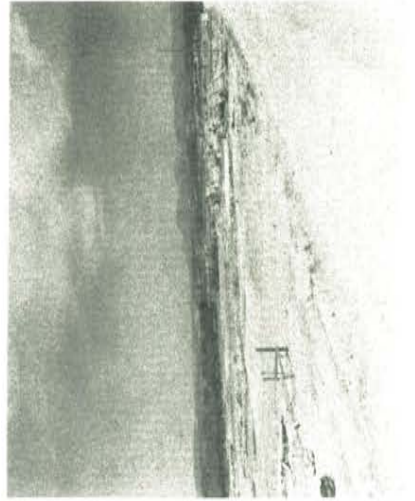
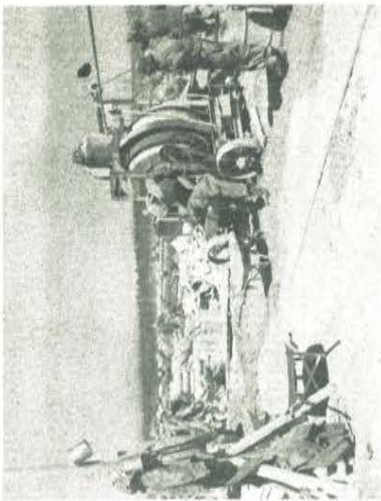
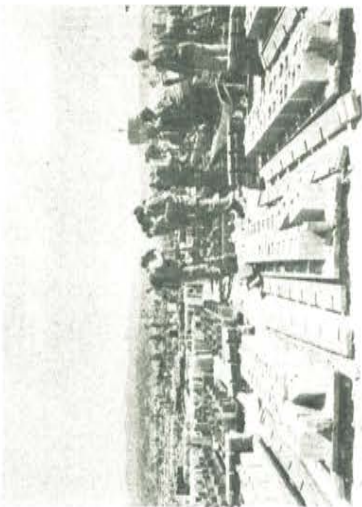
At last "points" began to have a meaning. Although the Regiment was slated to go direct to the Pacific, all of the old-timers and in fact nearly every man who had crossed the Atlantic with the 341st was eligible for discharge. Captain Dunagan and his faithful staff analyzed the records and found that nearly 900 replacements were needed, and most of the officers were loaded with "points". Five battle stars credited to the Regiment helped to swell the score. Urgent measures were called for. But the good luck of the 341st—and some vigorous staff work—bore fruit, and arrangements were made to trade nearly 600 high-pointers for practically the entire 266th Engineer Combat Battalion of the 66th Infantry Division. This insured that the main body of replacements would be well-trained, fit engineer soldiers who had been working together for many months. Several officers transferred with their men, and immediate steps were taken to integrate the new blood. Captain Spencer, Master Sergeant Halvorsen and their able force of instructors took advantage of the large quantity of Class IV equipment on hand for training, and in a very short time the Regiment was assured of a plentiful supply of equipment operators and mechanics.

The integration of the 266th was heralded by a review of that Battalion together with a provisional company of low-point men of the 341st. Major General Kramer, the Division Commander, received the review and bade farewell to his men, and Colonel Coe welcomed them to the 341st. A chicken-and-beer party given by the 266th helped to make every man feel that he "belonged."

Lieutenant Colonel Carlson was the first of the original cadre of officers to take his 130 points aboard an airplane and leave for home. Others followed, and on 14 July 1945 Colonel Coe said farewell to the 341st Engineers and left under orders transferring him to Washington, D. C. The command passed appropriately to Lieutenant Colonel Heilig, who had commanded one of the battalions through most of the Alcan experience, and had been Executive Officer of the Regiment for more than two years.

The month of August was devoted to preparations for the move to the





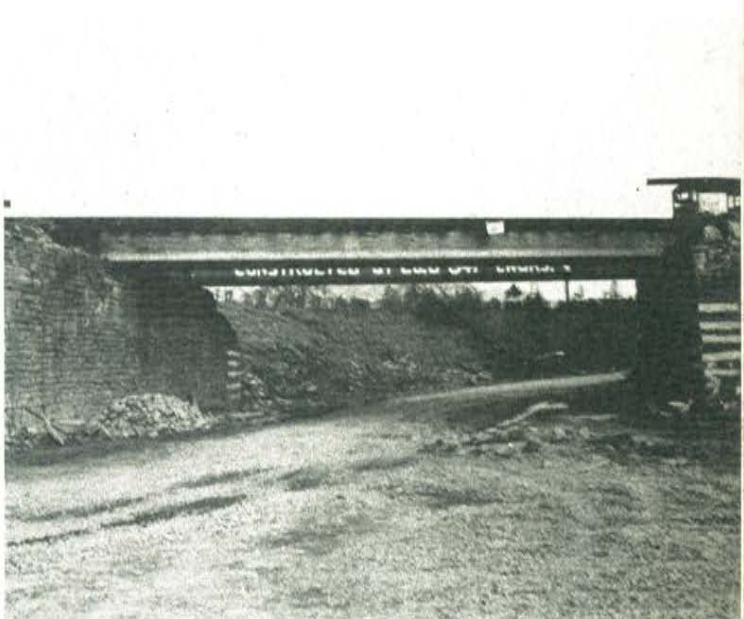
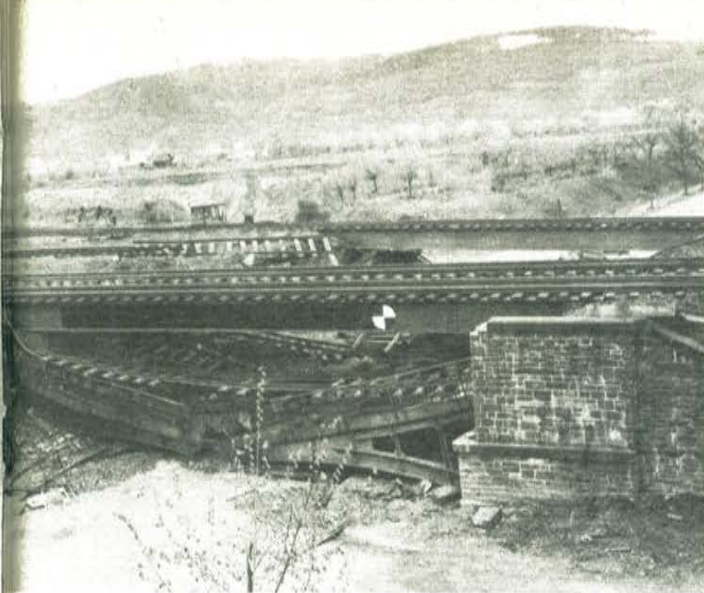
Pacific; destination "Sartorial" was indicated in the orders. But soon after the Japanese surrender, to the keen delight of everyone, that destination was changed to the one which was foremost in the minds of all: "U. S. A."

Sailing 1 September 1945 aboard the "SS ARGENTINA", little attention was paid to crowded sleeping space. Arriving at Camp Shanks, N. Y. on 10 September, by the 13th every man was on the way to his primary objective, HOME.

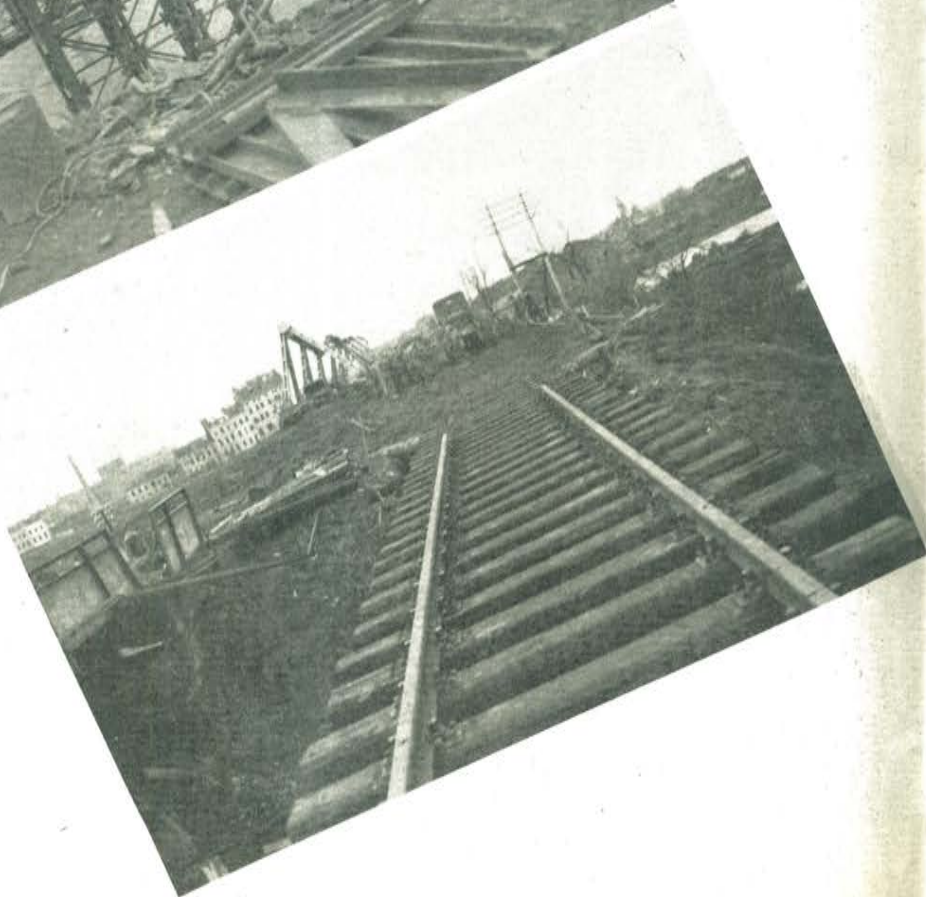
By the middle of October, the 600 or so who were still not eligible for separation had assembled at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana to reorganize the 341st as a part of the Strategic Reserve. The Regiment was slated to continue on active service. But the rate of separations from the Army was stepped up so fast that on 19 November 1945, when the move was made to Fort Belvoir, Virginia for permanent station, only 100 were left.

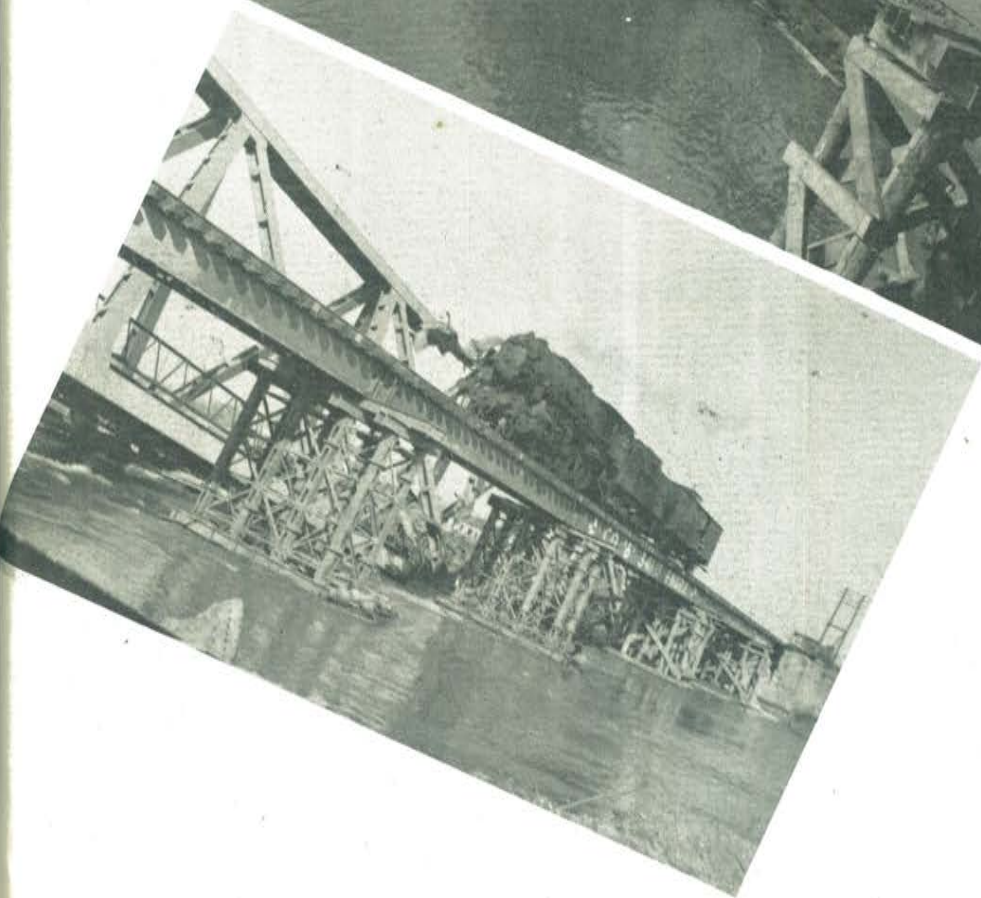
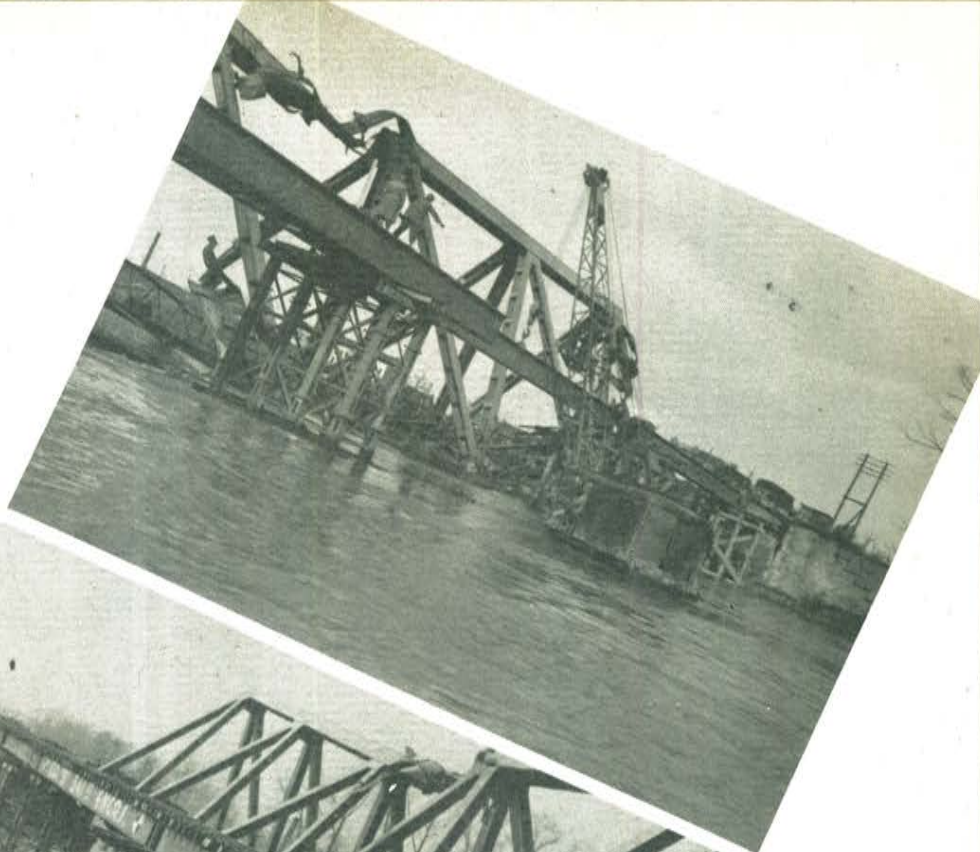
The size of the strategic reserve was cut drastically to fit the pattern of the reduced army, and on 22 March 1946 the 341st Engineer Regiment passed to an inactive status.

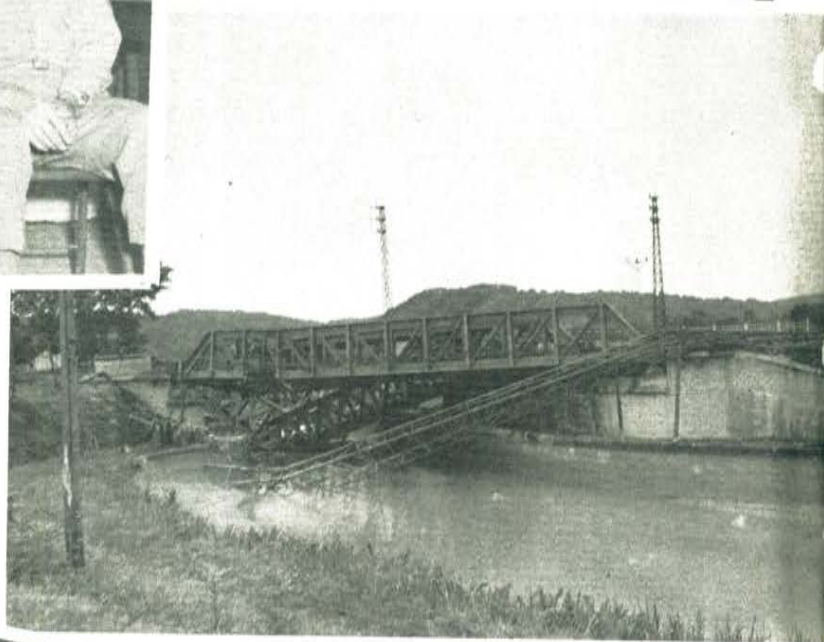
Marked as a Reserve Regiment, and with a record of achievement unsurpassed in the Army, the Three Forty-First stands by, ready as always for the time when again the United States Army needs a hard job done well, in time.



BONN TO SINZIG LINE

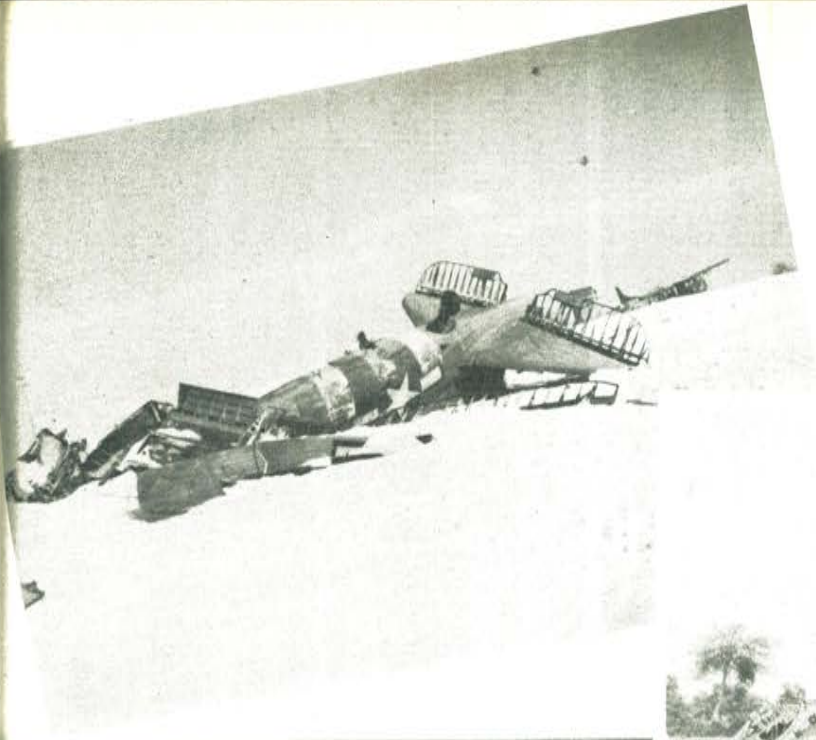


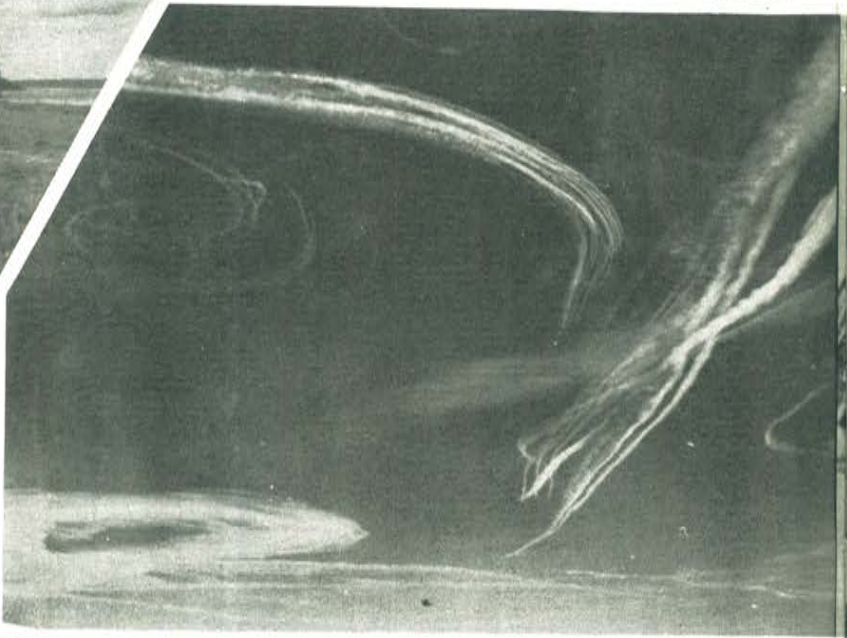


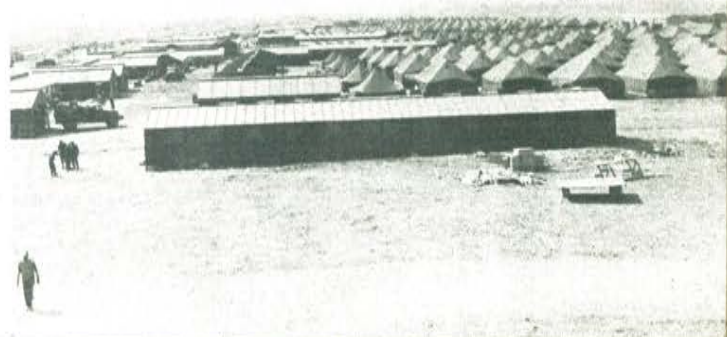


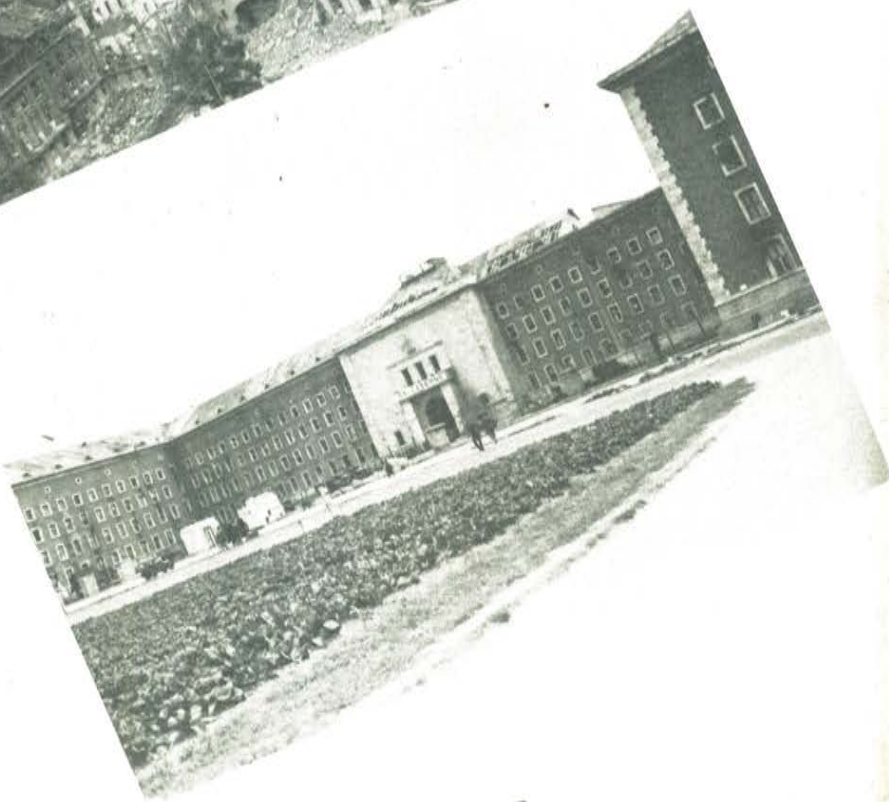
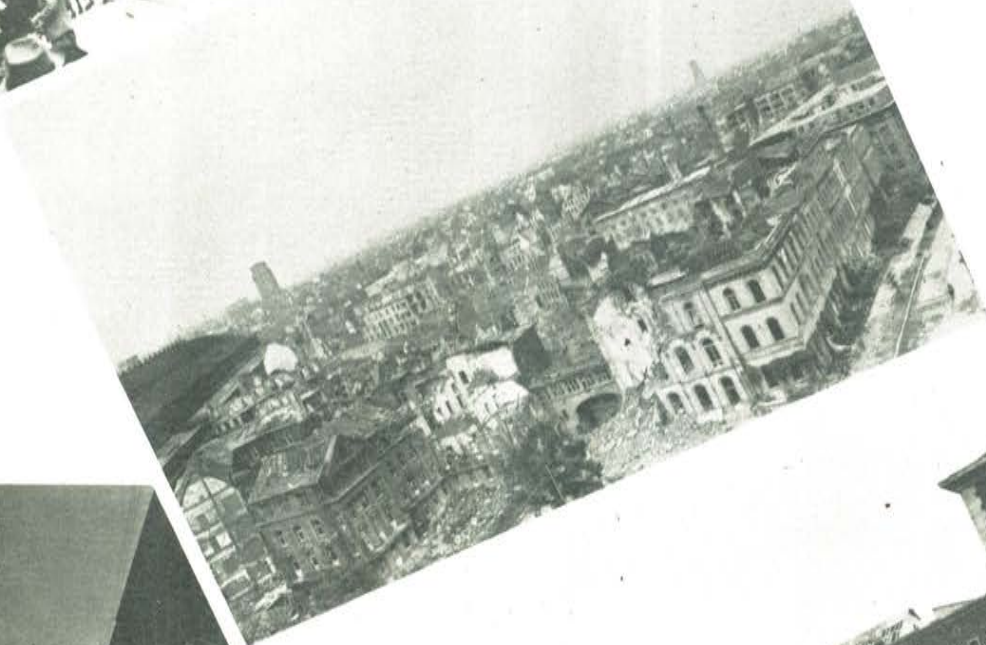
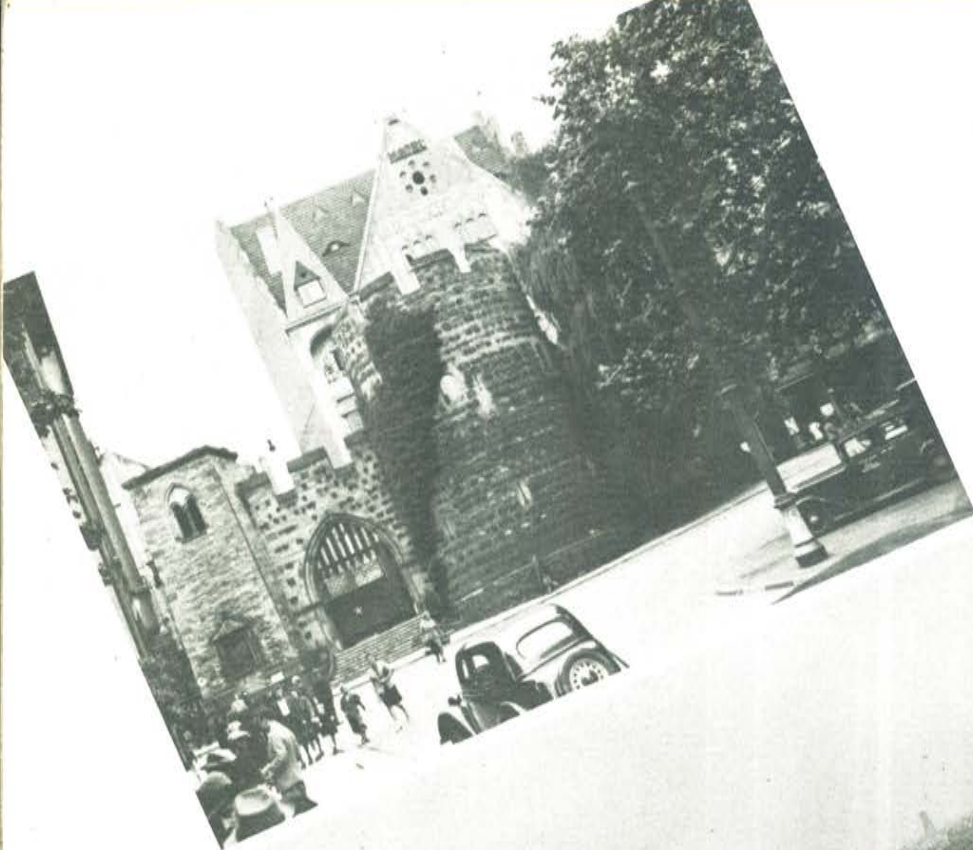


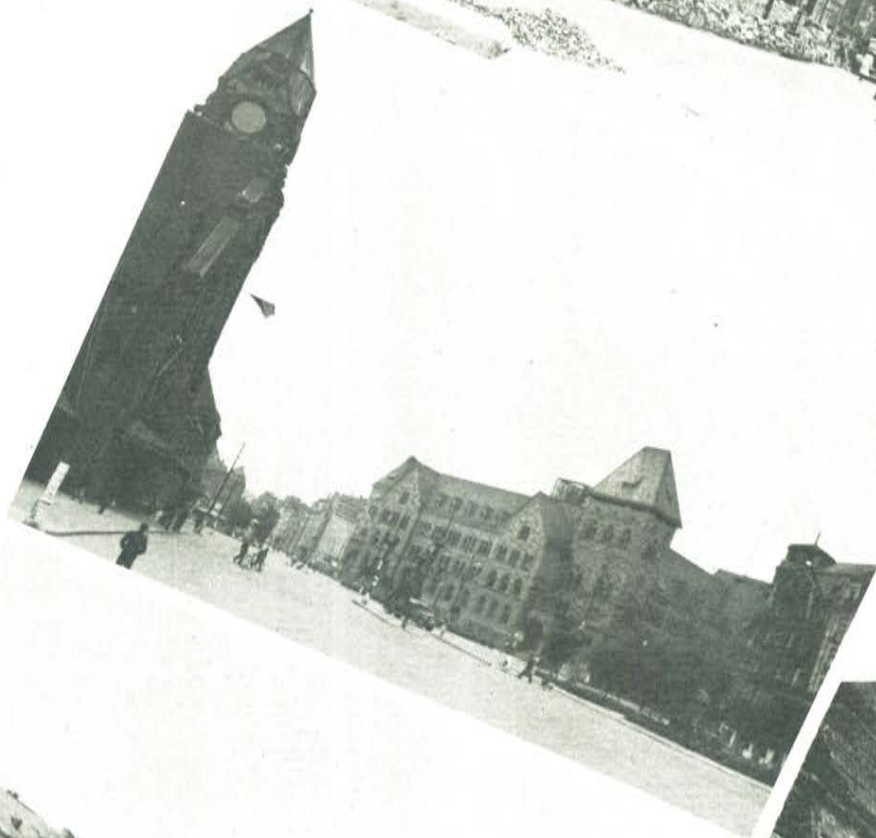




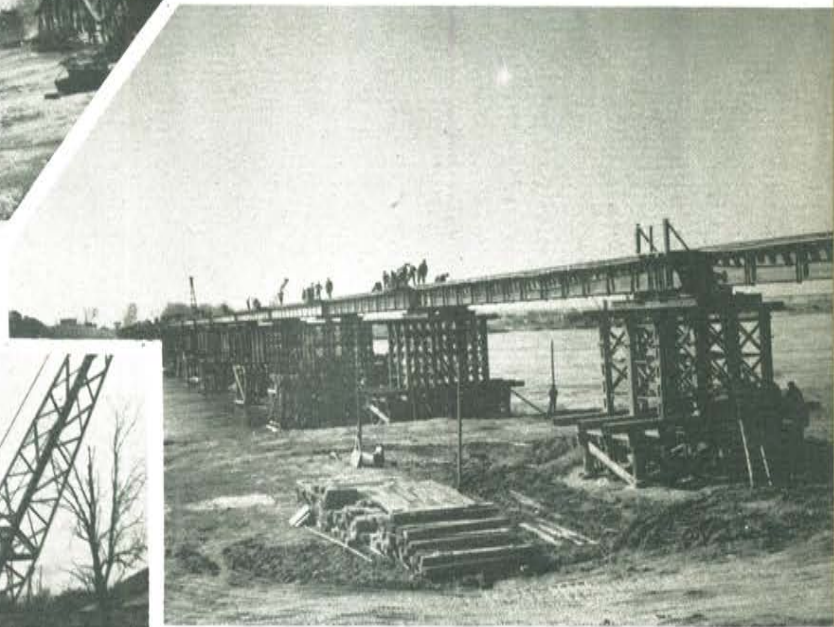


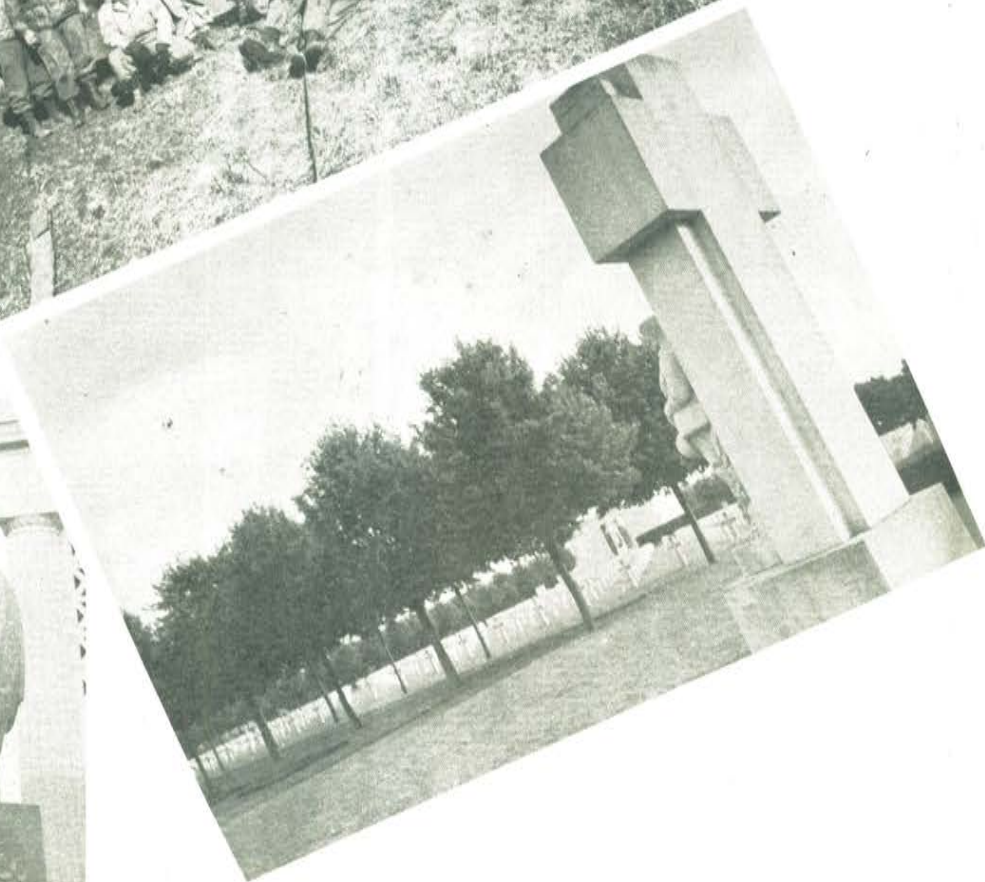
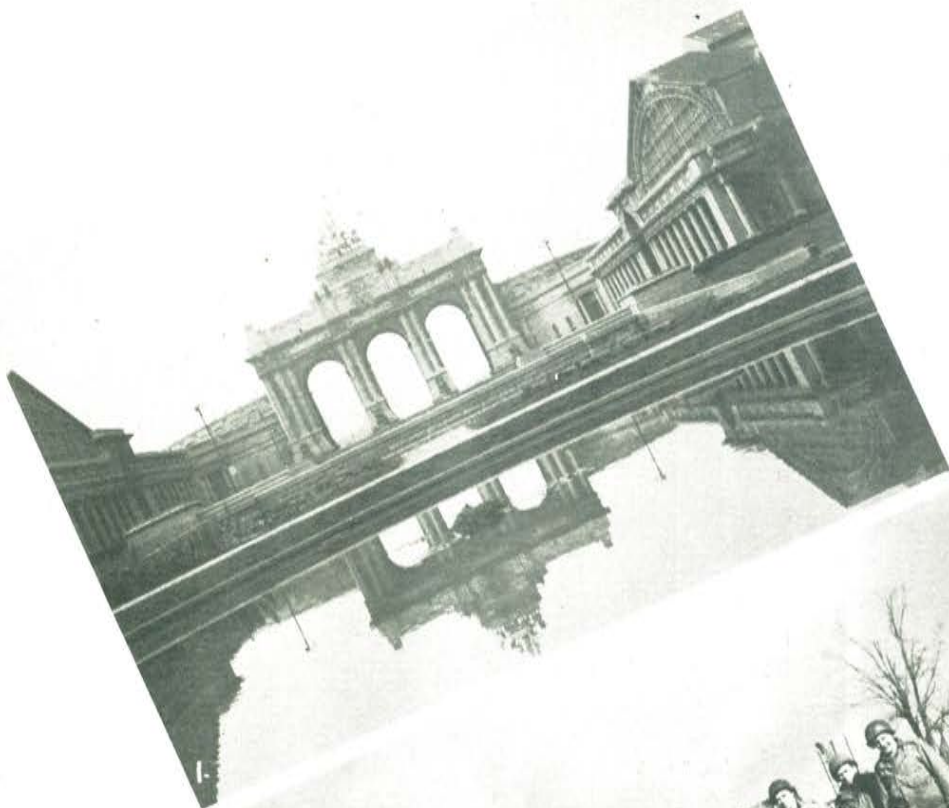


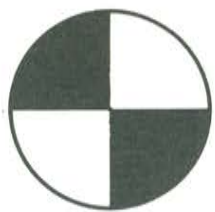










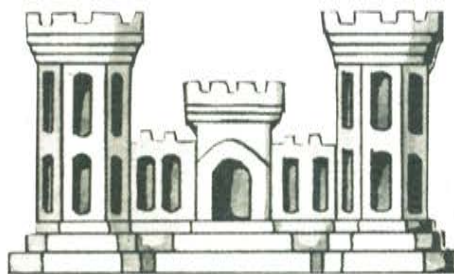








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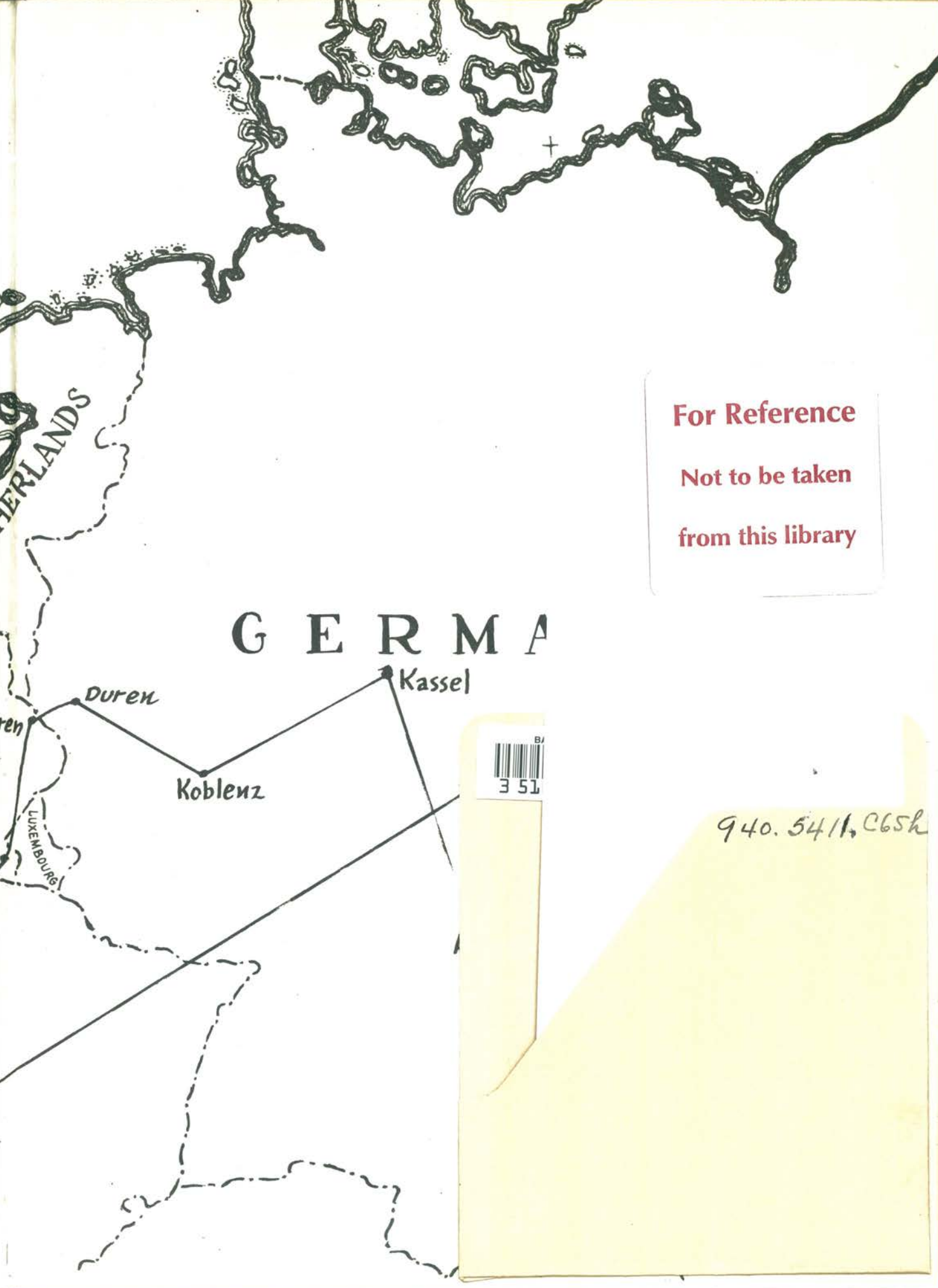
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