

SURF AND SAND



THE SAGA OF THE
533^d EB&SR



Currimao

Dirique

Jan. 9

San Fernando
San Fabian

Lingayen

PHILIPPINE IS.

Manila

Batangas

Mindoro

Mangarin

Dulag

Bugo

Malabang

Parang

Zamboanga

Davao

Cotabato

Piso

San Agustin

Talomo

Malalag

Clan

Morotal I.

ORNEO

HALMAHERA

Sarong

Noemfoor I.

Biak I.

Wakde Is.

Hollandia

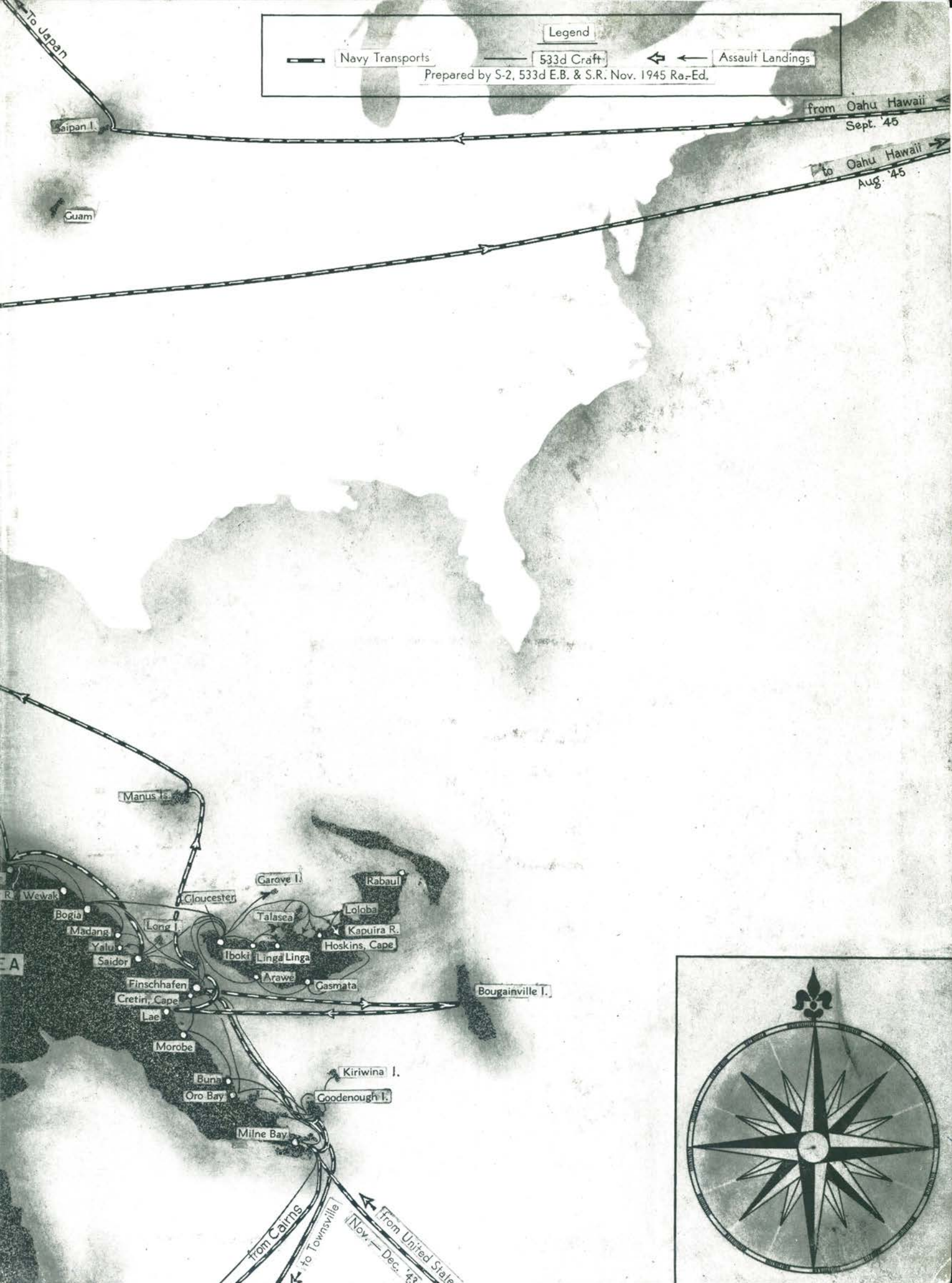
NEW GUINEA

CELEBES

GERAM

TIMOR

AUSTRALIA



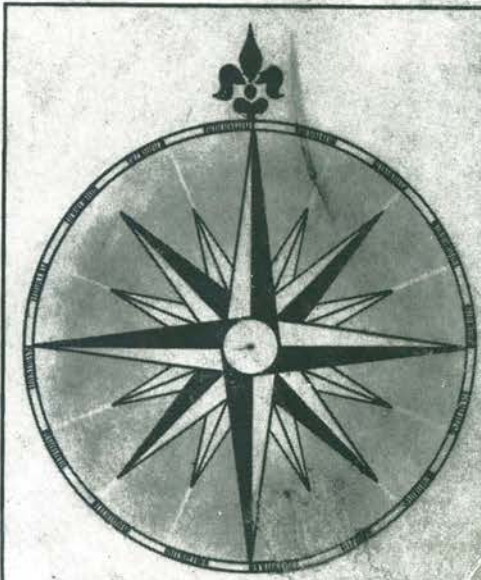
Legend

Navy Transports

533d Craft

Assault Landings

Prepared by S-2, 533d E.B. & S.R. Nov. 1945 Re-Ed.







Seleo Island, near Aitape, New Guinea.

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SURF AND SAND



The Saga of the
533^d
Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment
and 1461st Engineer Maintenance Company

1942 — 1945

BANDOR
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*To the
Doughboys and Leathernecks
of Seven Divisions
in whose support it was our privilege
to strive mightily for two years.*

PAIDOR
CLUB
YFARALI
JIN ROSHAR



1st Marine Division
(New Britain)



32d Infantry Division
(Saidor, Aitape)



40th Infantry Division
(New Britain)



37th Infantry Division
(Luzon)



43d Infantry Division
(Aitape, Luzon)



24th Infantry Division
(Mindanao)



31st Infantry Division
(Mindanao)



Sixth Army
(December 1943-April 1945
August-November 1945)



Eighth Army
(April-July 1945)



Foreword

In these pages will be found the story of our own 533d in the greatest of all the wars of the world. It is a story of toil and hardship and danger mixed with happy interludes and comradeships made the dearer thereby, a story of great deeds in the face of great obstacles, of reverses and disappointments but of pride and glory in the end.

This book is not written to impress others with our deeds. In the many commendations of high commanders is found the testimony to our success in an unusual and most important role in many landings on enemy-held shores. In our own minds and hearts are the priceless memories of our great adventure and the pride that comes from the knowledge of a job well done. May these pages help to keep them fresh through the years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "W. S. Moore".

W. S. MOORE
Colonel, Corps of Engineers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE—HISTORY

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Origins of the Engineer Amphibian Brigades	10
II	Massachusetts	13
III	Florida	20
IV	California	39
V	At Sea—Outward Bound	54
VI	Company B in Australia	60
VII	Cape Cretin, Goodenough Island and Milne Bay	63
VIII	New Britain	77
IX	Saidor	94
X	Aitape	104
XI	Luzon	125
XII	Mindanao	161
XIII	Japan	205

PART TWO

Statistics	228
Commendations	230
Other Amphibian Engineer Units	250
Chronology	260

PART THREE

Tables of Organization and Equipment	272
Boats	276
Engineer Equipment	296
1461st Engineer Maintenance Company	307

TABLE OF CONTENTS—*Continued*

	PAGE
Communications	319
Medical Detachment	328
The Paper War	334
163d Ordnance Detachment	338
Chaplains and Chapels	340

PART FOUR—PERSONNEL

Chain of Command	346
The Regiment	350
In Memoriam	398
Decorations	400
Editors' Note	407

MAPS AND CHARTS

Southwest Pacific Area	Inside Front Cover
United States of America	Inside Back Cover
Cape Cod and Vineyard Sound, Massachusetts	14
Carrabelle, Florida, and Adjacent Waters	23
California	40
Northeast New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago	64
Western New Britain	76
New Guinea—Huon Peninsula to Madang	96
New Guinea—Aitape to Wewak	110
The Philippine Islands	127
White Beach, San Fabian, Luzon	135
Luzon—Northwest Coast	156
Mindanao	162
Mindanao River and Illana Bay	165
Japan—Western Honshu and Kyushu	206



PART ONE



HISTORY

CHAPTER I

Origins of the Engineer Amphibian Brigades

The fortress island of Corregidor quivered under the relentless pounding of the Jap bombers and the heavy batteries massed on recently subdued Bataan. The weary defenders, safe only in the depths of its tunnels, knew they could not hope to repulse the final assault that would strike them any day. The last effective barrier to complete Japanese conquest of the Philippines was doomed.

A tiny Aussie garrison in the mountains above Port Moresby, the last impertinent Allied foothold on the second largest island in the world, wondered when the Japs on the north coast of New Guinea would decide to rub them out.

The bitter rear-guard action in Burma was drawing to an ignominious close as the remnants of the British, Indian, and Chinese forces stumbled over the trackless mountains into India, and the victorious Japs seized the Burma Road and pressed on into isolated China.

Between New Caledonia and the Solomons roamed the scouting planes of a small American naval task force seeking to locate the Japanese fleet that was about to sally forth for an attack on the Australian mainland.

On the other side of the world, Germany and her satellites bestrode Europe unchallenged from Gibraltar to the North Cape, from the Channel Islands to the African desert. The Russian winter counteroffensive, having hurled the Germans from the suburbs of Moscow, had bogged down in the ooze of spring. The Germans were attacking at Kharkov and in the Crimea, and their Afrika Korps was coiling for a deadly lunge at Egypt. German submarines stalked ships in the delta of the Mississippi and within sight of the New Jersey coast.

So began the month of May, 1942.

In these darkest moments of World War II, the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff were nevertheless grimly preparing offensives to regain the ground lost and bring the Axis ultimately to abject surrender. One fact stood out: there was no land route of approach, and so the British and American forces could come to grips with the Germans and Japanese only by amphibious attack. Not only would strong armies have to be raised, trained and equipped, but those armies would also have to be provided with ships and boats and trained beach parties in order to assault the fortress of Europe and the vast island empire of Japan.

Both the British and American navies were doing all they could to procure ships and small landing craft and to train crews for them, but the U. S. Navy in particular was necessarily preoccupied with meeting the menace of German submarines in the Atlantic and the threat of the now superior Japanese naval forces in the central Pacific. In order better to distribute the burden of preparing the amphibious forces, the Joint Chiefs of Staff assigned to the Army the task of creating a major amphibious training center and of recruiting and training specialized units capable of operating landing craft and handling the engineering work on beachheads.

This decision was reduced to orders on May 9, 1942 directing General Somervell,

commander of the Army Service Forces, to establish an amphibian training center at Camp Edwards, and to procure equipment and personnel for the specialized amphibian units.

As had been its lot throughout its long history, the U.S. Corps of Engineers received this new and unique assignment. After a brief period of study, the Engineer Amphibian Command was activated on June 5, 1942, with the mission of organizing, equipping and training eight engineer amphibian brigades, each capable of transporting and supporting a reinforced infantry division in a shore-to-shore amphibious attack. Colonel Daniel Noce, an engineer who had had much to do with the organization of the original air-borne units took command, and opened his headquarters at Camp Edwards, on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Ten days later the 1st Engineer Amphibian Brigade was activated, using two engineer combat regiments as its nucleus. Five days later the 2d Brigade came into being.

To procure personnel with appropriate civilian background as officers and non-commissioned officers for this work, an intensive recruiting program was inaugurated with headquarters in Washington. Employing extensive publicity and cooperating with the U.S. Power Squadrons, yacht clubs, and other organizations concerned with maritime activities, this drive resulted in many hundreds of civilians being enlisted or commissioned during the summer of 1942.

Procurement of boats was handled through the Navy Bureau of Ships in order not to duplicate effort. In accordance with the decision of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the engineer amphibian units were restricted to craft less than 100 feet long, on the general theory that these would be adequate for the short distance across the English Channel, where the brigades were initially expected to be employed.

Each day brought a fresh influx of personnel and equipment to Cape Cod. Veteran Coast Guard and Marine officers, battle tested Britishers with experience in commando raids, experts in civil engineering, navigation, boat repair, and communications formed the nucleus of the training command at Edwards. Camps were opened at Waquoit and Cotuit, and docks were built to provide appropriate training bases for the boat units.

During June and early July 1942 the Allied situation throughout the world grew more perilous. The Afrika Korps routed the British Eighth Army and reached within striking distance of the Nile; von Bock's great group of armies started its 1000-mile plunge from Orel to Stalingrad; and the Japanese, despite the naval battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, still threatened Australia.

To the Combined Chiefs of Staff, meeting in London early in July, the most serious danger appeared to be that the German summer offensive would succeed in knocking Russia out of the War. In order to do what little they could to relieve the pressure on the hard pressed Red armies, they agreed to launch, if necessary, a cross-channel invasion of France, even though the forces at their disposal were pitifully small. To do this they would need more landing craft and crews than were available in the British Isles; so the 1st Brigade on July 23 was ordered to England as fast as it could be moved. The Brigade was in a sad state of confusion, with almost no equipment and all ranks barely oriented as to their technical missions and training objec-

tives. Nevertheless, equipment was rushed from all parts of the country to the Brigade, and it was brought to full strength and sailed from New York on August 5th. Hardly had it debarked in England when it became apparent that the German drive was slowing down in the Caucasus and was being fought to a standstill at Stalingrad, and that it would not be necessary to launch the major attack across the channel during that year. Given this breathing spell, the navies of both Great Britain and the United States set about reversing the decision made in May to have the Army run the small landing craft, and in England they actually took away the 1st Brigade's boats.

Back in the United States a bitter wrangle ensued, and the understandably inexperienced performance of some of the engineer boatmen in their first maneuvers lent weight to the Navy's argument that only 'boys in blue' could satisfactorily handle boats. Colonel Arthur Trudeau, the Chief of Staff of the Engineer Amphibian Command, made a flying trip to visit General MacArthur in Australia during the early part of October to see if he was interested in continuing the development of the amphibian brigades. Just at this time MacArthur was engaged in his "Battle of the Marne" in the passes of the Owen Stanley Mountains and in the steaming jungles and plantations of Milne Bay. Though he had been successful in driving the Japanese back toward their bases on the northeast coast of New Guinea, lack of water-borne transportation had caused him to rely almost exclusively on his pitifully few airplanes, and he was, necessarily, in a most receptive mood. He promptly informed the War Department that he would like one engineer amphibian brigade immediately, to be followed in 1943 by a second one. The War Department, therefore, reduced the number of brigades to be created by the Engineer Amphibian Command to three.

Thus, the Navy's campaign to keep the Army out of the boat business succeeded to the extent that the amphibians in the European theater were henceforth to be nothing more than shore party engineers, while in the portion of the Pacific under Admiral Nimitz's control there would be no specialized amphibian engineers at all. Only in the Southwest Pacific were the amphibian engineers to be given a chance to operate in the manner originally contemplated in the dark days of May, 1942.



Both sides paid dearly for Buna — the Japs paid more, yet lost.

CHAPTER II

Massachusetts

While the 1st Brigade was crossing the Atlantic to England, its place at Camp Edwards was taken by the 3d Engineer Amphibian Brigade activated on August 8, 1942 under the command of Colonel David A. D. Ogden. Its principal components, activated simultaneously, were the 533d Engineer Shore Regiment, the 593d Engineer Boat Regiment, the 263d Medical Battalion, the 563d Quartermaster Battalion, and many smaller service units. This form of organization persisted for three months before both boat and shore elements were integrated at the regimental level to form engineer amphibian regiments. So, to develop the early history of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment as it ultimately came to be known, it is necessary to look separately at the initial days of what were to be its principal components—the Boat Battalion and the Shore Battalion.

Boat Battalion

This section is the story of the 2d Battalion of the 593d Engineer Boat Regiment which was to become the Boat Battalion of the 533d EB&SR. The 593d, from which all of the boat elements of the 3d Brigade initially stemmed, was activated with a cadre of noncommissioned officers from the 71st Field Artillery Brigade, a New York National Guard unit. Although its tables of organization and equipment provided for a strength of over 3,000 men, principally composed of three identical engineer boat battalions and a fleet of 500 landing craft capable of embarking an entire infantry division, the 593d EBR never reached full strength, and throughout the three months of its existence it operated primarily as a flexible training command.

From the date of activation until the last day of August, the 2d Battalion remained in the east block of Camp Edwards. Its few score men and officers were barely sufficient to take care of administration and preparation for receiving the anticipated recruits. When a few could be spared from these routine duties, they attended specialist classes in piloting, seamanship, and marine maintenance. When Colonel Oliver W. van den Berg, a Regular Army officer who had, appropriately, matriculated at Annapolis, took command of the Regiment, he instituted an intensive training program designed to prepare the Regiment for large-scale combined arms exercises, which, it was expected, would take place in a matter of weeks.

Camp Edwards was located nearly in the center of Cape Cod, and the several miles which separated it from the landing craft delayed the training program. Accordingly, on August 31, the 2d Battalion moved to a tent camp at Cotuit, Massachusetts, which was conveniently close to the landing craft pool. The camp had been established by the 592d Engineer Boat Regiment and was, in fact, little more than an inferior bivouac. Hot water was for some weeks a rarity, which presented problems not only of personal hygiene, but of a military nature in maintaining proper cleanliness of uniform. Located as it was in a pine gully, drainage was difficult and sand

was ever present. Transportation to the neighboring towns was difficult, and on the whole the camp furnished a rude awakening to the recruits who arrived fresh from the reception centers. But it was undoubtedly a comparatively accurate forecast of what life overseas would be like. Ingenuity in providing refinements was soon developed to such an extent that the camp was given the name Candoit.

Training with the landing craft was soon interrupted by a brief flurry of excitement over the reported approach of German bombers from Brittany. The embryo Battalion was hastily deployed as antiaircraft gunners on .50 calibre machine guns in the Falmouth-Woods Hole area. Higher authority has yet to explain what profit transatlantic raiders would find in bombing a summer resort and how .50 calibre machine guns could inconvenience heavy bombers. While the Battalion was still widely scattered on this questionable assignment, Headquarters, Engineer Amphibian Command, stripped it of all enlisted men except the original cadre of noncommissioned officers. For the next three weeks, the Battalion existed with a bare 100 men. Its real function during this period was the operation of a casual officers' camp and school, for the influx of officers was greater than that of enlisted men, and at times the ratio between them was about equal. It was the general rule that NCOs were the instructors and inexperienced officers were the students in the classes which were held, covering all manner of subjects from semaphore and telephone to the use of the bayonet and the identification of naval vessels.

At the same time, the officers were being given intensive training afloat. Thanks to the facilities and personnel of the Amphibian Command's Boat Unit Detachment, which was well seasoned with experienced sailors and navigators from the Coast Guard and the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the officers learned to beach and retract LCVs, LCPRs and LCMs,* to pilot and do dead reckoning, and to control "waves" of boats. Night after night missions put to sea to make surprise landings on Martha's Vineyard and Chappaquiddick, with senior officers acting as wave leaders and lieutenants as coxswains. On at least one occasion, the landing was a surprise to the guardians of the beaches, and more than one officer found himself held at the point of a tommy gun by an aroused coast guardsman or civilian defense watcher. During this period the officers who were commissioned direct from civilian life on the basis of their nautical experience learned soldiering, the officers from Fort Belvoir, trained as combat engineers, learned boating, and both groups learned much of the eccentricities and shortcomings of the landing craft. When the task of training the 1,000 men who were to make up the Battalion was undertaken, this personal experience was to prove invaluable to the officers.

Early in October, enlisted replacements flowed in again in substantial numbers, and by the 5th of October the companies at last assumed the semblance of military entities. All of the original boat company commanders were transferred within a few months, but ten lieutenants who were assigned from battalion headquarters to letter companies that day continued with their companies throughout the war.

During the early fall months, the shortage of men and of boats furnished an excellent opportunity to use specialists' schools for the training of all ranks, and full advan-

*Explanation of abbreviations of landing craft and description of the different types will be found on pages 276-295.



Top: Doughboys dash out of an LCPR in maneuvers on Martha's Vineyard.

Bottom: Fuel and water cans are unloaded from LCVs of a later wave.

tage was taken of their facilities. Officers spent three-week periods at Harvard studying celestial navigation; maintenance officers, mechanics, and enginemen studied their field at General Motors and Gray Marine Diesel schools in Detroit and at the Hall-Scott school in Berkeley, California; and noncoms and coxswains learned the refinements of operating landing craft properly at the Higgins school in New Orleans.

Those who remained at Camp Candoit divided their time between boat training and the fundamentals of general military subjects. All men in the Battalion learned elementary boat handling with the Boat Unit Detachment, making cold, wet trips up and down Vineyard Sound and chewing up the beaches of Martha's Vineyard and Waquoit with their blunt-nosed boats.

Three general aspects of military training were emphasized ashore: communications, weapons, and conditioning. Commands shouted from one boat to another over the roar of Diesel engines result in confusion and sore throats, so all personnel were trained again and again in semaphore and blinker. The passing of a test in the former was made a condition precedent to a pass. In addition to learning to fire their basic shoulder weapons, all men were trained in machine gun fire against aerial targets in preparation for the day when the .30s or .50s on their craft might be their only protection against hostile aircraft. Finally, to prepare the men for grueling work with little rest, speed marches were held over the heavy sand roads. The short-

ness of time and the necessity of training both on land and sea led to the not-regretted result that spit and polish and close-order drill were definitely skimped.

On October 25, the Battalion finally received its first boats — only 27 badly abused LCPRs and LCVs. They had been the training aids for many others and showed the result of the earnest efforts of beginners, but they did provide a means of training as a unit and also furnished valuable experience to the maintenance personnel in putting them into satisfactory condition and keeping them that way. On the same day, a warning order came down from higher headquarters, indicating a prompt move was in the offing for large-scale amphibian maneuvers to take place at Carrabelle, Florida. There was no time to waste, and maximum use was made of the boats. Officers and boat crews of each company as a unit operated boats together for the first time. Mechanics started what was to prove a three-year uphill struggle to reduce the “dead line” of boats that always seemed a little too frail for the punishment they received.

On November 3, after the companies had been running their own exercises for a week, the Battalion ordered its first formal problem. Shortly after midnight, thirty boats with carefully selected crews slipped out of Cotuit Harbor and proceeded down to Hyannisport. A provisional rifle battalion composed of surplus boatmen marched from Camp Candoit to the Hyannisport beach where they swiftly and silently embarked on the landing craft. The little convoy ran back to the westward, and as dawn was breaking, landed in three waves at Waquoit. It was far from a perfect combined operation, but it presented on a small scale examples of the problems which could be expected in actual operations, and set the pattern for future intensive training. As soon as the problem ended, all the boats were run to Falmouth where they were loaded on flat cars for shipment to Florida.

The next four days were the turmoil that is always associated with a long rail movement by an inexperienced organization. To the usual packing, crating, and loading was added an emergency program of range firing of shoulder weapons. Even the men who had never had preliminary marksmanship training were required to fire for record, and the best that can be said for the resulting scores is that they showed the need for such training.

At dawn on November 10, Camp Candoit was struck, and during the afternoon the Battalion embarked on two trains, happy to exchange the frigid waters of Vineyard Sound for the reaches of the Gulf of Mexico, which all fondly expected to be balmy and semi-tropical. Simultaneously, the 593d Boat Regiment ceased to exist, and its 2d Battalion became the 1st Battalion of the newly-activated 533d Engineer Amphibian Regiment under the command of Colonel Charles T. Tench. Companies D, E, and F were renamed A, B, and C respectively, but there was no change in their personnel, organization, or primary mission.

Shore Battalion

On August 8, 1942, the 533d Engineer Shore Regiment was activated at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, under the command of Major Bruce Russell. At the start,



Top: Shore engineers erect beach markers and unroll strips of Somervell matting to provide a temporary road for vehicles soon to be landed.



Bottom: The matting, of chicken wire stiffened with soft iron rods, is further strengthened with steel edge strips and staked down to prevent curling under the weight of the heavily loaded trucks.

the Regiment was made up of but a dozen officers and no enlisted men, but by the end of the month sufficient cadremen had been received to man the key posts in a headquarters and in three shore battalions. Of these three battalions, the first was later to become the Shore Battalion of the 533d EB&SR.

At the end of August, Colonel Charles T. Tench, a graduate of West Point in 1929, took command of the Regiment and Major Eldon F. Ziegler, also a Regular Army man, was appointed his executive officer. In the middle of September, all of the 1st Battalion of the 533d ESR was transferred to activate another regiment and the Battalion had then to be built up anew. Capt. DeWitt L. McLallen, a West Pointer who had been out of the service for more than fifteen years, took command of the 1st Battalion, which by then consisted of five officers and sixty enlisted men who had been transferred from the 532d Engineer Shore Regiment. Both officers and men were comparatively new in service and were completely lacking in knowledge of amphibian warfare. Their training in the branch of service in which they were to serve went little further than the identification of the colored pieces of cloth known as beach markers. With great enthusiasm, however, the cadre entered its new organization, and received the exalted ratings which generally fall to the lot of a cadre.

The training at Camp Edwards was primarily basic, but some conditioning, engineer construction, and orientation in beach operations was included. Many in the Battalion had received their first M-1 rifles, and a thorough course in rifle marksmanship with range firing was given priority. Interest in range firing, competitive spirit, and pride in the respective companies was stimulated when the regimental commander offered a three-day pass to the company making the best showing. Since no general passes or furloughs were being allowed at that time, the offer was

greatly appreciated and personnel showed great zeal. Company C proved to be the winner, and it was not surprising that when the day upon which the passes ended arrived, Company C also led the Battalion in number of men AWOL.

Training in construction was for the most part limited to carpentry, for heavy equipment had not yet been drawn. Materials were scarce, but a fair knowledge of their use was gained by building miniature models and by repairing existing camp facilities. Instruction in driving and care of vehicles was given to all potential motor pool personnel, and a limited number of drivers learned to operate tracked-type equipment through the use of small tractors. Physical conditioning was not ignored, for swimming and hikes were scheduled regularly. Most of the hikes were made to Ranger Camp, seventeen miles away, where the men learned the advantages and disadvantages of life in the open.

Beach training also was stressed, despite the lack of equipment and satisfactory terrain. Many "dry runs" were held in which beach landings were simulated and beach markers were set up, roads staked, dump sites selected, advance positions established, aid stations located, and experiments made in many other phases of the operation of a beachhead. Early knowledge of cargo handling was gained by the Battalion in helping with experiments conducted at Sandy Neck. LCTs were decked over, and a workable facsimile of a cargo ship was produced by using a Quickway crane as a cargo boom. By this means familiarity was attained with ships' gear, cargo gear, stowing of cargo, and discharge of cargo with both DUKWs and alligators.

Schools were put to full use, and cooks, bakers, and cobblers studied appropriate courses. Approximately twenty men were sent to amphibian tractor school in Florida, while others went to boat or navigation school. Special lectures and demonstrations in crew-served weapons filled out the courses of instruction.

For some time rumors had been rife of an impending reorganization and a possible move to a winter training site, and these rumors came true early in November. The 533d Engineer Shore Regiment became the 533d Engineer Amphibian Regiment, of which the 2d Battalion had been the 1st Battalion of the 533d ESR. The companies were redesignated as Headquarters 2d Battalion, D, E and F, and the Battalion prepared to become part of a regiment that apparently would be even more unorthodox.

The move, it developed, was to Carrabelle, Florida, which caused general jubilation except for those who were familiar with northwestern Florida. It seemed that the unit was being unusually well taken care of — Cape Cod in the summer and Florida in the winter — and there was some doubt as to whether Sherman was right. Before moving out, the usual orders to clear all sick soldiers were received, and the usual confusion of packing, crating, building of kitchen cars, and loading of vehicles took place. It was the first major move for both battalions, and everything was done the hard way. Mess sergeants and cooks later learned that their duties while aboard a troop train were not insurmountably difficult, but at that time the consensus of opinion was that no one would eat well enroute. Security regulations also were new to the troops and caused some irritation, as when contact with civilians on platforms was rigidly banned. Some trains were all Pullman, others largely coaches, but the trip lasted only 48 hours and spirits were generally high.

CHAPTER III

Florida

The 533d Engineer Amphibian Regiment soon learned that Camp Carrabelle was an orphan of the resort state of Florida. The terrain was flat and covered with jack pines. The water had a high sulphur content. Snakes were numerous, and it appeared as if every farmer in the region used the roads as a playground for his hogs. It was a rude shock to find that the balmy weather that had been anticipated was very much absent, and many mutterings were heard that November was warmer in Massachusetts than at Carrabelle.

The camp was more livable than the 1st Battalion had been accustomed to at Cotuit. The barracks were standard 100-foot by 20-foot tar paper shacks with kitchens and showers nearby. There was not always enough hot water, and plumbing was a thing of the past, but on the whole the facilities were adequate, and after mess halls and day rooms had been dressed up, Camp Carrabelle became a satisfactory home.

Those northerners in the Regiment who had thought of Florida as a state completely filled with resorts, recreation, and bathing beauties suffered a rude disappointment. The nearest town, Carrabelle, was dismal proof that *Tobacco Road* was not a figment of its author's imagination. To the north one passed through Sopchoppy and other towns made up of a few shacks and a swarm of hogs, until Tallahassee was reached, sixty miles away. There was a highway which ran in front of the camp, connecting Apalachicola to the west with Tallahassee. The traffic was light and bus service was, for all practical purposes, non-existent. It was soon obvious that the Florida Board of Commerce would not be flattered to hear the opinion of the newest residents of its northwest section.



Pier 2, Carrabelle, looking shorewards; boats of Boat Battalion Headquarters Company in the foreground.



A wave of LCPRs hits G Beach, Carrabelle, as a Shore Battalion bulldozer stands by; the lower picture was snapped only 20 seconds after the upper, yet in that time the boat in the foreground was completely emptied and its ramp raised ready to retract.

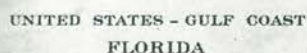
The 3d Engineer Amphibian Brigade, of which the new Regiment was a part, was attached to the Amphibious Training Command with the principal mission of training infantry divisions in amphibian warfare and a subordinate mission of gaining as much training for its own units as it could on the side. When the Regiment moved into camp, there was no infantry division present to be trained, which was most fortunate, for much work had to be done.

The Shore Battalion was detailed to construct a suitable landing beach for the loading and unloading of vehicles. The best site available was low and marshy, and required a great deal of fill. Since only native materials were available, the battalion commander decided to corduroy the entire area. The work was divided among the companies, and under supervision of the battalion engineer officer the first major construction job began. One platoon of each company was set to work felling and trimming logs. Another loaded and hauled the logs to the beach area, and the third laid the logs and wired them. It was the Battalion's first coordinated effort, and it worked out well considering the rough materials and the unsatisfactory nature of the area. This loading beach stood up well in the succeeding weeks and proved that the Battalion, after whose commander the beach was named, was capable of accomplishing much with few tools and materials.

In the middle of November the Boat Battalion drew a battered fleet of about 100 assorted LCPRs, LCPLs, and LCVs, powered by every known type of Diesel and gasoline engine, and the boat companies soon learned that there was nothing subtropical about northwest Florida. The temperature averaged around 40 degrees during most of the winter and occasionally dropped below 20, and these temperatures, while afloat, were made to seem many degrees lower. Dog Island Sound, on which most of the boat training took place, was extremely shoal, and all but a few beaches were so flat as to be unthinkable as targets for a landing force. Even more important, there was no surf except during high winds, so coxswains easily became over confident and lax in their beaching and retracting. Among the assets of Carrabelle from the point



Doughboys move on the double from their assembly area to board a waiting wave of LCPRs.

Scale $\frac{1}{10000}$

SOUNDINGS IN FEET
AT MEAN LOW WATER¹

	Cambelle Cambelle River	Sold Point Odocoileus Bay	St. Marks Lighthouse	St. Marks Island
<i>Mean high water</i>	1.6 ft.	2.0 ft.	2.4 ft.	2.4 ft.
<i>Mean low water</i>	0.2 ft.	1.0 ft.	1.2 ft.	1.2 ft.
<i>Lowest tide to be expected</i>	-2.5 ft.	-2.5 ft.	-3.0 ft.	-3.0 ft.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations: F, food; FL, feeding; Q, quail; 1 Q, interrupted quail; S-L, short legs; Oct, oscillating; Alt, alternating; G, grass; W, white; R, red; G, green; m, male; min, minutes; sec, seconds; ex, every; va, variable; M, male; BSC, obscured; AERO, aerodynamical; R, right; S, size; C, use; 4, use; 4, use; REF, reflection; Day, daytime; (L, light; h, hour; and h, hour; are white unless otherwise indicated.)

C.D. Coast Guard Station. R.T. radio tower.

HEIGHTS in feet above mean high water

A. STEINBAUGH AND

*Topography by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1834-1940.
Hydrography by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1872-1889 and 1925.
Supplemented by U. S. Engineer drawings in dredged channels to 1943.*

STUDY 284 • 1994

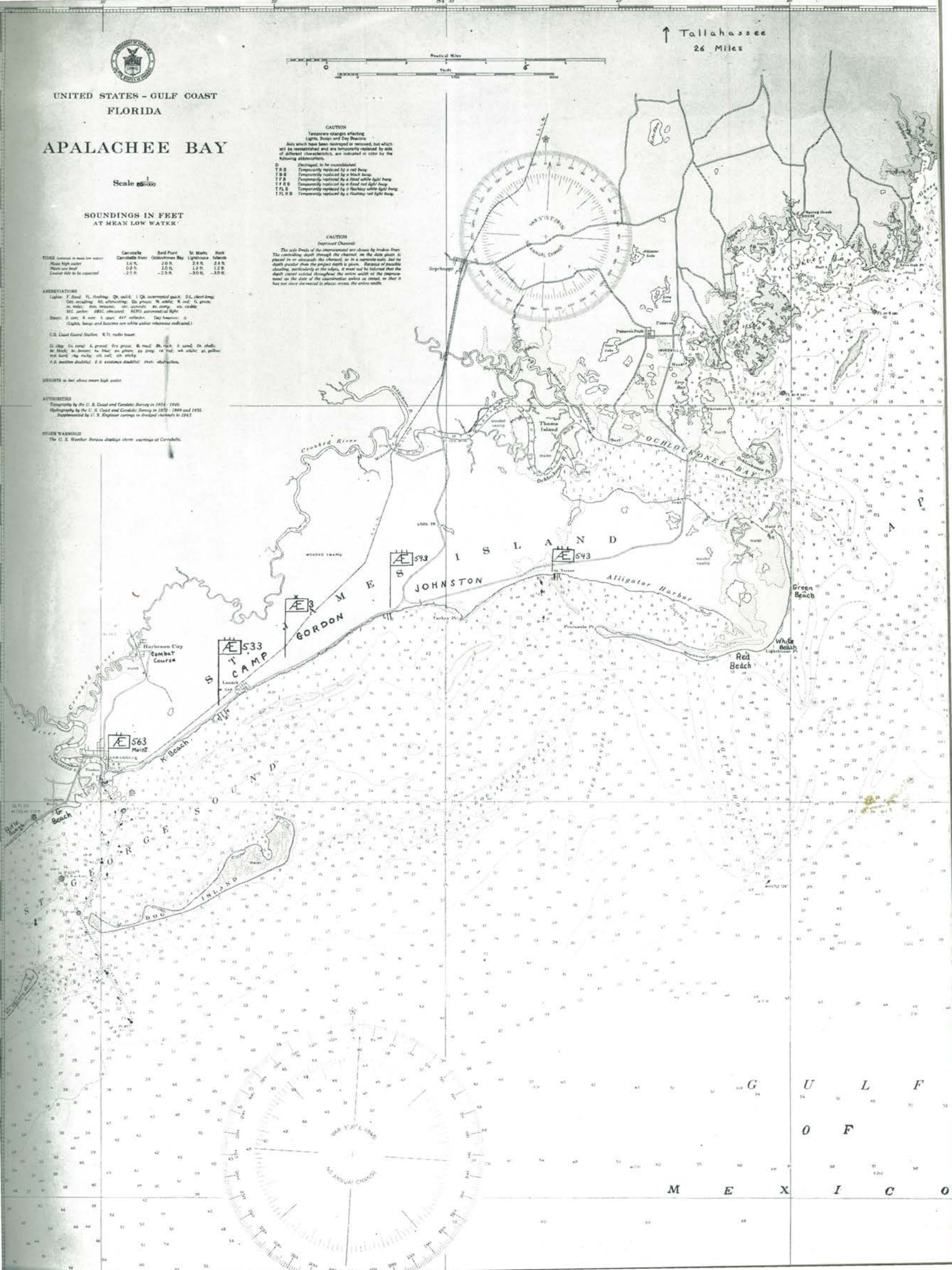
The U. S. Weather Service displays storm warnings at Cannobelle.

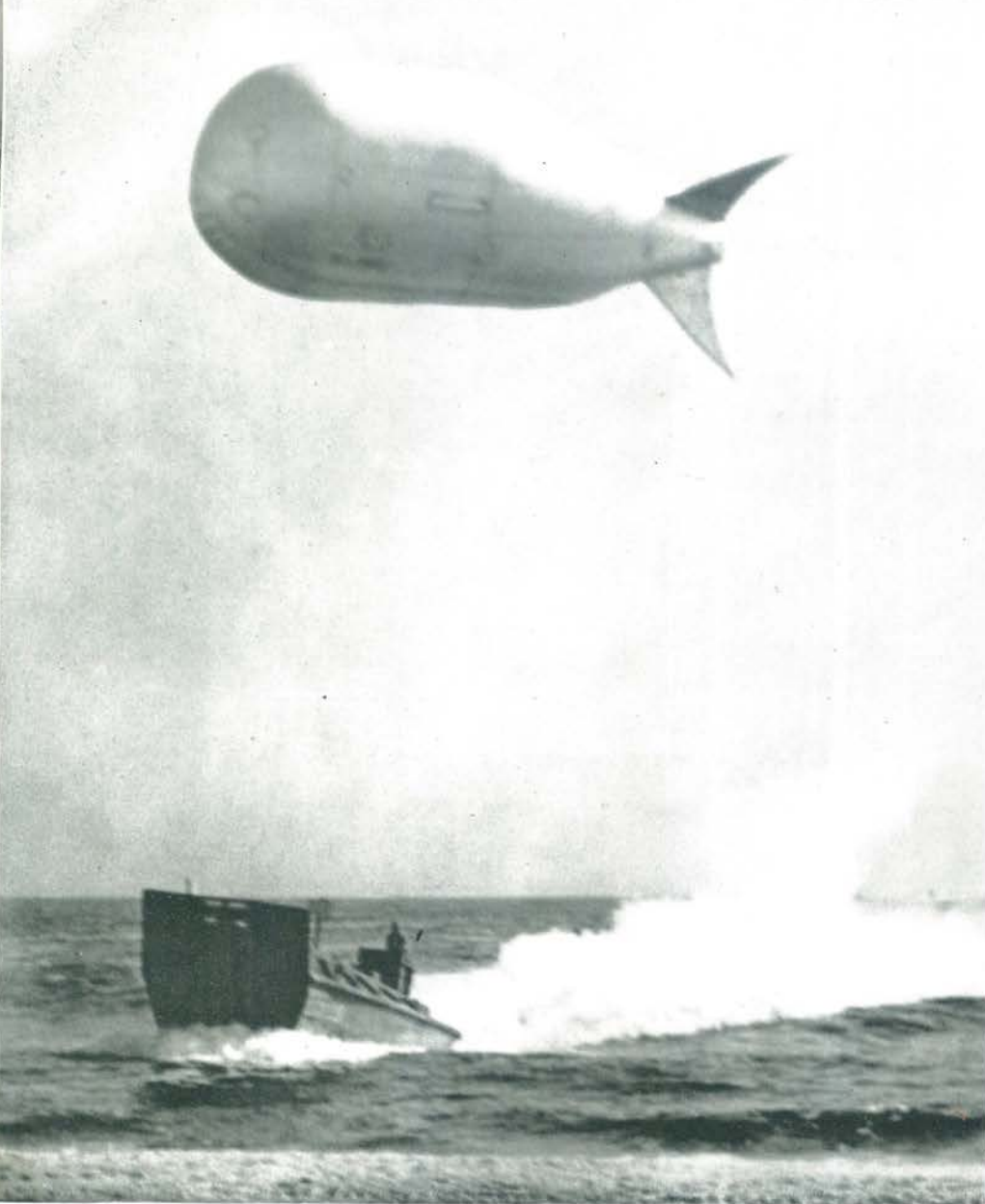
CAUTION
Temporary changes affecting
Lights, Srops and Day Beacons
Aids which have been destroyed or removed, but which
will be reestablished and are temporarily replaced by aids
of different characteristics, are indicated in color by the
following abbreviations:

Destroyed, to be reestablished.
① Temporarily replaced by a red buoy.
② Temporarily replaced by a black buoy.
③ Temporarily replaced by a third white light buoy.
④ Temporarily replaced by a third red light buoy.
⑤ Temporarily replaced by a flashing white light buoy.
⑥ Temporarily replaced by a flashing red light buoy.

CAUTION
Improved Channel

The side limits of the improvement are shown by broken lines. The controlling depth through the channel, on the date placed, is placed in or alongside the channel, or in a separate notch, but no depth greater than the project depth is given. Distance of possible shoaling, particularly at the edge, it must not be inferred that the depth stated existed throughout the entire width of the improvement on the date of the action as stated, or that it has not since changed in place, size, or the entire width.





Right: LCVs landing various types of equipment — from top to bottom: Shore engineers with beach markers and sled; antitank gun section; 105 mm howitzer; jeep with radio.

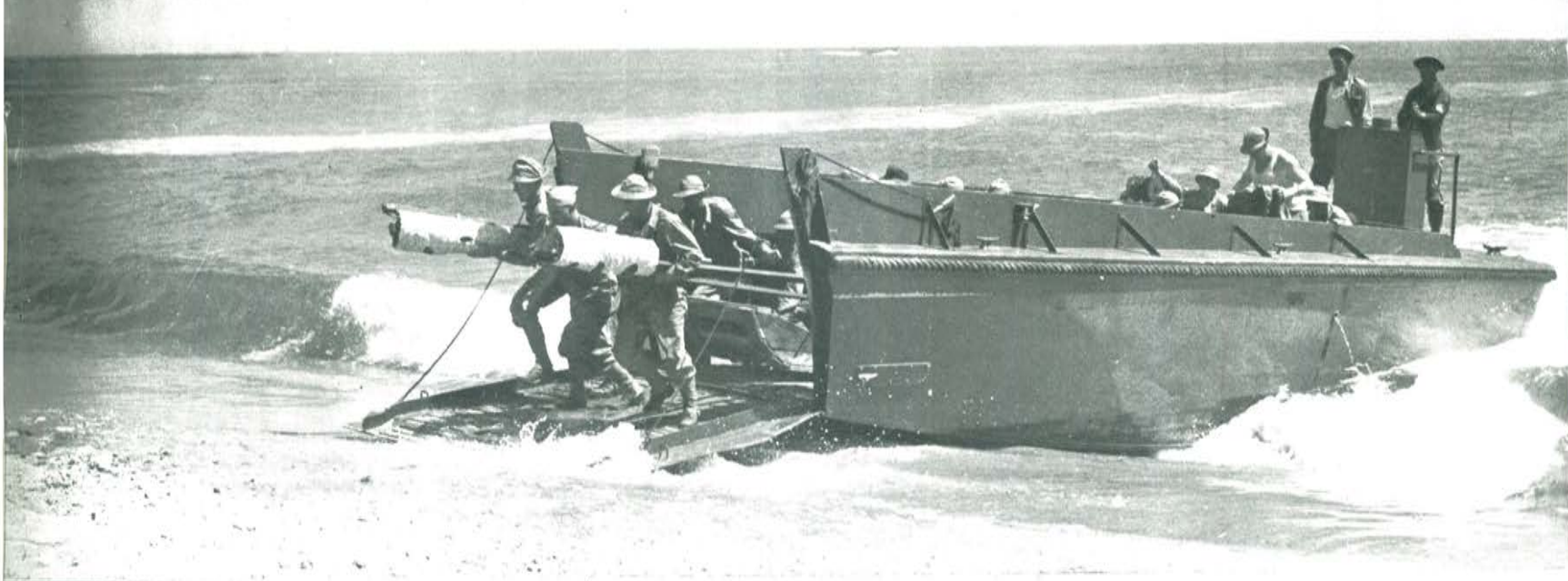
Left: An LCVP “with a bone in her teeth” towing a barrage balloon.

of view of the Boat Battalion were the three 1000-foot piers, one of which was assigned to each letter company, and which made an ideal arrangement for boat administration and maintenance. It is true that some problems came near to failure before they were even begun because of low tide, for some of the boats moored to the piers were found to be high and dry, but on the whole the piers proved to be workable and satisfactory.

Before the maintenance sections had an opportunity to give the boats some sadly needed maintenance, the ATC issued orders under which the boats were employed to capacity in training exercises. In late November, combined training with the 38th Infantry Division began in earnest, with the 533d working with the 149th Regimental

Men from a heavy weapons company land smartly from an LCPR.







D-4 dozer slithers down the ramp of a Bureau-type LCM; note emergency tow line already fastened in case the dozer bogs down.

Combat Team and Division Troops. Generally speaking, the mission of the Boat Battalion was to transport troops in accordance with prearranged problems, and the Shore Battalion was to provide facilities, instruction, demonstrations, and advice. Preliminary training instruction was given in chocking and lashing of vehicles in landing craft, and through demonstrations and assistance the infantry soon learned the best method of loading, securing, and unloading their own equipment. They also became familiar with the mission of the Regiment and its organization.

The Boat Battalion was also engaged in basic training for the infantry, and the fact that the boats were called upon to train a regiment, whereas there were barely enough to train a battalion, made the pressure pretty heavy. The usual schedule was for a departure at 0600, two hours before dawn, for K beach, and a return at 2000, well after dark. During this time, the troops were instructed in the types of boats, their general characteristics, and the number of troops each could carry. The next step required troops to embark in the boats, take a turn on the Sound, and then to make a simulated landing at the place where they had embarked. Full attention was given to boat discipline, and to the requirement that the coxswain was in full command of his boat and all personnel aboard regardless of rank. This aspect of boat discipline was one that caused trouble as long as the Regiment was active.

The second phase of the training consisted of running small problems, usually consisting of an infantry battalion supported by a shore company. In these exercises, the shore companies perfected their organization and technique in laying out and marking beaches and supply dumps, construction of roadways using various types of wire matting, directing the orderly movement of troops and equipment, and serving as an information center, while the boat companies perfected their wave discipline, navigation, piloting and maintenance. Each of the two battalions became familiar for the first time with the work of the other, and it was soon learned that the closest cooperation between them was essential in landing operations. Small exercises were followed by larger ones, and from day time the operations were moved to night. After about the third week, the confusion and the wet, cold misery of night landings were unhappily familiar to all. The shallow water of the Sound produced a sharp,

Right: A small tractor gets a thorough dunking as an LCV grounds on a sandbar. Plenty of man power manages to extricate it.





After a cold Dog Island dawn landing, a pair of beach control men check in by phone with the Beachmaster's CP as the crew of a water-cooled .50 calibre antiaircraft machine gun scans the sky for hostile planes.

choppy sea, and the spray deluged the boats and their occupants. The necessity for waterproofing became painfully evident to both battalions, and warm, dry clothing reached a popularity never before attained by the uniform.

The boats had been in poor condition when received, and the lack of opportunity for a complete overhaul gave them a bad start. Once in use, the boats had no rest, and this virtually ceaseless operation on beaches protected by steep, hard sandbars, placed an almost insupportable burden on the maintenance section, to which adequate tools and parts were unknown. The 533d met this situation by concentrating as much responsibility as possible on the boat companies, and gave them all possible personnel and facilities to do their own work, even if that meant infringing on the sacred 3rd echelon reserve of the 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion. The other regiments of the Brigade complied with the echelon set-up, and there thus commenced a battle between the 533d and the rest of the Brigade that was not finally resolved until the Regiment had been overseas for six months. By that time, the need for unified control of operations and maintenance at the company level could no longer be denied. The tremendous pressure that was cast upon the company mechanics at Carrabelle unquestionably developed in them an ingenuity and a resourcefulness which was the salvation of their companies when they were forced to operate separately overseas.

In mid-December came the first large-scale maneuvers, in the first of which the Regiment distinguished itself in landing the 149th Regimental Combat Team. The big reinforced divisional problem was scheduled for the 17th, 18th, and 19th of December, in which two full regimental combat teams were to be loaded during the evening on the boats of the 533d and 593d, to move thirty miles down the coast under the strictest blackout, and to land on a peninsula an hour before daybreak. The embarkation of 10,000 troops in nearly 300 craft went well; the beach was well organized, all things considered; and the problem was off to a good start. In the darkness between moonset and dawn, the Boat Battalion slipped badly. The Boat Battalion commander in the lead boat had no information as to the effect of the currents in the area, and relied too implicitly on an untested ancient radio homing device, and he led the column past the peninsula before turning toward land. Once on the prescribed last leg of the course the flotilla could not be diverted. Daylight disclosed a most appalling mess. Most of the boats had shot into the bay beyond Red Beach and were busily discharging their troops on islands and in mangrove swamps in the vicinity of Live Oak Point. Some wave leaders realized the error and tried



Testing the beach wire net as a barrage balloon and its winch are unloaded from a Higgins-type LCM.

to unsnarl the tangle, but they were considerably hampered by an extremely effective smoke screen which had been laid down by the amphibian chemical units. Some of the doughboys who had plunged ashore with such elan that they could not be recalled and re-embarked had to march 25 miles to get back into the problem.

At the objective, Red Beach, a group of international brass hats, headed by the late Lieutenant General McNair, commanding Army Ground Forces, awaited the landing, stop watches in hand. At H hour plus an hour and a half, the anguished liaison officers from the Brigade saw the first wave appear over the horizon, but when the wave had beached and the troops had debarked, it was discovered that the shock troops spearheading the landing were parts of a medical battalion and an ordnance company which were promptly annihilated by the enemy. The second wave delivered the medium artillery of the Division, which was not only annihilated but had its weapons turned to sea to await the arrival of the remainder of the landing force. This was more than the brass hats could appreciate, and they left in disgust, thus saving themselves the sight of even worse confusion.

The prestige of the Boat Battalion suffered a severe blow as a result of this fiasco. But it had a healthy effect on the overconfidence of its leaders, and it convinced higher authority that something more than a compass and a lead line was necessary

An umpire checks beach layout during landing exercise.





Night loading; *Top*: a 2½-ton truck climbs the ramp of an LCT; *Bottom*: a wave of LCPRs with ramps up awaits the signal to retract.

On Red Beach a beach control man "rogers" for a signal from a boat approaching an ammunition landing point.



if a pin-point landing under cover of darkness was to be made. From this debacle stemmed allowances of taffrail logs, radio compasses, peloruses, night glasses, and ultimately even radar. It further became evident that special navigation officers with appropriately equipped boats were necessary, whose sole function would be to lead the mission along a prescribed course, while the commander of the mission and others in free boats could ride herd without concern for navigation. This system, born of chaos, was used successfully throughout the war.

The maneuver was repeated a week later on a clear night in a strong northwest wind with the temperature just above freezing. For many it was as miserable a night as they had spent in the service, but despite the hazards of the weather, the problem was a reasonable success and did much to rehabilitate the spirits and reputation of the unit.

Meanwhile, Christmas had come and gone, and it cannot be said that the Yule spirit was entirely rampant. The small city of Tallahassee, ill equipped to handle a large body of men, was forced to close its restaurants to service men, and thousands of men with passes in their pockets found themselves left at camp for lack of transportation. The Christmas dinner was good, however, and the break in the strict training routine was most welcome.

During the month of January, the 38th Division moved away and the 28th Division moved in. The break in divisional training was utilized fully for unit training. The Shore Battalion, whose confidence had not suffered a jolt in the divisional problem, was shaken out of any semblance of overconfidence by innumerable assaults on Dog Island, a flat, undesirable stretch of sand located in the Gulf just off the coast of Carrabelle. No one could understand why any self-respecting program would require the capture of the island. Nonetheless, problems went on and on until the men claimed that they knew every grain of sand on the island and on the beaches and bars which protected it. The Shore Battalion took turns in being shore



Another view of Red Beach showing tractor standing by to aid stranded vehicles.



Shore engineers quickly lay beach matting over the soft sands of Red Beach.

party and infantry, and although the problems lacked excitement and required that all personnel wade ashore in water ranging as high as their armpits, much benefit was derived by everyone — with the probable exception of Dog Island.

The Boat Battalion was also taking part in the daily attacks on Dog Island and was learning valuable lessons in making up waves of boats, in handling waves in narrow channels, and in timing the last run from the point of departure to the beach. It should be added that prior to this time the shortage of boats was such that a wave leader, in order to meet his commitment, was forced to steal a boat from another wave that had already been made up. This practice, which was the father of tremendous confusion, finally disappeared during the Dog Island days. Of particular value during this period to the Boat Battalion were the teachings of Lt. Peter R. G. Worth, R.N., whose familiarity with the work of the commando beach parties in France and Norway gave solid foundations based on actual experience to the beach control sections, especially in salvaging stranded boats. To the Regiment as a whole, this unit training period was invaluable, for it gave an opportunity to rectify the deficiencies in training and standard procedures which had been mercilessly disclosed during the training with the 38th Division.

At the end of January, the Regiment furnished a cadre to form the 4th Engineer Amphibian Brigade. The regimental commander stated, in handing out to the subordinate units the requirements they would have to fill, that he demanded a good



High ranking French officers observe the landing of the 28th Division on Red Beach. Tear gas sprayed from planes caused the donning of gas masks.

cadre and that it was not to be considered as an opportunity to dispose of misfits. This order was obeyed in letter and spirit, and the Regiment felt ever after that it showed exemplary generosity.

Shortly after the cadre had left, training began with the 28th Division, and it progressed rapidly and smoothly throughout February, as the men and officers of the Regiment had profited by the experience with the 38th Division. As far as the Shore Battalion was concerned, training of this division was pretty much routine except for the final divisional problem. To make sure that there would be no flaws in the final show on Red Beach, a two-day rehearsal was held on the site. The dry run worked out smoothly, and the Shore Battalion felt that it was ready for almost any emergency. The Boat Battalion, remembering the Ides of December, was reasonably confident, but determined to redeem itself. The rehearsal for the divisional problem produced the only potentially grave accident when the LCPRs of the Boat Battalion commander and the commander of Company C had a head-on collision while running at high speed in the dark. One of the boats was completely demolished, and a high-ranking observer was sent back to Washington with a fractured hand and a bilious opinion of night aquatic maneuvers.

On the 4th of March the divisional problem began with 181 boats. The embarkation of thousands of troops and hundreds of vehicles in blackout and the dark of the moon left little to be desired. Each of the boat companies had a navigation boat, and the executive officer of the Boat Battalion led the way. This time, thanks to the lessons learned in December, the first wave was but a few minutes late and directly at the appointed spot on Red Beach, and the succeeding waves emerged from the blackness on schedule. During the day the boats returned to the near shore where they reloaded, and the Shore Battalion proceeded efficiently to organize the far shore, despite an early morning tear gas attack which resulted in considerable sneezing and embarrassment on the part of those caught without their gas masks.

The boats left G Beach for the second time carrying the reserve combat team on what looked like an easy routine mission. Shortly after sunset, however, the wind backed from southwest to south and began to freshen sharply. By 2130 the surf was

Colonel Tench (*left*) confers with Brigadier General Ogden (*center*) and Colonel Trudeau, Chief of Staff of EAC, during the maneuvers on Red Beach.



the highest the Regiment had ever encountered. Prior to midnight, by use of lessons learned from Lt. Worth, beached and partially swamped boats were pulled into deep water. By this time a moderate gale was blowing on shore in gusts of 40 miles per hour. The rain came down in sheets and torrents, and visibility was zero except during bursts of lightning. The barrage balloons which floated above the landing barges were an inevitable target for the lightning, and the flaming hydrogen and the white-hot steel cables produced an eerie effect that few will ever forget.

As they retracted from the far shore, some of the boats lacked the power to



A mixed wave of LCVs and LCMs takes on its second load at G Beach a few hours before the big storm broke up the 28th Division's maneuvers.

breast the seas and were forced back and driven ashore. Anchored cabin cruisers became unwilling landing craft. Those boats that continued to struggle back to the near shore were kept afloat only by pumping and bailing. Some passed inside Dog Island, counting on the record high tide to clear the bars, and reached the shelter of the Carrabelle River. Others more prudently stayed to seaward of the island, but as sometimes happens to prudent men, the western point of the island could not be weathered and many boats piled up there. By 0400 the wind had reached a force of 50 miles per hour and the breaking seas in the shallow sound were 20 feet high.

As the Boat Battalion fought during the night to keep its boats from destruction, the Shore Battalion was pressed into service saving men and equipment from the storm. At dawn the storm had subsided to a flat calm, dying as dramatically as it had come to life, but the extraordinary fury of the seas left a souvenir in the form of a large bell buoy, bottom side up, its clangers entangled in its mooring chains, mute evidence of the storm's violence. Search parties were organized to patrol the shore, lending aid to boat crews and passengers, and the boats that had survived were formed into patrols to search the sea for disabled craft. Not a man was lost from the

AFTER THE BIG STORM

A power cruiser command boat is shored up as a canal is dug to get it back into the water.



Landing craft and ex-yacht strewn helter-skelter on the sands of Dog Island.



Shore Battalion dozer cutting the canal to the boat in the top picture.



A Coast Guard patrol craft also wound up high and dry.





At D Beach troops practice passage of beach obstacles as a mine explodes at the water's edge.

Regiment's boats or on the Regiment's beaches, but strewn along 27 miles of coast line by ones and by groups were 39 boats of the 533d, some up among the trees, others wedged against cottage porches, and still others just heaped together on the sand like driftwood. As the two battalions and the 563d Maintenance Battalion worked together with tractor cranes and tackle, another valuable lesson in cooperation was learned. It was more than 48 hours before all the boats were salvaged.

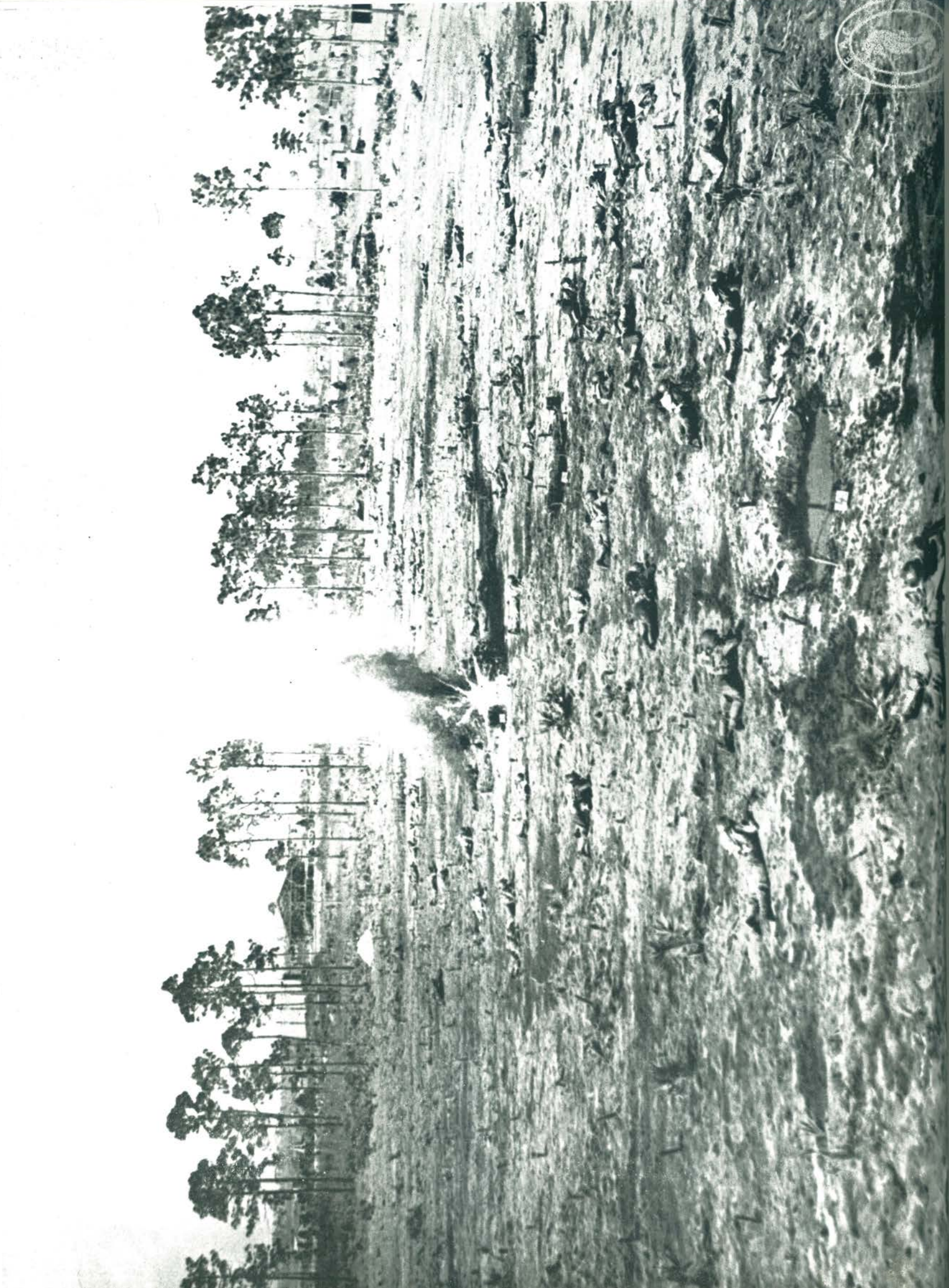
That same week the Amphibious Training Command was abolished and its activities turned over to the Navy. A period of rumor-packed suspense followed, during which the boatmen had visions of being transferred bag and baggage to the Navy, and the shore engineers considered worriedly the possibility of becoming infantrymen. But this suspense was soon ended when word came down that the Regiment would move shortly to the West Coast and be committed to the Pacific theater. After the storm, a few demonstration problems were held, mostly for the benefit of directors of training films, and the boats were laid up and shipped back to Cape Cod by rail.

Meanwhile, the training of two divisions had resulted in neglect of basic military subjects, and major effort was turned to arms qualifications. The Shore Battalion aided in the construction of a firing range and the entire Regiment went through a thorough course of preliminary instruction, qualification, and range firing. The highest individual score in the Brigade up to that time went to the honor of the Shore Battalion, and the general improvement in percentage of qualification was gratifying. Training for jungle warfare was also undergone, and the Shore Battalion put in considerable time on general engineer construction, especially fixed bridges.

The last seagoing exploit of the Boat Battalion in eastern waters came early in April when a heterogeneous fleet of ex-power yachts from 50 feet to 23 feet over-all were sailed to Fort Pierce on Florida's east coast and delivered to the Navy. There was no time to make a series of leisurely daylight trips from port to port, so the little flotilla cut straight across the corner of the Gulf to Clearwater thence down the coast to Fort Meyers. A complete lack of spare parts and limited fuel capacity caused much towing, but the boats were finally maneuvered through the Lake Okeechobee Canal and up the inland waterway to Fort Pierce, 445 miles in four days.

On April 2, Colonel Tench relinquished command of the Regiment to Lt. Colonel Zeigler, and departed for duty with the G-3 section at General MacArthur's headquarters.

The next fortnight was again filled with the chores attendant upon a move. Show-down inspections were frequent, and their necessity was evidenced by the length of the lists of missing items. Unit training continued until the last possible moment, but it was dovetailed efficiently with intensive packing, crating, chocking, and blocking. The lessons first learned on the move from Massachusetts to Florida simplified the preparations considerably, and when at the end of the third week of April the Regiment entrained, it was with far less confusion and followed by less complete exhaustion than had been the case the previous November. It is quite possible that the move was made the more easily because of the conviction of everyone that the future station could not be anything but an improvement over Carrabelle.



CHAPTER IV

California

Easter week, the last week in April, 1942, found four trains rolling westward by different routes, carrying the entire Regiment. Despite the variety of routes, all elements required six days for the trip. It was a pleasant journey on the whole, and the rest was enjoyed and well deserved by all. If boredom was occasionally experienced during the last day or so on the train, it was not surprising, but there was no audible complaint on that score.

From the moment the Regiment detrained at Ford Ord, it became apparent that it had moved to a far, far better place. The East Garrison was an exclusive outpost of the Fort located a few miles to the east of the main post. If it was farther from Monterey than the main post, it was nearer to Salinas and to San Francisco, so there was little to complain about. The area itself was not unattractive; the cantonment barracks differed little from those at Carrabelle, but the mess halls, latrines, post exchanges, movie theatres, and recreational facilities in general were a vast improvement. After the isolation of Carrabelle, the proximity of Salinas, Monterey, Carmel, San Jose, and even San Francisco made passes for the first time a real opportunity for enjoyment.

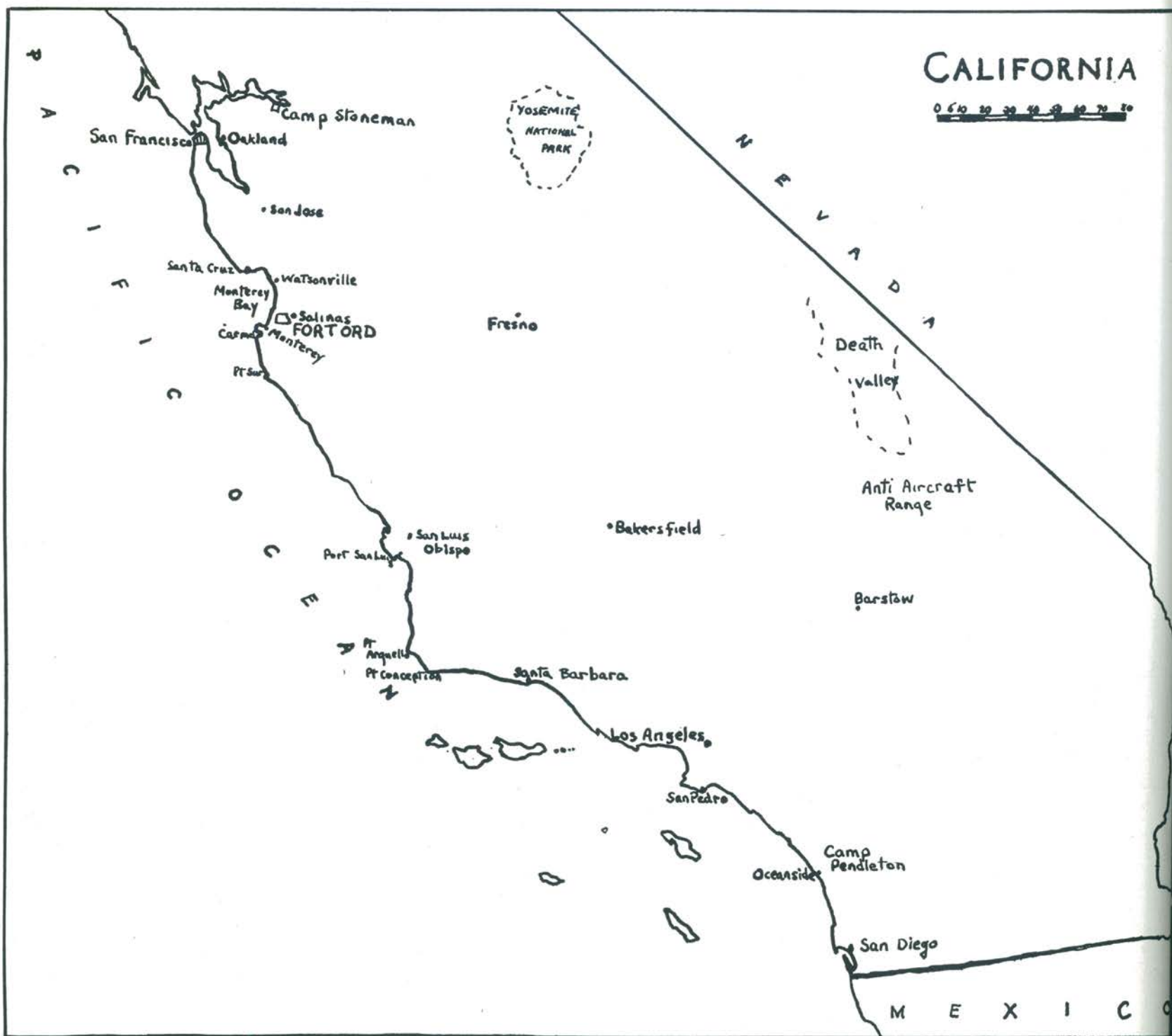
The Regiment had been given an alert date of July 1, which permitted only two months in which to correct as far as possible the deficiencies that had been made so painfully evident at the last station. As a result, the time allotted for organizing the new area was cut to the barest minimum. Although facilities were generally excellent, those appropriate to our special requirements were distinctly lacking at Fort Ord and when to this lack was added the uncertainty as to the future disposition of the Regiment, the establishment and carrying out of a realistic and comprehensive training program was extremely difficult.

The entire tables of organization and equipment of an engineer amphibian regiment had been drastically revamped. Some of the changes were needed and intelligent, but many more removed essential equipment and personnel, and the over-all result was so far below what experience showed was the minimum that it was hard to believe that Washington had given any serious consideration to the lessons of Casablanca and the maneuvers in Florida. That was a bitter pill which could be charged

Left: the infiltration course at Harbeson City near Carrabelle provided as realistic a foretaste of combat as could be conceived without inflicting casualties on the trainees.

Right: Road march at Fort Ord as seen from a liaison plane.





off to army "snafu," but even more bitter was the change in name. The 533d Engineer Amphibian Regiment had felt that its name reflected to some extent its duties, but now the War Department dropped the word "Amphibian" and redesignated it the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment. This tongue-twisting title was to be a source of confusion and embarrassment throughout the war, leading as it did to such corruptions as "Boot and Shoe" and "Boar and Shoat" Regiment. The Brigade too was given a new name, hereafter being known by the mysterious title of 3d Engineer Special Brigade. One rumor, perhaps the illegitimate offspring of the navy rumors in Florida, had it that the Navy had forced the Army to drop the word "Amphibian." More probably, however, the name was changed to assist certain less

brilliant headquarters in Washington which continually found themselves confusing engineer amphibian brigades with engineer aviation battalions.

Colonel Wayne S. Moore, a West Pointer with 23 years of service in the Corps of Engineers, arrived at Fort Ord to take command of the Regiment. At this time he found that heavy equipment for training Shore Battalion operators was in desperately short supply. And the Boat Battalion boasted the occasional use of something over sixty battered LCPRs and LCPLs, composing the entire fleet available for training all the boat battalions of the Brigade — slightly more than one-tenth of their authorized strength. As a result, training programs directed to primary missions had to be staggered by regiments, and a large portion of the time was devoted to secondary matters or improvised substitutes. The field expedient and the simulated substitute were called upon for assistance far too often to produce substantial results.

Conditioning was stressed throughout the stay at Fort Ord. Battalion speed marches were an almost daily affair. Few will forget the five-mile-per-hour saunters

The training areas of Fort Ord dotted with scrub oaks had little in common with the jungles for which the Regiment was trying to prepare.



Ship carpenters of C Company learn the rudiments of boat building by constructing a dory in the company street. At Saidor, New Guinea, this dory was traded to a PT squadron for gunboat armament and maintenance supplies.



along the dusty, steep trails that wound through the canyons of the training area, and a ten-mile wading trip down the bed of the Salinas River is no less memorable. Physical fitness programs were initiated with such zeal that there might be some question as to whether ultimately they built up the collective physique of the Regiment or tore it down. An intensive swimming program was pursued throughout the summer and well into the fall with the result that all but a handful of the men could swim fifty yards. This was a considerably greater accomplishment than it would be thought because of the surprisingly high percentage of non-swimmers that were found in the Regiment. For this purpose, the pools at the Monterey and Watsonville Schools were used to capacity with officers and men from college swimming teams giving expert instruction; the out-of-doors pool at the Mission Ranch in Carmel was sometimes used, and it was probably coincidental that the out-of-doors pool was employed on the coldest days.

Specialists schools covering the subjects most essential to regimental operations were carried on, but no longer could men be spared to be sent to distant schools, and regimental or battalion classes were organized. Shore Battalion men took turns on the few available tractors, graders, and shovels, and survey crews were given intensive work-outs. Some explosives were available, and demolition men gained necessary confidence in their tools. In the Boat Battalion, coxswains were drilled in compass adjustment, dead reckoning, and piloting; enginemen tore down and rebuilt all types of Diesel and gasoline engines which they might have to use in the future, and tune-ups, emergency repairs, and temporary expedients were practiced and developed on engines cooled from barrels of salt water. All communications personnel spent almost all free time becoming high-speed operators, and boat crews were trained toward a target of at least six words a minute on blinker and semaphore.

For the first time an opportunity was had for an unhurried course of preliminary marksmanship, and proficiency with all weapons was brought to a high level. Not only did the Regiment qualify virtually 100 per cent with the M-1 rifle, but also gave

every man familiarization firing with the carbine and '03 rifle. Every man also had an opportunity to throw live grenades. Those to whom rifle grenades and bazookas were issued under the current table of equipment had an opportunity to fire their

Desert antiaircraft range; *Top: the firing line; center and lower left: the pup tent bivouac; lower right: same during sand storm.*



weapons, and the Shore Battalion's platoon of 37 mm antitank gunners developed into crack shots and learned to accomplish maximum mobility in difficult terrain.

The principal effort in training with weapons, however, was devoted to machine guns. Three-quarters of the Regiment fired for record with a .30 calibre light machine gun, and as many also qualified on the .50 calibre as the limited supply of ammunition would permit. Since indications were that the primary use of the Regiment's automatic weapons would be antiaircraft or antiboat, much time was devoted to shooting from ring-mounted guns on rolling landing craft at water-borne sleds and towed kites.

The climax of weapons training came in the beginning of June when the bulk of the Boat Battalion and approximately one-quarter of the Shore Battalion moved by truck convoy 450 miles to the desert, just south of Death Valley. Those who made that trip will remember it as a very vivid experience. The single firing line with 200 water-cooled machine guns stretched impressively for two miles in the sand, and when a bomber-towed sleeve or a rocket swept down the line at speeds as high as 400 miles per hour, the roar of firing guns reverberated throughout the valley. In five days of firing, the taxpayers' burden was increased to the extent of nearly a million rounds of ammunition.

The firing, however, was probably the less memorable experience when compared with life on the desert. The nearest water point was 35 miles away over a boulder-studded track that was open only once a day due to firing regulations, and so to each man daily there was doled out one and one-half quarts of water for all purposes. This meant precious little for shaving and bathing in view of heat that reached as high as 140 degrees during the daytime. To return after a day's firing to the bivouac and to find that a sand storm whirling down the valley at a mile a minute had caused pup tents to vanish and had filled with sand those which, by virtue of being weighted down with 200 pounds of rock, had withstood the blast — this was a cause of great discouragement, to put it mildly, and the language employed on those occasions was far from mild. A trip to the mess line did nothing to raise the morale of the homeless, for his chow was encrusted with sand and his coffee was half filled with it. Nor was it any comfort to retire to the blankets, for on many uncomfortable occasions a scorpion or perhaps a "sidewinder" was found to be a willing, though uncongenial, bedmate.

The experience in the desert was valuable not only for the unquestionably fine opportunity it presented to improve machine gunnery, but also for the training in self-discipline and self-preservation under difficult conditions. As the convoy moved back from the desert to Fort Ord, a deep appreciation was felt by all for the "desert rats" of the British Eighth Army who lasted four years in the African Desert.

The East Garrison was far from the sea, and to engage in periods of continuous boat training it was necessary for the Boat Battalion to make several moves. Late in May the entire Battalion moved into the tent area at the Presidio of Monterey for their initial training on the Pacific. The Presidio is a beautiful post located only a few hundred yards — most of them straight up — from the inner harbor of Monterey where the landing craft were moored at the municipal wharf. Facilities for the maintenance sections were very unsatisfactory — one small shed which was almost com-

pletely filled by even as scanty a supply of parts as was then available. Propellers, shafts, and rudders could be serviced only by means of chain hoists hung from the dock above a floating platform for the ship-fitters. The boats, in accordance with a tradition which had become all too familiar, were in very poor condition when turned over to the Battalion, and there were only about fifty of them after designating necessary salvage and control boats. There was only one boat left per section, so it was necessary for each staff sergeant to take his four or five boat crews together in one boat, and for each of the fifteen or twenty men to take turns beaching and retracting — an obviously unsatisfactory expedient.

The very first landing was enough to prove that the calmness of Dog Island Sound had given no preparation for the surf that was found in the Pacific. The waves reared up ten feet or more in height and fell forward with crushing power, pounding the boats every time they retracted. There were three or four lines of breakers which began several hundred feet from the beach, and it was necessary to retract stern first with no turning until outside the outer breaker. The unfortunate boat that veered too soon and was caught broadside was utterly helpless, and her deck was usually stove in or her coaming torn off. Not even perfect handling was a guarantee of safety, for frequently the engine hatch was stove in and the gasoline engine drowned out. The beach control section had more than enough practice on salvage problems, and the damage to the fleet was so great that even round-the-clock work by the maintenance crews was hardly sufficient to keep up.

On the next trip to Monterey a month later, thorough-going tests were given to each platoon separately, each test lasting a day and a night. Each coxswain was required to plot a different dogleg course of about 25 miles to Santa Cruz and then follow that track alone. About midnight the platoon was given a skeleton field order requiring a pre-dawn landing twenty miles away. The oral order of the platoon leader and the execution of the problem were checked in detail, and after the initial

LVTs maneuvering on the dunes above Monterey Bay.







Amphibian scouts at Moss Beach battle the surf in pneumatic boats.

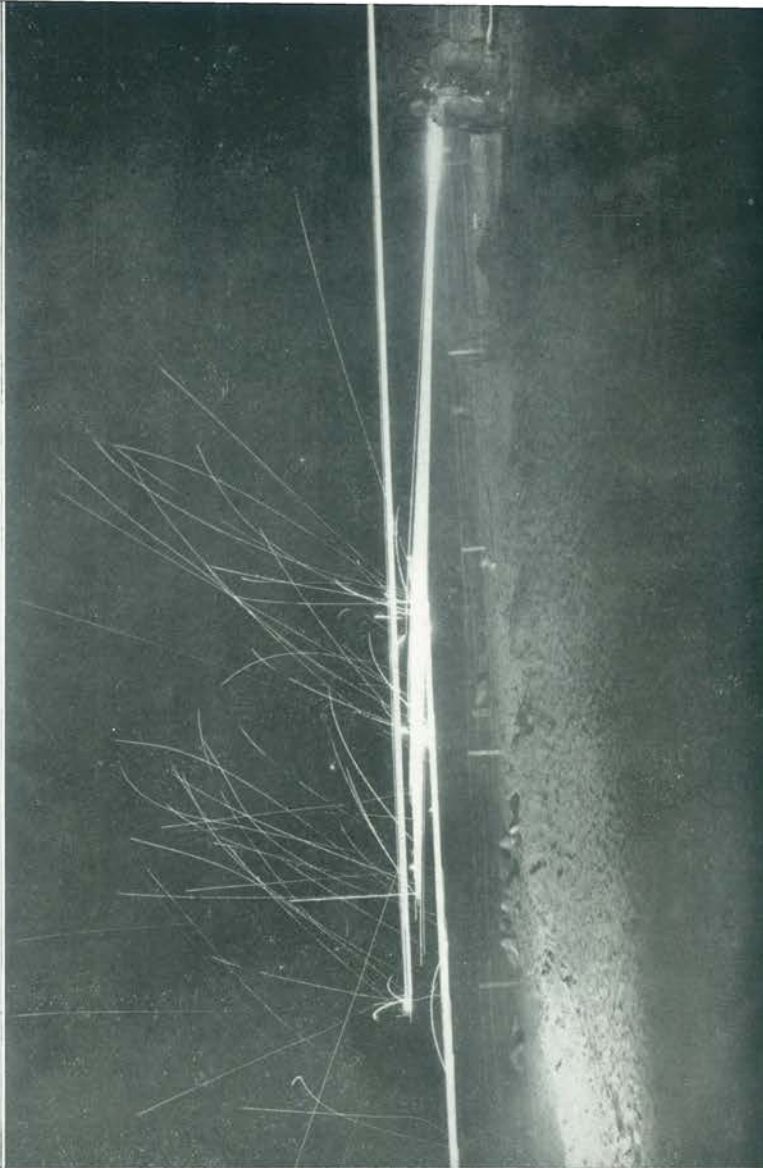
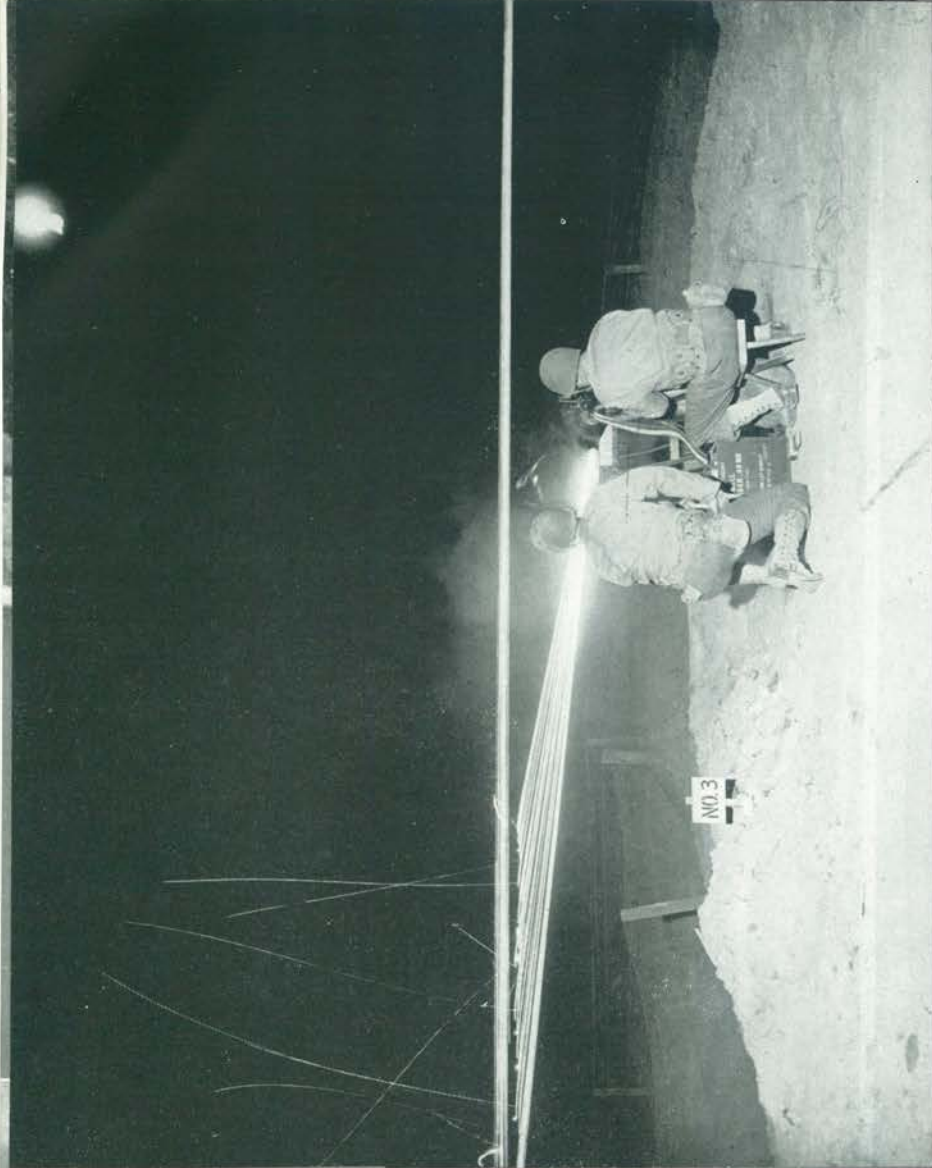
landing, the test was completed with operations in salvage technique, signalling, and formation running. The results of these tests were most gratifying, particularly as the daylight individual runs were all made against heavy seas and 20- to 30-mile winds, with compasses that were an object of suspicion rather than of confidence and boats that were badly mauled.

The only joint boat and shore exercises conducted by the Regiment were staged during this period as part of a War Department training inspection of the Brigade. Sixty boats left Monterey after sunset and bucked a vicious northwester for 25 miles to Santa Cruz. Mountainous seas held the speed down to less than four knots, and the condition of the boats was such that only 37 reached Santa Cruz, which was the near shore. Among the boats that failed to reach the near shore, were three-quarters of the wave leaders' boats and all of the salvage boats. With coxswains taking over the waves and a couple of lieutenants handling everything else, the run to the point of departure for the far shore went off smoothly. To save the day completely, a light fog obscured the line of departure so that as the first wave retracted and headed towards sea, enough of its boats could join the inbound third wave to make it complete. By this means 35 boats made eight complete seven-boat waves, and the rather gullible observers on the dunes were completely satisfied with the performance.

Thereafter, the sixty boats were permanently divided among the three regiments of the Brigade. In order to use its twenty to the maximum, and also to simulate to some slight degree the conditions that were expected to be encountered in the Southwest Pacific, the 533d abandoned Monterey Harbor with its wharves and gas pumps and established a bivouac for one company on Carmel Beach under the shadow of Pebble Beach Golf Course. Under those circumstances the bivouac could hardly be called roughing it, and each boat company spent three enjoyable weeks on Carmel Beach. Maintenance sections developed their own marine railroad construction technique and actually performed all echelons of maintenance for the first time. The only contact with battalion or regimental headquarters was by radio, and the communications section received valuable training in that way. Mess personnel too had an opportunity to work without the benefits of a modern army kitchen, and the companies acquired an invaluable feeling of self-reliance. Taken as a whole, those three weeks at Carmel Beach were at the same time as pleasant and as profitable as men in any army ever spent.

Not far away at Moss Beach on Point Pinos the heavy surf beat down upon a few

Left: Airviews of the camp built by B Company on the beach at Carmel under the Pebble Beach Golf Course. Note the wakes of maneuvering landing craft in the upper picture and the the dike of sand bags to keep the spring tides out of the tents.





Night and Day on the Infiltration Course at Fort Ord.

dozen volunteer amphibian scouts from all companies of the Regiment. Equipped with small rubber boats that tilted with the surf dangerously day after day, these men had all the tricks of the trade of the commandos and Marine raiders drilled into them. By the end of the summer they were ready for any reconnaissance of enemy shores, for demolition work, or for hydrographic surveys.

While the Boat Battalion was learning the eccentricities of the Pacific, the Shore Battalion was polishing up phases of its training that were either completely new or had been given insufficient attention previously. The shore companies had had such a thorough work-out in beach work in Florida, especially during their innumerable assaults on Dog Island, that their training could well afford to emphasize other aspects of their expected mission. For instance, word filtered back from the 2d Brigade in Nassau Bay, New Guinea, that amphibians were not infrequently required as reserve infantry in repelling attacks or recapturing lost ground, and so platoon problems in infantry tactics, both offensive and defensive, were practiced throughout the summer. Particular emphasis was placed on target designation and fire control. In common with all other troops all men of the 533d wriggled through the barbed wire and under the whining machine gun bullets of a so-called infiltration course.

Though engineer troops may be given specialized functions, and though their name may reflect that specialty, nevertheless, task force commanding officers consider that engineers are engineers, and with lofty disregard of their specialty expect them to solve any and all construction problems. To give the shore companies the groundwork of general construction and engineer planning, and, incidentally, to get their hands for training purposes on certain rare and choice items of construction equipment held by the post engineer, arrangements were made for the Shore Battalion to undertake certain portions of the post construction program. Company D took over the grounds and swimming pool at the huge service club, completing rapidly and successfully all-weather roads, parking areas, and a large concrete pool. E Company built the difficult "Engineer Canyon" road in the rugged terrain south of the East Garrison, while F Company built the so-called "Skyline Drive" in the same area. From these and many other smaller jobs, the shore engineers acquired flexibility and efficiency in handling equipment of all types. The primary mission of the Shore Battalion was not, however, ignored, and at the same time continuous experiments in sand stabilization and in beach marking technique were kept up.

The new tables of equipment included 12 DUKWs for the Shore Battalion, and though only a few were available at Fort Ord, drivers and maintenance men worked hard to develop the necessary skill to handle these truly amphibian truck-boats in the rough surf at Monterey Beach and to repair the frequent failures in their complicated mechanisms.

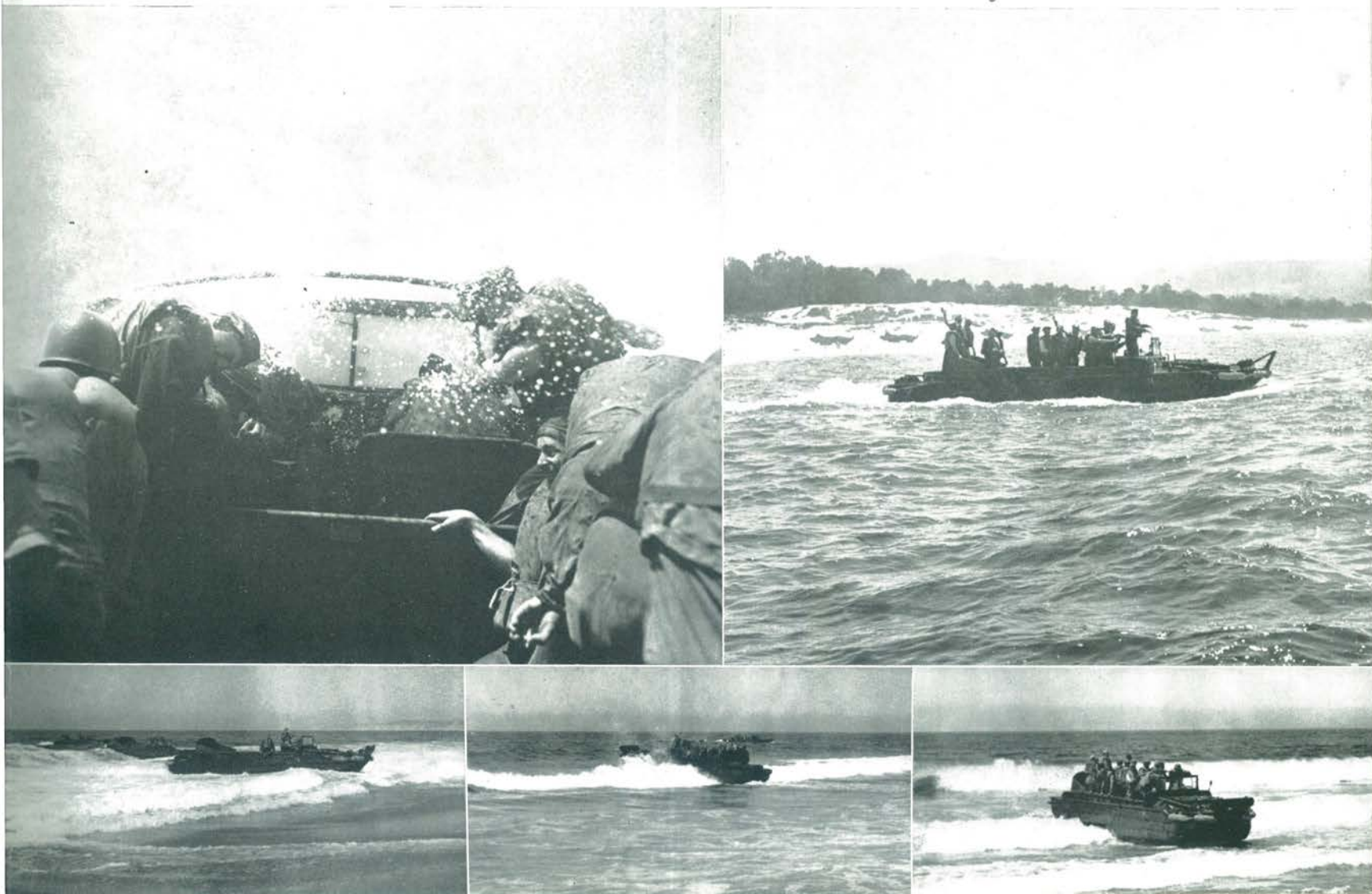
As a side line, the cargo platoons and their officers, along with a few men from the Boat Battalion, were sent to Oakland for six weeks training in cargo handling at the port-of-embarkation docks. Billeted in the grandstand of the Albany Race Track, the men received steady, on-the-job training in all phases of stevedore work. For the first time they made the acquaintance of slings and pallets, winches and jumbos, and at the end of the training the detachment contained many really competent hatch

foremen, winch operators, and signalmen. Some months later the Battalion was unexpectedly assigned to ship unloading at Cape Cretin, and as a result of the training at Oakland it made a fine record which could otherwise never have been achieved.

During this time, high hopes of early shipment overseas and discouragement from postponement and delay were alternating in raising and lowering the morale of the Regiment. The original alert date of July 1 was put off until September 15, and thereafter it crept week by week into November. The main reason was shortage of shipping. But inevitably it was rumored that the assignment to the Southwest Pacific had been canceled or that the Regiment was to be converted to port companies. It was unavoidable that the Boat and Shore Battalions pursued separate training programs and lost, to a certain degree, the cooperation that had developed in Florida. The Boat Battalion had no craft larger than 36 foot LCPRs, and so could not carry a single vehicle. There was, therefore, no feasible combined work with the Shore Battalion that could be found.

In the early fall, the Boat Battalion was loaned to the 4th Marine Division to expedite its amphibious training at Oceanside, California, nearly 400 miles to the south. Flat cars were not available, so there was no way to avoid patching up the old wrecks as well as possible and moving the boats on their own bottoms around Point Conception, the Cape Horn of the North Pacific, to Oceanside. In the middle of a black night made darker by a thick fog, 65 boats manned by A and C Companies plowed and puttered out of Carmel Bay and headed for Port San Luis, 160 miles down the coast. The shortage of equipment was the same old story; only a few boats

DUKWs maneuver in the surf of Monterey Bay.



had charts and some had no compasses; three had taffrail logs and some lacked even a tachometer. All of the boats, however, were well equipped with horseshoes or rabbits' feet, for by groups or separately they all turned up in Port San Luis. The next day, the convoy rounded Point Conception, blessed by unexpectedly calm seas, and made Santa Barbara without event. The rest of the trip via San Pedro to Oceanside was easy, and the flotilla arrived in perfect formation and on schedule.

For two weeks there followed a constant grind of day and night landing problems, carrying a battalion of Marines at a time. Everything was done according to the Navy's ship-to-shore standard operating procedure. It was strange and troublesome at the time, but later when the Battalion was called upon to operate under navy jurisdiction, this training proved invaluable. The beach there was as bad or worse than Monterey, for although the surf was not generally as high, beach work was complicated by a four-knot current which flowed parallel to the beach and swung the craft so that retracting was very difficult. The pressure on the salvage and maintenance crews was enormous but by working around the clock they kept their end up. At the end of the first week 50 out of the 65 boats were operating, while the navy boat group doing the same work had only eleven out of its 54 in operation.

In mid-September new alert orders were received which necessitated an immediate return to Fort Ord. It was a source of great relief that time did not permit a return by water, so the boats were turned over to the Navy and the return to Fort Ord was made by motor convoy. The Oceanside training was the last general work afloat until the Regiment reached its first overseas station.

One additional nautical activity is worthy of note. As a climax to the long-range navigation training, three landing craft, two LCVs and one LCM converted to quarter nine men each and manned with crews from each of the three regiments of the Brigade, took off from Monterey, California, for Cedros Island, Mexico, 700 miles away. The purpose of this mission was to establish the feasibility of navigation in such small craft and their adaptability to weather and to continuous operation over a long period. The boats proceeded in convoy, but each was equipped with a complete navigation set including radio compass, and each crew was made responsible for its own navigation. It was fortunate that weather and sea conditions were perfect, for the LCVs, in order to carry enough fuel, were overloaded to the extent of a ton. At the tiny Mexican fishing village where the boats paused to refuel, considerable excitement was caused, but the four-day, non-stop trip was uneventful. The tour finished at San Pedro, California, 500 miles from Cedros Island, making a grand total of 1200 miles with only one brief pause to refuel. This dramatic demonstration of the endurance of a small landing craft earned a "well done" from the Commander, Western Sea Frontier and gave the Regiment a feeling of confidence that was much needed on some of the first long-range missions overseas.

Back at Fort Ord the tempo of preparations for overseas movement increased daily, although numerous delays and postponements continued to cause disappointment. In August a secret warning order directed that one boat company be alerted for early movement to Cairns, Australia. At that time it appeared that the only way the 3d Brigade could acquire landing craft when it reached New Guinea was to move

them from the plant at Cairns, 500 miles across the Coral Sea and thence 200 miles to Port Harvey. Company B was nominated for this mission and was brought to full strength, reinforced with medics and an advance detachment from Boat Battalion Headquarters and the other boat companies. Early in October the movement order for the entire Brigade arrived from Washington. It broke the Regiment into four shipment groups: B Company, Shore Battalion, Boat Battalion less B Company, and Regimental Headquarters Company, with priority in that order. Final packing and crating thereafter required the greater portion of the time and effort of the Regiment. But some time was found for orientation lectures, command post exercises, and conditioning marches.

At last the total inadequacy of the tables of equipment had been appreciated in the Pentagon Building, and authority was granted to draw or purchase innumerable essential items ranging from course protractors to sawmills, and carloads of special equipment began to flow in. This did nothing to simplify the packing and crating; nor did the arrival of last-minute personnel replacements, who were as bewildered and surprised to find themselves in a strange outfit as last-minute replacements generally are. By the time the Regiment departed it was overstrength and reasonably well equipped, but it had not by any means acquired or been authorized all the equipment that past experience indicated was necessary.

Shortage of shipping continued to produce exasperating delays, and the stay at Fort Ord was extended a few more weeks until at last on the 21st of November, 1943, the Shore Battalion and B Company entrained for Camp Stoneman and overseas, while the balance of the Regiment left early in December.

The period between activation and embarkation had included only fifteen months, of which barely a year had been spent in training of any sort. The sequence of what training the Regiment had had would be grounds for a Section VIII discharge for any conscientious plans and training officer: three months of large-scale combined maneuvers at the outset; then eight to ten weeks of individual basic training; and finally, improvised small-unit training with hardly an item of major equipment that would be used in the theatre of operations. This training nightmare might be explained on the grounds that there was a pressing need to give infantry divisions amphibious training early in 1943, and that there was a desperate shortage of landing craft and heavy equipment in the combat zones during that year. Yet, those explanations are not convincing in view of the fact that the divisions which the Regiment trained in Florida did not see action until more than six months after the 533d did. That operators and coxswains were able to familiarize themselves with D-8 bulldozers and 5-ton crawler cranes and with LCMs and LCVs in the very midst of their first combat assignment is a tribute to their ingenuity and native ability. But the need for such training under such conditions is a sad commentary on the schedule given the Brigade in its state-side training, and led to the conviction that the engineer special brigades were the illegitimate children of the War Department's training program.

CHAPTER V

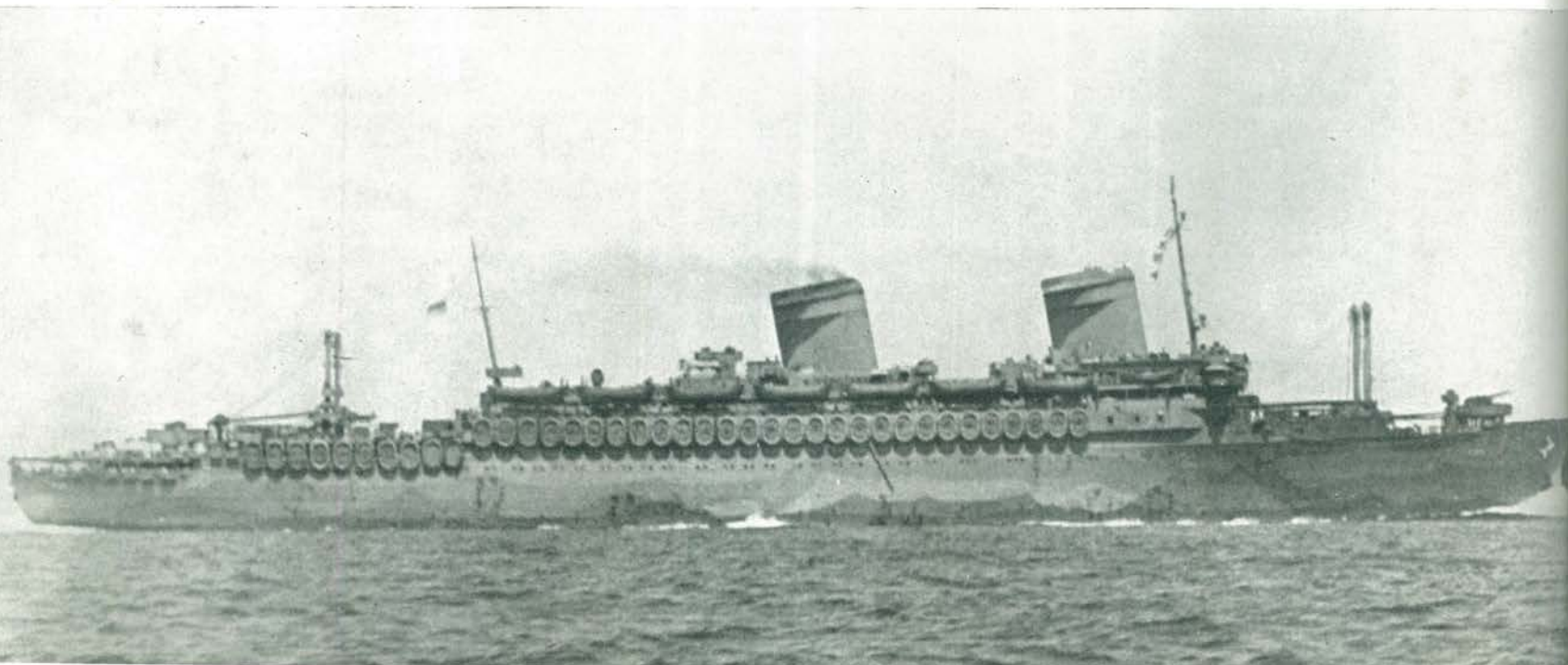
At Sea, Outward Bound

It was a sobering day, that Sunday, November 21, 1943, when the Shore Battalion and B Company entrained for Camp Stoneman, California, staging area for the San Francisco Port of Embarkation. It had been a comfortable stay at Ford Ord, and most of the personnel of the Regiment had enjoyed themselves as far as life in the Army can be enjoyed. Now, however, the first step had been taken toward separation from family and familiar scenes and from the comforts of Western civilization and a temperate climate.

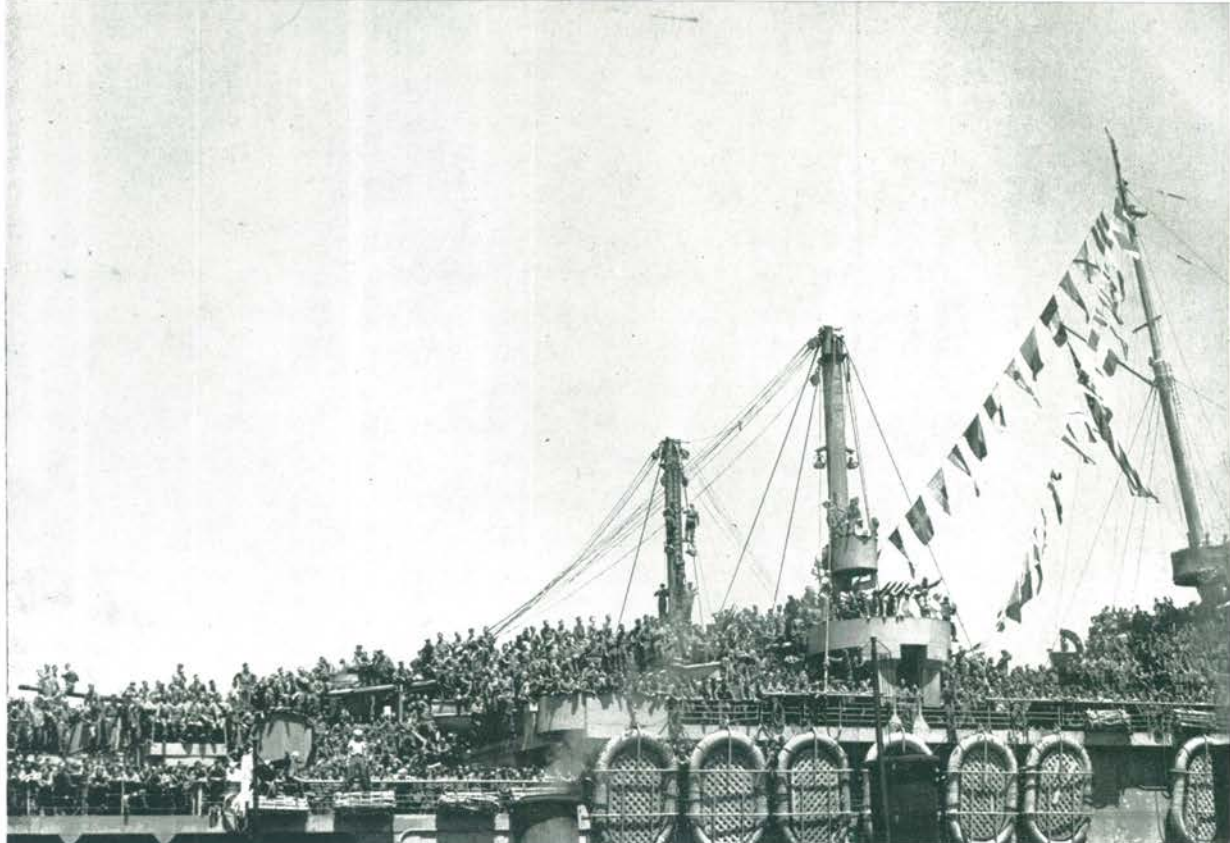
Upon arrival at Camp Stoneman "processing" began immediately, and everyone endured a sleepless, nerve-racking 48 hours. All personnel were required to have physical examinations; a show-down inspection was had, and the shortages were drawn and issued; censorship lectures were a necessity; and numerous odds and ends had to be completed. At the same time, company clerks and headquarters clerks were swamped in making out and completing final passenger lists and partial pay-rolls. The processing was completed in less than 36 hours, but everyone was too exhausted to appreciate that a record had been set for Camp Stoneman.

At Fort Ord the rest of the Regiment, temporarily under the command of its executive officer, completed all duties preparatory to moving to the port of embarkation. On December 2 Regimental Headquarters Company, and 8 days later the Boat Battalion moved by train to Camp Stoneman. Immediately upon arrival, all men went through a physical examination which was notable for its speed but not its accuracy. The Boat Battalion remained at Camp Stoneman for twelve days, during which a well-organized program was arranged, which when combined with the steps of processing through which the Shore Battalion and B Company had passed in two days, kept everyone constantly on the go. It was the general consensus of both the Shore Battalion and the Boat Battalion, the former having been rushed through in record time and the latter having remained for twelve days, that the port of embarka-

USS West Point, in peacetimes the *SS America*, which carried the Shore Battalion and Company B from San Francisco to Milne Bay.



A portion of the 10,000 passengers crammed aboard the *West Point* cheer arrival in New York. No such trespassing on guntubs and rigging was tolerated in '43!



tion was a bright spot in an army where efficiency and intelligent handling, trampled only by the minimum of red tape, were all too rare.

The Shore Battalion, B Company, and elements of regimental headquarters sailed on the *West Point* on the 23rd of November, 1943. The Boat Battalion with Regimental Headquarters Company sailed on the *Cape Perpetua* on the 23rd of December. The *West Point* was the former *America* of the United States Lines, the largest ship built in the United States, 38,000 tons of luxury liner. But that was in peacetimes. Now, everything pertaining to luxury had been stripped from her and every available foot of space, plus a few feet that were not available, was used for troops and their equipment. In the same way, the *Cape Perpetua*, a C-3 type Kaiser ship, was far from the cruise ship of which many had dreamed. She had made one or two trips to the South Pacific as a cargo ship and had just returned from the Kaiser yards after having been converted to a troop carrier.

In the absence of enemy attack, the crossings to New Guinea differed only to a slight extent. Once aboard the ship, strict discipline was the rule and had to be, in order that so many men could be efficiently handled in space designed for so few. On the *West Point* were representatives of all branches of the service: sailors, soldiers, marines, nurses, Red Cross workers. On the *Cape Perpetua* the personnel were all from the 3d Brigade. But on both ships the story was the same, crowding and more crowding.

The first duty, once aboard ship, was the billeting of personnel. After this, especially difficult on a ship with inexperienced transportation corps personnel, came the establishing of necessary details. A guard had to be organized, with scores of posts mostly to keep the army passengers from trespassing on the choicer regions of the ship. KP was, of course, inevitable. Compartment cleaners, garbage disposal, safety watches in all compartments, a medical detachment, a PX detachment, gunners to assist the skeleton navy gun crews — these and many other details had to be

selected and organized. The location of companionways, lavatories, latrines (aboard ship only the most dogged GI refused to refer to these as "heads"), the location of life rafts, and general orientation were more tasks that had to be disposed of immediately upon embarkation.

The Golden Gate is a beautiful sight, but not a happy one when outward bound. The decks were lined with GIs already homesick, wondering when and if they would see those friendly coasts again. Long after the mountains of California had dropped below the horizon, many men could be seen leaning on the rail looking astern, silent. With so many men in such cramped quarters, however, introspection could not long survive, and it was not long before conversation was loud and general, with particular emphasis placed on rumors. Destination, of course, was the great question mark, and there were those who insisted that the ship was bound for China or Africa or Attu; one rugged individualist had it direct from headquarters that the ship was bound for Dog Island Sound where further amphibious training would take place on G Beach.

Rumor mongering was probably the first extra-duty activity, but it was soon replaced by that most favorite of all army sports—shooting craps. There is very little to do for the men who are not on detail, and very little room to do it in, and very little to do it with. Most of the time was spent on deck reading, playing cards, swapping rumors, or, most frequently, rolling dice. It was too hot after the first day or so out to stay below decks. Occasionally a rumor of a threatened Japanese attack would bring everybody on deck, and at those times even the most stubborn would conscientiously strap on his life jacket. A diversion of particular interest was experienced on the *West Point* when in a radio broadcast the Japanese announced the sinking of the *USS West Point* with a tremendous loss of life. This report was most amusing at first, and everyone looked around smiling until someone happened to notice that the Japanese had announced the sinking at the ship's exact location. With or without such reports, however, frequent abandon ship and air raid drills were held throughout the voyage.

At night, when all portholes and hatches were secured, the heat below decks was terrific — 126° in some holds — and many chose to lie on the hard steel deck rather than endure the heat on the bunks below. Everything on shipboard was accomplished by standing in line. Fresh water was available for limited periods twice a day, and the man who happened to be reasonably near the head of the line would be assured of some water. The food was not plentiful, but then, under such inactive conditions in such heat, appetites were not great. There was a post exchange aboard, but in that case the line was almost prohibitive, and on the *Cape Perpetua* the PX itself was closed down for some days as a punitive measure, a procedure which caused considerable justified hard feeling on the part of all passengers.

The days passed slowly, and even the celebration traditional upon crossing "the line" could not break the boredom for long. Ennui was worse on the *Cape Perpetua* which took 23 days for the crossing, whereas the swift *West Point* was a 12-day ship. The Regiment almost welcomed the little yellow atabrine tablets when they first put in appearance, for they indicated that the end of the voyage was nearing and also conclusively spiked all incorrect rumors as to its destination. The pills were bitter

to those who insisted on tasting them, and after a few had been swallowed, many of the men acquired a dislike for them that was to cause trouble to them and to their unit for the next two years.

Two to three weeks at sea with no diversions, no deck tennis, no swimming pool, no dancing, no school teachers on vacation are a far cry from peace-time cruising, and there were few who were not up early on the morning the ship entered the China Straits leading into Milne Bay. New Guinea is lovely when seen from a distance, and the series of small islands, mountainous and heavily jungled, through which the narrow channel winds into Milne Bay, are noted for their beauty. Those who looked for "plantations" reminiscent of the old South were disappointed, for only one or two buildings worthy of the name could be seen. As the ship entered Milne Bay, admiration of the natural beauty of the place gave way to awe at the extent of the American war effort. Milne Bay is a 20-mile long inlet whose water is deep almost to the shore, and it was filled with literally hundreds of ships. Many a landlubber found it hard to believe that there were that many ships in the entire world, much less in one desolate harbor in the Southwest Pacific. As the ship worked carefully along the shore, ships could be seen moored so close as to be partly concealed by the jungle foliage behind them. Moving behind could be seen the familiar army vehicles of all sorts, throwing up clouds of dust, the same dust which in the heavy tropical rainfall became the mud which was to make life miserable in months to come. To those troops who stayed aboard ship for a night or more, it was a surprise to find that when darkness fell the entire base was lighted as brightly as any city in peace-time. They had left a blacked-out San Francisco a few days before and now, with the Japanese within easy bomber flight, blackout was a thing of the past. As the 533d became more experienced in the theatre, it too learned that the time lost by blackout was not justified.

Base A representatives came aboard the *West Point* with instructions for debark-

Dense jungle and deep water join to provide excellent concealment for landing craft.





PT crews supplement the jungle concealment with camouflage nets at their base on the southern shore of Milne Bay.

ing troops and with information on bivouac areas. Early on the 11th of December, DUKWs came alongside and transported the Shore Battalion to an area which had been designated for their camp. In accordance with the standing Base policy, the site was virgin jungle, the theory being that engineer troops can improve such areas more easily than others. In this case, however, the lack of equipment presented some serious problems. Fortunately, the 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion was comparatively well established nearby, and they cooperated to the extent of landing hand tools, and the work of creating a camp site began. It had been hot aboard ship, but it soon became apparent that nothing could compare with the heat of heavy jungle when one is wielding an axe or machete. Troops were cautioned to take frequent breaks, but despite this there were some cases of heat exhaustion. Orientation lectures had pointed out the frequency of heavy downpours of rain, and so every effort was made to clear tent space and by nightfall the entire Battalion was under canvas.

"C" rations were issued for three days pending unloading of the TAT equipment, and the improvement of the camp continued, as kitchens, latrines, and the area in general had to pass rigid inspections by higher echelons. The troops soon learned that the pictures they had seen in magazines and newsreels of unshaven, half-dressed soldiers did not depict troops of General Krueger's Sixth Army, and proper uniform and adequate mosquito defense were emphasized.

Speculation as to how and where the Battalion would be employed was widespread, and since the engineer equipment was not expected for several weeks, there was some thought that it might be used as infantry. Orders were soon received to

construct a water system to supply the section of Base A in which the bivouac was located, the plans calling for erection of a 20' x 20' x 6' concrete reservoir, installation of a pumping station and the laying of 4100 feet of line with necessary plumbing fixtures. Work began immediately upon this project and, as might be expected, progress had just begun when on December 18 orders came down directing the Battalion to draw equipment from the local depot and prepare to move forward as soon as shipping could be arranged. The order did not relieve the Battalion from working on the water system, so a deal was made to have troops from the 543d take over the project in case the movement should take place before it was completed. The regimental commander with an advance party flew to Finschhafen where it was learned that the Battalion would be employed at Sixth Army's advance shipping point from which supplies would go forward to the Arawe, Cape Gloucester, and Saidor operations. More precise information was not then available, but an area was designated for the Battalion on Cape Cretin, a few miles south of Finschhafen, and the immediate future seemed to have been settled.

Meanwhile, B Company had been able to obtain little or no information as to its future. The original task of moving LCVPs 500 miles across the Coral Sea from the assembly plant at Cairns to New Guinea was canceled because the Navy regarded such a trip as impossible for craft as small as LCVPs, and there is little doubt that it would have been not only dangerous but extremely wearing on both men and boats. Furthermore LCVPs were not in as great demand as they had been a few months previously because LCMs were at last being assembled at Milne Bay. GHQ without looking into the needs of the Brigade yielded to the request of Seventh Fleet and ordered B Company to Cairns, Australia, to train with the 6th Australian Division, but copies of the order never reached Base A or Sixth Army; so a wall of indifference met all attempts to get shipping for the Company. After two days aboard ship in the harbor, the Company was debarked and instructed to put up a temporary camp. In the absence of specific orders, it seemed best to shop around for transportation to Cairns, and it was not long before a ship, the *Cape Meers*, was discovered which was bound for Cairns and which could and would embark the Company if its 1500 cases of equipment could be loaded by 1500 the next afternoon. As usual the transportation corps could not offer any assistance, but a DUKW company was located and agreed to loan a few DUKWs to transport the equipment to the ship. A further headache arose when the first DUKW-load of equipment reached the ship a quarter of a mile off the shore and it developed that neither the ship nor the transportation corps could furnish winch operators. Men were quickly found in the Company to man the winches and to operate the crane ashore by which the equipment was lifted into the DUKWs. Loading of all the equipment and troops was completed ten minutes before sailing time, and on December 16 B Company headed out to sea, Australia bound.

A month later the *Cape Perpetua* dropped anchor in Milne Bay. She remained just long enough for A Company to debark in a rush without a solitary item of equipment outside of the men's barracks bags and then sailed out through the D'Entrecasteaux Islands to Melauna Bay, Goodenough, where on January 16, Regimental and Boat Battalion Headquarters Companies and Company C were set ashore.

The Shore Battalion's Command Post at Milne Bay, December 1943.



CHAPTER VI

Company B in Australia

Fair weather blessed B Company on its trip from Milne Bay to Cairns, but a storm blew up aboard ship which caused considerable inconvenience. The day before the ship was due at Cairns, the Captain disclosed that his orders actually were to go to Brisbane, which would mean a 1200-mile train ride for his passengers. Luckily the Boat Battalion CO who had proceeded to Cairns by air learned of this and through Colonel Tench at GHQ had the *Cape Meers* reordered to Cairns. The Captain, however, was a man of strong will and decided to split the difference by putting into Townsville 220 miles south of Cairns. On December 19 troops and equipment were unloaded and transferred to Armstrong Paddock, a former race track converted into an Army casual camp. The unloading was not expedited when the Australian stevedores threatened to strike the whole port because the troops, confident after their successful initial stevedoring venture at Milne Bay, undertook to work the ship during the frequent tea and luncheon breaks, without which the stevedores were lost.

After a day or so in the paddock, B Company loaded on to an Australian train bound for Cairns, and, after a trip of nearly fourteen hours at a brisk speed of about fifteen miles per hour, Cairns was reached at 4 o'clock in the morning. Army trucks were available, which completed the journey to the bivouac area fourteen miles north of Cairns, where the troops were unloaded and settled down to wait for the sunrise.

In a few days, Camp Wallaby, the first and only home of men of the 533d on Australian soil, was reasonably well settled. On Christmas Eve, boat crews were sent to Cairns, where they took over sixty brand new and fully equipped LCVPs from the 411th Engineer Base Shop, which had been assembling boats there since mid-1943. It is an interesting commentary that the first boats which the Regiment obtained in new condition were received after it had arrived in the theatre of operations. The boats were brought from Cairns around to the B Company anchorage, a small bay about a mile and a half from Camp Wallaby, and were made ready for heavy use.

New Year's Eve soon rolled around and brought with it a generous beer issue. For the first time, the Aussies began to drop in, pay their respects, and, perhaps incidentally, to enjoy an American cigarette and a free beer. As the evening wore on and the beer supply began to dwindle from determined onslaughts, slight differences of opinion began to crop up between B Company and its "down under" allies, with the result that customers began to straggle in to the dispensary, and the straggle became a flood about midnight. It was noted that the victor and victim of these affrays would go together to the dispensary and then return good friends to the tent for further debate and beer. From that night on, the medics were convinced that Australian beer was not conducive to quiet, philosophical discussions.

The first training was with the 1st Australian Beach Group, a unit new to the Australian Army and somewhat similar in purpose to the original Engineer Shore Regiments of the U. S. Army. After several weeks of beach training work consisting

of loading and unloading equipment and supplies, a practice dawn landing was held, on the basis of which Australian I Corps headquarters decided that the training of the Beach Group had progressed sufficiently for them to undertake combined exercises with an infantry division. Similar beach training was then started with the 6th Australian Infantry Division, veterans of Greece, Syria, and North Africa, culminating in maneuvers in which the Company and several Australian transports embarked and landed the 16th Brigade on Bramston Beach, sixty miles south of Cairns. The maneuver required several days and was most successful.

The final problem involved a landing of the 19th Brigade at Port Douglas after a night run of some forty miles. This maneuver again was highly successful, although shortly before H Hour it was discovered that an error had been made in the exact location of the target beach, but the miscalculation was discovered in time and a landing was made on schedule.

Meanwhile word had come from Brisbane that three LCMs and three 45-foot picket boats were available there, so personnel were flown, as soon as air priorities were available, to take them over before they should be assigned elsewhere. On the return voyage, the fair weather that had favored the Company ever since they left the Golden Gate deserted them, and they had to ride out a hurricane at McKay. No damage was suffered by the boats or the crews, and they arrived safely at Camp Wallaby.

The Company was alerted for movement to New Guinea on March 21, and by the 28th packing and crating were completed. There followed, as usual, a long and exasperating series of delays. Although ships were leaving Cairns periodically, the transportation corps could not find space for one company. It became necessary to set up a training program with refresher courses in communications, weapons firing, navigation classes etc. Boat formation practice was held, and the maintenance section had an opportunity to try some of the improvements that time had not permitted in the past. There was time too for some swimming or fishing on the Great Barrier Reef and for baseball games between platoons and with the Aussies. Week-end recreational convoys were made up, which carried troops to Innisfail and to the beautiful mountain resort at Kurranda, the Hotel Fitzpatrick. On some occasions beer and fried chicken were available, bringing a very welcome bit of home.

In May there was still no shipping space available to New Guinea and the Company, as befitted its apparently permanent status, moved into barracks in Cairns that had been formerly occupied by Base Section personnel. At last in June the Company was ordered to store the LCVPs in a warehouse. This not inconsiderable feat was accomplished neatly and tidily and was completed just in time to receive orders to transfer them to another warehouse. Although irritating, it seemed as if at last the move to New Guinea was drawing near. This optimistic conviction found support in a radio message from Brigade stating that an F boat was enroute to Cairns to transport the Company. When the transportation arrived, however, and was discovered to be a 99-foot ship with no troop accommodations, spirits hit a new low. But realizing that this might be the only means of getting up to the combat zone, the men quickly built bunks for approximately 100 men, and thus the entire Company

could be moved in about four round trips. It was decided also to send two of the picket boats and an LCM under their own power across the Coral Sea in convoy with the F boat. The convoy encountered heavy going on its 455-mile open sea trip, but arrived at Milne Bay in New Guinea in good order.

After a trip by the F boat and a C-47 transport plane had moved a quarter of the Company, a Liberty ship put into Cairns enroute to New Guinea. Higher headquarters advised that there was no space on the ship, and among the lower echelons of command it was felt that a 4th of July dance at the Red Cross was even stronger reason for not loading on the Liberty. Disregarding both, the balance of the Company finally completed loading on the ship about midnight of the 4th of July. On July 13, the Liberty ship dropped anchor at Finschhafen and B Company had returned to the regimental fold. The days of B Company as an independent detachment were at an end, but many retained very pleasant memories of Australia.



Our Allies from "Down Under" unloading supplies at Green Island.

CHAPTER VII

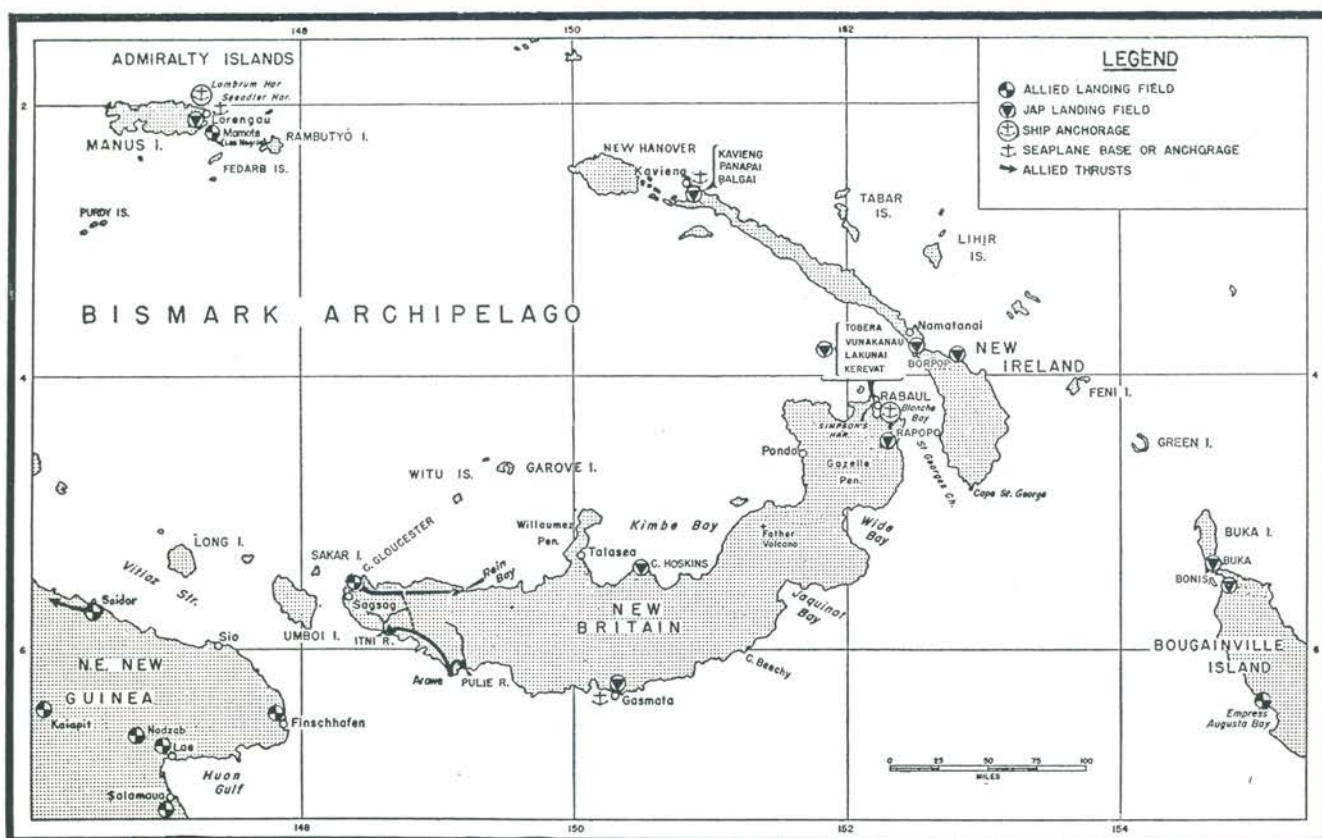
Cape Cretin, Goodenough Island and Milne Bay

It is necessary now to pause and make some explanation of the distribution of the Regiment at various spots throughout the Southwest Pacific. In mid-December of 1943, B Company was enroute to Australia; the Shore Battalion was at Milne Bay; and the Boat Battalion was about to set sail from the port of embarkation. It was several months before the Regiment was concentrated within the space of a few miles, and it will be necessary to follow separate elements and then return, in point of time, to review the activities of other units.

In the latter half of 1943 the Japs were driven from New Georgia and from the Lae-Finschhafen area of New Guinea, and their main line of defense then became the line running from Wewak through Madang and Cape Gloucester and Rabaul to Bougainville. It was MacArthur's consistent policy to by-pass strong Japanese concentrations, but this line stood squarely across his path and there was no way to avoid piercing it at some point. As he progressed westward along the New Guinea coast, the Vitiaz Strait between the western end of New Britain and Finschhafen would have to be his main supply route. To make this route safe, the Japs on the western half of New Britain had to be destroyed or driven eastward, and so it was decided to pierce the line at Cape Gloucester, whereas Wewak, Madang, and Rabaul could be by-passed, ultimately to become nothing more than self-managed Jap prison camps. Part of Bougainville and the Admiralties and Emirau were to be seized to seal the trap in the eastern Bismarcks and to bring our patrol aircraft within the range of the Carolines. The offensive, in accordance with this strategy, began in November, 1943, with the Marine landing at Empress Augusta Bay on Bougainville, cumulated strength early in December when the 112th Cavalry seized Arawe on the southwest coast of New Britain, and moved into its climax when the 1st Marine Division swept



A Jap battle flag is inspected outside the Shore Battalion CP at Cape Cretin.



ashore on Cape Gloucester on the day after Christmas and the 126th Regimental Combat Team of the 32d Division secured Saidor, 100-odd miles beyond Finschhafen on the New Guinea coast early in January.

The comparative ease with which these objectives had been seized caused MacArthur to accelerate his schedule for seizing the Admiralties and for starting his drive toward the Philippines via Hollandia. To meet the accelerated schedule it was essential that the 3d Brigade units be employed without waiting for full equipment or normal orientation in their new climate and surroundings. Accordingly, on the 4th of February, the 533d was assigned the mission of taking over the beaches and the water-borne support of the Saidor and Cape Gloucester task forces, which mission was to begin on or before March 1. Considering that these areas were 425 miles forward of Goodenough Island where the equipping was less than half accomplished and that little more than three weeks was allowed within which to begin that mission, the Regiment was confronted with a rather difficult problem. Colonel Moore decided that the best way to handle the situation was to move his command post to Finschhafen and to give the assignment at Saidor to the Shore Battalion less F Company, with C Company for a boat unit. Since the Gloucester mission entailed more long distance small-boat supply and less tonnage across the beach, that job was given to the Boat Battalion less Companies B and C and with F Company added.

Cape Cretin

The Shore Battalion at Milne Bay was alerted for forward movement, and on December 21 E and F Companies plus detachments from D and Headquarters boarded the Liberty ship *Josiah Earle* headed for Cape Cretin. On Christmas Eve, the ship steamed into Dreger Harbor and the troops disembarked at once. The first night was spent in a coconut grove opposite the future headquarters of Sixth Army where the usual insects, the propensity of jungle hammocks to turn over, and an air alert contributed little to a restful night.

Christmas Day was not as the songs and stories would have it. The troops were awakened early so that the maximum use could be made of the daylight, and some returned aboard the ship to unload. The balance were faced with a two-mile hike which was to be followed by a day devoted to clearing the jungle for the battalion area. Turkey, eggnog, Christmas trees, and the other inseparable adjuncts to December 25 were simulated; members of the Battalion ate their lunch on the ground in the shade of coconut trees and substituted cans of meat and beans for the more elegant repast. For those who were not too tired to take the trouble, coconuts could be opened, providing milk and an enjoyable dessert.

Fortunately, several days were allotted for making the camp, an experience which was extremely rare, for as a general rule the Regiment found that it was expected to move into a virgin area late one night and begin efficient operation at daylight. Two D-4 tractors cleaned the area and improved the native trail leading to the site. Two major problems were immediately encountered — water and latrine facilities. A temporary answer to the water problem was found in a neighboring detachment of Seabees, the 40th, who very kindly loaned a water trailer to the Battalion. The second problem was not as easily solved, for the water table was so near the surface of the ground that every hole dug for a latrine filled rapidly with water. Finally, coconut log cribs were built and dirt filled in around them to provide storage space. At first the cribs were sprayed with Diesel oil and burned out daily, but this scheme had to be abandoned when someone, more zealous than thoughtful, burned out the latrine when it was in use, seriously injuring three occupants. By frequent moves, careful spraying, and thorough screening, however, this problem too was satisfactorily solved.

One water trailer did not go far among several hundred men, and so efforts to obtain a better supply continued. A well was dug in the hope of locating an underground stream, but only seepage and a small trickle of water was obtained. To facilitate the flow of water, a charge of dynamite was used which worked in reverse — after the explosion even the trickle had ceased. Headquarters Company was then presented with the problem. By moving to approximately 150 feet from the ocean's edge and by using a ditching machine to dig a well, an adequate supply of water for all purposes was obtained. Showers and laundry facilities were constructed, and when pipe became available, the water was brought to all Company kitchens. Heads for the showers were obtained at high cost; to obtain them it was necessary to trade some of the precious whiskey which had been brought from the States, but even so

steep a price was justified by the enjoyment that the showers gave the Battalion and the neighboring units.

"Washing Machine Charlie" taught the Battalion another lesson which had not been taken very seriously in state-side training; he made it very fashionable to be the owner of a covered foxhole. After "Washing Machine Charlie" had paid a second visit, it was discovered that no foxhole, however comfortable, was fashionable unless it was in close proximity to the owner's cot. Enforcement of the order requiring foxholes for all presented no problem.

Early in January the remaining elements of the Shore Battalion arrived from Milne Bay with engineer equipment, and were pleasantly surprised to find their area all cleared and, relatively speaking, luxurious. Enough time had been permitted for establishment of the area, but the air raids and the fact that the Aussies were battling Japs at Fortification Point not too many miles away, kept the war from moving far into the background. Since the Battalion and its equipment were now all assembled, several conferences were held with the Sixth Army Engineer and the officer in charge of the forward shipping point. An agreement was reached whereby the Battalion would supply the shipping point with 500 men and supervisory officers, with a view to taking over the entire operation of the supply beach which was then being operated by 542d EB&SR. The remainder of the Battalion was to be given engineer construction work ranging from heavy road construction to carpentry and electrical wiring. It was a heavy schedule that lay ahead, but the days passed more rapidly when full, and there was a real satisfaction after training for so many months to be making at last a direct, albeit non-combat, contribution toward winning the war.

The training and experience in beach work, and particularly the limited training gained on the docks at San Francisco, enabled personnel to carry out their duties like veterans, and it was not long before the battalion commander was made beach-master. In addition to his own command, he had supervision of a port company, truck company, DUKW company, and a boat company of the 542d EB&SR. The shore companies organized hatch crews out of their utility cargo platoons, and it was not long before these crews were putting more tonnage overside than crews from the more experienced port company. The shipping point served as an experimental laboratory, and various combinations of hatch crews, lighterage, trucks, and labor were tried in order to find which would produce the greatest net result. The experience gained at this time was a sound basis upon which future requirements were estimated. It is interesting to note that it was here discovered that nearly as much tonnage could be handled in three six-hour shifts as could be handled in three eight-hour shifts because of the time lost in feeding when the longer shifts were worked.

During January and February approximately 35 cargo ships of all kinds were discharged at Cape Cretin with an average daily tonnage of 1,350, the record day of which showed a tonnage of 2,110. These figures work out to an average of seven tons per hatch hour, which is exceptionally good over a period of two months and may be attributed to an excellent beach, quiet water, short haul, and the enthusiasm which arose from doing the real thing at last. Not even frequent raids nor near misses diminished this enthusiasm.

The Battalion also had charge of loading the landing vessels which were supplying the Arawe, Cape Gloucester, and Saidor task forces. This work was kept separate from unloading, and since an extreme shortage of LSTs and LCTs existed, the work was always performed under pressure of time, and required most efficient coordination. The LCTs were used on the run to Arawe and the LSTs to Cape Gloucester and Saidor. Approximately five LCTs were loaded each week and ten LSTs, the average tonnage per week being about 5600 tons. In loading these craft, landing jetties built by the 40th Seabees of coral and coconut logs were used, but a great deal of maintenance was required prior to each loading operation, and the maintenance was the Battalion's responsibility. Full-time use of two dozers with carry-alls was necessary to keep the jetties in workable condition. Twelve DUKWs had been assigned to the Battalion and proved to be very valuable at this time. Despite limited training in their operation and maintenance, an average of nine were kept operating at all times, and in emergencies all twelve were put in workable condition. Some of the drivers learned the hard way, having to take the cargo at ship's side while the ship was being bombed. Less spectacular but equally essential was the contribution made by the DUKWs in prompt disposal of the garbage.

The defects in the state-side training program were felt most severely at this time; in the operation and maintenance of heavy equipment, the Battalion did not feel at ease. This was directly the result of lack of training with the equipment and the fact that the Battalion was issued many items from a special list of heavy engineer equipment shortly before going overseas and had had no opportunity even to familiarize itself with their use. With some 21 dozers, five cranes with attachments, carry-alls of all sizes, dump trucks, well drill, and generators, major jobs were assigned to the Battalion despite the fact that it had far too few men trained in the use of that equipment. These assignments included preparation of a staging area with the necessary road network, sawing of timber, erecting buildings, water systems and electrical works for the Sixth Army. These tasks were undertaken by the men of the

Pythons, big and little, killed in the Shore Battalion's bivouac at Cape Cretin.



Battalion not already assigned to the beach, with little more than courage and ingenuity. The situation was such that anyone who, through curiosity, stopped and looked at a piece of equipment found himself immediately designated as its operator.

The Battalion motor officer was noticed during these days to be pulling out large handfuls of hair and talking in his sleep. It was necessary to train operators, maintenance personnel, and supervisors on the job, and the motor officer devoted at least 18 hours a day to this work. The 40th Seabees, who had helped the Battalion with the loan of a water trailer, came to their rescue again with the loan of a very competent instructor who held classes for all operators not on shift and also instructed individuals while they were operating on the job. The Seabees also took student operators on their equipment and student mechanics in their shops, and it was a heartbreaking sight to see an inexperienced operator turn over a carry-all or bend a new dipper stick, but discouraging though it was, it was a necessity and had to be done.

Statistics on the construction jobs which were completed at Cape Cretin are not now available, but a brief description of them will give a satisfactory picture of their scope and difficulty. The staging area referred to previously was for the 32d Division, and to reach it, it was necessary to build approximately six miles of road, a part of which ran through a swamp requiring considerable fill. The road was fifty feet wide from ditch to ditch, with thirty feet of road surface on a four-inch base of crushed coral. To do the job, six D-8 bulldozers, two D-4 bulldozers, a road grader, four carry-alls, one Buckeye Shovel, and seven dump trucks were required. To give variety, a single-span bridge 26 feet wide and 16 feet long with a 25-ton capacity was included in the road, as was one large culvert.

A survey crew was organized to do all the surveying for the road and for the staging area, and as part of its duties this crew prepared a topographical map with two-foot contour intervals for the battalion area, a distance of 7500 feet including a shore line of 2 miles and extending inland 2600 feet to the foothills of the mountains.

Left: The beachmaster's headquarters at Cape Cretin.

Right: Mess tent of Shore Battalion Headquarters Company at Cape Cretin.



A waterworks for the Sixth Army headquarters was another problem which was successfully solved. A water point was established in one of the nearby streams and 1,000 feet of 3-inch, 3,000 feet of 2-inch, 1,000 feet of 1-inch, and 600 feet of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pipe were laid. Pumping stations were installed and three water towers were erected, one twelve feet high with 6,000 gallons capacity, another twenty feet high with two steel tanks of 4,500 gallons capacity each, and the third twenty feet high with a capacity of 3,000 gallons. As part of the waterworks, three shower baths and the necessary plumbing were installed. A Barber-Greene ditching machine was used to dig the ditch for the pipeline, and it was a source of considerable irritation when upon completion of the line, the machine was commandeered by Sixth Army headquarters to dig all the necessary foxholes for its personnel.

The carpenters of the Battalion constructed a number of buildings for Sixth Army headquarters, including the enlisted men's mess hall, 38 by 128 feet with a corrugated iron roof, complete with concrete floor, screened-in kitchen, shelves, tables, septic tanks, and plumbing. A dispensary of the portable type was constructed, and three warehouses were built for the quartermaster and medical supply dump areas. The latter were of native-type construction, and presented the first opportunity to construct buildings entirely of native materials.

The signal platoon, in addition to the battalion communications and electrical system, put in wires to Army headquarters and to the 542d EB&SR. They wired and maintained all of the buildings at Army headquarters, using approximately 30,000 feet of wiring. What with storms, falling coconuts, and alerts fired into the air, the wires were frequently cut, and the signal platoon was always busy.

Despite overloading from these missions and the beach work, all the jobs had been done so well that orders were received from the Army Engineer to set up and operate a sawmill. Of course, there had been no training of this sort, and a call was sent out from battalion headquarters for any men who had such experience to report. Ten men and one officer with very limited experience answered the call. With the aid of an instruction book, two D-4s and a few pieces of broken log chain, this detachment established the mill and began producing lumber in ten days, continuing during the balance of their stay at Cape Cretin.

A sector of the shipping point had been assigned to the Shore Battalion for defense and the weapons platoon prepared gun emplacements for their .50 calibre machine guns and for the 37 mms and maintained two outposts 24 hours a day. The G-2 section of the Sixth Army called upon the Battalion for a reconnaissance force to be sent to Umboi (Rooke) Island, and this mission was assigned to a scouting part consisting of one lieutenant and three enlisted men who departed for the island on January 15, 1944, by PT boat and were gone for a month. During this month they explored and mapped the entire island, obtained valuable information from the natives, spotted Jap camps, and in general distinguished themselves by their intelligent and thorough reconnaissance. All were awarded Silver Star medals for the highly successful completion of their mission, and the officer in charge later became for several months a member of Sixth Army's famed "Alamo Scouts."

There was some time for recreation, although not as much as the battalion com-

mander would have liked. An area was cleared and used for movies, band concerts, and even a floor show. A substantial stage with a background of young palm trees was built, and movies were shown three times a week. The 32d Division swing band and some stage shows plus a concert by the 112th Cavalry Band were high spots of the entertainment.

In the middle of February, orders were received to leave Philbertville, as the battalion area was known, and to proceed to Saidor to relieve the Shore Battalion of the 542d EB&SR. On the 23d of February, 1944, advance elements of D and E Companies departed with C Company for Saidor to prepare an area for the Battalion. F Company, as indicated above, was to move to New Britain.



DUKWs and LCMs work side by side unloading ships over the beach at Cape Cretin.



"Bongs" wrestle rations and fuel drums on Goodenough Island.

Goodenough Island and Milne Bay

Though the Shore Battalion had been hard at work for a fortnight at Cape Cretin before the plodding *Cape Perpetua* reached Milne Bay with the rest of the Regiment, the two boat companies aboard, A and C, were the first 3d Brigade boat units to arrive in New Guinea for keeps. General Ogden had been directed to assemble his Brigade at Goodenough Island 80 miles from Milne Bay before committing it to various actions then in progress or planned. Though Goodenough possessed many facilities constructed by Sixth Army units in the latter half of 1943, it was by no means self-sufficient as a staging area, and frequent intercourse with Base A at Milne Bay was essential. Shortage of heavy shipping required that this traffic be performed by landing craft. One of the 593d shore companies had been pressed into service to operate boats pending arrival of a boat company and had done a remarkable job considering its total lack of boat training. Yet it was not unnatural that General Ogden was somewhat more than slightly impatient to have a trained boat company

inaugurate service between Goodenough and Milne Bay. Thus hardly had the *Cape Perpetua* dropped her hook when orders were received to have A company debark and bivouac near the LCM assembly plant so that it could receive its allotment of craft and start the vitally needed runs. Since A Company's equipment was intermingled in the holds with that of the other units, all of which were destined to debark at Goodenough, there was nothing to do but land the men of A Company with nothing other than the equipment they wore and carried in their barracks bags.

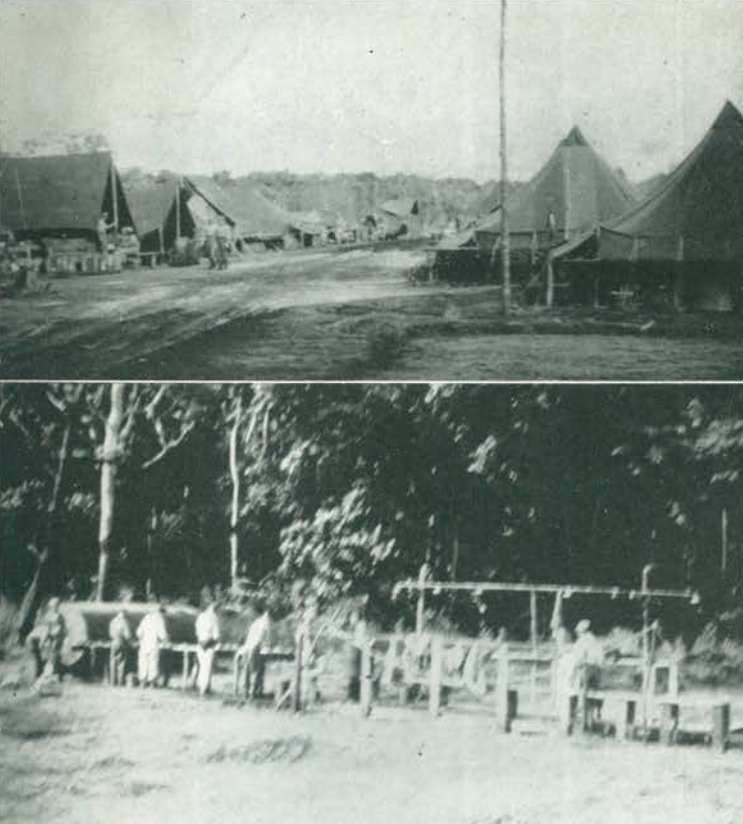
Naturally A Company's camp at Milne was anything but luxurious or efficient. True they did receive tentage from the 543d Shore Battalion, but for everything else they had to beg or scrounge. Instead of a field range they acquired an Australian steam kitchen which they soon discovered was a very ingenious contraption. Life was pretty grim with no lanterns, tools, or utensils, particularly when so much effort had been expended in the States to make sure that the outfit would arrive in the tropics with everything that foresight could provide.

On January 19, four days after getting ashore, the Company had received enough boats and put them in seaworthy enough condition to inaugurate convoy service out around East Cape, past Normanby Island and up through the coral-studded Moresby straits to Melauna Bay, Goodenough. This 84-mile run once started was maintained with packet-ship regularity for a month. The boats would load during the afternoon and evening and depart shortly after midnight, arriving at Goodenough in the early afternoon. Shortly after sunset the return run would start and terminate early the next morning allowing the crews but a few hours to service their craft and eat a hot meal ashore before taking their boats around to the loading beach for another round trip. Though this grueling schedule was unfortunately to be typical of requirements thrown at the Boat Battalion wherever it went, the fact that many men were seeing an LCM for the first time in their lives and were naturally doing many things "the hard way" made this assignment one which was never exceeded in terms of pressure and fatigue.

The outbound convoys were considerably larger than those which returned to Milne Bay; for A Company in addition to moving critical freight to Goodenough was delivering to C Company and the 593d their share of the LCMs that rolled down the ways of the 5211th Steel Hull Battalion. This convoy work was not the only thing that kept A Company's free time at a minimum. Normal harbor lighterage and miscellaneous missions to islands off the mouth of the Bay were plentiful enough to insure that no coxswain and crew ever received a complete lay day.

A detachment of the company moved up to Goodenough to locate the hundreds of crates of precious equipment which had been left aboard the ship at the time of debarkation at Milne Bay, sort them and prepare what was believed to be a semipermanent bivouac for the Company. Actually the temporary camp at Milne, which was finally struck on February 13 when the 543d Boat Battalion took over the convoy mission, was a year-round affair when compared to the frantic 60 hours A Company spent on Goodenough equipping and loading up its boats for the New Britain campaign.

Meanwhile, on January 16 the *Cape Perpetua* had wended her way into Melauna



Left: Scenes from the Camp on Goodenough Island showing C Company kitchen and showers erected by Regimental Headquarters Company. **Right:** Laundry in the raw.

Bay, and Regimental and Battalion Headquarters Companies and Company C had alighted on Goodenough's far from inviting shores. This island, roughly 15 miles in diameter and dominated by an 8000-foot mountain, was selected during the dry season as the assembly area for Sixth Army headquarters and the first troops assigned to that force. Its northern slopes had been ideal during the southeast monsoon that prevailed during the second half of the year, and Sixth Army had prudently moved forward to Cape Cretin before the change of season. Even in late December and early January when the advance detachment of Brigade headquarters was allotting bivouac areas and laying out roads and reconnoitering fords across the countless "brooks" that creased the coastal plain, it appeared to be well suited to acclimate green troops gradually to the tropics. But a week before the *Cape Perpetua* arrived the monsoon changed with a vengeance. Day after day the rain poured down — over 40 inches in one week — and of course that which fell on the lofty mountain swelled the brooks to streams and then to raging torrents in a matter of hours. The road into the 533d's camp area crossed a tiny trickle one day, was barely fordable by a 2½-ton truck that night and was impassable to a D-8 tractor the next day. One company of the 593d had to be evacuated from trees and hummocks by assault boat. Food had to be air-dropped to a large hospital. Land communications were at a complete standstill, and coral blocked off most areas from approach by landing craft.

Into this nightmare fresh from the States stepped the three companies of the 533d. Luckily their area was on a slight rise from which the Kunai grass had been scraped with a bulldozer before the deluge started, but to reach it the men had to wade shoulder deep and had to manhandle all their equipment hundreds of yards from the tiny coral-free beach which was fortunately discovered at one end of the area. For four days the only access to the camp was by boat. During that period a



General Mud was a potent adversary throughout the tropics; he got in his first licks on Goodenough Island.

group of boatmen and radio operators with no equipment other than sledges and hand saws built a 25-ton solid mahogany bridge across the mouth of the river that isolated the camp, on the theory that being over tidewater the whole sea would have to be raised before it would share the fate of all the other bridges on the island. A smaller stream was corduroyed, and as the rainy season had apparently shot the works in its initial onslaught, from then on the three companies could communicate by land with the unloading beach and supply dumps.

Less than 36 hours after landing C Company received a fleet of thirty battered LCMs and a few LCVPs from the 593d's E Company. It is no reflection on the shore engineers who had been running them diligently for a month to say that these craft were in pitiful condition; yet not only did they have to be put right to work lightering around the clock and running missions to Kiriwina and elsewhere, but it was also learned that they would have to be made to last for many months. It was a sad blow to C Company, and these ancient hulks nearly crippled that Company's effectiveness when the pressure was on at Saidor. Lightering at Goodenough was of course pretty dull, but the boats were new to the men and the practice in handling them in sheltered waters was very valuable. Maintenance facilities were conspicuous by their absence. With no tractor crane the best that could be done on the LCMs that required underwater repairs, which they all did with alarming frequency as a result of the maze of coral, was to winch them out of water on a skidway of palm logs. Fortunately, shortly before C Company's departure, LeTourneau cranes were issued, or it would not only have been unable to repair damaged boats but also unable to install gunmounts and other accessories which should have been installed at the LCM assembly plant in Milne Bay.

Not only did the boatmen have to build their own bridges in the absence of the brethren of the Shore Battalion, but they also had to take over a busy beach. The 593d's Shore Battalion had been handling the local beach, but its entire efforts were required to repair the ravages of the downpours and floods. Boat Battalion headquarters took over supervision of the entire unloading of three liberties, the movement of cargo across the beach and its delivery to the proper dumps. By trial and error and relying heavily on the determination of all attached units to get the ships, which were loaded with their own much needed equipment, discharged in a hurry, the somewhat bewildered boat officers and noncoms bulled the job through. This experience was most valuable when the same headquarters was made responsible for the beach at Cape Gloucester, and furthermore gave the boat officers a sympathetic understanding of the Shore Battalion's constant problems, an understanding which helped weld the Regiment into an effective team in later major operations.

The primary mission of the companies at Goodenough was securing their equipment and readying themselves for real assignments in the forward areas. This seemingly simple task was a terrible headache for several reasons. First, the San Francisco Port of Embarkation seemed to have taken a fiendish delight in commingling the equipment of different units. Second, all vehicles and heavy equipment had been shipped knocked down and crated and had to be assembled in hip-deep water with no tools other than the driver's hand tools packed in the crate. Third, the flooding of the dumps had damaged many items and had disorganized the personnel responsible for the dumps so that pilferage was very serious. Fourth, many items were received for the first time here without even a sample available to the unit for study and demonstration before leaving the States. Finally, the Shore Battalion had virtually no personnel on Goodenough, so the job of assembling and preparing its heavy equipment for movement forward fell on the regimental S-3 and a handful of mechanics.

All told the few weeks on Goodenough were a pain in the neck to all ranks, and the receipt on February 4 of warning orders for movement up the line came as a welcome relief, but there was little time for rejoicing in the two weeks that remained before the departure date. Barely in time the last boats to complete A and C Companies' allotments came off the line at Milne and were rushed to Goodenough to have gunmounts welded and equipment checked aboard. Vehicles were completed so close to the deadline that some were actually loaded aboard LCMs with less than one mile on the speedometer. At last, just as it appeared that the deadline would be met on all critical items, came a drastic and apparently ill-considered order to give up twenty-five per cent of the boats, and as will be seen in the next chapter, the final few days on Goodenough were probably the most annoying for the Boat Battalion of its entire overseas tour.

**Convoy of LCVPs coasts down the shore of New Guinea just south of Finschhafen;
Mt. Sattelberg in the background.**



C O R R A L S E A



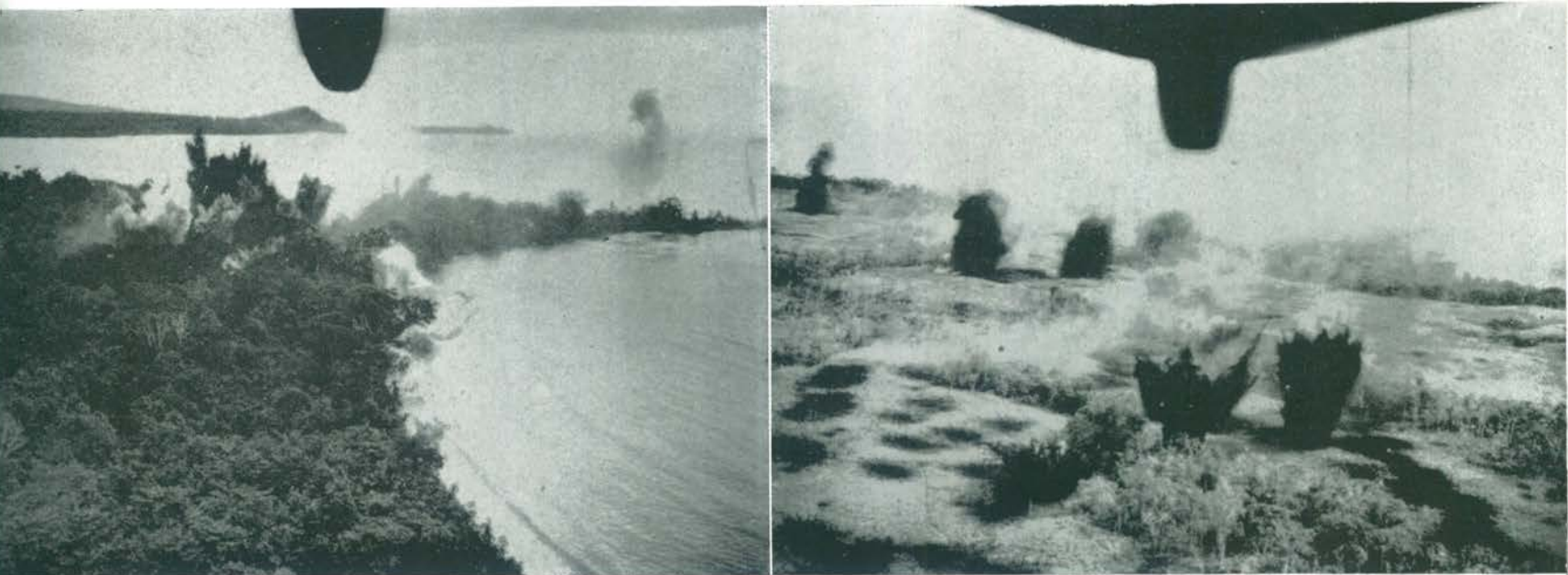
CHAPTER VIII

New Britain

ON the 10th of February the advance representative of the 533d landed at the airstrip at Cape Gloucester. The status of the campaign on New Britain at that time may be summarized as follows: after lightly opposed initial landings at Sag Sag and at Yellow Beach in Borgen Bay, the Marines had closed rapidly on the airstrip and Bloody Point, and had cleared Cape Gloucester proper prior to the end of 1943. The Marines had then regrouped, facing toward the south, and during January had fought a bloody series of engagements, particularly the battle for Hill 660, and had moved down the west shore of Borgen Bay, crossing the Natamo River after a sharp battle on January 28. Thereafter the 5th Marine Regiment had pushed rapidly eastward through crumbling Jap resistance and had reached Cape Gauffre.

The push along the coast was entirely dependent for supply and evacuation on the landing craft of Company C, 592d EB&SR, which was also charged with unloading the shipping in the harbor. This company had had only twenty-odd boats initially, and continuous operation on bad beaches with inadequate replacement parts had reduced their serviceable boats to a scant dozen. Consequently, Major General Rupertus, USMC, the task force commander, was more than delighted at the prospect of the reinforcement of another boat company, and he cheerfully outlined an accelerated offensive to the eastward that would be made possible by this new flotilla. The 533d officer made tentative arrangements for bivouacs in the least atrocious of the various swamps available and then departed for Goodenough to expedite the move forward as much as possible.

For the next two weeks a confusion in the lines of responsibility in the higher command echelons made life very difficult. Brigade and regimental headquarters were placed under USASOS, with the primary mission of expediting the unloading



Softening up Cape Gloucester shortly before the initial landings December 26, 1943.

of supplies at Gloucester and Saidor, yet the battalion commanders were placed under the task force commanders who were charged by Sixth Army with completing their tactical missions with the least possible delay. The first and unhappy effect of this confusion was that General Ogden withheld 25 per cent of the LCMs slated to go initially to both Saidor and Gloucester, so that the 593d could employ them on the run from Finschhafen to Arawe where there was no conflict of interest. As a result, the units assigned to the advance task forces were placed in the embarrassing position of having to hedge on their promises. While this confusion was reigning in higher headquarters, personnel performed herculean feats in preparing their craft for combat, mounting machine guns, drawing and distributing all types of equipment. The conflict of authority struck a particularly hard blow on the boat crews who had to turn their boats over to the 593d on the very same day on which they finished several days of very heavy work in preparing them. A similar irritating result was that ten out of forty of the boats which had already been loaded for the move had to be emptied, and their loads had to be redistributed. Nevertheless, the job was accomplished and everything that could be crammed aboard the reduced fleet had been loaded when darkness fell on the 17th of February. It should be added that the loading, unloading, and reloading was performed during 48 consecutive hours of heavy rain, and by the time the flotilla put to sea tempers left much to be desired.

The fleet consisting of 60 LCMs, 2 picket boats, and 37 LCVPs wound out of Melauna Bay and down Moresby Strait to Collingwood Bay at dawn on the 18th of February. The 150-mile trip to Oro Bay took less than 24 hours with good weather but considerable maintenance work en route. After the arrival at Oro Bay, one whole day was lost because it was necessary to manhandle the fuel drums. In addition, the battalion commander was kept occupied that day by the base commander who failed to see eye to eye with him on the question of garbage disposal. On the 20th, the flotilla proceeded uneventfully to Cape Cretin.

At Cape Cretin two days were lost because the Shore Battalion was not released from its construction and beach control assignments; the headquarters to which it had been attached displayed profound indifference toward the necessity of meeting the target dates which had been established for the Talasea and Yalau attacks. Finally, a few minutes after midnight on the 24th of February, C Company with elements of the Shore Battalion commenced the 125-mile run along the New Guinea coast to Saidor. A few hours later, A Company, Boat Battalion Headquarters, elements of F Company and of Company A of the 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion departed on the final 85-mile run through Dampier Strait to Borgen Bay. A fresh northwest wind kicked up a sharp chop in the Strait and all hands suffered a thorough drenching, but the convoy arrived on schedule off Yellow Beach that evening.

Immediately upon landing at Borgen Bay, it appeared that any thoughts of a few days in which to establish a camp and to service and repair the craft after their long run could be discarded. Instead, one of the worst "rat races" of all time was to occupy every minute of every 24 hours for the next week. The task force commander was confronted with a tremendous problem. In scarcely a week he had to move a substantial part of the 1st Marine Regiment fifty miles to relieve the 5th Marines in

A "raft" of LCMs at anchor in Borgen Bay — Hill "660" in the background.



the Rein Bay area; he had to build up thirty days' supplies of all classes, including three units of fire, at Iboki; and he had to stage and deliver an assault on the Wilaumez Peninsula with a full regimental combat team. Since all of this activity depended on a few dozen landing craft, not an hour could be spared for any boats that were not actually disabled; if a boat could be run, no matter by what field expedient, it had to run.

Going ashore upon arrival on New Britain was a rude awakening; the mud, the stench of dead Japs and foul soil, the rain that would not let up quite long enough to dry clothing, the area that turned out to be a bomb- and shell-cratered jungle, the flies, mosquitoes, and rats — into such a Utopia moved the provisional battalion of the 533d. Perhaps it was well that the pressure was as great as it was, for no time was permitted to anyone to worry about conditions.

LST beaches at Yellow Beach, Cape Gloucester.





Light artillery section of the 11th Marines splashes ashore at Cape Gloucester from LST.

All amphibious and allied elements were placed under control of the 533d, including five LCTs from the Navy, Company C of the 592d EB&SR with its maintenance platoon, and a port company. As fast as the boats were unloaded they were checked by the A Company maintenance section, and if they were found capable of half speed on one engine when loaded to the gunwales and when covered with as many marines as could perch on the cargo and the narrow waterways, they were so loaded, and convoys of a dozen or so boats were dispatched on the fifty-mile run to Iboki. The run along the coast lay through continuous patches of barely submerged coral which stretched many miles from the shore. To avoid these reefs by passing to seaward of them would nearly double the distance, so it was necessary to twist in and out amongst the reefs, and the convoys were limited to daylight runs. The first



The maintenance beach in Borgen Bay was always jammed with crippled craft.

few groups were led by boats of the 592d whose coxswains had been probing those waters for four weeks, but having made one trip through the maze, all coxswains were presumed to know the passages, and whether by knowledge or luck they always got through.

Iboki was actually occupied by the Marines on the 25th of February after a sharp air bombardment, and as quickly as they reached the point they were met by the LCMs with fresh troops and supplies. The day was marred by a tragic accident when one of the convoys was attacked by three B-25s of our own airforce which were returning to New Guinea from a strike on the Admiralties. They made three strafing attacks on four boats of the 592d, killing one engineer officer and several marines, and wounding many more of both marines and amphibian engineers. It was later learned that the pilots had been furnished with intelligence maps on which the New Britain data was 45 days and 50 miles out of date.

Meanwhile back at Borgen Bay the few men who were not involved in boat operations were struggling to set up a base camp in a dismal swampy forest, criss-crossed with fallen trees six feet in diameter and pocked with thirty-foot craters caused by the pre-landing bombardment. A daily rainfall of some two to five inches, clinging bottomless volcanic ash muck, and lack of tools and equipment made this work a misery which will never be forgotten. The maintenance problem was somewhat eased by the arrival on February 28 of Company A, 563d Maintenance Battalion less one platoon. With no opportunity for substantial repairs to the boats since their assembly at Milne Bay nearly five weeks before, the backlog of work presented to the maintenance unit as it debarked was staggering. But it rose to the occasion in splendid fashion and began hauling and repairing boats as fast as it could roll its equipment down the ramps of the LCTs.

Relieved from work at Borgen Bay the A Company maintenance section moved forward that same day to Iboki and there established an advance repair base in preparation for the next push up the coast. Realizing the amount of work his group

Company street of Headquarters Company, Boat Battalion at Borgen Bay after many dump-truck loads of fill had been poured into the swamp it once had been.





Middle of Willaumez Peninsula viewed from the Northwest.

Garua I. ↑

would be called upon to turn out, the maintenance officer picked the beach best suited for hauling boats, completely disregarding the fact that it was located at the upper end of Rein Bay, several hundred yards beyond the barbed wire of the marine perimeter. Ignoring both Japs and marines and the blackout prescribed by the latter, this little task force maintained its own "perimeter," and night as well as day the bright arc of its welders could be seen.

Through the first days of March the hectic shuttle service continued to pour troops and supplies into Iboki. Continuous downpours not only made a morass of the staging area, but so limited visibility that the convoys fell well behind schedule, as they picked their way through the tortuous route.

The assault on the Willaumez Peninsula was directed at the airfield and village of Talasea on the east coast. No naval combatant craft larger than PTs could be spared, nor were any LCIs or LSTs available, for the campaigns in the Marshalls and the Admiralties were then at their height, and so it was necessary to make the attack on the west coast and thence move overland to the east coast in order to minimize the risk and keep the hours of discomfort for the assault troops riding in small open boats to the minimum. Volupai plantation, directly across the neck from Talasea and connected thereto by what was thought to be an adequate road, was chosen as the initial beachhead.



↑ Volupai
Plantation

↑ Center of landing
beach

↑ Elbow of channel by which
boats had to approach beach.

The 5th Marines were to attack in a column of battalions with normal attachments, including a few pieces of equipment and a small advance detail from F Company of the Shore Battalion, which were all that had as yet arrived from Cape Cretin. Adequate fighter aircraft cover was expected during daylight, and a saturation bombing of the beach area was scheduled from H minus 40 to H minus 10 minutes. Control was given to the commander of the 533d Boat Battalion of all elements afloat, including eight PTs, five LCTs, and a company of amphibian tractors, in addition to the 40 LCMs and 17 LCVPs of the 533d and 592d. It was planned that the "amtracs" carrying the first two waves of infantry would be lifted in the LCTs and launched a mile off shore, from which point they would proceed directly across the barrier reef to the beach. The beach was so placed that the landing barges had to take a dogleg course in order to follow the only channel to the beach that was shown in the air photos. The feasibility of this channel was doubted by the amphibian scout who had made the reconnaissance, so an emergency plan to transfer men and appropriate equipment of later waves to the amtracs had to be prepared. The risks involved in ordering landing craft to approach the beach in column at an acute angle caused considerable concern, but there was no alternative.

The approach track selected was nearly 60 miles; so in order to make the 0800

H hour the convoy, held down to the LCTs' speed of 6 knots, had to clear Rein Bay by 2200 D-1. The PTs after providing a screen for the convoy during the night were to strafe the beach and neighboring headlands with 20 mm fire from outside the reefs. To replace the "call fire" against emergency targets usually available from destroyers and APDs, four medium tanks were to be carried in LCMs covering the flanks of the first wave of amtracs. Tests in Rein Bay showed that the tanks' 75 mm guns could deliver accurate and rapid fire over the coamings of the boats.

March 5, the day before the attack, found the shuttle service between Borgen Bay and Iboki still operating in high gear. When the loading out commenced after noon, one-third of the craft had not yet arrived. The afternoon and early evening saw a hectic jumble of boats jammed topside to topside on the narrow beach, discharging supplies and the last of the troops who were to take over the Iboki area, and taking on the attacking troops and their equipment and stores. No floodlighting equipment was available, so as darkness deepened and the deadline for departure approached, pandemonium reached new heights. Yet by dint of superhuman efforts on the part of all hands, the incoming boats were discharged, serviced, organized into waves and loaded in time.

The motley convoy that stood out to sea that night carried more than 3000 men and 1000 tons of equipment in what was probably the War's outstanding example of overloading small boats. Luckily the wind was calm all night and only the gentlest of ground swells rocked the boats.

Following close in the wake of the A Company picket boat the blacked-out flotilla kept in reasonably good order, though a series of inky rain squalls caused one three-boat wave to go astray for a time. The "free" boats carrying the various regimental and battalion commanders were delayed in departing, and being unable to find the main convoy in the blackness, proceeded independently to the rendezvous area. Daybreak came as a welcome relief shortly before 0700 and disclosed the little fleet somewhat northward of its prescribed track but about on schedule as it approached the mountainous peninsula.

As the minutes passed and the brightening sky remained empty of planes, a chill sense of foreboding crept up many a spine. The calculated risk of attacking an enemy-held shore without preliminary naval bombardment had been taken, but to go on in through the tricky channel and land on a beach overhung with thick jungle without benefit of preliminary bombing, strafing, and smoking was something else again. Nevertheless Colonel O. P. Smith, USMC, commanding the force, signalled "carry on"; so the assault began. The amtracs clattered and splashed off the LCTs' ramps as the PTs hurled their small HE shells at the beach. The lead boat, an LCVP, followed by the beach control boat dropping buoys, and the LCMs with tanks, picked its way through the nigger-heads. As these craft and the churning amtracs approached within two hundred yards of the shore, they cut loose with all their machine guns. The small Jap garrison reacted sharply, picking a few marines off the approaching amtracs with rifle and machine gun fire and lobbing 90 mm mortar shells into the water. At this critical moment the "air support" *did* arrive — one L-4 cub with General Ogden in it tossing hand grenades at likely Jap positions!

Giant Bread-fruit tree that dominated A Company's camp at Borgen Bay.



With few casualties and in good order the amtracs reached the beach, and simultaneously two medium tanks rolled off the ramps of the LCMs, one being promptly disabled by a suicide attack of a Jap with an armful of magnetic mines. The mortar fire increased in tempo destroying several of the channel buoys and otherwise causing many of the boats to get fouled up in the coral patches. No boat suffered a direct hit, and the only casualties were from fragments of shells bursting on the surface. Luckily the Japs kept their mortar fire on the water in the initial phases of the assault, for if it had been directed on the tiny (75 yards long) beach which soon was jammed with men and equipment, the casualties might have become prohibitive.

The twelve waves were finally discharged by 1100, only 45 minutes behind schedule, and except for five boats left for emergencies or flank patrols, the flotilla headed back for Iboki, taking with it the casualties. On the return trip to Iboki, the airforces, which had failed to arrive at all when needed, made their record for the day complete when a PBY strafed the crippled boats that were tagging along at the rear of the column. Meanwhile, the troops on the new beachhead were facing heavy going. Behind the beach the terrain was little more than a quagmire, and the artillery had to take up a position only a few dozen yards from the water's edge. When the boats withdrew, the Jap mortar fire was pulled in to the beach and casualties began to mount, including two officers and a sergeant of the boat control section of A Company. While the F Company detachment and the marines were laboring to lay cyclone fencing across the bog and thus to permit reasonable dispersion, the 533d medics were assisting the marine corpsmen in sheltering and administering to the

wounded. By mid-afternoon, the marines had worked far enough inland to drive the Japs from their mortar positions and the wounded could be moved from their fox-holes. Those who were urgently in need of hospital facilities were loaded on the only two good LCMs and on one crippled LCM for an agonizing eleven-hour trip back to Iboki. Not a few died on the way. Some of these lives could have been saved if the PTs had been retained in the objective area as was urged by the 533d and agreed to by the task force commander and the PT squadron commander, but Seventh Fleet headquarters had flatly directed that PTs be used exclusively as escorts for the LCTs, and when the LCTs returned to Iboki, the PTs went with them. Some of this loss that could have so easily been avoided was decreased during the night when the PTs did run out from Iboki to intercept the incoming LCMs and expedite bringing to shore the most seriously wounded. But the saving of time was trifling as compared with what it could have been. It was later learned that the commander of the Jap garrison and his staff escaped by barge to Garove that night, and if some PTs had remained on patrol in the objective area, these Japs could have been killed or captured.

The main convoy reached Iboki just after sunset, and the night was spent refueling and servicing the boats and loading the reserve battalion and the remainder of the units that had made up the assault force. Departing shortly after dawn, this echelon arrived on the beach at 1600, by which time the fighting had moved to the other side of the peninsula so that the resupply unloading was unopposed. On the second trip back to Iboki pressure had relaxed sufficiently so that all hands were given 3 hours sleep — the first for some in over 100 hours. The third load was principally bulk ammunition and rations, which took all day to take aboard.

During the day the Division's plan to attack Garove in the Vitu Islands on March 15 was discussed at length between the Boat Battalion commander and the commanding officer of the 1st Marines. The mission would involve an 80-mile run and a landing on beaches overlooked by cliffs whose caves concealed three inch guns. Naturally destroyers were to blast the way, yet even so, such an undertaking would be risky in view of the run-down condition of the boats and boat crews. So a promise was extracted from the assistant division commander that after the coming trip to Volupai all but four boats were to return to Borgen Bay to refit and get set for the Garove show.

At 0800 the 9th, the convoy arrived off Volupai beach to learn that despite prodigious efforts of marine and army engineers the four-mile road from the plantation across the peninsula was a hopeless quagmire and that the two battalions currently driving the Japs from Talasea airstrip would starve if they depended on it as a main supply route. Though instructed to await a DE as an escort before rounding Cape Hollman and landing at Talasea, the convoy got under weigh immediately and, unescorted, made the 60-mile passage into Talasea, the most important peacetime port between Rabaul and Madang.

The trip was not uneventful, for the last three boats of the convoy, two of which were carrying light tanks, came upon two Jap barges at dusk off Bulu-Murli and in a brief engagement, employing the tanks' 37 millimeter guns as well as the .50 calibre machine guns of the landing barges, caused one Jap boat to be abandoned and captured the other.

Leaving five LCMs to ferry equipment and supplies from Volupai around to Talasea, the rest of the boats returned 100 miles to Iboki next day to pick up the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, and take them back to Borgen Bay to stage for Garove. En route Bulu-Murli, off which the previous night's barge engagement had occurred, was given a thorough strafing from a range of 50 yards. Arriving shortly before midnight the boat group learned that Sixth Army had canceled the Garove operation and that the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, was to "clean out" Linga Linga plantation and the surrounding territory as soon as possible.

The Battalion with ten days supplies was loaded in 14 LCMs and 2 LCVPs shortly after daybreak, and the little convoy picked its way eastward through the uncharted coral reefs, arriving at a 1300 H hour. Shortly before noon the column of boats rounded into Eleonora Bay and formed into three waves for the assault. Brigadier General Sheppard who had just completed a cub reconnaissance flight over the objective dropped a message warning the boats to lay down heavy fire before landing. The maneuver was tricky, for the waves had to approach close and parallel to the beach, execute a "by the left flank", and land. Actually there was no opposition to the landing, but a few score yards inland the marines killed and captured several Japs.

The next day the force split up into several small amphibian patrols, approximately a reinforced platoon to each, and set forth to scour the shores of the bay

LCMs at Talasea deliver fresh bread, baked at Cape Gloucester 120 miles away, to the delight of men of the garrison who had lived for several weeks on K and C rations.



together with its dozen inhabited islands. The results were good: over a hundred Japs killed or captured. A particularly neat little operation occurred at Kandoka village on Riebeck Bay. Twenty-five well armed Japs occupied the village, which could not be attacked from the sea because of an impassable barrier reef 400 yards off shore. Thirty-odd marines were landed a mile or more from the village and approached it from the rear. The three boats feigned a frontal attack on the town, grounded on the reef and plastered the village with 60 mm mortar and machine gun fire. At a prearranged time the boats ceased fire and the marines, who had undetected crawled within hand grenade range, rushed the village killing 24 and capturing 1 Jap without suffering a single casualty. The first river penetration on the Regiment's record occurred the same day when an LCVP and 2 LCMs bounced over the bar and skidded into the mangrove-walled Kulu River. No Japs were encountered, but three small barges were destroyed with rifle grenades.

Operations were continued in the entire area between Iboki and the Willaumez Peninsula with small patrols, using landing craft for mobility, making quick raids on islands and villages wherever Jap stragglers were reported or suspected. Several hundred Japs were killed here in the next four weeks and substantial numbers of prisoners captured — the largest haul in the SWPA to date. A few groups, rear guard elements of the division withdrawing toward the Gazelle Peninsula, put up stout resistance, and occasionally marine patrols which were pinned down and in serious danger were evacuated by LCMs utilizing their full .50 calibre fire power to keep the Japs at bay.

Meanwhile to the east the 5th Marines pushed down the Willaumez Peninsula and garrisoned San Remo plantation as the main outpost on the north shore of New Britain. The 533d's job became in the main one of supplying all forces east of Cape Gloucester — a total of about 5000 men. Day after day convoys of a dozen or more LCMs loaded supplies at Borgen Bay, departed at 1600 and after 120 miles of open-water running put in to Talasea the following morning, discharging their cargo and returning with casualties or damaged equipment that night. Section leaders or coxswains soon took command of these runs, demonstrating seafaring acumen and piloting ability that amply justified their arduous training off the California coast.

To render the 5th Marines self-sustaining on the water the 3d platoon of Company A and the maintenance section that had been in Rein Bay were ordered to establish a base at Talasea. The platoon set up its camp on a high headland near the jetty used for unloading, while the maintenance beach was established in a small cove close by. The other platoons of the company later took turns at this ideal assignment and most of the men of A Company will remember Talasea with its beauty and unusual climate as the only spot approaching a "paradise" in the tropics. The picturesque harbor so well protected from all weather, the geysers steaming and spouting periodically along the shore, the hot streams that supplied baths and showers, the vast coconut plantations, the exquisite mission that overlooked the harbor, the steers and bananas on Garua Island, fishing that usually only liars experience — all these combined to make a tour of duty at Talasea the next best thing to a leave in Australia.

At Cape Gloucester itself there were ships to unload and short supply runs to

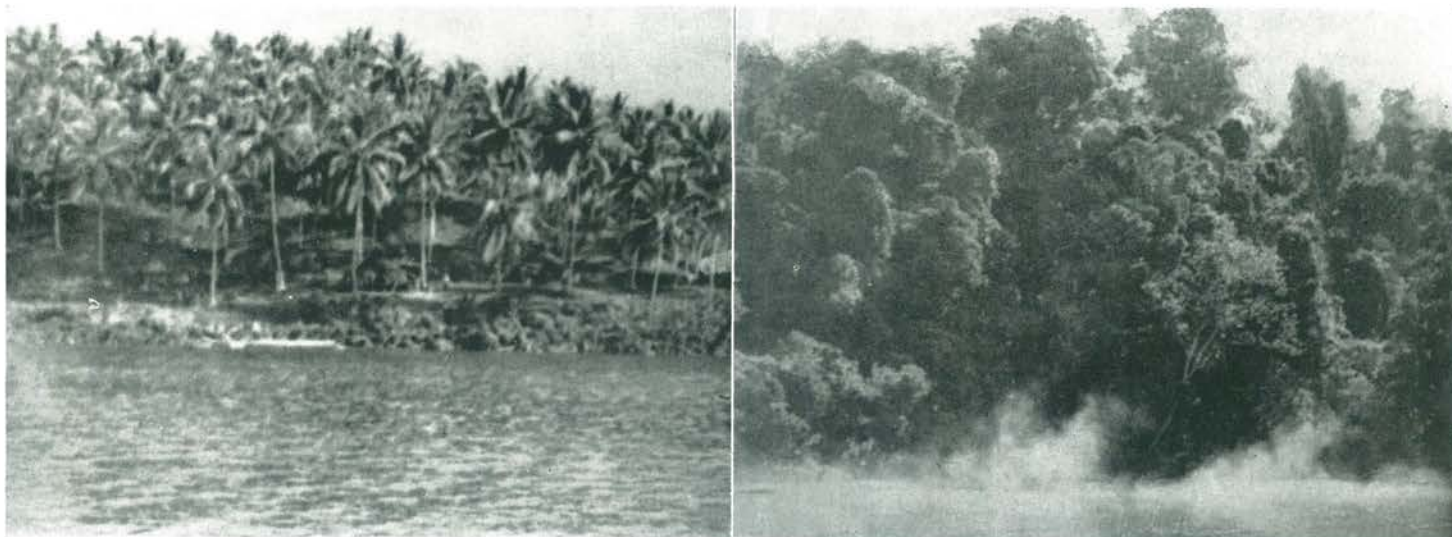
outlying radar stations. The maintenance work was divided between Borgen Bay, where the 563d platoon did all echelons of work on boats that were deadlined there, and Talasea where the A Company section did 1st, 2nd and 3rd echelon work on the boats disabled in that vicinity. Despite impressive operating hours of all boats and the ravages of coral, an average of over 80% of the boats were kept in operational condition.

Company F maintained a detachment at Talasea constructing roads and landing points in conjunction with the 17th Marines. The balance of the Company operated initially with the 19th Seabees on general road maintenance and extension in the Cape Gloucester area. As the pressure of off-loading ships in the harbor steadily increased until the port company and the marine stevedoring detachments could not cope with it, the Company's manpower was diverted to unloading. By early April the entire responsibility for handling 600 tons of cargo a day was placed on F Company, and it rose magnificently to the occasion, turning out 13 hatch crews each day in addition to handling the control of the beach and operating the necessary heavy equipment.

On April 10 the 1st Marine Division was relieved from assignment to the SWPA and alerted for movement to the Solomons. The Marines were to be relieved regiment by regiment by the 40th Infantry Division, as promptly as possible; and so continuous pressure was put on the boats to pull in the intermediate marine garrisons and to bring back from Talasea the vehicles and impedimenta of the 5th Marines.

Fortunately the Saidor Campaign was about over, and after much bickering between the commanding generals of the 40th and 32d Divisions, Sixth Army finally ordered C Company to proceed to Cape Gloucester, and the additional boats were most valuable in the exchange of garrisons which commenced on April 23. The navy transports refused to go to or near Talasea, so the entire 185th Regimental

Scenes from Talasea—Left: Camp of 3d Platoon of Company A. Right: Steam rising from one of the geysers around the edge of Garua Harbor.



Combat Team was disembarked in Borgen Bay into LCMs many of which had just a few hours before arrived after a 130-mile trip from Saidor. When the unit was all off the transports, the 60 LCMs took off in three convoys for Talasea and San Remo, 150 miles away. The passengers thus were not set ashore at their destinations until nearly 24 hours after they climbed down the landing nets. The next day the 5th Marines piled aboard the same boats for their return to Borgen Bay. Certainly this was the most extensive "ship-to-shore" troop movement of the War.

By the 5th of May the last of the convoys of transports had sailed with the last of the Marines, and the balance of C Company and the Maintenance Company had arrived at Cape Gloucester. For the first time since leaving California, the Boat Battalion was two-thirds intact, B Company still being in Australia.

The next development in the campaign was the extension of American control of New Britain to include Cape Hoskins, which point the Marines had planned to assault, but were prevented by their sudden move. A plan for an amphibious attack by two battalions of the 185th RCT was worked out, including a preliminary attack on an island off the Cape to secure artillery positions dominating the airstrip, but reconnaissance patrols developed the fact that the Japs had withdrawn all but a small screening force, so the plan was dropped and a quick landing was made on May 10 by landing craft from Talasea in conjunction with troops moving overland from San Remo. Casualties were confined to those caused by land mines and a handful of snipers. In an effort to learn what was behind the sudden evacuation of the Japs, the 533d proposed to 40th Division headquarters that a road block be established 20

LSTs at Yellow Beach during the relief of the 1st Marine Division by the 40th Infantry Division.



miles beyond Cape Hoskins at a point where the coastal trail crossed the Kapiura River and became a vehicular road to Rabaul. This point was 12 miles upstream from the sea, and impassable swamps to the north and mountainous jungles to the south turned it into a perfect bottleneck. The division commander agreed merely to a daylight reconnaissance using a handful of 533d men. By that time an LCM had been converted to a gunboat, not nearly as heavily armed as were the later such craft, but with a 37 millimeter and five machine guns, it carried substantial armament.* With an additional LCVP and LCM the gunboat pushed up the river, and although nerves were tense as the boats moved noisily up through the heavy jungle that would provide perfect cover for an ambush, no opposition developed. Upon reaching the crossing the party went ashore and reconnoitered a few miles in each direction. Only one Jap was killed, but enemy telephone lines were cut and several substantial rafts were destroyed, and this mission was the nearest approach to Rabaul made by ground forces for several months to come. It also pointed out the possibility of employing landing craft on rivers for rapid stabs into doubtful territory.

Partly for purposes of training, the 40th Division had reoccupied Sag Sag and Aisega on the western end of the island, so that the 533d was now responsible for water-borne supply of an area that extended 210 miles from east to west. Fortunately, lighterage at Borgen Bay was not at that time heavy and an unusually efficient SCR 284 radio net helped solve the problem of dispatching and control.

At this time the 533d again requested permission to reconnoiter Garove which would be a valuable refuge for boats making the run to Talasea and San Remo now that the southeast monsoon season was approaching. If Garove were not available, a crippled boat in a bad southeaster would have no refuge nearer than the Carolines. This request was passed by Division to Sixth Army which approved it, but limited the force to a platoon, and Division then turned it over to the 160th Infantry. After several days of planning, the 160th determined that the project was too risky and

*For a detailed description of these "LCMGs" see pages 282-288.

LCMs tied up at the dock
built in Borgen Bay during
April 1944.

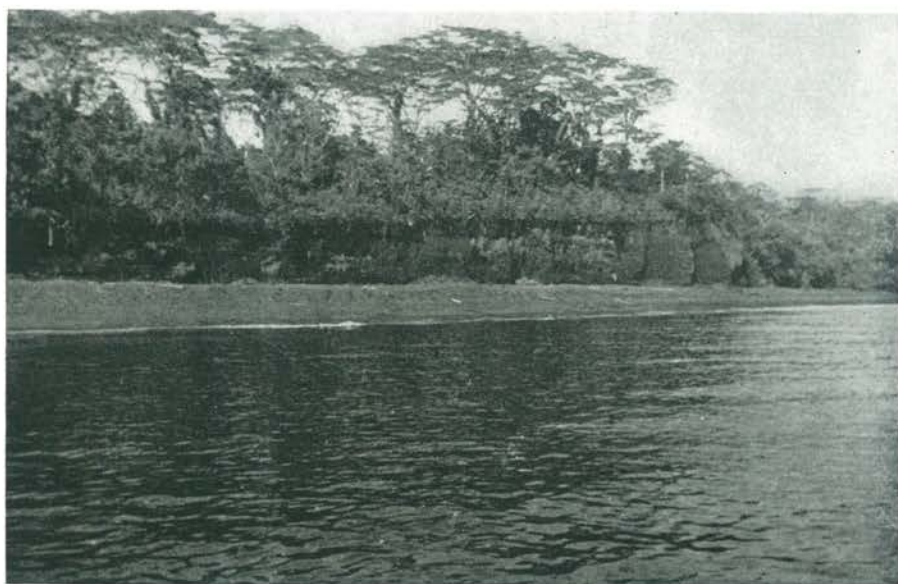


that in any event 35 miles off shore was too far for small landing craft! Thoroughly fed up a small party of 533d boatmen on May 27 embarked on an LCM gunboat, made the 80-mile trip, landed, and, after determining from the natives that the Japs had departed "two moons" ago, collected a fine haul of souvenirs and prepared several trucks for later removal. Upon their return they learned that the mission had been assigned to the 185th Infantry and that strict orders had been received that 533d craft were not to approach the island until it had been cleared by the infantry.

The story's sequel was that the RAAF studying photographs discovered that certain trucks had "moved" and plastered the island with bombs. The 185th studied and planned and finally after four weeks dispatched a Kanaka in a sailing canoe to obtain a report. To the considerable embarrassment of the 533d who had kept the secret within the outfit, he reported that "Jap palla go three moon (ago) white master come one moon (ago)." Late in June a landing of infantry was finally carried out and Garove was then "officially" recaptured.

Orders received on June 1 alerted all but one boat company of the 533d for movement to Aitape 440 miles to the westward. Before departure the 108th RCT had to be moved in LCMs with all their vehicles and equipment 120 miles to Arawe to relieve the 112th Cavalry. Several convoys including boats of the 543d were required for this move, and the boats encountering the full force of the southeast monsoon in Dampier Strait and along the southwest coast of the island took a terrific beating. Ramps worn thin by lack of paint and abrasion on sand were smashed in by the steep breaking seas. Men and equipment were drenched for hours as the boats struggled to make good 3 knots against the wind and sea. One boat was lost — the only sinking during all operations of the 533d — because her bilge pumps gave out and her battered ramp let the seas in at will. All personnel were removed before she went down, but the general's foot-lockers, jeep, and ice chest full of beer necessarily became part of the contents of Davy Jones' locker. Part of the 108th was carried

Garove Island's north shore — spot where 185th Infantry eventually made its "assault" landing.



beyond Gasmata to Montagu Harbor on the south coast thus extending the operational routes of the Battalion in New Britain waters to well over 400 miles.

Finally, after a hectic struggle to repair the battered C Company boats, Boat Battalion Headquarters Company, C Company, and the 3d platoon of the newly named 1461st Engineer Maintenance Company loaded aboard their landing craft on June 22 and at dawn the next day took off on the 220-mile run to Kronprinzhafen on the New Guinea coast between Madang and Hansa Bay. There they refueled and followed by a 2d ESB convoy proceeded out around the islands off Wewak and arrived at their new base — Aitape. F Company sweated out several weeks waiting for heavy shipping that never showed up and eventually at the end of August was moved to Aitape on two convoys of B Company LCMs.

A Company remained based at Borgen Bay all summer, with a platoon at Talasea, and easily handled the required water traffic, which task was made simpler by the laissez-faire policy of the 40th Division. By this time its area was well set up; eggs, butter, meat, and bread were no longer mere words; and moving pictures operated on schedule. So it was not an uncomfortable nor an unprofitable stay which A Company put in during the summer and early fall on New Britain. In September a boat company of the 594th EB&SR relieved A Company of nearly all work, and it concentrated on readying itself for its next assignment. A 50% replacement of boats was accomplished by exchanging worn-out craft at Milne Bay, and after the usual numerous false alarms, Company A finally left New Britain on November 14 to rejoin the Regiment at Aitape.

CHAPTER IX

Saidor

TURNING the 1944 calendar back to February, we find that advance elements of D and E Companies departed with C Company on the 24th for Saidor. The run from Cape Cretin to Saidor was a little over 100 miles and was accomplished uneventfully. The balance of Companies D and E and Headquarters Company, Shore Battalion arrived on LSTs on the morning of February 28. It was raining hard when the troops went ashore and continued to do so for most of the stay at Saidor. Nevertheless a camp site was selected for the Shore Battalion along the beach between the airstrip and the fuel dump, and the area was cleared and tents erected in rapid time.

C Company, requiring a harbor for its small boats, found an area a few miles to the east where a long coral reef furnished nearly sufficient shelter for its anchorage. Although the anchorage was usable, the area ashore was not. It was swampy, and perfumed by decomposed Jap bodies. Nevertheless, tents were erected and steps were taken to create the comforts that were even at this early time known to contribute so much to efficient operation of an organization. In a conference with the Chief of Staff of the 32d Division, it was learned that the Shore Battalion would relieve the Shore Battalion of the 542d EB&SR and operate the harbor under the general direction of the division G-4 section. To it were attached Company B of the 542d EB&SR and the Amphibious Truck Platoon from the 2d ESB, and in addition assistance was to be given in harbor operations by the 632d Tank Destroyer Battalion, and miscellaneous labor from the Division and the Air Corps. C Company's LCMs were to be assigned primarily to combat and resupply missions, but such as could be spared from those duties, together with two LCTs, three barges, and some DUKWs, were to furnish lighterage for the harbor. All base communications and beach defense were the responsibility of the Shore Battalion, as were the construction and maintenance of the beach and dumps and the road between them, and the supply of water to troops in the adjacent areas. In case these tasks did not keep the two-company Battalion fully occupied, it was directed to furnish the division engineer with engineering equipment and operators whenever called upon.

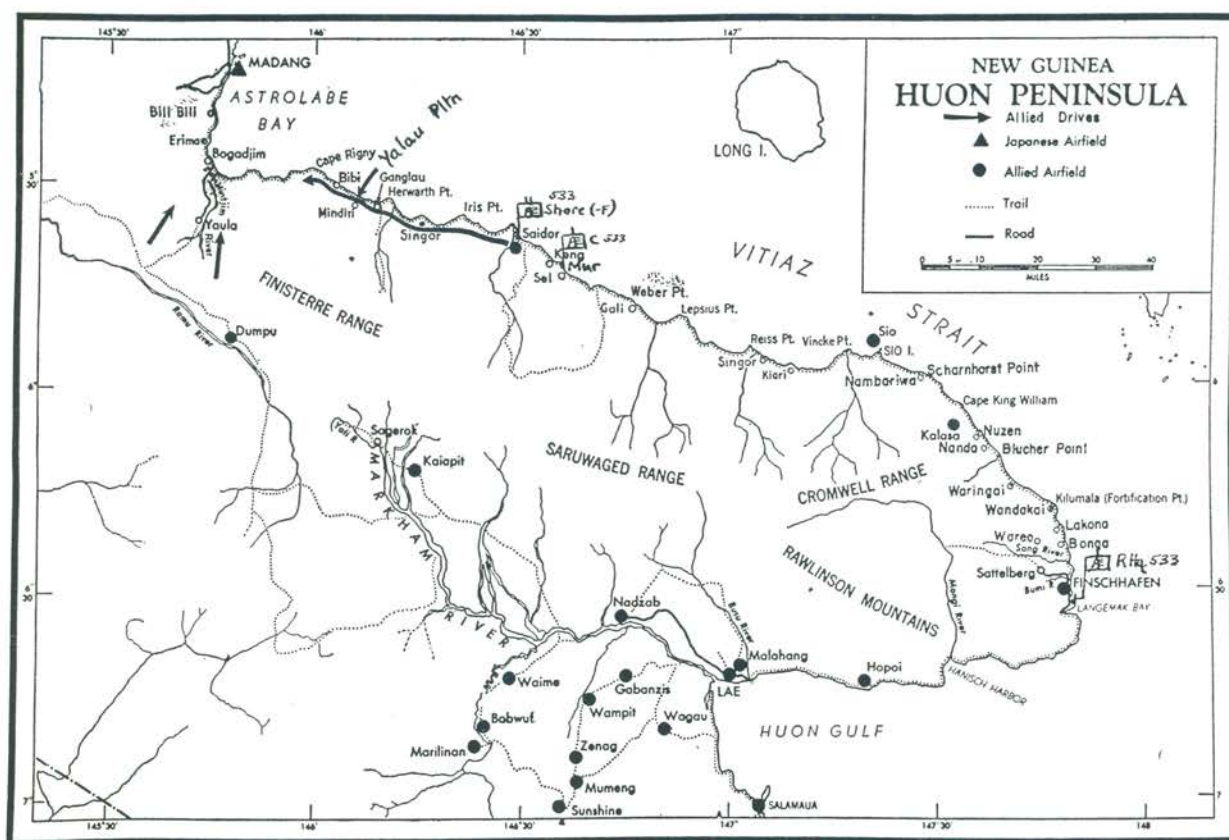
This mission was anything but glamorous, yet, in the estimation of many, it was the most difficult assignment the Shore Battalion had during its overseas duty. The entire operation was bogged down in mud; the initial supply dumps were inaccessible, and the road from the beach to the airstrip and to task force headquarters was little more than a canal of mud. There was no room to work, except for a much too narrow strip of beach; the beach was difficult, and coral patches made it very hard on LCMs. Spare parts for engineer equipment and for boats were not available, although the operating conditions were such that repeated breakdowns were inevitable. To this should be added the fact that the 32d Division was an extremely stern taskmaster, and that the Japs were bombing the area every night.

Upon arrival the Shore Battalion discovered that all classes of supplies were



Mud was the curse of the early days at Saidor. Big dozers struggle to strip the jungle and make a river of goo into a road.

dangerously low, and so beach operations could not be suspended to give an opportunity to construct a road or to enlarge the working area at the beach. Traffic had to be kept moving even though tractors at work on the road had to stop frequently to tow vehicles that were mired. At one time the supply of POL was so low and roads were so bad that a D-8 towing a sled was assigned to remove fuel from the initial dump, although it could pull only three drums at a time. It was obvious that supplies could not cross the beach in any substantial quantity until the beach itself and the roadways had been greatly improved. This was the first and primary mission of the Shore Battalion and by working all hours of the day and night with all possible equipment, a gravel pit was opened, from which the gravel was hauled in trucks and dumped on the roadbed as D-8s with carry-alls removed the mud. Hand labor opened up drainage-ways, and slowly but surely the difficult problem began to give way before



determined efforts to solve it. Finally, when the weather broke for a few days, an excellent all-weather road was completed.

With an exit from the beach to the dumps assured, the next necessity was working-room at the beach, and a swamp area was filled in for a parking place for trucks, and an office for the beachmaster and port director was built. Two other beaches were in use at this time from which supplies were sent to elements of the Division which could not be supplied by road, and time was even found to improve these beaches.

Meanwhile C Company had also been put to work at once. No sooner were the kitchen and maintenance sections unloaded, than orders were received that boat operations would begin the following day. This was the first of 368 missions which were run from this base and, ironically, the first mission was a fishing expedition for two general officers—at a time when every effort was necessary to get the boats in condition after their long run and to establish adequate living and working conditions!

Immediately upon arrival, rumors were heard of an assault landing, and on the 28th of February the rumors were confirmed. At this time the 32d Division was driving the Japs west along the coast, while Aussies were driving them inland along the Markham Valley. An escape from the valley was located a few miles behind the Jap line of resistance on the coast. It was necessary, therefore, to cut off the escape

The battalion landing force assigned to strike Yalau Plantation holds "dry run" off Yamai, New Guinea.



of the Japs from the Markham Valley and to cut off those who were retreating westward along the coast, and the spot chosen to plug this leak was the plantation of Yalau. Several night reconnaissances of the beach were made by PT boats, and the plans were carefully laid. Command afloat was assigned to the 542d's boat battalion executive as he was the senior amphibian officer, and the first three waves were comprised of boats of Company B, 542d EB&SR. The mission of Company C, 533d was to land the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th waves and to handle the resupply of the reinforced battalion making the attack. The embarkation area was Yamai, located approximately a third of the way from Saidor to Yalau and not far behind the point where the 32d Division was engaging the retreating Japs.

On the day prior to the landing, a dry run was made to assure that the landing would go off with no hitches. Boats were loaded with troops, equipment and supplies, and after a short run to sea the troops unloaded again, leaving the equipment and supplies aboard. At dusk the troops reloaded, and the convoy started for Yalau in

good order. Instead of using an army navigation boat, as the 533d did in the Talasea operation, the flotilla commander placed a PT boat in the guide position and this resulted in considerable confusion, for the PT could not run slowly enough for the heavily laden landing craft. The PT would run at 8 knots for a half a mile or so and then wait for the 6 knot landing craft to close up; as a result in the dark the waves were constantly running through each other. To add to the problems the sea was rough, so much so that at times the hubs of the jeeps in the wells of the LCVPs were under water. Nevertheless, none of the boats were lost, a fact which reflected great credit on the coxswains, one of whom received an official commendation for his work that night. At dawn a heavy aerial bombardment took place, and the PTs and landing craft showered the beach with fire.

The Japs, however, had anticipated the attack and had disappeared, and so the landing can be credited chiefly as valuable experience. The boat crews learned

A combat patrol lands at daybreak behind the enemy lines from LCVPs in Astrolabe Bay.



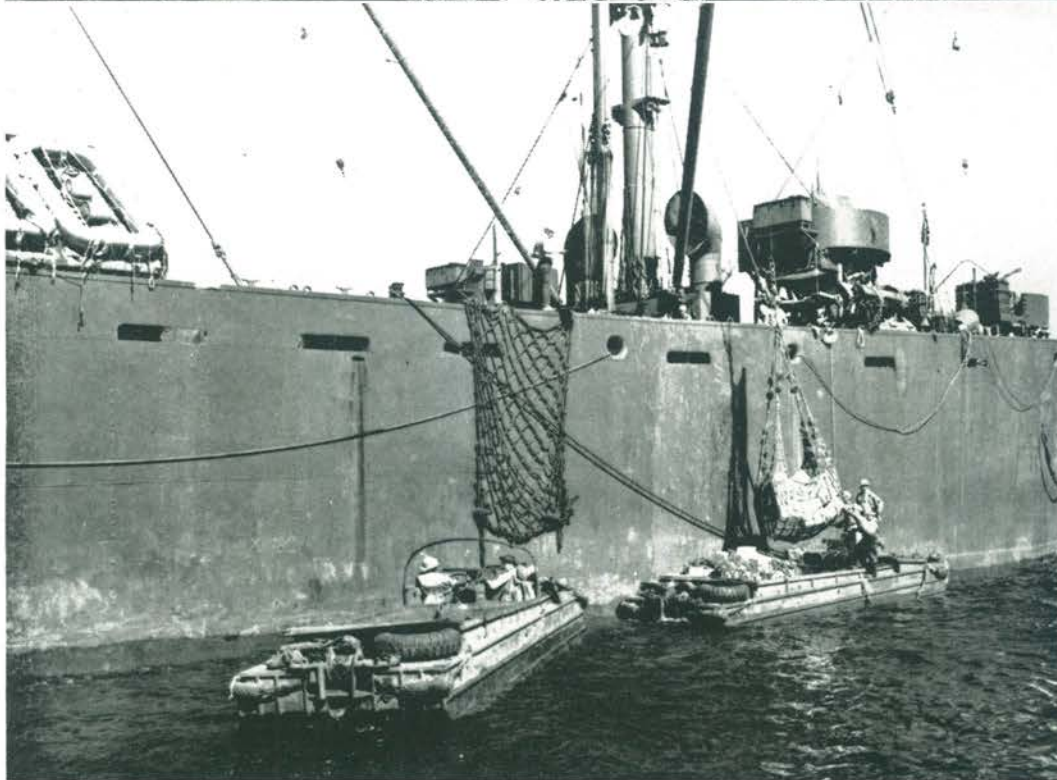
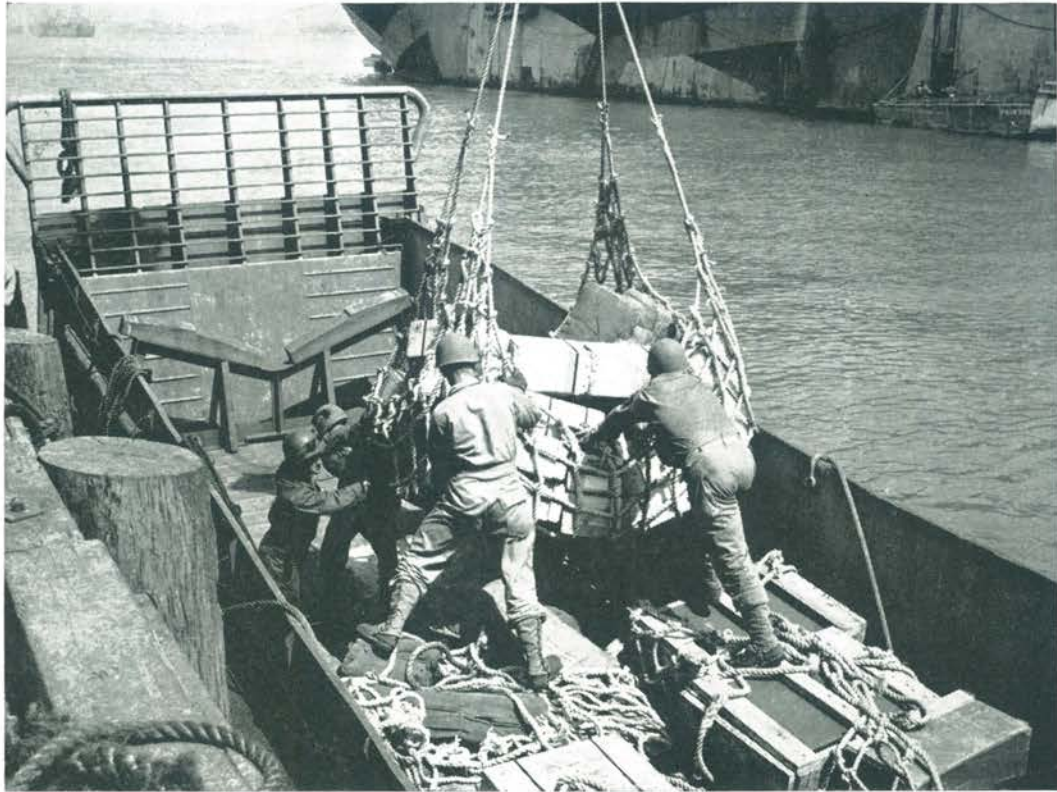
much from it, and one particular occurrence is worth reporting; as two boats moved in to the beach in their first combat landing, considerable amusement was caused when it was noted that coffee was boiling on their poop decks.

After the resupply was completed, the temporary base at Yamai was abandoned, and all the boats returned to the original base. The demand for boats had now increased, for in addition to the lightering, the coastal runs had been tremendously increased, both in number and in extent. Initially there was considerable confusion in boat dispatching caused by too many different agencies ordering boats, by communications difficulties, total lack of maps and charts, and general inexperience, and C Company was subjected to a good deal of criticism because the boats frequently arrived at the wrong place at the wrong time and in the wrong number. A change in personnel, laying a telephone line to the C Company base, and simplifying the channels of orders affecting boat operations soon rectified this situation.

Back at Saidor the improved working area and roads had produced a greatly increased rate of discharge. To meet the shortage of hatch crews Companies D and E were required to train additional winch operators, and though every available man in the Battalion was put to work, still more men were needed. Through the G-1 section of Division it was discovered that there were a few men who could operate ships' winches among the divisional units, and they were placed on special duty, which enabled the beachmaster to organize and train four hatch crews from a tank destroyer battalion and thus to keep the cargo moving an extra shift. Some 36,190 tons of supplies were unloaded at Saidor during March and April, with a daily tonnage ranging from practically zero in the early days to a record in April of 1,540 tons. No records of supplies sent up the coast are available, but from the number of boats dispatched on such missions to forward stations it is estimated that such shipments averaged 50 tons a day during March.

With increased demand and increased tonnage C Company began to run into maintenance difficulties, and on the 23d of March an all-time low was reached when only nine boats were operating out of seventy-four assigned. This frightful state of affairs was the inevitable result of circumstances beyond the Company's control. Its fleet included not only boats that had been abused back at Goodenough and run hard daily for over three months, but also contained a score of wrecks that Company B of the 542d had turned over to C Company for cannibalization rather than risk moving back to Finschhafen when it was relieved. Replacement parts were short throughout the Theatre and what few there were were being hoarded by the 2d Brigade for pending critical operations. Finally, the conditions under which the boats were forced to operate were unspeakably bad. The beaches were continually pounded by surf and consisted in large measure of boulders. The impossibility of keeping bulk-loaded boats from broaching on the beach dictated the use of mobile loading — driving trucks empty aboard the LCM, loading the truck at shipside with a bare 3 tons, and landing the loaded truck from the LCM. This meant many more beachings per day to obtain the same tonnage and put particular strain on the ramp winch mechanisms which at this period contained many inherent defects.

Part of the trouble lay in the inadequacy of the maintenance beach for hauling



Handling slingloads of cargo into an LCM and into DUKWs.

out boats regardless of the tide; so Shore Battalion equipment and operators began the construction of the first of many semi-artificial beaches the Regiment was to build. At the same time the worst of the wrecks were condemned and stripped to obtain a meager supply of parts for the others. But division headquarters could understand only the superficial figures and waged a futile campaign of recrimination directing the Shore Battalion commander to relieve the two senior boat officers for wilful destruction of government property and preferring charges against seven coxswains who obeyed their Company commander's orders to bring damaged boats back to the base rather than aggravate easily repairable trouble by making additional landings. Prompt and vigorous representations by the commanders of the Boat Battalion, Regiment and Brigade caused reconsideration of this hasty action. The real cure came shortly thereafter as a few critically needed parts were released, and superhuman labors of mechanics and specialists of the C Company maintenance section and the platoon of the 563d conquered the deadline. By April 9 the Company was able to turn out 31 of its 40 LCMs and 7 of its 10 LCVPs which is not an impressive record by later standards but was a vast improvement over the past. As an example of the strain

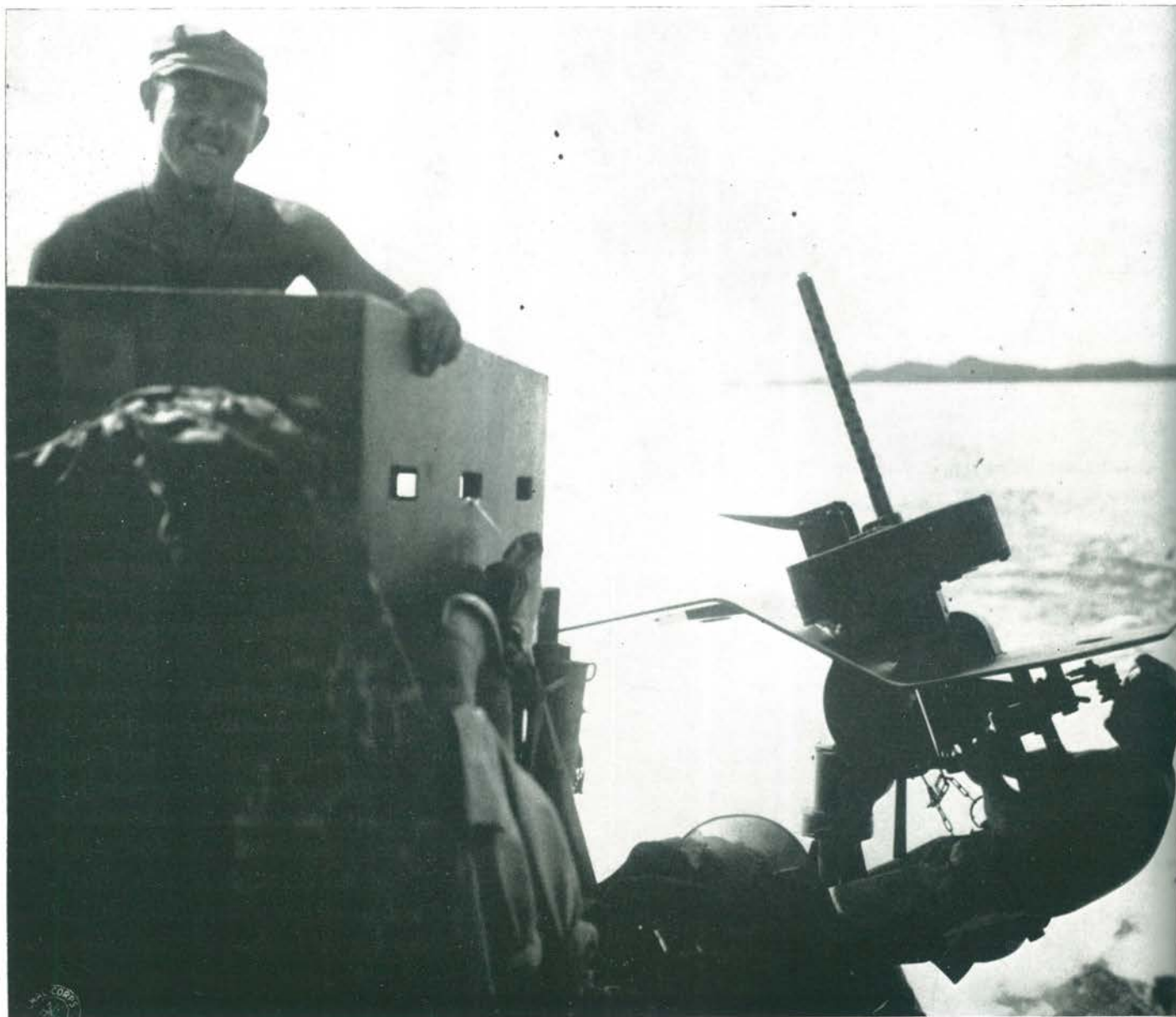
Loading miscellaneous gear aboard LCMs from a $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton truck.



on the maintenance personnel, in a thirty-day period 274 propellers and 196 shafts were changed, and 310 ramp belts were repaired; this was, of course, in addition to other work on a similar scale, and illustrates the difficulties which were met at this station.

For both Battalions the period at Saidor was a very hard school, but the lessons learned were learned well and never forgotten. From a dismal start progress was made to very substantial accomplishments which in turn led to a record in the future of which the Regiment can always be proud. The pressure on lighterage, which caused such difficulty, seemed puzzling at the time to many, but it was later learned

Test firing the after "fifty" on an LCM.



that the task force was under similar pressure to build up a supply base for the airborne supply of the Aitape-Hollandia task force with which the Regiment was later to work.

In the middle of April the 40th Division and the 32d Division engaged in a tug-of-war for the services of C Company; the former persuaded Sixth Army to issue orders under which C Company departed for New Britain, but the 32d Division secured orders first countermanding the move and then directing the Company to move *less one platoon*. C Company, however, had already moved but had been forced to leave behind nine LCMs and an LCV, which were in such bad condition that they could not undertake the trip, and the necessary maintenance men to put these boats into satisfactory operating condition. As a result of the conflicting orders this rear echelon became hostages for the platoon and at the same time was called upon to run some missions. When the 32d Division finally came to realize that nothing was being accomplished by keeping the hostages, and also as the result of some radio messages



Part of the Shore Battalion's camp at Saidor.

from Boat Battalion headquarters, which made rather free use of the persuasive name of Krueger, the rear echelon at last obtained leave to proceed to New Britain, arriving there during the first week in May.

The Shore Battalion carried on at Saidor for a little longer, profiting in efficiency of operation from the headaches suffered in the early days. As of the 29th of April it was relieved from attachment to the Saidor Task Force and assisted the Navy in loading out the 32d Division, and was relieved in turn from its beach work by an Australian docks operating company. On the 8th of May the Battalion, less F Company, consisting of 560 men and 32 officers, boarded the Liberty ship *William N. Byers* and joined a convoy of approximately sixty vessels supposedly bound for Aitape, where the task force assigned to seize Wakde Island was assembling. The *Byers* stumbled out of her convoy and into another one during the night of the 10th, arriving to everyone's surprise at Hollandia. As soon as the error was acknowledged, the ship put to sea again and arrived at Aitape on the 13th of May.

CHAPTER X

Aitape

GENERAL MACARTHUR'S operations to shatter the Jap main line of resistance in Northeast New Guinea and the Bismarcks were successfully concluded with the seizure of the Admiralties early in March. The Japs were isolated in eastern New Britain and New Ireland, and their main New Guinea force, the XVIII Army, was feverishly bracing itself in the Wewak-Hansa Bay area to receive the next American onslaught. But once in the enemy backfield General MacArthur had no interest in assaulting Jap defensive strongholds. His eye was fixed on the end zone — the Philippines. His interest in New Guinea was confined solely to securing necessary staging areas and air bases, and the less Japs protecting these the better he liked it. Hollandia, at almost the center of New Guinea's north coast, and Biak Island, three-fourths of the way from Milne Bay to the western tip were prize base areas and yet the Japs, lulled into security because they were so far behind the front lines, left them feebly garrisoned. Every effort was made to convince the Japs that the next American objective was Hansa Bay and Wewak, including the planting of faked diaries on life rafts dropped from planes attacking this locality, and the Jap commander bit — hook, line and sinker. He stripped Aitape and Hollandia to concentrate three first-class divisions near Wewak, collected and rallied the units retreating from Saidor and the Markham Valley, and confidently expected to repulse the American assault and avenge himself for a long series of defeats in eastern New Guinea.

In the darkness of April 22 the largest amphibious force yet assembled in the SWPA suddenly appeared over the northern horizon one hundred to two hundred and fifty miles behind Wewak and landed virtually without opposition at Aitape,



The beach at Aitape was a narrow strip between the surf and the jungle. Scene from the D day landing April 22, 1944.



At Humboldt Bay, Hollandia, doughboys of the initial landing force pass wreckage of Jap equipment as they seek a trail leading inland.

Hollandia, and Tanahmerah Bay. This great end run at one stroke moved the Sixth Army nearly four hundred miles nearer the Philippines. Since previous amphibious attacks had never bitten off more than one hundred miles at a time, it is small wonder that the Jap forces were utterly bewildered and unprepared. Taking advantage of his initial success, MacArthur pressed the offensive using one of the two combat teams that had landed at Aitape to attack Toem and Wakde Island, a hundred miles beyond Tanahmerah Bay, and the balance of the 41st Division to seize Biak Island. It was as these attacks were being teed up that the 533d Shore Battalion came into the picture. Its move from Saidor had been timed to bring it to Aitape in time to load out with the 163d Infantry for Toem and Wakde, and so the men were informed when the *Byers* dropped her hook in Aitape Roads on May 13. Immediately the staff began making hasty plans while the troops, except those needed to unload the ship, marched to a temporary bivouac near the beach. Late that afternoon,

however, it became apparent that the Battalion's heavy equipment could not possibly be unloaded in time to meet the loading schedule set up by the Wakde attack force. Accordingly the 593d EB&SR's Shore Battalion, which had taken part in the initial attack on Aitape, was assigned to the Wakde task force and the 533d Battalion's mission was changed to relieving the 593d and operating the Aitape beach installations. This was naturally a bitter disappointment for all ranks as they felt long overdue for a combat assignment, but as events turned out the erratic navigation of the *Byers* which had kept them out of the Wakde show actually was responsible for their later participation in two of the three biggest operations in the Philippines. The 593d Shore Battalion seemingly getting the good break was in fact heading up a blind alley that was to lead to many boring months on Noemfoor Island and no chance to get into action after July 1944.

The mission of the force at Aitape was purely defensive: locally it was to protect the intermediate airstrip and, when and if the Jap XVIII Army reacted to its predicament, it was to repulse any effort by the Japs to move against Hollandia. In other words the huge base installations at Hollandia were to be kept free to prepare for the invasion of the Philippines while the troops at Aitape were to hold the main Jap forces at a safe distance. Early in May the Aitape garrison consisted of the 32d Division with normal attachments, and the Shore Battalion despite its difficulties at Saidor had sufficiently impressed division headquarters so that it received a warm welcome. As the Jap Army slowly recovered from its shock and faced about to attack to the westward, the Aitape garrison was steadily reinforced to meet the threat. But this involved many weeks, for the Japs, harassed by day by the RAAF and by night by the PTs, had an extremely difficult job moving 50,000 men and equipment a hundred miles over the miserable trails. The major battle which will be known to history as the Battle of the Driniumor River did not begin in earnest until mid-July.

To return to the 13th of May, the disconsolate Shore Battalion was allotted an old Jap ration dump for its camp site. This spot had not been touched since the Japs abruptly abandoned their breakfast three weeks before and required several days of clearing and burying garbage; so the battalion commander decided to keep the men in their temporary bivouac using jungle hammocks and emergency rations while the new permanent camp was being established. Between the two areas lay an ammunition dump with both Jap and American shells piled in not too well dispersed bays. The second night after the Battalion debarked, this dump caught fire, whether by accident or by the hand of a Jap infiltrator will never be known, and soon was a raging inferno. Exploding shells and whining bullets made the temporary bivouac and the main unloading beach untenable for twenty-four hours and isolated the men who were working at the permanent camp site. Liberty ships in the roadstead hastily weighed anchor and moved out of range of the shells. The men working on the beach removed supplies to safety and carried on unloading activities on a new beach. When the ammunition fire burned out, the Battalion lost no time in establishing itself in the permanent camp site. Tents were erected, kitchens and latrines installed and screened against the flies. Water works were installed including showers and water piped to all company kitchens.

The principal mission of the Shore Battalion was the same old one of getting cargo out of the holds of the ships and into the appropriate task force dumps. Attached to the Battalion were a port company, a DUKW platoon, Company A of the 593d EB&SR with forty LCMs, and a few LCTs. Extra labor and trucks were furnished by division troops on the basis of daily requisitions by the Shore Battalion commander. During the first few months relatively calm waters and dry weather made for smooth harbor operations and good tonnages, with the average daily off-loading amounting to 1200 tons in June and 1428 tons in July. The work was handled by three six-hour shifts except when round-the-clock operations were necessitated by critical shortages ashore. Experience proved that as much if not more tonnage could be



The Shore Battalion's Camp at Aitape.

discharged by a given unit in this way in 18 hours than in a full 24 hours because eight hour shifts lost so much time in on-the-job feeding. In addition the shortage of supervising officers with only a small battalion staff to draw from made this shorter work day more efficient over a sustained period of many months.

The engineer platoons and their equipment were steadily employed, but as was generally the case, their work consisted of a great variety of small jobs. One of the most difficult jobs, and one that required all dozers, was building LST ramps. New ramps had to be constructed for each echelon, for the surf made it impossible to build permanent jetties. They cleared and drained all dump areas, maintained all roads leading to and within dump areas, prepared beach roads and parking areas for out-

loading task forces, assisted with the construction of the airstrip and operated a gravel pit for the 118th Engineers.

The Boat Battalion less A and B Companies, which had left New Britain for Aitape on the 23d of June, on the morning of the 26th caught its first glimpse of its new station, Seleo Island, a small island located three miles from the mainland and furnishing part of the meager shelter for Aitape Roads. As the convoy neared its



Left: "Mobile loading" of a B Company LCM and a DUKW alongside a Liberty ship.
Right: The beach at Lemieng, Aitape, was cleared and widened to handle heavy traffic.

future home it passed hard by Angel Island, which was built up solidly with native huts, and the souvenir hunters acquired a new interest in life. The convoy lay to off the western shore of Seleo while a reconnaissance group went ashore. The island was small, and there was nothing to be found except the remnants of a Jap fuel dump, which had been efficiently bombed and strafed, and several wrecked Jap landing barges. A fringing reef from 40 to 100 yards wide surrounded the island, except for a small break at the northwest corner, which was occupied by the maintenance platoon attached to Company A of the 593d. It was at once apparent that the most serious problem would be a maintenance beach, and the only feasible solution was to build one out over the coral reef some ninety yards or more. With the experience from Saidor and New Britain, the work of building the maintenance beach and setting up camp proceeded smoothly.



Left and upper right: Dipper stick filling dump trucks in borrow pit at Aitape.

Lower right: A section of the arterial highway that eventually ran through the base at Aitape.

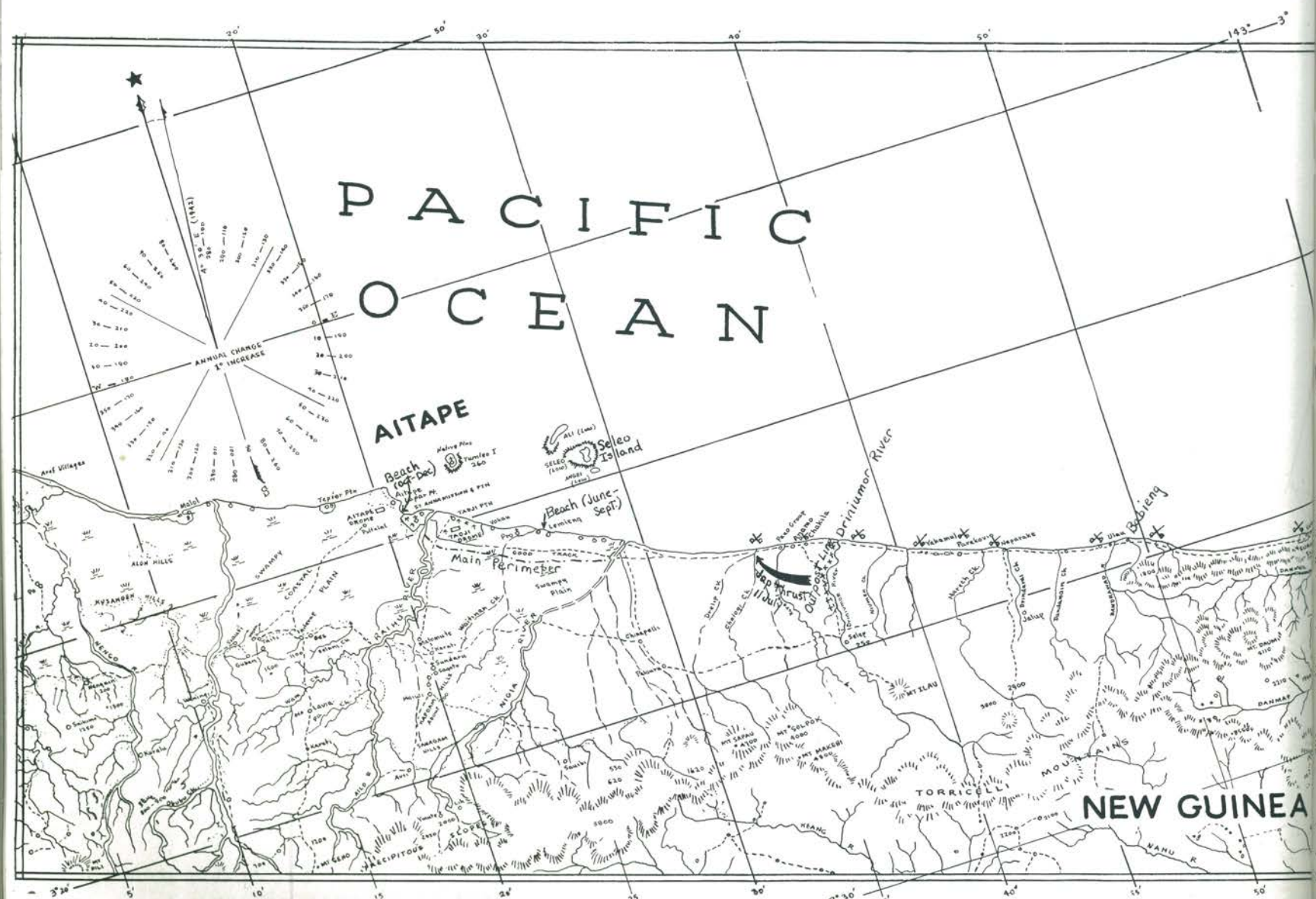
As usual the Battalion was informed that lightering would begin within the first twenty-four hours and the first six boats to be unloaded were dispatched to the mainland to start a monotonous grind that was to last for six months. The beach where the lightering was taking place looked ominous; the flat and shallow underwater contour promised considerable trouble for propellers, strut bearings, rudders, and water pumps, and so work on the maintenance beach was pushed forward with all possible speed. The lightering commitment was raised rapidly, and throughout its stay on Seleo the Battalion furnished the beachmaster all boats that were not either disabled or engaged in tactical missions. The boatmen were glad to find the eighteen-hour day in effect, but of course this meant no six-hour shift for them. As long as there were enough serviceable boats they split the day into nine-hour tours, but the trip to and from the beach and delays at the end of each period extended this duty to a good twelve hours a day. As the pressure increased and the old boats began to collapse under the strain, the boats that were fit to run lightered the full eighteen hours, which barely permitted a brief return to the island base once each night.

During May and June the tactical situation shaped up about as expected. The 32d Division established outposts of about company strength at Babieng and Yakamul and an outer defensive line along the Driniumor River. Preparing for the worst, it laid out a final defense line including only a strip a few hundred yards deep running from the Nigia to the Raihu Rivers. This line barely took in the vital Tadji airstrip



Scenes from Seleo Island: Left to right, top to bottom: The anchorage; carryall building beach over coral shelf; hauling an LCM on the artificial beach; vistas of C Company's bivouac; the island's only highway.

and left so little room to maneuver that the main hospital was moved out to Tumleo Island. The first inkling of the approaching onslaught came shortly after the Shore Battalion arrived, when the outpost company at Babieng radioed during the middle of the night that it had been by-passed and cut off by a large body of Japs. The Division decided to withdraw the company by sea rather than start a fight 15 miles from its main lines. Four LCMs of Company A, 593d, and two LCTs escorted by two 593d LCMGs effected the rescue without loss.

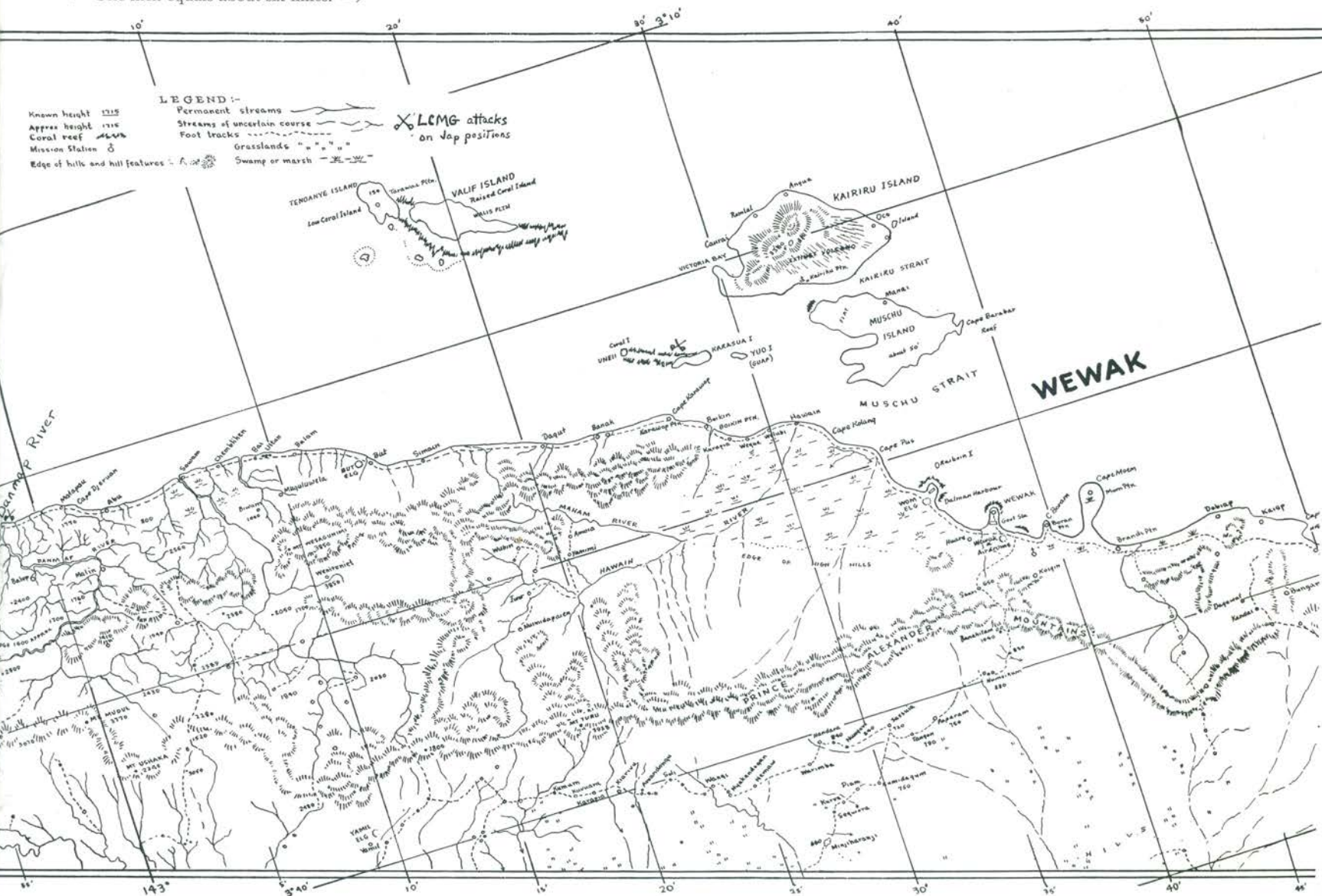


Knowledge that the Japs had substantial forces so far along the trail from Wewak to Aitape caused prompt acceleration of work on the main defences. The Shore Battalion not only cleared fields of fire and constructed coconut-log pill boxes and gun emplacements throughout the beachhead but was also assigned a sector of its own on the line. Under the direction of Brigadier General Stark of the 43d Division, which was en route to Aitape, the western half of the perimeter was assigned for the time being to available engineer troops on the possibility that the Japs might skirt the eastern defenses and strike at the "rear" of the beachhead. The Battalion's defense platoon, well reinforced, selected and organized its position in jungle so heavy that its 37 mm guns had to be dismantled and carried into position by hand.

By the end of June the Jap 20th, 41st and 51st Divisions had arrived within striking distance of the American positions. Had they attacked at once using their entire strength it is not at all unlikely that they would have broken through and put the Americans in a desperate position. But as usual they dallied, thrusting here and there and driving our outposts back to Niumen Creek just east of the Driniumor. At the same time the Aitape task force was growing rapidly. Control passed to XI Corps under Major General Hall, and the 112th Cavalry Regiment and the 124th RCT of the 31st Division arrived to build up the Corps, while the 43d Division began to come in from New Zealand. Though still outnumbered, General Hall on July 9 decided to throw the Japs off balance and at least gain some time by having the 124th RCT make an amphibious attack at Naparake behind the flank of the Jap 20th Division.

D day was set for July 13, and lightering operations were to be suspended while

← One inch equals about six miles. →



all available craft of Company C and the 593d's Company A and the LCT group moved the combat team 20 miles down the coast for a surprise dawn attack, heralded only by a quick air strike and PT and LCMG strafing. Most of the Shore Battalion was attached to the landing force, and all 533d men eagerly prepared themselves and their equipment for the first amphibian assault in which both battalions would perform their standard functions as a team. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—the Japs struck first, throwing several battalions across the Driniumor during the night of July 10-11. Several 127th Infantry outposts were cut off east of the Driniumor, and the 112th Cavalry at Afua near the inland extremity of the line was also for a time encircled. During the 11th plans for the attack on Naparake were pushed in the belief that it might be possible to force the Japs to withdraw in order to meet this attack, but when the seriousness of the Jap penetration was fully realized, the operation was called off, and the 124th RCT hastily moved up the beach in trucks, DUKWs and on foot to Tiver to hold the point of the Japs while the 127th Infantry was directed to abandon most of its Driniumor defense line and retreat to Chalogi Creek, about halfway back to the final defense line. The fierceness of the fighting meant an unexpectedly heavy volume of artillery fire, and it was soon realized that unless unloading was stepped up the ammunition dumps would soon be dangerously low. So, for the bulk of the 533d, the direct result of this break-through was to put their noses back on the lightering and cargo handling grindstone, and to turn the crank harder than ever before.

A minority of the 533d, principally men assigned to LCMGs, DUKWs and some LCMs saw considerable excitement in the next few weeks. The very afternoon that the attack on Naparake was canceled a cub plane spotted one of the lost platoons of the 127th Infantry trying to cut its way out to the beach beyond the Driniumor. At that time four LCMs guarded by two LCMGs had just finished delivering supplies to the new front lines. The boats quickly set off down the coast taking their course from the cub plane. The pilot got slightly mixed up and led the boats toward the near side of the wooded point at the river mouth, and only by luck did one of the LCMGs, swinging wide on the turn, spot a colored smoke grenade several hundred yards to the east of the point. This boat immediately altered course and with some difficulty signaled the rest of the craft to follow. As the first gunboat drew near, doughboys could be seen running out of the woods and plunging over the low sand dunes while puffs of sand indicated plenty of Jap small arms fire. The boat did not wait for the others but beached immediately, and as the first doughboy scrambled aboard, the infantry platoon leader backed out of the woods spraying his tommy gun to indicate there were no more Americans to come. The gunboat's machine guns then began to rake the woods, and as the men closed in around the gunboat helping the wounded aboard, the 37mm piece belched cannister and HE into the trees less than 25 yards from the water's edge. The Japs were content to remain in the jungle, and though the gunboat was somewhat peppered with holes, no casualties were sustained. The other boats arrived as it was retracting with its cargo of grateful and exhausted soldiers, and the little fleet gave the scene an intense strafing before retiring.

The gunboats took station that night off Tiver as an extension of the perimeter, a

function they were to perform for the rest of the summer. Not only did this afford the troops ashore security from attack from the sea or along the beach itself, but it also put a half dozen machine guns in excellent position to enfilade any banzai attack against the perimeter's first 100-150 yards. Early on the 13th the entire American force counterattacked to re-establish the line on the west bank of the Driniumor River. Along the beach the attack was spearheaded by a platoon of tank destroyers with the gunboats slightly ahead and as near the beach as the surf would permit (30-50 yards). Radio contact over the SCR 300 linked the boats with the TDs and the rifle company that was following immediately behind. Every thicket and group of thatched huts was raked with machine guns and HE before the doughboys moved ahead. When snipers in tree tops made a nuisance of themselves the boats' 37s blew the treetop to pieces. All went well until about noon. Anamo had been recaptured and an obstinate group of Japs in Chakila was being plastered with small arms. Suddenly enemy artillery began to rake the beach. No one could see just where it was coming from, and seized by mild panic both tankers and doughboys hastily withdrew more than half a mile. The boats quickly received full attention from the concealed Jap battery, and unable to discover its whereabouts they too adopted "evasive tactics" and scrambled to the westward at their full seven knots. A cub plane soon spotted the Jap battery 300 yards from where the boats had been, and our artillery silenced it. That afternoon the ground was regained by the same methodical methods with the additional support of 4.5-inch rockets from one of the LCMGs, and by nightfall the 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, had dug in along the lower reaches of the Driniumor with the gunboats, unable to cross the shallow bar, standing guard at the river mouth ready to spray the surface of the river should the Japs attempt to counterattack across it. The units farther inland had not made such easy progress, and through gaps between companies the Japs launched a counter-attack breaking through to the sea again three miles to the westward in the vicinity of our artillery positions. A savage battle raged throughout the evening with two 533d LCMGs dueling with Jap machine guns at point blank range. Here again the concentrated fire power of these improvised craft was decisive, and the rain of HE 20 mm and 37 mm shells was more than the Jap party could stand, so it withdrew into the jungle, and the tenuous line of communications along the beach was re-established.

For the rest of July things were relatively quiet on the seaward extremity of the line as units farther inland, dependent primarily on supplies dropped by air, struggled up to their assigned positions on the river and the Jap units behind them were mopped up. Each night the LCMGs maintained their defensive station and during daylight made short runs forward to strafe or dump rockets on reported Jap concentrations. Though the Japs in battalion strength attacked the river line nightly for more than two weeks, they made no attempt to cross it near its mouth. Supplies and replacements for the forward troops were brought up daily by LCMs, and express service was maintained by DUKWs which could make excellent time along the beach and swim around the unfordable creek mouths.

During this period one small action involving the boats occurred, and though it was the only costly such encounter, it was completely unplanned and unnecessary.



Top: A Shore Battalion DUKW rushes reinforcements from Aitape towards the Driniumor. Bottom: Treadway bridge across a slew near Anamö.

Early one morning an ambulance and a jeep carrying a full colonel got their landmarks mixed up and at low tide drove across the Driniumor, not only unaware that they were proceeding into enemy territory but also ignoring the orders to halt given by the local platoon leader. The infantry commander requested that the 593d LCMG which was standing by overtake the vehicles and order them to return, which seemed rather a hopeless task since the gunboat could only make 8 knots and the vehicles were by then far ahead. The gunboat picked up a cargo LCM that had just discharged a load of supplies and proceeded down the beach until both vehicles were in view. Suddenly, near Parakovio, the ambulance stopped, and the driver started running back along the beach. Through the glasses it could be seen that the ambulance had been hit by small arms fire. This apparently finally convinced the colonel, and the jeep began to turn around. Halfway around, however, it bogged down, and the driver and the colonel evacuated promptly. While the gunboat moved in on the exposed flank, ready to open fire when a target appeared, the cargo LCM grounded, and the three men climbed aboard and headed back for safe territory with no worse

effects than the loss of the vehicles. The colonel, however, soon recovered his nerve and after transferring to a DUKW to continue homeward himself, he ordered the boats to return up the beach in order to salvage the jeep and the ambulance. A party of troops came aboard, and the boats headed back to the beach at the same spot where the men had been picked up. The second trip into the beach, however, was fatal, for as the cargo LCM reached the outer breakers a 75 mm gun, well-concealed but close to the beach, opened fire on it, getting a direct hit that burst in the cargo well among the troops. The gunboat opened fire and strafed the beach, searching for the hidden gun, and although no damage was apparently done to the enemy gun, its fire was drawn away from the cargo boat which was thus enabled to withdraw from the beach. The enemy gun crew scored one hit on the gunboat, the shell exploding in a rocket launcher just forward of the engine room, but the continued heavy volume of fire from both craft prevented further hits, and the two boats were soon out of range where stock could be taken. The price paid for the colonel's stupidity was five men dead or dying and eleven wounded. The colonel was promptly relieved of his regiment by the corps commander and later severely punished.

A worse tragedy was nearly enacted when a jumpy corps staff officer became excited over a report that the Japs had collected barges for a sea-borne attack behind our Driniumor positions. In the middle of the night he abruptly altered the patrol zones carefully worked out between the 533d, the local PT squadron commanders and the destroyer division commander, informing only the PTs. As a result a PT skipper, believing that the LCMGs had been withdrawn opened up on one of them with a 40 mm gun at 75 yards range, fortunately missing. Identities were established in the nick of time and a frightful battle, that would not only have pitted army gunboats against PTs but would also have involved our destroyers and artillery, was averted by an eyelash.

On July 31 the corps commander, sensing that the Japs had bled themselves white in futile piece-meal attacks, ordered a general offensive. The 124th Infantry quietly assembled during the night behind the Driniumor and passing through the 128th advanced eastward along the coast. The tank destroyers and gunboats, with PTs standing by a little farther off shore, once more paced the attack which in two days gained three miles. Then, as the boats deceptively raked Yakamul and Parakovio



A rocket barrage in the vicinity of Naparake fires a Jap dump.



Tank destroyers spearhead the counterattack of August 1, 1944 eastwards from the Driniumor River. Slightly ahead on their seaward flank were the LCM gunboats.

with rockets and automatic weapons, the 124th turned and drove straight inland with the other line units wheeling to the right in a finely coordinated maneuver that rolled up the Jap Army and penned it between the 112th Cavalry and the impenetrable Torricelli Mountains. For ten days fierce fighting raged in the heavy jungle around Afua as six American regimental combat teams relentlessly chewed the Japs from three sides and the forbidding mountains blocked any escape. So ended the battle of the Driniumor River, one of the decisive battles of the War and the largest ground engagement in the Southwest Pacific prior to the fighting on Leyte. Its outlines have been included in this story, despite the fact that 533d played a very minor role in the actual fighting, for several reasons. Both boatmen and shore engineers were straining to the utmost to meet the logistical demands of this campaign and yet had pitifully little information about its progress and importance. The glamorous break-through of the Third Army in France and the well publicized campaign in the Marianas captured all the headlines and news broadcasts at the time. Yet, had the battle of the Driniumor gone the other way or even been a prolonged stalemate, the invasion of the Philippines would have been postponed many months. Finally, the campaign itself was a military masterpiece in which the XI Corps, without benefit of superior numbers and despite incredible difficulties of terrain, utterly destroyed an army of 50,000 as a fighting force.

Back in Aitape Roads, where the bark of our artillery could be heard above the clatter of bulldozers and cranes, the stress of the battle was brought home to the men working the ships by the frantic appeals of the corps staff for more tonnage. Ammunition was being expended day after day at a sustained rate never before witnessed in the Theatre. Engineer materials to bridge the countless streams and strengthen the perimeter defenses were invariably in short supply, and the bombers and fighters based on the Tadjji strips, setting new records in missions per plane per day, had an inexhaustible appetite for fuel and bombs. The 43d Division with 20,000 tons of equipment had to be unloaded in a hurry and, over the protest of the 533d, corps headquarters insisted that this be done over the beach nearest the Division's bivouac, a nightmare of shallow sandbars pommelled by severe surf.

Though the shore engineers and their equipment felt the strain, it was the boats that produced the real crisis. The fleet of Company A of the 593d had been badly battered in the early days of the landing and was down to about 20% operable boats when the 533d's C Company arrived with its fleet of relics that had barely survived the ordeal of Saidor. These craft stood up pretty well at first, but the maintenance crews soon fell behind as their small stock of spare parts and materials dwindled under the pressure of repeated breakdowns. Propeller blades were built up and hammered into shape so many times that they actually became limp, and coxswains could not gun their motors, for the propeller blades would bend under the sudden load. As the boats ground their way on and off the flat beaches, the propellers went completely out of shape, and the shafts bent like reeds. The shafts were worn so much at the strut bearing that it was necessary to turn them down on a lathe and fit them with sleeves made from iron pipe. When the supply of strut bearings was exhausted, wooden ones were turned out on lathes, but the combination of a high-speed shaft, a steel bearing

surface, a wooden bearing, and an inexhaustible supply of sand rendered this expedient vain, for such bearings wore out faster than they could be turned out.

The maintenance men did what they could, patching and improvising and praying for a reasonable shipment of new shafts, propellers and bearings, and when the hulls of the boats gave way, they patched ramps and hulls with flattened oil drums until oxygen gave out. Then they were helpless. On the 25th of July after repeated reports as to the desperate condition of the boats went unheeded at Corps, the Boat Battalion commander condemned and laid up twenty hopelessly leaking boats so that the limited repair resources could be concentrated on keeping the least unseaworthy craft operating. This brought immediate constructive action from the Sixth Army Engineer, and a few days later twenty boat crews in three C-47 transports were winging their way 800 miles to Milne Bay to draw new boats and bring them to Aitape under their own power. Sheet steel, oxygen, water-pump gears, shafts and other critical items were flown to Aitape from elsewhere in the Theatre. And the 533d's B Company which had been sitting at Finschhafen since early in July while various base commanders wrangled for its assignment, was ordered to join the Battalion at Seleo Island relieving the virtually inoperative 593d Company. Finally additional LCTs, far more suitable than LCMs for lightering under the prevailing conditions, were sent down from Hollandia. By mid-August, as the fury of the battle subsided, the critical lighterage situation improved, and for the next several weeks unloading operations went forward with relative smoothness.

During August the Regiment for the first time since arrival overseas made real progress toward concentration. Regimental Headquarters after six months on the Nugudu Peninsula at Finschhafen loaded up in boats of B Company and the new C Company craft en route from Milne Bay, and moved via Bogia to Aitape, where it established its command post and assumed operational control of the theretofore virtually independent battalions. The B Company boats then made two round trips to New Britain to bring F Company back into the Shore Battalion fold. Thus by the first week in September the entire Regiment, except A Company, was located in the same task force area, though separation of the bivouacs by several miles of water did much to preserve the separatist sentiment in the battalions. As will be seen in the next chapter, no sooner was the Regiment reunited than it was alerted for a major attack on the Talaud Islands between Morotai and the Philippines. But after two feverish weeks of planning and preparation this operation was canceled, and the outfit with a bad feeling of letdown went on with its routine work of discharging ships and constructing and maintaining roads and other facilities.

At the end of September the surf suddenly and without apparent cause built up until the beach which had been used ever since April became unusable. Lightering operations were transferred to Aitape Cove where the sheltering headland took the brunt of the northwesterly swells. This involved great inconvenience, for the trucks had to run five miles to some of the dumps over a winding road and the boatmen had to make a seven-mile run from Seleo Island to the cove which added nearly two hours to their lengthy working shift. The new sea conditions soon washed away the artificial beaches built on what had been Seleo's sheltered side, so all maintenance

Entrance to the regimental CP at Aitape, November, 1944.



Headquarters Company orderly room.



Amphibian washing machine, a unique item prized by men of Headquarters Company.



activities were concentrated in the tiny cove recently evacuated by Company A of the 593d.

Gunboat operations which had subsided when the climax of the Battle of the Driniumor moved inland, were revived late in August when the 43d Division relieved the XI Corps which departed for Morotai. The remnants of the Jap XVIII Army straggled back toward But and Wewak, and Major General Wing decided to give them no chance to reorganize within harassing distance of Aitape. First his 103d Infantry and later the 172d Infantry were given the mission of aggressive patrolling to the east. These patrols were also intended to season the many replacements that had joined the Division in New Zealand after its costly campaign the previous year in the Solomons, and they made constant use of the 533d's flotilla now numbering six gunboats with armament up to 57 mm guns. During early September elements of the 103d pushed through the Drimbol plantation and established an outpost at Babieng, and in the latter part of the month the 172d fought its way against increasingly vigorous resistance another twelve miles to Suain. An attempt to push on across the Danmap River to Cape Djeruan would have been a disaster had it not been for the support of the two 533d gunboats. The Japs let a platoon of Company F, 172d Infantry ford the river and advance 1000 yards, and then they closed in. While the LCMGs helped this platoon battle its way to a point on the shore where it was possible for the boats to beach in the heavy surf and pick it up, a Jap battalion crossed the river further inland and attacked the rest of F Company near Luain. A rescue similar to that in the first days of the Battle of the Driniumor was performed by two gunboats of B and C Company with the additional obstacle of such heavy surf that the wounded had to be floated out on rubber boats. After this narrow escape Division prescribed a more conservative policy, and the Japs too seemed willing to leave a wide no-man's-land—provided their positions at But were not threatened; so the gunboats had no more excitement.

One final exploit of the LCMGs came about because the PTs which had shared the Seleio anchorage had moved on. An old Walrus biplane of the RAAF took an intelligence officer on a risky mission to question natives on Karasua Island well within the Wewak stronghold. The natives turned out to have been pro-Japanese, and machine gun bullets promptly set the plane afire as it landed. An accompanying



The beach in Aitape Cove used during the fall of 1944. Tumbleo Island in the right background.

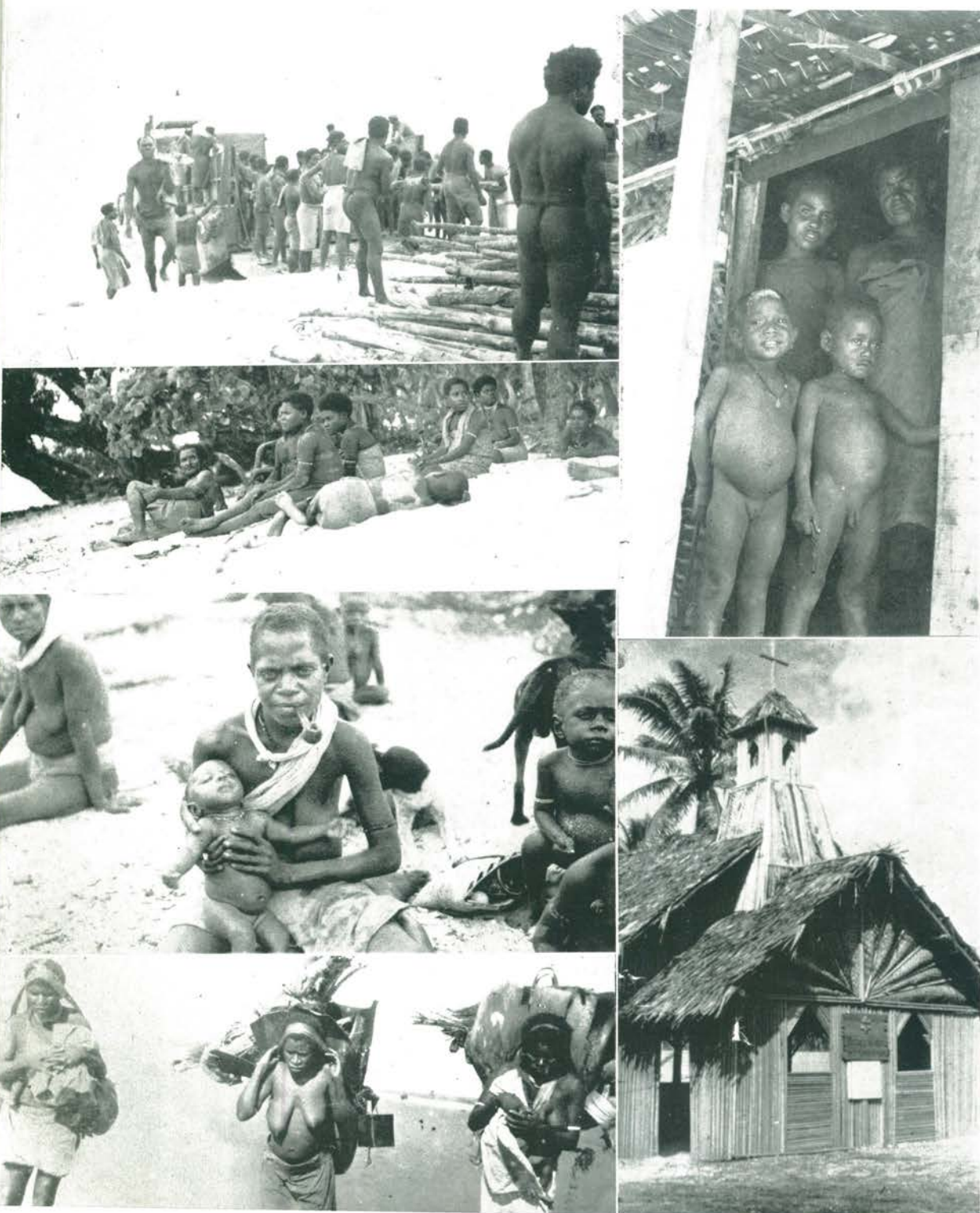


Natural bridge along the highway leading east from Aitape Cove.

plane thought the Aussies on the Walrus had escaped into the jungle and that if a boat could enter those waters they might be able to swim out to it. With no PTs available, four 533d LCMGs and a picket boat with newly installed radar immediately set forth with the understanding that they would lie to off the island until an hour after sunrise while RAAF planes scared the 5-inch and 6-inch batteries on nearby Kairiru and Cape Karawop into silence. Despite a series of rain squalls that drowned out the radar and reduced visibility to zero, the rendezvous was made before dawn and flares set off. The promised air cover failed to materialize, but the Jap batteries, probably uninterested in wasting ammunition on such small targets, remained quiet, and the boats after leisurely skirting the island with no sign of refugees, impudently splattered some known Jap installations with 40 mm HE and returned unmolested to Seleo. It is believed that no other Allied craft, army or navy, ever penetrated those well-fortified waters by daylight until well into 1945.

As various problems began to find solutions, opportunity for recreation could also be found. The gentlemen from Kentucky and Tennessee, cut off from their native supplies, were forced to improvise from materials at hand, and alcoholic beverages whose parentage was subject to a great deal of question began to appear in

the tents of the Regiment. The amateurs were forced to resort to forcing raisins and sugar through the eyes of coconuts or to stirring canned heat, hair tonic, and after-shave lotion with dried prunes and raisins. The more professional, however, proceeded with the aid of several Coleman stoves, some pilfered copper tubing, and a couple of five-gallon cans to set up a distilling operation which speeded production and increased potency to such an extent that after considerable consumption the consumer became a superman, as witness the following story. An ex-fisherman from C Company stocked himself up fully and, while in that condition, fell unnoticed off the stern of an LCM about four miles away from Seleo; unconcerned as the boat failed to slow down he began to swim to the island and found the water so refreshing that he swam right on past it and had to retrace his course some two miles after he discovered the error. This feat gave rise to many theories, the most plausible one of which is



The native population was cordial, worked well under proper direction, and was devoutly religious.

that so much of the water in his body had been displaced by alcohol that he floated three-fourths out of water, and his failure to correct his speed curve for this change in displacement caused him to over-shoot the island.

The construction of stills, however, was not the only recreation. The Shore Battalion constructed a fine open-air theatre, large enough to accommodate neighboring units, and film was thus secured for a picture almost every night. Once the schedules had been coordinated with the shifts at the beach so that the maximum number of troops could attend, a great deal of pleasure was had from this pastime. When Bob Hope's show arrived an even larger stage complete with dressing rooms was built. The show was held in the afternoon and work — except of the most essential variety — was suspended so that almost all of the Regiment was able to enjoy it.

Softball came into its own for the first time at Aitape and provided a source of entertainment for a great many of the troops. Each company of the Regiment on the mainland had a team, and from these teams was selected an aggregation which represented the Battalion in inter-unit competition. On Seleo, too, companies, platoons, and even the officers had their own teams, and games were in progress whenever the work schedule permitted. Not only the players but the spectators were greatly benefitted from the games. In June the Regiment began to receive monthly quotas of leaves and furloughs to Australia; the quotas were so small as to be almost invisible, but the thought that they might be increased, the fact that even so few were actually going on furlough, and the stories told by those who returned gave everyone a great boost in morale.

In November the regimental commander, after several conferences with the battalion commanders, decided upon a reorganization within the Regiment which would give it a really workable T/O and would more nearly equalize ratings with responsibilities. The boat companies with tables calling for 65 boats were actually operating 45, and the shore companies with tables calling for 3 dozers were actually manning 6 and many other pieces of equipment. Therefore, ratings were taken from boat companies and distributed to the shore companies. To give the Shore Battalion commander, who was ex-officio beachmaster, an adequate staff for round-the-clock operations, the regimental staff was pared down and officer and enlisted ratings given to Headquarters, Shore Battalion. Finally, the weapons sections and platoon of the Shore Battalion were abolished, subject to being reconstituted on a provisional basis during assault operations, and the shore companies were divided into an engineering platoon and a cargo platoon, thus recognizing a functional division which had in fact existed since their arrival overseas. Though this shake-up in ratings and organization inevitably worked against the interests of many individuals, the overall results proved excellent in succeeding operations.

The final weeks at Aitape were absorbed in intensive preparation for participation in the invasion of the Philippines and are covered in the next chapter. As the monsoon season changed, even the relatively sheltered beach at Aitape Cove was buffeted by an increasingly bad surf. This caused frequent suspension of unloading, and brought the average daily tonnage for October and November down to less than 1000 as compared with nearly 1500 during the hectic days of August. But the



Bob Hope and Frances Langford wow 15,000 GIs from the Shore Battalion's stage at Aitape.

unloading quota did not perceptibly relax as the 43d Division built up its supplies for the Philippine campaign and the 6th Australian Division with numerous service units moved in to take its place. An unfortunate result of this continued pressure despite bad conditions was that the new boats were soon nearly as dilapidated as those that had been condemned in July, and yet they had to be made to last through the Lingayen Gulf operations.

The tour of duty at Aitape can be summed up as nothing but a hard grind for nearly everyone in the Regiment. The instances of exciting combat participation were few, and the hours of drudgery were many, but the men of the 533d who sweated in the holds of liberties and in the conning towers of LCMs performed feats of endurance that, while not heroic, were none the less vitally essential to the success of the largest American force that fought in the jungles of New Guinea.

CHAPTER XI

Luzon

THE first embryonic plans for the reconquest of the Philippines were undoubtedly formulated by General MacArthur and his staff as soon as the gallant defense of Bataan became hopeless. The creation of the Southwest Pacific Theatre in March 1942 was in large measure directed to that object. Once the Jap offensive was blunted and turned back in Papua during the latter part of 1942, the New Guinea campaign had just one real objective — the liberation of the Philippines.

There were some in Washington and Pearl Harbor who favored a strictly defensive campaign in the SWPA, arguing that Japan could be defeated by a drive across the Central Pacific, by-passing the Philippines. But the MacArthur school, necessarily anticipating that Japan would not quit until her home islands were actually invaded, successfully maintained that such a tremendous invasion would have to be based on more than a few small islands and that, therefore, disregarding entirely our moral obligation to rescue the Filipinos, the reconquest of their Archipelago was an absolute necessity to our ultimate victory over Japan.

The initial plan adopted by MacArthur called for successive leaps up the New Guinea coast to its western end, then to Morotai, the Talaud Islands, and Mindanao. This plan, which was carried out except for the last two phases, was dictated by the simple fact that in the SWPA as distinct from the Central Pacific, each new beachhead had to receive its air support from a previously secured land base. Three hundred miles thus represented about the maximum stride that our forces could make at one time. This was in sharp contrast with the Navy's Central Pacific Theatre where control of all aircraft carriers enabled Admiral Nimitz to move virtually as far as he liked in a single hop.

Morotai was seized on September 15, 1944. The Talaud Islands, northeasternmost group in the Dutch East Indies, were scheduled for attack on October 15 (Operation "Gossip Monger") and the initial assault on the Philippines proper was to be delivered November 15 at Sarangani Bay, Mindanao (Operation "K-1"). As far as amphibians were concerned these actions were to be strictly 3d Brigade affairs, the 533d being attached to the 32d Infantry Division for the first one, and the other two regiments going into Mindanao with the 33d and 43d Divisions.

Detailed planning for the Talaud show moved into high gear the first week in September. The plans made the maximum use of the Regiment's mobility and flexibility. The initial beachhead was to be made on Salababoe Island by the 127th and 128th RCTs landing with the Shore Battalion from APDs, LSTs, APAs, and an LSD. 533d LCMs were to be carried to the limit of the shipping capacity. The balance of the Boat Battalion was to leave Aitape on October 1 and proceed under its own power to Morotai via Wakde, Woendi Lagoon, and Sansopar, a total distance of 1000 miles. The run from Morotai to the objective — 140 miles — was to be made

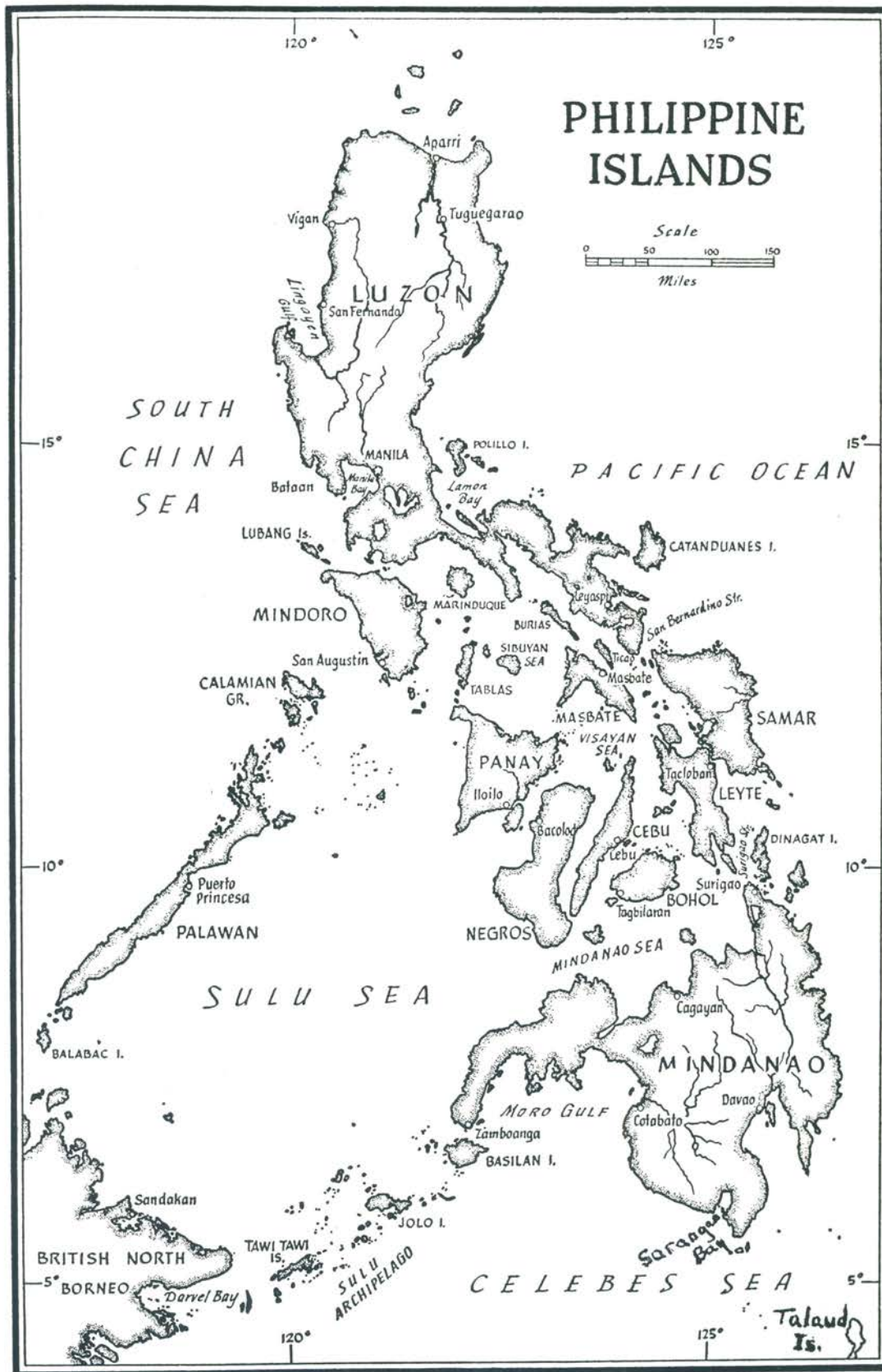
by the gunboats and part of the LCMs the night of D-1 in convoy with a PT squadron and at H + 2 hours these craft together with some LVTs were to pick up an infantry battalion on Salababoe and make a shore-to-shore hop to Karakelong. The seizure of the remaining islands in the group was to be accomplished in similar fashion as rapidly as possible.

The logistics were all worked out and field orders drafted, when on the evening of September 15 came a radio message "operation canceled." Though the reason was not disclosed for many weeks, this sudden change resulted from a deal made between General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz on the basis of Admiral Halsey's reports of the pitifully weak Jap air opposition to his early September carrier raid on the Philippines. Deciding that it was prudent to strike at the heart of the Archipelago relying initially only on carrier-based air cover, General MacArthur agreed to change his initial plan in favor of a major lunge at Leyte, provided the Third Fleet supported him and his Sixth Army was reinforced by the XXIV Corps. Admiral Nimitz likewise agreed to call off his projected attack on Yap in the Carolines, and the Joint Chiefs at Quebec promptly concurred.

The revised strategy in the Philippine Campaign made possible by the reinforcement of MacArthur's command was to split the Jap forces in two by seizing a vital island, whence planes could dominate most of the narrow seas. This would force the Japs to commit their reserves to a meat grinder, from the effects of which they would never recover. How well this worked is well-known history and is not part of this story. The Jap navy threw itself away in a brilliantly conceived but poorly executed endeavor to destroy the shipping of the Leyte task force. Their air forces, engaging in repeated suicide attacks for the first time, suffered a depletion they could never make up. And their army reserves including their crack 1st Division were largely annihilated in a series of grueling slugging matches in the Ormoc Valley where our 32d and 24th Divisions distinguished themselves.

When the fate of Leyte was sealed early in December by the 77th Division's capture of Ormoc, MacArthur took a well-calculated long chance and threw part of the 24th Division past Cebu, Negros, and Panay to seize and hold Mindoro. As usual the chance worked beautifully, and the Japs on Luzon seeing Manila threatened immediately from the south began to move heavy forces toward Batangas and Tayabas. The stage was now set for the touchdown play — the taking of Manila from the rear by landing at Lingayen Gulf and sweeping down the now virtually unguarded central plains.

This avenue of approach had not only been employed by the Japanese in 1941, but had been decided upon in the original plans for the reoccupation of the Philippines. The initial assault called for four divisions, the two on the left to land between Dagupan and Damortis, wheel slightly and push into the mountains to secure the left flank, while the two on the right were to land between Dagupan and Lingayen and drive rapidly down the broad plains to Manila Bay. Four other divisions were to follow as rapidly as shipping would permit to man the line that soon would extend 150 miles from Damortis to Laguna de Baie.



Planning

The 533d was first notified of its assignment to this "M-1" task force and attachment to the 43d Infantry Division in early October, but no detailed information reached the orphan task force at Aitape until mid-November. Even then, with loading-out less than three weeks off, it was impossible to make any real plans. The fact that Sixth Army which would control the show was still up to its neck in the Leyte fight while the 43d Division was at Aitape and I Corps, to which the 43d was attached, was at Hollandia, accounted in part for this, but the refusal of the Navy even to talk with any echelon lower than an army headquarters added materially to the confusion.

One thing was painfully clear at the outset: most of the boats would be left out of the initial assault because of the insufficient LCM capacity of the transports assigned to the Division, plus the fact that the LSD would carry only LCTs. This latter was very annoying, as it was hard to see why the LCTs could not proceed on their own bottoms to Mindoro and join the convoy there. But the Boat Battalion received a substitute mission, and its novelty and possibilities of real excitement mitigated the disappointment. The assignment called for the creation, along with the defense platoon of the Shore Battalion, of two provisional heavy weapons companies to form the backbone of the defense of the 5-mile beach perimeter. In previous operations in New Guinea the infantry had normally performed this function, but the 43d Division's plan called for a rapid drive inland to seize high ground up to eight miles from the beach the first night. Any by-passed Jap groups would thus be able to counterattack the beach installations at will unless shore party troops interposed. Hence the decision to use the surplus Boat Battalion personnel to man the key points of the perimeter.

The problems facing the Shore Battalion were quite the opposite. As soon as the magnitude of the operation in terms of equipment and men to be brought ashore was disclosed, it was apparent that the Battalion would be swamped unless heavily reinforced. In addition the Division planned to land three regiments abreast on a front of nearly 3 miles and to keep supplies coming in over the two extreme ends of the beach indefinitely. This would spread the shore party's personnel and equipment to the limit and dictated decentralization of control. Moreover, several reserve divisions were scheduled to land on the most suitable beach, and map studies indicated that this would be the 533d's.

The logistical planning of a major amphibian operation is as complex as anything in modern warfare. A shore party commander and his staff find themselves at the very nerve center of this planning. Since "M-1" was the first full scale effort of the Regiment as a unit, it will not be amiss at this point to outline in general terms how the problems confronting a boat and shore regiment are analyzed and dealt with before the task force even embarks.

Naturally the underlying decisions as to what size unit will attack what point and when are made in higher headquarters. The shipping in which the force and its supplies will be "lifted" is determined in joint Army-Navy conferences. Based on the

anticipated difficulties of the campaign, senior supply officers issue orders as to how many "days of supply" of each class are to be brought in with the assault forces, and subsequently. These decisions, as a matter of experience, are never final, and changes are announced daily until the task force actually departs and not infrequently even after that. So when the division G-4 and the engineer shore party commander and staffs do their work, they start with the most fragmentary information and find it shifting with discouraging frequency.

Despite these uncertainties they try to analyze their mission to see just how many tons of supplies must be brought across the beach each hour. In the initial assault the theoretical standard is the maximum that can be moved out of the transports' hatches and over the ramps of the LSTs. The reason for this is twofold: ships are always scarce and rapid turnaround is essential if the overall theatre requirements are to be met; secondly, ships are vulnerable to air and submarine attack, hence every effort of both services is bent toward discharging them in the shortest possible time.

Having calculated, then, how many tons can be spewed out by the convoy hour by hour, the next step is to provide enough small craft, LCTs, LCMs, LCVPs, DUKWs, and sometimes ponton barges, to keep that tonnage moving to the beach and provide an empty craft at shipside as soon as one pulls away. The distance from transport anchorage to unloading point, surf and beach conditions, and many other factors affect this calculation. In actual experience almost all operations were more than adequately supplied with small landing craft, but they were none the less a potential bottleneck and had to be figured accurately.

But cargo piled in landing craft, whether they be en route to shore or beached with ramp down, is no use to the advancing doughboys; so adequate labor and cranes must be provided at the water's edge to accomplish the unloading at the same speed as the loading at shipside. Figures based on experience show that a man can reasonably manhandle 6 tons a day and that a light crane and its crew can move 10-12 tons an hour from landing craft to truck. The efficiency of cranes as compared with manhandling is such that all shore parties employ as many as possible. In the SWPA which had the lowest priorities of any theatre on all equipment, there were never nearly enough. Thus many hundreds of men had to be detailed from service and frequently from combat units to make up an adequate labor pool for the beach.

The next item to be studied is transportation from the water's edge to the dumps. Piling supplies on the beach itself is justifiable only as a last resort, as confusion, congestion, and possible destruction inevitably result. A smooth flow of supplies from ships straight through to well dispersed dumps, each organized to receive and issue to using units separate classes of stores, is the ultimate objective of every shore party. Though the trip from the water's edge to the dump sites may be only a few hundred yards, the small capacity of the standard 6 x 6 truck, the time required to load and unload, and the unavoidable loss of time caused by operating in a new area, on "roads" that barely deserve the name, and among hundreds of vehicles, require a surprisingly large truck pool for the shore party alone. Experience in many operations has shown that the shore party should have at least 2 trucks per LCM and 4 per LCT if it is to discharge them without delay. Not once did the 533d ever have

such a truck pool. Not only did shortage of shipping space severely curtail the entire task force's wheeled transport, but even after the shore party's requirements had been ruthlessly scaled down, it normally discovered once ashore that many of its trucks were taken for "priority" missions elsewhere.

Finally, the unloading of trucks in the dumps by both cranes and manual labor must be geared to the overall flow of tonnage so trucks will not be wasted while idling in a dump. These dumps are normally run by the appropriate task force supply officer, but the shore party commander cannot neglect them at any stage of the planning or operation.

The above outline touches only the high spots and omits such vital problems as radio and wire communications, engineering work such as erection of ponton causeways, or sandbag jetties, making of roads, and clearing dump sites. When all these and myriad other items are considered and tentatively decided, beach layout plans are made and sandbox models constructed so all concerned can familiarize themselves as well as possible with the anticipated operation in advance of embarkation.

For the Lingayen operation planning proceeded as above. To augment the shore party's manpower, various port, ammunition, ordnance, quartermaster, etc. companies were attached, bringing the regimental strength to 3500 officers and men. Most of these units staged from points hundreds of miles from Aitape which added materially to the difficulties of organizing a coordinated team. An M.P. company, two medical companies and a DUKW company rounded out the shore party.

The question of adequate trucks was incapable of solution. After much careful calculation, the shore party stated that the minimum required to handle the peak load was 240 2½-ton trucks. All that was actually received was a promise of 123, which would have been adequate if resort was had to some temporary stock-piling on the beaches.

Loading Out

The latter part of November saw all ranks involved in preparations for the big attack. While personnel clerks typed passenger list after passenger list only to tear them up as the embarkation plan shifted, motor pool mechanics checked vehicles and welded wire-cutters to front bumpers. Officers and men assigned to perimeter defense conducted intensive weapons training, including full scale night exercises on Seleo Island. New boats just in from the 800-mile trip from the boat plant at Milne Bay were armed and readied. Old boats actually ripe for the graveyard were patched and strengthened. Spare parts for tractors and LCMs were brought in by air and by landing craft. In no class of supply other than rations was the Regiment adequately equipped, but that was such an old story that no one was particularly concerned.

Meanwhile not for one second did the pressure of routine work slacken. In fact, in some respects it increased the closer the day of embarkation came. The incoming Australian 6th Division had to be unloaded completely by 533d boats and Shore Battalion, and each successive week surf conditions grew worse with heavier and more frequent damage to the boats.

Thanksgiving evening brought a good break for the Boat Battalion. The boat companies of the 544th EB&SR which had been attached to the 37th Infantry Division announced they were unable to proceed to Finschhafen in time to meet their convoy for Bougainville whence the Division would stage for the Philippines. Consequently I Corps directed the 533d to have a boat company ready to load out of Finschhafen (400 miles away) in 60 hours time. Since A Company had only just arrived from New Britain and was not yet unpacked, and since a large detachment of it had just left Milne Bay with new boats, its selection was natural. Not only did the company have to do a quick job of striking camp and embarking during the remaining hours of the night, but one-third of its 56' boats had to be exchanged for 50' craft of B Company.

The trip to Finschhafen was made in the teeth of the southeast monsoon and was the finishing touch for some of the old boats which had to be replaced on arrival. Using SCR 284 radios with a normal range of 30-60 miles, company and battalion headquarters maintained contact with the detachment leaving Milne Bay 800 miles away, with the result that it and the rest of the company entered Finschhafen simultaneously. The naval transport squadron which arrived to pick up A Company thought it was only to receive LCMs and their crews, and refused to be bound by I Corps orders to lift the entire company and its equipment. Only by fast talking and pleading with individual skippers did the company commander succeed in moving his unit virtually intact to Bougainville. There it was forced by the 544th EB&SR to leave almost all its organizational equipment behind in an indefinitely delayed rear echelon.

The transport squadron to lift the 43d Division and attached troops arrived off Aitape at the end of November. Only by talking with each skipper was a definite statement finally obtained as to the number and size of craft they would carry. Thus another revision of plans was made less than a week before scheduled departure. Actually the Boat Battalion wound up with 99 of its 117 LCMs in the operation which gave it nearly 60% of the LCMs in the entire attack force, but it was too late to relieve it of responsibility for the perimeter defense.

Loading out commenced December 1 with all boats scheduled for the attack attached to their respective ships. Though this gave the Navy operating control of the boats, it was essential, as all our shore maintenance facilities had to be packed and loaded. The first days of loading disclosed that only a miracle would permit the Division to embark and sail on schedule. High surf and a heavy ground swell in the anchorage were the principal causes, but the necessity of continuing to unload Liberties in order to get supplies ashore to complete the task force's stocks used up all the spare boats. Fortunately, the Jap position in Leyte could not be cracked without an amphibious assault near Ormoc which used shipping earmarked for Lingayen and thus "S" day for the "M-1" show was postponed from December 20 until January 9.

The three weeks respite permitted an orderly out-loading despite the increasingly vicious surf, and also made possible securing certain vital equipment which the Regiment would otherwise have sailed without. The last four LCMs needed to replace old boats that finally collapsed in the outloading were forcibly removed from Hollandia in a night raid on the Base G boat pool — illegal but unavoidable under the



LSTs were loaded to capacity and then some, and as many men as could find a perch were crammed aboard for the two-week trip.

circumstances. Christmas eve found everything other than troops safely aboard the ships, and the day was devoted to consuming beer and turkey. Early on the 26th troops clambered up the landing nets. The next day a rather half-hearted rehearsal was held with no boats going within 200 yards of the beach. At 1400 December 28 the convoy got under weigh, and New Guinea dropped over the horizon forever for most of the Regiment. Left behind was a rear echelon of nearly 200 officers and men manning equipment and boats to be forwarded later from either Aitape or Hollandia. Some of these poor devils were not to rejoin the Regiment for five months.

The Trip

The 43d Division convoy in standard formation included 18 large transports, 3 LSDs, 15 LSTs, 9 LCIs, plus miscellaneous escort and auxiliary craft. The LSTs kept the speed down to seven knots — barely perceptible motion on a big ship. After crossing the equator a junction was made near Pelilieu with a similar convoy carrying the 6th Division from Sansopar. Still further along the Third Fleet ships carrying the 40th and 37th Divisions fell in astern. 533d personnel and equipment were scattered on more than forty vessels in these convoys.

The first hazy view of the Philippines came on January 4 as the ships entered Surigao straits. From there on through the Mindanao Sea and up along the western coast of Negros, Panay, and Mindoro the convoy was brazenly exposed to Jap air and submarine attack. Though all hands stood “GQ” at sunup and sundown and at



Lingayen Gulf packed with all sizes and types of combat and cargo ships.

special alerts during the day, the troop-carrying convoys were hardly more than annoyed. Up ahead the bombardment force of seven battleships and many cruisers and destroyers had already entered Lingayen Gulf and was receiving plenty of attention from the kamikaze planes. Serious damage was suffered by 17 warships in their first day in the Gulf. The main convoy received enough sample attacks to keep the troop passengers on their toes. A transport and a tanker took direct hits from suicide planes. A couple of midget submarines made a daring attack first on the cruiser division and then on the White Beach attack group, being sunk by ramming within a few lengths of several LSTs after narrowly missing a brace of ships. Probably the most spectacular, if least menacing, entertainment of the trip occurred when a Jap light cruiser emerged from Manila Bay and headed right for the convoy. Three American destroyers engaged her, using star shells, and in a matter of seconds sent her to the bottom.

Men of the Regiment manned guns throughout the fleet; some served the .50s on their own LCMs, others manned 20 mm pieces of their ship's battery. Gunboat



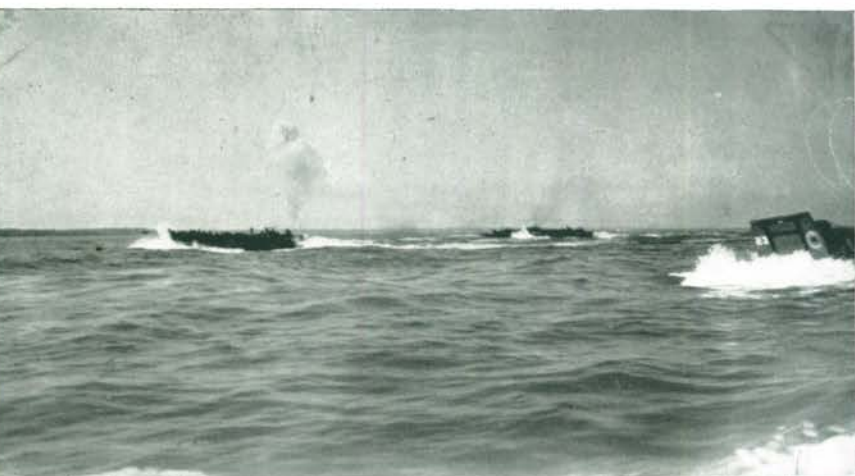
Down the cargo nets into landing craft scramble the assault troops on the morning of January 9, 1945.

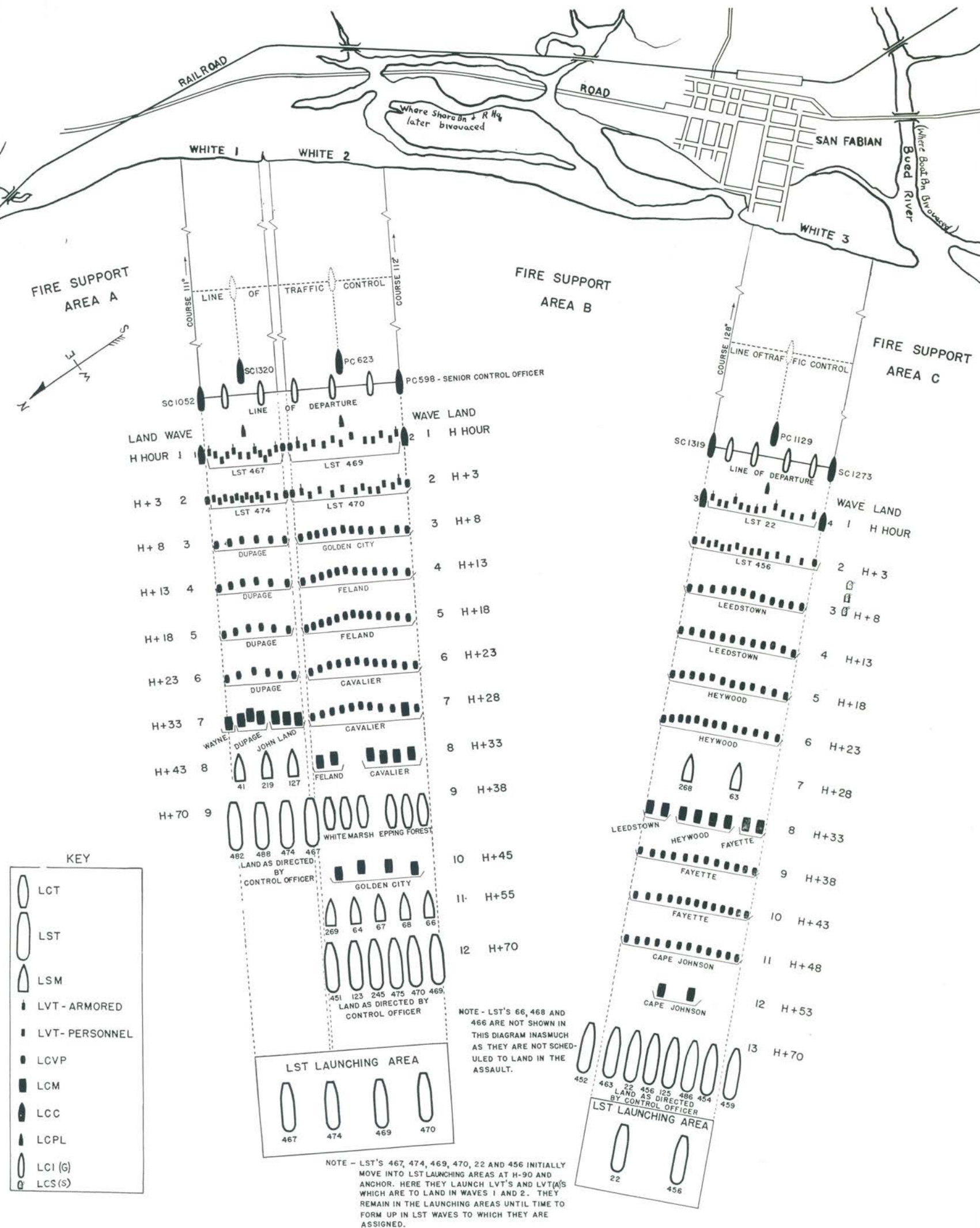
MBI aboard a Liberty received credit from her skipper for a major share in bringing down a suicide bomber.

The Landing

Shortly after midnight January 9 the mighty armada deployed in Lingayen Gulf; 400,000 soldiers and sailors — considerably more than were involved on American beaches the first day in Normandy — gulped early breakfasts and donned combat equipment. Before daybreak the transports were anchored in their appointed areas and were shedding their landing craft and debarking troops. From Damortis to Lingayen the twenty mile shoreline was pricked by orange bursts as 16-inch shells and lighter thudded into suspected pill boxes and earthworks.

At White Beach No. 3, San Fabian, troops waded ashore over the gently sloping beach — scenes of wave 11 at H + 48 minutes.





Daybreak was hard to detect for the normal haze and shadow cast by the mountains was intensified by the pall of smoke that covered the fleet and the shore. More than a thousand small landing craft circled off the quarters of their mother transports, moved on signal to the net-draped sides of the ships, and received their quota of troops and equipment. As soon as a wave was loaded it moved off in single file toward the control craft at the line of departure 4000 yards off shore. Though the smoke and haze caused some of the boats to miss their assigned positions by a few hundred yards, the landing went off remarkably smoothly.

The first amtracs (LVTs) crawled out of the moderate surf at 0930 to be followed by four or five waves of LCVs at five minute intervals. Then came the LCMs followed by LCTs, LSMs, and finally the LSTs. A Company landed at Crimson Beach just west of the Dagupan River and encountered no opposition. The rest of the Regiment went in on the White Beaches running northward from the Bued River past San Fabian to Mabilao. On the northernmost of these there was considerable enemy reaction with mortars and light artillery. Many of our boats were hit and some of our men wounded, but no boat was more than temporarily disabled.

Clearing the Bued River was the mission of a Boat Battalion detachment of three LCS(S)s which had been carried in LST davits. The river formed the boundary between the 43d and 6th Divisions, but no one knew in advance whether the bar at its mouth could be crossed by landing craft, and if so, how far up stream it would be navigable. The three little support boats moved shoreward on the right flank of the first assault waves and bumped their way over the bar at H+15 minutes. As they rounded the first bend, a Jap machine gun on the south bank of the river opened up and scored direct hits on the turret of one boat, but caused no casualties. Immediate .50 calibre return fire from the boats silenced the gun, thus permitting not only the boats but also a halted 1st Infantry patrol to resume their advance. The craft continued upstream as far as they could, keeping abreast of the infantry points but encountered no further opposition. After making a quick hydrographic survey and reporting to the naval beachmaster the desirability of landing much of the bulk supplies in the calm of the river, the detachment came out of the river and moved northward where it operated in flank support of the 172d Infantry. Here the boats were exposed to mortar and light artillery fire, and were fairly well peppered with fragments until they withdrew beyond effective range of their own machine guns.

On the beaches themselves the enemy did little to interfere except at White 1 and 2 where frequent concentrations of accurate mortar and light artillery fire interrupted work and for several hours kept LSTs and LSMs off the beach. Unfortunately this was by far the most suitable beach from a hydrographic standpoint, so there was nothing to do but keep on pouring supplies across it and accept the inevitable toll of casualties.

All the other beaches beginning with White 3 and extending on around the gulf to Lingayen were so flat that even LCMs grounded way off shore. LSTs stuck hard and fast almost a quarter mile out. In addition to the deeps inside the sand bars, craters made during the bombardment constituted fatal traps for vehicles and men attempting to wade ashore from the boats. Not even waterproofed tractors could get



103d Infantry men ford the slews behind White 3 as the 533d sets up its first beach CP in the Philippines.



in from the larger landing vessels, and the result by mid-morning was a messy picture of drowned vehicles — their cabs barely awash — and LSTs and LSMs stuck well off shore, while small boats were already bringing in bulk stores to a beach that was unprepared to receive them.

Gradually order developed from confusion as Seabees struggled to put enough sections of ponton cube causeways together to reach the beach from the LSTs. Small boats and DUKWs brought ashore the most critical personnel from the big landing ships, and all artillery and engineer dozers that could be collected went about salvaging the drowned vehicles in the surf. Dumps were reconnoitred and marked according to plan, but so few trucks got ashore on schedule that most of the bulk was handled by human chain from the boats' ramps to a temporary heap above the high tide mark.

With less than three hours of daylight remaining the LSTs finally started to discharge across both White 2 and White 3 beaches. A heavy smoke screen and some good fire support from destroyers had quieted the enemy fire on White 2, and the Seabees on White 3 at last pooled all their resources and bridged the gap from the number one priority LST to White 3 beach. From then on through the night things went reasonably well on both beaches.

The boatmen began a grueling 96 hours of incessant runs from shipside to beach and back again. The inability of LCTs and LSMs to land within workable distance

On White Beach 3 even the little LCVPs ground well off shore as the LSTs fail to reach within ponton causeway range of the beach. Lower right: LVT being loaded from LCM.





**Beach White 3: *Top:* Human chains unload LCVPs grounded far out on the flat beach.
Bottom: Two ponton causeways enable vehicles on LST to reach fordable depth.**

of the water's edge placed an unusually heavy strain on the small craft. Our 90-odd LCMs shuttled vehicles and then bulk cargo from the ships that had borne them from New Guinea. As soon as these parent ships were empty, the boats were directed to other ships of the same transport division and continued the same grind. When the "Trans Div" was discharged, the LCMs turned to on any other naval attack transport, and finally when these were done, there was a gulf-full of liberties with high priority cargo to be sped ashore. As all cabins had been destroyed on Seleo prior to embarkation, the boat men snatched what had to pass for a rest on the throbbing studded steel of the LCMs' decks, and for shelter from the blistering daytime sun or night rain squalls they had nothing.



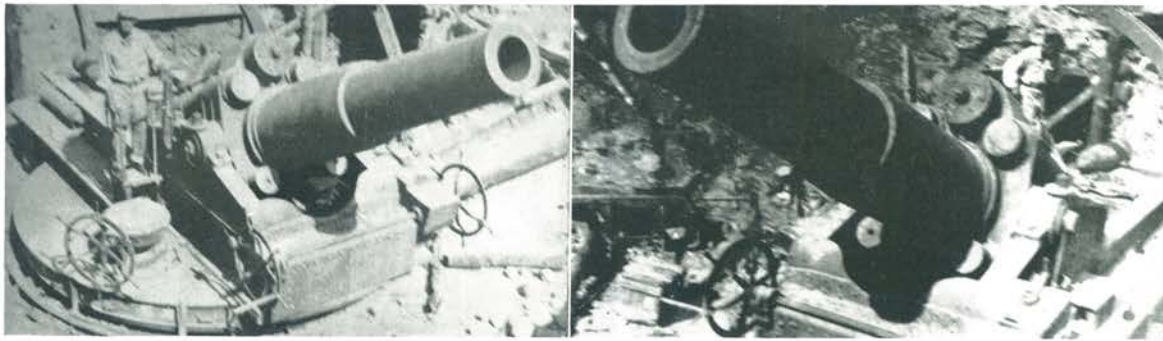
Beach White 2: Smoke pots conceal unloading operations from enemy observers in the hills and work continues despite intermittent shelling.

Besides its LCMs the Boat Battalion took over 25 of the transports' LCVPs. This transaction had been arranged without warning after the convoy had been at sea a week. With the Battalion having 99 LCMs, a fair sized rear echelon and 5000 yards of perimeter already charged to its responsibility, it had a problem setting up 25 boat crews. But cooks, motor pool mechanics, clerks, typists, as well as machinists from the 1461st eagerly volunteered for the job, and demonstrated that the essentials of landing-craft seamanship could be learned by mere association and exposure. These men and their LCVPs brought many thousands of troops ashore and handled the vital little flank missions, ferries, and other jobs that would otherwise have wasted the priceless capacity of an LCM or bigger craft.

The prime terrain characteristic of the initial beachhead was the maze of waterways that crisscrossed and meandered throughout its breadth and depth. During the first days, before adequate bridges were built, LCM and LCVP ferries provided the only egress from their initial footholds for many units. Physical contact between I Corps and Sixth Army, and between 43d and 6th Divisions, for example, depended on the 533d ferry in the Bued River.

The organization of the perimeter defense was badly delayed by the failure of the LSTs to land. The reconnaissance parties landed with the early waves and pushed inland with the infantry to lay out the straightest possible line. Several forward displacements of this protective line had to be made because high ranking hospital COs etc., who did not like the area assigned for their installations within the beach perimeter, moved forward to a nicer grove. The weapons were finally all unloaded about sunset, and the line organized after a fashion. Luckily the Japs made no attempt that first night to penetrate it.

During the hours of darkness work continued as usual, with lights being doused only under actual fire from artillery. Shortly after midnight a character who was later to become known all too well introduced himself with appropriate gusto. He was "Pistol Pete" later identified as a 320 mm (13 inch) Krupp howitzer cleverly



"Pistol Pete" Krupp 320 mm howitzer which shelled the San Fabian area from the mountains near Rosario for many nights.

hidden in a ravine between Damortis and Rosario. His line of fire was such that he could enfilade the beach while none of our ships could either see or reach him. A couple of dozen of his 1600 pound shells fell each night in and around San Fabian, and though doing surprisingly little total damage, served to acquaint all hands with the full meaning of the textbook phrase "harassing fire." The society for the improvement of foxholes sprang full-blown into life within a few seconds after the first awe-inspiring burst in the area.

The second day saw drastic revision in all shore party plans occasioned not by anything the Jap did, for he put up no resistance at all save in the hills at the north end of the beachhead, but by a heavy northerly surf. These breakers building up unhindered from the China coast crashed onto the virtually flat beaches extending from San Fabian to Lingayen. All types of landing craft were virtually impotent as they were alternately victims of a towering breaker and stuck hard and fast in only a foot or two of water in the troughs. At Blue Beach even an LSM broached and the ponton causeways leading to the LSTs were smashed and tossed in the sands. LCMs continued to work the beaches but more often than not had to be helped off with dozers or salvage boats. The superlative demonstration of seamanship put on by the coxswains of A Company on Crimson Beach was the subject of many laudatory statements





by captains of navy transports; nonetheless the volume of tonnage moving over these exposed beaches dropped to a trickle. On the initiative of A Company officers the Dagupan River was reconnoitred and buoyed, so that supplies could be unloaded in the protected waters of the Dagupan town waterfront, and the Navy at last consented to our running our own boats into the Bued rather than onto the churning face of White 3. Only on White 2 were conditions suitable for landing LSTs and for using any kind of boat on the open beach. So a great transfer of ships from all the other beaches to White 2 commenced.

There was no semblance of order or system to this shift. In some cases the skipper of the landing ship, completely fed up with fighting to keep his vessel from broaching, and seeing little or no progress in discharging his cargo, just retracted on his own initiative and proceeded to White 2. Again, the local shore party commander on his own responsibility closed down all or a portion of his beach and told the craft to move to White 2. Or the naval commander on his command ship receiving reports of the hopelessness of all beaches other than White 2, directed all shipping under his command to discharge over White 2. However it started, the stampede to take advantage of the relatively good gradient and modest surf of White 2 soon assumed such proportions that to all intents and purposes it could be said that, except for three of the initial assault divisions, Sixth Army and the bulk of supplies for 200,000 men landed over the 533d's 1000 yards of beach.

Bearing in mind that this beach had been originally expected to land two regimental combat teams, and that therefore its shore engineers consisted of two shore companies plus part of Shore Battalion headquarters, it is a wonder the shore party was not completely obliterated. None of the headquarters or individuals who caused this transfer bothered to inform the regimental CP or the navy beachmaster of the change. The 533d shore party merely consulted its landing tables a few times, threw

At the busy Beachmaster's CP on White Beach 2 Capt. Smith, Shore Battalion S-3, receives a report from Lt. Walton of E Company.



them away in disgust, and began to handle in turn each new craft that slapped its ramp on the beach. Only because each man from the battalion commander to the weary men of the beach squads rose magnificently to the challenge did the beach succeed in handling this new load. Intermittent fire from the hills continued to land in the crowded beach area, and the medics worked incessantly. 573 casualties were treated in the beach aid station in the first five days.

The confusion necessarily incident to such a huge flow was further heightened by the bewilderment of the troops coming ashore. For example, a tank unit attached to XIV Corps expected to land near Lingayen and had its plans and maps all set for such an event. Instead it found itself 20 miles away in the zone of I Corps with no means of communication and no route yet open by which it could proceed to its assigned area. Similarly the entire signal section of GHQ which was meant to land near Dagupan found itself, complete with multi-tonned trailers, on the extreme left flank of the beachhead some 1500 yards from the Jap gun positions. All such units that could not proceed over the light bridges to their proper areas had to be corralled, organized, and then shipped by landing craft to where they belonged. Thus after a few hours there was an out-loading problem of considerable proportions to complicate further the tangled beach. Sixth Army headquarters was still afloat; the two corps headquarters were busy trying to collect themselves and get established; 43d Division headquarters had its hands more than full in pushing the Japs from the hills dominating the beach. But each element of the invasion rolled in over this narrow strip of beach, fanned out, found its proper place, and did its job virtually without assistance or interference from any headquarters higher than a regiment. A tribute indeed to the initiative and intelligence of the junior officers and men.

On S+2 a whole new convoy arrived bearing the 25th Division and other reinforcements. This division unloaded its vehicles and equipment entirely over the Bued River part of White 3 — a strip of beach not over 50 yards wide — in the course of three days. Company F plus organic division troops formed a remarkably efficient shore party. It is doubtful if any division ever came ashore through a narrower bottleneck.

In the few days after S day the 533d's Shore Battalion's tonnage handled *exceeded*



Beach White 3: Cranes expediting unloading and tractor towing disabled $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton truck.



Above: White Beach 3 showing control point, temporary bivouacs and a roller conveyor in action.

Below: Supplies are stacked in temporary dumps on Beach White 3 as shortage of trucks prevents transfer to designated dumps.





**Ponton causeway
broached between
White 2 and White 3
is turned into bridge
across mouth of slew.**

that handled across Omaha Beach in Normandy during the comparable days. Omaha Beach had a shore party of two full Engineer Special Brigades, reinforced, aggregating over 20,000 men!

The perimeter defense line was relocated early on S+1 and thoroughly prepared with good fields of fire and excellent communications to meet an attack by anything up to a battalion. A patrol was sent out to comb the gap left between the 6th and 43d Divisions to be sure no undetected counterattack was launched from there. This patrol led a merry chase for several days, engaging in several sharp fire fights with small Jap parties in which the score in killed was 13 to 0 for our side.

Shortly after 0100 the second night a Jap infiltration party ran smack into the portion of our line just southeast of the San Fabian railroad station. A sheet of flame and lead from everything from .30 calibre machine guns to 37 mm mountain guns



**Machine gun nest manned
by men of B Company on
perimeter south of San
Fabian Railroad Station.**



Railroad Station at
San Fabian.

firing cannister killed or wounded more than half the Japs, and the balance withdrew. Several days later when a suicide battalion was liquidated well inland, its captured orders disclosed its mission to be "destroying enemy strong points east of the railroad and north of the Bued River," a good indication that the Jap field commander realized that if he wanted to raise havoc in the dump areas he would first have to breach a pretty substantial inner defense line. A few days after the first attempt, another was made at the opposite end of the line near Mabilao. The Japs sneaked undetected to within arms length of one of our machine gun nests, but were repulsed after a brisk grenade-tossing melee.

As the infantry units continued to make progress, the threat to the beach area diminished rapidly, and on S+5 and again on S+10 the defense line was drastically thinned out, being converted in effect into a line of listening and warning posts.

The LCS(S)s were joined by three of the LCM gunboats on S+2 and continued to support the 172d Infantry's left flank near Rabon. While their light armament and high angle rockets did little damage to the well dug in Japs, the boats drew fire and spotted several gun positions which were eventually taken under fire by the larger naval vessels. 43d Division Artillery sent a special observation party on an LCMG well behind the Jap lines to try to spot "Pistol Pete" but without success. Later several Alamo scout patrols were landed in the bay above Damortis for the same purpose. In these night missions no enemy opposition was encountered, but many hair raising moments occurred for those aboard, as the Navy, though notified hours in advance, never seemed to be able to notify the screening destroyers of our intended mission. It is hard to blame the larger ships for being wary, considering the menace of "Q" boats with their deadly charges of TNT. Yet everyone aboard an LCM as a

Fletcher class "can" swoops out of the night at 30 knots with five 5"/38's trained on it, wishes he were elsewhere.

The pressing need of the infantry units pushing into the mountains around Rosario and Pozzorubio for qualified guides caused Sixth Army to order the guerrilla forces operating in the vicinity of San Fernando to detach a battalion for service with the 43d Division. Scouts landed by boats of the 533d and from PTs contacted guerrilla headquarters and a rendezvous was made for S+10 at Aringay, 15 miles beyond the American lines. Two trips were made to bring out the 2d Battalion, 121st Filipino Infantry, all without interference on the part of the Japs.

Although the commanders of the major service units who were to assume responsibility for supply of Sixth Army after S+10, could not make up their minds until the last minute as to where they would locate the principal "ports," the Regiment concluded that the White 2 area was the only feasible one and so set about getting organized.

At Aringay, 15 miles behind the Jap lines, a battalion of the 121st Philippine Infantry boards LCMs to join the American forces to the south.



Bued River—first CP of the Boat Battalion on Luzon.

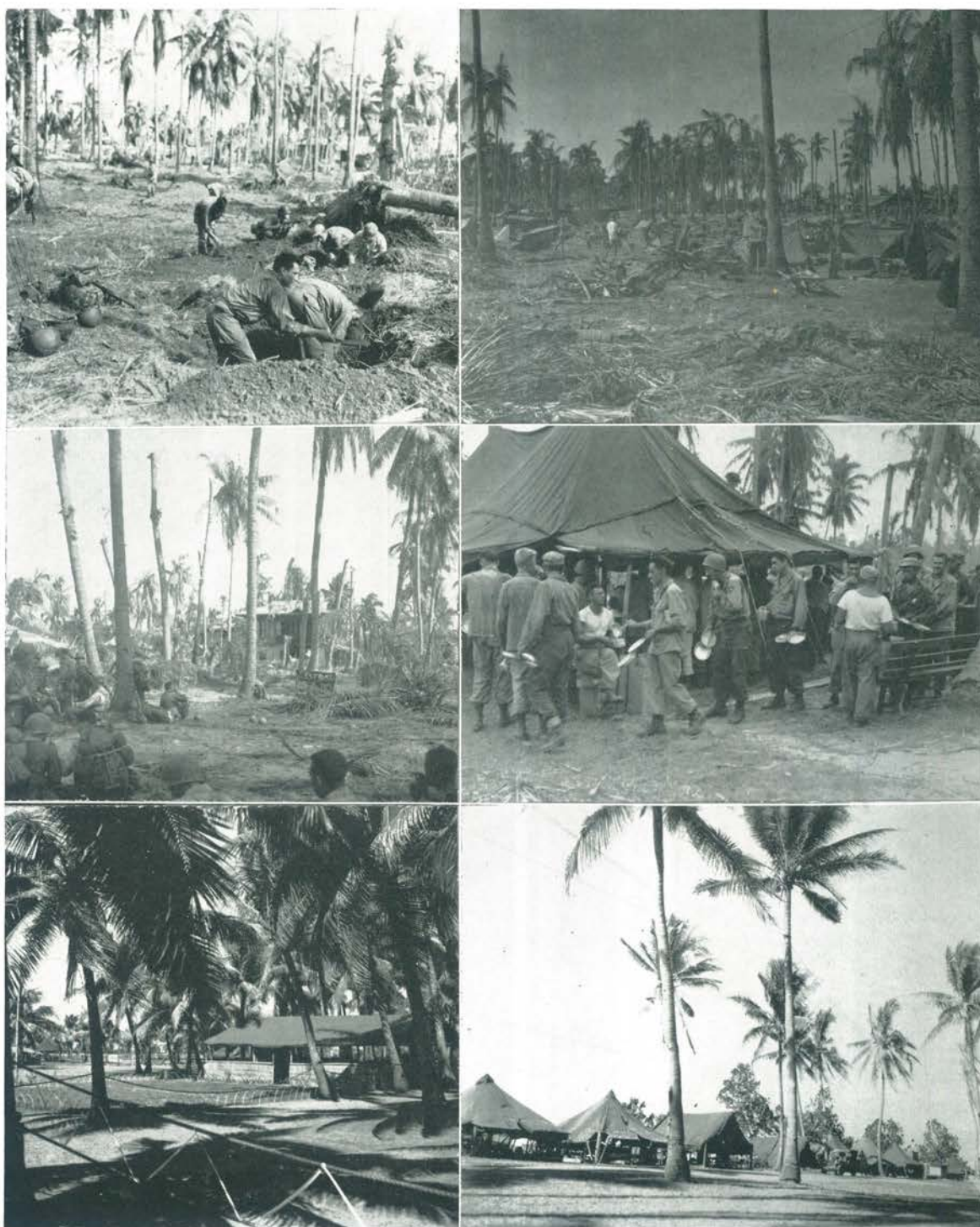


The Boat Battalion began intensive development of the southwest bank of the Bued River which provided a nearly perfect site. Starting at the head of navigation the companies extended down the river bank leaving enough room for each boat to have its berth in 8 feet of water while its ramp rested flush against the bank — the most convenient landing-craft base imaginable. The 1461st set up on a slightly muddy bank but one which could be used to haul boats at all tides. The progress was slow for several reasons. Much vital equipment was on rear echelon shipping, and much that had been advisedly loaded on S+2 and S+4 ships was not unloaded until two weeks after S day, because of higher headquarters' habit of slapping on revised unloading priorities several times a day. Also the usual amount of tentage, etc. had been pilfered and some destroyed. Finally, all hands had so much to do with their primary tasks that establishing the bivouac received belated attention. Native craftsmen erected thatched huts for tentless units such as Company A and Boat Battalion Headquarters Company, and when at last housed, these units had the best quarters of all. Only one company kitchen was available for the whole Battalion, and that had to be subdivided so that a unit could be sent to A Company, 6 miles away on the Dagupan.

Regimental Headquarters and the Shore Battalion also took over a fine area between White 2 and White 3 and despite pressure of beach work were soon well established and comfortably isolated by slews of salt water. Native workers, while not very industrious and invariably inconveniently in the way, made themselves more and more useful with the result that ere long all hands were living better than at any time since Fort Ord.



A Company officers' mess on the Dagupan River.



Top four scenes: Initial bivouac of Regimental Headquarters Company back of White Beach 3. Bottom: Views of Headquarters Shore Battalion (left) and Regimental Headquarters toward the end of the stay on Luzon.

Operations Under Base M Control

The two months from January 20 to March 20 saw the Regiment enmeshed in the operations of a gigantic base which furnished the entire supply and administration for an army of 200,000 in constant aggressive contact with the enemy. Though much of the fighting was scores of miles to the south, the presence of fighting within sight and hearing immediately to the north was a great stimulant to those engaged in service activities in the beach area.



Left: Colonel Johnson, Executive Officer Base M, argues with Col. Moore, Lt. Cols. McCullen and Amory, and Capt. Kelchak over best location for the future base.
Right: Major General Hugh Casey, Chief Engineer SWPA, visits Col. Moore a few days after the landing.

In theory, Base M took over all responsibility for discharge of shipping and handling of supplies and assigned "sub-port" commanders to control these functions at the three unloading points — White 2, Dagupan, and the Calmay River. Inasmuch as more than three-fourths of the total tonnage was to come in over White 2, the 533d — though nominally relieved of all functions other than furnishing lighterage and beach labor — soon found out that its burdens were drastically increased rather than diminished by the advent of Base M. The Base was woefully undermanned at first, being unable even to take care of its own communications. Its top personnel were experienced in handling ports with adequate piers and other facilities, but were totally unfamiliar with the problems of moving supplies via landing craft across an open beach. Consequently they organized the job on a horizontal basis

with one person in charge of port companies aboard the ships, another in charge of lighterage, another in charge of the beach labor, another with control over all trucks, and so on. As a result no one below the base commander himself was responsible for the movement of a box of rations from hold to dump, and the bickerings and back-biting between the various facility commanders were incessant.

The Regiment was in an unenviable position — it was the largest unit attached to the Base and the most conspicuous one, but it had no authority and could only work to improve the situation through persuasion and behind the scenes maneuvers. To almost every man in the Regiment and in the 543d EB&SR, which came under operational control of the 533d, the results of the organization, or lack thereof, were painfully apparent. LCM coxswains carried an average of 1.6 pay-loads per 24-hour day, pounding on the beach for 8-10 hours while 10 tons of supplies were unloaded. Shore Battalion crane operators twiddled their thumbs while a sling-load dangled 20 or 30 minutes waiting for a truck. Dump truck drivers with full loads waited for hours in dumps in which there was no labor.

After 10 days of thorough snafu, various reorganizations were adopted and efficiency gradually improved. All LCMs were unloaded at one part of the beach, larger landing craft at another, and DUKWs at a third. Truck control was decentralized more to the beachmasters, and the flow of tonnage kept reasonably steady.

During the second week in February the 543d, less its reinforced boat company, was relieved and shipped out to participate in the Zamboanga landing. The 534th EB&SR, less its boat battalion, replaced them in the White Beach set-up. Company A of the 533d was at last relieved from attachment to the 544th EB&SR and moved to the Bued River, thereby concentrating the entire Boat Battalion for the first time in 15 months.

Including the 543d boats, the Boat Battalion now had a fleet of 150 cargo LCMs plus nearly 40 LCVPs and overhead boats. Of these 85% were kept operating at all times despite severe wear from the fine silt of the beach and the excessive age of many of the boats. 100 LCMs each day lightered cargo onto White Beach, while coastwise trips kept the balance busy. Boat control was developed to a high degree with a ponton barge surmounted by a tower anchored 200 yards off the landing beach.

The LCM part of Beach White 2 in full operation with Filipino labor, February, 1945.



From this tower all loaded boats were directed to beach slots, and empty boats to ships, thereby cutting to a minimum the wear and tear of idle boats on the beach. In addition to the dispatchers, clerks filled out forms feverishly, covering every boat trip as the first stage in a process of report fabrication that had to be set up to satisfy the statistics-crazed gentlemen of Base M and higher headquarters.

The Shore Battalion took full charge of the LCM beach while the 534th handled the LCTs. As the fighting moved inland, native labor became more plentiful, and actual labor by men of the Battalion was reduced to such skilled work as rigging. Privates bossed gangs of 25 Pangasinans through their capitazes and did their best to get a half-dozen honest man-hours out of each hour the 25 worked. Though Base originally undertook to handle the administration and financial matters connected with the Filipino labor, it shortly turned this problem over to the Regiment. A full time labor section complete with interpreters and fistfuls of pesos kept tabs on the more than 600 laborers who worked each day.

Every piece of mechanical lifting equipment that could be obtained with a semblance of legality was employed on the beach as the proportion of heavy lifts far exceeded anything in the Regiment's previous experience with one- and two-division size task forces. But, as always, the beachmaster could have used three times as many cranes. To keep those few operating most steadily and most effectively, short piers were constructed at intervals along the beach. Not only did this eliminate the wear and tear on cranes incident to crawling about on the beach, but it kept the crane level, out of the surf, and off the tender ramp hinges of the LCMs. The piers were built without pile drivers, using jetting equipment improvised from fire pumps, and the effort expended on them was repaid many times over in the performance of the cranes and general efficiency of the beach.

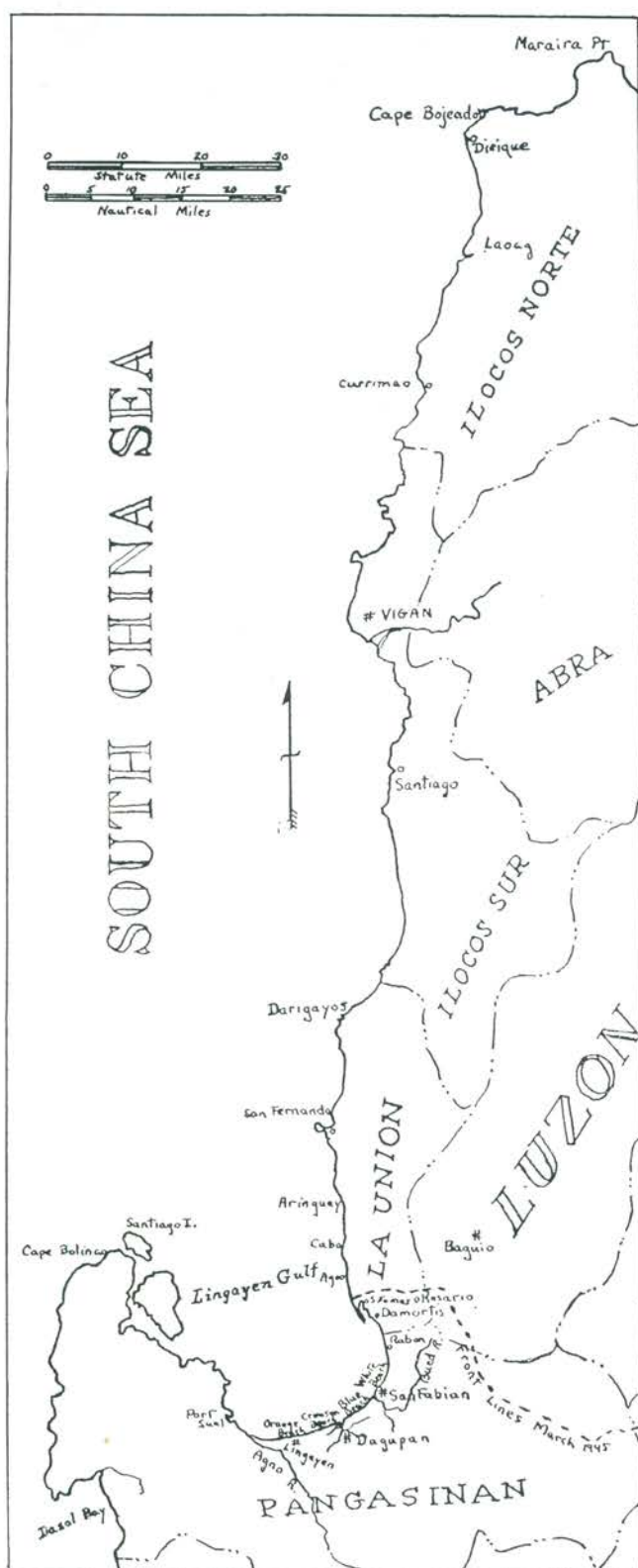
By the end of the period cargo handling was highly effective with the exception of movement in trucks from the beach to the dumps. The local base authorities controlled the available trucks well, but there just were not enough for the job. The shortage was in large part caused by destruction of the railroad and the far greater than anticipated damage to port facilities in Manila. Consequently, truck companies which had been expected to operate exclusively in the San Fabian-Lingayen area found themselves running hundred-mile convoys in a desperate attempt to get supplies to troops east of Manila which should have been supplied over the Manila waterfront.

Despite all shortcomings and difficulties the performance of the White Beach group set new records for the Pacific. The quota of 6000 tons a day set by Sixth Army was regularly exceeded by nearly one third. The 9000 tons handled on peak days were divided almost evenly among 100 LCMs, 28 LCTs, and 300 or more DUKWs.

No enemy shellfire could reach the beach during this period, but nights were frequently enlivened by nuisance air raids. The two best remembered include the night of February 20 when a bomb landed flush in a pile of land mines which detonated, showering the Shore Battalion area with 240 mm (fortunately unfused) projectiles and demolishing E Company's kitchen. Few will ever forget the night a stick of 6 bombs crashed into the Rabon ammunition dump. The area for miles around was illuminated as 2500 tons of ammunition, including multi-colored flares, tracers, and HE, went up in an awe-inspiring display which lasted for many hours.

Token regimental formation at which decorations for heroism and meritorious service during the Lingayen Gulf landing were presented by Colonel Moore, February, 1945.





Coastal Missions

Though virtually the entire effort of the Regiment during these two months was devoted to the glamorless grind of getting supplies ashore, the Boat Battalion added new friends and laurels in a series of supply runs to points up the coast of Luzon far behind the enemy lines. It all developed quite by accident in the course of working out arrangements with the local PT squadrons so there would be no unfortunate clashes during night patrol actions. The PTs were finding barge hunting along the northwest coast of Luzon absolutely profitless and could not strafe Jap positions because of the danger of killing Filipinos. They figured good hunting could be had off the north coast around Aparri, but their cruising radius did not permit them to reach there from any base within American controlled territory. So the 533d agreed to move an LCM fuel boat to Dirique inlet, 113 miles northward of the most advanced American positions and on the extreme northwest corner of Luzon, and to keep it replenished by running cargo LCMs with drums of 100-octane gas up there in periodic convoys. This was done for several weeks and, though no particular excitement developed other than with our own airforces, it did result in the distinction of maintaining the northernmost outpost in the Theatre.



Toe-to-toe fighting along the Villa Verde Trail—32d Division doughboys battle for one of the countless ridges in central Luzon.

In the course of coordinating this mission with the guerrilla forces that would screen it from the neighboring Jap garrisons, the Regiment became acquainted with Colonel Volkmann, leader of all guerrilla forces in northern Luzon. The brilliant record of his Division did much to pave the way for the reconquest of Luzon, but his men had been operating with virtually no outside assistance in the way of supplies and by February were in desperate need of many items, ranging from guns to radio tubes. Air drops in the steep jungle-clad mountains were not too successful. The Navy could not spare escorts for LSMs and LCTs and would not permit them to operate beyond Lingayen Gulf without escort. The problem was a natural for the Boat Battalion, and after securing permission of Sixth Army it undertook responsibility for all water-borne supply of the northern Luzon forces and to provide the necessary escort with its own gunboats. A liaison radio station manned by 533d men was established at Volkmann's CP to eliminate the delays incident to using army, corps, or similar channels, and a regular convoy run was established to the beaches at Duri-gayos, Santiago, and Currimaos controlled by guerrilla units. In five weeks 1000 tons of essential equipment and supplies were placed in the hands of this hard pressed unit, and its subsequent spectacular successes in seizing San Fernando and cutting Route 5 in the Cagayan valley were materially assisted by that support.

Heavy northerly winds and seas were the principal obstacle to these missions, and the risk of a disabled boat's falling into Jap hands was not inconsiderable, but the hospitality of the populace at the ports of call made assignment to one of these convoys coveted by all men of the boat companies.

Because of the dominance by the Navy of the waters west of Luzon, the Japs generally avoided digging in on the coast, so the type of support the LCM gunboats gave east of Aitape could not be utilized. Yet several night patrols of the 33d Division and the 158th RCT were landed in the Caba-Aringay area to obtain prisoners and information. The predilection of the Jap forces for caves in the mountains made these tame affairs, but one never failed to get a thrill making a midnight landing miles behind the enemy's front lines.

A small detachment of Boat Battalion men put the techniques they had developed on gunboats to good use far from salt water. When the 40th Division ran into extremely stubborn resistance in the Zambales mountains west of Fort Stotsenburg, they sent a hurried call to the 533d for rocket batteries. Launchers were quickly transferred to light trucks and a provisional battery organized and dispatched southward to the scene of the mountain fighting. The 4.5-inch rockets were employed with fair results, but the officer in charge concluded that the weapon really needed was the T-32 portable 37 mm cannon which he had mounted on gunboats back at Aitape. When these were brought up they proved just the thing for blasting at otherwise masked cave mouths, and the amphibian engineers had qualified as experts in mountain artillery!

Where Next?

No sooner had the Regiment caught its collective breath after the initial landing than rumors of its next assignment popped up at every turn. Most of these had some basis of fact, because GHQ backed and filled for several weeks before final allocation of amphibian units to succeeding operations, and Sixth Army and even division headquarters for a long time were not sure that an "end run" to take Baguio from the northwest would not be necessary. During February I Corps plans to pull the 25th Division out of the lines near San Jose and throw them into a shore-to-shore operation from White Beach to San Fernando reached the stage where boat allotment tables and wave diagrams were being prepared. On March 4 the 33d Division decided to make a regimental combat team landing at Aringay on March 7 but canceled it when a drive up the coastal highway met surprisingly light resistance. Sixth Army had the 533d scheduled for a XIV Corps task force with 1st Cavalry and 11th Airborne Divisions, but called off the show.

Meanwhile, at the exalted levels of inter-army and GHQ negotiations there was much wire pulling. All brigades wanted to get the best assignments, but without prejudice to their being available when the lineups were announced for the assault on Japan later in the year. The decision ultimately made was that all three brigades would be concentrated as well as possible for employment against Japan, but that the assignment to intervening operations would be dictated by considerations of present location and available shipping. Thus the 2d Brigade, which was spread in the cen-

tral Philippines from Leyte through Mindoro to Subic Bay, would be employed in the Visayan landings under Eighth Army, the 3d Brigade, nearly half of which was still in New Guinea, would furnish the amphibians required by Eighth Army for the recapture of Mindanao, and the boat elements needed by the Aussies in their attacks on Borneo. The 4th Brigade already concentrated on or en route to Luzon fell heir to the Manila assignment by the process of elimination. To some in the Regiment this was a blow, but Manila turned out to be pretty grim and involved pure service troop functions, while the Mindanao tour was to contain plenty of surprises and enough action to make the last few months of hostilities pass quickly.

As a consequence of the knowledge that the next assignment would be in an active campaign, advantage was taken of the proximity of a huge base to procure many items always wanted but never before had. Conversely both Battalions sloughed off T/E and S.L.O.E. equipment which was obviously not worth its weight and space. New cranes, tractors, and dump trucks increased the effectiveness of the Shore Battalion, and at the same time it unburdened itself of such little used items as the saw mill, track press, and well-drilling rig. The Boat Battalion foraged far and wide to capitalize on lessons learned in recent campaigns. 40 mm guns were obtained for the LCMGs, and each company built a new one incorporating all manner of new improvements. 120-tube rocket launchers permitted construction of single purpose rocket LCMs, and some fast talking to a 4th ESB supply officer wangled 100 new twin .50 calibre Heintz mounts for the cargo LCMs. Spare parts were procured from floating supply ships in quantities undreamed of in New Guinea. A few replacement boats, deck-loaded from the States, replaced utterly worn-out craft, but a sub-



43d Division's memorial service at San Fabian, February 24, 1945; *Top left*: contingents from all elements of the reinforced Division form around the cemetery; *top right*: Guard of Honor from 121st Filipino Regiment; *bottom left*: General Krueger, Major Generals Swift and Wing, commanding Sixth Army, I Corps, and 43d Division respectively, arrive; *bottom right*: ruins of 17th century abbey at San Fabian.

stantial majority of the vehicles and boats that were to participate in the last campaign of the war had seen extensive service in New Guinea.

On the 20th of March the 533d was officially relieved from duty with Base M, but in order not to cause any more disruption than necessary, normal functions were continued until March 26, just two days before the final farewell to Luzon.



Manila—next to Warsaw the most devastated city in the world—was visited by many of the 533d.

CHAPTER XII

Mindanao

FROM the point of view of grand strategy the Mindanao campaign was strictly a clean-up affair. The island of Mindanao was not required as a jumping off place for the attack on Japan, but the Southwest Pacific forces had been assigned by the Joint Chiefs of Staff the positive mission of destroying the Japanese forces in all the Philippine Islands and re-establishing the lawful government throughout the Archipelago. This mission was identical for the western Visayan Islands, and the order in which the assaults were made on the various islands of the Southern Philippines was dictated primarily by MacArthur's genius at keeping the Jap garrisons bewitched and befuddled. The campaigns in the spring of 1945 in this area were known collectively as the Victor Operations: V-1 was to free Panay and Negros; V-2, Cebu; V-3, Palawan; V-4, Zamboanga and the Sulu Archipelago; and V-5, Mindanao less the Zamboanga peninsula.

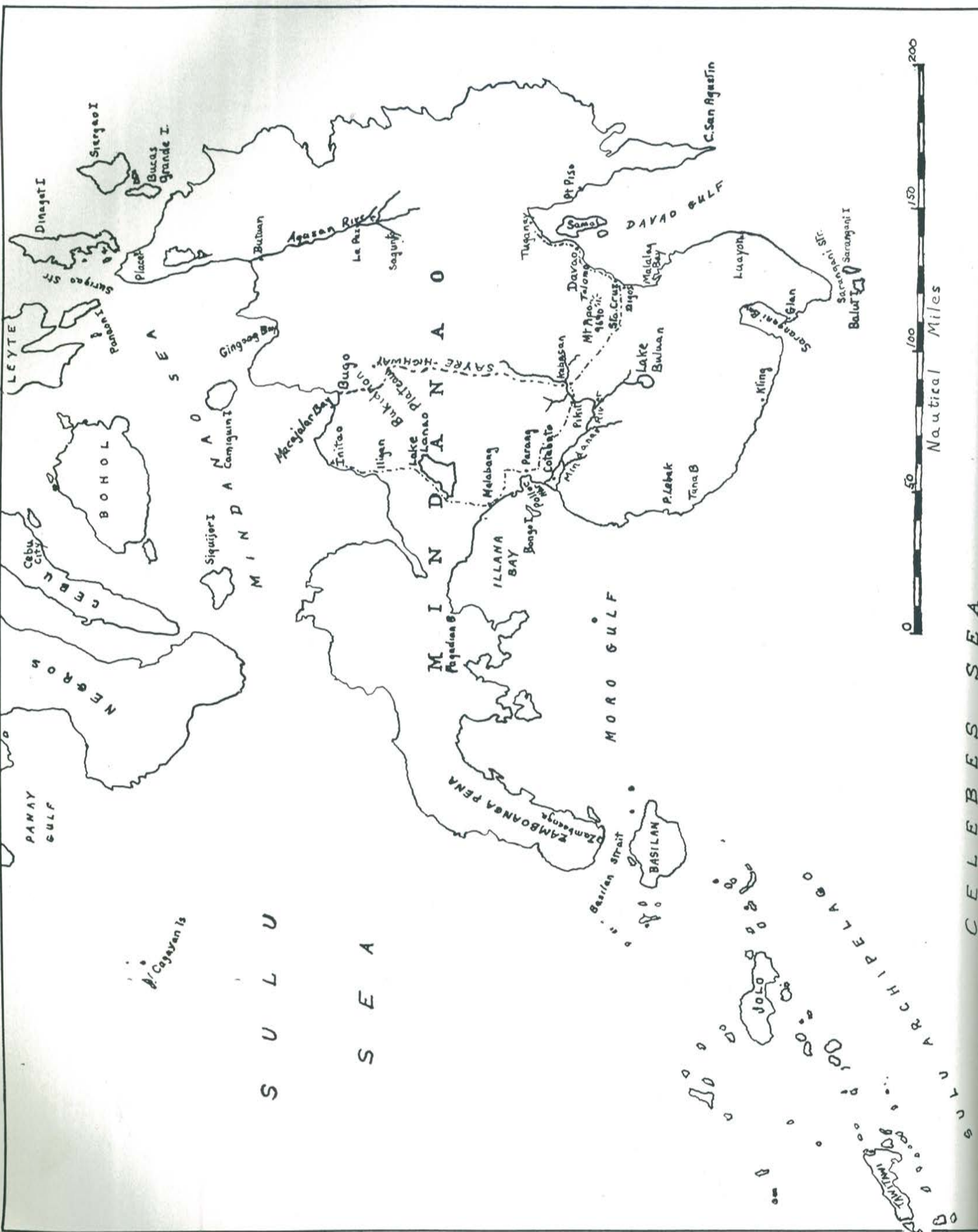
In order that our air arm might range over the South China Sea to North Borneo and Indo China, Palawan, westernmost of the Philippines, and Zamboanga, nearest to Borneo, were attacked first. Then came the V-2 and V-1 campaigns in the central Visayas, leaving by early April the main part of Mindanao as the only substantial land mass in the Philippines where the Jap garrison was not under relentless attack.

Planning

Mindanao, about the size of Pennsylvania, is the largest of the Philippine Islands. It is also the most rugged, least populated, and generally least civilized and developed. With the exception of Davao it has no city worthy of the name. Its "road net" is limited essentially to an east-west road from Lake Lanao thru Malabang, Parang, Pikit, and Santa Cruz to Davao, and a north-south track (the Sayre Highway) which wanders northward from Kabacan to Bugo on the north coast.

The defending garrison, composed of the Japanese 30th and 100th Divisions plus a miscellany of naval troops and service personnel aggregating about 50,000 effectives, was deployed in the principal towns and controlled the roads. Especially at Davao were they emplaced in strength with elaborate defenses and large quantities of automatic weapons and artillery. A frontal assault on Davao Gulf not only would expose the attacking troops to murderous fire but would, in addition, require the forcing of what the Navy considered the most vicious mine fields in the Theatre. So Eighth Army was ordered to "hit 'em where they ain't" by landing in the Moro Gulf and then moving overland more than 100 miles to take Davao in the rear.

The force designated for this campaign was X Corps consisting of the 24th and 31st Infantry Divisions and 20,000 assorted attached troops, including the 533d EB&SR. Planning the attack, set for April 17, commenced at Leyte on March 15, and as will be seen, continued at Luzon, Mindoro and at sea right up until a few hours



CELEBES SEA

Nautical Miles

before the first craft hit the beach. The Task Force's principal components staged at points ranging from Luzon, Leyte, and Mindoro to Morotai, and were not to meet until the last moment. Since the 24th Division was to make the assault and the 31st not to come ashore until five days thereafter, the Regiment was attached to the 24th and operated exclusively under its control during the planning stages and through the assault and initial exploitation.

The primary objectives in the assault on the shores of the Moro Gulf were the airstrip at Malabang and the town of Parang at the head of Polloc Harbor, which appeared to be the most satisfactory spot for the corps base of operations. Since air photos showed Polloc Harbor had nothing vaguely resembling a decent landing beach and, in addition, was believed to be fairly well fortified, X Corps and 24th Division commanders decided to land initially along the Malabang beaches and to take Parang from the rear by moving 35 miles along the road. The possibility of a sea-borne attack on Parang in conjunction with the overland attack was discussed, as was the problem of clearing the Mindanao River delta. But no detailed decisions were reached at the corps conferences at Leyte, and so the Regiment left Luzon hardly knowing more than above set forth.

The movement to Mindoro from San Fabian was accomplished by the Boat Battalion on its own craft and by the rest of the Regiment on four LSTs. The Boat Battalion planned to move in three company serials, commencing on March 28 and successive days. As no fuel could be guaranteed at Subic Bay by units stationed there, arrangements were made to have a tug move the two organic fuel barges to Subic Bay with the first serial, and from Subic Bay to Mindoro with the last. Typhoon warnings caused the naval port director to refuse clearance for the convoys until March 31; consequently the plan of moving by serials a day apart was abandoned, and the entire Boat Battalion, consisting of one 63' command boat, five LCMGs, 27 LCVPs, and 106 LCMs, departed from Lingayen at 0700, arriving at Subic Bay 1200 April 1. A naval escort, consisting of an LCI, was furnished for this part of the voyage in deference to the presence of a large tug, but the port director at Subic Bay, because of a shortage of escort vessels, designated one of the 533d's LCMGs as the escort for the tow for the run to Mindoro. B and C Company departed Subic Bay at 0700 April 2, and arrived in good order at Mangarin Bay, Mindoro, at 0900 the following day. Company A left Subic Bay a day later, and made the same schedule. A temporary camp and maintenance beach was set up on the eastern shore of Mangarin Bay, adjacent to the Boat Battalion of the 532d EB&SR.

Four LSTs arrived at Lingayen on April 1 and were loaded on the following day, providing ample room for all authorized and informally acquired equipment. This convoy departed Lingayen on April 4 and arrived at Mindoro forty-eight hours later. Regimental Headquarters Company and the Shore Battalion debarked and set up a temporary bivouac approximately one-half mile inland from the LST beach.

Representatives of the Regiment, meanwhile, had proceeded to Mindoro via command boat and were busily working out plans and orders with the 24th Division staff and the staff of Naval Task Group 78.2. In many respects this operation looked much simpler than Lingayen; in others it would be far more complex. The most

obvious difference was that no large navy transports, APAs, AKAs, or the like would be involved. This would ease the shore party load but would make the Boat Battalion's job more difficult in requiring a long run on its own bottoms and probably considerable ramp-to-ramp unloading.

The scheme of maneuver was essentially dictated by conditions of beach and inland terrain. Opposite the airstrip and town of Malabang the beach was apparently suitable only at high tide for craft no larger than LSMs. The beach at Parang was doubtful at low tide for any craft and probably useful at high tide only for LCTs and small boats. Moreover, if the enemy had gun positions on the capes protecting Polloc Harbor, a landing at Parang would be too hazardous for the ships involved. Only at the extreme left flank of the objective area, at Baras Plantation, was there a beach positively capable of receiving LSTs satisfactorily. Given these conditions, there was no alternative to the Division's plan of attack, which was as follows:

Red Beach (Baras Plantation): Land one battalion to secure the beachhead and follow it with all LSTs.

White Beach (Airstrip): Land two battalions in column with small craft, with the mission of seizing the airstrip and assisting in capture of the town.

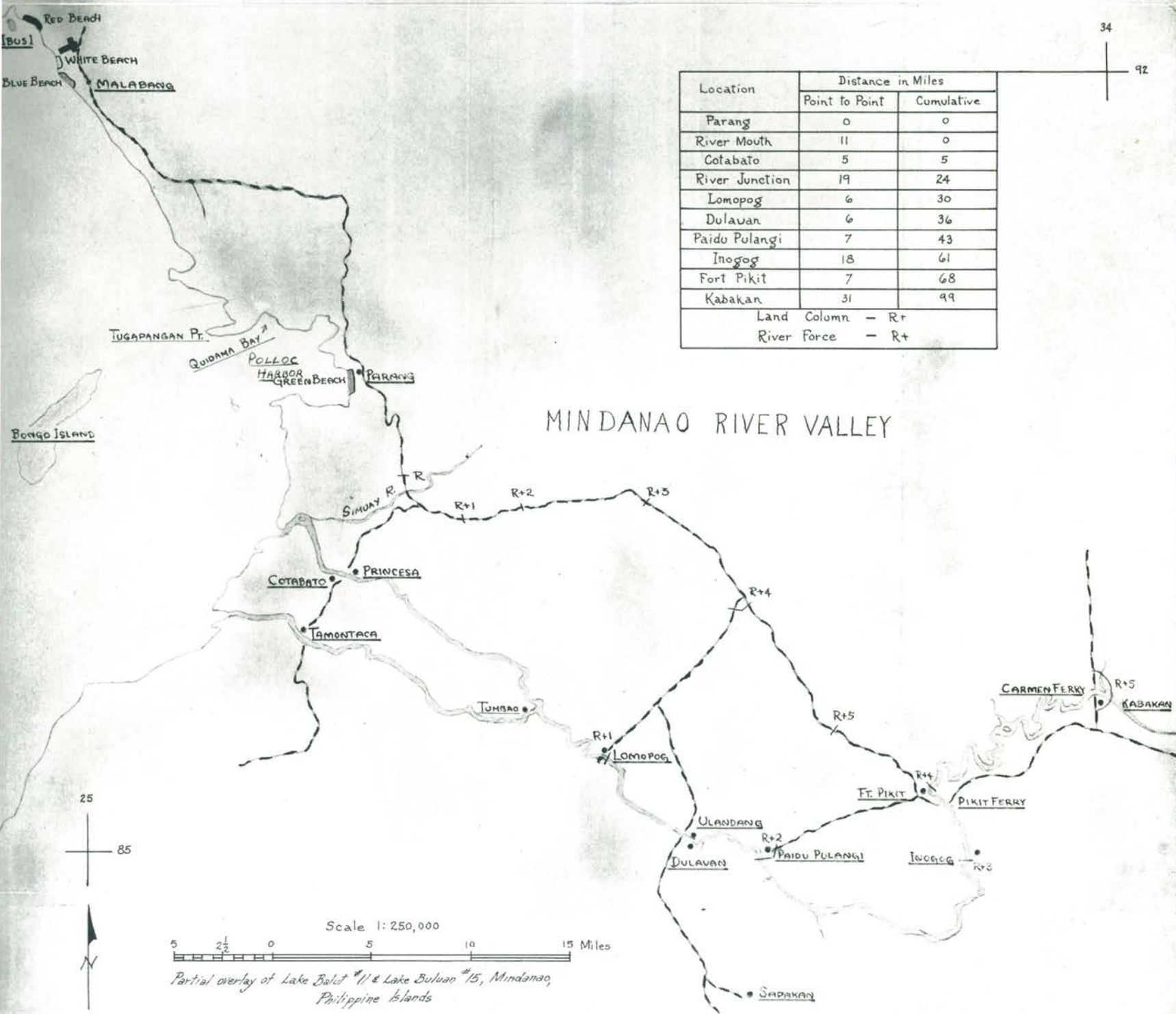
Blue Beach (Malabang Town): Land one RCT in column of battalions, with the dual mission of destroying the garrison of 700 in the town and of pushing rapidly down Route No. 1 to take Parang in the rear.

Green Beach (Parang): To be secured if possible by overland envelopment and if not, after reconnaissance by PTs, LVTs, and gunboats, to be assaulted with units previously landed on Malabang Beach or, if the latter were unexpectedly engaged, by elements of the combat team in floating reserve.

Under such a scheme, beach control rather than beach labor was the difficult problem. With three beaches stretching over more than five miles of coast to be handled on R Day, and a fourth beach twenty-two miles distant to be operated on R+1, the control sections of the Shore Battalion had to be spread extremely thin.

The general plan for employment of the Shore Battalion was to divide one company between White and Blue Beaches, to assign one company to operate Red Beach, and to have one company land at Red Beach to reinforce the company assigned to that beach if necessary, the last company to be prepared to move by LCM to Green Beach at the earliest opportunity.

For tactical purposes the Boat Battalion was required to furnish only two waves of LCVPs, 10 boats each, and one wave of 8 LCMs, but it was recognized by the division commander that additional LCMs were essential if the light vehicles, small dozers, and boat maintenance equipment of the Regiment were to be available when needed. Moreover, the possibility of subsequent shore-to-shore movements made the presence of all available army landing craft desirable. The 533d was, therefore, encouraged to take all craft possible, provided the Admiral approved. He insisted that the Navy's LCTs be towed by the larger landing ships but agreed to allow all but 18 of the LCMs to proceed as the 533d saw fit. The acquiescence of the naval commander in the unescorted movement of 99 small craft nearly 350 miles, and in the rendezvous and junction of these craft with the naval convoy for the final one hundred



and thirty miles of the approach, reversed Seventh Fleet's long established policy of not tolerating long distance moves of army craft in connection with assault operations. As will be seen hereafter, the presence of these extra craft was the principal factor in the initial rapid progress of the campaign.

The final questions determined at Mindoro dealt with the subsidiary landings and reconnaissances. The Division adopted the recommendations of the Regiment as to scouting Ibus and Bongo Islands early in the game and assigned appropriate missions in the reconnaissance along the coast to Parang. Initially under the impression that the opening of the Mindanao River would be a navy task, the General refused to specify this as a mission of the 533d EB&SR. After the naval commander stated that the shoal water in the river might preclude his LCIGs and PGMs from accomplishing this task, the division commander tentatively assigned this mission to the Regiment, reinforced by one rifle company, but stated that final orders would be issued only after the securing of Parang.

The Trip

A rehearsal was held on April 11. It included the prescribed maneuvers for all ships and boats engaged in organized waves, except those army boats that were already enroute to Zamboanga. Assault troops went ashore, but neither vehicles nor bulk cargo were discharged, and heavy amphibious shipping merely crossed the line of departure and then returned to the anchorage. The small boats performed well, but it was found that the time allotted between deployment of the convoy and H Hour allowed for absolutely no mishaps. In fact, the LCMs, after casting off their tows, had to run 11 miles at top speed in order to cross the line of departure at the prescribed time. A critique aboard the flagship later that day resulted in the Navy's consenting to increase the time cushion by moving the deployment area nearer the beach. There is no doubt but that the holding of this rehearsal was of great value to the boat crews and wave leaders, who had had only one previous ship-to-shore operation in two years. Moreover, this particular operation was far more complicated than the normal ship-to-shore attack from naval transports, because 95% of the boats picked up their troops not only from ships other than those towing or carrying them, but also from ships which, in the transport area, lay many miles from the point at which the boat coxswains were put on their own.

The embarkation presented no noteworthy difficulties, though cancellation of some of the promised LSTs meant that a fair sized rear echelon had to remain at Mindoro awaiting the turnaround shipping. Lack of time required all sorts of short cuts. The Shore Battalion actually had less than 48 hours between the time it debarked at Mindoro and the beginning of loading out. Thus the standard program of carefully worked out field orders issued in lengthy briefing conferences by each headquarters was necessarily telescoped into the preparation and rapid distribution of a single field order, followed by short skull practice sessions for such key personnel as could be spared from the work of out-loading. The experience at Lingayen, where the shore party successfully handled an emergency of unforeseen magnitude, tended to

give all hands a feeling of confidence and of indifference to formal orders. "Just tell us where we're to land — we know the rest" was the general attitude. How little they knew the extent to which events were to put this glib assurance to the test!

Except for a command and communications group loaded in 6 LCMs, Regimental Headquarters Company was left for the R+11 turnaround. The Boat Battalion was allotted LST space for its tractors and shop trucks, and carried the bulk of its personnel and equipment, including that of the 1461st EM Company, in 46 LCMs. The Shore Battalion had all its DUKWs loaded in 13 LCMs of the assault waves, as well as its weapons section and light dozers. In addition, its light vehicles and 2½-ton trucks not loaded in LSTs were carried in 26 LCMs.

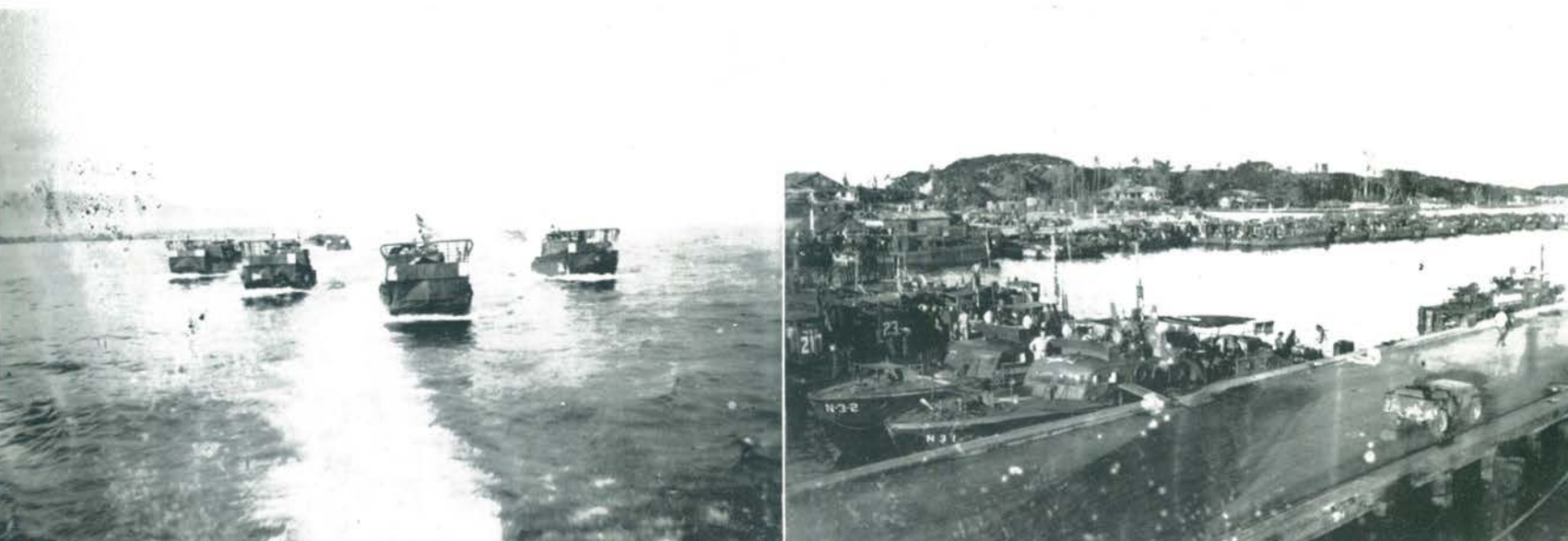
The LCMs were loaded on April 8 and 9, each one carrying, in addition to its cargo, 10 individuals, including the crew, on the general theory that 10 men on an LCM would be less acutely uncomfortable than 500 men on an LST. The truth of this assumption was proved by the experience of personnel on the LSTs. The LSTs were loaded on April 9, 10, and 12. At their davits swung 3 LCS(S)s and 21 LCVPs of the 533d.

The LCM trip from Mindoro to Zamboanga was blessed with ideal weather and glassy seas, as three separate convoys left at daybreak on April 10, 11 and 12. Not only did this division make the run easier on coxswains and control officers, but it also would be less apt to tip the hand of the whole Task Force should a casual Jap plane spot the boats. The run of 338 miles was actually non-stop with each boat carrying enough fuel in drums to keep it going. En route the Cagayan Islands were visited and the expected evacuation of the Japs confirmed.

After an average passage of 52 hours the boats tied up along the T wharf at Zamboanga. There 2 to 4 days were spent on refueling and minor repairs, exercise and recreation ashore, and getting acquainted with and sizing up the first of many Moros we were to meet. The 543d EB&SR, which had landed there a month previously, were fine hosts during this stay, and the relaxation was only slightly upset by receipt of a secret radio message from the flagship saying "Be prepared for alternate plan eliminating landings at Blue and White Beaches and substituting a 1300 assault landing on Polloc Harbor itself." Since there was no possible way to "be prepared" any better than had been done, there was nothing to do except await the junction with the naval convoy two days later.

The naval convoy left Mindoro at 1300 April 14. Aboard the flagship, information was received that the Japanese garrison at Malabang had been evacuated by boat to the Cotabato area, and that guerrilla forces controlled most of the Malabang-

Left: C Company convoy moves out of Mindoro bound for Zamboanga 338 miles away.
Right: The entire flotilla of the 533d tied up at Zamboanga two days before the attack.



Parang area. Confronted with this situation, the task force commander made a radical change in his attack plan. Only the Red Beach assault was left unchanged; the elements originally assigned to assault Blue Beach were ordered to attack Parang (Green Beach) at H+60, to be followed by the elements originally assigned to White Beach. All of the LSTs, except for 7 carrying aviation engineers, and 8 carrying air force units, were to land at Green Beach, and all but two of the 15 LSMs originally designated for White and Blue Beaches were diverted to Parang.

The wave structure remained unchanged, with the White Beach waves following on call those originally assigned to Blue Beach. The occupation of Ibus Island was left to the 533d, which was charged with a new mission of conducting a reconnaissance in force of Bongo Island at the earliest possible time.

This was no minor adjustment but rather a drastic revision in the whole assault operation. In military doctrine it had always been axiomatic that an amphibious operation once launched could no more be redirected than an arrow once the bow string is released. It is doubtful if such a change was ever hazarded in any other major sea-borne operation. The decision not only indicated great flexibility and daring in the minds of the admirals and generals, but more important, sublime confidence in their subordinates' ability to grasp new orders quickly and to execute them without too great confusion. Naturally the change affected the 533d more drastically than any other unit in the task force, and General Woodruff opened his shipboard conference in which he issued the new orders with the sober words "We will now have one minute of silent prayer for the 533d."

The naval convoy was due off Zamboanga at 0940 on R - 1, where it was to drop off the R + 2 shipping and be joined by task force elements from Leyte. Because of the strong currents in Basilan Strait, the 533d directed its small boats to join the convoy well east of the Strait off Malanipa Island at noon. The naval convoy, unfortunately, was approximately two hours behind schedule, so its predicted speed of advance of 6.7 knots would not enable it to meet H Hour. So the Boat Battalion, which was already at its rendezvous, at noon was ordered to proceed ahead keeping to one side of the track of the convoy, and to join it four hours later than scheduled, thereby shortening the time during which it would have to strain its engines to maintain station.

Part of the 533d fleet of LCMs in Basilan Straits off Zamboanga awaiting the passage of the naval convoy it was to trail across Moro Gulf.



At noon on R - 1 aboard a PC screening the convoy the details of the new plan of attack were learned for the first time by Colonel Moore and his staff. The next two hours were devoted to a careful study and final revision of the amended regimental order which had been drafted singlehanded by the 533d liaison officer. All this was accomplished in the time it took the regimental command boat to reach the Boat Battalion convoy, which was still preceding the naval convoy east of Basilan Straits. The commander of the Boat Battalion had meanwhile been directed to assemble his mission leaders aboard his command boat, and in the period 1400-1500 necessary instructions were issued to the boat commanders. The most serious problem arose from the fact that, whereas the original towing bill insured that all towed LCMs reach their proper rendezvous area, the revised destinations of the major amphibious shipping diverted five towed LCMs with Red Beach shore party personnel and equipment from the Red Beach group to the new Green Beach group. In addition, the assault force on Bongo Island had to be organized from mechanics, cooks, and miscellaneous passengers aboard the LCM convoy, and this personnel transferred to selected boats. Finally, the proposed division of the naval convoy after dark required a new disposition of the boat companies within the convoy.

The regimental command boat next pulled alongside the subchaser on which the Shore Battalion commander was embarked and advised him of the new plan. As to getting information to other Shore Battalion elements aboard LSTs, the regimental command group could do nothing but rely on the general briefing that the task force commander directed be held on each ship. Inasmuch as the distribution of the new orders was not completed to all ships in the convoy until after dark, this briefing was extremely sketchy and left many key personnel completely in the air.

About 1600 the stately convoy covering 25 square miles drew up to the waiting flotilla of LCMs at 8 knots — more than a knot faster than scheduled because of its two hours' tardiness. The wide screen of destroyers slipped by on both sides of the LCMs, followed by the light cruisers *Cleveland*, *Denver* and *Montpelier* and the five APDs. Then, led by the command ship *Wasatch*, came the phalanx of thirty-odd landing ships each towing an LCT or an LCM. Along the flanks were strung the mine-sweepers, LCIs, rocket and gunboats and at the tail came the tugs and minor auxiliaries. Small it was indeed compared to the armada which entered Lingayen Gulf three months before, but frightfully potent looking when viewed from the deck of a 36' J boat or even one of the line-of-battle 56' gunboats!

The coxswains and wave leaders maneuvered as close as they could to the passing naval vessels, but even so they had to move 2000 yards laterally to reach their proper station in the convoy which was moving at the maximum speed their LCMs could attain. To make matters worse, the main convoy doubled up, with the Red Beach group increasing speed to move out to port and abreast of the main body. At the same time a series of sharp easterly squalls slapped the stub-nosed craft head on, and as a finishing touch the Navy increased speed another half knot. It was soon apparent that the LCMs could not physically keep up and that if they tried to, extensive engine damage would result. So orders were issued to reduce speed to standard cruising (7 knots) and to proceed to the objective area independently of the naval convoy.

The rest of the night was a tough grind for all in the Boat Battalion. Black squalls cut visibility to inches. Head winds made it difficult to maintain even 7 knots. And the run was further complicated by the naval convoy's failure to adhere to its revised courses and its turns and speed changes made without signal of any sort. Nevertheless (with the exception of a single boat which took a 150-mile detour) the boat company convoys — B Company heading for Red Beach and A and C Companies heading for Parang — remained in good order and within dubious visual contact until daybreak. At that time all boats opened everything wide, including the tool box, and reached their rendezvous areas on schedule.

The Landing

The Ibus Island force, consisting of four LCMs and one DUKW, supported by one LCMG, reached the island's coral shelf at 0730, precisely on schedule. It found a suitable landing point seven minutes later and was able to report fifteen minutes before the eight o'clock H Hour that the island was free of enemy.

Wave 1 at Red Beach, consisting of ten LCVPs, picked up its troops from two LSTs and landed them on time. Wave 2 contained four LCMs towed by LSMs, each carrying a DUKW for Wave 4. Unfortunately, the wave leader's boat was

As from large transports, troops scramble down cargo nets from LSTs before going ashore in LCVPs.



astern of an LSM diverted to Parang, but a staff sergeant completed the wave by commandeering another boat, which had been towed contrary to plan to the Red Beach area, and launched the DUKWs and picked up his troops. The ramp cable of one LCM broke under the weight of the DUKW, allowing the ramp to fall vertical in the water, but the same staff sergeant re-rigged it in time to land his wave on schedule though to do so he had to skip crossing the line of departure, to the chagrin of the naval control officer. Wave 3, consisting of seven LCMs which had traveled under

their own power from Mindoro, crossed the line of departure in good order and arrived on time. Four of the eight DUKWs in Wave 4 were in LCMs towed to Parang, but the other four landed as they should. Thus the Red Beach phase of the landing and the boat operations were completed successfully despite the confusing change in plans.

Meanwhile, the Bongo Island mission embarked in two LCMs, supported by two LCMGs, made its landing at H-15, and after contacting guerrillas, was able to report to the flagship by H+30 that the island was free of Japs.

At Green Beach the waves all landed on schedule on the right beach, despite the fact that no coxswain had any idea of his destination until R Day. Three LCMs had their tow cables part during the night of R Day, but proceeded independently under their own power and succeeded in joining their waves during the deployment.

Coastal reconnaissance missions mounted in LVTs, supported by LCMGs, LCIGs, and LCS(S)s, proceeded both north and south of Green Beach, covering the coast prior to dark from Tugabangan Point to the Simuay River. One LCMG proceeded twenty miles down the coast to a point below the Mindanao River to pick up guerrilla liaison officers.

Neither on any of the beaches nor on these coastwise missions was contact made with the enemy; in fact, the only opposition encountered by the entire Task Force during R Day was a small sniper party near the town of Parang.

Company D, which comprised the bulk of the shore party at Red Beach, had loaded its reconnaissance elements, beach marking equipment, and communications equipment in DUKWs, and its engineering equipment and part of its reconnaissance team in LCMs of Wave 3. The latter arrived on schedule, but the diversion of half of the DUKWs to Parang deprived it of all its beach marking equipment and important communication items. The beach was excellent from a hydrographic point of view, but the sand was extremely heavy and loose. Heavy vegetation limited the beach to a depth of 15-20 yards, and lateral traffic was practically impossible. Slots were cleared directly inland from each LST landing point to the good ground. The shore party had two D-4s, one D-6, and a D-8, and the LSTs contained a number of bulldozers belonging to engineer units; so the work of towing vehicles through the loose sand and of clearing slots proceeded rapidly. Landing mat in quantity would have assisted materially, but efforts to obtain it had as usual been unsuccessful. One roll of cyclone fence was carried on each alternate LST and was useful as far as it went. Some LSTs beached absolutely dry, others required a short ramp no longer than twenty-five feet. The eight LSTs, which were designated to beach on R Day, were all discharged and retracted by 2200. In addition, the seven LSTs scheduled for R+1 were beached late on R Day and were completely unloaded by early the following afternoon. Because of the soft beach egress roads, nearly 70% of the bulk was discharged on the beach by hand, and thereafter was moved as quickly as possible to the dump areas. The total tonnage discharged during the first 30 hours at this beach was 4940 tons of mobile cargo, 3750 tons of bulk, and 150 tons of bulk back-loading, a total of 8840 tons.

F Company and elements of Regimental and Shore Battalion Headquarters



The shore at Parang is scanned from LCMG *MAI* as it leads an early wave to the well bombed beach on April 17, 1945.

Companies, which arrived at Red Beach, were immediately moved 25 miles to Green Beach, using the B Company LCMs which had been assigned to Red Beach for ramp-to-ramp lightering in the event that LSTs could not beach.

The shore line of Polloc Harbor, except for Green Beach, is generally useless for all types of landing craft because of steep cliffs or flat, soft mud beaches, mangrove swamps, or a combination of these. Green Beach itself is a soft, sand-covered coral shelf approximately three hundred yards in length, with one foot of water over the shelf at low tide and five to seven feet at high tide. The only egress was a steep road off the north end, and a solid row of houses immediately at the high tide mark blocked

LSMs and an LCI on Green Beach, Parang.





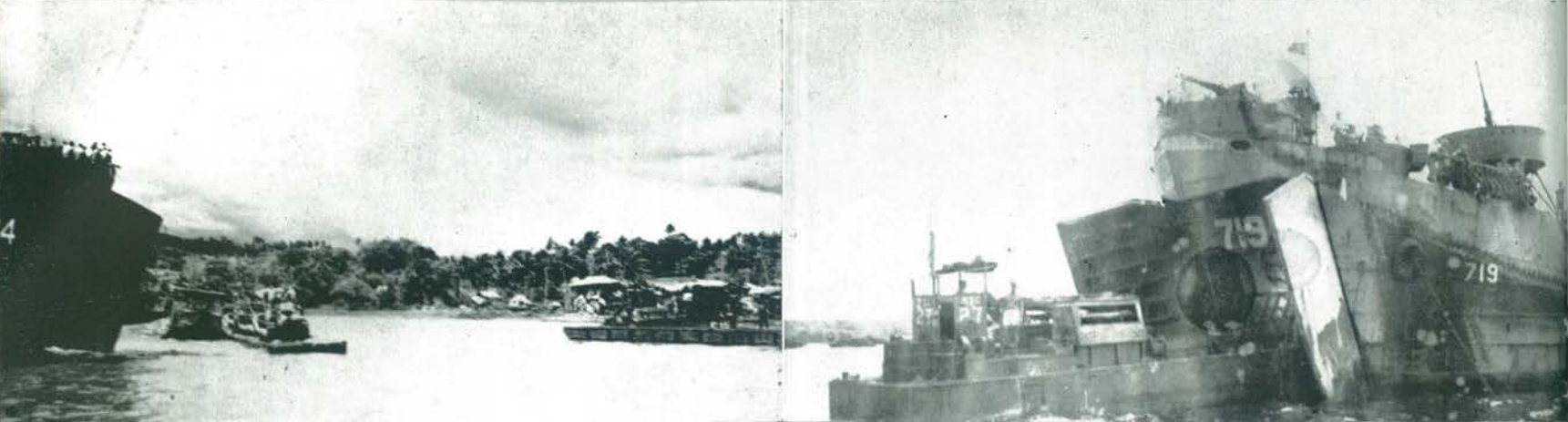
Green Beach, Parang, as seen from the Beachmaster's CP on the second day of the campaign.

two-thirds of the area available for lateral traffic. The jetty, approximately two hundred yards north of the beach, had been rendered totally unserviceable by unnecessary last minute air bombardment.

By a fortunate coincidence, high tide occurred at H+90, with the result that all small craft were able to beach and retract without difficulty. The LSMs and LCIs got over the shelf on their way in, but many were unable to retract until the succeeding tide. The only shore party elements to arrive early on R Day were those on the fifth wave, carried in LCMs. This group reconnoitered dump areas and with one D-6 and two D-4s as the sole engineer equipment at their disposal prior to the arrival of F Company from Red Beach, proceeded to clear the huge quantity of debris resulting from the demolition of the houses on the beach by naval gunfire, and to repair large craters in the existing road at the north end of the beach until it was capable of handling the flow of mobile traffic.

Troops assembling on Green Beach after debarking from LSMs and LCIs.





Makeshift unloading of LSTs—Left: Heavy equipment is brought ashore on sections of ponton causeway; right: Ramp-to-ramp discharge using LCM.

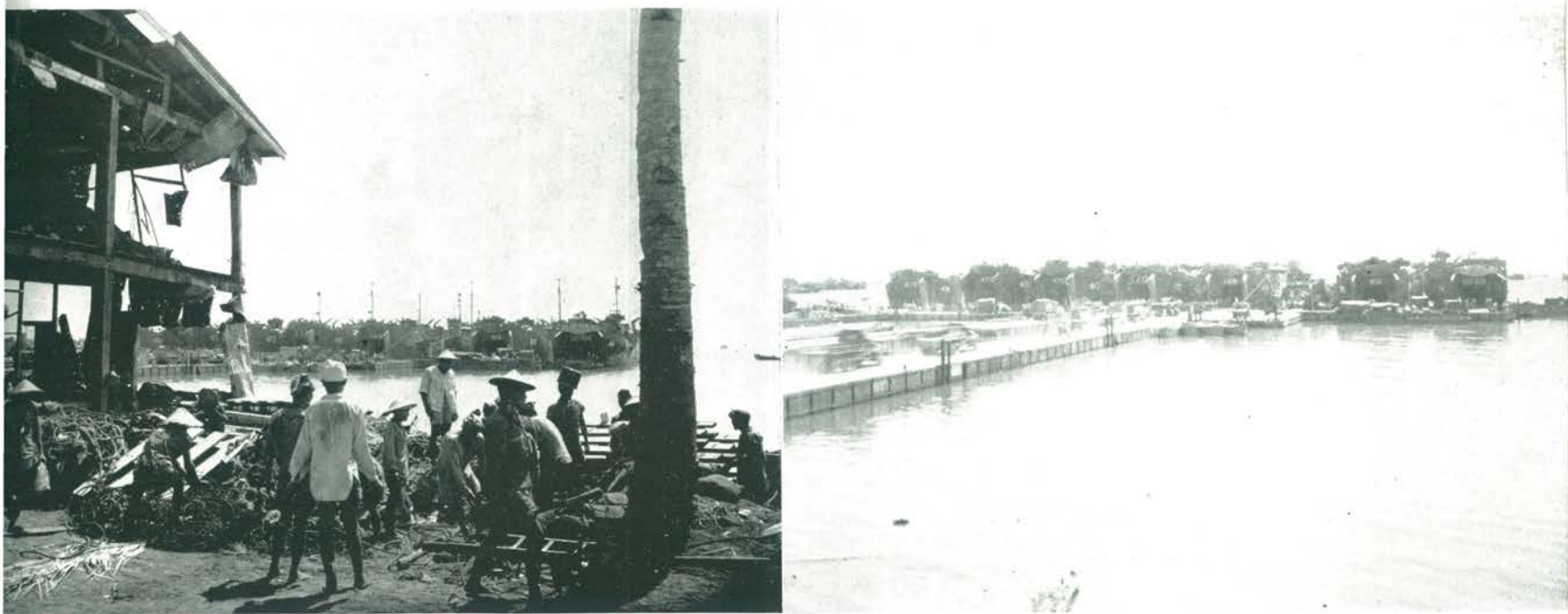
Test landings of LSTs disclosed that they could approach no nearer than five hundred feet from the beach, and as there were only four strings of ponton cubes with the Task Force, LSTs had initially to be discharged solely by lightering. Even this could not be commenced until the evening flood tide because of the congestion on the limited beach where many of the LCIs, LCTs, and LSMs of the assault waves were unable to retract, and, as will be seen later, a substantial portion of the LCMs were at that time diverted to a tactical operation. Early on the morning of R+1, three of the ponton strings were installed as extensions of the undamaged portion of the jetty, enabling three LSTs to discharge there simultaneously. Immediate advantage was taken of the arrival of additional ponton cubes on R+2, and a jetty was



A section of ponton causeway is floated into position by an LCM.



Jetty at Parang, as seen from the old Spanish Fort, after ponton cube extension enabled it to receive LSTs.



Jetty of ponton-cube sections accommodates seven LSTs at once.

constructed at the north end of the beach, which extended 470 feet from shore and by R + 3 possessed a frontage of 400 feet with a capacity of eight LSTs. 992 ponton cubes were employed in this jetty. After the construction of the jetty, LSTs were handled rapidly, with the result that the Navy's return convoy schedules were met.

Looking across Pol-
loc Harbor from be-
hind Green Beach.





Top left: Green Beach as seen from the partially ruined steamer wharf. Bottom left: A battalion of the 21st Infantry moves inland from Parang to support the 19th Infantry. Right: Two views of the initial beachmaster's CP on Green Beach.

The Mindanao River

Though the 533d's field order included provisions for the assault on the lower reaches of the double-mouthed Mindanao River, the division commander would not commit himself to the operation until Parang was secured. At 1700 R Day the General decided to seize the Cotabato-Tamontaka area by an amphibious assault, because a succession of blown bridges was slowing the 19th Infantry's southward progress along the highway. For the operation he created an informal task unit consisting of the 2d Battalion, 21st Infantry, and the gunboat elements and such other 533d craft as were needed. Since the infantry commander was confronted with the problem without any forewarning, the general scheme previously studied and recommended by the 533d was readily accepted, and tactical control of the operation was given to 533d officers. The initial objective was set as a line not more than a mile east of the two towns.

The plan of attack was a simultaneous forcing of both river mouths, using independent gunboat teams, aggregating five LCMGs, one LCM rocket, and three LCS(S)s, to be followed by the landing of one reinforced rifle company at Tamontaka and of the remainder of the infantry battalion at Cotabato. No assistance from the 19th Infantry, advancing along the highway from Parang, could be expected until R+2. One cruiser, one destroyer and two flights of B-25s were to support the operation, controlled through JASCO units on the leading gunboats.

In previous planning, it had been expected that the ground forces would arrive at the north bank of the river and be ferried across, using a minimum of boats, so this new, completely amphibious assault which required twenty-four cargo LCMs and fourteen LCVPs, presented unforeseen problems in collecting and organizing assault waves. This was further complicated by the fact that the planning conference did not break up until after dark, by the heavy rain which set in at sunset and continued

Looking forward on LCMG MCI; note the Jap 25 mm automatic cannon in the after cockpit.

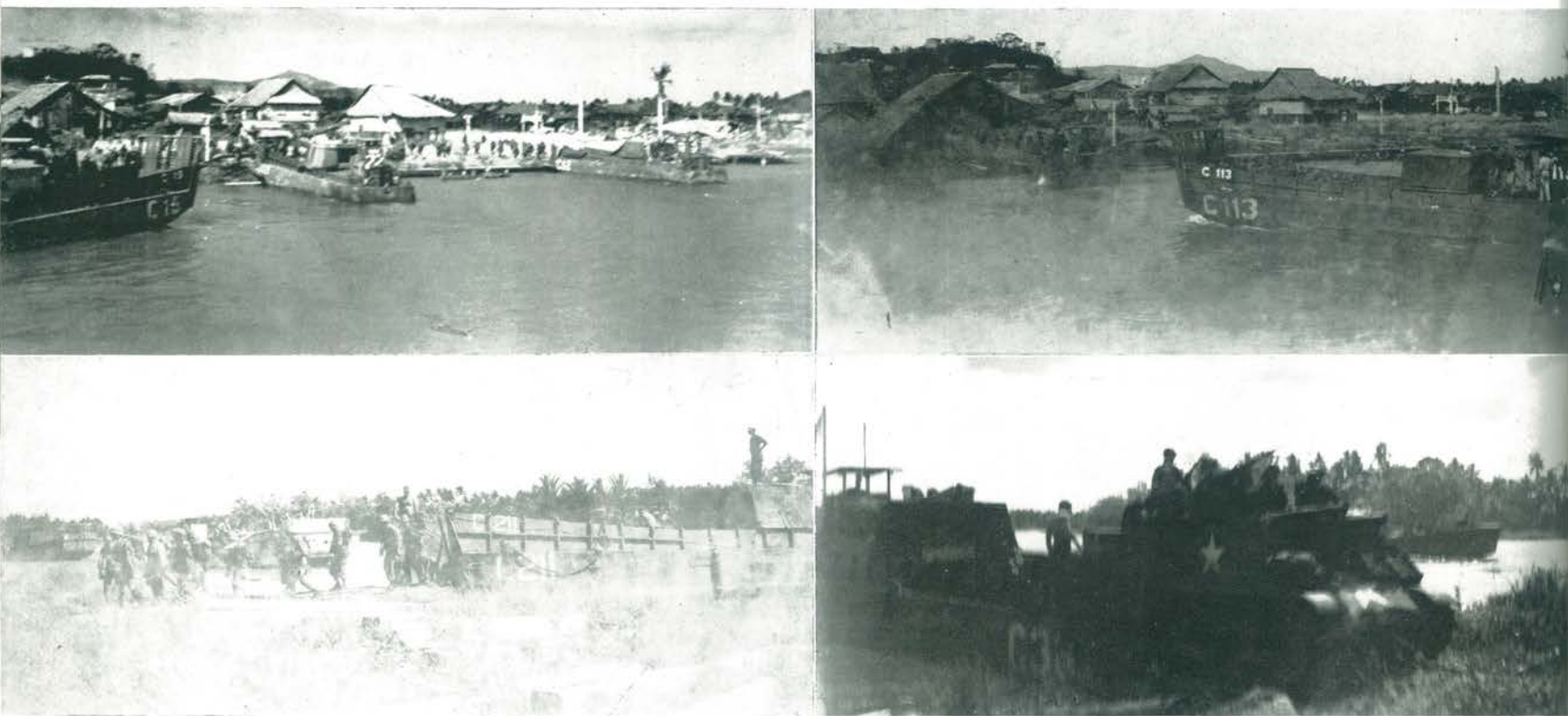


all night, and by the crowded condition of the beach, arising from the pressure of ramp-to-ramp lightering of the LSTs. By virtue of frantic efforts and considerable luck the boats were rounded up and beached, the infantry with its jeeps, trucks and self-propelled howitzers were sorted out and loaded over, among, and around the troops and materiel still pouring ashore across the beach. The waves were organized on the backs of envelopes, and officers and sergeants were assigned as leaders as they could be found. Finally at 0030 the last boat pulled off the beach and the little flotilla of 46 boats anchored while the troops got some damp, cramped sleep until daybreak.

A final check was made at dawn to see that key personnel was embarked according to plan, and the mission divided into two convoys which proceeded independently to the river mouths. Each convoy was headed by a gunboat team: the north branch group including 2 LCMGs, 1 Rocket LCM and an LCS(S), all C Company boats; the south branch force was led by 3 LCMGs and 2 LCS(S)s from the other three companies of the Battalion. The troops followed in LCMs and LCVPs: a rifle company up the south branch and the rest of the infantry battalion up the north.

Meanwhile, the general area bombardment by the *USS Cleveland* and *Sigourney* had been underway since daybreak. Promptly at 0900 the two assault groups started upstream and reached their initial objective without encountering opposition. A final intensive bombardment was laid on the two towns, including naval shell fire,

The landing at Cotabato, 5 miles up the Mindanao River, on April 18, 1945.

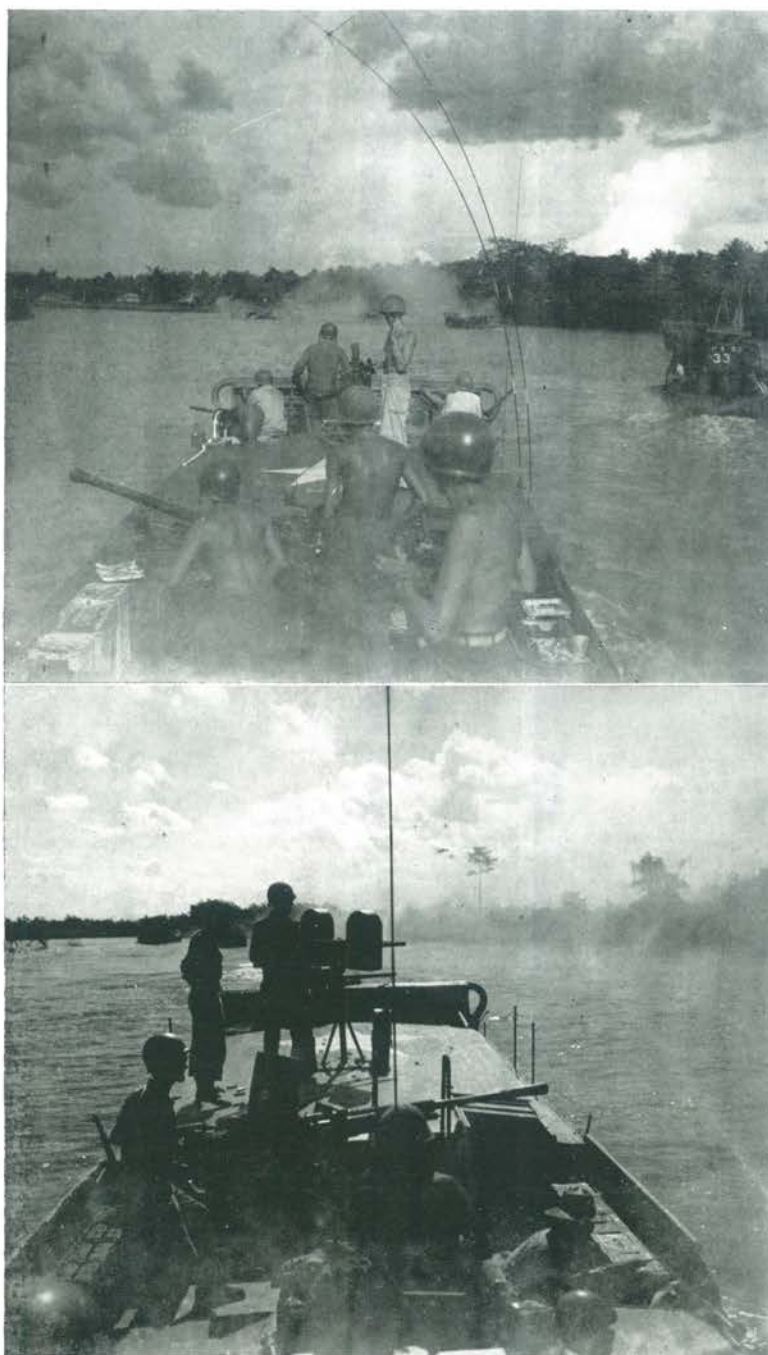


five hundred-pound bombs, aerial and boat rockets, and automatic cannon fire from the gunboats. Troops landed at both Cotabato and Tamontaka without making contact with the enemy, and fanned out to secure the area between the two river branches. Sensing that the enemy was totally disorganized and unprepared for a move up the river, the task unit commander decided to exploit the opportunity before the enemy could react and establish defenses further upstream. Gunboats were ordered to proceed up stream to the river junction and the division CP notified of this action. Orders were immediately received to transport one reinforced rifle company upstream with the gunboats. This movement was opposed only by a handful of Japs on the south branch, all but one of whom were killed in a brief fire fight. Guerrillas reported fifty Japs intrenched at Tumbau, just south of the river junction, and plans were made for an assault landing at this point, but the Japs fled into the swamps upon approach of the gunboats.

The two gunboat teams arrived simultaneously at the river junction at 1350, followed almost immediately by the infantry battalion commander and the reinforced rifle company in LCMs. A quick reconnaissance of the area indicated no suitable defensive position for such a small unit at this point, and so a further reconnaissance upstream was ordered. About a mile above the junction, local residents reported two hundred Japs dug in at Lomopog with automatic weapons. Orders were issued to assault this town, inasmuch as it controlled the first road-river junction above Cotabato and would enable our troops to attack from the rear the Japs opposing the advance of the 19th Infantry eastward along Route No. 1, which connects Parang with Davao via Fort Pikit. By this time the air support had been withdrawn, and the naval guns were out of range, so the gunboats were massed in line abreast to bring the maximum number of 40 mm and 37 mm guns into action simultaneously. The LCS(S)s and one LCMG protected the troop-carrying craft. A total of one hundred rockets were dropped on the town, and automatic cannon fire poured into it at maximum rate, but the only opposition was some machine gun and knee-mortar fire from the opposite bank, which was quickly silenced. Two launches and a landing barge, camouflaged under the bank, were sunk for good measure. While in the town itself no enemy were found, the presence of still-warm fires and numerous papers and arms in excellent condition indicated that the enemy had withdrawn very shortly before the landing.

A perimeter was organized, the gunboats deployed in its support, and a reconnaissance patrol, accompanied by engineer officers, pushed out to determine the condition of the road and the presence or absence of enemy forces. Radio orders were issued by the infantry battalion commander, on recommendation of the task unit commander, to move the balance of his battalion from Cotabato at crack of dawn in order to exploit further the enemy lack of preparedness in the river valley. At the same time, a radio message was sent to Division advising them of the situation and urging that reinforcements be dispatched immediately so that the drive could continue without slackening, until Fort Pikit could be secured and the enemy along Highway No. 1 completely trapped.

During the night the Japs crossed the river in canoes retreating northward both



Just before the landing at Lomopog — Jap fire from right bank is silenced and leading gunboats pour rockets and 40 mm shells into the town around the bend to the left.

upstream and downstream of the task unit, but displayed no desire to test its fire power. Enthusiastic Moros brought in much valuable intelligence of enemy movements and dispositions further upstream, as well as enough duck eggs for a really first class breakfast.

No answer was received to the above radio message until 0830, when orders were received for the infantry to hold Lomopog "at all costs" and reconnoiter the road

north to Serenaya, and for the gunboats to reconnoiter the river to Ulandang, a mere five miles upstream. No mention was made of reinforcements, nor was any indication given that those in authority were aware of the possibility of exploiting the penetration. The reconnaissance to Serenaya had been completed the previous evening, but in accordance with the message was ordered repeated, and one platoon of infantry embarked to accompany the gunboats upstream. This party arrived at Ulandang at 1030 to find that the Japs had left ninety minutes previously, abandoning a large store of arms and supplies. A quick reconnaissance was made three kilometers north along the road and a somewhat more limited probe made in the Dulauan area on the opposite bank. As this road was found to be in poor condition, thus reducing the value of Ulandang as a jumping-off point for further operations, and in view of the obvious continued demoralization of the Japs, the decision was made to push on to Paidu Pulangi to secure it as a beachhead for a drive on Fort Pikit.

As the force was being re-assembled and re-embarked, a message was received from the Commanding General, 24th Division, directing that Ulandang be held and that the force proceed no further upstream. It was obvious that the division commander was not aware of the extent to which the Japs were disorganized in the valley, so the radio message was ignored, and the little force proceeded to Paidu Pulangi where, after a brief bombardment, a landing was effected at 1300. Here again, evidence was found of a precipitate withdrawal on the part of the enemy, who left file baskets full of operational papers and arms with shells still in the chamber. A perimeter was organized and a strong radio message dispatched to the division command-

Scenes at Dulauan and Ulandang 36 miles up the Mindanao River.



er, explaining the desirability of holding this beachhead and attacking Fort Pikit with a minimum delay. This message was never answered, and so it was decided to guide the balance of the 2d Battalion, 21st Infantry, which had been ordered upstream as far as Lomopog, directly to Paidu Pulangi. Upon arriving at Lomopog at 1815, it was learned that the assistant division commander had that morning countermanded the order for the battalion to move upstream and had directed that the infantry be withdrawn to Lomopog.

This was indeed a bitter blow. The infantry battalion commander felt he would be court-martialed if he did not obey, and so he took his doughboys downstream to Lomopog. The boats had not been mentioned specifically in the order, and it was senseless to evacuate Paidu Pulangi so that the Japs could reoccupy its well constructed defenses and exact a heavy toll for its recovery. The decision was therefore made to hold Paidu Pulangi with the crews of 3 LCMGs and 2 LCS(S)s until a personal appeal could be made to the division commander to exploit the breakthrough. Thus on the night of R+2 36 officers and men were deployed in foxholes and on gunboats holding an essential road-river junction 13 miles ahead of the rifle company holding the crossing at Lomopog, which in turn was 25 miles beyond the nearest support. Scattered throughout the valley were 2000 Japs streaming east and north, their prepared hill positions by-passed and outflanked.

The night passed quietly and the next day the commanders of the two river garrisons ordered aggressive patrols partly to disguise their own weakness. A foot patrol ranged eastward from Paidu Pulangi spotting Jap bivouacs on the road to

Pikit and even repairing a bridge between the Jap rear guard and main body, only to have it destroyed again by a B-25. On the strength of native reports that a guerrilla headquarters was located only a few hundred yards upstream, two gunboats were sent out to make contact and get reinforcements if possible. The few hundred yards grew to 18 miles before the tense gunboat crews (on the verge of shooting their Moro guides) located the CP of the 2d Battalion, 118th Infantry (Filipino) Regiment, at Inogog, and made a deal for a joint operation against Fort Pikit if the American infantry did not show up next day.

Down at Lomopog a patrol on the south bank flushed about 80 Japs and soon two platoons were heavily engaged with mortars, machine guns on both sides, and barrage rockets from the supporting gunboat. The fight ended as a draw, with



Guerrilla leaders in canoe approach gunboat near Inogog.

our infantry retreating in boats across the river and the Japs using darkness to move upstream and across the river in canoes.

Back at Parang, it was learned that the Division was rushing reinforcements upstream as fast as they were disembarked from the R+2 shipping, and plans were made to concentrate these troops at Paidu Pulangi during R+4 for an attack on Fort Pikit the following day. The 3d Battalion, 34th Infantry, got as far upstream as Dulauan and continued to Paidu Pulangi early on R+4.

A brief conference with the amphibian garrison which had remained at Paidu Pulangi established that the river was clear of Japs as far as Inogog and that the road at least halfway to Fort Pikit was not defended, so it was decided to make a simultaneous overland and amphibious move on Fort Pikit, using one company afloat and the balance of the Battalion overland. Both elements moved out at 1100. The river force was now reinforced by three Navy PGMs* which had been working their way upstream for the past thirty-six hours. They had been sent into the river by the Admiral only on R+2 and had stopped for the night at the fork in the river. From Paidu Pulangi on army officers piloted them, and they operated under the tactical control of the 533d throughout their stay on the river.

The river force arrived at Inogog for a conference with the regimental commander of the 118th Infantry at 1400. An officer patrol sent out by this organization two hours before reported that six hundred Japs were dug in on the east bank below the ferry, and that two hundred enemy were emplaced above the ferry with two 2.95" mountain guns. As this was not the first pessimistic report that had been received from guerrillas in this campaign, orders were given to carry on, except that the

*Patrol Gunboat, Medium; converted 110' subchasers.

LCMs embark 34th Infantry Regiment troops and equipment to exploit the opening of the Mindanao River.

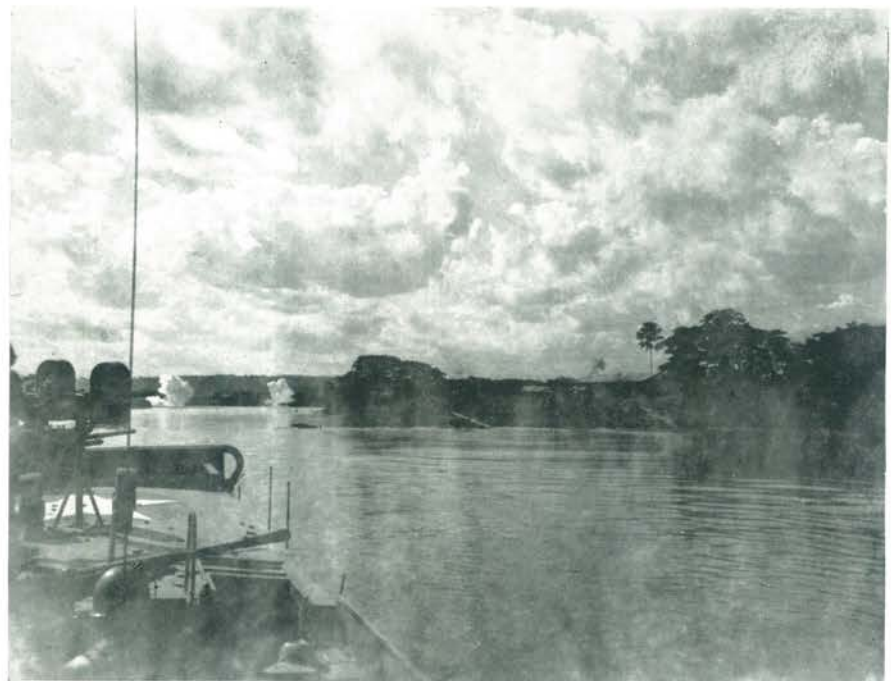




Guerrillas swarm over the LCMGs at Inogog while plans are made for the assault on Ft. Pikit.

infantry company was to be landed a mile and a half down stream from the ferry to avoid their being taken under fire while debarking, by the reported enemy concentrated on the opposite bank further upstream. The gunboats formed in two columns, each headed by a PGM, and proceeded upstream to the first reported enemy position. A maximum barrage was laid down, including 3"/50 from PGMs and the convoy received no return fire. The PGMs were unable to proceed above the ferry, because of the wrecked bridge, so the LCMGs drew ahead and covered the second reported

Bursts from the 3" guns of the PGMs open the bombardment of reported enemy positions just below Pikit Ferry.



THE ASSAULT ON FORT PIKIT

Approaching the fort, gunboat crews scan shore intently.



LCMG 12 sets a small patrol ashore right under the fort.



Patrol in the old Spanish fort raises flag on boathook to advise infantry approaching from the west that the Japs have departed.



concentration area with maximum fire of all weapons. Light small arms fire was received and quickly silenced, and the four gunboats proceeded directly to the town of Pikit. The dominating position of Fort Pikit atop a hundred-foot hill was obvious, so a patrol of gunboat crew members quickly occupied it at 1600, once more finding valuable stores of arms and equipment, including 90 mm mortars. Meanwhile, the infantry company which had landed below the ferry, reached the ferry landing and was ordered to dig in for the night. The main ground force advancing overland from Paidu Pulangi began to register artillery on the Fort Pikit area, but by bringing an SCR 300 to the top of the hill, contact was made with them while they were still three and a half miles away and identities established before any damage was done.

That night another battalion of the 34th Infantry, and its regimental headquarters, arrived at Fort Pikit in LCMs, and plans were made for reconnaissance in the direction of Kabacan for R+5, to be followed on R+6 by a joint land and amphibious attack on the town. The tactical command of the river campaign passed from the 533d to the Commanding Officer, 34th Infantry at that time. *

At daylight of R+5, three gunboats proceeded up stream with considerable difficulty as the boats dragged bottom almost continuously. By noon, the infantry had advanced rapidly along the road and were directed to proceed to the town of Kabacan prior to dark. Radio orders directed the boats to make all possible speed in order to join the infantry at the town. Late in the afternoon, the infantry battalion ran into approximately one hundred twenty Japs in the vicinity of the road junction Route 1 - Route 3 and, after a brief skirmish, dug in for the night. The gunboats encountered a party of Japs below the ferry, killed three and scattered the balance, and arrived at the ferry expecting to find the infantry either there or shortly to arrive. Contact with them over SCR 300 disclosed the fact that the infantry would not resume its advance until the following day, and that the gunboats would have to hold the ferry during the night, so once more a perimeter, consisting of a handful of cooks, radio operators, enginemen, and official observers from higher headquarters, was established across the line of retreat of the estimated Jap company which had halted the infantry battalion. Though no concerted attack was made on this position, several infiltration attempts were successfully repulsed, and three Japs killed. The commendable coolness of this detachment is proved by the fact that, despite the exposed conditions, only eighteen shots were fired during the entire night, and seventeen bullet holes were found in the three Japs.

Early the next morning the infantry occupied the town of Kabacan and, as this was the head of navigation for landing craft, the tactical phase of the river operation was concluded.

The planners in Eighth Army had predicted 14-30 days would be necessary to dislodge the Japs from the Mindanao River Valley and secure the critical Kabacan area. The job had been done in six. Any analysis of the map on page 165 cannot fail to indicate the strategic importance of the move upstream. The progress of the 19th Infantry along the road was hampered not only by Jap resistance but also by

*It is amusing to note that the unofficial history of the 24th Division, *Children of Yesterday* by Jan Valtin, gives entire credit for this advance up the Mindanao River to "scouts of the 34th Infantry Regiment" and states that they constructed their own gunboats!

demolished bridges often at intervals of a few hundred yards, and at times promised to be delayed indefinitely by lack of bridge materials and equipment and too few engineer troops. The comparison of the progress of the amphibian column and the road column speaks for itself. The Japs in western Cotabato Province were a disorganized, ineffective rabble largely because they had neglected one obvious avenue of attack, and that avenue had been decisively exploited by a force that was outnumbered ten or twenty to one.

No account of the river operations would be complete without mention of the magnificent performance of the communications personnel who, in addition to handling organic traffic efficiently, provided the only reliable communications between infantry units in the river valley during the first days of the operation.

The Boat Battalion was charged with local security of the river route, and during the succeeding weeks deployed its gunboats at intervals along the stream. These boats not only checked convoys against their schedule, but made patrols in their sectors in an effort to prevent any Jap stragglers from crossing the river by native canoes. The only contact with the enemy came in the vicinity of the river junction on April 30, when seven armed Japs were discovered in a bamboo thicket. After an intense bombardment of the thicket, a patrol, hurriedly assembled from crews of passing LCMs, went ashore and after a brief fire fight in a waist-deep swamp, killed six of the seven Japs.

The delay in clearing the road, and the large scale destruction of bridges, put the bulk of the burden of reinforcements and supplies on the river. The channel was too narrow and some places too shallow to risk the use of LCTs, so the entire task fell to the Boat Battalion. For this, after providing for lighterage at the main beach-heads, there was available one and two-thirds boat companies (C and 2 platoons of B), with an effective strength of fifty-five LCMs of which nine operated continuous ferries. The boats worked night and day, plying principally between Cotabato and Fort Pikit, with only sufficient time between trips to refuel and reload. During the period April 20 to April 28, three RCTs, plus a division headquarters and an extra battalion of field artillery were ferried the 68 miles from Parang to Pikit, together with three to six days of supplies.

At first the trips on the river were a pleasant novelty — fascinating scenery, cheery greetings from each barrio, and dead calm, but a little went a long way. The heat was the most oppressive the men had experienced overseas, night runs were a terrific strain on the helmsmen, and snags and flotsam caused much damage. The worst job of all was that of ferry boat at any of the busy points like Cotabato, Pikit, or Carmen Ferry (Kabacan). After the roads were completed to these points, the ferries ran 10-12 trips an hour 24 hours a day. Ramp mechanisms and clutches soon collapsed under such strain, but repairs were made on the spot and service kept up.

An F Company detachment with a couple of dozers improved the landing sites upstream and kept them and the nearby roads in as good shape as possible. The flow of cargo over these points rivaled that of salt sea beaches with tonnage averaging better than 300 tons a day at Pikit and exceeding 500 on peak days. In the first twenty days of the campaign 313,920 ton-miles were chalked up on the river alone.



SERVICE OF SUPPLY ON THE MINDANAO RIVER

Top: Loading ammunition by roller
conveyor.

Center: The busy ferry landing just
above Cotabato.



Right: Ammunition loading point in
Cotabato.



Throughout May the river commerce continued under high pressure and under increasing difficulty as the water level dropped and the boats available for work on the river were reduced to those of C Company alone. But with its base at Cotabato and ingenuity at licking the river currents and shoals, the flow of supplies was kept above requirements of the troops slugging up the Sayre Highway toward Del Monte and those moving eastward to Davao.

By June bases opened at Davao and Bugo, and highway traffic became impossible on account of the rains, and so the stock piles at Pikit and Kabacan and the service troops in that area had to be brought downstream again. Civilian government work, patrols into the Lake Buluan area and miscellaneous missions of all sorts kept at least one platoon of C Company on the river until the end of the War.

Operations at Parang

While a small minority of the regiment was having its novel excitement on the Mindanao River, plenty of hard routine work was the lot of most of the companies.

The period from R+2 to R+9 was one of virtual inactivity at Red Beach. The shipping discharged in this period included only three LSTs and three LSMs. An average of a hundred tons cargo per day for Green Beach was backloaded on LCMs. During the succeeding week, R+9 to R+15, one Liberty ship was discharged of equipment for airfield construction and supplies for the Marine Air Group. Company D organized fifteen skeleton hatch crews, which were supplemented by combat troops. Thirty trucks were available for twenty-four hour service, and approximately ten B Company LCMs worked around the clock during this period. The average daily discharge was 800 tons. Upon completion of the Liberty ship, Red Beach was closed down, and its shore party then moved to Parang by LCMs.

Green Beach at Parang was worked initially by E Company, and over it flowed all the supplies needed for the rapidly advancing Corps. The combination of steep grades, reasonably heavy rainfall, and unstable soil rendered imperative extensive road construction in the immediate beach area. F Company was therefore employed exclusively on this work. A total of 2.7 miles of road was constructed in the first 5 days, in addition to the ponton jetties and clearing of large ammunition and fuel dumps. No engineer equipment, other than bulldozers, cranes, and dump trucks, was available until the arrival of the turnaround shipping on R+11, yet the shore facilities were developed sufficiently to handle the traffic and tonnage brought ashore.

During the initial stages of the operation, available lighterage in the Green Beach area consisted of twelve LCTs, A Company's thirty-six LCMs, and, after R+5, one DUKW company with an average effective strength of thirty DUKWs. The naval task force commander's natural concern for a prompt discharge of LSTs caused him to retain complete operational control of all lighterage in the harbor until the last echelon of LSTs was discharged on R+17. This control, which was exercised from a command vessel afloat (through army liaison officers insofar as LCMs were concerned) undoubtedly did provide maximum lighterage for ramp-to-ramp dis-



Green Beach, Parang, flooded by a high run of tides (*above*) and during and after the feverish efforts to raise its level (*below*).





The beachmaster's command post built on the hill above Green Beach after the latter had been widened and raised.

charge of LSTs, but seriously hampered the effective dispatch of lighters to liberty ships, which commenced discharging on R+3.

The damage caused to LCMs during early emergency attempts to use the beach at other than high tides, reduced the operable percentage by R+2 to 50%. With the establishment of A Company's bivouac and boat repair base at Quidama Bay on R+3 this situation was rapidly remedied, and thereafter over 80% of the LCMs were available for lighterage, but only for approximately twelve hours out of each twenty-four during the periods of high tide. LCTs lost much valuable time waiting empty on the beach for succeeding high tides. As soon as the major LST echelons were discharged, holes were cut in alternate cubes in the ponton jetty, and these were filled with water, thus reducing the freeboard of the jetty to approximately eighteen inches, and enabling LCTs to land ramp-on and work intensively around the clock. At about the same time, a tidal schedule was set up, under which the LCMs worked mobile loading six or seven hour shifts around the high tide, and all DUKWs worked during the low water period. Since the bulk of the tonnage consisted of rations and ammunition, and the shortage of labor was extremely acute, this arrangement constituted the most efficient use of available facilities.

The necessity for water shipment of the bulk of the supplies going to the two infantry divisions imposed a severe backloading burden on the beach (averaging 430 tons per day) with a proportionate reduction of off-loaded tonnage.

Tonnage handled despite handicaps was not inconsiderable. A total of 126 LSTs were discharged in the first 18 days, and 9 Liberty ships were simultaneously unloaded. At no time was the task force short of required levels of supply ashore, and no convoy failed to meet its predicted departure date. Total tonnage over this beach for the period was 38,488 mobile and 54,698 bulk, or an average of 1924 tons mobile and 2735 tons bulk per day.



LCMs left high and dry at Green Beach, Parang.

Early in May Company D and two platoons of Company C of the 543d EB&SR moved from Zamboanga to Parang to fill the gap left by the departure of B and F Companies of the 533d for Davao Gulf. With the tapering-off of shipping arrivals, the month's work was handled with no particular difficulties. A succession of spring tides coupled with heavy rains inundated the beach for several days; consequently a major construction project was undertaken whereby the level of the beach was raised several yards and the surface graded and stabilized. When completed, Green Beach, which had been one of the worst unloading points ever operated by the Regiment, became a show spot and almost a pleasure to work on.

Meanwhile an engineer construction battalion was slowly repairing the old jetty to enable it to take small steamers, and at the same time driving piles so that the ponton jetty built by the Shore Battalion could be converted into a floating Liberty ship dock.

As the fighting moved farther and farther away to Davao and the Bukidnon Plateau, the usefulness of Parang as a base dwindled. But not until bitter experience proved that the 31st Division strung out from Silae to Del Monte could not be supplied by truck over the bottomless quagmire called the "Sayre Highway," did Corps finally decide to pull up its stakes and shift its base to Macajalar Bay on the north side of the island. By the time orders for this move came through, there was such a shortage of shipping for the move and so many tons of stores to be back-loaded that the task of closing out Parang



A typical Moro — reputedly a fierce warrior, certainly a lazy, indifferent worker.

dragged wearily on into July. Boat Battalion Headquarters, A, and E Companies moved out on May 30 enjoying a pleasant 400-mile boat ride via Zamboanga. Regimental Headquarters followed on June 19, leaving Shore Battalion Headquarters and D Company to preside over the dying port of Parang.

PARANG

Regimental CP as seen from Shore Battalion motor pool.



Radio shack viewed from the movie theatre.



Regimental Headquarters Company barber shop.



Colonel Moore outside his tent.



Davao Gulf

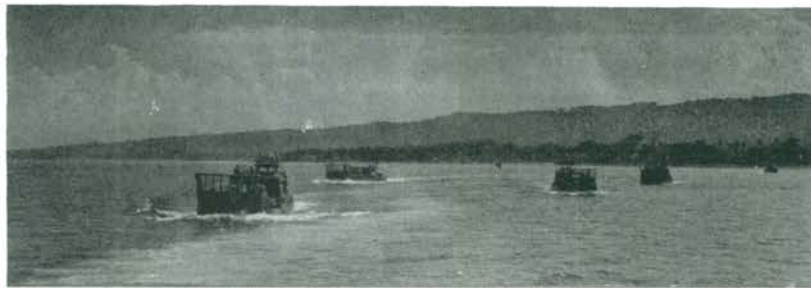
The progress of the 19th Infantry southeastward along Highway No. 1 from Kabacan to the shore of Davao Gulf was extremely rapid. Except for minor skirmishes with unenthusiastic Jap rear guards, and delays incident to repairing demolished bridges, the doughboys moved as rapidly as their feet would take them along this 75-mile track. By April 26, nine days after the landing at Parang, the infantry points stood only ten miles from the shore of the gulf at Santa Cruz. Naturally, as soon as they reached the sea, it was essential that supplies be brought directly to them by water in order not only to expedite their attack against the Japanese in and around Davao, but also to relieve as much of the strain on the Mindanao River traffic as possible.

It was the wish of the 533d to greet the doughboys as they came out of the jungle on to the beach at Santa Cruz with an LCM convoy load of rations and ammunition, and to be able to assist their advance up the gulf shore from the outset. The Navy, however, was extremely concerned about the presence of mines and coastal batteries in the whole gulf area, and procrastinated for several days. Finally the 533d decided, with the approval of the corps and division commander to move a boat platoon of B Company on their own initiative to Santa Cruz, a total distance of well over 300 miles. News of this reached the navy flagship, and in accordance with his authority, the Admiral flatly forbade such a move and insisted that the opening of Davao Gulf be accomplished by a naval task force. This force included a group of LSMs, a command ship, and an escort of a cruiser and three destroyers. In order to save time, the LCMs departed on April 30 and proceeded alone, protected only by LCMGs, to Sarangani Bay, where they made contact with a company of guerrillas and awaited the passage of the naval task force.



**B Company convoy
moving into Davao
Gulf May 3, 1945.**

B Company LCMs
moving the tanks
from Santa Cruz



to Talomo



to the fascination
of the inhabitants.



Shortly after sunset on May 2 the LCMs fell in astern of the naval convoy north-east of Sarangani Island, and moved up into the Gulf during the night. At daybreak on the 3rd the LSMs and LCMs landed on Santa Cruz beach where the 24th Division had been awaiting them for several days. Under pressure of the Navy's insistence that its landing ships move out of Davao Gulf prior to dark, a rapid job of unloading the LSMs was accomplished by Company F.

After the naval ships had departed, a group of LCMs embarked four medium tanks, with orders to move 20 miles northward to Talomo, to which point the 19th Infantry had that day advanced. The landing at Talomo was not actively opposed, but the elaborate Jap defenses erected along the beach were a considerable obstacle, and served as a reminder of the wisdom of GHQ in not ordering the original assault to be made on Davao Gulf.

Early the next morning 4 LCMs, accompanied by 2 LCMGs proceeded along the coast to Davao and went up the shallow, tricky Davao River a mile and a half to establish a ferry so that the 19th Infantry could bring up heavy equipment and weapons to bolster its assault on the ruined city of Davao. This ferry, which was operated for several weeks, came under intermittent Jap small arms, mortar, and artillery fire for several days. Continuous infiltration by the Japs throughout the period required the boat crews to stand vigilant security watch. On May 6 the Division established Talomo as its main base of operations, and F Company and the platoon of B Company established permanent bivouacs on that beach, closing down for good the beach at Santa Cruz.

The Davao River with its wide entrance almost blocked by obstacles (upper left) has a treacherous channel, but a ferry service was established to replace the demolished bridges leading into Davao.



**BLACK BEACH,
TALOMO**

LCMs in front of B
Company's bivouac.



LSMs bring ammuni-
tion and fuel from
Parang.



The monument to
Rizal adds something
not found on the
beaches in New
Guinea.



It was soon apparent that the Japs, who had been putting up surprisingly ineffective resistance to our drive across the island of Mindanao, had at last determined to make one of their typically fanatical stands in the hills immediately north and west of Davao. Though they did not attempt to dispute control of the shore line with our forces, they dug in such a short distance inland that for several weeks the shore and anchorage were within range of their light artillery and improvised rockets. In addition, they resorted to their customary tactics of night raids both by sea and by land.

The remainder of Company B, reinforced by all of the regiment's LCMGs, moved from Cotabato to Talomo in the middle of May, and such equipment of F Company as had been left behind in its initial move was forwarded at the same time. The unexpected intensity of the fighting required a far greater tonnage of ammunition and supplies than had been anticipated, and F Company put in an extremely strenuous two months. Not only did it virtually alone handle the cargo unloaded across the beach, but in addition it was called upon to reinforce the Division's 3d Engineer Battalion. F Company's equipment operators found themselves building supply and access roads on ground taken by the rifle companies but a few hours before. Each dozer was naturally a prime target for Jap snipers, who infested the 10-foot high grass in the area, and operators learned to run their machines with one hand and two feet while keeping a carbine ready for instant use in the other hand.

The Navy insisted, in view of the menace of Q boats and human torpedoes, that all ships move to the open sea at sunset each night, so only half the normal number of hours were available to discharge the ships. Even so, one FS boat was sunk, and several times the shipping was driven out of the anchorage by accurate field artillery fire from the hills.

One night in particular in the middle of May will not soon be forgotten by men of B and F Companies. Taking advantage of a heavy rain storm, a substantial body of Japs armed with large loads of picric acid, swarmed down to the beach and attempted to demolish gunboats, dozers, and LCMs. After a wild free-for-all, most of the Japs were killed, but a few escaped by swimming. Not much equipment was destroyed, and by a miracle the 533d suffered no casualties, although other troops in the same area had several killed and wounded. LCMG *MBI* had the closest escape: a Jap swimmer hung 40 pounds of picric acid over a bitt and swam away, holding on to a string tied to a hand grenade as a detonator. Fortunately the string was a bit weaker than the grenade pin, so morning found the boat serenely at anchor with the high explosive harmlessly bobbing against its frail skin.

Tactical support of the infantry by the boats was somewhat limited by the Japs' reluctance to hold any position within range of the gunboats' automatic weapons. The presence of the boats, however, was in no small measure responsible for this refusal of the enemy to stand near the water's edge. Soon after Davao was secured, a shore-to-shore landing was made on the island of Samal, using LVTs, LCMs, and 2 LCMGs. The Jap garrison of the island had retreated to its rugged interior and had to be hunted down by the doughboys.

From Davao the Division fanned out, with the 19th Infantry working northeast to the head of the gulf, which was held by a regiment of guerrillas, and the 34th and

21st Infantry worked northwest into the mountains back of Talomo. In order to give the guerrillas the wherewithal to resist the Japs so they could not retreat indefinitely up the valley above the head of the gulf, supplies were run by LCMs through Pakiputan straits. For several days this mission required running the gauntlet of small arms and light artillery fire. As the 19th Infantry moved northeast, its long lines of communication became strained so thin that trucks and ambulances were frequently ambushed. As a result, the land line of communications was temporarily abandoned, and the infantry were furnished all necessary supplies and evacuation by boats operating through the straits. In this way their advance to a junction with the guerrillas along the Tagum River was materially expedited, and the Jap forces north of Davao cut off from the valley leading to the headwaters of the Agusan River.

Point Piso on the eastern shore of the gulf was the principal Jap Q boat base. These Q boats, tiny speed boats about 20 feet long with high-explosive bows, were concealed by day in caves and bunkers, protected by concentrations of Jap automatic cannon, and they constituted the most serious threat to the shipping in the gulf. Attempts to wreck this base by air attack, long-range naval bombardment, and night strafing attacks by PTs were not wholly successful, and the LCMGs and rocket boats were called upon to make daylight attacks on this point. In addition, all-night patrols in the straits and around the anchorage were maintained by LCMGs for several weeks.

Toward the end of May the Navy decided to clean out the three Jap radar stations around the mouth of the gulf. A small task force, consisting of a destroyer, DE, PTs, LCMs, LCMGs, and an LCM rocket plus Company K of the 162d Infantry of the 41st Division, was established under the senior naval officer in the area. This force assembled in Malalag on the afternoon of May 31, and during the night made an 85-mile run to Luayon Point, on the southwest of Davao Gulf. After a brief skirmish, the Jap garrison was killed or dispersed to the hills, and the entire installation destroyed. The force re-embarked that afternoon and proceeded during the night 85 miles around to Glan, where guerrilla guides were picked up for the assault on Balut Island. Two landings had to be made on this island, one of which was made by the infantry, and the other was made by a body of 533d personnel who were convinced from a previous visit to the island and discussion with guerrillas that the objective was not accessible from the original landing point. This latter beach turned out to be the right one, yet despite the fact that the amphibians had been there for a couple of hours, the task force commander ordered them withdrawn so he could lay down a one-hour bombardment before permitting the infantry to make its landing and destroy the radio and radar installations on the hill in back of the beach. After considerable difficulty in embarking and withdrawing the boats over the coral reef at low tide, the task force departed at sundown June 4 for a 70-mile run across the mouth of the gulf to Cape San Augustin. The landing there took place the following noon and was unopposed, but yielded a rich prize in radio equipment, ammunition, and fuel dumps, all of which were destroyed. This five-day raiding party, covering 400 miles of sea, concluded tactical water-borne operations in Davao Gulf.

On June 19 B Company dispatched a platoon of LCMs plus an escort of LCMGs on a 500-mile run up the east coast of Mindanao, through Surigao Straits to the mouth

of the Agusan River to join with A Company in offensive operations up that river, which are described later. This run was made against a strong current and extremely heavy seas, and without any possibility of refueling other than from oil drums carried on the decks of the boats. In addition the craft were well loaded with supplies for the guerrillas on the northern tip of Mindanao. After unloading these supplies at Placer, they embarked a battalion of guerrillas for use in the coming river operation. These boats returned in July by the same route.

F Company departed from Talomo on July 10 enroute to its staging area for the invasion of Japan. Its two months at Talomo had demonstrated its capacity to perform the work and assume the responsibilities normally given to an entire shore battalion.

B Company remained at Talomo until October 15, at which time it departed with the 24th Division to participate in the occupation of Japan. In July this company played a major role in the final amphibian operation of the entire War—the invasion of Sarangani Bay. As soon as the Jap resistance around Davao was broken, and the remainder of their forces were driven into the impenetrable mountains north of Mt. Apo, the 24th Division was able to spare a reinforced battalion to help clean out the last Jap garrison in the southern part of the island. Coordinated with troops moving overland from Lake Buluan in the upper Mindanao valley, this battalion, to be landed at the head of Sarangani Bay, constituted the southern prong of a pincers movement. The landing itself, on July 12, was reasonably uneventful, but the two days' reconnaissance preceding the landing, which was carried out by guerrillas and gunboat elements of B Company, had its moments of excitement. The total distance run as well as the importance of the objective and the smooth manner in which the operation was carried out, made it serve as a fitting climax to the assault operations of the 533d.

The remainder of the summer at Talomo was relatively quiet. A long trip of 1000 miles to Batangas on Luzon was made in September to obtain replacement boats, but aside from this the months of August and September produced nothing worthy of note.

Macajalar Bay

The Bukidnon plateau in north central Mindanao, through which runs the Sayre "Highway" was one of the principal objectives in the main Mindanao campaign. As the 31st Division worked northward along the "Highway," running into moderately serious Japanese opposition, Eighth Army on May 10, launched an assault at Bugo on the shore of Macajalar Bay, using the 108th RCT of the 40th Division and a battalion of the Americal Division, and including a boat platoon and a shore company of the 542d EB&SR. This landing met virtually no opposition, and the infantry pushed rapidly southward to a junction with the 31st Division in the vicinity of Malaybalay. The miserable condition of the Sayre "Highway" made it imperative that the 31st Division change its line of communication from the Mindanao River-Sayre "Highway" route to one running south from Bugo.

As the elements of the 542d who had landed there were too small to handle a major base, the 533d was ordered to move a battalion headquarters and a boat and a shore company to Bugo early in June. This move, which has been mentioned before, shifted Boat Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Company A, and Company E from Parang via Zamboanga to Bugo the first of June. When X Corps itself displaced from Parang to Del Monte, Regimental Headquarters moved on June 19 overland via the Lake Lanao road to Bugo. These elements of the Regiment found an almost ideal bivouac site here in a palm grove with a steeply sloping, surfless beach, and entered upon normal unloading functions immediately.

The Lake Lanao road, over which most of the vehicles previously used at Parang had been moved, was impassable beyond Initao, 30 miles west of Bugo, so a large-scale ferry service, using LCMs and LCTs was inaugurated to bring these to the Bugo area. In addition, the necessity of getting the supplies southward over the Sayre "Highway" called for substantial road improvement on the gorge-scarred Bukidnon plateau. Equipment operators of E Company, in conjunction with their colleagues of the 542d and the 106th Engineers went far inland, filling washouts and removing large landslides. In addition, many hundreds of feet of bridges were installed or repaired to take the heavy traffic.



Bridge on the Bugo-Cagayan road built by E Company.

The Agusan River

When the 108th RCT and 31st Division joined forces, the Jap garrison was at last cleared from all major port and highway centers of the island of Mindanao. For the most part the Japs were scattered in the ragged jungle-clad mountains in groups too small to constitute a serious threat. However, one large group which still maintained its cohesion was observed by aerial reconnaissance to be heading eastward through various mountain passes to the fertile valley around the headwaters of the Agusan River. If these forces could have concentrated there, they would have been able to live indefinitely and would have remained a potential threat. To pursue them and destroy them in their retreat would have been unthinkable, because the narrow defiles through which they were withdrawing would have enabled a handful of men to hold up a regiment for days at a time. Consequently the corps commander, with the example of the Mindanao River fresh in mind, determined to beat the retreating Japs to this area by moving an infantry regiment 100 miles up the Agusan River and securing the outlets from the passes before the Japs arrived there.

The Agusan River was a far cry from the broad, deep Mindanao. For most of its length it averaged barely 40 yards in width, was lined with steep banks rising from 10 to 60 feet, had a depth that barely exceeded three feet, and a current that ran close to 5 knots. The inhabitants, the most primitive people in the Philippines, were known to be either friendly to the Japs or in such a low state of savagery as to be useless as guides or sources of information to our troops. Despite the hazards, the operation was ordered, and as related above, the necessary additional boats were moved all the way from Davao. The 155th RCT was embarked at Bugo and moved 75 miles eastward to Butuan in the mouth of the river.

The initial movement upstream was made by a small advance scouting force of gunboats, followed by a reinforced battalion in 20 LCMs. Aside from the delays caused by the strong currents and damage to boats by floating logs, the movement was uneventful until the force arrived at Lapaz. After considerable difficulty, the convoy moved another thirty miles upstream to Sagunto and established a strong perimeter at that point. On June 30 the river was at last high enough to enable them to push on to Langasian, where guerrillas were in contact with the enemy. As the boats neared Langasian, the guerrillas fell back under superior fire from the Japs. The LCMGs and rocket boats opened up and laid down an effective rocket barrage which dispersed the Japs and enabled the infantry rapidly to reoccupy the ground lost.

The infantry in the next few days fanned out and occupied key positions denying the entire area to the retreating Japs, while the waterway approaches were guarded by 2 LCMGs and an LCS(S). Although this ended the tactical phase of the river operation, the succeeding days and weeks of resupply and reinforcement of the garrison 100 miles from the sea were a sore strain on the boats and boatmen. Two full days of high speed running — and sometimes three — were required to make the trip from the mouth of the river to the landing point at Langasian. Flotsam, snags, and shifting shoals wreaked heavy damage on all boats involved and made the task of

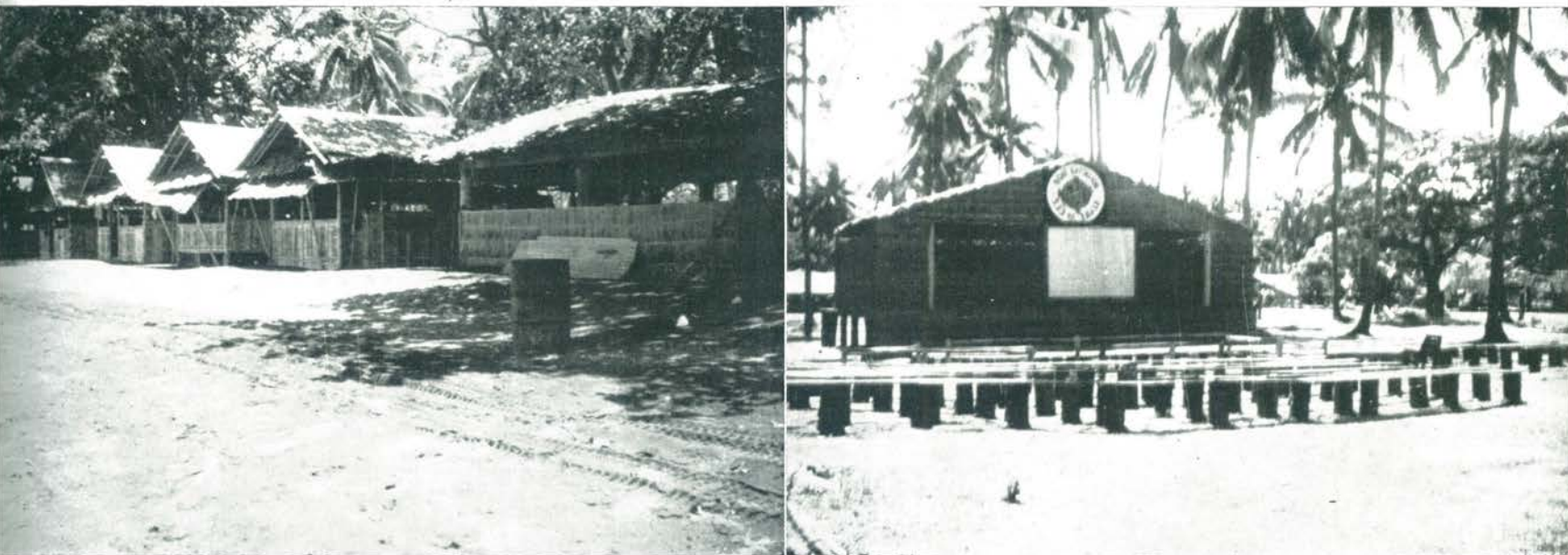
A Company's maintenance section, located in a mud hole at Butuan, a heartbreaker. Nevertheless the job was accomplished and the strategic objective achieved with a minimum of casualties and fatigue for the infantry elements.

This task dragged on for Company A for two months, and the presence of Jap stragglers along the densely overgrown banks made even the routine trips nerve-racking. It was on one of these runs, long after the Japs had surrendered, that a member of Company A engaged in a skirmish with Japs who did not know the War was over, and became one of the last Americans to be killed in action in the Pacific War.

With the departure of the Shore Battalion and Regimental Headquarters from Mindanao in mid-July, the Boat Battalion became, to all intents and purposes, independent. As stated before, B Company remained attached to 24th Division at Talomo, and A Company and Battalion Headquarters were based at Bugo operating lighterage there and on the Agusan River 75 miles to the east. Company C, during most of this period, was split, with part of it at Bugo and part still at Cotabato engaged in evacuating no longer needed supplies down the Mindanao River. One of its missions took an LCMG and 2 cargo LCMs all the way to Morotai and back — the only time during the War that the Celebes Sea was crossed from New Guinea to Mindanao by craft as small as LCMs.

Runs to Leyte, Cebu, and Batangas Bay on Luzon were made from time to time principally for the purpose of obtaining new boats for the occupation. These runs extended the operations of the boats to every major island in the Philippine Archipelago. With tactical operations finished and a distinct reduction in lighterage commitments, all hands turned to improving the bivouacs and making them show places. The Bugo encampment with its marine railway, theatre, chapel, baseball

Boat Battalion Camp at Bugo after VJ day — Officers' Row and the Theatre.



park, and huts of all sorts turned out to be so impressive that the corps commander labeled it a model for all troops in the Corps and required all company commanders and 1st sergeants to model their post-V-J Day bivouacs on it.

The Mindanao campaign, which had been looked forward to by many with foreboding, had turned out to be a magnificent opportunity for the Regiment. Probably in no other campaign of the War had a single amphibian regiment played such a decisive part, both tactically and logistically, as had the 533d in the operations of X Corps. It is safe to say that without the use of landing craft on rivers, the campaign would never have been concluded, as it was, in a brief ten weeks.



The marine railway at Bugo, built by A Company under the direction of T/3 Henry Moeller with the 50-ton 63-foot regimental command boat getting a new coat of paint.

CHAPTER XIII

Japan

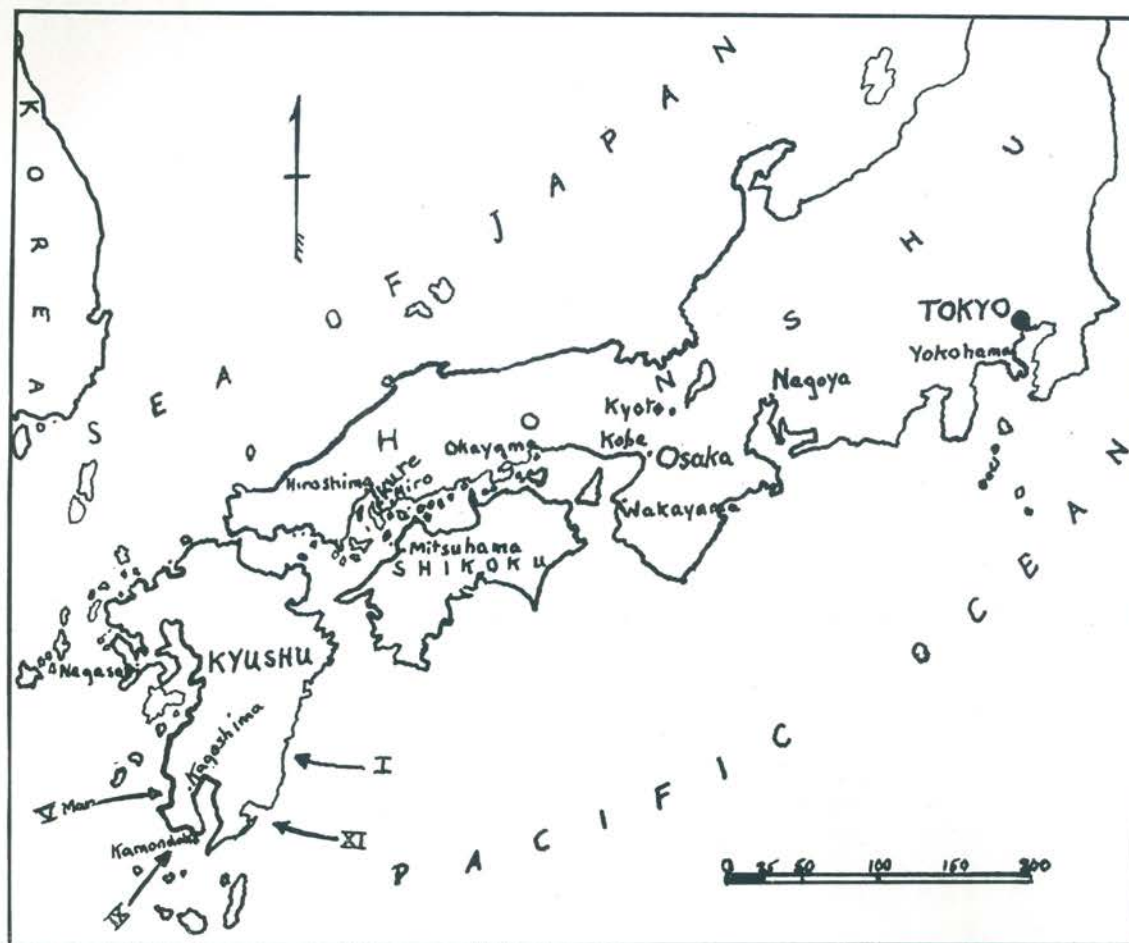
THE conquest of the Japanese home islands by traditional methods of ground warfare was planned, if necessary, for the fall and early spring of 1945-46. Though it was apparent that the B-29 and carrier task forces were raising havoc with Japanese war industries and cities, the effective secrecy surrounding the development of the atomic bomb led inevitably to the belief that the Japanese would not surrender until decisively defeated in ground combat on their home islands. The proposed strategy consisted of a two-phase assault: a preliminary attack by a full army of approximately 14 divisions on the southern tip of Kyushu on November 1, 1945, and a landing in the early spring of 1946 by 3 full field armies on the plains of Honshu north and east of Tokyo. The first assault, to be made by the veteran Sixth Army, had two primary objectives: one, to secure airfields from which our light and medium aircraft could range over the vital southern half of Japan; and two, to draw the Japanese defending forces southward, thus making easier the task of the final assault forces. The parallel between this and the strategy used in the Philippines and elsewhere in the Southwest Pacific is obvious.

Operation "Olympic"

The attack on Kyushu was labeled "Operation Olympic." Sixth Army was to consist of four full corps: the V Amphibious (Marine), I, IX, and XI. The Marine Corps was to land on the southwestern face of the island, I and XI Corps on the southeast face, and IX Corps on the extreme southern tip at Kamondake.

All three amphibian brigades were assigned to this Army, with the 2d and 4th at full strength with XI and I Corps respectively. The 3d Brigade was assigned to IX Corps, but the 593d, which was still involved in the Borneo campaigns, was not included. Furthermore, IX Corps being carried partially by Fifth Fleet could only employ one boat battalion because Fifth Fleet had not employed army landing craft in its Central Pacific operations. This meant that the Boat Battalion of either the 543d or the 533d would not participate in this operation.

IX Corps was to consist of the veteran 77th and 81st Divisions and the 98th Division, which had seen no action. Sixth Army directed that the 533d, as the most experienced amphibian regiment, be attached to the green 98th Division. Though this decision amounted to a nice compliment, the fact that the 98th Division was to stage from Oahu in the Hawaiian Islands and be carried by Fifth Fleet transports meant that the 533d Boat Battalion was the one to be passed over. By the time the Regiment received its first inkling of the proposed plan, the matter had been decided beyond argument, and all efforts, even though supported by Sixth Army, to have GHQ include the Boat Battalion in the IX Corps troop list were unsuccessful. It later turned out that in the course of redeployment the 532d's Boat Battalion was so



drastically weakened that the 533d Boat Battalion would have been employed as part of the XI Corps landing force at Ariakawan.

The Regiment received its first warning orders on June 25, and immediately laid plans to concentrate its scattered companies other than those of the Boat Battalion at Bugo. Headquarters Company Shore Battalion and Company D moved from Parang to Bugo by LSMs on July 8, and F Company loaded out of Talomo the next day. A small group of the regimental staff left for Oahu by plane on July 15. In view of the probable non-employment of the Boat Battalion, the Shore Battalion transferred to the Boat Battalion all personnel with over 85 points, and received in return enough men with less than 85 points to bring it up to full strength. These high point men, nearly 15% of the Regiment, departed for their homes, the first group in mid-July and the balance a month later.

Movement of the Shore Battalion and Regimental Headquarters Company to Oahu produced the weirdest and most inexcusable snafu of the whole war. Less than 900 men were involved, and because the bulk of the equipment was not in good enough condition to justify its movement to the rear staging area, a relatively small tonnage had to be moved. It was soon apparent that this little nontactical shipping

problem was more than the combined brains of Eighth Army, GHQ, and Pacific Fleet could handle. It was first decided that this move would have to commence at Leyte, which was an official USASOS base, and so preparations were made to move 200 miles northward by landing ships. Instead of landing ships, however, the transport *Lew Wallace* arrived at Bugo. This meant many hours of hold loading and unloading for a trip requiring less than a day's running time. Consequently permission was requested, and soon granted, to use the *Lew Wallace* for the entire trip, and she was rationed and outfitted accordingly. As soon as she was all loaded and ready to sail, the Regiment received a message that since she was assigned to the SWPA she could not go into Central Pacific waters and she would, therefore, have to discharge at Leyte. No amount of logical argument could overcome this technicality, and on July 16 the troops and equipment debarked and went into bivouac in a miserable swamp back of Dulag, Leyte. The 533d was advised that its stay would be only a matter of hours or a few days, and that GHQ had arranged for a large transport which would arrive almost immediately.

The large APA *President Hayes* was currently due in Leyte Gulf, and the appropriate army authorities at Manila and Leyte assigned her to carry the 533d troops, plus Company C of the 262d Medical Battalion to Oahu, on her way back to the States. Meanwhile the Liberty ship *Bowditch* was loaded with the bulk of the equipment. Three days later Base headquarters at Leyte directed the troops to embark aboard the *President Hayes* next morning. An early morning tour of the anchorage disclosed no *Hayes*, and a check at the port director's office produced the information that she had sailed under Navy orders during the night — empty!

After 24 hours of frantic radio messages to half a dozen different headquarters, the Navy was prevailed upon to send orders to the *Hayes*, now 900 miles at sea, to return and pick up the stranded troops. She duly returned to Leyte, and the 533d's bivouac was struck for the second time and the troops marched to the beach to await her boats. Once more she could not be located and was found to have sailed for the U.S. again empty on orders issued by a junior naval officer on duty at the port director's headquarters. When, after more appeals to Army authorities, the *Hayes* was again ordered to backtrack, her skipper just plain ignored the orders and proceeded dead-head to San Francisco.

At this turn of events the Base and Eighth Army movement officers washed their hands of the problem and referred it to GHQ Manila, where the best that could be offered was the little AKA *Artemis* capable of carrying only 200 men. The Regiment was in addition, gratuitously informed that this was its "last substitution." Regimental Headquarters Company and the Medical Company embarked on the *Artemis* and sailed July 30, leaving the 750 men of the Shore Battalion still squatting in the dismal swamps back of Dulag Beach.

Against the advice of Eighth Army's Chief of Staff, who did not wish to antagonize GHQ, a long radio plea was sent to Manila, and at last things clicked. The APA *Montrose* embarked the Shore Battalion and sailed on August 4. The delay of three full weeks was not only exasperating to all ranks, but prevented the 533d's participating in the practice landings held by the 98th Division, on which it counted so heavily

to produce the essential teamwork required in the difficult assault landing that lay ahead. It also gave an insight into the local conditions that caused the tragically high toll when, a few weeks later, the sinking of the *Indianapolis* went unnoticed in Leyte for several days.

Meanwhile, at Fort Hase on Oahu the regimental planning group was busily analyzing the forthcoming operation. IX Corps was to land at Kamondake with two divisions abreast on a 2½-mile beach. The 81st Division with the 543d EB&SR as the nucleus of its shore party was to be on the right and the 98th Division with the 533d attached on the left. The 77th Division in floating reserve was to land as needed. The grimmest feature of the proposal was Mt. Kamondake, which reared its densely wooded and doubtless cave-pocked mass 3000 feet almost perpendicularly from the water's edge on the right flank of the beach. Until its last defender was burned or blasted from his cave, no spot on the beach would be safe from direct plunging machine gun or 25 mm fire. Moreover, the initial objectives of the 98th Division were two airfields several miles inland; so the shore party would have another major perimeter defense problem. This time every man would have to assume that every inhabitant was a potential infiltrator ready to blow himself to kingdom come if in so doing he could take an American or a pile of American ammunition or fuel with him.

Altogether it looked like a "rough go." But the lessons of previous operations had been well learned by higher headquarters, so that at last the shore party was made large enough to handle its logistical tasks. The following breakdown of the 98th Division shore party is interesting to compare with those set up for the 533d's previous operations.

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Number of Men</i>	<i>Number of Vehicles</i>
533d EB&SR (Less Boat Battalion)	936	194
259th Engineer Combat Battalion	637	186
Detachment 294th Joint Assault Signal Company (JASCO)	150	30
328th Quartermaster Battalion (3 Service Companies)	666	15
Quartermaster Battalion (to be designated) (3 Truck Companies)	429	180
199th Port Battalion (5 Port Companies)	1128	53
Company C, 262d Medical Battalion	130	15
Company A, 608th MP Battalion	156	17
492d DUKW Company	180	56
1st Ordnance Bomb Disposal Squad	7	3
Total	4419	749

This shore party, all attached to the 533d, constituted 20% of the reinforced 98th Division, whereas at Lingayen the shore party troops (exclusive of the boat elements) numbered less than 2300 or only 10% of the reinforced 43d Division — a significant commentary on senior commanders' mounting emphasis on auxiliary beach troops. The strength and vehicle figures alone do not indicate the full expan-

sion in the capacity of the shore party, for newly developed equipment and adequate quantities of standard cranes and dozers were available for the first time. To take a single example, the 533d had had 5 cranes when it landed at Lingayen and was to have 23 cranes and 18 tractors with crane attachments on the Kyushu beachhead.

Despite the obvious implications of the news of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Russia's entry into the Japanese War, the report on August 10 that the Emperor of Japan had thrown in the sponge was at first incredible. As the Boat Battalion at Bugo clustered around company radios and the Shore Battalion, ploughing through the mid-Pacific, listened to ships' loud speakers, hardly a man could avoid thinking of the many false reports of Germany's surrender he had heard. But this time there was no mistake. By the 14th of August when Japan accepted President Truman's conditions, all hands were completely mentally demobilized. At Bugo, realization that a big job remained of bringing the thousands of Jap stragglers and defeated small remnants out of the interior kept the Boat Battalion from too wishful dreams of immediate departure for home. But aboard the *Artemis* and *Montrose* hopes soared. How easy it would be for these ships to skip the Hawaiian Islands and proceed directly to the Golden Gate! Labor Day at home or at least attendance at the opening of the football season were the fond hopes of nearly every man aboard those transports. As they realized their ships would definitely dock at Oahu, they merely anticipated a brief Hawaiian rest-cure before being homeward bound.

Oahu—Wakayama

Planning for Operation Olympic gave way to watchful waiting when the Japs first sued for peace, but less than 24 hours after President Truman announced that the War was over, orders arrived from Manila designating the 98th Division and the 533d as components of the occupation force. This was a bitter pill for the men of Regimental Headquarters Company, who debarked on August 14, and of the Shore Battalion who landed four days later. Resignation followed annoyance, however, when it became apparent that the units ordered to Japan included many whose men had seen far longer and more arduous service than had the 533d.

The scant fortnight spent on Oahu was a hectic one particularly for those in the supply sections. The vehicles and other equipment which had been pronounced serviceable and brought from Mindanao were condemned outright by officers of Central Pacific Base Command who had never even imagined the kind of equipment with which the Southwest Pacific forces had struggled along throughout their campaigns. In fact one driver was arrested as a menace on the highway for operating a jeep that was considered one of the prize vehicles of the Regiment! Thus with the war over replacement equipment without stint was at last received — from blankets to bull dozers, tents to twenty-ton trailers, Regimental Headquarters and the Shore Battalion were virtually 100% re-equipped.

Never had men of the 533d enjoyed such luxurious billets. Quadrangle C of Schofield Barracks and the surrounding recreational facilities of the post put even

Fort Ord to shame. Honolulu with its fabulous prices and total lack of legitimate sources of liquor was a disappointment, but all hands made the most of their limited freedom in civilization for the first time in 20 months.

Though the Japanese surrender was taken at face value, the chance of a ruse could not be completely ignored; therefore all divisions moving into Japan for the initial occupation were ordered to arrive "combat loaded" and prepared, if necessary, for an assault landing. Thus the plans differed little from those made for previous operations and more recently for "Olympic". The shore party was reduced drastically in size, but still included the 259th Engineer Combat Battalion, the DUKW company, and, for purposes of beach labor, three rifle companies and a field artillery battalion.

Loading out from the unheard of luxury of a macadamized beach at Iroquois Point commenced exactly seven days after the Shore Battalion arrived. With the exception of a few D-7 dozers and a handful of personnel on APAs, the entire shore party embarked on six LSTs and three LSMs. The LST convoy sailed on August 31, but the vessel carrying F Company threw a propellor and had to go into drydock for repairs. On September 4 this LST and the LSMs got under weigh, and were followed two days later by the large transports.

Four solid weeks on the LSTs were pretty grim, for they had three times as many passengers as bunks and the ponton causeways they carried forced water constantly over the weather deck. A stop at Saipan with a chance to stretch a leg helped a bit, and ideal weather favored the voyage. The destination was Wakayama, Honshu, a minor port on the eastern entrance to the Inland Sea. The 98th Division was to occupy Osaka, but fields of American pressure mines prevented shipping from reaching that port. Just ahead and landing at the same beach were I Corps troops and the 33d Division destined for Kyoto and Kobe. There were no decent maps or photos and no orders more explicit than to get ashore and get the convoy unloaded expeditiously.

On the cold morning of September 27 through fog and a misty rain the 533d had its first sight of Japan. At 0730 the advance reconnaissance elements of the shore party landed and quickly appreciated that it was in for more than the usual snafu. All the good part of the beach was pre-empted by the 33d Division's shore party, and the only jetty at which LSTs could land was theirs by Sixth Army order. Back of the

First CP in Japan on Wakayama Beach, September 27, 1945.





LCTs crowd the beach west of Wakayama during the second day of the occupation.

98th Division beach the land consisting of swampy, feces-fertilized gardens, was impassable for vehicles and useless for bivouac sites. Thus the shore party was confined to the immediate beach 1000 yards long and 50-75 yards wide with only a single narrow lane leading off it.

At 0830 (H hour) troops commenced landing and immediately marched to the railroad station at Wakayama for transportation inland. At 0910 vehicles started coming ashore, but many of these had to be towed out of the surf by four shore party dozers. LCMs and LCVPs sometimes grounded on the bar 80 yards off shore and

Temporary roadway of cyclone wire fencing is laid over the dunes to part of the dump area.





Vehicles of the 98th Division start to jam up the limited beach.



LSTs grounding some distance off shore wait for low tide before discharging vehicles.



Lack of trucks causes piling of stores just above the high water mark.

never got nearer dry land than 25 yards. A vehicle assembly area was established at the extreme right flank of the beach near the only road available for egress. Since I Corps denied 98th Division permission to move over the roads, all vehicles were left in the assembly area on the beach until 0900 on the second day. This effectively blocked nearly one-third of the suitable beach-dump area.

Refusal to allow the LSTs carrying the 533d equipment to land during the first day and inability of vehicles to wade ashore from the LSMs on the outer bar until



A battalion of heavy tanks adds to the congestion on the beach.

the afternoon's low tide left the shore party desperately short of vehicles, cranes, and even manpower. Meanwhile the transports pushed bulk cargo on to the shore in small craft, and these had to be painfully unloaded by human chains stacking the supplies just above the high tide line, which further congested the beach. Just before dark the LSMs disgorged a complete tank battalion into the melee. Added to the griefs was the miserable weather — 15 degrees colder than the coldest the Regiment had been exposed to in nearly two years, and a driving rain which soaked and numbed after a softening month afloat. The sum total made the first night in Japan about the most miserable the unit had ever experienced.

Largely because things could get no worse, the second day saw considerable improvement in the condition of the beach. The 533d's LSTs at last got their turn at the jetty and discharged the trucks and cranes so badly needed. Corps opened the roads to 98th Division vehicles, so they moved out of the way. The 533d took over a not too badly damaged iron foundry and set up a crude temporary bivouac in it.

Jap jetty, extended by strings of ponton cubes, is used to discharge LSTs at first three at a time, later six at once.





On the third day of the occupation, the beach was still badly crowded but there was a semblance of order.

Beach labor was put on a shift basis after 24 hours of steady work for all hands, and those off duty followed some much needed sleep with a visit to the ex-city of Wakayama which constituted a completely sufficient lesson in the effectiveness of the B-29's fire-bomb raids.

The second night ashore was far more comfortable than the first, and the progress of unloading was fairly satisfactory. But a typhoon warning, quoting wind velocities of over 100 m.p.h. in 48-60 hours, required that all the bulk stores be rehandled from the lower part of the beach to the top of the dunes. Despite this extra work and the other difficulties mentioned, the first 48 hours showed all 12 APAs unloaded and 4 AKAs two-thirds unloaded, a total of over 14000 tons of which 8000 was bulk.

About mid-afternoon of the third day as the shore party was at last confident that it would complete the job before the typhoon struck, Admiral Noble, commander of all naval forces in the area, casually inquired if the 533d would be ready to load on

Regimental Headquarters Company's
bivouac at Wakayama in the shell
of a gutted steel mill.



schedule. Puzzled at his meaning, the regimental commander was startled to find that the Admiral had orders to supply 12 LCTs, 5 LSMs and 3 APDs to move the Regiment 300-odd miles to Kure commencing that very night! Though a Sixth Army officer had dropped a hint of a move "early in October" to Kure to rejoin X Corps, the casual inquiry of the Admiral was the first and only "order" received for this move.

A hectic scramble ensued during the evening as trucks and DUKWs were rounded up and reloaded, and hasty plans made to squeeze into the limited shipping space allotted. By instinct the 12 LCTs were loaded at the midnight high tide and the LSMs at the early morning low. A small rear echelon to watch over the equipment for which there was no room remained in the factory for ten days, while the rest of the troops, after less than 72 hours ashore, re-embarked and headed back out to sea. The few thousand tons of 98th Division supplies on landing ships and LCTs not yet discharged were left for the 259th and the 544th EB&SR to handle, and it was a joy to be rid of one of the worst unloading problems ever thrown at the 533d.

The unseemly haste of the departure was followed by three full days at anchor in the lower bay, while the typhoon that devastated Okinawa approached and then veered out to sea. At last on October 4 the convoy worked its way against high winds and steep seas westward around the outside of Shikoku and into the other end of the Inland Sea, where it joined forces with the transport squadron bearing the 41st Division, X Corps, and the 533d's Boat Battalion from Mindanao.

Hiro—Kure

In the week following the Japanese surrender, Sixth Army alerted X Corps with the 41st and 24th Divisions for movement to western Honshu and Shikoku as part of the occupation force. The 533d Boat Battalion received orders attaching it to X Corps for this job on August 24. The attention of 3d Brigade headquarters was immediately directed to the serious understrength of the Battalion and the thoroughly worn out condition of most of its boats. 310 low-point replacements were soon shipped to the Battalion at Bugo, and during the second week of September it obtained 60

brand new LCMs from the 5211th Steel Hull Battalion's new plant at Batangas and rushed them to Mindanao.

Company C moved to Zamboanga on September 13 and in the succeeding days loaded the 41st Division aboard Transport Squadron 16. This squadron then moved up to Bugo where Company A and Boat Battalion Headquarters Company embarked with X Corps Headquarters. A rear echelon had to wait until October 7 before embarking in LSTs. B Company at Davao embarked with the 24th Division and left Mindanao on October 15.

The convoy with all of the Boat Battalion except B Company left Mindanao



The trip around Shikoku through the tail end of a typhoon was a wet thrash especially for those aboard LCTs and LSMs.

September 20 and after a brief stopover at Leyte proceeded to Buckner Bay, Okinawa. During the typhoon that wrecked that place, the convoy maneuvered at sea and suffered no material damage. It finally resumed its voyage on October 3 and two days later, in conjunction with the little group of landing vessels bringing the rest of the 533d from Wakayama, entered the Inland Sea between Shikoku and Kyushu.

Pressure-type mines sowed in July by B-29s prevented the ships from proceeding all the way into the harbor of Kure, where the bulk of the occupation force was to be stationed. So the transports anchored in Hiro Wan and prepared to lighter some troops and supplies through the narrow shallow Ondo Seto channel to the docks of Kure and to unload all vehicles and most of the bulk at the Hiro seaplane base.

Not only did the 533d's shore elements join the landing force without orders, maps, or data of any sort as to the troops and materiel to be debarked, but in addition their arrival was a complete surprise to the corps and division commanders. Since

a provisional shore party had already been organized from 41st Division troops, it was agreed that the 533d would merely support that shore party during the initial landing.

To insure a smooth handling of the beach, the shore party, including the 533d, was put ashore at Hiro during the afternoon of October 6 to get things organized prior to the debarkation of troops the next morning and to the unloading of vehicles and supplies the next afternoon. The physical landing site was ideal: a 450' wide

LCT and LSMs
beached on the con-
crete ramp of the
Hiro Naval Air
Station.



concrete seaplane ramp sloped down to water deep enough to float an LSM; the end of the main runway provided a made-to-order landing point for LSTs. By nightfall the shore party was all set with cranes, control points, parking areas, and storage facilities spotted and ready. At long last it looked as though the 533d were to see a really smooth amphibious operation.

This hope, however, failed to reckon with the Commodore of the transport squadron — appropriately nicknamed “Terrible Terry” McGovern. Though he had agreed to the plan of landing, he could not bear to “waste” the night, and so without notifying the shore party or any of the army authorities, he ordered his transports to send in all the vehicles. The as yet unlighted ramp suddenly was assaulted shortly before midnight by hundreds of truck- and jeep-bearing landing craft, and the vehicles stampeded all over the air base. Order was restored reasonably quickly, and the vehicles massed on the airstrip.

At dawn the troops came in, and by 0700 boat loads of bulk were waiting to be unloaded — eight hours ahead of schedule. By the time enough trucks were sorted out of the mess on the airfield, unloaded, and pressed into service at the water's edge, there was a regular log jam of LCVPs and LCMs loaded to the gunwales with stores. Though his own hasty actions had caused the mess, Terrible Terry, against the advice of his own navy beachmasters and over the protests of the army shore party com-



The principal dignitaries land at Hiro — Facing camera in center left to right: Rear Admiral Rogers, Major General Doe (41st Division), Major General Sibert (X Corps); extreme right: Brig. Gen. Willey (Kure Base).

mander, ordered working parties from the ships' crews brought ashore, and had them unload supplies by hand on an inaccessible rock bulkhead where, before they could be rescued, many hundreds of tons were engulfed in the rising tide and destroyed.

Meanwhile unloading progress on the beach had actually set new records, with cranes handling cargo by the netload and trucks delivering stores directly to their ultimate destinations in conveyor-equipped, covered warehouses. Despite the extra

Kure Ho, the part of the Inland Sea near Kure as seen from the mountains behind the devastated city.



work involved in untangling the snarls caused by the Commodore's interference, the twenty-one transports were discharged in less than 48 hours, and the 24,120 tons of cargo, including 17,000 tons of bulk, had almost all come over a "beach" less than 150 yards wide.

The 533d boatmen took a bad beating working for this transport squadron, for they were made to do all the dirty work, were given no maintenance by their parent ships, and frequently were bossed by green and incompetent navy coxswains who delighted in banging up the army craft. Altogether this operation did much to undo the fine spirit of teamwork which the Regiment had built up in two years with the Seventh Fleet.

The Boat Battalion set up its base and bivouac in the torpedo-and-mine portion of the Kure Naval Base. A convenient stone-walled boat basin and overhead cranes to lift boats out onto the quai for repairs made this area desirable, but a thorough working over by B-29s, carrier-borne dive bombers, and army medium bombers from Okinawa had left most of the buildings a shambles. Yet it was no worse to clean up

Top left: The shore of Ondo Seto channel; top right and bottom left: portions of the highway leading from Hiro to Kure; bottom right: part of the water front of Kure.



than a mucky piece of virgin jungle, and so the men cleared away the baka bombs, war heads, and twisted girders and set up their last billets in a leaky steel shed.

Regimental Headquarters joined the Boat Battalion at Kure three days after landing, but the Shore Battalion had to remain a few days in the flooded tent camp they had first set up at Hiro. By October 15 the bulk of the Regiment at Kure was concentrated for the first time since Luzon, and all men except those of B Company



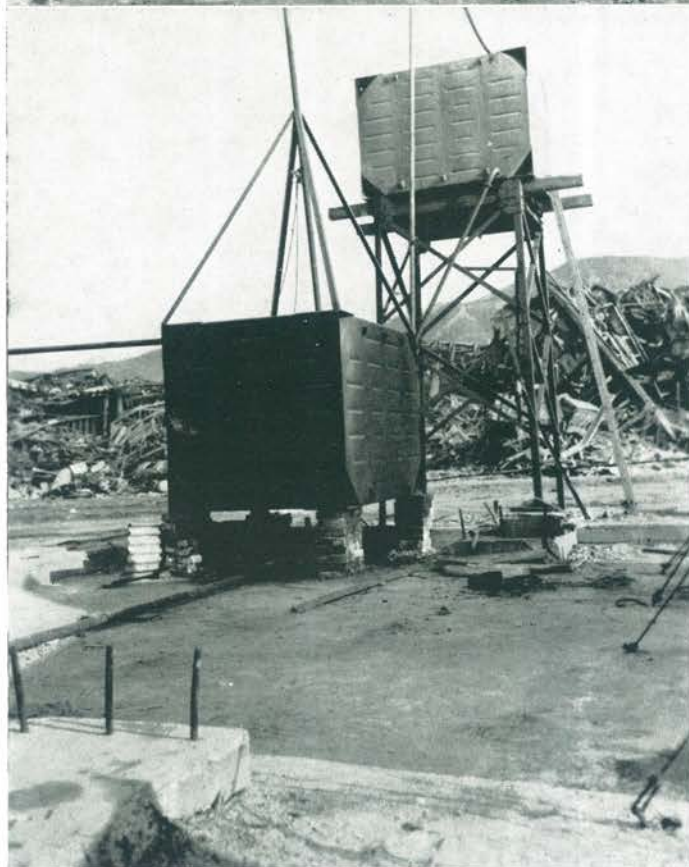
The parking area by the small boat basin in the Kure Mine Base.



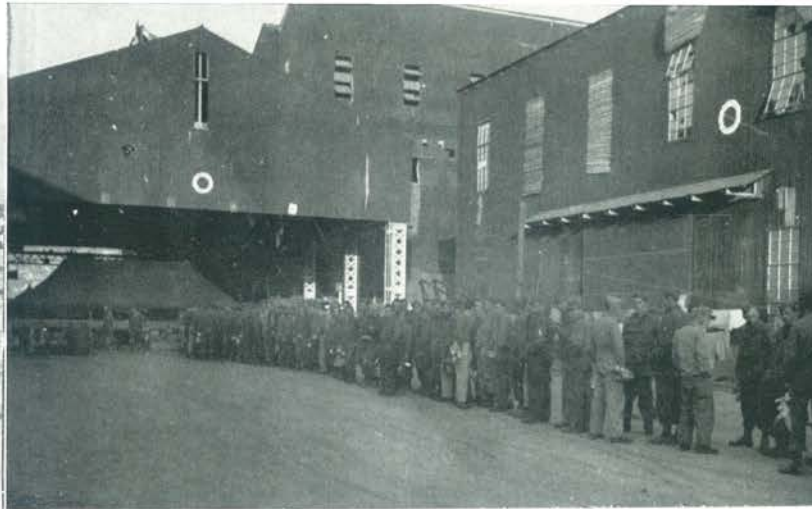
The inner harbor of Kure seen from the outer wall of the small boat basin.



LCMs tied up outside the small boat basin. Note the ruins of the steel mill in the background and the large hammer-head crane used to lift out LCMs for repair.



The Shore Battalion's Shower Room (*above*) with 2400 gallon hot water heating system constructed out of ponton cubes.



The Kure Mine Base. *Top left:* Shore Bn motor pool with kitchens, dormitory and huge building roofed by the Battalion in rear; *top right:* chow line; *bottom left:* hundreds of 25mm guns laid out for destruction in front of Boat Battalion Headquarters Company building; *bottom right:* ruins of steel mill blasted by Third Fleet dive bombers. *Below:* Shore Companies' orderly rooms.



Part of the Kure Naval Base demolished by Third Fleet dive bombers.

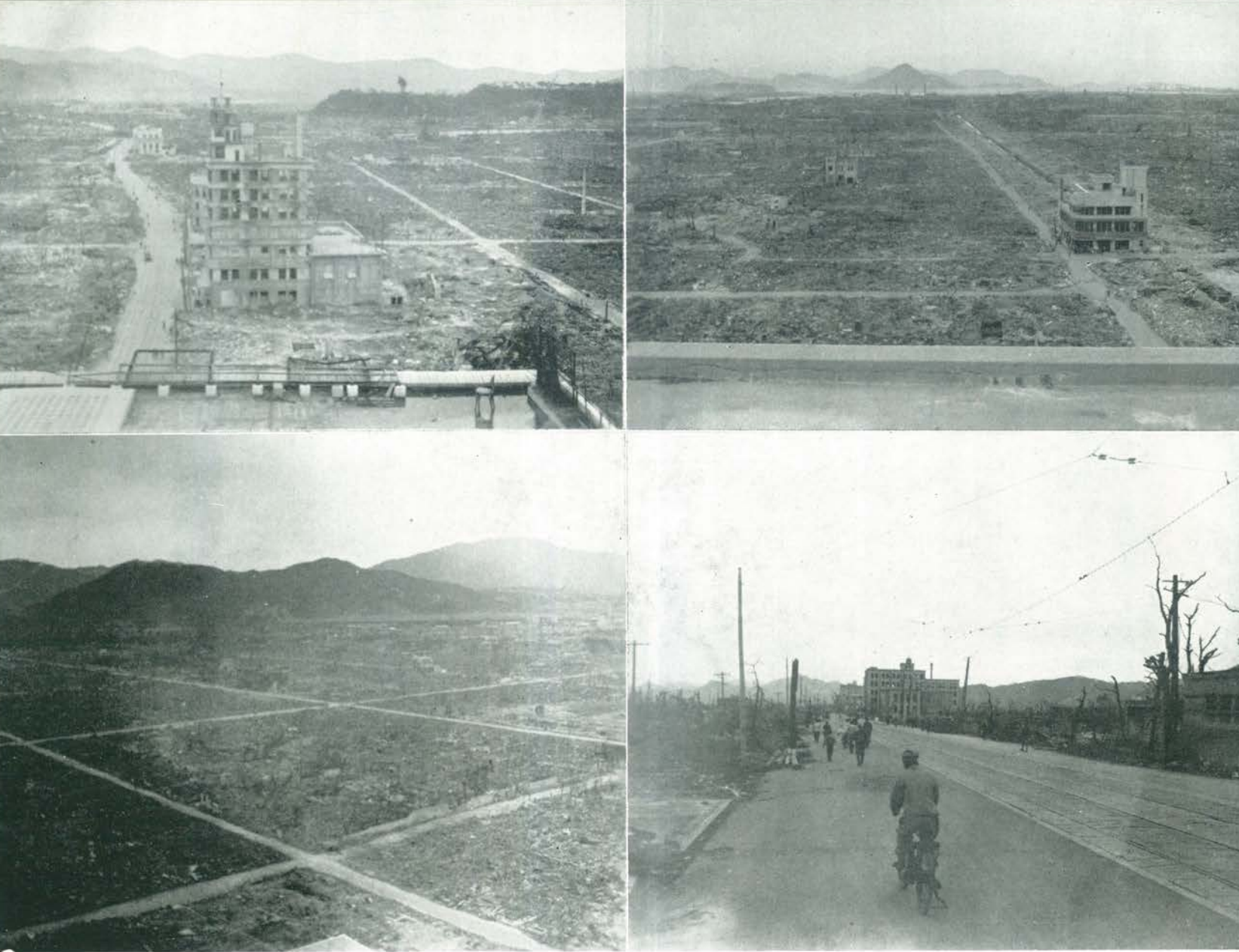


Harbor at Yeta Shima.



were within casual walking distance of each other for the first time in two years. B Company arrived with the 24th Division on October 22 and unloaded without incident at Mitsuhamma, Shikoku where a tent camp was set up, and a freight service inaugurated to Kure, 20 miles to the north.

During the rest of the stay in Japan there is little noteworthy to report as to activities of the 533d. The Regiment functioned under X Corps for a few weeks and then passed to control of Kure Base. The boat companies lightered cargos from Hiro Wan through the Ondo Seto to the docks at Kure, and moved occasional patrols and recreation parties around the scenic waterways. The Shore Battalion, in addition to its normal functions of beach operation, worked cranes on the Kure docks and performed tasks appropriate to any engineer construction outfit. Whole blocks of the most thoroughly devastated parts of Kure were cleaned off and leveled by their bulldozers to assist Jap reconstruction. A huge warehouse in the naval base was given a new tin roof — $1\frac{3}{4}$ acres of it, and the base officers' club and post office were built by men of the 533d.



Hiroshima — two months after the Bomb.

Aside from normal work and trying to keep warm with no wool clothes or stoves, the principal memories of Japan include the impressions of Hiroshima's appalling devastation and of "fraternization" with the little yellow people, as to which let each man be his own raconteur.

Disintegration

The War Department's announcement while the Regiment was enroute to Japan that all men with 80 V-J Day points would be homeward bound by November 1, and all men with 70 points by December 1, applied to 8 out of every 10 men in the 533d. No sooner was the area at Kure well settled than the topic on every tongue was—would the War Department's word be kept? For a while the bets were against the commitments being met. Sweeping the pressure mines from Nagoya took much longer than expected. Ships promised by the Navy did not show up, and confusion and recrimination reigned. To make matters worse, Yokohama, which had been

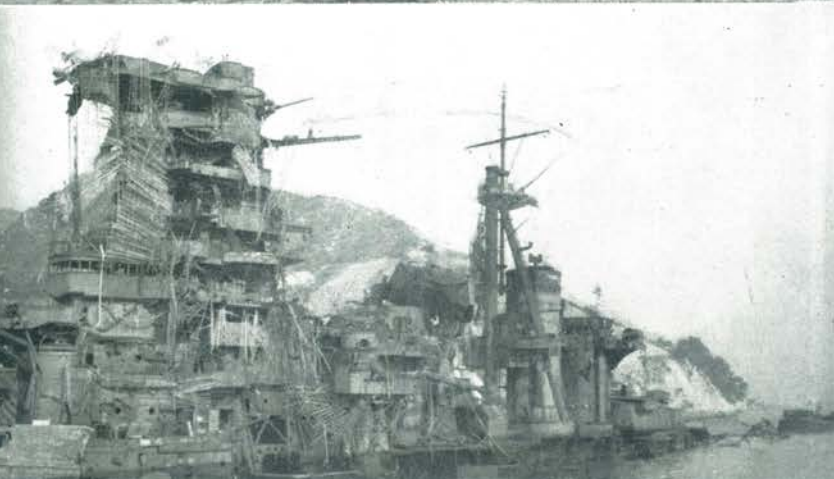
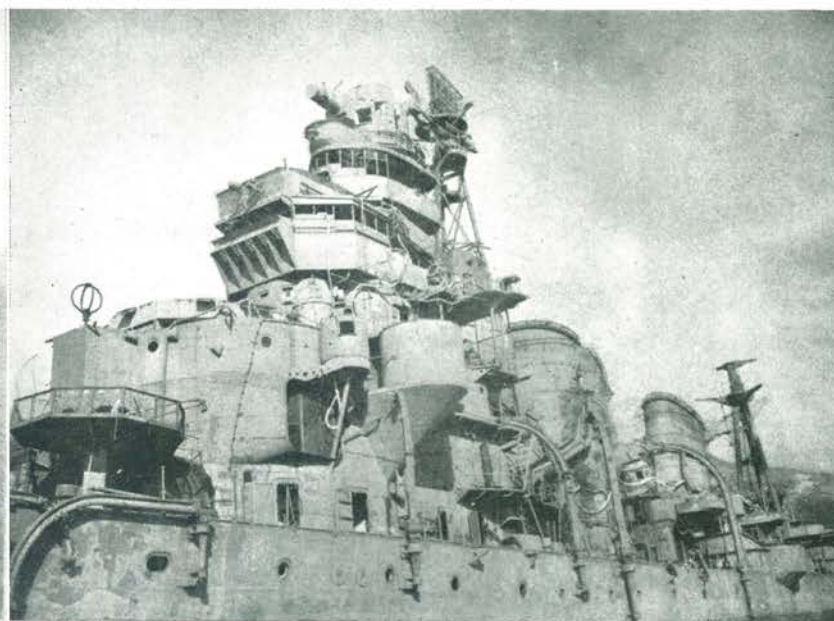
occupied in August, was doing a rushing business forwarding men of Eighth Army units home, while Sixth Army troops had to wait in jealous rage.

At last the log jam broke. October 23 brought the word that all officers with 83 points and men with 73 points were to be moved by train to Nagoya by November 3. Amidst general rejoicing the first trainload, including 232 men from the 533d, pulled out the next night, and two days later another 100 men departed. Then something went wrong, and a painful delay ensued.

Meanwhile, with the Regiment due to lose three-fourths of its men in ten days, drastic steps had to be taken to get rid of its \$15,000,000 worth of equipment and at the same time insure that the essential functions it was performing for the Corps were assumed by other units. Fortunately, two harbor craft companies with relatively low-point men had arrived and to them in the last days of October the 533d turned over its fleet of 100-odd craft and the shop trucks and other auxiliary boat equipment, along with the 300 low-point replacements who had joined the Boat Battalion at Mindanao. No authority for this transfer was obtained from higher headquarters, but it was so obviously the only thing to do that they, after considerable blustering, finally ratified it. Engineer heavy equipment, radios, arms, vehicles and all other types of equipment were turned in progressively so that the companies would not find themselves so short handed as to be unable to maintain and move any item.

Strenuous representations were made to Sixth Army and GHQ to have the Regiment inactivated by the end of November so that responsible personnel could close its career. These headquarters were agreeable, but repeated radio messages

Queens of the Imperial Navy blasted in their hiding places near Kure by planes of the Third Fleet squat ignobly on the bottom.



signed by MacArthur could not expedite procedures in Washington enough to secure the necessary War Department authority.

Between the 5th and 14th of November the exodus of men resumed, with 71-point men and 90-point officers finally departing. This group used up all the transports that put into Nagoya, and many had to wait there two to three weeks before the Navy sent more ships. Meanwhile before the very eyes of eligible men, hungry for the sight of home, APAs and AKAs were sailing empty from Hiro for the States—a bitter proof of the disadvantages of divided command.

The remnants of the Regiment, only 30 officers and about 400 enlisted men, had no equipment to work with and little with which to endear themselves to the Base commander. So on November 23 they were ordered to clear out of the Kure Naval Base, which by then had been turned into a fairly comfortable camp with hot showers and other little luxuries, and trek northward 8 miles to Koyama where they took over an attractive Jap barracks on a terrace overlooking the sea.

Hardly had they settled there when on November 28 orders arrived sending homeward another large number of point groups. This was the end. By the 4th of December every officer in the Regiment, and all but 40 low-point enlisted men who had been retained to act as a care-taking group, were on their way to Nagoya and the U.S.A.

The Base commander directed that the platoon of men, representing all that was left of what had been 2000 six weeks before, be attached for all purposes to the 1874th Engineer Aviation Battalion, and the care-takers of the boxes of regimental records moved back to Kure. Not until December 31, 1945 did official inactivation orders put an end to this ignominious existence, and bring to a close, after three and a half years of vigorous life, the career of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment.



PART TWO

Statistics

1. Logistics

Place	Period	Tons of Supplies Across the Beach		Operations of 533d Boats			
		Total	Daily Ave.	Troops Carried	Tons Carried		Boat Miles
					Total	Daily Ave.	
Milne Bay-Goodenough I.	20 Jan.-20 Feb. '44			4,500	37,000	1,230	43,000
Cape Cretin	25 Dec. '43-20 Feb. '44	104,500	1,900			...	
Saidor	25 Feb.-25 Apr. '44	39,000	720	8,000	32,200	585	62,200
New Britain	25 Feb.-15 Nov. '44	72,000*	810*	53,000	84,700	400	198,100
Aitape	1 May-26 Dec. '44	317,000	1,350	71,000	92,800	510	232,000
Luzon	9 Jan.-26 Mar. '45	399,277	5,260	39,000	188,300	2,500	101,000
Mindanao	17 Apr.-8 Sept. '45	217,680†	2,940†	37,000	175,000	1250	497,800
Japan	27 Sept.-1 Nov. '45	68,200	5,250‡	9,000	37,600	1,880	26,700
Total	25 Dec. '43-1 Nov. '45	1,217,700		221,500	647,600		1,160,800

*Based on 89 days during which beach was operated by Co. F, 533d EB&SR.

†Based on 74 days during which beaches at Malabang, Parang, Talomo or Bugo were operated by Shore Battalion, 533d EB&SR.

‡Beaches operated a total of 13 days during this period.

2. Casualties

Place	Japs killed by 533d	533d Killed	533d Wounded
Cape Cretin	0	0	5
Saidor	0	0	0
New Britain	17	0	3
Aitape	211	0	7
Luzon	16	1	20
Mindanao	28	2	0
	272	3	35

Statistics in the making: Capt. Koch, Regimental S-3, at the first CP on Luzon; Lt. Mebane, assistant S-3, and Major Howard, S-4, in the CP at Parang, Mindanao.



3. Table of Distances Run by LCMs
Nautical Miles

FROM→ TO ↓	Brisbane	Cairns	Milne Bay	Goodenough	Finschhafen	Borgen Bay	Aitape	Hollandia	Biak	San Fabian	Mindoro	Zamboanga	Parang	Davao	Bugo	Butuan
Cairns, Aust.	980															
Milne Bay, NG	1485	505														
Goodenough I., NG			83													
Finschhafen, NG	1780	800	315	290												
Borgen Bay, NB			400	375	85											
Talasea, NB					210	125										
Saidor, NG			425	400	110	125										
Aitape, NG	2205	1225	740		425	410										
Hollandia, NG							112									
Biak, NG							415	305								
Morotai, NEI							965	855	550				440			
Dirigue, Luzon	4400*									150						
Mindoro										325						
Zamboanga, Mindanao										665	340					
Parang, Mindanao										810	485	140				
Pikit, Mindanao										880	555	210	70			
Sarangani Bay, Mind.													145	130		
Davao, Mindanao													270			
Bugo, Mindanao												245	385	405		
Butuan, Mindanao														370	83	
Sagunto, Mindanao														465	178	95
Batangas, Mindanao														670	440	

Longest run with no stops: Cairns to Milne Bay, 505 miles.

Longest continuous voyage of one boat: ("Betsy" of B Co.) from Brisbane to Aitape to New Britain and back to Aitape, 3025 miles.

*Though no single boat made this trip, no part of it was not made by an LCM of the 533d at one time or another.

COMMENDATIONS

HEADQUARTERS 32D INFANTRY DIVISION

A.P.O. 32, c/o Postmaster,
San Francisco, California.

31 January 1944

SUBJECT: Appreciation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 533rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment,
(Thru) Commanding General, Alamo Force, APO 712.

1. It is desired to express to the Commanding Officer, 533rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, and members of his command, my sincerest appreciation for the splendid assistance and cooperation given to this command in establishing the camp area at Cape Cretin. By his most generously and unselfishly placing at our disposal his equipment, facilities and personnel, the camp was established in such a manner as would not have been possible otherwise.

2. It will be greatly appreciated if my personal thanks be conveyed to the members of the Regiment who were responsible for this action.

s / W. H. Gill

W. H. GILL
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

AG 201.22

1st Ind

(16jan44)

HEADQUARTERS ALAMO FORCE, APO 712, 30 January 1944.

TO : Commanding Officer 533rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment.

THRU: Commanding General, USASOS, APO 501.

I am pleased to note that the performance of duty by the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment was so outstanding as to merit commendation by the Commanding General, 32d Infantry Division. I wish to express to the officers and the men of this Regiment my own personal appreciation and official commendation for the results attained.

s / Walter Krueger

WALTER KRUEGER
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army,
Commanding

GSXN 201.22 (16jan44) 2nd Ind.
 HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY SERVICES OF SUPPLY,
 APO 501, 5 MAR 44
 TO: Commanding Officer, 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, APO 928,
 Unit No. 1.

1. It gives me great pleasure to commend you for the outstanding services your organization has rendered to the 32d Infantry Division.
2. It is highly gratifying to receive such reports, and this command is fortunate in having such an outstanding organization.

s / J. L. Frink
 J. L. FRINK
 Major General, United States Army
 Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
 2D ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE
 Office of the Commanding General

201.22

APO 503
 18 February 1944

SUBJECT: Appreciation

TO : Commanding General, 3rd Engineer Special Brigade, APO 565
 (Thru: Commanding General, Alamo Force, APO 322.)

1. It is desired to express our appreciation for the valuable assistance rendered to this Brigade during the past three months, by Companies A and C, 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Bn, Commanded by 1st Lt. John R. Nunn and Captain James W. Orme, Jr., respectively.

2. It is requested that this letter be brought to the attention of the officers and men of these two Companies.

s / W. F. Heavey
 W. F. HEAVEY
 BRIG GEN USA
 Commanding

AG 330.13 A-8
 (18 Feb 44)

1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY, APO 442, 22 February 1944.

TO : Commanding Officer, 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion, APO 928.

THRU: Commanding General, 3d Engineer Special Brigade, APO 928, Unit 1

The Commanding General is pleased to forward this letter of commendation on the splendid performance of duty on the part of Captain James W. Orme, Jr. and

1st Lieutenant John R. Nunn, and that of the other members of Companies A and C, 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion.

For the Commanding General:

s / J. R. Whitton
J. R. WHITTON,
Capt. A.G.D., Asst. Adj. Gen.
DADO/jjm

Basic: Commendation.

2nd Ind.

201.22

HEADQUARTERS 3RD ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE, APO 565, 7 March

1944

TO: Commanding Officer, 563rd Engr. Boat Maint. Bn., APO 928

It is a pleasure to receive and forward this letter of commendation to the officers and enlisted men of Companies A and C of the 563rd Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion who participated in rendering splendid assistance to the 2nd Engineer Special Brigade. It is desired that the subject officers and enlisted men be advised of this communication.

s / D. A. D. Ogden
D. A. D. OGDEN,
Brigadier General, USA,
Commanding

TELEGRAM

764A

TT

28 April 1944

TO CG THIRD ENGR SPEC BRIGADE

FROM CG FIRST MARINE DIVISION

PRIOR TO THE SEPARATION OF YOUR UNITS FROM MY COMMAND, I WISH TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION THE OUTSTANDING AND EFFICIENT MANNER IN WHICH EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF THE HEADQUARTERS BOAT BATTALION, COMPANY A AND COMPANY F, 533RD REGIMENT, AND COMPANY A, 563RD MAINTENANCE BATTALION, 3RD ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE HAVE PERFORMED THEIR DUTIES. IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TO HAVE THEM AS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF MY TASK FORCE AND I WISH THAT IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO CONTINUE AS SUCH. PLEASE CONVEY TO EACH AND EVERY OFFICER AND MAN OF THESE UNITS THE GOOD WISHES AND THANKS OF THE FIRST MARINE DIVISION FOR HAVING FULFILLED THEIR MISSION IN A HIGHLY SATISFACTORY MANNER. THEY WERE GOOD SHIPMATES AND DESERVE A WELL EARNED "WELL DONE."

TOO — 280010Z

TOR — 280345Z

HEADQUARTERS, WESTERN SECTOR

APO No. 705

17 July 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO : Commanding Officer, 533rd (EB & SR)
(Thru Commanding General, XI Corps, APO No. 705)

1. I desire to express my sincere appreciation to you, your officers and men for the splendid cooperation, enthusiasm and hard work shown in the construction of defensive positions in the Western Sector.

2. You were directed by higher headquarters to furnish details and complete other projects in addition and simultaneously with your primary mission as outlined by this headquarters. Furthermore, in the occupation of these positions, you assumed responsibility that is not normal for your command. This, you did without any hesitation and under the most trying circumstances.

3. You have my congratulations for a job well done, and best wishes in your future assignments.

For Brigadier General A. N. STARK:

s / Paul M. Culbertson

PAUL M. CULBERTSON

Lt. Col., Infantry

Executive

AG 201.2 (17Jul44) C 1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS US FORCES, APO 705, 18 July 1944.

TO: Commanding Officer, 533rd Shore Bn (EB&SR), APO 705

It is a pleasure for me to transmit this commendation.

s / C. P. Hall

C. P. HALL

Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS 103d COMBAT TEAM

JPC/jm

(Office of the Commanding Officer)

A.P.O. No. 43, c/o POSTMASTER

San Francisco, California

2 September 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : S/Sgt. John P. Lestrage, 12077538, Hq. Co., Boat Bn., 533 E.B.S.R.,
(Thru: Commanding Officer, 533, E.B.S.R.)

I am pleased to commend Staff Sergeant John P. Lestrage, 12077538, and the members of his boat crew for the splendid manner in which they performed their duties while attached to the 103d Combat Team.

The missions assigned to this group brought them under enemy fire several times. On many occasions it was only through their efforts that casualties and prisoners could be evacuated and supplies gotten to patrols moving along the beach. Their whole hearted co-operation, together with their cheerful willingness to carry out these tasks under any circumstances aided immeasurably in the successful completion of the missions assigned to this Combat Team.

s / Joseph P. Cleland
JOSEPH P. CLELAND
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
SHORE BATTALION
533D ENGINEER BOAT AND SHORE REGIMENT
APO 705

28 August 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : All Personnel of Assigned and Attached Units.

1. The following extract of a personal letter from the Commanding General, Sixth Army, to the Commanding General, 32nd Infantry Division is quoted for the information of all concerned:

"According to the records of this headquarters, the unloading of ships at Aitape, during the period that station was under your command, was effected expeditiously in a most commendable manner. This splendid performance was gratifying to me, especially in view of the overall theater backlog of shipping and the many difficulties involved."

2. I want to commend every member of this organization and attached units for the prominent part played in evincing such high praise from the Army Commander.

3. This praise from the Commanding General of the Sixth Army is evidence that the excellent results obtained did not go unnoticed.

4. I wish to express my appreciation for the splendid cooperation and hard work on the part of Officers and Enlisted Personnel who made this possible. The true test of an Organization is its ability to carry a difficult task through to a successful finish. All can be justly proud of a good job well done.

s / DeWitt L. McLallen
DEWITT L. McLALLEN
Lt. Col. 533rd EB&SR
Commanding

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

In Reply Please Quote
No. 11/2/AIR.

Headquarters, No. 71 Wing
Royal Australian Air Force
TADJI

13th November 1944

Headquarters,
43d Division,
APO 705.

CO-OPERATION OF 533D ENGINEERS (BOAT AND SHORE)
REGIMENT IN RESCUE WORK.

It is desired to express great appreciation for the ready co-operation given by the above regiment in connection with two recent rescue attempts.

Without hesitation they sent their vessels on these missions involving long and uncomfortable trips, knowing that there was the possibility of facing fire from guns of up to 5-inch calibre.

Unfortunately, one of these efforts was unsuccessful, and in the other they were forestalled by a Catalina flying boat, but more willing co-operation could not have been obtained from any other source.

It is requested that the regiment be notified of our appreciation.

s / E. W. Cooper

(E. W. COOPER),
Wing Commander,
Commanding No. 71 Wing,
TADJI

HEADQUARTERS U.S. FORCES

APO 705

18 November 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 533d Engineers (Boat and Shore) Regiment,
APO 705.

1. The attached letter from Wing Commander Cooper, Commanding No. 71 Wing, TADJI is in appreciation of your splendid work and cooperation in connection with two recent rescue attempts.

2. I am pleased in forwarding to you and your regiment this commendation and adding my own for hazardous duty voluntarily performed for an allied arm.

s / Leonard F. Wing

LEONARD F. WING,
Major General, U.S. Army,
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS FORTY-THIRD INFANTRY DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

A.P.O. 43, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, Calif.
31 January, 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO : Commanding Officer and All Ranks, 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment.

1. From the time of attachment of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment to this division prior to the present operation until its relief from attachment subsequent to the landing, the work of the Regiment has been outstanding.

2. During the planning stages of the operation and during the loading of the Division and attached troops under the most trying conditions of surf and sea, the officers and men of the Regiment have worked tirelessly and efficiently both day and night. The careful organization and skillful execution of a varied complex military operation, together with the successful accomplishment of the assigned mission and the subsequent support of the landing, testify more eloquently than words to the superior work of all ranks.

3. I commend both officers and men for a hard job well done.

s / Leonard F. Wing

LEONARD F. WING
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS I CORPS
United States Army
Office of the Commanding General

EA/fps

AG 330.13

A.P.O. 301
22 January 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding General, 3d Engineer Special Brigade, APO 70.
(Thru Channels)

1. The 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, commanded by Colonel Wayne S. Moore, 012617, CE, and the 543d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, commanded by Colonel Gerald E. Galloway, 016043, CE, both of the 3rd Engineer Special Brigade, were attached to the I Corps for MIKE ONE operation. These regiments reverted to Sixth Army control as of midnight, 18 January 1945, in accordance with ADM O 16/1, Headquarters Sixth Army.

2. Records of this headquarters indicate that a total of 100,644 tons of cargo — an average of 10,000 tons a day — was discharged by the two regiments during the ten-day period prior to reverting to Sixth Army control.

3. I wish to commend Colonel Moore and Colonel Galloway and their respective regiments for the splendid record made while under my command. They had a complete understanding of the vital necessity for rapid discharge of personnel, equipment and supplies in support of the Corps operation. Since S Day, beach operations have continued twenty-four hours a day with energy and determination to fulfill the demands of the Corps, Divisions and non-divisional troops.

4. Preliminary detailed planning by the boat and shore regiments and execution of these plans on landing were outstanding. Cargo was moved rapidly across beaches into inland well-dispersed dump areas, leaving beaches clear thereby eliminating congestion and confusion. It is commendable to note that no losses were sustained due to sinking of harbor craft, damage to supplies and equipment in lightering from ship to shore, or dropping overboard. The spirit of cooperation, outstanding performance of duty and energy in supporting the Corps operation, demonstrated by officers and men of the Boat and Shore Regiments, has indeed been gratifying to me.

s / Innis P. Swift

INNIS P. SWIFT
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding

Subject: Commendation

AG 330.13-E
(22 Jan 45)

1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS SIXTH ARMY, APO 442, 1 February 1945.

Thru: Commanding General, 4th Engineer Special Brigade, APO 70.

To : Commanding General, 3d Engineer Special Brigade, APO 920.

The Commanding General is pleased to note this commendation on the outstanding performance of duty by Colonel Moore and the personnel of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, and Colonel Galloway and the personnel of the 543d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment while attached to I Corps during the recent operations.

By command of Lieutenant General KRUEGER:

s / John B. Cooley

JOHN B. COOLEY,
Colonel, A.G.D.,
Adjutant General.

HEADQUARTERS
3D ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE
APO 920

201.22

DADO/fr
15 March 1945

SUBJECT: Operation of Boat Pool.

To : Commanding Officer, 533d Engineer Boat & Shore Regiment, APO 70.

1. A detachment of your regiment was ordered to Base G to operate a boat pool consisting of craft of M-1 Units, as well as other craft turned over to the pool by USASOS and other agencies. At one time this pool contained approximately 150 craft.

2. Despite lack of maintenance personnel, equipment and spare parts, your detachment did an excellent job of keeping boats in condition and in preparing them for movement forward. The absence of mail and recreational facilities for the men of the detachment constituted a serious problem of morale. However, the ingenuity of the officers of the detachment in establishing a post exchange and in providing LCM ferry service partially offset this trouble.

3. Lieutenant Frank Powell, the officers and enlisted men of this detachment are to be commended for the very efficient manner in which they performed their duties.

s / D. A. D. Ogden
D. A. D. OGDEN
Brigadier General, USA,
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
544TH ENGINEER BOAT AND SHORE REGIMENT
APO 70

2 February 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment (Thru: CG, 4th ESB, APO 70)

1. I desire to commend the company commander, officers, and men of Company A, 533d EBSR, for the efficient and willing manner in which they performed their duties while attached to this command.

2. Under adverse conditions, they worked hard and cheerfully, and, due entirely to their own efforts, had a superior boat maintenance record.

3. Their services and cooperation are deeply appreciated.

s / R. H. Naylor
R. H. NAYLOR
Colonel, CE
Commanding

1st Ind.

X -1

HQ., 4th Engineer Special Brigade, APO 70, 3 February 1945

TO: Commanding Officer, 533rd EB&SR

1. The manner of performance of duty and efficient boat maintenance record of Co. A, 533rd EB&SR while attached to 544th EB&SR, are matters that I have personally observed since S-day.

2. I desire to express my appreciation and commendation for efficient performance of duty under extremely adverse conditions.

s / Henry Hutchings, Jr.

HENRY HUTCHINGS, JR.,
Brigadier General, U.S.A.,
Commanding

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA
Office of the Commander-in-Chief

AG 370.2 (19 Mar 45)E

A.P.O. 500,
19 March 1945.

SUBJECT: Engineer Special Brigades.

TO: The Chief of Staff, War Department, Washington 25, D. C.

1. In the succession of amphibious operations up the coast of New Guinea to Morotai, thence to the Philippines, the performance of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Engineer Special Brigades has been outstanding. The soundness of the decision in 1942 to form organizations of this type has been borne out in all action in which they have participated. These units have contributed much to the rapid and successful prosecution of the war in the Southwest Pacific Area. I recommend that careful consideration be given to the perpetuation and expansion of such units in the future Army set-up.

2. I pass on to you an item extracted from a report to me from Headquarters, Administrative Command, Seventh Amphibious Force, file A16-3, Serial No. 0078, dated 15 February 1945, subject: "Report of the Lingayen Operation—San Fabian Attack Forces."

"It is believed that the Engineer Special Brigade as organized in the Southwest Pacific Area is the most efficient Shore Party organization now functioning in amphibious warfare and that the permanent organizations of these regiments have contributed in a large measure to the success of amphibious operation in this theater."

Douglas MacArthur,

DOUGLAS MACARTHUR,
General of the Army, United States Army,
Commander-in-Chief.

HEADQUARTERS X CORPS

APO 310

201.22-F

28 April 1945

Subject: Commendation.

To : Commanding Officer, 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, APO 159.

1. The following message from the Commander of Task Force 78.2 is reproduced for your information:

“FROM: COMMANDER NAVY TASK FORCE 78.2
INFO TO: COMMANDING GENERAL, X CORPS.

YOUR SPLENDID WORK IN COMPLETING DISCHARGING TWENTY-THREE LSTs PLUS ADDITIONAL CARGO FROM LIBERTIES IN LESS THAN THIRTY-SIX HOURS COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED UNDER VERY DIFFICULT CONDITIONS BY FULL COOPERATION AND GOOD HARD WORK ON THE PART OF ALL HANDS X WELL DONE X PASS TO THOSE RESPONSIBLE.”

2. The Commanding General, X Corps, desires to express his gratification and appreciation for the untiring efforts and splendid work done by the officers and enlisted men of your command, connected with the unloading.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL SIBERT:

s / F. Nowakowski

F. NOWAKOWSKI
Lt. Col., AGD
Adjutant General

201.22-F

1st Ind.

WSM/job

Basic: Commendation

HQ, 533D ENGINEER BOAT AND SHORE REGIMENT, APO 159, 30 April 1945

TO: All Members, this Regiment.

The efficient management and hard work which merited this commendation reflect great credit upon the regiment and upon all personnel of both boat and shore elements who contributed to the result. In particular the work of Company “F” in the construction of LST landings and the maintaining of the road net behind the beach was outstanding.

s / W. S. Moore

W. S. MOORE
Col., 533d EB&SR
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH ARMY
United States Army
Office of the Commanding General

AG 330. 13 (D)

29 May 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO : Commanding General
3d Engineer Special Brigade
APO 920

1. During the period 16 April 1945 to 28 April 1945, the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment rendered spectacular support to the landing of infantry units at Malabang, Mindanao, and the subsequent drive inland to Carmen's Ferry. The success of this push up the Mindanao River was due in a large measure to the efficiency and courage of the boat units.

2. I wish to express my praise of this outstanding accomplishment.

s / R. L. Eichelberger

R. L. EICHELBERGER
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

Basic: Commendation

201.22

1st Ind.

DADO/fr

HEADQUARTERS, 3d Engineer Special Brigade, APO 920, 5 Jun 45.

To: Commanding Officer, 533d Engr Boat & Shore Regt, APO 159.

1. It is with particular pride and gratification that I forward this commendation awarded your regiment by the Commanding General, Eighth Army, for its extraordinary exploits during recent operations on Mindanao. The unprecedented use of boat units in support of Infantry and the drive up the Mindanao River demonstrates the versatility of the Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, and the great success of the mission reflects the high state of efficiency of your units.

2. I desire that copies of the commendation be posted on the bulletin boards of your regiment.

s / D. A. D. Ogden

D. A. D. OGDEN
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

LCS(L) FLOTILLA ONE

Refer to: FE25-SF1/P15
Serial: 346

c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

USS LCI(L) 778, Flagship
7 May 1945

From: Commander LCS(L) Flotilla ONE.

To: Commanding Officer, 533rd E. B. and S. R., U. S. Army.

Subject: Letter of Appreciation.

1. During the period 1 May to 6 May 1945, this officer was engaged in moving five naval vessels from their moorings in the FORT PIKIT area to the open sea. That this operation was successfully completed was due to the splendid cooperation afforded by units of your command.

2. The personnel of all LCMs assisting displayed a commendable spirit of cooperation and further exhibited excellent seamanship.

3. The personnel of LCM M3A 112 is especially commended for their interest and zeal and it is requested that an entry to this effect be filed in their records.

s / R. E. Arison

R. E. ARISON

Capt., U.S.N.

Commander LCS(L) Flotilla ONE

FROM: CTU 78.3.6

TO: FLUSSER, LCI 226, LCI 24, LELAND THOMAS, MAJOR KINDT
MAJOR LAWTON, COMMANDING OFFICER, 162 RCT, CTU
70.1.14, FATHER HATHAWAY

THIS ATTACK UNIT HAS ESTABLISHED A SPLENDID RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT IN RAPID SUCCESSION X THIS REQUIRED THE CONTINUOUS AND TIRELESS EFFORT OF EVERY SINGLE OFFICER AND MAN UNDER TRYING AND AT TIMES DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES X TO FATHER HATHAWAY WHOSE COUNSEL AND GUIDANCE WAS IN EVERY MOVE X TO MAJOR KINDT AND HIS SWIFT STRIKING COMPANY OF 162 RCT X TO MAJOR LAWTON WHOSE BOATS DELIVERED THE GOODS X TO AN UNCOMPARABLE SCOUTING AND FIGHTING PEE TEE SQUADRON COMMANDER LIEUTENANT HOAGLAND X TO THE CAPTAINS OF THE SHIPS WHO KNOW HOW WHEN AND WHERE TO DELIVER THE GUNFIRE AND TO ALL THEIR FIGHTING OFFICERS AND MEN I WISH THE BEST OF GOOD FORTUNE AND A CHANCE AGAIN TO GET AT MORE JAP RADIO STATIONS WHERE I CAN BE WITH YOU X

s / F. W. McCorkle

CAPTAIN MCCORKLE

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH ARMY

United States Army
Office of the Commanding General
APO 343

GENERAL ORDERS

5 July 1945

NUMBER 79

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SECTION V

Awards of Meritorious Service Unit Plaque

Under the provisions of War Department Circular No. 345, 23 June 1944, a Meritorious Service Unit Plaque is awarded by the Commanding General, Eighth Army, to the following named units:

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*

*

1461ST ENGINEER MAINTENANCE COMPANY. For superior performance and devotion to duty from 1 March 1944 to 6 May 1945. During this period, the company participated in military operations in New Britain, New Guinea and the Philippine Islands. It succeeded in maintaining in operating condition a high proportion of the boats assigned to it for 3d and 4th echelon repair. By ingenious improvisation and unremitting individual and collective efforts it carried on its work in a highly efficient manner. Although it was handicapped by a shortage of trained personnel, adequate parts and materials, and an extraordinary high incidence of damage to boats, there was no faltering in boat maintenance. The accomplishments of this company in the face of tremendous difficulties contributed materially to the successful conclusion of the operations in which it was involved. The 1461st ENGINEER MAINTENANCE COMPANY has maintained, at all times, the highest standards of discipline, military courtesy and operating efficiency.

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BY COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL EICHELBERGER:

CLOVIS E. BYERS
Major General, GSC
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

s / Ward W. Conquest

WARD W. CONQUEST
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General

HEADQUARTERS 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Division Commander

A.P.O. No. 24
10 July 1945

AG 201.22

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, Co "F", 533d EB&SR.
(THRU: CO, 533d Engr. Boat & Shore Regt.)

1. Your exceptionally meritorious service and achievement during the period of your handling beach unloading operations at Talomo, have been brought to my attention and I wish to commend the officers and enlisted men of your organization for their diligence and devotion to duty.

2. The shore company functions were performed by you and your men in a superior manner. You welded together an efficient working organization and the cooperation, shown by members of your unit at all times, reflects great credit on your organization.

3. I have enjoyed having your organization under my command and it is without hesitation that I commend you on an important job well done.

s / R. B. Woodruff

R. B. WOODRUFF
Major General, USA.
Commanding

AG 201.22

1st Ind

RAJR/job

Basic: Commendation from Maj. Gen. R. B. Woodruff, Hdqs, 24th Infantry Division,
10 July 1945

HQ, 533D ENGINEER BOAT AND SHORE REGIMENT, APO 957, 19 Aug 1945

To: Commanding Officer, Shore Battalion, 533d Engineer Boat & Shore Regiment,
APO 957

From personal observation I am convinced that no company ever more richly earned a fine commendation. Never before has a single shore company been assigned such a large and complex beach and engineering mission. The brilliant manner in which F Company accomplished all its tasks in the Davao area reflects the highest credit on Captain Bouchelle and every individual in the organization.

s / Robert Amory, Jr.

ROBERT AMORY, JR.
Lt. Colonel, C. E.
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS 155TH INFANTRY
Office of the Regimental Commander

APO 31
27 August 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO : Commanding Officer, 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment

1. I wish to commend the Boat Battalion of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment and especially Company A, commanded by Captain John V. Michel for outstanding service during the Agusan Valley Campaign on Mindanao Island, Philippine Islands. The Battalion moved a Combat Team of the 155th Infantry on the longest inland water operation in the Pacific war. Company A remained with the Combat Team throughout the operation transporting additional troops and supplies and evacuating casualties. This vital transport was performed through some of the world's most dangerous waters.

2. Captain Michel's complete grasp of the situation enabled him to coordinate and carry out the extremely difficult task of forward supply and evacuation and to supervise energetically its execution.

3. The fine team work of all personnel of this organization made possible its outstanding record which contributed in a very high degree to the success of the operation.

s / Walter J. Hanna

WALTER J. HANNA
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS X CORPS
Office of the Commanding General
United States Army

COMMANDING OFFICER, 533D ENGINEER BOAT & SHORE REGIMENT

It affords me sincere pleasure to extend to the officers and men of your organization my deepest gratitude and appreciation of their achievement in the successful operations on MINDANAO, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

Your troops have displayed the highest degree of gallantry, skill, tenacity and fortitude in fighting a resourceful and determined enemy under adverse conditions of weather and on exceedingly difficult terrain. The loyalty and devotion to duty exhibited by your men and the highly effective results they have obtained in the execution of their missions, demonstrate the splendid fighting spirit and courage of the American soldier.

s / F. C. Sibert

F. C. SIBERT
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

20 August 1945

HEADQUARTERS X CORPS
Office of the Commanding General
United States Army

COMMANDING OFFICER, DETACHMENT, 163D ORDNANCE
MAINTENANCE COMPANY

It affords me sincere pleasure to extend to the officers and men of your organization my deepest gratitude and appreciation of their achievement in the successful operations on MINDANAO, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

The highly effective results obtained by your unit in the support of the combat troops, is deserving of the highest praise. The display of skill in the accomplishment of a difficult mission, and the loyalty and devotion to duty by your men despite adverse conditions of weather and exceedingly difficult terrain, demonstrate the splendid spirit and courage of the American soldier.

s / F. C. Sibert

F. C. SIBERT
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

20 August 1945

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH ARMY
United States Army
Office of the Commanding General
APO 343

COMMENDATION

3rd Engineer Special Brigade

1. During the past three years, the 3rd Engineer Special Brigade has made a record for itself that is worthy of the highest praise. This organization has been of invaluable service to the many operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, transporting tremendous numbers of combat personnel and their equipment to operational areas. In addition, these engineers have established innumerable beachheads, constructing roads, setting up dumps and rehabilitating power plants, water works, landing strips, bridges and docks. The officers and men of this organization have displayed high efficiency, eagerness and unswerving devotion to duty in the successful accomplishment of all their assignments. Their outstanding achievements have contributed greatly to the brilliant success of operations in the Southwest Pacific Area.

2. It is with the greatest of pleasure that I commend the 3rd Engineer Special Brigade on its fine accomplishments and extend to each officer and man of this organization my best wishes for continued success.

s / R. L. Eichelberger

R. L. EICHELBERGER
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

12 June 1945

HEADQUARTERS
3D ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE
APO 920

201.22

3 July 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO : All Personnel, 3d Engineer Special Brigade

1. The inclosed commendation from the Commanding General, Eighth Army, is in recognition of the record of the 3d Engineer Special Brigade since its activation and its achievements since arrival in this theater.

2. Our record is indeed one of which to be proud, and the achievements which went into its making would not have been possible without your hard work, courage and skill.

3. This is not, however, the time to rest on our laurels. The road home may be long and difficult, but the greater our efforts, the shorter it will be. We must continue to carry to a successful conclusion every mission assigned to us. When the job is finished our record will speak for itself.

s / D. A. D. Ogden

D. A. D. OGDEN
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding Officer

AG 201.22

APO 24
14 November 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

THRU : Commanding Officer, 533d EB&SR.

TO : Commanding Officer, Company "B", 533d EB&SR.

1. It has been brought to my attention that your company has rendered exceptional service to the Division during the entire Mindanao Operation, and I wish to commend you and your men for your meritorious achievement.

2. The task of operating your LCM's for lighterage of critical supplies meant long continuous hours of arduous work, which was done willingly and cheerfully. This was a fine showing of your spirit of cooperation and endurance.

3. Moving troops up the Mindanao River was a hazardous part of our operation and the close support given by you to our infantry units was a new high in per-

formance for your type of organization. This display of courage is most commendable.

4. While working with the Sarangani Task Force, you landed the Advance Party successfully prior to the invasion, and effected our resupply throughout the entire campaign. The crews of the LCM's made numerous trips to distant points on reconnaissance missions which demanded expert navigation through most dangerous waters, studded with coral reefs. Your contribution to this Task Force aided greatly in bringing this campaign to a successful close.

5. The ferry operated by you on the Mindanao River proved to be invaluable in transporting the troops and helping to effect our rapid crossing from Cotabato to Davao. Again, on the Davao River the ferry there enabled the 19th Infantry to cross and occupy that territory in and around Davao, our Divisional Objective. Both these incidents exhibited courage, fortitude and devotion to duty.

6. Your services throughout the entire V-5 operation were exceptional. I am pleased and grateful that you were attached to the Division.

s / Thomas D. Drake

THOMAS D. DRAKE,
Colonel, Infantry,
Commanding.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES, PACIFIC
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER

APO 500
31 August 1945

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS:

To you belongs a full measure of the victory attained by our forces.

Your task has been not only vitally important to our combined operations but also a difficult, hazardous and gruelling one.

Our amphibian engineers have performed gallantly and outstandingly in landing our assault forces and effecting their subsequent close combat support on over 150 successful major and minor amphibious operations in the Southwest Pacific.

Our combat engineers have, often under fire, ably assisted the operations of our combat forces in mine clearing, combined attack on enemy defensive positions, rapid construction of roads and bridges, and on all other types of engineer work.

Our basic construction units have performed miracles in transforming virtually overnight, jungle, swamp and mountainous terrain into depots, airdromes, hospitals

and camps. Aladdin-like, you have created major ports and bases, without which our air operations and forward movement would have been impossible.

Our engineer supply forces have, under greatest difficulty, surmounted the impossible in procuring, handling and providing the millions of tons of hundreds of thousands of items of engineer equipment and supplies, required for this gigantic engineer effort.

Our maintenance units have kept this vast engineer work potential functioning by efficient maintenance of many millions of horsepower capacity of engineer equipment, without which our task could not have been performed.

Our topographic units have charted a vast, relatively unknown section of the world and provided hundreds of millions of maps to guide our forces through what otherwise would have been a dark unknown.

Our engineer planning and supervisory headquarters have, with high success borne a heavy responsibility in their planning and subsequent, continued supervision of these difficult tasks.

Each of you has done his part well. With the failure or omission of any of these important cogs, our entire machine and operations they support, would not have functioned.

And let us all pay a silent tribute to those of our ranks who gave their lives in the execution of these tasks.

To each of you of all ranks I tendered my deepest appreciation for your magnificent effort, my pride in you for your outstanding performance and my best wishes for your continued well-being and success.

s / Hugh J. Casey

HUGH J. CASEY
Major General, U. S. Army
Chief Engineer

Other Amphibian Engineer Units

The Rest of the Third Brigade

THE "stateside" story of the other units of the 3d Brigade is virtually identical to that of the 533d. The two other regiments trained alongside it and participated with it in the full division maneuvers in Carrabelle. The 543d EB&SR (composed of the old 3d Battalions of the 533d Engineer Shore Regiment and the 593d Engineer Boat Regiment) made a spectacular convoy trip with LCMs from Massachusetts to the Gulf of Mexico in November 1942. The 593d EB&SR (consisting of the 2d Battalion, 533d Engineer Shore Regiment and Headquarters, and 1st Battalion 593d Engineer Boat Regiment) took a group back from Florida to Cape Cod in April. These voyages provided the first effective demonstration that small landing craft could be usefully employed far beyond their originally intended ship-to-shore range. On the other hand, the combined training with the 4th Marine Division at Oceanside, California, was exclusively a 533d affair.

In giving a brief account of the overseas history of the Brigade units, separate consideration by regiments is almost essential. Actually the Brigade never participates in actual operations as a unit. Brigade headquarters exercised administrative control over the regiments only as to matters of officer promotion and technical reports. Its primary function was obtaining and forwarding to the regiments equipment and supplies peculiar to amphibian operations, especially landing craft and marine parts and supplies. In addition it acted as adviser to the Theatre and Army commanders in amphibian matters and maintained a separate radio net that provided ready communications between all the scattered elements of the Brigade.

Brigadier General David A. D. Ogden commanded the Brigade from the time of its activation until July 20, 1945 when he was assigned to command the principal base to be established in Kyushu in the Olympic operation. Colonel Moore of the 533d succeeded him and held command until the Brigade was shipped home for inactivation from Yokohama in December 1945. General Ogden's ceaseless efforts to cut red tape and bring Army and Navy agencies together in order that critical supplies might reach the line units when needed and his continual educational pressure on division and corps commanders to insure that his amphibian engineer units were employed with maximum efficiency were a vital contribution to the campaign in the Southwest Pacific. His original executive, Colonel Edward Kraus, was succeeded in January 1944 by Colonel Gerald E. Galloway of the 543d EB&SR who ably held this difficult and thankless post to the end.

The Brigade command post was established initially at Goodenough Island in December 1943, and moved to Finschhafen in March and to Biak in September of the same year. In May 1945 it moved to Batangas, Luzon, and in September to Otaru on Hokkaido Island, Japan. An advance section of the Brigade headquarters operated as part of I Corps headquarters in the Lingayen Gulf landing and was preparing to act as IX Corps shore party headquarters in the invasion of Kyushu.



Brigadier General David A. D. Ogden, commander of the 3d Engineer Special Brigade, at the wheel of an LCPR.

The 543d EB&SR Overseas

The Regiment landed in Milne Bay during December 1943 and January 1944. The critical shortage of LCMs in the Theatre caused a substantial part of the Regiment to be utilized in the assembly lines of the 5211th Steel Hull Battalion which was erecting LCMs shipped in sections from the U.S. When this crisis eased a few weeks later, the Boat Battalion operated an extensive convoy service bringing new craft and critical supplies to New Britain and the Huon Peninsula. In April the Regiment, now under command of Lt. Col. Hughes, shifted its base to Finschhafen and continued its emergency supply service to forward areas. With the enemy-held coast between Madang and Aitape stretching nearly 300 miles, an intermediate refueling base was set up by the 543d, first at Kronprinz Harbor and then at Bogia. This out-post, which was raided occasionally by the Japs, was essential to the operations of all



Colonel Gerald E. Galloway, commander of the 543d EB&SR 1942-1943 and executive officer of the 3d Engineer Special Brigade 1944-1945.

brigades as the scene of the fighting moved ever westward along the New Guinea Coast.

Company A of the 543d made what was undoubtedly the record pre-assault cruise by small landing craft during the war. Leaving Milne Bay it moved steadily up the coast, stopping only long enough to refuel, for a distance of 1400 miles to Biak. There it rested briefly and made the 70-mile assault dash to Noemfoor Island July 2, 1944. An amusing side to this story is that Vice Admiral Barbey, commanding Seventh Amphibious Force, initially refused at Biak to let the boats make the 70-mile run to Noemfoor under their own power on the ground that such a long run was too much for open landing craft!

Meanwhile the rest of the Regiment had been attached to the 6th Infantry Division and on July 30, 1944 landed at Sansopar near the western tip of New Guinea. Here its existence was very similar to that of the 533d at Aitape. Bad beach and surf conditions, life on a small offshore island for the Boat Battalion, and hard, dusty work for the Shore Battalion, were common to both places. Moreover, the Jap division cut off to the east at Manokwari, kept harassing the perimeter and on occasions involved Boat Battalion gunboats and other craft in sharp clashes.

Still attached to the 6th Division, the Regiment, less the Boat Battalion but with most of Companies A and B, embarked in navy transports and landed in Lingayen Gulf on Blue Beach immediately south of the 533d. Because this beach had almost impossible surf conditions, it was abandoned within a few days and the 543d moved to White Beach and operated there under control of the 533d. Its boat elements shared the crowded Bued River with the 533d Boat Battalion.

Early in February, the 543d Shore Battalion and Regimental Headquarters

Company moved by LST to Mindoro where they were joined by C Company and attached to the 41st Infantry Division. On March 10 they landed at Zamboanga, Mindanao, suffering numerous casualties from the intense shellfire laid down on the beach. In the next few weeks a series of shore-to-shore operations down the Sulu Archipelago stretched C Company to the limit. Jolo, Basilan and Tawi Tawi were the most important, the latter being only 30 miles from Borneo. As the main fighting on Mindanao shifted eastward and the 533d became spread around the island, Company D and two platoons of C Company moved to Parang to reinforce the 533d.

Meanwhile most of A and B Companies had remained at San Fabian, Luzon, attached to the 533d until the latter moved out and thereafter attached to the 534th. In April they shifted their base northward to San Fernando and in July, in conjunction with elements of the 544th EB&SR, they made an unescorted end run around the northwest tip of Luzon to Aparri where they awaited the descent of the 11th Airborne Division.

In June, Colonel James Walsh was named to command the Regiment and he and General Ogden selected Major Lawton of the 533d to command the Boat Battalion. The scattered Regiment was gradually concentrated at Leyte during the summer of 1945 and attached to the 81st Infantry Division for the attack on Kyushu. After the surrender the Regiment remained with the 81st, landing in late September at Aomori on northern Honshu where it remained until November when it moved to Yokohama for return to the U.S. and inactivation.

The 593d EB&SR Overseas

Immediately upon landing in Milne Bay without its Boat Battalion in December 1943 the Regiment, under Colonel Oliver W. van den Berg, found itself faced with orders to move to Goodenough Island 80 miles away. Converting Company E to an emergency boat company and taking over a fleet of dilapidated LCVPs, the Regiment moved over mountain trails to Goodenough Bay and ferried itself to Goodenough. There it performed engineering and port work for Alamo base force.

In February, Company B moved forward to Finschhafen and Arawe where it supported the 112th Cavalry Regiment in its coastal drive east along the south shore of New Britain to and beyond the important Jap base at Gasmata. In March Company C relieved our C Company at Saidor where it teamed with the 5th Australian Division in its drive from Bogajim and Madang to Hansa Bay and Manam Island. In January 1945 this company again relieved the 533d, this time at Aitape and supported the 6th Australian Division as it moved eastward toward Boram and Wewak.

Meanwhile in April 1944 the 593d, less B and C Companies, was part of the great task force that originally enveloped Wewak and secured Hollandia. The Regiment landed with the 128th and 163d Combat Teams at Aitape and cleared the off-lying group of islands including Seleu where company A remained until August. The Regiment, less the Boat Battalion, re-embarked and on May 17 provided the shore party for the force that landed at Arara and then jumped across the narrow strait to

take Wadke Island. The smallness of the island, coupled with a fanaticism rare even for a Jap garrison, made this a pretty hot beach.

The Regiment's next assignment was Noemfoor Island southwest of Biak. With a 543d boat company and attached to the 158th RCT, it landed on the coral reefs of Noemfoor early in July. Here the Shore Battalion remained for many months building airstrips, roads and jetties. The cancellation of the K-1 plan for invading Mindanao kept the Regiment out of the Philippines until June 1945.

The Boat Battalion early in 1945 was attached to the First Australian Army and concentrated at Morotai. Company B served with the 9th Australian Division's 26th Brigade that seized Tarakan Island, off Northeast Borneo, early in May. A few weeks later the same division landed at Brunei Bay on Borneo's northwest coast, this time with Company C, 593d, which was joined by B Company after a long rough trip around through the Sulu Archipelago. In the labyrinth bays and rivers washing the important oil fields in this area these boat companies led a life similar to the 533d's in Mindanao and contributed materially to the speedy completion of the campaign. In July, Company A was part of the 7th Australian Division task force that seized the Balikpapan area in Dutch Borneo.

During the summer of 1945, the Regiment, now under command of Lt. Col. Shaeffer, started to concentrate at Batangas, Luzon. It was attached to the 77th Infantry Division for the occupation of Japan and, less the Boat Battalion which was still largely employed in the Borneo clean-up, it moved to Otaru on northwest Hokkaido. After two months there it returned to the United States via Yokohama for inactivation.

The 2d Brigade

Under command of Brigadier General William Heavey, the 2d ESB was activated on June 20, 1942 at Camp Edwards. Its boat regiment, the 592d, got its initial training at Waquoit, Massachusetts and the entire Brigade engaged in full scale division landing exercises on Martha's Vineyard with the 45th and 36th Infantry Divisions. These maneuvers were the first such shore-to-shore problems attempted in the war and the lessons learned were heeded by all amphibians thereafter.

In October 1942 the Brigade now reorganized into 3 amphibian regiments,

Brigadier General Daniel Noce, commander of the Engineer Amphibian Command (left), says good-bye to Brigadier General William F. Heavey, commander of the 2d Engineer Special Brigade, as the latter leaves for Australia early in 1943.



532d, 542d, and 592d, moved to Carrabelle for further combined training. Hardly had it settled down when it was ordered to California for movement to the Southwest Pacific, where General MacArthur's initial offensive against Buna and Gona was seriously hampered by lack of boats and trained amphibian troops. This campaign was successfully concluded before the 2d ESB left the coast, so the latter was sent in February 1943 to Australia for acclimatizing and further training. With it went the 411th Base Shop Battalion which built a plant at Cairns for fabricating LCVPs from parts shipped from the U.S. Nearby the 592d built the camp near Trinity Beach which a few months later was to be B Company's first overseas home.

In May 1943 the Brigade started to move north to Oro Bay. At the end of June elements of the 532d became the first amphibian engineers to see action in the Pacific. The assault which landed at Nassau Bay met considerable opposition and the surf conditions were exceptionally bad, but the performance of these men of the 532d with pitifully little equipment and nothing but LCVPs gave them a reputation that inured to the benefit of all amphibian engineers who followed them into the New Guinea campaign. The rest of the summer was a breathless time for the 532d as it participated in the successive captures of Lae and Salamaua. It then hopped with the 9th Australian Division (Rats of Tobruk) to Scarlet Beach above Finschhafen on the Huon peninsula. This was the key to the main Jap defense line in the South Pacific and the fight for it was bitter. By bringing up supplies under the noses of the Japs where our Navy dared not go, the 532d men so endeared themselves to the Aussies that they became known as the "9th Divvy's own navy." After the fall of Finschhafen in September, the 532d received no rest as it supported the drive up the Huon coast against the slowly retreating Japs. Finally in March after eight solid months of offensive operations it was withdrawn for a few weeks rest.

Meanwhile the 592d following the 532d from Australia teamed with the 112th Cavalry in the attack on Arawe, New Britain in December 1943 and provided a reinforced boat company for the 1st Marine Division when it assaulted Cape Gloucester shortly thereafter. Then in February the bulk of the Regiment was attached to the 1st Cavalry Division for the Admiralty Island campaign. After a ticklish time on Los Negros and a smart shore-to-shore operation across Seeadler Harbor to the main island of Manus, life for the 592d became relatively peaceful for several months.

The 542d received its baptism when it relieved the 532d at Tambu Bay near Salamaua and made its first major landing four months later at Saidor with the 126th Combat Team.

In April 1944 the bulk of the Brigade, except for the 592d, participated in the large task force that secured the Hollandia area. The 542d landed in Tanahmerah Bay with the 24th Infantry Division while the 532d under the 41st Infantry Division went ashore in Hollandia Harbor. In the next two months the 542d did an outstanding job in the Toem-Wadke area and in the attack on Biak Island.

On October 20th under the X Corps the 2d Brigade less the 542d landed in the vicinity of Tacloban, Leyte. The 532d was teamed with the 24th Infantry Division and the 592d with the 1st Cavalry. The combination of unusually heavy rainfall, intense Jap air attacks, and huge supply requirements of the divisions struggling for

the Ormoc Valley placed a heavy strain on the amphibian regiments. Particularly when the Carigara Road became impassable and the X Corps main line of supply became San Juanico Strait between Leyte and Samar, did the boat units prove their worth. In the final phase of the campaign when the Navy dashed briefly into the Camotes Sea to land the 77th Division below Ormoc and then withdrew, the gun and rocket LCMs of the 2d Brigade distinguished themselves by providing the sea bombardment of the town which was largely instrumental in its being overrun by the 77th with only a handful of casualties.

When the 24th Division in December grabbed strategic Mindoro Island, the 532d went with them. From there it participated in the seizures of Marinduque, Verde and Lubang Islands and provided the amphibian elements of the 41st division force that took Palawan.

Meanwhile the 592d now under the 38th Infantry Division landed on Luzon north of Subic Bay in January and participated in rapid succession in the seizure of Nasugbu and Mariveles and the assaults on Corregidor and Fort Drum. Spectacular close-in support was furnished in these operations by LCM gunboats and flame-thrower boats. This Regiment made many other landings on Southern Luzon including Legaspi.

In the Visayan campaign the 542d divided between the Americal and 40th Divisions landed on Panay, Cebu, and Negros in March, Bohol in April and, with the 108th RCT of the 40th Division, at Bugo in Northern Mindanao.

The entire Brigade was committed to the invasion of Kyushu with XI Corps whose objective was Ariakawan. In the initial occupation of the Yokohama-Tokyo area, elements of the 592d were among the first to set foot in Japan. Most of the Brigade spent the fall in Yokohama and at the end of the year returned to the United States to become part of the permanent establishment of the Army.

The 4th Brigade

The 4th Brigade was activated at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, February 1, 1943. Its cadres were principally from the 3d Brigade. Its fillers were youngsters fresh from reception centers. After a few weeks of concentrated basic training the units, the 534th, 544th, and 594th EB&SRs moved to Cape Cod to accomplish their primary boat and beach training. In September the entire Brigade moved to Carrabelle where its commander, Brigadier General Henry Hutchings, Jr., assumed the additional responsibility of command over the Army Ground Forces Training Center there. Combined exercises with the 4th Infantry Division were held during the winter, and by early spring the Brigade was enroute across the Pacific to New Guinea.

The headquarters and special troops arrived in Oro Bay in May 1944 and remained there until the end of the year. Their next station was Dagupan on Lingayen Gulf where they remained until Manila was cleared in March 1945. The Brigade in the Olympic operation was to be with I Corps in the Miyazaki area. After the surrender the headquarters joined I Corps and landed at Wakayama the day before the 533d. At the end of the year they were settled at Inuyama near Nagoya with prospects of remaining part of the occupation force indefinitely.

The 534th never operated as a full regiment because its Boat Battalion had the misfortune to be ordered to Brisbane early in 1944 to expedite the production of large steel fuel barges. What was expected to be an assignment of but a few months duration turned out to last until shortly before the war's end. As a result the Boat Battalion arrived in Luzon after the end of the campaign.

The rest of the Regiment arrived at Milne Bay in May 1944 and after a shake-down stay at Oro Bay moved to Aitape where it joined the 124th Combat Team for the Morotai landing in September. After two months there it moved back to Biak where it became attached to the 158th Combat Team for the Lingayen Gulf landing. On S+2 this force landed on White Beach, and the 534th worked for the 533d until March when it relieved the 544th at Dagupan. As soon as San Fernando was cleared of Japs, it moved there and operated under control of Base M until the surrender. In the occupation the Regiment, at last consisting of two battalions, was attached to the 25th Infantry Division and landed in mid-October at Nagoya.

The 544th debarked originally at Oro Bay in May and moved to the Sarmi-Wadke area in August. Its first assault landing was made with the 31st Infantry Division on Morotai in the Halmahera Group on September 15. In the succeeding weeks it made several small landings around Morotai and on Rao and other off-lying islands. In mid-November the Regiment less Boat Battalion took ship for Bougainville to stage with the 37th Infantry Division for Luzon. Company A, 533d joined them in the staging area as substitutes for their boat elements which could not be transported there in time. At Lingayen Gulf the 544th initially landed just west of the Dagupan River and within two days was operating Dagupan Port two miles upstream. Its Boat Battalion rejoined it there at the end of January. Early in March the Regiment moved to Manila where it did harbor work until the end of the War. Elements of both battalions supported the 38th Division in the Lake Taal area and Companies F and C reinforced by 543d boat units made the landing at Aparri in July. From Aringway the 544th, attached to the 33d Infantry Division, sailed to Wakayama where it remained indefinitely.

The 594th's Boat Battalion arrived in Milne Bay in time to relieve the 543d in the boat plant of the 5211th Steel Hull Battalion in April. The balance of the Regiment debarked at Oro Bay the following month. In June Company B joined the 11th Australian Division on New Britain and supported the siege of Rabaul for seven months. The rest of the Boat Battalion moved to Cape Gloucester relieving the 533d. In November Regimental Headquarters and the Shore Battalion followed to Cape Gloucester and staged there with the 40th Infantry Division for Luzon. At Lingayen Gulf the Regiment less B Company landing with the 40th Division handled the extreme right flank beach. Six weeks later, while the battle for Manila reached its climax in Intramuros, the 594th moved overland and by water to Balut Island in northwest Manila where they killed over 100 Japs before being able to organize their beach and unload the first waterborne supplies to be received by the city. The Regiment's assignment in the occupation force took it to Yokohama where it eventually relieved the 2d Brigade's homeward bound units.

The 1st Brigade

Only ten days after the activation of the Engineer Amphibian Command at Camp Edwards, the 1st Brigade was created on June 15, 1942 by redesignation of two engineer combat regiments. After a bare six weeks of preliminary training it was hastily brought to full strength and sent to the New York Port of Embarkation and thence to England. There it continued its training but lost all its boats to the navies of Britain and America. Its regiments both became shore regiments and its quarter-master battalion plus some of its boat units were converted to DUKW companies.

Late in November the Brigade sailed from Glasgow to North Africa and engaged partly in port work and partly in amphibian training of units scheduled for the Sicilian and Italian campaigns. It received its baptism of fire on Sicily in July 1943 and made a spectacular contribution to the grim struggle for the Salerno beachhead in September. Not only did the Brigade's shore parties perform their normal duties with fine indifference to the intensive artillery bombardments and air attacks the Germans flung at the beach, but in addition when Nazi counterattacks almost cut the beachhead in two, one of the amphibian regiments was hastily thrown into the breach and won high praise from the veteran 45th Division for its part in hurling back the Germans. In January and February elements of the Brigade formed part of the VI Corps which landed at Anzio. This entire beachhead remained under incessant artillery fire for three months and the shore engineers suffered numerous casualties as they kept badly needed supplies moving ashore.

The bulk of the Brigade moved back to England in the latter part of 1943 to prepare for the invasion of Normandy. On June 6, 1944 the Brigade supporting the 4th Division landed at Utah Beach on the base of the Cotentin Peninsula. This beach, the westernmost of those assaulted on D day was not as hotly defended as Omaha Beach, but well concealed artillery gave it a considerable working over. The bulk of the VII Corps which seized Cherbourg landed on Utah Beach, and the rapidity with which this vital port was overrun was due in part to the fine work of the Brigade's shore parties and DUKW companies. The Brigade remained in France for the following six months helping to handle the prodigious quantities of material and supplies required by the First and Third Armies.

Christmas 1944 found the Brigade on shipboard bound for the U.S.A., one of the very first units to be redeployed to the Pacific. After a winter at Fort Dix and Fort Lewis, Brigade headquarters sailed for Okinawa where it took charge of all the Tenth Army's unloading after the first few days. Its regiments did not participate in this campaign but were to have arrived in the Pacific in time for the Tenth Army's attack on Honshu in the spring of 1946. The elements of the Brigade in Okinawa moved with the XXIV Corps to occupy Korea early in September 1945. There they remained until inactivated in February 1946.

The 540th Engineer Shore Regiment originally activated in September 1942 was not initially assigned to any brigade. It was attached to the North African landing force, sailed from Norfolk in October 1942 and landed at Casablanca with the first waves. Though the fight there lasted only a couple of days, the 540th suffered casualties and thus became the first amphibian engineer outfit to participate in actual

combat. Its subsequent career was in the Mediterranean Theatre where it participated in the Sicilian and Italian campaigns and finished up with the assault on Southern France in August 1944.

The 5th and 6th Brigades

Activated originally as the 336th Engineer General Service Regiment in July 1942 at Camp Rucker, Alabama and then redesignated the 119th Engineer Combat Group, the 5th Brigade's men first entered the amphibian field at Fort Pierce, Florida where the Group was attached to the Atlantic Fleet's amphibian training center. After two months training there it moved to Virginia for the summer of 1943 and sailed for England from Boston in October.

Upon arrival in England it was reorganized into the 5th Engineer Special Brigade with its battalions designated as shore battalions. Together with the 6th Brigade it formed the 20,000-strong shore party at Omaha Beach, Normandy. This beach on June 6, 1944 was vigorously defended by strongly fortified German troops and others accidentally maneuvering nearby. For several hours it was touch and go whether the 1st and 29th Divisions could retain their tenuous toehold. The amphibians landing in early waves with no previous combat experience took much punishment but never faltered in accomplishing their mission.

During the succeeding year the Brigade saw service in various parts of Europe but no more amphibian operations. It participated in the battle of the "Bulge" and the final lunge across central Europe. In July 1945 it returned to New York en route to the Philippines where plans were made to reorganize it to match the SWPA brigades, with its boat battalions to be cadred from veteran boatmen of the 2d, 3d, and 4th Brigades. The Japanese surrender found the Brigade at Carrabelle, and it remained there until inactivated in October 1945.

Like the 5th Brigade, the 6th ESB started out as the 146th Engineer Combat Regiment and then became the 116th Engineer Combat Group. After basic training in Texas early in 1943 it was attached to the Atlantic Fleet's training center at Fort Pierce, Florida during August and September of that year. It spent the fall in Virginia and arrived in England in January 1944. Less than three weeks before D day it was reorganized like the 5th Brigade and renamed 6th ESB.

Its experiences on Omaha Beach were identical with those of its sister brigade. Later it found itself relieved of amphibian work and assigned to the Third Army with which it participated in the Rhineland campaign and the drive across central Germany. In July 1945 the Brigade returned to the United States for redeployment to the Philippines and further reorganization, but went no farther than Carrabelle, where it was inactivated simultaneously with the 5th Brigade.

* * * * *

Altogether over 50,000 amphibian engineers saw action in the various sea-borne assaults, and except for operations in the Central Pacific prior to Okinawa, no major American landing was made without the assistance of some unit, great or small, of amphibian engineers.

CHRONOLOGY

533d EB&SR

1942

WORLD WAR II

MAY

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| | 6 | Corregidor surrenders. |
| | 7 | Jap invasion of Australia turned back in battle of Coral Sea. |
| Joint Chiefs of Staff issue orders directing creation of amphibian engineer units. | 9 | |

JUNE

- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| Engineer Amphibian Command activated at Camp Edwards. | 5 | |
| | 7 | Jap thrust at Hawaiian Islands decisively beaten in battle of Midway. |
| | 10 | Japs occupy Attu and Kiska in the Aleutian Islands. |
| 1st Engineer Amphibian Brigade activated at Camp Edwards. | 15 | |
| 2d Engineer Amphibian Brigade activated at Camp Edwards. | 20 | |
| | 21 | Tobruk falls to Rommel's Army. |
| | 28 | Germans launch huge offensive in Russia. |

JULY

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| | 5 | Rommel halted at El Alamein. |
|--|---|------------------------------|

AUGUST

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| | 7 | 1st Marine Division lands on Guadalcanal. |
| 3d Engineer Amphibian Brigade, including 533d Engineer Shore Regiment and 593d Engineer Boat Regiment, activated at Camp Edwards. | 8 | |
| | 19 | Costly raid by Canadians on Dieppe. |
| Colonel C. T. Tench assumes command of 533d ESR. | 21 | |
| | 25 | Battle of Stalingrad begins. |
| | 25-31 | Allies drive off Jap attempt to seize Milne Bay. |
| Colonel O. W. van den Berg assumes command of 593d EBR. | 28 | |
| 2d Battalion, 593d EBR moves from Camp Edwards to Cotuit. | 31 | |

SEPTEMBER

- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| Boat Battalion in first tactical exercise makes night landing on No Man's Land. | 12 | |
| | 15 | Japs repulsed in attempt to take Port Moresby over Owen Stanley Mountains. |
| First antiaircraft machine gun firing at Popponesett. | 29 | |

OCTOBER

- | | | |
|--|-------|---|
| Basic training for boat men on Nantucket Sound and shore engineers on Sandy Neck and other Cape Cod beaches. | 1-31 | Battles rage at Stalingrad and Guadalcanal. |
| | 24-27 | Rommel decisively defeated at El Alamein. |
| 3d Brigade alerted for move to Carrabelle. | 25 | |

533d EB&SR

NOVEMBER

WORLD WAR II

- | | | |
|--|-------|---|
| | 7 | American and British forces invade French North Africa. |
| 533d ESR is redesignated 533d Engineer Amphibian Regiment, receives 2d Battalion of 593d EBR and sends 2d and 3d Battalions to 593d and 543d Engineer Amphibian Regiments. | 9 | |
| Boat Battalion moves by train from Camp Edwards to Carrabelle, Florida. | 10-12 | |
| Shore Battalion and regimental headquarters move by train from Camp Edwards to Carrabelle. | 13-15 | |
| | 21 | Beginning of struggle to oust Japs from Buna-Gona area of New Guinea. |
| | 24 | Seige of Stalingrad broken. |
| Training with 38th Division begins at G Beach. | 26 | |

DECEMBER

- | | | |
|---|-------|--------------------------------|
| First regimental combat team landing with 149th Infantry. | 11 | |
| First full division landing problem with 38th Division—horrible fiasco. | 17-20 | |
| | 25 | Allies bogged down in Tunisia. |
| Rerun of muffed 38th Division exercise. | 29-31 | |

1943

JANUARY

- | | | |
|--|--------------|---|
| 3d Brigade landing exercises on Dog Island. | 6, 9, 21, 26 | |
| | 19 | Buna-Gona fight ends with fall of Sanananda |
| | 23 | British Eighth Army takes Tripoli. |
| Cadre for 4th Brigade departs for Ft. Devens, causing considerable shuffling of assignments. | 25 | |
| | 31 | Stalingrad battle ends with surrender of German Sixth Army. |

FEBRUARY

- | | | |
|--|-------|--|
| Beginning of joint training with 112th Infantry and Special Troops of 28th Division. | 2 | |
| | 9 | Jap resistance on Guadalcanal ends. |
| 3d Brigade landing exercise at Red Beach. | 9-10 | |
| | 14 | Americans defeated at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia. |
| Combat team landing with 112th Infantry. | 24-25 | |

MARCH

- | | |
|--|-----|
| Full 28th Division landing at Red Beach. | 4-6 |
| Night of the big storm. | 5-6 |
| Salvage of wrecked boats. | 6-8 |
| Army's Amphibian Training command abolished. | 9 |
| Special landing problem for benefit of news reels. | 10 |
| Beginning of intensive rifle marksmanship training. | 11 |
| Special landing problem to impress conference of Dixie governors. | 25 |
| Boat Battalion turns in all landing craft in preparation for move to West Coast. | 30 |
| First regimental review. | 31 |

533d EB&SR	APRIL	WORLD WAR II
Colonel Tench relinquishes command.	1	
Firing for record with M-1 Rifle.	1-17	
Detachment of Boat Battalion takes 23 staff boats 440 miles to Fort Pierce, Florida.	9-12	
Regiment moves by rail to Ford Ord, California.	21-27	
	MAY	
	11	7th Division lands on Attu.
	12	Decisive Allied victory in Tunisia.
Boat Battalion at Presidio of Monterey for surf training.	19-28	
Colonel W. S. Moore assumes command of of Regiment.	22	
533d Engineer Amphibian Regiment redesignated 533d Engineer Boat & Shore Regiment.	25	
Boat Battalion plus detachment of Shore Battalion moves by truck to Desert for antiaircraft training.	29-June 6	
Regiment, after receiving over 500 replacements, is virtually at full strength.	31	
	JUNE	
First 3d Brigade review.	12	
Boat Battalion at Monterey for training tests of boat platoons.	17-29	
War Department and Engineer Amphibian Command training inspection, including landing problem.	22	
	30	Landings on Woodlark, Kiriwina, Nassau Bay and New Georgia start major Allied offensive in SWPA.
	JULY	
Company B establishes camp on Carmel Beach for intensive boat and maintenance training.	1	
Second regimental review.	3	
Colonel Moore assumes command of Brigade during General Ogden's trip to SWPA.	5	Germans launch great offensive in Russia directed at Kursk.
	10	Allies invade Sicily.
Company A replaces Company B at Carmel Beach camp.	22	
Company C wins company honors and 533d wins regimental honors in Brigade track meet.	24	
About half of Shore Battalion moves to Albany race track for cargo handling training at Oakland Port of Embarkation.	25	
	AUGUST	
	5	Munda air field on New Guinea captured by 43d, 37th and 25th Divisions.
	7	German thrust in Russia halted and thrown back.
B Company designated for early shipment overseas to ferry boats from Australia to New Guinea.	8	
Company C replaces Company A at Carmel Beach.	15	
563d Boat Maintenance Battalion moves to port of embarkation.	16	
Boat Battalion less Company B moves 450 miles down the California coast in LCPLs and Rs to Oceanside.	24-30	

533d EB&SR

SEPTEMBER

WORLD WAR II

Training exercises at Oceanside, California,
with 4th Marine Division.

1-12

3

Italy surrenders.

4

532d EB&SR attached to 9th Australian
Division participates in first large am-
phibian attack in SWPA, a few miles east of
Lae.

563d Boat Maintenance Battalion sails for
New Guinea.

7

9

Allies land at Salerno on Italian mainland.

11

Salamaua, New Guinea, falls to 41st Division.

Regiment receives official alert for overseas
movement.

13

Boat Battalion less Company B returns by
truck to Fort Ord.

14-15

16

Lae, New Guinea, captured by Aussies.

3d Brigade CPX tests communications and
staff work for major landings.

20-21

OCTOBER

1

Fifth Army occupies Naples.

2

Aussies capture Finschhafen.

Final training in new weapons and equipment.
563d Maintenance Battalion debarks at Milne
Bay.

1-20

14

Company B and Shore Battalion called to port
of embarkation to sail 5 November.

22

Company B and Shore Battalion load freight
Cars.

29

Sailing date postponed indefinitely.

30

NOVEMBER

1

3d Marine Division lands on Bougainville.

6

Russians capture Kiev.

1200 mile cruise to Mexico demonstrates long
range possibilities of small landing craft.

8-17

Company B and Shore Battalion again called
to port of embarkation to sail November 23.

10

Shore Battalion and Company B finally en-
train for Camp Stoneman.

21

21-23

Tarawa and Makin, Gilbert Islands, cap-
tured.

Shore Battalion and Company B aboard *USS*
West Point sail out the Golden Gate.

24

DECEMBER

Regimental Headquarters Company moves
from Fort Ord to Camp Stoneman.

2

West Point anchors in Milne Bay.

10

Shore Battalion debarks and pitches camp on
north shore of Milne Bay.

11

Company B debarks and reloads on *SS Cape*
Meers for Australia.

14-16

15

112th Cavalry Regiment lands at Arawe,
New Britain.

Boat Battalion less Company B entrains at Ft.
Ord for Camp Stoneman.

17

Advance party of Shore Battalion moves from
Milne Bay to Cape Cretin.

19

Company B lands at Townsville and moves to
Cairns by rail.

19-21

533d EB&SR

DECEMBER (continued)

WORLD WAR II

Shore Battalion aboard <i>SS Josiah Earle</i> moves from Milne Bay to Cape Cretin.	21-24	
Regiment less Shore Battalion and Company B sails from San Francisco aboard <i>SS Cape Perpetua</i> .	22	
	26	1st Marine Division lands at Cape Gloucester.
Company B starts joint training with 6th Division (Australian) north of Cairns.	27	

1944

JANUARY

	2	126th RCT lands at Saidor.
Shore Battalion takes over operation of Sixth Army Base beach at Cape Cretin.	5	
Company A, 563d EBM Battalion moves to Langamak Bay to support 2d ESB.	7	
	9	Russia reenters Poland.
Company A debarks from <i>Cape Perpetua</i> at Milne Bay.	14	
Lt. Farkas leads scouting mission to Umboi Island.	15-16	Feb.
Company C, Regimental, and Boat Battalion Headquarters Company debark at Melauna Bay, Goodenough.	16	
Company C commences boat operations at Goodenough.	18	
Company A starts convoy runs from Milne Bay to Goodenough.	19	
	22	Anglo-American VI Corps lands at Anzio near Rome.
	31	Central Pacific forces invade Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands.

FEBRUARY

Regiment ordered to take over amphibious support of task forces at Cape Gloucester and Saidor by 1 March.	4	
A Company moves from Milne Bay to Goodenough.	13	
	15	New Zealanders occupy Green Island south-east of Rabaul.
Boat Battalion less Company B in organic craft moves via Oro Bay to Finschhafen.	18-21	
	19-22	Eniwetok in Marshall Islands captured.
Regimental Headquarters Company and Medical Detachment move from Goodenough to Finschhafen. Regimental CP established on Nugudu Peninsula.	21-23	
Boat Battalion Headquarters Company and Company A arrive at Cape Gloucester.	24	
Shore Battalion, less Company F, and Company C arrive at Saidor.	25	
Company A's boats help 5th Marines take Iboki plantation.	26	
Company A, 563d EBM Battalion arrives at Borgen Bay, New Britain.	28	
	29	1st Cavalry Division reconnaissance lands at Los Negros, Admiralty Islands.

533D EB&SR	MARCH	WORLD WAR II
Company F arrives at Borgen Bay from Cretin.	3	
Company C participates in Yalau Plantation attack with 128th Infantry.	5	
5th Marines with Company A and parts of Company F and Boat Battalion Headquarters Company attached makes assault landing at Volupai (Talasea) New Britain.	6	
	10	Japs from Burma invade northeast India.
Company A boats land 1st Marines at Linga-Linga Plantation, Eleonora Bay, New Britain.	11	
	15	Fifth Army stopped cold in Italy by German defense of Cassino.
B Company relieved from attachment to Australian I Corps to await shipment to New Guinea.	20	
	21	Russians reenter Rumania.
	26	Marines land at Emirau completing encirclement of Rabaul area.
APRIL		
Company F takes over beach at Borgen Bay.	3	
General MacArthur brought ashore in Company A LCVF at Borgen Bay.	19	
	22	24th, 32d, and 41st Divisions land at Aitape and Hollandia on New Guinea.
Company C moves from Saidor to Cape Gloucester.	22-23	
533d LCMs carry 185th Infantry from Borgen Bay to Talasea and bring back 5th Marines.	24-25	
Shore Battalion relieved from duty at Saidor to prepare for Wakde Island operation.	29	
MAY		
Rear echelon Company C arrives at Borgen Bay from Saidor.	3	
Shore Battalion on <i>SS Wm. N. Byers</i> sails from Saidor to Aitape via Hollandia. Detour causes it to be dropped from Wakde Island task force.	8-13	
Landing at Cape Hoskins, New Britain.	8	
	11	Allies resume offensive in Italy.
Shore Battalion takes over beach at Aitape.	14	
First inland reconnaissance by LCMGs executed on Kapiura River, New Britain.	15	
Company B moves into town of Cairns to stage for New Guinea.	15	
	19	163d Combat Team invades Wakde Island and nearby shore of New Guinea.
	27	Balance of 41st Division lands on Biak Island.
Unauthorized and unopposed landing at Garove, Vitu Islands, north of New Britain.	28	
JUNE		
108th RCT moved from Borgen Bay to Arawe in A and C Company boats.	5-13	
	6	Allies invade Normandy.
Advanced detail of Company B arrives at Finschhafen by air.	14	
	15	V Amphibious Corps lands on Saipan. First B-29 raids on Japan.

533d EB&SR	JUNE (continued)	WORLD WAR II
Boat Battalion Headquarters Company and Company C in organic craft move from New Britain to Seleo Island off Aitape.	23-26	
	27	Cherbourg captured by American VII Corps.
	JULY	
Scheduled shore-to-shore attack of 124th RCT (31st Division) from Aitape to Naparake canceled because of Jap break-through on the Driniumor River.	2 13	158 RCT seizes Noemfoor Island.
B Company arrives at Finschhafen from Cairns. Battle of Driniumor River results in virtual annihilation of Jap XVIII Army; LCMGs, DUKWs see considerable action.	14-8 Aug.	
	20	III Amphibious Corps assaults Guam.
	25	Americans break out of Normandy beach-head.
	30	6th Division lands at Sansopar near western tip of New Guinea.
	AUGUST	
C Company crews fly from Aitape to Milne Bay to receive and bring forward the first group of replacement boats.	4	
	15	Southern France invaded by American Seventh Army.
Regimental Headquarters Company and Company B move in organic craft from Finschhafen to Aitape and Seleo Island.	19-29	
Company F moves from Borgen Bay to Aitape in B Company LCMs.	25 29-3 Sept.	Paris liberated.
	SEPTEMBER	
Warning orders for attack on Talaud Islands with 32d Division on October 15 received by Regiment.	3	
Talaud operation canceled.	10 15	Americans cross German border. Morotai, Dutch East Indies, and Pelilieu, Western Carolines, invaded.
LCMGs support advance of 103d Infantry from Babieng to Suain Plantation.	16-17	
LCMGs save Company F, 172d Infantry from disaster on Danmap River—extreme limit of American advance toward Wewak.	20	
	OCTOBER	
Beach at Lemieng Village, Aitape, abandoned because of heavy surf, and operations shifted to Aitape Cove.	1	
	20 21 26	Sixth Army invades Leyte. First Army captures Aachen.
LCMGs enter Wewak area on unsuccessful attempt to rescue RAAF flyers.		
	NOVEMBER	
Planning for Lingayen Gulf landing on December 20 commences.	12	
Company A moves from Borgen Bay, New Britain to Seleo Island.	14-17	

533d EB&SR

NOVEMBER (continued)

WORLD WAR II

Company A makes hasty move from Seleo Island back to Finschhafen. 24-26

A Company moves on naval transports from Finschhafen to Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville. 27-1 Dec.

Transports arrive in Aitape Roads to take 43d Division and 533d less Company A to Luzon. 30

DECEMBER

Lingayen Gulf "S" Day postponed 20 days to 9 January; 60 LCMs and crews attached to transports. 1

Loading of supplies and vehicles in heavy surf. 5-24

7

77th Division lands at Ormoc, western Leyte.

15

24 Division lands on Mindoro Island, southwest of Luzon.

A Company with 37th Division leaves Bougainville aboard naval transports. 16

von Rundstedt launches last German offensive.

A Company participates in rehearsals off Lae, New Guinea. 18-19

A Company arrives at Manus Island. 21

Troops embark at Aitape. 26

Rehearsal at Aitape. 27

Convoy sails from Aitape. 28

Boat Battalion rear echelon moves to Hollandia to await turnaround shipping. 28-29

37th Division convoy sails from Manus Island. 31

1945

JANUARY

Convoy enters Philippine waters. 4

Regiment lands at White Beach, San Fabian. 9

12

Sixth Army lands at Lingayen Gulf.

Russians commence last great winter offensive.

Assault phase terminates and Regiment passes to operational control of Base M. 19

Boat Battalion brings out guerrilla battalion from Aringay. 19-20

29

38th Division lands at Subic Bay.

Regimental rear echelon arrives at San Fabian from Aitape. 30

White Beach 2 reorganized with 543d and 533d Shore Battalions handling unloading of LCMs and LCTs respectively. 31

11th Airborne Division lands at Nusugbu, south of Manila Bay.

FEBRUARY

A Company moves from Dagupan River to Bued River. 4

10

37th and 1st Cavalry Divisions enter Manila.

543d relieved on White Beach; 533d Shore Battalion takes over LCM beach while 534th begins to handle LCTs. 12

16

Air- and sea-borne assault on Corregidor.

Regiment advised it would make shore-to-shore attack northward on Luzon. 18

19

Marines land on Iwo Jima.

Convoy service to guerrilla-held points and PT refueling station on northern Luzon inaugurated. 25

28

186th RCT lands on Palawan Island.

533d EB&SR	MARCH	WORLD WAR II
Regiment alerted for operation on Mindanao.	6	
	7	Remagen beachhead across Rhine seized by 9th Armored Division.
	10	41st Division lands at Zamboanga.
First real information of new operation received.	15	
	18	40th Division invades Panay.
Regiment relieved from operational control of Base M.	20	
	23	Main crossing of the lower Rhine.
Regiment ceases operations on White Beach.	26	
	27	Americal Division lands on Cebu.
	29	40th Division invades Negros.
Boat Battalion in organic craft departs Lingayen Gulf.	31	
APRIL		
Boat Battalion stops over at Subic Bay.	1	Tenth Army invades Okinawa; 158th RCT lands at Lingayen; Ruhr encircled by First and Ninth Armies.
Boat Battalion arrives Mangarin Bay, Mindoro.	2-3	
Rest of Regiment on LSTs moves from Lingayen Gulf to Mindoro.	4-6	
	5	Joint MacArthur-Nimitz command of all Pacific forces announced for invasion of Japan.
Regiment attached to 24th Division begins to load out at Mindoro.	8	
B Company convoy departs for Zamboanga.	10	
A Company convoy departs for Zamboanga.	11	
Rehearsal of operation held at Mindoro.		
C Company convoy departs for Zamboanga.	12	President Roosevelt dies.
	13	Russians capture Vienna.
Naval convoy leaves Mindoro.	14	
Drastic change in plans as Army and Navy convoys join off Zamboanga.	16	
"R" Day landings at Malabang and Parang, Mindanao.	17	
Beginning of Mindanao River operations; seizure of Cotabato and Lomopog.	18	
Capture of Carmen Ferry ends offensive phase of Mindanao River operation.	22	Russians in Berlin.
	25	Russians and Americans meet on the Elbe River.
Platoon of B Company and Company F leave for Davao Gulf.	30	
MAY		
	1	Australians land at Tarakan, Borneo.
Platoon of B Company and Company F join 24th Division at Santa Cruz in Davao Gulf.	3	
Davao River ferry inaugurated and Talomo Beach established.	4	
Malabang Beach closed down and D Company moved to Parang.	5	
	7	Germans surrender.
	8	V-E Day.
Shore-to-shore operation against Samal Island, Davao Gulf.	9	
	10	108th RCT lands at Macajalar Bay, Mindanao.
	12	Australians finally capture Wewak.

533D EB&SR

MAY (continued)

WORLD WAR II

- 13 Capture of Balete Pass after bitter struggle seals fate of Japs on Luzon.
- Balance of B Company moves from Cotabato to Talomo. 17-19
- 24 31st Division and 108th RCT meet on Sayre Highway.
- Companies A, E and Boat Battalion Headquarters move from Parang via Zamboanga to Bugo. 20-June 2

JUNE

- Assault landing at Luayon Point, Davao Gulf. 1
- Assault landing on Balut Island, Davao Gulf. 4
- Assault landing at Cape St. Augustin. 5
- 10 Australians land at Brunei Bay, Borneo.
- B Company platoon leaves Talomo for run up east coast of Mindanao to Agusan River. 19
- Regimental Headquarters Company moves from Parang to Bugo overland and by LSMs. 19-21
- 21 Jap resistance ceases on Okinawa.
- 25
- Regiment less Boat Battalion alerted to move to Oahu to stage for invasion of Japan.
- Using A and B Company boats, 155th RCT is moved 100 miles up Agusan River to trap last Japs in northern Mindanao. 25-30

JULY

- 1 Australians land at Balikpapan, Borneo.
- 4 MacArthur announces Philippine campaign completed.
- Headquarters Company Shore Battalion and Company D leave Parang for Bugo. 8
- Company F departs Talomo for Leyte. 10
- B Company boats with 21st RCT make final amphibious assault of the War at head of Sarangani Bay. 12
- Regiment less Boat Battalion moves from Bugo to Leyte. 14-15
- Colonel Moore takes command of 3d ESB and is succeeded in 533d by Lt. Col. Amory. 20
- 26 Allied heads of governments at Potsdam give Japs conditions for unconditional surrender.
- Regimental Headquarters Company sails from Leyte for Oahu. 30

AUGUST

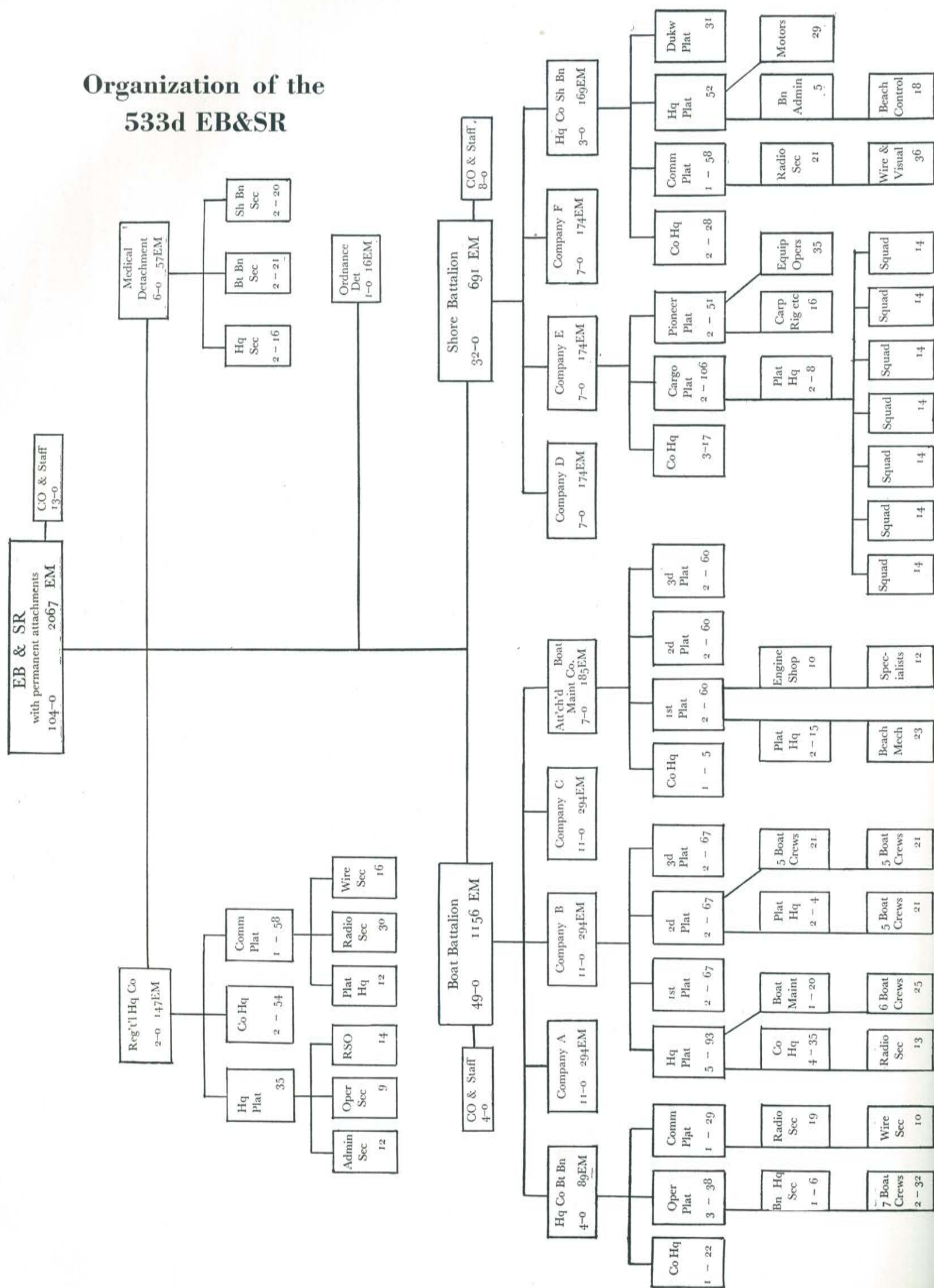
- Shore Battalion sails for Oahu from Leyte. 4
- 6 First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.
- 8 Russians enter War against Japan.
- 10 Japs sue for peace, but announce certain reservations to Potsdam terms.
- Regimental Headquarters Company arrives at Oahu. 14
- Japs accept President Truman's terms; War over.
- Regiment alerted for occupation duty in Japan. 15
- Shore Battalion arrives at Oahu. 18
- Loading out commences at Oahu. 25
- 28 First American troops under Colonel Tench land in Japan at Atsugi.
- Convoys sail from Oahu for Japan. 31-Sept. 4

533d EB&SR	SEPTEMBER	WORLD WAR II
	1	Japs sign surrender in Tokyo Bay.
	2	V-J Day.
Company C moves from Bugo to Zamboanga to load out 41st Division.	13	
Layover at Saipan for Shore Battalion and Regimental Headquarters.	17-21	
Convoy with Boat Battalion less B Company leaves Mindanao after picking up X Corps, Company A and Headquarters Company at Bugo.	20	
Regiment less Boat Battalion lands with 98th Division at Wakayama.	27	
Regiment less Boat Battalion re-embarks for Hiro.	29-30	
OCTOBER		
Convoy from Mindanao rides out typhoon off Okinawa.	1-3	
Landing with 41st Division at Hiro-Kure.	6	
Regiment less B Company concentrated at Kure Naval Base; B Company departs from Talomo for Japan with 24th Division.	15	
B Company lands at Mitsuhamma, Shikoku.	22	
100 point officers and 83 point men entrain for Nagoya.	25	
Boats turned over to harbor craft companies and Boat Battalion becomes inactive.	27	
NOVEMBER		
Regiment relieved from X Corps and attached to Kure Base.	4	
80-81 point men leave for Nagoya.	5	
All men with less than 60 points transferred to other units except for small selected caretaker detachment.	6	
Final turning in of equipment of all types; Regiment becomes virtually inactive.	13-19	
71 point men and 90 point officers leave for Nagoya reducing Regiment's strength to 40 officers and 400 men.	14	
Remainder of Regiment moves from Kure to Koyama, half way to Hiroshima.	24	
60-70 point men and 73-89 point officers leave for Nagoya.	29-Dec. 5	
DECEMBER		
"Regiment" reduced to 40 men, attached to 1874th Engineer Aviation Battalion, moves back to Kure.	4	
Regiment inactivated.	31	



PART THREE

Organization of the 533d EB&SR



Summary of Personnel according to modified T/O adopted by 533d EB&SR 6 December 1944

Rank or Grade	Reg't'l Hq. & Hq. Co.	Boat Bn Hq. & Hq. Co.	Boat Co.	Attch'd Maint. Co.	Boat Bn Total	Shore Bn Hq. & Hq. Co.	Shore Co.	Shore Bn Total	Medical Det.	Ord- nance Det.	Regi- ment Total
Colonel	1				1	1		1			1
Lt. Colonel	1	1			1	2		2			3
Major	2				7	4		7	1		6
Captain	6	3	1	1	38	4	1	22	3		23
Lieutenant	4	4	10	4	2	4	6		2	1	67
Warrant Officer	2			2							4
Sub Total Officer	16	9	11	7	49	11	7	32	6	1	104
Master Sergeant	5			1	1						6
First Sergeant	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	4			10
Technical Sergeant	1	1	4	4	17		2	6		1	26
Staff Sergeant	7	4	13	5	48	8	8	32	1		88
Technician Third Grade	7	6	2	12	24	4		4	2	1	38
Sergeant	2	1	3	4	14	4	9	31	1		48
Technician Fourth Grade	23	20	63	38	247	12	16	60	6	3	339
Corporal	1	2	1	4	9	1	11	34	3		47
Technician Fifth Grade	37	28	102	68	402	45	29	132	16	6	593
Private and Private First Class	63	26	105	48	389	94	98	388	27	5	872
Sub Total enlisted	147	89	294	185	1156	169	174	691	57	16	2067
Aggregate	163	98	305	192	1205	180	181	723	63	17	2171

PRINCIPAL EQUIPMENT OF 533d EB&SR

NOTE: The following table does not accord with War Department Tables of Equipment as modified by officially approved Supplementary Lists of Equipment because at no time did the Regiment operate under these nor could it have. The summary set forth below shows certain major items of equipment as actually employed by the unit toward the end of the War.

	Unit	Regt'l Hq. Co.	Boat Bn Hq. Co.	A	B	C	1461st	Shore Bn Hq. Co.	D	E	F	Total
Boats												
63' Crash			2									2
LCM Gun			2	2	2	2						8
LCM Rocket				1	1	1						3
LCM Salvage				1	1	1	3					6
LCM Cargo				39	39	39						117
LCVP			3	8	8	8						27
LCS(S)				1	1	1						3
16' Utility			1	1	1	1	1					5
Total Boats			8	53	53	53	4					171
Engineer Equipment												
Dozer D-8									5	5	5	15
Dozer D-7				1	1	1	3		2	2	2	12
Tractor (light)									1	1	1	3
Shovel-Crane Crawler type (1½ yd.)									2	2	2	6
Crane 20-ton LeTourneau				1	1	1	3		1	1	1	9
Crane Truck Mounted									1	1	1	3
Grader Motorized									1	1	1	3
Grader Towed								1				1
Carryall 12 yd.									1	1	1	3
Carryall 3½ yd.								1				1
Air Compressor Mtzd.									1	1	1	3
Generators 5-15KVA	2		1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	15
Water Purif. Unit	1		1					2				4
Trailer 16-20-ton Flat Bed							3		2	2	2	9
Pump Trailer Mounted				1	1	1		1	1	1	1	7
Vehicles												
¼-ton Jeep	12		4	3	3	3	3	11	3	3	3	48
¾-ton Weapons Carrier	2							7				9
1½-ton Truck	1		1	1	1	1			1	1	1	8
2½-ton Truck	7		2	2	2	2	6	8	1	1	1	32
2½-ton Dumptruck	2			1	1	1			6	6	6	23
2½-ton DUKW	1							12				13
6-ton Prime Mover							1		1	1	1	4
Tank Truck 2½-4 Ton	1		1					4				6

Unit	Regt'l Hq. Co.	Boat Bn					Shore Bn				Total
		Hq. Co.	A	B	C	1461st	Hq. Co.	D	E	F	
Vehicles—cont.											
Shop Truck	3		1	1	1	9	4				19
Cargo Trailer	9	2	3	3	3	12	6	4	4	4	50
Water Trailer	1	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	16
Miscel. Vehicles	3		2	2	2	6	5	4	4	4	32
Total Vehicles	42	11	15	15	15	40	59	21	21	21	260
Heavy Weapons											
40 mm AA Gun		2	2	2	2						8
37 mm Automatic		2	2	2	2						8
37 mm AT Gun								2	2	2	6
25 mm or 20 mm AA		4	4	4	4						16
.50 Cal. Machine Gun	5	12	174	174	174	12	12	2	2	2	569
.30 Cal. Machine Gun		14	27	27	27			4	4	4	107
4.5 inch Barrage Rocket Launcher		6	38	38	38						120
Radio Equipment											
SCR 399 (300 Watt)	1										1
SCR 193 (75 Watt)	1	2									3
SCR 177 (75 Watt)	2	1					2				5
TCS 8 (40 Watt)		2	1	1	1						5
SCR 284 or 694 (25 Watt)	3	7	2	2	2		4				20
SCR 610 FM	1	1					1				3
SCR 300 FM	1	3	16	16	16		2	3	3	3	63

The regimental supply organization outside its office on Luzon.



Boats

Small Wooden Landing Craft

THE first type of landing craft used by the Engineer Amphibian Command was the old 36-foot LCPL (Landing Craft Personnel—Large), often called the Higgins “Eureka.” This boat was developed by Higgins to run in shoal water, travel through heavy seaweed, and land and retract from beaches. It was the father of all landing boats and the only one with a pointed bow. The original design was never changed, and the Navy still uses LCPLs as control and salvage boats on attack transports and also fixes them up as admirals’ barges. The LCPL has a spoon bow and is powered with either a 250-horsepower Hall-Scott gasoline engine or a Gray Marine Diesel. With a good propeller the boat could make 20 knots with a light load. It is an open cockpit type boat divided into two compartments by a transverse bulkhead. The craft is manned by a crew of three, has two .30 calibre machine guns mounted in two scarf rings forward, and carries only 16 fully armed troops or 6000 lbs. of cargo. The LCPL, as such, was never used overseas in the Pacific by the Engineer Special Brigades, but in training in the United States it was used as a troop carrier, wave leader, patrol boat, and command ship. This craft has wonderful seagoing abilities as proved by its performance during the Carrabelle hurricane, the long trip off the coast of California, and in repeated beachings in the very heavy surf at Monterey.

The second type of landing craft used by the Engineer Amphibian Command was the LCPR (Landing Craft Personnel—Ramp). It is very similar to the LCPL except that it has a small ramp, 3'5 $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide, through which an ammunition cart can pass.

LCPL with troops debarking over the side.



All the LCPRs used by the EAC were originally powered by Buda Diesels which with only 105 horsepower proved inadequate, so Hall-Scott 250-horsepower Invaders replaced them giving the LCPR nearly the same speed as the LCPL. This boat, like the LCPL, weighs 12,500 lbs. but carries 29 troops or 6000 lbs. of cargo. It is also 36' long, 10'9" beam, 3'0" draft, has two .30 calibre machine guns, and carries a crew of three. It has one large open cockpit divided in half by a transverse bulkhead and a $\frac{1}{4}$ " armored steel door across the ramp passage-way. The Navy used LCPRs on the older converted APDs, because their small ramps permitted troops to be unloaded much more easily than from LCPLs. But once APDs were designed to carry the heavier LCVP, the LCPR saw no further combat service. The amphibian engineers, though using them extensively in training, had none overseas.



LCPR

The third type of landing barge used only in the United States by the EAC was the LCV (Landing Craft Vehicle). This boat is also 36' long, 10'9" beam, 3'0" draft, weight 13,000 lbs., unarmored, and has a capacity of 38 troops or 6000 lbs. cargo or one jeep, which its square ramp across the bow 6'1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide enables it to load. While the LCPL and the LCPR have somewhat of a pointed bow, the LCV was the first landing barge that really pushed the water with its square bow. The ramp on the LCV was in most cases made of steel, raised and lowered by a ramp winch aft which two of the crew of three operated. The engine was installed in one of two positions, either way aft in the stern with a V-drive gear box, or about two-thirds of the way aft. The coxswain's steering wheel and controls were on the after deck, where he had no protection from enemy gunfire and presented a wonderful target for

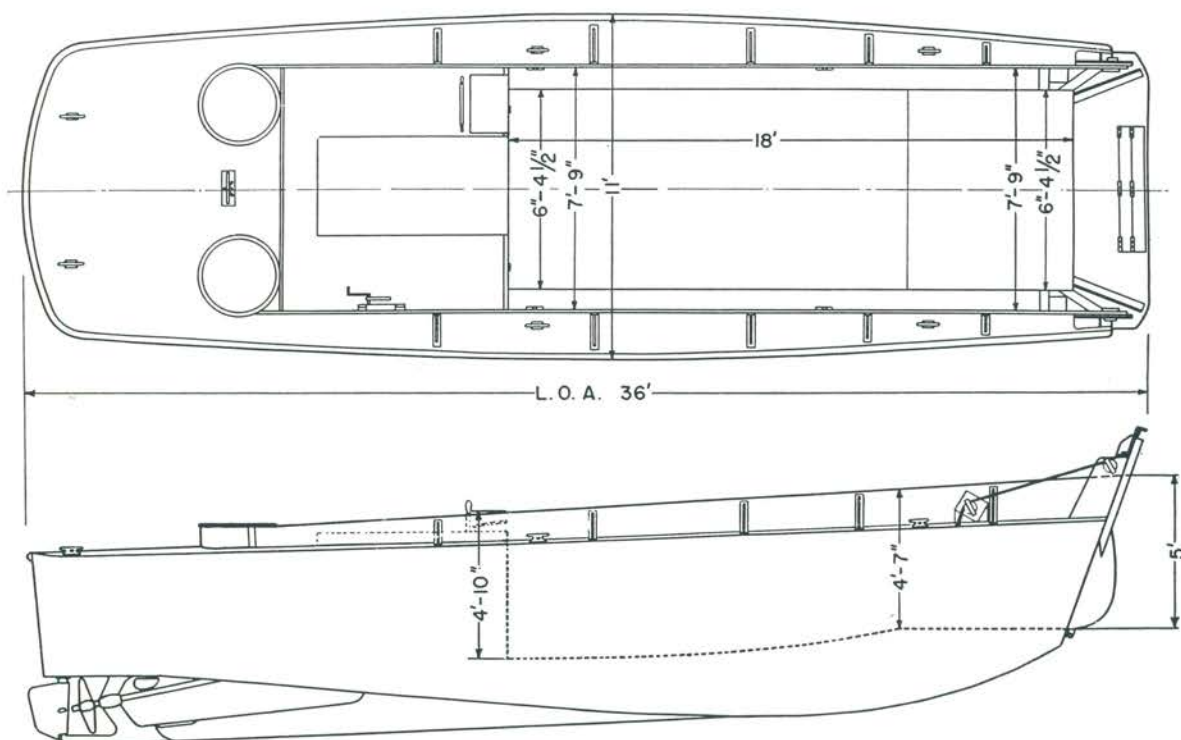
Top: Left to right: Low-ramp LCV, high-ramp LCV, Higgins-type LCM(3)s.

Bottom-foreground: Left to right: High ramp LCV, Low-ramp LCV, LCM(3). In center background note two Bureau-type LCMs.



snipers. The LCV had a large cargo hold 18 feet long, 6 feet wide at the deck, and 7 feet 4 inches wide at the top of the gunwale. Though the original LCV with no armor and a 250-horsepower engine could make up to 16 knots empty, when loaded it did not perform too well, lost its seaworthy qualities, had a decided tendency to be bow heavy, and took a lot of solid water over its ramp. This craft was used by the EAC on the Atlantic coast both as a troop carrier and to haul jeeps, small guns, and ammunition, but none was sent to the west coast or New Guinea.

The LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle—Personnel) was the standard small landing barge used by both the Engineer Special Brigades and the Navy overseas. It is 36'0" long, 11'0" beam, 3'2" draft, weighs 17,850 lbs., carries a crew of three, and has $\frac{1}{4}$ " armor on its sides extending from the ramp back two-thirds of the way aft and a ramp of armor plate. This boat is powered with a 250-horsepower Gray Marine Diesel and has a fuel capacity of 290 gallons. Two .30 calibre machine guns aft in two scarf ring mounts give it some self-protection. These improvements over the LCV reduce the speed down to 10 knots empty, $8\frac{1}{2}$ knots loaded. But now the craft can carry under most conditions 36-38 fully armed infantry, or a $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton weapons carrier, or four tons of bulk cargo. While the LCVP is nothing more than a high powered square shoe box, she still can take a lot of punishment on long open water voyages as shown by hundreds of trips all the way from Milne Bay to Morotai in the New Guinea area and voyages up and down the full length of the Philippine Islands. The LCVPs were used throughout the Pacific for their intended primary



Plan and Profile of LCVP.



LCVPs with a full load of 36-40 men wallowed low.

purpose of carrying infantry on the assault waves. They were also employed as harbor taxis, standby boats off the unloading beaches, and were decked over and used as command and navigation boats in LCM coastwise convoys.

Another type of small wood landing craft supplied to the Engineer Special Brigades overseas was the 37-foot J-Boat built from the plans of the Transportation Corps. While the other landing craft of the ESBs were from U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships plans, the J-Boat was an Army design. It has the same hull form and lines as the original Higgins "Eureka" except that it is 37' long. It is decked over aft and in place of the open cockpit forward has a trunk cabin with three built-in berths, a head, seat, and steering wheel for the coxswain. On the top of the cabin is a scarf ring with a twin .50 calibre machine gun mount. This boat also has a mast with twin searchlights. The power plant is a Hudson Invader giving a speed up to 17 knots plus a fair cruising radius from 300 gallons of fuel, but a Gray Marine Diesel would be preferable. All in all, it is a very good adaptation of the LCPL and served its purpose as a standby boat off unloading beaches, dispatch boat, convoy control boat, and navigation boat.

The Landing Craft Support—Small (LCSS), first introduced to the Battalion at Aitape, was probably the first small combat craft developed by the Navy in this war. It first saw action in the North African landings. The hulls of these craft are actually



LCS(S) firing 4.5 inch rockets from its MK VIII launchers.

Turret of LCS(S) tied up alongside LCMG. Rockets on latter's MK VII launcher (magazine type) are being fused.



the same as the LCPL. They are decked over, both fore and aft, with an armored turret amidships housing the helmsman and containing a twin .50 calibre machine gun in the top of the turret. Aft of the turret is a small sunken cockpit containing three .30 calibre machine guns. The sides of the boat are armored with $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch plate extending alongside the midship sections of the boat. On the deck itself alongside of the turret two twelve-rail rocket launchers are installed. These little boats are quite formidable considering their scant thirty-six foot length, but, on the whole, were unadaptable to the needs of the Battalion because they were the slowest boats in the unit and were unable to keep up with the convoys at anything but very nominal speeds. They came into their own on the Bued, Mindanao, and Agusan Rivers, where their low silhouettes and effective armor made them excellent for reconnaissance work.

Landing Craft Mechanized—LCMs

The Landing Craft Mechanized Mark 3—LCM(3)—was the workhorse of the Engineer Special Brigades. This 50-foot Higgins designed tank lighter, intended for ship-to-shore unloading of vehicles and bulk stores, accomplished more work and completed more coastwise missions than anybody ever thought possible. Its dimensions are 50'0" long, 14'0" beam, 3'6" draft, weight 56,000 lbs., load 30 tons, one medium tank, or 77 troops. The barge is powered with two 250-horsepower Gray Marine Diesels; its speed is 7 knots cruising with $\frac{2}{3}$ load, flank speed 9 knots empty. The fuel capacity on the original LCMs was 450 gallons, giving a cruising range of 280 nautical miles. This boat in contrast to the plywood 36-foot barges is made of

light steel, has a square bow with a high ramp to facilitate the unloading of vehicles. The forward two-thirds of the craft is an open cargo space 31'6" long, 6'4" deep at the after bulkhead, 10' 7" wide at the gunwale, and 9' 8" wide at the bottom. The after third of the barge is given over to the engine room with fuel tanks enclosed and a lazarette for storage space. Above the engine is the coxswain's stand protected by $\frac{1}{4}$ " armor. For armament the LCMs carry either single or twin .50 calibre machine guns in Heintz mounts located on the fantail and forward of the conning tower. These boats carry a crew of four, and a removable wooden frame house covered with canvas was customarily erected over the after end of the cargo well so that the crew could live aboard. The ramp is raised and lowered by a power take-off winch from the port engine. The sides and bottom of the LCM are divided into watertight compartments, the two after compartments being sometimes connected with fuel lines giving the boats sufficient fuel capacity to have an endurance of well over 1000 miles. Each boat has pad eyes to which cable slings can be attached so that they can be lifted aboard an attack transport or Liberty ship. In order that the LCM(3) could carry its 30-ton load the deck of the cargo hold had to be kept low and as a result is not self-bailing, so to remove the water special powerful bilge pumps driven by the main engines are installed. In addition to a medium tank, it can transport any number of combinations of vehicles such as a 2½-ton truck and two jeeps, 4 jeeps, a 155 mm howitzer and its prime mover, or a D-7 or D-8 bulldozer. The LCMs proved to be very seaworthy not only in heavy weather off shore but also in beaching and retracting amidst high surf.

Late in 1944 the new improved LCM(6) made its appearance. It is 56' long with the extra 6 feet all added to the cargo hold. In addition water tanks were added as well as fuel tanks in the lazarette so that the fuel capacity was doubled. This new

Left: LCM(3) showing Heintz mount without gun and Danforth-type anchor.
Right: LCM(6)s viewed from deck of LCMG.



LCM(6) with removable cabin for crew of four.



type is a better seaboat than the LCM(3) and can take a heavier load—35 tons; also with the added space a better combination of vehicles can be carried. The LCM(6) is also about a knot faster than its predecessor, due to the increased waterline. Except for the fact that many navy transports cannot stow this larger tank lighter, it would have immediately rendered the LCM(3) obsolete.

The tank lighter in which the boat crews of the EAC received their first training was the LCM designed by the U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships. This craft, designed to carry a 30-ton medium tank like the Higgins LCM(3), was 50 feet long and had the same shoe-box shape as the Higgins lighter with a square bow and ramp forward. It had also the same power plant as the LCM(3) and the same speed. The engines were located in the middle of the boat under the tank deck with coxswain aft on the starboard side in an armored wheelhouse. The main difference was that the whole boat was one big cargo space or hold, but the deck of this hold was above the top of the engines so that the center of gravity was raised. Though the cargo hold was self-bailing, the craft once loaded to her specified capacity was top heavy and in tests off Norfolk capsized; so the model was reluctantly discontinued by the Navy in favor of the Higgins design discussed above.

Landing Craft Conversions — The LCMGs

The question of the most suitable design for command and control craft has been debated among the amphibians ever since the days at Camp Edwards. In the 533d the consensus was that the craft must be capable of beaching, and this ruled out the fancy cabin craft, hereinafter discussed, which higher authority normally specified for this purpose. In the United States LCPLs or LCPRs had been decked over and fitted with navigation and radio cabins, and when the 533d arrived overseas and received its first boats, LCVPs and LCMs, battalion and company commanders set aside LCVPs for command, control, and salvage boats. LCMs were too scarce and seemed unnecessarily large for this assignment. The LCVPs were decked over and outfitted with radio and navigation compartments and accommodations for six or eight men.

The Talasea and Yalau operations early in March 1944 proved that these converted LCVPs were dangerously inadequate for their intended duties. The failure of

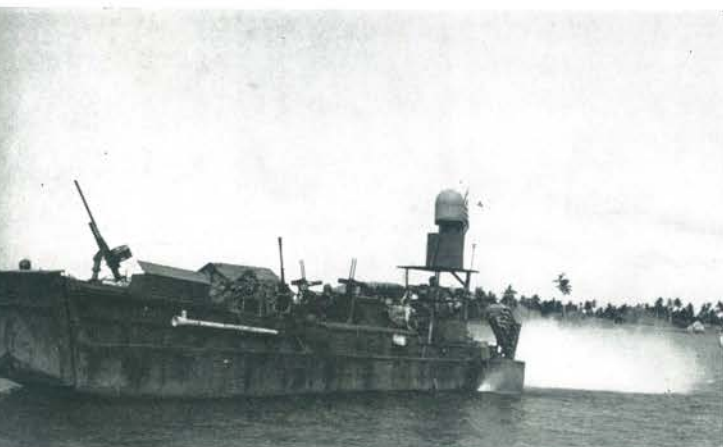
the single engine in one nearly took the flotilla commander out of the Talasea attack; their inability to keep up with LCMs made them useless in convoy control; their limited power and lack of control when straining on a tow line made them ineffective salvage boats; and finally they were just too small to accommodate the personnel of the amphibian headquarters afloat and at the same time provide space for the assault force officers who insisted on riding in the command boat. After these landings it was also quite apparent that some type of offensive craft was needed by the Battalion. During the assault there was no effective method employed to protect the landing craft between the time the naval barrage let up and the moment the boats actually hit the beach. While the landing craft were equipped with machine guns—.50 calibre in the case of the LCMs, and .30 calibre aboard the LCVPs—these weapons were primarily for defense against air attack and almost totally useless for placing direct fire upon the beach because of their position aboard the boats.

To meet these needs there was nothing to do but convert LCMs into combination gun and command and navigation boats. Though the 2d Brigade had months before constructed heavily armed LCM "Flak" boats, they had limited missions and with the Allied airforces achieving nearly complete supremacy, their design was not appropriate for what the 533d wanted.

To serve the purpose as a command craft it was necessary to provide space below decks for communication and navigational facilities as well as living quarters for a relatively large crew. In addition, to meet the needs of a combat craft, capable of engaging enemy landing barges and strafing beach defenses, adequate deck space was essential to man the guns properly and for storage of ready ammunition. Needless to say, the space for these purposes aboard a fifty-foot boat was limited.

There was no time to waste waiting for a 'perfect' design that could be prescribed for the entire Battalion. Each unit commander and the battalion executive put his ideas into effect almost simultaneously. Eleven LCMGs in all were constructed—three by each boat company and two by battalion headquarters personnel. Seven of these were built in New Guinea before the 56-foot LCM was available; the others took advantage of the longer hull. In the early class, three distinct deck plans were tried out: the flush deck (*M11*, *MA3* and *MB3*), the dog house with a raised navigation cabin (*M12*, *MA7*, and the first *MB1*), and the well deck with a sunken cockpit amidships (*MC3* and *MC5*). Though *M11* was actually the first in commission, the well deck design ultimately proved to have the most merit, so the prototype of that class, *MC3*, which was begun at Saidor in March 1944 will be considered first.

Below decks *MC3* was divided into two cabins with an ammunition and general storage space separating the two. The after cabin contained the radio and navigating compartments as well as the galley and two bunks for command personnel. The forward cabin, extending to the bow of the boat, provided living quarters for six crew members. Almost full headroom was obtained in the cabin aft, but because of the rise in the well deck forward the headroom there was limited to four and a half feet.



LCMG *MC3* showing, forward to aft, 37 mm automatic cannon, 25 mm automatic cannon, 2 twin .30 calibre aircraft-type machine guns, radar antenna and rocket launcher.

This was to be one of the greatest disadvantages in all later craft although some improvements were incorporated in following designs. The silhouette of the craft remained much the same, as the cabin tops were constructed even with the coamings. The ramp, however, was cut down to the level of the fore deck.

The materials used in the converting of the boat were, of necessity, the simplest imaginable. The framing, decking, and bulkheading were of scrap lumber, and the decks themselves were covered with salvaged tentage. To increase the cruising range of the boat the wing tanks in the hull were tapped, making it possible to carry an additional fuel supply of 600 gallons. Extra storage space for water was also obtained in this manner. In the galley a regulation gasoline fire unit was installed to serve as a stove. The sink consisted of the lower half of a 40 mm ammunition can, and the running water installation was a converted LCVP bilge pump. Bunks were made by installing cots, less legs, on wooden frames. The communication equipment aboard included a Navy TCS 5, an Army SCR 284, and two SCR 300s for intra-convoy communication. Navigational equipment was crude but adequate. Mounted on the deck of the after cabin was a 7-inch Navy magnetic compass, which served as the master, and, in the chartroom and wheelhouse, two repeaters from the magnesyn which was installed in the after companionway. Other equipment was carried such as taffrail logs, sextants, charts, and necessary Hydrographic Office publications.

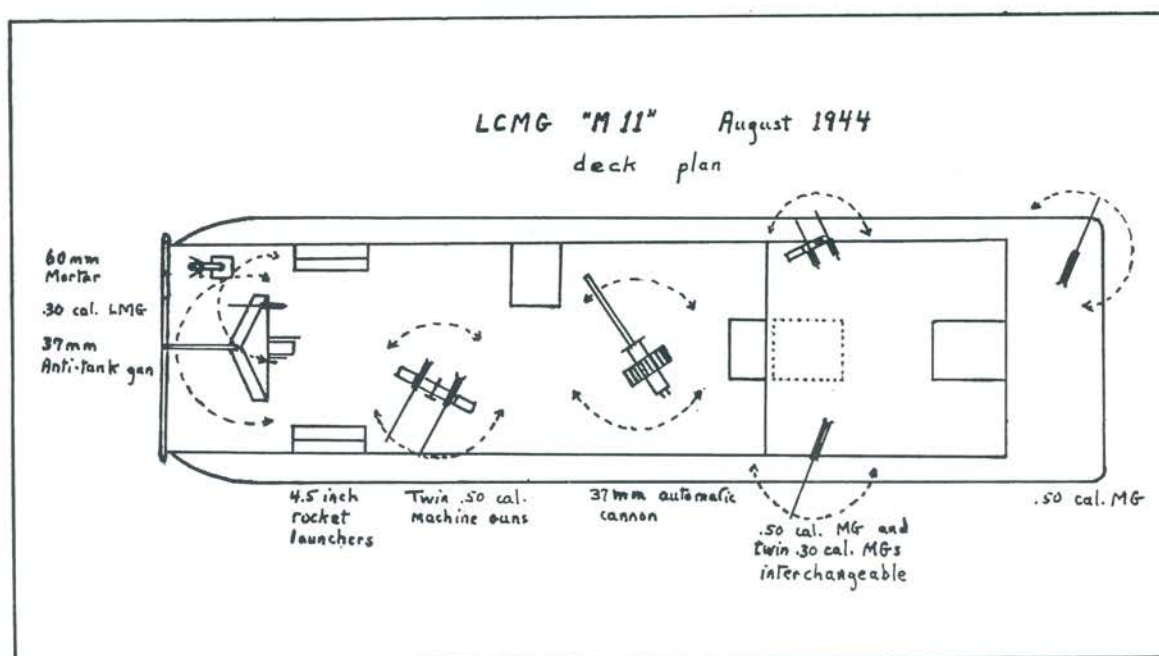
Though the conversion of the hull itself was beset by many difficulties, by far the greatest problem of all was found in the attempts to locate the proper guns for the boat. In the organization were to be found machine guns *ad infinitum*, but there the supply of suitable guns ended. After much haggling two 20 mm and one 37 mm guns were wheedled from the Navy PT base at Saidor. These weapons formed the backbone of the armament of this first gunboat. The 37 mm was mounted on the foredeck, the barrel projecting slightly over the bow. The two 20 mm's were placed forward of the wheelhouse, one on each side of the main deck. As auxiliary weapons two .50 calibre guns were mounted, one on each cabin top. In the year that followed the armament of this boat was to undergo many changes. The original single shot 37 mm antitank gun was discarded at Aitape in favor of an automatic 37 salvaged from a wrecked P-39 plane. In the end she was to become the most heavily gunned of all, with five automatic cannon and four machine guns.

At Aitape four 4.5" rocket launchers were installed on the boat. Two were placed on the after deck firing aft and two on the waterways alongside the forward cabin firing forward. These rockets greatly augmented the firepower of the boat and were the first heavy weapons actually authorized the organization. More launchers undoubtedly would have been put aboard if it had not been for the lack of space available for extra rockets. Whenever it was anticipated that an unusually large number of these projectiles were to be used, it was necessary to carry the additional ammunition in a cargo LCM.

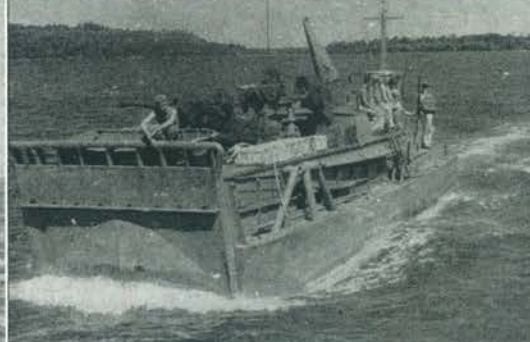
One of the greatest drawbacks encountered in using navy and airforce weapons aboard the gunboats of the Battalion was the difficulty in obtaining ammunition for the guns. Sufficient supplies of either 40 mm or 37 mm automatic ammunition were almost never on hand. Consequently, it was with great pleasure and anticipation

that the gunboat personnel viewed the vast stores of captured Japanese guns and ammunition to be found in the vicinity of the regimental encampment at San Fabian. Foraging parties were sent out to obtain the best possible of the lighter calibre guns and to bring back as much ammunition for them as was practicable. Two types of gun were found that admirably suited the needs of the gunboats—the Japanese 20 and 25 mm naval AA guns. Although extremely crude in external appearance these guns were, nevertheless, well and simply manufactured. The 25 mm gun was mounted aboard *MC3* as an experiment and found to be markedly superior in performance and reliability to the standard American 20's of Swiss design. The gun was placed in the cockpit amidships. This mounting was later changed to include a 25 mm gun on each coaming in the midship section of the boat. With this latter plan it was possible to obtain almost 180 degree traverse on each gun without danger of firing into the other gun positions. The 20 and 25 mm guns were also used satisfactorily on other boats, as will be mentioned later.

LCMG *M11* with only her initial New Britain armament.



LCMG *M12*



M11, the Battalion's flagship, differed radically from the boat just discussed. Her high flush deck permitted room below for spacious living quarters and also for a jeep, and the ventilation made her a pleasant craft in the tropics. Her armament, as shown in the accompanying sketch, was staggered so as to take maximum advantage of the deck space and bring the maximum fire power to bear on either broadside. The 60 mm mortar was valuable not only for normal offensive purposes but also with its illuminating shells was handy to have around at night.

M12, designed and skippered by the battalion 'exec', was more akin to *M11* than to *MC3* but with her large raised "dog house" over the after part of the cargo well she represented a distinct design. This dog house contained the radio shack and chart room and was much the most convenient arrangement for nontactical operations such as leading long distance convoys, but it sacrificed some of the deck space available for gun mounts. This craft originally carried a borrowed 57 mm antitank gun as her "main battery" giving her a weapon with a range of over 10,000 yards and terrific hitting power, but late in 1944 this was exchanged for a 40 mm antiaircraft cannon which was placed on the foredeck, the muzzle extending slightly over the cut-down ramp. No additional bracing was found to be necessary under the deck and, surprising as it may seem, the gun actually transmitted less shock through the hull than a 37 mm. In all operations the gun proved itself to be very good, both on this and other craft, and the sole objection that might be offered is that to serve the gun efficiently required too many men for so small a boat. But for this single fact, the gun was unsurpassed. *M12* also carried an automatic 37 mm gun and the usual assortment of machine guns and rocket launchers.

MA7 and the first *MB1* were similar to *M12* in general design. The first was distinguished by a twin 25 mm Jap automatic cannon—an extremely potent weapon, and the B Company flagship by a flying bridge over the conning tower with a 20 mm cannon mounted thereon. *MA3* and *MB3* were flush deckers, the latter the first



LCMG *MB1* with 37 mm gun, 3 .50 calibre machine guns and 20 mm automatic cannon on flying bridge.

LCMG with a 56' hull. The added six feet in the length of the well greatly improved the accommodations below both as to comfort and operational efficiency. Also, in rough weather it was found that the boat handled much more effectively than the 50' models, thus making this hull type more desirable for navigation work.

After the completion of these craft no new boats were built until late in February, 1945, when the Battalion became well established along the Bued River, Lingayen Gulf, where it was possible to act on lessons previously learned and to do a thorough construction job on this type of boat. Three boats were built simultaneously, one for each of the letter companies. These were: *MAI*, *MBI*, and *MCI*. All were conversions of the fifty-six-foot hull, and all were very well built considering the materials at hand. *MC₃* was indeed a crude affair alongside her newer sisters with their welded frames and composite decks. All three boasted almost identical deck layouts with a well amidships protected with armor plate. The fore deck of *MCI* differed slightly from the others in that the deck was dropped a foot from the ramp for a distance of about five feet. This was done to give a more stable mount to the forward gun, as well as a better firing platform. The three differed considerably, however, as to the

The last LCMGs:

Upper right: MAI with 25 mm forward and 40 mm amidships. Lower right: MBI with opposite arrangement.

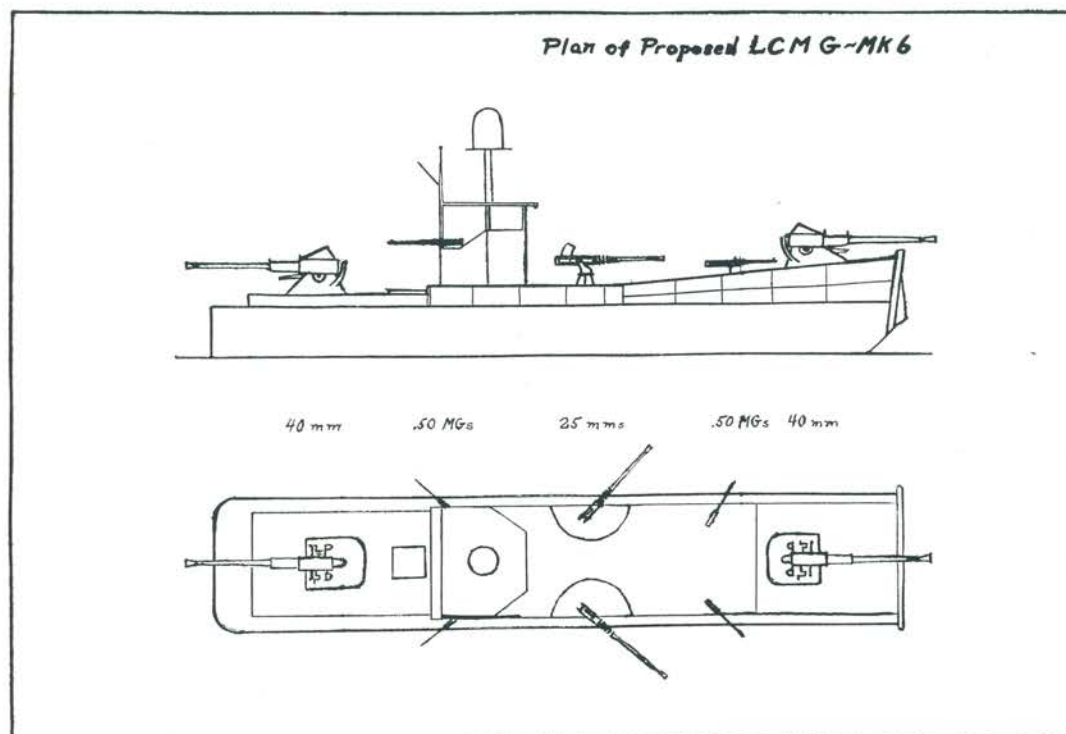
Lower left: MCI showing Jap 25 mm cannon which proved to be an extremely effective weapon.



positions and types of guns they carried. *MAI* mounted a 40 mm in the cockpit amidships and a Japanese 25 mm on the foredeck. These were supplemented by three .50 calibre machine guns. *MBI*, on the other hand, had her 40 mm on the foredeck and a Japanese 25 mm in the cockpit. Initially *MCI* carried an automatic 37 mm in the forward cockpit, but this was changed within a few weeks in favor of the 40 mm gun. In the amidships cockpit a Jap 25 mm was mounted. All three boats had numerous .50 and .30 calibre machine guns ranged along their decks, as well as 4.5-inch rocket launchers. These were the last of the gunboats converted by the Battalion, and were completed barely in time to see action in the Mindanao campaign, where they proved to be ideally suited to the tasks they were required to perform in the southernmost of the Philippine Islands.

The two river campaigns in which the Battalion participated, those of the Mindanao and Agusan Rivers, proved the merit beyond all possible doubt of this type of craft. Because of their shallow draft the boats were able to operate in all but the lowest water, and were able to clear themselves from sandbars and snags that would have been impossible for craft of any other design. Their guns were mounted at a perfect height for firing over river banks while still giving some measure of protection to the crews. While the story of these campaigns is told elsewhere, it must be said that in a large part it was the LCMGs of the Boat Battalion that made possible the rapid conquest of these two great rivers and the land that lay between.

Had not this type of craft been developed, it is extremely doubtful that many of the operations of the organization would have been at all possible. It is regrettable that such a boat was not actually designed and built by the Navy for this kind of work as its uses were almost without limit in the campaigns all over the Pacific.



Other craft were projected by the Battalion but never actually constructed as the War ended while they were being designed. They were to mount 40 mm guns on their sterns as well as on their foredecks. To accomplish this it would have been necessary to move the wheelhouses forward over the engine room, but this would have increased the field of fire by almost fifty per cent. In addition, Jap 25s or U.S. 20s were to have been carried amidships, as had been done aboard *MC*₃. Had these boats ever been completed they would have boasted almost triple the firepower of the original LCMGs.

It might be well to note here that radar equipment was tried aboard one of the boats, *MC*₃, but was anything but a success. In the first place, the only set available for the experiment was one of the type used on the B-24 bombers. As this equipment was in no way constructed for marine use, and had already seen six months service aboard one of the picket boats, it was never very reliable. An NK-2 fathometer was installed on one of the gunboats, but lack of replacement parts gave little opportunity to test its worth. Throughout the War efforts were made to obtain appropriate radar sets such as the SO on the PTs and also to acquire IFF equipment to prevent unnecessary clashes with friendly planes and vessels. GHQ approved these at last, and the gunboat flotilla would have been so equipped for the invasion of Japan.

Other Converted Landing Craft

¶ The LCM Rocket Boat was one of the last additions to the Battalion's combat flotilla. The rocket boat as a distinct type did not come into being until 1945, during the Philippine Campaign, though rockets had been employed for many months on the gunboats as auxiliary weapons. The necessity of concentrating the blasts of many rockets for maximum effect made it advisable to construct special craft whose sole mission would be laying down a barrage of these high capacity rockets. The rocket boats were nothing more than LCM(3)s or LCM(6)s converted to hold as many rocket launchers as possible in the well. The launchers were of the same design as carried on the gunboats, the standard navy Mark VII launcher. Thirty of these were placed in the well of the LCM(6)s in three rows, giving a total of 360 rockets. The boat was aimed by the coxswain using ring sights and range was adjusted by firing single rockets as the boat approached the target. Fire for effect could be delivered a row at a time or simultaneously in which latter case the effect in the target area 1100 yards away was the same as if thirty *battalions* of 105 mm howitzers let go at the target at once. While the DUKW type 120-rail launcher was capable of a more rapid rate of fire, the difficulty encountered in loading and in removing misfired rockets more than offset its advantages as to rate of fire. The effectiveness of the rocket boat as an offensive weapon cannot be overemphasized. The destructive power of these craft, taking into consideration their size, was tremendous. Wherever a highly concentrated and saturating fire was required, these boats were without equal whether for laying down a pre-landing barrage, clearing blocks in river operations, or covering a withdrawal. Had it not been for the difficulty in obtaining launch-

ers from army supply sources it goes without saying that this type of boat would have been put into use long before it actually was.

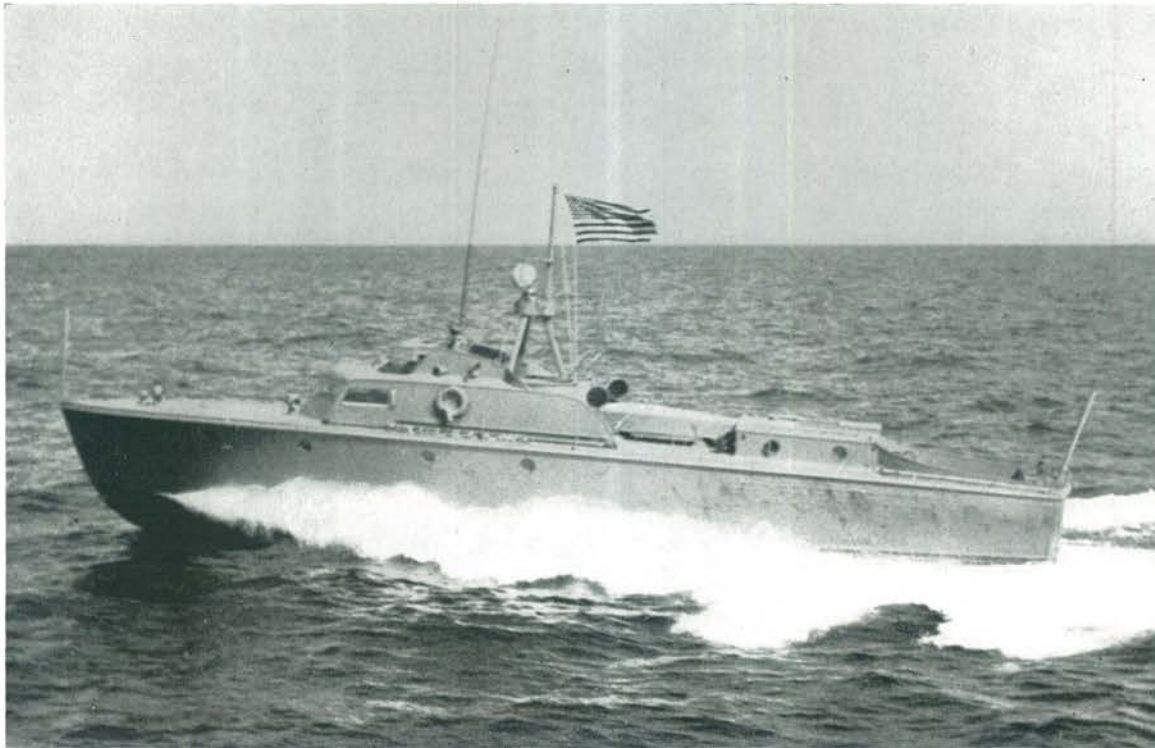
The need for some type of boat capable of assisting beached landing craft off the beaches was realized even before the organization ever put to sea. While in training in the United States LCPLs and LCVs were utilized for this purpose. The maintenance boat in those early days usually consisted of nothing more than one or the other of these boats with an extra bitt or two, a crew with strong backs, and a good supply of heavy line. In the first few months of the Battalion's tour of duty overseas the LCVPs performed much the same function, and in a like manner. It was soon apparent, however, that with the increasingly long runs the craft of the organization were required to make combined with the immense difficulty of obtaining new parts once the old ones were damaged beyond repair, some practical system had to be devised whereby almost instant repairs could be made at sea. To perform this function as well as to salvage boats beached in the surf, the LCM maintenance boat was developed.

One maintenance boat was allotted to each company, and one to each platoon of the 1461st Maintenance Company. There was no set design, all boats being decked over and many having a large winch salvaged from a Jap landing barge welded on the after deck on which the steel towing cable was wound. Some had steel flying bridges over the conning tower from which search lights could illuminate night salvage jobs and maintenance officers could keep better watch over the flotillas entrusted to their care. One of the 1461st's craft had an ingenious crane installed on the mount of a Jap 75 mm antiaircraft gun. This rig was invaluable in salvaging engines from hulls that were sunk in shallow water or hopelessly wrecked.

Below decks the boats presented quite an unusual picture. In some of the later models a complete machine shop was set up. Parts and tools were carried to perform almost any conceivable repair that could be accomplished without actually lifting the boat from the water, including welding equipment and complete engines ready for immediate replacement should they be needed in some out-of-the-way stop.

Auxiliary Craft

The largest, fastest, and most luxurious craft of the Regiment were the 63-foot Aircraft Rescue Boats built to specifications of the U.S. Navy Bureau of Ships and used primarily as "crash" boats by both army and navy airforces. They are 15½ feet wide, draw 4½ feet and have double planked hulls. They have flush decks, a large self-bailing cockpit aft, wide flaring bows to throw the water aside, and a high speed V-bottom. Armament consists of two twin .50 calibre machine guns mounted in two turrets with 360° traverse. As delivered to the Army there were two types of engine installations: one with twin Hall-Scott Defenders—660 horsepower each—and the other twin Hall-Scott Invaders—250 horsepower each. With the Defenders the boats cruise at 21½ knots at 1600 R.P.M. and can make 28 knots at top speed; with the smaller Invaders the cruising speed is 12 knots, flank speed 16 knots. The cruising range of the fast crash boat is 400 miles with full load of 100 octane gasoline



63-foot command and navigation boat doing 25 knots.

aboard—2350 gallons. The slower model only carries 1600 gallons of 80 octane gas on which she can cruise for 700 miles. Down below these craft have a forecastle forward with four berths, then two small single staterooms, then the inside bridge with duplicate operating controls, next the galley and a separate compartment for the radio; opposite the galley is a double stateroom, then comes the engine room with water tight bulkheads at either end, and the after compartment is the dispensary with two wide berths with the main gas tanks underneath. These boats are manned by a crew of six and except in bad weather are run from the flying bridge. The Regiment had two of these—one fast and one slow and employed them as floating command posts and for emergency trips to conferences or to procure small but critical supplies.

The only other cabin craft used by the Regiment was the 45-foot Picket Boat—Mark II which was used in New Guinea as a navigation boat. This boat was designed for harbor patrol work in the United States and not as a coastwise cruiser in the South Pacific, and for the latter purpose it was strictly no good. It was poorly designed from every angle having very low speed considering its twin 165-horsepower Continental Commando engines and even with two Gray Diesels was incapable of doing 15 knots in calm weather. In a sea its bow buried itself and cut the effective speed to about that of an LCM. Its interior arrangements were wasteful of space and its lack of controls on deck made it a nuisance to conn. Once the LCMGs were completed these craft were little used, and none were moved forward to the Philippines with the Regiment.

In 1942 the Engineer Amphibian Command had designed a 42' command and navigation boat—the AC. These craft were not a success because the proper power plants were never installed. They came with 500-horsepower Liberty engines con-



Type AC command boat developed for EAC by Gar Wood but never used overseas because of unreliable engine.

verted by Gar Wood, which gave them a top speed of over 30 knots. They had a large cabin forward as well as another one aft plus a well protected bridge deck. Overseas they would have made excellent navigation boats if powered with Gray Marine Diesels.

At the very end of the War the Boat Battalion finally was issued the standard Landing Craft Control developed by the Navy to lead assault waves to the line of departure off a beachhead. It is a twin screw steel craft 56 feet in length powered with twin Gray Marine Diesels with a speed of 13 knots. The Navy equipped them with radar, gyro compass, fathometers, and army and navy radios so that the officers on board could keep in constant contact with the wave leaders, the navy flagship, army and navy air support, the beachmaster, and fire control parties. When the 3d Brigade, after a long struggle, received the LCCs in August 1945, the War not only was over, but the Navy had removed all the radios, radar, etc. from them! This type of navigation boat would have been very useful in leading LCM missions up and down the coasts of New Guinea and the Philippine Islands, but inter-service jealousy kept dozens of them idle in navy boat pools while the Army had to improvise its own.

A normal 26-foot open wooden launch of heavy wood construction, designated MT, was found extremely useful in and around the anchorage. It was powered with a 60-horsepower Buda Diesel giving it a top speed of 9 knots. It has a large open cockpit with the engine box in the middle and can carry about twenty men. It was employed both as a harbor taxi and a harbor tug and was operated by one man. With its heavy planking it withstood a lot of punishment, and proved itself a very good sea boat.

The smallest power boat used overseas by the amphibian engineers was the 18-foot open cockpit Engineer utility boat powered by a 4-cylinder, 50-horsepower Gray gasoline engine. This small power boat has a tunnel stern so that it can beach and retract like the larger landing craft. The hull is built of moulded plywood in one piece. Because of this plywood construction the skin can take much more punishment than the ordinary planked boat which was fortunate because of the abuse they received. As water taxis they could carry ten men, were easily handled by a single

18-foot "PU" boat designed by
Corps of Engineers.



operator, and in smooth water had a good turn of speed. They were designed by the Corps of Engineers to work on rivers with light and heavy ponton companies, and so were very light in weight and capable of being transported on a trailer. For long water trips they and the MTs were transported in the cargo well of LCMs.

Large Landing Craft and Ships

Though the larger landing craft and ships were manned exclusively by the Navy, a brief catalog of them is given here as the Regiment either assisted them on and off various beaches or enjoyed their hospitality on long trips.

The LCT—Landing Craft Tank—108 feet in length was the next size larger than the LCM and was the smallest amphibious vessel on which the crew was *intended* to live. It could carry five medium tanks or 100 tons of bulk cargo, but on account of its slow speed, 5-6 knots, it was used primarily as a ship-to-shore lighter for bulk stores.

The LCI—Landing Craft Infantry—158 feet long was designed to carry no vehicles or cargo, just one company of assault troops. Various conversions of these were made by the Navy to give it shoal draft gunboats and rocket boats.



LCIs on the beach at Parang.

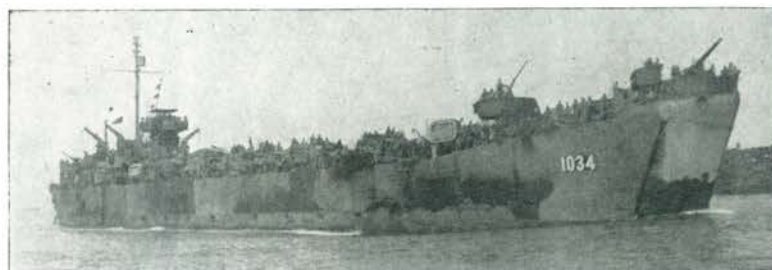


LSMs in close column astern.

The LSM—Landing Ship Medium—210 feet long was designed to fill the gap between the LCT and the LST (see below) and to keep up with the medium speed convoys of LCIs and transports. It carried a pay load of 300 tons on its single well deck.

The LST—Landing Ship Tank—328 feet in length was the most important vehicle carrying craft of the War. Scores of vehicles, up to 1000 tons of bulk stores, and hundreds of troops could be crowded on its two large decks. The ramp led directly to the “tank” deck which was completely enclosed, and an elevator, later replaced by an internal ramp, permitted the “weather” or upper deck to be loaded with vehicles.

LST with her usual over-load of passengers.



Bow views of LSTs
showing doors and
ramps.



The LSD—Landing Ship Dock—was not strictly speaking a landing ship. It was rather a large sea-going self-propelled dry dock into which were floated through gates in its stern three LCTs or twenty LCMs fully loaded. The water was then pumped out and the smaller craft given a dry ride to the objective area where they were launched by again flooding the LSD's main compartment. Three C Company LCMs aboard the LSD *Shadwell* received an extra fast launching when she was torpedoed east of Leyte in February 1945.

The transports that carried small landing craft, LCVPs and LCMs, ranged from APDs, converted destroyers or destroyer escorts, capable of carrying 150-200 assault troops which were landed by four LCVPs or LCPRs, to the large 5000-17000 ton APAs (Attack Transports—Personnel) with accommodations for 600-1500 troops and hold space for 500-1000 tons of stores which were landed by the ship's two dozen LCVPs and two to four LCMs and the equally large AKAs (Attack Transports—Cargo) which carried up to 4000 tons of vehicles and stores and set them ashore by means of eight LCMs and about a dozen LCVPs.

LSD — a high speed floating drydock for LCTs and LCMs.



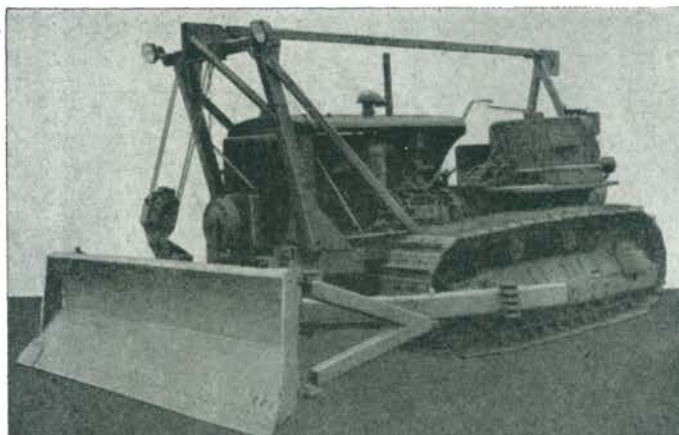
Engineer Equipment

AT one time or another throughout its history, the Shore Battalion possessed a vast assortment of engineer equipment items. The constant development of new equipment during the War contributed to this turnover, but more important was the never ending controversy as to the true function of an engineer shore battalion when not engaged in amphibian assault operations. The initial table of basic allowances gave a shore company little more than an engineer combat company, on the theory that its operations would be exclusively those of controlling and improving a beach. Special lists of equipment and new tables of equipment brought the total engineer items to many times those initially allotted, with the idea that once the first stages of a landing were successfully completed, the shore battalion would engage in general construction activities, including particularly airfields and roads. Although lip service was constantly paid to this latter idea, the actual pressure from task force headquarters to get supplies ashore during the later stages of an amphibian operation and the failure of higher headquarters to allot enough port companies kept the Shore Battalion's nose to the unloading grindstone through most of its overseas career. The result was that many pieces of equipment such as road rollers, asphalt distributors, and saw mills, being rarely if ever employed, were turned over to other engineer units. This article, therefore, is confined to machinery regularly employed during the 533d's campaigns.

Dozers

The workhorse in the Battalion's stable was without question the D-8 dozer officially designated "Tractor, crawler type, deisel, with angle dozer, 113 draw bar horsepower." This powerful machine, weighing over 21 tons, was first issued to the Battalion upon its arrival in New Guinea. Operators who had been trained only on its smaller counterparts, the D-4s and D-6s, had to develop their skills during actual critical operations. On the beach this dozer, normally landed from LSTs or LSMs,

D-8 bulldozer.





D-8 at a familiar task — dragging drowned out vehicles out of the surf.

was used for initial road and dump construction and for clearing major obstructions, such as demolished buildings, wrecked planes, and fallen timber. In moderate and heavy surf it served to hold LCTs firmly on the beach, and in an emergency was capable of pushing stranded LCMs and LCTs back into water deep enough to float them. When LSTs and LSMs grounded far enough off shore so that vehicles could not reach dry sand under their own power, and yet not far enough to warrant employment of ponton cube causeways, the Shore Battalion used its large dozers to push out ramps of sand, reveted by sand bags, to the ramps of the landing ships. The powerful Hyster winch with its 50-ton capacity proved a life saver in many emergencies, including extricating the dozer itself from deep sink holes.

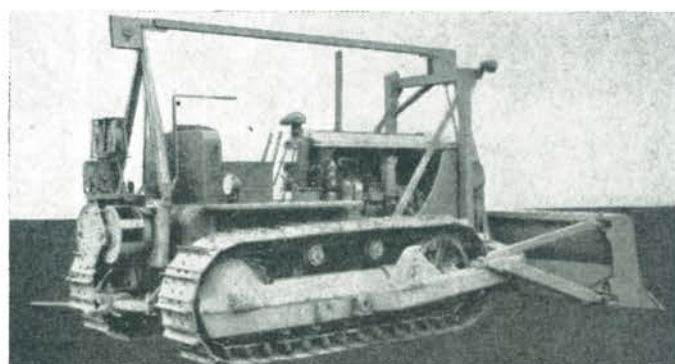
Inland the D-8 was equally in prime demand. Almost every construction job assigned to the Battalion required the use of one or more D-8s at the outset, and frequently the entire job could be accomplished by these versatile machines. With either jungle or Kunai grass or occasionally ruins occupying the site of the projects, grubbing and clearing was the first order of business once the survey party had completed its task. Trees, many scores of feet in height were uprooted and pushed or dragged out of the way. Rough grading and evening were invariably jobs of the dozer, and often final leveling and smoothing were adequately performed by "back blading."

The D-7 dozer, considerably smaller than the D-8, with an 80-horsepower engine

The terrain for road building was never easy. D-8s were always the first to go through.



D-7 dozer.

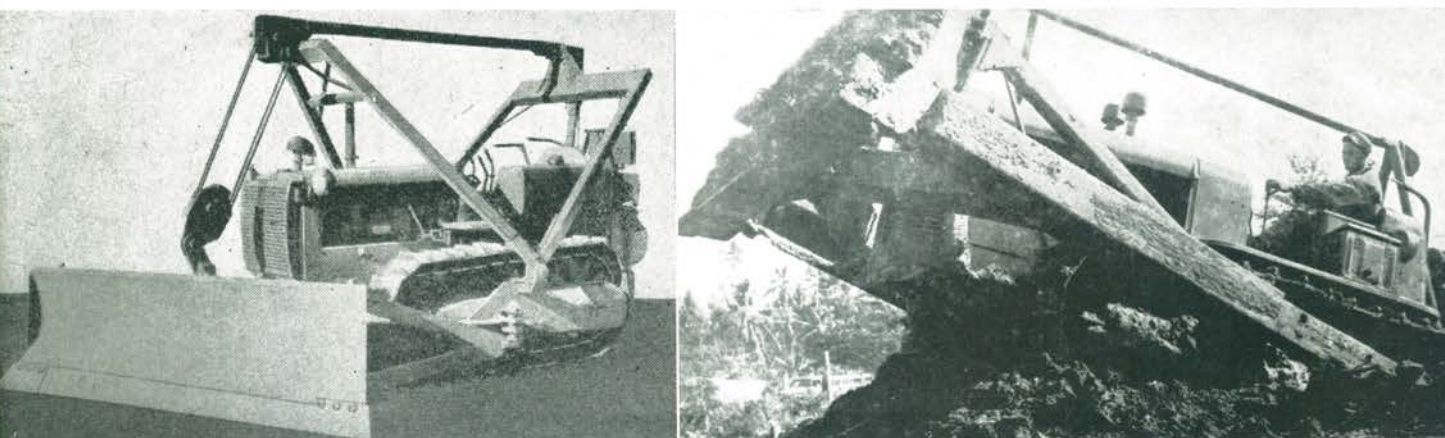


and a gross weight of slightly over 16 tons, performed much the same functions. Its use was not confined to the Shore Battalion. The Boat Battalion and 1461st Maintenance Company had a total of six which were engaged primarily in furnishing the motive power for 20-ton cranes (see below). The standard 120-inch blade was replaced toward the end of the War by the special 100-inch blade, which enabled the D-7 completely assembled to move in and out of an LCM. This greatly increased its convenience for both Boat Battalion and Shore Battalion usage as it could then land in earlier waves ready to go to work.

The smaller tractors, principally the D-4 and D-6, with 35 to 65 horsepower motors, were originally the only tractors assigned to the Regiment. Once the major load could be assumed by the larger machines, the little ones were restricted to preliminary beach clearing and towing stranded vehicles out of the surf. Many times when the larger landing ships were delayed several hours in discharging of vehicles, these D-4s and D-6s saved the day, particularly at Green Beach, Parang, where two D-4s and a D-6 were solely responsible for enabling the bulk of the assault vehicles to move inland during the first day of the landing.

All the Regiment's dozers were cable operated, and though there were some supporters for the hydraulic machines favored by the Seabees, the consensus of opinion was that the ease in replacing broken wire rope made the cable operated machines surer bets on the beaches subject to enemy shell fire.

At one time or another tractors such as the International TD14 and the Allis Chalmers HD 9 found their way into the 533d's equipment pools, but their performance never inspired the confidence of the Caterpillar 8s, 7s, 6s and 4s.

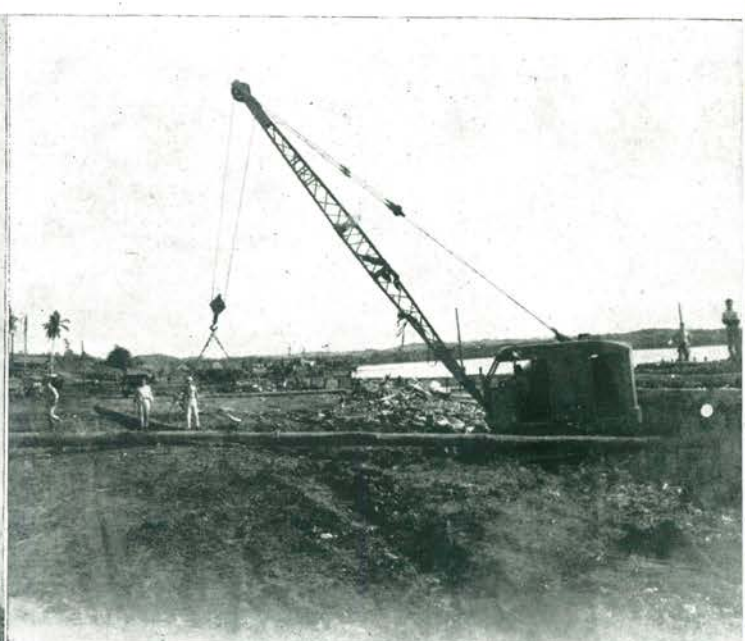
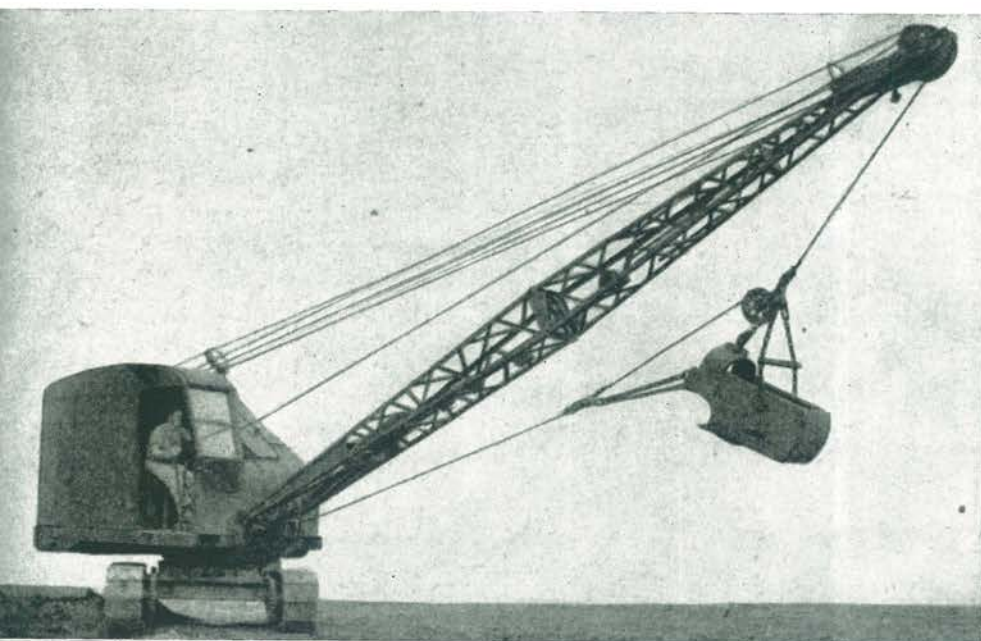
Left: D-4 dozer; right: TD 14 dozer.

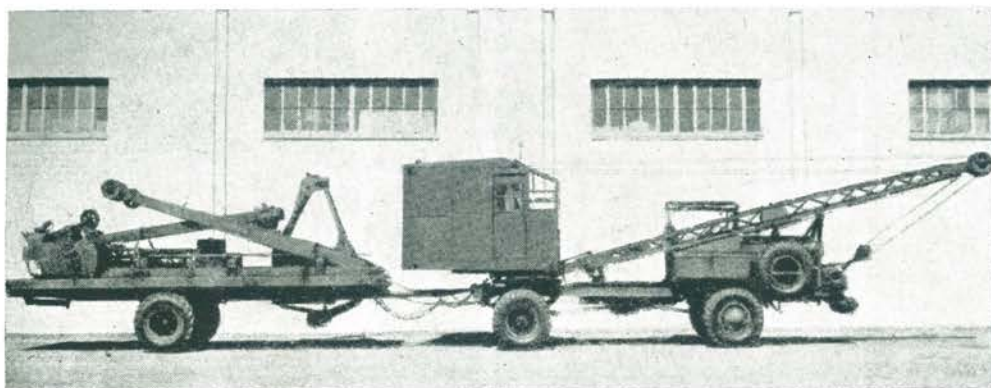
Cranes and Shovels

Rivaling the D-8 dozer in importance for the operation of the Regiment was the half-yard Bucyrus Erie power shovel. Its principal use was as a crane operating at the water's edge to unload LCMs and LCTs. For this purpose it was equipped with a truss boom and such cargo lifting equipment as rope or wire slings, barrel chins and box hooks. Though slow and ponderous in movement, its treads enabled it to move about the beach from boat to boat. Twenty-four hours a day for days on end it would pick up its miscellaneous loads of box cargo, oil drums, ammunition, or crates and swing them to trucks, saving many thousands of man hours. Fueling and emergency maintenance were performed with minimum interruption of work, and so long as the clutch surfaces could be kept dry, the cranes rarely quit.

The flexibility of this machine was well utilized during all operations. A few hours in the motor pool were enough to remove its crane boom and substitute a dipper stick so that it could operate in a borrow pit and fill dump trucks with much needed materials for fills or road surfacing, or again with its crane boom in place the clam

Left to right, top to bottom: $\frac{1}{2}$ -yd. power shovel with dragline bucket rigged; same with simple crane boom; same with dipper stick in action; $1\frac{1}{2}$ yd. shovel pinch hitting as a crane.





Original design of Quickway truck crane with shovel attachments on trailer.

shell or dragline bucket could be employed for minor dredging, ditch cutting, or for obtaining materials not available in side-hill cuts. Finally each company possessed a set of pile driver leads, equipped with which the crane was used to build bridges, jetties or to install piles to anchor landing craft or ponton causeways. The construction of the dock at Parang could never have been performed so rapidly or with such permanence had it not been for the pile-driving technique developed by the Shore Battalion's operators on less critical construction in previous campaigns.

Though many makes of shovel were used at one time or another by the Regiment, it was generally agreed that the Bucyrus Erie was the most reliable and that the Buckeye and Osgood were the least desirable.

Truck mounted cranes were part of each shore company's equipment at all times. The Quickway, mounted on a 4-wheel chassis, was a convenient machine, provided it could be operated on a level, hard surface, but was incapable of movement by itself in sand and subject to capsizing when used on a sloping surface. It, therefore, was confined in general to operation in dumps and to lifts of not over 1 or 2 tons. At the end of the War new Quickway cranes were issued on Coleman chassis, which had a total of 10 tires, of which 8 were powered. These were a great improvement and would possibly have rivaled the crawler cranes in usefulness. The 4-wheel General crane used in Luzon was absolutely ineffective except on the level and was inappropriate as permanent equipment of an engineer shore battalion. Though these machines had clam shell and drag line attachments, little use of them was made by the 533d.

The 20-ton LeTourneau tractor-crane played a vital roll in the operations of the Regiment. Employed in conjunction with a D-8 or more generally a D-7 tractor, this machine was used by the Shore Battalion for moving crated vehicles and other

20-ton Letourneau tractor crane clearing logs.



similar loads too heavy for the 5-ton Bucyrus Erie. Its ability to pick up a substantial load and move with it expeditiously through soft sand provided the answer to many otherwise unsolvable problems in cargo handling on the beach.

The critical importance of the LeTourneau crane was demonstrated daily on the maintenance beaches of the Boat Battalion. Without these cranes there would have been no possibility of hauling out and repairing the thousands of LCMs with damaged propellers, shafts and rudders. Though these cranes were not designed with this specific purpose in mind, they were ideally suited for it, being capable of reaching far out into the water, lifting the whole after half of an LCM and bringing it well up on to dry land and depositing it gently within an inch of the spot desired. Smaller boats, such as LCVPs or LCS(S)s could be lifted bodily from the water and taken anywhere on land that a tractor could go. To insure increased stability, two additional wheels were added to some of the cranes used by the 1461st. The skill developed by the tractor-crane operators was possibly best demonstrated in the way they handled removal and installation of engines from all types of boats despite extremely narrow clearances.

Certain other lighter cranes, including crane attachments on tractors, were employed from time to time. However, not until nearly the end of the War was the Regiment authorized the new 4-ton crane attachment for the D-8 tractor. These machines, which would have been extremely valuable, were never actually put into use.

Scrapers and Graders

For moving earth relatively short distances — not over a few hundred yards — by far the most efficient tool was the 12-yard carryall, otherwise known as a pan or scraper. This solidly constructed, rubber tired machine behind a D-8 dozer was capable of picking up at a bite between 12 and 15 cubic yards of sand or earth, moving it at 6 or 8 miles an hour, and depositing it with surprising evenness where desired. As compared to dump trucks, with at best 2½ to 4-yard capacity, requiring a power shovel for loading, these carryalls were extremely efficient. Typical examples of their work included the construction of artificial beaches over the coral shelf on Seleo Island, and raising the level of the whole Green Beach by several feet at Parang.



12-yard carryall with pan up and closed.

D-8 and LCT on coral beach typical of those over which an artificial beach had to be constructed.



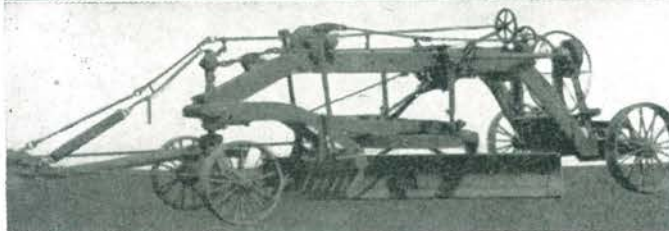
Smaller scrapers, $3\frac{1}{2}$, 6 and 8-yard capacities, were also allotted to the Shore Battalion, but were little used as most of its jobs justified the use of the 12-yard pan.

For ditching and smooth grading of dump areas and roads the D-12 self-powered graders with 12-foot mold board and the towed graders were used. The latter were employed in cutting reasonably deep ditches or levelling extremely bumpy surfaces. Experience proved that one of these was sufficient for the needs of the entire Battalion. The caterpillar D-12 powered grader was in almost daily use either on its prime mission of maintaining road surfaces, or in finishing the work in dump sites and beach assembly areas initiated by the big dozers.

D-12 motorized road grader.



Heavy duty towed road grader and ditcher.

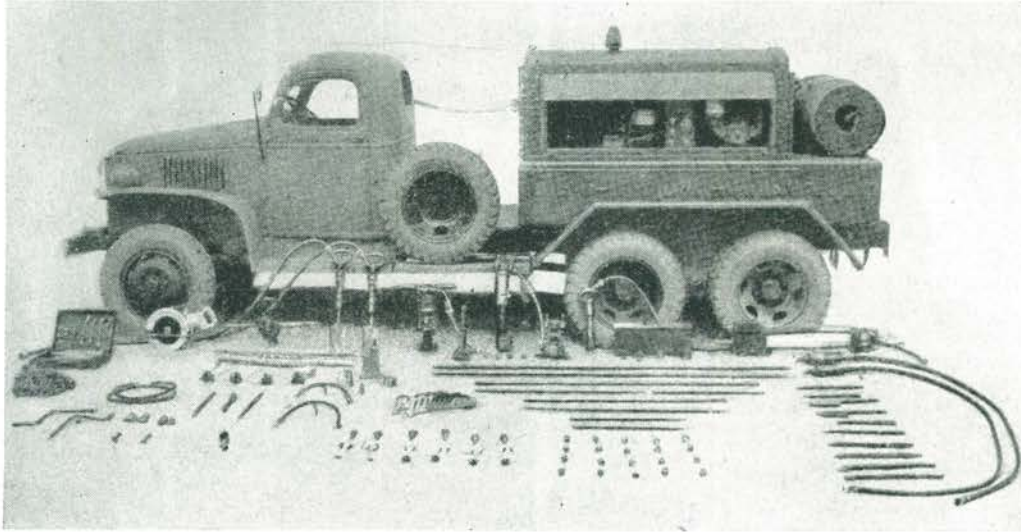


Front view of D-12 road grader.



Miscellaneous

One of the most versatile and man-hour saving machines possessed by the Shore Battalion was the motorized air compressor mounted on a 2½-ton truck. This ma-

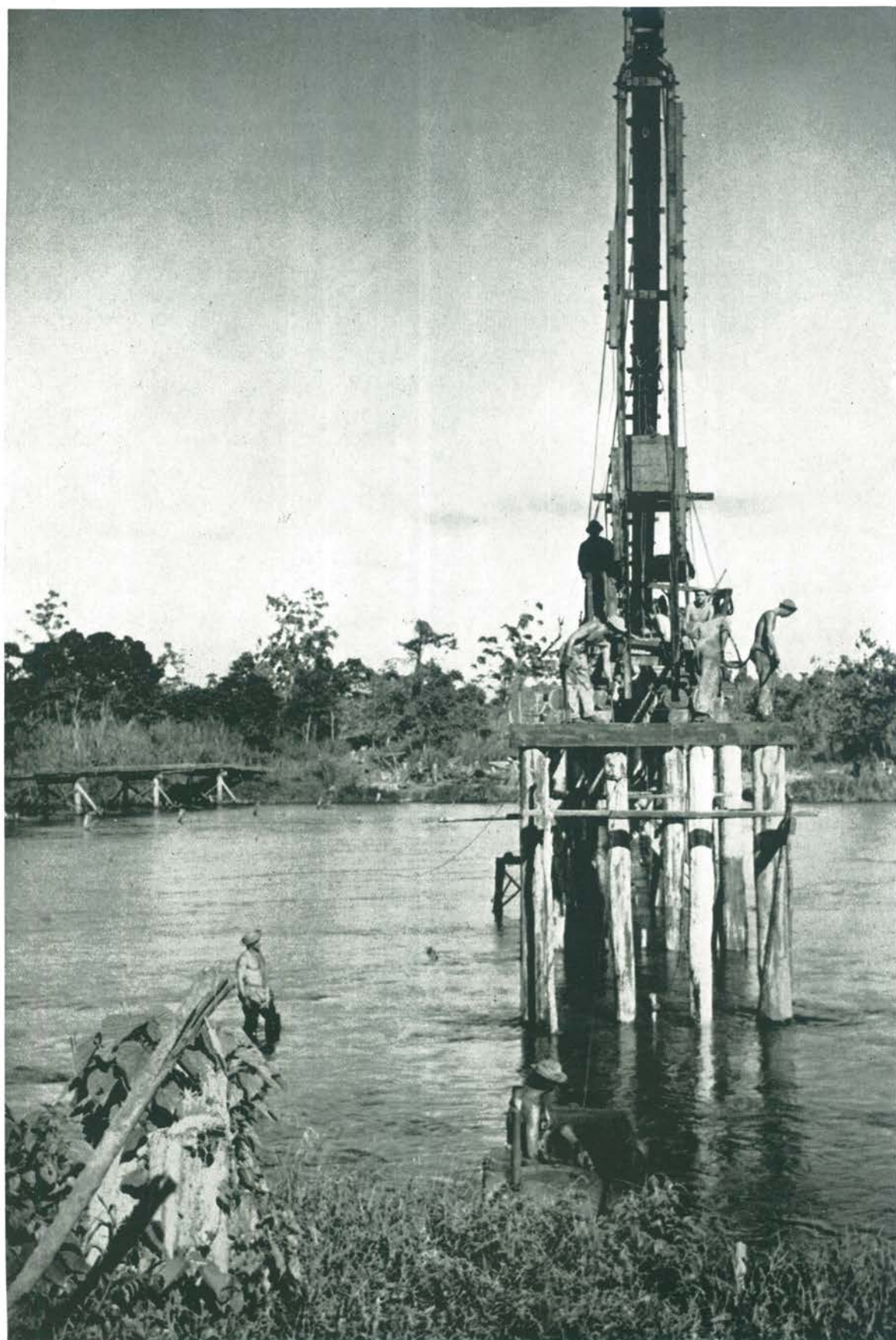


Air compressor truck with auxiliary tools laid out for inspection.

chine, capable of furnishing 105 cubic feet a minute of compressed air up to 100 pounds per square inch, provided power to operate chain saws, clay spades and various forms of drills. Rarely was a construction job on a bridge or a building undertaken without employing these pneumatic handymen.

Typical trestle-bent bridge using a minimum of non-local materials.





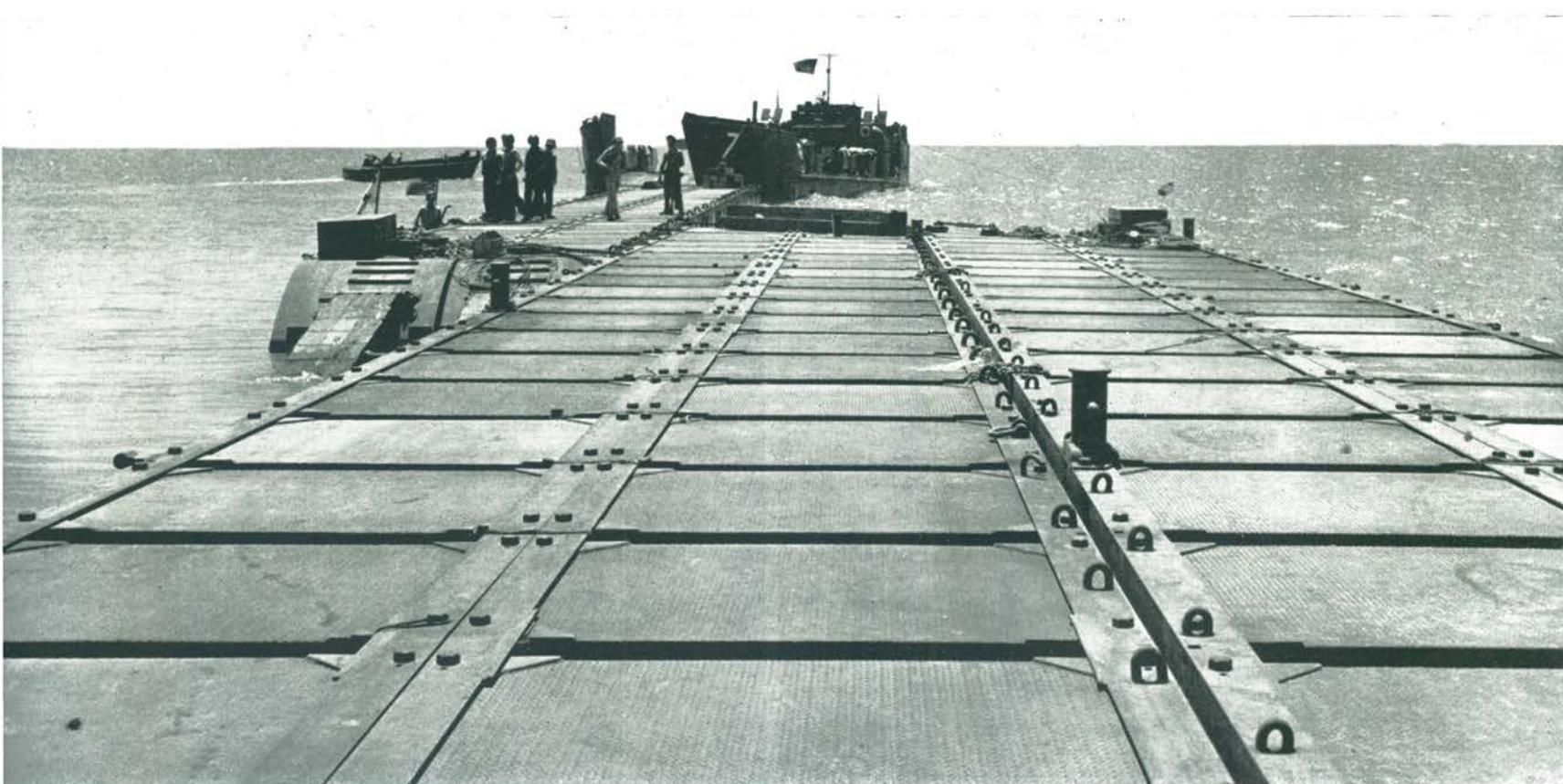
Driving pile as trestle-bent bridge nears the far bank.

Midway in 1944 the Regiment was equipped with several 500-gallons-a-minute, trailer mounted, gasoline powered fire pumps, the primary purpose of which was furnishing a rapid stream of water for emergency fire fighting. Fortunately they were rarely needed for this purpose, but they did come in handy for pumping out swamped craft. The Shore Battalion developed its own jetting implements to go with these pumps and found that under most circumstances driving pile could be accomplished as satisfactorily and more rapidly by jetting the pile almost to its final level than by driving it all the way. Several rapidly erected bridges in Mindanao and a series of jetties on Luzon testify to the effectiveness of this method. Some piles were satisfactorily set with no pile driver at all merely using an A frame on a truck to hold the pile in position and getting it down to the proper depth exclusively with the water jet assisted by the pile's own weight.

A well drilling rig of standard oil field exploration type was carried by the Battalion for many months. Its only practical use came on Luzon, where in an appropriate geological area artesian wells were drilled to a depth of more than 125 feet, and a fine supply of fresh water not requiring chemical purification was obtained.

A complete saw mill was part of the equipment issued to the Regiment upon its arrival in New Guinea. This was put in operation at Cape Cretin and furnished

Close-up of causeway built of 7' x 5' x 5' steel ponton sections.



valuable supplies of lumber for the construction of the base at Finschhafen, but was not subsequently used because the supply of lumber shipped directly from the United States was adequate for the task forces with which the Regiment operated.

All of this equipment required extensive maintenance and repair work largely



1000-gallon water distributor truck.

because it frequently had to be operated beyond its capacity or under conditions extremely detrimental to any mechanical equipment. The maintenance section of each shore company and the repair section of Shore Battalion Headquarters Company was well equipped with shop trucks, welding and other equipment, and performed maintenance far beyond the normally authorized jobs. Improvisation and substitution were the order of the day throughout their tour in the Southwest Pacific, and the ingenuity developed by master mechanics in the motor pools contributed largely to the prodigious amount of work accomplished by the engineer equipment of the Battalion.

Shore Battalion's 3d echelon shop at Parang.



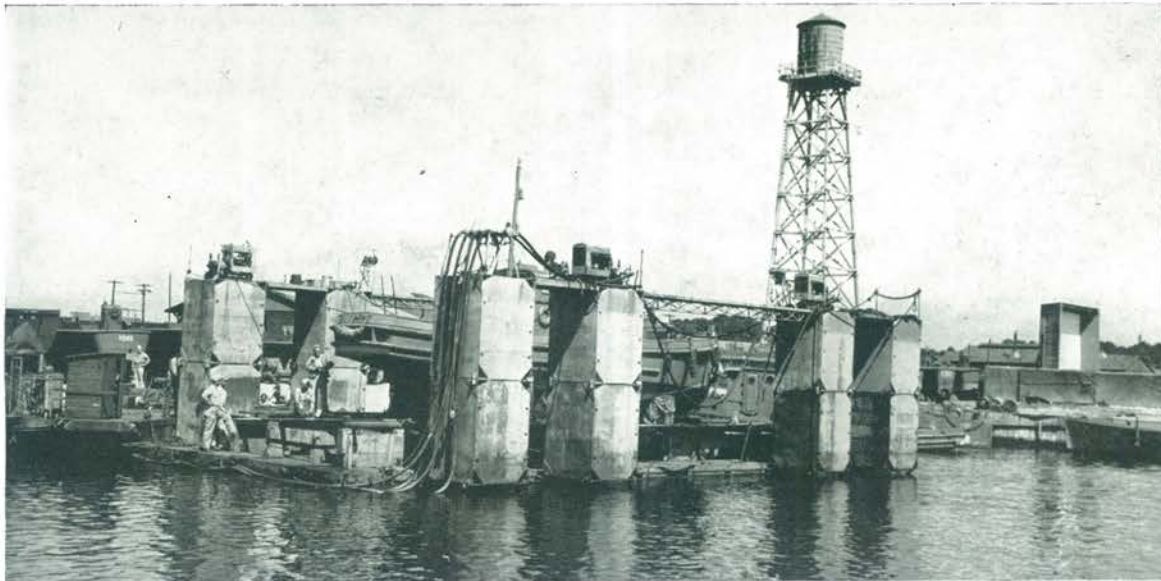
The 1461st Engineer Maintenance Company

THE 563d Boat Maintenance Company, forerunner of the 1461st Engineer Maintenance Company, was activated on August 8, 1942 at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts. From this date until November 16, 1942, the Company began to accumulate the necessary machinery and tools to repair and maintain landing boats of the 3d Engineer Special Brigade.

On November 16, 1942, fourteen officers and two hundred and two enlisted men arrived at Camp Belle, Carrabelle, Florida, to undertake the maintenance of landing craft then being used by the Brigade to train infantry divisions in amphibious warfare. The personnel that made up the company were from all walks of life, and many of the skills required in this type of work had to be taught from the ground up. Work included ship fitting, welding, propeller repair and rebuilding, shaft straightening and brazing, ignition and other electrical work, engine overhaul for both Diesel and gasoline engines, blacksmith trades, and methods of quickly repairing damaged hulls of both steel and wood. The training while at Camp Belle was long, hard and tedious even though the facilities afforded the maintenance companies were ideal.

By early December damage to landing craft had become so heavy that it was necessary to institute two twelve-hour shifts in both hull and engine shops. About this time the maintenance section of the 593d Engineer Amphibian Regiment joined with the 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Company to make a provisional battalion known as the 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion under the command of 1st Lt. Richard Stewart. From the personnel of these two units Company A, Company B and Company C of the provisional battalion were formed.

Because of the many types of engines, and the fact that they were being run day



Drydock built of ponton cube sections at Camp Belle, Carrabelle.



Preparing to float a command boat after the big storm.

and night in amphibious training, the Battalion could not repair engines anywhere near as rapidly as they were breaking down. In fact, the production of the entire engine shop was but one engine per day. This gives an idea of the strides yet to be taken before the maintenance unit would be able to accomplish its mission overseas. But constant practice and intensive on-the-job training broke the bottleneck, and by March the engine shop was producing eleven rebuilt engines each day.

On the night of March 5, 1943 when the severe storm struck the Gulf coast of Florida in the midst of large scale maneuvers, all personnel of the 563d were called out. After a hectic night of rescue work around G Beach and the Carrabelle River, groups of men with tractors and A frames, set out on salvaging missions to islands and strange beaches on the task of refloating a total of ninety-one boats that had been washed from one hundred to two hundred yards up on shore by the strong winds and extraordinary tides accompanying the storm. For sixty-five straight hours many of

20-ton LeTourneau tractor-crane with LCPR in its clutches at Monterey.



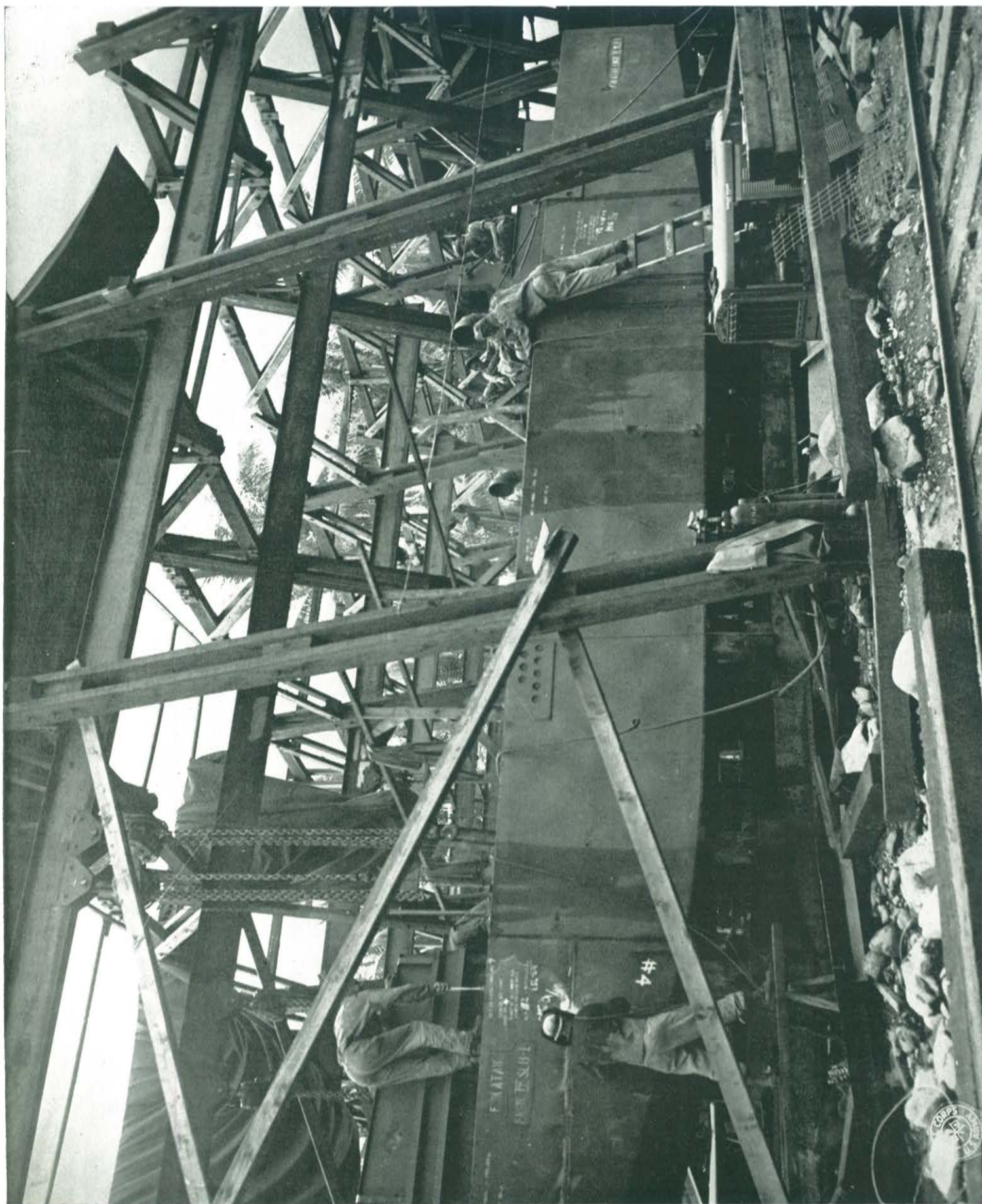
the men and officers received no sleep or rest of any kind. It was a huge undertaking but within seventy-two hours after the storm broke, all boats that had been damaged and lifted out of the water by the storm, were again in operating condition.

In April 1943 the Battalion along with the entire 3d Brigade moved by rail to Fort Ord, California. The 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion was assigned an open space with only mess halls and latrines already constructed in the military reservation of Fort Ord. The first three weeks at this base were spent pouring concrete for tents in which the Battalion lived, and in setting up working areas and maintenance shops on the beach at Monterey. Beginning in the early part of May 1943, each company of the Battalion spent ten days of each month on the beach at Monterey carrying on normal third and fourth echelon maintenance of boats being used in surf training, while the other two companies proceeded with the necessary combat training in preparation for service in the Southwest Pacific in the near future. The training received by these mechanics, welders, carpenters and other skilled men of the maintenance organization included two-week courses of machine gun firing on the desert, rifle marksmanship, bayonet fighting, scouting and reconnaissance work. This training along with the army infiltration training, training in street fighting and on the way to live in the tropics, rounded out a very versatile group of men, who could be used for repairing wrecked and worn-out equipment and who could protect themselves against the enemy if the occasion arose.

During a trip to Australia and New Guinea in July, General Ogden was impressed with the tremendous problem of boat maintenance facing the 2d Brigade and offered his battalion to help out while the rest of the 3d Brigade awaited shipping. After a hectic ten days of packing, crating and car loading, the Battalion arrived at Camp Stoneman on August 16, 1943, where it received a complete outfitting and underwent strenuous last minute training. On August 27, 1943 the Maintenance Battalion boarded the *S.S. President Johnson* at Oakland, California. Trouble developed in the engines of the ship, and the actual departure date from San Francisco harbour was September 7, 1943. The ship was large and old and very slow, and before it was at sea a full twenty-four hours, eight machinists and mechanics of Company A of the 563d had taken over important positions in the decrepit engine room. Thus the 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion spearheaded the entire 3d Engineer Special Brigade on its move overseas.

After a long, uncomfortable and crowded trip, the Battalion was unloaded at Milne Bay, New Guinea, on October 14, 1943. These were the first troops to be brought directly from the States to Milne Bay.

Plans had been made for half of the Battalion to unload the *President Johnson*, while the other half built a camp including roads, mess halls, etc., out of an area of jungle that was actually a sea of mud. The place picked for the camp was approximately six miles from what was then Base A, and was not connected by road, but accessible only by small boats. This was the first taste of the tropics that these men had, and it turned out to be a little more than bargained for. In order to get things built in record time, men and officers were working fourteen- to sixteen-hour days, when they should have been working not more than six-hour days until acclimated.



Part of the assembly line of the 521st Steel Hull Battalion at Milne Bay as the sections of an LCM are welded together.

After thirty-eight days of rain and living in the mud, it was finally possible to get the men on makeshift floors and tents, and things were a little more comfortable.

Then came the job of building warehouses and the LCM assembly plant in a nearby area. This task was given to Company A of the 563d, and with all the problems and difficulties that were faced, a remarkable job was done. All concerned knew that the plant was to produce the LCMs that were to be used in future landing operations in the Pacific, and they also knew that in order to meet the schedule of operations as set up by GHQ, extra efforts would have to be freely expended. Deadlines were met, and by December the boats that arrived carved up into eleven sections were being erected, welded together and launched off the assembly line.

Late in November 1943, changes were made in the officer personnel of the Company whereby 1st Lt. John R. Nunn was appointed company commander, 1st Lt. John F. Hamel was made Executive Officer, and 1st Lt. Robert D. Crawford was added to the officer roster. The strength of the Company at this time was one hundred and thirty-one enlisted men and seven officers.

In the latter part of December, Company A, 563d was alerted to move to Finschhafen to support the 2d Engineer Special Brigade. A Company finally departed Milne Bay for Finschhafen on January 3, 1944 aboard the Liberty Ship *Joel S. Palmer* and arrived at Finschhafen January 7. The Company disembarked and while a detail operated the winches and unloaded ship, the rest of the Company cut a road through almost impassable jungle with bulldozers to the area in which the camp and shops were to be set up. This final location was on Langamak Bay at the mouth of the Mapes River.

Work at this spot proceeded with a high rate of efficiency on boats of the 2d Engineer Special Brigade and on many pieces of damaged equipment that were brought to the Company by other engineer and ordnance units in the area. Nights were never quiet, and little sleep or rest was obtained by the men due to almost constant Japanese bombing. This bombing and the occasional landing of Japanese paratroopers in the area made the men realize more than ever that they were really at war and tended to raise the morale and efforts to very high levels. Finschhafen also gave the men the first taste of what they could expect if they did not control the flies and mosquitoes that infested the tropics. In the old Japanese bivouacs which were very unsanitary, mosquitoes bred in great numbers and at one time over forty-five percent of the Company was put out of commission by Dengue fever. However, this condition was soon overcome.

On February 10, 1944 Company A, 563d was officially attached to the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment and was alerted to proceed to two new combat points, namely Saidor and Borgen Bay, Cape Gloucester, New Britain. The strength of the Company at this time was six officers, one warrant officer and one hundred and twenty-one enlisted men.

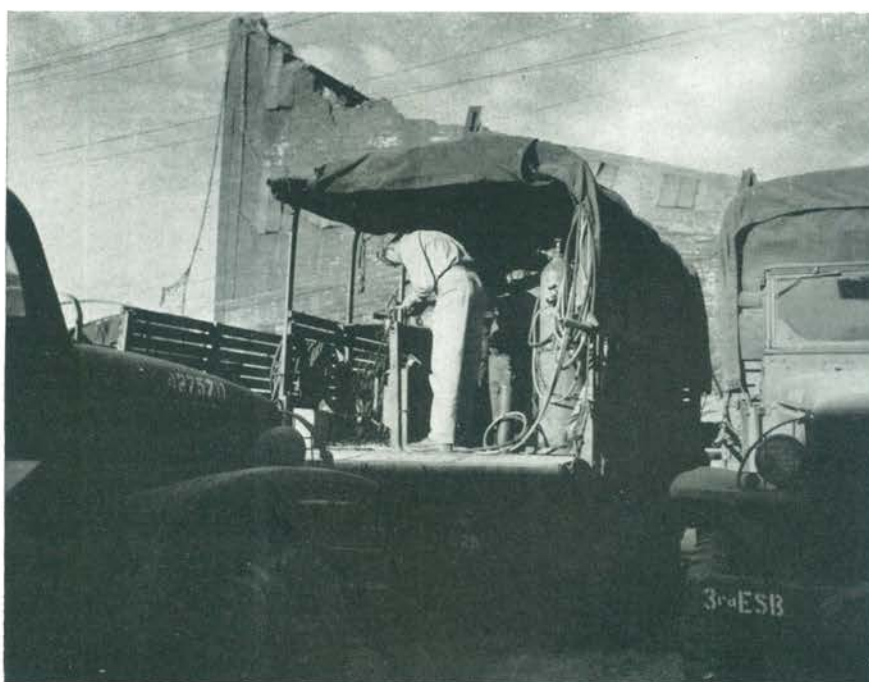
On February 26, 1944 Lt. Cawley, Lt. Frankenhauser with T/Sgt. Michels and T/Sgt. Boswell and thirty-nine other enlisted men departed Finschhafen with equipment for Saidor, aboard *LST 996* to carry out the maintenance work on the boats of Company C, 533d EB&SR. Operating conditions at Saidor were very difficult,

with heavy surf and long sloping beaches composed of boulders and heavy rock formations. Damage to boats and engines was very heavy. Marine supplies were not available, and it was here that the enlisted men and officers showed what American ingenuity could do by substituting wood for metals, lead for bronze, and changing other pieces of equipment in order to keep C Company's boats running throughout the entire Saidor campaign.

On February 24 Lt. Crawford, M/Sgt. Molner and twenty enlisted men departed Finschhafen for Cape Gloucester, New Britain, aboard 533d LCMs, as an advance party for Company A, 563d. Their mission was to select a suitable beach for maintenance operations and a nearby bivouac area in which to set up the rest of the Company. On February 28 the balance of the organization departed Finschhafen for Cape Gloucester on two LCTs, with all remaining company equipment. All maintenance operations were finally located on a small strip of beach in Borgen Bay, Cape Gloucester, that proved to be fairly treacherous for the purpose of lifting out thirty-ton LCMs for repair and overhauling. A bivouac area was set up adjacent to the beach in what was at one time a dense forest of mahogany trees. However, pre-invasion bombing and shelling by the Air Corps and Navy had reduced the area to a number of deep shell holes, mud and ruined tree stumps, with a tremendous tangle of foliage lying about.

Upon arriving at this base, it was found that thirty of the thirty-one LCM landing craft belonging to Company A of the 533d had been damaged by the long trip from the assembly plant and by contact with floating logs and coral formations. It was also discovered that the maintenance company had but four days to put these boats into combat condition to make a one hundred and twenty-mile run up the

Mobile Welding
Shop.



coast of New Britain to land elements of the 1st Marine Division in a combat landing at Talasea, New Britain. Under this emergency condition boats were repaired and dispatched before any living area was set up for the maintenance personnel, outside of a fly-proof kitchen. It is a credit to the will and ingenuity of the maintenance men that the job of repairing these boats in the given four days was completed on time, and all craft successfully made the run to Talasea on schedule.

Borgen Bay and New Britain will always be remembered by this organization as a rough deal and will also be linked up with any thoughts they might have of canned bully beef and canned carrots. This constituted the daily diet for many, many weeks. It was also on this operation that first blood was drawn by a member of the 3d Engineer Special Brigade when Sgt. Beckner shot a Japanese sniper from the seat of his bulldozer as he was put ashore at Talasea.

On July 1, 1944 Company A of the 563d Engineer Boat Maintenance Battalion was redesignated the 1461st Engineer Maintenance Company by the War Department. A new Table of Organization and Equipment raised the authorized strength of the Company from one hundred and twenty-one to one hundred and ninety-four enlisted men, and changed the organization from a company of two platoons, to a company of three fully equipped platoons, each platoon to support a boat company of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment. Lt. Crawford, T/Sgt. Boswell and forty-five other enlisted men proceeded to Aitape, New Guinea with Company C which was attached to the 32d Infantry Division in that area. The 2d platoon under WO(jg) Joseph Latanzio remained on New Britain attached to Company A of the 533d, which in turn was attached to the 40th Infantry Division. Captain Nunn and WO(jg) Joseph Williamson took nineteen men under the direction of T/Sgt. James Parrell, and returned to Finschhafen to acquire additional men and equipment to fill out the 1st platoon of the Company. While at Finschhafen, the 1st platoon joined B Company of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment and together they moved from Finschhafen to Seleo Island, Aitape, New Guinea during the latter part of August 1944.

The 2d platoon continued on at Borgen Bay, Cape Gloucester, New Britain with A Company in support of the 40th Division, until November 14, 1944 at which time it departed Cape Gloucester to proceed to Seleo Island to join the 1st and 3d platoons. During its stay at Cape Gloucester it had kept an exceptionally high percentage of the boats in operation, besides making parts for dental departments of the hospital, and many other exceptional items in the machine shops to help out other organizations.

Upon arrival at Seleo Island, the men of the 2d platoon immediately set up camp, but within seventy-two hours were again breaking camp and loading men and equipment on LCMs to proceed to Finschhafen to re-load on navy transports for the attack on Luzon. During their stay at Seleo Island, the platoon acquired a new platoon commander in the person of Lt. Richard G. Gall. Other than this one change in officer personnel, the roster of the platoon remained about as it had been when it was originally organized.

The 1st and 3d platoons continued to operate on Seleo Island at Aitape, New

Hauling an LCM on the bank of the Bued River, Luzon.



Guinea where operations for the boats were exceptionally difficult and maintenance work ran very high. While there shortages of marine parts necessitated many improvisations in order to keep the boats running. A new idea of sleeving worn shafts with iron water pipe was tried and found to be successful. Wooden cutless bearings were made out of hard woods found in the area, and after many tests under actual conditions, were found to be impractical due to the grinding action of the fine volcanic silt found around the beaches of this area. While at this base, a new type army kitchen was developed by S/Sgt. McBride. It consisted of a 9' x 12' hut built on wooden runners, screened with 2" mesh sand screening covered with regular insect screen. It was equipped with two army field ranges for cooking, plus screened-in bread and pastry boxes, kerosene refrigeration, work tables and electric compressors and ventilating systems. It was also equipped with lifting eyes which allowed it to be picked up by the M-20 crane and placed anywhere on the beach, or lifted aboard any boat or ship. This type kitchen was so successful that the other two platoons constructed similar ones and all of them gained wide notoriety. The men of this organization were served hot meals usually within two hours after the kitchen was placed on the beach during an operation.

Also, while at this base, a salvaged 30 KW Japanese generator was attached to a Gray Marine Diesel engine and afforded power in later operations to the entire Boat Battalion as well as to the automatic machinery used by the Maintenance Company. This particular project enabled the technicians of the Maintenance Company to study the wear on different parts of the Gray Marine Diesel engine after hundreds of hours of continuous high speed operation.

About December 20, 1944 all preparations had been completed by the Maintenance Company for the Mike 1 operation on Luzon, and the loading of navy transports and Liberty ships began. By December 25 all loading was completed and on the morning of December 26 all personnel of the 1st and 3d platoons except a few left to bring up rear echelon equipment, were loaded aboard navy transports and

1st platoon hauling a boat on the lip of a Cotabato dock.





Tuning up a rebuilt Gray Marine Diesel in the 3d echelon shops of the 1461st.

cargo ships for the start of one of the largest attack operations in the Pacific. After an uneventful but dangerous voyage in which many men in the Company witnessed attempts of hurtling suicide planes and submarines to stop the convoy, the attack on the main island of Luzon at Lingayen Gulf was made. Particulars of this attack are covered in Part One, so will not be dwelt upon in this chapter.

The 1st and 3d platoons of the Maintenance Company finally set up operations for boat maintenance on the banks of the Bued River near San Fabian. Here emergency operations were carried out with the few available tools until S plus 4 day when shop equipment and shop trucks were put ashore. Within eight hours after arrival of this equipment, all shops were up and in complete operation on rebuilding motors and the boats with all their component parts. Work during the first few weeks was exceptionally heavy, but once the initial backlog of boats damaged in the earlier days of the assault was whittled down, 90% of the entire fleet of landing craft was kept in operating condition. In this place the men also went through some bombing and a few nights of watchfulness due to attempted Japanese infiltration.

In the meantime, the 2d platoon was having considerable trouble in maintaining boats without any tools or equipment whatsoever. Because of the failure of the 544th EB&SR to allot any space on the transports from Bougainville, the equipment of the 2d platoon had to be left behind. Its men fixed boats by pulling them into shallow water at high tide and repairing them as best they could with equipment borrowed from the 1462d between tides. About February 10 the 2d platoon moved from the Dagupan area and set up its shops and equipment, which arrived on that date, on the Bued River Bank with the 1st and 3d platoons. This was the first time in seven months that the Company was together. While there men were able to visit Manila in the very early days after its liberation and observe at first hand what the Japanese could and did do to what was once a beautiful and highly civilized city.

Operations continued on the Bued until March 28, 1944, when all three platoons were loaded aboard LCMs and LSTs to start the trip to the Malabang and Parang areas on the Island of Mindanao. A stop of approximately five days was made on the Island of Mindoro where equipment was regrouped in echelons. On April 12 reloading was again the order of the day on both LCMs and LSTs, and the final

One of the Navy-designed mobile repair units specifically intended for employment in a shore based landing craft pool.

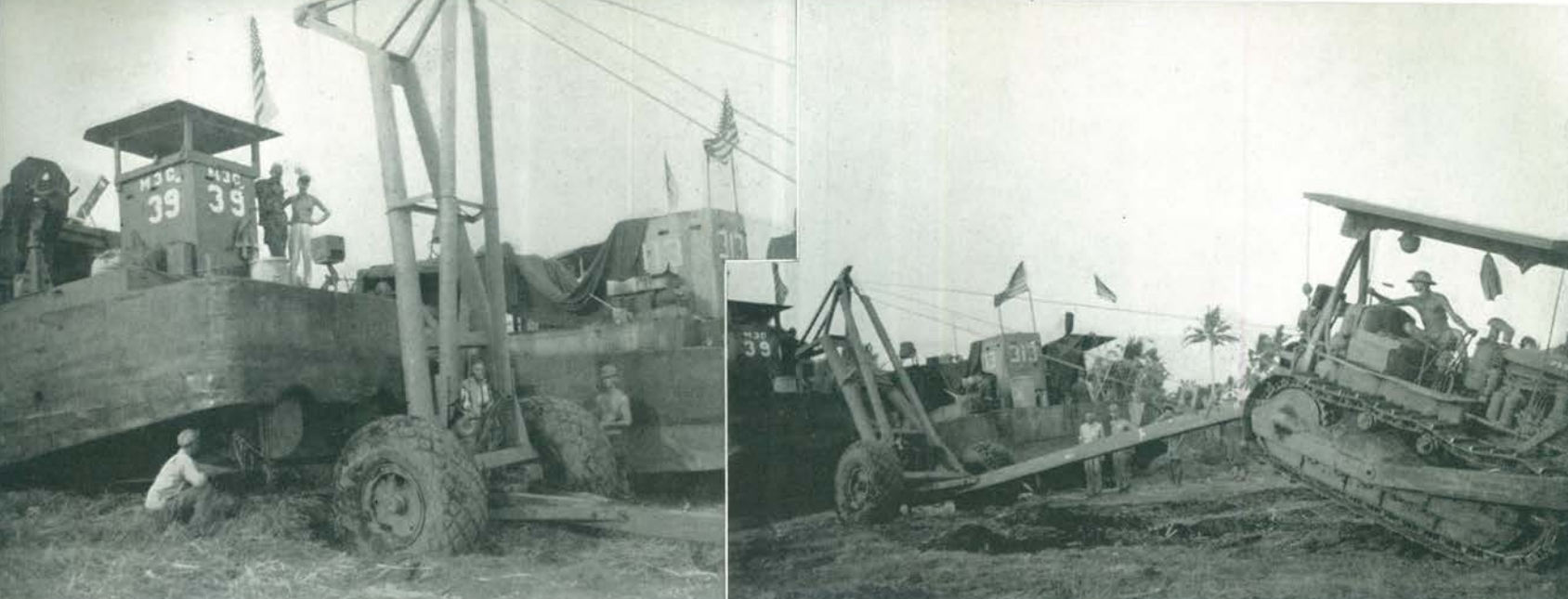


leg of the trip to Mindanao was begun. Lt. Carroll, platoon leader of the 1st platoon, T/Sgt. Parrell and fourteen other enlisted men joined fifteen enlisted men and one officer from Company B in furnishing a platoon of riflemen to reconnoiter Ibus Island just one quarter mile off the coast of Malabang, and to destroy if necessary any Japanese installations there. This was to take place thirty minutes before the main attack on the mainland of Malabang. During the evening of April 16, while all ships and small boats were sailing under blackout, a message was received changing the order of the operation so that half of the ships landed at Malabang and the remaining half at Parang. The small patrol mentioned above went ashore at Ibus Island as scheduled and discovered no enemy fortifications or personnel, and the landing was made at both places on schedule and without opposition. The sudden last minute splitting of the fleet created considerable confusion in proper distribution to the two points of operation, and it was approximately forty-eight hours after the original landing before this situation could be corrected and maintenance operations could proceed.

The 1st platoon was initially stationed at Ibus Island in the Malabang area, the 2d platoon in Quidama Bay in the Parang area, and the 3d platoon at Cotabato, which is approximately five miles up the Mindanao River. Here again very difficult beaching conditions were encountered and work was exceptionally hard and heavy.

Late in April the 1st platoon moved from Ibus Island to Cotabato and set up temporarily before proceeding on to Davao with Company B. On May 6 M/Sgt. Molner and ten enlisted men proceeded to Talomo as an advance echelon and were later joined by Lt. Carroll and the balance of the forty-seven men in the 1st platoon. In the Davao area Japanese infiltration was very heavy and included attempts to mine or otherwise destroy the maintenance equipment. On one occasion T/4 Ralph W. Davidson, a welder with the organization, was sleeping in his welding truck, when a Jap threw a hand grenade into the truck. Fortunately it failed to explode. While at Talomo the 1st platoon not only kept a high percentage of the boats in operating condition, but also did numerous other valuable services for elements of the 24th Division including building an adjustable operating table out of welded pipe for a hospital unit at Davao which had had its equipment demolished by shellfire.

In June, the 2d platoon moved with A Company to Bugo on the north shore of Mindanao. Operations on the Agusan River with its snags and ledges made it prac-



Checking shafts and propellers after a boat is hauled. *Right:* the 28-ton LCMs frequently bounced the 15-ton D-7 dozers around plenty before being maneuvered into the desired spot.

tically necessary to rebuild entire under water units of the biggest percentage of the boats on river runs.

The 3d platoon continued to operate at the town of Cotabato until the latter part of July 1945, during which time they not only continued to maintain the landing craft that were delivering troops and equipment far up the Mindanao River, but also became civic minded and made church bells for the missionaries at Cotabato, and helped to construct some of the civil buildings and churches for the returning population.

During this time the entire Company was under close observation and received many minute inspections. The Company was eventually awarded the Meritorious Service Plaque in recognition of its accomplishments and military record throughout its entire tour of duty overseas.

In the early part of August when the 2d and 3d platoons had combined forces in Bugo, a model camp was established and living conditions were the highest that had been known by the organization since its arrival overseas. Here the great homeward exodus of the men began. The resulting holes in the ranks of the organization were filled by replacements freshly arrived from the States who, although not experienced in this type of work, immediately caught the spirit of the Company and put forth their best efforts.

On the night the proposal of peace by the Japanese was broadcast to the world, it was received by the members of the organization with calmness and silent thanks that this trouble was over, even though the men knew that their job would not be completed until all troops had been moved out of the interior and substitute crews and maintenance men could be trained for the continued unloading of supplies.

On September 9, 1945 the 3d platoon departed for Zamboanga, Mindanao with Company C, to reload on navy transports for the long but final trip to the Japanese mainland. The 2d platoon loaded directly from Bugo and the 1st platoon directly from Talomo. The 2d and 3d platoons arrived at Kure, Japan October 7, 1945, and immediately set up shops in the small boat basins of the Japanese naval base. Here the job was to continue to maintain the boats that would supply the troops ashore

until such time as the harbors could be cleared of mines and docks could be conditioned to receive cargo vessels. The 1st platoon proceeded directly to the Island of Shikoku to a spot approximately twenty-five miles from Kure, to do the same kind of work.

Immediately upon arrival of the organization in Japan, the demobilization system as set up by the Army reduced the personnel of the Company to a point where operating was extremely difficult. On November 12, all men with less than sixty points, which meant that all men who were replacements in the Company, were transferred to harbor craft organizations which had taken over the boats from the 533d. These organizations also took all of the Company's equipment.

In this way the 1461st Engineer Maintenance Company ended the job it had begun twenty-five months before at Milne Bay, New Guinea. The remnant of the Company was merged with the caretaker detachment of the 533d and was inactivated early in 1946.

During twenty-two months of participation in all kinds of operations in combat areas, not a man was lost or seriously wounded. The Company lifted from the water and repaired a total of over seventy-five hundred landing craft. Without its expert and tireless efforts the Boat Battalion of the 533d would have been helpless; and without the latter four major task forces might have failed.



The 1461st's last shop — Kure Basin, Japan.

Communications

THE nerve system of any military unit is its communications section. Without the ability to transmit information from lower units to headquarters, or decisions from headquarters down to the fighting or working elements, all its potential power would be wasted. An engineer boat and shore regiment is dependent on its communicators to a unique degree. Its own elements are apt to be widely scattered, partly afloat and partly ashore; furthermore, it must provide communications facilities for many other units during the hectic early stages of securing the beachhead. The 533d's tour of duty in the Southwest Pacific required its units to operate most of the time separated by many hundreds of miles, and presented many problems in communication that were exceptional even for an amphibian engineer outfit.

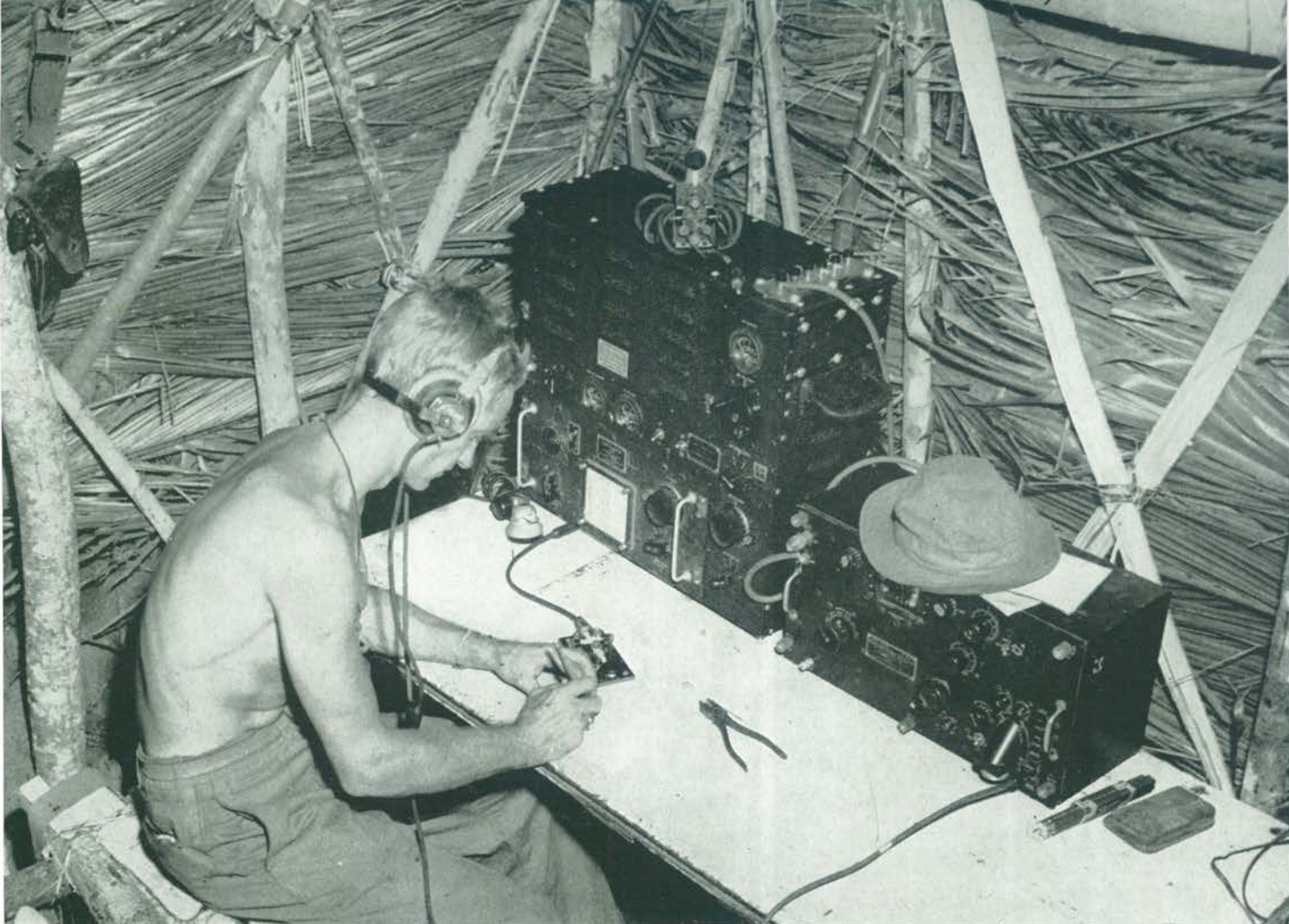
The primary duty of nearly one man out of every ten in the Regiment was either setting up, servicing, or operating instruments of communication. Had all these men been grouped together in one company, that company would have had a greater strength than any except the three boat companies. In Regimental Headquarters Company the communications platoon had a strength of 58 men, of whom 30 were radio operators. Boat Battalion Headquarters Company had a communications section of 29 men, 19 of them assigned to radio, and each boat company had a radio section of 13 men. The Shore Battalion Headquarters Company's communications platoon, which handled all communications for the Battalion, numbered 57, with 26 assigned to radio and 31 to wire and message center work. The equipment employed by these sections, some of the problems they faced, and the manner in which they achieved their mission of tying the Regiment into an effectively functioning unit despite phenomenal handicaps of distance is the subject of this chapter.

Radio

Linking regimental headquarters with the command post of the 3d Engineer Special Brigade and with the other major amphibian units was the powerful SCR 299. This highly effective instrument, with its 300-watt power and its range of thousands of miles, was mounted for convenience and protection in a DUKW. During early 1945 this set enabled the 533d, from its station on Luzon, to communicate at will with brigade headquarters at Biak and the 543d at Zamboanga, and late in the war facilitated redeployment and the handling of pressing administrative matters when the Regiment at Kure was 700 miles from the Brigade's advance CP on Hokkaido and 1600 miles from the Brigade's rear echelon at Batangas, Luzon.

DUKW-mounted SCR 299 radio debarking from LSM at Hiro seaplane base, Japan.





SCR 193 — a powerful and dependable set.

Ranking just below the SCR 299 were the radio sets designated as SCR 177 and 193. These sets with a transmitting power of 75 watts differed primarily in their power units, the former using a 110-volt generator and the latter operating from low voltage storage batteries. During the first few months of the Regiment's overseas duty these sets had to do the work later accomplished by the 299, maintaining contact over distances of half a thousand miles by virtue of extremely careful operation and net discipline. The major use to which they were put, however, was linking the Regiment with its subordinate units when, as was normal, they were widely separated. Not only were these established at the bases of detached battalions and companies, but the SCR 193 was installed in command boats and gun boats when they were sent on distant missions.

In the next lower level came the SCR 284 and its improved version, the SCR 694. These sets, with a power of 25 watts were intended by the Signal Corps to have an effective voice range of 20-30 miles, and an effective CW code range of 60 miles. Such limited ranges would have been in many instances useless to the Regiment, so it was fortunate that the Signal Corps was proved to have been most conservative in its statements. More than a dozen of these instruments provided the principal sinews linking the elements of the Boat Battalion throughout the War. In the spring of 1944 the Boat Battalion's net stretched 400 miles from Cape Hoskins on New Britain to Saidor, New Guinea. Antennas carefully erected in the proper direction helped make possible these lengthy ranges, but it was also remarkable that boats



SCR 284 — medium range and power but a steady performer.

with only the standard 25-foot antenna rod were generally able to keep in ready contact with their operating base. Although these sets had hand crank generators, the Regiment normally used 240-ampere-hour batteries as the basic means of power. In addition to the long range code work, these sets saw extremely heavy duty as substitutes for telephones at such places as Aitape where the Battalion on an island depended completely for control of lighterage and all administrative traffic on this radio set.

Somewhat superior to the 284, but equivalent in purpose and use, were the Navy 40-watt sets TCS 5 and TCS 8. These were first acquired as installed equipment of the picket boats and crash boats, but were later obtained by trading with PT mother ships. Their considerably wider range of kilocycles not only permitted necessary voice contact between the LCMGs and planes and PTs in the same area, but also were extremely pleasant to have around because of their ability to pick up programs on the normal long wave broadcasting channels.

For short range pure voice work, the Regiment at one time or another used the SCR 511, 536, 610 and 300. The first was used only in training in the States and was found to be extremely allergic to salt water. The little 536, which was initially supposed to provide the main communication within a boat company, was found to be equally unreliable when exposed to spray, but was throughout the War invaluable for communication between control points on long beaches. The 610 was never employed in great quantity by the Regiment and was never on its official tables, but was used in its later operations for liaison work with the navy transports and landing ships. Though not as easy to move as the other sets considered here, its built-in loud speaker and proportionately high power would have made it a welcome addition to the Regiment's hierarchy of radios.



SCR 300 — short range but within that range magnificently effective.

The SCR 300, of which the Regiment had a total of 63, was the radio most familiar to the men of both battalions. This little set, with its three circuits and 18 tubes contained in a case no bigger than a shoe box and its power furnished by a single attached battery, operated in the 40-48 megacycle band with a simplicity and fidelity of tone that rivaled the field telephone. It was, of course, limited in range to so-called "line of sight," but this meant on the water an effective range of 10-15 miles, and was more than adequate for control of convoys, communication between the beachmaster and working parties aboard ships in the harbor, and contact between gunboats and ground troops fighting within range of the gunboats' effective support. Its sturdy construction and thorough waterproofing made it reliable under weather

Gathered around an SCR 300 on the beach Lt. Colonel McLallen and Major Collier keep in close touch with ships and other parts of the beach.



and sea conditions when all other radios were useless; and its simplicity of operation made its employment possible without wasting the time of expert high-speed radio operators so badly needed to tend the higher powered sets on a 24-hour basis. Its great advantage over the SCR 610 lay in the ease with which it could be tuned from channel to channel, thus enabling one set to guard 3 or 4 nets, provided the operator adhered to a prearranged time schedule.

The high-speed radio operators of the Regiment were trained in a manner prescribed by the Signal Corps in centralized schools at Carrabelle and Fort Ord, and in general developed a high state of proficiency with the key. Though most of the operators were capable of handling traffic at the rate of 25-30 words a minute, atmospheric conditions and the fact that the sets were being operated to and beyond the limit of their range, meant that most messages were handled at approximately 15 to 18 words a minute.

Codes and Ciphers

When the Brigade first arrived in the Theatre in late 1943 and requested assignment of channels to operate its radio equipment, the Chief Signal Officer at first limited it to sets of not over 25 watts. This would have meant that all communication between widely scattered units of the Brigade would have to have been sent through existing radio nets, which were already terribly overcrowded and in some cases days behind schedule in handling even priority messages. Though the Theatre shortly relented and permitted the Brigade to use its higher powered sets, this permission was coupled with stringent warnings against compromising secret or confidential information by failure properly to use prescribed code procedures. For the rest of the War the Regiment made every effort to adhere to these directives and at the same time to achieve flexibility and speed in the transmission of messages.

The principal cipher employed was that built around the ingenious M-209 cipher device, which once set was capable of enciphering messages at whatever speed the code clerk could operate its typewriter-like key board. This instrument was extremely satisfactory save for the fact that the Regiment was only allowed three of them, one for each battalion and one for regimental headquarters. With companies and even smaller units stationed at widely separated points, these three instruments were totally insufficient, and great trouble was experienced in obtaining additional ones. About the time the Regiment finally possessed enough of them, higher authorities decided that this device was not sufficiently undecipherable and directed that it be restricted to confidential messages. Thus, for communications classified secret, it was necessary to employ either the Division Field Code or a double transposition cipher. The first of these was a code built on a numerical equivalent for all phrases or syllables with a frequently changing subtraction factor. Though this was undoubted-

Signal tower at Aitape seen over the ramp of an LCM.





Semaphoring from the water's edge was effective once you attracted attention from the boat or ship.

ly a fine method for use in well organized rear headquarters, anyone who has had to encode or decode a message by this system on a small, salt water-soaked clip-board in the cramped quarters of an LCM while fighting off the symptoms of seasickness, remembers this code as one of the minor nightmares of the War. The double transposition cipher was nearly as bad, as the smallest inaccuracy in following out its cryptographic procedures threw the whole message into a meaningless jumble. Actually the solution in the Regiment was to phrase messages whenever possible in such terms that they could properly be classified as confidential, but when material originated in higher headquarters, or obviously contained secret information, there was nothing to do but go through the painful computations involved in the Division Field Code or employ the tedious double transposition.

In intra-regimental traffic varieties of the simpler code forms were employed. The brevity codes appropriate for other tactical units never included the phrases required by the 533d, and it was felt inadvisable to create an additional code of this nature; so the Regiment's only private codes were built around a simple list of code names for units and individuals, sometimes coupled with the well known "shackle" code method of disguising numerals. When this was not sufficient, the Boat Battalion kept in reserve a single transposition cipher which was fast and easy, and while very easy to break, sounded sufficiently like a code so that the monitoring stations of higher headquarters let it pass. Voice transmissions and clear text CW messages occasionally brought the originators into considerable hot water, especially when the radio circuit, such as the one between Seleo and the Aitape mainland or between Parang and Cotabato, was used as a substitute for a telephone connection; and of course, this was particularly true when relatively high ranking officers insisted on using the microphone in person, at which time the agony on the face of the operator on watch was something to behold.

Visual Signaling

Despite the hundreds of thousands of dollars of ingenious radio equipment in the hands of the Regiment, it is probably a fact that more messages were exchanged by old-fashioned semaphore or blinker than by any other means. In the Boat Battalion all communications from wave leaders or platoon leaders to boats under their control were necessarily by visual means, and contacts made by convoys or lone craft with shore stations or passing naval or merchant vessels were much more common with blinker than radio. The SE-11 signal gun, a simple but very effective contraption powered by five ordinary small dry cells, was part of the equipment of every boat, and could be used on a clear night over distances up to 10 miles, or again could be used with the red lens for short distances without disclosing the location of a blacked-out convoy. The Shore Battalion too had plenty of opportunity to use blinker and semaphore. At each beach the Battalion erected a signal tower, equipped with powerful blinker lamps, and frequently the communications of all services between vessels afloat and installations ashore were channeled through this tower, and the beach control personnel necessarily relied upon the signal flags for virtually all their traffic-directing signals to landing craft.

Telephone

Whereas most non-signal corps units of regimental or battalion size are solely responsible in the field of wire communication for installing and maintaining adequate telephone networks within their units, the 533d's wire sections had a far heavier task. In addition to normal unit telephone systems, the linemen of the headquarters companies of the Regiment and Shore Battalion were responsible for communication to all units operating in the so-called beach-dump area and for supplying and servic-

Stringing cable near Parang.



ing lines to all dumps, control points, and other installations involved in the logistical functioning of the beachhead. This was a big job in itself, but was rendered extraordinarily difficult by the fact that it had to be done from scratch in the early hours of an amphibious assault before there were any roads and while vehicles of all types were roaming in every direction at once. Under these conditions attempts to lay wire on the ground were a waste of time as the lines were cut up into small fragments almost as fast as they were laid. Consequently the wiremen had to elevate the lines as fast as they laid them, and even this was no protection, as enthusiastic bulldozer operators invariably seemed to give perverse priority to knocking down those trees that supported vital telephone lines.

Despite these heart-breaking handicaps, the line crews kept at their job hour after hour, using alternate and often ingenious routes to outwit those who would unthinkingly destroy their work. Even after a beachhead became well organized, the work of maintaining lines was never easy. Particularly in the Philippines where field wire was regarded by the natives as a staple commodity for repairing their shattered and sagging homes, the linesmen's duty was never over.

Throughout the War efforts were made to solve the problem of laying standard field wire, W-110, under salt water from shore to ship or from one point of the shore to an island or isolated cove. Although this seemed to work well for a few days, the wire was not sufficiently well protected to withstand the chafing on the coral bottom and the gnawing of hungry fish, and the Regiment was never able to obtain armored cable in sufficient quantity to install a long lasting circuit under the sea.

The most spectacular achievement of the wire section in terms of overcoming difficulties and terrain was in laying the line from Parang to Quidama Bay on the



Keeping the wires identified on such a pole was no small job.

north shore of Polloc Harbor, Mindanao. This bay was the only suitable boat base for craft lightering X Corps supplies ashore, and yet high mountains blocked radio waves between it and the beach at Parang. When the line laid under the water proved no more reliable than expected, the regimental wire crew set out to link Parang with Quidama by a wire laid over the mountain and swamps that lay between them. The natives said flatly that the terrain was impassable, that though there had once been a trail, nobody still alive remembered the route. With the assistance of two outlaw Moro hunters, the linemen in one day blazed their own trail $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles winching their light wire truck across streams for a while, then transferring the equipment to a jeep, and swinging that across chasms, and finally scaling the precipitous mountain range on hands and knees, dragging their heavy reels of wire behind them. When they finally arrived at A Company's bivouac on Quidama Bay, they were so blackened by mud and tattered and torn by vines and rock that the first man to greet them thought they were Moro guerrillas. Like all other lines, this one, once initially laid, required plenty of attention to keep it in operation. Though the natives around Sugud still maintained it was impossible to reach Quidama Bay overland, there was soon a trail that was well known to the linemen of the 533d.

Other work of the communications sections included installing and maintaining lighting systems both on the beaches and in camps. Shortages of wire, sockets and bulbs required extreme care and ability to make a little go a long way; and the over-worked generators of many different origins and capacities for which replacement parts were never available were kept in continuous operation only by the most ingenious and devoted attention. Operation of the precious moving picture projectors and care and repair of the delicate SCR 717c radars on the LCMGs also fell to the lot of the versatile signalmen. All in all, the Regiment can take great pride in the accomplishments of its communicators. Their stretching of the effective range of radios beyond the expectations of the laboratories that developed them, their handling of voluminous coded traffic 24 hours a day, month after month, and their never failing efforts to tie the beachhead forces into a common wire net may not have been as spectacular as the exploits of the operators of the big cats or the crews of the LCMGs; yet without their skill, the 2000 men of the 533d would have been little more effective than a mob of sweating New Guinea 'Bongs.'



Part of the regimental wire crew pose from a familiar perch.

The Medical Detachment

THE Medical Detachment of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment was organized and began to function in September 1942. During the first two months at Camp Edwards, the number of men and officers in the Detachment was too small to permit any activity other than routine sick-call and sanitary inspection.

In November 1942, the Regiment moved to Camp Carrabelle, Florida. The detachment had increased in strength and continued to grow so that shortly it was able to perform all of its garrison duties and also participate in the tactical training of the Regiment. By April 1943, when the Regiment moved to Fort Ord, California, the organization was fairly well trained. The following months were spent in polishing away all the roughness disclosed in maneuvers. Toward the end of '43 every man in the Regiment was given a complete physical examination to eliminate the unfit.

The principal functions of the Detachment in garrison were training, sanitary inspections, and operation of dispensaries. Whatever the efficiency of the Detachment was during combat depended largely on the character and thoroughness of its training during these months in garrison. In addition to basic military training, specialized training and instruction of personnel enabled them to perform skillfully the functions for which the Detachment was organized. The Detachment aided the line companies of the Regiment in the preparation and presentation of classes in Personal Hygiene, First Aid, and other related medical subjects. Tactical training in conjunction with the Regiment itself on the numerous problems taught the Detachment to maneuver and deploy its elements in combat as part of the Regiment as a co-ordinated whole rather than as a separate unit serving the Regiment.

Sanitary inspections were a necessary evil. No one in the Detachment liked to be designated as inspector, the inspector never liked his work, and, of course, no

Practicing casualty handling in Florida.



one liked the inspector. Yet, they were the only means of discovering sanitary shortcomings. The time finally arrived when the inspector could go through the area and say with pride that this Regiment was a little bit better than surrounding units. The awareness of the value of good sanitation and the excellent co-operation of unit commanders and responsible noncommissioned officers resulted in the maintenance of high standards during the entire period of existence of the Regiment.

The dispensary was the "heart" and the center of activity of the Medical Detachment. The dispensary was never closed, although there were times when it had to be stationed in the back of a weapons carrier or on an LCM. Usually, however, there were comfortable furniture, fancy signs and even a lot of white paint to distinguish a dispensary of the 533d. While still in training in the United States, one dispensary was usually sufficient to serve the Regiment. During the period of foreign service there were as many as six operating at one time. There were always neighboring units and attached units without medical personnel of their own, so the dispensaries of the 533d furnished medical service for an average of 3000 men most of the time. The men who came in as patients had to be promptly seen, well received and efficiently treated; otherwise, they would not report ailments that were still of a minor nature and many would progress to where hospitalization would be necessary. Yet, "goldbricks" could not be allowed to waste the technicians' time nor avoid their own duties. Many men in the Regiment were rarely ill. They remember these dispensaries as the places they received all those shots (vaccinations and immunizations) which even the medics admit were considerable in number. The diseases guarded against included: Small pox, Typhoid, Typhus, Tetanus, Cholera, Plague, Yellow Fever and Influenza.

Whenever possible "quarters" cases were treated in the dispensary area. This meant the conversion of an adjacent hut or tent into a small hospital. Patients that did not require any special hospital facilities or specialty consultation were placed here. This permitted more comfort and greater liberties for the patient and decreased the total days of "hospitalization" for the Regiment.

The tables of organization of the Medical Detachment originally listed five medical officers, one dental officer and sixty-one men. Later changes allowed only three medical officers and one dental officer, but added two medical administrative officers. The number of men was dropped to fifty-seven. They further indicated a breakdown of the unit into a Boat Battalion section, a Shore Battalion section and a headquarters section. Both the standing operating procedures and the tables of organization of the Medical Detachment were unique. The former had to be planned and worked out from experiment and experience. The Regiment itself was placed in so many and varied situations that no plan or set of plans could cover them all. Initiative and adaptation were more important than following any set formula.

During the two years in foreign service, sanitation and preventative medicine became much greater problems. The work of the Detachment and the co-operation of the Regiment resulted in the maintenance of the same high standards that were held before. While at Aitape, the Regiment received a commendation from the Brigade Surgeon for maintaining low disease rates. Records were kept, showing the compara-

tive hospitalization rates between the 533d EB&SR and the Division, Corps, and Army to which it was attached. The rates of the 533d were invariably lower, usually ranging from 50% to 75% of the rates of the larger units. The actual hospitalization rate varied every month but averaged 235 cases per thousand per year. The percentage of man days lost due to the quarters cases averaged only 1%. Combat casualties and traumatic accidents were, of course, unavoidable. The Regiment had, however, very few deaths or permanent partial disabilities due to disease processes.

The first of the major operations for the Medical Detachment was at Talasea, New Britain. Only the personnel of one battalion aid station participated in that operation, but the work accomplished by this section was noteworthy. After intensive mortar fire spattered the beach, they cleared the beach of casualties, established an aid station on the beach, assisted in evacuation of patients coming from forward units, hauled medical supplies, and escorted casualties on the long uncomfortable boat trip back to Iboki.

The second major operation for the Medical Detachment was at Lingayen Gulf. The Regiment was charged, in this instance, with the following missions:

- a. To collect casualties within the beach area.
- b. To receive casualties from all forward clearing and separate aid stations.
- c. To serve as a clearing point for all casualties leaving the beachhead area.

Litter cases after LCM ride are transferred to ambulance over a muddy beach.





First aid on the beach at San Fabian.



Victim of land mine gets a drink before being sent via LCVP to a hospital ship in Lingayen Gulf.

To accomplish all this, Company A, 263d Medical Battalion and the 604th Medical Clearing Company were attached to this Regiment. The tactical situation required the 533d EB&SR Medical Detachment to establish an aid station on each of two beaches and a separate section to control evacuation of patients. One clearing station was also to be established on each beach and each of the attached companies was divided into a hospital platoon and a collecting platoon. In the operation all procedures followed the plan. The two aid stations of the regimental Medical Detachment treated a total of 573 patients by S plus 10. Blackout tents were prepared and dug in. These were extremely valuable on Beach White Two in permitting treatment of casualties at night under fire. Several men were detailed to work with the naval



Upper left: Artificial resuscitation is attempted on a drowning victim on White Beach 3, Luzon. Upper right and lower left: Transferring casualties to the fast Crash Boat at Cotabato for return to hospital ships in Polloc Harbor. Lower right: Dispensary at Parang.

medical beach party and to obtain the record of every patient evacuated to navy hospital ships. This made it possible to obtain and distribute daily to proper organizations the names of patients being evacuated from the beach. Another section of the Detachment operated coordination and information centers for all medical units crossing the beach.

In the third major operation on Mindanao the plan called for the Regiment to operate four separate beachheads and make an assault up the Mindanao River. Accordingly the Medical Detachment was split into five separate sections of nine men and one medical officer in each. En route to Mindanao this plan was changed so that landings were made on only two beaches. The plan of operation was such that two sections of the Medical Detachment were landed on each beach. Immediately

upon landing the sections contacted the medical sections of the naval shore party and in conjunction with them set up a dispensary and an evacuation point in the vicinity of the beachmaster. This close contact with the Navy resulted in better cooperation and faster evacuation. There were no hospitals ashore prepared to receive patients until the afternoon of R plus 2. Arrangements were made, therefore, to send patients appearing at the evacuation point to hospital ships — with provisions to return them (only those requiring less than 15 days hospitalization) as soon as facilities were available ashore. Casualties were very light, and in the first two days there were only 31 men sent out to the hospital ships with 20 men returning by the morning of R plus 2. Subsequently evacuation was from the 30th Evacuation Hospital through the beach evacuation point.

For the river operation one LCM was converted into a floating dispensary. When the final objective had been reached this boat and several others were used to evacuate casualties to Cotabato. By R plus 10 the Detachment had settled down to routine operations, but the Regiment was so scattered that there were five separate dispensaries in operation, and an aid station on the beach. The Detachment was furnishing medical service to approximately 1500 men in addition to the Regiment itself.

The hospital boats were a joint accomplishment of the Medical Detachment and the Boat Battalion. The problem was to prepare attachments that would convert an LCM into a boat carrying a maximum of patients as comfortably as possible. This conversion of a cargo carrying LCM into a hospital boat, or vice versa, had to be completed in a few minutes. Further, the attachments had to be small and light enough for stowage aboard that boat. A considerable number of men and officers found the problem interesting enough to spend many hours on the planning and building of such boats. Many very satisfactory hospital boats were finally built. The hospital boats were first used to advantage at Talasea, but the greatest use of such a boat was made during the Mindanao River operation where it furnished the only medical service and transportation available.

The dental section with its "spinning wheel" followed the troops wherever they went. Every six months the troops were surveyed. Those who required any work were notified and given appointments. Insistence was made that appointments be kept. Dentures were usually difficult to get and a few unfortunates had to wait sometimes for months before their plates could be made. In all other phases the status of dental health in the Regiment was far superior to that of a similar group in civil life.

Although the medical personnel were listed as "attached," they were actually and in every way as much a part of the Regiment as any of the lettered companies. If the record of the Detachment was good it could only be so because the record of the Regiment was good. If the men of the Regiment remember and follow the rules of personal hygiene as carefully as they did while in military service the effort spent in teaching these rules may bring further profitable return in the years to come.

The Paper War

THERE used to be a sign over the main building entrance at Fort Washington, Maryland, the post where the Army trained most of its administrative personnel, which read, "he also serves who sits and sweats." The average person is no doubt prone to query how it is possible to sit and sweat; if, however, he had been a member of the S-1 team of the 533d during those last hectic days in Japan, he would have seen how easy a feat that was. But that is getting ahead of our story. In fact about three years ahead of it.

The S-1 section of the 533d was formed with just about as much confusion and guess work as the rest of our civilian army. The man who knew his army regulations was as rare as a six-striper in training camp. If such a person was of the enlisted ranks he usually found himself with a pair of oak leaves on his shoulders, with orders sending him to some high echelon of command. The 533d was completely devoid of any trained administrative personnel. It was simply a case of the blind leading the blind. However, out of this humble and somewhat ignoble beginning the S-1 section took form. Payrolls were prepared, emergency furloughs granted, dependency discharge cases investigated almost from the very first day the 533d was on military record as an army unit.

The men of the line companies, who rarely if ever saw their company clerks, wondered and justifiably, perhaps, how the clerk spent his day. Rest assured it was well spent under the close supervision of the assistant adjutant and personnel sergeant major. Each battalion furnished about two clerks per company who were put on duty with regimental headquarters. They returned to their parent company only when they had actual business to perform or after hours to shoot the breeze with their friends. This pool of about twenty clerks formed the personnel section of the Regiment. On them rested the responsibility of preparing the all-important payrolls, the allotment requests, the insurance applications, the requests for discharges under half a dozen army regulations. In between times the company clerk had to be the right arm (administratively speaking) of the company commander. His job went on whether the Regiment was safely billeted at Carmel-by-the-Sea or sweating it out on White Beach, Luzon. And then in those final months after the defeat of Germany, when the little white cards for tabulation of discharge points appeared, the life of a company clerk was simply not his own. If there is any undecorated hero of World War II it is the company clerk. And this is not only true of the 533d but any unit in

The only two buildings used as CPs by the Regiment overseas — *Left: the "Villa" at Parang; right: the former Jap barracks at Kure.*



the entire United States Army. As the memoirs of various units are written this fact will no doubt come out in its proper light.

But what about this paper war, you ask? What did the S-1 section do when the chips were down; when the Shore Battalion was breaking record after record in unloading vitally needed material; when the coxswains were running important missions along the New Guinea coast? Well, the unglamorous job of the company clerk was to continue getting his friends paid, continue getting them discharged, and continue taking the friendly jibes of his line company friends of what a soft spot Mr. Company Clerk had.

Perhaps the story which best illustrates the paper work war is the role the S-1 section played in the landing of Luzon. As is related elsewhere, the Regiment, among other things, was charged with the evacuation of the wounded from White Beach. The field order stated that an evacuation order must accompany each evacuee from the beach. This sounded logical enough until it was learned that twenty copies of this order had to be presented to the Navy before the wounded soldier could be put aboard the LCVP. Naturally twenty copies of an order would necessitate a mimeograph machine, and of all the useless and excess baggage a unit could have on a D-Day anywhere, a duplicating machine seemed the most absurd. But the Navy decreed twenty copies, and twenty copies it was. The mimeo was waterproofed, crated, strapped in a jeep and rolled ashore about H-hour plus 60 minutes ready to do its share for victory. The 533d has the dubious distinction of having the first such machine in operation on Luzon. The trusty mimeo operator was grinding out evacuation orders about H-hour plus 90 minutes.

An S-1 section is only as good as its sergeant major. This six-striper makes or breaks the section. On him rests the thankless job of keeping the command post operating twenty-four hours a day. Besides being a genius at organization, he must be a fighter and a diplomat besides. The day his correspondence is heaviest, usually finds his ace typist on KP; the day he must turn out enough orders to sink a battleship, usually finds his mimeo operator on guard duty. Yet despite all this, he gets the job done. For the major portion of the war this thankless job was in the expert hands of Master Sergeant Harries. It was his untiring, unstinting efforts that got those final

CWO William Doherty, personnel adjutant of the Regiment, at his desk in Parang.



separation reports to Sixth Army headquarters and who in no small measure was responsible for starting the men on that sentimental journey, once the Regiment got the green light.

It is impossible to mention every person who contributed to the smooth functioning of the administrative section of the 533d. It should be emphasized again and again that these so-called "chairborne commandos" did what they could to bring victory sooner. That their contribution was not as noticeable and vital as the men of the line was not their fault. Many of them would (and many did) have traded places gladly with the coxswains and shore engineers. However, the choice was not always theirs. As a result when their grandchildren ask them what they did in World War II perhaps they will wryly answer, "Why, grandchild, I helped carry a mimeograph machine ashore on Beach White Two."

* * * * *

Worth recording for posterity is the following example of why the paper war was a mystery as well as an anathema to the line soldier. On the night of 19 January 1945 at the northern end of the Lingayen Gulf perimeter a .50 calibre machine gun nest was manned by three men of Headquarters Company, Shore Battalion. The night bade fair to be as uneventful as those of the preceding week, so the gun crew chief permitted two men at a time to sleep while the third kept a sharp lookout. They had only one timepiece between them, a civilian wristwatch belonging to Pvt Kondziolka, and to permit rotation every two hours Kondziolka placed his watch on a litter where the man on guard could refer to it conveniently. Shortly after midnight five well armed Japs disguised as Filipinos sneaked close to the emplacement and upon being challenged lobbed in a hand grenade. For the next twenty minutes a wild free for all raged with all available weapons from knives and grenades to carbines employed. The Japs finally withdrew leaving one dead and dragging two wounded. In the course of the melee Kondziolka's watch had been blown to smithereens by a concussion grenade.

In due course Kondziolka put in a claim for reimbursement backed by affidavits signed by his buddies, his company commander and the regimental ordnance officer. This claim was referred to the regimental claims officer who made a personal check and forwarded it recommending approval up the line to 4th Brigade headquarters. Its classic reply is reproduced photographically lest its authenticity be challenged:

A goodly haul of mail makes even those who have to manhandle it happy.



4th Ind

Basic: Claim for Damaged Personal Property.

HEADQUARTERS, 4th ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE, APO 75 15 March 1945

TO: Commanding Officer, 533d EB&SR, APO 70.

1. Claim of Private August J. Kondziolka, Headquarters Company, Shore Battalion, 533d EB&SR, under AR 25-100, is returned herewith for the following reasons:

- A. It is the duty of the Claims Officer of the Unit which has appointed him to fully process the claim in accordance with USAFFE Regulations 1-75, 4 October 1944.
- B. The claim must be submitted in quadruplicate.
- C. The claim does not fall under Par. 2d but comes under 2b.
- D. The official table of depreciation for watches from 2 to 3 years old requires a depreciation charge of 30%.
- E. The facts as set forth by claimant and others is to meagre to allow the Theatre Claims Officer to reach a proper conclusion. The following facts should be developed.
 - (1) Which person laid the watch down?
 - (2) In whose possession was it prior to the accident?
 - (3) Was it claimant's duty as a machine gunner to furnish time to those going on guard?
 - (4) Was anyone in the group authorized a watch by the T/E?
 - (5) Was it merely laid on the litter or fastened to it? Was covered or uncovered?
 - (6) Was the litter destroyed completely by the grenade?
- F. It is the duty of the Claims Officer to investigate the matter thoroughly and report the results of his investigation on WD Form 30b which becomes a part of the record. This Headquarters has no copies of WD Form 30b at present. A requisition has been placed for them and as soon as the form is received units will receive a suitable number.
- G. There is no certificate as to the possibility of replacement through Quartermaster sources. See Pars. 5d and 8, AR 25-100, and Par. 10b USAFFE Regulations 1-75, 4 October 1944.

2. It is suggested that the matter be held in abeyance until the proper forms are available.

By command of Brigadier General Hutchings:

J. R. McCann
J. R. McCann, 1st Lt. CE
Adjutant

3 Incls: NC

The tale has a happy ending, for in May when the Regiment found itself attached to X Corps for administration, the original claim with the fourth indorsement conveniently excised was favorably reviewed by the X Corps judge advocate, and Kondziolka eventually was reimbursed.

163d Ordnance Detachment

THE 163d Ordnance Maintenance Company was organized in May 1943 at Fort Ord, California by a merger of the 163d Ordnance Platoon (Armament) and the 3499th Ordnance Company (Automotive).

Nearly every man in both organizations had been with the 3d Brigade throughout its history, receiving training at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, and Camp Gordon Johnston, Florida before moving to Fort Ord. Hardly had the new company been organized before the entire armament section and many of the automotive platoon departed for the anti-aircraft firing range in the California desert south of Death Valley. Here they helped set up and maintained over 200 water-cooled machine guns on a continuous 2½-mile firing line. Despite the heat and unpleasant forms of wild life the company profited greatly from the training as it disclosed the weaknesses of automatic weapons when exposed to flying sand and when fired with relatively prolonged bursts.

The next trip — a far more enjoyable one — was to a bivouac in Yosemite National Park where amidst scenes of unrivaled beauty the outfit learned the rudiments of living in the field. Like the rest of the Brigade the Ordnance Company's late summer and fall was devoted to collecting equipment and impatiently awaiting final orders to the port of embarkation.

December 22d found it aboard ship bound for the SWPA, and early in January it debarked into the bottomless goo of Goodenough Island. Here it had the same miserable introduction to life in the tropics as did much of the Brigade. Its initial task in addition to repair work on the few Brigade vehicles in operation was assembling hundreds of crated, knocked down trucks and jeeps in scattered dumps hip deep in mud. In addition, much ordnance equipment including hundreds of automatic weapons was seriously damaged by being flooded in storage dumps, and the 163d had to take all these apart and restore them to operable condition. For several weeks the men worked to the limit of their endurance and finally succeeded in putting in shape the mountains of ordnance materiel that the Brigade would need in its operations.

In March 1944, the company moved up to Finschhafen and established itself on the Nugudu Peninsula building shops and a ball diamond and acquiring fame as having the best company ball team in the Finschhafen base area. The company had been designed to operate as a unit supporting the operations of an amphibian brigade that was reasonably concentrated. Thus the wide scattering of units of the 3d Brigade along the 1600 mile coast of New Guinea made it imperative that the Ordnance Company be split up and sent out as detachments if it was to do more than operate an elegant rear echelon motor pool and repair shop. In June, therefore, Detachment One consisting of 15 men and one officer, Lt. Jack Enos, moved up to Aitape and there became a permanent attachment of the 533d EB&SR. The detachment's equipment included a shop truck, wrecker, a balanced assortment of tools and parts to perform third echelon and many types of fourth echelon work on all vehicles and weapons issued to the Regiment. The value of this increment to the Regiment's

self-sufficiency was immediately obvious and led to the formation of similar detachments to operate with the 543d and 593d EB&SRs.

Within the detachment work was divided between an automotive section which operated in the regimental headquarters motor pool area and an armament section which did most of its work at the Boat Battalion's base on Seleo Island. The automotive section was further subdivided into general automotive repair, battery and small engine, carburetion and ignition, welding, emergency salvage, and parts supply sections. Though at all times badly handicapped by having too few men, this section did yeoman work in keeping the vehicles of the Regiment in first class condition and repairing wrecked vehicles which otherwise would have been salvaged by task force ordnance outfits and in most cases not replaced.

The weapons section, in addition to assisting the boat companies' armorers with their scores of issue machine guns, lent valuable assistance during the arming of the early LCMGs with their varied types of automatic cannon, American and Japanese.

In the Lingayen Gulf landing the Ordnance Detachment after helping waterproof hundreds of vehicles, found itself with the critical assignment of operating a vehicle dewaterproofing and emergency repair station on White Beach. Vehicles once waterproofed can only be driven a few hundred feet without serious damage from overheating, and yet are often desperately needed immediately after debarkation. So expediting stripping off the dewaterproofing materials and inspecting to see that this is done completely is a vital shore party function. So also is resuscitating vehicles that drown out, either because of poor waterproofing or going into deep shell holes. Not only was this of service to the assault troops but also it helped keep the beach clear of dead vehicles which would gravely hamper the shore party itself.

As soon as the Regiment settled down to routine work, the 163d had its shops established and was repairing the serious damage done to vehicles during the first hectic days of the invasion. Work grew heavier rather than lighter as the departure for Mindanao approached, but the Regiment's vehicles were all in passable shape when loaded out in March.

In Parang, Mindanao, the Ordnance men performed the same functions on R day and then established themselves in one of the few buildings the naval gunfire and termites had left standing. It had been fighting a losing battle with the termites, with nearly half the second story caved in; yet it had a concrete floor and made the best shop the detachment had seen since leaving Fort Ord. Two months in Parang were followed by three weeks at Bugo with an interesting motor convoy trip via Malabang and Lake Lanao in between.

In July the detachment accompanied Regimental Headquarters Company to Leyte and thence to Oahu and finally to Wakayama and Kure Japan. In mid-October, to facilitate redeployment of the men and turning in equipment, all personnel of the detachment were transferred to the 533d, and Detachment One 163d Ordnance Maintenance Company was no more.

In sixteen months with the Regiment the handful of Ordnance men had contributed far out of proportion to their numbers to the ultimate effectiveness and success of the 533d.

Chaplains and Chapels

“A FRIEND in need is a friend indeed” may not be a quotation from the Scriptures but it is a truism that was daily proven by the chaplains we were fortunate to have assigned to the 533d. Whether a soldier had a letter disclosing trouble or tragedy at home or found himself in disciplinary trouble with the powers that were or was just plain homesick and fed to the teeth, he had two real friends he could seek.

Captain Joseph P. (Joe) Monahan, a Roman Catholic Priest from Boston, joined us just before we sailed from San Francisco. A serious operation took him out

Left to right: T/5 Williams, Chaplain Traweck, Chaplain Monahan, T/5 Thibault.



of circulation to a hospital in Port Moresby early in 1944. But once back with the unit at Aitape and in the Philippines he made up for lost time with a rush. Living first with the Shore Battalion and then moving to Seleo Island with the boatmen, he soon became intimate with one and all. From yardbird to commander all profited constantly from his counsel and the example of his cheery way. In addition to his proficiency as a preacher and his understanding in private conference he possessed remarkable talent as a singer, accompanying himself on the camp organ, could rival Bergen in ventriloquism, and had an inexhaustible fund of stories in a dozen dialects. With him around the bluest evening became one of memorable merriment.

Midway in our stay at Aitape we at last received a Protestant chaplain, Captain Julian C. (Jack) Traweck of Shawnee, Oklahoma. He too shuttled between our scattered units making lasting friendships throughout the Regiment. A true son of the Southwest he was an exhibition shot with a pistol and thoroughly at home on a coral sand ball diamond.

The two sky pilots had their hands full not only keeping contact with and providing services for the men of the Regiment who were almost always scattered far and



Impromptu Mass at San Fabian, 1944, and Midnight Christmas Mass at Cretin, 1943

wide, but also in caring for the orphan units that always lay round about a task force beachhead. These outfits, ranging from tiny Coast Guard beach parties to separate battalions, were invariably objects of solicitude for Traweck and Monahan, and the congregations of these two pastors were often several times as big as the 533d.

During the landing at San Fabian, Luzon the chaplains really went all out. The cold statistics of their official reports covering the first ten days leave doubt as to whether they slept at all: 31 religious services, 54 burials, 284 hospital visits to over 1000 individuals, and 180 routine conferences with men with troubles. But these do not disclose the true picture of these men of the Cross dashing from points of danger to areas even more exposed to shellfire to give their aid and comfort to the wounded and the dying. The panicky civilians, particularly the pitiful children orphaned by Jap brutality or the unavoidably indiscriminate slaughter of the naval bombardment were calmed and assisted by the padres who thus helped materially to minimize confusion in the beachhead area.

One night in that hectic period Monahan and Traweck took cover in a shallow hole as 320 mm, 1600 pound shells pulverized the ground about them. As succeeding bursts strode toward them like an avenging fury, they figured the game was up. "This is it, Joe," muttered Traweck as a crescendo whine ripped right at their hole. "Looks like it," replied Monahan, "say a good word to St. Peter..." With a vicious

Chaplains view huge crater with a priest of the ruined cathedral at San Fabian.



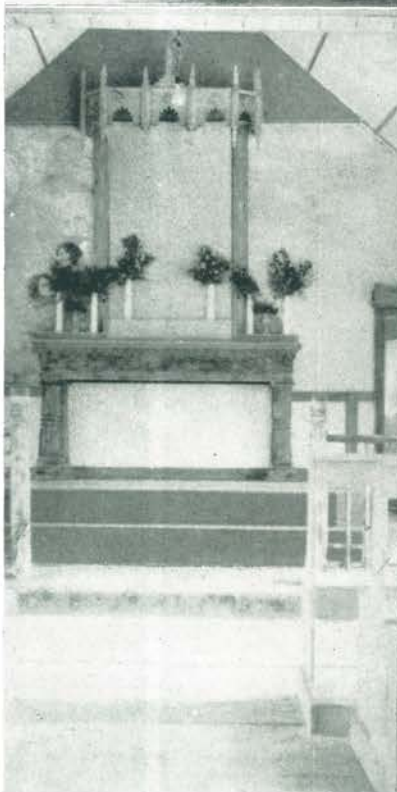
jolt the huge shell struck the ground almost within arms' reach and half smothered them with dirt. Whether the Almighty was especially alert for His servants or not, the shell was the only dud that night, and Joe and Jack carried on.

The 533d was an engineer outfit, albeit a peculiar one, and it tended to remain in one spot longer than most line outfits. So it is not surprising that with the inspiration of the chaplains the men built some of the most spectacular chapels in the forward areas. Starting at Cape Cretin and Saidor the Shore Battalion developed techniques of chapel construction that not only produced at every camp a chapel to be proud of but had it up almost before the tents were pitched. A Company at Borgen Bay

**Chapel of Shore
Battalion on Luzon**



Left: Altar of the above



*Right: Altar of Boat
Battalion Chapel on
Luzon.*



and the Boat Battalion at Seleo, on the banks of the Bued and at Bugo showed that the boatmen also had real talent for ecclesiastical architecture and craftsmanship.

With the War over the Shore Battalion's carpenters in addition to all their other work undertook one last sacred building — one that the jungle would not soon reclaim. They rebuilt a monastery and mission church in Hiroshima. Who knows that these combat veterans erecting above the appalling devastation left by the first atomic bomb a monument to charity and brotherly love may not have rendered as big a contribution to winning the peace as any bridge or jetty they built in New Guinea was to winning the conflict? At Kure a heavy machine shop was converted to a fine regimental chapel complete with five-ton traveling crane and "stained" glass windows. Here appropriately were gathered night after night in late October and November the men of the Regiment, grouped not by companies or battalions but by "points," to spend their last moments before marching to the train that would start them on the long voyage home.

Regimental Chapel at Parang.





PART FOUR



PERSONNEL

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER FOR THE ALLIED POWERS

3 December 1945

Colonel W. S. Moore, Commanding Officer
533rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment
3rd Engineer Special Brigade
APO 928, c/o P.M., San Francisco, Calif.

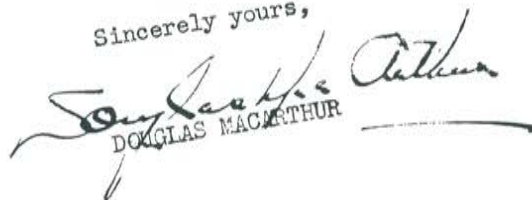
Dear Colonel Moore,

The 533rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, 3rd Engineer Special Brigade has served through four campaigns. Arriving in New Guinea in December of 1943, the unit saw action there and in New Britain, Luzon and the Southern Philippines and finally landed at Wakayama, Hiro and Kure for the occupation of Japan.

The courage, devotion to duty and untiring efforts which the officers and enlisted men of the regiment displayed throughout their service contributed vitally to our ultimate victory.

It is fitting, indeed, that the splendid achievements of this regiment are now recorded in a memorial volume for all of its members. In this form, it serves as a permanent commemoration of the heroic part they have played in the defeat of our enemies and the achievement of peace.

Sincerely yours,


DOUGLAS MACARTHUR



General of the Army Douglas MacArthur with his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Richard K. Sutherland (left) and the Eighth Army's Commander, Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger.

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH ARMY

United States Army

Office of the Commanding General

APO 343

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO: Commanding Officer

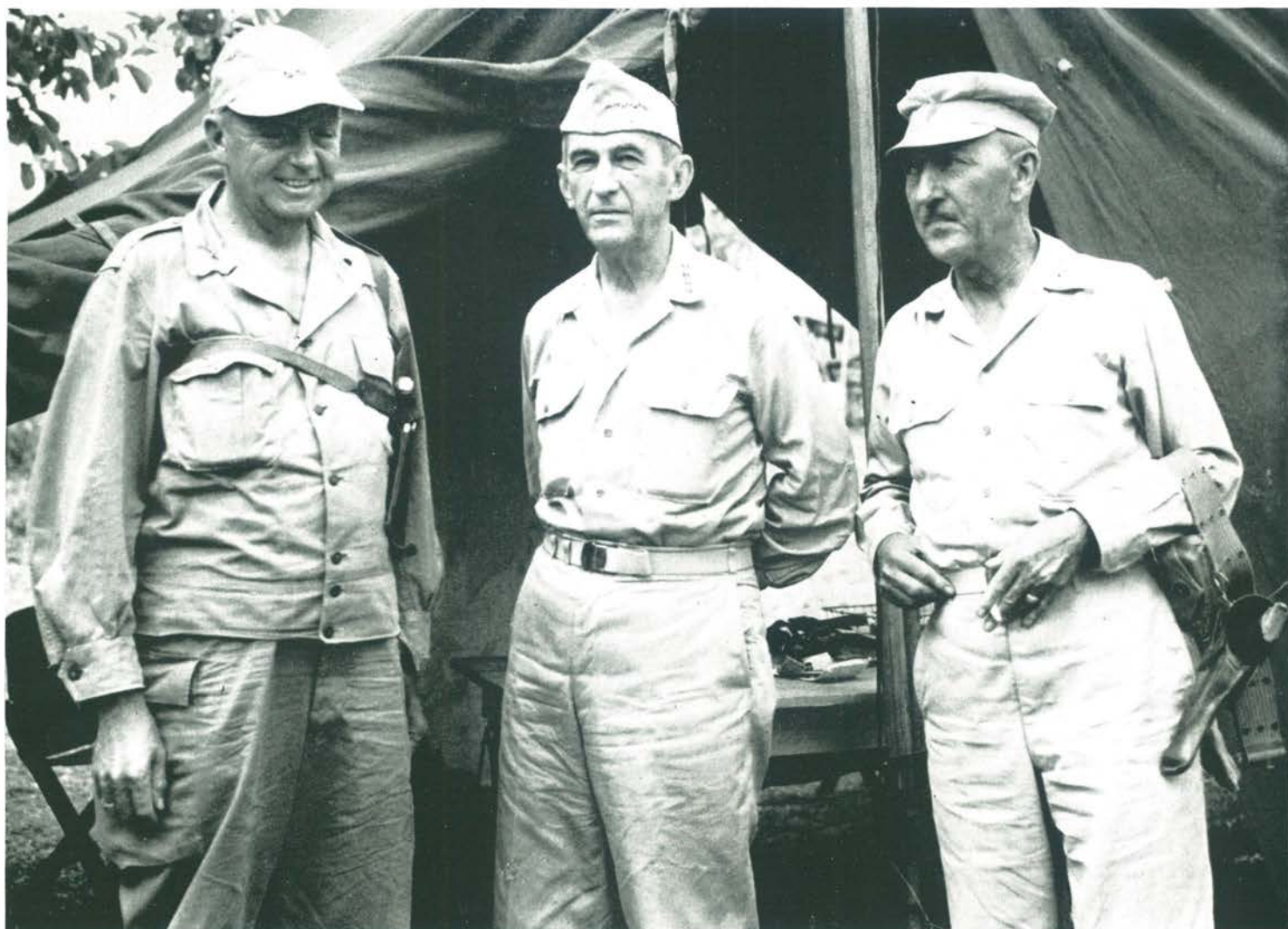
533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment

APO 310

I feel it an honor to be able to contribute to the history of your regiment. It is a record of courage, devotion to duty and perseverance in the face of overwhelming odds. I shall remember particularly the regiment's spearheading of the drive up the Mindanao River. Throughout that operation, your unit demonstrated singular determination and unity of purpose. If the men of your organization demonstrate the same qualities in peace as they did in war, the ideals for which all have fought so hard will be everlastingly insured.



R. L. Eichelberger
R. L. EICHELBERGER
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

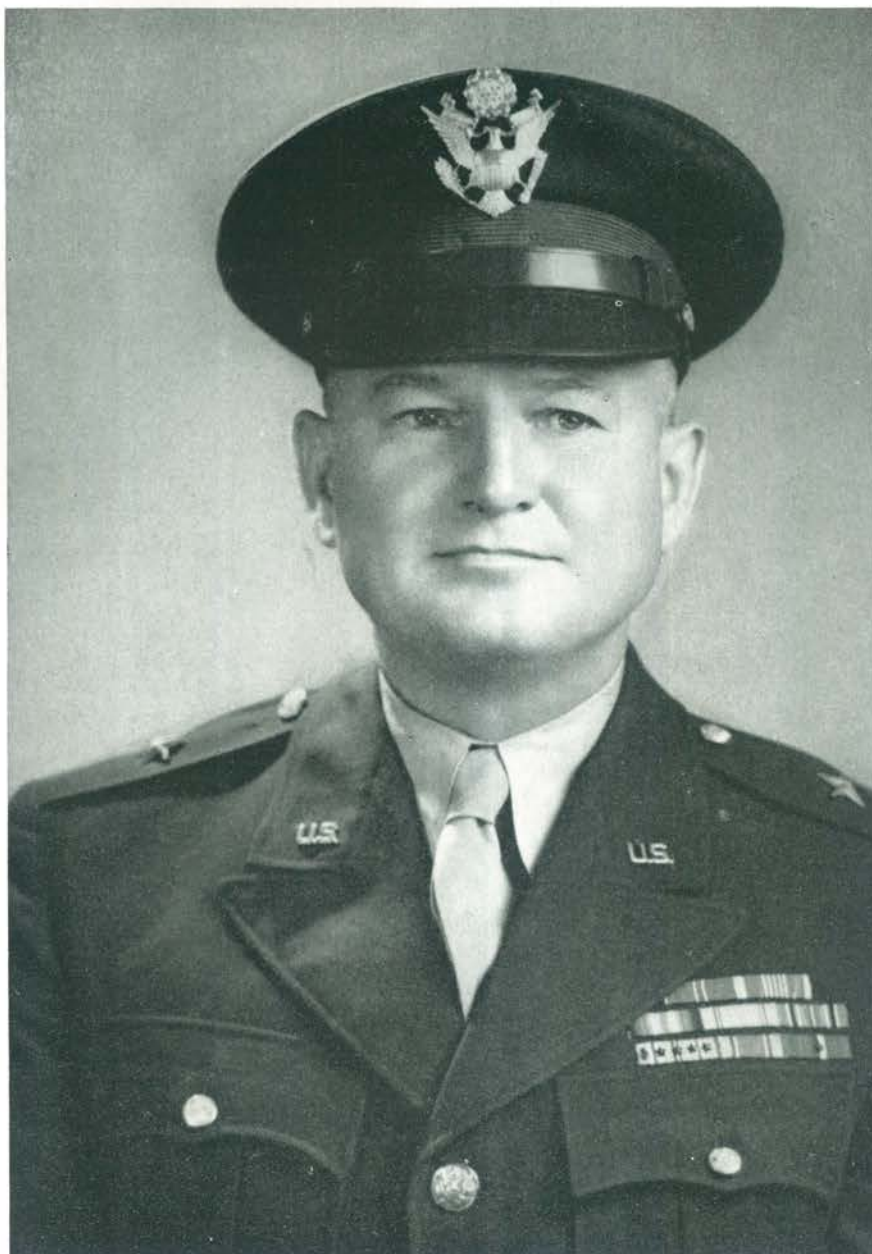


General Walter Krueger, Commanding General of Sixth Army, with Lieutenant General C. P. Hall (right), commander of XI Corps in New Guinea and Luzon, and Major General Leonard F. Wing, commander of the 43d Infantry Division during the New Guinea and Luzon campaigns.

To the Members of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment.

Your Regiment, through the courage, skill and devoted services of its members, contributed its full share to the success of Sixth Army operations in the New Britain, New Guinea and Luzon campaigns and in the occupation of Western Honshu, Japan. You may well be proud of the record of your regiment and, in the years to come, can look back with satisfaction and justifiable pride upon duty well done in the service of your country.

Walter Krueger
Walter Krueger
General, U.S. Army, Retired.



Brigadier General David A. D. Ogden, Commanding General
3d Engineer Special Brigade from August 1942 until July 1945.

HEADQUARTERS 2ND ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE
CAMP SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA

23 April 1946

To the Officers and Men of the 533rd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment:

The Amphibian Engineers, through their accomplishments in the Western Pacific have earned for themselves a place in the peacetime Army. Your exploits in New Britain, New Guinea, Luzon, and Mindanao were important contributions toward establishing this fact and created new military techniques. You have every right to be proud of these deeds. Now that the regiment has finished its task and is being deactivated, allow me to tell you of the great pride I have in having commanded the 3d Engineer Special Brigade of which you were a part. Good luck in civil life.


D. A. D. OGDEN
Brig. Gen. USA
Commanding



Colonel Wayne S. Moore, Commanding Officer of the 533d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment from May 1943 until July 1945 and commander of the 3d Engineer Special Brigade, July-November 1945.



Colonel Charles T. Tench, Commanding Officer of the Regiment from August 1942 to April 1943. Thereafter Colonel Tench was an Assistant G-3 on General MacArthur's staff.

Lt. Colonel Robert Amory, Jr., Commanding Officer of the Boat Battalion from September 1942 until February 1945, Regimental Executive Officer, February-July 1945, and Commanding Officer of the Regiment July-November 1945.





Lt. Colonel DeWitt L. McLallen, Commanding Officer Shore Battalion from September 1942 until June 1945.



Lt. Colonel Carl J. Hartwig, Executive Officer Shore Battalion, September 1942-January 1943, Regimental S-3, February 1943-May 1944, Regimental Executive Officer, May 1944-January 1945, Boat Battalion commander, February-July 1945.



Lt. Colonel Leon W. Hill, Company F Commander, September 1942-January 1943, Executive Officer Shore Battalion, February 1943-June 1945, Shore Battalion Commander, June-November 1945.



Lt. Colonel Edwin H. Lawton, Executive Officer Boat Battalion, September 1942-June 1945, Commanding Officer Boat Battalion 543d EB&SR, June-October, 1945.



Major Philip L. Howard, Boat Battalion S-3, September 1942-June 1944, Regimental Supply Officer, June 1944-July 1945, Boat Battalion commander, July-November 1945.



Major Robert P. Buzini, Company A commander, January 1943-May 1945, Deputy Beachmaster, June-July 1945, Regimental Executive Officer, July-November 1945.



THE STAFF, NOVEMBER 1945

Back Row: Doherty, Mowitz, Kaye, Traweek, Mebane, Monahan, Burnette, Costello
Front Row: Bellick, Kruger, Buzzini, Amory, Koch, Scales, Reich

Commanding Officer

Colonel Tench August 1942—April 1943
 Lt. Colonel Ziegler April—May 1943
 Colonel Moore May 1943—July 1945
 Lt. Colonel Amory July—November 1945

Executive Officer

Lt. Colonel Ziegler
 August 1942—January 1943
 and May 1943—May 1944
 Lt. Colonel Russell February—May 1943
 Lt. Colonel Hartwig
 May 1944—January 1945
 Lt. Colonel Amory January—July 1945
 Major Buzzini July—November 1945
S-1
 Lt. Carrington August 1942—March 1943

Captain Reich

April 1943—November 1945

S-2

Lt. T. W. Collier August 1942—April 1944

Captain Bellick

April 1944—November 1945

S-3

Major Russell

August 1942—January 1943

Major Hartwig

February 1943—May 1944

Major Koch May 1944—November 1945

S-4

Captain Davis August 1942—June 1944

Major Howard June 1944—July 1945

Captain Scales July 1945—October 1945

THE ORIGINAL STAFF, 1942

Collier, Carrington, McLallen, Davis, Amory, Russell,
 Tench, Ziegler



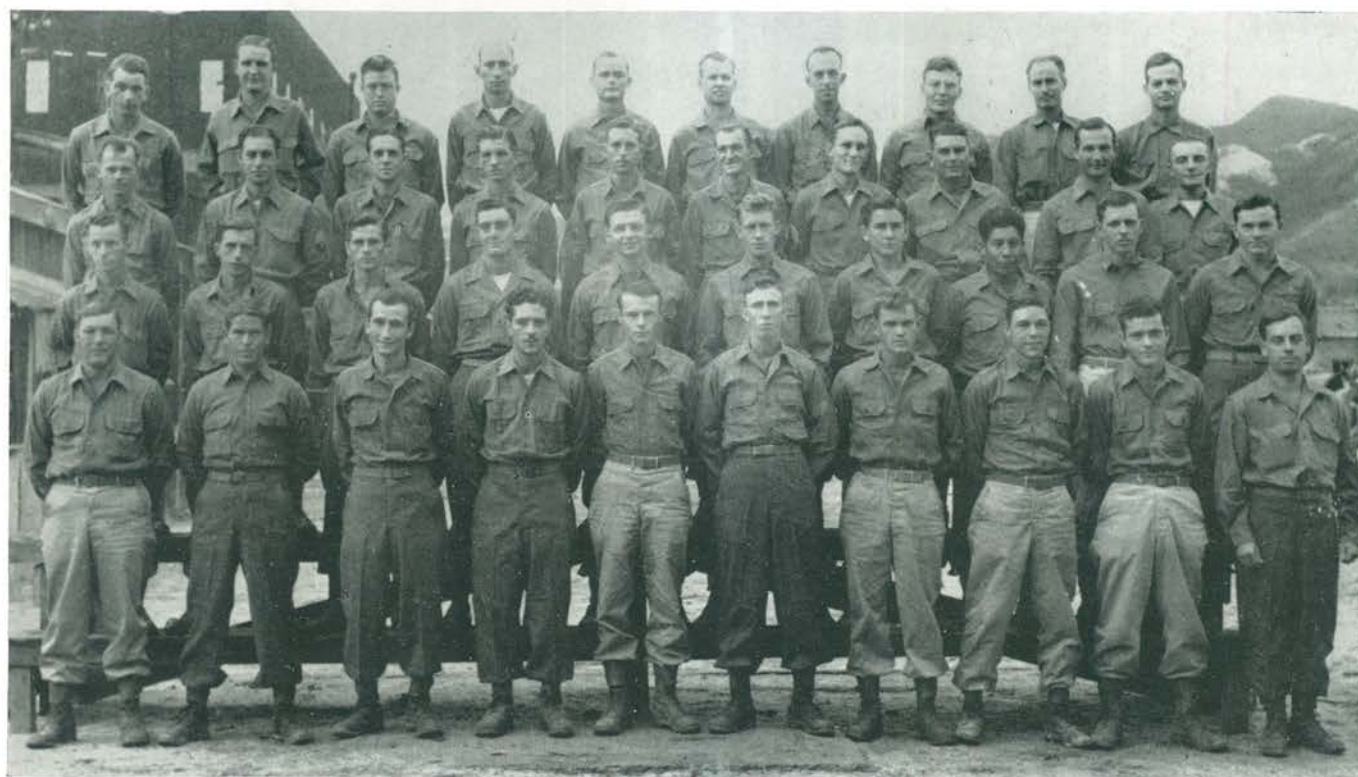
REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS COMPANY



<i>First Row</i>	Soulner	Incorvaia	Davenport
Hart	Wurst	Saman	Shindle
St. Laurent	Varela	Roberts	
Luroseuch	Perry	McGuire	<i>Missing</i>
Giffen	Lorree	Sourman	Allen
Walesa	Lee		Allgood
Legault	Mitacek	<i>Fourth Row</i>	Ammerman
Billings	Stockouf	Husted	Boudreau
Steiner		Hilt	Budke
Stickney	<i>Third Row</i>	Snow	Buttell
Skaggs	Castillo	Cafilisch	Buzbee
	Damian	Boger	Carter
<i>Second Row</i>	Tidwell	Snethen	Clemens
Randolph	Kelly, E.	Quick	Dickens
Bowers	Ely	Owen	

Commanding Officer: Captain Kelchak
Captain Henry

August 1942—June 1944
June 1944—October 1945



<i>First Row</i>	Williams	Jones	Bucknell
Peyton	Hunt	Olson	Erwin
Cubster	Ulaszewski	Harries	Bengler
Covello	Mosely	Vaughan	Griffith
Randazzo	Adams	Hillary	
McCollum	Silvas	Zaidel	<i>Missing</i>
Gentry	Lumbley		Dunston
Plonski	Smith	<i>Fourth Row</i>	Eckhart
Holseback		Wanta	Eilers
Samuels	<i>Third Row</i>	Grady	Escamilla
Kugler	Prokopik	Glover	Fuster
	Ferranti	Beals	Gresser
<i>Second Row</i>	Conner	Hamlin	Heath
Masencup	Hruzak	Laskosky	Irwin
Keener			Jassem

Other Company Officers: Bernard, Kirkpatrick, Marchand, Watson, Weber

*First Row*

Escamilla
Canino
Hartman
Parks
Marinelli
Plaskon
Mendoza
Sergi
Interrante
Yuricak

Second Row

Thorne
Hewitt

Harclerode
Jedrzejewski
O'Brien
Zambotti
Richie
Stinson
Thibault
Shoe

Third Row

Hosford
Lee
Wilson
Braunschweig
Griswold
Reizberg

Bello
Youngblood
Russell
Ceglarek

Fourth Row

Boyles
Anderson
Puryear
Leister
Williams
Pryor
Gracey
Hales
Shaw
Peters

Missing

Kelly, T.
Kidwell
King
Ledford
Ludwig
Masser
May
McKean
Moore
Mousley
Nathan
Petti
Prouty



<i>First Row</i>	Diaz	Brown	Trovato
Jurek	Nester	Trainor	Ulin
Blankenship	Diller	Nolan	Walker
Thornton	Duda	Barton	Walter
Voightman	Petren		Warnecke
Arner	Caplow	<i>Missing</i>	Warrick
Stutesman		Rollins	Wells
Staats	<i>Third Row</i>	Russell	Wilbert
	Vonderleith	Schuey	Yee
<i>Second Row</i>	Hohensee	Sparks	
Kimmerly			

BOAT BATTALION OFFICERS

October 1, 1943



Back Row, Left to Right: Wolf, Campbell, W. B., Schneck, Powell, Garrison, Hawkins, Waterman, Johnston, L., Dickey, Thompson, B. R., Hayden, Wrightson.

Third Row, Left to Right: Oakley, Bush, Dougherty, Thompson, F. P. M., Mebane, Scales, James, Campbell, R. W., Johnston, Gardner.

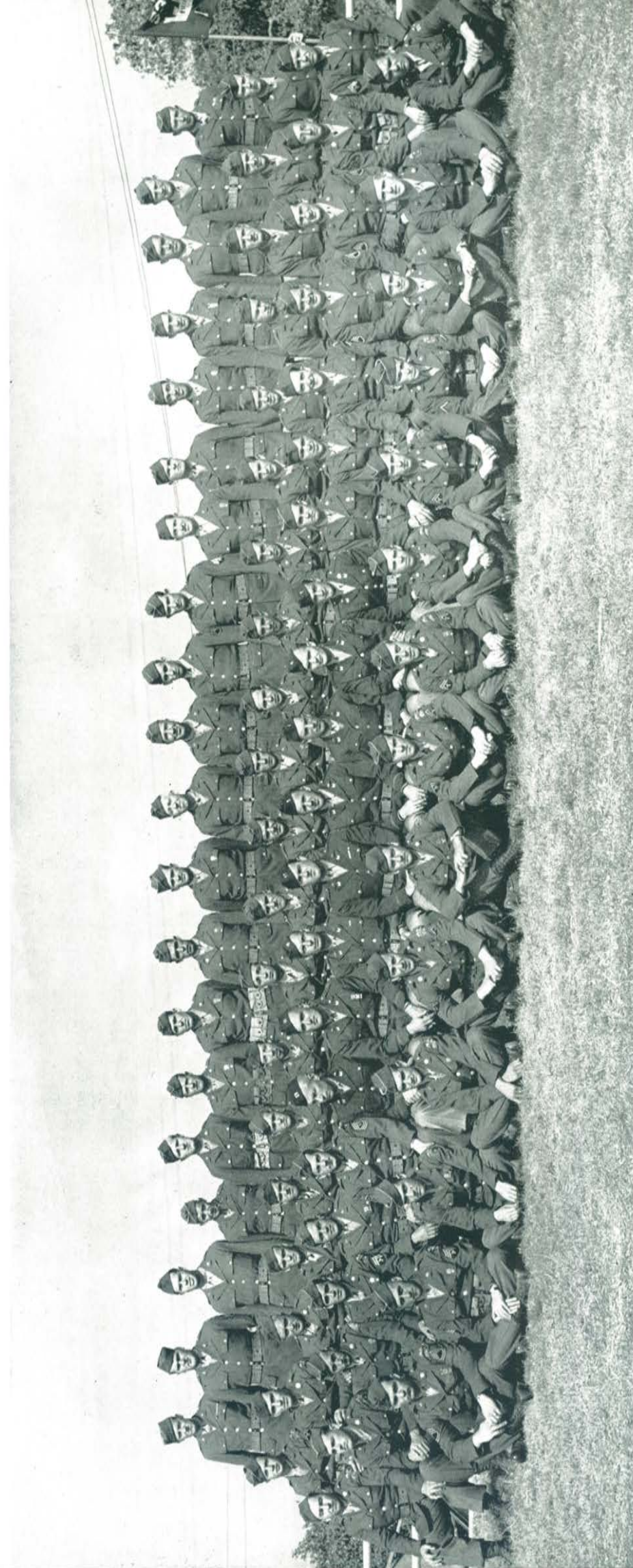
Second Row, Left to Right: Weitzenkorn, Addiego, Buckwalter, Hubbard, Lawton, Amory, Howard, Thompson, H. S., Anderson, Maxwell, Burnette.

Front Row, Left to Right: Shaleen, Beach, Gannon, Page, Buzzini, Winter, Michel, Cook, Symmes, Puryear.

(Missing from picture: Beckman, Barron, McMahon, Langdon, Soltz)

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, BOAT BATTALION

October 1, 1943



Back Row, Left to Right: Dwyer, Andrews, Waldron, Moore, Svados, Wershing, Fosgate, Josey, Hayes, Griswold, O'Loughlin, Edwards, Dyer, Aleshire, McGrath, Twomey, Konnerth, Towne, Arentzen, Witters.
Third Row, Left to Right: Widener, Cox, Messer, Weber, Sowers, Crider, Hammond, Polley, Dragan, Rook, Baranski, Colwell, Rumill, Munroe, Hayden, G., Thorn, Lynch, Krajewski, Kulow, Hawthorne.
Second Row, Left to Right: Lancaster, Miller, Edgar, Smith, Mann, McGovern, Howard, Lawton, Amory, Anderson, Buckwalter, Maxwell, Burnette, Addiego, Hayden, D., Holsemback, Kelly, Wilcox, Lestrangle, Follien, Marsh.
Front Row, Left to Right: Briley, Hunting, Samuels, Stark, Lanham, Swisher, Forsyth, Vance, Hild, Lorek, Hart, Huffman, Welton, Wojtysiak.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY BOAT BATTALION



<i>First Row</i>		Lestrangle	Carwile	Huffman
Follien	Hawthorne	Hopkins	Colwell	
McCue		Witters	Hughes	
Dobrowolski	<i>Second Row</i>	Epperly	Cobb	
Dupont	Duckworth	Getz	Marchetti	
Hild	Romero		Spracklin	
Lorek	Moore	<i>Third Row</i>	Provost	
Edgar	Klein	Tucker	Zanko	

BOAT BATTALION HEADQUARTERS

<i>Commanding Officer:</i>	Lt. Colonel Amory	September 1942—January 1945
	Lt. Colonel Hartwig	January—July 1945
	Major Howard	July—November 1945
<i>Executive Officer:</i>	Major Lawton	September 1942—July 1945
	Captain Hawkins	July—November 1945
<i>S-1:</i>	Captain H. S. Thompson	September 1942—April 1944
	Captain Anderson	April 1944—July 1945
	Captain Waterman	July—November 1945
<i>S-3:</i>	Captain Howard	September 1942—June 1944
	Captain Gannon	June 1944—July 1945
	Lt. W. B. Campbell	July—November 1945

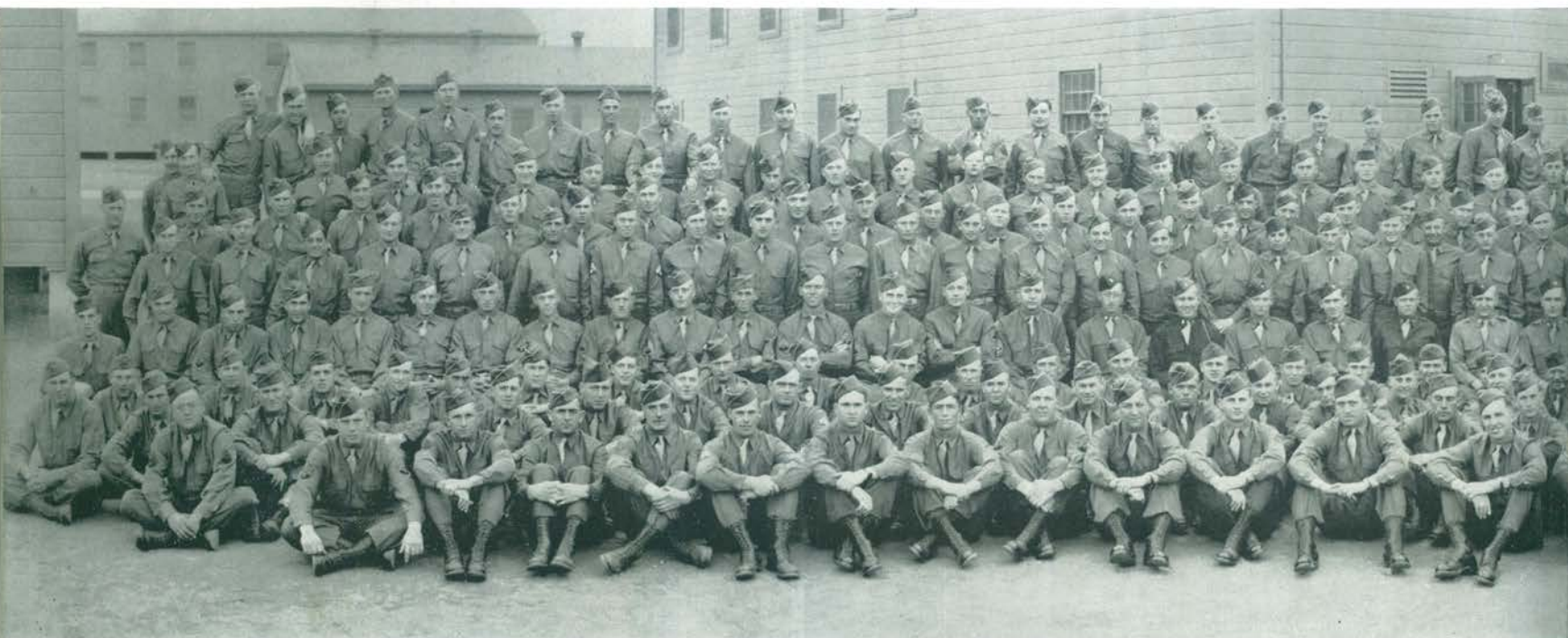


<i>First Row</i>	<i>Second Row</i>	<i>Third Row</i>	<i>Fourth Row</i>
Page	Bacchus	Kelly	Dagy
Stanley	Burch	Zemaitis	Baranski
Welton	Twomey	Hayes	McMillan
Stark	Staggs	Kline	Arentzen
Hunting	Kittinger	Gilbert	Krajewski
Swisher	Keith	Smith	Daniells
Mizerak	Maust	Kulow	Betts
Caton	Walters	Carvalo	Hayden
Polley	Aleshire	Dickens	Jenkins

BOAT BATTALION HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

Commanding Officer: Captain Anderson
 Lt. Buckwalter
 Captain Powell
 Lt. Winter

September 1942—April 1944
 April—September 1944
 September 1944—July 1945
 July—November 1945

*First Row*

Yates
Trowbridge
Turbeville
Bauer
Knutson
Vest
Helms
Sievers
Anderson, A.
Unidentified
Budke
Peters
Hammons
Coleman
Smith
Schjott
Bray
Carson
McGlaughlin
Bunch
Carter
Gess
Demaree
Moore
Gibson
Unidentified
MacCullom
Kowalski

2nd Row, Sitting

Dilley
Grantham

Miller
Griggs
Parncott
Ryan
Unidentified
Evans
DeWitt
Schram
Valenta
Glahe
Bush
Bihuniak
Unidentified
McCafferty
Lanyon
Unidentified
Cramer
Huckaby
Curry
Walter
Gohl
Howell
Blake
Ryan
Cavanagh
Salyer, G. M.
Barenie
Streich
White
Petric
Richter
Wagner

3rd Row, Sitting

Hockett
Holloway
Harmon
Lanahan
Trope
Unidentified
Slater
Quinn
LeGault
Rudolph, P.
Unidentified
Voegle
Waterman
Fisher
Jendro
Peterson
Glazer
Butler
Rudolph, R.
Bihuniak
Johnson, M.
Dube
Mayhan
Geiser
Spangler
Comer
Juergenmeyer
Cologrande
Propst
Wisner
Hall

Ward
Epstein

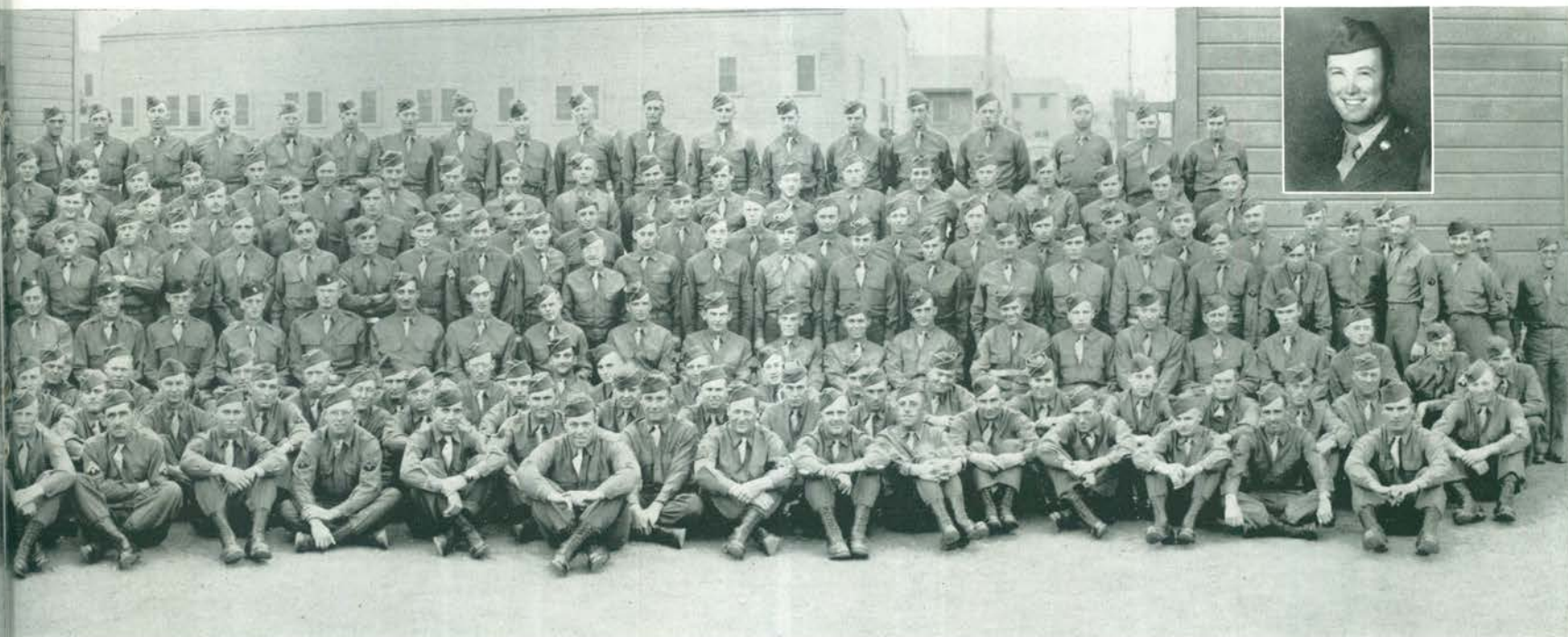
*4th Row
Sitting on Chairs*

Altman
Kutzler
Hartman
Brustolon
Wilk
Neet
Jereb
Stuerke
Kolke
Moore, H.
Birdsong
Kuzen
Weissert
Benedetti
Styles
Isley
Winter
Beach
Symmes
Puryear
Gannon
Lawton
Buzzini
Michel
Shaleen
Page
McMahon
Sinisi

Tighe
Pierce
Blizman
Kahilainen
Minor
Shore
Hill
Rausch
Standa
Meilicke
Klein
Unidentified
Lange
Denlinger
Harris

5th Row, Standing

Patterson
Giddons
Dipolido
Korkuc
Lucarelli
Swiggett
Williamson
Wise
Gorelli
Lowry
Fitch
Bray
Kaiser
Garrett
Malone
Baron



Resendez
Thyse
Smith, F. A.
Sienicki
Lambert
Nimick
Mizisin
Friend
Deveau
O'Hara
Giambrone
George
Veris
Copeland
Grossberg
Conrad
Goldman
Kolakowsky
Giffin
Mosselman
Giambalvo
Bryant
Harmon
Roland
March
Howard, I.
Doane
Gendazek
Broom
Parris

6th Row, Standing
Young
Unidentified

Dillard
Boardman
Cole, W.
Fowler
Dunn
Dale
Hobbs
McKinney
Ackerman
Turner
Hall, A.
Montgomery
Simochko
Kjos
MacCormack
Harke
Unidentified
Lancaster
Smith, H.
Murphy
Topel
Daugherty
Moss
Camp
Wallace
Smith, R. L.
Boyd, R.
Best
Cutulle
Doumont
Tomerlin
May
Sheldon

Johnson, R. T.
Biesemeyer
Yost
Lott
Christopher
Leatherman
O'Neill
Gill
Pennachio

7th Row, Standing
McMunn
Payne
Salyer, C.
Moyer
Chesser
Wright
Briglio
Unidentified
Woolport
Stiars
LaVoye
Jercic
Krugel
Unidentified
Marquardt
Cole, D.
Unidentified
Taylor
Howard, S.
Mullis
Gajewski
Hebert
(Insert: Paterson)

Curtis
Kosmick
Bliss
Atkins
Troscht
Bell
Donahue, J.
Barnes
Glover
Moeller
Schmalzer
Newman
Velardo
Girton
Piccinelli
Tikkinen
Willis
Vania
Burnett
Dombrowski

Rear Row, Stand.
Ray
Smith, E.
Unidentified
Nix
Hoffman
Donahue, C.
Bruns
Unidentified
Sprouse
Cheney
Danielson

Mandelblatt
Richards
Wehrman
D'Amasso
Anderson, G.
Burton
Conney
Unidentified
Bowers
Moore
Loftus
Probst
Chism
Jones
Pennachio
Richmond
Ingram
Destefanis
Halsted
Unidentified
Crews
Glass
Harris
Dykstra
Ford
Menchio
Welsh
Mowitz
Dunworth
Unidentified
Heather
Linge
Werndli

*First Row*

Ryan
Comer
Sands
May
Trowbridge
Hill
Tighe
Lancaster
Cavanagh
Leatherman
Boyd
Doumont

Second Row

Tucker
Kneebone
Werndli
Schramm
Ray
Smith, C. W.
Epstein
Neet
Blake
Best
Wagner

Third Row

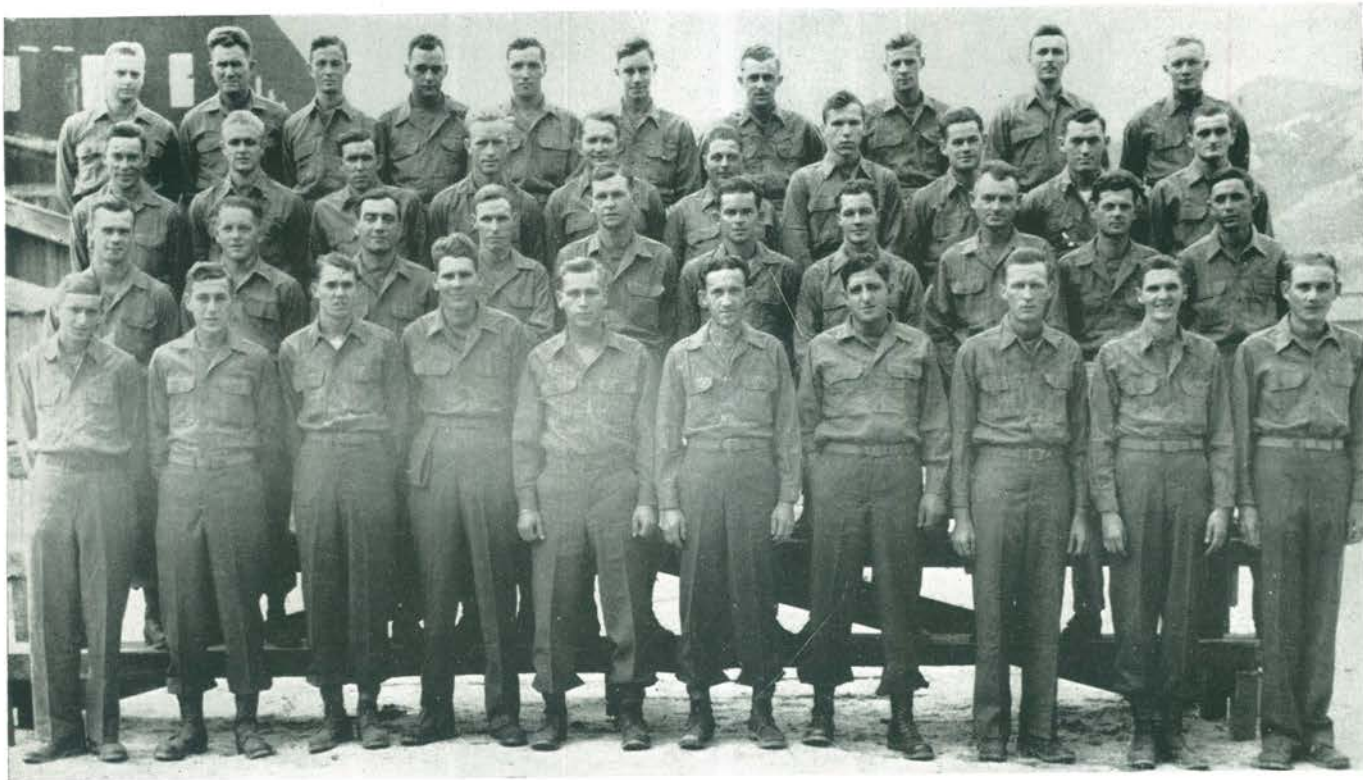
Cheney
Jarrett
Silcott
Wise
Dykstra
Fitch
Gess
Lyon
White
McCafferty

Fourth Row

Atkins
Durgin
Valeo
Richards
Copeland
Burnett
March
Woolpert
Grossberg
Gorelli

Commanding Officer: Captain Sweedy
Captain Buzzini
Captain Michel

September 1942—January 1943
February 1943—June 1945
June—October 1945

*First Row*

Harke
 Streich
 Dunn
 Dillard
 Griggs
 Payne
 Cutulle
 Juergenmeyer
 Bradley
 Holloway

Second Row

Rudolph, R. W.
 Parncutt
 Beauchemin
 Waterman
 Kahilainen
 Ryan, J. T.
 Nelson, R. E.
 Lange
 Gendaszek
 Stroub

Third Row

Worthington
 Peterson
 Doane
 Spangler
 Bihuniak
 Birglio
 Standa
 DeWitt
 Voegele
 Menchio

Fourth Row

Harms
 Grantham
 Glazer
 Dressler
 Geiser
 Wilcox
 Kaiser
 Sullivan, J. H.
 Englehart
 Drewry

*First Row*

Turner
Giambalvo
Donahue
Glass
Stowers

Second Row

Tice
Scaia
Miklos
Grandinetti
Bryant
De Vincenzo
Cabral

Third Row

Pearson
Bombard
Boone, C. R.
Daugherty
Swiggett
Marconillier
Thyse

Fourth Row

Hebron
Currence
Carnabuci
Russell
Avila
Kosmick
Patterson



First Row
Blanchette
Pennacchio
Coleman
Wright
Ward
Unidentified
Howard, S. O.
Blizman

Second Row
Stuerke
Musselman
Harris
Henifin
Slater
Colagrande
Juryla

Third Row
Goldstein
Staley
Barker
Mayhan
Sprouse
Carson

Fourth Row
Butler
Leader
Santora
Howard, I. R.
Loh
Valenta
Shore



<i>First Row</i>		<i>Fourth Row</i>	
Mitcham	Cook	Fostvedt	Arnett
Wortham	English	Graves	Bellant
Fisher	Dupler	Resler	Bergh
Green	Miller	Lynes	Bicha
Dougherty		Boser	Boatwright
Preising	<i>Third Row</i>	Cleveland	Boyd
Morris	Clune	McAffoose, H. D.	Brooks
Kazmierski	Besu	Vegge	Brown
	Harrison	McCann	Bryant
	Graff		Bullock
<i>Second Row</i>	Bowling	<i>Missing</i>	Burmell
Krueger	Schuettler	Alegria	Burkhardt
Kirk	Crist	Allen	Busch
Hummel	McAffoose, C. D.	Ambrose	Byron
Marangoni	Bowman		Carlson, C. C.
Kline			Carlson, W. R.

Commanding Officer: Captain Harris
 Captain Scales
 Captain F. P. M. Thompson

September 1942—June 1943
 June 1943—July 1945
 July—November 1945

*First Row*

DaCosta
Lucchesi
Gampher
Antaramian

Second Row

Pederson
Reed



Robert H. Scales

Galonski
Gooley

Missing

Carman
Casella
Chardavoyne, J. J.
Chardavoyne, W. T.
Chivers
Chmura
Chrisman
Cope
Cornes
Crawford
Davis
Deutzman
DeWitt
DiMarco
Dulacka
Eastman
Eisentrou

Embry
Evans
Everts
Estes
Ferrari
Ferron
Frauman
Freund
Gaetano
Garner
Gardner
Garwood
Gatto
Gaudiello
Gentile
Goins, J. C.
Golueke
Goodwin
Grau
Gregory
Griffin

Griswold
Grojean
Grover
Guidry
Hagen
Hager
Hansen
Harmon
Hartman
Hays
Hayton
Henger
Henry
Heringer
Hirschhorn
Hisler
Hitt
Hogue
Holmes
Holt
Hutchison

*First Row*

Cidylo
Simpson
Martin
Hyrkas
Shelton
Brehm
Hudman
Moschogianis
Everett, H.
Britt

Second Row

Fekete
Ridgway
Strelecki
Gibbs
Reeser
Gruber
Hockenberry
Wilson

Kefauver
Leone
Hayter

Third Row

Nardini
Rand
Dobbins
Peterson
Davis
Durham
Wotzka
Elliott
Hildebrand
Beckner

Fourth Row

Goins, J. H.
Bryant
Harris
Eckhart
Crisco

Stewart
Palmer
Everitt, K.
Harrison
Kinnemann

Missing

Jenkins
Johnson
Juckniess
Karsh
Kempf
Kesterson
Kinnemann
Knutson
Komar
Kostrzynski
LeVay
Linzey
Logan
Lombardo

Lorence
Mathews
Maxwell
McCready
McElreath
McNew, C.
McNew, L.
McShaw
Miller
Mix
Moore, J. B.
Moore, M. E.
Nolan
Ososky
Ostrum
Perazzo
Peterson
Price
Procysen
Rabinowitz
Rawlings

*First Row*

Carey
Mazur
Hunsberger
Smith
Campbell
Addiego
Granich
Sweeney
McAnally
George
Stys

Second Row

Tonini
Wolpert
Homes
Leake
Hawley
Krukowski
Caleb
Ross

Nomellini
Palmer
Clark
Urban

Third Row

Rendelle
Wold
Schnase
Bullock
Blake
Matlock
Willhoite
Basham
Konzal
Caulley
Kendrick

Fourth Row

Barnes
Ford
Murphy

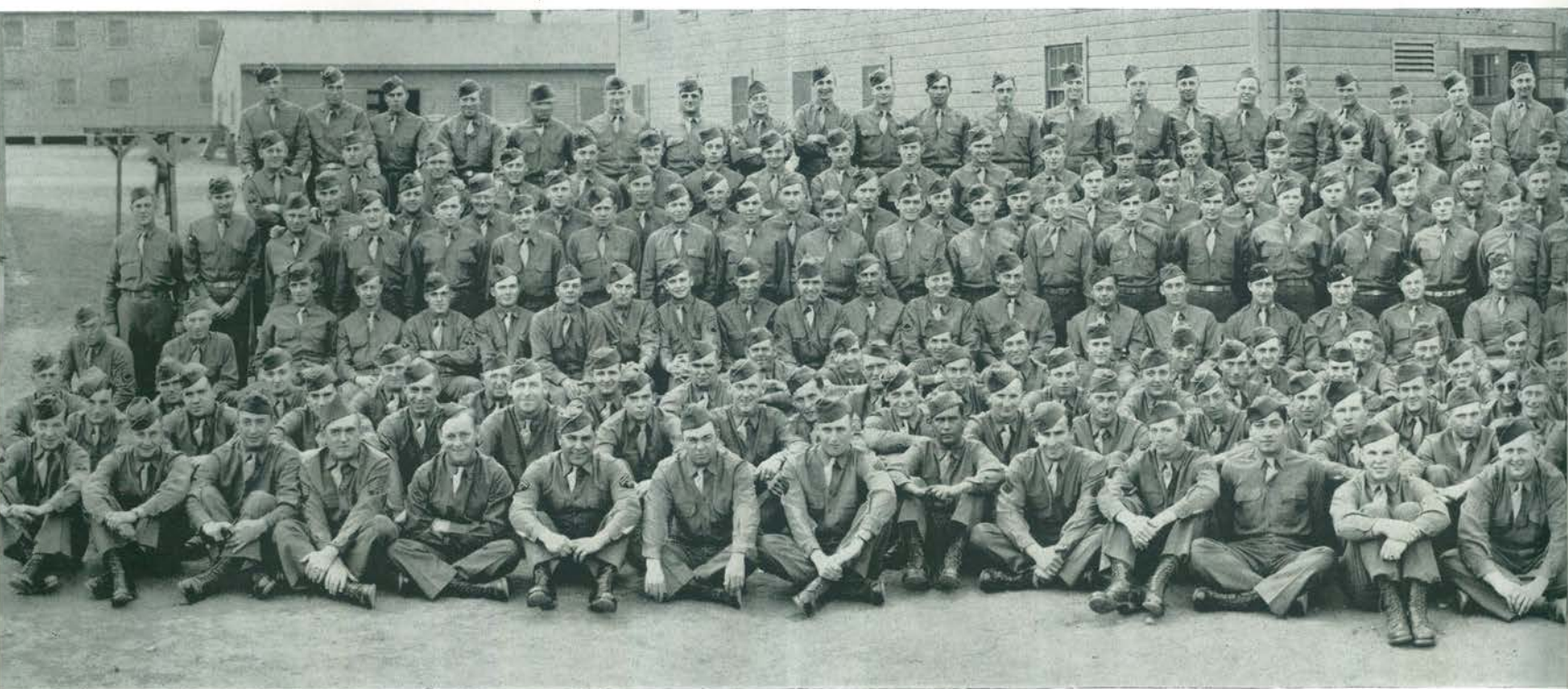
Cumby
Roche
Anderson
Johnson
Bevilaqua
Sanor

Loomis
Ruppert

Missing

Richardson
Riegelsberger
Rios
Riner
Roberts
Robinson
Royds
Ryan
Saltz
Schultz
Schwab
Scott

Shaffer
Smith, D. L.
Smith, R. C.
Smith, W. L.
Spinks
Stansbury
Stealey
Stewart
Swanner
Terry
Ulvestad
Underwood
Ungemach
Vaughan
Wallace
Warriner
Wilcox
Wolfe
Wolfer
Wood
Zerbo
Zuern



<i>First Row</i>	Mauldin	Chandler	Unidentified	Ditterline
Conroy	Zapf	May	Tuck	Jolly
Costello	Macko	Joseph	Lindsey	
DiLorenzo	Zornes	LeGrand	Harding	<i>4th Row, Sitting</i>
Kowzic	Schoell	Wilson	Bello	Cellucci
Steinbrunner	Peterson, W.	Warron	Gillock	Shaw
Vigil	Flood, E.	Brown, L.	Morris	Sirota
Owens, C.	Kopicki	Long	Anderson	Devese
Ramsborg	Angelline	Unidentified	Torres	White, J.
Chavez	Morine	McAdams	Yerian	Allen
Huba, A.	Feagan	Collins, J. G.	Brown, M.	Roebuck
Taylor	Pollard	Thompson	Carroll	Fishback
Bejaran	Williams, B.	Heinz	Moore	Russell
Blackmer	Williams, D.		Hahn	Christman
Braddy	Unidentified	<i>3rd Row</i>	Clark	Ehlers
Mener	McLaughlin	Singleton	Meador	Severin
Wingo	Hitzman	Ruth	Unidentified	Weber
Homb	Van Walleghe	Pasley	Neff	Vassar
Ballard	McMahan	Traylor	Warren	Andrews
Winninger	Brown, L.	Warrick	Seiss	Waterman
Schmitt	Gatchel	Larson	Payton	Powell
Lewis	Patton	McSherry	Cooper	Thompson
Burns	Graham	Maleski	Hizer	Garrison
Babington	Steinback	Kurtz	Olson, H.	Lawton
Slattery	Clark	McGuire	Thornton, I.	Hawkins
Couch	Rogers	Keene	Paris	Campbell
Alexandowicz	Kemeny	Hensley	Locker	Wrightson
	Ellington	Tommie	Starnes	Johnson
<i>2nd Row</i>	Plocus	Unidentified	Hawkins	Schneck
McMillan	Meigs	Drake	Guthrie	Hayden
Peters	Hopson, S.	Weyek	Murk	Neville
Donlevy	Beckstead	Isaksen	Wagner	Mizerak
Janke	Cronise	Golla	Foster	Jessie
Moshier	Clifton		Curts	Berger



Warner
Black
Altobello
Ruby
Tourangean
Galbreath
Miller, James
Jamison
Schlemmer

5th Row, Standing

Unidentified
Tharp
Reed, D.
Taygue
Brassfield
Kroll
Boyles
Tapp
Griggs
Plante
Desiderio
Justak
Roberie
Fagan
Prescott
Caldwell
Doiron
Zadel
Musso
Reedy
Stoechr
Keyser
James

Simms
Roark
Metteauer
Willard, E.
Pedro
Collins
Ward
Hill
Buckley
Fisher
Pharmer
Rosales
Marchetti
Rugo
Blalock
Cheslock

6th Row, Standing

Ball
Shaw, H.
Tveekrem
Hagedon
Schroer
Price
Baker
Sharp
Kauffman
Flaga
Hansen
Askew
Lucas
White, N.
Gardner
Whitten
Jacobs

Schuermann
Bogart
Parker
Lange
Brickle
Gillespie
Hatch
Ramey
Flood, J.
Smith, W.
Bromfield
Stewart
Festa
Willard, F.
Vance
Entsminger
Scott, L.
Price
Malacarne

7th Row, Standing

Nielson
Litton
Scott
McCallister
Russ
Hirschhorn
Rader
Beard
Hicks
Kramar
Dennison
Gordon
Harding
Unidentified

Severson
Thornton
Reigh
Penny
Lee
Nethercott
Whitkamp
Randolph
Dickey
Kitchen, D.
Unidentified
Miller, A.
Kart
Smith, E.
Budrick
Balnis
Janko
Jafke
Marcek
Stout
Duffin
Loftus
Bredau
Olson, O.

Top Row, Standing

Schoof
Sovie
Slee
Gramer
Ritrosky
Hutchison
Entrieri
Olivera
Gilbert

Watwood
Baldiosera
Hanke
Duncan
Von Kaenel
Smith, G.
Kubiak
Gribble
Hughes
Owens, B.
Unidentified
Rosga
Lane
Kolakoski
Martin, J.
Wells
Mosley
Branning
Sorenson
Bolin
Apodoca
Montoya
Miller
McGraw
Milliken
Hillyer
Unidentified
Barr
Lojeck
Stiger
Levern
Lawrence
Unidentified
Carver

*First Row*

Metteauer
Ball
Neville
Tommie
Peterson, W.
Collins
Janke
Hagedon
Miller, James
Hawkins
Dickey

Second Row

Roark
Sirota
Aleksandrowicz
Brassfield
Clifton
Branning
McMahan
Jandura
Wingo
Gillock

Third Row

Augugliaro
Cheslock
Wielgos
Keyser
White, James
Torres
Smith, James
Reigh
Stiger
Buckley

Fourth Row

Pease
Tapp
Montoya
Lee
Kroll
Baldiosera
Watwood
Kenton
Roberie
Balnis
Janko
Oliveira

Commanding Officer: Captain Linton
Captain Field
Captain Hawkins
Captain Garrison

September 1942—January 1943
January—March 1943
April 1943—July 1945
July—October 1945



Nunn, Carroll, Gall
(Missing: Cawley, Crawford, Lattanzio, Williamson)

Commanding Officer: Captain Nunn

November 1943—November 1945



Back Row: Esken, Harlow, Carpenter, Gibbs, Jackson, Balas, Lincoln
Middle Row: Tillotson, Razny, Kline, Dourth, Kitchens, Tebbe, Woodhurst
Front Row: Parrell, George, Nigro, Robinson, Lonsway, Cowley



<i>First Row</i>	Durst	<i>Fourth Row</i>	Bicking
Watkins	Flewelling	Greene	Boswell
Tate	Ross	Gudgeon	Brown
Beckner	Johansen	Albers	Carter
Favale	Reinertsen	Halliday	Davidson, M. L.
Hale		Mathieu	Davidson, R. W.
Janca	<i>Third Row</i>	Mycoff	Dechert
Ketcherside	Weaver	Birmingham	Donaldson
McGuire	Liddle	Rendina	Ethier
Youngblood	Maxian	Place	Feery
Kendall	Parham	Dooley	Fernandez
	Vance		Garcia
<i>Second Row</i>	Terrell	<i>Missing</i>	Gatlin
Richison	Pearce	Allen	Genereux
Symons	Knobloch	Anderson	Gregg
Thieman	Wolfe	Asmar	Griswold
Neal	Mackowak	Belcher	Guimont
Gornic			



<i>First Row</i>	Parker	New	Maguder
Kyne	Haines	Corwin	McRaney
Burgess	<i>Third Row</i>	Finucane	Meadows
Fichter	Burch	Richards	Michalski
Brehn	Philips	<i>Missing</i>	Michel
St. Pierre	Patterson	Hall	Miller
Luck	Marcigliano	Halverson	Molnar
Mahr	Schwartzberg	Hardin	Morgan
<i>Second Row</i>	Langlois	Jacobsen	Neff
Fury	Reed	Kakos	Nelson
Rabiansky	<i>Fourth Row</i>	Lecompte	O'Hara
Malichi	Brinkley	Lepanto	Olson
Blattman	Singley	Leshar	Orto
Hutchinson	Shahan	Luikert	Parsons
			Patten

*First Row*

McBride
Gray
Flowers
Thompson
Harris
Metro
Mullikin
Giger
Davis
Wilda

Second Row

Hoyer
Smalley

McDougall
Aspegren
DiSalvo
Cantrell
Mullis
Niemi
Hogan
Kight

Third Row

Klingbeil
Synansky
Knotl
Risl
Sujos

Grahon
Newnick
Rushing
Huttle
Sylvia

Missing

Penney
Pickering
Pierson
Portik
Quin
Rhodes
Riley
Russell, F. L.

Russell, H. F.
Rowe
Salyer
Sarata
Schupman
Smith, F. C.
Smith, J. E.
Snoke
Sonnenburg
Summers
Washburn
Whiddon
Whittaker
Zabroski



Pihlman, Barrett, Chwastyk, Hill, Smith, Bantly, Page
 (Missing: Baughman, Collier, C. H., Curtis, Draminski, Fenner, Fortner, Krui, Singleton)

Commanding Officer: Lt. Colonel McLallen
 Lt. Colonel Hill

Executive Officer: Captain Hartwig
 Major Hill
 Major L. J. Smith

S-1: Captain Evans
 Lt. Barrett

Deputy Beachmaster: Major C. H. Collier

September 1942—June 1945

June—November 1945

September 1942—January 1943

January 1943—June 1945

June—November 1945

September 1942—May 1945

May—November 1945

April 1944—May 1945

Skippy



Amidon, Collier, T. W., Cardwell



*First Row*

Kolokowska
Gredevant
Wingard
Pollock
Brown
Frank
Blalock
Brandlein
Cashman
Fitzpatrick

Second Row

E. Cole
Straub

Pharmer
Collard
Yopp
Berry
MacDowell
S. Cox
Ondo
Skelley

Third Row

Kiser
Taubert
Sherer
Leach
Fielding

Proctor
Murphy
Spangler
R. Hall
Larr

Fourth Row

Merrick
Critelli
Squadrito
Hariegle
Cross
Shklaver
Shaw
Polansky

Gaertner
Bad Hand

Missing

Adams
Baldwin
Bamford
Beauregard
Bistolas
Bledsoe
Brown
Cavanaugh
Chamberlain
Clark
Clarke

Commanding Officer: Captain L. J. Smith
Captain Amidon

January 1943—April 1944
April 1944—October 1945

*First Row*

Dunstan
Swenson
Coates
Legault
Row
Brannan
J. F. Moore
Tanksley
Wallace
Magiera

Second Row

Neal
Gillay

Locke
Conger
Rook
Johnson
Carrolus
Donovan
McCloud
Threlkeld

Third Row

Kuffner
Dilley
Tse
Redd
Ashley

L. L. Moore
Synder
Bruton
I. Phillips
Robinette

Fourth Row

Naugle
F. Hall
D'Agostino
Caraway
Shannon
Klevans
Bilesimo
Everette

Thurmond
Dente

Missing

Connelly
Crittelli
Davis
Decker
Eilers
Ferrucci
Fennell
Freeman
Gielda
Goldberg
Gorman
Guidrez



<i>First Row</i>	Hahn	Cummings	Florian
Cormack	Cornelius	Zimmerman	Laviolette
Gonzalez	Gillam	Schnieders	
Kerns	Dancy	Savage	<i>Missing</i>
Risinger	Smith	Thompson	Hall, F. E.
Paxton	Seims		Ham
Ellington	Herzer	<i>Fourth Row</i>	Heikes
Brown, J. C.	Hunt	Hembree	Hill
Hooker		Beam	Hooker
Woodbridge	<i>Third Row</i>	Kjos	Hucko
Amore	Ives	Huffman	Jacobsen
	Verhoeven	Billingsley	Jones
<i>Second Row</i>	Kopicki	Weyek	Lamper
Sadoff	McNary	Isaksen	Lombardi
MacCormack	Sill	Shoemaker	Lukesavich



<i>First Row</i>	Doherty	Mitchell	Seefeldt
Hirzel	Tucker	MacCallum	Shoup
Williams	Barnhouse	McDowell	Slenk
Riemersma		McNary	Squadrito
Cole, W. H.	<i>Third Row</i>	Pane	Stevenson
Barnett	Cox, H.	Perry	Sullivan
Dean	Cornn	Phillips	Syracusa
Welch	Flietz	Pollack	Topp
	Dunn	Ray	Toth
<i>Second Row</i>	Grisso	Risinger	Verhoeven
Baron		Romero	Waits
Kinnamon	<i>Missing</i>	Rossiter	Woolsey
Cooper	Martin	Sealock	Zimmerman
	Michaud		



Commanding Officer:

Lt. Austin September 1942—January 1943

Captain Adair

January 1943—October 1944

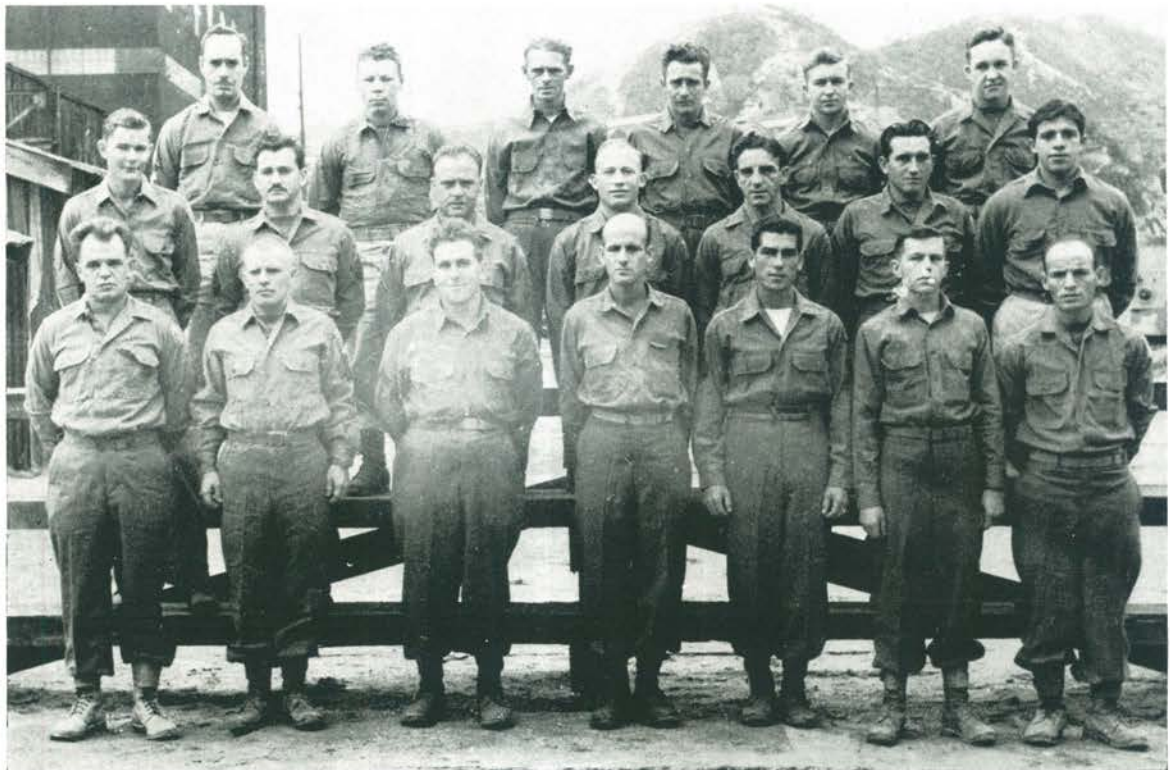
Captain Rhodes October 1944—May 1945

Captain Evans May—November 1945

Back Row: Hughes, McEachern, Smythe, Darling

Front Row: Lindberg, Evans

(*Missing:* Gross, Johnson, M. K., McDermott, Morey)



Back Row: Mayola, Whaley, Connelly, Dahms, Breeton, Kindberg

Middle Row: McWhorter, Yannarella, Camozzi, Powell, Walendzik, Steele, Ferrucci

Front Row: Leaveck, Srock, Zurn, Carlson, Hayman, Carson, Mastriaco



<i>First Row</i>	Harper	Archileti	Brandt
Perry	Lad	Klimek	Brown
Kusnetzky	Jaszewski		Chan
Lockman	Scheldrup	<i>Fourth Row</i>	Conte
Gough	Williamson	Brennan	Cousins
Dunn	Wright	Craig	Cox
Brittain		Lord	Cusati
Rosenauer	<i>Third Row</i>	Noffke	Dahms
Loupe	Dodd	Rosales	Downey
Edwards	Pokriefke	McGuire	Everman
Hicks	Schlemmer	Ringer	Filangeri
<i>Second Row</i>	Barnett	Lewis	Fitzgerald
Stikl	Beller	Sphar	Flannagan
Holden	Yarish	Landeck	Forster
Thompson	Thorbjornsen	<i>Missing</i>	George
Daum	Diekema	Bishop	

*First Row*

Konstantine
McFarland
Walsh
Nygaard
McDowell
Waclawski
Reed
Gordon
Caudill
Lienau

Second Row

Flowers
Feaver
Paradise
Zimpel

Kubat
Perlmutter
Celebucki
Wallace
Motter
Clay

Third Row

Stapleton
DiGiovanni
Maddocks
Windhaus
Differding
Owens
Ryan
Everett

Bilesimo
Lohr

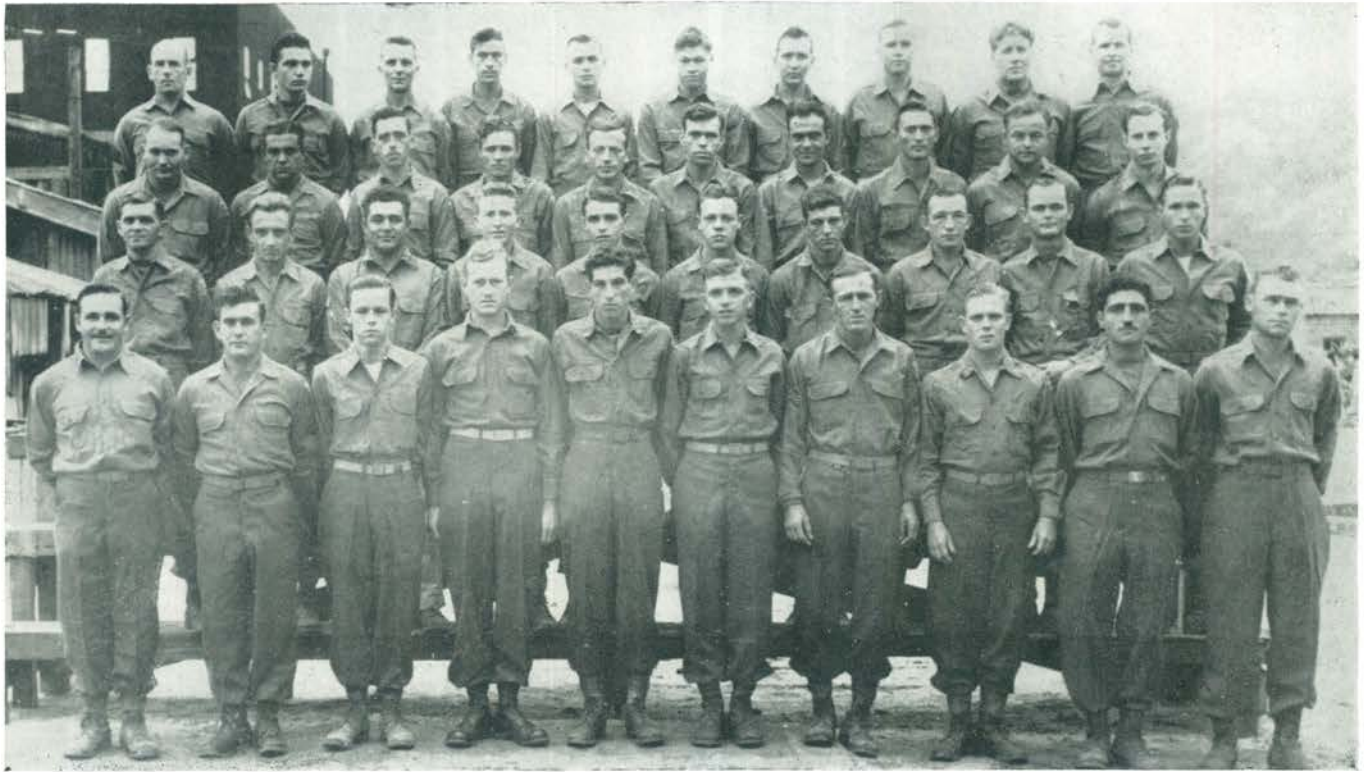
Fourth Row

Besch
Wilson
Anderson
Legrand
Sathre
Lambert
Augustine
Treyner
McGaughey
Hines

Missing

Gosney

Gray
Guglielmelli
Heiman
Jurgens
Knox
Krohn
Leathers
Locke
Lubka
Martin, R.
Martin, T.
Moran
Przegrenda
Ray
Records

*First Row*

Dawson
Kropilak
Surette
Briddell
Kessell
Taylor
Reason
Cox
Muzio
Kelly

Second Row

Semborski
Sewell
Ortiz

Hamburger
Ramey
King
Ward
McEnery
Hamlin
Thornton

Third Row

Dillard
Doca
Fisher
Johnson
Jenkins
Findlay
Urso

Granatosky
Jentzsch
Yolton

Fourth Row

Leahy
Akridge
Schneider
Burks
Phillips
Tattoo
Nelson
Golden
Riley
Laskowski

Missing

Riccardella
Rodgers
Roll
Rogoszewski
Satterfield
Sherman
Stoloski
Stueland
Thomas
Todd
Trzewik
Van Brewaene
Vernetti
Weissberger
Woods



Gilbert, Gregoire, Walton, Bush, Strong
Missing: Bowman, Captain

Commanding Officer: Captain C. H. Collier
Lt. Colegrove
Captain Walton

September 1942—April 1944
April 1944—February 1945
February—November 1945

*First Row*

Crites
Crowther
Livengood
Johnson
Della Vedova
Moran
Baine
Fultz
Dyroen
Colbert

Second Row

Bolten
Rodgers
Barlow

Harris, E.
Adams
Sellers
Hall, M.
Boler
Harbour
Timmons

Third Row

Hakala
Higgins
Fellem
Stuardi
Ahrens
Feerick
Danaluk

Sheffield
Ruby
Ribble

Fourth Row

Golla
Untela
Hayner
Anderson
Metzger
McDaniels
Woodward
Hogue
Green, R.
Hudson

Missing

Campbell
Caranzi
Casper
Claybaugh
Cole
Cordova
Cottrell
Courtney
Dettori
Daly
Dietrich
Erwin
Edmunds
Gilbert
Goldberg
Gordy

*First Row*

Schaeffer
Shandor
McLaughlin
Chodkowski
Chavez
Conrad
Vezina
Cissell
Bethel
LaBelle

Second Row

Smith
Cratty
Bradshaw
Harbin
Hunter

Mudgett
Kamerer
Camp
Warbington
Perry

Third Row

Worrell
Green, W.
Godfrey
Estep
Noud
Snow
Larson
Saymanski
Van Wallegghem
Mandel

Fourth Row

Bradley
Hughey
Hayes
Blackmer
Markowski
Blaha
Mozingo
Reizburg
Rigas
Oller

Missing

Gospeter
Gritton
Haas
Hakkala

Hale
Harmon
Himes
Hobson
Holaday
Hughes, H.
Jacobs
Kelly
Kondziolka
Kucinic
Lee
Lewis
Logan
Luchowski
McGriff
McKinney
Mallock
Marano

*First Row*

Harris, R.
Ray
Dobey
Rowley
DeHaven
Brown
Griffon
Hatfield
Eckman
Hartfiel

Second Row

Shafranck
Colburn
Hall, G.
Ducote

Gresko
Hernandez, L.
Myers, F.
Rotolone
Dorney
Costley

Third Row

Thomas
Pagano
Rignola
Bosheff
Bremner
Block
Allen
Kammerdeiner

Shrodes
Luck

Fourth Row

Zieno
Goetz
Kiggins
Menna
Zimmerman
Marshall
Greene
Clutter

Missing

Mendenhall
Meyer

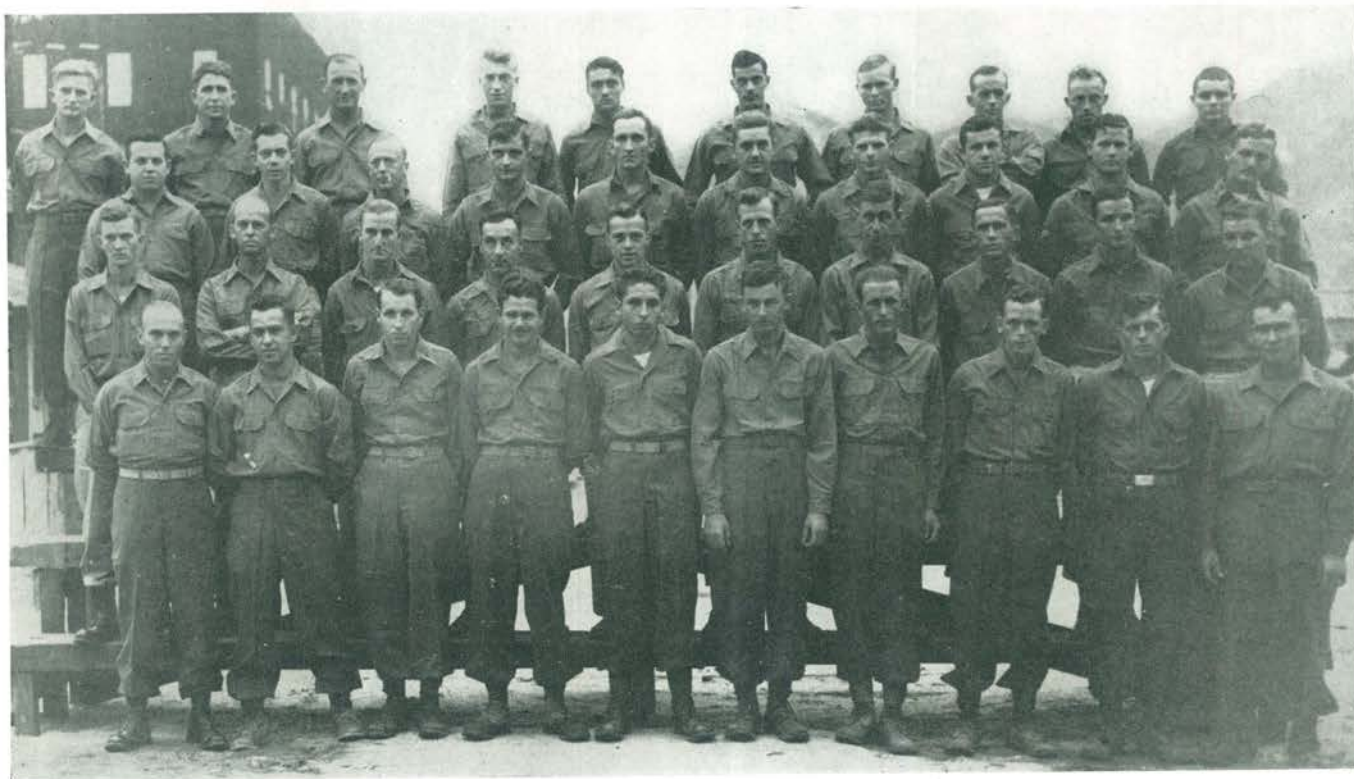
Meyers
Mikolashek
Moffett
Myers
Parker
Pirone
Pichl
Ricci
Rickert
Roberts
Sabol
Schnider
Staubs
Talbot
Wagner
Wanta
Wentland



Farkas, MacLeod, Lawson, Johnson, Day
Missing: Barnett, Wender



Back Row: Prato, Kubiak, Berkenkemper, Harris, Holmen, Krolich
Third Row: Geraci, Conn, Cummings, Ungemach, Underwood, Crum
Second Row: Silvey, Besco, Gibson, Beckham, O'Bryant, VandenBranden
Front Row: Sheldon, Bullock, Austin, A., Rutkowski, Wilson, Waller

*First Row*

Kassai
Panasuk
Rupert
Austin
Joerres
Williamson
Boggs
Character
Morgan
Kirts

Second Row

Hirchkorn
McDaniel
Bonnette
Nault
Misner

Malick
Brous
Dean
Wells
Reynolds, Alton

Third Row

Chappell
Hogan
Gilliam
Perkins
Terry
Graves
Reish
Hudgins
Meade
Vance

Fourth Row

Mallen
Boatwright
Poja
Thompson
Maxwell
Fiore
Doyle
Carter
Wallace
Chivers

Missing

Adams
Agee
Baker, E.

Bemisdarfer
Benefiel
Black
Bledsoe
Chester
Clayton
Corbin
Casper
Dailey
Darland
Dattoli
DeBartolo
De Cheser
DeVenzio
Dwyer
Edwards
Eros

Commanding Officer: Lt. Hill
Captain Priester
Captain Bouchelle
Captain L. Johnson

September 1942—January 1943
January 1943—March 1944
March 1944—June 1945
June—November 1945

*First Row*

Eisentroust
 Stilwell
 Parus
 Reynolds, M.
 Farmer
 McCormack
 Castleman
 Sommer
 Travis
 Hinds

Second Row

Hutchison
 Piecuch
 Deery
 White
 Hale

Kluttz
 Blehm
 Stanley
 Watson
 Riddle

Third Row

Duckett
 Barber
 Moore
 Mutnick
 Bishop
 Brunone
 Cook
 Hancy
 Hamersky
 McCready

Fourth Row

Raines
 Luedtke
 Cohen
 Ryan
 Stansbury
 Richardson
 Fugate
 Ferraro
 Puckett
 Ewald

Missing

Evans
 Florence
 French
 Ginn

Goodman
 Granfay
 Hamaker
 Hanson
 Hilton
 Hogan
 Helevinsky
 Huidekoper
 Jeanson
 Kennedy
 Kuffner
 Laird
 Liles
 Makarchik
 Masincup
 Metz
 Molo



First Row
 Vollmerhausen
 Carlson
 Placek
 Huff
 Dixon
 Andrews
 Barnes
 Gomes

Second Row
 Ricci
 Bumba
 Pentek
 Di Paolo

Uldriks
 Tolemy
 Bauer
 Gramling

Third Row
 Mihalak
 Gay
 Roberts
 Neal
 Stringer
 Trainor
 Hays
 Cantrell

Fourth Row
 Harmon
 Senechal
 Patrick
 Lepp
 Baker, R.
 Sears
 Posnonsky

Missing
 Nebeker
 Nix
 O'Reilly
 Orsini
 Procter

Raines
 Rawlins
 Robertson
 Rone
 Russell
 Sarna
 Sims
 Sink
 Slovacek
 Stockman
 Tarter
 Tom
 Washburn
 Whitt
 Wires



Bantly, Mandell, Kruger, Mound, Helbert
Missing: Witt

Commanding Officer: Major Donnelly
 Major Kruger

September 1942—February 1943
 February 1943—November 1945



<i>First Row</i>	Mojeski	Kiesel	Burden	Decker
Hein	Setterfield	Collins	Maser	Frank
Polan	Atkins	Munn	Gonzalez	Kassel
Garver	Coulson	Piszczeck	Roots	Lambert
Morrow	Belich	Puerto	Schnaithman	Manuel
Page	Scelsi			Mills
Hanafan				Palmer
	<i>Third Row</i>	<i>Fourth Row</i>	<i>Missing</i>	Provost
<i>Second Row</i>	Lewis	Farr	Ahrens	Rasso
Baker	Jackson	Pollard	Beach	Rothrock
Farthing	Everett	Johann	Bell	Wagner
Real	Barnes	Flahive	Brian	Walsh
Buhler	Kaye	Smith	Croushore	Wills

*First Row*

Jones
Keener
Williams
Peyton
Mosley

Ulaszewski
Adams

Second Row

Hruzak
Lumbley
Hunt

Thorne
Smith
Vaughan
Olson

Missing

Rice

Commanding Officer: Lt. Enos
Lt. Cates

June 1944—February 1945
February—August 1945

In Memoriam



U. S. Army Cemetery Number 1, San Fabian, Luzon.

Roll of Honor of the 533^d

Andrew Aiello	Co. B	Cairns, Australia
Rudolph Barutske	Hq. Co. Sh. Bn.	Milne Bay, New Guinea
George W. Berger	Co. C	Saidor, New Guinea
William M. Cronise	Co. C	Saidor, New Guinea
Charles R. Devers	Co. F	Borgen Bay, New Britain
Clarence E. Donahue	Co. A	Dagupan, Luzon
William E. Edgar	Hq. Co. Bt. Bn.	Kure, Japan
Harry Frauman	Co. B	Talomo, Mindanao
James A. Giambrone	Co. A	Manus I., Admiralty Is.
Melvin J. Jants	Co. B	Talomo, Mindanao
Richard C. Jenkins	Co. E	Aitape, New Guinea
Willis E. Krueger	Co. F	San Fabian, Luzon
Edward A. Lachowicz	Co. C	Fort Ord, California
Louis A. Martinez	Hq. Co. Bt. Bn.	Borgen Bay, New Britain
Raymond H. May	Co. F	San Fabian, Luzon
Charles M. Miller	Hq. Co. Bt. Bn.	Bued River, Luzon
Andrew Mizisin	Co. A	Borgen Bay, New Britain
Frederick A. Navarro	Co. D	Aitape, New Guinea
James B. Robb	R. Hq. Co.	San Fabian, Luzon
Dave E. Sheldon	Co. A	Agusan River, Mindanao
William A. Stephenson	Hq. Co. Sh. Bn.	Cape Cretin, New Guinea
Howard D. Vance	Hq. Co. Bt. Bn.	San Fabian, Luzon
Basil J. Wilcox	Hq. Co. Bt. Bn.	Cotabato, Mindanao

Awards and Decorations

SILVER STAR



1st Lt.	Arpad Farkas	Umboi Island, New Guinea
Pfc.	Albert L. Eckman	Umboi Island, New Guinea
Pvt.	Lorman L. Laird, Jr.	Umboi Island, New Guinea
Pfc.	Frank Perry	Umboi Island, New Guinea
T/Sgt.	John J. Sedore	Danmap River, New Guinea
T/4	Mathias J. Beller	San Fabian, Luzon
Lt. Col.	Robert Amory, Jr.	Mindanao River
Capt.	Elbert A. Hawkins	Mindanao River
Major	Edwin H. Lawton	Mindanao River
1st Lt.	Charles W. Page	Mindanao River
1st/Sgt.	Edward M. Vassar	Mindanao River

LEGION OF MERIT



Colonel	Wayne S. Moore	New Guinea and Philippines
Lt. Col.	Robert Amory, Jr.	New Guinea and Philippines

SOLDIERS MEDAL



T/5	Alfred L. Everitt	Monterey Bay, California
T/5	Peter J. Giambalvo	Monterey Bay, California
Pvt.	Leon Romanski	Monterey Bay, California
Pvt.	Robert H. Kline	Langamac Bay, New Guinea
Pvt.	Charles Hunt, Jr.	Aitape, New Guinea
T/Sgt.	Paul B. Noffke	Aitape, New Guinea
Sgt.	Salvatore D. Ricci	Aitape, New Guinea
Pvt.	James Squadrito	Aitape, New Guinea
T/5	Manuel DaCosta	Babieng, New Guinea
T/3	Robert J. Blake	Dagupan River, Luzon
Pvt.	Erwin Epstein	Dagupan River, Luzon
T/5	Julius H. Grossberg	Dagupan River, Luzon
S/Sgt.	John P. Lestrangle	Bued River, Luzon
S/Sgt.	Alfred S. Adams	Mindanao River
T/5	James F. Carver	Mindanao River
S/Sgt.	Robert T. Purcell, Jr.	Mindanao River
Pfc.	Albert H. Schroer	Mindanao River
T/4	Melvin J. Jants	Davao, Mindanao (<i>Posthumous</i>)
T/4	Eric Pederson	Davao, Mindanao
T/4	Stephen W. Billingsley	Wakayama, Japan
T/5	William Cole	Wakayama, Japan
1st/Sgt.	Selmer E. Sathre	Wakayama, Japan

BRONZE STAR



Capt.	Joseph J. Gannon	Talasea, New Britain
Lt. Col.	Robert Amory, Jr.	Talasea, New Britain
T/5	Howard L. Helms	Eleanora Bay, New Britain
T/4	Peter R. Rudolf	Eleanora Bay, New Britain
T/5	Elmer L. Smith	Eleanora Bay, New Britain
T/Sgt.	Robert E. Tighe	Eleanora Bay, New Britain
1st Lt.	Claude H. Hayden	Yakamul, New Guinea
Col.	Wayne S. Moore	Aitape, New Guinea
T/Sgt.	Thomas M. Cospers	San Fabian, Luzon
1st Lt.	Gene I. Granich	San Fabian, Luzon
1st/Sgt.	Chester E. Horton	San Fabian, Luzon
Sgt.	George A. Hughes	San Fabian, Luzon
Major	Leon W. Hill	San Fabian, Luzon
Lt. Col.	DeWitt L. McLallen	San Fabian, Luzon
Pvt.	Dante Menna	San Fabian, Luzon
Chaplain	Joseph P. Monahan	San Fabian, Luzon
Col.	Wayne S. Moore	San Fabian, Luzon
1st Lt.	Norman Privett	San Fabian, Luzon
Corp.	Leo P. Thibault	San Fabian, Luzon
Chaplain	Julian C. Traweck	San Fabian, Luzon

BRONZE STAR

(continued)

T/Sgt.	Efraim Weber	San Fabian, Luzon
T/5	Harry O. Witters	San Fabian, Luzon
Capt.	Robert P. Buzzini	New Britain and Luzon
WO (jg)	Edward F. Costello	New Guinea and Luzon
M/Sgt.	James Harries	New Guinea and Luzon
Major	Robert M. Koch	New Guinea and Luzon
M/Sgt.	Woodrow Lee	New Guinea and Luzon
1st Lt.	Earl J. McMahon	New Guinea and Luzon
1st Lt.	Biddle R. Thompson	New Guinea and Luzon
Pfc.	Carroll E. Ackerman	Mindanao
T/3	Delmar W. Aleshire	Mindanao
T/4	Theodore W. Allen	Mindanao
T/5	Alonzo L. Anderson	Mindanao
Cpl.	George W. Andrews	Mindanao
Capt.	Harry C. Bantly	Mindanao
T/4	Lowell R. Barr	Mindanao
Sgt.	Charles R. Beckner	Mindanao
T/4	Alphonso P. Bejaren	Mindanao
T/4	Chester I. Bellant	Mindanao
T/3	Robert J. Blake	Mindanao
1st/Sgt.	Francis R. Blizman	Mindanao
T/5	Otto E. Bolten	Mindanao
Capt.	Dallas P. Bouchelle	Mindanao
T/5	Alvertis D. Boyd	Mindanao
Pfc.	Ray D. Boyles	Mindanao
T/4	Harold A. Brian	Mindanao
T/4	Andrew J. Brown	Mindanao
Pfc.	James A. Brunone	Mindanao
Pfc.	Clifford R. Burkhardt	Mindanao
T/5	Cecil H. Burns	Mindanao
1st Lt.	Irving T. Bush	Mindanao
1st Lt.	William B. Campbell, Jr.	Mindanao
1st Lt.	Edward Q. Carroll	Mindanao
T/3	Harold Ceglarek	Mindanao
T/4	Daniel Cellucci	Mindanao
T/4	James A. Chapman	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Tony J. Christman	Mindanao
Sgt.	Arthur L. Colagrande	Mindanao
Major	Clarence H. Collier, Jr.	Mindanao
T/4	Loren R. Collins	Mindanao
T/5	Joseph W. Cox	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	James A. Dale	Mindanao
M/Sgt.	Coy W. Dean	Mindanao
T/4	John H. Denlinger	Mindanao

BRONZE STAR
 (continued)

T/4	James Dennison, Jr.	Mindanao
T/4	Merritt H. Deutzman	Mindanao
T/4	Glover I. Dewease	Mindanao
CWO	William Doherty	Mindanao
T/4	Fred J. Dorion, Jr.	Mindanao
1st Lt.	Robert W. Dougherty	Mindanao
T/4	Joe E. Duncan	Mindanao
T/4	John A. Dusek	Mindanao
T/4	Henry W. Dykstra	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Oswald M. Dyroen	Mindanao
T/5	Harry Eastman	Mindanao
T/4	William H. Edgar	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Marion E. Edwards	Mindanao
T/4	Francis X. Fagan	Mindanao
Capt.	Joseph J. Gannon	Mindanao
Capt.	William W. Garrison	Mindanao
T/4	Chalmers R. Gardner	Mindanao
T/4	William George	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Jerry E. Goins	Mindanao
T/4	Thomas P. Graham	Mindanao
T/5	Andrew L. Gray	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	Fred R. Greene	Mindanao
T/5	Gerald A. Griggs	Mindanao
T/5	Fred W. Grover	Mindanao
T/4	Fred C. Hadlich	Mindanao
T/5	Troy E. Hammons	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Charles L. Harbour	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Fred Harlow	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Walter W. Hartfield	Mindanao
Capt.	Hollen G. Helbert	Mindanao
T/4	Vernon W. Hinze	Mindanao
Sgt.	Edwin F. Hirzel	Mindanao
Pvt.	Elgin Holmes	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Harold G. Hopson	Mindanao
Major	Phillip L. Howard	Mindanao
T/5	Martin O. Hunt	Mindanao
1st Lt.	Wendell H. Isley	Mindanao
T/3	Murl E. Jackson	Mindanao
Pfc.	Anthony J. Joerres	Mindanao
1st Lt.	LeRoy A. Johnson	Mindanao
T/5	Donald E. Kemeny	Mindanao
T/4	Isaac T. Keyser	Mindanao
Pfc.	Francis F. Krajewski	Mindanao
T/4	Dale Kulow	Mindanao

BRONZE STAR
(continued)

S/Sgt.	Henry J. Kuzen	Mindanao
Sgt.	Elmer H. Landeck	Mindanao
1st Lt.	Palmer H. Langdon	Mindanao
T/5	James E. Lanham	Mindanao
T/3	Charles L. Leach	Mindanao
Pfc.	Harold F. Lewis	Mindanao
1st Lt.	George B. Lindberg	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Roy G. Lindquist	Mindanao
T/4	Arlee C. Lindsey	Mindanao
T/5	John E. Loftus, Jr.	Mindanao
T/4	Joseph Lojiki	Mindanao
T/4	Francis W. Long	Mindanao
T/3	Robert E. Long	Mindanao
T/3	Ralph W. Luikart	Mindanao
T/4	Thomas M. Lynch	Mindanao
T/5	Lloyd Lynnes	Mindanao
T/4	Malcolm MacCallum	Mindanao
1st Lt.	James H. MacLeod	Mindanao
T/5	James M. Martin	Mindanao
T/4	Donald I. McCafferty	Mindanao
1st Lt.	Douglas A. McEachern	Mindanao
T/4	George E. McKinney	Mindanao
T/5	Gerald W. McNary	Mindanao
Capt.	Harry B. Mebane	Mindanao
T/4	William M. Metteauer	Mindanao
Capt.	John V. Michel	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	Charles J. Mihalak	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Marion W. Miller	Mindanao
T/3	Henry Moeller	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Vernon H. Moffett	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	John F. Moore	Mindanao
Capt.	Daniel Mound	Mindanao
T/3	Vance C. Mullis, Jr.	Mindanao
Pfc.	John B. Musselman	Mindanao
Sgt.	Tony N. Muzio	Mindanao
T/4	Harrel F. Neet	Mindanao
T/4	Paul Nielsen	Mindanao
T/4	Gurvis E. O'Kelley	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	James J. Parrell, Jr.	Mindanao
T/4	Maynard Parris	Mindanao
T/4	Steve Parris	Mindanao
T/4	Earl Patrick	Mindanao
T/5	Warren M. Peterson	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	Harry F. Prock	Mindanao

BRONZE STAR

(continued)

T/4	Edward E. Rader	Mindanao
T/5	William G. Ramey	Mindanao
T/4	Richard E. Reiss	Mindanao
T/5	Leo Richter	Mindanao
T/4	Martin J. Riemersma	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	John R. Rigas	Mindanao
T/3	John E. Roland	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Wayne D. Satterfield	Mindanao
Capt.	Robert H. Scales	Mindanao
1st Lt.	Edwin B. F. Schneck	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	Adolph M. Schoof	Mindanao
T/4	Jesse F. Sharp	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Harold W. Shaw	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Frank W. Sheffield	Mindanao
T/4	Howard F. Shrodes	Mindanao
T/4	James S. Silcott	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	Armand J. Sinisi	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Daniel D. Siquido	Mindanao
Capt.	Leonard J. Smith	Mindanao
T/4	Tomey Steele	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	Adelbert D. Stewart	Mindanao
Sgt.	Cordis S. Taubert	Mindanao
Capt.	Fred P. M. Thompson	Mindanao
Pfc.	William F. Todd	Mindanao
T/4	Willard M. Towne	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	William S. Turbeville	Mindanao
T/5	Trygve Tveekrem	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	Vincent E. Walsh	Mindanao
Capt.	Raiford R. Walton	Mindanao
Capt.	Reuben M. Waterman	Mindanao
T/5	Marvin H. Watson	Mindanao
T/5	Grady E. Welch	Mindanao
1st Lt.	Joseph P. Wender	Mindanao
T/5	Billy L. Williams	Mindanao
T/3	Delbert W. Wills	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	Thomas S. Wilson	Mindanao
T/5	Russel B. Wingo	Mindanao
Sgt.	Berry F. Wise	Mindanao
S/Sgt.	John W. Wisner	Mindanao
T/5	Frank B. Wood	Mindanao
T/5	Douglas H. Yerian	Mindanao
T/Sgt.	Dominic J. Zieno	Mindanao
T/4	Theodore H. Zimpel	Mindanao

PURPLE HEART

Pfc.	Willie M. Andrews	Cape Cretin, New Guinea
Pfc.	Donald R. Benefield	Cape Cretin, New Guinea
Pfc.	Earnest H. Character	Cape Cretin, New Guinea
Pfc.	Jesse Conn	Cape Cretin, New Guinea
Pfc.	Leland L. Graves	Cape Cretin, New Guinea
Capt.	Joseph J. Gannon	Talasea, New Britain
T/4	Hilton C. Leatherman	Talasea, New Britain
2d Lt.	David X. Oakley	Talasea, New Britain
Sgt.	Nickolas H. Caras	Aitape, New Guinea
Cpl.	John A. Cummings	Aitape, New Guinea
Pfc.	Japhet T. Flanagan	Aitape, New Guinea
T/5	Roy T. Freeman	Aitape, New Guinea
Cpl.	Walter N. Simmers	Aitape, New Guinea
Pfc.	Jino A. Zambotti	Aitape, New Guinea
T/5	Edmund J. Trainor	Muschu Straits, New Guinea
Pfc.	Vivian C. Chivers	San Fabian, Luzon
T/4	John H. Dusek	San Fabian, Luzon
1st Lt.	William W. Garrison	San Fabian, Luzon
T/5	Irwin Goldberg	San Fabian, Luzon
T/4	John R. Hakala	San Fabian, Luzon
S/Sgt.	John L. Knott	San Fabian, Luzon
Pvt.	Lawrence W. S. Lord	San Fabian, Luzon
Pvt.	Richard W. Moore	San Fabian, Luzon
Pfc.	Peter J. Przegienda	San Fabian, Luzon
S/Sgt.	Robert T. Purcell, Jr.	San Fabian, Luzon
Cpl.	Burton S. Records	San Fabian, Luzon
Pfc.	Harlan F. Roberts	San Fabian, Luzon
Pfc.	James E. Sealock	San Fabian, Luzon
T/Sgt.	John J. Sedore	San Fabian, Luzon
Pfc.	Teddy L. Simms	San Fabian, Luzon
Pfc.	George E. Steinbach	San Fabian, Luzon
Pfc.	William F. Straub	San Fabian, Luzon
S/Sgt.	Rudolf Syracuse	San Fabian, Luzon
Cpl.	Stanley H. Wacławski	San Fabian, Luzon
Pfc.	Ralph B. Thomas	Manila, Luzon

**COMMISSIONED
SECOND LIEUTENANT**
**For Outstanding Per-
formance in the Field**

1st/Sgt.	Harry E. Gregoire	T/Sgt.	Harry F. Prock
T/Sgt.	Leroy B. Hall	T/Sgt.	John J. Sedore
Sgt.	George A. Hughes, Jr.	T/Sgt.	Walter M. Singleton
S/Sgt.	Ligouri A. Jacobs	T/Sgt.	Andrew J. Smythe
S/Sgt.	John L. Knott	1st/Sgt.	Edward M. Vassar
S/Sgt.	Robert J. Mowitz		

Editors' Note

This book has been written and edited by and for men of the 533d Engineers. Its publication was paid for entirely by voluntary individual subscriptions. Its paramount purpose is to provide a memoir for each soldier so that he can readily and accurately and, it is hoped, proudly refresh his recollection of his days with the amphibs. In addition, its editors have borne in mind that the Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment was undreamt of months after we were at war. As a new Army entity with a unique and varied mission, it deserves a history of its own. This book endeavors, therefore, to give a balanced account of one regiment's work and contribution to the campaigns in the Southwest Pacific so that those who had little or no contact with this or similar organizations may learn what they were and what they accomplished.

First drafts of all chapters were written by men who were present during the events related and who held sufficiently important roles so that they were aware of the factors controlling decisions and actions. Their personal recollections have been carefully checked to accord with diaries and official contemporary documents or reports written while events were fresh in mind. For historical facts beyond their first hand knowledge the editors have relied principally on the Office of Naval Intelligence Weekly Bulletin. Documentation by footnotes or voluminous appendices seemed inappropriate considering the book's main purpose. Any reader wishing to obtain authority for, or further information as to any statement is invited to communicate with the editors.

The editors wish to express their gratitude to the following contributors whose efforts not only lightened the burden on the editors but materially enhanced the value of the book as a whole:

LT. COL. LEON W. HILL—Those portions of Chapters II, III, V, VII, IX and X relating to the activities of the Shore Battalion.

MAJOR EUGENE T. EVANS, JR.—Portions of Chapters II and III.

CAPTAIN FRANK B. POWELL—Portions of Chapter IV.

MAJOR PHILIP L. HOWARD—Portions of Chapter V.

CAPTAIN HARRY B. MEBANE—Portions of Chapter V and all of Chapter VI.

MAJOR ROBERT P. BUZZINI—Portions of Chapters VIII and XIII.

MAJOR E. A. HAWKINS—Portions of Chapter IX relating to C Company.

LT. COL. EDWIN H. LAWTON—Portions of Chapter X relating to the Boat Battalion.

MAJOR LEONARD J. SMITH—Portions of Chapter XIII.

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CAPTAIN ARTHUR L. BELICK for collecting the bulk of the illustrations and all the group pictures.

Many others have generously assisted the editors in obtaining or checking information.

COLONEL ROBERT AMORY, JR., % Harvard Law School, Cambridge 38, Mass.

CAPTAIN REUBEN M. WATERMAN, 600 Griswold St., Detroit 26, Michigan

Editors

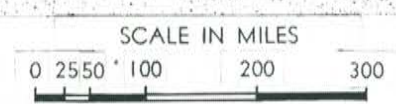
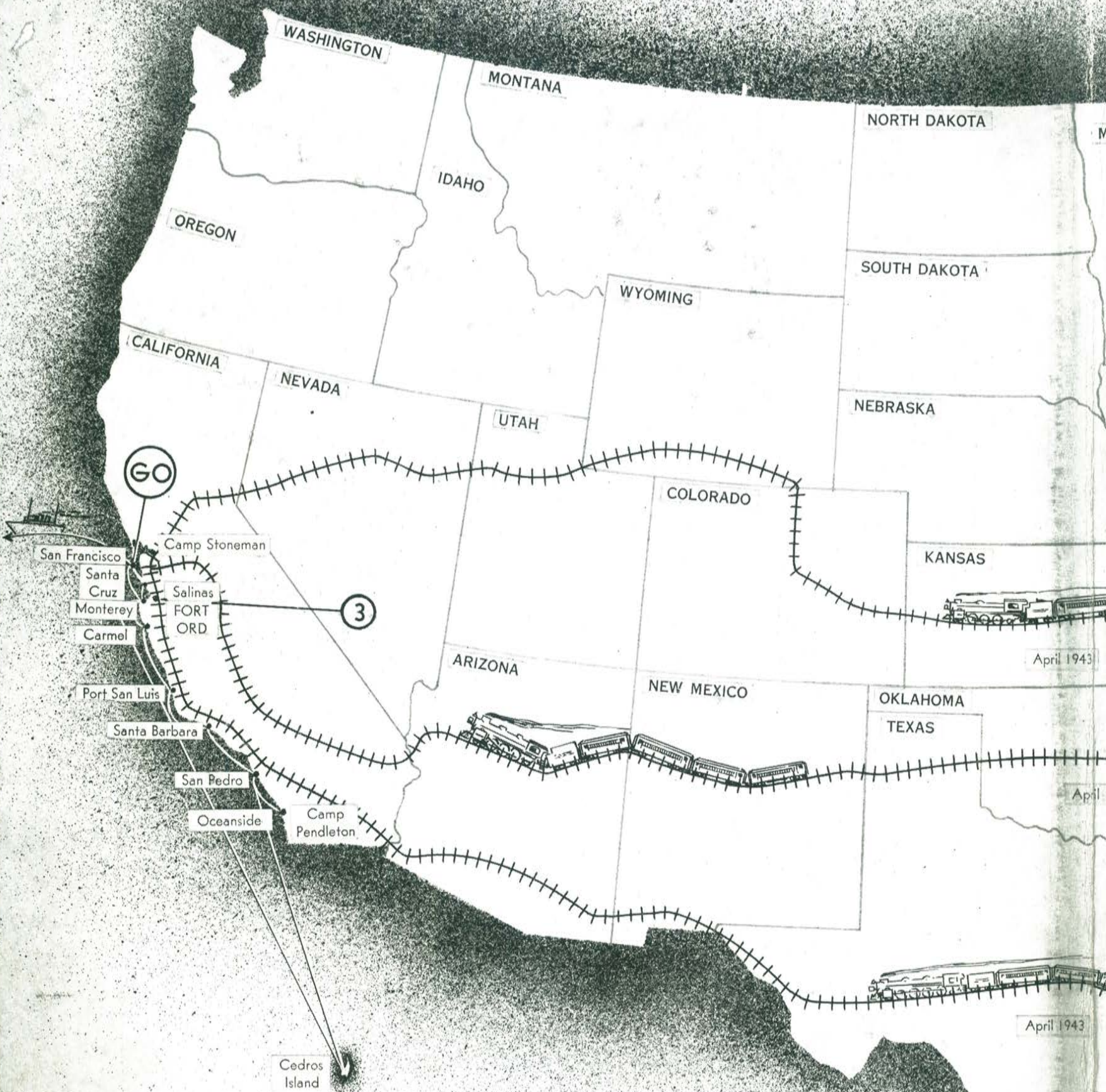
Acknowledgment of Illustrations

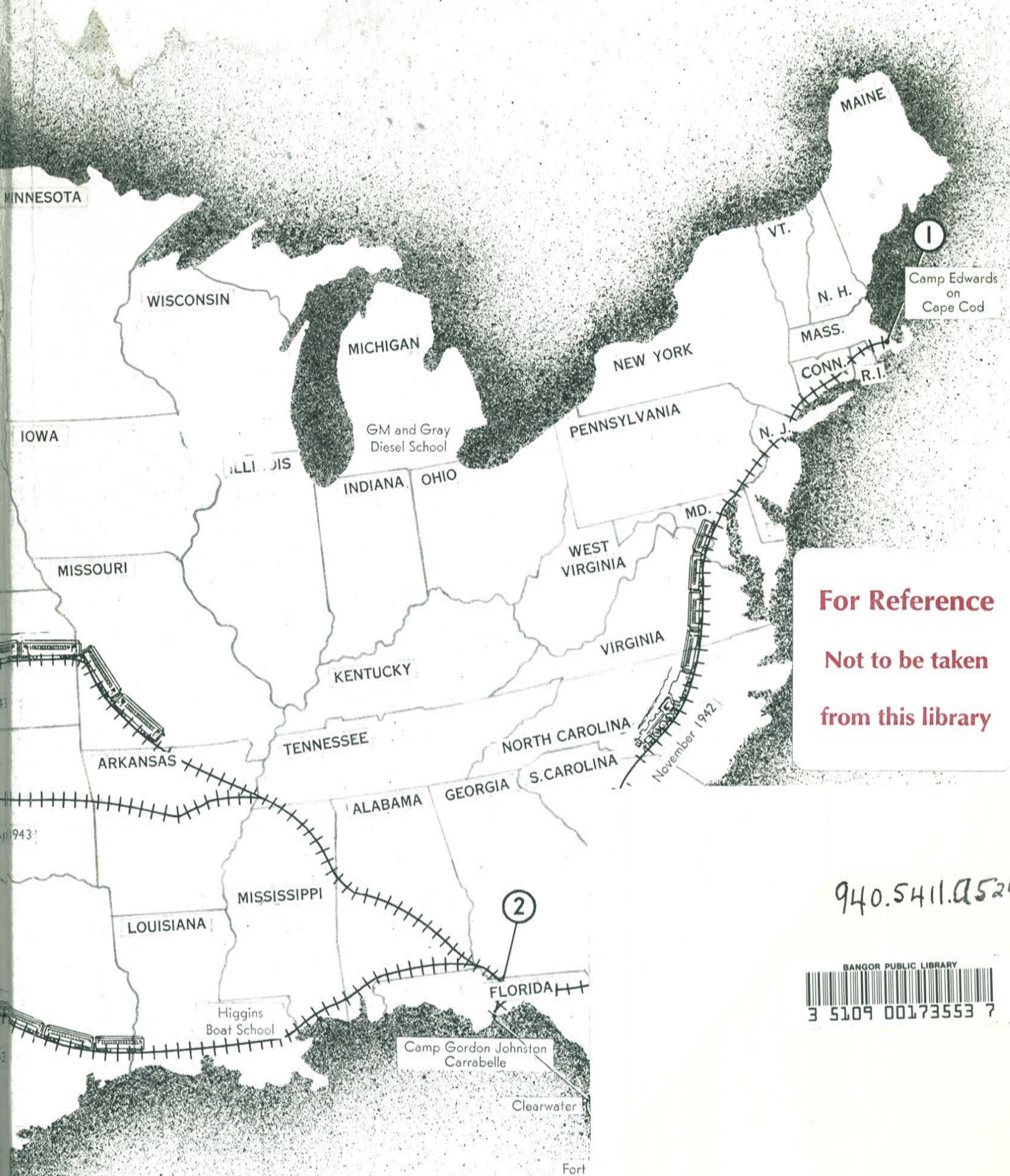
The editors wish to express their appreciation and gratitude for the generous manner in which individuals and official War and Navy Department agencies responded to their requests for pictures for use in this book.

Almost two hundred of the action photographs and all of the platoon-group pictures in Part Four were taken and printed by photographers attached to the regimental S-2 section. Of these, the Philippine campaign shots were made by Sergeant Sherman detailed from 3d Brigade headquarters.

There follows a list of the contributors of the balance of the illustrations together with the pages on which their photographs are reproduced. Where no subdivision of the page is indicated, the acknowledgment is of all pictures on that page.

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