



336th Engineer Combat Battalion



Omaha Beach To The Elbe River

Reunion
Holiday Inn Motel East - Syracuse, NY
6-8 September 1990



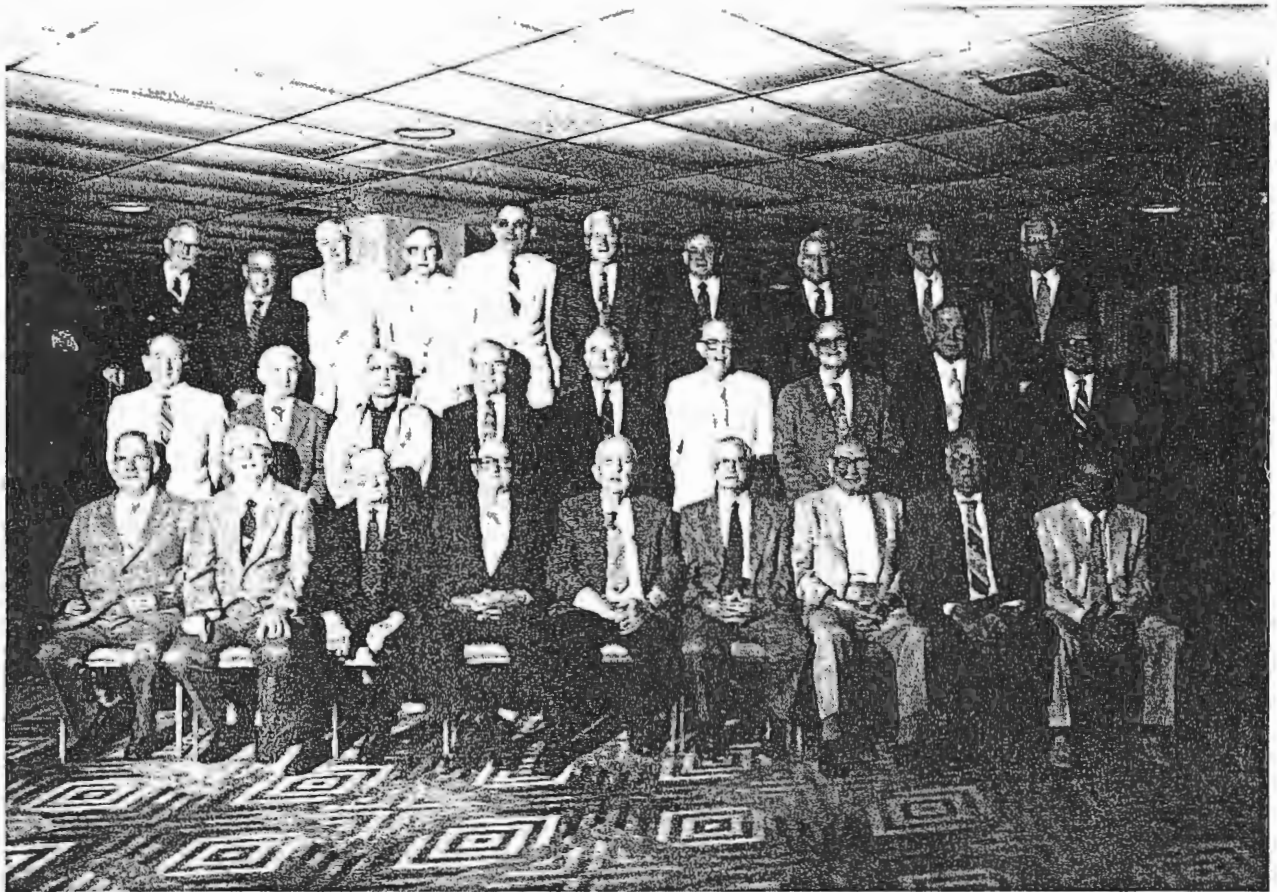
WELCOME SIGN FOR THIRD REUNION



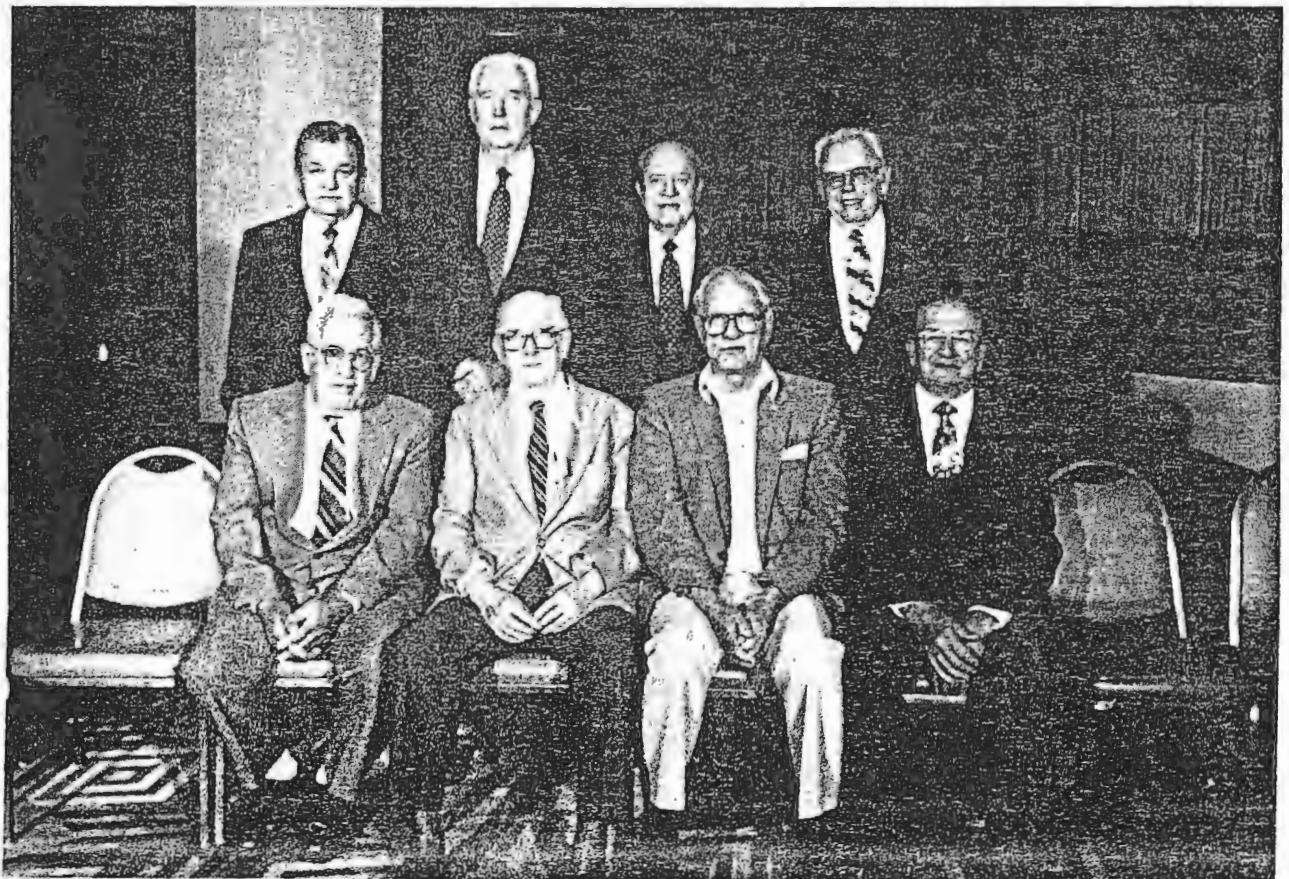
CHECKING IN
Group looking at a program



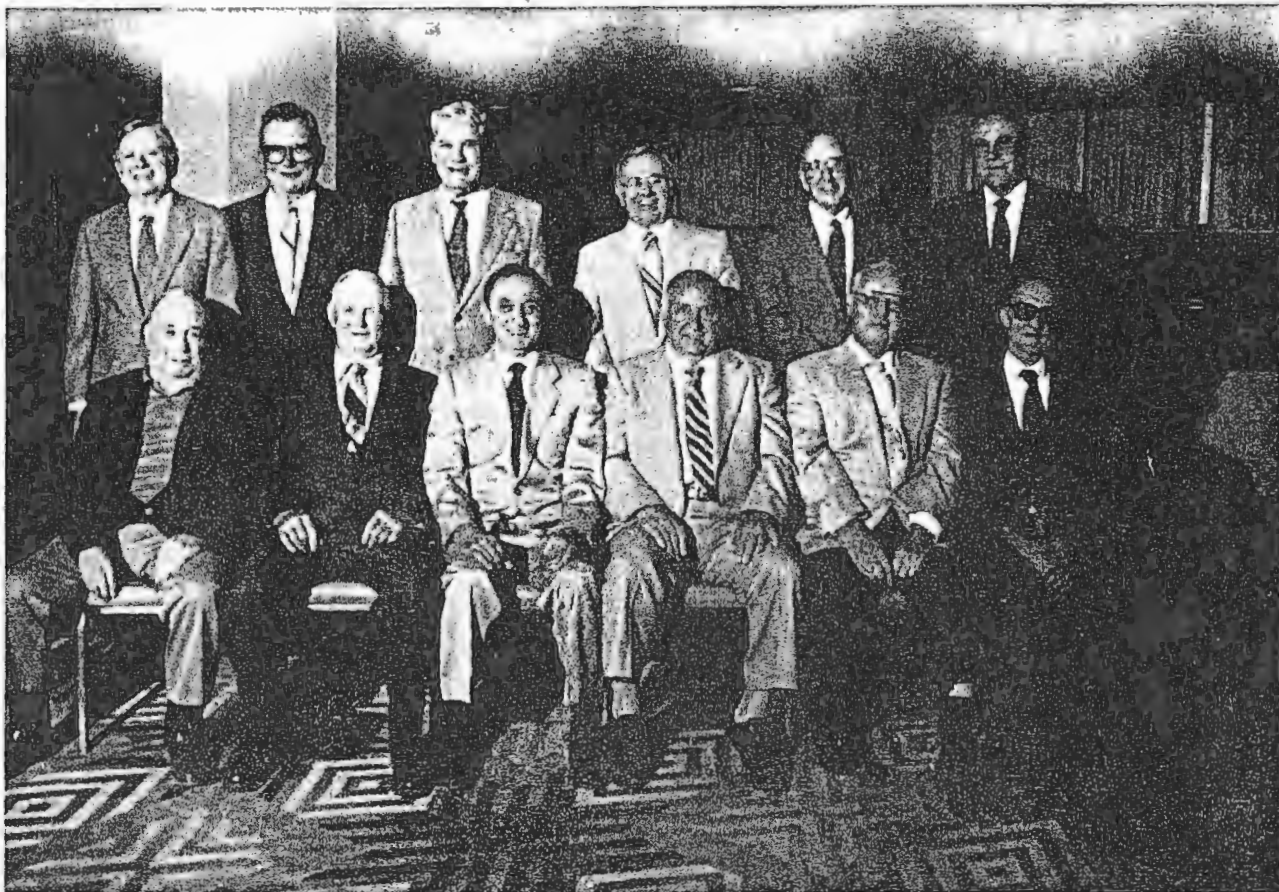
REGISTRATION
Betty Miller & Joyce Golec at Registration Table



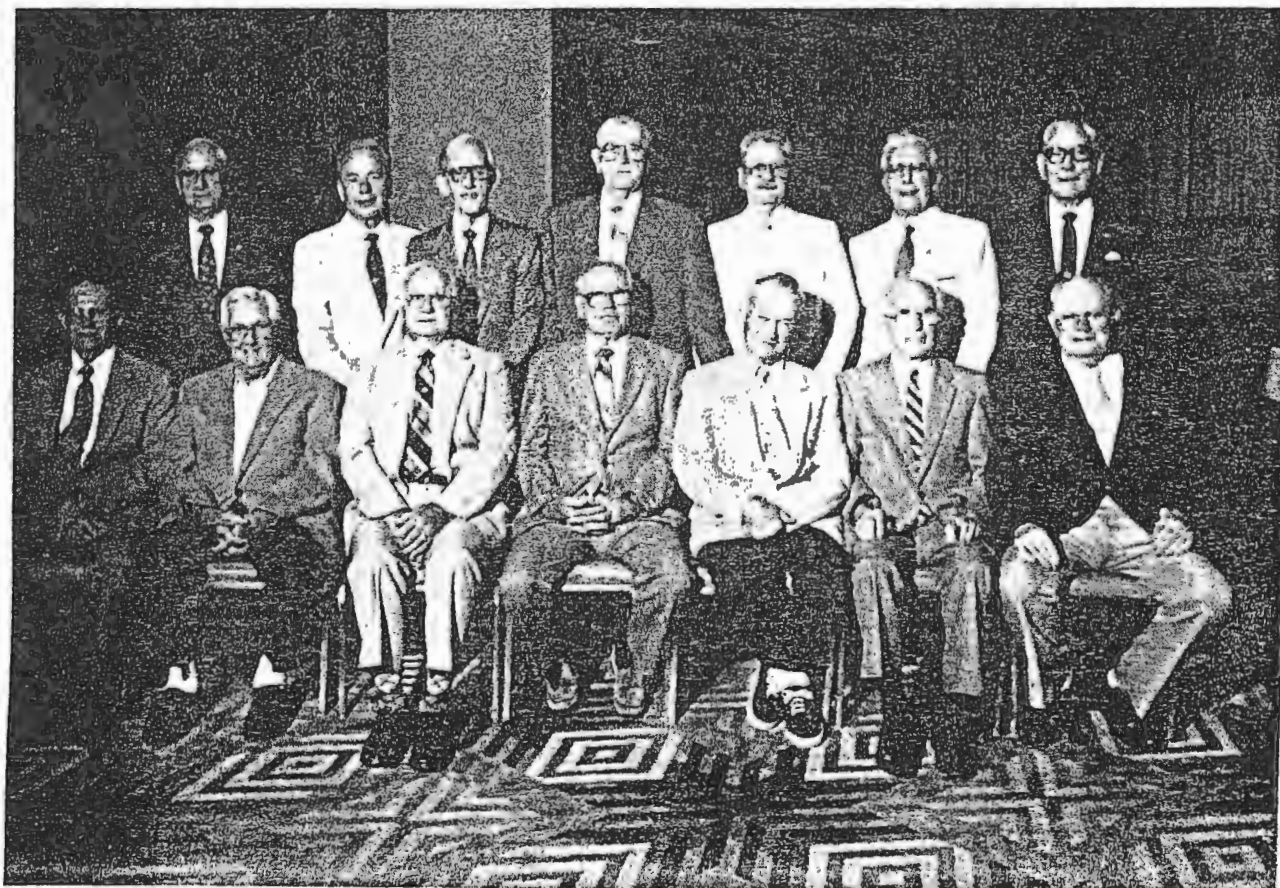
A COMPANY



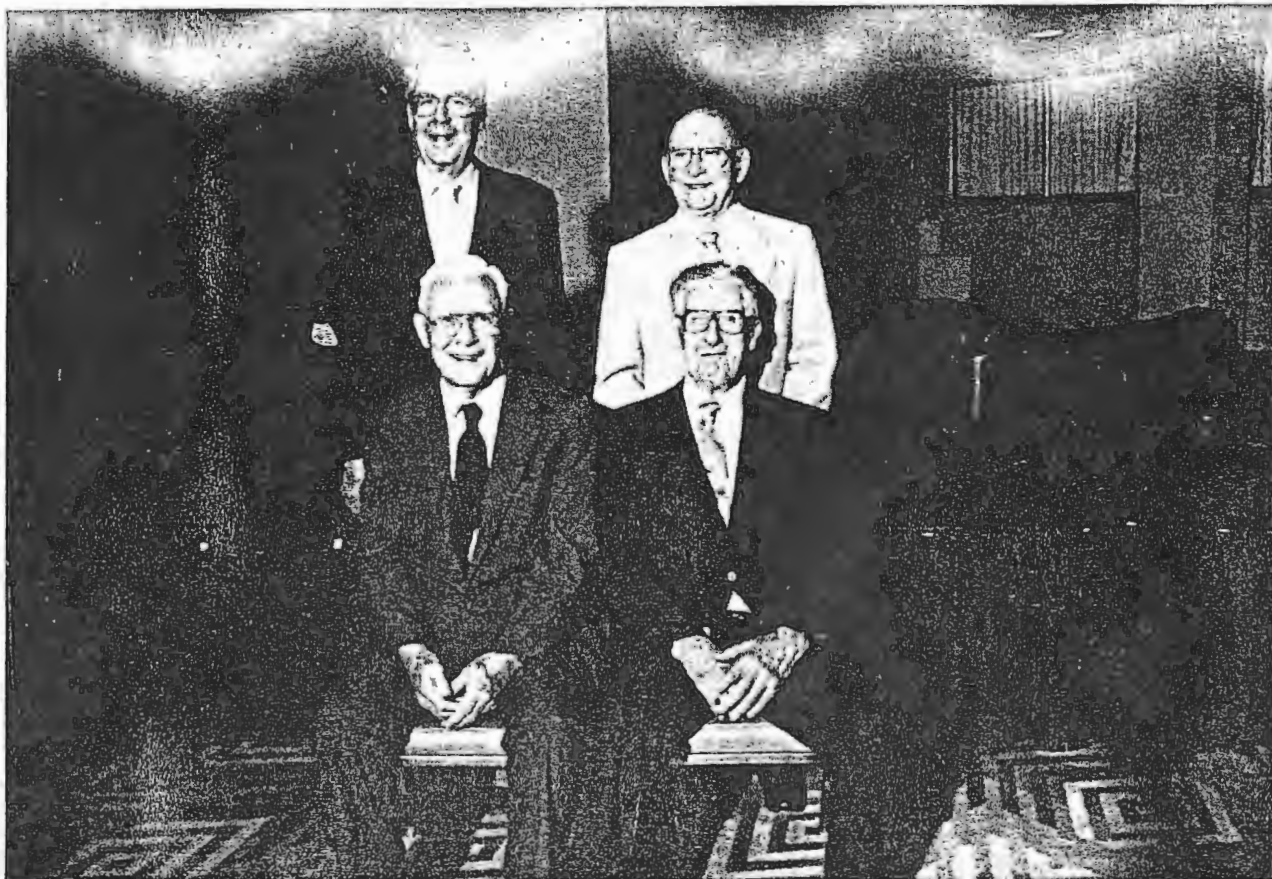
B COMPANY



C COMPANY



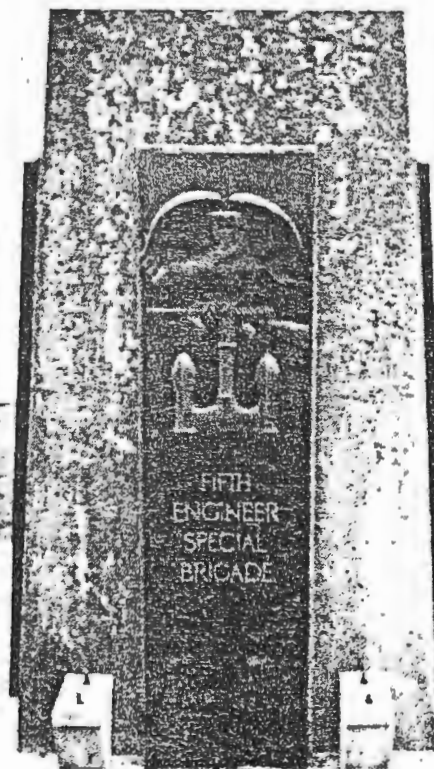
HEADQUARTERS & SERVICE COMPANY



MEDICAL DETACHMENT



IN MEMORIAM
Joe Backes - 1924-1990



5TH ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE MONUMENT
AT OMAHA BEACH

HOSPITALITY ROOM



CHARLIE PAYNE LOOKING AT BULLETIN BOARD



MEMORABILIA



MIKE RUSSO & ETHEL LUNGER



ED REGO GETTING "PINNED" BY TESS



"BARTENDER"
Carl Lunger



FUN AND GAMES

HOSPITALITY ROOM



V.P. HARRY KAISER BEING WELCOMED BY
GENE BRODEUR AND GEORGE WOODBRIDGE



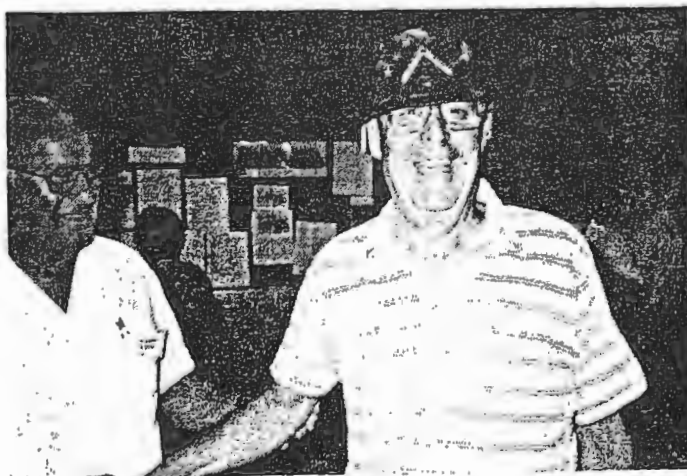
CLEO DRAKE & RHEA ROBERTS



ANOTHER CARD GAME



STERLING LIVINGSTON & SY PETTINARI
Both passed away



MIKE RUSSO & AL NAPOLI



LUCKY JON MATTUCHIO BEING WELCOMED
BY BEV ACHTERBERG

BANQUET



INVOCATION BY CARL LUNGER

GROUP DURING INVOCATION



BANQUET VIEW

THE LOTHSPICHS & THE BROWNS



BANQUET ROOM



A CONGENIAL GROUP

IVAN & MAXINE SWEATT



CLIFF KEASLING & HAROLD SARTORIUS

**CARL LUNGER AND VINCE MUMM DISPLAY THE
VEHICLE PLATE TO BE GIVEN TO JOE BACKES.**



MEMORIAL SERVICE



READING A CO. DECEASED LIST
George Woodbridge, President



READING B CO. DECEASED LIST
Bob Munger



READING C CO. DECEASED LIST
John Mattuchio



READING H&S & MEDICS DECEASED LIST
Gene Brodeur

336th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

TAPS

H & S Company

Bell, Rudolph A.
Caggiano, Anthony
Doyle, Arville R.
Flory, Donald E.
Hartkopf, Douglas
Krent, Edward
Marquez, Melcor G.
Nenadal, Edwin J.
Puls, Donald H.
Scufsa, Rudolph J.
Stancola, Joseph J.

Bogardus, Walter F.
Davis, Leonard E.
Fairgrievies, Floyd
Giles, Jay
Heater, Floyd L.
Korchun, Walter
Maynard, Wallace J.
Newhouse, Earl M.
Quinn, Walter C.
Shaw, Howard, Jr.
Wallace, J.C.

Brady, Francis
Dean, Ramon D.
Foster, Elva
Hanson, Oscar
Hunter, Robert F.
Luciano, Michael A.
Mezzanotte, Pasquale T.
Palumbo, Joseph A.
Russell, Edward C.
Snow, James F.
Swartz, William R.

Medical Detachment

Baranowsky, Anthony J.
Kovachik, John
Smulick, Alexander

DeLong, Harold E.
Meekins, Isaac C.
Smulick, Nicholas

Dennis, Earl W.
Mugavero, Anthony J.
Weber, Robert G.

"A" Company

Alves, Pierre
Beltz, Walter E.
Cole, Howard
Cupp, Fred L.
Donaldson, Merl J.
Finley, Macon L.
Gronvold, Theodore C.
Johnson, Ivan
Lori, Clement J.
Nowak, Leonard J.
Owen, Carlton A.
Plantenberg, Clarence J.
Reese, Robert S.
Sanborn, Herbert J.
Simone, Maurice P.
Tardy, Frederick A.
Vigus, William R.
Walker, James A.
Athas, Pete

Anderson, Thomas A.
Beumers, Ludwig
Comnesso, Vincent J.
Dalke, Ervine H.
Eckhardt, Robert W.
George Harold R.
Hattrup, Delbert H.
Juralewicz, Alexander E.
McDermott, Mathew A.
Oliva, Saro
Perron, Rene W.
Prunest, Roy
Rogers, George E.
Seall, Paul H.
Sobel, John
Torres, Mingo A.
Waite, James
Wilcox, Henry L.
Backes, Joseph G.

Bair, George J.
Calimeris, Angelo H.
Cravens, Charles R.
Desveaux, Bernard E.
Erwin, James, Jr.
Gostyla, Albert F.
Hriniak, Andrew
Lee, William J.
Miller, Ben
O'Neil, William A.
Peterson, Walter
Rydelski, Stanley J.
Samuels, Albert
Shafer, Everett
Staples, Marvin L.
Vargo, Charles F.
Walden, L.G.
Zyszkiewicz, Leo

336th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

TAPS

"B" Company

Adamus, John
Barash, Hyman
Bronnock, Harvey
Clapp, Bradford C.
Gacek, Bronislaw J.J.
Hance, Harold W.
Mackey, John J.
Morningstar, Donald L.
Phelps, Henry C.
Sullo, John
Johnston, Kenneth E.

Anderson Edward M.
Bard, Franklin A.
Calnen, John
Cook, Wayne W., Jr.
Grahek, Frank J.
Huff, Frank H.
Malone, Anthony F.
Noel, Earl G.
Protko, Joseph R.
Wheeler, Jack W.

Annino, Louis J.
Bick, Richard B.
Chretien, Leo J.
Demarais, Philip P.
Hall, Roy E.
LeClair, Theodore W.
McKeage, Franklin A.
Pangle, Leroy
Shipitz, Michael
Smith, Joseph W.

"C" Company

Baptiste, Rento
Bergquist, Byron J.
Brockway, Edward G.
Cull, Elmer F.
Dinneen, Gerald E.
Hammerstrom, Robert E.
Komenchuck, Walter J.
McCarthy, Louis E., Jr.
Potas, Stanley F.
Wieland, Peter J.
Wood, Raymond A.
Flamio, Anthony

Bangardt, Edward
Bourgeois, Francis A.
Buonopane, Ralph A.
DeMonico, Mario F.
Downey, William D.
Haugan, Clifford I.
Kugge, Harry W.
Meehan, William G.
Roketenetz, Michael
Wilson, James W.
Cronin, Daniel A.
Fulton, James E.

Barkau, Leonard
Braun, Darrel C.
Coffey, James
Dickinson, Hilton G.
Halasz, Frank M.
Juster, Herbert G.
Masotta, Salvatore J.
Nagle, Lawrence E.
Ulasich, Matt
Wojtczak, Theodore J.
DeBartolomeo, Ernest

336th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

1990 Reunion Attendees

"A" Company

Rene & Eleanor Denelle
Harold & Laura Dull
Steve Greenday
Dick & Rosalie Higgins
Earl & Betty Knasel
Gordon & Kathryn Lee
Larry & Virginia Lothspeich
Bill & Martha Mallory
Frank & Stella Matulis
Bob & Ann Meehan
John & Sandra Meridith
Charlie & Dottie Mitzel
Al & Lisa Monfreda
Harold & Frances Newburry
Charlie & Lenore Paine
Tony & Catherine Paolette
Pete Patryna & Cheryl Suda
Francis Paquette
Ed & Merle Rolland
Nick & Claudia Sabatino
Vince Schlotterbeck
Walter & Mary Smith
Ivan & Maxine Sweatt
Lionel & Rose Theriault
Gene & Mildred Thompson
Fred Welch

"B" Company

Jim Cosgrove
Bill & Rosemary Cullen
Ervin & Cleo Drake
Mel & Wanda Fleming
Stan & Fran Kokoszka
Jim & Betty McLaughlin
Sylvio & Julie Morin
Bob Munger & Mickey Murphey
Edwin & Tess Rego
Ed & Rhea Robert

"C" Company

Fred & Beverly Achterberg
Harry & Beverly Kaiser
Cliff Keasling
Sterling Livingston
Bill Marshall
John & Rena Mattuchio
Earl & Betty Metz
Sylvester & Alvera Pettinari
Jim & Mary Sakezles
Harold Sartorius
Bob & Dot Struthers
George Zaffle

H & S Company

Gene & Dottie Brodeur
Cy & Lola Chimenti
Bud Clark
Lee & Dottie Dauzat
Fran & Gladys Gustina
Ed & Isabelle Harrington
Larry & Evelyn Jones
Leo Kiggins
John & Sarah Loperfido
Carl & Ethel Lunger
Harold & Betty Miller
Vince & Germaine Mumm
Frank J. Nix
Mike Russo & Joyce Golec
Otto & Ruth Vokoun
George & Marion Woodbridge

MED. DET.

James & Eva Brown
Ralph & Paula Eike
Steve & Anna Jurinko
Alphonso & Peggy Napoli



Acterberg, Fred & Beverly

Blood, John

Brodeur, Gene & Dotty



Brown Jr., James & Eva

Chimenti, Cyro & Lola

Clark, Bud



Cosgrove, James

Cullen Jr., William & Rosemary

Dausat, Lee & Gladys



Denelle, Rene & Eleanor

Dull, Harold & Laura

Eike, Ralph & Paula

Fleming, Mel & Wanda

Greenday, Stephen

Gustina, Francis & Gladys



Harrington, Edmond & Isabelle

Higgins, Richard & Rosalie

Jones, Lawrence & Evelyn



Jurinko, Stephen & Anna

Kaiser Jr., Harry & Beverly

Keasling, Clifford



Kiggins, Leo D.

Knasel, Earl & Betty

Kokoszka, Stan & Fran





Lee, Gordon & Kathryn

Livingston, Sterling

Loperfido, John & Sarah



Lothspeich, Larry & Virginia

Lunger, Carl & Ethel

Mallory, William & Martha



Marshall Jr., William & Pauline

Mattuchio, John & Rena

Matulis, Frank & Stella



Meehan, Robert & Anna

Meredith, John & Sandra

Metz, Earl & Betty

Miller, Harold & Betty

Mitzel, Charles & Dorothy

Monfreda, Albert & Elizabeth



Morin, Sylvio & Julie

Morrison, Hal

Mumm, Vincent & Germaine



Munger, Robert & Michele
Murphy

Napoli, Alphonso & Margaret

Newbury, Harold & Frances



Paine, Charlie & Lenore

Paoletti, Tony & Catherine

Paquett, Francis





Patryna, Pete & Cheryl Suda

Pettinari, Sylvester & Alvera

Rego, Edwin & Tess



Robert, Edward & Rhea

Rolland, Edgar & Merle

Russo, Michael & Joyce Golec



Sakezles, James & Mary

Sartorius, Harold

Sabatino, Nicholas & Claudia



Schlotterbeck, Vince

Smith, Walter & Mary

Struthers, Robert & Dorothy

Sweatt, Ivan & Maxine

Therhault, Lionel

Thompson, Gene & Mildred



Vokoun, Otto & Ruth

Welch, Fred

Woodbridge, George & Marian



Zaffle, George T.





Adamczyk, Stanley

Eaton, Vance

Goins, Milton & Phyllis



Jeffrey, Walter C.

Justice, Olive & Lovada

Lockhart, Grant & Ruth



Masten, Frank

Riccadonna, Fred & Angeline

Sanford, Robert



Tuttle, Enos

Luke, Bill & Adelene

Byron, Ruyle & Joe Backes

The 336th History

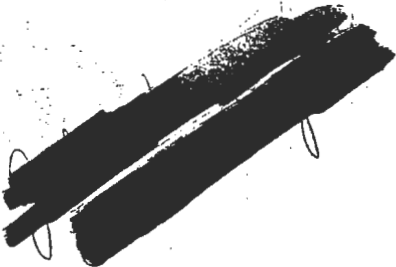
5 September 1928	Activated in the Organized Reserve as the 336th Engineer Regiment (General Service).
25 July 1942	Federally activated at Camp (now Fort) Rucker, Alabama. Staffed with 32 2nd Lts. who were commissioned 22 July 42 from A & L Companies of the 8th Engineer OCS class at Fort Belvoir, VA; regular Army officers; reserve officers called to active duty; enlisted cadre from various units throughout the US and other enlisted personnel direct from reception centers, mainly from the New England states and the upper midwest states. Basic, unit & specialist training was conducted within the regiment until the regiment was deactivated 7 April 1943.
7 April 1943	Hqs & Hqs & Service Co. of the regiment was designated Hqs Co. 1119th Engineer Combat Group. The 1st Battalion was designated the 336th Engineer Combat Bn. & the 2nd Bn. was designated the 234th Engr. Combat Bn.
April/October 1943	Amphibious training at Fort Pierce, Florida & the Chesapeake Bay with mountain climbing training at Seneca Rock, WV.
21 October 1943	Staged at Camp Miles Standish, MA. Departed Boston Port of Debarkation Aboard the USS Shawnee. Landed Cardiff, Wales 2 November and went into tent Camp Myndd Lliw, Pontardulaes, Wales.
November 43/May 44	Continued training along the Bristol Channel & the south coast of England.
6 June 1944	Landed on Omaha Beach. Normandy, France with the assault forces of the 5th Engineer Special Brigade.
June 44/May 45	Operated through France, Netherlands, Belgium & Germany. Bridged the Elbe River, just before Germany surrendered, at Bleckade and was in Boisenburg, Germany when the war with Germany ended.
May/November 45	Engaged in engineering projects throughout Germany.
4 December 1945	Battalion inactivated at Camp Miles, Standish, MA. There were not many of the original members in the Bn. at this time as many were rotated earlier under the point system.

UNIT AWARDS

1. WWII Campaign Streamers. European-African Middle Eastern Campaign.
 NORMANDY (with Bronze Arrowhead)
 NORTHERN FRANCE
 RHINELAND
 CENTRAL EUROPE
2. Meritorious Unit Streamer - European Theatre.
3. French Croix de Guerre streamer with Palm & embroidered NORMANDY BEACHES.



Wherever you are, we have a photographer near.



DEDICATION

To Joe Backes without whose energy and devotion
this history would never have been put into print.
Also to the men, living and dead, who were members
of the 336th Engineer Combat Battalion during
World War II.



336 Engineer Combat Bn.

"Amphibian"



Joseph G. Backes

Services for Joseph G. Backes, 66, of 475 Loras Blvd. will be at 10 a.m. Wednesday at St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

Burial will be in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Key West, Iowa. Friends may call from 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday at Behr Funeral Home, 1491 Main St., where the parish wake service will be said at 8 p.m. and members of the Dubuque Council Knights of Columbus will meet at 6:45 p.m. for the rosary.



Backes

Mr. Backes had formerly worked for the John Deere Dubuque Works for 30 years. He later worked for the Dubuque Community School Transportation Department as a bus driver until his retirement.

He was born on March 29, 1924, in Dubuque, son of John and Cecilia (Deluhery) Backes. He died at 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 15, 1990, at The Finley Hospital.

He married Jeanne R. Zoller in Paris, France; she died on May 2, 1986.

He was a World War II veteran, serving with the Army Engineers. He was a charter member of the United Auto Workers Local 94, an active member of St. Patrick's Parish and member of its holy name society. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 510 and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 508.

Surviving are three daughters, Mrs. Robert (Kathryn L.) Simon and Mrs. Roger (Marjorie C.) Lewis, both of Dubuque and Angela P. Backes at home; three sons, Thomas J. and John A., both of Dubuque and Mark J. of Edgerton, Wis.; 11 grandchildren and a sister, Mrs. Marjorie O'Brien of Prairie du Chien, Wis.

He was preceded in death by a son, David J., on March 9, 1977.

A Joseph G. Backes Memorial Fund has been established.

Sept. 26, 1990

Dear Former Members of A Company:

As you can see from the accompanying article, we have sad news. Joe Backes, who was a Vice President of our Reunion Committee for the years '89-'90 passed away unexpectedly after only a 4 week illness. In layman's language, it was a rare disease of the bone marrow.

Joe was an enthusiastic supporter of the 336th and our Reunion Group. He was a great inspiration to me personally, and he would take on any task we asked him to do. His enthusiasm was an inspiration to all former members of the battalion. He designed our caps, letterhead and our membership cards. He devoted many hours trying to locate former members of the battalion by mail and by phone, all at his own expense.

It was his earnest desire to have a history of the 336th documented, and he was in the process of doing this when he became ill. Joe attended our 2nd Reunion in 1988 in Grand Rapids and was looking forward to the Syracuse Reunion but was unable to attend because of his illness. One of his aims for the Reunion was to contact people for more information. Before his death, Joe contacted one of our members to make arrangements for the completion of the history. With everyone's cooperation, hopefully this can be done.

For those of us who knew him personally, his sense of humor and cheerfulness will never be forgotten.

The Reunion Committee sent a lovely funeral arrangement. Vince & Germaine Mumm and George and Marian Woodbridge attended the wake on Tues. night and the funeral Wed. morning. Vince and George served as pallbearers. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to the family at: 475 Loras Blvd., Dubuque, Iowa, 52001.

THE AMPHIBIOUS PATCH

In late May, 1942 at a conference in London of General Somervell, Lord Louis Mountbatten (then Chief of Combined Operations), and General Sir John Dill, it was decided that the Amphibian Engineers for that theater would receive their initial training in the U. S. and their final in England. It was further decided that the U.S. Amphibian Engineers would wear the Combined Operations shoulder patch - gold tommy gun, anchor and eagle on a blue field, signifying combined operations on land, sea and air. In addition, to denote the engineer amphibians, the War Department authorized wearing a pocket patch, a small sea horse in scarlet and white, the Engineer colors. It is interesting to note that Lord Mountbatten himself designed the Combined Operations patch and showed it to President Roosevelt.

FOREWORD

This is not a history but rather a collection of WWII records as well as personal recollections of the 336th Engineer (C) Battalion. To go back at this date to 1942-1943 was like looking for sunshine at Pontardulais, Wales in January. Rain! Rain! Rain! Our thanks go out to the officers and men - veterans of the 336th - who opened their hearts and memories to us, as well as providing some maps, photos, operational orders, etc., that helped so immeasurably.

Your "Scribes" are not authors or writers. Just a group who thought something should be left in our attics for our grandchildren to write on with their crayons. Or to read later about us and our war experiences. Since we grow fewer each year, we rushed this task along in the hopes of an early completion. We ask that you be kind in your judgement of us. There are so many of our war tasks and projects that could not be included because of lack of space, costs involved, not to mention loss of memory. Also, we have probably made mistakes when crediting people or companies with activities which were in fact performed by others. We apologize. Also, because we did not wish slight anyone, we have avoided mentioning names too often. We hope to present to you our mission and how we accomplished it. Where we went. How we lived together. We shall accept your criticisms for attempting to reenact this almost impossible trip into the past. But then... we are still the Amphibious Engineers. We are used to doing this!

The men of the 336th Engineer Combat Battalion were citizen soldiers with a few exceptions. Our officers were not

professional soldiers either. Our training was hard, long and wet. We can't recall any time that our feet were dry, or that a raincoat wasn't part of our daily uniform in Wales. Whatever the job, we did it. And we did it well. Never has a group of men from all of the U.S.A. been put together and worked out so well. Team is the word. NO! Family is a better word, because that is what we were. And still are. Gripe, bitch, cry and moan. We did this every day. It's a soldier's way of letting off steam peacefully. We never did master bugle calls or whistles.... But, just rattle a mess kit and we came on the run. Our cooks really took a beating. We certainly gave them lip service about the chow. We meant no harm. They did a good job considering the supplies they were given. Our Medics also got the buzz while in training...but when we saw them perform in combat we were proud and thankful to know them, and to have them with us. Our hats are humbly off to them, one and all! We couldn't imagine going into combat without a weapon...the Medics only had Red Cross armbands.

We do not know all the missions each company had along the way, so we shall hold to the main Battalion operations. There will be little mention of the stills, liquor deals, chicken coops, and liberated supplies obtained along the way. Only if we could eat it, drink it, or sleep in it dry...did it go with us up the road.

Sometimes when we moved we must have looked like a gypsy caravan. If a General Officer had come along, I swear our officers would have had to abandon us rather than face him. (This, however, was soon corrected along the way and we became a little G.I., or so some thought!).

We soon became a close knit family, taking care of each other. They call this being "buddies" but that's not as close as we were. We respected our officers differently than most outfits, as they were closer to us than the army liked them to be. Our captains never could get used to being referred to as "the old

man" and our lieutenants were fair when we would request a part of their liquor rations, always sharing with us. The officers took care of us well; kept us clear of trouble, helped when we got into a jam and listened to us when we needed a sympathetic ear. We can't recall a time when they were not there to help us out. They got dirty and wet too. All in all, they were well liked and respected, and still part of the team.

Our sergeants were another thing... they lived close to, and with us. Once in combat they never wore stripes. (Can't imagine why!). Some said it was because the enemy snipers wouldn't spot 'em and shoot them. Rumor had it, though, they didn't want to remind us of their rank when we had ammunition in our rifles! (We would never be forgiven if we did not take this opportunity to give them just one more jab in the ribs). All in all, they were good leaders, and we were lucky to have men of their caliber for our noncoms. They put up with us through hell and high water. It is said that a good sergeant will do anything for his men except work; well, ours worked right alongside us many times. Wet, mud, cold, good times or bad, they were always there with us.

THE BEGINNING

July 25th, 1942. The 336th Engineer General Service Regiment was formed and activated at Camp Rucker, Alabama. This was the original unit from which the 5th Engineer Special Brigade was formed later, in Europe. From September 1942 to January, 1943, the Regiment conducted basic training (NTP), receiving an "excellent" rating from 2nd U.S. Army. On January 18, 1943, nine weeks of unit training began, and on March 22, 1943, the unit received a rating of 90%.

On 7th April, 1943, the regiment was reorganized and redesignated to form the 1119 Engineer Combat Group, and moved to Fort Pierce, Florida on 15 April, 1943. It was here at Fort Pierce that the 1119 ECG received their first Amphibious training. (2 months). Assigned units joined here also. Sand flies also joined the ranks and did their best to bite and eat everyone. The famous "daisy chain" was invented here, people unloading ships and landing craft standing in deep water handing ammo boxes down the line from man to man.

On 16 June, 1943, the 1119 ECG with assigned units moved to Camp Pickett, Virginia for the next three months, the unit had more advanced training with the 28th Infantry Division, along with joint operations with the Navy. (Chesapeake Bay... Cove Point, Maryland).

— 5th October, 1943, Major Paul D. Bennett took command of the 336 ECG, and on the 10th October, 1943, the unit moved to Camp Myles Standish, Mass. for overseas shipment to the European theater of operations.

21st October, 1943, the group sailed for the United Kingdom from Boston, Mass. The 336 Eng. (C) Bn. was on board the ship called

the SHAWNEE, a single screw ship built to transport 250 passengers between New York and Havana. There were 1400 GI'S on board her when we joined the convoy. We had a 3" gun on the bow for protection, and later, when the gun crew practiced firing it the first shot split the muzzle of the barrel... that ended our local armament.

2nd November, 1943, the 336 EGB arrived at Swansea, South Wales, and was assigned to Camp No.1 at Mynydd LLIW near Pongtardulais, Wales. (A small village).

On 12 November, 1943, the 1119 Group was redesignated as the 5th Engineer Special Brigade. The ~~33~~ Engr. (C) Bn. was assigned to the 5th Brigade on the 13th November, 1943. The battalion strength was 29 officers, 3 warrant officers and 632 enlisted men.

FOOTNOTE.

Late in May, 1942, at a conference in England, it was decided that the amphibian Engineers for the ETO would receive their final training in the United Kingdom. Also, the shoulder patch to be worn would be that of "Combined Operations." The same patch (with different colors) worn by the U.S. Marines, British and French commandos. The War Department also authorized a pocket patch - "The Sea Horse". Lord Mountbatten himself designed the "Combined Operations" patch and showed it to President Roosevelt for approval. Lord Mountbatten was Chief of Combined Operations at that time.

13th March, 1944, the 5th EGB was assigned to the 1st U.S. Army. The general missions assigned the Engineers were: To command Engineer Battalions, attached units from other branches of the services, and perform all engineering work on the beach to facilitate debarkation, that is, to clear mines and booby traps; establish a road network; unload supplies, transportation to

camps and evacuation of wounded as well as collecting prisoners of war and local security.

Assigned to the 336 ECB were:

- *4142 GM Service company
- *Company B 61 Medical battalion
- *Company A 6th Naval Beach battalion
- *1st Platoon A Company 203rd GM Gas supply battalion
- *2nd Platoon 30th Chemical decontamination Company
- *1st Platoon 294th Joint Assault Signal Company
- *1st Section Magazine Platoon, 616th Ordnance Ammo Company
- *2nd Platoon, 210 MP Company
- *3rd Section, Shop Platoon 3466 Ordnance Medium Auto. Maint. Company
- *458th Amphibian Truck Company

PLANNING...

In planning the invasion of western Europe, we faced a problem of unparalleled magnitude relating to landing and transferring to dumps the enormous supply of tonnage needed for such undertaking on the beaches, with no port facilities. Thus, it was necessary to train units to become capable of handling and operating improvised beach ports. The frame work for this project was unbelievable. It had never been done before in history on such a large scale. This had to be developed and smoothed out by training and planning in the 5th ESB. Changes were made almost daily, with improvements, equipment changes, shipping schedules, manpower adjustments, and new special equipment arriving weekly from the USA.

TRAINING...

Training was organized by beach battalion groups. The 37th, 336th and 348 ECBS would maneuver with all attached units practicing methods of landing and securing a beach head on the coast of Oxwich and Port Eynon, Wales. Supplies, roads, defense, mines, boobytraps, etc., all were used so the troops would develop discipline for the real thing in combat. In the meantime, staff and 1st Army worked on the master plans for the invasion on western Europe - OPERATION "NEPTUNE".

The individual companies of the 336th ECB worked on company and platoon training. Bazookas, bangalore torpedoes, machine guns, hand grenades, mine detectors, small arms, bayonets, anti-tank and personnel mines, booby-traps. And on and on. Off duty hours were spent in trying to make our tents water-proof.

Our camp in Wales was on the side of the hill, and water ran under and through the tents, making everything muddy and wet. Our battalion operations officer once said: "It wasn't so bad, once we taught water how to run up hill." The men scavenged lumber wherever they went to improve conditions in the tents, and sidewalks were installed. In a few weeks, floors started to appear in most of the tents, as well as side wall frames and doors. There wasn't a safe piece of wood anywhere from these Engineers. Part of an Engineer's job is to improvise when necessary... we did just that.

While in Wales, we did find time in the evenings to visit the local towns and pubs (taverns). Close to camp was Pontardulais, Wales, with about three pubs on the main street. Also a "Fish and Chip" shop that served fish and a handful of french fries wrapped in newspaper. Most of the men ate the fries, and tossed the fish in the gutter. What a mess if one slipped on the fish in the dark. The United Kingdom was under blackout conditions, so at night we went everywhere in the dark. Liquor was at a

premium.... only one or two bottles were opened each night in the pubs. Beer was available (Suds) 'hoff & hoff', but it was hard to get used to. It tasted awful and was not even cold. (no ice). Welsh ale was a little better, but was too warm.

The United Kingdom had been at war for years, and was heavily bombed; on near starvation diets; no luxuries, blackout conditions and no gasoline -- to mention a few of the hardships. They were hurting, but their spirits were high and they impressed us very much with their winning attitude towards the war.

This was a coal mining area, and most of the men and boys above 14 years of age worked in the mines. Men unfit for the mines worked in the fields, or in a tin or metal factory in the area. Everyone rode the bus in Wales, or on bikes locally. No cars, either because of rationing or because they couldn't afford them. The Welsh people were very warm and welcoming. Their hospitality was simple, but very genuine, and soon we were invited into their homes and to their dances, etc. We learned the "Hokey-Pokey". Oh, yes, they really can sing... all of them and they take pride in it. It's something to observe, the coal miners marching home in long lines, dirty and tired, but singing along the way. In their Welsh language, of course, which is very difficult to pick up. I don't think the GI's ever caught on to even the simplest sayings. They also spoke English, but we had some difficulty with that, too. Ha! Ha!

Later, when the companies left for southern England and the invasion, they, the Welsh stood in the shadows that dark night with tears in their eyes waving goodbye to us. We really felt the love and friendship of these wonderful people as they train slowly pulled out. All of us knew we would not be back to Pontardulais again. We were on our way. It gave us a fine feeling knowing that they really cared about us. The 336 EGB during their travels were adopted as sons and friends by quite a few towns and cities during their travels. We enjoyed this, and

were very proud that we were able to represent our country in the very best light.

FORGOTTEN... Other Cities that were visited by many were Swansea, Gorsinon and the Mumbles. Gorsinon was larger than Pontardulais, and we could catch a bus just outside our camp gate. There were numerous pubs, etc., so we found more soldiers there. Swansea was larger in size and population. It is also a major Welsh seaport. The battalion ran truck convoys to Swansea so the men to get there and back almost any night. There were many more things to do in Swansea - movies, girls pubs and even a dance or two. The city showed a lot of bomb damage from Luftwaffe raids, but the people showed only the strong will of the Welsh and the desire to recover and win. Of course, there were many more M.P.'s there, too, so one had to be good. Mumbles was a town along the coast on the Gower peninsula. Some of the men went there, but not as many as to the other cities.

Occasionally we would get to King's Dock, Swansea, where we witnessed loads of supplies being transported to the dock warehouses. Sometimes big warships would be in for supplies or repair, and that was a sight to behold.

The villages of Oxwich and Port Eynon were on the coast line of the Bristol Channel, and adjoined the beaches that we practiced invasion tactics on. These villages were very small; in peace time a resort or cottage area. Not much excitement there, but dances were held weekly in a small schoolhouse. (If you could find it.). The people put up with our maneuvers conducted in their backyards, and on their beaches, and looked on with wonderment in their eyes. We must have put on a good show as they were always there to see us make a landing.

SLAPTON SANDS INSERT?

Another item of interest must not be forgotten. The "honey buckets" at our little camp on the hill. As there were no toilet

facilities, we had a latrine tent without any holes in the ground. One row of five-gallon buckets had make-shift seats placed on them for solid waste. On the other side of the tent was a row of plain buckets for liquid waste. What a smell, what a mess! Every morning a farmer came to our camp with an open tank wagon, and emptied the buckets. Drive off down the road splashing everything along the way. It was noted later that he put this on his fields and garden. NUFF SAID..

THE MESS HALL AT MYNYDD LLIW, WALES..

What a mess it was. The whole battalion eating in one hut. Normally, each company had its own facilities. Imagine, if you can, feeding almost 700 men three meals a day in one hall. Another factor that made the cooks' jobs difficult and almost impossible, was the food supplies we received. For some time, most of our food rations were supplied by the British. Some of these rations came from "old" army crated supplies produced ages ago. Our cooks just could not produce palatable meals from these rations. The battalion had some good cooks, but there wasn't much they could do under such conditions.

We must have been given some really poor canned goods, for an outbreak of the "trots" hit our battalion. With the shortage of latrines in the camp, it was like a bad dream for all of us. Nearly all of us had the "trots" in a serious way. Some had to be out into hospital for recovery. For a while one had to be careful where one walked in the camp.

Our food supply was changed to American rations and our cooks began to produce a much better quality of food. However, I must confess I can't understand to this day how yellow-golden eggs (scrambled) always appeared dark green at breakfast. If one didn't look at them they tasted good. How we dreamed of real fresh eggs, fried with the yolk looking up. Some of the boys did manage to get real eggs from the Welsh farmers near camp.

THE TACTICAL PLAN was:

(1) The 1st US Army and the British 2nd Army supported by US and Allied Naval and Air Forces, operating simultaneously, will land over selected beaches on the northern coast of Normandy, France, and establish beachheads for the continuation of further joint operations inland. Beaches in the American Sectors are designated UTAH and OMAHA. The 50th British Division will assault the beaches on the left and will capture Bayeux on D-Day.

(2) The attack on Utah Beach will be made by the VII US CORPS WITH THE 4TH US Infantry Division (Force "U") in the initial assault, and the attack on OMAHA beach will be made by the V US Corps, composed of the 1st and 29th US Infantry Divisions with supporting troops; Force "O", the assault of Force "B" for the immediate follow-up, with preload build-up and ferry service, following later. The 101 Airborne Division will drop on the area behind Vierville...Carentan, during the night of D-1 and D-Day, with the main objective of assisting the seaborne landing of the VII US Corps.

(3) The United States Navy will transport, protect and land the US Forces, support the assault landings with gunfire, clear underwater and floating obstacles and mines, provide and operate ships and craft for movement of troops and supplies to the far shore during the assault landings with gun fire; clear underwater and floating obstacles and mines; provide and operate ships and craft for movement of troops and supplies to the far shore during the assault; follow-up and build-up phases, and construct, maintain and operate all seaward installations necessary for the installations necessary for the continuous unloading of personnel, vehicles and supplies.

(4) The US 9th Air Force will cover the movement of the US

assault forces, and support the assault landings and subsequent operations of the ground forces ashore, by prearranged bombing missions prior to H-hour and by missions "on call" after H-hour.

(5) The 1st US Infantry Division (Less Regt. Combat Team 26), with REgt. Combat Team 116 and other troops attached, (all of these troops constituting Force "O"), will make the initial assault on Omaha Beach at H-hour on D-Day, with two Regimental Combat teams abreast, reduce the beach defenses in zone of action, secure the beachhead maintenance line, and secure the D-Day Phase Line by 2 hours before dark on D-Day. It will cover the landing of the remainder of V Corps, and will be prepared to participate in the extension of the beachhead to the south and southwest.

(6) The 29th US Infantry Division (Less Regt. Combat team 116)), with Regimental Combat team 26 and other troops attached, will land on Omaha Beach behind the initial assault. (These troops constitute Force "B").

THE 5TH ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE PLAN:

(a) Support the assault landings of the V US Corps and the subsequent debarkation of XIX US Corps, and other 1st Army and Communications Zone troops on Omaha Beach, beginning on D-Day. The Engineer Brigade under group control, will organize and operate all shore installations necessary for debarkation, supply, evacuation and local security, in order to insure the continuous movement of personnel, vehicles and supplies across the Beaches and through Mulberry "A", and artificial port, to be constructed by the Navy, and the minor ports of Grandcamp-les-Bains and Isigny. V US Corps lands on Omaha Beach with the 1st US Infantry Division (Reinforced) and supported by 5th Engineer Spec. Brigade (Reinforced), all in Force "B".

The supporting Engineer Battalion Beach groups involved in

Force "O" consisted of:

16th US Infantry Regt.---- 37th Engr. Battalion Group.

116th U.S. Infantry Regt.-149th Engr. Battalion Group.

18th U.S. Infantry Regt.-348th Engr. Battalion Group.

with 331 men from the 336th Engr. Battalion.

The rest of the 336th Engr. Battalion in Force "B" landed in support of the 26th U.S. Infantry Regt. The landing schedules planned, really never came off on time, as enemy actions and defenses were stronger than expected. NOTE: It must be remembered that never in history had an invasion of such a vast size ever been planned. The initial fleet of ships carrying troops and supplies, and vehicles to sustain them was some 5000. Including war ships. To supply these troops with food, water, ammunition and other support was so vast.... almost unbelievable.

DRESS REHEARSAL:

The full dress rehearsal for the assault on the northern coast of France was called " Exercise FABIUS 1":

(1) In the meantime, while plans were being made for Operation NEPTUNE, others were under way and being executed by the assault elements of the 1st US Army, with supporting troops, to stage a "Full-Dress Rehearsal", for a large portion of the various assault troops scheduled to land during the first two tides on Omaha Beach in Operation NEPTUNE. (Maynard notes) These were the troops that constituted what was referred to as Force "O", for both FABIUS 1 and for Operation NEPTUNE. In planning and executing FABIUS 1 from the standpoint of the Regt. Combat Teams and the Engineer Special Brigades, as nearly as possible the same procedure was followed as was being planned at the same time for Operation NEPTUNE. This was done insofar as was technically possible and within the bounds of Security regulations.

(2) Brigade Field Order No. 12 for exercise FABIUS 1 was patterned after the one being planned for Operation NEPTUNE. Quoting from it in part:

"V.US Corps lands with the 1st US Infantry Division (Reinforced) (less 26th Infantry Regt., plus 116th Infantry Regt., attached) supported by the 5th Engineer Special Brigade (Reinforced) (less 336th ECB Beach Group, but with 331 members of the 336th ECB attached to the 348 ECB Beach group, plus the 149th Battalion Beach group (Reinforced) (Attached).

(3) The concentration and marshalling of Force "O" troops and equipment for exercise FABIUS 1 began for the 5th ESB on 24 April 1944, with units moving from their base camps in South Wales, to the Concentration and Marshalling Area, Area D, in the vicinity of Dorchester in Southern England. The units were marshalled in Cap D-6, D-11, D-12, and D-12B, having been divided according to boat loads for the assault. Loading on APA'S, LCI'S, and LCT'S, along with the Infantry and other assault and supporting troops, was accomplished from Portland and Weymouth in Southern England in keeping with detailed planned schedules.

(4) After completing the marshalling and loading of Force "O" troops and equipment, the maneuver portion of Exercise FABIUS 1 consisted of an amphibious landing on Slapton Sands Beaches, South Devon, in Southern England, from 3 to 5 May, 1944. The assault took place as scheduled, with H-Hour and D-Day at 030700 3 May, 1944, and essentially completed by midnight of the same day, excepting for the unloading of token supplies by the 5th ESB. All Engineer Special Brigade troops participating were returned to their respective concentration areas by 8 May, 1944, and the maneuver area was cleared for subsequent exercises by other troops.

(5) During Exercise FABIUS 1 deficiencies and needed

changes were noted and corrective measures were taken.

OPERATION NEPTUNE... The 5th Engineer Special Brigade made their final preparations and were marshalled into craft or ship loads on 28th May, 1944. Embarkation at Portland, in Souther England, commenced 31 May, 1944 and was completed 3 June, 1944. The short sea voyage across the English channel began 4 and 5 June, 1944 and the assault landing was made on the northern coast of Normandy,

France, 6 June, 1944. The combat forces of the assault landing before H-Hour, 0630; the first elements of the 5TH ESB landed at H-65 minutes.

(1) Force "B": The 5th ESB elements scheduled to land in Force "B" remained in their base camp until May 1944, inasmuch as they did not participate in FABIUS 1. They were concentrated in the Truro Marshalling Area, "Sausage E," in Southern England, commencing 9 May, 1944: the movement of Brigade troops and equipment was completed 11 May, 1944. They remained there for five days and were then marshalled into craft and ship loads in "Sausage C," partially occupying Camps C-1 through C-7, D-6, F-11, E-3, and B-4: briefing of troops were conducted after marshalling. Embarkation from Falmouth commenced 1 June, 1944 and was completed 3 June, 1944. The short sea voyage across the English channel started 3 June, 1944 and on 7 June, 1944 they arrived off the coast of Normandy, France opposite Omaha Beach. Landings were nearly at once by transferring to smaller craft.

(2) Build-Up Ferry: The 5th ESB elements in this force were concentrated at Abbotsbury, Dorset, England, 18 May, 1944 in billets. They remained in this camp until 4 June, 1944, when they were marshalled into craft and ship loads in Camp D-11 Area D (Same area as for Force "C" units which preceded them). Embarkation was started 7 June, 1944 and completed 8 June, 1944 and they landed 9 June, 1944. One LSR was torpedoed while in the English Channel and sunk. Two men and several loaded vehicles

were lost.

(3) Bristol Channel Pre-Load: The 5th ESB elements in this force were concentrated in Camp U-89, Crickhowell, South Wales, on 15 May, 1944. They were marshalled into craft and ship loads during the period 29 May, 1944 to June 1, June, 1944.

Embarkation commenced 30 May, 1944 and completed 2 June, 1944: briefing was done after sailing. The short sea voyage was began 3 June, 1944 and the force anchored off the coast of France on the morning of 7 June, 1944. During the voyage one vessel struck a mine and casualties to Brigade personnel amounted to two men killed and ten men injured.

(4) Residue: These troops of the 5th ESB commencing 5 May, 1944 were concentrated in Tortworth Court Camp, Falfield, Gloucester, and the movement to the Concentration Areas was completed 6 May, 1944. The unit detachments were organized into Provisional Battalion of six companies; this organization was designated "Brigade Special Troops". Prior to D-Day, the Detachment functioned as a personnel reservoir and service unit for the assaulting elements of the Brigade. Processing for overseas movement was accomplished after D-Day. Elements of the Residue were scheduled to arrive in the Marshalling area on D13 and in France on D16. However, only a portion of the units departed on schedule and they were detained several days in the Marshalling Area. Other units were called forward as shipping permitted. Engineer units were marshalled in the Truro Area and all other units, at Southampton. Departures were at various times and the last elements debarked in France on Omaha Beach on 12 July, 1944.

THE LANDING IN FRANCE:

During the assault phase, landings were made in small craft from the larger ships anchored in the English Channel at rendezvous; The LCI's and LCT's beached directly. The smaller

landing craft used to unload APA's and LST's consisted LCM's, LCVP's and Rhino Ferries. Upon beaching, or while a few hundred yards off shore, many of these craft, and troops and equipment aboard, suffered casualties from enemy fire and underwater obstacles.

(1) - The Far Shore Situation as it actually Existed:

a. General: Advance information regarding the beach, the adjacent terrain, the enemy's defense positions, and disposition of the enemy's forces was given to us, but later found to be far from correct in many ways. However, the Geographic and hydrographic data given prior to the landing were quite accurate. Disposition of enemy troops was inadequate and not updated to give a complete picture of conditions as they actually existed.

b. The enemy's defensive positions were found to be considerably more extensive than was indicated by advance intelligence data. Mortar positions had not been located and many temporary emplacements for 75-mm and 88-mm guns were occupied, especially those located from 1000 to 2500 yards back of the beach, many of which continued to molest operations on the beach to a great extent through D-2. Practically all of the concrete pillboxes for automatic and heavy guns had been located by aerial photograph interpretations and report; however, many of them were discovered too late to have been included on the defense Overprint Maps issued in the Marshalling areas prior to debarking from the United Kingdom. Tank turrets set in concrete were also unreported; likewise the extent of antipersonnel mines and their "tie-ins" with antiminies and barbed wire entanglements were not fully known. Although not in operation, stationary flamethrowers were set up at various points along the beach; these were not included in advance intelligence data. The types of constructed obstacles encountered were as reported; however, they were found to be more numerous and extensively located. Also, another condition found to exist and not anticipated was

the additional hazard caused by wrecked craft and vehicles becoming an obstacle as damaged or abandoned equipment began collecting on the beach. These became a serious obstacle to movement until the Brig. Engineers began clearing passages from the beach.

(c) Advance information regarding the disposition of German troops in the vicinity of the beach over which the assault was made indicated that elements of the German 716 Infantry Division with headquarters at Caen defended the area from Ouistreham west to the mouth of the river Douve. The 726 Infantry Regt., with headquarters at Bayeux was reported to be in the immediate Omaha beach area, while it was indicated that the German 352nd Infantry Division was in the vicinity of St. Lo. Actually, the entire 726th Regt. of the German 716th Division was in the 29 US Infantry area, while the Regt. of the German 352nd Infantry Division was manning the defenses in the 1st US Infantry Division area, with the two other Regts. in reserve.

PRELUDE TO THE ASSAULT....

US Bombers came over the beaches on schedule, but no bombs hit the beach. One bomb was later found near Vierville-sur-Mer and another near St. Laurent-sur-Mer, but both were in open fields. The 8th Air Force reported that two other patterns may have fallen in the Omaha area, but doubted if many other bomb patterns fell North of the Bayeux-Isigny highway, although several fell south of the highway where they may have done a great deal to disrupt German communications and reduce the effectiveness of their reserve strength.

The Naval bombardment began on schedule at H-45 minutes, but reports of its effectiveness are not available. (Operational signals obtained by author indicate that the Navy tried very hard to hit the targets assigned them, but with heavy seas, and assault troops nearing the shore; fire was lifted earlier than was planned). Inland targets were also heavily shelled. Only

one shot was fired at the Naval vessels from the shore, and that missed its mark. The enemy was apparently trying to keep the location of its emplacements secret. The success of the shelling of the beach defenses by gunfire support craft and by tanks and self-propelled artillery aboard LCT's was questionable. Rough water made accuracy difficult, and a number of the LCT's were either damaged by gunfire or were late in arriving offshore. Of the 16 carrying the M-4 tanks, two were lost at sea and three were delayed. The LCT(R)'s approached the shore on schedule and fired their rockets at 0629 hours, but assault team personnel and Infantry agree that none hit their targets.

Nor did the DD tanks prove effective. The 741st tank battalion attempted to discharge 29 of its 32 tanks at sea. Twenty-seven foundered and two swam ashore, beach on EASY RED Beach at H-Hour. The remaining three were eventually landed from an LCT in this same area. The 743rd tank battalion made no attempt to launch its tanks at sea and discharged them in the usual manner from LCT's. Eight were lost, but 24 were reported to have landed on the western end of the beach between H-20 minutes and H-hour. No reports are available on the operations of these tanks, but they were unable to neutralize enemy fire.

THE VOYAGE... 4 June 1944 some of the ships began to leave the harbors that the 336th were moored in. Warships, minesweepers etc.. We noticed most everything that took place around us, as when one is penned up for days waiting for something to happen, one is very aware of every movement, and try to read something into everything that is said or done. Rumors flew all over the ships. The ships were packed full of men and equipment, and there was beginning to develop quite an odor. No showers or baths for days. Men were lying all over the place, trying to sleep. There were lots of crap games going. Some men wrote letters, even though they did not receive mail. Others, checked their equipment. We omitted to mention earlier that our mail service home had been stopped ever since the lockup in the camps in southern England. Our loved ones would know that "something was

up" when they did not receive mail from us. It would be a long time for us too, before mail would reach us from home.

Later that night, the warships returned to harbor. D-Day had been postponed for twenty-four hours. Of course, we did not know this. It all began again the next night (5 June), but this time our ships prepared to sail as well. Soon we were on the way, out to sea, hundreds of ships of all sizes. Everywhere one looked there were ships. Escorts of warships were everywhere. The air force, too, as overhead flying cover for our fleet. Everyone gawked at the sight. It was unbelievable.. but real. We were on our way. The waves in the English channel were huge. The ships rolled and tossed like corks in a whirlpool. People got sick. Games stopped, and everyone became very serious. Most began to think of what was to come. We all knew that this was what we had trained for. Would the enemy be surprised? Or, were they waiting for us on the beaches? Would we make it ashore? Lots of questions, but no answers.

The ships stopped in the assembly area, miles off the beaches. Unloading began for the 336th. Down the cargo nets into the LCTs, and other types of landing craft they went. Some of the larger equipment on LSTs was transferred to LCTs or Rhino Ferries. Waves raised the ships up and then down and made unloading a painstaking operation. Men were seasick and overloaded with heavy equipment. But, their training asserted itself and somehow everything was loaded and the men were on the way.

The warships were shelling the beach areas as well as the inland targets. The air force was overhead. Both sea and air were full of support forces. We had arrived to pay back a long standing debt to comrades of our forefathers - Lafayette. Surly of spirit, he was waiting for us on the beaches and in the hills. Smiles were gone from faces. Everyone wore war faces. Fox Red beach on the left flank... turn left upon landing and go to Fox Red beach. Stay alive and get to our beach at all costs. Our job is on Fox Red. Got to get there. Fight our way to assembly and get to work. Have I forgotten anything? Rations, ammo, etc.

etc. Too late now, get ashore and turn left; that's all I have got to remember and do.

This is the way it seemed to happen for the guys in Force "O". The trip to shore in landing craft was a journey that most of us would rather forget. Waves, obstacles, shellfire and mines all prevented an orderly landing. Nothing went as planned. The voyage was over and we were about to tour Europe at government expense.

In spite of the elaborate plans to knock out beach defenses, most of the enemy emplacements were intact at H-hour, ready to cover the beach with artillery, mortar and small arms fire. The outcome of the operation, therefore, rested on the shoulders of the Infantry and Engineers landing in the first waves.

336 Engineer Combat Battalion Lands.....

Operations Plan Co. "A" states Co. "A" lands Easy Red beach and moves laterally to left along beach to Number 1 assembly area (this was initiated by Captain Lothspeich on 5-24-44 before invasion.) Company "A" landed on Easy Red Beach so landed according to plan, but still had to traverse the 2500 to 3000 yards to Fox Red and F-1 exit.

"Omaha Beachhead" Historical Division U.S. War Department states"

Fox Beach was ready for development but the 336th Engrcomb. Bn. scheduled to land there was brought in on opposite end of Omaha Beach 4000 yards away.

The two versions conflict. It stands to reason that Company "A's" Operation Report is authentic. I know for a fact most of Company "A" Headquarters Personnel and one Platoon of C. "B" landed in the center of Easy Red Beach. Undoubtedly parts of Company "A", "B" and "C" were landed in different locations. Do you have a complete operation plan for the 336th Engr. Comb. Bn.? It might clarify the situation.

Due to the above I suggest changing the wording as follows:
331 men, advance element of the 336th Engr. Co., b. Bn. landed with the 348th Engr. Beach, but were 2500 to 3000 yards west of their targeted destination. Some were landed even further away

upon leaving the landing craft. They came under heavy mortar and artillery fire and had to take shelter in the shingle and regroup. The Germans had artillery observers in well positioned places, including church steeples. With deadly accuracy they were hitting almost everything that landed on the beach shortly after fighting men from ^{336TH} ~~33TH~~ Hd. Qrtrs. Co. and thirty-two men from Co. "B" landed and debarked from an LCI (Landing Craft Infantry). The ship was hit by an artillery barrage that completely put it out of action. The LCI remained at list in the center of Easy Red Beach one year later. An Athey wagon pulled by a bulldozer and loaded with five gallon cans of gasoline was hit about one hundred yards west of the center of Easy Red. Flames shot high in the sky. It was learned the next day that this explosion killed several officers and enlisted men from our sister battalion. Easy Red Beach was no place to be as everything was a sitting duck because of the accuracy of the German mortars and artillery. By moving in small groups, sometimes in two and threes, the 336th moved parallel to the enemy and worked their way up the beach to their assigned area F.1 exit on Fox Red Beach. The 336th Engineer's advance equipment also began to arrive; and some of its Bulldozers pulling trailers of explosives were landed at the same location, and had to make the long trip without cover to their proper assigned beach. It was a nightmare on the Beach... No training can prepare for such fear and confusion. A feeling of loneliness surrounds one, although there are hundreds of men about. Every enemy gun is firing at you. Helpless, scared and alone. Then faith and discipline assert, and your training impels you to lead or to follow. Some crawled, some ran, but all worked their way east to Fox Red Beach and to their various assignments. Equipment was lost in the seas; mine detectors, machine guns, all types of equipment badly needed on shore. No matter...we got there and were ready to get the job done. The MEDICS. Oh, the MEDICS!; THE 336EGB had their own with them. They had no time to think. Their job started before they reached the shore. There were wounded everywhere, and our MEDICS went to work at once treating everyone who was wounded. One had

only to yell MEDIC! and he would appear. This story would be incomplete if we didn't take time to "Salute" our dear comrades who did their jobs so well. Medic Officer received the Bronze and 3 Medics received Silver Stars.

F-1 ROAD EXIT..

On the pre-invasion maps it showed this as a small dirt road running up the hill off the beach joining another small road behind the beach. The 336 ECB job was to widen it, improve it so it could carry traffic off the beach. However, upon arriving on Fox Red Beach, it was found to be a path and not a road. With no traffic moving off the Beach because of enemy gunfire, the 336th job was to build an exit road, and fast.

UNLOADING ON BEACH (Brigade)

8 June to 25 June 1944

93,415 Personnel

16,997 vehicles

71,896 Tons of supplies

27 June to 15 July 1944

33,180 Personnel

19,750 Vehicles

81,075 Tons of Supplies

16 July to 31 July 1944

66,402 Personnel

9,832 Vehicles

85,787 Tons of Supplies

Month of August, 1944

73,302 Personnel

8,019 Vehicles

181,777 Tons of Supplies

Prisoners Taken D-Day

66 total, 37 were wounded

Prisoners used by 336th EGB

12 June to 14 June 1944

200 to bury the dead

15 June to 18 June

300 to bury dead

Some of the 336th cleared mines (by hand, probing with bayonets). Others scouted the new road site. Others scouted ahead and established a perimeter of defense on top of the hill. A bulldozer dug out a hole through the six to eight foot embankment ten to twelve feet wide to provide access to the proposed road that was being cleared of mines and bordered with strips of tape to identify cleared portions. Company 'B' of the 745th Tank Battalion landed twelve tanks on Fox Green Beach at 1830 and was on the high ground by 2030, losing three tanks. The first tank up the hill ran outside the tape near the top of the hill and ran over an anti-tank mine and blew up. The second tank tried to go around the first tank and also hit an anti-tank mine. No one was left in the first tank to explain when someone pulled the pin on a grenade and it exploded inside the tank, a terrible tragedy. When the last of the tanks climbed the hill and headed for Colleville Sur Mer, it was a good feeling to know there was some armor in front. Imagine how the infantry men felt when the tanks joined them in Colleville!

Darkness did not fall until after 1100 hrs. No one knew the situation other than what was immediately around them. No one knew the enemy strength or location. Rumors were circulated that the beach might have to be evacuated. The night was filled with uncertainty.

During the late afternoon and evening, 20 German prisoners of war had been taken in the immediate section. A collecting point was established next to the exit at the bottom of the

cliff. One German was wounded and on a stretcher. He refused American medical attention. A German Lieutenant seeing the thousands of ships off shore was heard to remark, "*Alles Est Kaput.*"

In the meantime, others from the 336th probed for mines and cleared the beach area, and other areas needed for supplies, aid stations, vehicle transit, and bivouac. Other teams began the work of removing obstacles and damaged equipment from the beach area so Naval craft could land on the beach. Also evacuation of wounded, handling of prisoners of war, recon for inland dumps; on and on with no let up. More troops were landing, supplies needed, water, ammo, first aid, mortars coming in, snipers shooting, men stepping on mines, a friend dying...can't stop, must keep moving.

Aid stations were needed as well as beach markers, roads over the sand beach, a water point, removal of thousands of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, security of the beach area, and much more.

As night fell it was found that the left flank of the entire Omaha beach had less than a squad of infantry guarding it in a captured German gun position. One officer and a security platoon of the 336th were sent to man this position with the infantry group. Using small arms, and a captured enemy machine gun, the position remained secure for the night. The beach was covered with the dead...they had to be moved from the path of the ocean, and the equipment arriving hourly. How painful it was to look at these brave men, how gently they were handled. They were moved

aside until the graves registration troops could take care of them. Ammunition, first aid kits and weapons were taken from them as they were needed badly on the line.

There wasn't much rest the first night in France, for with snipers and the German Air Force, and much more work to be done...few had any break to sleep. When the enemy planes came over, the Navy anti-aircraft guns zeroed in. What a display of aerial fireworks they put up. They, the Navy, knocked down most of them, and drove off the rest. Yes, it was 'the longest day'!

NAVAL GUN SUPPORT....

Before we leave this first day, a word of thanks is owed to our U.S. Navy for a job well done. On the shore with us were the Naval Beach Battalions assigned to our brigade (a company to the 336th). They trained with us, and landed with us. They even wore GI uniforms with Navy painted on them. Brave men they were, and we really got along with them. Well done Navy!

What can be said of the Destroyer Group? They probably saved the day for us all. When the operation order came down from Fleet to support the beach troops, it said, "Necessary risks must be taken, expected, and accepted." In other words, "Go get 'em." The Destroyer Force steamed in so close to shore that you could nearly see their eyes. Their 5" guns took the enemy strong points under fire and really did the job. Most of this fire was done at point blank range. Meantime the battleships and cruisers lobbed shells inland to other targets. Without this help, many more of our troops would have paid dearly that day. We humbly

tip our hats to our friends and comrades of the U.S. Navy.

Perhaps in haste we have forgotten to mention the great danger from artillery, mortars, anti-personnel mines, and booby-traps. Everywhere you turned or went, mines of various types were to be found. Some were old, placed in the ground. Some were two or more years old, placed in the ground years earlier; these didn't explode. Many other anti-personnel mines did explode and killed or crippled no telling how many lives.

The German 'S' mine was the one feared the most. Upon stepping on one, the mine would fly up out of the ground a few feet and explode; steel shards, ball bearings, bolts, and whatever was in them would reach out and kill or wound a number of men. Others were the 'Schu' mine, and the 'concrete' mine. The 'schu' mine would take off your foot when stepped on, and the concrete mine would spread hunks of concrete mixed with steel shards killing or wounding anyone nearby. The anti-tank mine was for vehicles of all types. Generally, it takes about 250 lbs. pressure to set one off, so men could work around them a little better than the small mines. Most of these were found much easier than the anti-personnel mines. It is believed the 336th Engineers removed some 20,000 mines from the beach and area around the hills.

Artillery was absolutely horrible, 75mm and 88mm cannons shelled the beach at point blank range, and from a few miles behind the beach. The only defense against these was to dig in deep (fox-holes) or advance forward quickly and overtake the enemy positions, where it was generally safe. The latter could

not be done, as the enemy had machine gun nests facing our infantry, holding them on the beach. The 336th had to dodge all this while continuing its job. When an artillery shell comes in, it whistles and screams; and convinces you that it's you that it is going to hit. It's something you can't explain, unless you've been under fire. Mortars are something else; they come in sounding like a dove in flight. Most men don't hear this in battle, but only the "click" it makes a split second before it explodes. So the sound of mortars is a "click-boom". The worst place to be is in a forest, for then, if the shells hit the trees up high and explode, metal rains down on everyone.

So on D-day and D1 while our men of the 336th went about their tasks on the beach and hills, all of this action was taking place around them. Hit the ground, dive into a hole or ditch, then back to work. Constant fear, danger, thirst, hunger...a million things; but the mission was the first thing that had to be done. Nothing else mattered...open a road for tanks, clear mines, open paths to the sea, this was our reason for being there. The infantry depended on us....they were waiting for us, and believed we wouldn't let them down. There is a bond between combat troops that no one can really describe...but it's there, we all knew it, and felt it. One will not let the other down. Engineers are normally in and out of combat, while infantry goes in, and stay in, so Combat Engineers behind the infantry will do everything in their power to support them.

There were no eating facilities on the beach, or anywhere in Normandy. We carried emergency food rations in our packs for

three days; a canteen of water, and an extra bandoleer of ammo. Everyone's clothes were soaking wet from the sea. As night fell, it was cold and damp. Fox-holes were wet, you think "what the hell am I doing here, why me?" You look around and see all the dead, and the dying...and thank God for keeping you safe. You pray that tomorrow will be better.

You've never been under an air attack where you were the target, but tonight you will be. The Luftwaffe came over and made a show of trying to get to us and the fleet, but failed. They managed to slow us up a bit, and kept others awake a few hours. Supplies that were badly needed were beginning to land in dribbles. Orders were still out to land only infantry, engineers and needed supplies. Hold the rest. You wonder if this is the real invasion, or a feint. Will the fleet be there in the morning, or gone to Calais or someplace else? Please God keep them here. You don't know that our commanding general aboard a cruiser 12 miles off the coast, knows less than you about what is happening. Communications are really in a mess. Forty-five years later, the military in Washington still doesn't know what happened on Omaha beach. They can only put pieces together from scant operational reports submitted by the units.

Perhaps it was best, for the individual American soldier, and junior officers do much better in the field if the big brass stay out of it. "SNAFU" was the word I was looking for (Situation normal, all f----- up). From where we stood, it was a captain's and major's war, and we were winning. No insult is meant for General Omar Bradley, as he was a Soldier's general,

and liked by his men.

On top of the F-1 Exit road location was the enemy strong point of Fox Beach area. Barbed wire, mines and the like protected it; Two French 75mm guns, and two enclosed mortar positions, a 37 Gun mounted on a fixed tank turret, and a few machine gun positions. Also very dangerous were the flame throwers buried along the hills to spread fire on the advancing troops, but the fuel tanks were empty, so they were never used.

The last resistance from machine guns overlooking our beach was ended, leaving only occasional artillery and mortar fire from the enemy rear coming in on our beach positions. Snipers and artillery were still hindering our work on the hills and beach area. Supplies of ammunition for the forward troops had become a serious problem, and so the ammunition taken from fallen soldiers was sent forward until we could land fresh supplies from the sea.

The beach was being clogged by traffic and supplies that were not needed. DUKWs were landing with the wrong loads on them. The beach commander of Fox, while in communication with the fleet commander of supply and landing craft(navy), told him (the Admiral) that they should hold landing anything on Fox Beach except ammunition, engineers, infantry, artillery and heavy equipment. This began to happen within a short while, and the beach became alive with the things that were needed. Ammunition, as it landed, was sent forward to distribution sites, engineer equipment arrived and the congested beach condition cleared. We could at last see improvement.

Security Platoons of the 336th were clearing snipers off the

hills with rifle fire. Enemy prisoners were coming in and a small wire enclosure was prepared to keep them under guard until the proper personnel arrived to take over. CP's were improved and marked, wire and radio communications were progressing well. It began to look as if we were going to stay a while. Our big job was yet before us. Supply an army with everything they needed. A complete port facility had to be made on this beach. There were no decks here...just sand and rock.

Some older cargo ships appeared, and were sunk in a line in front of the beach to form a breakwater for small craft to shelter behind. The SeaBees (Navy) landed and began to put together steel floating causeways for unloading ships at sea. Then from over the channel huge concrete apartment size buildings appeared, towed by sea going tugs. These were "Mulberry" (code name) to be sunk along side the breakwater to form the wall that would stop the waves and give us a calm bay to work in. Anti-aircraft gun positions were mounted on their tops to defend them. They were so large that it was hard to believe our eyes.

By D3 our forward troops had broken out of the bridgehead and taken N13 road. We could now start on road improvement, and supply as well as clearing the dead and getting rid of the beach obstacles and still active mines. Our Headquarters moved to St. Honerine, a small village a few miles east of the beach.

D4, A-Company constructed roads to dumps, and cleared openings in hedge rows; cleared mines and patrolled the area. B-Company built a lateral road along the beach front, worked on a cargo transfer point at Exit F-1 entrance, cleared a bivouac area

for the Naval Beach Battalion, checked cargo, vehicles, personnel crossing the beach, and patrolled for snipers. C-Company cleared mines from the beach area and inland, conducted patrols for snipers, and did some cargo work on Fox Red.

D5. Transfer point operation improved. Checking of personnel, cargo, and vehicles crossing the beach, policing of the beach, sign erection, evacuation of wounded and construction of roads, etc. In general, the work of the Battalion was to improve and develop the beach, dump areas, and road network.

D13 (19th June). The 336th was relieved of beach operations and assigned the duties of constructing and maintaining roads within the entire Beach area of the 5th ESB, and operation of the Brigade Transit Area. However, their cranes plus miscellaneous equipment remained in operation on the beach and in the dump areas. C-Company operated Vehicle and personnel transit areas 3, 4, and 5. Water point operators of H&S Company were now manning two water points; 12,240 gallons of water was furnished daily.

In addition to above, the 336th furnished operators for cranes, trucks, prime movers, bulldozers, air compressors, and arc-welding equipment on a twenty four hour basis. Equipment operators worked 12-hour shifts, seven days a week. Two rock crushers were assembled to furnish material for the roads.

Welders from the 336th went into production on building for 1st Army tanks: Steel "Shears", rhinoceroses, these to be used on the front of tanks to break through hedge rows. Our machinists assisted. This device worked out well, and saved many of our tanks from destruction by the enemy. Scrap steel from the beach

fortifications was used in this project.

There were just too many job assignments given to the 336th to write about all of them. Build, construct, destroy, clear, unload cargo, operate heavy equipment, furnish water, survey beach, and hundreds of others. During this period, most of the men worked in 14-hour shifts. There was not time to build any kind of permanent shelter for our own troops until much, much later, as all our energy was put to the job of supplying the forward troops.

Late in July the 336th was assigned the responsibility for unloading all barges of the 5th ESB. These barges were much like those we see on rivers in the USA. The assignment included:

1. Unload cargo from barges and Rhino Ferries.
2. Maintain the barges in operating condition.
3. Keep barges painted, provide lights, living quarters, fenders, unloading chutes, cables, and miscellaneous equipment.
4. Provide crews to operate the barges on a 24 hour basis, and conduct inspection of same.
5. Keep the Battalions to which the barges were assigned notified as to the status of unloading.
6. Assist in mooring the barges to cargo ships; securing to tugs for movement, and securing to anchors.
7. Safeguard the barges and their cargo at all times. This included the prevention of pilfering or unloading of cargo by any except authorized personnel.

On the 27th of July, 1944 the following Commendation was received from the Commanding General of V Corps:

Subject: Commendation:

To: Commanding Officer, Provisional Engineer Special

Brigade Group, APO 230 U.S. Army.

1. Confronted with the necessity of quickly installing "Rhinceroses" on tanks and self-propelled tank destroyers, a request for help was made to the Engineer Special Brigades. This request was promptly and willingly met. The workmanship performed was excellent and as a result units of the Corps were better prepared for the operation now in progress. The personnel of the units listed deserve the thanks and commendations of the units of the Corps as a whole:

147th Engineer Combat Battalion

203rd Engineer Combat Battalion

336th Engineer Combat Battalion

346th Ord. Medium Maint. Company

From: S/L.T. Gerow, T/L.T. Gerow

Major General, U.S. Army, Commanding

From July to the closing of Omaha Beach, the 336th performed road maintenance, construction, unloading on beach, barge operations, transit area duties, and water point operation; I am sure we have forgotten some, but this will give you the general scope of our mission. Wherever we were needed, we served well.

In order to grasp the full picture, you must try to understand how vast the supply operation was. Hundreds of trucks operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week hauled from the beach to the supply storage dumps. Other trucks (Red Balls) hauling

from these dumps forward to the troops and tank battalions. The roads were bumper to bumper with trucks wherever you went. Initially even the 336th trucks and prime movers were used during the night hours to help the QM truck companies. Cranes and cats were unloading or transferring cargo on the beach, while others were assigned to the various inland dumps to unload the filled cargo nets.

Hundreds of tanks and self-propelled guns were tearing up the roads moving forward off the beach to inland areas. The French roads were small and narrow, mostly graveled or dirt. They were not built to stand any heavy traffic, there were not enough roads to handle the supplies, incoming troops, and equipment. Can you imagine what happens to a road when an entire division of tanks moves over it at high speed? Near complete destruction in a few hours. While tanks are moving on a road, in convoy, all other vehicles must get off or be pushed in the ditch. At night, headlights were not permitted as there was danger of air attack; so the danger was always with us on the roadways.

New roads had to be built to handle the traffic, and in some cases, to shorten the runs to the dumps or the beach. A tank trail (road) was built for the tanks and self-propelled guns, so as to protect our main roads, and keep them clear for supply trucks.

Imagine, if you can, the gasoline alone needed to keep an army running, plus the supply trucks that deliver it. Until pipe lines were buried underground to carry the gas to the forward

dumps, it all had to be trucked in five-gallon cans. A little later they began to haul it in gasoline tanker trucks. The roads had to be watched and maintained on a 24-hour basis. Bulldozers and graders never got to rest much. Gravel had to be found for the road work. Quarries were opened and rock crushers were assembled and operated by the 336th.

Then the rains came, and the roads required continuous patrol for mud holes and sink spots. You can't believe what happens to the roads in France, when military traffic and rain meet. Everything turns to mud; deep, deep mud. It becomes knee deep, and near impossible to drive in. Drainage ditches had to be installed. Sometimes to such an extent that the ditches looked like small rivers or streams. Tons upon tons of gravel had to be produced and hauled to keep the roads open. By-pass roads had to be put in at some places where repairs could not be made. Wet, muddy, damp and getting cold, we wondered if we would ever see the sun again.

We couldn't keep our clothes dry, and there was no place to dry anything out. There wasn't even a dry place for us to eat our chow. We had not taken time out to build any mess hall yet. We thought of the men up forward in muddy fox holes, and wondered how they lived through it. It kept us going another day.

Late in June a big storm hit Omaha Beach from the sea. Strong winds, and giant waves all along the coastal region. We had to shut down operations for several days while this storm tore everything to pieces. Our "Mulberry" units were hit and damaged, the SeaBee's floating causeways were lifted out of the

water and totally destroyed. There was nothing to be done. We just had to stand there and watch the sea destroy everything. Ships and small craft were driven up on the beach, barges were cut loose and beached or blown out to sea in the English channel with our crew-men aboard. It took several days for the Navy to find them all and bring them back. The crews were damn happy to be alive, and most never went back to sea again. The clean up job started all over, on the beach. Equipment that could still be used was salvaged, and unloading of supplies and personnel began again.

The pace had to pick up, as we were days behind on landing supplies and replacement man-power. War waits for no man, and the forward dumps would be running low on needed equipment and supplies. Everyone pitched in and the job got done.

Now, without the causeways to bring equipment ashore directly from the ships, we had to bring all of the small ships into shore, dry them out, and unload them on the beach at transfer points. Somehow it all worked, and soon we were back on schedule increasing our tonnage. The world never knew what we went through during the storms, and rains, to get the job done. Our reward was knowing we did it. The hardships gone through to get one load of supplies up to the forward line were sometimes unbelievable. Patton once said "God I'm proud of these men". Our officers were thinking the same about us. It is remarkable to remember that these men came from every walk of life. Each had some skills, but none had ever done the things necessary to get this job done; yet we all came together as a team, the family

grew closer, we helped and took care of each other, and were very proud of each other. We were getting better chow now...fresh bread, cakes, real butter once in a while. If only the sun would come out, and this damn rain would stop. Oh joy! We got a movie set up in an old barn and had a weekly show. Also entertainment from some band guys in Normandy that toured the area. Things were looking up, we now had recreation equipment and shows!

All the recreation equipment for the Brigade was lost at sea or on the beach, so when the men had any spare time there was nothing to do but loaf around; the 336th ECB was a very active group at sports and it was hard to bear.

On July 18 the first USO Show was put on in the brigade area and the 504 Port Band was reformed and toured the area giving performances as a GI Show.

A service club for enlisted men was set up in a chateau in Colleville Sur Mer during late July 1944. On the 4th of August, 1944 it opened. It was called 'The Manor Club', and contained the following:

1. Movie house.
2. 4-Game Room.
3. 2-Reading rooms.
4. 1-Office.
5. 1-Kitchen.
6. 1-Refreshment room.

An officers club was also opened on 26 August, 1944 in another chateau. (Don't know what was in it, but will bet they had lots of booze.)

The Red Cross also had a donut and coffee bar for enlisted men at the service club. You paid for the donut, the coffee was free. All these years later your author believes GIs haven't forgiven the Red Cross for charging for the donuts....

Sometime in September or October of 1944, the line companies began to think of cold weather. It seemed that we might be staying here part of the winter. The men had been living in underground shelters since the invasion. There had never been time to build buildings or some sort of barracks. Some of these fox-holes or dugouts in the ground were quite unique. The company command posts, supply and the like, had electric lights furnished by a generator. Wires generally ran along the ground. Daily, more and more of the underground living quarters somehow got tapped into these wires, and lights became the style. However, as the generators were rated for putting out a limited amount of power, and as more lights were added, the dimmer all the rest of the lights became until our electricians walked the lines and found all the splices. Generally the CO's looked the other way, and in a few days got additional generators to handle the load. Some of these dugouts were large enough to sleep two to four men. They had folding tables, wash basins, and built-in cots, all the comforts of home except for the damp and cold. Stoves were made from GI cans, or built from scrap piles or sunken ships. Some burned diesel oil, and had the habit of blinking out and on, causing an explosion, waking up the men every few hours with fear for their lives. The motor pool men built shacks that slept four men. Most were high and dry.

Finally, the companies built large barracks for the line troops that were equipped with stoves, cots and lights. Mess halls were also constructed. It was like being home again. We had dry blankets, a place to dry out our clothes, and a warm bed to sleep in. FLASH!...Just found out that C-Company started on this building program much earlier than other companies, and beat the big rains of late summer and early fall. They had inside information from the French about what the weather would be like. The next war, I may move in with them...if they'll have me. Found out where all the ice cream was coming from. C-Company inherited the Navy Sea-Bee's ice cream making machine. They kept it going around the clock. They had to, for there were a couple guys in C-Company that ate ice cream with every meal, and in between. It appears that C-Company, along with doing their regular work, also had an effective Recon and Scroungers unit that was on the go 24 hours a day. Guess I had better mention here that H&S Company went to tents quite early too, and beat the rains. Must have heard C Company talking on the radio.

The main job on the beach continued until well into November 1944, plus maintenance of roads and whatever it took to supply two armies. Heavy equipment operators were detached to Cherbourg for use on dock cranes. Things were moving slow there, as the Germans really destroyed the harbor before leaving. Omaha Beach still held all the tonnage records for cargo, vehicle, and personnel unloading. LSTs were now going up the Seine river discharging their cargos inland.

Sometime in late August 1944 the first food supply convoy to

Paris was organized to leave the 5th ESB area. This convoy was manned by French drivers carrying coffee, beans, and sugar for the people of Paris. Nearly 100 French trucks led by one US officer and a driver. What a hell of a job it was to keep them together on this one-day trip to the capital. It must of been interesting too, considering how long it took to get the officer and driver back to our unit.

Supply parts for our unit--trucks, cranes, and dozers-- became a serious problem too. It was reported that one motor Sgt. stopped a military train carrying a piece of heavy equipment, and while he talked to the train crew his men robbed parts for our needs. All types of midnight requisitions were used to keep our stock rolling.

Another good one happened to H&S Water. The French people near the water purification units brought fresh water from their homes for the boys to drink, as they didn't want them to drink water from the ponds and streams they were using to fill the purification tanks. After the break-out at St. Lo, gasoline became a short item. With 3rd Army on the move, gasoline was rationed to all rear troops, that were hauling supplies, five-gallons per day per vehicle. There were some days when we really had to scratch for enough gasoline to operate our motor pool.

On the 19th of November 1944, Omaha Beach was closed. No more ships came in for unloading of cargo, however all the beach dumps, as well as inland dumps, had to be closed and moved forward. Our cranes and heavy equipment were used in support of this movement. The roadwork had to be kept up, there was always

enough work to go around. It seems there was never any rest for Engineers, wherever they were.

Now the men were given more 72-hour passes to Paris and the larger cities around our area. Most everyone had a chance to get to Paris once. To us single guys it meant GIRLS, dancing and standing up to a bar and ordering a drink of something good, sleeping in a bed with white sheets, music, people walking down the streets smiling, wearing clothing like we see back home. It made us think of home, all the thing we missed so much. There were so many places to see, and things to do before the 72-hour pass was over. We hardly knew which way to go first. Somehow we lived through it all and returned to our company in a cold wet truck. Back from the world to this hole in the mud. What the hell am I doing here! Tired, broke, and a hang-over that won't quit throbbing. You fall in bed.

Some of the men returned in good shape; cleaned up, tie straight, boots shined; some with arms full of souvenirs to send or take home. Others came back looking as though they had been to hell and back; clothes torn, bandages on their heads, and eyes that looked so red you could light a cigarette on them. But all ~~and~~ ^{HAD} the time of their lives. They would talk about it for a long time. After a pass, the movie barn or the service club down the road just wasn't the same anymore. There are hundreds of stories that could be told here, but won't be, as they're probably lies anyway. It was interesting and fun though, listening to them in 44 & 45. I'll bet that another book could be written on just the thoughts going through a lot of minds while reading this book.

RUMOR DEPARTMENT....Some American Dentist close to us was having trouble at his clinic with the local civilian population crowding his daily for treatment of their teeth. He was overheard at the mess hall saying: "Tomorrow is the last day I'll be treating those civilians, no more after tomorrow." Two days later he was questioned by another officer on how he made out with his problem. He replied: "Yep, got them all stopped, none of them coming in bothering me anymore." How did you do it, he was asked? Easy he said; "When they pointed out which tooth was aching, I pulled the tooth next to it. Didn't take long for the word to pass around." Nuff said.

OPERATION "NEPTUNE" (Invasion) was the largest amphibious operation in military history. Studies have been made of other military operations in the past; NEPTUNE made them all look like minor invasions. Armies of yore generally lived off the land they captured, while the allied troops carried with them their own supplies and medical facilities. Replacement of manpower alone would have stunned these armies. In fact, no other army in the world had ever tried such an operation. The allied planners under General Eisenhower put together D-Day, and follow-up operations without reference to the past. Engineer Brigades helped to establish this plan during their maneuvers held in the States, and the United Kingdom. It worked for the allied armies. It worked because of the ingenuity and dedication of the officers and men on the beaches; and the landing crafts and the personnel operating them. Constant changes and adjustments were made to supply our armies. Victory came not only because of the fighting ability of our armies; but because the enemy never believed we could supply our armies for such a fast, never stopping break-out into France and then into Germany.

A good example of this dedication shows on our 5th ESB beaches. The supplies handled across the beach were:

1. Total cargo landed.....620,907 tons
Average per day..... 4,156 tons
2. Personnel landed..... 562,705 men
Average per day..... 3,369 men
3. Vehicles landed..... 75,488 men
Average per day..... 452 men
4. No record was kept for 6 or 7 June 1944
5. This document does not include the 1st and 6th ESB beaches, nor the British beaches.

As we look back on this operation, it brings to mind the hardships encountered getting on to this beach. The friends we lost, and the horrible introduction into combat with the enemy. No one except the men who were there at that time can image what a massive undertaking it was. Historians have thus

far failed to put the operations together to show the whole picture of the invasion. Photographers either failed in their job, or lost their equipment on landing. As stated before, this was a battle commanded on the company and platoon level. Brigade, division, corps and army commands had to sit it out and wait for the dust to settle. It would take hundreds of people to sift through reports, all the way down to company levels, and then probably fed to computers to fairly develop a true picture of Omaha beach. Who cares! We all know it will never be placed into the history books properly. One thing, the 336th Engineers Combat Battalion know. We were there, we know what we did and we are damn proud of every minute of it.... May it never happen again.

Prisoners turned over to 302nd M.P.

Company for evacuation.

13 Aug. 1944 250 PWs

14 Aug. 1944 250 PWs

20 Aug. 1944 500 PWs

31 Aug. 1944 500 PWs

Also 2 German Chaplains

Also 2 German doctors

Total PWs 1504

336 ECB Wounded and injured, killed

Wounded and evacuated.....22

Not evacuated..... 3

Injured and evacuated..... 3

" " not evacuated... 2

Killed..... 3

Died of wounds.....3

Landing schedule of 336th EGB:D-Day:

2nd tide	Men	Veh	Tr.	3rd Tide	Men	Veh	Tr.
H&S Company	33	0	0	57	3	0	
A-Company	124	3	1	44	21	2	
B-Company	63	3	1	101	18	2	

C-Company 121 2 1 43 20 2

About the 21 of December, 1944 the alert and move orders were received for the 336th to move from the beach areas forward. We would join the 1st army again the forward area. The 5th ESB had released us. Some of the men were at a movie in the old barn, some were in the company areas, while others were at work, when the move order was passed down. Two hours to pack and move out. We were needed some place else in a hurry. Light field packs with bare necessities; rifle, bayonet, helmets, etc. Pack the rest in your duffle bag...it stays behind. Roll in two hours, load up and pull out. No one seems to know where we are going, and later it proves that either we were lost, or, as usual the brass had changed their minds, and we were the last to find out.

The trip forward was terrible. It was snowing and sleeting, and the roads were slick. There were a number of fender benders en route. A-company too the point, and the 336th ended up near the Liege, Belgium area, unloaded and started walking towards a wooded area where gunfire could be heard. Snow was above our ankles, and the temperature near zero. An officer caught up with us, and after discussed we were told to get the hell out of there. We were in the wrong place. Orders had been changed, and we were going back to a location near Paris. You never saw a group get loaded and out of a place as fast as we did. As we remember at this time in our lives, the whole battalion did not move up to this area.

All returned to the Paris area, some went into Paris, and overnight shelter was found for the men. The trucks that got deep into Paris had a wonderful night on the town. The following day all units exited Paris and formed at or around Cabourg or Corbell, France, just south of Paris. We did get a turkey dinner at Christmas, though. As we did not have any stoves with us, the turkeys were sent out to the bakeries to be cooked. Then they were lost, no one knew which shops they had been taken to. Found at last, they were promptly eaten. Some of the men managed to get hold of a little wine, so our Christmas looked a lot better

as we went to sleep.

The new mission was to form a defensive line with other Engineer battalions, around the eastern approach to Paris. Road blocks, bridge guards, etc. It was thought by someone higher up that German paratroopers (dressed as Americans) were trying to get to the SHAEF HQ. and kill or capture our high brass. Of course, it was out of the question, but so was the Bulge, and a precaution had to be taken. This mission lasted a little over a week and the stay was enjoyed, as most of the men lived in French chateaus.

There was some humor in this stay. Two well known officers slipped into Paris for an afternoon of sipping wine and spirits. On their return trip, while riding along the road on the outskirts of Paris, they started to sing German songs. A road block of French halted them at gun point. After a lengthy explanation that they were American officers returning to their units, they were allowed to leave. It was a good thing the guards did not ask for I.D.'s since one of the officers had a real German name.

The 6 Jan 1945 we received orders to move north to the 9th army area. We moved to Heerlen, Overbrook and Spekholzerheld, Holland. We were assigned to work in the 9th Army's rear area. Most of us settled in Dutch schoolhouses, out of the bad weather. It lasted about two weeks, and then we were ordered to move up to the front and relieve part of the 102nd Infantry at Suggarath, Germany. We formed a defensive line on the side of a "V", with the British on the other side. We were about to learn all over again what combat and shell fire was like. This town was utterly destroyed. Basements were used for shelter, although some of the troops did get to stay in existing houses above ground. Mess and supplies had to be trucked in daily, but we did receive warm chow, even though it was hard to get to once in a while due to shelling. The Germans had the advantage of being able to shell us at will. Scouting and patrolling were conducted daily but no attack was initiated by us. We were in a holding position. One night when Company "A" was stationed on the front lines near Suggarath I was C.Q. for the night. We had the 102nd on the

right and a British outfit on the left. We had telephone communications all along the line. During the night our boys were firing their machine guns indiscriminately; just trigger happy. Some time during that night the phone rang and some British character on the other end said, "I say old boy, your fifty caliber machine gun is firing over our C.P. It's a bit trifling, you know." His jesting manner of speech made me fall out of the chair with laughter. I sent someone out to quiet the boys down. About 5.a.m. the British opened up with their 25 pounders and the 102nd with 105's. They laid down a terrific barrage for what seemed like hours. The same character came back on the phone and said "I say, old boy, how did you like the show? We are having a bit of a go at it, you know." Had to be British non-coms, their officers had no sense of humor.

There was a lot of snow up there. I shot a rabbit one day, and an old sergeant who had served in World War 1, in the cavalry, cooked it for me.

I remember picking up some hoes, rakes and shovels from a store in Geilenkirchen, Germany, near Suggarath and carrying them back to a Dutch farmer right outside of Heerlen, Holland. The farmer had a daughter. So? There were lots of interesting things happening here. We were new in combat again, and trigger happy. One Company expended quite a bit of machine gun ammo one night and the next day some 5000 rounds of ammo was seen going up to that company area.

We stayed on this mission for about two weeks, and then we were relieved by the 102nd Infantry Division. Al wee happy to get back to Holland again.

During our stay in Holland, more winter clothing was issued. Oh yes! We were issued the new army sleeping back, known as the "Fat Sack." It was quite a warm sleeping bag, once you got it together. The squad sergeants held meetings to show everyone how to assemble it and use it. We did not like it at first. We never liked anything new. It was unsafe, you couldn't get out of it in a hurry. It made you feel restricted inside. Dozens of reason why we should not use it. But use it we did. A squad enticed a

sergeant to get inside and demonstrate how it worked. While he did this, the men quickly tied him up, and hung him in a cloakroom. The chow whistle blew and off went the squad to eat. Need it be said that no one in that squad got into his "Fart Sack" for several weeks. And not until they were sure the sergeant was fast asleep. Just a family squabble, no hard feelings.

From Holland we moved into Germany via the Siegfried Line to Aachen, Brand area, where we worked on rear area projects and maintenance. Then back to Holland again. Holland became a home away from home for us, and we got to know the people well. When we stood guard at night the Dutch ladies would come out of their houses at all hours to give each guard a cup of chocolate and a cookie. It was very cold in Holland. Some of the men got to attend Dutch dances. The girls were very much like American girls, and they spoke better English than we did.

The Dutch children were adopted by us at once. They were very happy, smiling kids, and they liked us too... especially our gum and candy. We seemed to always have extra sweets to give to them. Boy, they were good at snowballing. Many were the snow wars fought between us. They would never give up. American soldiers loved children, and wherever they went (even into Germany) they would share everything with the children. I believe this went back to the thirties when we all faced hard times. Most G.I.'s knew what it was like to go without things when they were young.

The Germans stripped Holland of everything. The Dutch people were on a near starvation diet, and they were not allowed to hold any gatherings while under German occupation. It was like being in prison. They were very happy that the Americans came. We soon noticed that some Dutch women had their hair cut off. We found that they had been punished by their neighbors for being too close with the Germans. Soon the movie houses opened and GI's flocked to them. We had a neighborhood church close by, and services were held for us. It was like being at home. All of these nice things had an effect on the GI's. It made them

homesick.

We worked on a few maintenance and construction projects throughout Holland. Some of the men went to schools for bridge building, and various other things. One company even built a prison from a school house. Upon completion they found out that it was for American prisoners. It is rumored that several wire snipers were left behind where they could be found. Never heard if there was an escape there or not, but there was a tool corporal left wondering what happened to his snipers. It is believed that B-Company stayed in Germany during this period.

A little Dutch girl ran out from between two buildings into one of our trucks in convoy, and was badly injured. We thought it was a boy, so we took the child to our army hospital for treatment, where it was discovered that the "he" was a she. They guys in the ward would not let them take her away, so she stayed for a couple of weeks in the ward and was spoiled. Our guys took up a collection of candy bars, etc. and filled a basket. Boy, did her eyes pop when she saw them. She had a lot of visitors from our outfit during her stay in the hospital. All worked out for her just fine, and she did not have any permanent injuries.

When the Germans left Holland, they took nearly all of the bicycles with them, as this was the main method of transportation, and it hurt very much for these people to be without their bikes. Later, as the 336th got into Germany, some of the units came across enemy stores of bikes. They loaded trucks with all of the good ones and took them back to Holland. We called these trips, "free bikes for the Dutch". You can't imagine the reception we received from these people, as the bikes were handed off the trucks. Of course, these little trips were made on the Q.T., but the grapevine has it that some of the officers knew and looked the other way. How about those side trips to Belgium for a scoop of ice cream, served on a piece of paper, for 3 francs? It was little things like that kept smiles on GI faces. Nor can we forget how these people would wash our clothes and press them just for the bar of soap so that they could wash their own clothes. How does one try to make an

American housewife understand what it was like to do without soap. Without perfumed hand soap, makeup, toothpaste, and material for clothing. The Germans took everything for use in their own country. There was so much suffering, it would take pages to cover it all. Let's just say that they stood up to it, faced it bravely until liberation came to Holland.

We moved forward again to support the Rhine crossing near Geldern-Wallach area. The battalion established a forward bridge dump south of Wesel (upstream) and helped bridge the Rhine. Our heavy equipment helped bring forward large naval craft to carry men and tanks across the river, and our cranes unloaded the craft and put them into the river while under fire. (LCVPs). We used the tank retrievers to carry the boats. Near here, one company, while checking the area for mines etc., found buried treasure. Scotch, hand soap, wine and German naval uniforms. Even under manure piles. A visiting battalion officer, upon approaching, thought we had a town full of mines and booby traps, until he was offered a drink. Believe me, even the officers were probing that day. The Germans must have left in a hurry to have left behind such precious items. In the excitement a small German recon. plane flew over twice, but everyone was too busy to care.

Some of our men with boat experience were detached and sent to group to operate assault and storm boats for the Wesel crossing, with the 30th Infantry division. Motor boats were used to take the troops across. What an experience; they were happy to get back home to the 336th. No wounded men, but their boat was sunk by mortar fire after several crossings.

About April 7 1945 the 336th crossed the Rhine at Wesel, Germany and moved to the area of Dorsten-Lembeck, Germany. Regular road maintenance and construction was done here with one exception. A-Company built a 320 ft. fixed, wooden trestle bridge. Construction took six days. It even had a walkway for people on one side. What was not known at the time was there were 32,000 Germans just south of us; a pocket left by advancing troops. We never saw them.

We worked in the rear area of the 9th Army for some time.

There is little rest for Engineers any place. Roads, construction, mine removable and booby traps had to be taken care of. One never knew from one minute to the next when there were orders to go forward. We were amphibious engineers, and there was always one more river to cross.

Our next move took us north east through Hannover to Wolfsburg, Germany. This is where the Volkswagen cars were manufactured before and after the war. When we arrived the assembly line still had some jeeps on it, partially assembled. Well, you guessed right, our boys had to make up a few to play around with. It seemed that the manager of this plant had worked for Ford in USA during the thirties, and upon returning to Germany, was given this plant by Hitler in order to produce vehicles for the German army. He spoke a near perfect English and wanted to get along well with the Americans.

Having moved into this area after a long trip, our knowledge of the enemy whereabouts was very limited. Unknown to us, we were again facing a large enemy force just outside of the town. Early in the morning of our first night in German barracks, we were driven out of town by an attacking force of infantry and tanks. A defensive line was established just outside of the town along a small river or stream. Our machine guns were set up, bazookas deployed and patrols sent out to make contact. Tank destroyers were called into support us.

The enemy tanks were knocked out by our tank destroyers; one I believe was taken out by a bazooka. The enemy withdrew, and we re-entered Wolfsburg. We never saw the Germans again. It was a pocket group trying to break out along with a high-ranking officer in charge. About thirty miles east of our position was the town of Gardenlegen. The German SS Troops had driven hundred of forced laborers into a large cement, barn-like building; soaked them with gasoline and set them on fire. These people had been taken from all over Europe as prisoners and used in German factories and fields as labor. We viewed this terrible sight. It was so horrible. Now we knew and believed the tales we had heard about the brutality of the German SS units. The townspeople were

forced to piece together the burned bodies and give them a proper burial in marked graves. Guards were placed to be sure it was done right. I don't believe any of us will ever forget the sight. Most of us were sick.

Another of the enemy's bad tricks. They strung wires across some small roads so that when Jeeps came down these roads with their windshields down, the wires would decapitate the drivers and the passengers. Our guys in the motor pools built and installed steel grabbers on the front bumpers of all of our jeeps so that these wires could not reach the seat area of the jeeps. However, none of our drivers ever reported having seen one of these wires or cables. One of our 336th trucks did come in with a magnetic mine attached to the underside of a running board, driver's side. After that, it was common practice to see drivers inspecting the underside of their trucks and jeeps.

The battalion moved north through Uelsen, Germany to the area of Luneberg-Bleckede, near the Elbe river. This would be our last combat of the war. C-Company was assigned to the job of bridging the Elbe river, with one platoon from A-Company. The 1000th Treadway Bridge Company would help also. The Battalion acted in support. A-Company's motor section with supporting equipment loaded was shelled a short distance from the bridge site. One man was mortally wounded, and another was wounded in the hand. This was heartbreaking to all of us. The last shelling of the war for us, our last battle and we had lost a dear friend that was with the battalion from the beginning. The wounded man recovered and is still actively with or association.

We crossed the Elbe on this bridge and moved towards Boizenburg, Germany less than 200 miles from Berlin. We had, however, been closer to the German capital when we were at Gardenlegen, Germany (130 miles). We were told to be on the lookout for groups of enemy soldiers wanting to surrender. Caution was to be used in our forward movement to handle whatever happened en route. Well now, around the next curve was a German convoy with tanks. We stopped, a jeep went forward to investigate and found that they needed gas to continue to our rear...They had

quit fighting. IT WAS OVER. We gave them fuel and directions and continued on our way. I don't have to tell you, it was mighty eery passing the enemy convoy on that road. (They were still armed.) The farther we went, the more of the enemy we sighted, all coming in to surrender. We could hardly move on the road, there wee so many Germans moving by us. After some hours, we arrived at Boizenburg, Germany. We were not prepared for our next meeting. (we thought we had seen everything in this war).

Around the next little curve on the main street in Boizenburg we wee met by a group of American-British-French prisoners. I don't remember how many, but there were hundreds of them, half starved, some in rags, and mighty happy to see us. One of them yelled "Where the hell have you guys been? What took you so long to get here?" What a joyous meeting it was. We were warned by them not to get too close, as they still had lice. They were hungry, starved, wanted food. We had to be careful what we gave them to eat, as some of them were in bad shape. We pulled off and made camp in nearby buildings, and began the job of taking care of them.

The Battalion went on short rations so that we could feed them. We dug out our duffle bags and got them dressed up, after showers and de-lousing. Our medical staff gave instructions on what we could feed them, and every one pitched in to help. We had a helluva time keeping them from booze or food that could kill them. I don't remember where we took them or much else, except that we were happy for them and made them feel at home.

We also discovered a forced labor camp in this city of Schwerin. Men and women from all over Europe taken from their homes and interned to work for the Germans. They were in a large fenced in wire camp. They lived in unbelievably crowded buildings. Bunk beds were four and five high. However, this group was in better health than most we had seen before. We couldn't do much to help these people, except notify the proper people at HQ.

Day after day the enemy marched past our buildings. Thousands of them. They did not want to be captured by the

Russians. It was an eery feeling watching this. We numbered about 600 to 700 men, while they numbered about 118,000, plus the enemy that was facing on the Elbe crossing. (All were armed, too.) What to do, how to handle such a vast number. Just hold your breath and pray they don't turn on you.

One of our boys found that the forced labor camp across the street from our building had a shower with hot water. Saying nothing to the others he tiptoed over and partook of this heavenly gift, singing and lathering. What a day! Upon rinsing the soap from his eyes he found he was surrounded by five or six young ladies also taking showers.

While watching these Germans marching by, some of the men spotted what looked like a large formation of officers approaching. Upon stopping the group, one of the German Captains came forward speaking good English. He informed our men that Lt. General von Tuttlesprech, commanding officer of the German 13th Army Corp. wa standing next to them, and wanted to surrender to an American officer. The aide and the General were taken to A-Company's command post, where Lt. FRed Welch met them and informed the company commander that we had an Army Corp. surrendering to us. Captain Lothspeich met the General and agreed to take him to General Montgomery's HQ at Luneberg, Germany. Lt. Welch was to search them and remove items of value to us, but in the excitement forgot to do so, and the British got the pistols etc. from the General and aide. Once again the reporters and historians missed the 336th in their hour of glory. (Lothspeich got the General's hat).

We were attached to the XV111 Airborne Corps. of the Ninth Army here. We were working with the 7th Armored Division and the 8th Infantry Division. Don't know where the hell they were during all this enemy movement, for we wee all alone in the midst of the enemy.

The 336th was in the Russian zone of occupation across the Elbe River. They (the Russians) soon let us know that they wanted us out of there, and soon. We stayed. They did not like us, and we didn't like them. It was like that from the start.

There were a few incidents with Russian soldiers too. They thought they could bully us, but after a few scraps we had no more trouble with them. Our honor was upheld, it was our town.

While at Boizenburg, surveys of the entire area were made and maps produced. Also, our trucks were used to transport civilians, as well as office equipment and documents of every kind to Bonn, Germany. Don't know to this day what the deal was, but they must have been important people.

The feeling of the 336th were very mixed at this time. The fighting was over in Europe, but we were deep in Germany surrounded by hundreds of thousands of enemy troops. Could this be a trap? Would we be attacked from the rear? Rumors flew around like wildfire. Would we be sent to the Pacific to fight Japs? The uncertainty of our future was on the minds of everyone. Rumors indicated that old timers might leave the outfit, and the younger man (replacements) would go to the Pacific. We were also facing a very hostile Russian force. They were ragged looking, but a battle proven force. We knew right then, the truth about the Russians. They raped the women, and looted everything of value, and removed all type of machinery to ship back to Russia.

We were not entirely innocent of looting, but limited it mostly to booze, automobiles, fresh eggs and small souvenirs to take home. I believe that when we left Boizenburg, it was a nearly dry town. You could see fear in the eyes of the townspeople at the knowledge that soon the Russians would occupy the entire town. Many civilians left to head west into other occupation area, in order to escape the Russians.

Now I must comment on the conditions regarding food supplies for civilians. They didn't have much of anything. It was a common sight to see the women and children stand in line by our garbage cans when we were through dumping scraps from our mess kits. They would clean out the garbage cans and leave them as clean as a whistle. It was difficult for our boys to eat and watch this. I believe a lot of the men actually dumped extra garbage, so these civilians could have it.

The children would stand near us while we were eating, watching every spoonful of food going into our mouths. Each carried a small can of some type in hopes of getting something to eat. Our hearts went out to them. Many of our boys could not stand to see this. They would eat a little and give the children the rest. I had observed on several occasions men just handing out their complete mess kits filled with food to a child. There was no way we could feed all of these children as our supply line was long, and we did not have enough food to do this. We did the best we could to share with the young ones. Don't believe we had any of our emergency rations left when we left the town. It really bothered American soldiers to see children suffer so.

When war ended in Germany we stopped taking things from people unless we paid for them. Soap, food, sweets, all made good trade items. How our supply section ever kept up with our trading, I will never know.

The non-fraternization rule was still in effect, but I don't really think many of us paid much attention to it, unless the MPs were around. The German people treated us kindly and with friendship. Most American returned this gesture.

An incident happened while at Boizenburg. The first day, while searching a rather wealthy home, the man of the house appeared to meet our boys. He was partly shaved. After the search, and all dangerous alcoholic beverages were removed from the house, it was discovered that somehow the German's razor, a strop and brush had been taken by mistake. Nuf said. Another quite amusing one was: A couple of the boys got a little full of local wine, stopped in a local barn to sleep it off. In the morning when they awoke, there they were lying among twenty or thirty armed German soldiers, also asleep.

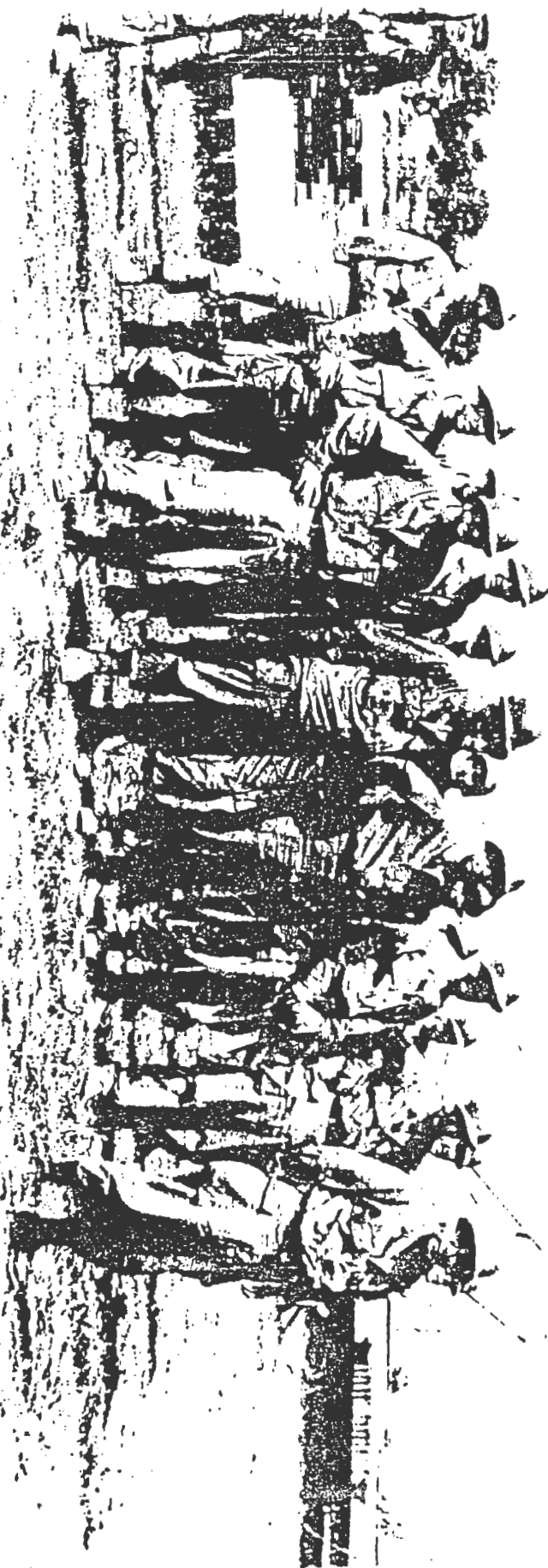
We left Boizenburg on the Elbe and the Russian Zone the last of May 1945. We proceed to Elze, Germany and eventually to the French zone. The companies were again separated pursuing different projects. Battalion Headquarters was located in Bitburg and the Companies were spread between there and Trier. We were cleaning up the area, dismantling Bailey bridges and all

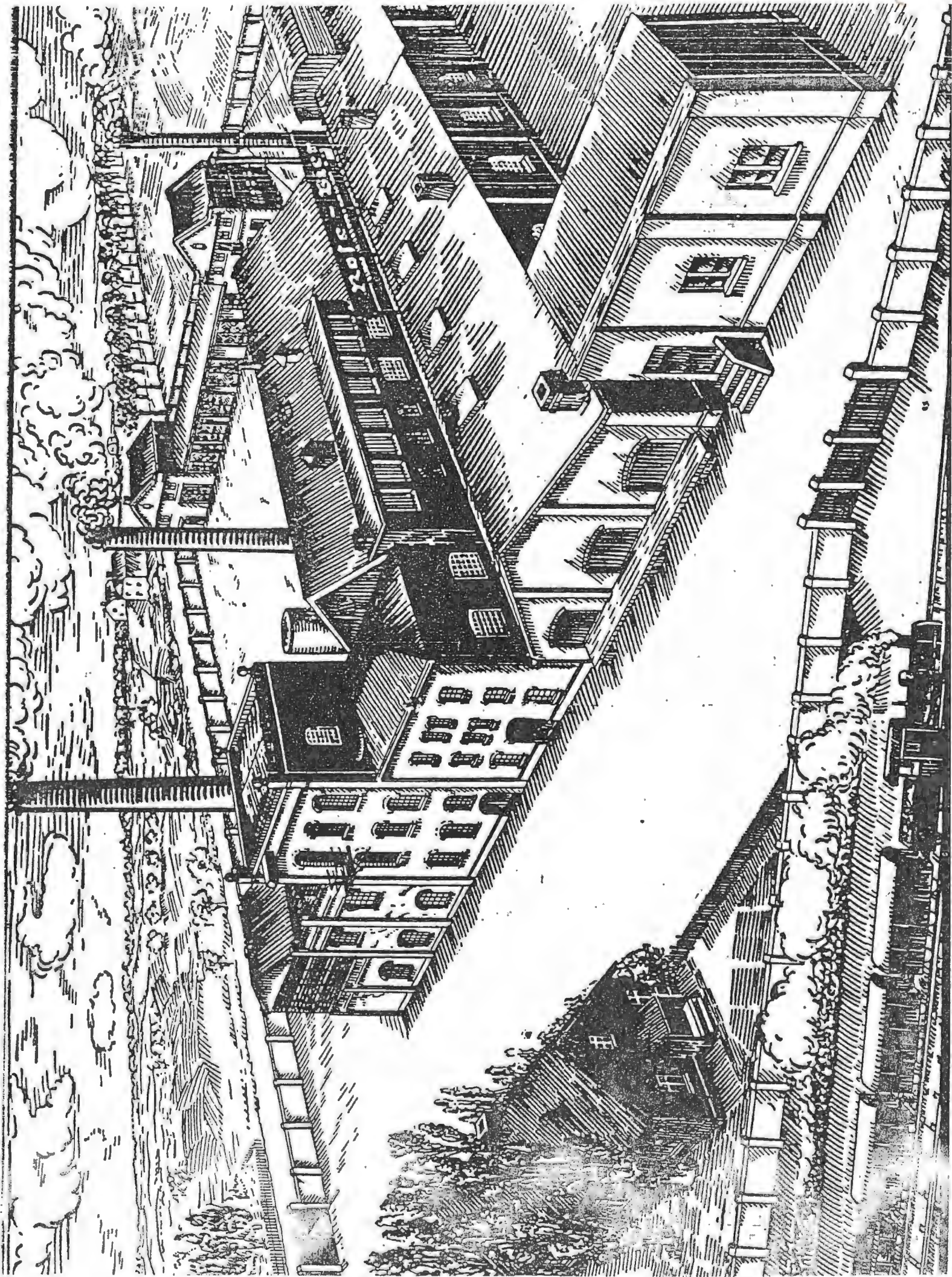
sorts of engineering jobs. One job not exactly welcomed was providing a grave registration unit with a mine removal detail to search along the Saar river basin for bodies left behind by Patton's Army during the fighting.

In late June the entire outfit was transferred from French zone to American zone. Scattered from Wurzburg to Nuremberg. Before we left the French zone the point system for eligibility to be shipped home to the States had been put into operation. The Battalion was beginning to lose officers and enlisted men who became eligible. By the time we reached the American zone, men were being shipped out rapidly and replaced by men from another outfit. We continued doing engineering jobs in the area we were overseeing German works such as sawmills, CO² Gas plant and other operations. The middle of August we moved into Nuremberg. The future home of the war crime trials. We proceeded to supervise the work of cleaning up the city. We had a quartermaster truck outfit attached to us to haul away the rubble. We had over one thousand German POWs in a stockade to draw any skill, from carpenter to plumber. We worked on the roof of the hospital and the war crime trial building. We concentrated on a residential area to house the dignitaries who would later conduct the trial.

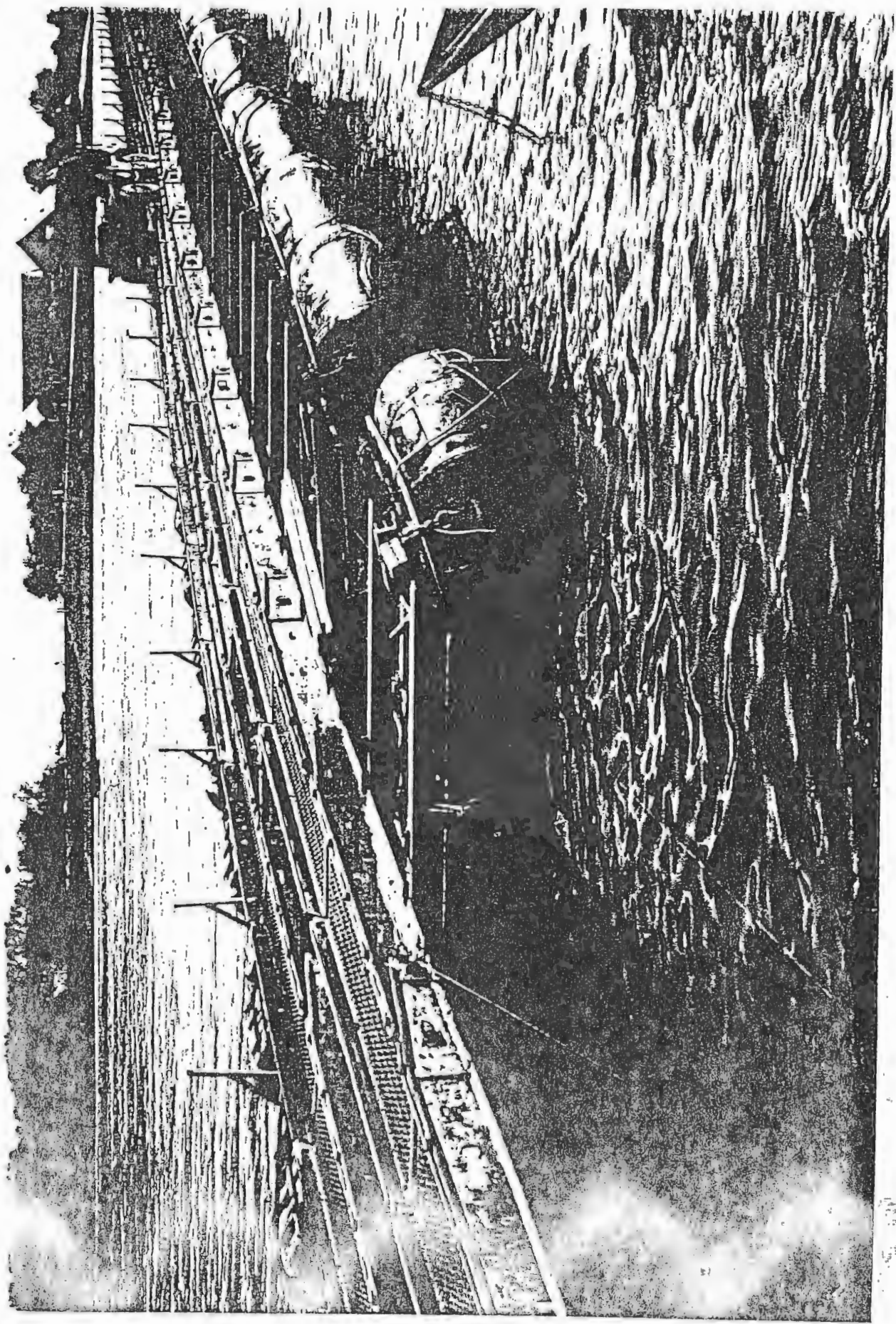
By the end of September there were three officers and only a few enlisted men left in the battalion. All had been shipped out, home to the States on their way. The 336th Engineer Combat Battalion had accomplished its mission. The men of the 336th could be proud that they had accomplished every mission they had been assigned from Omaha Beach to Nuremberg, Germany where it all ended.

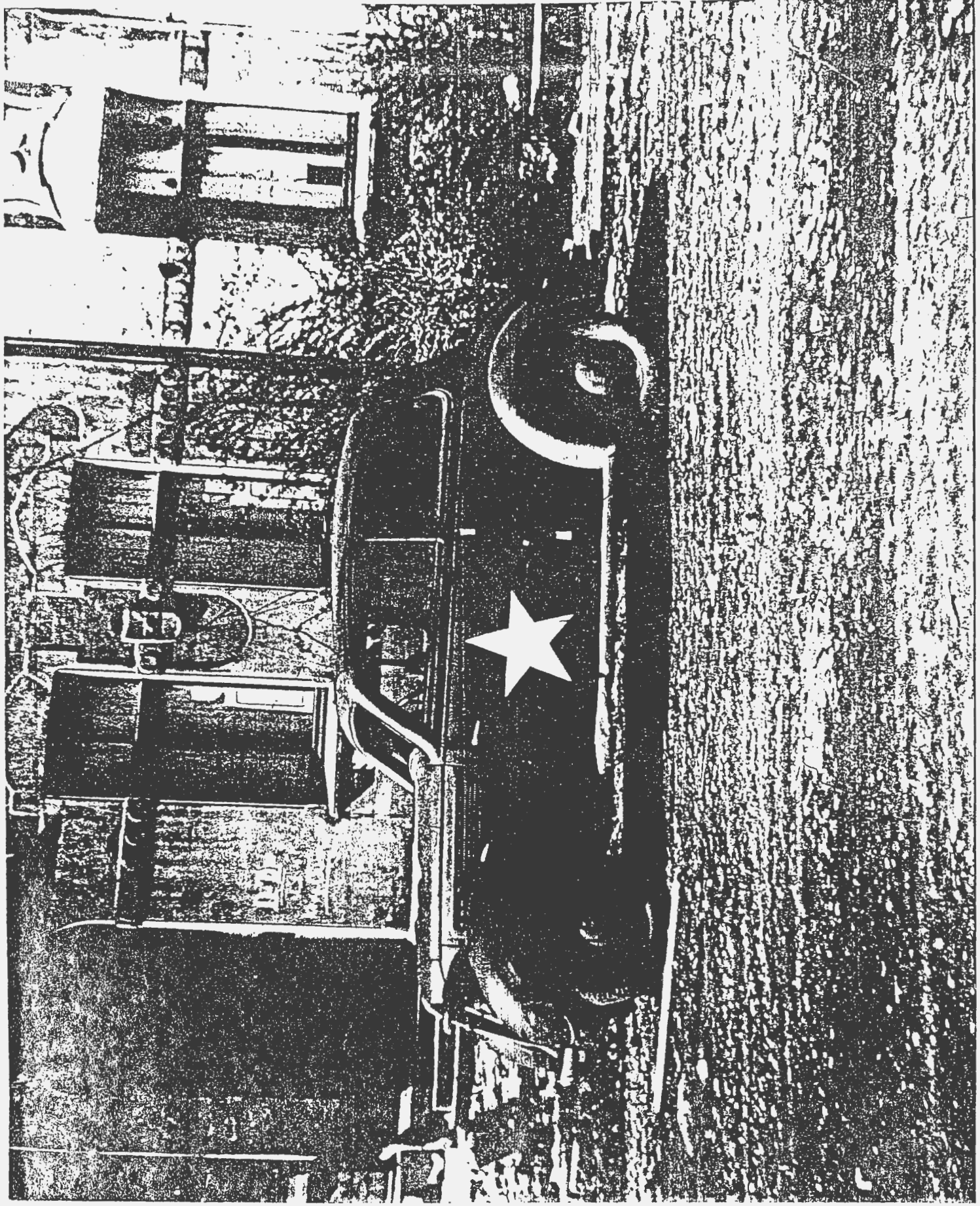
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SARG. KEASLING IN FRONT



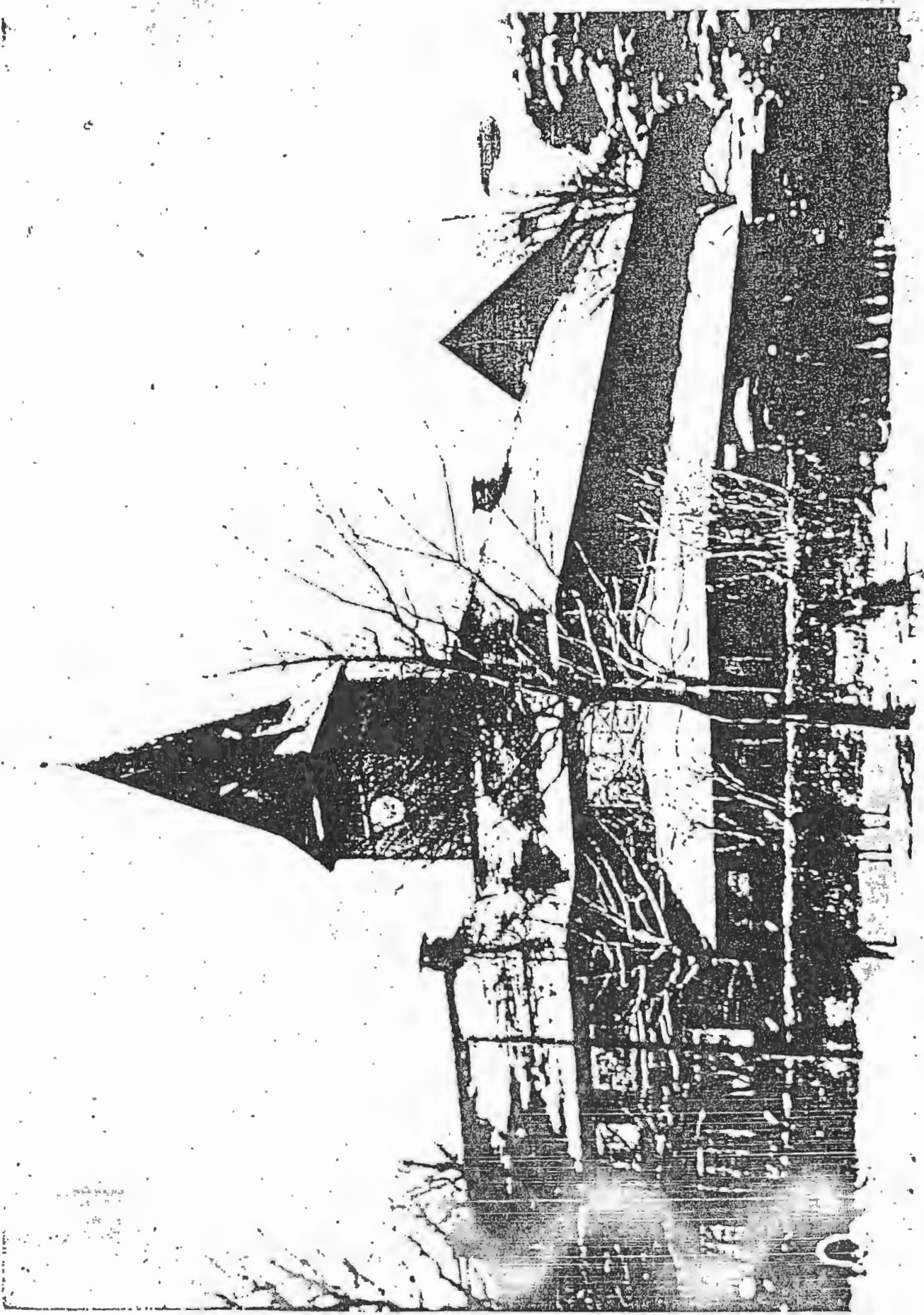


BUILD ON ELBE RIVER





PAR WENT INTO HAMBURG.



PAVERH WE STAYED AT IN HOLLAND

LT ZAPFEL

ME FRED ACHTERBERG



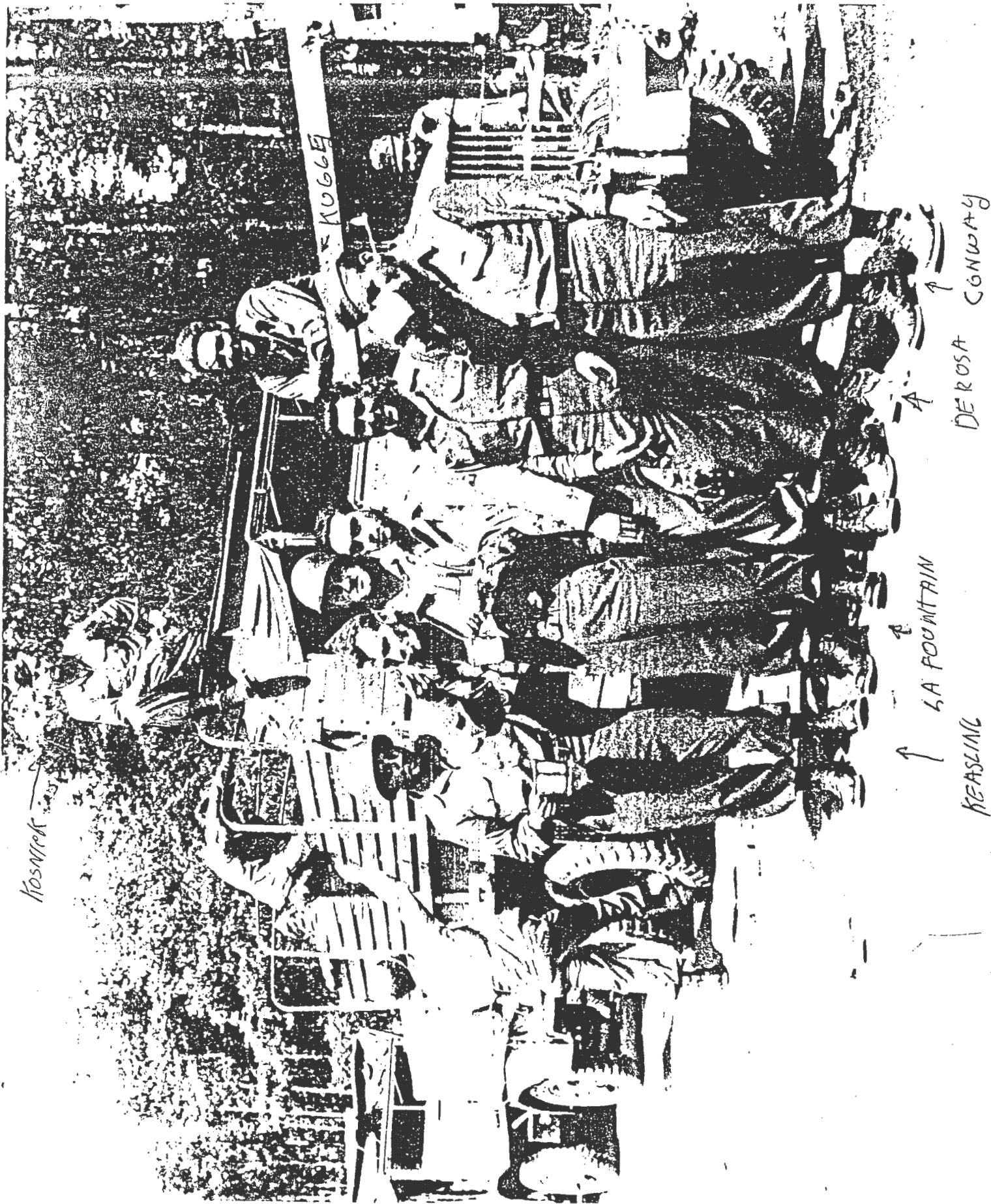
KOSNIK

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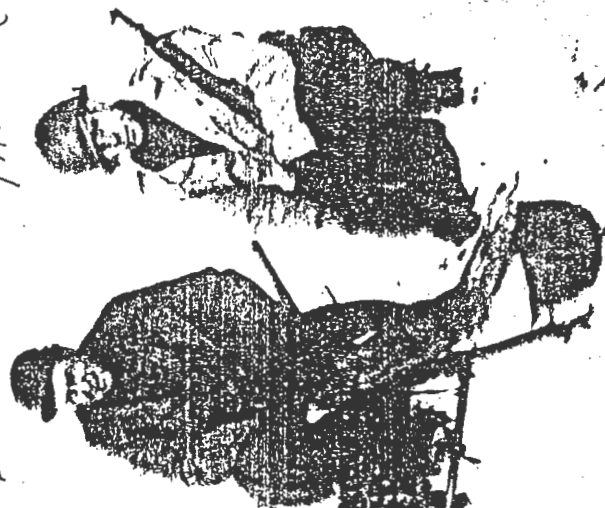
↑ LA FOUNTAIN

KEASLING

↑ DEROSA CONWAY



TANNER



DE ROSE



HOGAN



BONNELL



THIS IS WHERE WE RELIEVED
A INF BAT

LT ZAFFLE

LT McGRADY





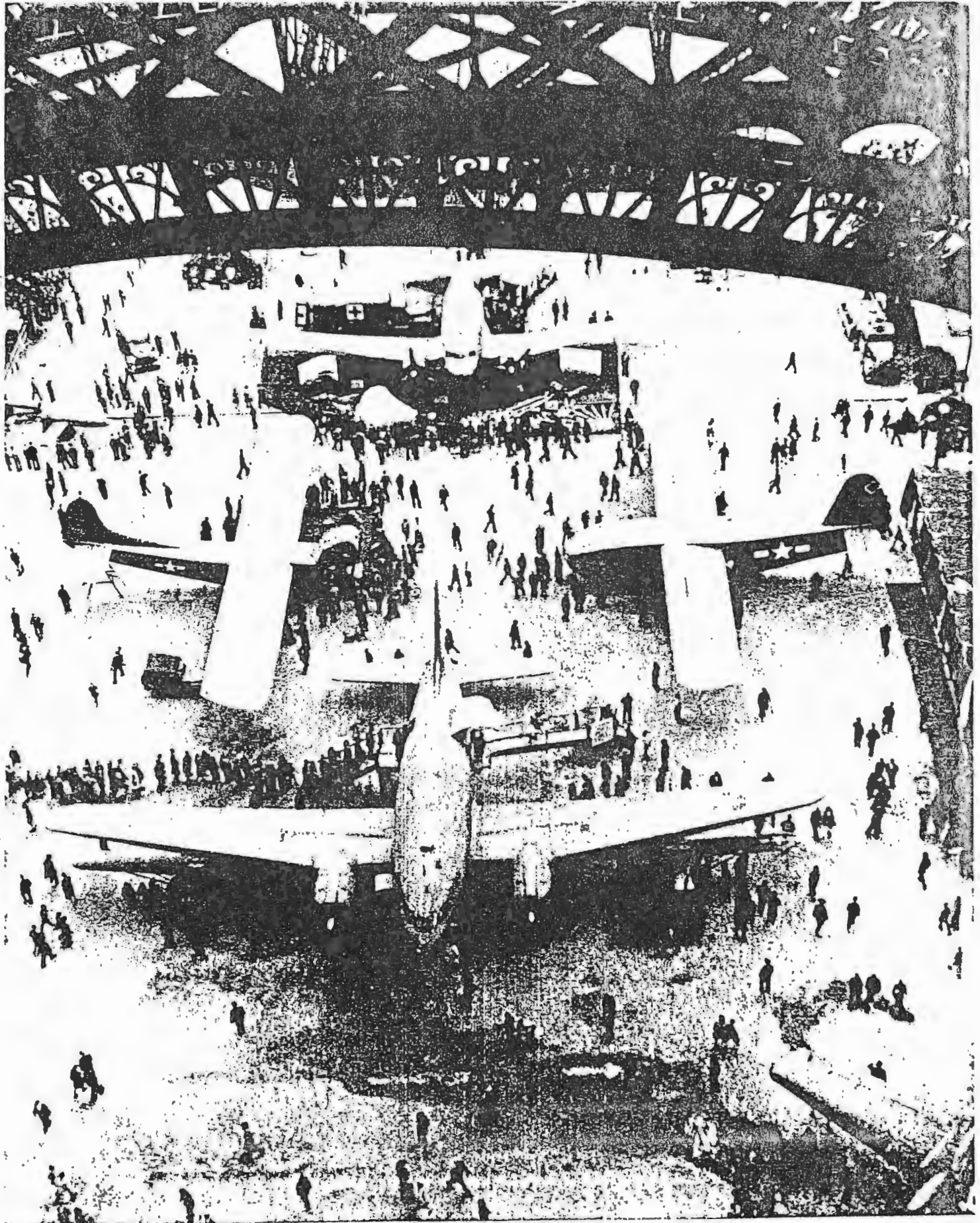
JIM
CONWAY
in
nursing
home

JOHN
MATTUCCIO

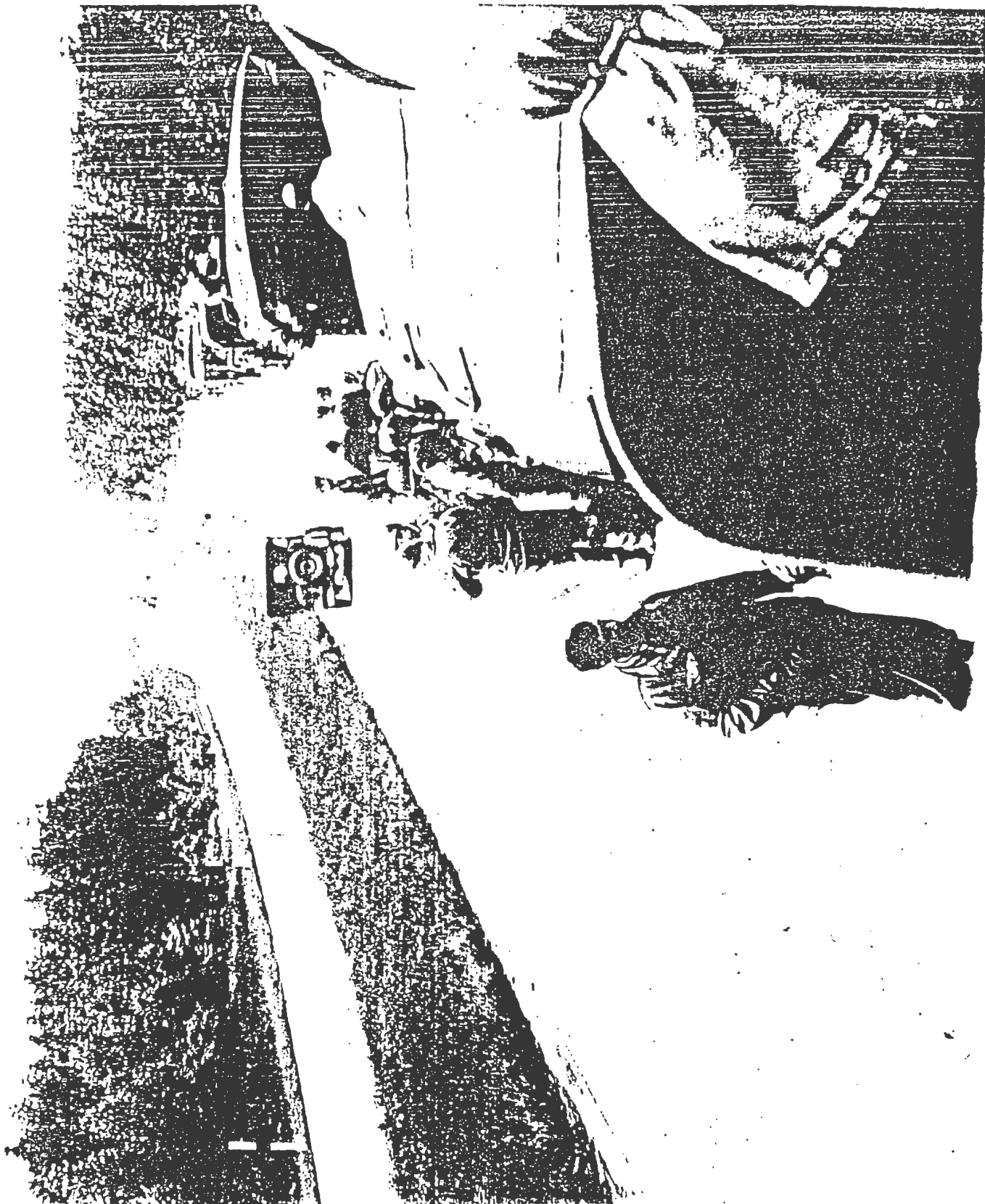


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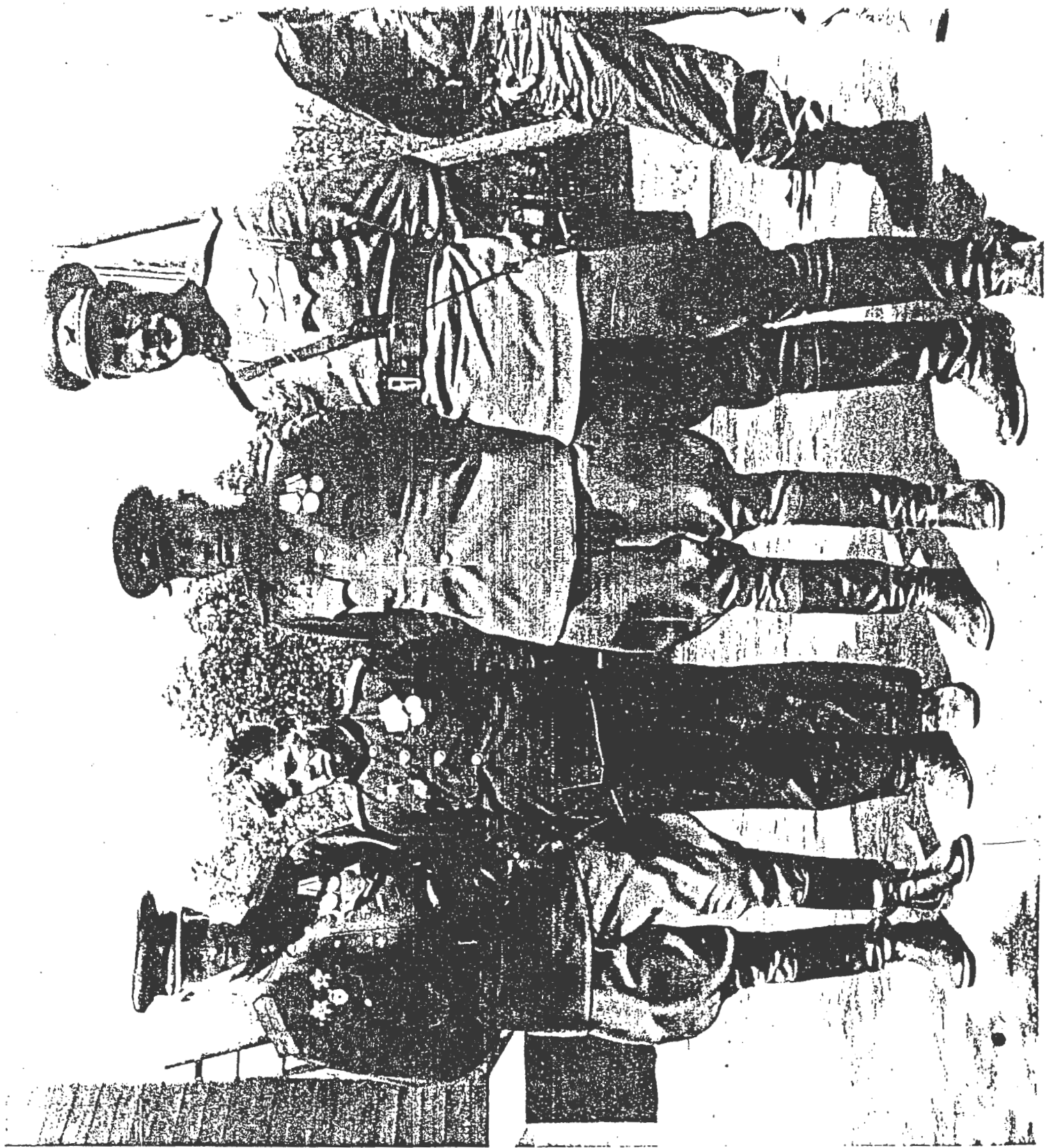
AIRSHOW UNDER THE
EIFFEL TOWER.



OK convey some pictures



RUSSIANS W & MIA 111



Miscellaneous Craft

- 1 AGC (Flagship)
- 1 DD (Relief Flagship)
- 1 LSD
- 15 USCG Rescue Craft
- 9 Dispatch Boats
- 1 PT (Dispatch Boat - Flag)

5. The ships and craft together with the Army forces assigned to Assault Force "O" were organized into the following Task Groups:-

- (a) Landing Force (124.1)
- (b) Shore Party (124.2)
- (c) Assault Group O-1 (124.3)
- (d) Assault Group O-2 (124.4)
- (e) Assault Group O-3 (124.5)
- (f) Assault Group O-4 (124.6)
- (g) Escorts (124.7)
- (h) Gunfire Support Craft (124.8)
- (i) Bombardment Group (124.9)
- (j) Sweeper Group (124.10)
- (k) Far Shore Service Group OMAHA (124.11)
- (l) Dispatch Boats (124.12)
- (m) Rescue Vessels (124.13)

6. The Landing Force was composed of elements of the V Corps, U.S. Army and included the First U.S. Infantry Division, Reinforced, less the 26th Regimental Combat Team, plus the 116th Regimental Combat Team, the 115th Regimental Combat Team, and the 2d and 5th Ranger Battalions. This Force was supported by a Shore Party consisting of 2/3ds of the 5th Engineer Special Brigade, 1/3d of the 6th Engineer Special Brigade, and the Provisional Engineer Special Brigade Group Commander and Staff. Also included in the Shore Party were 2/3ds of the 6th Naval Beach Battalion and 1/3d of the 7th Naval Beach Battalion. The remainder of the V Corps, and the remainder of the Engineer Special Brigade Group, and of the 6th and 7th Naval Beach Battalions comprised the Landing Force and Shore Party of Force "B" which landed on the same beach as Force "C".

7. The Landing Attack Plan was as follows: The 16th RCT attacked on the left on Beaches FOG GREEN and EASY RED with two battalions in assault and one following. The 116th RCT attacked on the right with two battalions in assault and one following, on Beaches EASY GREEN, DOG RED, DOG WHITE, and DOG GREEN. One assault battalion of the 116th RCT landed three companies abreast on Beaches EASY GREEN, DOG RED and DOG WHITE; the other landed three companies in column on Beach DOG GREEN. Nine of the twelve companies of the 2d and 5th Ranger Battalions landed on Beach DOG GREEN while the remaining three Ranger companies landed on the POINT DU HOC in Sector CHARLIE to capture an enemy battery located there which threatened the Transport Area. The 18th RCT landed immediately after the

16th RCT on the same beaches. The Rifle Companies of the 115th embarked in LCI(L)s were to land on call on the same beaches as the 116th unless otherwise directed. The landing was preceded by a forty minute naval bombardment at previously designated targets. A bombing attack was scheduled for delivery between H - 30 minutes and H hour. This, however, failed to materialize. In addition to the bombardment by naval gunfire from supporting ships and craft, tanks embarked in LCT(A)s fired on targets of opportunity during the last 3000 yards of their approach to the beach and 105 mm SP artillery embarked in LCTs likewise fired during their passage through the boat lanes. LCT(R)s and LCS(S)s were scheduled to deliver a full discharge of rockets immediately prior to the "touchdown" of the infantry. The fire of the gunfire support craft and of the destroyers close inshore where they could observe the actual landing was to continue until such time as the advancing troops were actually endangered by it instead of being lifted at a pre-arranged clock time. In general, no equipment or troops were scheduled to land between the arrival of the demolition parties at H - 3 minutes and H - 30 minutes. The whole plan of assault, therefore, might be described as follows: To destroy enemy defenses and cover the shoreward progress of the leading assault waves by naval and air bombardment; to land a wave of infantry preceded and supported by tanks to storm the enemy beach defenses, and cover the operations of the combat demolition parties while the latter were engaged in clearing lanes through the obstacles in the tidal area; and as soon as the lanes were open, to follow through with successive waves of infantry, artillery, motorized equipment, and stores, in order to reduce the remaining enemy defenses and seize the beachhead.

8. Force "O" was assembled at five ports: PORTLAND, POOLE, EXMOUTH, FALMOUTH, and BMLFAST. With the exception of the escort and control vessels and some of the minor landing craft destined for POOLE, the assembly was completed May 30th, 1944. Prior to sortie, the disposition of the Force was as follows:

(a) At PORTLAND-WEYMOUTH:

4 APAs	6 LCM(CRU)s
3 XAPs	19 LCM (NCDU)s
3 LSI(S)s	32 LCP(L)s
3 LSI(H)s	2 Br. ODDs
33 LCI(L)s	2 Fr. Frigates
3 LCHs	7 PCs
24 IST	4 SCs
1 FDT	3 ML-970s
20 Rhino Ferries	3 MLs
147 LCTs	2 HDMLs
1 LSD	5 SGBs
5 LCCs	18 MSs
15 USCG Cutters	6 Danlayers
3 DEs	8 MLs (Navigational leaders for MSs)

(a) At PORTLAND-WEYMOUTH (Continued)

1 PT	8 BYMSs
9 US DDs	9 MSs
3 Hunt DDs	1 ARL
7 MTB	1 Accommodation Ship

(b) At POOLE:

1 LCH	20 LBOs
5 LCG(L)s	5 LBWs
9 LCT(R)s	16 LBEs
7 LCFs	2 LBKs
17 LCM (NCDU)s	9 Fueling Trawlers
83 LCMs	2 ML-970s
6 LCM(CRU)s	4 MLs
8 Seaplane Tenders	2 PCs
72 LBV(2)s	2 SCs

(c) At BELFAST:

2 BBs
3 CLs

(d) At EXMOUTH:

3 A/S Trawlers

(e) At FAIRMOUTH:

1 Pontoon Drydock

All ships and craft were loaded at the assembly ports indicated above except twelve LCI(L)s carrying Rifle Companies of the 115th Regimental Combat Team which were loaded in PLYMOUTH, but sailed from PORTLAND, and sixteen LCTs carrying DD tanks which were loaded at TORCROSS in START BAY but likewise sailed from PORTLAND. The loading was smooth and uneventful except for the necessity to make several substitutions involving a shift of loads in LCTs. This was occasioned by casualties to the craft, two of which were due to enemy action. They were the result of damage from mines dropped in the harbor during an air raid on the night of 27-28 May. All loading was completed by the evening of June 3d.

9. For the movement from the assembly ports to the Assault Area, Force "O" was organized into five convoys, designated Convoy Group O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, and O-5, respectively. Convoy Groups O-1 and O-2 were assault convoys, O-3, O-4 and O-5 follow-ups. June 5th was originally designated as D Day. On the night of 3-4 June, the weather was clear but

with a rising wind. Convoy O-2 got underway from the PORTLAND-WEYMOUTH Area and from POOLE shortly after midnight as planned. After it had been underway for several hours, orders were received postponing D day 24 hours. Immediately the pre-arranged postponement signal was sent to the Convoy Commander by radio, and in addition, destroyers were dispatched to notify him in case he failed to receive the message. Upon receipt of the delaying order, Convoy O-2 reversed course and returned to port. A large landing craft convoy of Force "U" which had likewise started for the Assault Area was unable to beat its way back to westward against the wind which had reached near gale force, and was forced to take refuge in PORTLAND HARBOR and WEYMOUTH ROAD. From the arrival of these ships and craft of Force "U" until their departure the following morning, the efforts of this Command were chiefly absorbed in getting them re-organized and underway on time. The only sheltered berths available were so located as to require their crossing the track of Convoy O-2 which had to sortie at about the same time. This resulted in some interference with Convoy O-2, in the sortie during darkness, but not enough to cause serious delay.

Convoy Group O-1 cleared PORTLAND HARBOR on the afternoon of June 5. The ANCON, Guide, passed through the breakwater at 1400. Unfortunately the transports of the convoy were headed away from the harbor entrance riding to the fresh westerly wind, and they had trouble in turning inside the harbor and getting headed out. This delayed their taking station in the convoy formation, and it was not until 2000 that all of them were in position.

10. The movement of Convoy O-1 and O-2 to the Assault Area was comparatively uneventful. In Convoy O-2, several of the LCP(L)s being towed had to be cast adrift and abandoned, and two LCT(A)s foundered, but the crews were removed in all cases. Convoy Group O-1 encountered one floating mine during daylight, which was avoided by an emergency turn signal. Four times between the entry into the approach channel and the arrival at the Transport Area the Guide had to reduce speed or stop entirely. Two of these delays were occasioned by interference from landing craft from Force "U" which had been set to the eastward by the strong tidal currents, and were crossing Channel 3 from east to west in an attempt to regain position in their own approach channel. On both occasions the ANCON was forced out of the swept channel in order to avoid running through the craft convoys. The other two delays were caused by the stopping of the Bombardment Group, which was immediately ahead of Convoy O-1. The second time this occurred, no further delay could be accepted, and Convoy Group O-1 passed the Bombardment Group and continued into the Transport Area, where the ANCON anchored in position: 49° 29' N. 00° 42' W. at 0251 D day. The remaining ships of Convoy Group O-1 and the landing craft of Convoy Group O-2 followed rapidly into their proper positions.

the same time. Due to the state of the sea, the loss of the DD tanks, the absence of five LCT(A)s and damage to others by enemy gunfire, the order of landing was somewhat mixed. Simultaneously with the landing and the cessation of the naval gunfire bombardment, the enemy commenced firing. This fire from artillery, mortars, machine guns, and small arms was heavy and accurate, and casualties were numerous. Many of the tanks which had reached the shore line were knocked out, and losses to the infantry advancing shoreward through the obstacles, and to the demolition parties trying to clear lanes through them, were severe. A considerable portion of the equipment of the demolition parties was lost in the landing due to the surf. The limited time for working on the obstacles before they were covered by the rapidly rising tide and the devastating effect of the defensive fire further reduced the effectiveness of the demolition parties. Only five gaps were cleared all the way into the beach, and three part way in, instead of the sixteen planned. Most of these were inadequately marked. The result was that during the high tide immediately following the assault the only opening through the obstacles that was in use for a considerable period was one lane on EASY RED Beach.

14. At the request of the Commanding General, V Corps, the Commander Assault Group O-2 was directed at H hour to land troops of the 115th RCT at H + 4 hours. Thus, all the Landing Force embarked in Force "O" were committed from the beginning of the assault. After the initial waves, landing continued throughout the forenoon and afternoon of D day. Due to the failure of the demolition parties to clear and mark gaps through the underwater obstacles, and to the heavy enemy fire, great difficulty was experienced in getting anyone or anything ashore. Some craft carrying infantry and elements of the Shore Party managed to land their personnel, but the bulk of the craft proceeding shoreward were stopped between the seaward row of obstacles and the line of departure. With the strong tide, fresh wind, and choppy sea, this soon resulted in a mass of craft in which all semblance of wave organization was lost until the Deputy Assault Group Commanders arrived on the scene, took charge of the situation, moved the craft to seaward to give them more room and reformed the waves as best they could. In the meanwhile, most of the tanks which had reached the shore had been knocked out by enemy artillery fire or by mines, or were caught in the obstacles and flooded by the rising tide, and the personnel, both the assault troops and the Shore Party, were pinned down on the beaches just above high water by enemy fire; few, if any, troops actually crossed the beach during the early hours of the forenoon. The supporting destroyers and gunfire support craft stood in as close to the beach as the depth of the water would allow and engaged all the defensive installations which they could locate. Despite this, however, little progress had been made prior to 1100 when there was still considerable machine gun fire, sniping,

11. The weather at this time was unfavorable, but landing operations were possible. The sea was choppy with wind Force 5 from the southwest. The sky was partially overcast with visibility about ten miles. Due to the wind and sea, debarkation from transports into LCVs was difficult. Fortunately, plans had been made to rail-load boats whenever possible, and those which could not be rail-loaded were loaded despite the unfavorable conditions. The trip of the LCVs from the Transport Area ten miles off shore into the line of departure in the face of fresh wind and choppy sea was neither easy nor pleasant. Nevertheless, they arrived at the line of departure in fairly good order. Due to the darkness and confusion in the Transport Area the LCT with DD tanks, the LCT(A)s and the LCMs with demolition parties straggled considerably in their approach toward the line of departure. Two LCT(A)s foundered before reaching the Transport Area. One LCT(A) strayed to the Force "U" Area and did not return until several hours later. Two more LCT(A)s had gone so far to the eastward that they could not get back in time for their part in the initial assault wave. Thus, five of the 16 LCT(A)s scheduled for the first wave were missing.

12. The pre-landing Naval bombardment was carried out in accordance with the plan, but the air bombardment scheduled for delivery on the OMAHA Beaches between H - 30 minutes and H hour did not materialize for reasons unknown to the Force Commander. Its absence was felt severely when the landing commenced. During the naval bombardment the enemy made no reply of any kind. Several competent observers have stated that during this entire period only one shot was fired from the enemy batteries ashore and this missed.

13. The order of landing of the first four waves on all beaches was - DD tanks between H - 10 and H - 5 minutes; LCT(A)s carrying tanks and tank dozers for obstacle clearance at H hour; a wave of infantry at H + 1 minute; and demolition parties at H + 3 minutes. DD tanks were to be launched from the LCTs in which they were embarked approximately six thousand yards off shore unless weather conditions prohibited, and were to proceed in to their assigned beaches from that point under their own power. The decision whether to launch at 6000 yards or to close the beaches was left to the senior Army tank officer and senior Naval officer in the LCTs of the two assault groups. Those on the left flank in Assault Group O-1, preceding the 16th RCT, were launched as planned. The sea conditions, however, were such that all but two or three of them foundered before they reached the shore. The responsible officers on the right gauged the sea conditions more accurately and took their LCTs in to a point where the DD tanks grounded as soon as they were launched. Therefore, all the DD tanks preceding the assault troops of the 116th RCT reached the shore. Information is not available as to the exact time of landing or the order of landing waves on all of the beaches. The first landings on EASY RED and DOG GREEN were made at 0635 and it is believed that the leading waves landed on the other beaches at approximately

the same time. Due to the absence of five LCT order of landing was soon and the cessation of the firing. This fire from arms was heavy and accounted tanks which had reached the infantry advancing demolition parties trying considerable portion of in the landing due to obstacles before they devastating effect of mass of the demolition into the beach, and the Most of these were in high tide immediately obstacles that was in RED Beach.

14. At the Commander Assault Group the 115th RCT at H Force "O" were committed initial waves, landing of D day. Due to the mark gaps through the great difficulty was Some craft carrying land their personnel were stopped between ture. With the storm resulted in a mass was lost until the took charge of the more room and refilled most of the tanks enemy artillery flooded by the river and the Shore Patrol water by enemy fire during the early gunfire support water would allow could locate. Due to 1100 when the

artillery, and mortar fire on the beaches between the exits, and opposite the exits the condition was critical. A number of enemy strong points in the beach were still holding out and our troops were not able to move inland. The first encouraging news came at 1100 from a message to Commander Transport Division THREE, intercepted by the Force Commander, to the effect that German defenders were leaving their posts and surrendering to U.S. troops. Shortly after that another message from a member of the V Corps Staff embarked in a DUKW near the shore line stated that the troops were advancing up the western slope of the exit from Sector EASY. By 1300, COLIEVILLE was taken, and by 1330, a general advance began up slopes of EASY RED and FOX GREEN Beaches. By 1340 the beaches of Sectors EASY and DOG were clear of opposition except for artillery and mortar fire. At 1400, the Commanding Officer of the Engineer Special Brigade Group left the ANCON to set up headquarters on the beach.

Early in the forenoon, reports had been received from the minesweepers stating that the sweep of the Transport Area and the channels for the Bombardment Group from the Transport Area to the 10-fathom curve had been completed with negative results. Because of this, the Force Commander felt that the transports could close the beaches if necessary. However, in view of their prospective early departure from the Assault Area, it was decided that the delay caused by the movement of the ships would result in a net loss rather than a gain, and they were left in the Transport Area until they completed unloading and departed.

15. Landing of personnel and vehicles from transports and LSTs continued throughout the afternoon of D day. During this time, the beaches were subject to enemy artillery and mortar fire which, while neither heavy nor sustained, was deadly accurate. The fire was obviously observed, because enemy batteries would be silent until craft beached, when there would be a few quick salvos, usually right on the target. This artillery fire caused considerable loss, and was doubly disturbing because neither enemy observers nor batteries could be located. In fact, repeated requests for U.S. vessels to cease firing on the beaches were made by personnel ashore and observers to seaward, who thought that it was our own ships firing into our own troops. Actually no U.S. ships were firing at the times the requests were made, and when they did fire, they were firing at targets inland rather than on the beach. About 1430, Commander Force "B" with Convoy B-2, consisting principally of LCI(L)s and HMS OCEANWAY, stood into the Assault Area. Anchorages close to the beaches were assigned to this convoy and Commander Force "B" was directed to land the troops embarked in accordance with plan, using LCVPs as necessary to unload LCI(L)s. At the same time the Deputy Commanders of Assault Groups O-1, O-2, and O-3 were ordered to provide small landing craft to assist in landing of Force "B". Meanwhile the LSI(S)s and LSI(H)s which had carried the Ranger Battalions were sailed to the ISLE OF WIGET, and information was received that the transports of Assault Groups O-1, O-2, and O-3 would complete unloading and be ready to sail by 1700. They sailed about 1800. By 1530, advance elements of the First Division and

Twenty-ninth Division Staffs were setting up command posts ashore near the beach exits from Sectors EASY and DOG respectively, and ST. LAURENT was partially occupied in addition to the capture of COLLEVILLE. At 1540, the OCEANWAY was directed to close FOX GREEN Beach and discharge her twenty (20) LCHs carrying M-4 tanks, these tanks to be attached to the 16th RCT. This was completed by 1715. Convoy Group O-3 and B-1 arrived together about 1600. Although information as to the actual loss of landing craft was meager at this time, indications were that a considerable number were sunk or badly damaged, and at 1700, the Force Commander requested the Commander Service Force to sail ARL-4 to the OMAHA Assault Area as soon as practicable. At 1715, the Commanding General, First Division and his Staff left the ANCON to establish their headquarters on the beach. By 1730, except for sniping and the recurring artillery and mortar fire, hostile action against the beach area had ceased and the work of organizing the beaches for further unloading was progressing in orderly fashion.

16. In accordance with the request of the Commanding General, First Division, the 26th RCT was landed in the early evening. All Rifle Companies of the regiment were ashore by 2100. Between 2320 and 2340 the air attack which had been anticipated all day was finally delivered. There were no radar warnings of the approach of the hostile planes and the first information of the impending attack was the sight and sound of an enemy plane which passed over the flagship at low altitude. Only a few more planes came over, however, of which three were shot down. Several bombs were dropped in the Transport Area but caused no damage. This ended D day.

17. At 0045 D + 1, the Commanding General, V Corps, informed the Force Commander that his line was generally along the road from VIERVILLE through ST. LAURENT to about one mile south of COLLEVILLE, and that he intended to attack with the beachhead line as his objective. About 0045, in accordance with a request from the Officer in Command of the Combat Demolition Units, Commander Service Force was requested by dispatch to send additional explosives and demolition equipment for the NCDUs from the United Kingdom by the quickest available means. The response to the request was prompt and efficient. The material was assembled and loaded on a PT which arrived in the Assault Area about 0900 the following day. At 0550, in accordance with the request of the Commanding General, V Corps, Commander Force "B" was directed to land the 175th Infantry on Beach FOX GREEN. This was the last infantry regiment of the First and Twenty-ninth Divisions to be landed, and constituted the Corps Reserve. There was some delay in the execution of this order and the troops did not actually commence to land until between 1000 and 1100. Convoy Group O-4 stood in on the morning watch about twelve hours late. Convoy B-3 and the first of the build-up personnel convoys consisting of the transports SUSAN E. ANTHONY, GOETHALS, BORINGUEN, and SIMONDS, likewise arrived. Just to

seaward of the Assault Area the SUSAN B. ANTHONY struck a mine and eventually sank about 0950. All of the personnel aboard were taken off before she went down. During the forenoon, surveys for the establishment of GOOSEBERRY 2 and MULBERRY "A" were commenced. A report from the Commanding General First Army as of 1000 this date stated that the Landing Force was moving forward and now held a line through ST. HONORINE DES PERTES, GOOS LE HAMEL, LOUVIERES and GRUCHY. Unloading of the remaining LSTs and LCT(4)s of Force "O" and Force "B" and of the transports of the build-up convoy continued through the afternoon and evening of D / 1. By 2200, all personnel from the GOETHALS, BORINQUEN and SIMONDS had been landed. Except for the transports this unloading was done by LCT(5) and (6)s and Rhino Ferries. In the early evening Convoy Group O-5, the last of Force "O", arrived. It also was some twelve hours late. Work progressed slowly because of the obstacles which still impeded access to the beach despite the efforts of the demolition parties who were working on them whenever tidal conditions permitted. In the light of later experience it is regretted that a practice of drying out the LSTs and larger LCTs was not commenced immediately. This would have materially speeded up the unloading and would have freed the LCT(5)s and (6)s and Rhino Ferries for unloading MT ships which were beginning to arrive. A.N.C.X.F's directive stated specifically, however, that LSTs were not to be dried out except in an emergency, and at this stage of the operation it did not appear to the Force Commander that the situation could be so construed.

18. Between midnight and morning of D / 2 day, there were two air raid alarms; the first about 0105, and the other about 0610. Neither developed into a serious attack although it was believed at the time that some mines had been dropped in the Assault Area. Repeated sweeps, however, failed to detect them. Clearing of obstacles and unloading had continued during the night of D / 1, and by 1000 D / 2, all LSTs of Force "O" had finished discharging. About 1100 the 5th Ranger Battalion which had landed on DOG GREEN Beach with the 116th Infantry and had been fighting its way steadily westward along the shore line established contact with the survivors of the three Ranger companies which had landed on the POINTE DU HOE to knock out the enemy batteries there. The latter had accomplished their mission, but had been hemmed in within a small area near the tip of the point where they had been under constant enemy attack for more than forty-eight hours. Repeated requests had been received from them for boats to evacuate wounded, additional ammunition, and reinforcements. These requests had been passed to the Commanding General, V Corps, and boats to carry the reinforcements were offered. Gun-fire support ships were doing their best to help by delivering supporting fires as requested by the Liaison Officer with the Rangers, but their situation was desperate. Finally, on the afternoon of D / 1, two boats from the Flagship with twenty-five additional Rangers, plus small arms ammunition, food and medical supplies landed on the POINTE DU HOE and delivered them to the group besieged there. On their way out, the boats

evacuated the wounded. Despite the fact that the beaches had been cleared of organized enemy resistance for more than thirty-six hours, on the morning of D / 2, there was still occasional sniping from men hidden in caves and tunnels in the face of the slopes overlooking the beaches, and sporadic artillery fire on the beaches likewise continued. Unloading of the remaining ships of Force "B" and of the MT ships and coasters which were arriving in a steady stream continued throughout D / 2 Day, but it was very slow. The reason for this will be discussed later. By the morning of D / 2 Day, it had become evident that additional ferry craft would be required if the planned rate of unloading was to be reached; and since Rhino Ferries were proving the most useful craft in the Ferry Service, a request was sent to Commander Service Force to forward immediately five spare Rhinos complete with bulldozers, tugs, and other equipment. Later the same day in order to coordinate minesweeping activities in the Western Task Force Area, the 31st Minesweeping Flotilla, the 104th Motor Minesweeping Flotilla, and the 167th BYMS Flotilla were directed to report for duty to Commander MS West in CHIMO. Commander MS West then assumed responsibility for sweeping operations in both Force "U" and Force "O" Assault Areas. At 1100 D / 2, Shuttle Control was activated and assumed responsibility for receiving and sailing convoys. In response to the Force Commander's message of two days previous, ARL-4 arrived in the Assault Area and reported for duty about noon the same day. Repairs to damaged LCTs commenced immediately. Ships of the GOOSEBERRY Project were being placed in position and sunk, and the first MULBERRY tows arrived. About 2100, reports were received that vessels near the beach were under fire from heavy guns and the Force Commander was ordered to move all ships about two miles to seaward. Subsequent investigation of the reports indicated that probably the explosion of the blasting charges used to sink the ships of the GOOSEBERRY had been mistaken for enemy gunfire at the landing craft and ships unloading were moved in again the following morning. Considerable confusion had resulted, however, in the spotting of the coasters and MT vessels to meet Army demands for selective unloading and this caused further delay. Up until the afternoon of D / 2 Day, the LCTs, LCI(L)s, LCMs and Rhino Ferries ferrying personnel and equipment from ship to shore had been operating under the direct control of the Deputy Assault Group Commanders, and the prospective NOIC, Captain CAMP, who had been embarked with the Deputy Commander O-3 throughout the assault, had not commenced to function. On D / 2, the Force Commander, after a conference with Captain CAMP and the Deputy Group Commander, directed the former to assume command of all ferry craft and to perform the functions of NOIC with the Deputy Assault Group Commanders temporarily assisting him. At this time, Captain CAMP with part of his organization was still embarked in LCI(L) 492 in company with the Deputy Commander Assault Group O-3, and the remainder of his organization and equipment was on board the Accommodation Ship, ELEAZAR WHEELOCK, which had arrived in the Assault Area the previous day.

6 June (D-day)

0635 First wave landed on DOG GREEN; first wave landed on EASY RED.
0636 Second wave landed on DOG GREEN.
0638 Second wave landed EASY GREEN.
0641 PC 552 reported that DD tanks for EASY GREEN foundered.
0644 Com LCT Flot 19 reported LCT 2041 about to be abandoned at sea.
0645 Ordered Control Vessels to report time of landings on all beaches.
0647 LCC 50 reported one LCA with troops capsized on the right flank of DOG GREEN.
0705 HMS TALYBONT reported targets 82 and 83 still 50% active.
0729 USS SATTERLEE reported she had established communications with Rangers ashore at Pointe du Hoc.
0745 Granted permission to CTG 124.6 to close beach by swept channel to assist damaged LCAs.
0805 HMS TANATSIDE reported completion of all bombardment missions (100% of her bombardment ammunition expended).
0807 8th wave landed on EASY RED. Control vessel EASY RED unable to distinguish all waves between first at 0635 and eighth but believes they are evenly spaced and on time.
Boats returning to USS THOMAS JEFFERSON report mines near beach endangering landings and many boats swamped as a result of obstacles and seas.
0817 CTG 124.13 ordered to send 5 rescue boats to the vicinity of beach for rescue work.
0824 CTG 124.9 reported that enemy batteries at MAISY apparently still in commission and that he was keeping them under fire.
0840 15th wave landed on EASY RED.
0843 Senior Officer 167th Minesweeping Flotilla reported no mines found in sweeps completed so far.
0845 HMS TANATSIDE reported to CTF 124 that all targets were successfully bombarded.
0849 Report received that First Battalion of 116th Infantry had landed but were being retarded by machine gun fire.
0859 CTG 124.4 reported that obstacles not cleared and heavy machine gun fire on beach DOG GREEN.
0900 Army observer in boat 100 yards off DOG RED beach reported several companies of 16th Infantry were on EASY RED and FOX RED beaches, enemy artillery and machine gun fire still effective, about 30 LCTs standing by to land, obstacles appeared thicker than in photographs, LCI 85 hit and burning after unloading, 2 LCTs burning and landing resuming on DOG beaches.
0909 Ordered CTG 124.9 to locate and silence an enemy battery back of DOG GREEN which was firing on beach.
0915 CTG 124.8 reported that he could find no targets of opportunity without endangering own troops and requested information on likely targets for LCGs.

6 June (D-day)

- 0921 CTF 124 ordered MS 31 to sweep OHIO, OREGON, and KANSAS areas outside of boat lanes and 104th MMS to make magnetic sweep in same areas.
- 0928 CTG 124.4 reported that enemy gunfire on exit at DOG GREEN and battery behind DOG GREEN were hindering landing.
- 0930 HMS PRINCE LEOPOLD reported that Rangers had landed safely but against heavy opposition. Beach obstructions not cleared.
- 0930 CTF 124 informed CTG 124.4 that there were DUKWs in distress between his position and the beach.
- 0941 CTF 124 informed 124.9 of a target near exit of DOG GREEN which was believed to be causing trouble.
- 0945 ComBatDiv 5 relayed a report from plane that batteries at MAISY were completely destroyed but that he was unable to have report verified by Shore Fire Control Party.
- 0951 LCC 40 reported very few LCTs landing on DOG GREEN, and no sign of DUKWs.
- 0955 CTG 124.3 reported many wounded at DOG RED needing evacuation.
- 1001 CTG 124.4 reported that tanks at exit DOG ONE were held up by cross fire by machine guns.
- 1002 USS TEXAS reported enemy battery at MAISY knocked out.
- 1006 Informed ComBatDiv 5 that fighter bombers had reported MAISY batteries destroyed.
- 1016 Informed CTG 124.9 of many reports of machine gun and mortar fire on DOG GREEN, and ordered him to render all assistance possible.
- 1020 Com LCT(A) Flot reported for ferry service. Instructed to report to Assault Group Commanders.
- 1026 Informed USS ARKANSAS and CTG 124.9 of heavy shell fire on DOG RED and ordered them to endeavor to locate and destroy enemy batteries.
- 1030 CTG 124.4 reported that underwater obstacles no longer visible due to rising tide and gaps on DOG GREEN and CHARLIE not marked. Beachmaster EASY RED reported little progress made by LCTs landing on FOX and EASY RED beaches.
- 1032 CTG 124.4 reported machine gun fire on right flank of DOG GREEN.
- 1040 CTG 124.4 reported DOG GREEN beach not favorable for landing due to mines.
- 1100 Headquarters V Corps reported to headquarters First Army aboard USS ACHERNAR that DOG WHITE and DOG GREEN beach obstacles not breached by 060910; FOX GREEN and EASY RED beaches not clear of enemy fire by 1010; LCT and LCI(L) unable to unload on these beaches; 116th Infantry Division moving along slowly; General Wyman instructed to reinforce with the 18th Infantry where needed.
- 1100 LCIs 408, 409, 411, 412, 554 reported landing on EASY RED; met by some artillery fire.
- 1100 Control Vessel EASY RED reported "Conditions of beaches opposite exits still critical. Beaches between exits drawing occasional artillery and mortar fire."

6 June (D day)

- 1230 Commander LCT Flot 19 relayed report that Beach EASY RED was closed by enemy fire and inquired if he should continue to beach LCTs or if CTF-124 intended to shell the beach.
- 1235 Requested information from USS SATTERLEE on whereabouts of Rangers. Reply that Rangers were at position 586934.
- 1239 Control Vessel DOG GREEN informed CTF-124 that he had no Rhino ferries on hand at line of departure and that beach was temporarily closed due to congestion.
- 1240 CTF-124 advised CTF-122 that he expected transport unloading to be nearly complete by 061600; that they would sail as soon as possible and that he considered it inadvisable to shift their positions at this time.
- 1246 CTG-124.3 forwarded to CTF-124 a combined summary of Boat Officers reports as follows: Situation at FOX GREEN and EASY RED Beaches extremely critical heavy machine gun fire; unloading of LCI and LCT delayed by lack of channels through beach obstacles; only one DD tank reported landing on EASY RED; first wave of EMPIRE ANVIL LCA reported foundered; strong currents causing landing craft to land on wrong beaches.
- 1250 V Corps observer informed CG V Corps that enemy artillery firing on craft on beach EASY RED. Observer believed craft could be seen from VIERVILLE Church Spire.
- 1255 ComTransDiv 3 reported following information with reference to DOG GREEN waves: five boats of second wave beached 3 minutes late, one boat sinking due to underwater obstacles; 8 boats of 4th wave beached 8 minutes late and one 20 minutes late; craft in great difficulty in passing through obstacles; 5 boats of 5th wave beached 15 minutes late; beach appeared heavily mined; 6 craft lost.
- 1256 CTF-124 ordered PC-552 to give priority in landing to craft carrying infantry.
- 1300 Assistant Div. Comdr. 1st Div. informed CG 1st Div. that 16th Infantry had taken COLLEVILLE at 061233.
- 1328 Ordered CTG-124.8 to direct LCG to fire on church steeple in VIERVILLE.
- 1334 V Corps observer informed CG V Corps of a general advance up slope EASY RED and continued advance up FOX RED with some men moving on ridge towards PORT EN BESSIN at 1200.
- 1341 CTG-124.9 informed CTF-124 that DOG Beaches were clear of opposition and ready for landing troops; no opposition on EASY Beaches and troops ashore apparently awaiting infantry reinforcements; and that all fire support ships were awaiting target assignments from Army.

7 June (D+1 day)

- 0045 CG, V Corps informed CTF 124 that his present line was generally along road from VIERVILLE - ST. LAURENT - one mile south of COLLEVILLE and that he was attacking with the Beachhead line as his objective.
- 0236 CTF 124 requested CTF 127 to send special equipment for NCDU parties by quickest available means.
- 0250 Observed plane crash on beach - identity unknown.
- 0552 CTF 124 ordered CTF 126 and Deputy Assault Group Commanders O-1 and O-2 to land 175th Infantry on DOG GREEN at scheduled time.
- 0724 CG, VII Corps relayed message from Rangers at POINT DU HOE to CG, V Corps that there were many casualties and support was needed.
- 0758 Beachmaster DOG WHITE relayed request from CG, 29th Division to CTF 124 that remaining regimental combat teams and division troops be landed on DOG WHITE immediately.
- 0800 LCH 492 informed CTF 124 that convoy group O-4 had arrived at 0750.
- 0800 Ordered CTF 126 and Deputy Assault Group Commanders O-1 and O-2 to land 175th Regimental Combat Team and Division Troops of Force "B" on beach DOG WHITE as they were urgently needed.
- 0804 CTF 128 requested permission of CTF 124 to carry out Operation MULBERRY commencing with survey of GOOSEBERRY and survey of MULBERRY. Reply affirmative.
- 0820 SUSAN B. ANTHONY struck mine requested CTF 124 to send landing craft to remove troops.
- 0832 Control Vessel DOG GREEN relayed request of CG, V Corps that 175th Infantry landed immediately at DOG GREEN Beach.
- 0845 CTF 124 ordered LCI 86 to send LCVP to POINT DU HOE to evacuate litter cases.
- 0900 ComDesRon 18 informed CTF 124 that wreck of SUSAN B. ANTHONY was located 49° 29' 30"N 00° 42' 00"W in about 12 fathoms of water.
- 0907 CG, V Corps informed CTF 124 that 175th RCT should land at once according to plan and assemble in vicinity of ST. LAURENT; 2nd Division should begin landing upon arrival. Informed Deputy Commander Assault Group O-2 that 175th Infantry be landed immediately on DOG GREEN.
- 0930 CG, 1st Army informed CG, V Corps that Rangers at POINTE DU HOE urgently needed reinforcements and ammunition and asked if naval gunfire support could be provided them.
- 1020 AT 90 informed CTF 124 that troops aboard SUSAN B. ANTHONY (AP 72) evacuated to LCT 624, LCT 625, LCI 924 and HMS MENOP with a few unidentified small craft.
- 1035 Informed CTF 122 that SUSAN B. ANTHONY sunk by mine nine miles 013 degrees from PORT EN BESSIN; survivors on numerous small ships.

7 June (D + 1)

- 1042 Again directed LCH-86 and LCH-492 that 175th BCT should be landed at once according to plan.
- 1111 Ordered LCI-86, LCI-492 and Transports BORINQUE, GORTHEALS, SIMONDS to land Second Division at earliest possible time.
- 1125 Informed CG V Corps that CTF-124 would transport troops to vicinity POINTE DU HOE in LCTs and land them in LCVPs to assist Rangers if desired.
- 1140 LCI-86 informed CTF-124 that 175th BCT had begun to land.
- 1202 Ordered USS ANCON to send two boats to POINTE DU HOE to remove wounded men.
- 1210 CTF-122 directed CTF-124 to use every effort to evacuate wounded from beaches.
- 1220 Ordered Task Group 124.9 not to engage targets inside British area.
- 1225 HMS ENTERPRISE informed CTF-124 that she had been attached to CTF 124 by CTG-125.8.
- 1400 CTG-124.8 informed CTF-124 that he had observed British Fire Support Ships fire on PORT EN BESSIN; that he had 9 fully loaded rocket ships and 5 gun ships available for close neutralizing fire and requested instructions.
- 1405 Boats left ANCON for USS TEXAS on mission to carry reinforcements to Rangers at POINTE DU HOE and evacuate casualties.
- 1410 Ordered HMS ENTERPRISE to report to CTG-124.9.
- 1437 Informed Commander Force "G" that CTF-124 had 9 rocket ships available for fire on PORT EN BESSIN if desired.
- 1515 CG First Army issued situation report on OMAHA Beach as of 071000B: - 1st Div. and 2 regiments of 29th Div. extend from ST. HONORINE DES PERTES, GOOS LE HAMEL, LOUVIERS, GRUCHY. Landings opposed by 4 German regiments who were alert and waiting. Estimated casualties 116th Inf. 30%, 16th Inf. 40%, 26th Inf. 10%; snipers and machine gun fire still being placed on beach directly north of SAN LAURENT and sporadic fire still landing on beach. Attack will continue according to plan; Obstacles on beach continue to delay craft. Rhino ferries working well.
- 1612 Requested CTF-122 to assign six PCs immediately for duty as Control Vessels.
- 1633 Red Alert; General Quarters.
- 1657 Secured from General Quarters. No attack developed.
- 1705 CTG-124.9 informed CTF-124 that British were firing into PORT EN BESSIN.
- 1725 CTF-127 informed CTF-124 that special demolition equipment for underwater obstacles is being shipped via PT-521.
- 1807 CTF-122 informed WESTERN NAVAL TASK FORCE that Shuttle Control would become effective at 081100 and that prior to that time latest information could be obtained from CTF-124 and CTF-125.

level on board the flagship was high because of the large number of frequencies in use, but only one case of serious interference was noted. The V Corps command net on 35.5 mcs. and the Tactical Reconnaissance frequency of 141.84 mcs. both used a crystal on 7880 kcs. Communication was possible on only one of these nets at a time.

Extensive jamming was expected, as the enemy had the advantage of a long established and complete wire network whereas we were forced to use radio. Surprisingly, however, no jamming was experienced on any of the frequencies used by this force. It may be possible that the enemy endeavored to gain useful information by listening to our transmissions rather than cause us the inconvenience of jamming.

The following circuits were manned on board the force flagship:-

<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
92.5 kc	Senior Officers Broadcast	Rec. only
100 kc	Area Broadcast	Rec. only
138 kc	Task Force Broadcast	Rec. only
3300 kc	Rear Link (Movements)	
72.5 mc	V.H.F. Ship-Shore Simplex	
6500 kc	Task Force Command	
4150 kc	Admiral's Wave	
2333 kc	Minesweeping Wave	
2068 kc	Task Force Auxiliary	
5000 kc	Radar Reporting Wave	
3400 kc	Joint Force Broadcast	
2716 kc	Assault Force Auxiliary	
4300 kc	Bombardment Calling	
2800 kc	Ship-Shore Administrative	Beachmasters
4510 kc	Ship-Shore Administrative	Beachmasters
27.6 mc	Boat Control FM	
28.0 mc	Boat Control FM	
28.8 mc	Boat Control FM	
29.0 mc	Boat Control FM	
28.4 mc	Boat Control Common FM	
29.2 mc	Boat Control Common FM	
2190 kc	Assault Force Command	
2600 kc	Assault Force Voice	
460 kc	Group Transports	
7200 kc	Group LST - LCI(L)	
8360 kc	Group O-1 LCT (voice)	Rec. only
10290 kc	Group O-2 LCT (voice)	Rec. only
3916 kc	First Army Command	
1860 kc	V Corps - First Army	
4420 kc	Lateral to British Army	

AUTHORITY CO 336
 TOP SECRET BIGOT
 INITIAL
 DATE 3/25/44

Operations Plan Co. A.

Par 1 & 2 3e F.O. No. 9, 336th Engr Combat Bn.

3. a. Company A lands EASY RED contacts reconnaissance element moves laterally to left along beach to #1 assembly area 697893 if practical. After note assembly area 702890.
 - (1) In event lateral movement is not practical due to enemy action on left flank company will move inland from EASY RED to Personnel Transit area where disposition will be made to left flank by inland route.
 - (2) On arrival at assembly area Company will be formed into security, Mine removal, and Gen. Engr Platoons. Each platoon will be broken down into operating sections or crews.
- b. Security Platoon sets up 2-50 Cal Mgs Guns on high ground to left of Rd exit Fl. One section will be responsible for unit initial Air warning and as soon as practical will set up and operate Loud Hailer Equipment.
 - (1) Security Platoon will send two (2) reconnaissance patrols along routes outlined on overlay to explore area ST HONORINE DES FAYES. One mine removal section will accompany the patrol along the cliff line. The signal team will lay telephone wire behind both patrols and the inland patrol will be furnished one radio. Each patrol will carry at least one bazooka. Patrols will contact each other at predetermined point near ST HONORINE.
 - (2) Security Platoon will hold 30 Cal MG crews in reserve until sufficient information has been gained to commit them on order of the Platoon Commander.
- c. 1. Mine removal platoon will dispatch one section with the shore line patrol and have another section in readiness to move with the inland patrol on call.
 2. Mine removal platoon will utilize the necessary sections to clear road Fl inland in the least possible time. This must be regulated so that the Gen Engr Platoon can complete road prior to H/12.
 3. If practical sections of the mine removal platoon will be sent inland on the first marked lane to clear lateral road 80 and lateral road B-80 in the company zone of responsibility. AA Gun positions as shown on the overlay if not occupied will be cleared after approval of the AA units on the beach.
 4. On completion of assigned tasks sections will clear bunk park, En Maintenance area and other roads of company responsibility shown on the overlay.
- d. The General Engr Platoon will secure the company D7 and one additional D7 from Beach FLX GREEN, on coming ashore. It will be responsible for getting the Athey Wagon to the assembly area and unloading the Trailer.

d. (cont'd)

- (2) This section will lay wire across the beach shingleless soon as practical and supervise and assist the construction of road F1 to be able to carry 120 vehicles per hour by H/12.
- (3) Make necessary arrangement to procure additional wire, ches-pelling and core matting from beach FOX GREEN.
- (4) On completion of F1, continue construction of road net in initial Dump Areas along roads 80 to 890.

e. Company Hqs will set up CP, initially at 702890.

- (1) Will have phone connections to patrols operating inland. Will set up and maintain complete operations overlay, company journal, furnish one runner to En, CP. Will procure as soon as possible a roster of company personnel landed and any information available concerning absentees. Will evaluate and consolidate all REI.

f. 1. Operations section will erect the left flank marker at the extreme left flank of the workable beach, and erect the medical evacuation marker when this point is established. It will be responsible for erecting all signs and lights as required. The initial supply dump will be set up in the inland position or order of the CO, prior to D-1. Kitchen personnel will prepare to supply at least 2 hot meals per day commencing D+2.

g. (1) Each M.G. will be protected by riflemen and at least one bazooka.

- (2) Fox holes will be dug near all working sites, gun positions and bivouac areas.

(3) Camouflage, Blackout discipline. S.O.P.

(4) Dispersion at all times will be maintained.

(5) Gas masks will be worn at all times.

(6) Local security will be maintained by each section or group whether working or not.

(7) Booby traps including time devices may be prevalent in logical places, buildings, orchards, paths, and hedges. Restrict movement unless essential.

(8) Password and reply will be used.

4. a. Each individual lands with 1 D and 1 K Ration.

b. Each individual lands with full canteen & gallon allowance will be carried. Water to be obtained from no source except approved D.P.

REI.

a. Conditions of existing roads & bridges.

b. Location of road materials.

c. Location and quantity of water points.

d. Possible bivouac areas.

e. Exact location of mine fields; status of removal.

f. Location and extent of all obstacles and defensive works.

(1) Estimate of work to be done.

g. Use of gas by enemy-gas contaminated areas.

h. Enemy Air activity.

i. Reports of unexploded shells or bombs.

L.J. LOTHSPREICH
Capt CE

OFFICIAL:

L.J. LOTHSPREICH
Capt CE.

June 7, 1964

Dear Admiral Kirk,

I am taking the liberty of writing you about an event that I have wondered about these past twenty years.

I was shore party commander of Fox Red Beach on Omaha for the D day landing and consequent developement of the beach area and exit route.

Late in the morning of D+1, after a hectic time of supervising mine removal on the route up the hill and an improvised assembly area on top of the hill, I received a call from the naval beach party communication setup and was told the fleet commander wished to talk to me. I identified myself on the radio and a conversation went something like this: "This is the flotilla commander. You are authorized to speak in the clear. What do you want in there? Your exit is the only one getting any volume of vehicles across the beach."

I replied that we needed more people; engineers and heavy equipment and infantry, small arms ammunition, and artillery to support the infantry already here, — and also to stop the chemical warfare preloaded Dukws that were cluttering up the assembly area.

Whoever I talked to carried a big stick, as in one hour and 30 minutes artillery, 155 guns no less, were crossing the beach, along with Seabee rhino-ferries loaded with dozers, cranes, etc.

Now, Admiral for twenty years I have been wondering if it was really you I talked with that confused June morning of 1944.

L. J. Lothspeich

L. J. Lothspeich O-1101930
Co. A 336 Eng. C. Bn.
5th Engr. Special Brigade

1al

File might be furnished to ...
LJL



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000

IN REPLY REFER TO

5758

Ser. 09BH/AR 504315

15 FEB 1989

REC'D -2-28-89

Mr. Joseph G. Backes
336th Engineer Combat Battalion Association

Dear Mr. Backes:

This replies to your letter of January 27, concerning Captain Larry J. Lothspeich on Fox Red Beach during the Normandy Invasion.

After extensive reading and reviewing of Admiral Kirk's papers, message traffic, action reports as well as published material, we believe that the person that Captain Lothspeich spoke to was not Admiral Kirk but the flotilla commander of the LCT or LCI flotilla assigned to land troops and supplies on the FOX beaches. We enclose a message from Admiral Kirk (CTF 122) to Admiral Hall (CTF 124), who was in charge of the landings at Omaha Beach, that shows Admiral Kirk's concern for the slow unloading on the beaches. Admiral Hall probably passed this concern along to his subordinates. We are also including a message from Admiral Hall to Admiral Kirk reporting on the unloading in the late afternoon of June 7, 1944. Additionally, we are also enclosing extracts from Admiral Hall's report that specifically mentions Fox Red beach as well as the unloading problem. Published sources that may be of interest are Samuel Eliot Morison's The Invasion of France and Germany, 1944-1945 which is Volume XI of his fifteen-volume History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, and G. A. Harrison's Cross Channel Attack, which is part of the monumental series U.S. Army in World War II.

Captain Lothspeich's military service during World War II is noted with great appreciation and I hope that this information will be helpful to your group and especially Captain Larry Lothspeich.

G. C. WILEEN
ASSISTANT VICE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
(Acting)

Enclosures

201 East 62nd St,

1 WEST SEVENTH SECOND STREET

NEW YORK 23, N. Y.

June 19/64

Dear Mr. Lathspich

Thank you for the letter
addressed to Admiral Kirk.
He would have been greatly
interested to hear from one of
his shore commanders.

On his return from Taipei
where he served as Quartermaster
to the Republic of China for several
months, his health failed
rapidly and he died here
in New York on Oct. 15th /63.
He is buried in Arlington
and many of his war time
comrades and staff attended

the services.

He looked forward so
much to celebrating the 20th
anniversary of D. Day and
I am glad to say he was
represented at the ceremonies
by a former member of his
staff who presented a framed
picture and message to the
Mayor of St. Marie Eglise in my
name.

I do hope it was the Admiral
you talked with on that June
morning. Please continue to
believe it was!

With best wishes

Yours truly
Mr. Rear G. Kirk Lydia's Kirk

FROM
TO

CTF 122
CTF 124

070940 B

VISUAL

ROUTINE

FROM PERSONAL OBSERVATION RATE OF UNLOADING OVER BEACHES IS SLOW X
ENEMY ACTION MUST BE EXPECTED AND RISKS ACCEPTED X MAKE EVERY EFFORT
TO EXPEDITE LOADING X

VISUAL

070940 B

TOD: 1312/07

ADMIRAL

FROM COM FORCE "0"
TO CTF 122



080145 F

SECRET

PRIORITY

SITUATION REPORT NUMBER 2 AS OF 072200 JUNE 7 ARMY OBJECTIVES ARE CAPTURE
OF "D" DAY OBJECTIVES AND PORT EN BESSIN X LINE NOT ADVANCED TO

ENGRANVILLE 651852, SOUTH OF SURRAIN, SOUTH OF AIRE RIVER, VICINITY OF
HANTEVILLE OCCUPYING TREVIERES, VICINITY OF SAINT HONORINE DES PERTES AND

SOUTH OF A POSITION VICINITY 670870 X PATROLS ENTERING PORT EN BESSIN AT
1500 X HEAVY LOSSES TO DEMOLITION UNITS AND BEACH BATTALIONS FROM MORTAR

AND ARTILLERY FIRE AND SNIPERS BUT CLEARING OF UNDERWATER OBSTACLES
PROCEEDING SATISFACTORY X FOX AND EASY SECTORS FUNCTIONING SMOOTHLY AND

DOG SECTOR IMPROVING AFTER BEING HELD UP BY SNIPING X HOPE TO UNLOAD
3 TANK BATTALIONS TONIGHT X RANGERS AT POINT DU NOE RELIEVED BY SEA

INCLUDING REINFORCEMENTS, AMMUNITION, PROVISIONS AND EVACUATION OF
WOUNDED X THING BURIED IN DEBRIS BY NAVAL AND AIR BOMBARDMENT X TOTAL

UNLOADINGS AS OF 072200, PERSONNEL XXXXX 41,928 X VEHICLES 2,670,
SUPPLIES 900 TONS X

SECRET

080145 F
ADMIRAL

TOR: 04008/08
LOG 1734

11thFHB/A16-3
Serial: 00576

ELEVENTH AMPHIBIOUS FORCE

SECRET

27 July 1944.

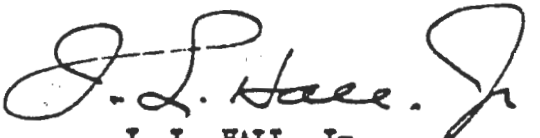
From: Commander Assault Force "0".
(Commander Eleventh Amphibious Force).
To : Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via : Commander Western Naval Task Force.
Subject: Action Report - Assault on VIERVILLE-COLLEVILLE
Sector, Coast of NORMANDY.
Reference: (a) Art. 712 and 874(6) U.S. Navy Regulations 1920.
(b) Navy Department Bulletin of 31 December 1943,
pages 257 - 260.

1. This report is divided into six parts as follows:-

Part I---NARRATIVE OF THE ACTION.
Part II---CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF EVENTS.
Part III---PERFORMANCE OF ORDNANCE MATERIAL AND
EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING AMMUNITION EXPENDITURE.
Part IV---RESUME OF BATTLE DAMAGE (LOSSES).
Part V---COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.
Part VI---PERSONNEL PERFORMANCE AND CASUALTIES.

2. The Operation Order of Commander Assault Force "0",
(Operation Order Number BB-44), is not included in this report.
Copies have already been furnished addressees.

3. Recommendations for awards are in separate corres-
pondence.


J. L. HALL, Jr.

ACTION REPORT
ASSAULT ON VIERVILLE-COLLEVILLE SECTOR
COAST OF NORMANDY

PART I
NARRATIVE OF THE ACTION

1. The assault on the VIERVILLE-COLLEVILLE Sector of the NORMANDY Beaches was part of a joint British-American operation, the purpose of which was to secure a lodgement on the Continent from which to develop further offensive operations. This in turn, was a part of a large strategic plan to bring about the total defeat of Germany by means of assaults upon German-occupied Europe from the UNITED KINGDOM, the MEDITERRANEAN, and RUSSIA. The joint attack was launched in two adjacent areas in the BAY OF THE SEINE. Simultaneous assaults were made by the Eastern Naval Task Force (British and Canadian), composed of Assault Forces "S", "J", and "G", and follow-up Force "L"; and by the Western Naval Task Force (U.S.), composed of Assault Forces "O", and "U", and follow-up Force "B". The boundary line between the British and U.S. Forces started at the root of PORT EN BESSIN Western Breakwater, thence 025° true to Meridian 0° 40' West, thence northward along this meridian to latitude 49° 40' North. Assault Force "O" attacked enemy beaches in the VIERVILLE-COLLEVILLE Area while Assault Force "U" attacked beaches in the MADELEINE Area. Force "B", landed over the same beaches as Force "O" under the direction of the Commander, Force "O".

2. The entire operation was commanded by the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, General D. D. EISENHOWER, U.S.A. Under him were three officers, each acting as the Commander-in-Chief of his respective arm. Their command was exercised jointly. They were:-

Naval -- Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief,
Expeditionary Force --
Admiral Sir Bertram H. RAMSEY, RN.

Army -- Commander-in-Chief,
21st Army Group --
General Sir Bernard L. MONTGOMERY, RA.

Air -- Commander-in-Chief,
Allied Expeditionary Air Force --
Sir Trafford LEIGH-MALLORY, RAF.

Under the Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief were the Commanders of the Eastern Naval Task Force, and the Western Naval Task Force, respectively. The Western Naval Task Force was commanded by Rear Admiral KIRK, USN, under whom were Assault Force "O" commanded by Rear Admiral HALL, USN; Assault Force "U" by Rear Admiral MOON, USN; and follow-up Force "B" by Commodore EDGAR, USN.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Instill Discipline, Install the Military

Do any of these educators and the other "champions of the poor" really want to give these Hartford kids an education? ("Failings but No Solutions for Hartford Schools," Jan. 31)

Would all these great thinkers from all these bureaus and all their lawyers really like to have the ghetto dwellers with the ability to read and write and calculate well (or almost as well) as their more affluent suburban counterparts?

Would you like to see these inner-city school students become real students who would behave themselves and who would stop breaking the windows, wrecking the bathrooms and scribbling graffiti on the wall? And while we're at it, would you like to see them stop doing and pushing drugs?

You can do it without hiring one more sociologist; without buying one more piece of audiovisual equipment.

All you have to put in those schools is two things: discipline and peace. In that order.

During the Korean War, I had a chance to see what the Army did with the raw material the draft board sent. I watched a buck sergeant with two years of teachers college from some unknown Mississippi school take a gang of recruits who were nothing more than Neanderthal. In six months, he and the other non-coms taught these people how to read, write, shave and bathe. They learned how to take care of their weapons; they learned what a bank check was; they learned how to understand a bus timetable.

Even the students who want to learn in these schools can't. How can you think about algebra when you know that a couple of guys in the back of the room are going to be waiting for you after school with knives or guns for the sheer joy of it?

If you can have schools with discipline in them, you don't need any more than four walls, electricity, bathrooms, a cafeteria and blackboards. If they were to establish schools like that in these sium districts they would be towers of light in the rest of the neighborhoods.

What you need is discipline and peace so that the teachers can teach. We don't need saints. We don't need "educated" teachers. We need people with the same competency as the my sergeant.

I'll tell you how you get that discipline and peace. Our Government made a pact when we decided to turn the military into something the nation could rely on. We swore to a lot of men and women that we'd train them. We'd give them jobs that they could enjoy with pride. We'd give them a living wage and a career. The only hitch is that they might have to get shot at once in a while. Now, after we broke our promise and dumped several hundred thousand of those men and women, the newspapers are debating sending a division to Bosnia.

We've got a war to fight right now. I say we should keep those soldiers and station some of them in our schools and some of them in various high-traffic areas around the towns and cities.

And please don't give me that baloney about martial law. I remember what the decent black residents in Los Angeles said when the National Guard started to pull out. They said that this was the only time they've had peace.

A squad or two of first-rate American soldiers or sailors or marines in any high school would cause an instant transformation. Some kids would learn, they'd get a fighting chance to become decent citizens and the white families and the black families would stop yanking their kids out of schools — particularly if they thought their children weren't in danger of being killed or maimed anymore. It would cut the educational budget. It would cut hundreds of billions of dollars in crime losses. It would throttle down the drug trade. The only losers would be the social engineers who so desperately need an underclass to work on.

THOMAS WHITEHEAD
New Canaan

Not too far-fetched

Good Old Days Gone By...

Editor:

How many of you people remember when all the small towns in Vermont were run by a handful of good reliable people. Most of them farmers or someone with a business. The towns had three selectmen, three school directors, a town clerk and treasurer. Sometimes the town clerk held three jobs—town clerk, treasurer and tax collector. Most worked for no pay. There was also a road commissioner and an overseer of the poor, who would check on the sick and injured.

After several years someone got the big idea that we should have five selectmen and five members on the school board. That was when things started going the wrong way!

Now I will tell you a little story that took place way back in 1932, my second town meeting in North Fayston. The town had a covered bridge that needed a new floor. The cost was \$350. Al McCullough was the town representative at that time. In those days every town had their own representative.

Al McCullough got up to explain how the town could get state aid for bridge repairs, road maintenance and also money for the schools.

Acess (sp) Corliss stood up and said, "Al, you know damn well as soon as the towns start getting money from the State for roads, bridges and schools, it won't be long before the State will tell you how to run the towns and our schools."

How right he was! Without a doubt, he never did get

much schooling. In those days most of the young men only went to school in the winter term. However, he still had a lot of common sense in his old head.

After the 1927 flood there were many roads washed out. It took thousands of yards of gravel for repair work. At that time every town in the State could go into the rivers and take as much gravel as needed, of course, there was a fee of five or 10 cents a yard for it.

The Waitsfield Club has a fine recreation field. At the south end of the field where the river makes a real sharp turn the river's bed is filled with gravel or six feet deep with gravel.

Now if we should have good old Vermont with five or six feet of snow, a good thaw and plenty of rain, it would be goodbye for the recreation little league dugout and that good fence around the ball field.

The state water reclamation board will let us have only 50 yards of gravel a year for five years for someone better put that hard pressure on the State and get that gravel washed out of there pretty soon. This is just the case of the State telling people what they can do and what they cannot do.

Let's go back to the good old days gone by...

—Sterling L. Loring



If FDR hadn't made his suggestion, 1,437 more ~~men~~ (and a woman) might not have survived Normandy

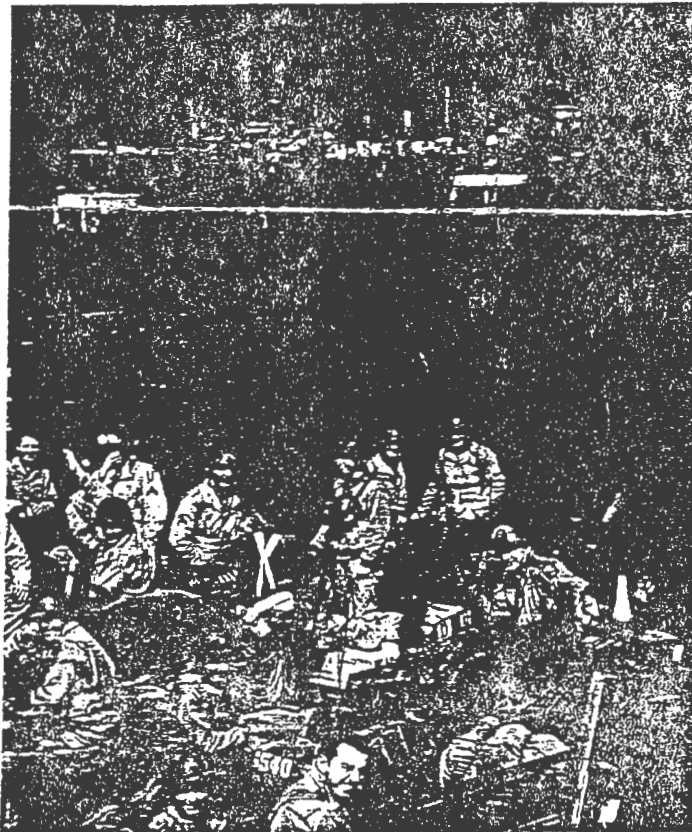
By Truman R. Strobridge

On June 5, 1944, the largest armada ever assembled—almost 5,000 ships—was on its way with more than 500,000 Allied soldiers. The next morning, the most famous of all D-days, the assault troops landed on the heavily fortified beaches of Normandy. In the weeks following, millions more men would be ferried across the English Channel to reinforce those brave souls who first had seized and maintained a beachhead on the European continent.

Lost to view among so many vessels of all conceivable type were the 60 small wooden cutters of the U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Flotilla One, a unique humanitarian organization given the sole mission of saving lives during the invasion. "It never occurred to me," one of those saved remembered; "that people who had ships sunk under them during the enormous amphibious operation which secured the first beachheads on the coast of France would be specially provided for—until it happened to me."

The war correspondents, some of them also rescued by the 83-footers, fondly called them the "matchbox fleet." And these matchboxes saved 1,438 participants of the largest Allied amphibious landing of World War II. The small patrol craft ran the gauntlet of deadly shore batteries, strafing by airplanes, thickly strewn mine fields, naval gunfire and sometimes even friendly fire in their endless race to the aid of persons in distress. They took them aboard until the 83-footers almost swamped, carried the survivors to larger ships, and then returned to search for more.

The most likely dangers to the invasion fleet consisted of storms, submarines, "E" boats (fast torpedo boats), the Luftwaffe, enemy mine fields and underwater obstacles. Since this large invasion



As American troops board landing craft for the coming invasion of Normandy, almost lost in the background are the small but not insignificant cutters of U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Flotilla One.

force had to operate on an intricate schedule, not one of the thousands of ships participating could afford to stop and pick up survivors.

Most of the Allied invasion planners had overlooked the idea of forming a rescue flotilla, despite the need being so self-evident in retrospect. To President Franklin D. Roosevelt belongs the credit for creating it. An enthusiastic yachtsman until crippled by polio and assistant secretary of the Navy during World War I, he knew from personal experience of the skills of U.S. Coast Guardsmen in handling their small craft. Just a few weeks prior to D-day, he suggested the provision of special rescue ships for the great armada.

Urgent secret orders went out to U.S. Coast Guard units from Maine to Cuba. Scores of 83-footers abandoned anti-

submarine ~~tasks~~ earned the ~~name~~ of "sub-busters" ~~converging~~ in the North ~~Atlantic~~. Here, they ~~were~~ aboard fast ~~ships~~ rushed across the ~~channel~~.

Upon the ~~arrival~~ish ports, ~~the~~ Guardsmen ~~were~~ cally to ~~command~~ 83-footers ~~in~~ British ~~command~~ been on ~~the~~ at Dunkirk ~~the~~ offered ~~the~~ the harrier ~~the~~. The crews ~~of~~ armament ~~from~~ from the ~~ships~~ rigged ~~scram~~ aft on ~~board~~ cue cutters ~~and~~ and weary ~~on~~ on board ~~the~~ stalled ~~block~~ the iron ~~ships~~ more seri-

They ~~were~~ and all ~~to~~ had to ~~im~~ equipment ~~assigned~~ assigned ~~to~~

rived only 60 hours ~~of~~ mandy assault.

The U.S. Coast ~~Guard~~ first-aid instructions ~~for~~ minus one, any one ~~with~~ broken bone, apply ~~the~~ give artificial respiration ~~while~~ meanwhile, had fam- ~~ily~~ with the complicated ~~cases~~.

Being powered by ~~gas~~ cutters had large ~~fuel~~ that held several ~~times~~ high-test fuel. Even a ~~small~~ let could pierce the ~~water~~ fuel tanks, turning ~~the~~ a blazing inferno.

The rescue cutter ~~carried~~ amount of California ~~oil~~ reviving the spirits ~~of~~ vivors. "It was ~~pac~~ ~~ing~~

THE UNITED STATES BICENTENNIAL MEMORIAL MEDAL

You are eligible to receive and may purchase the Bicentennial Memorial Medal if you were in one of the seven American uniformed services—either Regular, Reserve or National Guard—retired or discharged from one of these on or before July 4, 1976. This medal, struck to commemorate those soldiers, sailors and militiamen of two hundred years ago, is in pewter, our colonial metal, with a raised face of "The Spirit of Seventy Six"; while the reverse has a militiaman in semi-relief. The medal ribbon is of equal widths of our national colors—red, white and blue.

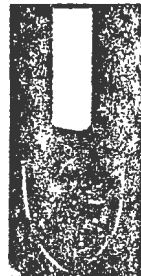
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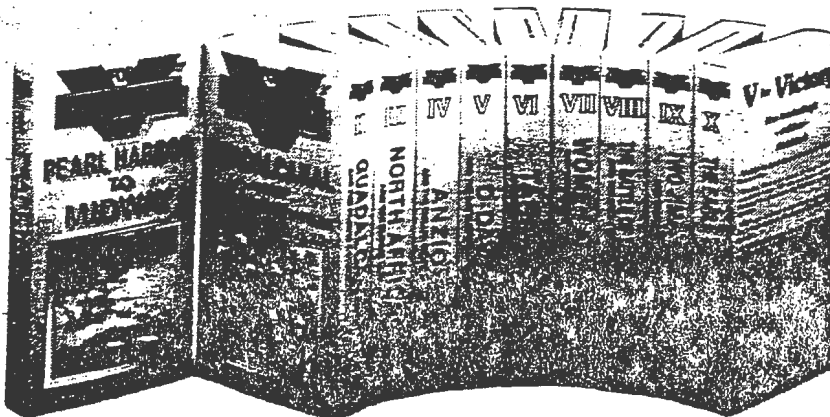
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Armament

Continued from page 1

ounce bottles," remembered a flotta commander, Lt. Cmdr. Ender Stewart, U.S. Coast Guard Reserve (USCGR), "and when dividing among the 60 boats of the flotilla, there was the spirited ration for each crew member—less than the proverbial carried by the Saint Bernards of the seaplanes. Needless to say, these groups of concentrated 'sunshine' were needed during the first few hours after."

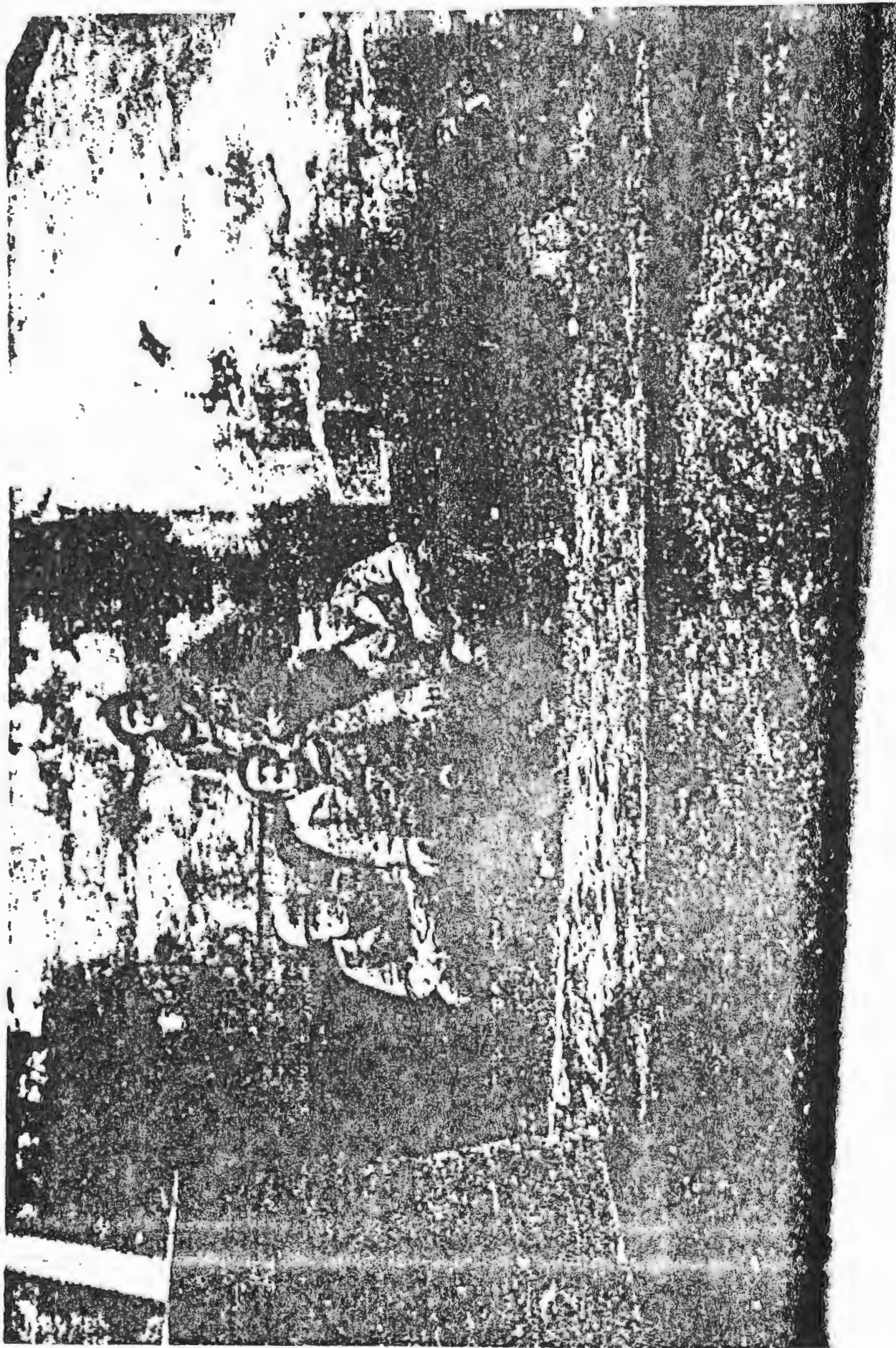
The skippers gave pre-war briefings the night before the action. The one given by Lt. j.g. Robert M. Roenbloom, Jr., USCGR, commander of Rescue Cutter 16, probably typical of the others. "We're going to be callous," he told his men. "These vessels could not take on board survivors than they could carry. 'When we get a load,' he said, 'we're going to have to leave no matter how many men are on board, but as soon as we unload a load of boys on a larger ship, we'll look for another.'"

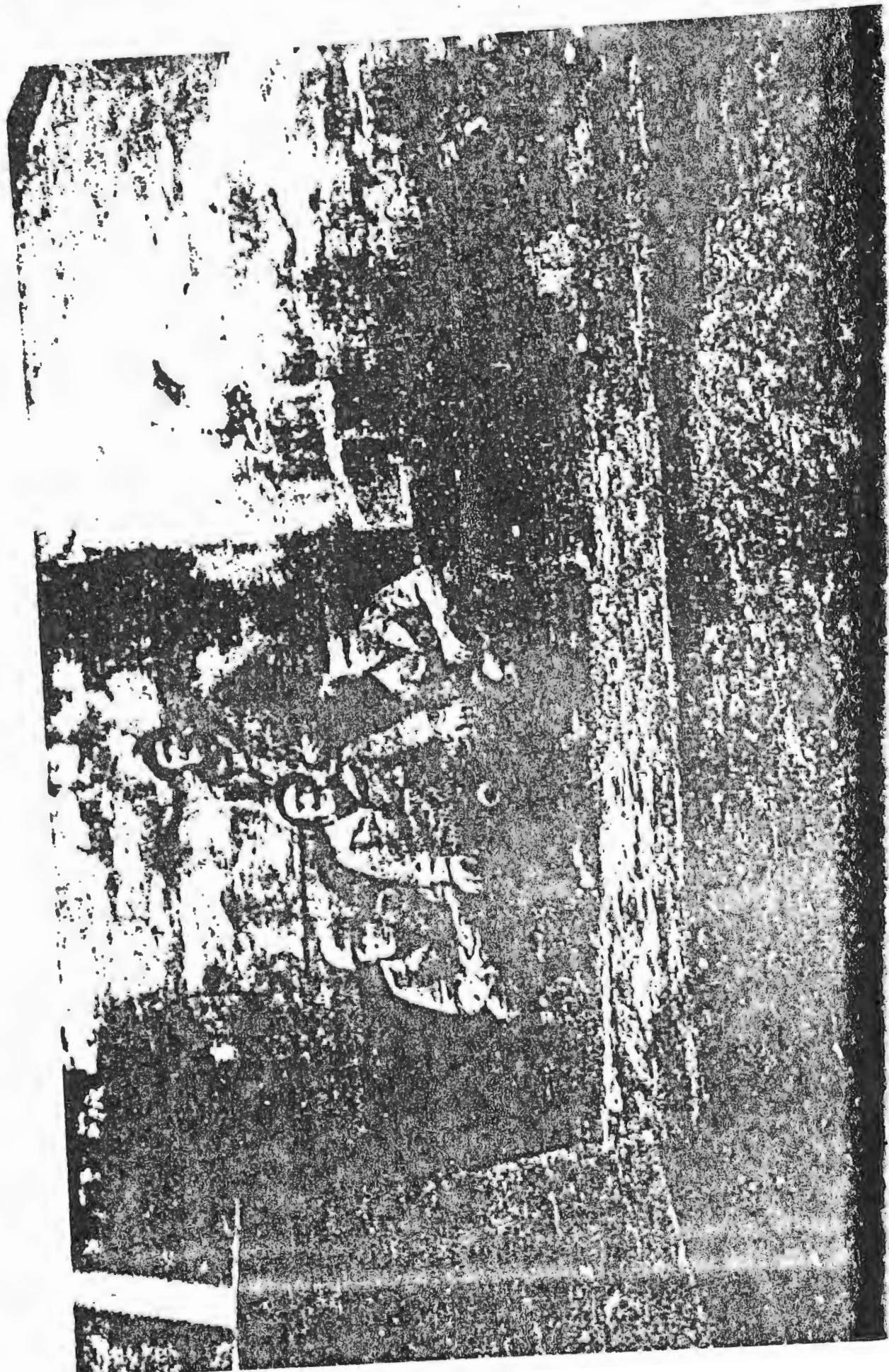
The invasion plans called for the to be divided equally, with half to the British and Canadian forces and the other half to the American beaches.

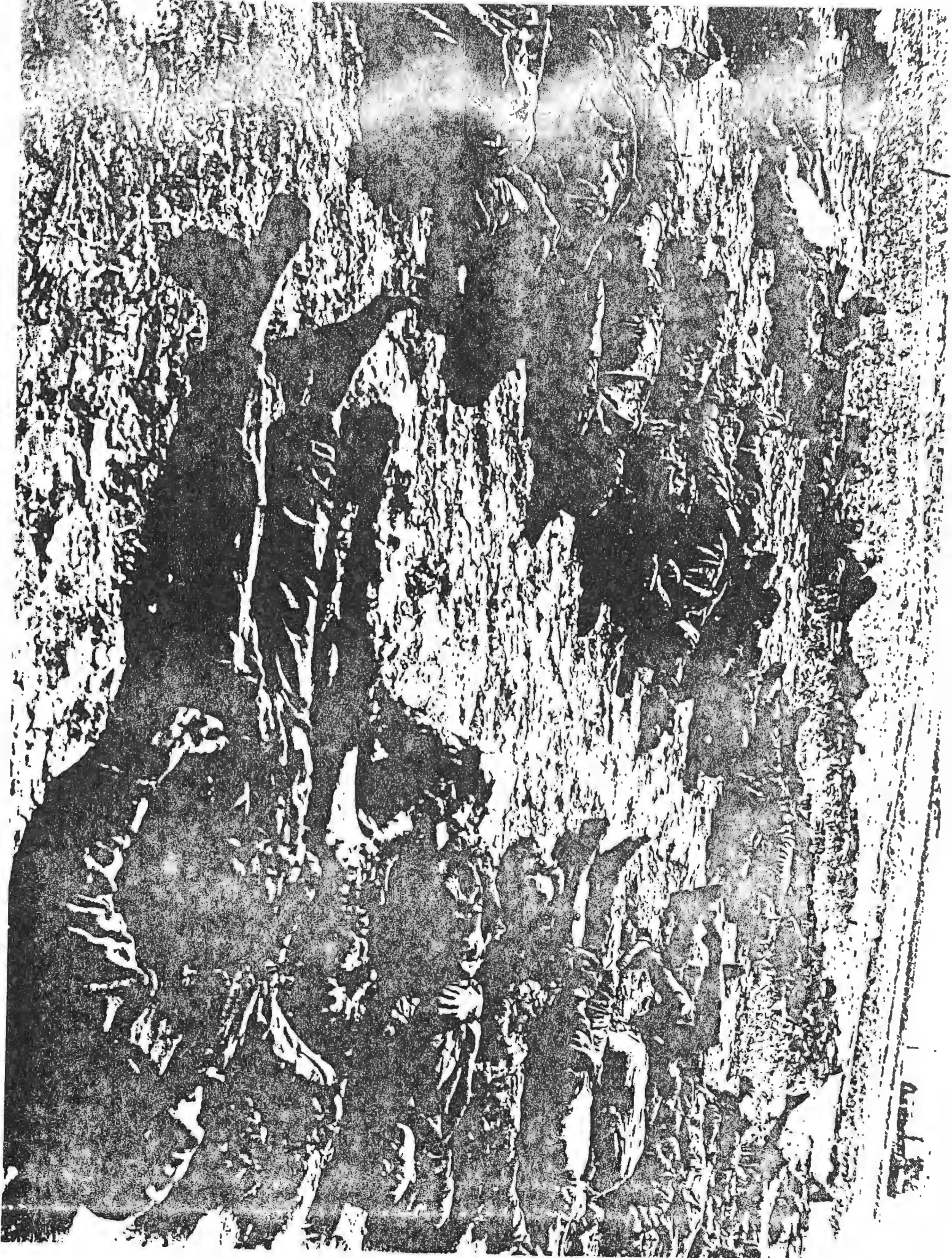
Since the offshore danger was expected to be the lineup of German transports, the majority of the landing craft remained close to the beach, five positioned between the British and the American beaches. The amphibious landing demonstrated the false assumption. The German machine guns, mortars and rockets created havoc among the landing craft, LCTs (Landing Craft, Tanks) and LCI(L)s (Landing Craft, Infantry) during their runs to the beach. On the sides, the U.S. Coast Guard swimmers floundering in the oil slicks. The five close-in transports were soon frantically calling for help, and before long most of them had ventured in close to the beach.

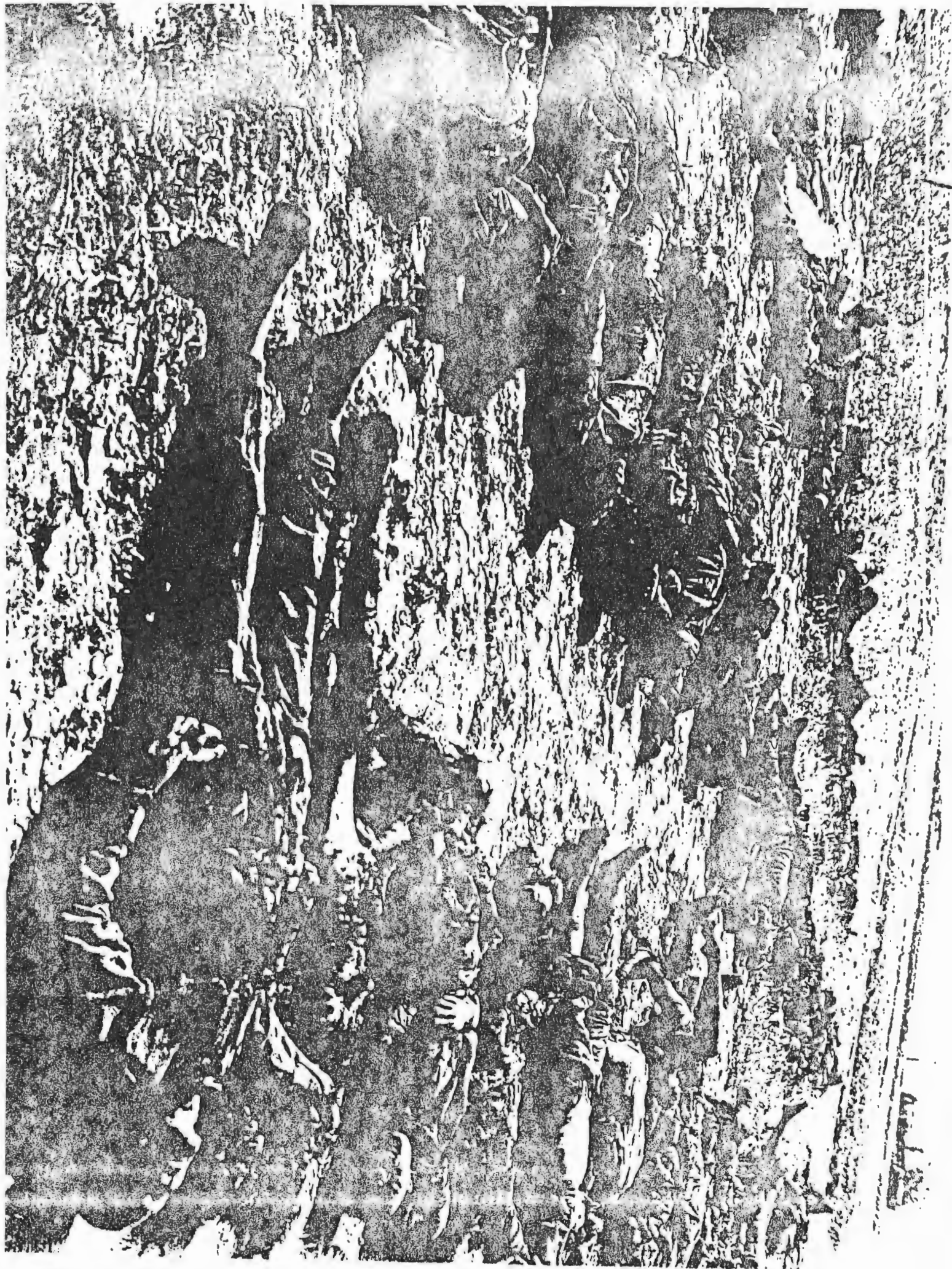
The distinction of making the beach belongs to Ensign Benjamin Stewart, USCG, skipper of Coast Guard Cutter 1 (CGC-1). It took place after H-hour and less than an hour from the German guns. The cutter was running, and the water was cold. Most of the survivors were weakened by both immersion and that the crewmembers had to help them on board as shells bursting on all sides continued to cruise about fully out of the way of the

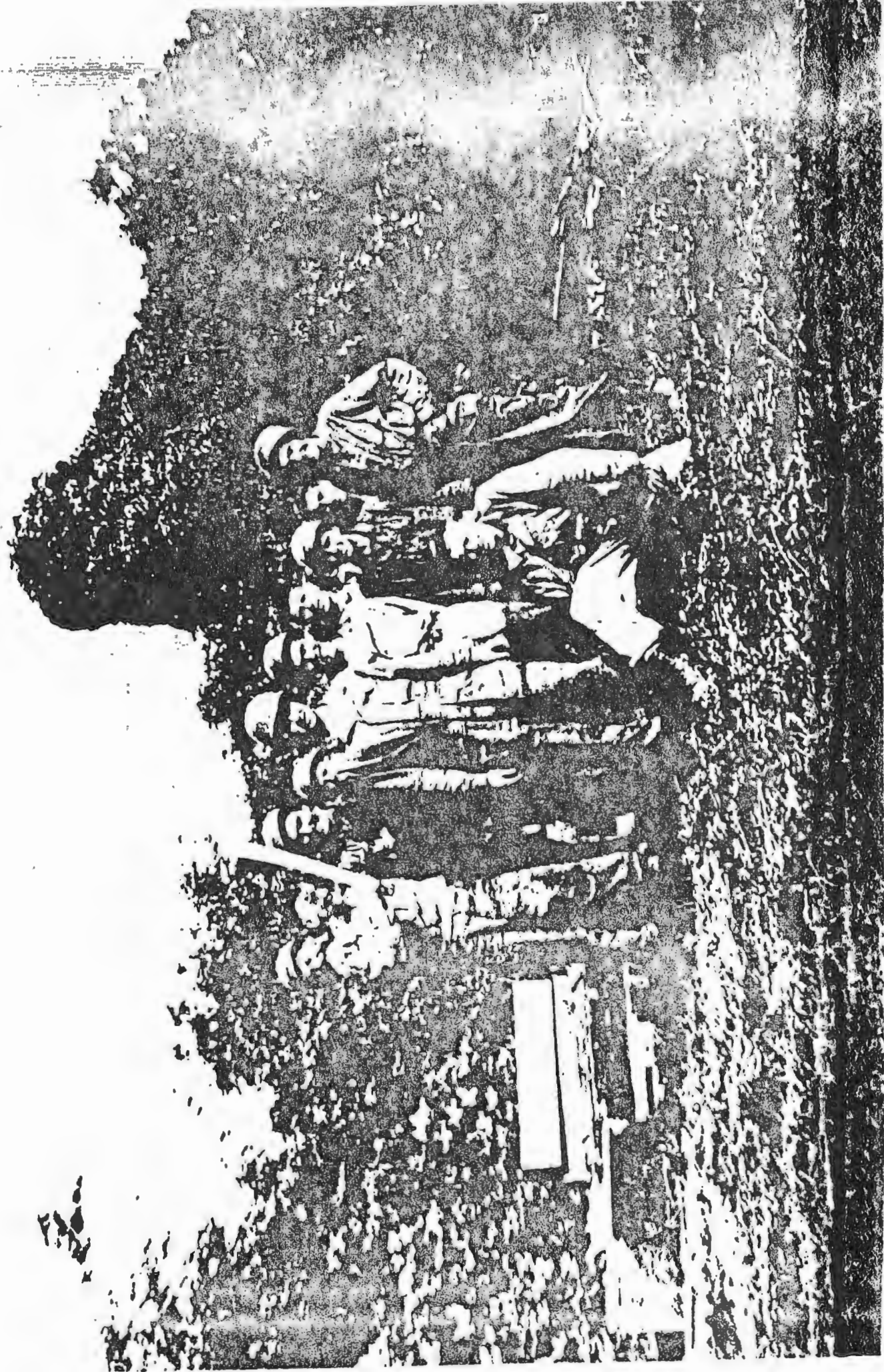
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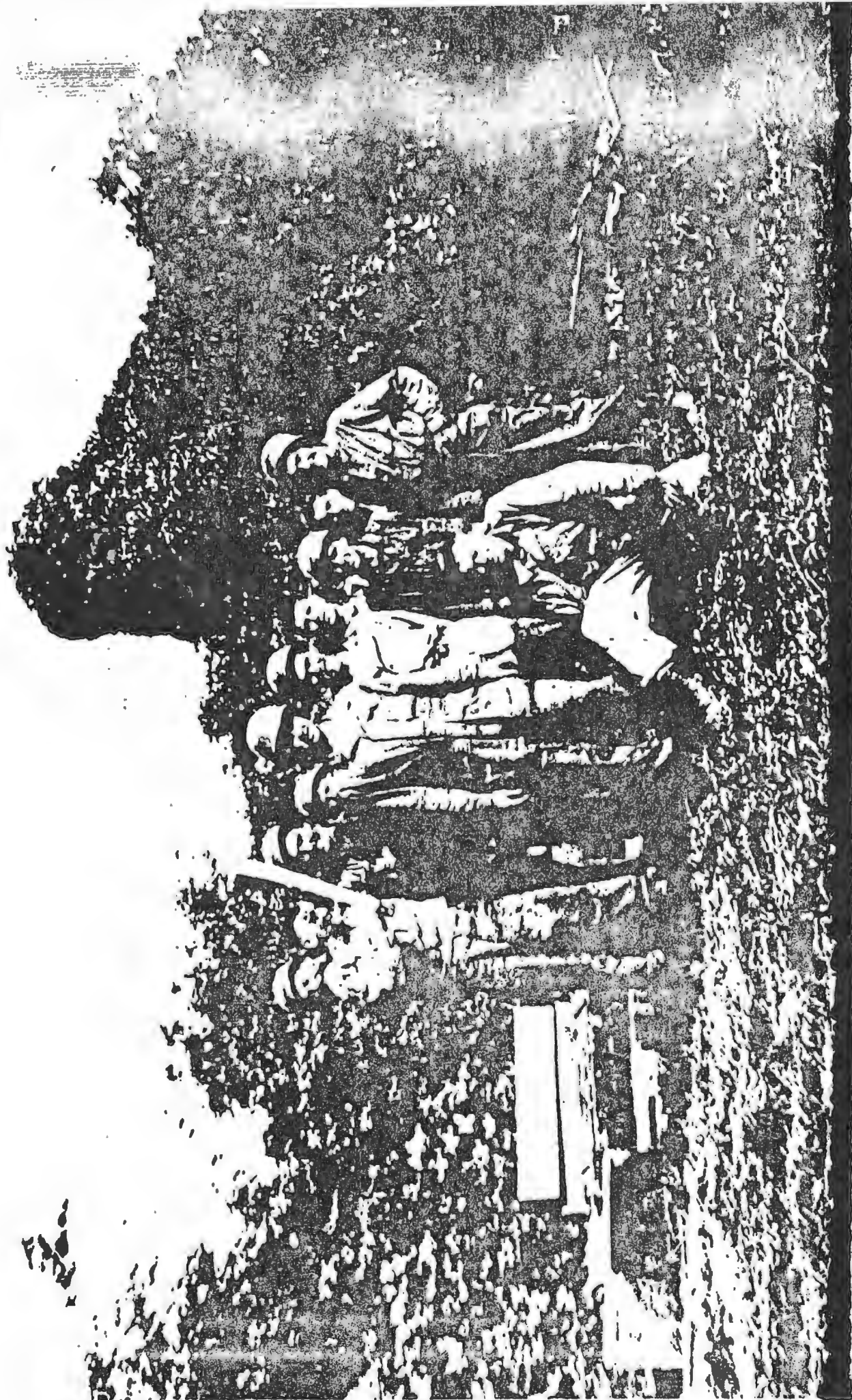












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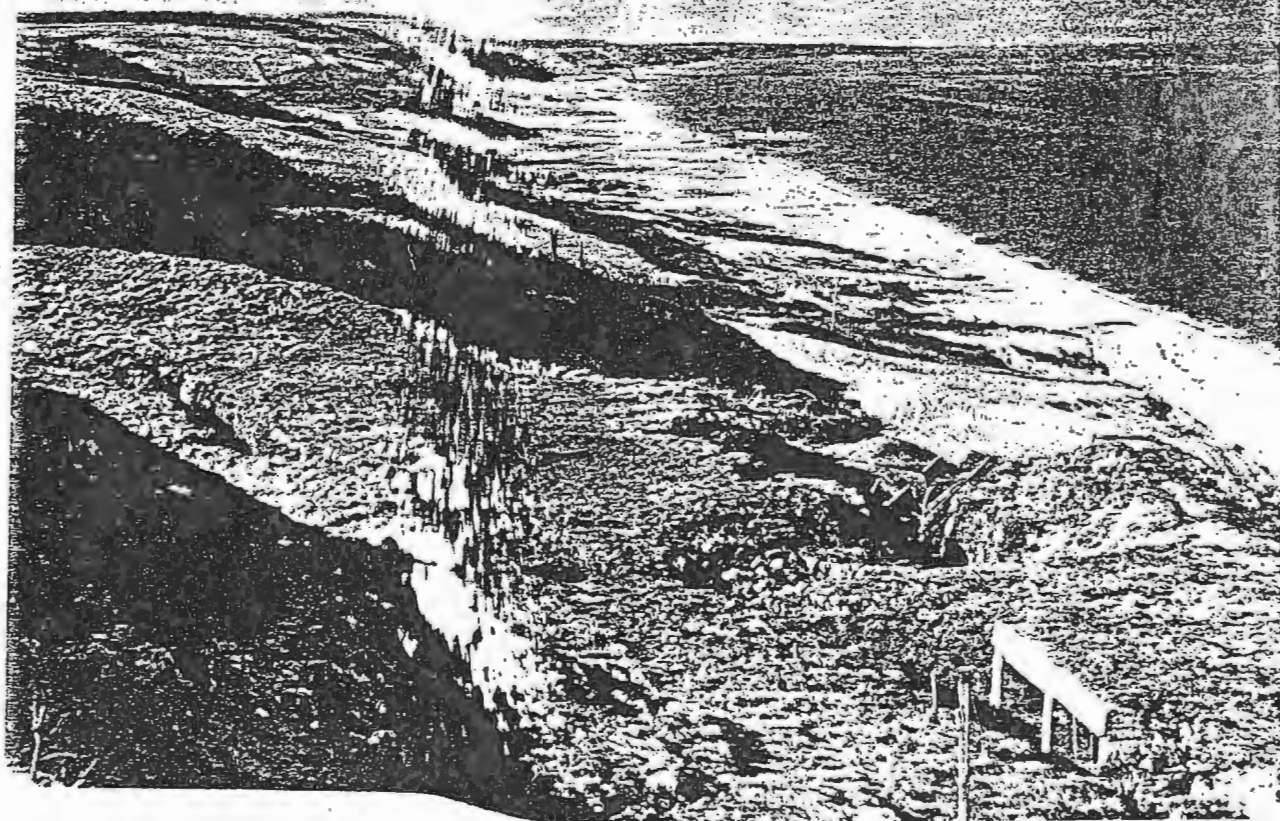
OMAHA BEACHHEAD

(6 June—13 June 1944)



American Forces in Action Series

Historical Division
WAR DEPARTMENT



THE CRESCENT CURVE OF OMAHA BEACH *shores from high ground at the F-1 strongpoint above the eastern end of Omaha. Right foreground, German 75-mm gun emplacement; far background, cliffs near Pointe de la Percée. (Photo taken February 1945.)*

were made so as to permit the assignment of divisional zones to the 29th Divisions. These zones had no effect on corps order, which was in the hands of Gen. Charles H. Gerhardt, who was in command of the 29th Division with its components. In the meantime, the plan paved the way for this step. Norman D. Cota, assistant division commander of the 29th, was to lead the 116th RCT and assist Gen. Gerhardt in handling the 29th Division until it was reverted.

Assignment of the 1st and 2d Divisions into the 29th Gen. Cota's command was normal under the order to Gen. Gerhardt. The 1st Division's assignment with the 29th was in line with the plan they

The 1st Division was a veteran unit which had served through the campaigns of North Africa and Sicily. The 29th and 2d Divisions would experience their first action in Normandy.

Terrain

The coast of Normandy offers only a few areas favorable for large-scale landing operations in the zone assigned to V Corps (Maps Nos. II and III). Cliffs, reefs, and the wide tidal ranges combine to present

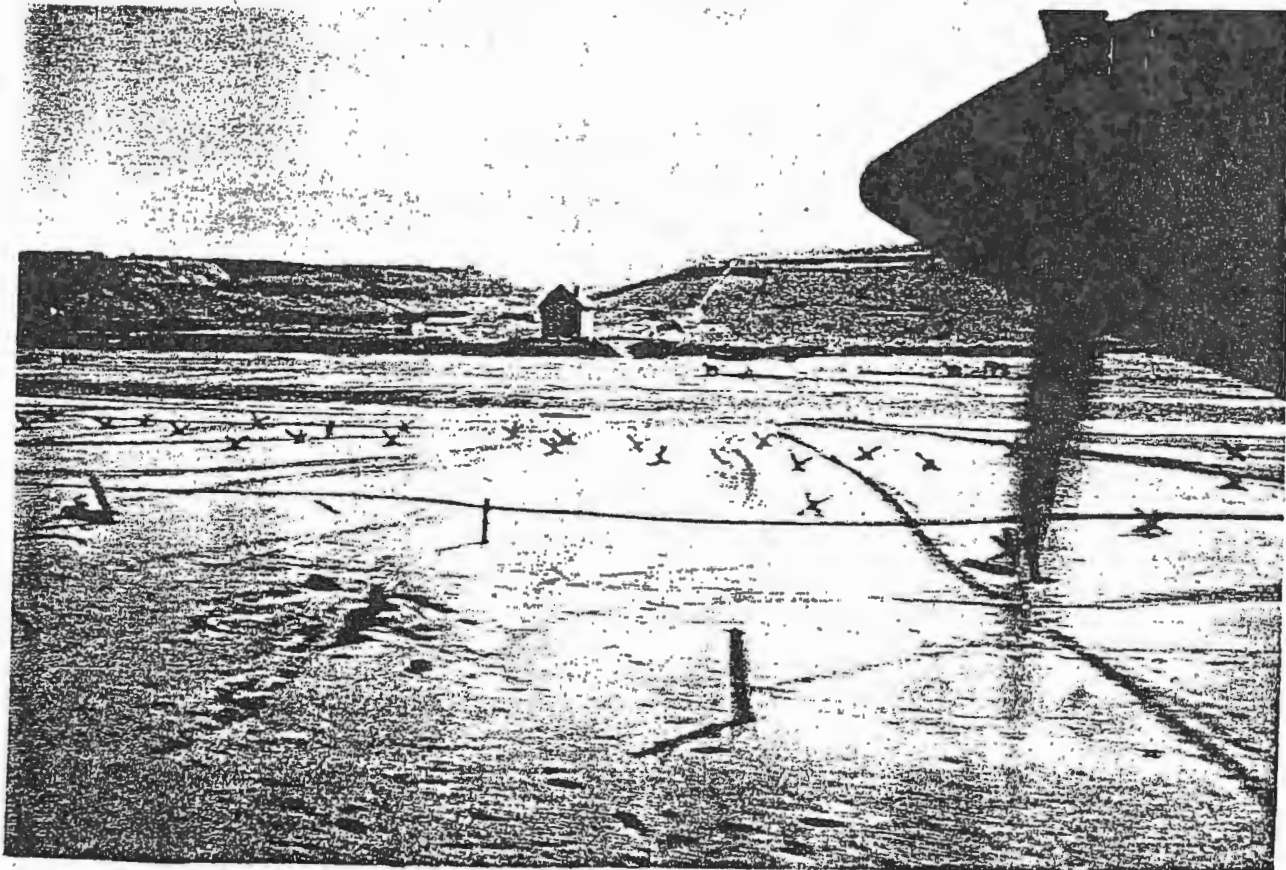
natural difficulties. The estuary at the mouth of the Vire River is marked by extensive shallows, exposed at low tide, and flanked on the east by reefs that extend to Grandcamp. Beyond that seaside village cliffs averaging 100 feet in height tower above a narrow beach as far as Pointe de la Percée. Five miles further east, cliffs reappear at the shore line, and the beach is spoiled by rock ledges which continue as far as Port-en-Bessin.

It was on this five-mile, cliffless interval that V Corps planned its assault landings, designating the sector as "Omaha" Beach.

That part of the stretch regarded as suitable for landing operations was about 7,000 yards long, on a shore which curves landward in a very slight crescent and is backed with bluffs which merge into the cliffs at either end of the sector.

The beach slopes very gently below high-water mark. With a tidal range of 18 feet expected at the period of the assault, low tide would expose a stretch of firm sand averaging about 300 yards in distance from low-water mark to high. The enemy had placed "underwater" obstacles on this tidal flat. At high tide, men and vehicles wading

THE GENTLY SLOPING TIDAL FLAT offered no cover for the attacking forces. This reconnaissance photograph taken 19 May 1944 shows the sands at low tide in front of E-1 draw. A pillbox is seen just to the right of the house, and a strongpoint on the bluff shoulder left of the draw. Work is in progress on obstacles, including hedgehogs and some mined posts. French labor was used.





THE SHINGLE EMBANKMENT was characteristic of the whole length of Omaha Beach. It was impassable at most places for vehicles, but afforded some cover for the assault troops. This section is in front of D-3 draw, by the house which Maj. Bingham occupied early in the assault. German trenches were just beyond the wire on the top of the shingle. The crest line of the bluff barely shows.

up the beach could expect trouble with irregular runnels parallel to the shore, scoured out by the tidal current and two and one-half to four feet deep.

At the high-water mark, the tidal flat terminated⁴ in a bank of coarse shingle, sloping up rather steeply to a height of some 8 feet. In places it was as much as 15 yards

wide, and the stones averaged 3 inches in diameter. On the eastern two-thirds of the beach, the shingle lay against a low sand embankment or dune line and constituted a barrier which was impassable for vehicles. On the western part of the beach the shingle piled against a sea wall, first (near the Vier-ville exit, D-1) of stone masonry sloping seaward, then of wood. The wall varied in height from 4 to 12 feet and was broken by a gap several hundred yards wide where the tidal flat ended in shingle and embankment. Immediately behind the sea wall a paved

⁴ As a result of defensive preparation by the Germans, the effects of the assault bombardment, and above all the work done by engineers to clear the beach for supply operations after the assault, many features of the beach at the time of the assault were largely destroyed. The sea wall and shingle embankment were completely removed and many of the beach villas were razed or reduced to rubble. The road system was entirely changed.

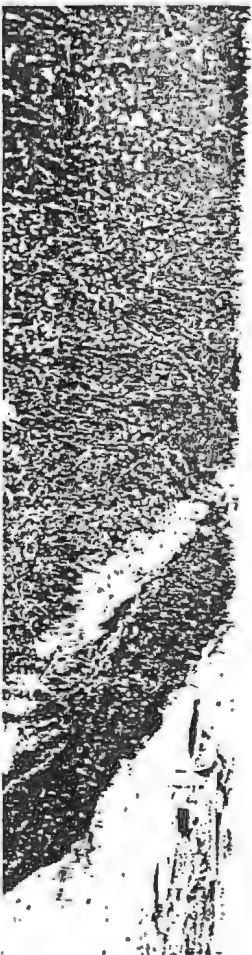
promenade beach road ran from Exit D-1 to Exit D-3, then became a rough track going as far as Exit E-3.

Between the dune line (or sea wall) and the bluffs lay the beach flat. Very narrow at either end of the main landing zone, this level shelf of sand widened to more than 200 yards near the center of the stretch. Except at the Vierville end, the flat had large patches of marsh and high grass, usually near the edge of the bluffs. Toward Exit D-1, a number of summer villas lined the shelf behind the promenade road, and at Exit D-3 lay a small village, les Moulins, with buildings clustered on the road running back inland from the beach. Many of these had been razed by the Germans to improve fields of defensive fires. East of les Moulins there were only a few scattered houses.

Bluffs 100 to 170 feet in height rise sharply from the flat and dominate the whole beach area. The slopes are generally steep, but in varying degree. They are most abrupt between Exit D-1 and Exit D-3; farther east, the rise is easier but reaches higher elevations (150 to 165 feet) fairly close to the beach flat. The grass-covered slopes are more uneven than they appear when viewed from only a short distance. Many small folds or irregularities provide opportunity for cover from flanking fires, and from Exit E-1 eastward the bluff sides are partly covered with low scrub and brush. Along most of the stretch, the bluff ends in a clear-cut crest line as it reaches the edge of the inland plateau; toward the eastern end, where the slopes are longer and more gradual, the edge is not sharply defined.

THE BEACH FLAT, looking east from western shoulder of E-1 draw. Taken a few days after the invasion, the photograph shows the antitank ditch protecting the draw. Trucks are already using a new exit road leading straight up the bluff off Easy Red (right).

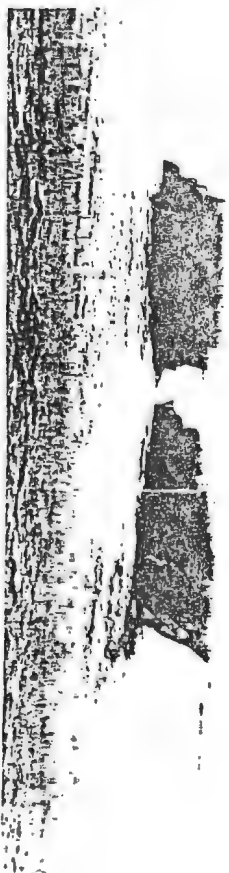
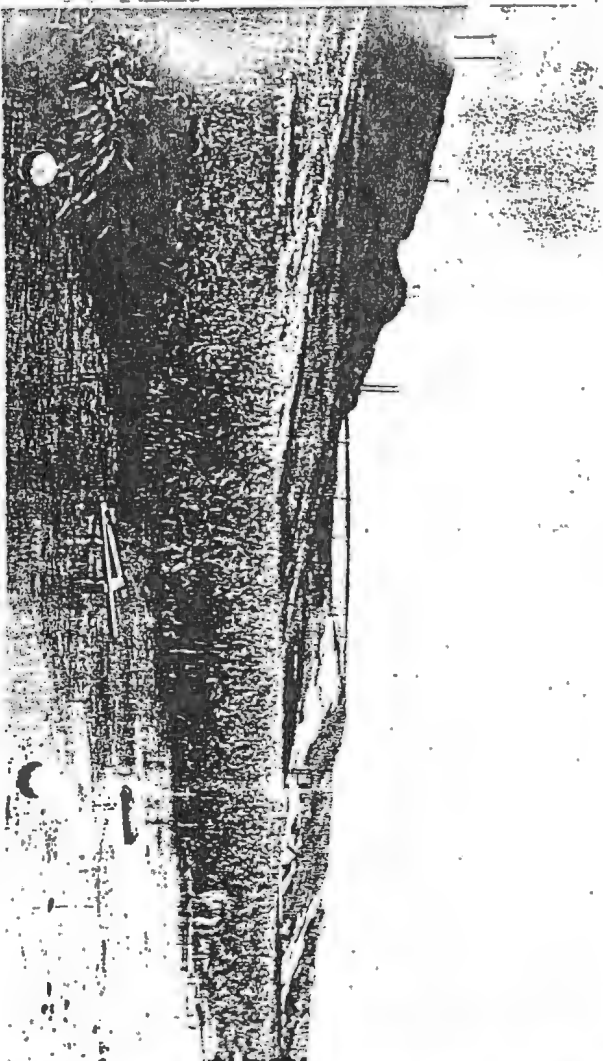




AT THE WESTERN END OF ONIWA the bluffs merge into a cliff line. Taken from a point 150 yards west of D-1 drase, this view shows the cliffs toward Pointe de la Perle and the narrowing beach flat along sector Charlie. A pillbox sited to fire east along beach is on the sand (right). Other gun emplacements were built into cliff sides near the Point. (Photograph taken June 1945)

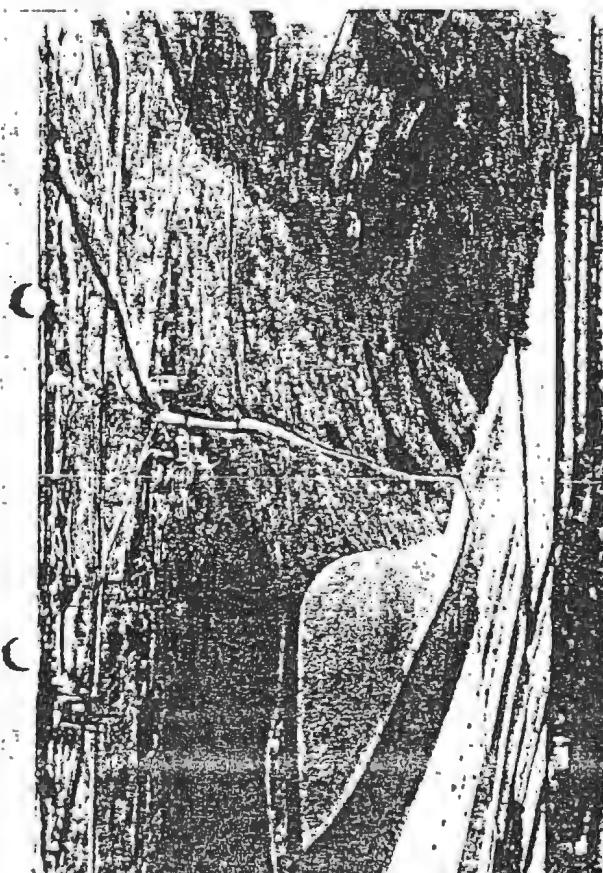
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MARSHES ALONG THE BEACH FLAT were found at the foot of the bluff and were often mined. This photograph, taken June 1945, shows the beach from Easy Green, looking west past D-3 drase. The exit road over the bluff (center) was constructed by beach engineers.



ALONG EASY RED SECTOR the beach has more, marked by patches of brush. This beach is between D-1 drases, facing a main penetration area of the beach flat just after D Day, the photograph shows a pillbox on a sand bankment, including a bulldozer and LCL 553. The beach cleared, and gaps opened through the embankment in the

D-1 DRAW leads off the beach to the flat plain behind the bluff. To the right, the fields toward St-Laurent have unusually few hedgerows. This aerial oblique was taken in June 1945, when little work had been done on fortifications along Omaha Beach.

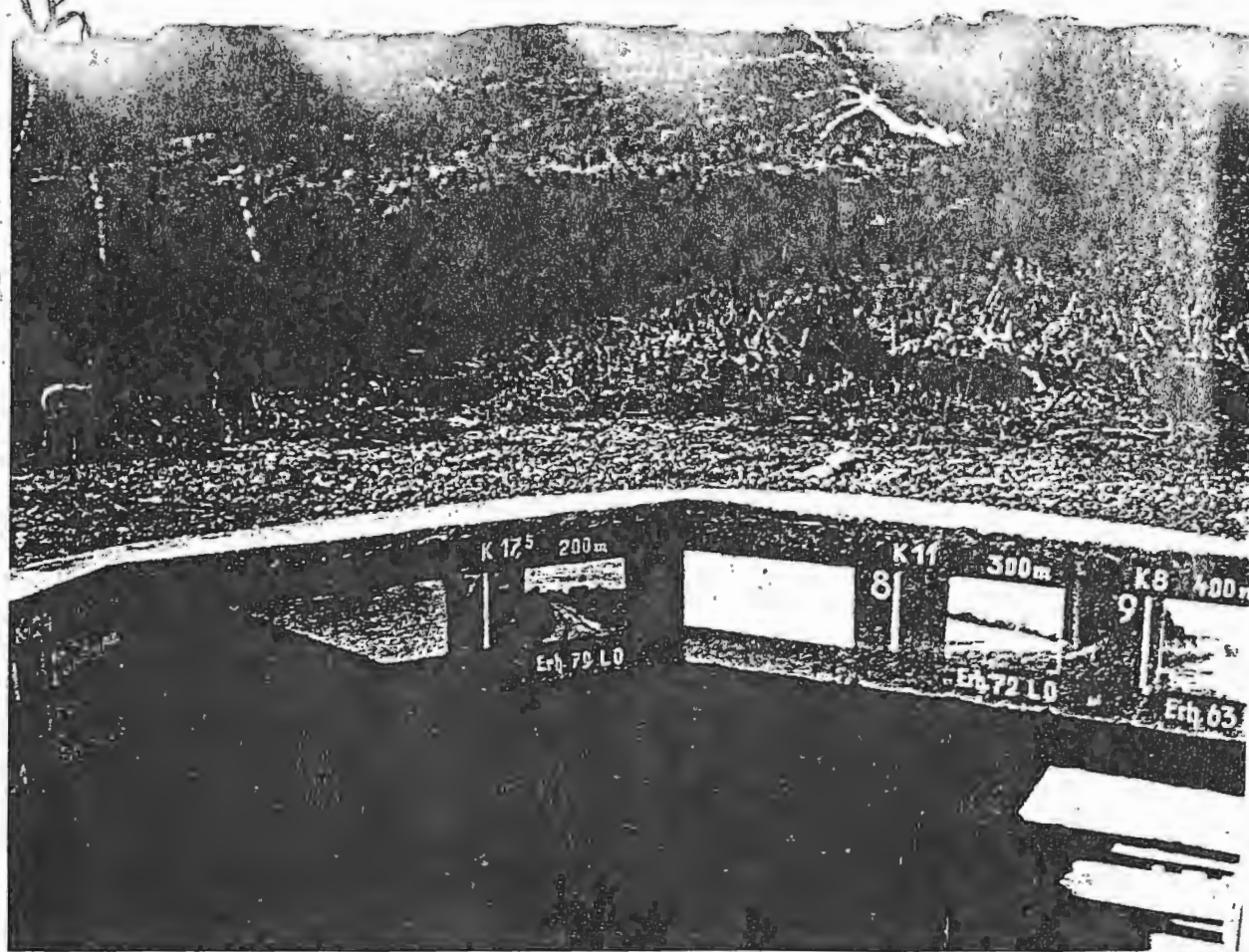




TRENCHES ALONG THE BLUFF EDGE were the main German defenses between strongpoints guarding draws. These trenches, leading from dugouts to firing positions, overlooked Easy Red Beach west of E-1 draw. Such systems usually included machine-gun positions.

Omaha Beach lay in the 53-mile sector reportedly held by the 716th Infantry Division, extending from the Orne River to the Vire Estuary (Map No. I). This was a defensive division, estimated at two regiments, two or three artillery battalions, and other small divisional units. Non-German elements in the division were estimated to be as high as 50 percent, mostly Poles or Russians, and morale was thought to be poor. The 726th Infantry Regiment was responsible for the coast defenses from west of Grandcamp to a point three miles east of Port-en-Bessin. According to the intelligence available, defending troops in the Omaha Beach strongpoints amounted to about a reinforced battalion, some 800 to 1,000 troops, most of them needed to man

the beach defenses. Local reserves of the 716th Division were estimated at three battalions, two of these near enough to the Omaha assault area to reach it in two to three hours. Counterattacks by these units were not regarded as likely to be effective against penetrations of the beach defenses, and major counterattacks would depend on the arrival of mobile reserves. The nearest of these to the Omaha area, and the most likely to be committed there was the 3rd Infantry Division, reported as stationed in the St-Lô-Caumont area some 20 miles inland. Commanded by Lt. Gen. Heinz Himmler, this was an offensive division of good quality, with a core of veterans experienced in fighting on the Russian front, and expected to furnish most of the opposition



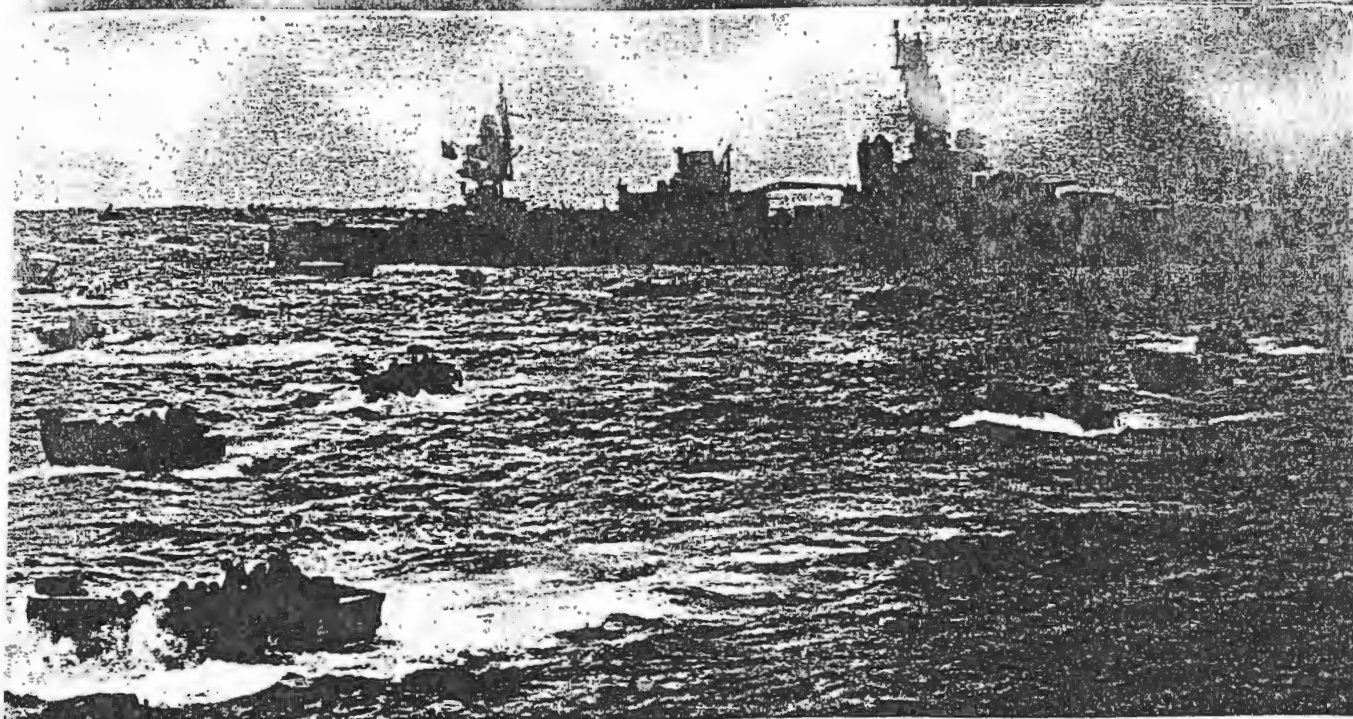
GERMAN MORTAR POSITION, in the strongpoint on the bank just west of Fierville draw, looking inland. The gunners had painted panoramic sketches of ground features near the position with ranges and deflections for hitting more important target areas.

be limited to harassing raids by E-Boats on the flanks of the convoy lane, and underwater attack by U-Boats from bases in western France.

Pre-Assault Bombardment Plans

The assault landings on Omaha Beach were to be preceded by intensive air and naval bombardment in the half-hour before touchdown, designed to neutralize all known gun positions and to demoralize enemy troops in the beach defenses. For the period

just previous to D Day air attacks were planned against coastal batteries in the NEPTUNE area, but only as part of a widespread program which put its heaviest attacks on the French coast north of the Seine. The Pointe du Hoc position, one of the priority targets in this pre-D-Day bombardment, had been hit on 15 April, 22 May, and 6 June. The RAF was to conclude the effort against coastal batteries with a concentrated attack between midnight and dawn of D Day; the coastal batteries from the mouth of the Seine to Cherbourg were



LANDING CRAFT were launched from transports 10 miles from the beaches. These craft, bucking rough seas, are passing by the cruiser *Augusta*, flagship of Western Task Force. The LCI's in foreground would carry something more than a company of infantry.

Montebou.

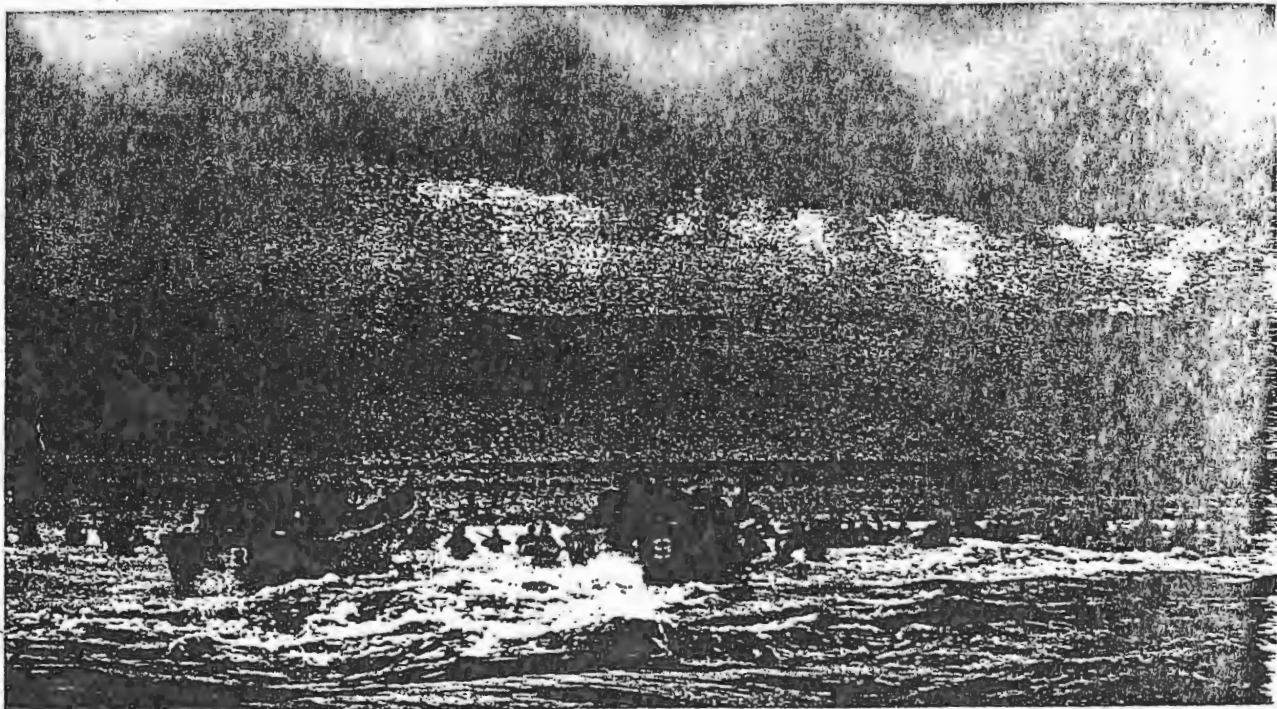


ing. Similar handicaps, however, had met and overcome at training exercises, many men, even among the seasick, were keyed up by the occasion. One officer remembered his troops chatting about "What rambles the beach would be from the ribs and ships' guns," although his own impression was: "It looked like another big tactical scheme off Slapton Sands, and I didn't get the feeling out of my head that was going to be another miserable two-day with a hot shower at the end."

As the landing craft carrying the 16th T units came within a few miles of shore they passed men struggling in life preservers on rafts. These were personnel from Landed DD tanks, the first casualties of rough seas. According to plan. Companies B and C of the 741st Tank Battalion were launched at H-50 minutes, 6,000 yards off shore, to lead in the first assault wave on the eastern beach sectors. In very short order the DD's began to suffer crippling

damage in broken struts, torn canvas, and engine trouble from water flooding the engine compartment. Of the 32 tanks, 2 swam in and 3 others were beached from an LCT which could not launch its DD's because of a damaged ramp. In the 116th RCT zone, the officers in charge of the tank-loaded LCT's had decided not to risk the conditions of sea, and the 32 DD's of the 743d Tank Battalion were carried in to the beach.

In terms of ultimate effects, all these difficulties were minor by comparison with those of navigation. The plan called for landing each assault unit in a relatively small, defined area where it had a specific task to perform in reducing enemy defenses, opening gaps in obstacles, or clearing a section of the flat. Quick success on the beach was dependent on carrying out a large number of such small tasks, which were often correlated to lead to some major result such as the opening of an exit.



MIST AND SMOKE OBSCURED LANDMARKS even as late as 0730, when the support BLT's were landing. This Coast Guard photograph shows LCVP's, from the transport *Samuel Chase*, landing troops of the 1st BLT, 16th Infantry on their assigned beach sector, Easy Red.

Despite all the intensive study put on conditions of current and wind for this part of the coast, all the visual aids for spotting beachmarks by panoramic photographs, and all the experience with similar difficulties in training exercises, a great many landing craft of the first waves came in away from their target sectors. Smoke and dust along the beach from naval fire and a slight early morning mist made it hard to recognize landmarks as the shore was neared. One of the control vessels for Dog Beach drifted off its station, which may explain some of the later troubles of approach in that sector. The fact that practically all the mislanded craft were east of their targets points to the tidal current as a contributing factor. It was known that with a rising tide (low tide on 6 June was at 0525), a strong current ran laterally eastward along Omaha Beach, reaching

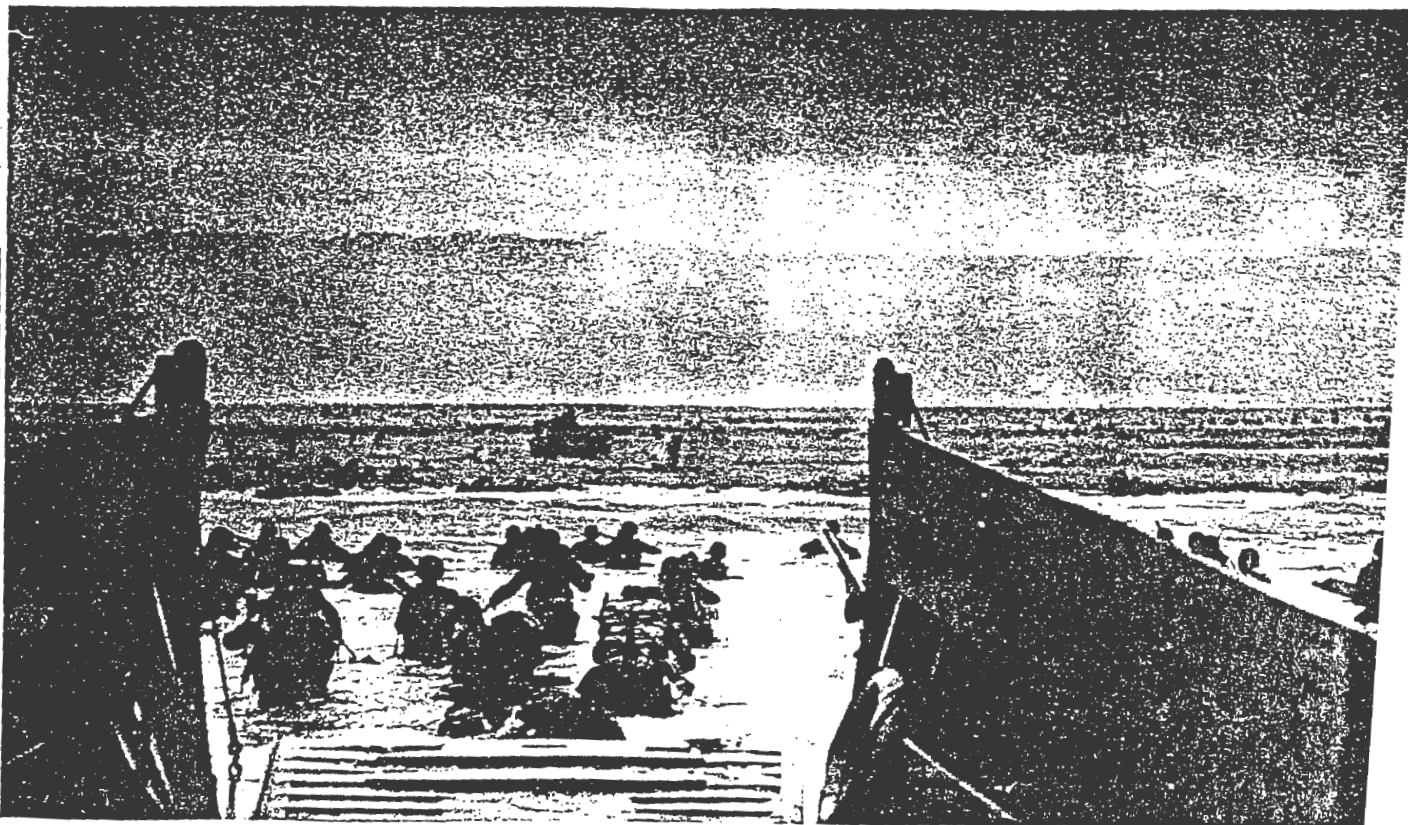
maximum velocity of nearly 2.7 knots at miles off shore; strong winds might increase its average velocity. That the current was very strong on D Day is indicated by the report of the destroyer *Satterlee*, which found it necessary to steer 20 to 30 degrees "up current" in order to maintain position in the firing lane.

Whatever the cause, a majority of landing craft during the first hour came in east of their appointed beach sector, and this majority included craft bearing engineers as well as infantry (Maps Nos. V, VI). Sometimes the margin of error was as much as a thousand yards or more; one company (E) of the 116th, destined for Easy Green, came in boat sections scattered, on the 16th beach as far east as Fox Green. More often, the error was in the order of a few hundred yards, but this could be enough to unde-

cases the water was neck deep. Under fire as they came within a quarter-mile of the shore, the infantry met their worst experiences of the day and suffered their heaviest casualties just after touchdown. Small-arms fire, mortars, and artillery concentrated on the landing area, but the worst hazard was produced by converging fires from automatic weapons. Survivors from some craft report hearing the fire beat on the ramps before they were lowered, and then seeing the hail of bullets whip the surf just in front of the lowered ramps. Some men dove under water or went over the sides to escape the beaten zone of the machine guns. Stiff,

weakened from seasickness, and often heavily loaded, the debarking troops had little chance of moving fast in water that was knee deep or higher, and their progress was made more difficult by uneven footing in the runnels crossing the tidal flat. Many men were exhausted before they reached shore, where they faced 200 yards or more of open sand to cross before reaching cover at the sea wall or shingle bank. Most men who reached that cover made it by walking, and under increasing enemy fire. Troops who stopped to organize, rest, or take shelter behind obstacles or tanks merely prolonged their difficulties and suffered heavier losses.

ASSAULT LANDING. This LCI(P) has grounded some distance out, and the men are wading toward the long stretch of open sands. A tank (No. 9, from Company A, 741st Tank Battalion) is on the edge of the tidal flat just ahead, on beach sector Easy Red. These troops are believed to be members of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, landing about 0730, when the tide was through the lower obstacles.



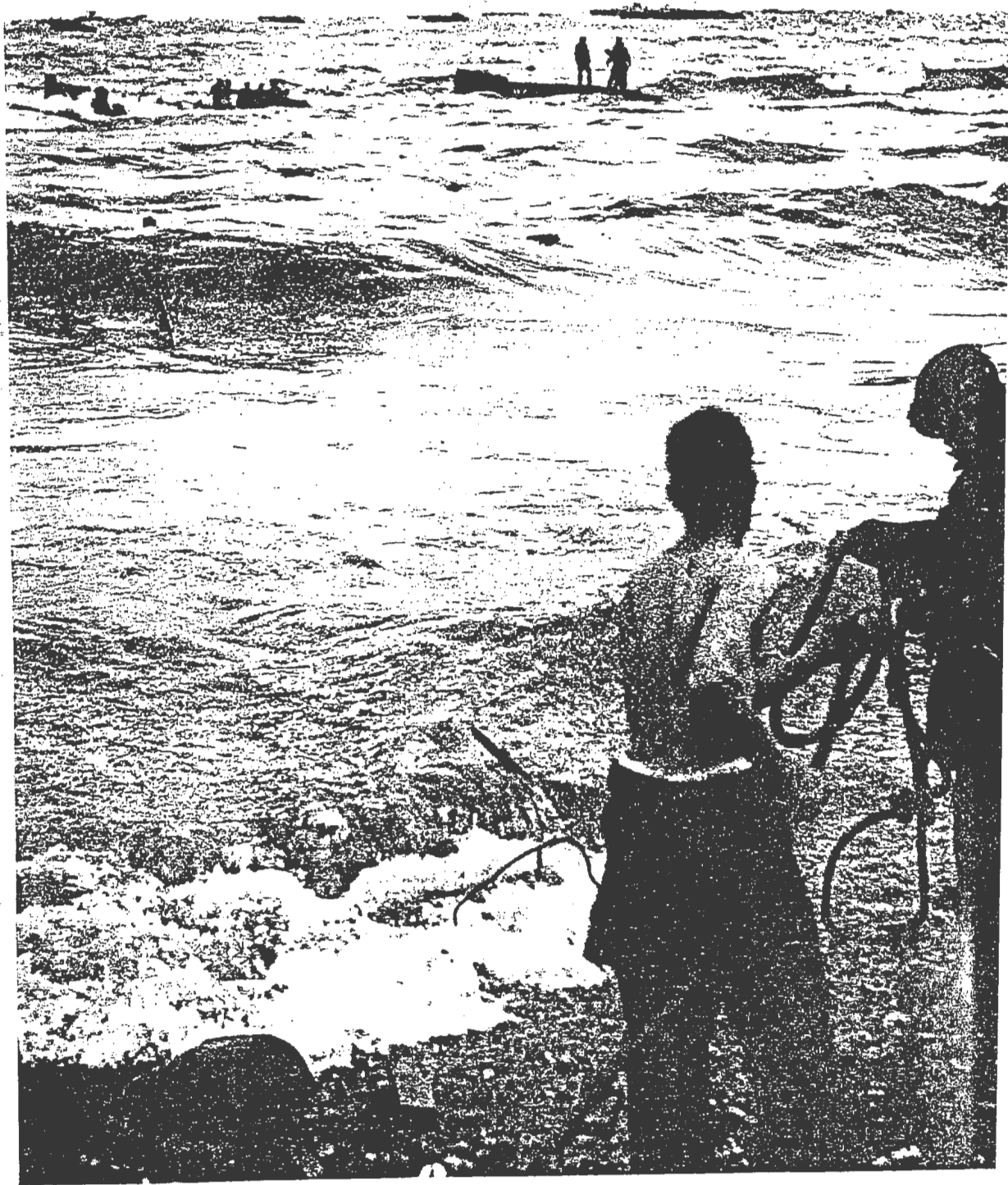


SMOKE FROM GRASS FIRES obscured the bluffs on several sectors, notably Dog Red, shown here. The smoke is still visible when this picture was taken, about 1600. LCT 207, carrying the self-propelled guns of 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, was finally able to make shore after an attempt at 0800 had failed. Obstacles on this part of Omaha were still intact that afternoon.

There were fortunate exceptions to this general picture. Several hundred yards of bluff west of les Moulins draw were obscured in heavy smoke from grass fires, apparently started by naval shells or rockets. Blanketed by this smoke, enemy guns and emplacements were unable to deliver effective fire on that end of Dog Beach, and units landing there were comparatively unscathed. At other places, what would seem to be an occasional "blind spot" in the enemy fire pattern let a craft get men ashore with few losses. In the main, the first wave was hard hit.

Perhaps the worst area on the beach was Dog Green, directly in front of strongpoints guarding the Vierville draw and under heavy flanking fire from emplacements to the west, near Pointe de la Percée. Company A of the 116th was due to land on this sector with Company C of the 2d Rangers on its

right flank, and both units came in on their targets. One of the six LCA's carrying Company A foundered about a thousand yards off shore, and passing Rangers saw men jumping overboard and being dragged down by their loads. At H+6 minutes the remaining craft grounded in water 4 to 6 feet deep, about 30 yards short of the outward band of obstacles. Starting off the craft in three files, center file first and the flank files peeling right and left, the men were enveloped in accurate and intense fire from automatic weapons. Order was quickly lost as the troops attempted to dive under water or dropped over the sides into surf over their heads. Mortar fire scored four direct hits on one LCA, which "disintegrated." Casualties were suffered all the way to the sand, but when the survivors got there, some found they could not hold and came back into the water for cover, while others took



MEN FROM WRECKED LANDING CRAFT are being rescued by life lines carried out to them from the beach. Medical corps personnel performed many acts of heroism, working under fire to bring up the wounded men left on the tidal flat and threatened by rising tide.

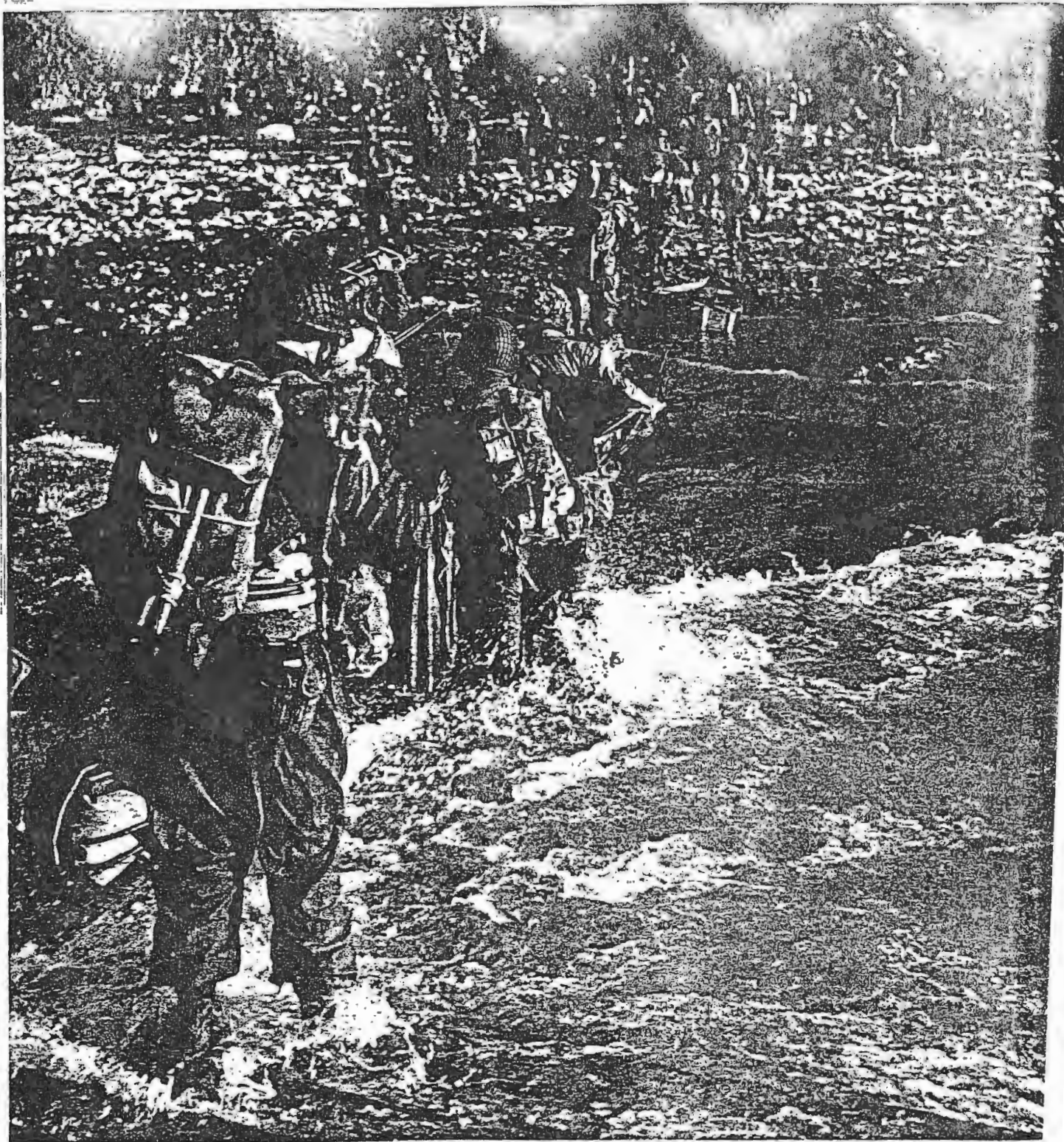
Organization suffered in crossing the beach flat. The 5th Section, first to arrive, knocked out two more machine guns and took a prisoner. On the whole, enemy opposition had not been heavy, and cover on the slopes allowed Company G to make the crest with few casualties. Their movement forward, from embankment to the bluff top, had taken place between 0730 and 0830. Enemy fire died away as the troops emerged on the fields of the upland, reorganized, and started south in column

of sections. Their principal concern was with the frequent indications of mined areas just beyond the bluff top.

To their right Lieutenant Spalding's section of Company E, 16th RCT, was getting up about the same time, helped by covering fire from Company G, and effecting a useful extension of the front of penetration. The section now numbered 23 men, having lost 3 at the beach and 3 more getting past an enemy machine gun on the bluff side. The gun was operated by a lone soldier

PATH THROUGH MINEFIELDS. marked by engineers and followed by the assaulting units of the 16th Infantry from Easy Red. View taken from the foot of the slopes. looks directly up route taken D Day morning by units of the 16th Infantry (2d and 1st Battalions).





ROCKY LEDGES outcrop on the beach at Fox Red, where the foot of the bluff is cliff-like. Troops, carrying heavy weapons equipment, are coming in at the sector where Company L, 16th Infantry, found shelter before moving right to assault the F-1 strongpoint.

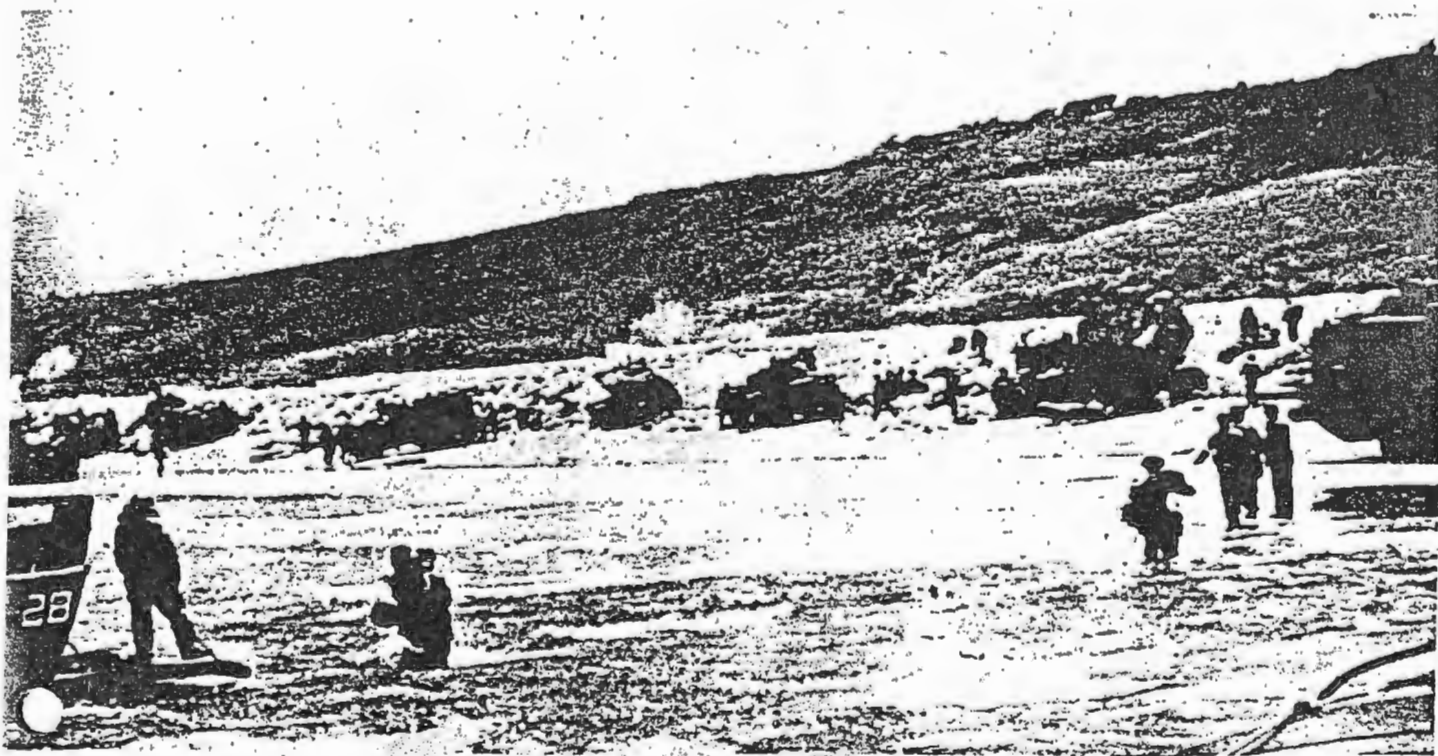
led over to a tank for better direction of fire. Nevertheless, the tanks kept on firing: one of them, disabled, until the rising tide drowned out the guns, others while the crew worked on dismounted tracks. Their achievement cannot be summed up in statistics; the best testimony in their favor is the usual mention in the records of many units, from all parts of the beach, of emplacements neutralized by the supporting fire of tanks. In an interview shortly after the battle, the commander of the 2d Battalion, 116th Infantry, who saw some of the worst fighting on the beach at les Moulins, expressed his opinion that the tanks "saved the day. They shot the hell out of the Germans, and the hell shot out of them."

The destroyer *Carmick*, by what was described as "silent cooperation," did her

best to help some tanks on Dog Green which had managed to get up on the promenade road and were trying to fight west toward the Vierville draw. The destroyer's observers watched for the tanks' fire to show targets on the bluff edge, and then used the bursts as a point of aim for the *Carmick's* guns.

Support from naval units, necessarily limited during the first landings, began to count heavily later on. Some of the landing craft had tried to support the debarking troops with the fire from their light guns. When Company G was landing near les Moulins, the infantry saw a patrol craft stand off directly in front of the enemy strongpoint to the east of the draw and pump shell after shell into it. German artillery got the craft's range and forced it

VEHICLES ARE HELD ON THE TIDAL FLAT, unable to get beyond the shingle, which was reached by high tide about 1100, D Day. This sector is on Easy Red, and E-3 draw, still strongly defended by the German forces, is about a quarter mile to the east (left).



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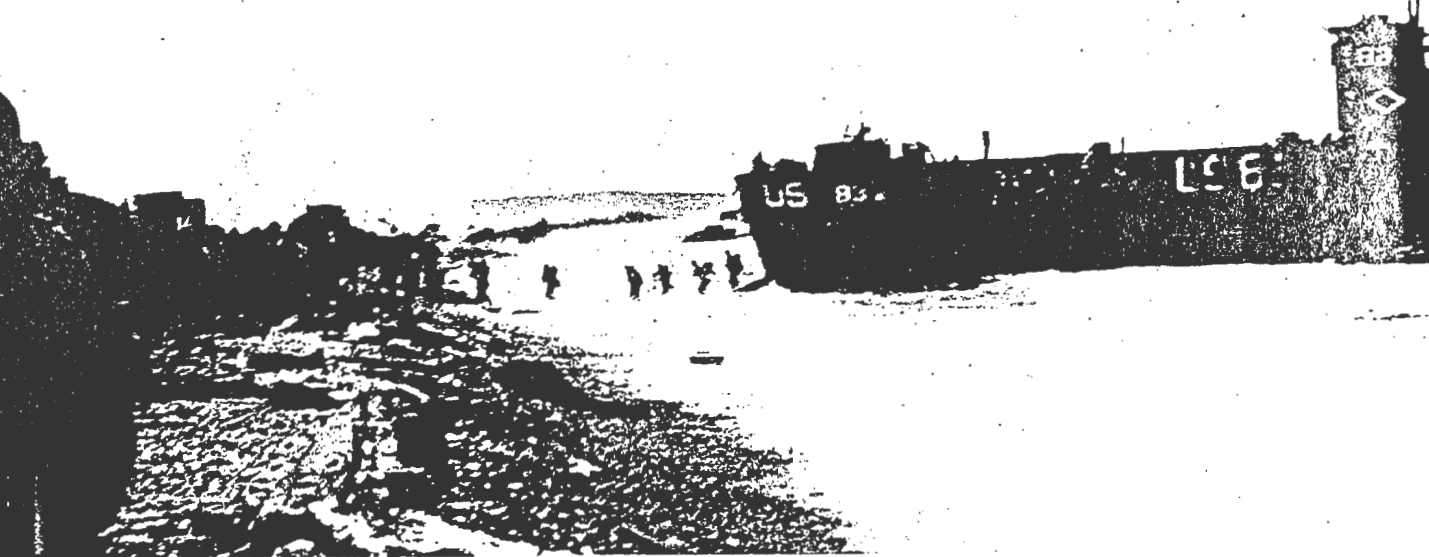
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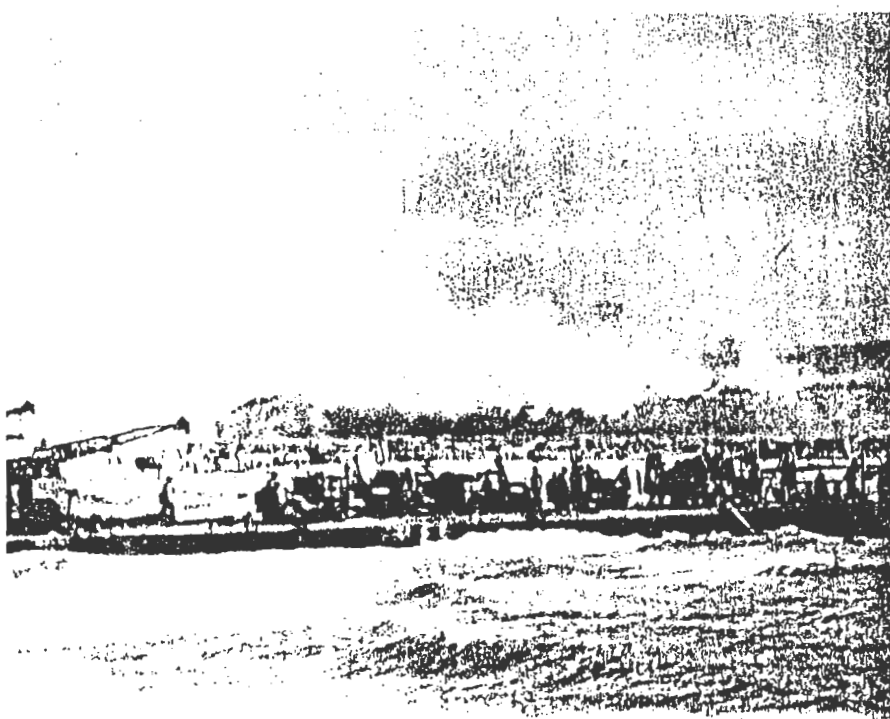
HIGH-TIDE LANDINGS were hindered by the beach obstacles. LCI (L) 83, carrying combat engineers, approached Fox Green at 0830, was unable to get in, and debarked 72 men on LCVP's. An artillery hit on the port bulwarks caused 16 casualties. Finally beaching at 1116, the craft was further damaged on one side by a mine but all personnel debarked and the LCI was floated off that night.

shore, with craft of all descriptions maneuvering in every direction. The 2d Battalion began landing just west of E-1 shortly after 1000. As they neared shore, troops of the 18th had no impression that any progress had been made from the beach: "The beach shingle was full of tractors, tanks, vehicles, bulldozers, and troops—the high ground was still held by Germans who had all troops on the beach pinned down—the beach was still under heavy fire from enemy small arms, mortars, and artillery." The underwater obstacles caused great difficulties, even though a narrow gap had been cleared near E-1; the Navy report for the transport group carrying the 18th Infantry lists 22 LCVP's, 2 LCI (L)'s and 4 LCT's as lost at the beach,

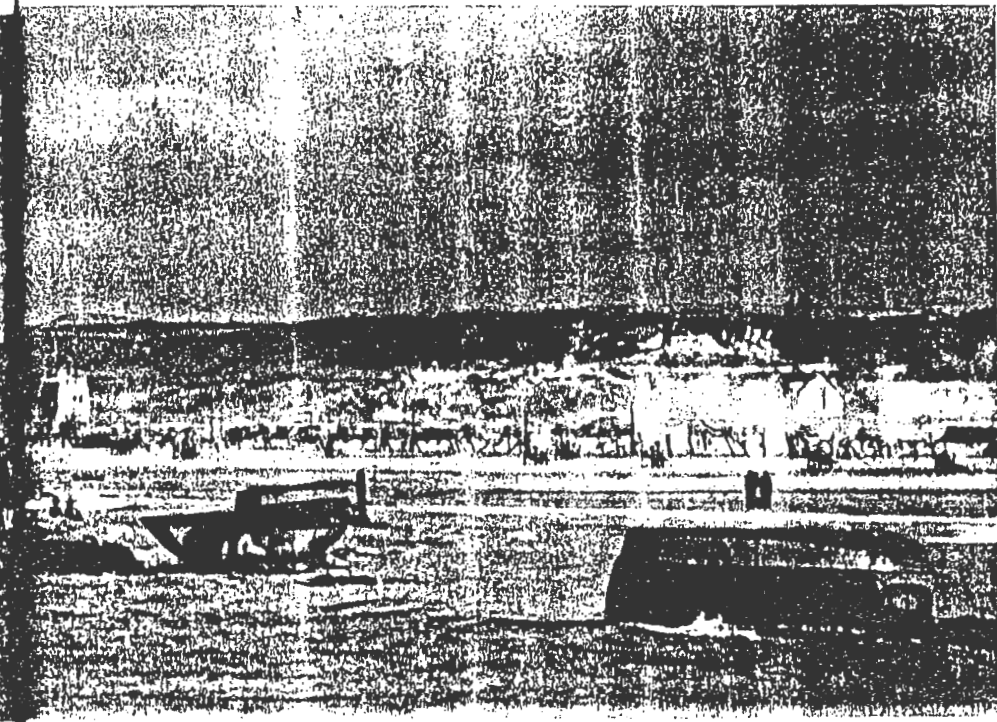
nearly all from being staved in by log ramps or hitting mines. Nevertheless, personnel losses in the 18th Infantry were light.

On the right of E-1, the 2d Battalion found an enemy pillbox still in action. Fire from a tank supported the infantry in a first attempt, but the attack was stalled until naval fire was laid on. The NSFCP contacted a destroyer about 1,000 yards off shore and coordinated its action with the infantry assault. The affair was very nicely timed; the destroyers' guns, firing only a few yards over the crowded beach, got on the target at about the fourth round and the pillbox surrendered. Twenty Germans were taken prisoners. Thus, at about 1130, the last enemy defenses in front of E-1 draw

182



183



LANDINGS WERE DELAYED and in the afternoon the approach to the beach was crowded with craft waiting to come in as the receding tide uncovered obstacles. A rhino-ferry, with cranes aboard, has come in near some drenched-out trucks. Les Moulins (D-3) at right.

... to stop progress, this fire (D) hamper and delay the effort to clear the confusion on the beach. Inland observers and recon planes located the enemy batteries, but guns could not intervene effectively.

guessing as to location of the German guns. Nevertheless, the engineers were able to make steady progress in their vital task of clearing and organizing the beach for movement inland. As the tide lowered, the remnants of the demolition teams went to work again on the exposed obstacles, although

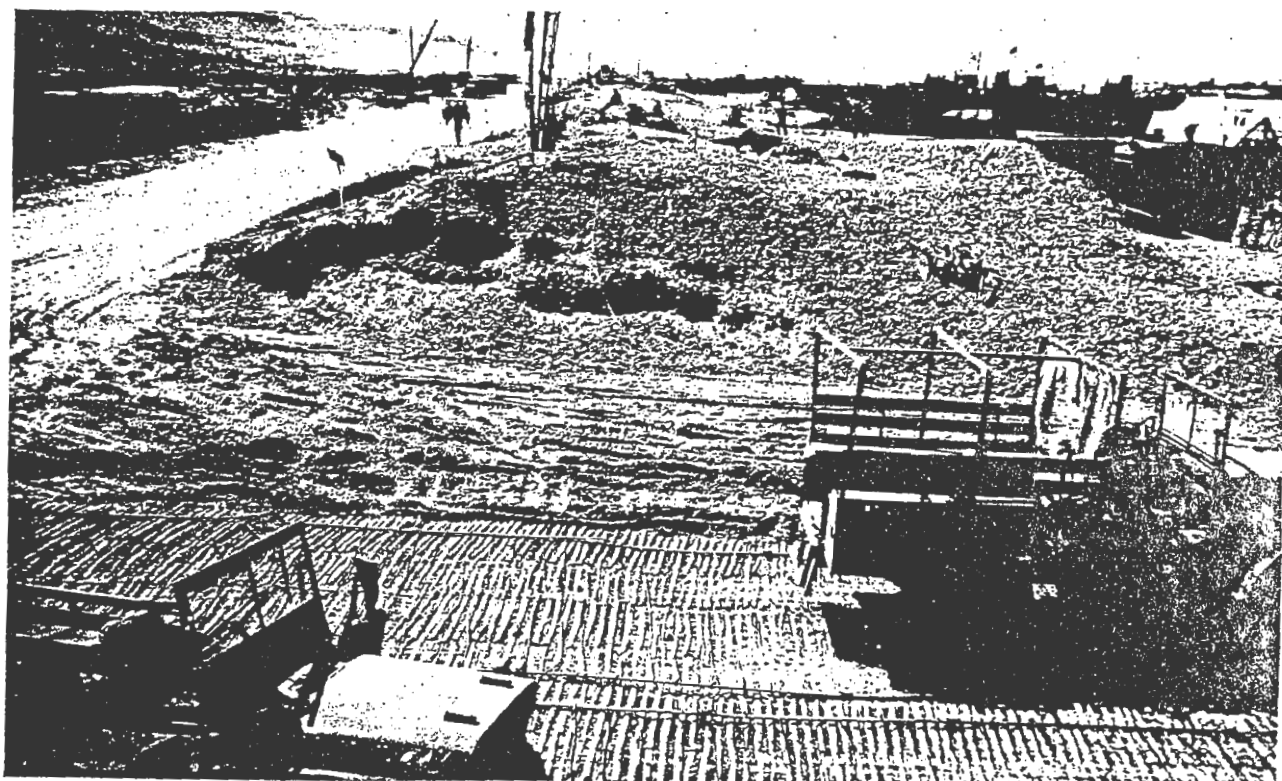
marked, and an estimated 35 percent of the obstacles on the beach had been cleared. Along the beach flat, units of the Engineer Special Brigade Group were making gaps in the embankment, clearing minefields, and doing what they could to get at the exits. More of their units and equipment were

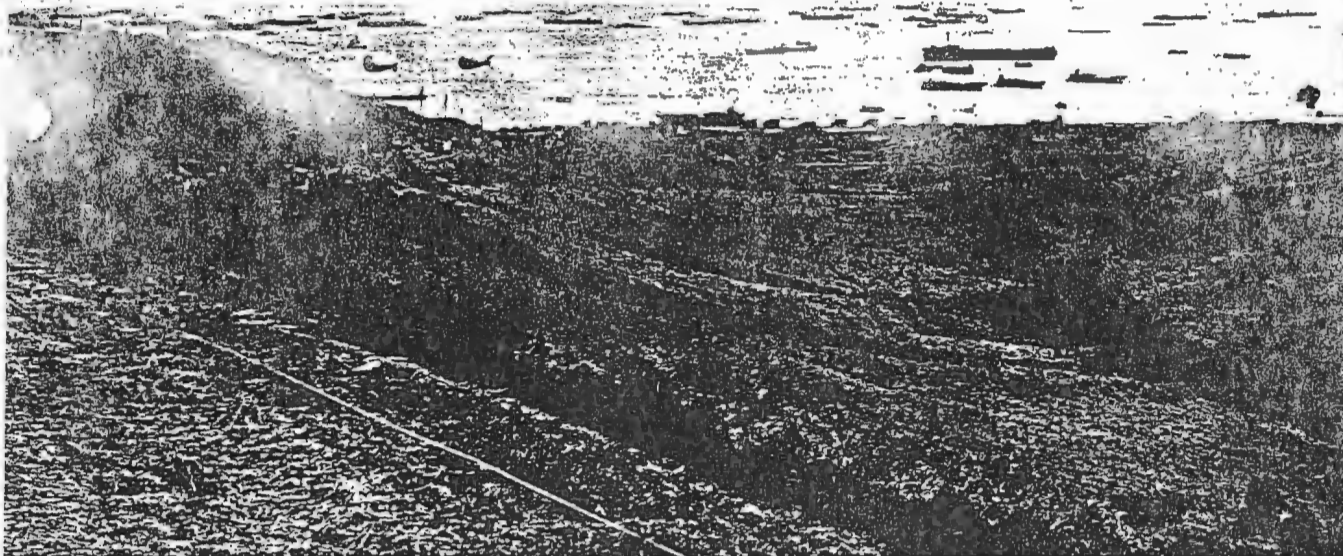
unit began a difficult journey to reach F-1 exit. Enemy artillery fire harassed it all the way, especially in front of D-3 and E-3 draws. At E-3 shelling was so heavy that men were sent across the exposed area in pairs. When about half had crossed, a dozer at work near the shingle was hit and burned.

The primary condition for improvement on the beach was to get vehicles started inland, thus relieving congestion and permitting further landings. This became possible after the fire of destroyers and the advance of the 18th Infantry had cleared up the last enemy resistance at E-1 draw. Gaps had already been cut through the embankment, and the engineers of the 1st, 37th, and 149th Battalions were ready to exploit the advantage. Between 1200 and 1300, dozers under fire from snipers cut a road up the western slope of the draw toward St-Laurent, and the movement of vehicles began almost at once. Landings were resumed on Easy Red and Easy Green, the first group of pre-loaded dukws coming in by 1400. Enemy artillery lacked observation on the E-1 draw,

fortunately for the heavy traffic now starting. By 1500 new trouble loomed; the vehicles coming up on the plateau found themselves unable to get far toward St-Laurent because of continued enemy resistance in that village. For a time all movement was stopped. Vehicles jammed bumper to bumper all the way up the exit road, but by 1600, engineers had pushed a branch road south off the planned route toward the coastal highway. Vehicles were hastily shunted off this track into the adjoining fields, and movement continued for the rest of the day. At 1700, all remaining tanks of the 741st Tank Battalion were ordered inland via this exit, and four of them later took part in the unsuccessful attempt to clean out St-Laurent before dark.

BREACHES IN THE SHINGLE EMBANKMENT were opened by bulldozers in the afternoon, permitting vehicles to reach the flat. This scene (Easy Red) taken some days later, shows ships unloading at the high-water line, where they were floated off at next high tide.





THE E-1 EXIT ROAD was opened on D Day by 1300, the engineers working under fire from snipers. This photo, looking down E-1 draw, was taken later in the week. A tape to mark mine-cleared areas was still needed, since this draw had been heavily mined.

BLOCKS WERE DEMOLISHED at the mouth of D-1 by engineers of the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion. After the road was open for traffic to Vierville by 1700, fire from the artillery demolished houses along the road, impeding its use until dark.



Montebou

XX

XX

91

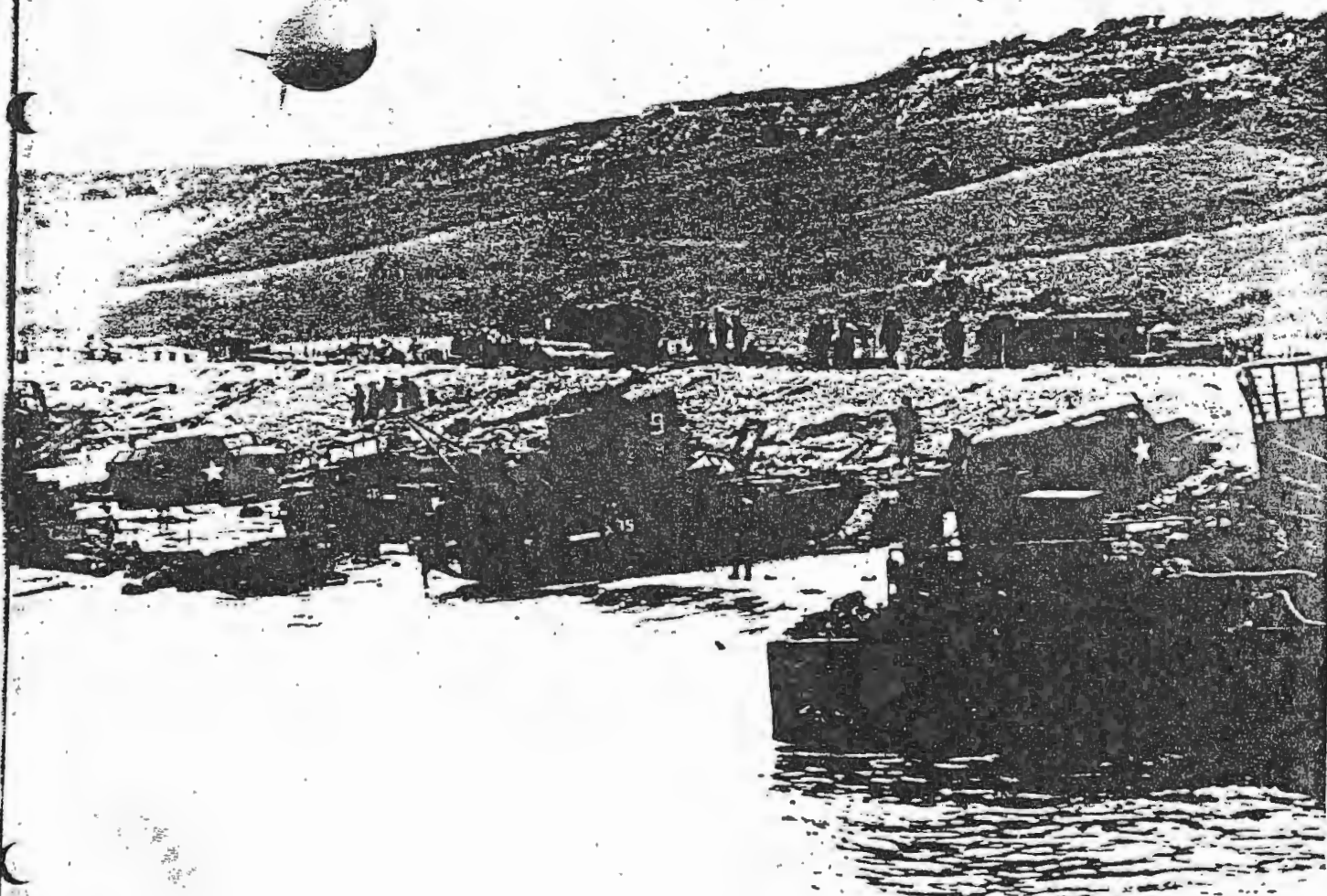
Vierville

organization of dumps, and "lost" elements of assault infantry, reinforcements, and service troops were trying to find their units. Men dug in for the night wherever they could, some in the sand or on the bluff slopes. All through the shallow beachhead, along the bluffs, in the transit area, and around command posts, sniper fire caused alarms and started outbursts of firing. There were no "rear areas" on the night of D Day.

At the End of D Day

The assault on Omaha Beach had succeeded, but the going had been harder than expected. Penetrations made in the morning by relatively weak assault groups had lacked the force to carry far inland. Delay in reducing the strongpoints at the draws had slowed landings of reinforcements, artillery, and supplies. Stubborn enemy resistance,

WRECKAGE ON EASY RED includes landing craft (right), trucks, and tank No. 9, Company A, 741st Tank Battalion, which had been disabled here in the morning. Much matériel was salvaged during the clean-up of the beach by the Engineer Special Brigade Group.



both at strongpoints and inland, had held the advance to a strip of ground hardly more than a mile-and-a-half deep in the Colleville area, and considerably less than that west of St-Laurent. Barely large enough to be called a foothold, this strip was well inside the planned beachhead maintenance area. Behind U. S. forward positions, cut-off enemy groups were still resisting. The whole landing area continued under enemy artillery fire from inland.

Infantry assault troops had been landed, despite all difficulties, on the scale intended; most of the elements of five regiments were ashore by dark. With respect to artillery, vehicles, and supplies of all sorts, schedules

were far behind. Little more than 100 tons had been got ashore instead of the 2,400 tons planned for D Day. The ammunition supply situation was critical and would have been even worse except for the fact that 90 of the 110 pre-loaded dukws in Force "O" had made the shore successfully. Only the first steps had been taken to organize the beach for handling the expected volume of traffic; and it was obvious that further delay in unloadings would be inevitable.

Unit records for D Day are necessarily incomplete or fragmentary, and losses in men and matériel cannot be established in accurate detail. First estimates of casualties

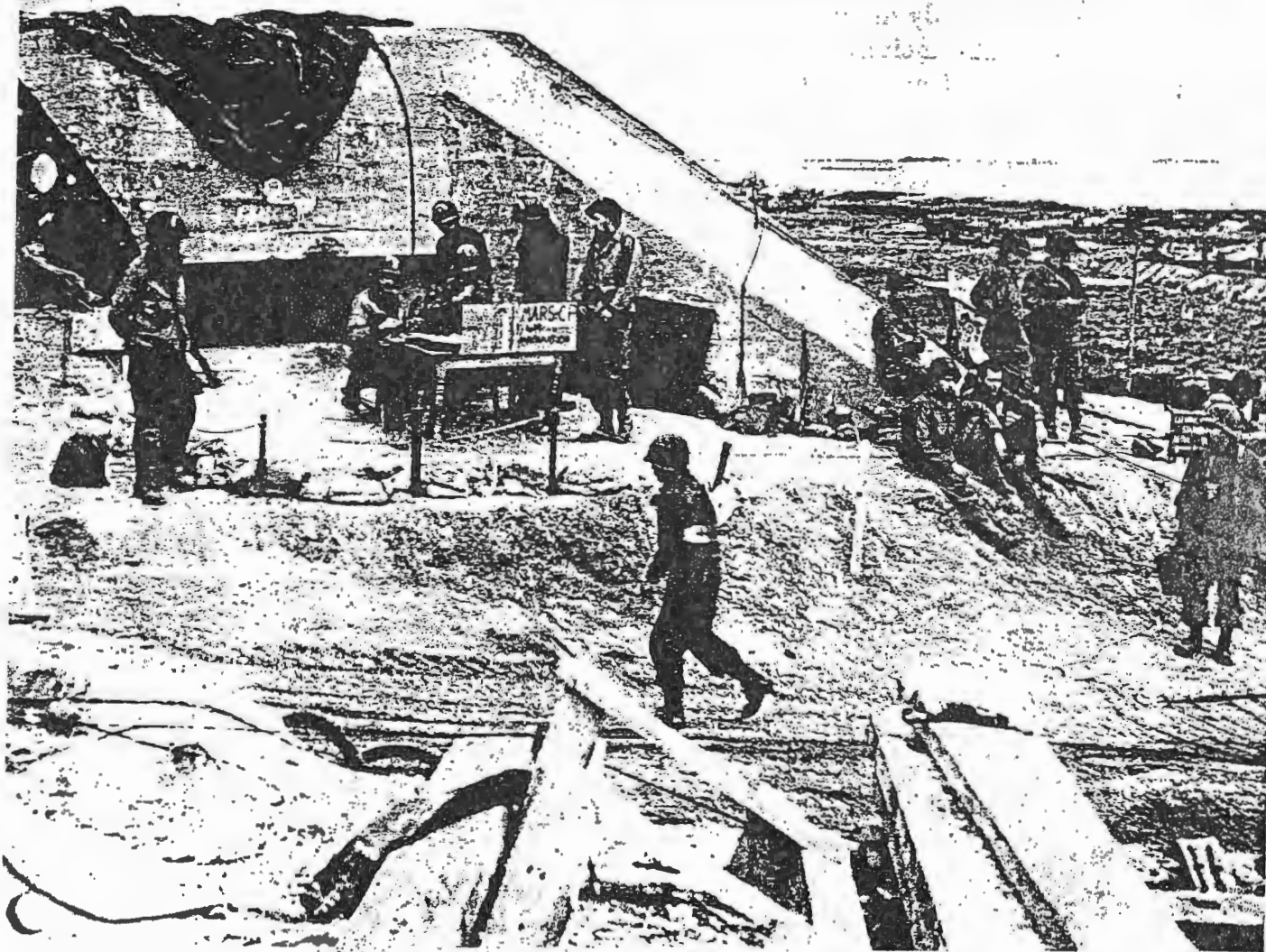
DEBRIS of the landing assault on Dog Beach, with discarded life preservers most prominent. Boxes of demolitions in foreground.



There, even after the evening news of Allied operations. The evidence suggests that both the Navy and Army regarded the assault in this area as a mere adjunct of the main effort directed at Caen and Bayeux. Communications were especially poor in the 352d Division's sector, and nothing had come back to Corps of the scale of operations in progress at Omaha.

When Hitler, on 6 June, received word of the invasion he was about to appear at a reception near Salzburg of the new Hungarian prime minister. Hitler came in to the meeting with a radiant face and announced "It's begun at last." He was confident that all measures were being taken to meet the crisis, and that by 13 June counterattacks would wipe out any beachheads.

A PILLBOX USED AS HEADQUARTERS. This emplacement (now a battle monument) which protected E-1 draw (west side), was employed temporarily as CP for the Engineer Special Brigade Group. This unit operated Omaha Beach as a port of supply until December.



to get south and west of the Aure. Several hundred enemy were captured north of the Aure in mopping-up operations during the next two days. Elements of the 914th, 915th, and 726th Regiments had been involved in the main effort to check the 29th Division. Enemy losses in artillery had been considerable, including two horse-drawn batteries of 105-mm guns found deserted near Osmanville on 9 June. One of the most important results of the advance was to deprive the enemy of the coastal defenses and artillery positions between Grandcamp and Isigny, from which fire had been harassing both Omaha and Utah beachheads.

In contrast to the loss of enemy fire power, the artillery support of the 29th Division continued to build up on 8 June. By nightfall, six battalions of artillery, including three of 155-mm howitzers (two attached

from Corps Artillery), were available. Use of artillery on 8 June had still been relatively light, but the difficulties in getting observed fire were being overcome as communications improved. The first aircraft used for artillery observation was flown that afternoon, and several more planes were ready by 9 June.

Improvement at the Beach

Tactical advance and the arrival of supplies were mutually dependent conditions of success for the operation. Until the advance pushed far enough to free the beaches for normal operation, the supply and reinforcement necessary for sustained attack could not be unloaded. Deepening of the beachhead on 7-8 June was reflected in the progress made at the landing beaches.

ORGANIZING THE BEACH involved clearing mines and debris, salvage jobs, and building roads. Supplies had to be kept moving while all the other work was being carried on. Scene in front of E-1 draw, an exit much photographed in the early days of the invasion.



arranged priority schedules for discharging less, all exit roads were opened and working did ammunition begin to reach shore on

LANDING SUPPLIES from ships at the edge of the beach flat. Ammunition was particularly needed in the first days. Remnants of the shingle still shored; later the embankment was entirely removed by beach engineers organizing Omaha as a port of entry for supplies.



moderating sea conditions were better. Enemy batteries were firing on the landing area; the beach clear of debris and mines; a line running the length of the beach rapidly constructed for two-way many access roads had been built tidal flat to the lateral for facilitating charge of craft. Transit areas were being to function as planned. An landing strip, prepared on the line near L-L exit, was operational by 8 June, and wounded were evacuated from this held as early as 10 June. Communication facilities, essential for flow of traffic on the beach, were stalled. Tonnage moved for the only 1,129, a small figure in view but the start of rapid expansion to 7,000 tons by D+5. The situation under control, and a major supply for the coming months of operation to take organized shape.

During these two days, Allied continued their offensive against communications. The Eighth Air Force began to work on the bridges, while the Ninth Air Force after the railroad bridges between the Loire (Map No. XIII). Many yards and traffic centers from Paris received attacks, and they were bombed up to points as near head as St-Lô, Lison, Carentan, and Fighter-bombers carried on the dictating rail and road movement.



THE 2D DIVISION STARTS INLAND from the beach in front of E-1 draw. At the curve of the column, the troops are passing pillbox used as headquarters by the engineers. The 2d Division, landing 7-8 June, had to be used in mopping up enemy resistance near the beach.

north of Trévières, was to capture the key high ground at Cerisy Forest. The 1st Division was to put its main effort on the right, thus assisting the 2d Division, and to protect the east flank of V Corps along the Drôme River. The 1st Division's objectives lay along the high ground west of the Drôme River between Cerisy Forest and the Army boundary. On the right wing, covering the drive south to Cerisy Forest, the 29th Division would cross the Aure and reach the edge of the Elle River valley; at the

same time, it was to capture Isigny and establish contact with VII Corps toward Carentan. Enemy counterattack was still regarded as highly possible, and each attacking division was ordered to be ready for defense of D-Day positions in its sector with one to three battalions (one in the 2d Division sector), these units to remain in D-Day positions until relieved by Corps order.

This attack plan was designed to continue forward movements already under way, with a minimum of delay. In two cases, verbal