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July 11, 1942



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ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMPLETION OF THE

CLAIBORNE AND POLK
MILITARY RAILWAY

worldwartwoveterans.org

711th Engineer Railway Operating Battalion



OFFICERS OF THE 711TH ENGINEER RAILWAY OPERATING BATTALION



MAJOR G. M. WELCH Commanding Officer

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To all the men who have given of their time and energy unselfishly so that the Claiborne and Polk Military Railway might become a reality, this booklet is dedicated.

Major G. M. Welch	Commanding Officer, Superintendent
Captain H. A. Israel	Executive Officer, Assistant Superintendent
Captain E. J. Lawler	Storekeeper
Captain E. W. Drummond	Headquarters and Service Company Commander
Captain Harold Conn	Medical Officer
1st Lt. C. S. Angleton	Road Foreman of Engines
1st Lt. J. D. Elgin	Construction Foreman
1st. Lt. Joe D. Gore	Roadmaster
1st Lt. W. J. Kaiser	Dental Officer
1st Lt. G. E. Lourie	Adjutant
	A Company Commander, Engineer Maintenance-of-Way
1st. Lt. Earl Martin	B Company Commander, Master Mechanic
1st Lt. P. W. Strong	Chief Dispatcher
	C Company Commander, Trainmaster
1st Lt. S. D. Williamson	Signal Supervisor
2nd Lt. Robert Dawson	Training Officer Car Foreman Bridge and Buildng Supervisor Yardmaster
2nd Lt. John Depp	Car Foreman
2nd Lt. G. E. Dike	Bridge and Buildng Supervisor
2nd Lt. W. J. Dixon	Yardmaster
2nd Lt. D. L. Manion	Asst. Engineer Maintenance-of-Way
2nd Lt. J. A. Mitchell	Mechanical Engineer
	Asst. Storekeeper
2nd Lt. H. A. Ziegler	Asst. Yardmaster

FORMER OFFICERS

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Lt. Col. C. K. Harding
Major C. S. Donnelly
Captain Bertel Groundborg
Captain Ward A. Jones
Captain J. D. Matheson

Captain F. Thomas
Captain P. F. Yount
1st. Lt. Irving Rachlin
2nd Lt., D. W. Ehrhardt
2nd Lt. Edmund Kelly
2nd Lt. J. W. Logan, Jr.

The 711th Engineer Battalion

The 711th Engineer Battalion (Railway Operating), first of its kind in the United States Army, was activated on June 18th, 1942 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Although originally scheduled for activation at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, the battalion was organized at Fort Belvoir because facilities for the reception of the unit were not yet ready at Camp Claiborne, and because the 711th's officers were already at Fort Belvoir, at which post there were also several hundred railroad men available for the battalion from the Engineer Replacement Training Center.

gineer School Detachment, and the 1st, 9th, 4th, and 20th Engineers as an initial step. These men arrived on June 22nd, and the next several days were spent in setting up a tent camp in the woods adjacent to the Fort Belvoir railroad, near the pistol range. Pyramidal tents were pitched, latrines dug, temporary shower facilities erected, and kitchens using wood burning field ranges were set up. Four hundred twenty-five men from the ERTC were moved into this camp on June 25th.

During the period the 711th remained at Fort Belvoir, it completely rehabilitated the Quartermaster railroad serving the post. Built in 1917, this road was badly in need of maintenance. The 711th installed over 7000 tie plates on the line, replaced over a thousand ties, rebuilt one bridge and repaired several others, installed twenty culverts, relocated several hundred feet of track, and lined and surfaced the entire four and a half miles of main line using 9000 yards of gravel ballast obtained from a pit along



CAMP AT FORT BELVOIR, VIRGINIA



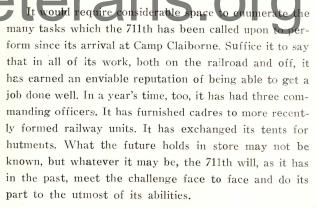
TENT CAMP AT CAMP CLAIBORNE, LA.

the right-of-way. This work was started on June 26th and continued to August 5th. The quartermaster engine was used in work train service, with crews furnished by the 711th.

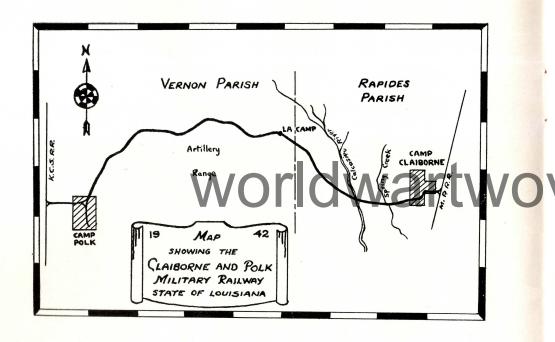
On August 8th, 1941, the battalion departed for Camp Claiborne. The camp in the woods was dismantled, equipment turned in, and at 3:30 P.M. on the afternoon of the 8th, accompanied by the 5th Engineers Band, the battalion marched to the train which was to take it to its new home.

Arriving at Camp Claiborne on the 19th, the battalion found its area all prepared by the advance detail, although certain buildings including battalion headquarters, the post exchange, three latrines, and others remained to be built. After about a week spent in improving the camp area, the battalion commenced working, to the extent that this was possible, on its principal project, the Claiborne and Polk

HUTMENTS REPLACE TENTS, JUNE, 1942







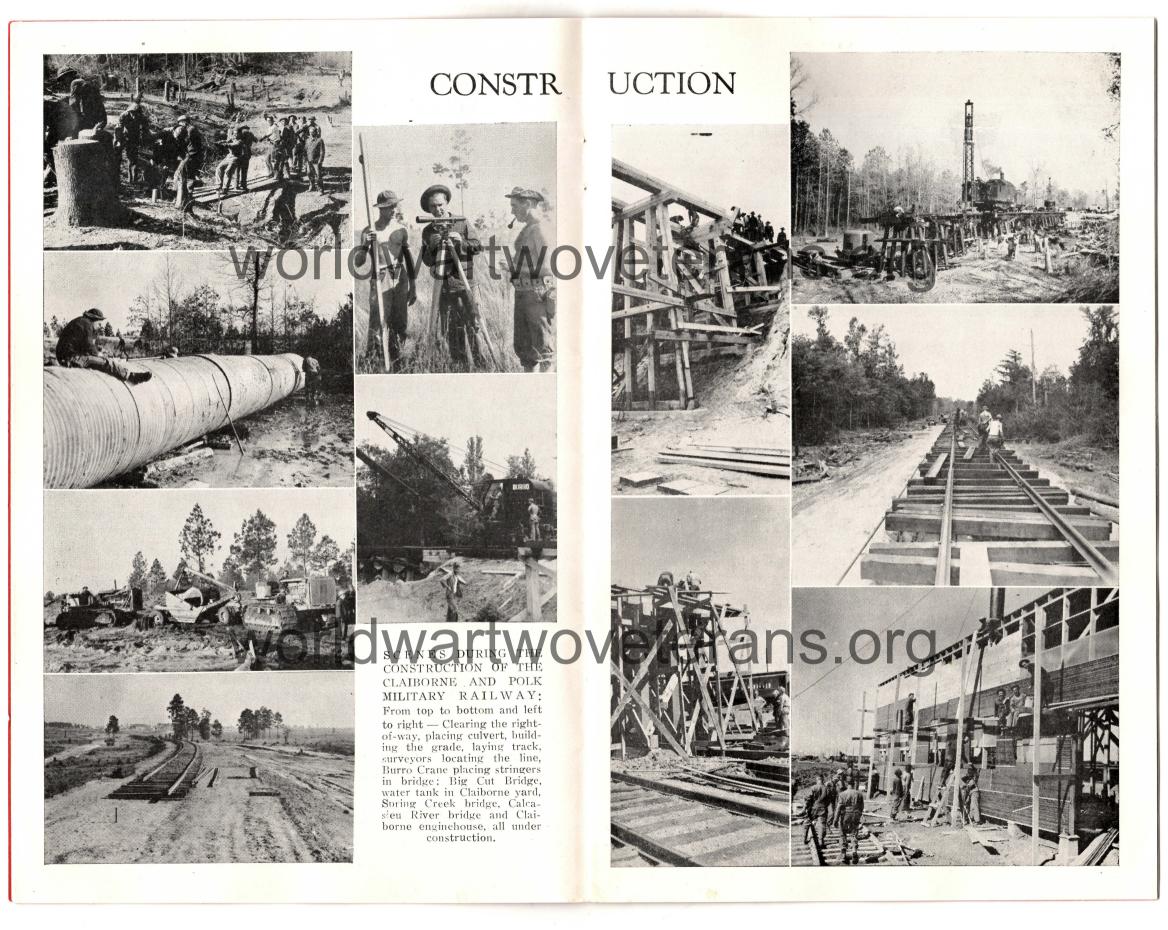
HISTORY OF THE CLAIBORNE AND POLK MILITARY RAILWAY

When the War Department decided early in 1941 to activate a railway operating battalion, negotiations were commenced for the purchase of a railroad to be used in training. An agreement was reached with the Red River and Gulf Railroad in Louisiana whereby this line would be purchased by the government; connections were to be built extending to Camp Claiborne and Camp Polk, and the Red River and Gulf was to continue its operation over the government road on the basis of trackage rights. The Red River and Gulf then insisted upon adding certain additional terms to the agreement which were not acceptable to the government, whereupon a reconnaissance was ordered by the Office of the Chief of Engineers to determine the feasibility of constructing an entirely new line between Camp Claiborne and Camp Polk. The reconnaissance, made by Capt. H. A. Israel and Capt. Paul Yount in June 1941, indicated that such a line could be constructed relatively easily, utilizing a portion of an abandoned logging railroad roadbed for part of the distance. As this project would serve several uses in addition to providing a railroad for training purposes, it was decided to construct the Claiborne and Polk Military Railway instead of purchasing the Red River and Gulf. To the 711th Engineer Battalion, later assisted by other troops, fell the task of this construction.

Location of the line was started in the middle of August by surveying parties composed entirely of men from the battalion. The parties worked from both the Camp Claiborne and Camp Polk ends, through grassy fields, swamps, woods and streams. An attempt was made in the location to minimize the amount of earthwork and the number of bridges required, thus facilitating construction and cutting down costs. For this reason the line has many curves and grades, following the ground lines as closely as it was possible to fit the limitations of a railroad location to the ridges and valleys of the terrain. Original plans called for a maximum grade of 1½ per-cent, compensated, and a maximum curvature of 4 degrees. It was necessary in five instances, however to use 6 degree curves, and in order to speed construction after the start of the war, the ruling grade was raised to 2 percent. The line as finally located is approximately 50 miles long.

> The Claiborne yard was also planned and laid out on the ground by the engineering forces of the battalion, many of whom were trained in the course of their work.

> Rails, ties, and angle bars together with some tools and some box cars were available to the battalion at Camp Claiborne in August of 1941, but there were no spikes, bolts, nut locks, tie plates or turnouts, and no motive power. Most important, there was no earth moving machinery. The first fill for the railroad was made in the Claiborne yard, using borrowed Con-





Stockpile of Track Material at Camp Polk, Louisiana

struction Quartermaster equipment. When, after several attempts, it was found impossible to obtain army earth moving equipment, two TD. 18's each with scraper, and two R. D. 7's with bulldozers were rented from the Robinson-Young Company in September to start building the fills and making the cuts on the main line location out of Camp Claiborne. Men from the 711th were used as operators. Later this rented equipment was supplemented and eventually replaced by army equipment. As time passed, it was possible to increase the amount of army equipment in use, and as additional right of way was secured (the first right of way through private land being acquired November 22, 1941), the earth moving equipment was moved about on the line so as to use it to the best advantage. This required setting up camps along the right of way, two or which were located near La Camp and one near Pine Knob. When the grade was under construction out of Camp Polk, the operators were stationed in that camp itself. The equipment in use on the line prior to May 25, 1942 when contracts were let for certain stretches, materially increasing the amount of machinery in service, included nine 9-yard scraper units, three 12-yard scraper units, four 6-yard scraper units, eight bulldozers, and two draglines, all operated by personnel of the 711th.

The first track was laid on September 4, 1941, in the Claiborne yard, by the maintenance-of-way forces of A Company. As the main line grade progressed, during the month of October, track was laid west from Camp Claiborne, using a Missouri Pacific clamshell to place rails and to pull cars out and unload them. On October 7, the 91st and 93rd Engineer Battalions (colored) were ordered to work on the railroad. The 91st established a camp on the old Hillyer - Deutches - Edwards logging railroad right-of-way near the Calcasieu River and put its men to work clearing, grading the old roadbed, laying track, and building bridges using material hauled from Camp Claiborne by truck. The 93rd set up several camps, two near Claiborne and one at Camp Polk, and engaged in work such as the 91st was doing except for the bridge construction. Other units which have assisted in

the grading and track work include the 98th Engineer Battalion which laid track out of Camp Polk and erected several bridges north of the Artillery Range, the 383rd Engineers, the 331st Engineers, and several dump truck companies.

In January, the battalion received a Burro Crane which had been ordered several months earlier, and this was put to immediate use in the track work and bridge construction.

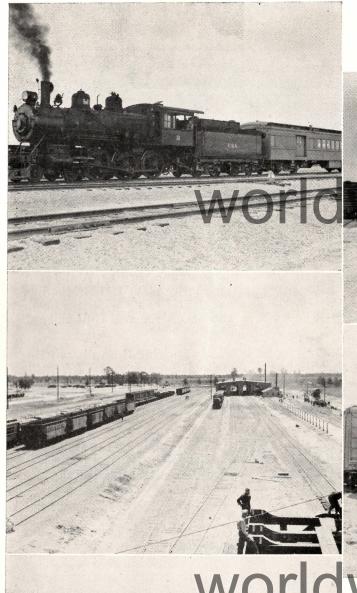
The bridge problem occupied the attention of the battalion from the first Of the twenty-five bridges on the line, all but three were on the old logging railroad road ed. Many other bridges already existing on the old roadbed were replaced by culverts after the drainage areas for which they provided an opening were surveyed. Big Cut bridge, which carries the Claiborne and Polk across the Red River and Gulf, was started late in October. The trestle bents were erected during November, and on December 9. the steel girder forming the central span was placed in position. A 130 foot frame and steel structure resting on concrete footings, Big Cut Bridge has six single bents with four posts each and two double bents with five posts apiece. It is approximately 30 feet above the Red River and Gulf rails at the center.

Spring Creek Bridge, a 785 foot pile trestle crossing the valley of the stream from which it takes its name, was started on January 27, 1942. After the right of wav was cleared by the 98th Engineers, the 711th bridge and building platoon, using a 78 ton steam pile driver rented from the Missouri Pacific, completed the essential structure of the bridge in 171/2 days.

The longest bridge on the line, a 2200 foot crossing of the Calcasieu River, was under construction off and on almost from the time of arrival of the 711th at Claiborne. The long and difficult haul of material to the site of this bridge and the frequent floods which fill the bottoms it spans, made construction a most arduous task. By utilizing solid portions of existing piling from an old bridge on the Hillyer — Deutches — Edwards line, it was possible to erect trestle bents for the support of the stringers and track. The first train passed over this bridge on May 19, 1942.

Scene Along the Right-of-Way of the Claiborne and Polk Military Railway





OPER





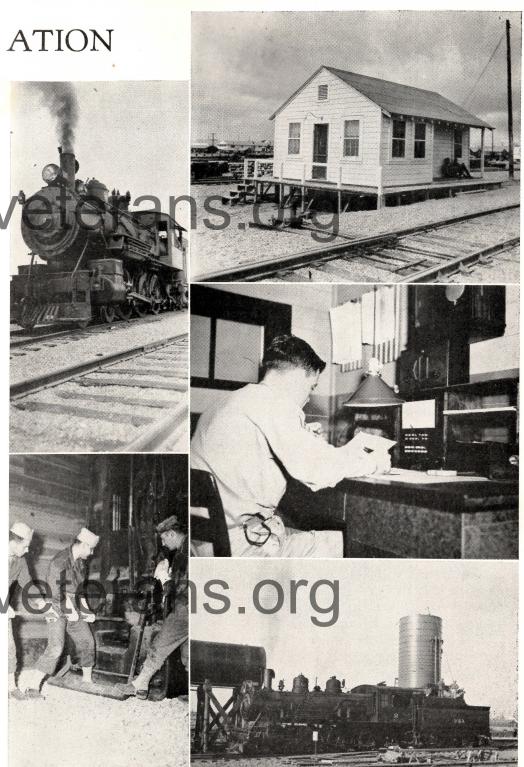








OPERATING THE RAIL-ROAD: From left to right and top to bottom passenger train preparing to leave Claiborne yard, Claiborne yard, three views showing switching operations in Claiborne yard, engine, men at work in enginehouse, yard office in Claiborne yard, dispatcher at Claiborne, engine taking water.





DISPATCHER'S OFFICE, Camp Claiborne, Louisiana

The enginehouse, for which the foundation footings were located on September 16, 1941, was constructed by B Company. This structure, with three tracks and four pits, a boiler room with stationary boiler, washout and refill equipment, machine shop, and store house was completed on March 4. The enginehouse latrine, the water tank, and the oil storage tank for locomotives were not ready for service, however,, until June. The erection of these facilities, coupled with the new lead from

the Missouri Pacific main line to the Claiborne Yard were the final steps in the completion of the yard for operation. This yard has six tracks with a capacity of 150 cars, three engine house tracks, two "rip" tracks and a wye for turning engines

Operation actually commenced when the first serviceable locomotive arrived on December 8. Number 1, a ten-wheeler from the Texas and Pacific' began service almost immediately; it was used for hauling material and doing minor switching work in the 711th yard and on the line. Other locomotives arrived in January, and on February 1, the first passenger train was run, carrying men to work on the Spring Creek bridge. On February 16th, the 711th took over the switching for the Quartermaster Warehouses at Camp Claiborne and on April 28th took over the same work at Camp Polk. On February 19, the dispatchers office and yard office at Camp Claiborne were finished, and dispatching of trains over the 5\\[^3\]\/\) miles between Claiborne and Spring Creek bridge was begun on February 27. The telephone line over which the dispatching is accomplished was erected by the 26th Signal Construction Battalion. This line was completed late in March. The first running order, Number 2 of February 27, was made complete at 12:10 A.M. and read "Engine 2 run extra Spring Creek to Claiborne." The yard office was moved to a new building in the 711th yard late in May. As the new line was extended, new stations were added, and old ones were closed, and trains were dispatched over the additional portion of track ready for service.

Equipment available for the operation of work and other types of trains on the Claiborne and Polk in cludes seven 79-ton ten wheelers two new 85-ton consolidation type locomotives (all oil burners), two coaches and two combination cars, 16 box cars, 50 flat cars, 25 gondola cars, 12 tank cars, and 4 refrigerator cars. Four box cars and two refrigerator cars have been converted into cabooses by the mechanical forces of the 711th. These cabooses, with bay windows instead of the time honored cupola, have attracted nationwide attention.



Caboose Reconstructed From Refrigerator Car

Specifications of the locomotives follow:

Ten-Wheelers	Consolidations
28,000	37,000 lb.
200	210
20x26	. 21x26
122,000	160,500 lbs.
53' —6"	56 ' -8 $\frac{7}{8}$ "
56"	50 "
2790 gal.	1800 gal.
6500 gal.	6500 gal.
Cooke (American) 1902	Lima 1942
	28,000 200 20x26 122,000 53' —6" 56" 2790 gal. 6500 gal. Cooke (American)

Although much remained to be done in the way of lining and surfacing track, the "Golden Spike" marking completion of the grading and track laying on the Claiborne and Polk Military Railway was driven near La-Camp, Louisiana on July 11, 1942 at an appropriate ceremony.

With nearly six thousand troops trained in railway construction, the Claiborne and Polk Military Railway has served a useful purpose in the past, and now before it opens a future of service as a training railroad for operating troops such as the 711th, in addition to the improved transportation facilities which it provides between Camp Claiborne and Camp Polk and the artillery range east of Camp Polk.

MEDICAL DETACHMENT

OFFICERS

Capt. Harold Conn

1st Lt. W. J. Kaiser

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SERGEANTS Cletus W. McDaniel Hugh P. Welch

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Donald E. Greene Sol Katz

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Jonathan Teitelbaum Albert Weaver

Harold A. Fetterhoff George W. Lockard

James B. Fitzpatrick Earl J. Geoffrion Robert O. Hatch Walter H. Hatmaker Newell R. Heacock Robert P. Henderson Ernest B. Hilton Adolphus A. I. Hinklin Louis T. Hitt. Frank P. Kendra James H Kinard Gaylord B. Kindhart Albert Klobas John E. Knesevich Erwin Kraft Mark Kubat, Jr. John F. Leary Donald H. Lightfoot

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to Last Page) Robert H. Reckner Francis C. Rummery Roman B. Schipp Francis D. Schlader Elvin P. Shaner James C. Shaw Edwin J. Spurck Thomas A. Stewart Max E. St. John Ned F. Streiff Johathan W. Studstill Bill R. Underhill Henry R. Van Dam Russell I. Van Wormer Thomas S. Weathers Austin E. White Harold E. Wood Albert G Zemke Eugene E. Zohfeld

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Russell P. Dewey

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Curtis J. Weingartner

Russell P. Dewey John T. Dunbar Henry Kaatz James W. Marr Roy V. Rudd

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John E. Leiger

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Walter F. Jones
Mike Kenishak

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Byran S. Colbourn
Dominick V Constantino
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Jesse A. Darby
John De Masi

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Otis O. Cason
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Edward F. Giardelli
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Corlie C. Hanson
Theo R. Hartman
Herbert J. Krow
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Donald E. Leach
James B. Long
Charles J. Ludban

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PRIVATES Harold H. Foskit

David R. Gaston

Anthon Georges

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William C. Pjetre
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Eldon J. Powelson
Vernon b. Queen
Andrew M. Reddington
Nicholas Riccardo
Elmer G. Richards
James W. Riffle
Frank Romeo
Schuyler M. Rumill, Jr.
Herbert C. Rush

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Elmer G. Richards
James W. Riffle
Frank Romeo
Schuyler M. Rumill, Jr.
Herbert C. Rush
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Matthew E. Simpson
Clem Skonieczski
Joseph J. Smiegoski
James J. Sullivan ?
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Wallace R. Todd
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William G. Zierle, Jr.
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Barney G. Harper
Clyde T. Ryan

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Raymond W. Kroah

Freeman A. Randolph

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Geddes A. Bridges Chester V. Dixon

Truman D. Grizzle

Kermit C. Gumpert Burley C. Harmon

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John W. Milliken

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Chares Ferro

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Bradie T. Lancaster

Leroy Johnson Gideon Justice Lye D. Kamm

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William O. Goodrow

Benjamin H. Hawkins

James A. Moxter

Russel V. Gemberling

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1st Lt. W. A. Lowe, Company Commander 1st Lt. J. D. Gore 2nd Lt. G. E. Dike 2nd Lt. D. L. Manion

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TECHNICAL SERGEANT
Joseph F. DeRose

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Lloyd A. Armstrong
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Joseph V. Beiger
Edward J. Berta
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William H. Branstetter
Joseph Carbone
Oscar F. Chase
Anthony J. Corrallo
James J. Cunningham
Robert C. Day
John DeMalio
Frank J. DiBiagio
Eugene F. Dunkle
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George C. Rill
Jessiah C. Rummell
Philip G. Sanchez
Gerald Scott
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Frank J. Simonds
Gilbert L. Slusher
Forrest Stewart
Wayne E| Williams
Robert D. Wheeler

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Harold M. Heath
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Raymond T. Hotton
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Nicholas P. Katopes
Joseph J. Keller
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Lavern M. Kunkle
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Roland H. LaRose
Marcus R. Lauterborn
Frank S. Levano
George J. Lill
Peter J. Magin, Jr.
George J. Makinson
Clair J. Maroney
Domenico A. Maure
Jospeh J. Modee
James H. Morey
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Daniel L. Negri Ernest Neiderman John H. Oden Alfred A. Pantuliano Harold W. Rice Elmer E. Robinson Charles Sanko Troy Sansing, Jr. Harry Schulver Anthony J. Scurato Leslie N. Setterberg Troy L. Shepherd James H. Sholars Olen A. Stewart Spencer Stewart Walter F. Swede Owen E. Sweeney Roland W. Turner Claude Vanover Clifford A. Warren Corbin Waters Joseph E. Whiteman Gerlando F. Zaso William Zydycryn

ATTACHED FROM AIR CORPS, UNASSIGNED Pvt. 1cl Henderson R. Marriott, Jr. Pvt. Carl C. Meyer Pvt. John J. Morgan

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John M. Gutkoska
John M. Gutkoska
John M. Hole
Robert D. Housh
Byerrer R. Jores
Junes A. Kelb
Lee R. Alfen
Louis W. Olifo

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SERGEANT

Raymond P. Rabideau

CORPORAL Robert L. Goergen

George C. Raible

Carl F. Rudicill

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PRIVATES FIRST CLASS

Daniel H. Matheny Lige Mathews Ernest S. Owens

PRIVATES

Arthur B. Hanner Paul E. Heckman Howard G. Henderson John L. Herlevic Valentine W. Kodelja Walter F. Krawcyk Theodore E. Kruse John P. Lattomus Zolton Lenugyel Harry L. Lindeman Nicholas Matarazzo Harold C. McKellip Donald Miller John J. Mullinex Aaron E. Nelson Julius J. Oleysyck Daniel J. Opatka Frank V. Pagano Stanley P. Patryllo Stanley E. Pickering Louis A. Pluto Anton E. Pocius, Jr. Thomas A. Prather Blaine E. Pulley Leon G. Reavis

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Al V. Rhew Edward Riley

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Patsy Sandora Edward J. Scanlon, Jr. Charles R. Shingler Elva Shirley Roy H. Smedley Lloyd L. Spaulding Warren M. Spicknall Charles L. Strahan Arthur E. Straub Teodore G. Taraduck Leo B. Temmen Vincent Toscan John M. Tweedy zz Frank P. Urzedowski Elten L. Van Pernis Raynal W. Westral Myron J. Wodecki Antony J. Yantorn Stephen F. Zarnay Herman D. Wasserman

COMPANY "C"

1st Lt. G. W. Warmack, Commanding Officer 1st Lt. C. S. Angleton 2nd Lt. W. J. Dixon

2nd Lt. H. A. Ziegler MASTER SERGEANTS William L. Fox

Forrest L. Terrell FIRST SI GEANT

Melvin Espach

George C. Becker Roger L. Beckman Ernest L. Blackerby William H. Stephens

STAFF SERGEANTS

SERGUANTS

l'arvey E. Harriso Joseph J. Cooper Robert J. Cutter Bernard E. Niebes John F. Oglethorpe George E. Dressel Jr. Charles H. Park Robert L. Edwards

George J. Faltot Leonard A. Gray

John Gentile

Edward Sovina C.yde C. Wilson Harry R. Baker

John B. Cundiff

Wilbur R. Cusick Lugene J. Dellai

Robert H. Gasch

Edward M. Hale

George A. Ayers

Edward Boland

John V. Clark

Donnell F. Berry

Howard D. Bowers

Curtis M. Bullock

Arthur F. Cowper Albert J. DiPietro

Francis J. Dowd

Robert W. Brase

Joseph E. Cherven

Louis A. Butterworth William J. Channe

Russell Burdick

Robert Collins

Alexander Currie Thomas V. Davis

James C. Alagood

Owen E. Sparks

Frank G. Bevill

Chester S. Boice

Rusaw Lee William R. Perkins Walter W. Steele, Jr.

Chester P. Balicki William E. Beckwith

Lewis G. Bolen, Jr.

Raymond B. Bunton Douglas W. Carlson

James E. Fitzmaurice

Harley H. Avey Frank L. Coulton, Jr.

Clyde E. Anderson, Jr.

George H. Foster, Jr.

Patrick M. Greenan

Jack W. Perkins Ralph A. Perry Royal R. Perry Joseph W. Purcell Charles H. Radaker

TECHNICIAN GRADE 4

Oscar J. Hofland William H. Hughes Glenn Jackson Peter W. Lee Harold W. Legacy William Leland Elmer T. Madosh Peter McCann Carlton C. Moxley John W. Murphy John Offringa Wade H. Player

TECHNICIAN GRADE 5

Robert J. Dunlap John J. Ford Leonard E. Forrester Leon E. Galer Carlton F. Gassman J. W. Gregson Robert L. Hardman Theodore Hernandez William F. Horton Harold S. Hough Albert D. Howard William C. Hurley Clifton W. Johnson Elbert S. Kerstetter

RIVATES FIRST CLASS

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PRIVATES

George A. Brice Glenn F. Briley Harold W. Burdette John W Carroll Charles M. Chambers William T. Church Joseph S. B. Colson Howard P. Coursey Daniel E. Coyle

(Turn Back to Page 15)

Ralph B. Reeder Harvey W. Reid Edwin G. Rowlance Harld R. Shafer Woodrow H. Stoker Thomas C. Speed Earl F. Warfel James E. Waters John F. Williams Vern O. Wyble Samuel M. Yarnell Clarence W. Haskett Francis E. Zock

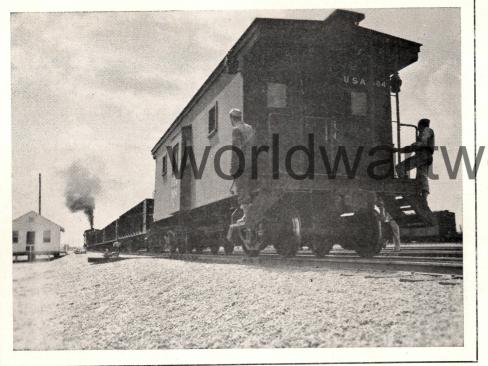
Robert L. Redfearn Jr. Otis E. Rowan Quinton Rowell Elmer W. Schultz Joseph C. Simons Glen J. Snyder Claude E. Sowell Delmond G. Worth

CORPORALS John A. Dempsey. George H. Murray

Louis G.Levay, Jr. Russell D. Long
Floyd S. Lynch
Martin J. McLaughlin
Wilbur C. Miller Wilbert F. Patin Louis P. Poltrone Paul Protz Michael Raddick George H. Ramsey John T. Simmonds Charles L. Stephenson Evert C. West

William J. McQuinn Earl D. Merchant Robert R. Micka Leon D. Mitcheltree Thomas J. Newberger Henry Peppler Thomas E. Pfeifer George G. Pio John P. Powers Andrew C. Shawl, Jr. Earl P. Tocknell Theodore Wallace Theodore N. Yost

Lester E. Crouse George G. Cushing James F. Davis Frank Dillon Michael E. Donahue Robert J. Dryden Joseph C. Dufek John Durket, Jr. Nathan G. English



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