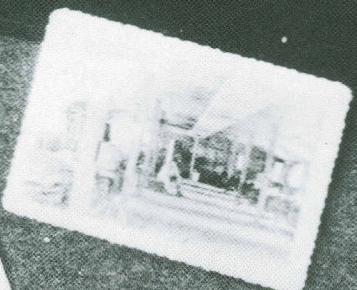
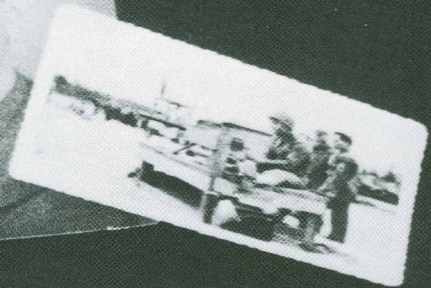
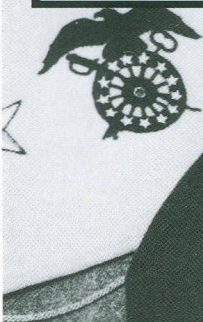
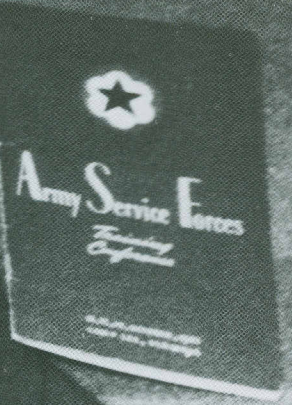


# QUARTERMASTER PROFESSIONAL BULLETIN



AUTUMN/WINTER 1994 PB 10-94-3/4

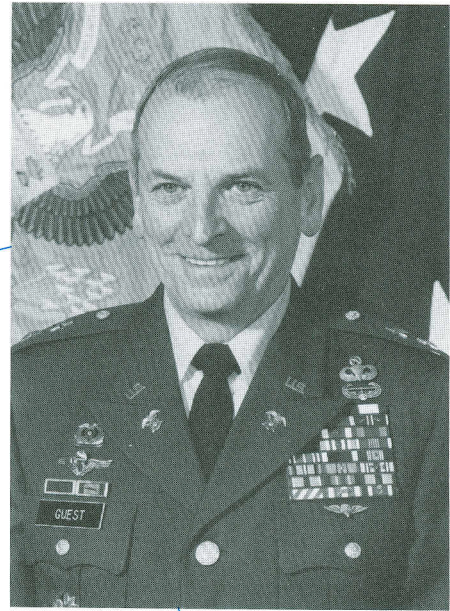


To Allies:  
MAJOR INDUSTRIES  
CONTROLLED  
SAYS CRIPPS

PLAN TO EXPLOIT  
AG MOODS

POCKET GUIDE TO  
BURMA

**WORLD WAR II**  
50th Anniversary  
Commemorative Edition




THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL, UNITED STATES ARMY  
FORT LEE, VIRGINIA 23801-5001

SUBJECT: World War II Commemorative Edition of the *Quartermaster Professional Bulletin*.

This summer marks the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. For the past three years the U.S. Army had been commemorating what must certainly be regarded as one of the most decisive events in world history. And rightfully so. Our generation owes an enormous debt of gratitude to the millions of American soldiers who served with pride, at home and abroad, a half century ago, and sacrificed so much in the name of freedom.

Throughout this commemorative period, we in the Quartermaster Corps have likewise tried to honor our own—with historical articles in the *Bulletin*, special exhibits at the Quartermaster Museum, veterans' reunions and memorialization projects here at Fort Lee, and with the selection of several World War II era veterans to become Distinguished Members of the Quartermaster Regiment and members of the QMC Hall of Fame. This special edition of the *Bulletin* is yet another way of paying homage to those who served.

But while this issue is dedicated primarily to the memory of those tens of thousands of Quartermasters who made victory possible, it aims to speak directly to today's soldiers as well. It is a serious reminder that supply wins wars. Just months after Pearl Harbor, the new Commander of Army Service Forces, General Brehon B. Somervell, wrote: "Good logistics alone can't win a war. Bad logistics alone can lose it." It strikes me that this bit of insight applies not just to the past, but to the future as well.

  
Robert K. Guest  
Major General, U.S. Army



# Quartermaster Professional Bulletin



50<sup>th</sup>  
COMMEMORATIVE

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**Distribution: Special**

Dr. Steven E. Anders, Quartermaster Corps Historian, researched and wrote the articles for this World War II commemorative edition, unless otherwise indicated.

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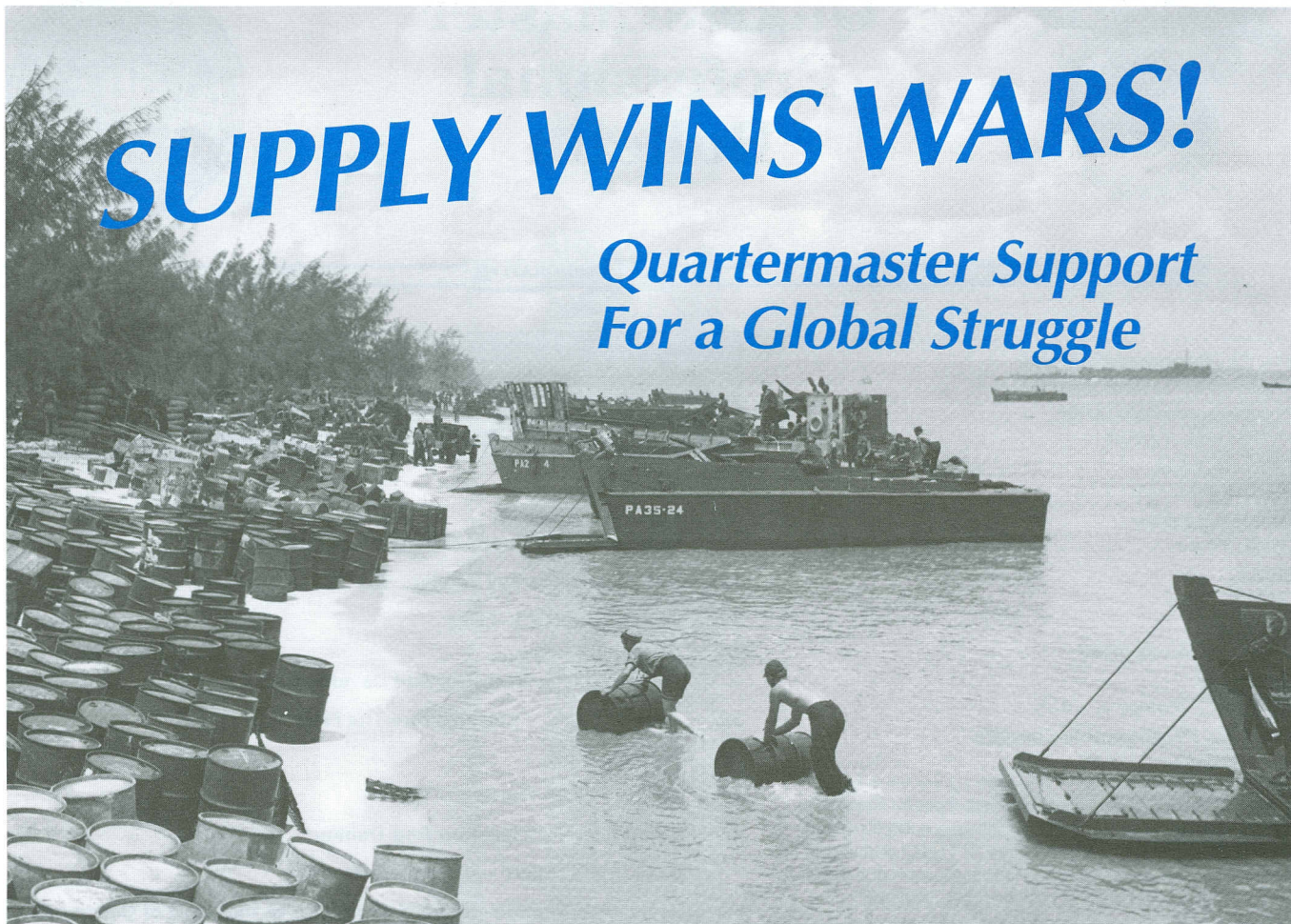
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# SUPPLY WINS WARS!

## Quartermaster Support For a Global Struggle



*“Yesterday, December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.”*

With these few words, President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced to Congress and a stunned nation what had happened at Pearl Harbor the day before and asked for a formal declaration of war. From his tone it was clear the road ahead would not be easy. Much sacrifice was called for. But he had no doubts as to the final outcome. “With confidence in our armed forces — with the unbounded determination of our people,” he assured his listeners, “we will gain the inevitable triumph — so help us God.” Congress responded by unanimously approving a formal declaration of war against Japan that same afternoon. Three days later a similar resolution placed us at war with Germany.

Fortunately the country had not been caught completely flat-footed. A state of emergency had existed for over a year, a new Selective Service Act was in effect, and the whole process of mobilization was well underway long before the attack on Pearl Harbor. The first months of actual war saw not only the expansion of military forces, but also significant reorga-

nization. In March 1942, the Army was reorganized into three main branches: the Army Ground Forces (AGF), the Army Air Forces (AAF), and the Army Service Forces (ASF). The Quartermaster Corps was placed in Services of Supply (SOS), and Transportation was set up as a separate department.

Although construction and transportation were essentially removed from the Corps’ mission, Quartermaster activities continued to embrace food, clothing, equipage, general supplies, horses and mules, laundries, printing, salvage, graves registration, and kindred field services. Most important, the Quartermaster Corps did not change its primary focus, which was (and still is) *to support the individual combat soldier*. Now, though, with the country immersed in war — our first *total* war — there were many, many more soldiers to support than ever before in our nation’s history. Instead of the initial one million, the number soon increased to upwards of four million, and ultimately eight million men and women in the U.S. Army alone, all requiring Quartermaster support on a daily basis.

The keynote of the Quartermaster effort in World War II was sounded by The Quartermaster General himself, then-Major General Edmund B. Gregory. Like FDR, he was both committed and confident, yet eager to assure his countrymen with the following pledge:

“Let me make this simple promise to the American people. The Quartermaster Corps will never fail your boys! We will deliver the goods. Wherever they go — to whatever point American fighting men penetrate — Quartermasters will be by their side to ‘Keep ‘em Rolling to Victory!’”

The Corps’ main objective, in other words, was to see that the soldiers being sent to the far corners of the globe to meet the forces of aggression head-on, were indeed “the best fed, best clothed, best equipped, and best cared for” the world has ever seen. Nothing less would do.

### WORLD’S BIGGEST MERCHANDISE MART

The November 1942 issue of *The National Geographic Magazine* ran a feature article on the Quartermaster’s contribution thus far toward the war effort. Most amazing to the author was the wide scope and unprecedented scale of activities allotted to the QM General — “husky, hardworking ‘Pope’ Gregory” — whom he described as “the world’s biggest, busiest business man.”

“He’s the world’s biggest purchasing agent, exporter, and delivery boy. His colossal depot warehouses make the big mail-order houses look

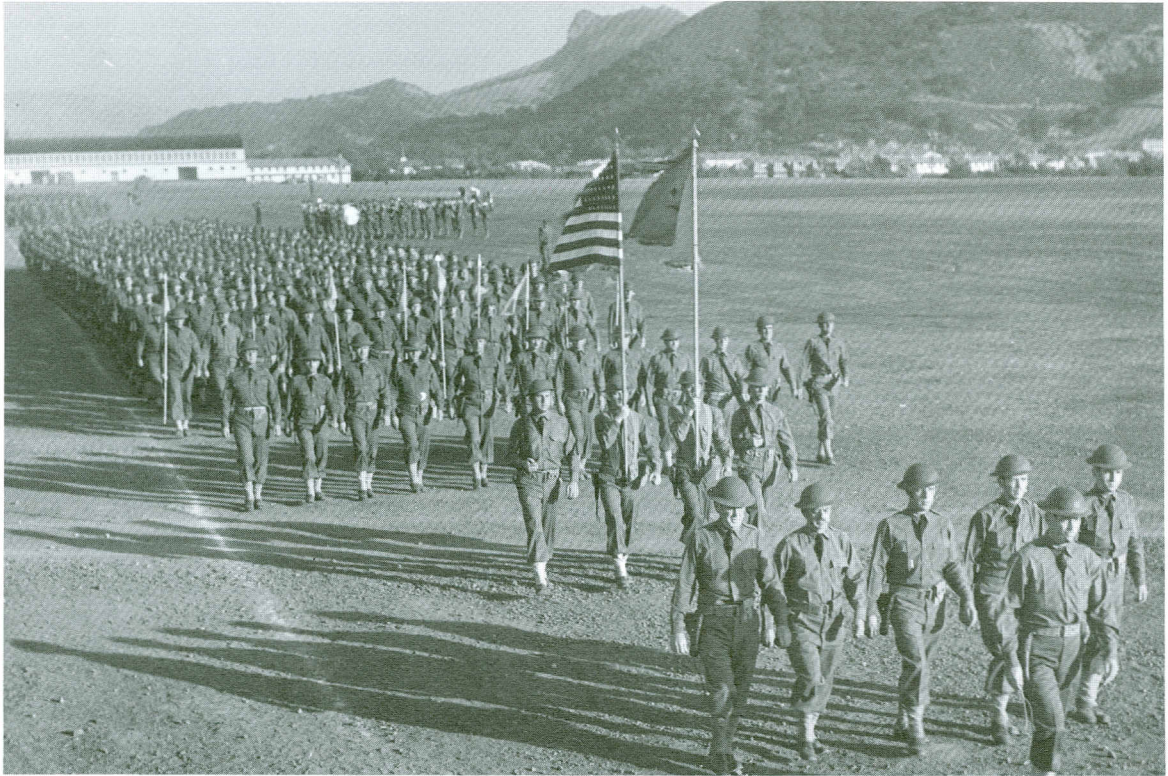
like crossroads country stores. He’s the world’s biggest coat-and-suit man, chain-store operator, tobacco salesman, truck and transfer man; biggest tailor, tentmaker, laundryman, musician, radio- and shoe-repairman; biggest cook and baker — he can turn out 3,000,000 loaves of bread a day!”

**DEPOTS.** The enormous quantity of goods purchased and stored by Quartermasters stateside, then shipped overseas, is staggering. Almost overnight the scope of distribution activities had to be expanded a hundredfold. At the heart of this phenomenon was the Quartermaster depot system. There were only a handful of uniformed personnel and little over 7,000 civilian employees at QM depots nationwide in June 1940. By war’s end the depots were employing on average more than 75,000 civilian employees from coast to coast, notably in such places as San Francisco, New York, Seattle, Atlanta, Columbus and Philadelphia. Each of these facilities had become remarkably efficient at “pushing supplies,” owing to the introduction of motorized forklifts, new hydraulic lifts, and roller-conveyor systems.

Quartermaster depots shipped or received on average over a million tons of supplies each month during the height of the war. In May 1945, they set a record when QM repre-

### QMC PRODUCTION OF MAJOR ITEMS, 1941–45

Combat service boots (pairs) . . . . .	28,700,000
Cotton khaki shirts . . . . .	69,300,000
Cotton khaki trousers . . . . .	67,900,000
Flannel shirts . . . . .	73,700,000
Lightweight ponchos . . . . .	5,110,000
Raincoats . . . . .	28,300,000
Shoes — service (pairs) . . . . .	79,900,000
Shoe-pacs (pairs) . . . . .	4,350,000
Tents . . . . .	30,500,000
Blankets . . . . .	57,000,000
Sleeping bags . . . . .	10,000,000
Field jackets . . . . .	49,000,000
Field trousers . . . . .	68,000,000
Socks . . . . .	505,000,000
<b>Subsistence</b>	
Canned and fresh meat (lbs.) . . . . .	12,900,000,000
Canned, dehydrated and fresh vegetables (lbs.) . . . . .	17,100,000,000
Fruit juices (lbs.) . . . . .	1,700,000,000
Flour (lbs.) . . . . .	7,840,000,000
Coffee (lbs.) . . . . .	1,440,000,000
Granulated sugar (lbs.) . . . . .	2,420,000,000



The 115th Quartermaster Regiment passes in review during mobilization exercises (1941).

representatives attained 1,700,000 tons of supplies, worth more than a *billion* dollars. What sort of space was needed to store these goods? The Army figured it needed about 300,000,000 square feet of space in the United States alone to house all its military supplies, equipment, weapons and vehicles. Of that amount, nearly 60,000,000 square feet were reserved solely for Quartermaster use. That figure represented about one-third of the total available space in the private warehouses of the U.S. at the time.

**CLOTHING.** The investment in military clothing was no less significant. Every one of Uncle Sam's nephews, who stepped forward and was sworn in, received 66 separate items of clothing: everything from cotton shorts and wool socks, to dog tags and a "steel pot" helmet — at an overall cost to the government of approximately \$165. It is estimated that it took about 200 pounds of wool, or fleeces from 26 sheep (!) for each new soldier's uniform.

Most of the World War II uniforms were designed, developed, procured and stored in the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot. With nearly a hundred acres of storage space and stocks of about 500 million articles of clothing and equipment on hand, it was indeed the world's largest clothing store. There, from the earliest days of the war, one could find the enormous piles of military shoes, coats, socks, gloves, belts, etc. There were enough belts alone in the Philadelphia warehouses that, if laid end to end, they would almost reach from coast to coast.

And shoes. The old vets used to say the Army only had two sizes — "too big, and too small." Now they came in nearly 250 different sizes and shapes, ranging from size 4 1/2 to 16. The Army issued approximately 2,000,000 pairs of shoes and other footwear a month. Some 300,000 of them were "re-builds," rescued from the salvage pile with much savings to the American taxpayer. QM repairmen were also mending about 1,500,000 pairs monthly.

All told, the Quartermaster Corps procured some 500 different items of clothing, with a total of 6,500 sizes. For instance, there were 42 sizes of women's blouses, 40 sizes of trousers, and 25 sizes of overcoats. Quartermaster-employed researchers developed synthetic materials; lightweight, water-, shrink- and abrasion-resistant apparel; and more efficient and effective combat uniforms and equipment for use in every theater. Toward the end of the war, special emphasis was placed on garments that would keep our soldiers warm and dry in the wet-cold climate of the northwest Pacific. Interestingly enough, the basic field uniform of 1945 contained no item that was in use in January 1942.

**FOOD.** Soldiers must eat every day. Wholesale statistics tell us that the story of Quartermaster subsistence was one of the biggest stories of World War II. By the time of the Japanese surrender in 1945, the Corps was buying, storing and issuing some 41,000,000 pounds of foodstuffs a day — approximately 15,000,000,000 pounds a year — for the Army alone. Additional purchases were being made for the other

military and war services. About one-fourth of the foodstuffs being procured was meat. Dressed and canned chicken purchased for the Army, Navy and others totaled around 613,000,000 pounds annually.

The Army by itself was getting 165,000,000 pounds of dehydrated vegetables a year, 200,000,000 pounds of dehydrated milk, and 70,000,000 pounds of dehydrated eggs, figured on a per annum basis. Armed and war services — most of them served by the QMC — were accounting for yearly totals of 32 percent of the nation's canned fruits and vegetables, 17 percent of its sugar, 21 percent of its butter, 13 percent of its eggs, and 23 percent of its meats.

**CLASS III.** Churchill said at the end of World War I that the Allies had floated to victory “on a sea of oil.” His French counterpart, Georges Clemenceau, likewise declared petroleum was “as necessary as blood” for defeating the Germans in 1918. The French even coined a phrase which colorfully and aptly described the importance of gasoline on the modern, mechanized battlefield. They called it “*le sang rouge de guerre*” (the red blood of war). In World War II, American GIs called it simply Class III or “POL,” short for petroleum, oil and lubricants. Its supply too was a Quartermaster mission.

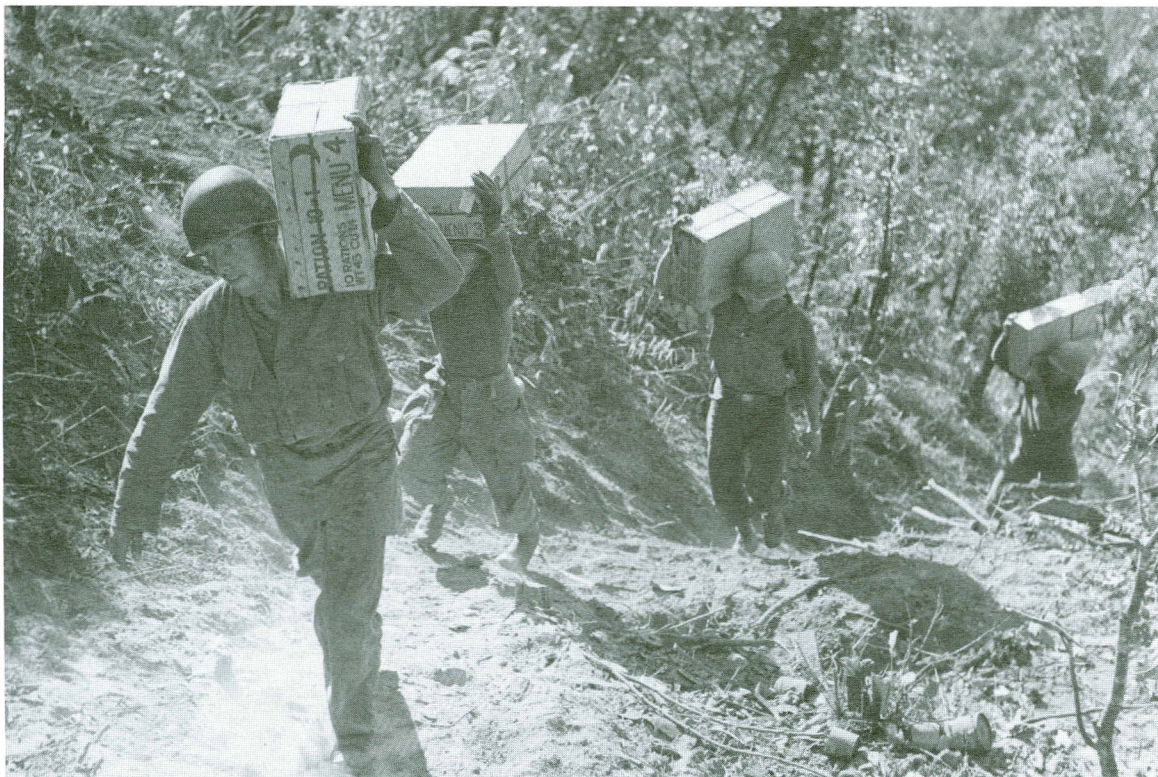
The flow of petroleum products to various theaters was enormous. Even the relatively small North African campaign, code-named Operation TORCH, required no less than 10,000,000 gallons of gasoline. About 50 percent of all the

storage space in ships going overseas was reserved for POL. A medium tank used over a gallon and a half of gasoline for each mile it was driven. An armored division required 1,000 gallons to move the same distance. On the eve of D-Day, logistical planners figured the typical Army used well over 5,000,000 gallons (or about 18,000 tons) of gasoline each month.

In Europe the real test came nearly two months after the Normandy landing. It was late July before Allied troops managed to completely free themselves of the hedgerows and penetrate German defenses around the town of St. Lo. The next six weeks saw the 12th Army Group conducting a spectacular maneuver campaign eastward, with General Patton's Third Army leading the way. That is until his tanks began running out of gas. By the last week of August, both the First and Third Armies were in rapid pursuit, using upwards of 800,000 gallons per day. On August 24, the First Army alone used up 782,000 gallons of motor fuel.

With nearly 400 miles separating the armored divisions at the front from the POL storage facilities still back at the coast, the situation grew bleaker by the day. The logistical crisis threatened to halt the Allies where the enemy could not. On August 31, Patton's daily allotment of gasoline dropped off sharply from 400,000 to 31,000 gallons, which placed a virtual stranglehold on the fiery commander. “My men can eat their belts,” he was overheard telling Ike at a meeting on September 2, “but my tanks gotta have gas.”

Fortunately, the crisis was short-lived. Aided by the famed “Red Ball Express,” millions of five-gallon “jerricans”

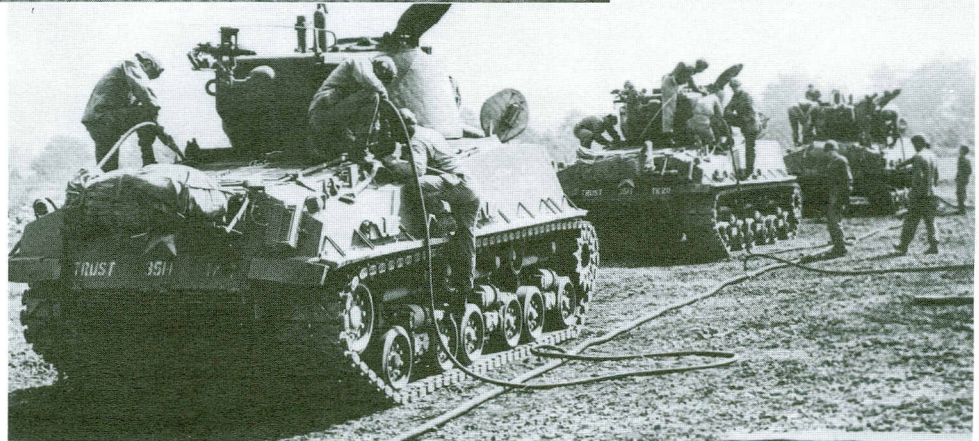


**Quartermaster supplymen carry rations from an airdrop field in the valley to frontline positions up this 1,200-foot hill in Burma (February 1945).**



**Soldiers pump gasoline into five-gallon jerricans at a French railhead and reload them onto freight cars for shipment (February 1945).**

**QM Gasoline Supply Companies refuel fast-moving armored columns on their drive across France (July 1944).**



filled with gasoline were hurried nonstop to places they were most needed. By the end of the first week in September, forward area truck heads were issuing POL as soon as it arrived, and consumption rates were once again hitting the 800,000 gallons-a-day mark. The worst of Patton's gasoline woes ended about as quickly as they had begun — thanks in large part to Quartermasters.

If indeed POL constitutes the lifeblood of the modern Army, Quartermasters in World War II saw to it that the “blood” supplies were constantly replenished. One *billion* gallons of gasoline, 75,000,000 gallons of lubricating oil, and 45,000,000 pounds of grease kept our planes, tanks, trucks, jeeps, and other vehicles moving on the road to victory.

**OTHER SERVICES.** In addition to providing more than 70,000 separate items of supply to soldiers around the world, the Quartermaster Corps maintained 70 different kinds of services to keep them in good condition. The QMC ran the biggest laundry operation ever. In 1945 alone, with over 300 laundries working at home and abroad, Quartermasters washed and ironed almost two billion pieces of laundry — enough that if hung on a single clothesline, it would have to run to more than 500,000 miles long.

Repair services of all kinds were always close to the troops during the war. QM shops repaired shoes, tools, tents, typewriters, field ranges, clothing and cots, among other things. All of this resulted in great savings to the U.S. Government. Quartermaster salvage units in the European Theater of Operations, for instance, “recycled” 43,000 tons of war material, at an estimated savings to the American taxpayer of \$163,000,000.

Not surprisingly, a lot of things get lost in the heat of battle. Quartermasters in World War II had the added task of running the world's largest lost-and-found department. One such receiving depot in France accumulated over 100,000 lost items. Lost items ranged from small things such as toothbrushes and wallets, photos and family mementos, and nearly two million dollars in cash and money orders, to bigger or less personal things such as live mines and booby traps, a piano, and even a 600-pound engraved bronze slab. Those that qualified as personal effects were routinely sent to a special depot set up for that purpose in Kansas City.

**ANIMALS TOO.** Not long after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the American Kennel Association and a new group calling itself “Dogs For Defense” mobilized dog owners across

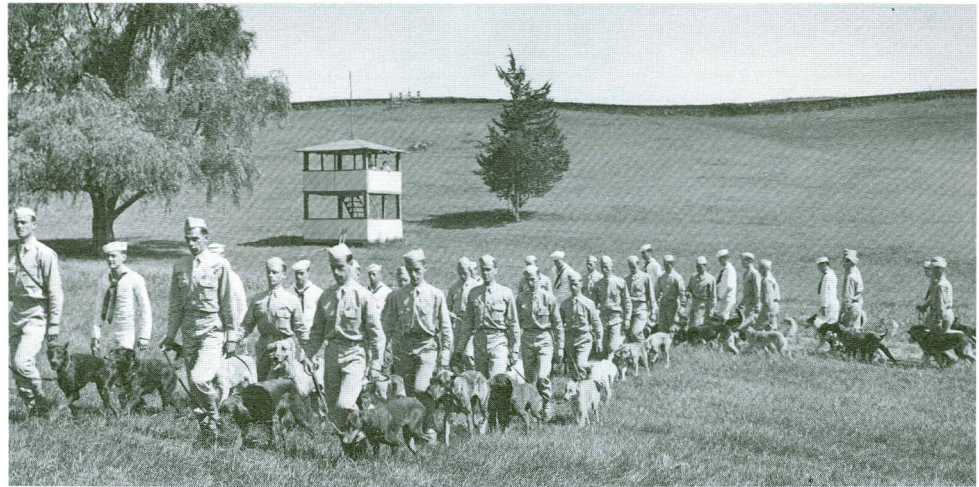


the country to donate quality animals to the Quartermaster Corps. From 1942 on, Quartermasters ran the Army's so-called "K-9 Corps" and undertook to change these new recruits into good fighting "soldiers." In all, nearly 20,000 dogs were procured between 1942 and 1945. They were handled by the QM Remount Branch, which had had nearly a century dealing with animals. When the war began, there were already three remount depots located around the country in Front Royal, Virginia, Fort Robinson, Nebraska, and Fort Reno, Nevada. A fourth was established at Pomona, California, in 1943, to get animals acclimated to a hot, semitropical climate not unlike the southwest Pacific theater.

In March 1944, the War Department authorized the creation of QM War Dog Platoons and issued special TO&Es (tables of organization) for that purpose. Fifteen platoons were activated in World War II. Seven saw service in Europe and eight in the Pacific. They served as sentries, pack and sled dogs, mine detectors, and messenger carriers. Demand for infantry scout dogs in particular was growing during the closing days of the war. They were especially useful in the Pacific where they "led point" in the dense, semi-dark jungles, and helped patrolling infantrymen avoid enemy ambushes.

World War II has been described as the first "truly gasoline-combustion engine war," but neither side could dispense with the age-old use of horses and mules. In 1941, the U.S. Army had 28,023 horses and 2,125 mules on hand. The number of horses steadily went down as cavalry units were "de-horsed" during the war. But there was still a pressing need at times for the old Army mule. The Quartermaster Remount Service provided pack mules to help transport supplies in Tunisia during the winter of 1942-43, and later in the rugged mountains of Italy. QM pack outfits were also used extensively along the Burma Trail and in parts of south-central China.

**IN APPRECIATION.** For most of America's past wars the role of logistics in general, and of the Quartermaster Corps in particular, received scant attention and very little praise. World War II changed all that. From Bataan on, "Fighting Quartermasters" were in the news. Newspapers, journals, magazines, even radio programs lauded the Quartermaster Corps' wartime achievements. Most observers appeared to recognize the difficulties involved in supporting such a huge force, engaged in several theaters at once, in an open-ended conflict. They usually wound up praising the Army's ability to care for its own in combat: to get fresh turkeys to the men at the front on Thanksgiving, to come up with new items such as K- and C-Rations, to provide laundry and bath service in the most unlikely spots, to handle the dead with such rever-



**Newly inducted members of the 'K-9 Corps' execute a column left while performing all the intricate movements of a close order drill (August 1942).**

ence and respect, and just to supply the fighting forces with the sheer *volume* of goods needed to successfully prosecute the world's largest war ever.

Quartermasters played a big role, an *indispensable* role in the overall war effort, and for a change the public was well aware of the contribution. Appreciation was shown in many ways. For example, on March 3, 1944, New Hampshire Senator Styles Bridges gave a stirring speech to his U.S. Senate colleagues, in praise of the Quartermaster Corps. He began his remarks as follows:

"Daily we read in the headlines of our victories, of spectacular bombing raids, of heroic landings on far-away shores, of desperate land engagements. These outstanding phases of this war we fully appreciate, and to these heroic men we pay full honor.

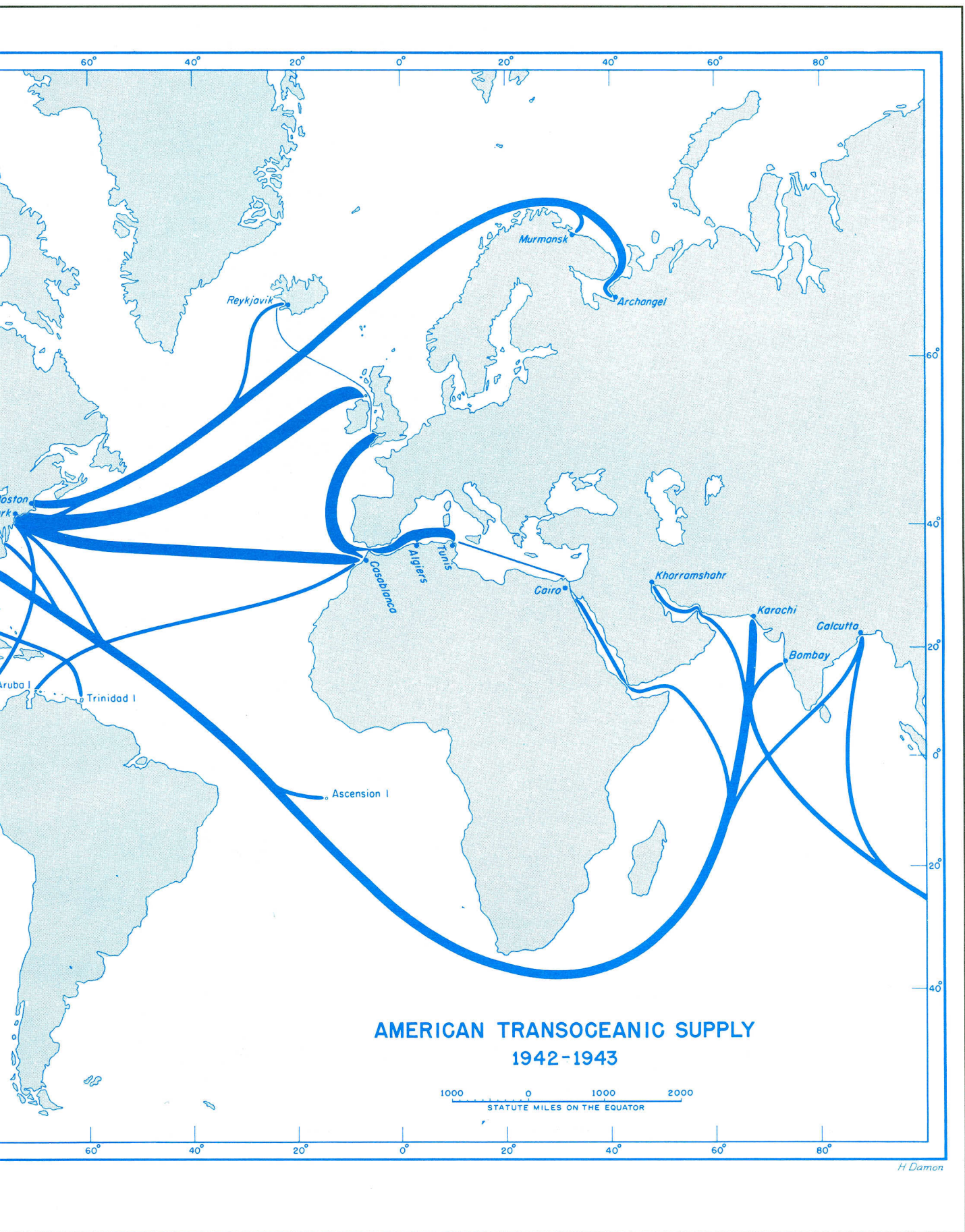
"Today I wish to tell the Senate and, through the vehicle of the Senate, the people of the Nation, a very vital and colorful story, a story of one of the least publicized branches of our armed forces, the Quartermaster Corps.

"One of the several supply services of our Army, the Quartermaster Corps, is the one closest to the soldier, the one closest to your boy. The food he eats, the clothing he wears, the shoes in which he covers the terrain he is taking from the enemy every day are but a few of the contributions of the Quartermaster Corps to our ultimate victory."

Senator Bridges delivered his remarks a full three months before D-Day, knowing that the story was far from over, and that many dark days lay ahead. Yet he felt an urgent need to pay tribute where tribute was due. At length, he concluded by saying: "That is the story of the Quartermaster Corps, a fine, capable fighting organization whose imperishable record of achievement in this global war is one in which virtually every American has shared, and one of which every American can be proud."

No truer words were ever spoken.

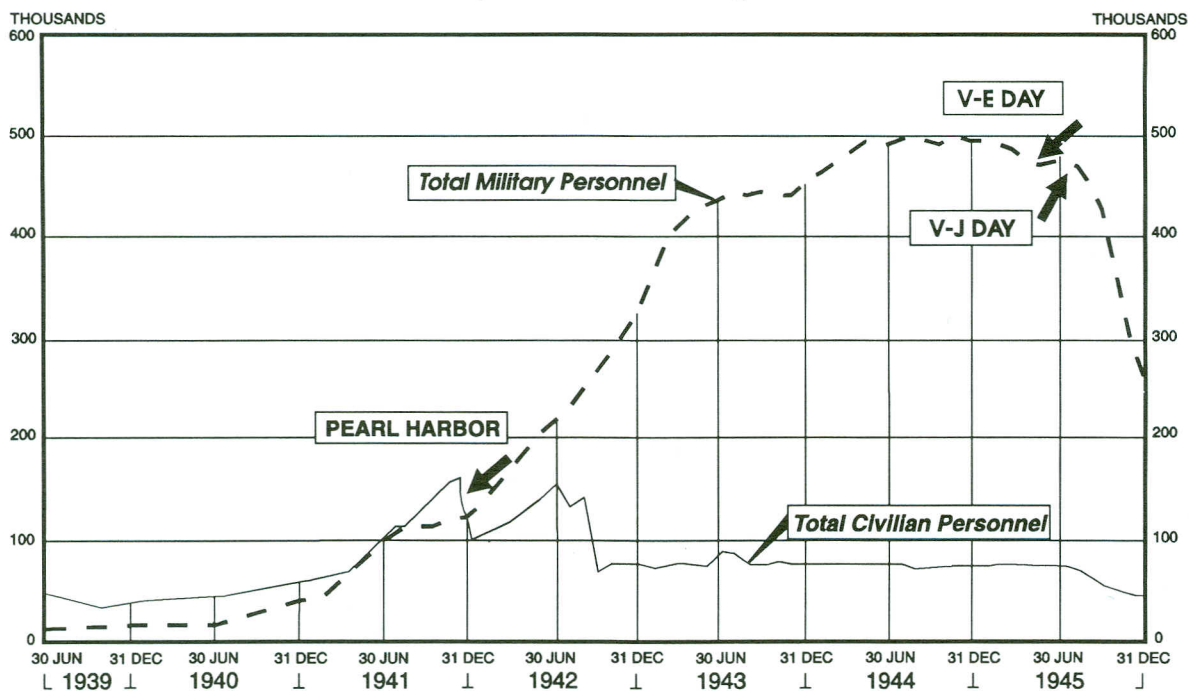




**Growth of the Quartermaster Corps and the Army: Actual Strength  
(Officers and Enlisted Men)**

Date	Strength		Percent QMC to Army
	QMC	Army	
30 Aug 1939 .....	11,267	176,487	6.38
30 Jun 1940 .....	17,788	264,118	6.73
30 Sep 1940 .....	31,104	438,254	7.05
31 Dec 1940 .....	43,239	620,774	6.95
30 Jun 1941 .....	101,442	1,460,998	6.93
31 Dec 1941 .....	124,483	1,686,403	7.32
30 Jun 1942 .....	226,146	3,074,184	7.70
31 Dec 1942 .....	327,794	5,397,674	6.07
30 Jun 1943 .....	436,841	6,993,102	6.25
31 Dec 1943 .....	453,419	7,482,434	6.06
31 Aug 1944 .....	502,265	8,102,545	6.19
31 Dec 1944 .....	498,010	8,052,693	6.19
31 Mar 1945 .....	491,301	8,157,386	6.02
31 May 1945 .....	472,853	8,291,336	5.70
31 Dec 1945 .....	268,964	4,228,936	6.38

**Growth Of The Quartermaster Corps: 1939-1945**



## QM UNITS WERE KEY TO VICTORY



After the war MG Robert M. Littlejohn, Chief QM, European Theater of Operations, presented General Eisenhower with a silk scroll bearing the unit insignias of all major elements assigned to the Supreme Commander on V-E Day.

*During World War II, the Quartermaster Corps' policy was to train soldiers as individual specialists first, then teach them to work as teams within specialized units. Between 1939 and 1945, the Corps fielded more than 40 different types of divisional and nondivisional units to carry out various supply and service functions. TO&Es (tables of organization and equipment) were constantly being revised throughout the war to make them more flexible and efficient — and meet the needs of a global struggle.*

**Historical Background.** From the Revolutionary War until the beginning of the 20th century, Quartermaster activities in the field were performed almost exclusively by civilian employees such as teamsters, stevedores, depot operators, blacksmiths and mechanics, with the aid of combat soldiers detailed from the line. Generally speaking, soldiers were required to cook their own meals, repair clothing and equipment as best they could, even bury their fallen comrades themselves when the need arose.

In 1912, the Quartermaster Department was reorganized and “militarized.” It became the Quartermaster Corps much as we know it today: with trained specialists and separate units. There were only four types of units at the start of World War I (truck, bakery, pack, and wagon companies), but the number expanded to 28 by war’s end. Their performance received fairly high marks. Because many of the service units were of the “fixed” variety, it was not uncommon for a doughboy at the front to have to walk 20 or 25 miles to the rear to get his “de-lousing” or to have his shoes repaired.

The bulky, cumbersome division supply trains of World War I were replaced by Quartermaster regiments in the mid-1930s, and these by QM battalions at the start of World War II. The newly designed, fast-moving, lighter “triangular” divisions required still smaller, more flexible support units. So, by 1943, a wide assortment of nondivisional Quartermaster *companies* were attached to armies, corps, divisions and other large tactical units as needed to provide them with supplies, transportation, petroleum support, repair and maintenance, and field services. What follows is a general description of some of those companies and their significance on the battlefield.



## **QM BAKERY COMPANY**

The fresh bread baked by the QM Bakery Companies was a necessity for the health and morale of the troops. Insufficient bread means hungry soldiers. Demand for bread in the front lines was constant, requiring most bakery companies to operate 24 hours daily. On the Anzio beachhead, 80 bakers turned out 27,000 pounds

**Members of the 99th QM Platoon practice mixing dough for a field bakery at the Desert Training Center, Indio, California.**

of bread every day while under fire. On crossing the Rhine, troops of the First Army, which had been subsisting on emergency rations, were issued fresh bread. Reports indicated that the morale of the troops strengthened considerably.

**Emptying bread pans at the 3028th QM Bakery Company in Belgium**

In the Pacific Theater, bread was considered so important that it was flown from rear areas to troops on the scattered forward islands. On an island in the South Pacific, a bakery company used breakfast cereal to bake whole wheat bread, which improved the menu and lifted the morale of the troops.

Early in the war, a bakery company on Guadalcanal furnished 20 pounds of bread per 100 men to 75,000 troops, using World War I equipment.

In the African campaign, a Quartermaster bakery company produced 5,000,000 pounds of bread from June to October 1943. Five bakery companies of the Third Army roasted 800,000 pounds of coffee. Another Quartermaster bakery company baked 6,000,000 pounds of bread in 5 months.



## **QM SALVAGE REPAIR COMPANY**

The company was made up of 2 platoons, with 3 officers and 198 enlisted personnel. Each of the two platoons had a repair unit which could be set up independently for the repair of shoes, clothing and textiles. It was equipped with six van-type semitrailers: two for shoe repair, two for clothing repair, and

**Inspecting freshly baked bread at the 2012th QM Bakery Company in Holland before distribution to field troops**

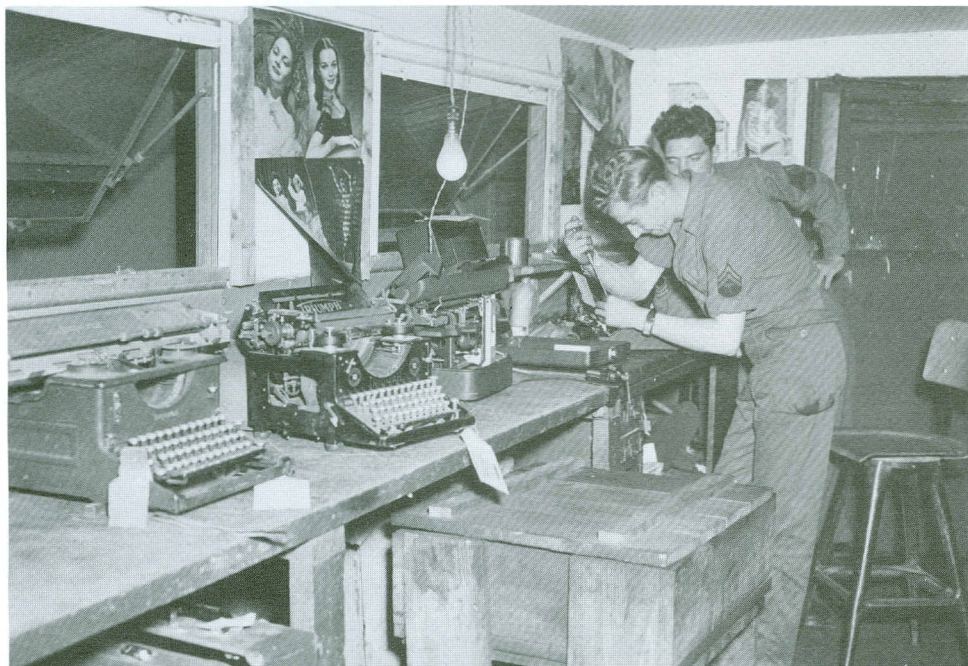
two for textile repair. The equipment was portable and could be installed in tents or buildings as needed.

The QM Salvage Repair Company could do repair work for at least 50,000 troops under field conditions. It was es-

timated that in combat each company could save the U.S. Government \$300,000 to \$400,000 per month.

In Africa, Europe and the Pacific islands, salvage repair companies worked at top speed to keep GI feet

marching toward the enemy. One company repaired 10,000 pairs of shoes in a single month. Over a period of 6 months, another unit repaired 56,000 pairs of shoes and approximately 400,000 other items.



**Members of the 215th QM Salvage Repair Company work at a depot in Bamberg, Germany.**

**Quartermaster fabric repair specialists sew in a mobile trailer in Darwin, Australia (June 1944).**



Answering an emergency call from the Army Air Forces, one Quartermaster Salvage Repair Company improvised more than 300 safety belts for B-29 gunners, providing them with an effective item of equipment while they were engaged in the bombing of Tokyo.

## ***QM LAUNDRY COMPANY***

QM Laundry Companies had 2 platoons of 2 sections each, with 265 enlisted soldiers and 5 officers. Their equipment consisted of commercial-type washers, extractors, and dryers mounted on 16 semitrailers. Each unit could pump its own water from a stream or lake, generate its own electricity, and could wash and dry about 125 pounds of laundry an hour.

By working two, eight-hour shifts a day, seven days a week, a QM Laundry Company could furnish laundry service for 48,000 troops a week. A single platoon could service 12,000, and a section could service 6,000 troops a week.

In all theaters, laundry companies supported troops in the field. For example, a laundry company in the Pacific washed 1,358,491 pieces in one month and 1,272,244 pieces in the next. In the Fifth Army (Italy), 50 tons of clothing were washed daily by laundry units working at bath-clothing exchange points.

Laundry companies in the Ninth Army reduced trench foot (frostbite) among troops by a daily exchange of socks. Clean socks were issued as part of the ration, and soiled socks were returned for washing and later reissue. During the bitter winter fighting, laundry units exchanged wet, soggy blankets of combat troops for clean blankets washed by the mobile laundry units.

## ***QM REFRIGERATION COMPANY (MOBILE)***

Organized in three platoons with three sections in each platoon, the QM Refrigeration Company could supply a



**An extractor for the 464th QM Mobile Laundry Company, Bougainville**



**The 41st QM Company distributes perishables from a refrigerator trailer somewhere in New Guinea.**

field army of 150,000 men with its daily quota of fresh foods and other perishable supplies. Each of the company's 30 refrigerated semitrailers had a capacity of 10,000 pounds, giving the company a total capacity of 300,000 pounds.

One platoon could supply a corps (about 50,000 men). A single section could serve a division.

Battle-weary GIs would cheer the sight of these huge vans in the combat areas, eager for the fresh food they car-



ried — always a welcome relief from the monotony of preserved rations. In Alaska and other theaters with below-freezing temperatures, the insulated vans of these versatile units were used to keep perishables from freezing.

The refrigerator vans also transported life-giving blood plasma, vaccines, and other perishable medical supplies to hospitals and aid stations.

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## **QM BASE PETROLEUM SUPPLY COMPANY**

The QM Base Petroleum Supply Company consisted of a headquarters, depot section, and three operating platoons. Each platoon had a platoon headquarters, a canning section, and a cleaning section. The company had four 100-gallon and four 30-gallon-per-minute dispensers, eight rotary-barrel pumps, and four engine-driven can washers to keep the gas containers in good condition.

Also, the company was provided with six 3,000-gallon capacity collapsible containers for storing petroleum products and had sufficient five-gallon gasoline cans to carry out its mission. The company's main organic transport consisted of eight 2 1/2-ton cargo trucks

and nine one-ton cargo trailers. The company would attempt to maintain a reserve of 100,000 gallons of gasoline in five-gallon cans and approximately 15 tons of lubricants. It could clean and fill 20,000 five-gallon containers daily from its bulk gasoline supply.

During World War II, it would take over 159 gallons of gasoline to move an infantry division one mile. An armored division took 725 gallons of gasoline to move the same distance. A Field Army used well over 5 million gallons of gasoline a month.

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## **QM TRUCK COMPANY**

QM Truck Companies provided motor transportation for Army personnel and supplies. In all areas of a theater of operations, from the ports of debarkation to the fighting fronts, Quartermaster trucks hauled troops, prisoners, food, gasoline, animals, weapons — in fact, anything that had to be transported from Ammunition to Zippers.

“Light” truck companies were equipped with 48 2 1/2-ton general cargo trucks, while “heavy” truck companies had 48 tractor-trucks or 96 10-ton stake and platform semitrailers. Both types of companies might also be

supplied with tanker trucks for hauling gasoline products.

QM Truck Companies made victory possible. Over 45 truck companies were awarded the invasion arrowhead for participating in amphibious landings. Truck companies in the Fifth Army, in addition to their other hauling, delivered 1,500 tons of food, 1,800 tons of gasoline, and 50 tons of clothing daily. A heavy truck company delivered 27 million gallons of gasoline to the Seventh Army in 38 days.

During the Battle of the Bulge, another company operated continuously for 36 hours to move troops and barely escaped as the Germans broke through. From November 1944 to February 1945, truck companies in the Ninth Army hauled 300,000 tons of supplies and 200,000 troops while driving 2.5 million miles. Twenty thousand drivers of 174 truck companies delivered 200,000 tons of supplies from Cherbourg to the lines beyond Paris during the 26-day life of the Red Ball Express.

The drivers often operated 24 hours a day, sleeping in their trucks and eating cold C-Rations for days on end. They earned the respect of combat troops and led General Patton to observe, late in the war: “The two-and-a-half-ton truck is our most valuable weapon.”

**Quartermaster Truck Companies in the Pacific evacuated wounded from combat areas to hospitals in the rear.**



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## ***QM SERVICE COMPANY***

The QM Service Company, which consisted of two platoons of four sections each, provided military personnel to perform a wide range of general labor. They were trained, for example, to pull guard duty, ice refrigerator cars, collect and bury the dead, recover salvage articles, handle gasoline and oil, load vehicles and equipment, operate materi-

als handling equipment, load and unload ships — and much more. Truly they were “jacks of all trades.”

Throughout the world, wherever U.S. troops were fighting, men of the QM Service Company were at their heels with the supplies needed to sustain victory. High troop morale and efficiency were maintained because food, clothing, weapons, equipment and fuel were at the right place at the right time

through the back-breaking effort and “know-how” of labor personnel.

In the North African campaign, the remarkable movement of the entire II Corps from the southern to the northern sector was accomplished in five days, complete with supply installations. It took the Germans completely by surprise. Credit for the success of this tactical move was due in large measure to the excellent support of QM labor troops.

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## ***QM FUMIGATION AND BATH COMPANY (MOBILE)***

The QM Fumigation and Bath (F and B) Company (Mobile) made sure that battle-weary troops near the front were free of disease-carrying lice and other parasites, and provided them with hot showers and clean clothes. Authorized equipment included 24 shower heads and 6 prefabricated fumigation chambers where methyl bromide gas was administered. The 85-man company could serve approximately 3,600 troops in a 12-hour day.

It was said that no other support unit contributed more to the physical well-being and morale of the combat troops. One QM F and B company took over the facilities of Germany's largest coal mine and operated a 200-head shower for 4,000 men per day. Another company operating with the Fifth Army in Italy gave 1,081,115 showers in a 194-day period.

In the European Theater, typhus cases reached an all-time low. For example, not a single case was reported in the Fifth Army up to August 19, 1944. No small share of the credit for this remarkable record goes to the men who organized and operated the QM F and B Companies.



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## **QM GRAVES REGISTRATION COMPANY**

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The QM Graves Registration Company supervised the collection and burial of the dead, marked and recorded the graves of each deceased person on the battlefield, and disposed of personal effects. The 260-man company had three platoons, with three sections each. The platoon was the basic working unit and was designed to serve a division. Each of the three sections of the platoon was divided into two squads: a collecting squad and an evacuation squad.

Immediate burial of the battle dead was important for sanitary and morale

reasons. This work was often done under hazardous conditions. One outstanding example of such service is the record of a QM Graves Registration Company which scrambled ashore on D-Day with the First Army and gathered bodies from the beaches, in the water, and inland. Many bodies had to be cut from wrecked landing craft submerged in the shallow water. By the end of D-plus-2, one platoon alone had buried 457 American dead. By working day and night, the three platoons together were able to clear the beaches of all dead.

This company operated five cemeteries in Normandy and later opened five more in France, two in Belgium, and three in Germany. The company was at times in danger of encirclement, was often in the vicinity of enemy paratroop landings, and was strafed and bombed. Despite these hazards, the company headquarters was able to send on its reports and the personal effects of American casualties within 24 hours after burial. The unit was awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque, and many of its personnel received individual awards and decorations.

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## **QM GASOLINE SUPPLY COMPANY**

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The QM Gasoline Supply Company distributed gasoline and lubricants to units in the field. Its two platoons (122 enlisted personnel) broke down into five-gallon containers the bulk deliveries of gasoline received at the railheads, truck heads, and refilling points, and moved the fuel closer to the fighting zone. Then they issued POL (petroleum, oils and lubricants) to the using units by exchanging full cans for empty ones.

The company had a bulk-reduction capacity of 144,000 gallons daily. Its

transport capacity, using 2 1/2-ton cargo trucks and one-ton trailers, was 3,000 five-gallon cans daily. Its personnel were also capable of operating one to four Class III distribution points.

On D-Day, four huge gasoline dumps made up of main storage areas and eight roadside points were operating in southern England. These dumps carried a stock of 1,000,000 gallons of gas and oil. From each of the four dumps a QM Gasoline Supply Company dispensed 100,000 gallons a day, in five-gallon containers.

In Normandy, gasoline supply trucks ran a gauntlet of fire to deliver gasoline to vehicles beyond the village of Canisy. The town was an inferno. Rafters and blazing timbers crashed across highway intersections and there was hardly room to get past. Yet tanks beyond the village needed fuel. A column of 30 trucks loaded with gas took the chance. Spaced 300 yards apart, the trucks roared through the town at 50 miles an hour. Luck held — every man made it.

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## **QM SALVAGE COLLECTING COMPANY**

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The job of the QM Salvage Collecting Company was to direct the collection of battlefield waste: to recover the clothing, the food, the trucks and other equipment; to sort and classify the recovered materiel; and to send it on for study, re-issue or repair. It had 4 officers and 200 enlisted men. Included were seven enlisted specialists attached from the Ordnance Department, and the same number from the Chemical Warfare Service and the Signal Corps, to provide technical direction in classifying and sorting equipment belonging to their respective services. A single company could locate, collect, classify and dispose of the salvage expectancy of 75,000 fighting troops — a fair-sized army.

For collecting purposes, the salvage officer divided the battle area into

sub-areas and allocated small groups of men to each. Every available means of transportation was used. Organizations bringing supplies forward would often carry salvage back with them on the return trip. Salvage collecting points were spotted at convenient locations throughout the area. Critical materials (such as rubber, gasoline, vehicles, ordnance, metals, shoes and clothing) were collected, classified and disposed of with the greatest possible speed.

On Guadalcanal, it was three months before the first shipment of clothing arrived. Without the QM Salvage Collecting Company, combat troops would have suffered severely. In the Philippines, guerrilla units were completely equipped with captured and recovered materiel. At Clark Field,

Japanese heavy artillery shells were recovered and put back into action by U.S. troops within 24 hours, servicing two fast-firing batteries. Elsewhere in the South Pacific, 507,000 articles of clothing and equipment were recovered in one month. The salvaged materiel was valued at \$605,000. Over 1,800 tons of shipping space would have been required to replace it.

In the Mediterranean Theater, recovered materials included 897 tons of aluminum, 219 tons of rubber, 312 tons of brass, 858 tons of scrap steel, 546 tons of light ferrous scrap, and 755 tons of heavy ferrous scrap, as well as 129 tons of shoes, clothing, copper, lead and batteries. In Italy, 1,162,681 separate pieces representing a total value of \$4,000,000 were collected in two weeks.



Rations are loaded aboard trains at the 58th QM Base Depot, Class I Dump at Liege, Belgium.

## **HHC, QUARtermaster Base Depot Company**

The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, QM Base Depot Company, with its 34 officers and 118 enlisted men, provided the administrative support and technical expertise needed to establish large depots within the theater of operations. HHC usually administered depots supplying 100,000 men. However, depots in the European Theater often handled supplies for nearly twice that number.

When the Germans counterattacked in December 1944, Allied depots

in northern Europe were faced with emergency demands for increased supplies and new supply points. The Third Army swung into an entirely new zone. Old supply lines had to be abandoned and new ones spotted in another area. A Quartermaster base depot was immediately on the job, and supplies moved forward without interruption — 565 railway cars of food in a single day, 493,680 tons of supplies in a month. The battle was won, with no small part of the credit to the Quartermaster base depots.

Another QM Base Depot Company aided in the final push to victory. During the drive across the Rhine, three armies depended upon it for support: the First, the Third, and the Fifteenth. At the peak of its operations, the depot shipped over 3 1/3 million rations in a single day; handled 2 1/2 million tons of supplies over a period of 7 months; supervised 15 subdepots scattered over an area 75 miles wide; and supervised 255 officers, 5,750 enlisted men, 6,555 German prisoners of war, and 1,749 civilian employees.

After the war, ex-Sergeant **BILL MAULDIN**, in his book *Up Front*, tossed this bouquet to the QM support team: "I got downright affectionate toward the Quartermasters in France, where they did a miraculous job of supplying the combat troops. The gasoline problem was fierce, because the combat men had moved so far ahead of the supply schedule, but the QM's delivered the goods."

# THE QMC AS OF V-J DAY

*How Many QM Units Served in World War II?* On December 7, 1941, QM authorized personnel included 7,750 officers and 114,000 enlisted men. As of August 15, 1945, the T/O (table of organization) strength of the Quartermaster Corps was approximately 430,000 personnel. Of the authorized strength, 362,949 were overseas on V-J Day. Considerably more than that number served outside the continental U.S. during the duration, but were returned under rotational and redeployment policies. The Corps had 32,000 officers, 395,786 enlisted men, 1,123 warrant officers, and 239 in the Women's Army Corps (WACs). Some 60,000 civilians were also employed at QM installations in the U.S. The following list shows the large number and many different types of Quartermaster organizations during the course of the war:

QM Company, Infantry Division . . . . .	65
Hq. & Hq. Det., QM Group . . . . .	76
QM Truck Company, Heavy . . . . .	201
Hq. & Hq. Det., QM Battalion, Mobile . . . . .	403
QM Truck Company (Troop) or QM Troop Transport Company . . . . .	692
QM Service Company . . . . .	447
QM Gasoline Supply Company . . . . .	120
QM Car Company . . . . .	28
QM Remount Troop . . . . .	4
QM Pack Troop (Company) . . . . .	7
QM Bakery Company . . . . .	106
QM Sales Company, Mobile . . . . .	8
QM Laundry Company, Semimobile . . . . .	73
QM Salvage Collecting Company . . . . .	34
QM Railhead Company . . . . .	82
QM Refrigeration Company . . . . .	32
QM Depot Company, Supply . . . . .	99
QM Salvage Repair Company, Semimobile . . . . .	42
QM Fumigation and Bath Company, Mobile . . . . .	31
QM Graves Registration Company . . . . .	34
QM Salvage Repair Company (Fixed), QM Base Depot . . . . .	7
Airborne QM Company . . . . .	5
QM Base Depot Company . . . . .	9
QM Base Petroleum Supply Company . . . . .	1
QM Base Depot Supply & Sales Company . . . . .	1
Hq, QM Service Organization . . . . .	66
QM Truck Company, Aviation . . . . .	230
Hq. & Hq. Company, QM Base Depot . . . . .	23
Mountain QM Battalion . . . . .	1
Hq. & Hq. Company, Mountain QM Battalion . . . . .	1
QM Company, Cavalry Division . . . . .	1
QM Hq. & Hq Company, Engineer Special Brigade . . . . .	3
QM Petroleum Products Laboratory . . . . .	37
QM Section, Armored Division . . . . .	16
QM Composite Overseas Company . . . . .	11
QM Italian Battalion, Italian Service Units . . . . .	24
QM Large Drum Manufacturing Company . . . . .	1

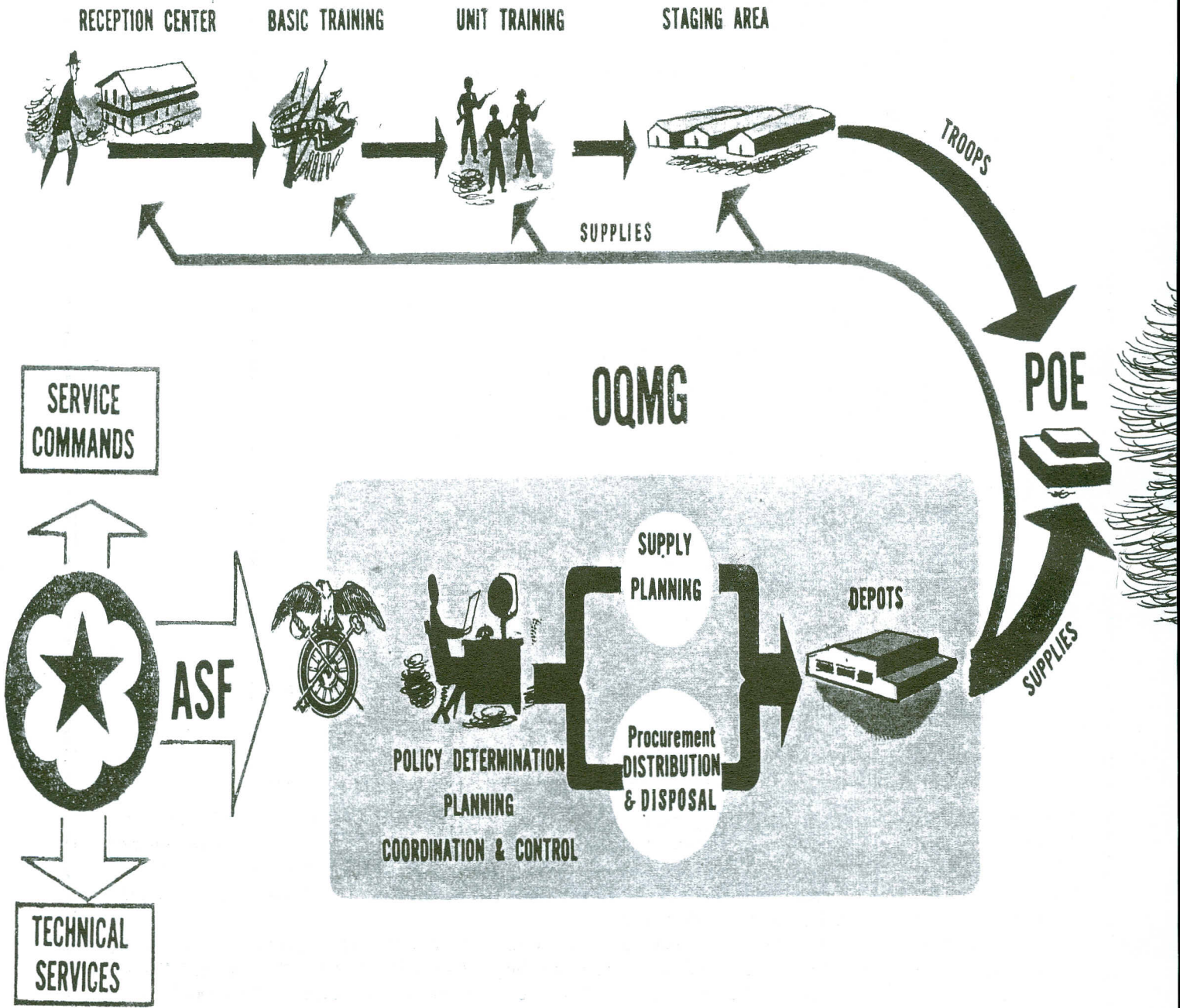
In higher headquarters, there were 24 QM Sections in Corps Headquarters and 11 QM Sections in Army Headquarters. In addition, there were QM organizations (usually sections) with Air Forces and with other topside headquarters wherever they were. QMs even served jointly with Navy staffs in the Pacific in certain instances. There were also Theater QMs (called Chief Quartermasters), Base QMs, Island Service Command QMs, and QMs with various other nomenclatures, with their staffs, throughout the world.

Besides the larger units, there were separate platoons at many overseas spots, including, by type: Railhead, 1; Bakery, 6; Butcher, 1; Car, 25; Cold Storage, 3; Drum Cleaning, 3; Drum Filling, 3; Graves Registration, 12; Laundry, 9; Sales, 2; Salvage Repair, 2; Service, 5; Truck, 2. There were also 29 Infantry Scout Dog Platoons, originally QM War Dog Platoons.

There were also QM Detachments serving overseas. Among them were Auto Maintenance, 9; Car, 9; Clothing and Equipment Repair, 7; Driver Augmentation Teams, 76; Labor, 13; Laundry, Hospital, 173; Laundry, Mobile, 91; Mess Teams, 2; Office Machine Repair, 22; Refrigeration Truck, 45; Remount, 1; Supply, 29; and Truck, 2.

# ZONE OF THE INTERIOR

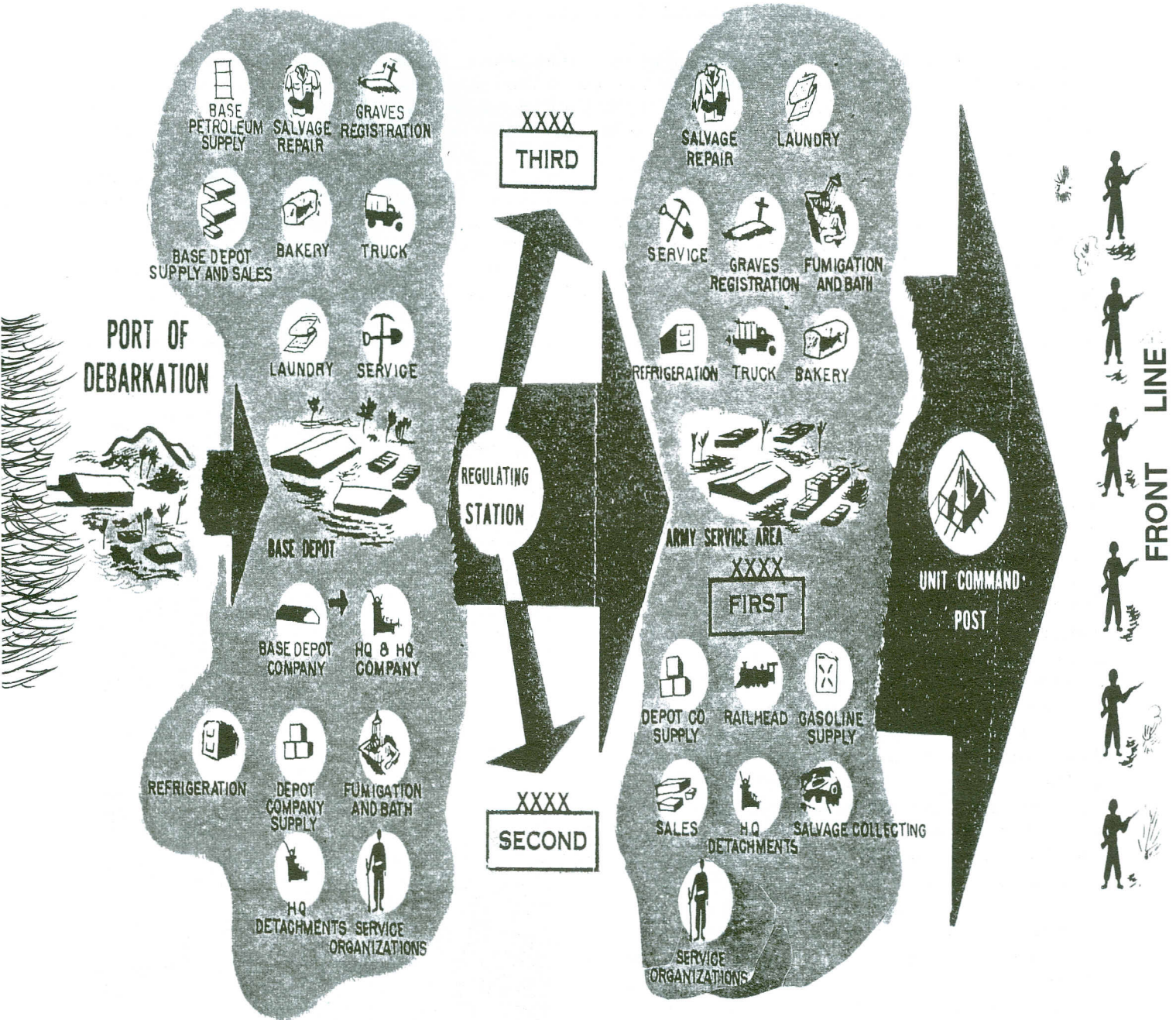
## POSTS, CAMPS AND STATIONS



# THEATER OF OPERATIONS

## COMMUNICATIONS ZONE

## COMBAT ZONE



# A NEW KIND OF WAR

## QM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT QM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT QM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Long before the attack on Pearl Harbor, U.S. Army planners, which included Quartermaster Corps personnel, understood that if war came again, it would little resemble World War I. So much had changed between 1918 and 1941. The advent of massive air forces, large-scale armored units, heavy (yet “portable”) artillery, and truck-borne infantry troops capable of covering unheard of distances in relatively short periods of time, gave all sides in the coming conflict the ability to quickly expand the battlefield beyond any previous limits.

Instead of a line of trenches running from the Baltic to the Adriatic, the war that finally erupted in the 1930s soon dominated the whole of Europe, much of Africa, Asia and the Pacific as well. The war was neither “static” nor self-limiting. On the contrary, World War II felt as if it were being waged almost *everywhere* at once. It demanded nothing short of total commitment.

From a Quartermaster perspective, victory depended upon the ability to consistently field food, clothing and equipment superior to the enemy’s. Under the stimulus of this new kind of war, scientific research and development (R&D), coupled with industrial know-how, were applied to Quartermaster problems — with remarkable success. The war years saw an explosion of R&D activities aimed at meeting the soldier’s needs on all fronts.

### THE BEST-FED ARMY

Throughout the history of warfare, great commanders have understood the pressing need, first and foremost, to provide troops with an adequate supply of food. Napoleon is supposed to have said, “an army marches on its stomach.” His great adversary, the Duke of Wellington, once boasted that “many can lead troops, I can feed them.” Both knew that a lack of suitable provisions would quickly undermine the morale, esprit de corps, discipline and physical condition of an army. There is enormous truth in the old French proverb, “the soup makes the soldier.”

Each of America’s past wars can be associated with the rations provided. There were the “starving times” at Valley Forge that nearly undid Washington’s army. During the Civil War, troops on the march ate “salt horse” and “sow-belly,” and a three-inch square wafer called “hardtack” (which had lots of other nicknames, like “teeth-dullers” and “worm castles”). Army cooks in Cuba at the turn of the century will forever be condemned for allegedly having served “embalmed beef.”

World War I vets were introduced to chewing gum and cigarettes, and got used to taking their meals with soluble coffee. But they were also left with the memory of far too much canned salmon (“goldfish”) and canned corned beef (“corned willie”). There were trained Army cooks in the field at last, but too often they indulged in the practice of combining everything into a nondescript stew (called “slum,” after a hobo delicacy) and plopping it rather unceremoniously into the soldier’s mess kit.



A Quartermaster staff officer at the Subsistence R&D Laboratory in Chicago, Illinois, demonstrates sealing of the new C-Ration accessory packet.





**It's chow time and two frontline U.S. artillerymen heat their rations over a small gasoline stove at Nettuno, Italy (February 1944).**

All of this changed rather dramatically in the mid-1930s. The Quartermaster Corps opened a new Subsistence Research and Development Laboratory at its Chicago Depot in 1936, and thus began the modern era of ration research for the United States armed forces. Out of that environment would come a whole range of specialized rations, scientifically designed and tested, for use in all sorts of military situations and climates.

**“D-Bars.”** The earliest ration to be developed using this scientific approach was the D-Ration. It was made up of three 4-ounce “chocolate” bars wrapped in aluminum foil, then overwrapped and sealed in parchment paper. These were designed solely for emergency use, to replace the old World War I “iron ra-

tions.” The researcher’s intent was to get the highest caloric content possible in the smallest package, and yet retain sufficient palatability. Over 200,000 D-Rations were on hand by the end of 1941. A year later that number swelled to over 10 million.

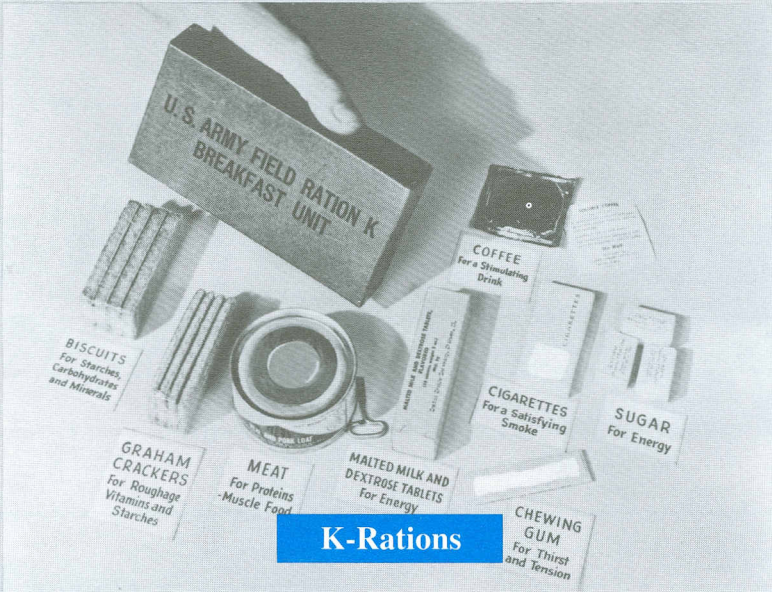
**C-Rations.** As early as 1932, reports indicated the need to develop “meals-in-a-can” to replace the World War I “reserve ration.” They first experimented with 12-ounce cans of beef stew, Irish stew, beef with noodles, and the like. By 1938, the subsistence lab had come up with a six-can proposal, consisting of three M (meat) units and three B (bread) units. Thus was born the U.S. Army Field Ration C, which some knowledgeable observers described as “one of the best field rations ever.”

The C-Ration menu continued to evolve throughout the war. M units ultimately included such favorites as meat and spaghetti, chicken and vegetables, and pork and beans. B units included, among other things, biscuits, compressed and premixed cereal, candy-coated peanuts or raisins, soluble coffee, hard candies, jam, lemon- and orange-juice powder, cocoa mix, and caramels. The accessory packet included nine “good commercial-quality cigarettes,” halazone water-purification tablets, book matches, toilet paper, chewing gum and last, but by no means least, a tiny opener for the meat cans.

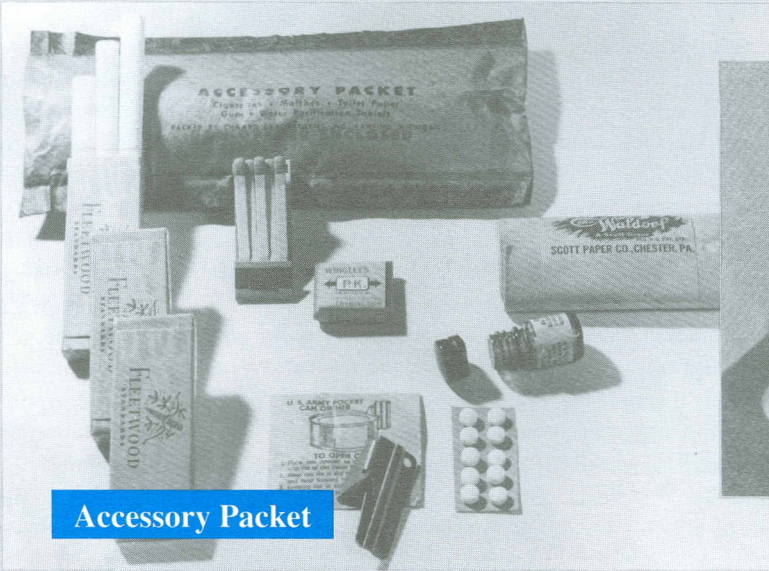
**Ode to a P-38.** That tiny, lightweight, collapsible opener developed in 1942 is called a “P-38.” How it got that name is still not clear. Some say because



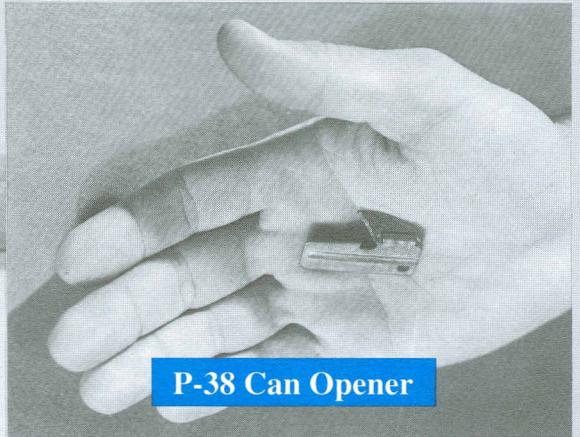
**C-Rations**



**K-Rations**



**Accessory Packet**



**P-38 Can Opener**

it required exactly 38 punctures around a can to open it. Others claimed it performed with the speed of a P-38 fighter plane. Whatever the case, it is clear this little device has to be considered one of the most perfect inventions ever designed for use in combat. Most troops carried it on their dog tags. More than just a can opener, in time the P-38 acquired a thousand and one uses: all-purpose toothpick, fingernail cleaner, screwdriver, bottle opener, box cutter, letter opener, chisel, scraper, stirrer, etc.

For World War II veterans (Korean War and Vietnam vets as well), the P-38 is a souvenir, a bonafide historical artifact worthy of retention. Indeed, one can well imagine countless old soldiers still carrying a P-38 on their key chain a half century after the fact, or preserving it for their offspring along with other cherished items from the war.

**K-Rations.** Perhaps the best known, and for many soldiers the best-liked field ration in World War II, was the K-Ration. (Note: Contrary to several long-standing myths, there is no special significance attached to the letter "K." It was simply picked to make it phonetically distinguishable from C- and D-Rations.) The lightweight, easy-to-carry ration was designed for the assault phase of a combat operation and was first put to use by Army paratroopers. To the amazement of its developers, it became an overnight success and was soon adopted for all-service use. The Quartermaster Corps purchased its first million K-Rations in May 1942. In the peak year, 1944, they procured more than 105 million.

The K-Ration was packed in three cardboard units — breakfast, dinner, and supper — yielding approximately 3,300 calories, and 99 grams of protein. Breakfast centered around a small can of scrambled eggs and ham. Dinner featured some version of canned meat, and supper usually a canned cheese product. The cheese was especially favored, not just because it was thought to taste all that good, but because many believed it aided in alleviating diarrhea. K's also experienced continuous refinement during the war. A greater variety of biscuits were added, along with improved meat products, better packages, and additional accessory items.

K-Rations remained more or less popular to the very end, as long as they were not overused. It does not matter how good a field ration is: if troops experience the same old "box lunches" for

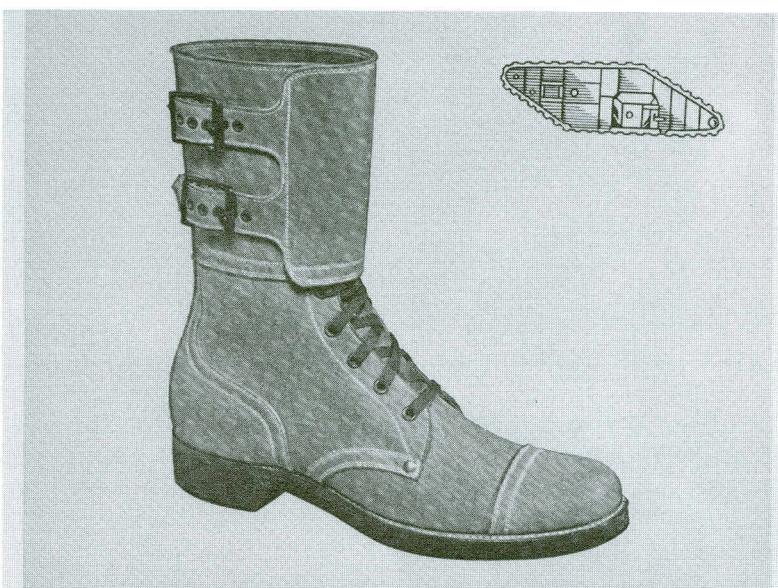
weeks on end, complaints are bound to ensue. That is exactly what happened with K-Rations from time to time. (*Historical Note:* See the "Dear B-Bag" article in this edition.)

## THE BEST-CLOTHED ARMY

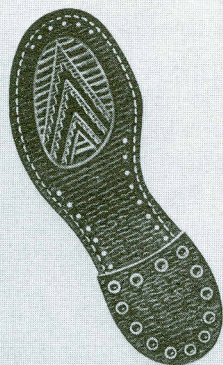
The problem of providing suitable clothing for a global Army was sometimes more difficult than feeding a global Army. After all, troops in Alaska and Okinawa might eat the same sets of rations, but require very different types of clothing. Tankers had special clothing needs, as did paratroopers. The old "doughboy" uniforms carried over from World War I days would have been out

of place entirely in the North African desert or in the jungles of New Guinea.

When World War II began, the U.S. Army was far behind its enemies in developing special combat clothing for the different climates, and for the different conditions under which our forces would be called upon to fight. Soon, though, a number of governmental and private agencies joined ranks with the

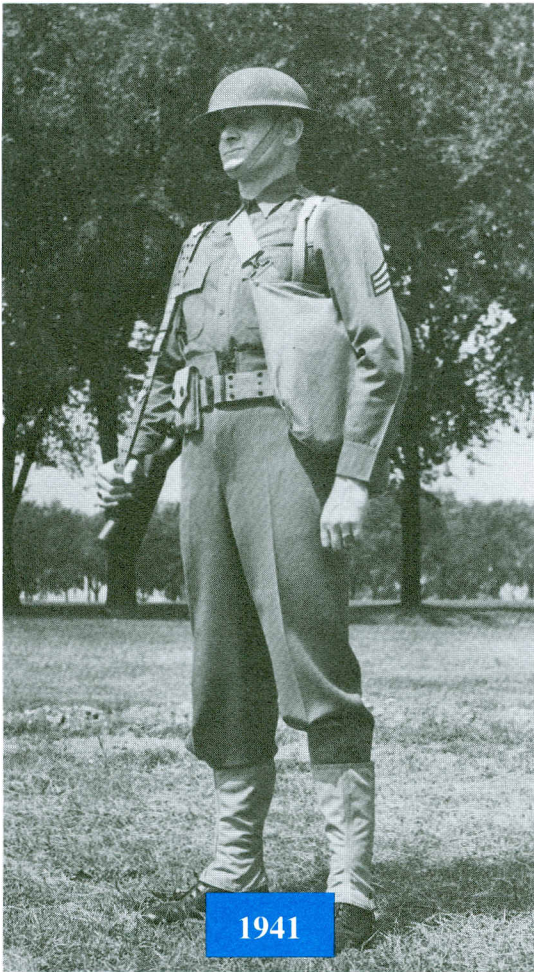


### U. S. ARMY BOOT, SERVICE, COMBAT



For real serious and rough operations. Commando troops making a landing on some enemy coast might well be wearing this boot. This shoe is practically the same as one on preceding page except uppers are several inches higher and laced for greater leg and ankle support and affording more protection.

## Combat Field Uniform



Quartermaster Corps' Research and Development Branch to begin designing and testing hundreds of new items of military clothing.

For example, they produced no less than 25 types of gloves, from cotton flannel for use against mosquitoes in the Pacific to sturdy gauntlets for handling barbed wire in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). For the cold zones, they devised clothing made of fiberglass twill, warmer and lighter than any other cold-weather clothing known at that time. New ponchos and raincoats were developed which were light enough for tropic wear but which afforded maximum protection. Other items included lambskin muffs for cold-weather use by motorcyclists; asbestos gloves for handling hot machine guns; reversible ski suits, snow-white on one side and green on the other, for fooling the enemy in

either snowdrifts or pine forests; and electrically heated underwear and flight suits for Army airmen as they ventured to ever higher altitudes.

**Headgear and Footgear.** In 1941, the Quartermaster Corps initiated a comprehensive review of all Army headgear to determine which hats, caps and helmets ought to be modified or eliminated. An item such as the World War I campaign hat (which resembles the present-day drill sergeant's cap) had a lot of sentimentality attached to it, so many favored its retention. However, the more practical researchers viewed it as next to useless, since it could not be easily worn in motor vehicles, tanks or airplanes. The old doughboy's helmet was also deemed obsolete. It was ultimately replaced by the steel "pot-shaped" helmet with liner, which provided far more protection.

The Corps had even more difficulties developing a good, sturdy service shoe for use in World War II. The Type I service shoe used by National Guard troops on maneuver during the emergency period was the subject of much complaint. Its outer soles wore through in as little as two or three weeks. By the time a Type II shoe with rubber taps and heels was developed, the nation was in the throes of a critical shortage of rubber. Researchers experimented continuously with all sorts of substitute materials. The result was a service shoe that was actually *weaker* than the product it was designed to replace. It took until 1943 to come up with a viable replacement, the Type III service shoe.

By then, researchers had already concluded that what was really needed was an all new *combat boot*, to replace both the service shoe and the old-style

leggings still in use. By January 1944, the American shoe industry began full-scale production of the new, sturdy combat boot, with tie bottoms and buckled tops, that would serve as the soldier's primary footwear for the remainder of the war.

The new field combat boot was received in all theaters, but it did not meet all needs. General MacArthur's troops in the Pacific still had pressing need for a durable, yet lightweight and quick-drying jungle boot. One model was pressed into production in 1942, but it hardly fit the bill. It had a duck top and rubber sole, was lightweight, porous and easily cleaned and dried. However, it offered so little support that troops routinely complained of "aching arches." The high canvas tops also chafed at the legs, so it was not uncommon for soldiers to fold them over or cut them off. The matter of a new jungle boot was still being examined in the summer of 1945 when the war ended.

**Shades of Valley Forge.** Even the best combat boot could not always adequately protect foot soldiers during some of the situations they found themselves in during World War II. The enemy in this case was the same one faced by Washington's troops — Old Man Winter. Troops who were forced to march through cold, muddy slush or to stand in ankle-deep snow in an icy fox-hole were subject to widespread outbreaks of frostbite and trench foot. During the 1943 attack on Attu, in the Aleutians, U.S. troops suffered about 1,200 casualties due mainly to trench foot. Likewise about 20 percent of Fifth Army casualties in the winter campaign in Italy were attributed to trench foot.

The next year, in the winter of 1944-45, the incidence of trench foot in the European Theater of Operations reached epidemic proportions. The Chief Quartermaster called for a half million pairs of overshoes in late September, but this was a last-minute request. The overshoes had barely begun arriving before the weather turned bitterly cold, even in October. By mid-

October, 320 cases of trench foot were reported in theater. The number continued to rise until it reached a peak of 5,386 cases on November 17th. In all, 44,728 soldiers had to be hospitalized

*"No one is complaining that the people at home are denying to the army what it needs. There is, on the contrary, a universal conviction that the American Army is the best fed, best clothed, best equipped, and the best provided with medical care, of any army in history."*

*Walter Lippman, New York Herald Tribune (December 28, 1944)*

for frostbite and trench foot between October 1944 and April 1945. Enough troops were laid up in this way to round out two good-sized infantry divisions.

**The "Ike Jacket."** One of the more popular items of clothing devel-

oped by the Quartermaster Corps was the waist-length, wool field jacket known as the "ETO jacket." It was meant to serve a dual purpose as a combat jacket and Class A uniform. To wear as a Class A uniform, troops were convinced that the jacket had to be tight-fitting and well-tailored (like General Eisenhower's) or it did not look right. The Chief Quartermaster railed against this practice and sent QM tailors out to the various de-

pots to show what a proper fit should look like. But to little avail. After V-E Day, the GI dressed in a tight-fitting "Ike jacket" became an ever-present symbol of the occupational force in Europe.



**Troops on the European continent were issued additional winter clothing as cold weather set in.**

In 1942, the Quartermaster Corps furnished uniforms and equipment to 'para-ski' members of the newly formed 503rd Parachute Battalion, shown here training in the snowcapped mountains of Utah.



Armored troops in a frontline holding position, somewhere in Holland, receiving an issue of winter clothing (left and below).





Jeeps, two afloat, cross a river during the Louisiana Maneuvers.

## THE BEST-EQUIPPED ARMY

The research and development arm of the Quartermaster Corps in World War II also joined forces with science and industry to improve existing equipment and to provide brand new items, some of them never before envisioned on the battlefield.

**Personal Items.** When the war began, soldiers were still carrying their clothes and personal items in an old World War I vintage, blue denim “barracks bag.” It was long, round and with a drawstring opening at the top — hard to carry (so most troops just dragged it, which soon wore holes in the sides) and even harder to store properly. By April 1943, it was replaced by a much more durable and easier to carry *duffle bag*. The latter was 37 inches long and 12 inches square; made of tough, olive-drab-colored duck fabric; and had a double-purpose handle (so it could be carried like a suitcase or slung over the shoulder) and a closure that could be locked.

This was only one of scores of such items that made life a little easier for the World War II soldier. Some items — such as an improved intrenching tool,

for instance — actually made life a great deal safer, too. Unlike World War I where soldiers spent most of their time at the front in deep, well-fortified and elaborately dug trenches (one author called it a “troglodyte world”), in World War II the emphasis was on individual shelter and the need to construct hasty foxholes. Hence, the intrenching tool became an indispensable piece of equipment, as necessary as a weapon in many settings. One Quartermaster observer in Tunisia in 1943 noted:

*“This is one of the few items that the fighting soldier will not discard, but will actually carry right into battle with him. It is probably the most useful utensil that he has in his possession. In every new position he takes, either advancing or retreating, it is absolutely necessary that a foxhole be dug. When foxholes are needed, they are usually need IN A HURRY—and DEEP!”*

The M-1943 Intrenching Tool was a combination shovel, hoe and pick ax,

with a wooden handle and folding blade. It could be easily carried, assembled, and required almost no instructions for use. One can only imagine the number of lives saved by it, but even that did not stop QM researchers. An improved 1945 model was already designed and in production when the war ended.

No item it seems was too small or seemingly unimportant that it failed to receive a response from R&D personnel, if it was something they thought was needed in the field. In 1943, as U.S. troops moved into cold climates and deserts simultaneously, word arrived that they were suffering from chapped skin and sunburn. Quartermaster technicians went to work and developed what was described as a “medicated cylindrical stick which contains camphor and other soothing ingredients.” In time it was called simply “chapstick.”

**Functional and Organizational Equipment.** Every area of Quartermaster responsibility received attention from the scientific community, resulting in new equipment that made for far greater efficiency in the field. In the

petroleum arena for instance, researchers developed and fielded new pumps and dispensers, fixed and collapsible storage facilities, different-sized tanker trucks, fuel-testing devices, cleaning equipment, and a wide range of containers for transporting POL products in all situations.

The 55-gallon drum and the 5-gallon "blitz can" (or "jerrican," as it was more commonly known) were as symbolic of World War II as K-Rations, V-mail, and the steel pot helmet. If there ever was an instance of the "for want of a nail" syndrome in modern warfare, it was in the late summer of 1944, when the whole Allied move across France threatened to come to a screeching halt — for want of enough trucks and jerricans to keep the drive alive. Jerricans filled with gasoline were everywhere, at open dump sites and railheads, stretching alongside the roads, stacked on flatbed trucks, and fastened to the backs of vehicles of every make and variety. Still there was a pressing shortage. First and Third Army planners called for no less than 7 million jerricans in September. Production at home never quite matched that need, but theater Quartermasters took up the slack by instituting an ingenious recycling plan which involved, among others, French children.

**The Jeep.** General Patton once described the 2 1/2-ton truck as "our most valuable weapon." Indeed, there is a strong case to be made for that assessment. But if you ask any World War II veteran what vehicle stands out most in his or her mind, most likely it would be the Army jeep. Officially it was called "the 1/4-ton, 4 x 4, command-reconnaissance car." Unofficially, it had several names such as "blitz-buggy," "bantam," "peep," "puddle-jumper," "jeepie" and

"son-of-a-jeep." Eventually the 1/4-ton became affectionately known to one and all as simply the "jeep."

The jeep had been intended as a low-silhouette command car, with a collapsible top and the ability to mount a machine gun. Quartermaster researchers took the lead in drafting the specifications. It was ultimately designed and built in stages between 1940-41, with the aid of the American Bantam Car Company, Ford, and Willys. It was a genuine group effort, with help from ordnance and infantry personnel as well. However, the Quartermaster Corps is entitled to a lion's share of the credit. One historian has written that, "among the contributions of the QMC to the war effort, the development of the jeep was probably the most spectacular single accomplishment."

The jeep was originally designed to fill a tactical need and not to haul cargo. That soon changed. Throughout the war, the jeep performed yeoman

service as a supply carrier in regions where it usually was the only vehicle available or where larger trucks simply could not maneuver. A Quartermaster officer who relied on the jeep as a sole means of transport along the trails of New Guinea, and in the Buna campaign, stated: "The Jeep and the C-ration are two of the seven wonders of this war." The jeep was immortalized in cartoons by Bill Mauldin, and praised to the hilt by war correspondent Ernie Pyle, who called it "a divine instrument of wartime locomotion." Pyle's eulogy continues:

*"Good Lord, I don't think we could continue the war without the jeep. It does everything. It goes everywhere. It's as faithful as a dog, as strong as a mule, and as agile as a goat. It constantly carries twice what it was designed for, and still keeps on going. It doesn't even ride so badly after you get used to it."*



**These soldiers go up in the air (for the benefit of visiting reporters) to demonstrate the jeep's capabilities.**

**SUMMARY.** The American soldier went to war in 1941 only marginally better off than his doughboy counterpart a generation before. Under the spur of total conflict, the Quartermaster Corps, with the aid of the scientific and industrial communities, made sure that in time the World War II soldier was in fact the best-fed, best-clothed and best-equipped the world had ever seen. Their success guaranteed that in the postwar decades, research and development would remain a permanent feature of military planning.



# Holland Invaded by Air; Siegfried Line Is Burst

## 20,000 Nazis

By Bud Ka  
Stars and Stripes Staff  
BEAUGENCY, France, (AP)—More than 20,000 German members of the Luftwaffe and Nazi marine units, were Army prisoner of war captured after their mass surrender here principally by the reconnoitering officer and 24 enlisted men of the 1st Infantry Division platoon.

In a ceremony marking the mass surrenders in this area, the platoon formally turned over to Maj. Gen. Robert C. Mackay, commander, and then to the other tools of war—including all kinds—before crossing to become prisoners.

The story behind the surrender came on September 8, when Lt. Col. of Ashtabula, Ohio, leader

## Siegfried Line Is Rent Without Loss of a Man

By Andy Rooney  
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer  
WITH A FIRST ARMY INFANTRY DIVISION, Sept. 17.—After ten years of talk about the Siegfried Line, 21-year-old 1/Lt. Bob F. Kalb of Paducah, Ky., took his command through it without a casualty. F. Kalb and his men forced the opening, the armored unit working with this crack infantry division has been pouring through the Siegfried Line splits and



Sgt. Crystal C.E.

order city of Aachen. The line was pierced early last week, but it was Kalb and his company who forced the final opening in the last German defense line in front of the Rhine River. It was Pfc. Alvin C. Smith of Seattle, Wash., who first got through the line. Kalb followed him along. The opening was made by a series of strategic blows in the hills. The Germans placed the fortified concrete igloos in positions which commanded the only possible entry vehicles. On both sides of the roads, concrete "dragon's teeth" extend for miles, preventing tanks from rolling over the open country between the road networks. "We knocked out about 15 or 20 pillboxes, I guess," Kalb said. "Our men were in some of them for about 20 yards and blasted them wide open." Many of the pillboxes were cracked open with grenades tossed into small openings in the concrete

including on the island of Peleliu to the Philippines, storming ashore against relatively light opposition on Anguar in the Palau group, 600 miles due east of the islands. All initial objectives were secured. The assault force as the 81st Infantry made under heavy covering bombardment. The assault followed an initial landing on the island of Peleliu, to the north of Anguar, which is the southernmost of the group. Landing under conditions described in reports from Peleliu as almost identical with those at bloody Tarawa, U.S. Marines who assaulted Peleliu smashed inland with but a fraction of the losses incurred in the Gilberts invasion. Tracked landing vehicles were used in the Palau attack. He was "Mr. Muncher's" deputy from 1937 to 1940, when he was bounced because of a beer-garden brawl in which he slapped an officer. Hitler now has a personal command of 40 SS and four personal

American MPs, he said, have full authority to arrest both military and civilian parties to a sale involving gasoline, cigarettes, food or other U.S. Army supplies. The action terminated the illicit business. U.S. troops were said to have been in the area for about 15 miles from the main frontier, about 15 miles from the main frontier, about 15 miles from the main frontier. (Continued on Page 4)

Meuse and were reported to be advancing toward the German frontier on a wide front east of liberated Maastricht. The Nazis launched a counter-attack east of Aachen early Sunday but American troops were said to have repulsed it. (Continued on Page 4)

whole possible route to the advance toward the Netherlands. Supreme Allied headquarters did not disclose the site of the landings, but a German DNE agency said the landings were made at 40 miles southeast of Rotterdam; about 30 miles west of the German frontier, and at Nijmegen on the lower Rhine three miles from the main frontier. A second DNE release claimed the landings were made "west of the Dutch-German frontier on the northern bank of the Rhine." The Germans claimed that considerable contingents of newly-formed Army had been wiped out but Stanley Woodward, representing the combined press, reported that the landings had been freed. Preceding the air assault was an assault by the 1,000 for (Continued on Page 4)

**25 Veteran ETO Fliers Among Dead in Wreck**  
Stars and Stripes U.S. Bureau

from 1937 to 1940, when he was bounced because of a beer-garden brawl in which he slapped an officer. Hitler now has a personal command of 40 SS and four personal

**Orderly Whom Hitler Fired Is Captured by First Army**  
MG Robert M. Littlejohn  
Chief QM, European Theater

widespread impression that Hitler was impotent. The orderly said he had been corresponding with one of Hitler's secretaries with whom he was friendly

**One Standard Gasoline Adopted for Army Use**  
WASHINGTON, Sept. 17.—The

# Dear 'B-Bag . . . '

19 January 1945

## Letters From The Field

To the Quartermaster,  
or Offending Parties:

We of the Infantry know and realize that there is a limited amount of space on each transport bringing supplies to the ETO, but we would like to ask a few questions to the people responsible for us not being issued any handkerchiefs for the last three and a half months.

First Question: Did you ever have to take the white flag away from a surrendering German and use it to wipe your nostrils?

Second Question: Did you ever try to wipe your nostrils with a pair of discarded socks, which were a little stiff, with a sand paper effect?

Third Question: Did you ever try taking handkerchiefs away from dead Germans?

If you can answer yes to any of the above questions, you probably know the score; but we doubt if you can.

So to the people responsible, will you please oblige us by sending your old socks (before they get too hard), your summer shorts, undershirts, toilet tissue, or any other items you might think suitable to wipe our nostrils, up here to the front?

Hoping it won't take you three and a half months to fill our request and that you are in the best of health, with no head colds while our nostrils keep running merrily along.

S/Sgt William Boner 33323258  
Co. K, 318th Infantry

Stars & Stripes  
THE B BAG:

Germany  
January 12, 1945

I have been wondering who the guy was that took the Govt for another ride. Anyhow, that is what it amounts to, this thing of having O.D. paint on food cans.

Did you ever try to open a can of corn and not get some paint in the corn. That is one item you can see paint in. What about milk, you know it is the usual thing to open milk cans with two small holes and when the milk is pored out the paint is well coated with milk so that it is not noticed. Who knows that this is not the cause of stomach cramps and the like?

Is this paint so necessary on food cans? We don't find it too hard to hide our cans from these seldom seen enemy aircraft. Does the good points over ride the bad? When they try to get O.D. paint for trucks and the like it seems to be one of those much needed but hard things to get.

Signed

S/Sgt H.D. Eaton 38007709  
Serv Btry 557 FA Bn.

Jan 8th 1945  
Germany

Dear Editor:

We read your column "B Bag" and take mild interest in the trials and tribulations of the soldiers in the ETO. We have listened to them rant and rave over such subjects as who is going to get home first, what we are going to do with Germany after the war, and combat pay for the front line medics. But being easy going fellows it didn't concern us much and we were content to let the other boys do the bitching - this is up until today. But this morning something happened that made us blow our tops. It was too much even for our plagmatic [sic] disposition.

We were up all night laying wire and mines, and were looking forward to a good cup of coffee. We opened our breakfast K rations and what do we find - bouillon powder! We then opened all the other rations thinking the coffee might have been put in the dinners or suppers by mistake. But no, we found the usual lemon and bouillon. Can you blame us for being hot!

We wouldn't say anything about this except that this is not the first time that it has happened. We feel that the war workers are letting us down. If they can't put out enough ammunition and tires for the front the least they could do is put coffee in the breakfast ration!

While we are at it we would like to give some constructive criticism on the K ration subject. First, do away with the cheese in the dinner entirely. In its place put spam (yes, we still like spam). I'll bet that there will be enough unopened cans of cheese after the war littered from Normandy Beaches to Berlin to feed the starving countries of Europe for the next six months. We could take care of Greece for two days with the cheese that we have right here at our post.

Second, have two types of rations. One for summer and one for winter. In the summer rations have coffee for breakfast, lemon for dinner, and cocoa for supper. For winter have coffee for breakfast, cocoa for dinner and coffee for supper.

We feel that we know what we are talking about as we have been living on C's and K's for six weeks except for Christmas and New Years when we had turkey. Try it some time.

Sgt John W. Geforth, 34605835  
Co. L, 13th Inf

P.S. This was typed on a shell-shocked typewriter.

To the B-Bag  
Stars and Stripes

Somewhere in France

I don't know where the trouble lies, but every meal that we have had in this country has been lacking one of the most important items. I mean SALT!! The only salt we get is what the cooks can render out of the bacon, but it is not enough. One GI told me that salt is not issued with the regular rations over here. I don't know if that is true or not, but why can't we get enough to flavor the food?

Food without salt tastes like dirt.

Pvt John K. Kemper 13155467  
Co E, 417th Infantry

*Sgt. Brown*



*Sounds Off*

on  
**SOMETHIN' NEW  
HAS BEEN  
ADDED**

MY FIRST JOB when I came into this Army was workin' under a Division QM — the old square division. I didn't work there very long before I got a pretty good idea what sort of a man a good Quartermaster had to be.

TO GET his job done right, the QM had to have the tact of an ambassador, the dignity of a bishop, the cheek of an income tax collector, the hope of a company loan shark, and the gab of a D.A. To top it off, he had to say "No!" to the same people more times than any man I ever met. That was the old QM.

BUT SOMETHIN' NEW has been added. Today there are air Quartermasters, amphibious Quartermasters, mountain Quartermasters, and just Quartermasters. They deliver supplies by parachutes, float 'em in on the tide, haul 'em over mountains, or plain get 'em there. They drive trucks, run bath units, handle gasoline, launder clothes, drive DUKW's, carry packboards, lead mules, roast coffee, train war dogs, or do any of the many special jobs which put the ball-carriers into scoring position.

THE QM's JOB is so big it's hard to fix in your mind. Think of the thousands of shiploads of supplies needed to supply the invasion of France. Think of the clothes the men there wear, the equipment they carry, the food they eat, the gasoline they use, the coal they need, and all the other services they require to keep them top-notch fightin' men.

QM's WERE in on that job. They were in on the invasion of Africa, Sicily, Italy, and the Pacific islands, too. You can't have a fightin' front until the QM's are all set with the supplies to back it. QM's not only deliver the stuff, they think it up for science labs to work on, have it made by factories, and figure out what should be where and when.

ALL ALONG the line somethin' is done by QM specialists. That's what today's QM is — a soldier with a technical job to do. He's got to have the honesty of a judge, the knowledge of a professor, the warm heart of a close friend, the skin of a rhino, and the patience of Job. And through all his ups and downs, he's got to be able to say "Yes!" to more seemingly impossible jobs than any man I ever met.

*Quartermaster Training Service Journal*  
15 September 1944



Quartermaster soldiers in World War II did more than fix, feed and fuel the force. They also *fought* — often and hard. Today we use the term Logistics Warriors. Back then, they were simply called “Fighting Quartermasters.”

There was an old wheeze that routinely made the rounds among combat soldiers and never failed to get a laugh. It said, in effect: “the only Quartermaster ever hurt in war was hit by a can of beans rolling off a deuce and a half.” Funny? Yes. But was it true? Not a chance.

The fact is, in World War II the supposed line between fighting “front” and the secure “rear area” was blurred as never before. Both sides exercised unprecedented mobility, which meant the front, once established, never stayed put. Of course, enemy aircraft made it their business (often their only business) to threaten, harass, and destroy Allied supply lines. For the Quartermaster soldier, the new face of battle meant the enemy could just as easily be in your face, on your flanks, immediately overhead, and sometimes even behind you. As one wag put it, “the only rear area *some* QMs often find themselves concerned with is their own — wiggling it into a foxhole, and fast!”

Tradition had it that support troops were immune to actual combat. That they never experienced firsthand the smell of gunpowder. Or had an inkling of what it was like at the so-called “sharp edge” (old soldier talk for the main battlefield).

### HELL IN ITALY

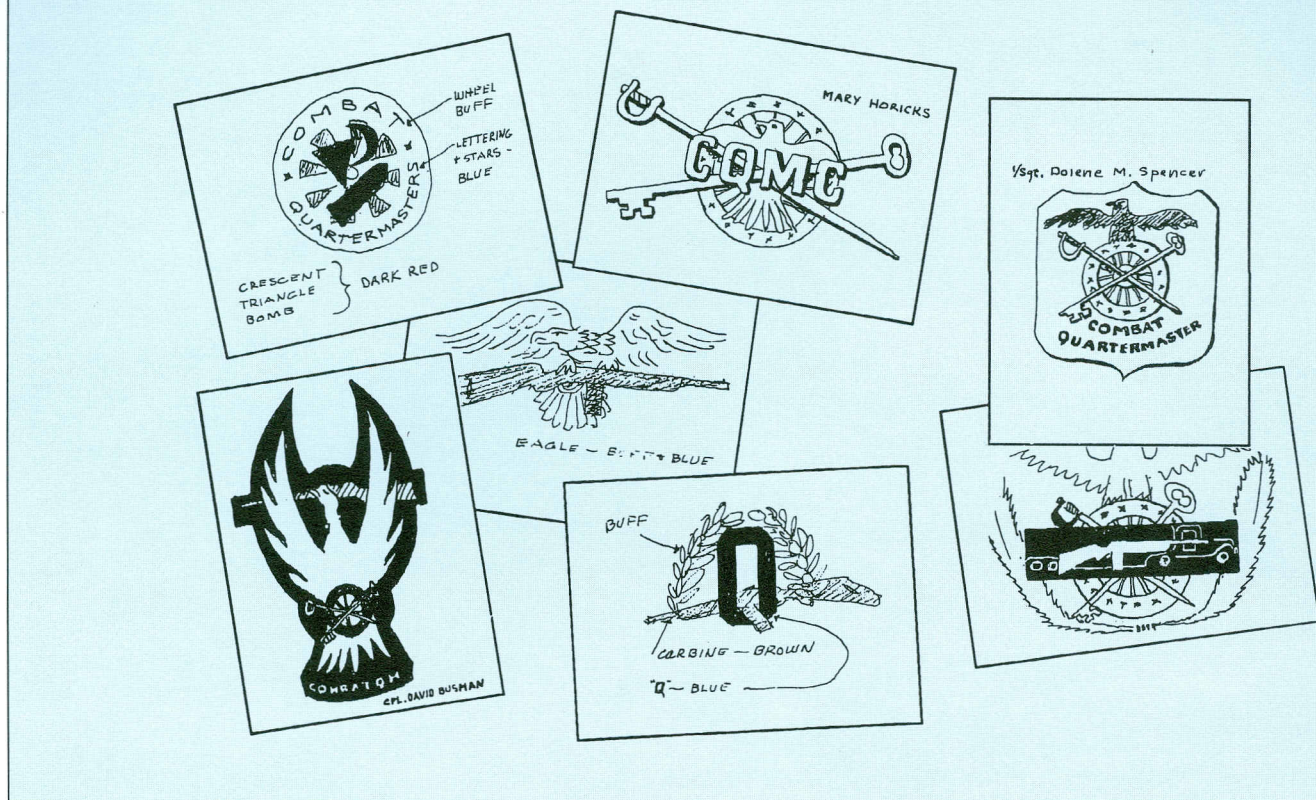
No doubt the veteran war correspondent Ernie Pyle had heard disparaging remarks about support troops before. Such talk hardly accorded with what he saw with his own eyes at bloody Anzio. “Up here on the beachhead,” he reported in January 1944, “they are blowing that tradition all to hell. The Quartermaster Corps has been under fire ever since the beachhead was established, and still is.”

He went on to tell how the supplymen off-loaded rations and equipment and moved it forward over “rugged, zeroed-in terrain” to the infantry-manned foxholes — and suffered heavy casualties along the way. Diving Stukas, incoming mortars and screaming artillery rounds were no respecters of service troops.

Another group of Quartermasters there at Anzio, the 48th QM Graves Registration Company, likewise found no safe haven from which to carry out their mission. An excerpt from one of their after action reports tells it all:

“A ceremony site was selected and the cemetery established 23 January 1944, one mile north of Nettuno, Italy. It was here that the company suffered its largest number of battle casualties — two killed and five wounded. This brought the total number of Purple Heart awards to fourteen.

## A DISTINCTIVE INSIGNIA FOR 'FIGHTING QUARTERMASTERS'?



“For sixty-six continuous days the company was under artillery fire bombing attack. During this period Graves Registration personnel were forced to use open graves for protection against shell-burst and fragmentation.”

### HEROES OF BATAAN

Anzio happened about midway in the war, but the term “Fighting Quartermasters” gained prominence much earlier. Within days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces in the Pacific turned toward the Philippines. Frank Hewlett was the only American correspondent to report the invasion of the Philippines from its start until Bataan fell and he was forced to seek refuge on Corregidor. He later got off the island and made it safely to General MacArthur’s headquarters in Australia. There he filed a dispatch, dated April 24, 1942, with the heading “Quartermasters on Bataan Performed Heroic Feats.”

The opening paragraph stated: “Many of them died and few were decorated, but when the final heroic history of Bataan is written the men of the U.S. Quartermaster Corps deserve a place of honor beside the frontline fighting troops.”

Despite round-the-clock shelling and bombing, QMs did everything humanly possible to help the beleaguered forces hold out. They picked rice and harvested it in homemade rice mills. Built a coffee roaster out of an old oil drum and boiled

and re-boiled grounds until they were nearly white. Boiled sea water for salt. And butchered cavalry horses, pack mules, and caribou for meat — all in a forlorn effort to ward off starvation.

“Their job was heart-breaking,” reported Hewlett, “and their ranks will show many deaths, but few citations.” So much for that old wheeze about a wayward can of beans. “Bataan’s fighting quartermasters,” he rightly concluded, had “soured forever the Army’s jibes about the Quartermaster Corps being safest.”

Anzio and Bataan were not unique. Throughout the war, unit histories from the Pacific, European, African and Mediterranean theaters confirm that Quartermasters routinely found themselves in the thick of it.

On Guadalcanal, for example, a laundry company had to blast out Japanese gun emplacements and suppress sniper fire before it could set up shop. In the Battle of the Bulge, one member of a mobile bakery company reported shooting down a German Messerschmitt with his machine gun between bread runs. When the Marines landed on Iwo Jima, Quartermasters were right behind.

### WITH MARINES IN THE ASSAULT

First Lieutenant Edward A. Busch, QMC, commanded a section of the 473rd Amphibian Truck Company that went ashore on Iwo, early in the morning on February 20, 1945



By war's end, Camp Lee staff artist had roughed out a wide range of possibilities.

(D+1). He and his platoon sergeant, Sgt. Ben Steele, found the incline too steep for their “Duck” carrier to make it, so they got out and waded onto the beach, leaving the others to circle offshore until they could find a more suitable landing spot.

“There was plenty of mortar fire,” Lieutenant Busch later recalled, “so we hit the dirt right away. We were too scared to figure out what was going on, so we just kept moving. I saw a pillbox and a group of men and headed for it, but some more shells came in just then, so we did another dive. I saw an aid man working over a wounded Marine. As I looked up, a mortar shell hit the aid man’s back, killing him and the Marine. We hadn’t seen any [Japanese] — dead or alive — just dead Marines.

“We finally got to the pillbox and found there what was left of the shore party. There were nine men and one officer left out of 120 men and 10 officers. All the others were casualties. I reported to the officer, a Marine second lieutenant. He was badly shaken and there were tears in his eyes. He told us to beat it — he had no one to unload us, no equipment to help us up on the beach. The sea was too heavy to get back on the LST’s, so we had no alternative but to look for a better beach.”

Lieutenant Busch lost three “Ducks” during the course of the day, but by 1700 hours had gotten the remaining five assigned to him safely ashore. All told, the company lost 17 “Ducks,” and its 173 black enlisted men suffered numerous casualties. (Incidentally, Busch happened to be back offshore aboard LST 779 when the American flag was raised on Mount Suribachi a few days later, noting: “I don’t think there was a man on that island that didn’t shed tears when he saw that flag go up.”)

### INVASION BEFORE NORMANDY

The turning point in Europe came in the spring of 1944, as Allied planners made final preparations for the cross-channel attack that would signal the death knell of Nazi Germany. Major General Robert M. Littlejohn, Chief Quartermaster for the European Theater of Operations (ETO), had been in the United Kingdom for two years working nonstop to build the logistics infrastructure for the Normandy Invasion — stockpiling mountains of equipment, training tens of thousands of Army service troops, and trying to anticipate the untold needs of the largest invasion force ever.

In late April 1944, the Allies conducted a large-scale mock D-Day invasion, called Exercise Tiger, in the English Channel off the southern coast of England. The first wave of LSTs hit the beaches of Slapton Sands, South Devon, on April 27th. They continued operations, with practice landings all day.

Shortly after 0200 hours on the 28th, in the pitch dark, a flotilla of seven German torpedo boats penetrated the convoy and opened fire, hitting three fully loaded LSTs. One of them, LST 531, sank in seven minutes, killing about 80 percent of the 500 soldiers and sailors onboard. LST 507 took a torpedo in the bow and burst into flames, causing its 500 passengers to quickly abandon ship with little time to man the lifeboats. About half of them died in the channel's bitterly cold water.

"Men were screaming, jumping, hollering for help," one eyewitness recalled 50 years later. "Everyone was panicking. None of us were in gunfire before. We didn't know what the hell it was." This same observer said that when morning came, he found his own ship had dropped anchor in the middle of a mine field. "All I could see," he said, "was what I thought looked like seaweed. It was really bodies floating."

Nobody knows for certain how many U.S. soldiers and sailors died in the so-called Battle of Slapton Sands. It was a top-secret operation. General Eisenhower feared that if German intelligence learned the details of the mock invasion, he might have to postpone or even cancel D-Day. The 146th Quartermaster Truck Company stationed in England was rushed to Slapton Sands in the middle of the night to begin the gruesome task of collecting the dead and transporting them to a cemetery near London. Sworn to secrecy, it was almost a half century before the men of the 146th felt at liberty to discuss this tragic affair.

Records vary, but the best estimate is that around 750 servicemen died in the channel that night. Among the "for-

gotten dead" of Exercise Tiger were a large number of Quartermaster soldiers. A Quartermaster battalion, a truck company, graves registration company, two railhead companies, and two QM service companies all suffered casualties. The worst hit, the 3206th Quartermaster Service Company, was virtually destroyed — when 201 of its 251 officers and men were killed or wounded.

### *NORMANDY AND BEYOND*

Quartermaster units and personnel were in the English Channel and on the beaches, at Omaha and Utah, when the Allies landed on June 6. QM railhead, service, and truck companies saw continuous operation in the assault at Normandy, in the breakout at St. Lo, and the rapid pursuit across France in the summer of 1944. They had some unforgettable experiences.

The 407th Airborne QM Company, for instance, went into Normandy on D-Day in two echelons, the first in gliders and the rest by ship. The glider-borne contingent landed at 2115 hours on June 6 and set up a temporary bivouac on the outskirts of Blosville, a short distance from Ste. Mere Eglise. (*Historical Note:* See also COL (then Sergeant) Elbert E. Legg's personal account of the 603rd QM Graves Registration Company in this edition.)

Tech 4 Fred Gilbert's unit, the 3891st QM Truck Company, landed on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day and immediately began hauling rations, ammo, and *infantrymen*. "In other words," he wrote that they considered themselves "a part of the mobile infantry."



**Quartermaster soldiers were a key part of the Allied invasion force that landed on Normandy Beach—and suffered heavy casualties as did other elements.**





Allied armor columns (top) moved through the wrecked streets of St. Lo during the breakout from Omaha Beach. Months later (bottom), a *Stars and Stripes* extra tells the full story of the German surrender.

"We are the truck company that drove the 4th Division into Paris on 25 August, the day of the liberation, and helped clean out snipers for three days. After that, we were with the 1st Division at the battle of Belgium. We were told: 'You *were* a QM truck company. *Now* you're in the Infantry. Get in there and fight!' And we did, with no regrets. Several times later, we did the same thing."

Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Andrew T. McNamara, Chief Quartermaster for the First Army, told a similar account of the 476th QM Group. Its four truck companies arrived on Utah Beach "when confusion still dominated the battle area, and front lines, as such, were non-existent."

"[They] . . . performed every type of truck support for the fighting troops of the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions. Supplies were taken up into front lines and unloaded directly to user units, with the bulk of the missions being completed under shellfire and strafing. The trucks were sent out with infantrymen aboard on spearhead thrusts, and when resistance was encountered, the truck drivers found themselves taking part in the fighting. Men of these companies performed guard with the line troops, in emergencies manned machine-guns and outposts, carried barbed wire and mines into positions forward of existing front lines, and shared the same rigors and dangers as did the divisional troops."



Colonel (later Major General) Victor J. MacLaughlin presents a Fifth Army plaque to members of the 98th QM Railhead Company for outstanding service during their 27 months in Africa and Italy.

Private John G. Bianchi of the 97th Quartermaster Railhead Company, another service unit that came in on D-Day, wrote that he "used to wonder laying back there in a foxhole what they meant about rear-echelon Quartermaster boys. There were times when I would have given anything to be an infantryman, back with the reserves, safe from fire."

Months later when it appeared victory was just around the corner, Hitler surprised everyone by launching a vicious counterattack. The 89th Quartermaster Railhead Company was caught deep in enemy territory during the Battle of the Bulge. It was ordered to hold the Belgian crossroads town of Gouvy "at all costs." The men quickly laid down the ration boxes they were stacking, and picked up their weapons, as the fighting began. Though outnumbered three to one, they managed to hold off two German battalions for five days. The cost was 8 American and 99 German casualties.

The record of Quartermaster troops on the continent is full of such surprises. For example, the unit historian for the 476th QM Group records in unembellished terms that on 25 December 1944 "at 1130 hours in the vicinity of Camp Elsenborn, a P-51 was shot down by Cpl. J. Robinson and S/Sgt Olsyenski of the 3812th QM Truck Company as it was strafing the truck column. Pilot bailed out, was captured, and found to be a German." A not-so-merry Christmas for him, to be sure.

In another case, when elements of the 35th Infantry entered the important town of Chateaudun on the road to Paris, they expected strong opposition. Instead they found Major Charles W. Ketterman, CO of a Quartermaster Truck Battalion, and Tech 5 Ernest A. Jenkins, his driver, standing beside the mayor of the town, accepting Chateaudun as a gift.

It seems that Major Ketterman and Corporal Jenkins, returning from a routine reconnaissance in their jeep, drove into Chateaudun believing that the town had already been liberated. A hail of machine-gun fire told them otherwise. Armed only with a .45 pistol and an '03 rifle, the major and his driver staged a private eight-hour war, in the course of which they killed three Germans, wounded several more, knocked out a gun position, scared the entire garrison except 15 diehards into evacuating the town, and then went in to capture those 15! General Patton thought enough of this incident to award both QMs the Silver Star.

In his book, *War As I Knew It*, Patton also recounted how in the spring of 1945, a Quartermaster detachment of the Third Army, "had the signal, and as I know, solitary distinction of capturing a German lieutenant general, General Hahm, commanding the 82d German Corps, together with a colonel, a major, a lieutenant, and seven privates."

### QUARTERMASTER ROLL OF HONOR

As the war progressed, more and more units and personnel were added to the Quartermaster "Roll of Honor." They made their mark by supporting victory, not just technically, but *tactically* as well, in every theater and every campaign.

Example: The 41st Quartermaster Company established a truly remarkable record with the 41st Infantry Division in the Pacific. They took part in the campaigns at Buna,

Zamboango, Salamaua, Aitape, Hollandia, Wakde, Palawan, Biak and elsewhere — while earning 3 Silver Stars, 4 Soldiers Medals, dozens of Purple Hearts (18 at Hollandia alone), 18 Bronze Stars, and a Presidential Unit Citation.

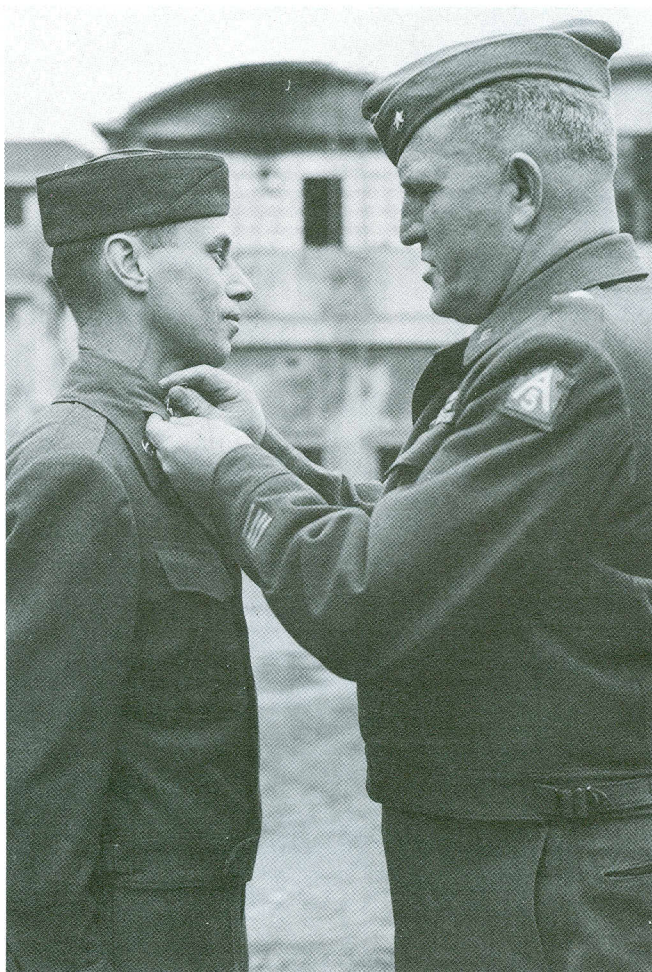
Their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Clarence E. Reid, went overseas as a captain and became one of the most decorated QMs in the Pacific theater. His awards included the Silver Star, the Bronze Star (with three clusters), the Air Medal, the National Defense Ribbon, theater ribbon with a silver star (representing five campaigns) and the invasion arrowhead, and the Philippine Liberation ribbon.

All told “Fighting Quartermasters” were awarded nearly 9,000 medals in World War II for extraordinary service and conspicuous acts of bravery. And thousands more purple hearts. Tech 5 Eric G. Gibson, a first cook with the 30th Infantry Division, was awarded the Medal of Honor (posthumously) for leading a courageous charge against an entrenched German outpost near Isola Bella, Italy, in late January 1944. Seven other QMs were awarded Distinguished Service Crosses, 85 Silver Stars, and 420 Soldiers Medals — all associated with acts of valor.

When the Quartermaster Corps was in its infancy during the Revolutionary War, Nathanael Greene thought it unlikely that a Quartermaster would ever achieve recognition on the battlefield. His now-famous lament (“who ever heard of a Quarter Master in history”) dogged the Corps for over a century and a half.

It’s too bad General Greene — George Washington’s favorite Quartermaster General (also nicknamed the “Fighting Quaker”) — was not around to see how much things had changed in World War II. If so, he might have wanted to take back what he said earlier.

Quartermasters *do* fight. And yes, history *does* remember.



Brigadier General Joseph P. Sullivan, Fifth Army Quartermaster, Florence, Italy, promotes a corporal with the 102nd QM Bakery Company to second lieutenant.

*“For in this struggle of life and death, where some men give their lives and all give a part of their youth and of their happiness and their hopes, there is no reward except the honor and glory of being part of a great enterprise that will always be remembered and celebrated gratefully. There can be no inducement and no repayment except the honor of belonging to an army which has done so well its duty that it will be forever famous in the history of the world.*

*“Medals and ribbons for the specially brave and efficient, provision for all the soldiers when they return, are necessary. But they are not sufficient. Nothing can be sufficient except the feeling now while they are working and fighting, and later when they return, that what they are doing will be understood, will have been realized, and will have become part of the heritage of their people, of the legends and the history of America.”*

Walter Lippman, *New York Herald Tribune* (December 28, 1944)



## BUNDLES FROM THE SKY

**Historical Background.** The idea of dropping people and things safely out of the sky has been around for a long time. As far back as the late 15th century, the Italian genius, Leonardo da Vinci, made drawings of a pyramid-shaped “parachute” and reasoned that: “If a man carry a domed roof of starched linen eighteen feet wide and eighteen feet long, he will be able to throw himself from any great height without fear of danger.”

While religious wars ravaged the European continent in the 1600s, some intrepid souls experimented with gliders—and much like the legendary Icarus usually met with an unkind fate. A century later, about the time of our own American Revolution, some French inventors had better luck getting off the ground in hot air balloons. Ben Franklin marveled at this wonder of the age. Ever the visionary, he predicted that one day military troops would be launched into battle from the air.

With the advent of balloons came the first practical parachutes. As early as 1802, one balloonist used a parachute to jump from a height of 8,000 feet. He was a bit shook up, but survived. In 1808, a Polish aeronaut likewise used a parachute to escape a burning balloon, and he too landed safely.

The French made effective use of observation balloons against the Austrians during the Napoleonic wars, and the Union Army did the same on this side of the Atlantic during the Civil War. For the most part, both balloons and parachutes in the 19th century remained an oddity, more of a circus-like attraction than a realistic and dependable mode of transportation.

Then came the airplane, and everything changed. The first successful parachute jump from an airplane occurred in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1912. Four years later a pilot reportedly jumped safely from a burning plane on the Russian front in World War I. Both parachutists and supplies were dropped at disaster scenes in the U.S. during the 1920s and 30s. In the mid-1930s, the Russians pioneered large-scale airborne and air-supply operations, while the Italian army used airdrop procedures in its campaign against the Ethiopians. The Germans used mass airborne troops to support the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg; and dropped upwards of 35,000 airborne troops on the isle of Crete.

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## AIR SUPPLY IN THE ETO

**Italy.** Aerial resupply for the Allied side in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) in World War II was never regarded as anything more than an emergency stopgap—for use when roads, railways or other more efficient (and less costly) means were inoperable. That is the sort of situation, though, that presented itself in Italy early in 1943 when elements of the Fifth Army advanced beyond the Volturno River and were cut off by a sudden German counterattack. They were unreachable even by Quartermaster pack mules. “Air QMs” wrapped clothing and food (K- and D-rations) in blankets, packed them inside “belly tanks” attached to the bomb racks of A-36s, and dropped them successfully to the beleaguered troops on the ground.

They also dropped considerable supplies by parachute to Fifth Army soldiers around Casino, and to the French Mountain Corps in its drive across the Petrella Massif. By 1944, airdrop procedures in Italy had evolved to the point that colored smoke and white panels were used to effectively mark the drop zone. Air Quartermasters also began using different-colored parachutes for different classes of supplies. Whenever possible, they would collect parachutes and containers after a drop and send them to the rear through QM salvage channels for repair and future use.

**Northwestern Europe.** In the many months leading up to the Normandy invasion, Allied carriers routinely dropped weapons and equipment needed to sustain the French Underground. Of course, airborne operations figured prominently in the cross-channel assault on June 6. Hours before the massive armada of naval warships and LSTs came within sight of Omaha and Utah beaches, troops of the 82nd and 101st Air-

borne Divisions had already hit the ground under cover of darkness well behind coastal fortifications and were busy moving toward their assigned objectives.

The earliest sorties saw nearly 13,000 men coming in over their drop zones in 925 fully loaded C-47s. During the course of several more hours, they were followed by another 4,000 men in gliders, many of which crashed on impact in high French hedgerows. Fog, flak, clouds and confusion caused a number of them to miss their intended drop sites by a wide margin. As a result, prescheduled aerial resupply drops met with less-than-hoped-for success. Pathfinders for the 101st, for example, were unable to properly mark the six chosen drop zones, so about 60 percent of their supplies fell into impassable swamps or enemy hands. Fortunately, members of the 82nd Division had better results dropping food and supplies in the area around Ste. Mere Eglise.

Following the Allied breakout and breathtaking pursuit across France in the summer of 1944, General Eisenhower, in mid-September, launched a massive airborne attack deep in enemy territory. It was aimed at capturing key bridges, securing a narrow corridor through Holland, and putting Allied troops across the Rhine. Had this daring and controversial strategic move—known as Operation MARKET-GARDEN—paid off, it might have brought a quick end to the war. But it failed miserably, as did Quartermaster efforts to provide paratroopers with supply by air. The 426th Airborne QM Company prepared five aerial resupply drops during the operation. In the end, between 70 and 80 percent of the dropped supplies fell either into German hands or inaccessible terrain.

**He said “Nuts!”** Air supply was widely used in the ETO, but it was mostly air-landed rather than airdropped. The notable exception was at Bastogne. When Brigadier General

***NORMANDY DROP.***  
Somewhere over France,  
a jumpmaster and  
a crew chief push supplies  
out to paratroops in parapacks  
(June 7, 1944).



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*TO THE FAR CORNERS . . .*



**Supplies (top) being dropped to Allied ground forces in the South Pacific. Medical supplies (left) being readied for drop to airborne troops around Naples, Italy. Parachute folding room (right) of the 3964th Quartermaster Company near Soekering, India.**

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Anthony McAuliffe's 101st Airborne Division found themselves completely encircled by German forces on December 21 and were running low on all manner of supplies, the idea of an airdrop was one of the few options they had left. It was not just bravado that prompted General McAuliffe to say "Nuts" to the German demand for his surrender. He figured, quite rightly as it turned out, that resupply by air could yet save the day.

Together, the C-47 "Skytrains" of the U.S. Troop Carrier Command and their "flying Quartermaster" cargo crews kept the Bastogne garrison adequately supplied during the critical period from 23 to 27 December 1944. A special "pathfinder" force, equipped with visual and radio signaling devices, was dropped to pinpoint precise drop zones. Once over the target, QM dropmasters on the C-47s went into action. Within 45 seconds from the time the pilot flashed the green light that told them they were over the target, QM cargo crews got the heavy packages out of the planes. In all, 962 C-47s delivered over 850 tons of ordnance, medical and food supplies, and other vital equipment to the soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division—and did so with about 95 percent accuracy.

## PACIFIC THEATER OF OPERATIONS

Throughout the war the airdrop expedient was more widely used in the island-hopping Pacific campaign and in the China-Burma-India Theater, than in Europe. When elements of the 32nd and 41st Infantry Divisions in New Guinea crossed the mountains on their drive toward Buna, they were supported in part by free-fall airdrops. Several months later while 8,000 troops of the 32nd Division were at Aitape on their march toward Hollandia, they were completely supplied by air for about three weeks. Elsewhere, at Guadalcanal, efforts to provide aerial resupply had decidedly mixed results. Almost all of the food and rations dropped to ground forces were found to be still usable. However, most of the 5-gallon water cans were demolished on impact, and about 85 percent of the ammunition was ruined.

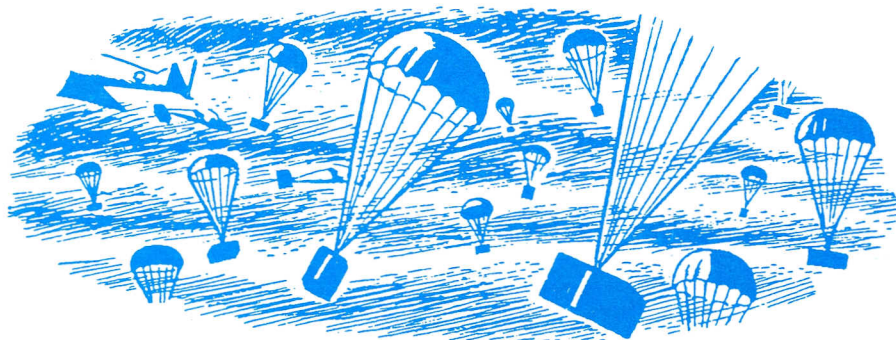
In New Georgia in the summer of 1943, over 100 tons of food, clothing, ammunition (including mortar shells and hand grenades), medical supplies and cigarettes were successfully dropped. Nearly 1,400 parachutes were used to accomplish this mission. Relatively few were returned, and almost all of those were either torn beyond repair or rotted by the pen-

etrating jungle dampness. When parachutes got caught in trees (as often happened), the suspension lines had to be shot off, with substantial damage to the supplies as well as the parachutes.

Air Quartermasters were quite successful in resupplying some of the assault forces at Arawe (New Britain) and in the battle for Los Negros (in the Admiralties). On several occasions while delivering supplies to the 1st Cavalry Division in the Admiralties, the drop zone was a small airstrip which was still bitterly contested by the Japanese. In some instances B-17s made strafing runs on the enemy's side of the air strip, while "flying QMs" kicked their supplies on the opposite side and followed up with another flyover using machine guns. The effect was to pin down the enemy long enough for the 1st Cavalry to retrieve their supplies.

**Merrill's Marauders.** The 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), otherwise known as "Merrill's Marauders," after their illustrious commander, Brigadier General Frank D. Merrill, moved into northern Burma in January 1944 with nearly 3,000 troops on a mission to clear the way for construction of the Ledo Road. The Marauders were jungle-fighting foot soldiers, but they brought with them their own trained drop personnel and equipment. They received air drops at about 30 different sites between February and May. It was a dangerous business for pilots, crews and the Quartermasters on board who "kicked" supplies out the side doors. Two planes were shot down, and one was lost and another damaged when outgoing parachutes were accidentally caught on the planes' horizontal stabilizers. The Marauders' Air QMs flew in all kinds of weather, usually dropping their loads at 150 to 200 feet. During March alone, they flew 17 missions, with 6 to 7 planes, and managed to drop 370 tons of supplies.

From 1942 to 1945, Quartermaster aerial supply personnel in the Pacific delivered more than five million pounds of supplies to General Walter Krueger's fighting Sixth Army troops on the ground. For their part in supporting victory, Air QMs were awarded 4 Soldiers Medals, 4 Legions of Merit, 6 Bronze Stars, and more than 60 Air Medals. Airdrop procedures improved steadily right up to the day of the Japanese surrender. It was clear from this experience that supply by air would become an important facet of postwar logistical thinking. In 1950, just five years after the war, that mission was handed off permanently to the Quartermaster Corps.



# Camp Lee

## MOBILIZATION AND TRAINING

*“We didn’t know how soon war would come, but we knew it was coming. We didn’t know when we’d have to fight, but we knew it might come at any time, and we had to get together something of an Army pretty darn fast. We didn’t dare stop for the progressive and logical building of a war machine. As a result, the machine was a little wobbly when it first got going. The officers knew it. Everyone knew it.”*

Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair

In September 1939, the German Army rolled into Poland, marking the beginning of World War II. The United States Army — with less than 200,000 Regulars on active duty and only three functioning infantry divisions — was ranked about 17th in overall effectiveness among the world’s major powers, just behind Rumania. As the war clouds drifted across the Atlantic, much needed to be done to prepare this nation for war in the months ahead.

Congress approved the call-up of nearly 300,000 Guardsmen and Reservists in late August 1940. In September, Congress passed a Selective Service Act that allowed the drafting of up to 900,000 more men for one full year. Throughout the emergency period, mobilization planners in Washington were abuzz with activity.

Among the first things the War Department had to decide was *where* to put the many thousands of new recruits coming into service, and *how* to house and train them. Fortunately, a Quartermaster officer, Brigadier General Charles D. Hartman, and a group of some 80 architects and draftsmen had been meeting regularly in an empty warehouse at Fort Myers, Virginia, for nearly a year. They were busy drawing up blueprints for barracks, BOQs (bachelor officers quarters), mess halls, supply rooms, military theaters, chapels, warehouses, garages, headquarters, hospitals — all the buildings needed to house, train, care for and equip an army about to engage in full-scale, modern warfare.

General Hartman’s plans included the standard 63-man barracks now familiar to every veteran of World War II. With bare walls and uncovered rafters, two rows of neatly aligned bunks and footlockers, forced air ducts overhead, an open latrine and outdoor coal furnace, they were the essence of functionality. They were also easily built. In the 10 months ending in June 1941, enough of these barracks were constructed to house a million new recruits. On some posts, new buildings were completed at the rate of one every 54 minutes.

In October 1940, the War Department issued orders for the construction of Camp Lee, Virginia. It was to be one of two major facilities for training Quartermaster soldiers. (The other was Fort Francis E. Warren, Wyoming.) Initially, only about \$12.5 million was set aside for the construction of Camp Lee. A virtual army of civilian laborers swarmed into the Petersburg-Hopewell area in November and December and began building at a furious pace. They were still digging, hammering and painting when the first troops arrived after the beginning of the year.

The future “Home of the Quartermaster Corps” was not much to look at that winter. When a Captain Roy A. Smith first came to Petersburg in early January 1941, he saw no signs pointing to the new post, so he asked one of the locals how to get to Camp Lee. “Well,” said the native, slowly clearing his throat. “Go out the Hopewell road until you come to a lot of dirt and shovels and there you are.”

### TOURING VIRGINIA’S ‘THIRD LARGEST CITY’

Like its World War I predecessor built on the same spot, the new Camp Lee was U-shaped. A Avenue formed a big “U” that ran nearly five miles from tip to tip. The main entrance opened onto Lee Avenue. If you had been among the thousands of raw recruits arriving on post 50 years ago, you would likely have come through the main gate past the MP (military police) checkpoint, and seen immediately before you a bewildering patchwork of signs pointing in all different directions, where various activities were located.

Turning left on A Avenue, past the big water tower, would bring you into the Quartermaster Replacement Training Center, the heart and soul of Camp Lee. That was where the QM training regiments were housed and most of the enlisted training took place. Laid out in grid fashion, one street after another was lined with company barracks, PT (physical train-



**Philadelphia Depot—  
the original home  
of the  
Quartermaster  
School,  
1910–1941**



**Interior view of  
Quartermaster School  
barracks in the 1920s**



**Tens of thousands of  
Quartermaster soldiers received their  
initial training at Camp Lee, Virginia,  
before joining units overseas.**



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ing) areas, supply rooms, motor pools, small PXs (post exchanges), and administrative buildings.

A short distance from the barracks (along Shop Road) were dozens of warehouses, classrooms, equipment stands and empty railroad cars, where budding forklift operators, inventory clerks, storage and distribution specialists of all kinds honed their wartime skills. Down A Avenue a few blocks, past the Field House, was another exit, with a road that crossed over Route 36 and led to the rifle range and some additional bivouac sites.

If you came through the main gate, and instead of turning left, went straight ahead on Lee Avenue, you would eventually wind up at the center of post. En route you would have passed a service club and library, the post office, a theater and one of several chapels, plus two large athletic fields. Lee Avenue dead-ended at a circular drive on which sat the Officers Club. Major General James E. Edmonds, the Post Commander, had his headquarters at the intersection of Lee and Mahone Avenues. General Edmonds was a National Guardsman recalled to active duty as part of the emergency buildup. He was a World War I veteran and an old-time cavalry officer who had spent the last 15 years in the 23rd Cavalry. It was not uncommon to see him out inspecting the post on horseback.

As a final alternative, you could come through the main gate and turn right on A Avenue, heading southwest. While going past scores of wooden buildings on the left, you might catch a glimpse of Finley Field on the right. This athletic field, one of several on post, was named after Lieutenant "Pecos" Finley, an outstanding college basketball player from the University of New Mexico. Following graduation from the Quartermaster Officer Candidate School (OCS), Finley went off to serve in the Philippines, was captured by the Japanese and died on the Bataan "Death March."

On A Avenue, at the busy Mahone intersection, you could not help but notice the looming presence of the Camp Lee Station Hospital. The hospital's first three wards were completed by mid-February 1941. By the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, there were 29 wards completed with beds for over 1,000 patients, 5 clinics, several mess halls, staff officer and enlisted quarters, 4 large storage rooms and a central heating plant — and literally *miles* of corridors connecting the whole hospital complex. The bed capacity was increased to 2,000 in 1942. By the end of 1943, the Camp Lee Station Hospital had furnished medical care and hospitalization for over 30,000 military personnel. In June 1944, it was designated a Regional Hospital by the War Department.

In the beginning, Camp Lee was also the home of the Medical Replacement Training Center (MRTC). As Quartermaster training increased, the Army decided to relocate the MRTC at nearby Camp Pickett. This was done in May 1942, with the entire group making the 25-mile march on foot. About the time they were leaving, growing numbers in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC, which became the Women's Army Corps or WAC from 1943 to 1978) were arriving at Camp Lee. Serving both as trainees and permanent party, the WAACs had their billets along A Avenue just past the hospital.

Much later in the war in 1944, nearly 1,000 German prisoners of war (POWs) were also confined at Camp Lee. They had been captured in North Africa, Sicily, Italy and at St. Lo, and were sent here to wait out the war. Some, thoroughly propagandized, were reportedly shocked to discover that cities such as Richmond had not been totally destroyed by *Luftwaffe* bombers.

## THE QUARTERMASTER SCHOOL

At the very end of A Avenue southwest, on several streets off to the right, was the Quartermaster School. Next to the QM Replacement Training Center, this was the busiest spot on post. For over three decades (1910 to 1941) the QM School had been located at Schuylkill Arsenal in downtown Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With the outbreak of war, severe overcrowding prompted the move to Camp Lee in the fall of 1941. The whole program was up and running by the end of October.

Eventually there were enough classrooms in the school to accommodate 6,000 students at a time, plus the barracks to house them, medical and dental clinics, giant consolidated mess halls, parade grounds, and an assortment of recreational facilities.

Fixed training sites included a model warehouse, mock-up flat and box cars, a mock C-47 airplane, an obstacle course, physical fitness testing areas, a miniature theater of operations, firing ranges, bivouac areas with temporary kitchens and latrines, hasty field fortifications, a malaria control point, and a 1,500-seat amphitheater.

The School's Publications Division produced scores of high-quality field manuals, handbooks, bulletins, circulars and technical works on every facet of QM activity. It also oversaw publication of the *Quartermaster Training Service Journal*, an official organ of the Corps, with a circulation of nearly 30,000 copies weekly.

A "Demonstration Battalion" was put together early on. The battalion organized into sections and platoons of every type of Quartermaster unit to show how QM functions such as cooking and baking, laundry, bath and shoe repair were performed in the field. The school also set up a public address system with speakers located in all barracks, mess halls, in most classrooms, and at strategic outdoor points throughout the training area to keep everyone informed with important announcements.

School planners knew too that all Quartermaster students must be soldiers first — and then skilled technicians. So they instituted a rigorous military training program. For example, 327 of the 793 scheduled hours in the QM Officer Candidate Course were devoted to tactical instruction, leadership, map reading, and so on.

PT likewise played a key role in shaping Quartermaster soldiers. Taking long hikes through the Virginia countryside over difficult terrain, and creeping and crawling under fire; jumping, running, climbing, rolling and crawling through the school's obstacle course; climbing down landing nets, then thrusting and parrying with fixed bayonets — all were used to physically condition the men for combat.

# CAMP LEE TRAVELLER

VOL. 1, NO. 1.

PETERSBURG, VA.

GEN. LEE and TRAVELLER

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 1941

5c A COPY

## New Recruits

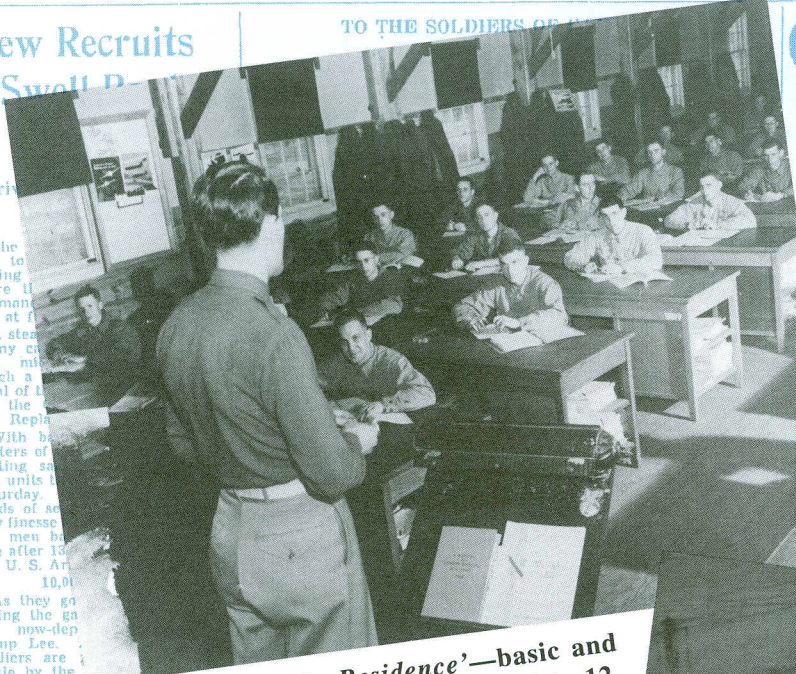
Swift D...

Arriv

The Lee to lowing more th permanent ing at f...  
A stea Army ca and mis reach a rival of B for the ial Repla...  
With be centers of parting so last units Saturday...  
fields of esary finesse five men be Lee after 13 the U. S. Ar...

As they go filling the ga the now-dep Camp Lee. soldiers are while by the

TO THE SOLDIERS OF



**'QM Scholars in Residence'—basic and advanced officers received from 4 to 12 weeks of classroom instruction.**

## Camp Lee Prepares For Fourth Of July

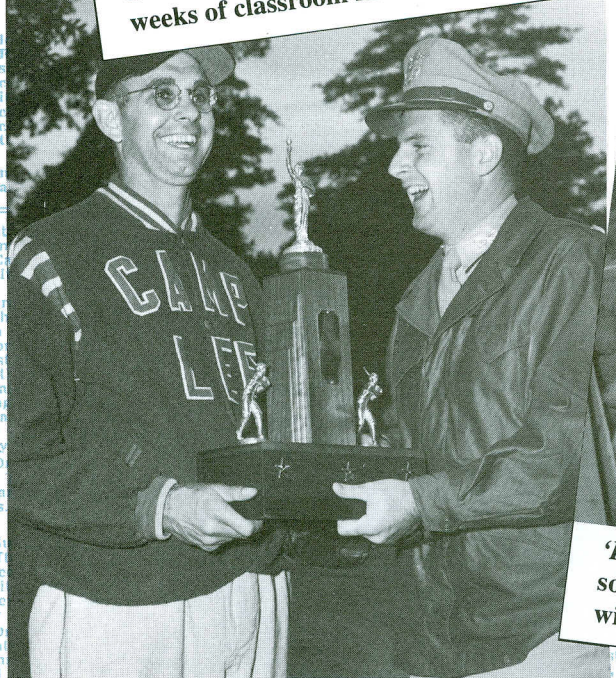
Thousands to Leave for Homes on Passes as Official Holiday Is Ordered

## Medico Guards To Be Armed

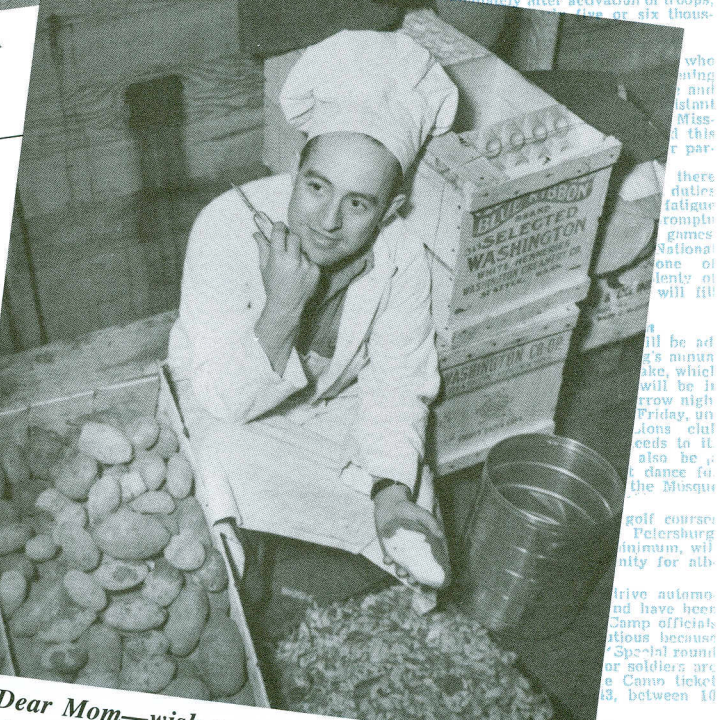
For the first time in the history of Camp Lee, medical soldiers are given training in the use of arms. Pistols will be the weapons and they will be used by guards around the reservoir and vital areas. A move on the part of Camp Lee authorities has nothing to do with the general policy of the War Department. As far as is known, the Army plans will follow the long tradition, medical soldiers always being unarmed. At Camp Lee, however, medical and trained guards at any

Anticipating an official holiday for the weekend, soldiers at Camp Lee prepared today to observe the 165th anniversary of America's Declaration of Independence. Several thousand men will be given passes to visit their homes from Thursday at Retreat until Reveille Monday; long lists of activities are planned for those remaining at Camp; and nearby communities are opening their facilities to entertain visiting soldiers. Yet beneath the usual festivity of the July 4 celebration, an undercurrent of solemnity marks the 1941 observance. At noon Friday, a 40-gun salute in the Union will be fired, one gun for each state, symbolizing the determination of the United States to preserve democracy. At every teeming Army camp in the country, similar ceremonies will be held. The Fourth of July exodus from Camp Lee, coming as it does immediately after activation of troops, will number four or six thousand

## Trainin



**'All work and no play' —The Camp Lee Travellers excelled in football and baseball.**



**'Dear Mom—wish you were here!' — Few soldiers managed to get through basic training**

who using and instant Miss- this r par-  
there duties fatigue comply games National one of lently of will fill  
It will be ad e's mun- like, which will be in row high Friday, un ions clud eads to it also be dance for the Musque  
golf course Petersburg innum, will nity for ath-  
drive automo and have heat Camp officials tious because Special round or soldiers are e Camp ticket 13, between 10

## Killed Wreck

Taylor, 24, of 2, was killed and three other Camp Lee soldiers were injured late Monday when their car overturned in Chesterfield county. The injured were Sgt. Paul Craddock, Pvt. Cleveland H. Binn...

## Becomes Lieutenant



Enlisted soldiers 'stand to' for Saturday morning inspection.

### **'WE SPREAD OUR FAME BY OUR DEEDS'**

On the eve of Pearl Harbor, a correspondent for the *New York Times*, with the blessing of the Chief of Staff of the Army, toured military camps throughout the country to get a sense of what conditions were like, see how morale fared during the mobilization, and try to discover how well this nation's

QMS instructors used a miniature theater of operations to show how supplies moved from stateside to overseas depots.



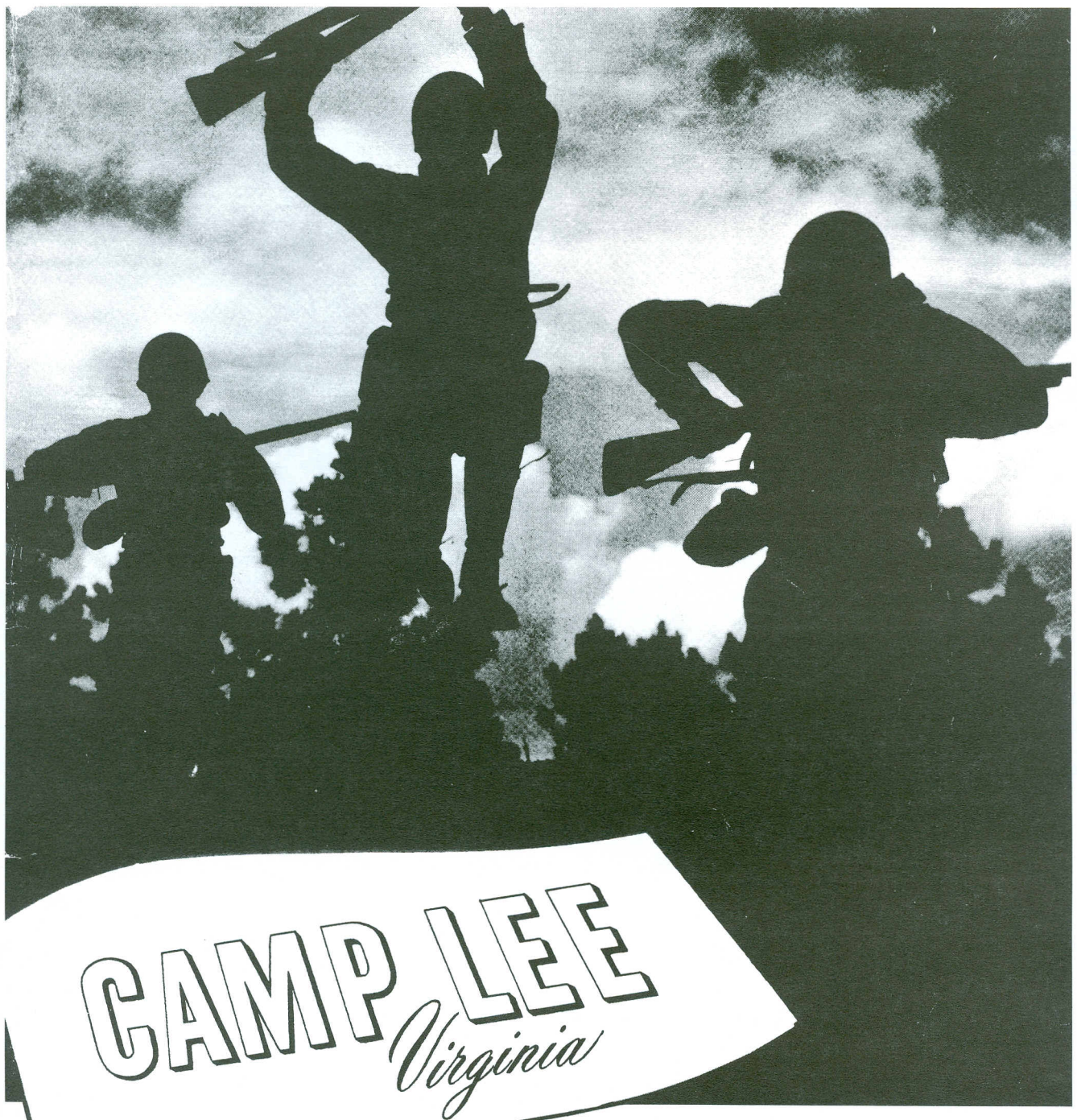
newest citizen-soldiers were being trained for the awesome task at hand. "It occurs to me," the reporter wrote to General Edmonds, "that you may find satisfaction in the fact that on my 8,000-mile tour of Army posts and stations, Camp Lee, from every angle, held the brightest and most reassuring circumstances."

In the years to follow, the camp's record would become even brighter and more reassuring. That record was one of continued growth and improvement. When the emergency period began in July 1940, The Quartermaster School in Philadelphia had a staff and faculty of only 18 officers and 3 NCOs. That number increased steadily after the move to Camp Lee. At its peak in December 1942, the number of school instructors and cadre had risen to nearly 2,000.

During the two decades leading up to World War II, the Philadelphia school had trained just over 1,600 students. By comparison, in the 4 1/2 years from the summer of 1940 until the end of 1945,

The Quartermaster School trained more than 52,000 officers, officer candidates, and key enlisted personnel. It was an amazing accomplishment.

Back in the mid-1920s, the small band of instructors in Philadelphia adopted the Quartermaster School motto, "*Famam Extendimus Factis* — We Spread Our Fame By Our Deeds." Little did they know back then how prophetic, how appropriate indeed, was their choice for a new school motto.



# CAMP LEE

*Virginia*

## SPECIAL REPRINT

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The original CAMP LEE, VIRGINIA -- built in 1917 and named in honor of the South's great soldier, General Robert E. Lee -- was torn down at the end of World War I. With the emergency of 1940, the area again became a beehive of activity, and, as if by magic, a new Camp Lee sprang to life on the eve of World War II. Over 300,000 Quartermaster soldiers received branch and unit training here during the course of the war. The following portfolio, reprinted from a 1944 conference publication, gives some idea of the flavor and scope of activities at Camp Lee as it met its greatest challenge ever.



it's called . . .

## Camp Lee, Va.

named in tribute to General Robert E. Lee

. . . it stands on grounds where famed battles of the war between the states were fought . . .

in 1917 it emerged as a training site for the World War's 80th Division . . . and the year following the Armistice it became a national Bird Sanctuary . . .

With the emergency of 1940 and the declaration of war in 1941, Camp Lee mushroomed overnight into the world's largest Quartermaster Training Center . . .

Its components . . . the Army Service Forces Training Center, The Quartermaster School, The Quartermaster Board, the ASF Regional Hospital, and allied service units make the camp to-day one of the foremost in the country . . .

... Wherever the might of the American soldier is being felt—on battle fronts scattered on the byways of the world— there stand fighting sons of Camp Lee ...

... Their record ... their deeds of valor and accomplishment ... their devotion to duty ... are primary in this struggle for

Victory and a lasting Peace ...

... The pride Camp Lee takes in their performance is placed **not** in the Camp ... but in the men who have made it.

They, and they alone ... all over the world ... fulfill its purpose ...



# basic military . . .





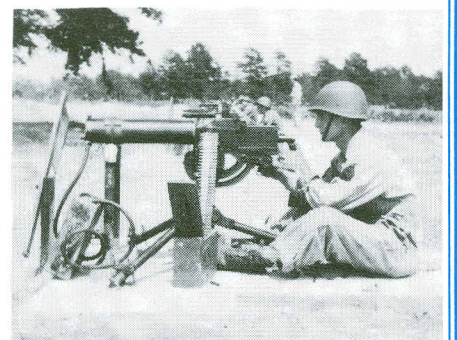
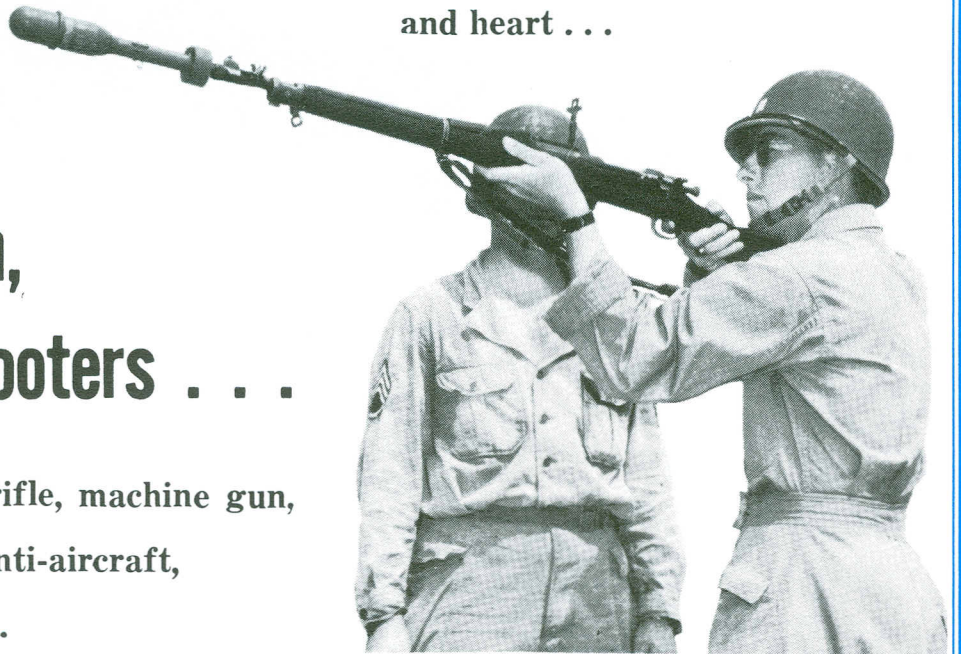
trainees are taught the rudiments of combat with gun in hand . . .

a steady eye . . .

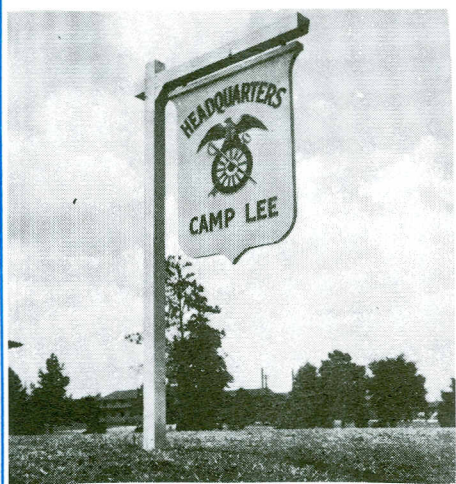
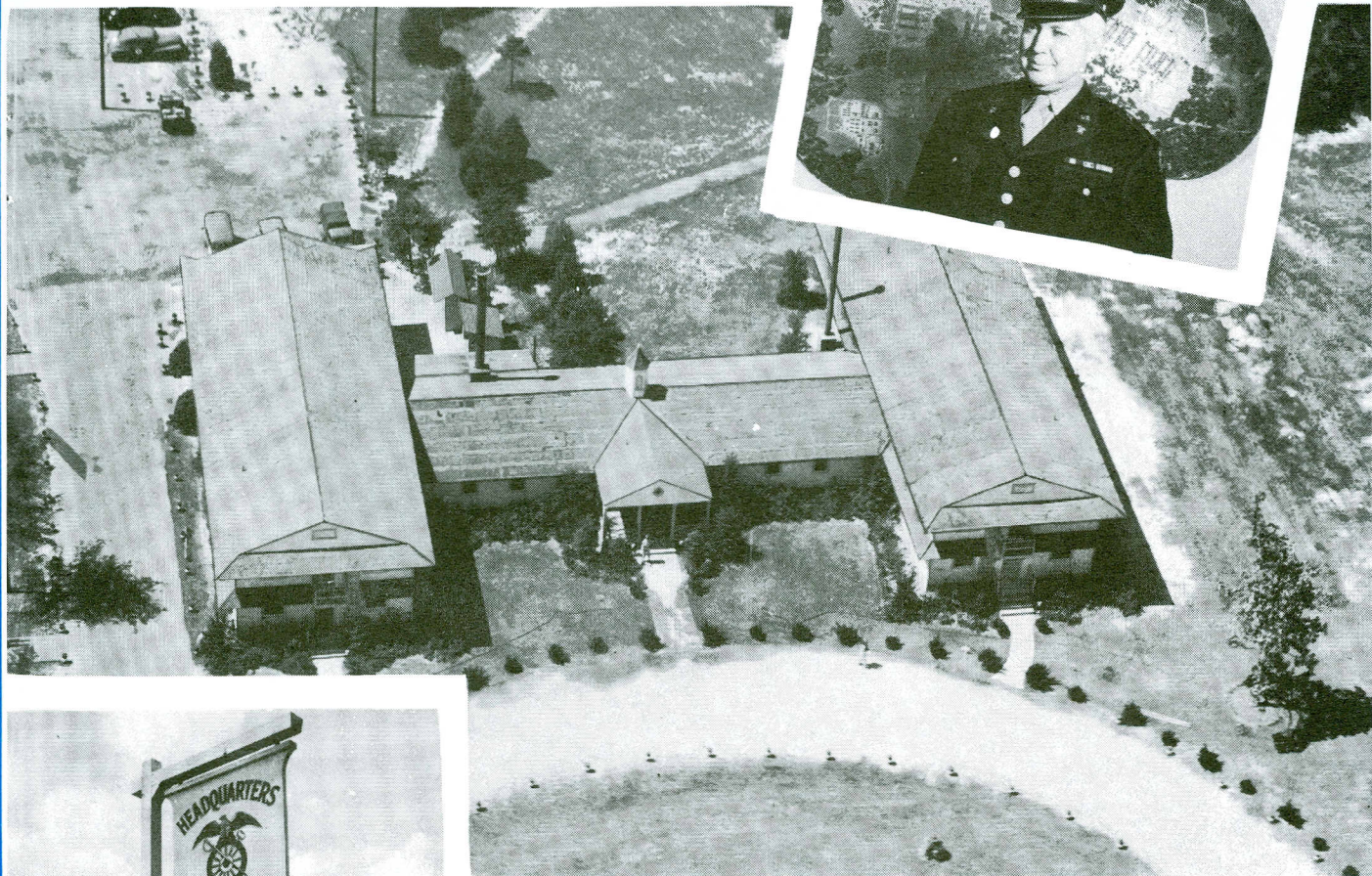
and heart . . .

## Marksman, sharpshooters . . .

on the range with rifle, machine gun,  
carbine, bazooka, anti-aircraft,  
and anti-tank guns.



# Headquarters . . .



Impressive . . . dignified . . . the throbbing pulse of Camp . . .  
is Camp Headquarters . . .

and at its helm . . . Brig. Gen. George A. Horkan,  
the commanding general . . .

knitting together an organization that gains momentum  
with every training cycle . . . every day . . . developing fighting  
men who stand proud of their uniform . . . their cause . . . their  
leaders . . . and their camp. . . .

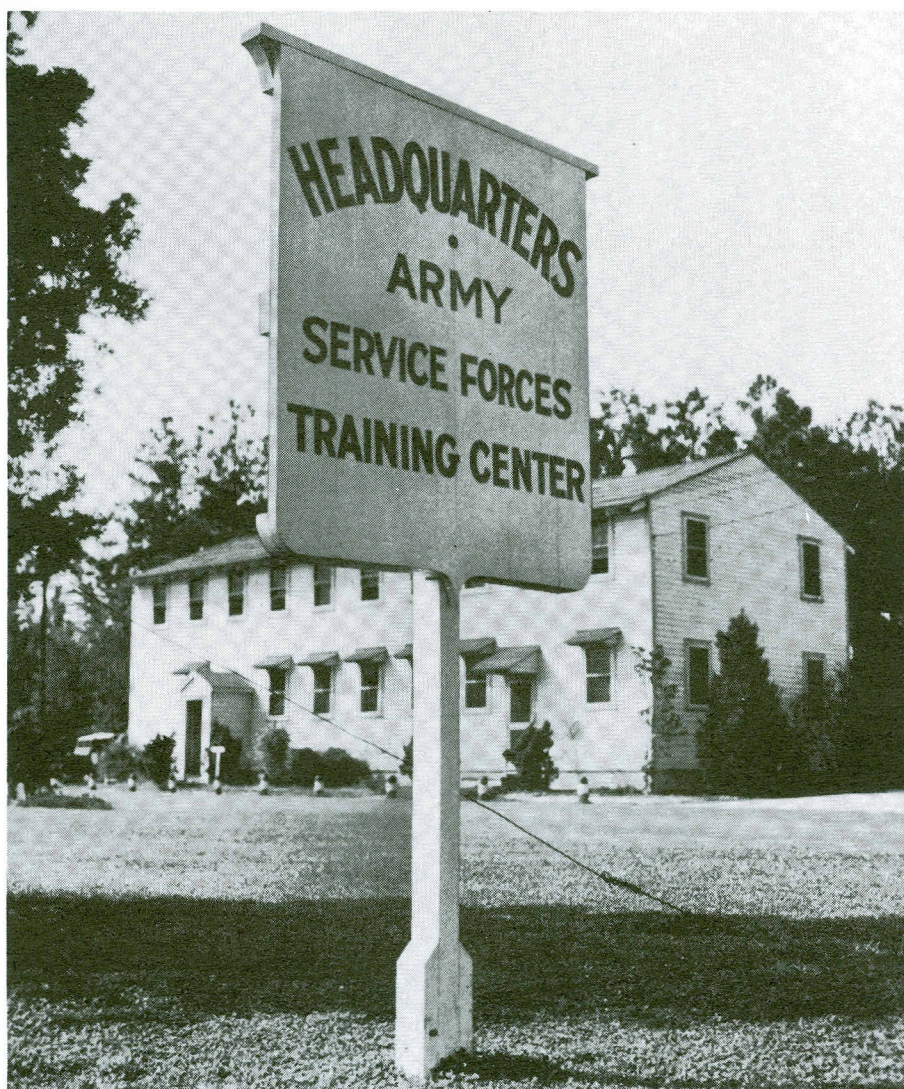
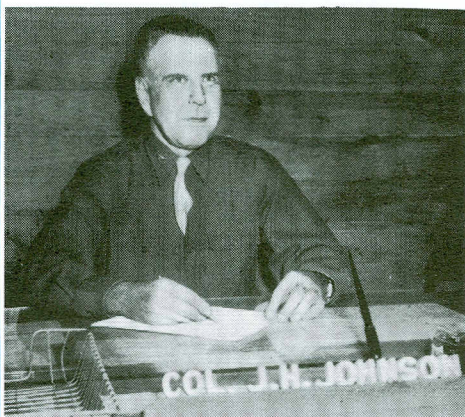
# world's largest single quartermaster installation . . . ASFTC

. . . responsible for the training, in three and a half years, of more than 200,000 fighting men for a multitude of service and supply duties . . .

Guided to-day by Colonel James H. Johnson . . . it has taken green trainees and paced them through basic military and technical training for jobs ranging from cooks . . . to carpenters. . . .

formerly designated the Quartermaster Replacement Training Center . .

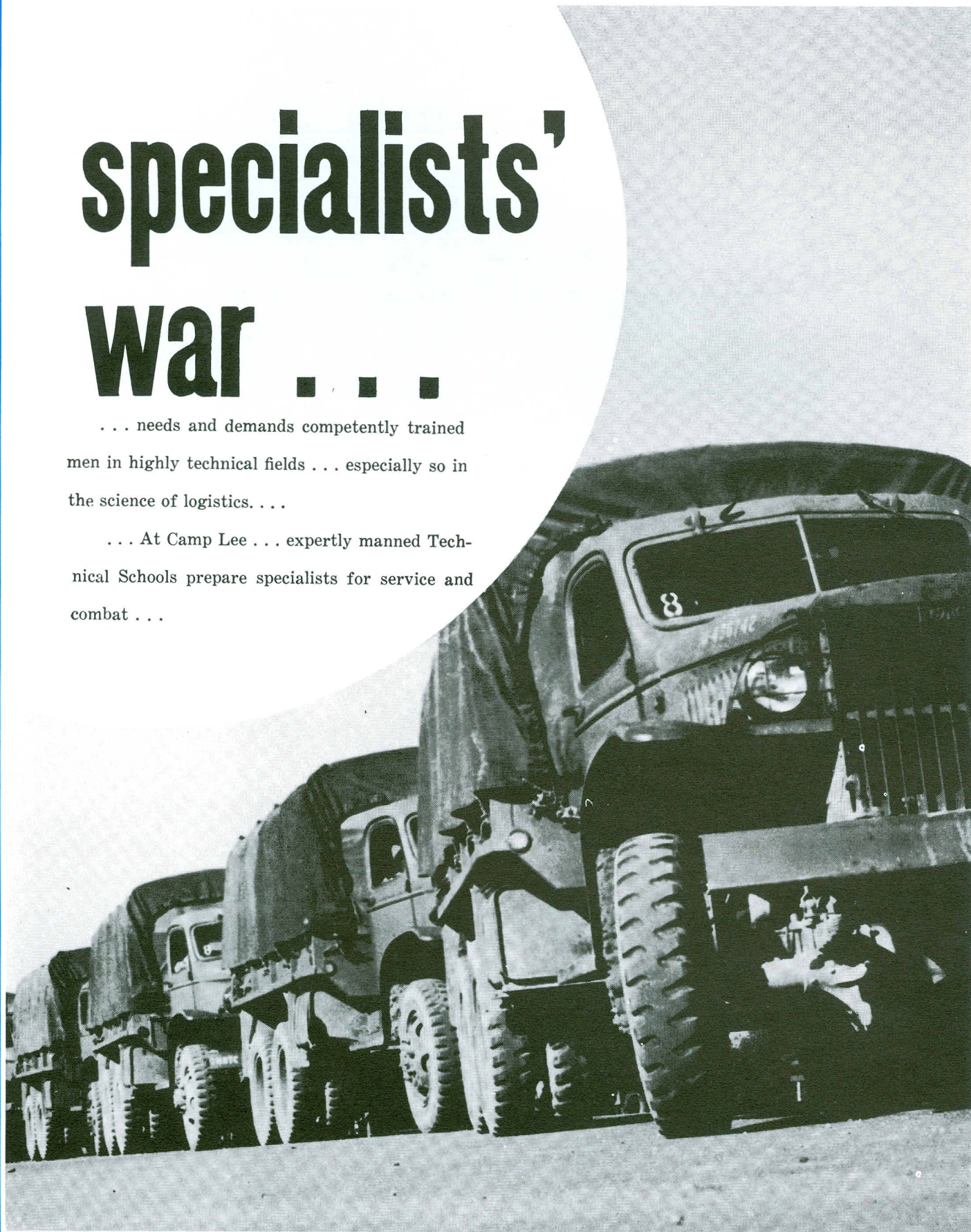
it now specializes in unit, replacement, and retraining for the Army Service Forces . .



# specialists' war . . .

. . . needs and demands competently trained men in highly technical fields . . . especially so in the science of logistics. . . .

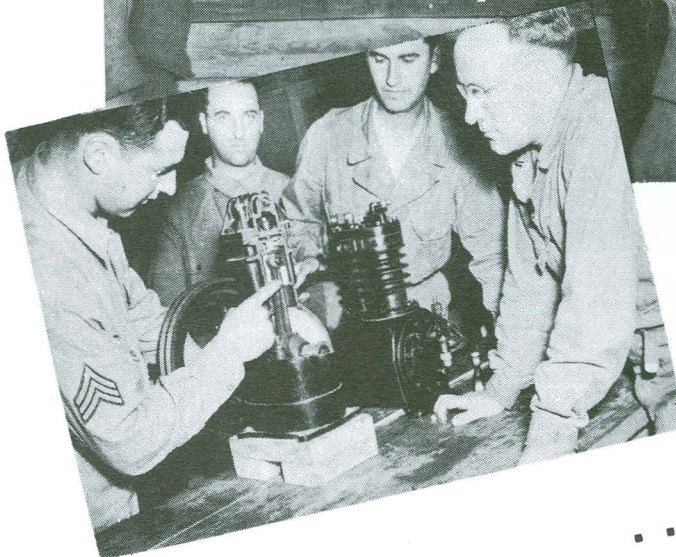
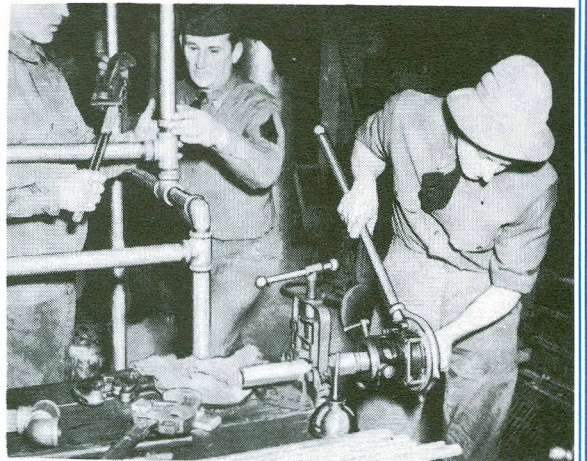
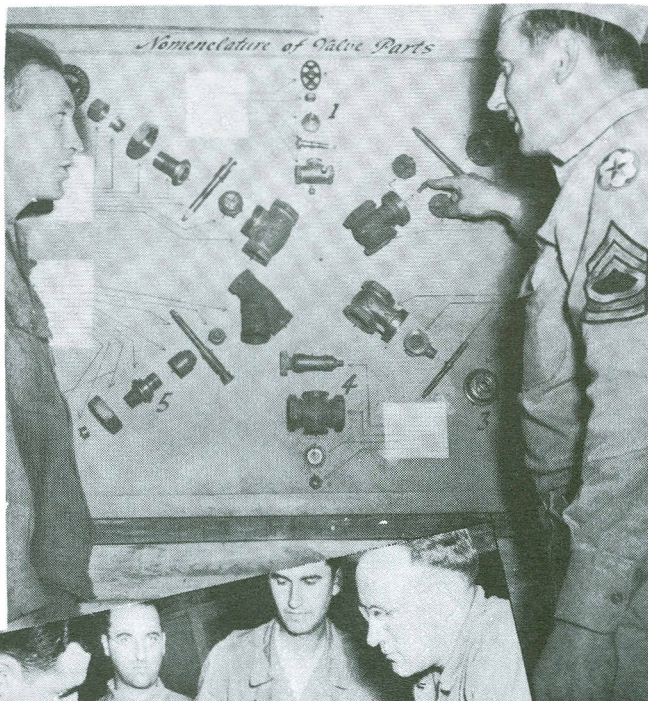
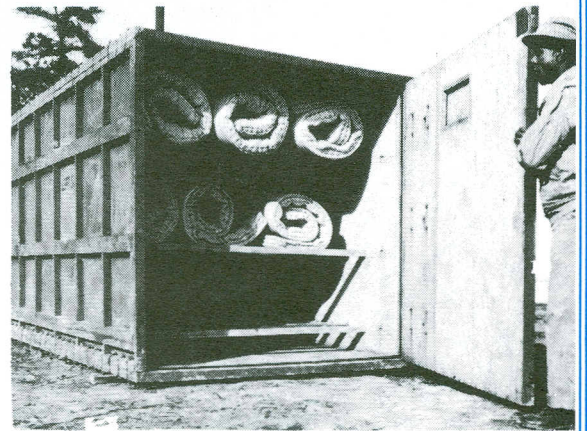
. . . At Camp Lee . . . expertly manned Technical Schools prepare specialists for service and combat . . .



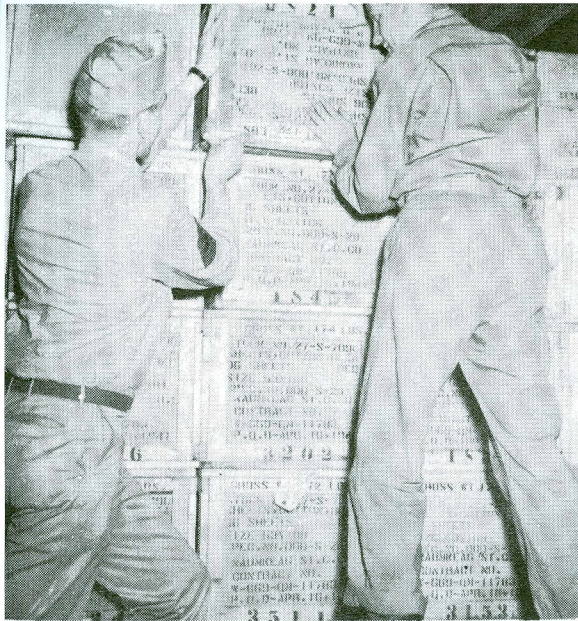
The Technical Specialist's Schools . . .

**more than 100**

prepare trainees to serve the men who  
serve the line . . .



fumigation and bath  
. . . plumbing  
. . . refrigeration



**warehousing . . .**



**DEPOT SUPPLY..**



**clothing and equipage . . .**

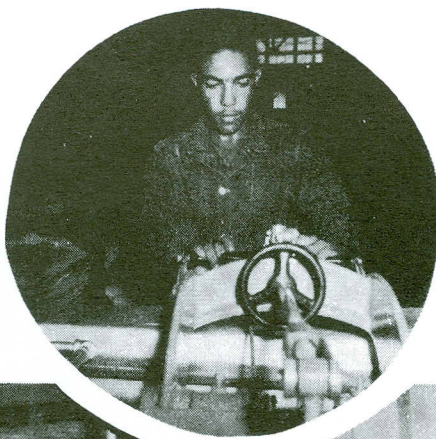
**clerks . . .**



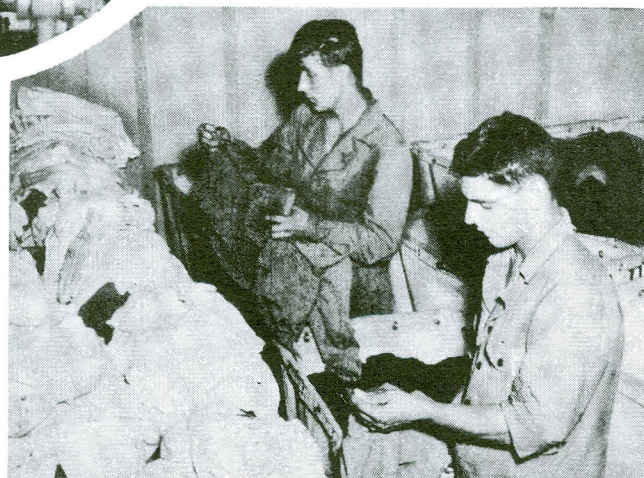
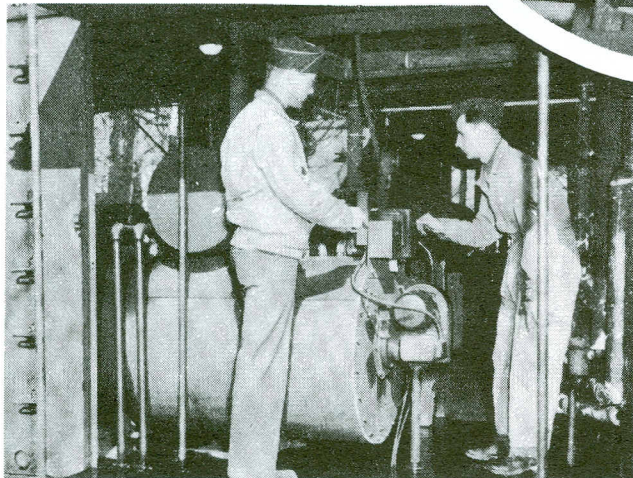


**service and salvage . . .**

**MOBILE  
LAUNDRY . . .**

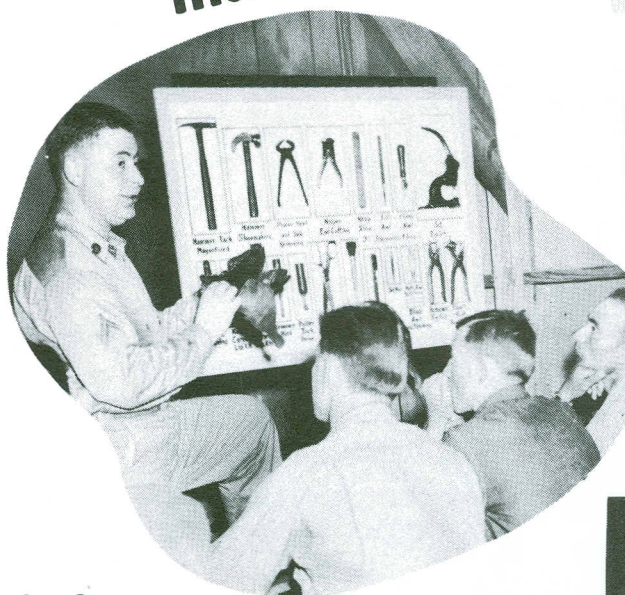


**fixed  
laundry . . .**





**shoe repair . . .**  
**machinists . . .**



**draftsmen . . .**

**CANVAS REPAIR . . .**





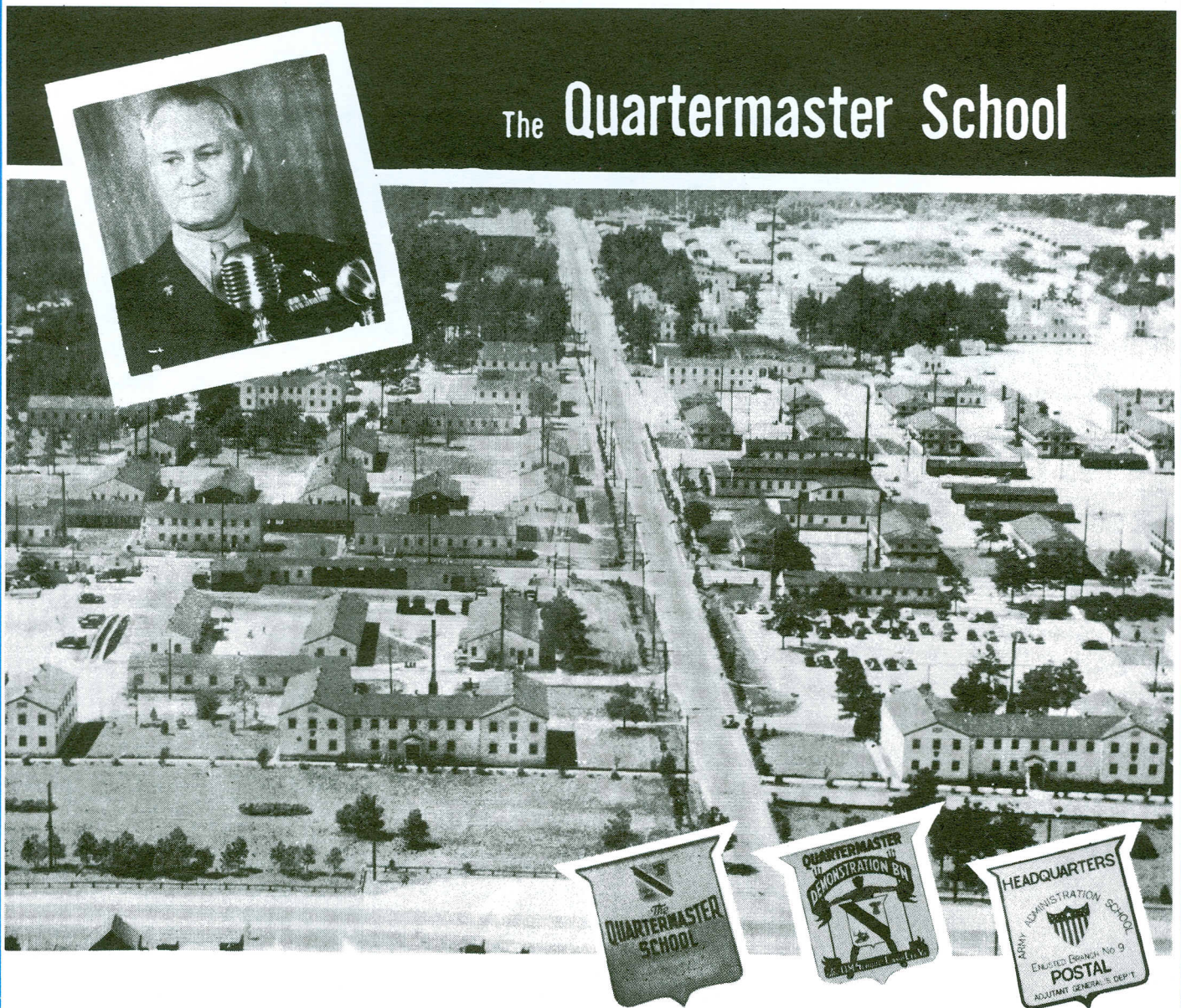


**bakery . . . pastry . . .**

**cooks and mess sergeants . . .**



# The Quartermaster School



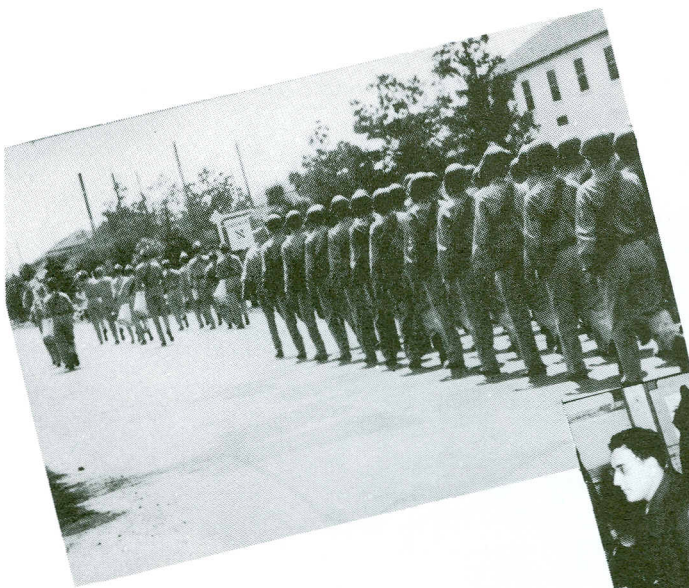
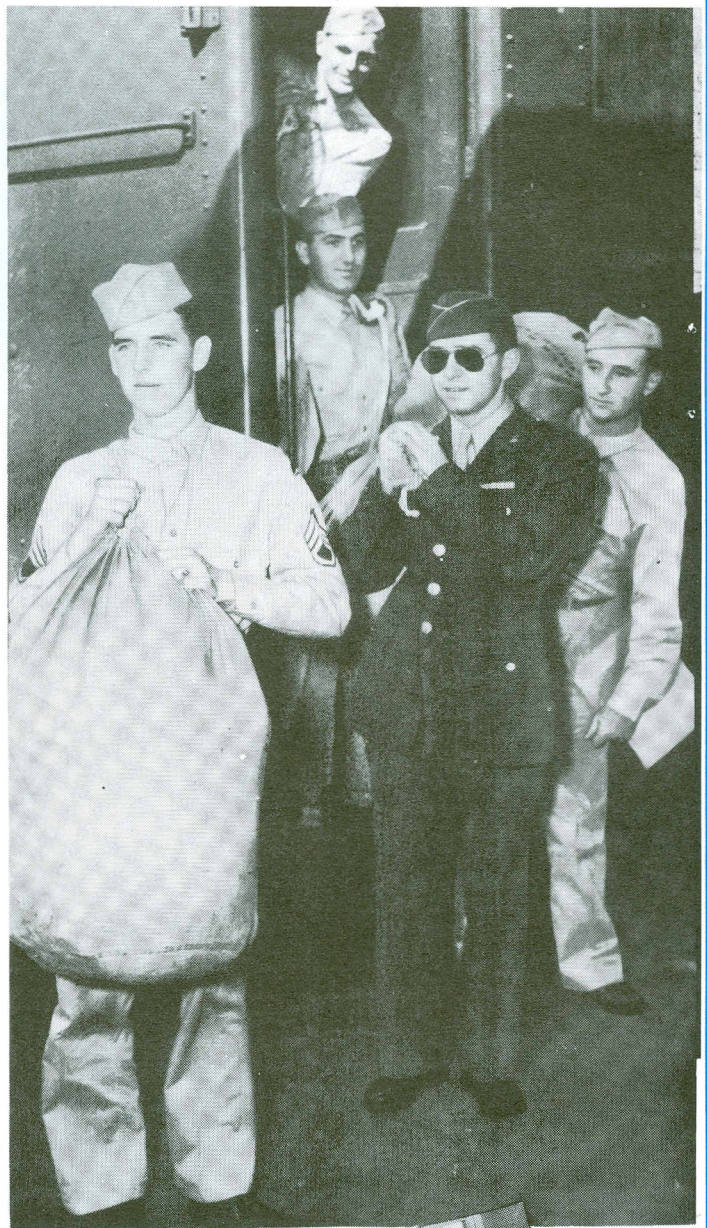
The University of higher learning in the Quartermaster Corps . . . established over 30 years ago . . . now led by Commandant Colonel Lloyd R. Wolfe . . . it has upheld its traditional motto "Famam Extendimus Factis" . . . "We Spread Our Fame By Our Deeds". . .

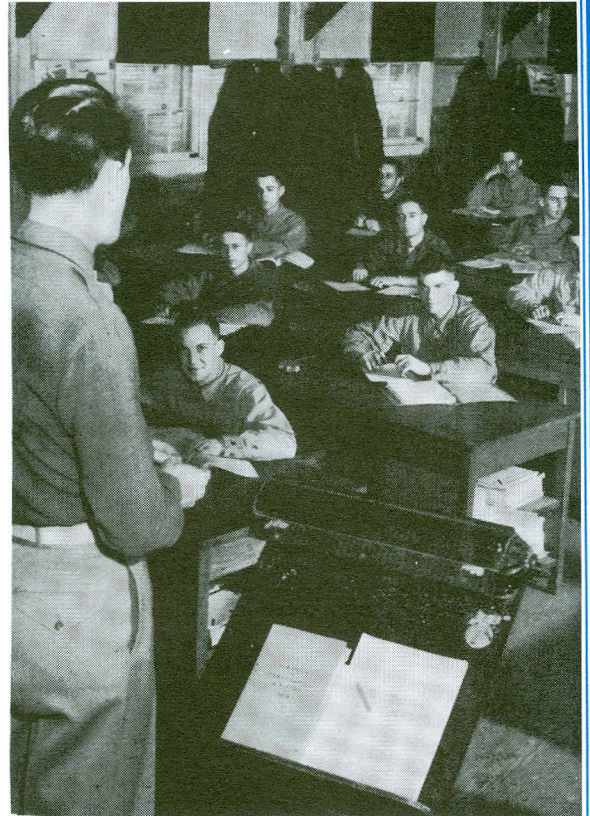
Quartermaster School alumni all over the world . . . are making the school a singular standout among service institutions . . . .

It has graduated some 23,000 officer candidates as second lieutenants . . . trained more than 8,500 officers for a multitude of jobs . . . taught more than 6,000 non-coms in highly specialized quartermaster duties . . .

they come to the Quartermaster School from the winds of the world . . . some have seen action . . . won ribbons, medals, praises . . . others come fresh from the training centres and divisional units . . .

Their tension and expectancy is great . . . and they face the next 17 weeks of training with steady heads . . . but pounding hearts . . .

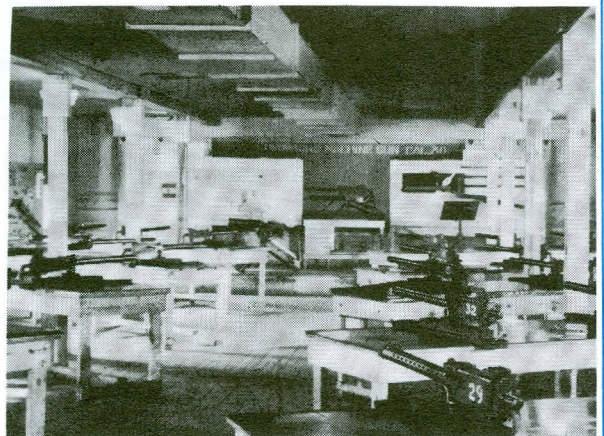




## **. . . and then studies begin**

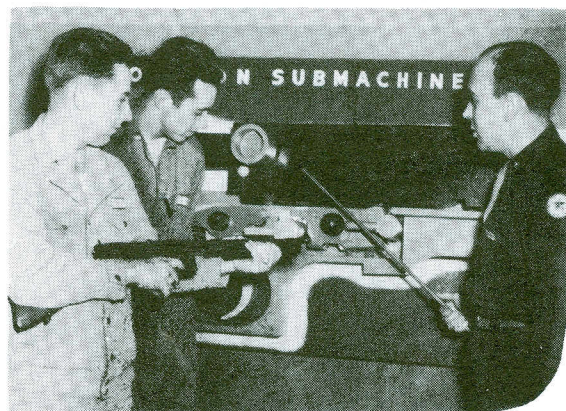
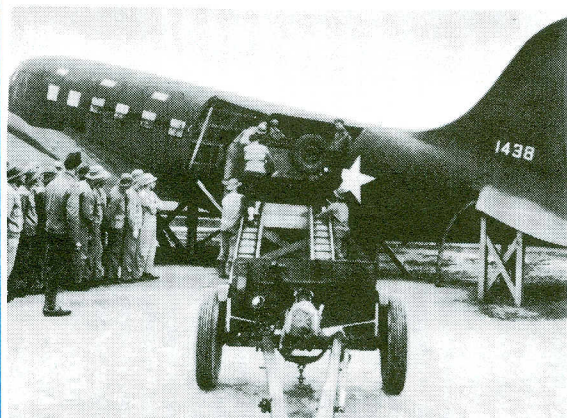
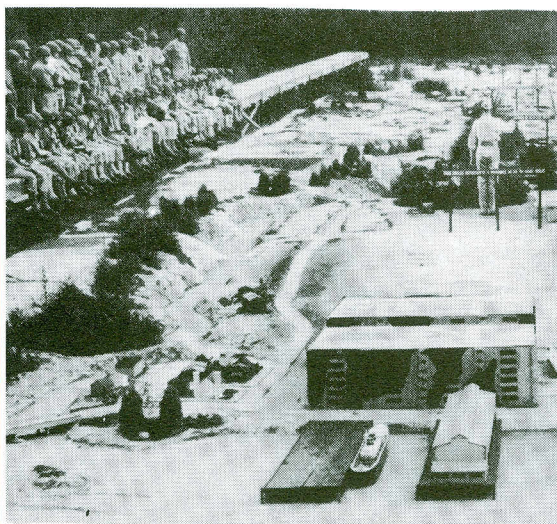
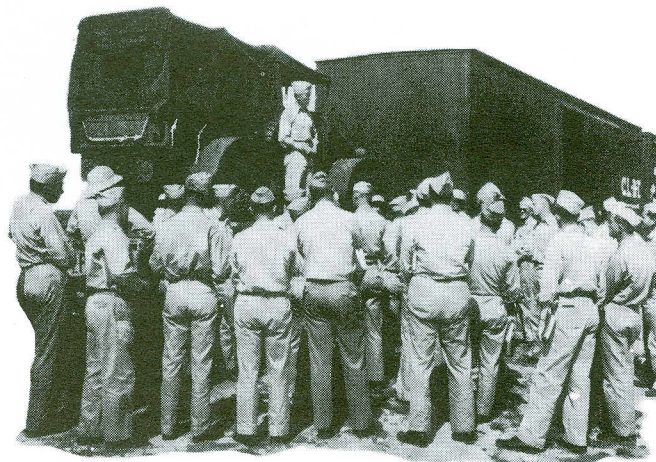
**. . . descending in an avalanche of texts, lectures, exams, conferences, bulletins . . . ad infinitum.**

**. . . techniques, practices, methods, application, theory . . . from reveille to taps . . .**



## ... learn by doing

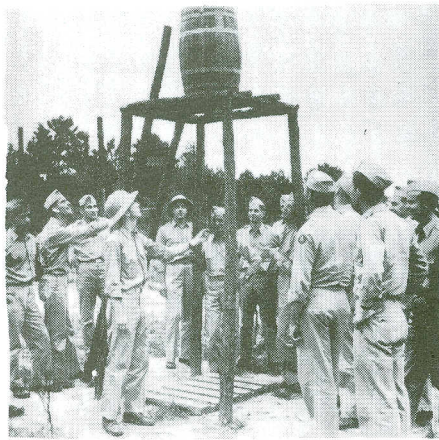
... a simple rule followed by the School . . . and with the aid of training aids . . . developed and built by the Quartermaster Technical Training Service . . . studies take on a new meaning . . . are more practicable . . .





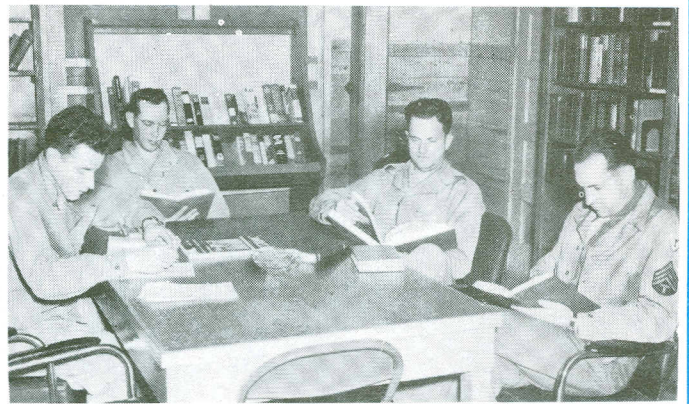
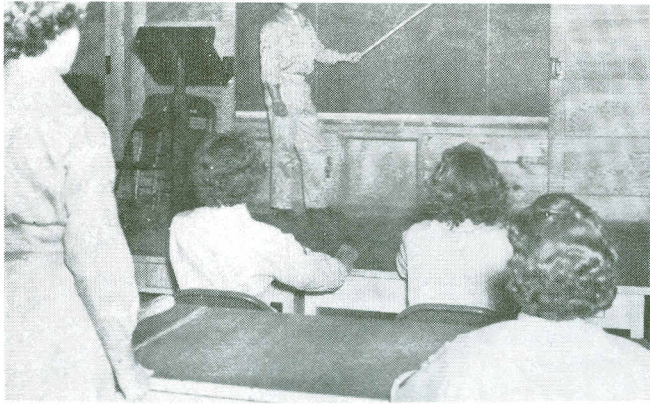
... in tempo with new techniques and directives the Quartermaster School also trains officers and enlisted men of all grades ...

Officers in ...



**Basic Supply**  
**Advanced Officers**  
**ASF Depot Courses**

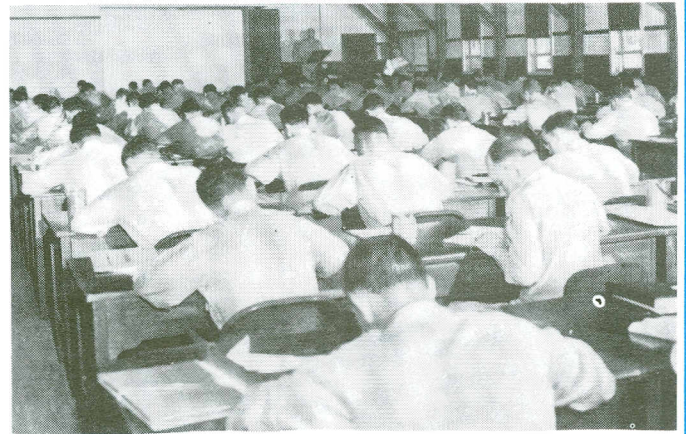




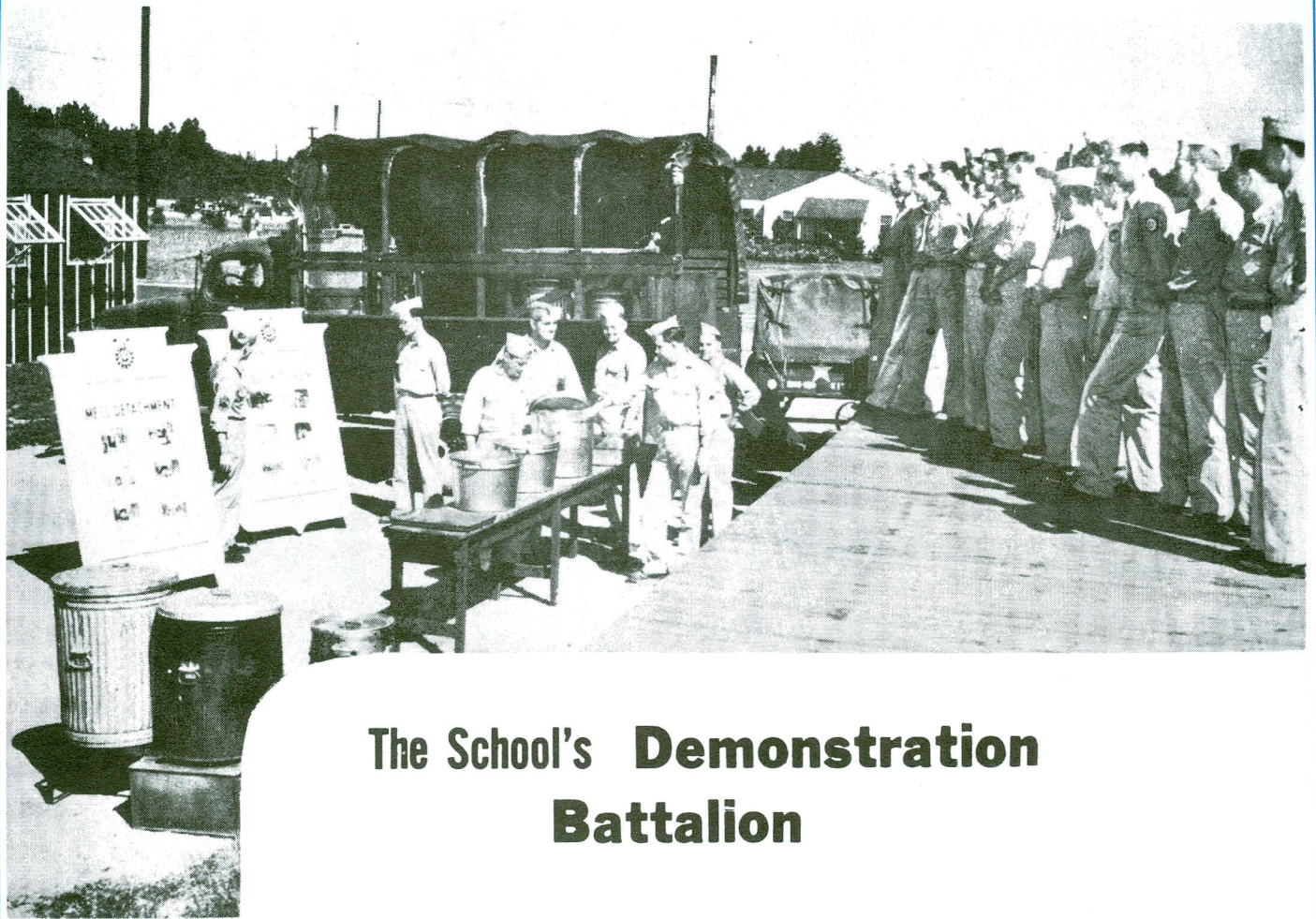
... enlisted men attend:

## The Non-Commissioned Officer Specialist School

## The A. G. School (POSTAL)

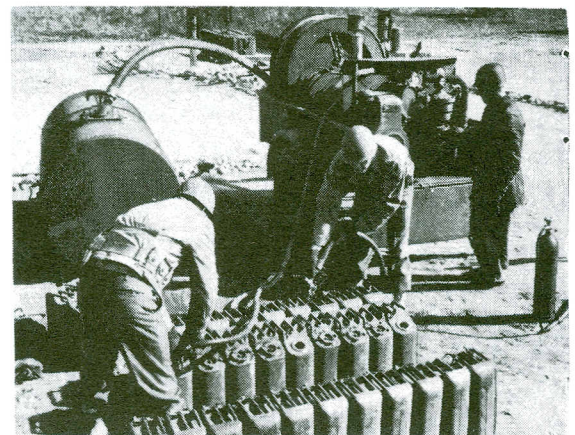


—The facilities of the School are utilized to the fullest in all-around training . . .

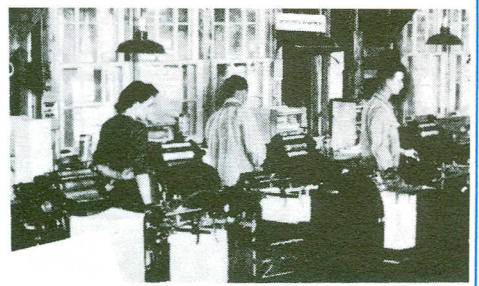


## The School's **Demonstration Battalion**

portrays the role of the combat quartermaster under simulated battle—men watch, learn and then perform themselves.





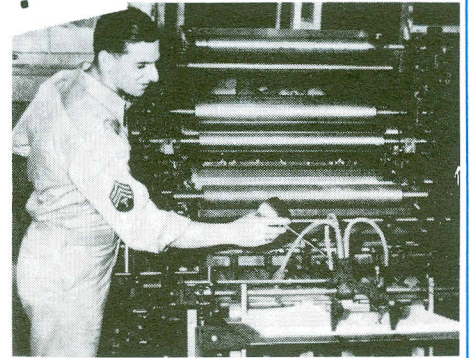


# Quartermaster Technical Training Service . . .

Located at the Quartermaster School—  
developing, producing, and formulating all  
types of training aids and publications for Quartermasters everywhere . . .

A highly skilled writing, art, production, photography, and printing staff . . . produces  
film strips, training films, pamphlets, booklets,  
technical and field manuals, posters and technical bulletins.

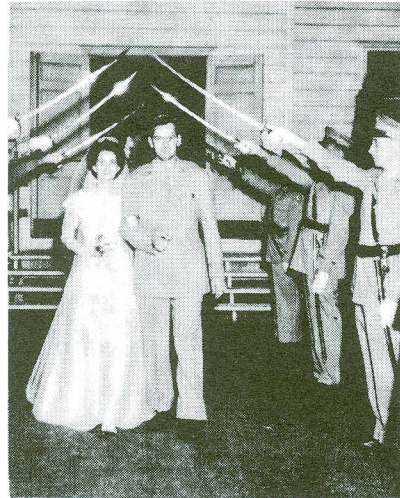
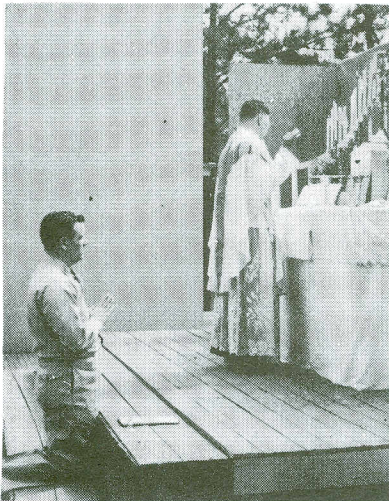
Publications and training aids of all sorts.



... to **comfort**  
the mind  
... to **meditate**  
... and **pray**



—to ease the trying, seering hours ...



the chaplain and his chapel are never closed to answer the call of men

who need spiritual guidance or perhaps just sound advice.

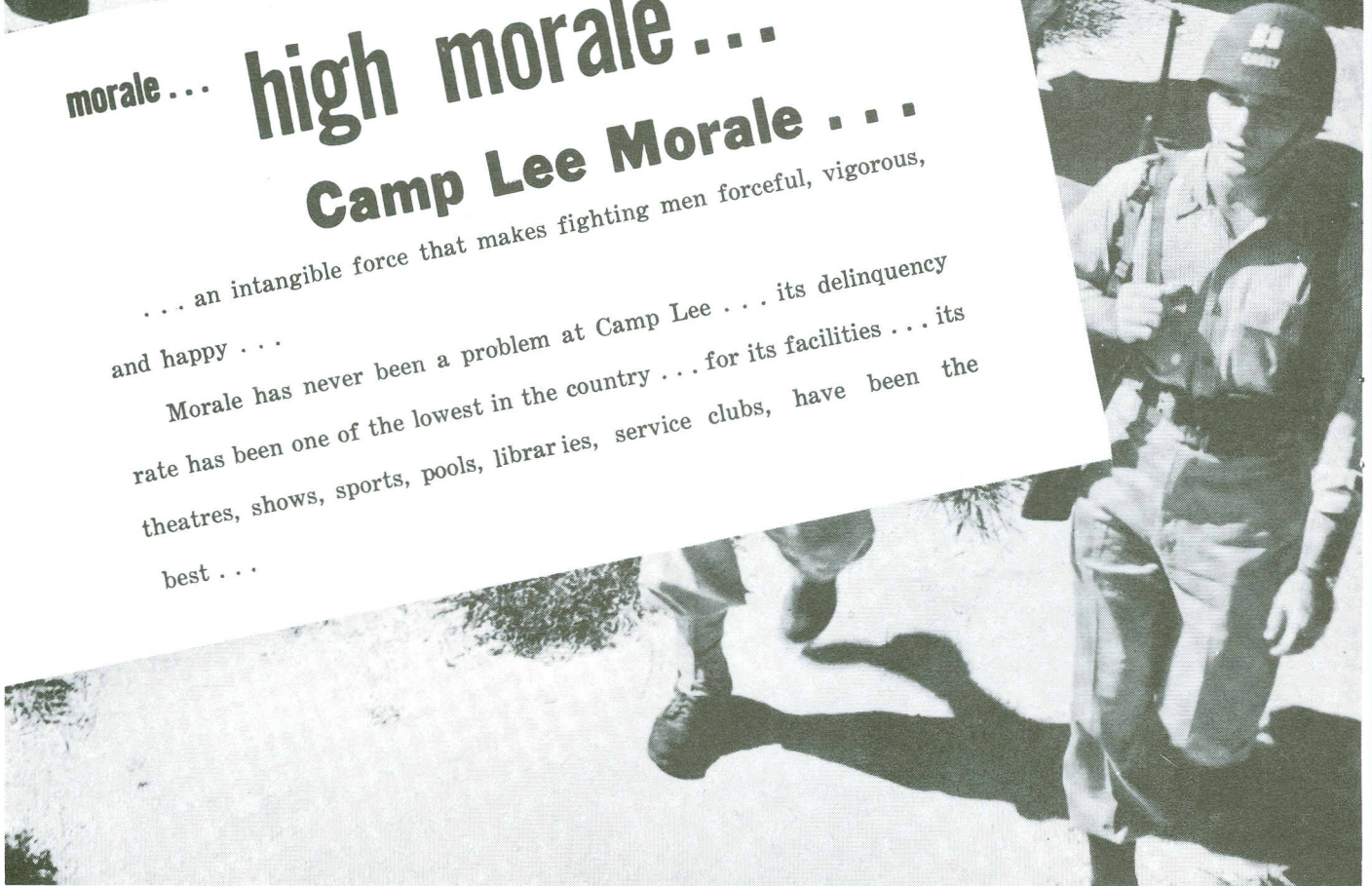


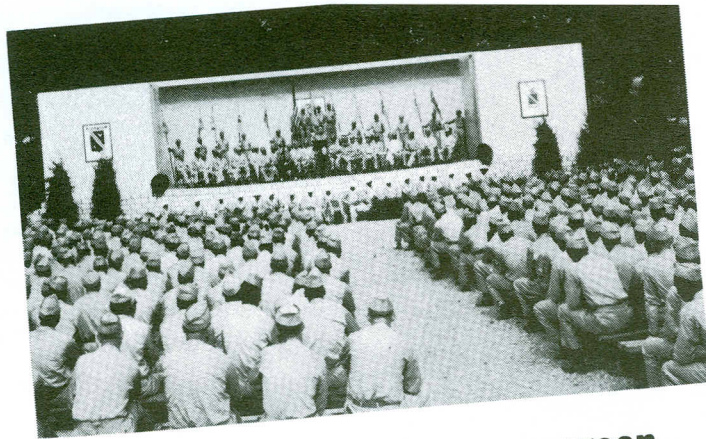
morale ... **high morale ...**

## **Camp Lee Morale ...**

... an intangible force that makes fighting men forceful, vigorous, and happy ...

Morale has never been a problem at Camp Lee ... its delinquency rate has been one of the lowest in the country ... for its facilities ... its theatres, shows, sports, pools, libraries, service clubs, have been the best ...





# music

... sweet, hot, operatic ...

# laughter

radio ... stage ... screen ...



Special Service has brought the tops in talent for the amusement of Camp Lee troops ...

During hours of relaxation the entertainment's the thing!



**toothbrushes . . . haircuts . . .**



**Sodas . . . Sweets . . .**

. . . under one roof . . . the GI emporium called the PX . . .

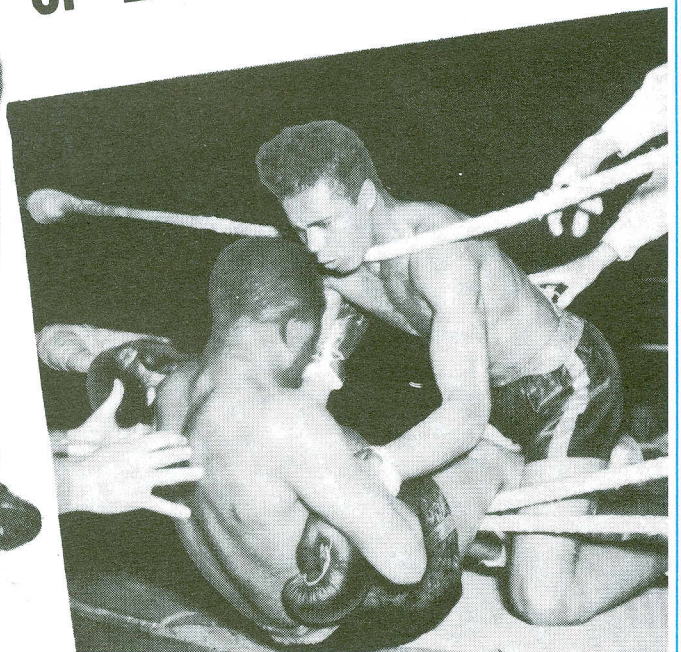
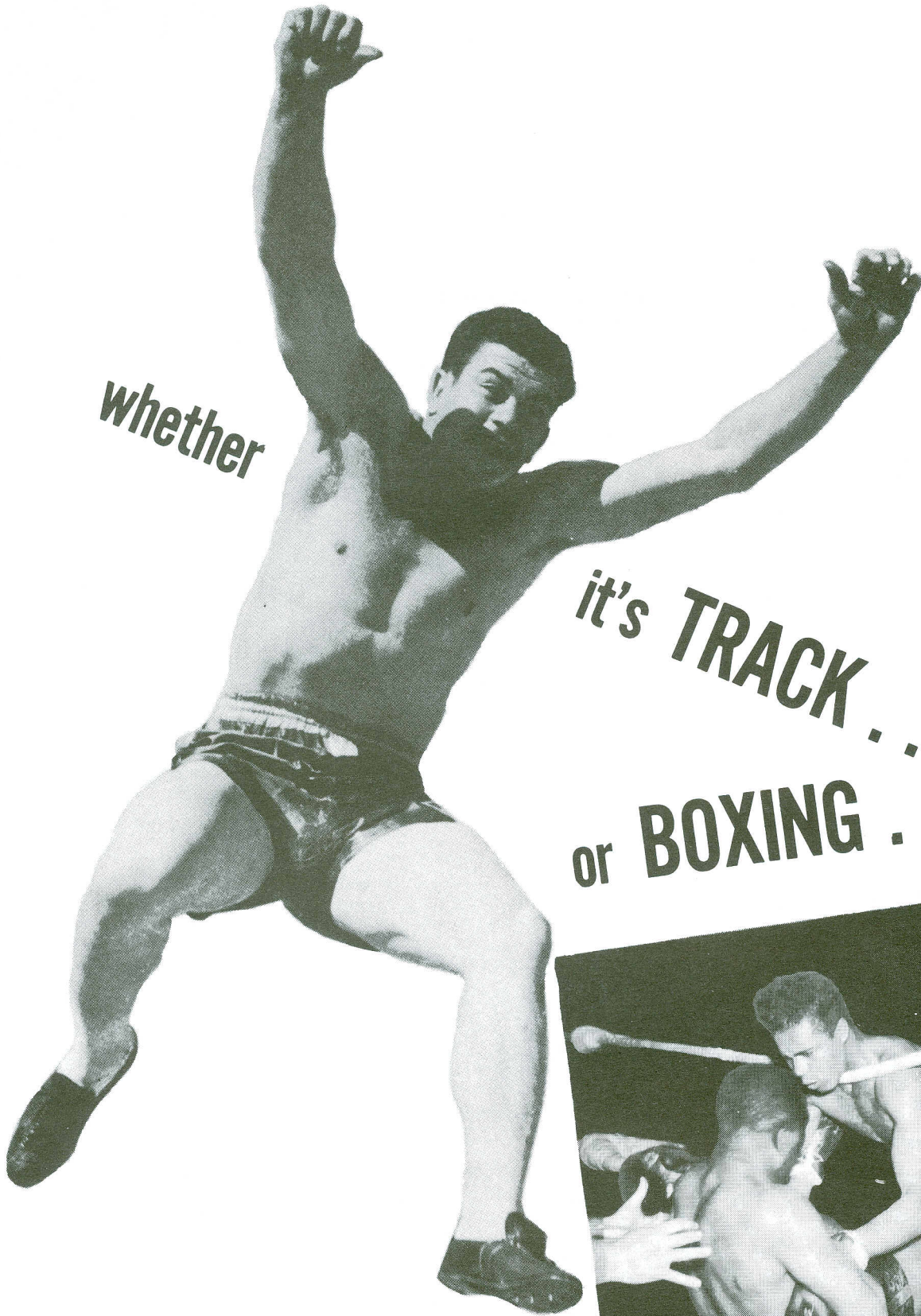
Camp Lee has 21 Branch Exchanges . . . 2 Clothing Shops . . . one Gas Station . . .

The prices are low . . . the dividends high . . . with sales  
grossing more than 5 million dollars a year . . .



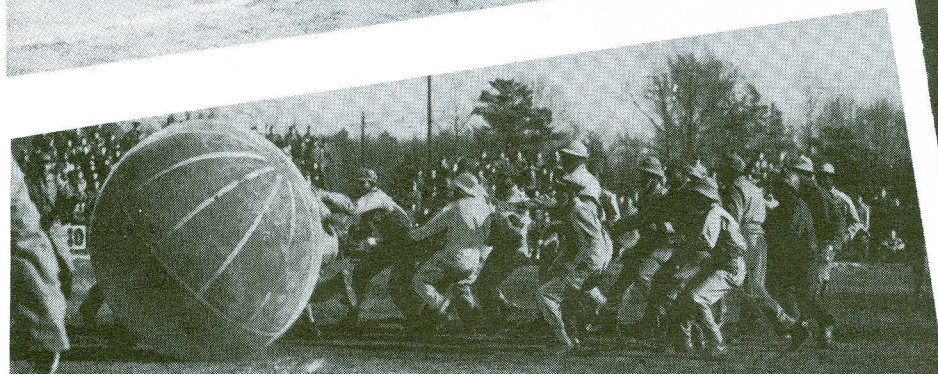
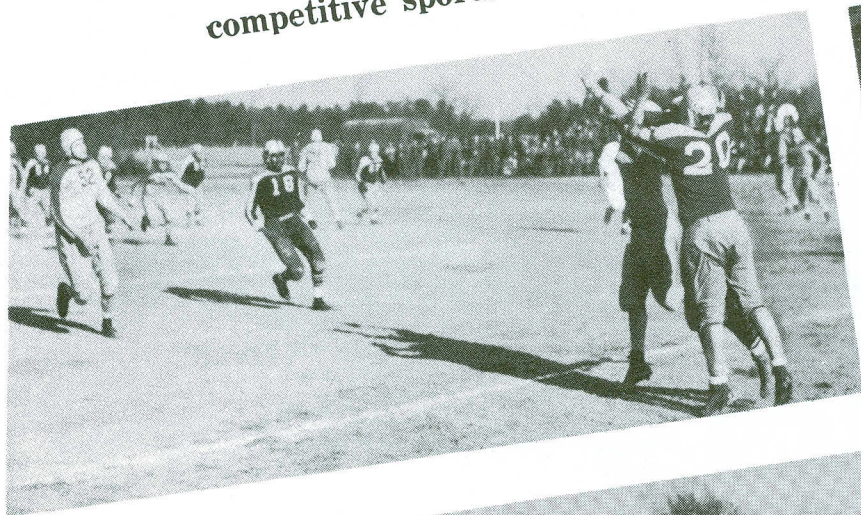
whether

it's **TRACK . . .**  
or **BOXING . . .**

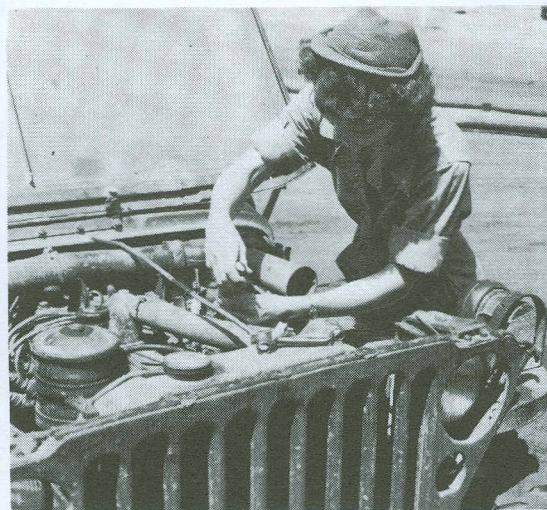




... or for that matter, baseball, volley ball, basketball, push-ball, football, horseshoe, table tennis, swimming ... or athletics of any sort. Camp Lee's organized intra-mural activities encourages physical conditioning ... its inter-service league participations stimulate recreational and competitive sports ...



# WACS . . . women at war

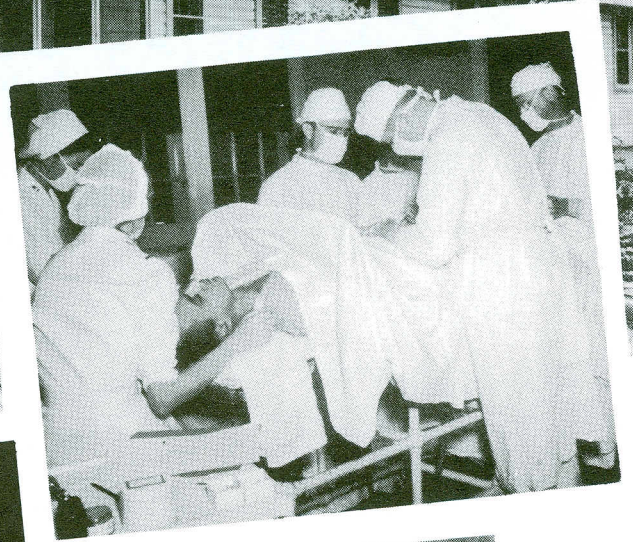


the **WAC** . . .

The Woman's Army Corps . . .  
working for Victory in many

operational jobs alongside brothers-in-khaki . . .





## the ASF Regional Hospital

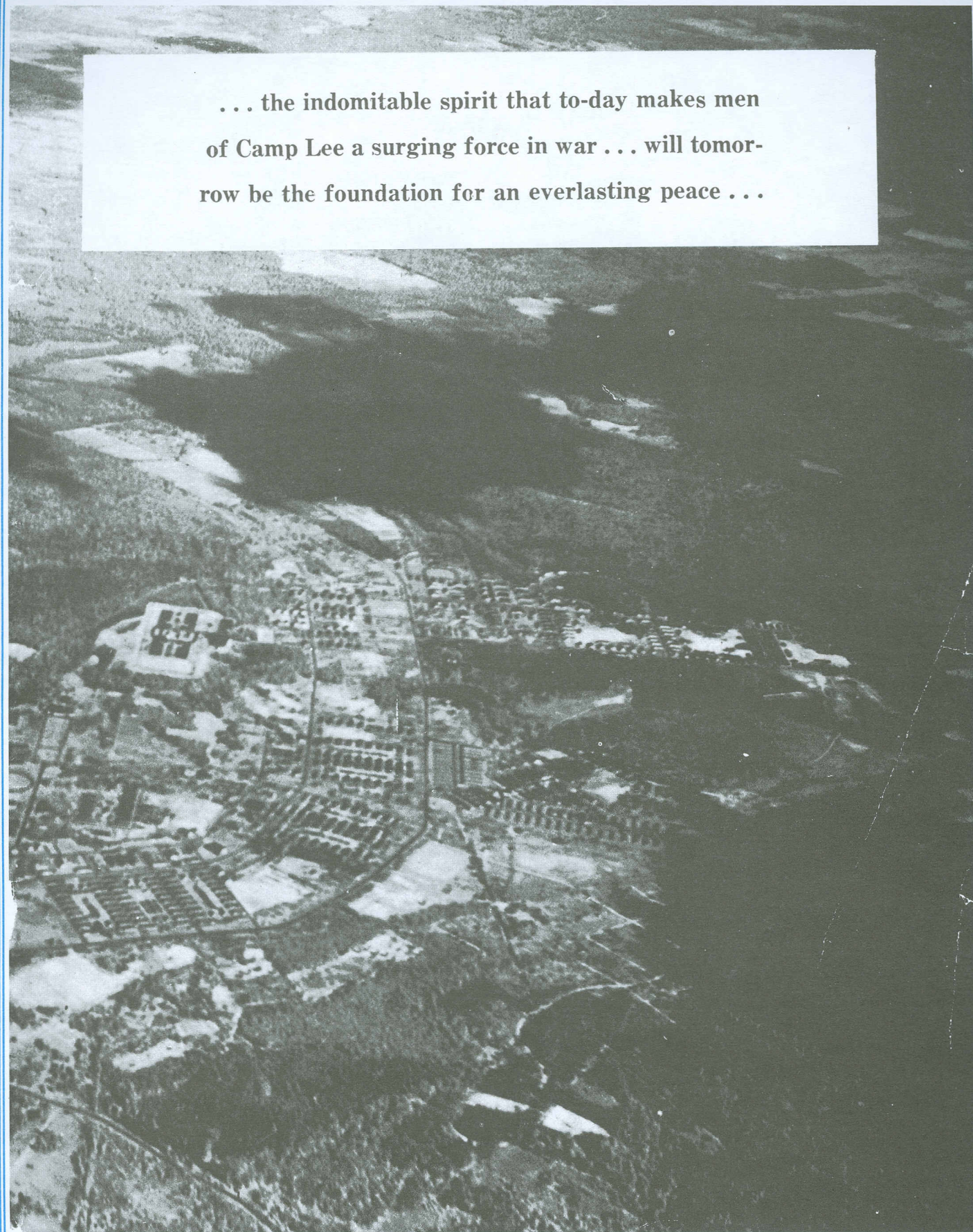


staffed with skilled surgeons, doctors and technicians . . .

utilizing the most modern equipment, and knowledge of medical practices . . .

it accomodates two thousand beds in 134 individual hospital buildings.  
Under the command of Colonel E. H. Gist, the hospital operates 63 wards, 12 regimental dispensaries, and 4 dental clinics, with a staff of 1,200 officers, enlisted men and civilians. It expertly divides its activities between preventative, and curative medicine . . . and now is expanding its rehabilitation and reconditioning wards for the overseas wounded . . .

... the indomitable spirit that to-day makes men  
of Camp Lee a surging force in war ... will tomor-  
row be the foundation for an everlasting peace ...





## COL HORKAN SAYS ...

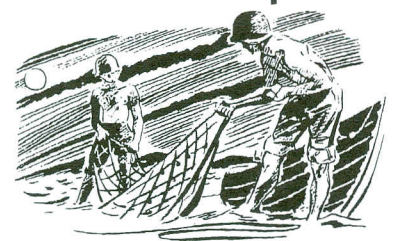
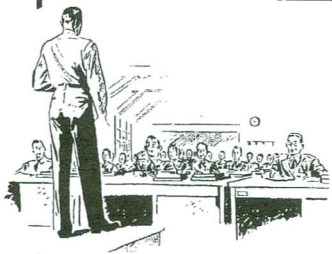
“Each battle in this global war proves that the speed of moving troops is geared to the speed and efficiency of supply trains. The quartermaster, then, becomes the key man in the solution of today’s strategic problems.

“Basic principles of war have not changed much since Ghenghis Khan. He was the father of *blitz*. Surprise attack, lightning thrust, the wedge-shaped formation used by Von Brauchitsch to bring Poland to its knees, were all used by the Khan 800 years ago — and later successfully employed by his followers *right there in the same Poland!* Only difference was that the Germans used tanks and armored cars; the Khan used tireless ponies and deadly arrows.

“Today’s higher speed in moving troops simply means we have to deliver food and other supplies that much faster. Now it isn’t enough to keep up with marching armies; QM has to keep up with troops hurtling forward at the rate of 100 to 200 miles a day.

“That’s why, today, QM troops must be armed to fight, because so often they find themselves right in the thick of battle, as on Bataan. That’s why, here at the QM school, cadets go in for chemical warfare, work on pistol and rifle ranges, learn the use of tommy guns, map reading, jungle and desert warfare, infantry maneuvers, as well as strictly QM problems. We make ‘em soldiers first, then quartermasters.”

*COL George A. Horkan, XO of the Quartermaster School, as quoted in The National Geographic Magazine (November 1942)*



## WORLD WAR II Europe and North Africa



A captured enemy document, written by a division commander, perhaps pays as great a tribute to all the forces responsible for supply of the frontline troops as could be found. He wrote:

*I cannot understand these Americans. Each night we know that we have cut them to pieces, inflicted heavy casualties, mowed down their transport. We know, in some cases, we have almost decimated entire battalions. But — in the morning, we are suddenly faced with fresh battalions, with complete replacements of men, machines, food, tools, and weapons. This happens day after day. If I did not see it with my own eyes, I would say it is impossible to give this kind of support to frontline troops so far from their bases.*

**General Dwight D. Eisenhower**

# A Personal Memoir —

From North Africa to the Heart of Germany

Lieutenant General Andrew T. McNamara

**A Note About the Author:** *Retired Lieutenant General Andrew T. McNamara graduated from West Point in 1928 and held various infantry-related assignments for nearly a decade before transferring to the Quartermaster Corps in 1937. During World War II he served as Chief Quartermaster for the II Corps in North Africa and Sicily, and First Army Quartermaster for the entire European campaign — from before Normandy until after V-E Day — and was in the Pacific with First Army Headquarters when the Japanese surrendered. The Chief Quartermaster for the European Theater of Operations, MG Robert M. Littlejohn, often referred to him as “that brilliant Colonel McNamara.” What follows are some excerpts from his personal memoirs of that period.*



COL Andrew T. McNamara, QMC

## Crossing the Atlantic

On July 2, 1942, we left New York harbor and set sail for England on board the carrier *Monterrey*. The convoy consisted of seven troop ships besides our own, and the *USS Texas*, a battleship whose appearance must have struck terror into the heart of many a Spaniard in 1898, but whose presence next to us was most reassuring. Around us was a screen of 12 destroyers, destroyer-escorts, and corvettes. We were never close enough to any of them to know just what they were, other than friendly.

Twelve days and some 4,000 miles later we entered British waters and sailed up the Clyde River to the village of Grenoch. There we boarded a train which took us to Tidworth Barracks, an old cavalry post in the south of England. From Tidworth, a few weeks later, our headquarters moved another 25 miles or so to Salisbury. There we divided into several groups and occupied Longford Castle (for the general staff) and three other country estates (for the special staff). The

Quartermaster section was ensconced in a lovely country home called Cowsfield House, soon to be renamed old “Moo Manner.”

## Operation TORCH

Late one night in early August, I received a telephone call to report to Norfolk House in London on the following afternoon. Thus ended my days in Southern England, and I drove to London in anticipation of the secrets of Norfolk House.

In Norfolk House, the British Army had organized a planning staff, supplemented by a group of U.S. Army officers. The object of all the planning was Operation TORCH, the invasion of North Africa. The matter was highly secret. Each individual, officer or enlisted, who knew of it was required to be first classified for security purposes as “Bigot.” The enlisted men stationed there not only ate and slept in the building, but also were not permitted to leave it. The British were in charge of the planning and they left nothing to chance in the matter of security.

We were to plan an amphibious operation some 1,500 miles distant, to be mounted and initially supplied from England and to be thereafter maintained by equipment and supplies that had not as yet left the United States. The Supreme Headquarters, formed from both the British and American sides, was designated “Allied Force Headquarters,” commanded by Lieutenant General Eisenhower. Major General Mark Clark was transferred from the command of the II Corps to be named as Deputy Commander of the Allied Forces. Major General Lloyd Fredendall was brought from the United States to assume command again of the II Corps. During this shuffle, I was made Quartermaster of the Corps.

The II Corps’ mission was to seize and occupy Oran in French North Africa. The striking force was the 1st Infantry Division, operating in three combat teams, and Combat Command “B” of the 1st Armored Division. These units plus the 20th Engineer Regiment (Combat) and a few tank-de-

stroyer units were to comprise the initial assault force. All units were to land on D-Day with 12 days of supply.

On D-Day, we had assigned to us one Gasoline Supply Company and one Depot Supply Platoon. This was our Quartermaster troop-list of approximately 175 troops. On D+4, another convoy was scheduled to arrive with an additional QM Railhead Company and some Truck Companies.

By October 25, we had done what we could in the way of planning the invasion of Oran. I felt dissatisfied because owing to security rules we could not give any inkling of their missions to the few troop units under our command, or even to my own assistants on the Corps staff.

### Not A Medal in the Convoy

My group from Corps Headquarters was placed on board the *SS Letitia* at Glasgow on October 26, a miserable and dreary day. We had the satisfaction of know-

ing that there was nothing further in our power that could be done. As I meditated upon this satisfaction, I suffered a rude shock. We had shipped tons of all kinds of supplies, but there was not a medal in the convoy. To complicate matters, the ships were all under radio silence. Fortunately, I was able to have a "blinker" message sent to the Port Commander, asking him to forward to the main body of Corps Headquarters, a request to bring medals by the case with them on the D+13 convoy.

On the afternoon of November 6, our convoy met with convoys which had come from the United States, at a rendezvous point not far from Gibraltar. At midnight we went through the Straits, with the lights of Tangiers on our right and the massive darkness of the Rock on our left. We did not realize at the time how long it would be until we would again see the light of a city at night. On the following day we were headed east within sight of Spain, following the

conventional ship route to Malta. By afternoon the land had completely fallen away. "H" hour was to be at 1:00 A.M. on November 8.

The attack was three-pronged, two forces going in at Mers-el-Kebir and Los Andalouses, respectively, to the west of Oran, and one column landing at the little fishing town of Arzeu, to the east. All three were on the whole successful despite opposition. However, the same good luck did not extend to two cutters full of infantrymen which sailed directly into Oran harbor.

By the time they reached there, French naval forces had had approximately two hours notice that an invasion was underway. So they were on full alert. They turned their machine guns onto the two cutters and the unfortunate Americans in them were butchered as they stood below the decks. We afterwards buried most of them in a cemetery in Oran.

About 6:00 A.M. on November 8, I first caught sight of the coast at Arzeu. Late that afternoon I went ashore with the II Corps Headquarters, and we set up our temporary command post in a schoolhouse two blocks from the beach.

### Beach Supply for 40,000 Men

Inasmuch as three-fourths or more of the troops had come in at Arzeu, the bulk of supplies were discharged there also. These supplies, whether Quartermaster, ordnance, chemical, engineer or medical, were handled by the 1st Engineer Special Brigade. This Brigade, composed of two shore regiments and one boat regiment, unloaded and car-



Loaded trucks rolling ashore on French North African Coast

Supply pallets being pulled to dump areas



ried cargo from the ships to the shore, where it would be picked up at the water line by the shore detachments and placed in the appropriate dumps. Each of the several supply services had its own dump area.

Trucks run by the Engineer Special Brigade were to haul supplies to where the other services designated. But coordination was lacking, and two unfortunate practices developed. One was that the engineers were dumping the cargo at the spots most convenient to them, which were generally at the water's edge. The other was that they exercised no prerogative control over the landing area itself.

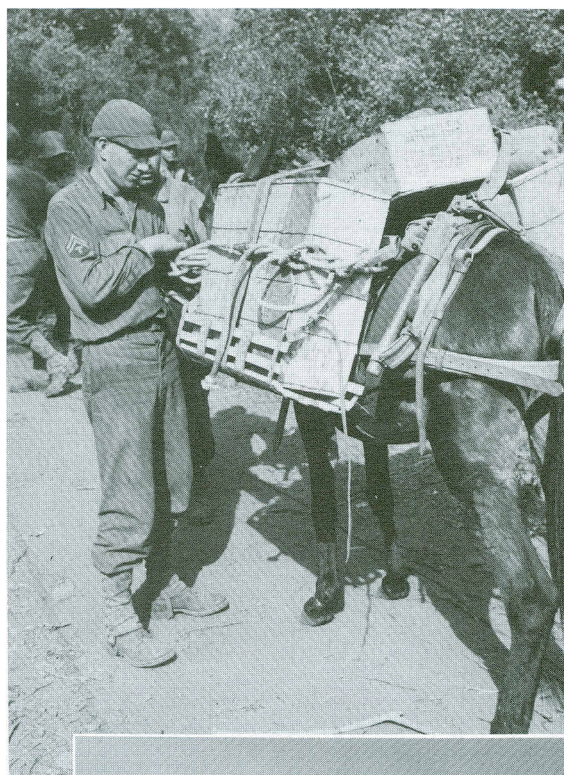
That is, the docks and the beaches were open to visitors of all types and descriptions: French, Arabs and Americans wandering among the stacks of supplies. The supply officers from the various American units had a field day laying in substantial reserves of rations and whatever else might be handy at the time. There was simply no discipline of any type evidenced in the supply area along the beach, and only a few truckloads were delivered to our Quartermaster dumps.

A total of 12 days of supply for 40,000 men was coming across the beaches. However, that 12 days of supply was completely exhausted in the course of four days. This did not mean that there had been bad planning. The overdraw — and overdraw it was — simply reflected a total lack of supply discipline aggravated by the sloppy control over the dump areas. Supply officers would go down to the beach and take whatever they wanted, "get while the getting was good."

By D+6 the II Corps Headquarters had left the beach area and was ensconced in and about the Grand Hotel D'Oran. My QM Section had its office in what had until a few days previously been a gambling casino of some note. We faced the problems of storing the supplies, anticipating the tremendous buildup that was scheduled to begin at once.

### Graves Registration

The most pressing problem was burial. Although I had requested at least a Quartermaster Graves Registration Platoon (1 officer, 24 enlisted men) accompany the force, this was rejected by G-3 on the ground that only combat troops were important. Due primarily to the slaughter in Oran Harbor, we had to bury more than 400 American soldiers. I selected a site near a civilian cemetery on the outskirts of the city, obtained some engineer troops with digging equipment, and turned this serious operation over to one of my Assistant Corps Quartermasters. There he organized and laid out



Pack mules being loaded with C-Rations in the hills near Bizerte, North Africa



U.S. Army chaplain saying services at a temporary cemetery in Algeria

the cemetery, buried the dead, and reported the burials.

### Retrospect

It is with some degree of humility that I look back upon Operation TORCH. Virtually no coordination or advanced thinking had preceded or accompanied the Oran operation. Our Quartermaster units had no concepts of their missions until we met them on a pier and told them where to go, what to do, and, often, how to do it. The enlisted men were physically overburdened with food, ammunition and accouterments.

The two C-Rations alone that a soldier carried as he went into Oran weighed 10 pounds. The bandoleers of ammunition, the clothing, gas masks, weapon, and other incidentals that the combat troops carried on their persons weighed an additional 122 pounds, totaling 132 pounds per man. This simply represents about 110 pounds too many for a combat soldier to carry and enough to make anyone else utterly useless. Moreover, each soldier had (either carried by him, or for him) two barracks-bags, each full of more equipment and clothing.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** In subsequent entries in his memoirs, Colonel McNamara discussed many of his varied experiences with the II Corps in Tunisia and Sicily. He had some particularly tense moments, for instance, when supply bases had to be quickly moved out of harm's way during the battles of Kasserine Pass and El Guettar. Later on, during the Sicilian campaign he was also witness to the sad episode where some 27 American C-47s, loaded with paratroopers, were inadvertently shot down by U.S. antiaircraft batteries.

The Mediterranean campaign was a training ground for Allied logisticians, as well as for combat troops. Colonel McNamara thought long and hard about what he had seen and experienced and was ready to apply the lessons learned on his next assignment back in England, as First Army Quartermaster. He flew to London at the end of September 1943, and threw himself headlong into planning and full-scale preparations for the upcoming Normandy invasion: code-named Operation OVERLORD.

Between January and May 1944, the number of Americans in the United Kingdom more than doubled, hitting a peak of approximately 1 1/2 million troops on the eve of D-Day. In cargo shipments, upwards of two million long tons (or 40 percent of all tonnage discharged in UK ports in the 2 1/2 years from January 1942 to May 1944) were received in the five months immediately preceding D-Day. Over 600,000 long tons of supplies arrived during the final months of preparation (roughly 140,000 were Quartermaster supplies). At depots, port cities, railheads and along crowded highways throughout England the scene was one of unprecedented activity, as the date set for the invasion drew nigh.

### D-Day in the English Channel

After an early morning breakfast on May 30, we drove in a convoy from Bristol to Falmouth on the southwest coast of England. All that any of us had in the way of personal baggage was a musette-bag, a filled canteen, a gas mask, and the other accouterments worn on our pistol belts. At Falmouth, we were divided into three groups, each one of which embarked on an LST. I and one of my enlisted clerks were on one LST, another Quartermaster warrant officer and a clerk on a second, and a Quartermaster warrant officer and clerk were on the third. These LSTs were to be our homes

until D+1, when we were scheduled to debark and organize Army Headquarters ashore.

On the afternoon of June 6 [D-Day] the LSTs headed south into the channel, then turned east when they were several miles offshore. In turning to the east we found ourselves a part of a steady and endless procession of ships. Around us were LSTs, LCIs, headquarters ships, cargo ships, and hospital ships, with destroyers, cruisers, and carriers in every direction as far as we could see.

When darkness fell that night, we were midway out in the channel. Hours later we were well aware that we were in a war, in-

asmuch as the German *Luftwaffe* came overhead on a bombing raid against us. Antiaircraft guns of all calibers fired at the planes from positions about us. The air became full of falling fragments and spent bullets. One of the Headquarters Company lieutenants on our LST was struck in the back of his calf by one of these falling bits and had to be transferred to a hospital ship on the following day.

Daybreak the following day [D+1] found us off Omaha Beach, watching our naval guns pound the beach fortifications as they fired over our heads. It was plain that the attack had not been as successful

**A weapon carrier moves through the surf toward Utah Beach, with its antiaircraft gun pointing skyward.**





as it had been planned. Indeed, geysers of sand and smoke were arising all along the beach. At first I thought that these were caused by our own troops touching off enemy mines. Then I realized that there were no troops in the areas in which these explosions were taking place. No amount of wishful thinking could alter the fact that the Germans were shelling the beach. I then noticed spouts of water occasionally rising out among the ships, and the further realization came to me that the Germans were also doing their best to shell us at sea. There was very little that we could do about this. All day the LSTs moved up and down the coast from Omaha Beach to Utah Beach, and back.

Meanwhile, landing craft and DUKWs [amphibious cargo vehicles] were scurrying back and forth from the ship to the shore, moving troops and supplies as fast as they could. Long lines of troops could be observed moving from the beaches themselves inland along the very few beach exits. Overhead our planes patrolled constantly. With much sadness, we noted one of them falling into the sea and another plummeting to the earth just beyond the beaches after a strafing run. The fact that our planes were strafing just a few hundred yards beyond the bluffs which overlooked the beaches indicated clearly that the enemy was not far inland.

With the enemy that close to the beach, the area selected as the site of the First Army CP would necessarily still be in enemy hands. Consequently, our plan to go ashore on that morning was suspended. Later on the afternoon of D+1, I sent a message to one of our other LSTs and instructed the Quartermaster officer aboard to go ashore at daybreak on the following day, to survey the situation, and then to return and report to me on my LST before nightfall. I was particularly alarmed over unconfirmed reports that heavy casualties had been afflicted on the Quartermaster troops ashore.

At about 5:00 P.M. of D+2, the Quartermaster officer reported to me on my LST, and informed me that he had visited both the V Corps Quartermaster and the Quartermaster of the 29th Infantry Division, but



**A transfer point on a Normandy beachhead where the cargoes of DUKWs are unloaded onto trucks for distribution to area dumps**

that neither of them had any information about any Quartermaster casualties.

He reported further that our own artillery was firing from positions just beyond the beaches, which meant that the front line was not far away. He had estimated 500 dead lying on the beach. Because of the difficulty of digging decent graves in sand, I had instructed Quartermasters of the invasion Divisions and Corps, as well as the graves registration platoons that accompanied them during the early days of the operation, that no burials were to be performed on the beach.

On the afternoon of D+3 the First Army Headquarters at sea went ashore. By

this time, the Germans had been cleared from some fields near the little French town of Grand Campe, designated in advance as the first location of our CP. Shortly before our LSTs began to move, a few German planes had come overhead at a high altitude. Regardless of their altitude and the fact that they dropped no bombs, they drew a terrific amount of antiaircraft fire.

Once ashore, our vehicles from First Army Headquarters followed the prearranged road net from the beach exits to the site of our CP at Grand Campe. There we dug slit trenches for ourselves, ate our R-rations, and spent our first night ashore.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** Colonel McNamara went on to describe the laborious efforts required to sort out supplies, establish dump sites, forge communications, and move QM units into position to begin supporting the combat forces as they fought their way through the hedgerows and beyond. After the breakthrough at St. Lo and frantic pursuit across France and Belgium, winter descended and the Allies (notably the First Army) were dealt a major setback with the German counteroffensive in the Ardennes.

With the Battle of the Bulge behind them, the new year found the "Fighting First" again on the move, pushing relentlessly past the Rhine to the very heart of Nazi Germany. Colonel McNamara recounts many of the episodes that occurred along the way — instances of Quartermaster bravery, guts, hard work and sheer determination — that contributed immeasurably to the final victory. His eloquent conclusion, and praise for a job well done, could just as easily apply to *all* Quartermasters, in *all* theaters, in World War II.

## Final Victory

On May 15, 1945 [a week after V-E Day], First Army Headquarters departed by motor convoy from Weimar, Germany, the location of our last CP, to the Port of La Havre. By direction of our Chief of Staff, I traveled by plane to Paris, where I had my final interview with General Littlejohn. It was with deep sincerity that I expressed to him my appreciation for making possible all that I had been able to do in providing Quartermaster service within the First Army. The fact that the supplies and the troops had been available in Europe to be assigned or attached to the First Army, did not happen by accident. On the contrary, it happened because of the vision and imagination, as well as the intelligent planning of General Littlejohn and the splendid staff of officers with which he had surrounded himself.

Without General Littlejohn's foresight, I would never have been able to obtain the units for use in the First Army. Similarly, the fresh bread, the fresh meat, the fresh eggs, the cigarettes and cigars, new razor blades, and other items that were characteristically in demand and relished by the troops, would never have been available had they not been considered and thought of months in advance by this same staff.

The fact that we had laundry service in the field, the fact that our combat troops when pulled out of the line would go by battalions towards bath points where, after hot showers, they would exchange their dirty clothes for clean clothing, the fact that in our system of burials less than two per cent of our own dead were required to be marked "unknown," and the fact that by our salvage operations hundreds of tons of clothing and equipment were repaired and were kept in circulation among our own troops, were all reflections upon the ability and providence of the Chief Quartermaster of the European Theater.

## Our QM Soldiers

There were other people to whom I would have liked to express my thanks, had it been physically possible to do so. I was thinking of the truck drivers, who often carried our supplies and troops past a point of human physical endurance but who nevertheless kept going because they felt it their duty to do so. I was thinking of the officers and men of the 89th Quartermaster Railhead Company, who with enthusiasm had accepted their role as combat troops during the Battle of the Bulge. And I was thinking of those men who had stood out between our own infantry and the enemy tanks in

the gasoline dumps at Spa while loading the cans of gasoline on our trucks, with the result that not one ounce of gasoline was lost to the enemy. This impetus, this enthusiasm and spirit on the part of these subordinate officers and enlisted men which had made it possible to accomplish the Quartermaster mission within the First Army.

Lastly, I thought of the responsibility and the resiliency that had typified our Quartermaster groups, battalions and companies. All during the campaign we had been operating the First Army with a Quartermaster troop command that I had thought appropriate for an Army of 8 divisions and 3 corps. The minimum number of divisions that we had had within First Army after the Normandy operations were 12, divided into 3 corps. Most of the time, we had 15 or more divisions within the First Army. During the early phase of the Bulge, we had 22 divisions.

Consequently, the Quartermaster units of First Army had far exceeded their capacities as noted on the appropriate tables of organization and equipment. Our multiple movements of depot areas, however, placed even a higher strain upon these troops. I marveled then, as I do now, that at no time did a unit commander ever tell me or any of my staff officers that any assignment, plan or order would be impossible in its execution.

I consider that these three factors, namely, the farsightedness of the Chief Quartermaster of the Theater, the individual spirit of our Quartermaster soldiers, and the ingenuity and ability of our troop commanders, together combined to make possible the Quartermaster service that was given in First Army. It is my further opinion that this service was of such nature as to have reflected credit upon the Quartermaster Corps.

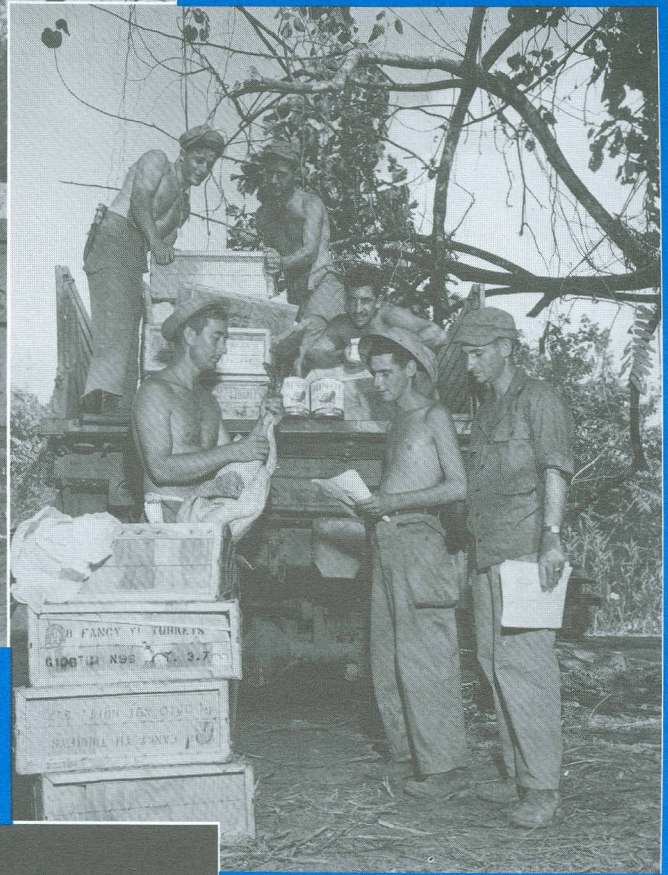


Frontline troops sought makeshift shelters in the frozen Ardennes during the Battle of the Bulge, December 1944.



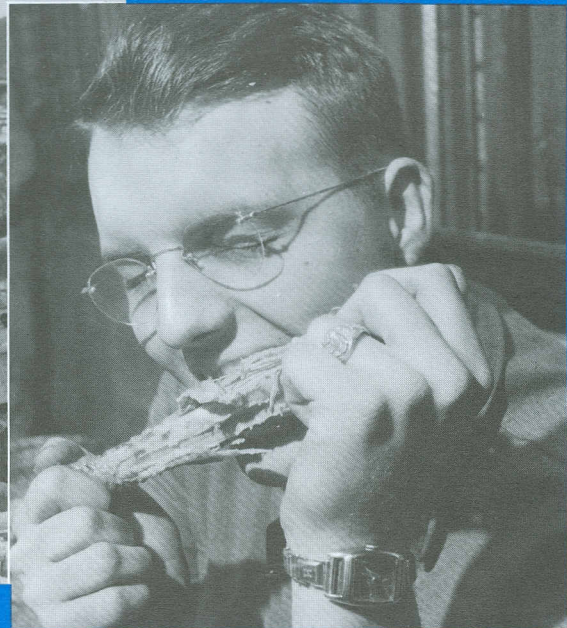
**Londoners crowd into Trafalgar Square to wait for the beginning of the Victory Parade, May 8, 1945.**

*After the War:* Colonel McNamara returned to the United States for a brief visit at the end of May 1945, before redeploying to the Philippines with an advance party from First Army Headquarters. General McNamara was The Quartermaster General in Washington from 1957 to 1961, and from that date until his retirement in 1964, he served as the first Director of the newly established Defense Supply Agency. In 1988, Lieutenant General McNamara was the first living member inducted into the Quartermaster Corps Hall of Fame.



'... every soldier had turkey. ...'





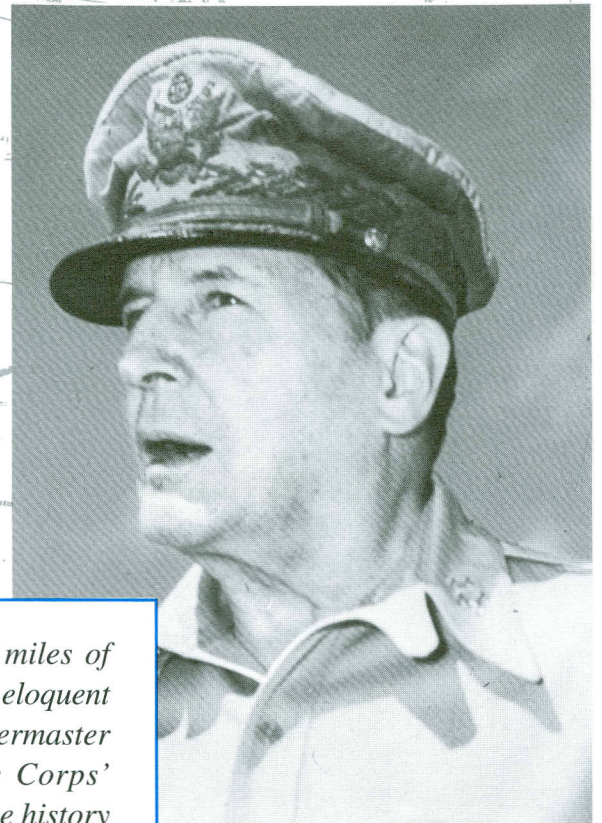
**“It is to the great credit of the Quartermaster Corps that on this Christmas Day [1944] every soldier had turkey; those in the front had turkey sandwiches and the rest, hot turkey. I know of no army in the world except the American which could have done such a thing. . . .”**

*General George S. Patton, Jr.  
War As I Knew It*





## WORLD WAR II Asia and the Pacific



*The steady flow of supplies across thousands of miles of water, or by air, during the Pacific War is in itself the most eloquent testimony conceivable as to the efficiency of the Quartermaster Corps. Both the magnitude of assignment and the Corps' performance in carrying it out are without parallel in the history of warfare.*

*In varied actions on widely separated islands, vital shipments, essential to the very existence of soldiers, came through, despite conditions never before encountered. The Quartermasters met the challenge completely and effectively.*

**General Douglas MacArthur**



*Quartermasters got their first taste of what was to come when Japanese forces isolated U.S. troops and their allies in the Philippines. American and Filipino troops on Bataan and Corregidor were slowly strangled. Cut off from supplies, some 6,500 miles from home, these men, including many Quartermasters, went down fighting.*

*For at least three months after December 7, 1941, the Japanese had the initiative in the Pacific and carried the war to the Allies. Painfully aware of the danger in the region and fighting a desperate holding action while the war in Europe took precedence, U.S. support troops began the job of building bases around the world. As the pendulum of war gradually shifted in favor of the Allies, the QM soldier found himself supplying not a retreat but the beginning of a counteroffensive that was to carry through to V-J Day.*

**GUADALCANAL.** In August 1942, lighters landed supplies at three points along a four-mile stretch of beach on the Japanese stronghold at *Guadalcanal*. The first waves were under constant aerial attack. Sharp coral, incessant rain, and high humidity meant, from a QM viewpoint, that there was a terrific toll in shoes. Thousands of replacement pairs had to be rushed inland by QMs and native carriers. QMs brought ashore gallons of insecticides and repellents to protect front-line troops from the murderous mosquitoes.

Under steady enemy fire, one bakery platoon operated nine ovens and turned out enough bread to supply 20 pounds a day for each 100 men.

**NEW GUINEA.** The next stop was *Port Moresby*, in southern New Guinea. From there, the fighting moved inland. QM soldiers pushed beyond frontiers and mountain ranges that had been unexplored until as recently as 1927. There they hacked and clawed their way through mud and jungle with

cases of supplies on their backs. They jammed material through by truck, jeep, boat, barge, mule and burro.

In November 1942, when General MacArthur took his next step toward the Philippines by landing at Buna on the north New Guinea coast, QMs found themselves up against a rugged situation. Their dumps had to be hewed out of the undergrowth, and they were cut off from the forward troops by hilly jungle, thick with enemy forces.

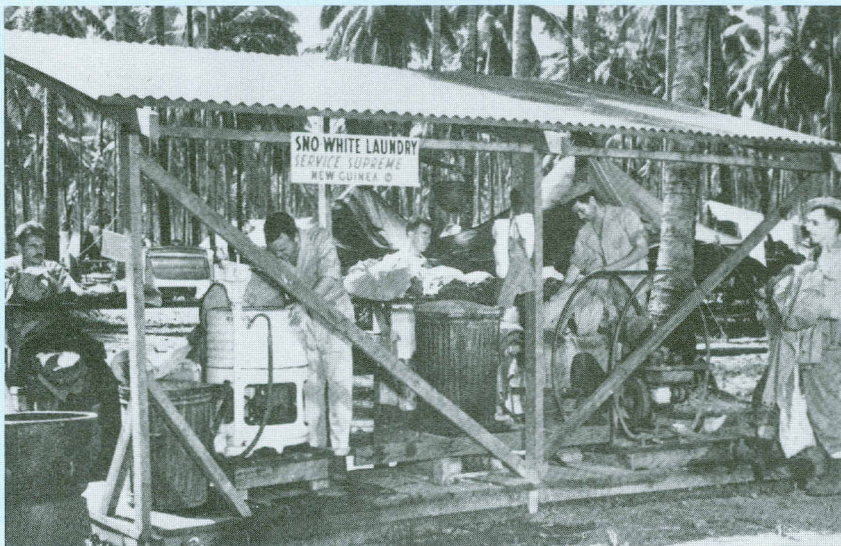
First, a sub-base was established at *Milne Bay*, and small cargo ships were unloaded there. Other small boats, ranging in capacity from 50 to 500 tons, transshipped this cargo and started toward the nearest small harbor on the road to Buna. There, supplies were transferred to even smaller boats and barges, carrying as little as 10 tons.

These were unloaded at night on bare beaches, through pounding surf. On alternate nights, supplies landed. On alternate days, supplies moved forward on the backs of QMs and

native carriers until they reached the combat troops. The infantrymen preferred not to think of what would happen if the QM supplymen did not get through.

**JUNGLE IMPS.** Improvisation kept the QMs going in their isolated bits of jungle, 2,000 miles from base. They built storage facilities for protection against the rains and terrible humidity. They created refrigeration units, primarily for hospital needs, and mounted them on improvised chassis. QMs of the Americal Division built their own ice plant out of junked materials. During this phase of the war, Japanese infiltrators and counterattacks were a constant danger.

QM operations in the assaults at *Biak* and *Hollandia* were mostly a matter of blood and sweat. Said a lieutenant colonel who observed the action: "To stand on a beach and watch these service companies sweat in the tropic heat to move the prodigious piles of supplies and equipment, or to see those



An improvised laundry in New Guinea made from salvaged parts and a commercial washer



A 'Rube Goldberg' machine built from a steel drum and an old motorcycle



drivers coax and wheedle their big vehicles over unbelievably bad terrain; or to witness the growth from chaos to orderliness in the supply dumps is to marvel at the individual back-breaking efforts and collective units' accomplishments."

Back at *New Caledonia*, one of the main supply bases, Quartermasters took over, set up or built canning factories, packing plants, machine shops, laundries, repair units, and virtually all the Services of Supply installations necessary to wage Pacific-style warfare.

While Allied troops on the other side of the globe were busy driving back the Germans in North Africa, Sicily and Italy and establishing a major base in Iceland, the Pacific forces in the north cleared Japanese invaders from the Aleu-

tian Islands (at Attu and Kiska). In that bleak, muddy, sunless region, QMs tried to keep it a clean war for their fellow GIs. Laundries and dry cleaning plants went to work on a large scale, helping ease an almost unbearable climate.

**CENTRAL PACIFIC.** The Pacific campaign was steadily progressing, and with it, QM supply techniques. For the assault on *Kwajalein*, January 31, 1944, Quartermasters devised and built more than 4,000 cargo sleds. Supplies palletized on these sleds could be moved rapidly from landing craft to shore dumps.

Supplymen relied on aerial tactics, too, in support of several operations. Isolated troops in New Guinea had been fed and equipped that way when land transport was too slow and difficult. In the *Papuan* campaign, concluded in January 1943, assault troops carried a two-day ration supply. When that was gone, it was up to the QMC to keep them going. Air supply again was the answer. It was a big factor, too, in *Burma* where QM soldiers took to the air to kick cases of rations out of C-47s to troops below.

In November 1943, one Quartermaster officer and 18 enlisted men re-



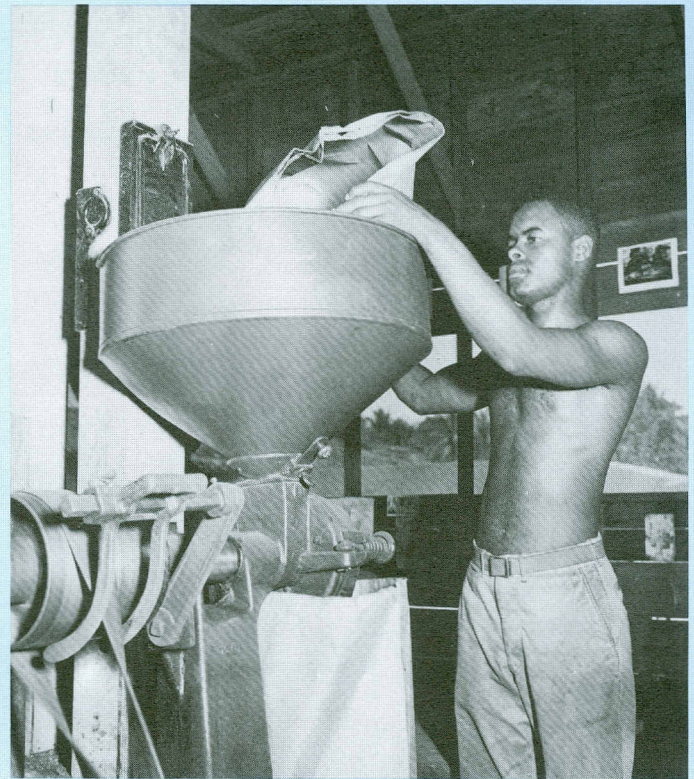
Filipino laborers arrange a huge pile of 10-in-1 rations in Luzon.

Soldiers on Iwo Jima get a welcome shower near the beach area.





**Bread received from a chute at the 314th QM Bakery Company, Guadalcanal**



**Coffee grinding at a mill on Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides**

ceived three Distinguished Flying Medals and 19 Air Medals. They were the unit which supplied by air the American, British, Chinese and Indian forces operating in the hills of upper Burma, the troops that were pushing the Japanese out of the way of the Ledo Road.

**SWEATING WAR.** While the campaigns that would liberate the Philippines and occupy the Ryukyus were in the making, thousands of Quartermasters were sweating out the war in foul climate and rear-area island bases. There they helped build the supply pressure needed to back the high-powered assaults that came in 1945. Months and years of labor and boredom do not rate battle stars, but without that work, the battles would not have been won by the right side. That knowledge was often the only reward many Quartermasters received for their efforts.

**THE FINAL LEG.** Quartermasters played a vital role to the very end in the Pacific campaign. They provided direct support to the fighting elements that ultimately liberated the Philippines and along the way had to defend not only their supply installations but themselves as well, against a skillful and determined foe. There were QMs on *Okinawa*, too, and *Ie Shima* — wherever there were combat troops, for that matter.

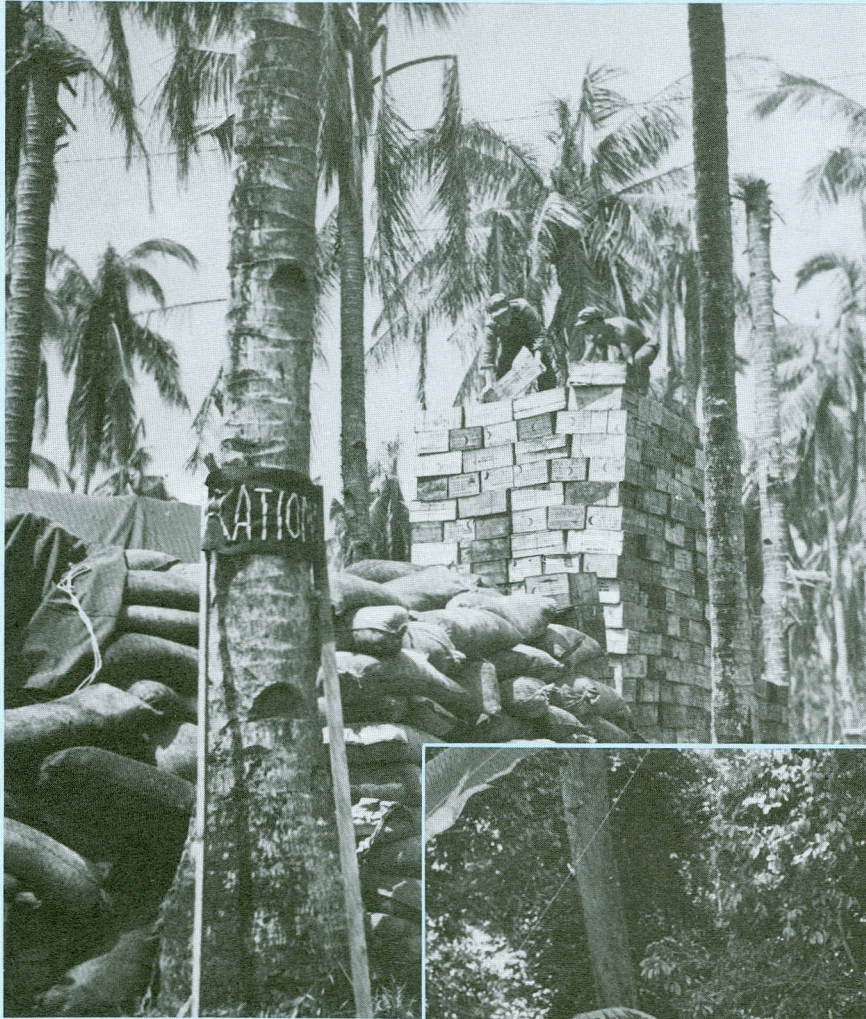
Much more could be told of the Quartermaster role in the Pacific. Of those who fought alongside the infantry. Of

those who probed for mines to help clear jungle roads and base areas. Of those QMs in India who worked night and day improvising to get fresh meat to the forward-area GIs. Of the courageous truck drivers who daily traversed the dangerous Stilwell Road.

There was the dangerous and brave work of salvage companies such as the one which went ashore right behind the infantry in the *Luzon* invasion. The Division Quartermaster Company which, in its division's drive from the *Lingayen Gulf* to *Manila*, supplied 32,000 men while the enemy threw everything they had at them. The QM pack trains that beat the roadless terrain on Luzon. The Quartermaster Group that supplied Marines for the invasion and occupation of a large part of *Okinawa*. The citations, awards, Purple Hearts, the countless QMs who died as a frontline infantryman might have died — Killed in Action.

The dropping of the atomic bomb prompted Japanese leaders to surrender on August 14, 1945. But it was not the bomb alone that brought victory to the Allies in the Pacific. Nor MacArthur's brilliant island-hopping strategy and continuous assault that wore down the enemy's defenses. No single element accounted for the outcome.

Rather, Japan was defeated by the best fighting combination the world had ever seen. The long road back from Bataan to Tokyo was a team effort. Quartermasters, supporting victory the whole way, were a vital part of that team.



Quartermaster ration dump,  
Leyte Island, Philippines

Water being carried  
over a mountain trail  
on Bougainville





LCT landing supplies at Bougainville (top)

Gasoline storage dump at Bougainville (bottom)

# OVER THE HUMP . . . AND INTO CHINA

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** LTG Woodrow W. Vaughan graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York (Class of 1940) and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Quartermaster Corps. He was still a first lieutenant stationed at Fort Meade, Maryland, when World War II broke out. In May 1942 he was reassigned to the 76th Infantry Division at Fort Meade and promoted to captain. He attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, from December 1942 to March 1943, during which time he was promoted to major. Expecting to go overseas after that, he was less than pleased to find out he had been assigned to the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations. To an aspiring young major, the China-Burma-India Theater looked like the kiss of death (a real "career-ender") but he was determined to do his best.

In 1991, General Vaughan was inducted into the Quartermaster Corps Hall of Fame. What follows are excerpts from a lengthy interview conducted by the Quartermaster Historian in the fall of 1992.

**INTERVIEWER:** How did you learn you were going to the Far East, and what was your reaction?

**LTG VAUGHAN:** My orders read to go to Camp Kilmore, New Jersey. About the time I got there I learned that I would be going some place in the Far East, in the China-Burma-India Theater. The information we got included a little pocketbook guide on the Hindu language. So I figured if I was going to be learning Hindustani, I probably wouldn't be going to Europe. . .

[When I got those orders] I was sick, sick . . . and very disappointed. I knew that Europe was the center of activity. That's where the war was going

to be fought. The stakes would be high, and the game would be won or lost on the outcome. So that's where I wanted to go. But when I got ordered to China, I thought, well this is the end of the road. What the hell, I didn't even know we had troops in China. Why are we there? Why am I going there? Nothing will ever happen, and I'll die on the vine.

So it was not a happy outlook as far as I was concerned. And I went there feeling I would probably spend the war in China. My contemporaries would win the war in Europe and reap all the benefits, and get promoted, and be able to tell their grandchildren how they won the war. And I'd be able to tell them how I saw the pagodas in the Far East.

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** Then-Major Vaughan sailed on the British liner *SS Mauritania* from New York, to Trinidad, Rio, Cape Town, Madagascar, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and landed in Bombay, India, in May 1943. He crossed northern India on a train, and flew "over the hump" to Kunming, China, in the far southwestern part of China near the Burma border. There he built and commanded the first General Depot in China.

**INTERVIEWER:** What was your mission in China?

**LTG VAUGHAN:** We had two principal missions in China when I first got there. We supported the 14th Air Force, because it was the only U.S. force



**LTG Woodrow W. Vaughan**

in combat. The 14th was commanded by Major General Claire Chennault, who had formerly been head of the "Flying Tigers" and was a close friend of Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang.

In addition, we had advisors with all the Chinese ground forces, similar to what we had in Korea with the Korean units and what we had ultimately in Vietnam. And we supported not only the advisors, but also the Chinese ground forces in a wholesale sense—with their equipment, ammunition and materiel that they couldn't obtain locally. We didn't run supply routes from our depots down to the units. We turned it over at depots to Chinese units that then made the distribution to their field organizations.

The only way to get supplies into China was by air. They flew from probably 20 airfields located throughout eastern India. We hoped they would go to the airfield they were manifested to. But weather would sometimes close down one airfield and leave another one open. . . . Once it landed at the airfield, the movement of supplies from that point was by truck. If it were for U.S. forces use, we trucked it ourselves or directed Chinese transportation units to

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take it from point to point. If the supplies were going to the Chinese combat elements, they picked it up in bulk at our depots and distributed it through their own system to their units.

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**INTERVIEWER:** Any lessons learned from dealing with the Chinese?

**LTG VAUGHAN:** I learned that we didn't have all the answers. By that I mean the tendency was to advise the Chinese to do it our way. Our way must be the best way. But I found that many times the Chinese had the better way. And so I guess what I learned was that while our advisors had to advise them on how to do things our way, because that's the only way we knew, it's good for an advisor to *listen*. Because some things might work in our culture, but don't work in theirs. . . . My tendency was to begin to talk the first month, and suddenly the second year I said, "well, I don't know as much as I thought."

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**HISTORICAL NOTE:** *As might be expected, the China-Burma-India Theater presented unique problems for Quartermasters. Since overland supply was not possible at first, everything had to be purchased locally or flown in. The Chinese built living quarters, storage and other facilities for the Americans and furnished subsistence such as eggs, bacon, bread and chicken. But to make the local food "taste like you were at home," said General Vaughan, they had flown in condiments such as "coffee, salt, pepper, jelly, peanut butter, ketchup, and other accessories." One item extremely rare, and therefore missed all the more in the CBI, was American beer.*

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**LTG VAUGHAN:** We had a rule in China that the beer ration, which troops around the world got (like six cans a month, or some number), could be supplied as it arrived in the theater. But because it had to be flown from India to China, we had a rule against flying any of it in. So we led a pretty sparse existence so far as the "goodies" were

concerned. In the winter of '44, just about Christmas time, I happened to be in India, and I was shown around warehouses in Assam. In them were mountains of things that had been brought that far for us, but couldn't go any further because we had no way to get them in except by air. One of the items was beer.

I said to myself, "why couldn't I give the people in China a Christmas present?" So I sat down and with the help of the people there, computed about how much we would need. I think we had at that time about 25 or 30,000 people [in theater]. I figured what it would take to give each man six cans of beer. We computed it out. It wasn't very many airplane loads, didn't seem like. So I said, "ship it."

We had a radio-telephone hookup. I got in touch with my exec in Kunming and said we're going to ship it over. And as soon as it arrives, get it distributed so that every soldier gets his six-pack before Christmas. Well, the people in India were hesitant to ship it because we did have a rule against it. And I said, "well, I'm the man that determines whether or not we get it or we don't get it. So I'm telling you, *ship it*. I'm giving you authority on behalf of the CG." MG Albert C. Wedemeyer [the new Theater Commander] was in Washington at the time. We shipped it over, got it distributed. And I must say that the people in China thought this was the greatest thing since sliced bread.

Not long after that General Wedemeyer returned. In early January he asked to see me. When I went in, he inquired as whether I had authorized the shipment of beer. I said, "yes." And he said, "but you know we have a rule against that." I said, "Yes, sir." But it just seemed to me that our people had been there so long, not having a single bit of it. It wasn't going to take up too much of our valuable tonnage. And I got envious of what the troops in India were getting. They were getting double doses, because they were also drinking up our quota. I just decided it would be a good thing for the morale of the theater to do it. [So I told him.] "I did it. I take full responsibility."

He just said, "I understand your reasons for doing it. Just don't do it

again." I never did it again, but I always thought down deep in my heart that he was glad I did it, but he couldn't officially sanction it.

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**HISTORICAL NOTE:** *General Vaughan was introduced to General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, but had no first-hand dealings with him. As a member of General Wedemeyer's G-4 staff he did come to know the latter quite well, and the two remained friends for years. After V-J Day, General Vaughan was in charge of redeployment operations throughout China, and later worked closely with General George C. Marshall's postwar mission to China. Instead of being the "career-ender" that he feared, the assignment to the China-Burma-India Theater was a blessing in disguise. It marked the beginning of a truly spectacular career, with 38 years of active duty service as a Quartermaster officer.*

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**INTERVIEWER:** You thought by going to the Far East you would never make it to lieutenant colonel. But in fact you were promoted to full colonel in November 1945, while still in China. And at age 27 that made you one of the youngest officers to hold that rank in the entire U.S. Army. What do you make of that?

**LTG VAUGHAN:** As I remarked earlier, when I was ordered there I was very disappointed because I felt that would be the end. There would be nothing going on. I wouldn't have an opportunity to do anything. . . . Well, I found that you never know when you have the opportunity. You can't predict ahead of time what will happen. [Going back to my West Point days, I learned] you have to recite every day, prepare yourself every day. Do whatever your job is that day as well as you can. And if the right circumstances come along, you're ready for them.

So while I went to China very disappointed, all my classmates who went to Europe, they were battalion commanders who were lieutenant colonels. And I was promoted maybe a year after they were. But when the China Theater

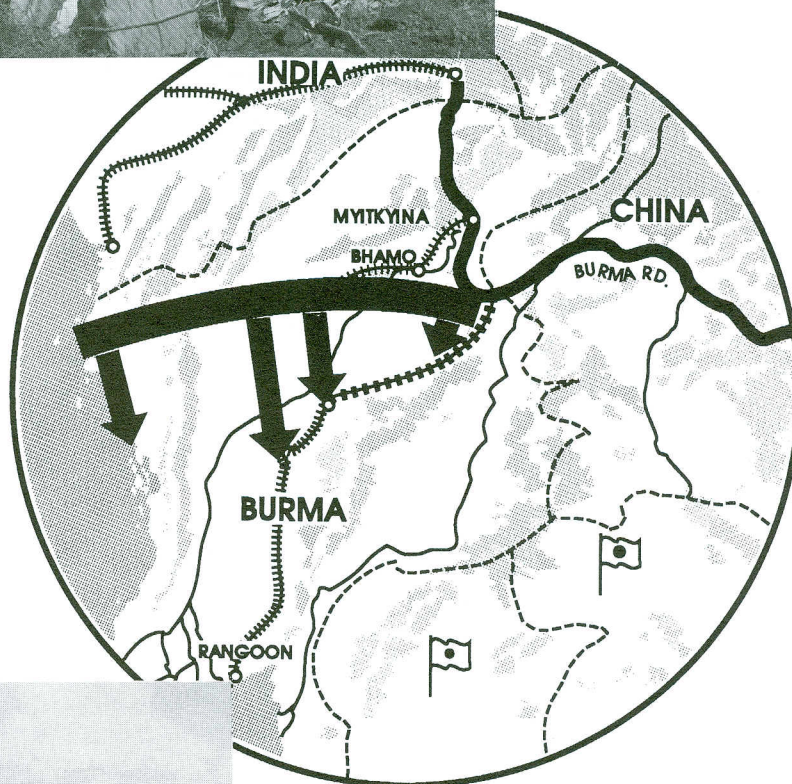
split off from the India-Burma Theater [in late 1944], then it produced a hierarchy of its own. It had to do for itself what it had been relying on others to do previous to that time. By being on the spot, I was made the G-4 of the rear echelon of the China Theater; was promoted to lieutenant colonel and subsequently to colonel; and had many great opportunities and experiences, none of which I had anticipated when I first went there.

That was a big lesson in itself. Don't try to guide your career based upon where you think you ought to go to advance yourself along the line. You can't do that. There are too many ifs, ands, and buts; too many emergencies that happen; too many unusual things; too many things you can't possibly predict . . .

There were only three people in my [West Point] class who were promoted to colonel in World War II. One was an engineer officer who was in the European Theater, and was in a combat engineer unit that was exposed many times. He had an opportunity to display his ability and was made a group commander. Another was an infantry regimental commander whose unit was decimated on the landing. He really took over a part of the beach and single-handedly led that part of the landing. When his regimental commander was killed, he was made regimental commander and promoted. And myself in the boondocks of China—as far away from the “real” activity of World War II as one could have been. So you just don't know about the future. . . .



**Food supplies  
dropped by cargo  
plane on Chinese rice  
paddy**



**Pack animals were indispensable  
for distributing supplies in China  
and Burma.**

# Pfc Paskewitz

## SERVICE OF SUPPLY GI



**HISTORICAL NOTE:** From late 1942 until the war ended, the Quartermaster School produced an exceptionally useful and well-written publication entitled the QUARTERMASTER TRAINING SERVICE JOURNAL. Each issue ran to about 30 pages. They contained feature articles, letters to the editor, “how to” pieces, training tips, clever graphics and lots of pictures. About 30,000 copies of the JOURNAL were sent weekly to Quartermaster troops around the world.

One of the most popular and entertaining features was not to be found inside the JOURNAL, but rather on its back cover: the cartoon section called “Quartermaster Gigs and Gags.” Chances are most readers, before checking out anything else, would automatically flip it over and see what ole Paskewitz was up to. “Paske-WHO?”

Private (No First Name) Paskewitz. He was the prototypical QM “grunt.” One of the JOURNAL’S writers, in the excerpt reprinted below, paints a knowing portrait of “Pvt P.” It helps explain why this humble cartoon character enjoyed such a huge following in the field.

*He inhabited the world of the QM . . . and his job was to sweat forward what infantrymen, such as Joe and Willie of Cartoonist Bill Mauldin fame, ate, wore and used. His was the world of ration crates, clothing bales, and gasoline dumps.*

Paskewitz was the soldier who baked the bread, sewed the pants, retrieved and repaired discarded mess kits, butchered cows, drove mules, trained war dogs, filled jerricans, washed clothes, drove trucks, toted packboards, killed lice, and buried the dead.

He was a citizen-soldier who knew all about work, little about glory. An Army-hardened, cynical, 100% goldbrick, he learned angles the hard way. He’d had more days on KP than many an Infantryman had in the service. He handled enough crates to supply the invasion of Okinawa and picked up enough cigarette butts to eliminate Army rationing. He stood inspection more times than a show horse, took more orders than Sears-Roebuck in a boom year, and uttered the words “Yes, Sir!” so often and with such obviously heartfelt sincerity that a post-war career in Hollywood seems predestined.

Among all the weary men of the Army Service Forces, Paskewitz was the weariest.

**No Young’un.** As many Quartermasters, Paskewitz is no youngster. Before the war, he’d been a civilian for a long time. At this late stage, he’s still a civilian at heart — despite the Army’s most determined efforts. Regimentation is something he never could stand. His appearance proved it. His trousers were patched and his jacket was torn — even when his job was to repair clothes for a few thousand other GI’s.

He sported a beard (not a full growth like Joe and Willie who didn’t have a chance to use a razor, but just a lazy man’s stubble). His sparse hair hung in his eyes, and a cigarette usually dangled from his mouth. In his early days of training, the subject of camouflage caught his fancy. Something positively ostrich-like in his nature made him take great delight in sticking a leafy branch in his helmet so that he could hide from the world — and to him there was as much to hide from in the Z of I [Zone of Interior] as there was in the front lines.



**The Champ.** This pudgy, sloppy, weary soldier was the champion of the Army supplymen. He understood their feelings and he faced their problems. For example, he shared the attitude of many of his readers towards certain officers. In one cartoon Paskewitz, who for once in his career was neat and clean, stood before a court-martial. The presiding officer said, "Pvt. Paskewitz, you will please tell the board exactly why you pinned the mistletoe to the major's coat tail?"

**Combat QM's.** His attitude toward supplymen in action hinged on a fine enigma. Many Quartermasters had seen lads who never got out of the Communications Zone boasting about their exploits at the front, and heard infantrymen, or engineers, or others who will swear on a stack of bibles that the QM never existed who ever saw action. Paskewitz attacked both generalizations:

In one episode, he was far behind the lines, sitting next to a baker who was breaking eggs into a pan. Paskewitz re-

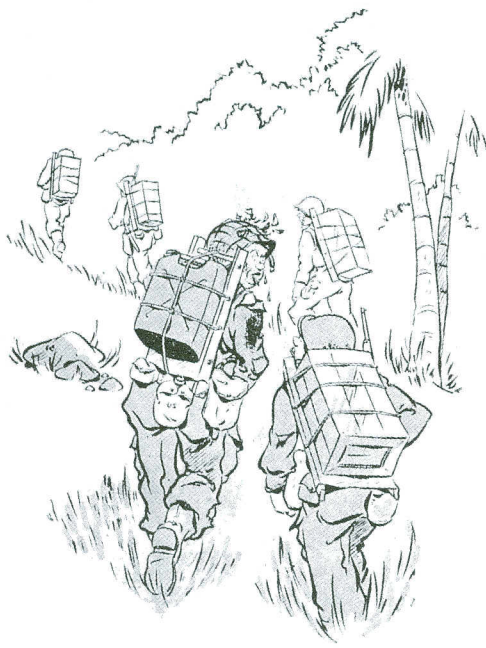
ported, in a letter he happened to be writing, "— And as I sit here with shells cracking all around me —."

The idea that service troops are always behind the fighting was lampooned in a cartoon which showed Pvt. P. sitting comfortably on a stack of gasoline cans, leisurely reading a newspaper and resting against a sign which pointed the way to Berlin. A tank drove up and a high-ranking officer popped out of the turret. Paskewitz drawled, "Sump'n detain youse, Sir?"

Paskewitz also learned a thing or two about glory and credit. Once when he singlehandedly killed a squad of Japanese, his superior officer congratulated him with a hearty pat on the back and these words: "— And Paskewitz, a copy of the letter of commendation will be placed in your 201 file!"

**Creator.** The man who created and drew Paskewitz was tall, balding, 32-year-old SGT CHESTER ADAMS, who, as he was nowise loathe to admit, felt about the Army very much as Paskewitz did. He began drawing cartoons for the *Journal* in November 1943. At first, he had no definite character in mind. He just drew cartoons which he hoped Quartermasters would find funny.

A fellow artist used to letter in the captions. This other artist was named ANTHONY PASKEWITZ, and he came from Greenpoint, New York. For a gag one day, Adams drew a far from lifelike caricature of the real Paskewitz, used the name in the gag line, and had him speak "Green-



"De next guy asks me how many miles I get to the gallon gets a sock in the puss!"



"What did you expect, dearie—Chanel No. 5?"

perntese.” Adams liked the result and tried the same character a few more times. Then several readers wrote in and asked for more. Soon “Private Paskewitz” was known throughout the Corps, and readers became indignant if he failed to appear in his weekly slot.

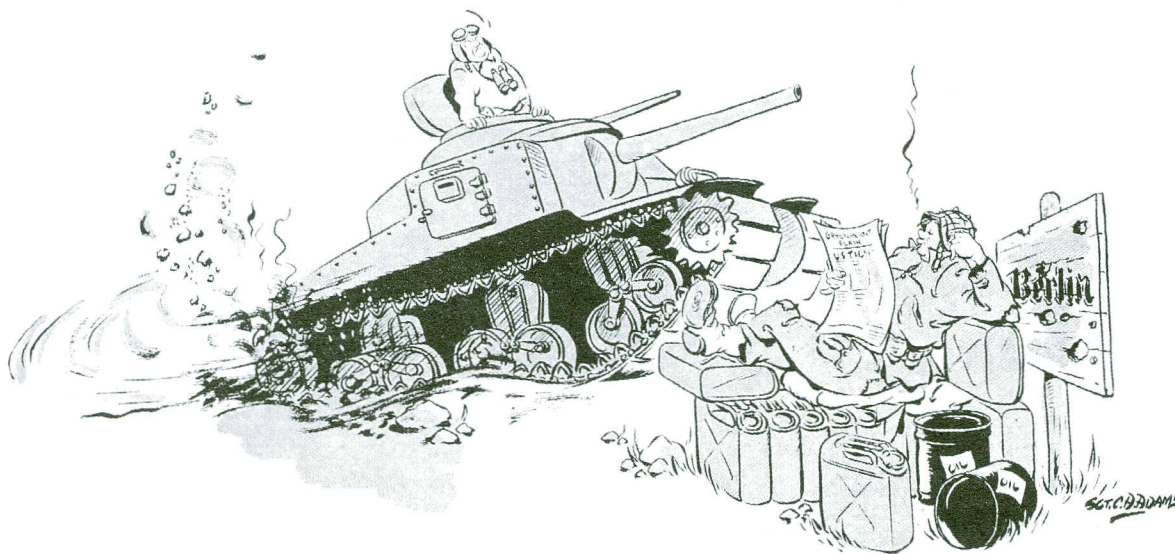
**Armywide Role.** Because of his popularity, the Army Service Forces picked up Pvt. P. and used him on official conservation posters. In this role, he was pinned up on bulletin boards throughout the Army.

*When the war ended, the JOURNAL ceased publication. As for Paskewitz, he was awarded an “Honorable Discharge” and resumed life as a civilian. His inspired creator, Sgt CHESTER ADAMS (who is reported to have felt the same way about the Army as Paskewitz) did the same.*

*For a sampling of vintage Paskewitz, see the following.*

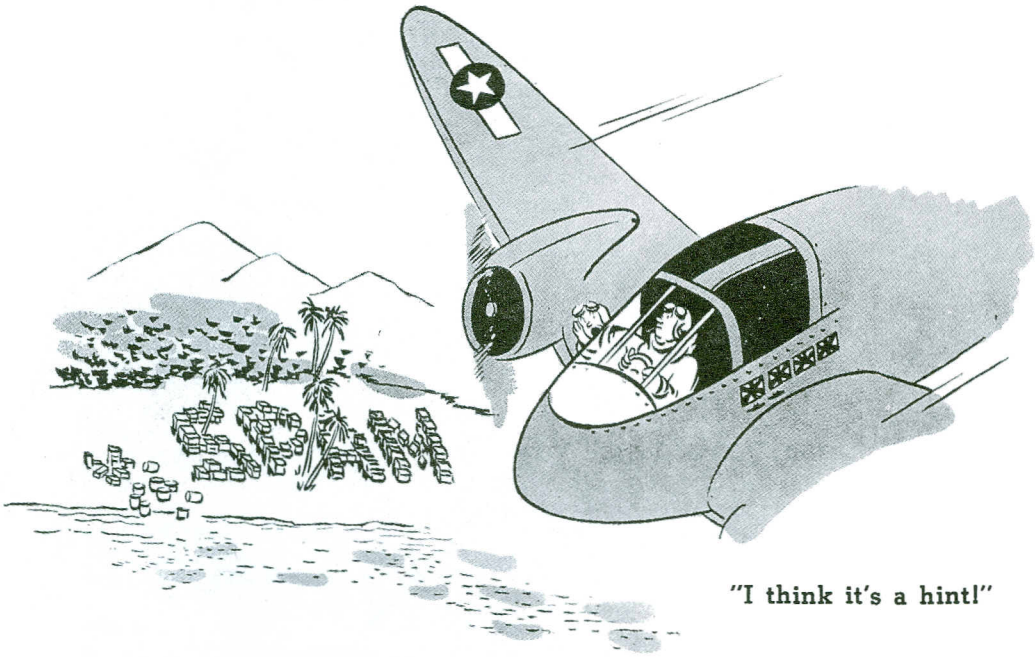


“No paper clips! Can’t you QM’s remember anything?”



“Sump’n detain youse, sir?”

# QUARTERMASTER GIGS AND GAGS



“—and as I sit here with shells cracking all around me—!”



"Quit beefin', you dope. It ain't that kind of sterilization!"



"Well, it's one place in th' Army where people seem to know what they're doin'."



"And did you fellows hear what that big fat corporal said about the first sergeant—?"

QUARTERMASTER  
**GIGS AND GAGS**



PASS THIS  
JOURNAL  
ALONG TO:



# Crosses at Normandy, June 1944

COL Elbert E. Legg



Sergeant Legg after he joined  
the 82nd Airborne Division

*This narrative relates some of my personal experiences as a sergeant squad leader in the 603rd Quartermaster Graves Registration Company in the first days of the Allied invasion at Normandy, France, in June 1944. As a squad leader in the 4th Platoon, I decided it would be a good idea to have someone accompany the glider elements of the 82d Airborne Division on D-Day. My name was submitted as the "volunteer" to make the first U.S. Army Quartermaster graves registration combat airborne landing.*

*This narrative also details how a cemetery was established near a village called Blosville about three miles south of Ste. Mere Eglise, an area with crashed gliders strewn everywhere and hundreds of parachutes hanging from hedges, trees and houses. The Blosville Cemetery was one of six American cemeteries established in a radius of about 20 miles. This was due in part to the overall lack of ground communication between the attacking elements. Graves registration services were plentiful. At the outset, the Blosville Cemetery was intended to be temporary and primarily serve the 82nd Airborne Division. By the time the St. Lo breakout took place and Allied forces moved east into central France, this cemetery contained over 6,000 Allied graves.*

## Major Invasion Force

In March 1944, the 603rd Quartermaster Graves Registration Company, then stationed in England, was assigned

to support the VII Army Corps which was to be the major U.S. force invading France on D-Day, 6 June 1944. Each of the four platoons of the company was assigned to support one of the assault divisions of the VII Corps. The assignments were as follows: 1st Platoon to the 4th Infantry Division, 2nd Platoon to the 9th Infantry Division, 3rd Platoon to the 90th Infantry Division and 4th Platoon to the 82nd Airborne Division. Each platoon joined its respective division about two months before the invasion. The waiting time between joining a division and the invasion itself was taken up by weapons and special equipment training. In addition, the graves registration personnel conducted special classes for the assault combat units on how to process and evacuate battle dead.

The 4th Platoon, my unit, joined the 82nd Airborne Division at Leicheston, England. The Division was a veteran unit, having fought in Sicily and Italy. However, even with that experience, the Division did not know how graves registration services would work in a battle setting such as Normandy. No one did, including the graves registration personnel who would be providing the services. Everyone had his own visualization of how things should be done. In training we were taught that the combat units would evacuate their dead to a regimental, or in some cases, division collecting point. From there the supporting graves registration units would evacuate and process the dead and establish area cemeteries, as opposed to unit cemeteries.

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## High Casualty Estimates

Because no one in the 4th Platoon was parachute-qualified, we assumed that everyone would journey to France as part of the seaborne 82nd Airborne Division logistical trains. The schedule called for the graves registration unit and its vehicles to arrive on the beach about D+3. This would be too long for mass casualties to go unprocessed on the battlefield. Estimates of battle dead for establishing the beachhead ran as high as 10,000 American soldiers.

Some pessimistic estimates had the airborne forces isolated from the beach landing forces for as much as a week. Graves registration representation with the airborne forces would be a valuable asset in such a situation. I asked my platoon leader, First Lieutenant Edwin Miller, to explore the possibility of a manifest space in one of the gliders. Lieutenant Miller returned from his next commanders meeting with word that the 82nd Airborne Division staff was delighted to have a graves registration representative accompany the glider elements.

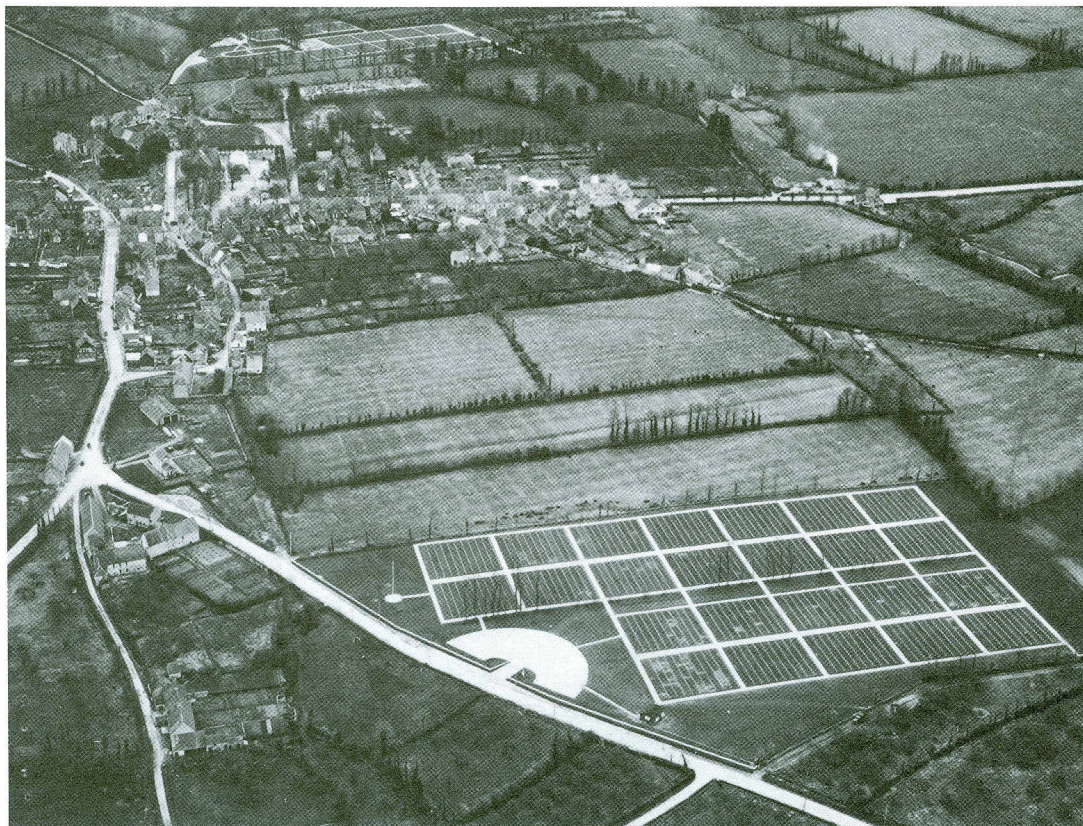
On the afternoon of June 1st, I took my personal and combat gear and moved to a Niesan hut in the division headquarters area. This was the last time I would see members of my 4th Platoon until mid-June. My new bunk mates were all representatives of support and attached units who would be going into Normandy by glider. The next day we were taken to an airfield and given "glider training" which consisted of loading and unloading a glider, lashing and knot tying. We

trained on an American GC-4A glider. However, as it turned out, the personnel receiving GC-4A training would enter into the objective area in a larger, wooden, British Horsa glider. We were all given a certificate signed by the division commander verifying we were trained and qualified to ride a glider.

## The Real Thing

On the 3rd of June my group was moved to a nearby airfield and billeted in a tent city. The area was surrounded by barbed wire and armed sentries. Everyone could sense this was the real thing. There was nothing to do except write letters, eat and think. During the late afternoon of 4 June, long lines of combat-equipped paratroopers marched by on the way to their waiting aircraft. Their pockets bulged with all sorts of combat paraphernalia including weapons, rations, grenades and land mines. The glider troops stood and watched them march by for what seemed like hours. Darkness comes late in England in June, so we were able to witness these same troops return from their aircraft starting about 10 o'clock. This was not to be the day of the long-awaited invasion. We understood why when, about midnight, it started a slow rain that lasted through the night.

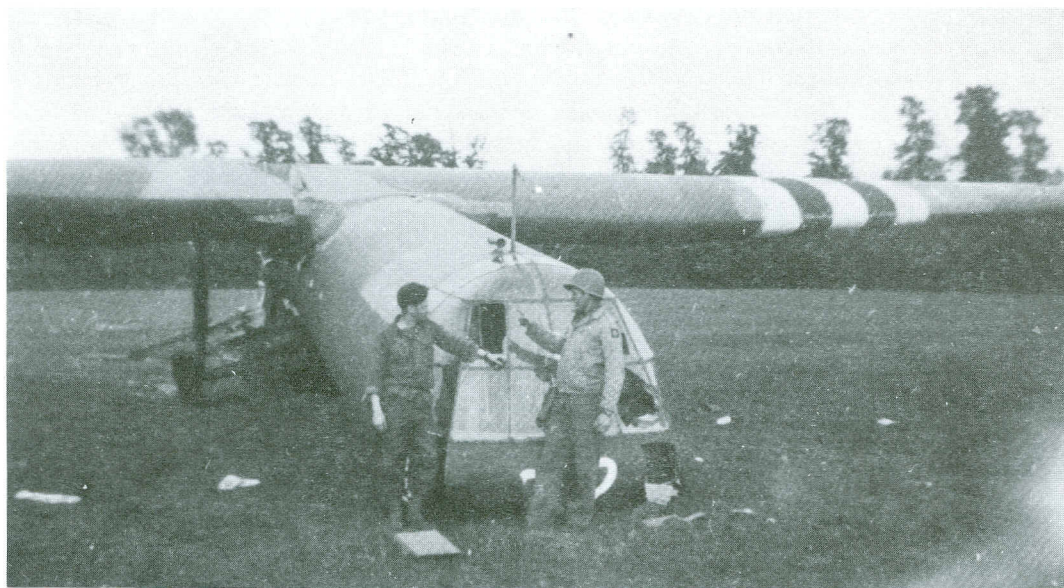
The next day, 5 June 1944, the paratroopers again made their slow trek to the aircraft. About 9 o'clock that evening the transport planes could be heard warming up. In a couple of hours it was obvious the planes were taking off and heading south. The invasion was on!



Aerial view of military cemeteries at Ste. Mere Eglise

The next morning, 6 June 1944, the glider troops were able to hear a radio in the big mess tent. The announcement was loud and clear that airborne troops had landed in Normandy. Some of the ground crews from the air corps came in for a quick breakfast. They said many of the planes had not returned and others making it back were badly damaged. This brought the first true realization that this was war and our glider elements would soon be a part of it.

Later that day the glider troops were formed up with their gear and marched to the loading area. There were double rows of planes and gliders as far as one could see in both directions. A long nylon cable coiled back and forth



**Sergeant Legg (right) and a comrade examine crash damage to glider No. 32.**

like a snake between each plane and glider. After checking, I found my glider would be carrying a jeep, a loaded quarter-ton trailer and 11 men. It was marked with the large invasion force white bands and bore the identification number "32" painted on its nose. Two officers joined the group for the first time, Major John Backer (finance) from division headquarters and a First Lieutenant James Fraim. They chose the two jump seats in the tail section back of the jeep and trailer. A sergeant came by and instructed the group on how to unbolt the tail section, lift the glider nose and back the jeep out the rear. This was a procedure peculiar to the British Horsa glider and had not been included in our previous training.

After takeoff, it was a two-hour flight heading south for Normandy. The flight was uneventful, except most got airsick as we crossed the English Channel. As the gliders crossed the Normandy coast, the seaborne invasion was spread out below. Thousands of ships, battle smoke, heavy seas and the equipment jam-up on the beach were all clearly visible. The larger guns could be heard, tracers laced the landscape and some anti-aircraft fire could be heard at a distance in our flight formation.

## Eerie and Quiet

Once past the coast, it was only minutes flying time to LZ (landing zone) "W," our designated landing area located about eight miles inland from Utah Beach. The glider pilots could be seen pointing out reference points and looking for their landing zone. Finally the pilot slowly placed his hand on the overhead release handle and gave it a downward jerk. The tow cable could be seen falling away to the front. The glider banked hard to the right and everything was eerie and quiet.

Gliders could be seen in free flight in all directions. Our two pilots seemed to have as much trouble avoiding collision as they did finding their landing spot in LZ "W."

The glider came in over a hedge of trees about 80 feet high and nosed down into a level pasture. The pilot brought the nose up just as the glider was about to touch. This resulted in a hard pancake-type landing. The front strut came through the wooden floor of the glider and ripped toward the rear, barely missing the legs of some of the troops. The entire tail section, with the two attached officer passengers, broke away and rolled about the field. The

jeep and trailer broke through the floor and came to rest near ground level on top of the vehicle rigging gear. Loose equipment of all kinds flew forward and piled against the back of the pilot seats. Helmets that were not strapped down ended up in the cockpit.

A sergeant in the front asked if anyone was hurt. A quick check showed everyone in the glider was all right. Outside on the tail section was Lieutenant Fraim, shaken up but otherwise ready to go. Major Backer had broken ribs and had to be assisted out of his seat. The sun was still shining and the weather was beautiful in a place called Normandy, France.

The glider had landed in its designated field in LZ "W" about three miles south of Ste. Mere Eglise and a few hundred yards from the personnel assembly point at the crossroads of Les Forges. It was early evening and we had about four hours before dark. While the bulk of the troops began to free the vehicle and equipment from the glider debris, I volunteered to look for the assembly point. Since the glider had landed in the correct location, it was simple enough to find.



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I walked south down a farm path and came to a paved road running east and west. Turning right, I came to Les Forges Crossroads in less than 10 minutes. On the way there, I met a patrol from the 4th Infantry Division who had come in from the beach. They said their part of the landing was fairly easy, which was good news to me. At the assembly point, I found several dozen soldiers milling about, looking for their units. In an apple orchard in the southeast quadrant of the Crossroads, a collection point for the wounded

**‘... I went to one corner of the field and stuck my heel in the ground. This would be the upper left corner of the first grave.’**

was being set up. About 20 wounded lay on the ground and were being treated by a doctor. They were all glider crash casualties, including one pilot who had both of his feet dragged off in the landing. More were coming in, and I realized this was a high-risk business I had gotten myself into.

As I was returning to our glider, I also became aware of the rifle and machine gun fire that could be heard about two hedgerows away. I ignored the firing and returned to guide the rest of the party to the assembly point.

### **Hit the Ground**

After gathering all our equipment, we formed into sort of a march column and headed for Les Forges, with me leading. As we headed down the farm path, everyone was expecting an enemy soldier to be behind every bush. Suddenly, a burst of automatic small arms fire could be heard in the rear of the column. We all hit the ground and prepared for action. A soldier bringing up the rear of our column shouted: “It was me, my BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) went off accidentally. Sorry.” We were all relieved but had to listen while Lieutenant Fraim gave a short lecture on being “trigger happy.” We reached the assembly point without further incident and the group dispersed as they searched for their units.

Lieutenant Fraim approached me at this point and announced he was the appointed Graves Registration Officer for the 82nd Airborne Division. He was an officer in the 407th Airborne Quartermaster Company that was organic to the division. It would have been worthwhile for the two of us to have coordinated activities while we were still in England. Lieutenant Fraim said there were several dead in the immediate area, and a cemetery site should be selected. I reminded him that our mission was to establish collecting points, but no mention had been made of actual burials before the arrival of my platoon. Lieutenant Fraim replied that the first collecting point should be made in one of the many large fields in the area, and further progress would depend on the developing situation.

### **First Time in My Life**

After a quick check of the surrounding area, I selected a large field southwest of and adjacent to Les Forges Cross-

roads as the first work site. Four dead paratroopers already lay in the corner by the Crossroads. Five gliders were in the hedgerows that surrounded the field. As I examined the site, two jeeps with trailers loaded with bodies drove in, and were directed to the corner of the field where the other bodies lay. The drivers made it clear they were delivering but not unloading. I sized up the situation and

decided the time had come for me to be, and to act like, the graves registration representative that I was. For the first time in my life I

touched a dead man. I grabbed the leg of one of the bodies and rolled it off onto the ground. As I struggled, the drivers gave in and assisted me with the remainder of the bodies. There were now 14 dead lying in a row and more loaded vehicles were driving into the field.

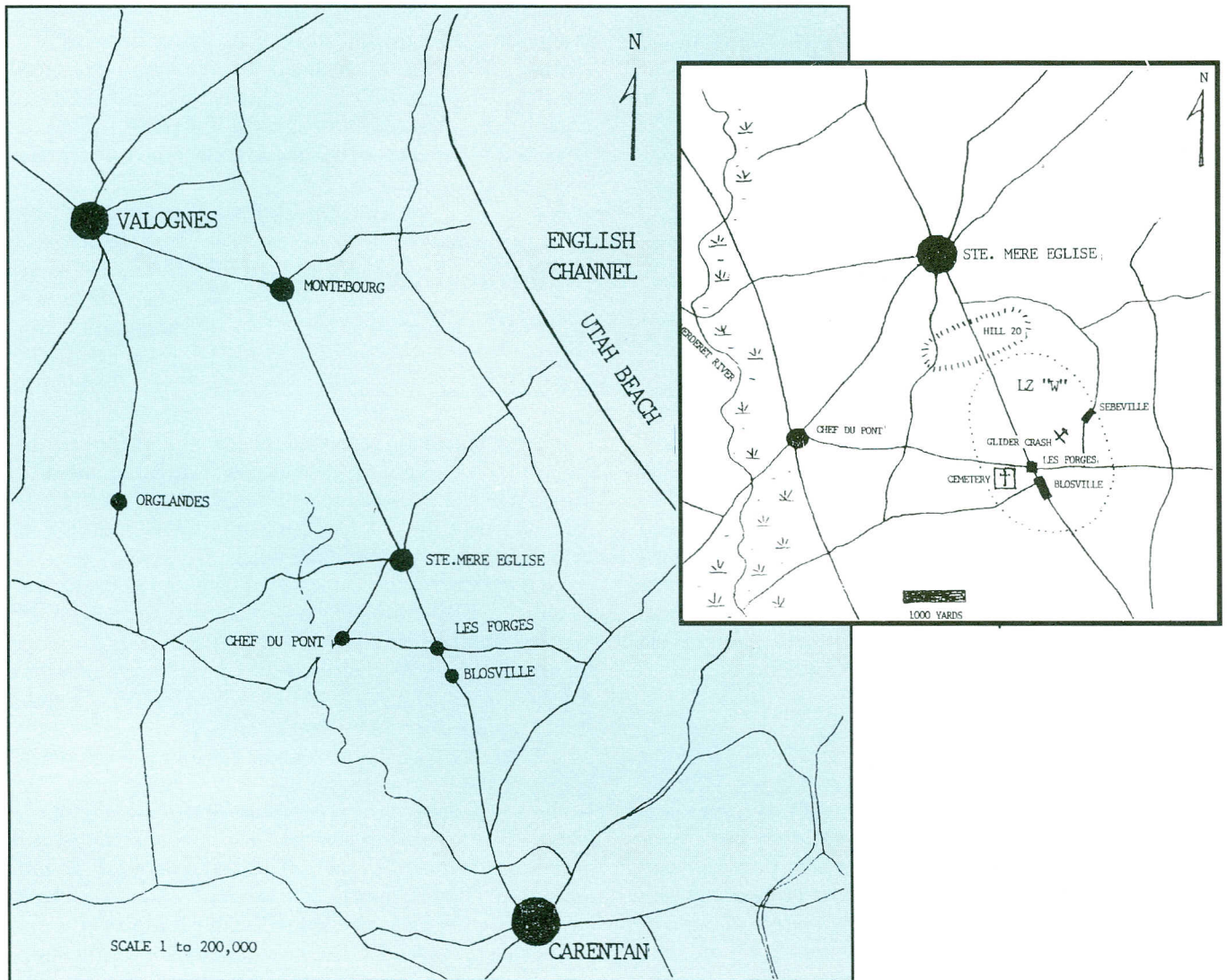
Lieutenant Fraim came by and instructed me to start visualizing how I would lay out a cemetery in the field. He said he would go into the village of Blosville and arrange for civilian labor. When asked how he would pay the workers, he displayed a musette bag full of invasion French francs intended for that purpose.

After studying the surrounding terrain, I went to one corner of the field and stuck my heel in the ground. This would be the upper left corner of the first grave. I found an empty K-ration carton and split it into wooden stakes. I paced off the graves in rows of 20 and marked them with the stakes. I had no transit, tape measure, shovels, picks or any other equipment needed to establish a properly laid out cemetery. I also lacked burial bags (mattress covers), grave registration forms and personal effects bags. The situation rapidly exceeded what had originally been planned for the one-man graves registration unit, and this was still the first day.

### **Battle for Normandy on All Sides**

Lieutenant Fraim returned and said he had arranged for about 35 Frenchmen to start digging graves the next morning. By this time about 50 bodies awaited burial. It was nearing darkness and I began looking for a place to sleep. A major who appeared to be coordinating local defenses helped out by assigning me a position in the orchard near where the aid station had been set up.

The battle for Normandy was progressing on all sides, but I had been too busy with the new cemetery to get involved. About a half mile north of Les Forges Crossroads at a location called Hill 20 on the road to Ste. Mere Eglise, the Germans had a strong emplacement with a dug-in 88mm gun. Attempts to dislodge them with riflemen had failed. Two 4th Division tanks made it in from the beach and attacked up the road. Both were knocked out by the German gun about 200 yards north of Les Forges.



I found an abandoned foxhole in the middle of the orchard and set up housekeeping. Sleep came easily as the fatigue of the day's events had begun to take its toll.

Some time after midnight a German patrol stumbled into the orchard and was challenged from all sides by rifle fire. A lively exchange took place, and the German patrol leader could be clearly heard shouting and directing his men out of the danger area. I did not feel obliged to take part and did not leave my foxhole or fire a shot.

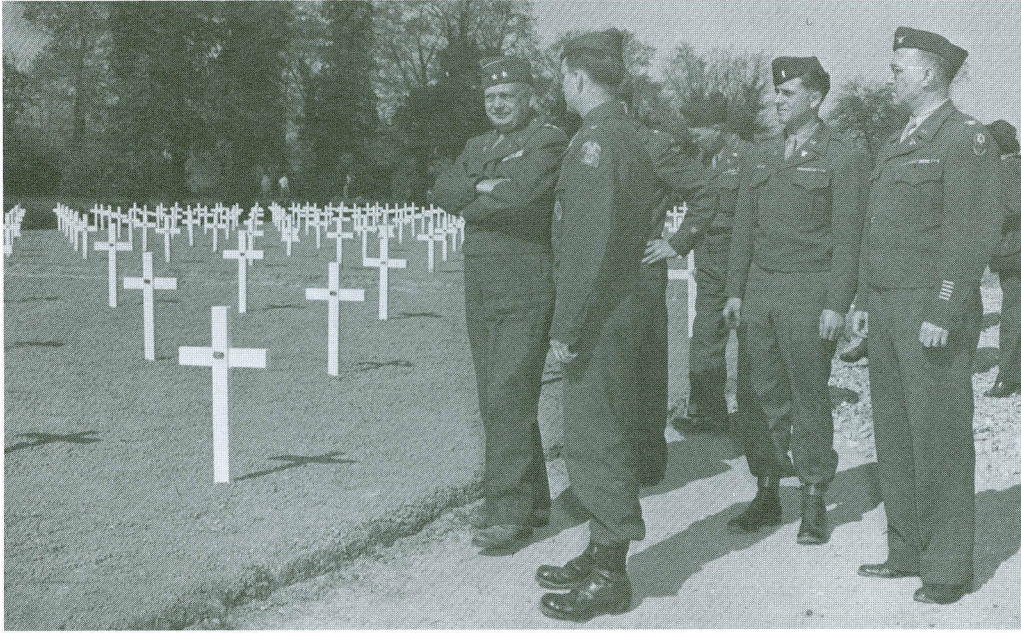
Dawn came early and the troopers began improving their defenses and prepared to attack the pockets of resistance about them. The skirmish the night before had not resulted in any friendly casualties nor, apparently, any on the German side. The hedgerow on the south side of the orchard was strewn with battle debris, mostly of German origin.

I gathered my gear and headed toward the cemetery site. As I crossed the road I could see a column of Frenchmen coming my way, carrying a mixture of picks and shovels and lunch pails. All the men were very old or crippled in some way. It took little time to assign them to digging

graves. There was little conversation since I spoke no French and they spoke no English. The long row of bodies and marking stakes made it apparent what was to be done.

### Parachute Becomes 'Filing Cabinet'

Once everyone had his assignment and was digging, I began the job of processing bodies. There were plenty of parachutes in the field, so nylon parachute panels served as personal effects bags and body bags. Each body was searched and all personal effects were secured, but no inventory was taken. A ruled tablet served as Graves Registration Form No. 1. Both identification tags were left with the body until it was ready to be placed into a grave. One tag stayed with the body after burial and the other was attached to the stake that served as a grave marker. The personal effects and Form No. 1 were kept together and wrapped in a parachute that served as a "filing cabinet" for the first days of the invasion. About 50 bodies were interred on D+1. More were arriving all the time. Soldiers were bringing in map coordinates and other information about the location of bodies and, in particular, crashed glid-



**MG E.B. Gregory, TQMG, inspecting the cemeteries at Ste. Mere Eglise, April 1945**

ers and planes that needed to be cleared. I had no capability to start collection and evacuation. I did keep a log of information and a map marked with body locations which would later be passed on to graves registration personnel.

### **D+1**

About 1600 hours on D+1, Lieutenant Fraim came by to inform me that I should stop work and move with the other troops located around Les Forges Crossroads to a safer location. The Frenchmen were paid and instructed to return when they again saw activity around the cemetery. All graves were closed and a military chaplain came to conduct an all-faith burial service. I hid the personal effects parachute in a nearby hedgerow and with my gear headed for a group of vehicles forming near the Crossroads.

I did not know where we were going or how long we would be gone. The convoy was made up of miscellaneous vehicles from the 82nd Airborne Division, the 4th Infantry Division and a

tank destroyer unit. We moved west to the town of Chef du Pont, which had been heavily damaged, then north about a mile where we joined a dug-in element of a parachute unit.

I was not under anyone's direct control so I found a good spot and took a position in a hedgerow for the night. As darkness fell, firing could be heard in the distance in all directions. Shortly after midnight a German aircraft flew over our positions and dropped what was judged to be a 500-pound bomb. It landed in an empty field about 200 yards away and blew a

huge crater. The next morning, the area where I slept was recognizable as a portion of the 82nd Airborne Division Command Post.

Shortly after noon a small convoy formed to return to the Les Forges Crossroads area. I hitched a ride on a jeep trailer and returned to the cemetery. There I found the French labor detail waiting for instructions, and I quickly put them to work. During the previous night a sharp firefight had taken place around the Crossroads and apple orchard



**American soldiers present arms during Memorial Day ceremonies at the Blossville Cemetery near Ste. Mere Eglise, May 1945.**

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area. Battle debris was everywhere, including German helmets, weapons and gas masks.

The cemetery area had not been disturbed.

### D+2

This was D+2 and the bodies were piling up, including about 25 enemy dead. Lieutenant Fraim arrived in midafternoon and said he would look for more laborers for the next day. He indicated he would also check to see if he could get German prisoners of war to assist with the digging. Getting guards and digging tools would be a problem. A few more bodies were interred on D+2, and several more rows of graves were marked off.

The laborers were encouraged to return early the next day and to bring their friends. Before they left, I had them dig a slit trench near the hedgerow at the corner of the cemetery. This was covered by a tent shelter half and would serve as my home for graves registration activities during the coming days.

### D+3

D+3 dawned as a busy day. Bodies aboveground now numbered in the hundreds, with about half being German. About 70 Frenchmen arrived and dug over a hundred graves. I was pressed to do even rudimentary processing of the bodies. Late in the afternoon, Lieutenant Fraim arrived with a big civilian truck loaded with prisoners of war. They had military police guards but no tools. The Frenchmen were not eager to lend their tools, so the prisoners were sent to the beach for evacuation.

### D+4 to D+7

On D+4 I heard that some graves registration personnel were in the area of Ste. Mere Eglise and had started a cemetery. I had no time or transportation to go look for them, so the work continued at the Blossville Cemetery. A Quartermaster Service Platoon with vehicles and pioneer tools arrived. About 150 German prisoners of war also arrived and were assigned digging duties. Activity was picking up. The big limitation was processing bodies to insure proper identification and security of personal effects. A second plot of 200 grave sites was marked off to provide work space for all the diggers. French laborers were now handling and moving all bodies.

This level of activity continued until D+7 when a portion of my unit, the 4th Platoon, 603rd Quartermaster Graves Registration Company, arrived and took over the operation of the cemetery. They found much of the work had to be done over, including relocation of all bodies. About 350 Americans and 100 Germans were underground by this time. Several hundred Germans awaited burial, but the backlog of American dead was less than 100.

I spent the first couple of days after the arrival of my platoon organizing work details and sending out collecting teams to recover some of the bodies at locations I had marked on my map. The most difficult recoveries were from crashed and burned troop transport planes and from burned-out tanks. Several bodies were recovered from the inundated flood plain of the Merderet River where paratroopers had drowned on D-Day. The fighting units of the 82nd Airborne Division were now evacuating their battle dead



**The author revisited the original site of the Blossville Cemetery in 1984 during the 40th anniversary of D-Day. The inscription reads: 'At this place were buried 6,000 American soldiers between 1944 and 1948 who died in the liberation of France.'**



**The Quartermaster Center and School at Fort Lee, Virginia designed and built a photographic exhibit on the 603rd QM Graves Registration Company, LTG Joseph S. Laposata, QMC Retired (center), Presented it to the Airborne Museum at Ste. Mere Eglise during the 50th anniversary of D-Day ceremonies.**

directly to the cemetery. New, 200-grave burial plots were surveyed and interments were being made according to the book. There were now mattress covers to serve as body bags and proper marking stakes for each grave. All the information in the temporary records was transferred to Graves Registration Form No. 1, and personal effects were inventoried and placed in regulation bags.

Weapons, ammunition and equipment kept piling up at the cemetery. Most bodies arrived fully clothed and with web gear. Some had gas masks and small arms weapons and nearly all had some sort of ammunition and rations. All usable government equipment was taken from the bodies. Initially, all GI equipment was thrown into a big pile and made available to anyone who wanted it.

When the 4th Platoon arrived to take over the cemetery, personnel were assigned to sort the equipment and secure the ammunition. The French laborers watched longingly as most American bodies were buried with their jump boots. Later they were allowed to take the heavy leather boots from some of the German dead.

### **Today A Small Monument**

About June 20th, the 4th Platoon moved to Orglandes, approximately 10 miles northeast toward Cherbourg, and established a permanent German cemetery. The Blossville Cemetery was turned over to another graves registration unit who continued to bury Americans until after the St. Lo breakout. Today a small monument at the Les Forges Crossroads marks the Blossville Cemetery location and records that 6,000 Allied troops from the Normandy invasion were buried there. Later,

the bodies were moved to consolidated permanent cemeteries in Normandy or sent back to the U.S. for burial.

Burial of the German dead at the Orglandes Cemetery was much the same as for Americans. Efforts were made to identify every body. One identification tag was left on the remains and the other placed with the personal effects. All personal items were secured and forwarded through Red Cross channels to the next of kin. Most of the bodies had been searched and some effects removed by the time they got to the cemetery.

Shortly after the move to Orglandes, I asked for and received a permanent transfer to the 82nd Airborne Division. I was further assigned to the 407th Airborne Quartermaster Company. When the Division returned to England for reorganization and refitting, I attended parachute school and in September participated in the airborne invasion of Holland. Here, I again started a temporary cemetery, five miles south of Nijmegen.

After the war, I received a Regular Army Commission through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) at West Virginia University and served as an infantry officer through three more wars: Korea, Dominican Republic and Vietnam. I retired as a Colonel in 1970.

The 603rd Quartermaster Graves Registration Company remained attached to the VII Army Corps throughout most of World War II. They helped establish and worked most of the large permanent cemeteries in France, Luxembourg, Belgium and Holland. Their example of graves registration support for an army corps is considered a classic and was to serve as a model for other units.

# The Fighting Quartermaster Song

Every branch of service needs a song to identify with. A tune that sticks in your head long after you wish it wouldn't. With lyrics that fire the imagination and let others know what you're about. The Quartermaster Corps is no exception.

After some 166 years of relative silence in this matter, on the eve of World War II a trio of QM songwriters came up with an official song for the Corps: "We're The Gang That Keeps Things Moving." It was formally approved by The Quartermaster General in October 1941 and steadily rose on the military service Hit Parade in the days after Pearl Harbor. The first verse and chorus went like this:

*When there is trouble brewing at the front,  
And trucks are rumbling up the road,  
The men who bear the stormy battle's brunt  
Know who is there to share the load;  
They know who'll go through fiery shot and shell  
To bring supplies for men and gun as well;  
You can be sure the Q.M.'s coming out  
For you can hear the soldiers shout:*

**CHORUS** *We're the gang that keeps things moving,  
At the front and post to post,  
When a soldier has tough going,  
We're the guys he needs the most.  
From the day he joins the Army  
'Til the time he's home once more,  
If he should have to shoot or ride  
The buddies fighting by his side  
Will be from the QUARTERMASTER CORPS.*

# With All Due Honors . . .

**CARE OF THE WAR DEAD . . .** During World War II, the U.S. Government called to service approximately 15,000,000 men and women. The number of American war dead totaled around 359,000, of which 281,000 were recovered and given burial in more than 250 temporary military cemeteries around the globe. The Quartermaster Corps had primary responsibility for search and recovery, establishment of collection points on the battlefield, initial identification of the deceased, the laying out of cemeteries, and overseeing proper interment.

It took almost another six years after the war (until the close of 1951) for final disposition to be accomplished. In all, some 171,000 casketed remains were delivered to next of kin in the United States. At the same time, approximately 97,000 dead were, according to wishes of the next of kin, buried abroad in permanent U.S. military cemeteries. Another 10,000 "unknowns" likewise found their final resting place on foreign soil.

The worldwide graves registration program, when finally completed, marked the largest reinterment operation ever. The search for the World War II era's missing in action continues to this day.

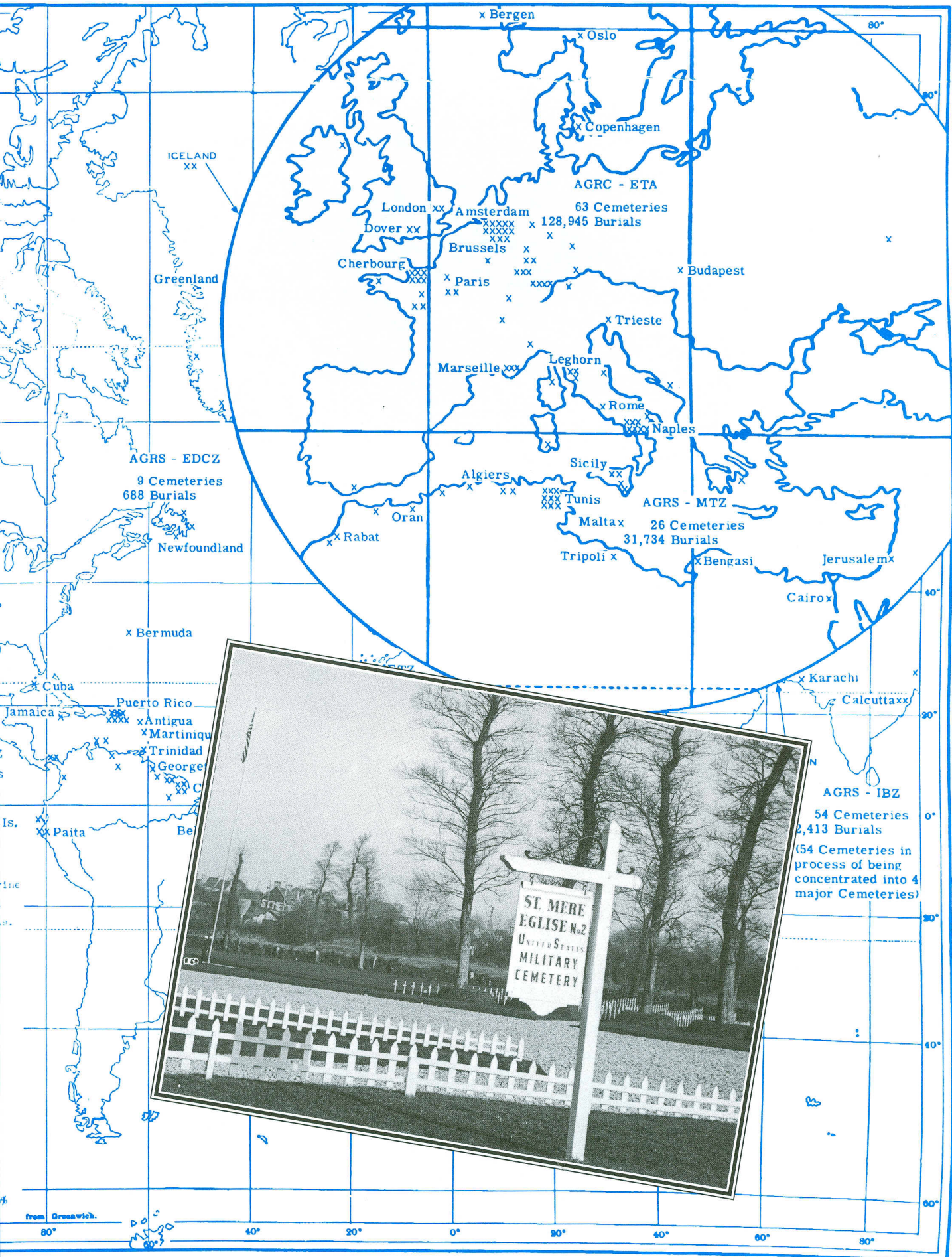


# LOCATION OF OVERSEAS TEMPORARY





# ESTABLISHED U.S. MILITARY CEMETERIES





**Fifth Army soldiers  
(above) prepare bodies  
for burial, Sicily.**

**Schoolgirl (right)  
honors American  
war dead at  
Margraten Cemetery,  
Holland.**



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## Europe and Mediterranean Theaters . . .

In the European Theater, approximately 140,000 American deceased were buried in 36 temporary U.S. Military Cemeteries: 24 in France, 4 in Belgium, 3 in Holland, 2 in England, and 1 each in Ireland, Luxembourg and Switzerland. No two cemeteries were alike. Each initially preserved its natural surroundings. Hedgerows and shrubbery remained as they were when Allied troops marched across the countryside. At the same time, each cemetery was designed and laid out to give a high degree of commemoration to the valiant dead.

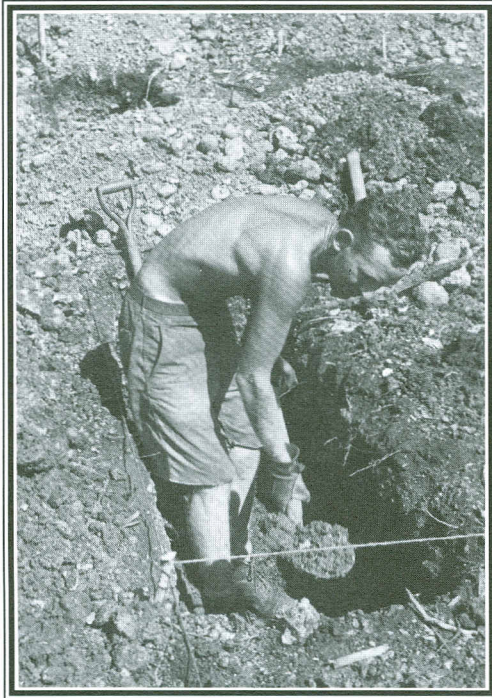
Another 51 temporary U.S. military cemeteries were established in the regions surrounding the Mediterranean: 20 of them on the Italian peninsula; 14 in Africa; 10 in the islands in the waist of the Mediterranean (Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Malta); and the remaining 7 in the Balkans, stretching from Greece through Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Rumania. Of the nearly 38,000 American dead in these cemeteries, only about 3 1/2 percent were classed as unknown, attesting to the high efficiency of wartime identification efforts in this area.

**TWELVE PERMANENT CEMETERIES** were developed in the postwar years, each one rich in historic association. . .Cambridge in *England*, Margraten in *Holland*, Henri Chapelle and Neuville-en-Condroz in *Belgium*, Hamm in *Luxembourg*. . .five in *France*, including St. Laurent which overlooks the Normandy beaches where American, British and Canadian troops stormed ashore on D-Day. . .two in *Italy*, Florence symbolizing the final triumph of the Fifth Army and Nettuno recalling its heroic stand in the Anzio beachhead. . .and one at Tunis, in *Tunisia*, where Hitler's dream of an African empire perished.



Entrance to Hamm American Cemetery in Luxembourg

Soldiers digging graves in  
New Georgia, South Pacific



**I**n deep and everlasting appreciation of the heroic efforts of those who, in keeping their country free, made the supreme sacrifice in World War II, the entire nation has been dedicated to disposing of the mortal remains of those honored dead in a manner consistent with the wishes of their next of kin.

*Harry Truman*  
President of the United States

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## Pacific Theater . . .

During the bitter years from Pearl Harbor to the surrender of Japan in Tokyo Bay, more than 80,000 American soldiers gave their lives in the Pacific and on the Asiatic mainland in order to overthrow the Japanese Empire.

General MacArthur's celebrated "island-hopping" campaign in the Southwest Pacific saw Allied forces eventually triumph in the Admiralties, at Buna, Finschhafen, Hollandia, Biak, Leyte, Luzon and elsewhere.



But his long, hard-fought road to victory was laden with the graves of nearly 40,000 Americans. Another 30,000 remains lay in temporary military cemeteries reaching from Tarawa, in the Central Pacific, to the island of Zamami Shima, in the East China Sea off the coast of Okinawa. Losses on the Asiatic mainland were largely confined to flights of American airmen over the Himalayas between China and India, and on bombing missions to Japan from interior Chinese bases.

Graves registration service in the Pacific was especially complex, due to the extended area over which fighting occurred — and the harsh climate and terrain. In New Guinea, for instance, isolated graves were sometimes located far in the mountainous interior. Overland transportation, confined to native trails, was slow and difficult. The search and recovery effort was further hampered by the rapid growth of vegetation in the tropics, the tall kunai grass in some areas, and the dense jungle undergrowth in others.

### TWO PERMANENT CEMETERIES . . .

During the course of the war, 201 temporary military cemeteries were established: 133 in the

Central and Southwest Pacific Zone, 59 in the India-Burma Zone, and 9 in the China Zone. With the conclusion of hostilities, only two sites were selected for permanent interment: the Punchbowl Cemetery at Honolulu, *Hawaii*, near where the first American servicemen fell in World War II during the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Fort McKinley Cemetery in the suburbs of Manila, representing the heavy price paid in fulfilling the U.S. goal to return to the *Philippines*.

# OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE

*Two Confederate veterans were reminiscing about the days during the war when Paducah was being fought over by the Northern and Southern forces. "I remember," one veteran said, "when we pushed those damyankees all the way across the Ohio and up into Illinois!" The other old soldier regretfully corrected him. "I was there, old friend," he said, "and I'm afraid that wasn't the way it happened at all. Those Yankees drove us out of Paducah and almost to the Tennessee line." The first veteran reflected a bit, then sourly remarked, "Another good story ruined by an eyewitness!"*

Alben W. Barkley, *That Reminds Me* (1954).

**War** has a distinct way of turning acquaintances into comrades. "Those men on the line were my family, my home," wrote well-known author, and Marine Corps veteran, William Manchester. "They were closer to me than I can say, closer than any friends had been or ever would be."

Of the more than half million Quartermasters who served during World War II, most felt a keen sense of pride for having done so, and a strong kinship with their buddies in uniform. For some, their wartime experience was just the beginning of a military career. Instead of mustering out after V-J Day, they opted to stick around. For the vast majority of Quartermasters, the war marked a brief interlude before returning to civilian life. It only lasted two, three or at most four years. But what years they were! And they furnished enough memories to last a lifetime.

Every veteran shared the experience of being inducted. Arriving at some Replacement Training Center, usually in the south or far west, with masses of other anonymous souls. Getting that first "GI" haircut, and being issued a uniform and equipment (including "dog tags" and a new identification in the form of a Serial Number). Learning to march, drill, handle a fixed bayonet and fire a 30-caliber, M-1 rifle. Appreciating the difference between reveille and taps, PT and KP. Sampling the delights of C-Rations, K-Rations, powdered eggs, and enough Spam to choke a horse. Looking forward to receiving a private's first paycheck of \$21.00. All this while learning to live in a drafty barracks with 61 bunkmates, where the only private space was in the latrine — which was probably the least private place of all.

After basic training, the enlisted Quartermaster soldier underwent a period of additional training at Camp Lee, Fort Warren, or one of several other specialized schools and training centers to acquire a military occupational skill (MOS). Then it was on to some designated Quartermaster unit "for

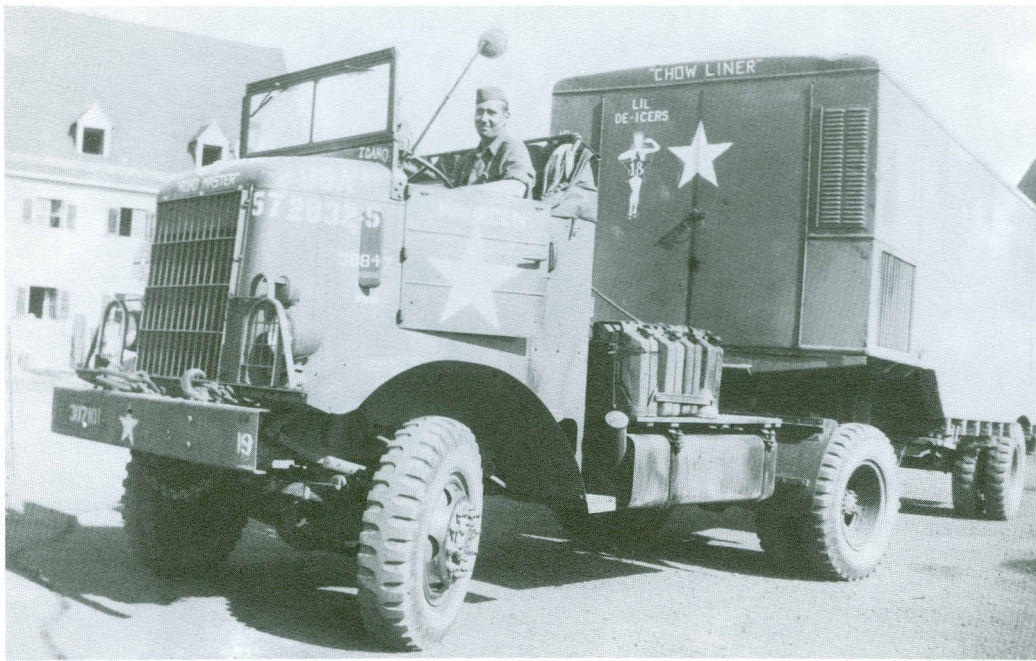
the duration." There in the units, both stateside and abroad, is where the real friendships and lasting memories were formed.

World War II ended a half century ago. Yet, even to this day, veteran Quartermasters routinely get together to hold reunions, to rekindle old friendships and talk about the distant past.

## THREE STORIES

**LIL' DE-ICERS REUNITE.** The 3071st Quartermaster Refrigeration Company (Mobile), nicknamed the "Lil' De-Icers," is one of several units in the postwar years that have managed to locate a goodly number of their old comrades, and hold reunions. Starting with a 1945 company roster and a few addresses, they pieced together the whereabouts of all but a few of the 129 former members. Thirty-nine of them attended their first reunion held in Kansas City in 1985 — which coincided with the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II. The meeting was such a success that, with the exception of 1986, they have continued holding reunions every year since.

On the surface, the story of the 3071st hardly appears all that uncommon. It can be summarized in a few words, in fact, with the listing of some key dates and the mentioning of scattered troop locations. Following the unit's activation at Fort Francis E. Warren, Wyoming, in March 1944, several members went for additional training at Bloomington, Indiana, before moving on to the Boston port of embarkation in mid-December, and final preparation for a Christmastime crossing of the Atlantic. They set sail on the British liner *Aquitania* on 21 December and arrived at Glasgow, Scotland, nine days



One of the 3071st QM tractor trailers in the vicinity of Munich, Germany (May 1945) with a picture of the unit's mascot 'Lil De-Icer' painted on the trailer

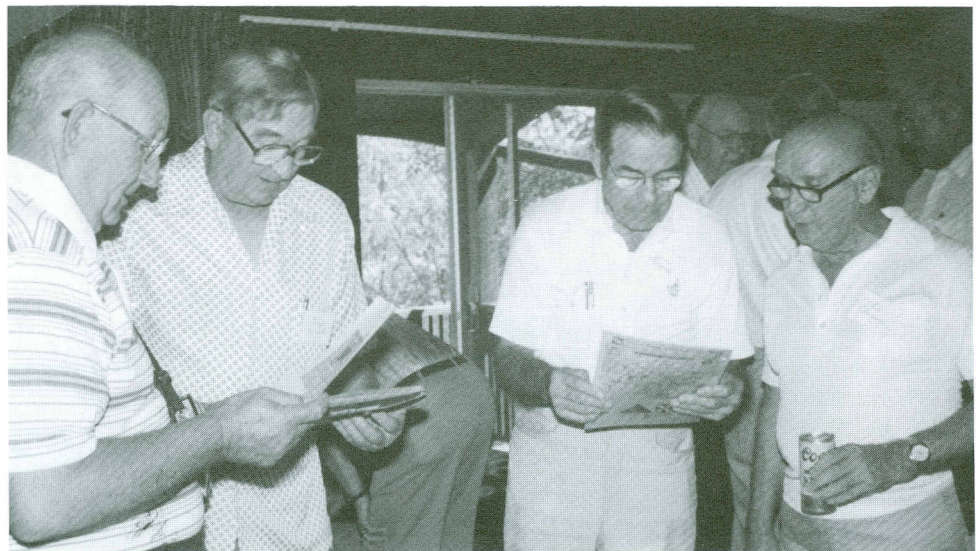
later. From there they traveled by rail to Wales, then to Birmingham, England, and in March 1945 crossed the English Channel to Le Havre, France.

Once on the continent the unit moved eastward from Le Havre, to Camp Twenty-Grand (near Rouena, France), Metz, across the German border to Frankenthal, then Ulm, while some sections delivered goods as far away as Salisburg, Austria, and points east of Munich, Nuremberg, and Stuttgart. From Munich, their last major headquarters area in the European Theater, they moved south to Marseilles, and boarded the *USS General Randal* for redeployment to the Pacific. After a few months occupational

service in Japan, most members had acquired enough points for a discharge and subsequent return to civilian life.

That's it, their whole World War II experience in a nutshell. Of course, that is only an outline history. The *real* story of the 3071st (and most small units, for that matter) resides only in the minds, memories, letters, photographs and personal recollections of the veterans themselves. Reunions give old soldiers a chance to reflect, an opportunity to stoke the coals and remember anew what happened way back then, what *really* happened. The story that invariably emerges is far more telling, complex, tragic, pathetic, funny, unbelievable, you name it, than any official account might render.

For instance, knowing the outline history above, if you were to mention Wales to veteran Staff Sergeant Henry



Some 3071st QM veterans look over old photographs at their reunion in Kansas City, Missouri, in June 1985.

Brassfield of the 3071st, the word "cosmoline" would come immediately to mind. The winter of 1945 was, as he recalled it, one of the worst that Wales had had in decades. With 14 inches of snow on the ground, and 4 inches of water on the barracks floor, "we were out cleaning 'cosmoline' off of all the trucks and equipment." As for a long-awaited 48-hour pass to London, he remembered how when he finally got there, "five V-2 rockets were dropped in two days. Nice vacation!"

Sergeant Brassfield also remembered that that convoy to Metz was not entirely without incident. Their Company Commander, Captain Luther Hoopes, at one point pulled off the side of the road and, while leading a French farmer's horse through an open field, the poor creature stepped on a land mine. The jeep parked 50 yards away was "splattered with



**Soldiers in the 146th QM Truck Company stopped for a photograph in front of the Sphinx and the Pyramids.**

blood and flesh” — from the horse, fortunately, and not the CO. In any case, “a very solemn speech was given by the Captain that evening in Metz.”

Such events are instantly recalled by others in the unit, and vignettes — another word for war stories — begin to accumulate, breathing life into the outline history. Not all the memories are scary or unpleasant, by any means. The same Sergeant Brassfield fondly remembers spending whole days climbing through the ruins of old Welsh castles and driving back to camp in the evening eating fish-and-chips and drinking some of that good “oatmeal stout beer.” While in Marseilles, getting to attend shows put on by Bob Hope, Mickey Rooney, Jerry Colona, and the like.

Though about half of the original members of 3071st are now deceased, the surviving “Lil’ De-Icers” vow to continue meeting as long as possible.

★ ★ ★

**QMs IN THE PROMISED LAND.** One of the interesting features about Quartermaster units in World War II is that they were *everywhere*. Wherever U.S. combat troops or our allies went, there you would undoubtedly find a group of American QMs as well. The history of the 146th Quartermaster Truck Company is a case in point.

The unit was originally known as Company A, First Battalion, 104th Quartermaster Regiment, activated in the Washington, D.C., area in 1936 to support the 29th “Blue and Gray” Infantry Division. It started with about 50 members, but quickly grew to little over 100 with the infusion of new “selectees” during the emergency period of 1940-41. They eventually received all new trucks out of Michigan and

were able to get a few months training at Fort Meade, Maryland, before moving south in the fall of 1941 to take part in the Carolina maneuvers. Most of their group were still in North Carolina when they heard the news of Pearl Harbor.

That spring they were reorganized and redesignated the 146th Quartermaster Truck Company and were, in effect, “divorced” from the 29th Infantry Division. Late September 1942 found them at sea aboard the British liner *Acquitania* heading for Cairo, Egypt, via the coast of South Africa. Their mission initially would be to transport supplies from the Egyptian port of Massawa, up windy mountainous roads to the city of Asmara. Over the next several months, they commingled with Egyptians, Palestinians, Tripolians, Bedouin sheep herders, and our British allies; frequented the ancient pyramids; and visited cities once conquered or created by Alexander the Great.

But they were not there on a sightseeing trip. Far from it. The men of the 146th had to brave not only German fighter pilots throughout the area, but the hostile desert elements as well: extreme heat, mosquitoes, rats, scorpions, and a host of communicable diseases. As they drove their convoys through the Libyan outback, signs all along the route read “Diseased Area, Keep Moving, Don’t Stop.”

Long after the war, they could recount with good humor waking up in the desert and finding scorpions camped out in their shoes or recall the sensation of having a live snake glide across your chest before you were fully awake. Of course, the ever-present bugs could be murderous. Tech 5 Rudy Weber remembered one incident in Benghazi where the locusts were “so bad that one swing of a board killed 20 to 30 of them. You couldn’t see through your windshield because of them.”



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On February 27, 1944, after serving over 15 months in the desert, the men of the 146th QM Truck Company boarded the British steamer *Ontario*, docked at Suez, and sailed for England to make ready for the main event later that spring — Normandy. They happened to be bivouacking in Dorchester on the night of April 28, when a Quartermaster Corps major from SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) arrived around midnight and informed the CO of the 146th that they had to perform a Top Secret mission that night. It was not until they were about ready to pull out that some of the men learned that German E-boats only hours before had intercepted an Allied mock landing (Exercise TIGER) and had hit at least three LSTs. Their trucks would be used to haul the dead to Brookwood cemetery in London.

Rudy Weber recalled that when their convoy arrived at the beach area, “it was still dark and there was a strange smell in the air. When we asked about it, some soldier told us to look into some very large tents. These tents were very long. When we looked in, I saw row on row of dead wrapped in blankets on stretchers.” They loaded their trucks “two tiers high with a rope down the center, over the bodies to prevent them from bouncing off the stretchers.” At the very back of each truck sat a Quartermaster Graves Registration soldier in Class I uniform. They served as honor guards.

More than 75 trucks made that sad, early morning trip through the streets of London. MPs guarded each intersection and steered traffic away from the convoy, as curious onlookers watched, not having a clue as to what lay under those tightly drawn tarpaulins. Once at the cemetery, the unloading process took most of the day. They did not return to camp until after 10 p.m. that night. “It had been a long 22-hour day for the 146th QM Truck Company,” recalled Lieutenant Bill Albright, the convoy commander. It was, he said, an assignment that “remained etched in the memories of all personnel who took part in it.”

With D-Day still pending, the men were ordered not to tell anyone what they had seen or done that night. For some it was another 40 years, until they got together for a reunion, that they discussed openly the secret role they played in Operation TIGER.

This was only one of countless episodes that make up the World War II history of the 146th. In mid-July they landed in France, played a significant role in the famed Red Ball Express, carried their “precious cargo” all across France, Belgium and into the heart of Germany, and were present on the scene — looking eye-to-eye at the Russian allies along the Elbe — when the war in Europe ended. They were still in Berlin awaiting orders for redeployment when word reached them about the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

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**WE BAND OF BROTHERS.** On March 16, 1944, the 58th Quartermaster Base Depot was activated at Camp Lee, Virginia, with an authorized strength of 34 officers, 2 warrant officers and 118 enlisted men. Following two months of intensive training, they left Camp Lee for New York port of embarkation, boarded the *HMT Mataroa* and sailed to

Liverpool, England, where they arrived on July 3. After another six weeks of training and moving about, they finally crossed the English Channel and landed on the continent at Utah Beach.

During the summer and fall of 1944 they formed the vanguard of support for the 12th Army Group, established the depots that allowed Hodge’s First Army and Patton’s Third Army to conduct their spectacular races across France. At places such as Le Mans (where they arrived just eight days after the Germans left), Ablis, Chatenay, Soissons, Sezanne, and Sommesons they virtually rewrote the book on how to supply a maneuver campaign. As the most advanced base depot in the European Theater of Operations, they often found themselves dangerously close to the enemy, and subject to more than a few “buzz-bomb” attacks.

By September 1944, the 58th QM Base Depot had moved its headquarters to Huy, Belgium, then in November to Liege, where they undertook to supply food and gasoline to the Theater’s Advance Section (ADSEC), the Ninth U.S. Air Force, and the First and Ninth Armies. The Liege Depot lined both sides of the Meuse River, and took in under its command hundreds of warehouses, open storage areas, and railroad facilities. The Germans realized what a vital resource this was for the Allied advance and made Liege one of their primary targets during what came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge.

The “buzz bombs” (German V-1 and V-2 rockets) had been falling intermittently since the men of the 58th QM Base Depot arrived in the area. The bombs began dropping in earnest, and with a vengeance, on December 16 with the start of the German counteroffensive. They damaged the railroad, knocked out three refrigerator vans (each containing five tons of frozen turkeys for the holidays), and set off a very serious fire at the POL dump site. Seven QM Gasoline Supply Companies, 500 German POWs, and scores of Belgian civilians formed a “human chain” to help fight the fire. It did extensive damage to the pipeline and storage facilities and destroyed about a million gallons of gasoline.

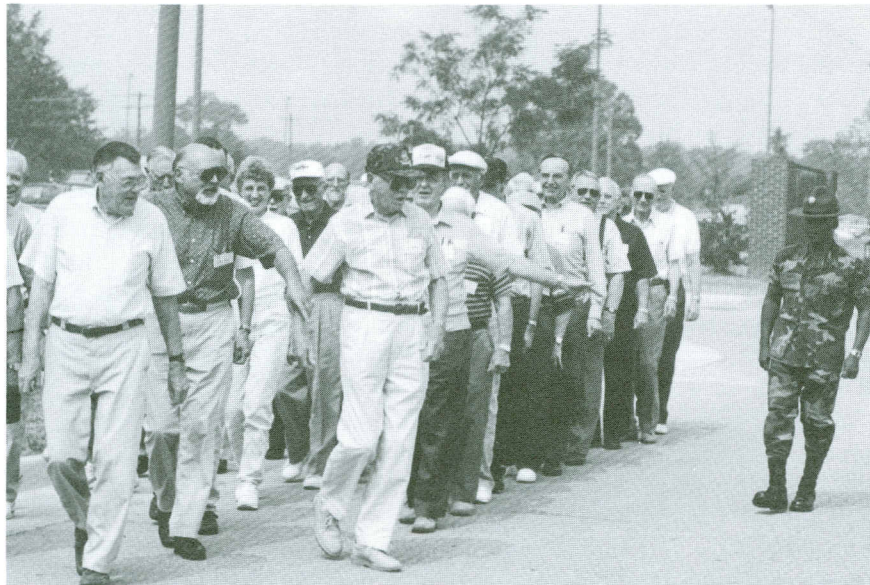
The rest of the month saw little let up. While the 101st Airborne Division found itself holed up in Bastogne, the 58th at Liege continued to take a pounding from enemy aircraft and “buzz bomb” rocket attacks right through the Christmas season. At one point the tactical situation on the ground brought German tanks to within five miles of the city of Liege. From the end of November 1944 until the end of January 1945 when the counteroffensive was finally checked, a total of 915 “buzz bombs” had struck Liege, killing 1,930 and injuring 2,204 others. Through it all, the 58th QM Base Depot continued to function smoothly and efficiently and helped lay the groundwork for the final springtime offensive, and eventual victory in Europe.

Like so many other units when the job in Europe was finished, the 58th got its orders to redeploy to Japan. They were onboard a U.S. Coast Guard carrier, had just passed through the Panama Canal, and were arriving in the Marshall Islands when they learned of the atomic bomb dropped at Hiroshima. Most ended their tour of duty in Okinawa in the fall of 1945.

After that they went their separate ways, each knowing they had played a pivotal role in the war. Together they had



After the 'buzz bombs' hit Liege, Belgium

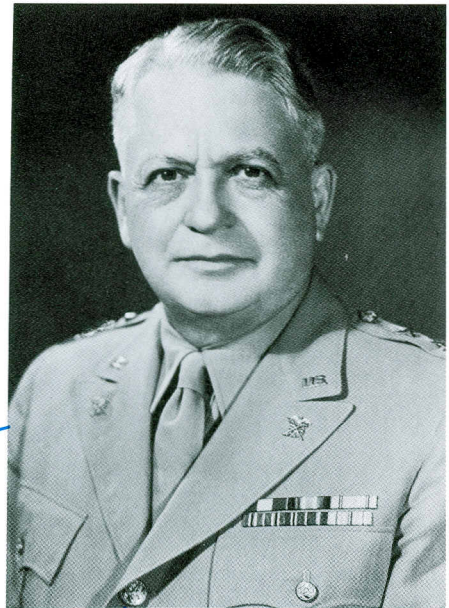


Men of the 58th QM Base Depot returned to Fort Lee, Virginia, for their 50th reunion.

traveled halfway around the world and had some harrowing experiences (and some truly hilarious ones, as well). In the course of it all, they formed a bond which transcended the war itself. They held their first reunion in 1958 (!) and have been meeting regularly ever since. In time, they even adopted a motto from Shakespeare's *Henry V* that could serve as a fitting epitaph for all veterans of past wars: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

In September 1994, the men of the 58th QM Base Depot returned to Camp Lee (now Fort Lee) where it all began 50 years ago. Once again they ate in the mess hall, drove around post, visited training sites, and conversed with soldiers now much their juniors. More important, they resumed their conversations with each other; pulled out the faded pictures; and stayed up late talking, laughing, sharing old memories. And, no doubt in the retelling, some really good stories were ruined by eyewitness accounts.

# G-2 from The QMG



IN REPLY REFER TO \_\_\_\_\_

ARMY SERVICE FORCES  
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL  
WASHINGTON

FIVE LONG YEARS have passed since the United States began the mobilization of the greatest military force in the nation's history. During 44 months of that period, America has been engaged in global warfare. And since the beginning of defense mobilization in late 1940, more than 11,000,000 men and women have been processed through the Army's training camps, with a peak strength at one period of 8,300,000.

It has been the responsibility of the Quartermaster Corps over this period to feed, clothe, and provide general supplies and equipment for this huge force, including the gasoline and oils needed to move its tanks, trucks, jeeps, and other vehicular equipment. This mission imposed upon the Quartermaster Corps the most vital responsibility in the 170 years of its existence and the largest task, whether measured by quantity, value, distance, toil, or blood.

Wherever went the combat troops went the Quartermaster Corps building its supply lines. In Africa, Europe, Asia, and on little-known Pacific islands, Quartermaster soldiers lie side by side with combat troops beneath the white crosses that mark our Army's passing. It was the price they paid for that never-ceasing flow of supplies which made victory possible.

There is little I can add to the praise already bestowed upon the personnel and achievements of the Quartermaster Corps by the theater commanders. I can say only that I am intensely proud to have had the command of the Quartermaster Corps with its hundreds of thousands of military and tens of thousands of civilian personnel throughout the world's greatest conflict. Each of you has had an important and vital part in adequately supplying our armed forces. And to each and every one of you, I offer my deepest thanks and congratulations for what we, working as one, have accomplished.

*E.B. Gregory*  
E.B. GREGORY  
Lieutenant General  
The Quartermaster General

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