

and specifically in civil works. They were better in being more adapted to the Corps of Engineers work than the specialized graduate instruction that you get now in civilian institutions. I mean, now when they go to, say, Carnegie Tech, they don't get a Corps of Engineers' training but they specialize in hydraulics or they may take something in mechanical engineering, but it's more an advanced engineering course in sort of a tight specific field rather than a general one. They won't be getting mapping, river and harbor development, flood control; they won't be getting certain other things that you would have if you were tailoring your course for Corps of Engineers preparational activities.

The company officers course which they had then was also very, very good and specifically directed toward Corps of Engineers activities. They did have a bit more military, including tactics and preparation of defensive positions. They went into river and harbor development, even though that was something that you think was more appropriately in the Engineer School that I attended the first time. But they brought that in, as well as military law and so on.

American Expeditionary Forces in Europe

Q: After you finished the Engineer School at Belvoir in 1919, you went to France for what was called the "tour of observation" with the American Expeditionary Forces until September of 1919, when you came back to Camp Humphreys. What was the purpose of this tour?

A: It was the War Department's idea to give an opportunity to those who had not served in Europe during World War I to see in the field what the actual situation had been. They'd take us over and they'd show us the depots that they had for the important Services of Supply, and up around the different field fortifications at the front, with some of those who had been involved going over the situation and talking about how the operation was conducted. This was poor preparation for the next war because in World War I they just dug in and that was it. When you think of the terrific loss of life, just fighting there, banging against each other, banging against each other with costly frontal attacks and with some tanks and few planes. With war of movement, somebody should have gone here or there and attempted a major

flanking movement and settled the thing. No war could be conducted forever the way they conducted World War I in Europe. The French, having the Maginot Line later, which to them was to be an impenetrable defense line, thought falsely that was going to give them absolute security based on what had happened in World War I. Aerial bombing, heavy tank maneuvering, and outflanking movement by the German forces killed that dream in the early phase of World War II.

219th Engineers at Camp Dodge, Iowa

Q: You wanted to mention an incident at Camp Dodge?

A: Well, at Camp Dodge [Des Moines, Iowa], here I was with the 219th Engineers, you might say, the youngest officer of the command, but just by reason of being in the Corps of Engineers and the regular service, I had a comparatively high rank. Although I commanded a company, I was also the senior captain in our battalion. So when they had something to do with the battalion, I was the acting battalion commander.

The other battalion in the 219th was commanded by a Major Walton, I think E. C. Walton, who came from Texas. He was a very prominent consulting civil engineer. One day we were going to have a contest of bridging the Des Moines River. His battalion was going to bridge it, and we also were going to bridge it. We started off simultaneously. He started off upstream and they started building there. As it was a competition, I decided that the thing to do was to build from both sides of the river, because if you're building only from one side then you can progress only so fast. So I had my forces gather some timber and make some rafts. I got a cable across and set up a cable tower on the other side, providing a flying ferry. As we started constructing the bridge on the near shore, we also operated the flying ferry to take personnel and piling across to the other bank, thereby working from both ends.

Well, Major Walton looking at that, I guess, got terribly surprised and chagrined. They tried to work faster and faster, didn't get the piling in deep enough, and all of a sudden, wham! The forward end of their bridge collapsed; the personnel on it went into the water. We had to lower our