

Q: How did you manage with such a shortage of officers?

A: Every commander had his own solution. My approach was to fill every vacant command slot with a noncommissioned officer. My theory was that training and maintenance needed leadership and supervision. I would have each noncom in an officer slot display a tag on his uniform showing his brevetted rank, whether it be 2d or 1st lieutenant. Where captains were missing I would have these spots filled by lieutenants and would have them, like the noncoms, display their brevetted ranks. This was not only good training for noncoms and junior officers but was a big morale booster. I was able to get several noncoms promoted to the officer ranks, similar to battlefield commissions. Although the Army did not permit many such promotions, it was a big morale booster.

Q: By the time you gave up your command, had the 24th Division responded to your direction?

A: Yes, very much so. I was very pleased with the way the division responded to my direction. When I took over, the division was definitely on the bottom in all categories by which VII Corps and USAREUR rated its divisions. They kept score on such things as training, maintenance, administration, and discipline. By the time I left, the 24th Division was first in maintenance and first in training, including the tank gunnery competition. I was particularly proud of our tank gunnery award because we were a mechanized division, which had a relatively smaller number of tanks than the armored divisions against which we competed.

### **Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, USAREUR**

Q: Why did you relinquish command of the 24th Division before your two-year tour was up?

A: General O'Meara, CG of USAREUR, brought me to Heidelberg to be a member of his staff. He made me his deputy chief of staff for logistics [DCSLOG] and put me in charge of FRELOC [fast relocation from France]. Six months prior to my arrival, General de Gaulle had severed his ties with NATO and ordered the U.S. troops and equipment out of France. He gave the U.S. one year to completely evacuate from France.

General O'Meara assigned this job to my predecessor, Major General Alden K. Sibley. Sibley was a brilliant officer, but very cautious and indecisive. After six months, at which time O'Meara expected one-half of the job to be finished, Sibley

was still planning how best to do it. **O'Meara** relieved Sibley and pulled me in to completely evacuate France in the remaining six months left.

Q: What did this involve?

A: It involved moving thousands of troops and several hundred thousand tons of equipment from France. I had to start practically from scratch because Sibley had not made good plans to do the job within the allotted year. Moving the troops was relatively easy. But moving the equipment was difficult. There were huge stockpiles of equipment and supplies located all along the line of communications which ran from Germany back across France. NATO's strategy called for stopping a Warsaw Pact attack on the Rhine, and the supplies were stockpiled not only to assist the defense but to allow NATO forces to take the offensive.

The job had several large complications. First, we had to find space in Europe to store the supplies and equipment. We wanted to put as much of the materiel as possible along the new line of communications which paralleled the Rhine on its west bank and went north to Rotterdam and Amsterdam. But there simply wasn't enough room in western Germany to accommodate all the supplies and equipment. As a result, we decided to move much of the ammunition to England, and most of the food to Italy.

A second complication was that we discovered huge stockpiles of equipment in France which were not on any records. These were items stored in France which were part of our reparations from Germany and Japan. Most of this equipment consisted of steel beams and columns. The concept was that these steel beams and columns were to be used to rebuild bridges across the Rhine and elsewhere in Europe after NATO had repulsed a Warsaw Pact attack.

A third complication was General **O'Meara's** desire to move everything out of France and leave nothing behind. Much of the equipment had deteriorated or was otherwise cheaper to replace than to move. But O'Meara wanted nothing left behind.

And finally, the job was complicated because the Pentagon was determined to micro-manage the job. They had ordered USAREUR to submit key-punched cards on which every item of equipment was listed, to include its description, volume, weight, and condition. In addition, the location and future destination of the equipment was to be listed. This job was only about 10 percent complete when I took over.

Finding places to relocate the stockpile of food was relatively easy. The boxed rations, powdered milk and eggs, and other food we moved to Camp Darby on the west coast of Italy. Some of the remaining stocks of food we planned to put along the lines of communication [LOC] in western Germany.

Relocating ammunition was an enormously large and complex problem. Not only is ammo bulky and heavy, but it must be stored in carefully calculated small stockpiles, separated from one another for safety purposes. Sibley's tentative plans were to relocate this ammo along the LOC in Germany. But there was not room for more than 10 percent of it. My plan was to prevail upon the United Kingdom to allow us to store the ammo on abandoned airfields in England, which had become inoperable after World War II. Although the Ministry of Defense of the United Kingdom cooperated fully, the task was difficult because people in England living near the abandoned airfields did not want to accept new hazards to their safety. The deadline for getting out of France was February 15, 1967. Yet it was not until December 26, 1966, before we received the final okay from the United Kingdom.

Moving the reparations materiel was also a complicated job. We decided to sell as much as we could for scrap, move some back to the United States, and move the remainder into the highly overcrowded bases in western Germany.

Getting our plans approved in the Pentagon was a sticky problem, but we were able to solve it in an unorthodox way. Not having enough officers to draw up the plans, I struck a deal with the deputy chief of staff for personnel [DCSPER] of the U.S. Army. He had a number of young lawyers on his rolls for which he had no jobs. These were young lieutenants who had received grants from the Army to complete their legal training and were now required to pay back for their training by performing obligated tours of duty. I was assigned 30 of the brightest of these lawyers for a six-month obligated tour in Heidelberg. They did a splendid job of drawing up our FRELOC plans in a hurry. But one of them had a good idea. We invited people from the Pentagon to Heidelberg to look over our shoulders and give us day-to-day approval as we progressed.

We also convinced them that listing all the equipment on punch cards was a hopelessly long, and in fact, unnecessary task. We simply estimated the amounts of supplies and equipment in gross terms and went about moving it. One of the young lawyers assigned to me even convinced representatives of the General Accounting Office [GAO] to come to Heidelberg to witness how we planned and executed FRELOC. This paid enormous dividends. Instead of the usual critical report which all such jobs get from GAO, we managed to receive a commendation.

With this new way of business we went into high gear. We hired every ship available to move ammo to England and food to Italy. We formed provisional truck companies from all the divisions and other units in Germany. We moved as much as we could by rail. And where these assets were not sufficient, we hired commercial movers from France, Germany, Belgium, and Holland to take up the slack. Getting funds to pay for the civilian ships, rail cars, and trucks was another difficult problem which we also solved in an unorthodox way.

One of my jobs as the chief of FRELOC was to sell as much as possible of the unmovable objects, such as barracks, warehouses, and hospitals, to French businessmen. We were given certain guidelines as to pricing. Here again, one of my young lawyers had a good idea. He took a team of his fellow officers to France and put on dog and pony shows, showing French businessmen what bargains they were getting. When a deal was struck, the purchaser had to put up a deposit. We used these deposits to pay the movers, promising them full payment when we received our money from the purchasers. We were able to get more for the properties than our guidelines allowed and this made our relationship with the Pentagon and GAO smoother.

Another of our problems was complying with General O'Meara's orders that everything be moved. Rather than try to convince him that certain types of material, for example, sand and gravel, was not worth moving, we simply had dump truck companies haul the material into land fills west of the Rhine. We moved just about everything we could. For example, we even moved several expensive golf greens to German golf courses. We rolled up the turf, transported the greens to Germany, and had them laid on top of the poorer greens there.

Another difficult problem requiring solution was the central computer to handle supplies from the U.S. to the troops in Europe. There was a large first generation computer in Orleans which was simply not worth moving since second generation computers were then available. We went to the IBM headquarters in New York and learned that they were experimenting with a third generation computer. We were able to get approval from the Pentagon to purchase the third generation computer. However, there was a great deal of controversy as to where it should be located. Rather than wait for a final decision, I had the computer and its ancillary equipment installed in 10 rail cars and placed temporarily in a tunnel in western Germany. The idea looked good on paper but proved difficult to execute. The problem was that diesel fumes from the generators needed to run and cool the computers settled on the computer's storage drums and disks. As a result, all sorts of spurious errors began to occur. However, one of our ingenious planners designed a set of air filters which we placed on the diesel engines in the tunnel. Fortunately, the scheme worked.

Q: What did you do about relocating fuel supplies? Was the pipeline across France dismantled?

A: No, the French pipeline remained intact. This was due to three reasons. First, it was simply impractical to build a pipeline along our dogleg line of communications on the west bank of the Rhine. It was also impractical to destroy the pipeline across France.

Second, we always believed that the French, although they pulled out of the military portion of NATO, would play an active role in support of NATO if the Warsaw Pact attacked. As a result, we took the risk that the pipeline across France would be available in time of war. We hedged our bets, of course, and established some insurance for ourselves by erecting temporary storage tanks for fuel in mid-Germany on the west bank of the Rhine. The idea was that tankers docking at Amsterdam and Rotterdam would pump fuel into barges which would float up the Rhine and pump their loads into the temporary storage tanks. But we were not overly concerned about our fuel supply; we counted on being able to use the French pipeline in the event the Warsaw Pact attacked.

The third reason was a financial one. The French government made a considerable sum of money by leasing and operating the pipeline. It did not want to sacrifice these profits and gave us assurances that the pipeline would continue to operate. For these three reasons we continued to use the French pipeline and were never too concerned about fuel supplies for the military in Western Europe.

Each part of the task seemed to have its own complications. For example, the French were willing to buy five newly erected U.S. hospitals, but did not want to use the buildings as hospitals. Instead they planned to use the buildings to house the elderly and establish rehabilitation centers. This meant that we had to move X-ray machines, dental chairs, and other hospital equipment to replace outmoded equipment in our hospitals in the remainder of Europe. It would have been far easier if the French had been willing to use the hospitals to replace their older hospitals. But they were unwilling to do this, and unwilling to pay us the price we wanted for the equipment. As a result, moving delicate and expensive hospital paraphernalia was just another part of our job.

Our officers and men worked furiously around the clock to beat the deadline. There was not much time left for contingencies and we had to make everything work as efficiently and rapidly as possible. But there were some things beyond our control. For example, a storm blew up in the Channel, sinking one of our barges loaded with ammunition. We had to delay shipping for 48 hours for fear of losing more barges or ships. Then again, a fire broke out in one of the ammo storage depots in England. The fear that persons living nearby could be hurt caused a

suspension of our operations to the United Kingdom. But fortunately, no one was hurt and we were able to resume operations after only a three-day shutdown. However, despite these obstacles, our plan was being executed smoothly. Naysayers claimed we would be a month late. But we beat the deadline by 24 hours.

Q: What about the French? Did they put obstacles in your way?

A: No. Even though France's policy, at the highest level, was to get the U.S. out of their country, the bureaucracy at lower levels was surprisingly cooperative. In most places where our troops had been stationed the townspeople were sorry to see them go. They assisted us in every way they could. Many of the cities and towns had goodbye parties at which the local people apologized for de Gaulle's anti-American policies.

Q: Was General O'Meara pleased that you met the deadline?

A: Yes. He was not only pleased but expressed profuse thanks to me and the men who carried out the operation. He dispensed commendations freely and recommended a number of officers, including me, for accelerated promotion. Thinking he was doing me a favor, O'Meara submitted a special efficiency report on me, recommending that the Army have me skip a grade and be promoted to a four-star general. I was told that when this report hit the chief of staff's desk he uncharacteristically uttered several expletives and blurted out: "I said that over my dead body will Rowny ever be promoted and I meant it." O'Meara's efficiency report only aroused Johnson's ire.

Q: That accounts for your first year as DCSLOG. What about your second year?

A: During the second year I concentrated on improving the maintenance of USAREUR's equipment. All of the Army's new equipment was going to Vietnam. Furthermore, the fact that units were operational in combat meant that more spare parts were being used. This meant that we had to take unusual steps to keep our equipment running. General O'Meara did not want to let our training suffer, and this put an extra burden on keeping the equipment in operating order. General O'Meara adopted some of the ideas I had used in the 24th Division, such as insisting that commanders exercise personal supervision over maintenance. He also transferred some of the better officers to supply and maintenance jobs. This did not sit well with some of the officers since the way to get promoted had habitually been to do well in the training field. But O'Meara rewarded these officers with

good efficiency reports, and this went a long way toward assuaging the fears of those who felt they would be passed over for promotions.

Q: Did you do anything else, other than involve the chain of command, to improve maintenance?

A: Yes, we looked for ways by which we could keep our equipment in good shape. For example, Hohenfels and Grafenwehr, where the tank gunnery tests were conducted, were very muddy areas. There the tanks churned up mud and it was particularly hard on the tanks. General O'Meara came up with a scheme of paving large areas of the gunnery range with concrete. He had USAREUR engineers pave hardstands the size of football fields. His theory was that teaching gunners to shoot had little to do with teaching them to operate in muddy terrain. O'Meara also provided warming tents where the soldiers could perform necessary maintenance under more comfortable conditions. "Tankers will learn soon enough how to maintain their equipment in combat. But you don't have to train at how to be uncomfortable," he said. As a result he separated the two functions of gunnery and maintenance. I, for one, was happy because it meant that USAREUR's tanks could be kept combat ready.

Q: How about applying training to maintenance? Was that done?

A: Yes. General O'Meara ordered commanders to establish training schools for mechanics. He also insisted that units practice doing maintenance in the field when we were on maneuvers rather than have vehicles go back to the rear for routine maintenance. This saved on the number of miles put on each tank, APC, and vehicle. I recall that O'Meara gave awards and special recognition to commanders of units who were able to perform maintenance while on the move. The units getting to their assigned place in the defensive line with the largest percentage of their vehicles would be singled out for special awards. In general, because of our unusual situation where new equipment and supplies were siphoned off to Vietnam, there was a great deal of attention and command supervision paid to maintenance.

Q: France had gone to the general depot concept in **1958**. Were you still using the general depot concept after you moved out of France?

A: Yes, we continued the general depot concept. But with our new third generation computers we were able to take much of the strain off the depots. We did this in two ways. First, software had been developed which allowed commanders to record their planned training activities. This allowed for more particularized and

accurate estimates on time between overhauls DOS]. Fewer unneeded spare parts sat idle on the shelves and more spare parts were available when they were needed. The second thing we did was to tie our computer in with computers at supply sources in the United States, allowing us to bypass depots. Parts needed to put a piece of equipment back into operation would be earmarked and expedited for the unit. This permitted a large number of parts to skip the depots, thus saving administrative and storage time and effort. These things became possible as better computers and especially better software was developed. Incidentally, when I was DCSLOG I operated the largest computer complex then on the European continent.

Q: Do I take from what you said that you were able to reduce the amounts of spare equipment and spare parts in Europe?

A: Yes. Our greater reliance on computers allowed us to reduce the size of our depots. But it was also a matter of necessity. Our supply installations like Kaiserslautern and Rudesheim were stacked to overflowing and we simply had no more place to put things. This caused us to put greater reliance on the shipment of equipment and spare parts directly from the U.S. to the units. But it also pulled down our stock levels in Europe. Whereas USAREUR's logistical concept had previously called for 60- and 90-day stockpiles, we cut these down, in many instances, to a 30-day stockpile. This meant that we would have to plan on more rapid replenishment in the event of war. And it also meant that we stockpiled very few materials, such as those which had been stored in France, to rebuild Europe in the aftermath of war.

Q: Was General O'Meara your boss during the entire time you were DCSLOG?

A: No. General O'Meara went into retirement and during the last months I was in USAREUR I worked for General James Polk.

### **Deputy Commander in Chief, SACEUR**

Q: After you left USAREUR you were assigned as deputy chief of staff to the United States Command for Europe in Stuttgart. Can you tell me the circumstances under which this took place?

A: As you know, the Supreme Commander in Europe [SACEUR] wore two hats. He was commander of all NATO troops and also commanded the U.S. troops assigned to NATO. But 95 percent of the work involved with this second job was assigned to D/CINC [deputy commander in chief], General David Burchinal. This command