

The Diary of Col. Aldo H. Bagnulo



WEDNESDAY, 6 December 1944, 1830 hours
Aboard MT338, Nicholas HERKIMER anchored off
LE HAVRE, France

For some time I've wanted to start a diary. I have finally started today since time is more readily available than is the case normally and the events of the last few days have been particularly interesting.

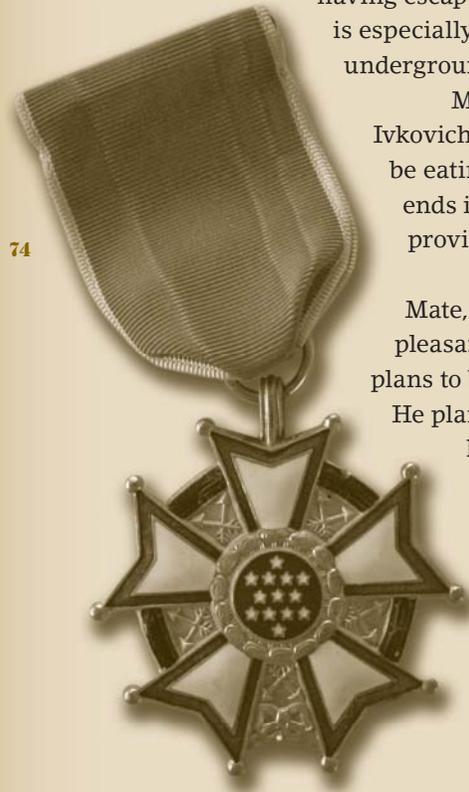
Approximately 200 men and all of the vehicles and equipment of the lettered companies were loaded on this vessel 4 December 1944 and we left Southampton, England, the morning of 5 Dec. Twice it was necessary to turn back to safe anchorage because of heavy seas and high wind. Some damage was done to our equipment, which broke loose from the lashings and shifted. Today, however, we crossed the Channel on a very calm sea.

There are two French Officers aboard ship, Maj. LEYDET and Capt. TROTTER, who are returning to France for the first time since having escaped to America in 1941. Capt. TROTTER is especially interesting, having been involved in underground activities.

Maj. Worley, Maj. Mohler and Major (Doc) Ivkovich share a stateroom.¹ We are supposed to be eating C rations but manage to get odds and ends in food which we cook on a gasoline stove provided by Doc.² Each meal is an adventure.

Right now I'm in the cabin of the 1st Mate, Mr. Luther G. Youngs, who is a very pleasant fellow. He is acquainted with P.R. and plans to buy land there sometime in the future.³ He plans to buy a schooner which he will use to haul supplies to and from P.R.

Aldo Bagnulo earned a Legion of Merit for his service in the Caribbean before WWII and a second for his service from 1955 to 1965.



1 Paul I. Ivkovich, the 1321st's regimental surgeon. As in the history section, officers of the 1321st, unless otherwise indicated, are identified in "1321st EGS Regt. List of Officers, with civilian addresses, 1945" and "Officers of the 1321st Engineer General Service Regiment While in Europe," Aldo H. Bagnulo Papers, Box 1, Folders 26 and 27, Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alexandria, Va. (hereafter cited as CEHO).

2 C-rations typically consisted of canned meat, vegetables, and dessert, along with candy, gum, hot beverage mix, hard biscuits, crackers, cheese, salt, sugar, cigarettes, toilet paper, and can openers.

3 P.R. is Puerto Rico.

THURSDAY, 7 December 1944, 1815 hours

We are still anchored off LE HAVRE waiting for Naval authorities to send pilot aboard who will guide us over sand bar.

Nothing of unusual interest occurred today.

After breakfast this morning, I went out on deck and engaged in conversation with Lt. Senior Grade McGown who is Naval Officer commanding gun crews stationed on this ship. He is from Providence and has heard of Colonel Garbish and Grace De Ware.⁴ He seemed to enjoy my accounts of the experiences in the West Indies.

This afternoon I had a nap, read for a while, then strolled on the deck.

It was my turn to wash the mess gear after the evening meal. I'm reading the book UNDER COVER by John Carson.⁵

FRIDAY, 8 December 1944, 2015 [hours]

Another day spent at anchor off LE HAVRE. A high wind has blown all day and it has been quite cold.

The Chief Mate came into our cabin earlier in the evening and he, Maj. Worley, Maj. Mohler, Doc Ivkovich and I engaged in a delightful "bull" session. The chief mate here has been at sea for 17 years and, of course, has many tales to tell.

I didn't sleep well last night since my body was sore all over. I feared that I had the flu, but during the course of the day I've improved and feel pretty good this evening. Waiting at anchor as long as we have leads one to believe that there is faulty planning somewhere along the line. I understand that a ship of this size costs the government \$18,000 daily. There are many other ships lying at anchor as we are.

The Mate tells many stories of mismanagement in connection with transporting cargo across the channel. Perhaps this waste is inevitably a part of the war.

4 Probably Edgar William Garbisch, who graduated from the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) in 1925 and was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers. He resigned that year but returned to the Army in 1942 and served as executive officer and acting district engineer of the Corps of Engineers' New York District. In 1944 he became district engineer of the Providence District and, later that year, district engineer of the New York District. Charles N. Branham, ed., *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York Since Its Establishment in 1802. Supplement, Volume IX, 1940-1950* (n.p.: Association of Graduates, U.S. Military Academy, 1950), 481. Grace De Ware is not identified.

5 John Roy Carlson (not Carson) [Arthur Derounian], *Under Cover: My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America—The Amazing Revelation of How Axis Agents and Our Enemies Within are Now Plotting to Destroy the United States* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1943).

SATURDAY, 9 December 1944, 1630 hours

We have crossed the sand bar and are approaching LE HAVRE. We are now passing a ship whose stern only is above water. It seems to have broken midships.

As we approach LE HAVRE, on the left is a high cliff. This cliff is studded with gun emplacements. This is my first experience of the ravages of war. Approximately seventy five percent of the bldgs are damaged or completely destroyed. We are now entering the breakwater, a massive concrete wall. Very close on our right is the mast only of a ship sticking out of the water.

This city is really in shambles. As we come closer it becomes apparent that a very few bldgs have not been damaged at least slightly. This damage, I understand, was done by allied sea and air power in wresting the city from the Germans. Some of the destruction is so complete, however, that I would guess that it is the result of deliberate demolitions on the part of the retreating Germans. As we come closer to the docks I'm more convinced that the destruction here was accomplished by the Germans.⁶

They have done a thorough job. These sights have had a profound effect on me. I couldn't begin to estimate the extent of the damage.

The two French officers are with me now pointing out the various bldgs. Capt. TROTTER is now telling me about the GARE MARITIME Du HAVRE. The framework only of this railroad station remains.

Although some ships are tied up to docks, most are anchored in this slip thru which we are moving and are discharging their cargos into lighters and DUKWS.⁷

Two tugs are jockeying us now. It's 1720. I'm going to eat in case we have to debark hastily.

It is 2000. We have tied up along another ship. Nothing will happen until tomorrow morning.

2200: The picture has changed again. We are now being unloaded by Doc Bn.⁸ Operations will be continued until we are completely unloaded.

I still do not know where the rest of the regiment is or when we will marry up with them.



⁶ See note 39 in the history section.

⁷ A lighter is a large barge used for delivering goods to or unloading goods from a cargo vessel. A DUKW is a 2½-ton, 6 ft. by 6 ft., amphibious truck.

⁸ "Doc Bn" might be Dock Battalion.

SUNDAY, 10 December 1944, 1800 hours

The last 24 hours have been very, very rough ones. I have had no more than three hours of sleep. These were in my command car. I haven't had my clothes off; haven't once washed my face or teeth.

We were unloaded last night on an LCT and made a beach landing at LE HAVRE. At approximately 0200 this morning we arrived at our bivouac area, which is merely a stretch of road on which we parked our vehicles. I saw Maj. Wetzel upon arrival at Bivouac Area; he departed for DIJON by train this morning with approximately 1,000 troops.

These notes are being written in my C and R by the light of a "torch."⁹ It's very cold and damp; it's hailing. This will be my bedroom tonight also.

Today I made arrangements for gas, water and release on our movement for Tuesday, 12 Dec. Not all of our equipment has been unloaded yet—approximately 80%.

TUESDAY, 12 December 1944, 0830 [hours]

Did not manage to write notes last night since I got involved in the complicated task of unrolling my bedding roll in the C and R and worming into same.

We're still at the transient area (B) awaiting clearance for convoy. As a matter of fact, these notes are being written at Area B Hqs where I have come in an attempt to expedite clearance.

At every meal (C rations, of course) which we have had, a number of women and children have gathered to ask for food. They really do not look starving so I don't know whether they have resorted to begging as the only means of obtaining food or whether they witness no shame in the matter.



⁹ "C and R" is a command and reconnaissance vehicle, developed to give officers and staff mobility on the battlefield. "Torch" is the British term for "flashlight."

12 December 1944, 1800 [hours]

As the result of some "fast" talking, I obtained clearance for my convoys this morning. We left the bivouac area in three serials:

First Bn vehicles minus heavy equipment

2d Bn vehicles minus heavy equipment.

Heavy equipment.

Heavy equipment departed 0900, 1st Bn at 1100, 2nd Bn at 1130.

Riding in my C and R with Lt. Yonally and Dan Brown (Driver),

I lost 1st and 2nd Bn convoys and passed Heavy Equipment.¹⁰

These notes are being written at the mess hall of an MP detachment in Beauvais where we stopped off to ask for a meal.

Fortunately we ran into the mess sergeant who gave us first: steak, potatoes and corn, then followed this up with a hamburger and spaghetti. I ate everything.

The road, so far, has been interesting in that both sides are strewn with wrecked German vehicles, the results, no doubt, of our strafing of the retreating German columns. A huge railroad bridge was noticed demolished. We're going to shave and wash at the MP Det.

THURSDAY, 14 December 1944

After riding practically all night Tuesday, we arrived at DIJON (Engr Section of CAS) at approximately 1100 Wednesday morning.¹¹ There we were advised that the Regimental bivouac area was located at LES FORGES approximately three (3) miles west of EPINAL. Without delay we proceeded to LES FORGES, arriving at approximately 1800 Wednesday.

The route followed from LE HAVRE to LES FORGES is: LE HAVRE N14, St ROMAIN GC 134, LILLEBONNE GC 29 to RD Jct GC 40 to RD Jct N14, YVETOT, ROUEN N30, GOURNAY N31, BEAUVAIS, CLERMONT, Compiègne, SOISSONS, FISMES N386 RD Jct N51 Right on N51 to EPERNAY N3, CHALONS N4 to VITRY LE FRANCOIS, ST DIZIER N67, JOINVILLE, CHAUMONT N19, LANGRES, N74 DIJON.

We retraced our steps part of the way in order to arrive at LES FORGES.

Army Engineer lensatic compass.



Upon arrival at LES FORGES I found everything pretty much in a mess. Nothing much could be done at night so I turned in for the night in a room of the caretaker's house. There was no stove and it was cold.

Today I spent most of the time at EPINAL reconnoitering a site for another bivouac area. I found one place, a previous French Bks [barracks] (occupied by US troops in the last war) which struck me very favorably.

I decided to move 1st Bn and Hqs to that site.

These notes are being written at LES FORGES. We will move to EPINAL tomorrow.

MONDAY, 18 December 1944

The events of the last few days have happened in such rapid succession that I even forgot to note them. (Last notes were written on 14 December.)

Friday, 15 Dec, I rode to DIJON, CAS Hqs. On that day Regt'1 Hq, H/S Co and the 1st Bn moved to EPINAL.¹² I went to DIJON principally to confer with Colonel Smullen, CAS Engr, and also to obtain the general picture on work, supply, administration, etc. Colonel Smullen, however, was not there, having gone to Switzerland to contract for prefabricated bldgs.

Both Friday and Saturday were spent at CAS Hqs. Friday night was spent at CENTRAL HOTEL, DIJON.

Upon my return to EPINAL, Saturday evening, I received a telephone call from Capt. Lee from LUNEVILLE. Capt. Lee had been sent there to reconnoiter site for division rest camp. He explained that job was hot, so I decided to send 2nd Bn and went that night to LES FORGES to notify Bn Cmdr of 2nd Bn [Major Mohler].

The 2nd Bn moved to LUNEVILLE Sunday and I drove up in the afternoon to make a hasty inspection. Returned to EPINAL Sunday night; learned that we have also been assigned the task of rehabilitating certain bldgs in EPINAL (the site of a military prep school) for a general hospital.

Monday morning, Maj. O'Toole, Maj. Worley and myself made the reconnaissance of these bldgs.

In the afternoon Maj. O'Toole and I drove to LUNEVILLE.

These notes are being written at the RIVERA HOTEL, LUNEVILLE. I'm tired; its 2300.

I'm ready for bed.

¹⁰ James N. Yonally, Akron, Ohio, regimental information and education officer; Dan Brown was apparently an enlisted man who was Bagnulo's driver.

¹¹ See note 42 in the history section.

¹² Regimental headquarters, Headquarters and Service Company, and the 1st Battalion.

WEDNESDAY, 20 December 1944, 2100 hours

I'm back at EPINAL again.

After a great deal of scurrying about, making plans and mobilizing for the task of developing a division rest camp at LUNEVILLE, the General (Maj. Gen. Arthur Wilson) informed us this morning that the entire scheme has been dropped.¹³ It seems as though our Armies are being "Tussled" by the Germans at present and there is not much chance of a division being pulled back from the front lines for rest.¹⁴

I decided to leave the 2nd Bn at LUNEVILLE at the CASERNE STAINVILLE. It is an excellent site and promises to be close to the center of gravity of activities. After giving Maj. Mohler instructions, I drove to SAVERNE to visit Engr Section of 7th Army reference road maintenance.

The road from LUNEVILLE to SAVERNE was heavily congested with trucks going both ways. The scars of battle were readily noticeable en route. It appeared that a good portion of the disabled equipment seen is allied.

Tonight I'm apprehensive about the amount of work being accomplished by the staff. They may require some "jacking up."

TUESDAY, 26 December 1944, 0845 [hours]

It is difficult to realize that six days have passed since I wrote notes last. These notes are being [written] at HQ, 2nd Bn, LUNEVILLE.

I drove up here yesterday afternoon, attended a party last night, now I am waiting for certain papers before proceeding to OBERNAI, then STRASBOURG. OBERNAI is the site of a 7th Army Engr Dump which we are taking over as per orders from Engr Sect, CAS.

Mohler, Gunter and I are going to STRASBOURG reference captured enemy equipment. Major Keller, CEM, is the officer we want to see there.¹⁵ The party last night turned out to be a drunken brawl. I didn't enjoy myself at all. During the night a number of planes flew overhead and aerial bombardment could be heard to the east.

The night before last a number of men, Free French I suspect, fired on my wrecker as it was towing a disabled vehicle of the 94th

[Infantry Division]. Who was with him received a bullet wound in the leg.

In the last few days, Maj. Wetzel and I have had a number of "run-ins" reference division of responsibility and staff functions. Yesterday, I wrote six pages outlining proper staff functioning, which Maj. Wetzel has read and which apparently has clarified the situation. The "poop" also contained definite instructions on certain things that I want accomplished.

Two German prisoners have just entered 2d Bn HQ under guard. Approximately 150 such prisoners are being worked by the 2nd Bn. Of these two who just entered, one is approximately 45 years, the other is 35 years. Just a little hand signaling was necessary to put them to work cleaning the floor.

THURSDAY, 28 December 1944

The situation is, at least, lukewarm.

I went to OBERNAI Tuesday to reconnoiter the captured enemy dump. I was surprised to see what was there. The dump at OBERNAI apparently was built by the Germans with permanence in mind. Spur facilities, shops, warehouses and office space were all provided. Large stores of Engr materials were left intact. In the afternoon we went to STRASBOURG to contact Maj. Keller, head of the CEM board, (Captured Enemy Materials) but did not find him. We visited another captured enemy dump where all classes of materials were stored, from cannons to horse equipment. At this location, we were within two miles of the front lines. Large caliber guns could be heard constantly, and occasionally machine gun fire could be heard at not too great a distance.

Wednesday morning we visited the dump at RUSS. A great deal of misc supplies were available there also.

My reaction resulting from observations was to establish a permanent dump at OBERNAI, but this was changed Wednesday night when I received telephonic instructions from Engr Officer to evacuate all supplies from OBERNAI and RUSS as quickly as possible and to have ten demolition squads alerted and mobile. These instructions lead me to believe that a German breakthrough is expected. This is more or less confirmed by news from the front.

Between LUNEVILLE and OBERNAI we travelled through some beautiful mountain country very much SWISS in character. Along these roads the remains of German-prepared obstacles still are in evidence.

¹³ Arthur R. Wilson was commander of the Continental Advance Section (CONAD). Roland G. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support of the Armies*. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1953), 1:10.

¹⁴ A reference to the Battle of the Bulge.

¹⁵ CEM is captured enemy material. See diary entry for 28 December 1944.

FRIDAY, 29 December 1944, 2015 [hours]

OBERNAI

SATURDAY, 30 December 1944, 1900 [hours]

OBERNAI

Just as I started this last night the lights failed, and I was compelled to discontinue. This has been a very interesting week: On Tuesday, I came to OBERNAI with a view of taking over dumps both here and RUSS. Upon my return to EPINAL I was advised to evacuate these dumps since they may be in enemy hands within a few days. Within the last three days we have loaded approximately 200 truckloads of supplies from here and RUSS.

This morning I went to STRASBOURG to obtain information of the tactical situation. This what I was told:

The Germans have crossed the MOSELLE River south of us near COLMAR. We are being pressed also from the north. This entire area around STRASBOURG then forms a pocket which is held on lightly. The plan is to withdraw.

Meanwhile I'm evacuating as much supplies from RUSS and from here as I can. Hope we don't get caught.

MONDAY, 8 January 1945, 0800 [hours]

EPINAL,

On New Years day, troops of the 343 Engrs (III Corps) took over the guard of OBERNAI and we departed, having evacuated approximately 1,000 tons captured enemy material.¹⁶ On the return trip I was convoy commander for six Italian Service Unit trucks, the last group of trucks to come out of OBERNAI.¹⁷ Since then I've spent two days in DIJON conferring with Col. Smullen. (I'm expecting him to visit me this morning.)

This morning is the first time in a week that I have felt like living. I have a cold and apparently I was pretty much worn down as a result of the intensive and nerve wracking work.

One of the platoons of Co E is still at RUSS evacuating that place. Co D has moved back to LUNEVILLE to maintain a 17 mile

¹⁶ 343d Engineer General Service Regiment, a white unit.

¹⁷ After the fall of the Mussolini government, Italy became a cobelligerent of the Allied armies. Italian prisoners of war were given the choice of remaining prisoners or joining Allied non-combatant units. In the U.S. Army these were company-size units, usually in the Quartermaster or Transportation Corps. A majority of Italian PWs in American hands voluntarily joined the Italian Service Units. Their status was ambiguous—although considered soldiers of the U.S. Army, they were technically PWs. Charles T. O'Reilly, *Forgotten Battles: Italy's War of Liberation, 1943-1945* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001), 165-67.

stretch of road for 7th Army. I have failed to note that HQs, 7th Army moved back to LUNEVILLE and took over the CASERNE STAINVILLE being occupied by 2nd Bn. Co F moved in with 51st Sta[tion] Hospital at LUNEVILLE.¹⁸ Bn HQs Cos D and E moved back to LES FORGES.

TUESDAY, 23 January [1945], 1200 hours

NANCY

Last notes were written on 8 Jan 45.

I'm at the Grand Hotel, NANCY, having been here for two days as a result of the fact that CAS area has extended considerably to the west beyond NANCY. I don't know the exact line as yet.

Col. Smullen asked me to come up to NANCY to find the following:

- a. Depot Site
- b. Office space for Engrs Sect—8,000 sq ft¹⁹
- c. Billet for Engr Sect Personnel
- d. Billet for my personnel

I've found what I believe will be an excellent depot site at TOUL. Maj. Impson, Engineer Supply Officer, CAS, and Capt. Lee are investigating the site more in detail today.

I've found, also, an excellent caserne in TOUL to house my regiment or part of it.

Maj. Carey, Real Estate Officer, CAS, is working on the office space and billet.

Nothing very exciting has happened since writing my last notes. "Mike," my brother in law, came to visit me.²⁰ He seems to be a swell fellow.



Engineer branch insignia.

¹⁸ The 500-bed 51st Station Hospital at Lunéville was originally intended to be a neuro-psychiatric facility in support of the Third and Seventh Armies but was used to care for medical and surgical patients during the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign. Graham A. Cosmas and Albert E. Cowdrey, *The Medical Department: Medical Service in the European Theater of Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1992), 386.

¹⁹ Engineering Section, Seventh Army.

²⁰ Maj. Miguel Montesinos was the brother of Bagnulo's wife, Helen. During the war he served as an intelligence officer in the Seventh Army. His unit came across the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau, which they helped to liberate. Miguel J. Montesinos interview, 25 January 1980, by Elizabeth Jacobs, Box 3, Folder 65, Fred Roberts Crawford Witness to the Holocaust Project files, Special Collections Dept., Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University.

FRIDAY, 25 January [1945], 2000 hours
EPINAL

We (Captain Lee and I) left NANCY at approximately 1400 yesterday, stopped off to see Col. [Ralph D.] King, Engr Sect of 7th Army HQs, then Co F at LUNEVILLE, and arrived here at approximately 2000 last night. Had a meeting with the staff to discuss my plans regarding the move of Hqs and 1st Bn to TOUL.

Wetzel has been ill for a week or ten days. This morning at 0500 I heard him calling for Dabbs and went into his room to find out what was wrong. He asked me to call "Doc." I did and when we returned, Wetzel started to cry and explained that he has been in constant fear of something. It seems that he has completely broken down and is a PN case.²¹

This surprised me for Wetzel is the last one whom I would suspect to "crack up." He will report to the hospital this morning for admission.

With both him and Bob Cross in the hospital we are running pretty short of personnel. [one and a half lines blacked out]

SATURDAY, 26 January 1945, 2100 hours
EPINAL

The last few days have brought us approximately 15 inches of snow. This has caused us to work feverishly night and day in an attempt to keep the roads open.

The Regiment has an area of responsibility which includes approximately 300 miles of road. The situation looked quite serious this afternoon so HQs at DIJON have reinforced us by sending two graders from the 335th Engrs and issuing, in addition, 2 more graders and a D-7.²² Maj. Jaques made arrangements with the 926th Avn Engr Regt to take over the roads in the NANCY area.²³ This is the area which, I believe, will be given to us, but which, at present, is nobody's responsibility.

I'm tired so I'm going to bed.

Made out efficiency reports today and tonight.

²¹ It is possible that Bagnulo meant NP, or neuropsychiatric, case.

²² 335th Engineer General Service Regiment, a white unit. A D-7 is a medium bulldozer.

²³ 926th Engineer Aviation Regiment, a white unit.

FRIDAY, 2 February [1945], 2120 hours
EPINAL

Much has transpired since the writing of the last notes on 26 Jan.

Col. Wetzel has been transferred out of the regiment. He was admitted to the 236th [General Hospital] as a mental case and transferred from there to an unknown hospital. There is much speculation in the regiment to the effect that he has "goofed" off after receiving his promotion. Many things lead one to believe this.

Three days ago it rained and we have had a thaw since then. Practically all snow has disappeared off the roads. Now we are worried about excessive floods and our bridges going out.

I returned from TOUL after a quick trip up there to review Capt. Lee's plan for occupying caserne BAUTZEN. He and a platoon of Co C are there now. The staff is going up there tomorrow to look over the scheme which Lee and I have agreed upon.

Capt. Dabbs has been assigned as executive. Lt. Yonally as S-1.²⁴ Capt. Lee is very much disturbed that he was not given executive's job.



"Doc" Ivkovich, surgeon for the 1321st, and nurse.

²⁴ S-1 is the personnel staff officer.

SUNDAY, 4 February 1945
EPINAL

Last notes were written 2 Feb.

An interesting episode happened today. This morning I went into Capt. Dabbs' office to advise him that I was leaving for church. In his office was a French female soldier. She was blonde, small, dressed in American G.I. coat and French motorcyclist headgear. She was searching for a hospital which was reported to have French soldiers in it. Since I was going to the 35th Sta[tion] hospital to church, I offered to show her the way to it and to the 236th Gen Hosp which was very close to the 35th. (She could not speak a word of English so we had our interpreter (Velasquez) interpret.) Before letting her off at the 236th I asked her to have lunch with us, which she gladly accepted, and I went off to church. Capt. [R. A.] Watson, CO [commanding officer] of 791st DT [Dump Truck] Co also had lunch with us and had with him an excellent interpreter. I learned that Mademoiselle Lemoine was attached to the "Regiment de March Legione Etrangere" (Foreign Legion) as a social worker.²⁵ A most interesting conversation ensued for approximately one hour. Her driver arrived and she left, but before she did she gave me the regimental insignia of the RMLE in gratitude for our hospitality.

My memories of her are that she is intelligent, keen and gracious; attractive but not beautiful.

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An engineer from the 1321st poses upon an abandoned field artillery piece.



²⁵ Régiment de marche de la Légion étrangère, a unit of the French foreign legion.



Members of the 1321st at church service in France.

MONDAY, 12 February 1945

Last notes were written 4 Feb.

During the past week, I went down to DIJON and returned, then I went to TOUL through LUNEVILLE to watch the corduroy job being done by Co F on the road.

I returned from TOUL Saturday at approximately 1800, and no more than 20 minutes after having arrived I received a call from Col. Smullen to go to THIONVILLE, 28 Kils [kilometers] north of METZ, to reconnoiter a site for its possibilities as an Engr Depot. Since he wanted the information by noon, Sunday, I went to TOUL Saturday night, remained there overnight, and Maj. Jaques and I were on the road 0600 Sunday. We went to THIONVILLE, but learned that there is no Engr Depot there, but that there is one at WOIPPY, just a few kilos north of METZ.

We retraced our steps to WOIPPY where we found a captured enemy engineer depot.

It was a huge depot; 300,000 sq ft closed storage, 200 acres hard standing, and siding for 100 cars, but it was badly damaged as the result of air bombardment by our air force.²⁶ I reported my findings to Col. Smullen by phone and returned to EPINAL. I'm really tired after those trips.



²⁶ Hardstand or hardstanding is a hard-surfaced area, often used for vehicle maintenance or storage.

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THURSDAY, 15 February 1945

EPINAL

Last notes written 12 February.

The roads have been failing badly since the thaw and in many places they are impassible. Yesterday, I conducted an experiment using gravel. Since all officers (here) are busy, I put Capt. Harris, my dental officer, in charge of the detail. He did an excellent job.

I'm going out again now with Capt. Harris and the detail to work some more on the particular spot. We spread a thick layer of gravel over a bad spot. This morning I want to check it and run a grader over it.

I expect Smullen to visit me later this morning.

FRIDAY, 16 February 1945

EPINAL

Colonel Smullen arrived at approximately 1700 yesterday. He had supper with us and departed at approximately 2100. Maj. Baldwin, a former SOLOC [Southern Line of Communications (Rhône Valley)] officer now with Engr Sect CAS, accompanied him.

The conference was very satisfactory. In connection with the 1392nd Forestry Co, we will ship out of VINCEY 50,000 bd ft [board feet] of tactical lumber to 7th Army daily. 7th Army and 1392nd vehicles will haul from mills to VINCEY. We have been authorized to become engaged in lumber business to certain extent by helping mill owners.

In addition, we are to commence drawing lumber from MEURTHE MOSELLE Dept.²⁷ Our allocation in VOSGES is 5,000,000 bd ft; in MEURTHE and MOSELLE it is 2,000,000.

This lumber is to be procured by 31 March.

Col. Smullen could not honor our request for more dump trucks. Problem of providing 400 tons of rock or slag to 7th Army daily was explained. Nothing definite was reached. Maj. Jaques is reconnoitering in connection with this. Col. Smullen explained that it is contemplated that considerable road maintenance area would be taken from us in the south so we could take over Nancy area.

We are pleased with these prospects.

MONDAY, 19 February 1945, 0915 [hours]

Last notes written 16 Feb.

Saturday morning I went to Hqs 7th Army to obtain consolidated signed receipt for all of the lumber furnished to them up to 15 Feb.

I then went to BLAINVILLE to visit Co F in their new location, then proceeded to TOUL.

Remained at TOUL Saturday night, went into NANCY Sunday morning to try to make arrangements for shipment by rail of rock or gravel to DOMGERMAIN. Maj. Jaques and I were together and had little success. Maj. Jaques will follow through.

Then proceeded to DOMGERMAIN to inspect Co C in process of developing depot. It promises to be an interesting job. At present Capt. Collis is constructing additional unloading hard standing and hard standing for open storage.

I return[ed] to TOUL Sunday afternoon.



Unwinding in the mess hall.

²⁷ Department of Meurthe-et-Moselle. A French department is roughly equivalent to an American county.

TUESDAY, 20 February 1945

TOUL

I have moved my office and belongings to TOUL. This move was prompted by the fact that I intend to move my Hqs and one battalion to TOUL eventually and also by the fact that four German PW [prisoner of war] companies are to report to me in TOUL within the next day or two.

These four PW companies (216 PWs in each company) are to be used for depot operations, and until depot personnel can take care of them, I am to be responsible for them.

After arriving here, I went around with Lt. Geller to obtain information on how they will arrive. Information indicates that they will have personal equipment only. Accordingly we made arrangements for cooking facilities and rations.

WEDNESDAY, 28 February 1945

Last notes written 20 Feb.

The events of the last two days are worthy of being noted. The German PWs arrived yesterday afternoon, 704 in number. Today the four companies, 9041, 9042, 9043 and 9044, were engaged in cleaning and improving their quarters. Captain Lee, who has been made P/W officer, has done an excellent job of whipping things into shape rapidly. The prisoners have taken hold without much instructions. Capt. Lee seems to be enjoying his assignment immensely.

Today 20 4-ton dump trucks were made available to us for our work here. It has been a great source of pleasure to observe the amount of rock being hauled by them. Two of the main roads at DOMGERMAIN are practically complete. Stone is being applied to the third.

Our progress at DOMGERMAIN has been cause for many favorable comments. Capt. Collis has done a fine job so far.

We have had excellent weather for approximately 2 weeks.

THURSDAY, 1 March 1945

These notes are being written in my C&R while at site of E 257 Depot project, DOMGERMAIN.²⁸

At a conference yesterday afternoon (Col. Baldwin, Maj. O'Toule, Maj. Radki, Capt. Dabbs and myself) it was decided that the 334th Engr would take over construction work at E 523 and I would continue at E 257.²⁹ This morning I had a conference with Col. [G.] Bloodgood, CO of the 334th Engr, in which I outlined to him the features of the work, as given to me in yesterday's conference, at E 523. Col. Bloodgood and I decided that 10 (ten) of his 4-ton dump trucks would continue to haul for me; the others would haul for him. He also agreed to take over operation of 3/4 Link-belt shovel which is being provided by the Dept. At present I am operating a 3/4 yard BUCKEYE and a 1/2 yard OSGOOD.³⁰

MONDAY, 12 March 1945

TOUL

Notes have not been written for many days.

Today, Colonel Baldwin asked me for an estimate on completion of the Depot at DOMGERMAIN. Estimate given:

- 1 - Original area 23 March
- 2 - Area within south cover of triangle 31 Mar
- 3 - Area south of triangle 10 April

The information I received regarding sending a company to La FORGE (South of SARREBOURG) was confirmed tonight. Co E will be sent.

28 E-257 is perhaps the Engineer Supply Installation at Domgermain.

29 It is uncertain if "Col. Baldwin" is the same as the Major Baldwin mentioned in the entry of 16 February 1945 and if "Maj. O'Toule" is the same as the Major O'Toule mentioned on 18 December 1944. The 334th was the 334th Engineer Special Service Regiment. E-523 was the Engineer Supply Installation at Toul. *Final Report of the Chief Engineer, European Theater of Operations, 1942-1945*, vol. 2 (n.p., n.d.), Appendix 20-A and Appendix 20-B, CEHO.

30 Link-Belt, Buckeye, and Osgood were companies that manufactured power shovels and other construction equipment. Eric Reinert, CEHO, personal communication, 1 May 2008.

**THURSDAY, 15 March 1945, 0830 hours
TOUL**

Yesterday was a very full day. In the morning Col. Baldwin advised me that he desired that the 334th take over construction of the area at DOMGERMAIN south of the triangle. I contacted Colonel Bloodgood, C. O. of 334th, and advised him of same and made arrangements for his proceeding with this work.

Later in the day Colonel Baldwin advised me that rear boundary of CAS would be coincident with MEURTHE – MOSELLE – VOSGES boundary and that, in all probability, troops would be frozen in present locations. In view of the fact that he desired that all of my regiment be with CAS, he suggested that I take steps to move those, who are not already there, into proposed CAS area. Accordingly Hdqs, 2nd Bn is moving to BLAINVILLE with Co F and Co D is on its way to WOIPPY just north of METZ.

Tuesday I went to La FORGE to reconnoiter area into which Co E is moving. I learned that Co E will be part of a team whose mission is to keep a pipeline within 10 miles of front line as 7th Army moves forward. It promises to be an interesting assignment for Co E.



Colonel Bagnulo at a field conference to determine the boundaries of the Domgermain depot.

**SUNDAY, 18 March 1945
HQs in vicinity of St. NICOLAS**

Yesterday "Mike" came to visit me but I was at CAS HQs. Today I've come to visit him, but he is at 6AG HQs.³¹

This morning I delivered to Colonel Smullen in person a tabulation of the results of our survey of METZ.

(He gave the regt the assignment of surveying available facilities.) He explained that he desired two companies in the new area to be taken over from 7th Army and that he wanted to find location (sidings) along which he could establish stockpiles of rock. Maj. Jaques and Maj. Alsin are reconnoitering those areas today.³² Last night Captain Collis got drunk and raised hell with his officers so that they are ready to "quit." I intend to investigate the matter tonight. It appears that we might have to start reclassification proceedings on Collis.

**FRIDAY, 23 March 1945
TOUL**

Last notes written 18 March.

The events of the last few days have happened with lightning [speed]. My regiment is moving forward to take over certain areas as the 7th Army moves forward.

Three out of 5 G[eneral]. S[ervice]. Reg'ts have been selected to support 7th Army as it advances. The 1321st is one of the three.

This morning Colonel Bloodgood and I are going to 7 A[Army] Hdqs to report.

³¹ 6th Army Group, commanded by Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers.

³² "Alsin" is probably the Maj. Bill Alsyn mentioned in the history section.

TUESDAY, 27 March 1945
SARREBOURG

I moved to this location yesterday. The rest of the Reg't HQs will move here today and tomorrow. The disposition of the Reg't at present is as follows:

Reg'tl HQs H/S Co - SARREBOURG
Hdqs, 1st Bn - SARREBOURG
CO A - TOUL
Co B - RECHICOURT
Co C - CHATEAU-SALINS
Hdqs 2nd Bn and Co D either SAVERNE or PHALSBOURG
Co E - SARREGUEMINES
Co F - HAGUENAU

WEDNESDAY, 4 April 1945
SARREBOURG

Last notes were written 27 March, 1945.

Saturday, I was ordered back to NANCY to attend a ceremony given by the French to honor General Sebree, who liberated that city.³³ In a very colorful ceremony at the Hotel de Ville, Nancy, the General was made an honorary citizen of Nancy. The ceremony took place in a large ballroom. Lined up along one side of this room were the American Officers like myself who were ordered to the ceremony and on the other side were French officers, French civilians and city officials dressed in bright colored ermine robes.

Lieutenant General Patch, 7th Army commander, attended the ceremony. He is a tall, impressive soldierly man. My eyes were fixed on him in admiration throughout the ceremony.

Sunday morning I went to TOUL to make arrangements for picking up some equipment and releasing the men of Co A from guard at E 523 and E 524.³⁴ On the return trip from TOUL between Toul and Nancy, I saw what was left of a horse which has stepped on a mine. What remained consisted only of the rear portion of the body and the two hind legs.

Engr Sect, CAS, moved to MANNHEIM yesterday (forward) and rear moved to KAISERSLAUTERN.

³³ Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Sebree was the assistant commander of the 35th Infantry Division through February 1945. A task force under Sebree liberated Nancy on 15 September 1944. Hugh M. Cole, *The Lorraine Campaign* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Division, U.S. Army, 1950), 95.

³⁴ E-524 is not identified. It does not appear in the *Final Report of the Chief Engineer*, vol. 2, Appendix 20-A.

SUNDAY, 8 April 1945, 1330 hours
SARREBOURG

Two interesting episodes occurred since the writing of the last notes which are not "in the line of business."

Friday afternoon, Maj. Worley and I went to HEMING to investigate the site for unloading rock. While we were there, two white American soldiers, very much excited, came to us to report that three girls had approached them and asked them for protection. A colored guard, they related, had struck one of the girls and had threatened to return with a pistol. Thinking it was one of my men, I accompanied the soldiers to the home of these girls. Worley entered first to find a number of young girls, one of whom had nothing on but a skirt and a blouse which was unbuttoned so that her breasts were bare. She had covered up by the time I entered so that I did not get in on the show. In my best French, I investigated and learned that soldiers frequented this home. That day a slightly dark soldier had asked one of the girls if she would "coucher" with him, whereupon she slapped him on the face.³⁵ He in turn slapped her. I asked if she knew who the soldier is, and she replied in the affirmative and led Worley and me to an adjacent house.

Corps of Engineers half-pound blocks of TNT.



³⁵ In this context, "coucher" is meant as "go to bed."

There I found that a number of Ordnance soldiers were billeted and it was one of these who had done the slapping. Things were worked out satisfactorily and the girls asked us if we would return to their home for some coffee, whereupon I decided that it would be advisable to decline and continue our investigation of the rock situation.

Six months ago yesterday we set sail from Boston P of E [port of embarkation] and we had a party last night. Arrangements for approximately 25 girls had been made at the major's office. They were fairly attractive but mostly young. Both colored and white officers were there and it was somewhat of a disturbing sight to see the colored officers dance with the white girls—although I have tried to eliminate any such reaction.

Toward the end of the dance I met a Marie Houssier who had been a dancing instructor and who is an excellent dancer. I enjoyed dancing with her immensely. The party ended at midnight and all seemed to have enjoyed themselves. Many of the girls asked me if we would have another.

MONDAY, 9 April 1945

German border north of WISSEMBOURG

This is the first time I have set foot on German soil. I left SARREBOURG at approximately 0930 hours and proceeded to HAGUENAU. Between SARREBOURG and DETTWILLER, Co D had a number of prisoners on the road. Their work resulted in considerable improvement on the condition of the road. I stopped off at Co F for a short time at HAGUENAU, had a cup of coffee, then proceeded on my way.

It's a beautiful spring day. The trees are in full bloom and the grass is a luscious green. Dan Brown and I have just completed lunch, and having written these notes we will be on our way.



German prisoners of war attached to the 1321st.

WEDNESDAY, 11 April 1945

SARREBOURG

I returned from my trip to Germany late yesterday afternoon. I left HAGUENAU about 1100 Monday, proceeded north to WISSEMBOURG, NEUSTADT, LUDWIGSHAFEN, cross the Rhine over to MANNHEIM and proceeded to CAS Hqs which is approximately six kils southeast of MANNHEIM. Arrived CAS Hqs mid afternoon.

LUDWIGSHAFEN and MANNHEIM have been practically beaten to a pulp. We crossed the RHINE on a reinforced pontoon bridge.

Being in Germany resulted in a strange feeling which is not pleasant. We are surrounded by people who have been our bitter enemies for years, and it is certain that their feeling toward us must not be friendly. With the non fraternization policy now in effect, the occupation troops will be similar to confined men.³⁶

Most of the land seen is farmland and mostly vineyard



³⁶ As the Allied troops were entering Germany, General Dwight D. Eisenhower issued a directive prohibiting "mingling with Germans upon terms of friendliness, familiarity, or intimacy, individually or in groups in official or unofficial dealings." In practice, the non-fraternization policy proved nearly impossible to enforce. Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1990), 329–30.

cultivated. It is beautiful. The Germans were hard at work in their fields and in the cities setting everything right.

It was alarming to see the large number of [young] German men in civilian clothes working.

There can be no question that these men are German soldiers who have thrown away their uniforms and returned to civilian life. They may be dangerous.

Colonel Smullen directed me to take over maintenance of the road from SARREGUEMINES, HOMBURG, KAISERSLAUTERN and relieved me of responsibility of the road from LUNEVILLE to SARREBOURG.

That means at present we are maintaining the road from SARREBOURG to Haguenau in addition to the road mentioned above. Co's A and C will be sent up to take over the SARREGUEMINES-KAISERSLAUTERN road.

**SUNDAY, 15 April 1945, 2145 hours
SARREBOURG**

Last notes were written Wednesday 11 April.

Today being Sunday, I decided to take it off this afternoon and take a ride up into the nearby mountains. Maj. Worley, Capt. Dabbs, Lt. Thomas, and Lt. Geller and I made the trip.³⁷

It was a perfect day and the scenery along the mountain roads was beautiful.

Near the town of DABO, we could see in the distance a church which stands on the top of the highest mountain in that area. At about the same time we passed two religious processions, of approximately 200-300 people in each procession, headed in the general direction of this church. We learned that today is the day set aside to commemorate Pope LEO who was born in this area and that these processions were headed for the church.³⁸

We decided to visit the church also. We had to leave the car at the road and travel the rest of the way by foot, which was a 20 minute climb. The views from the top of that mountain thrilled me. These small French towns with their red roofed houses setting on the sides of the hills formed a delightful picture. Some of the views showed cultivated land, towns and some areas just forests.



³⁷ George M. Thomas, Saco, Maine, regimental motor officer.

³⁸ Probably St. Leo IX, who was born in Alsace and was known as Bruno of Toul. His papacy lasted from 1049 to 1054; his feast day is 19 April.

**THURSDAY, 26 April 1945
SINGEN, GERMANY, CP, CO D.³⁹**

The last notes were written 15 April.

I have not been prompted to write since there has not been much of interest.

The last two days, however, have brought about a completely new picture.

Monday of this week, I moved my advance CP to BAD DURKHEIM, GERMANY with a view to being closer to CAS HQ. Tuesday morning, when I reported to CAS HQ, I learned that instructions had been issued to rear HQ to move Co's D and F into position to accomplish repair work on the autobahn from KARLSRUHE to STUTTGART. Yesterday I reconnoitered the entire route and these are the jobs involved.⁴⁰

- a. Fill a crater two kilometers NW of SINGEN.
- b. Jack a bridge back into position 1.0 kils SE of SINGEN.
- c. Raise and crib one end of autobahn bridge which had been partially dropped.

This is a reinforced concrete stringer bridge, 10 stringers (5' x 2'), 60' span. Location is at intersections of Hwy 10 and autobahn a few kils NW of PFORZHEIM.



*Army Engineer
welding goggles.*



³⁹ CP is command post.

⁴⁰ In the original diary, items (a) through (f) on this list are preceded by a check mark; items (g) through (j) are not. The significance of the marks is unknown.

- d. Provide 2 way connection from Hwy 10 to autobahn north of PFORZHEIM.
- e. Build 80' bridge along autobahn over cross road E of PFORZHEIM.
- f. Build 80' bridge along autobahn over cross road 1 kil SE of WIMSHEIM.
- g. Fill gap on autobahn caused by dropping bridge on cross road below, 3 kils north of HEIMSHEIM.
- h. Fill gap on autobahn caused by dropping bridge on crossroad below, 3 kils slightly east and north of HEIMSHEIM.
- i. Fill gap on autobahn 1 kil SE of RUTESHEIM.
- j. Build 150' span over RR crossing 2 kils SW of LEONBERG.

Co D is now located at SINGEN. Co F at LEONBERG. Capt. Lee and I stayed with Co F last night at Leonberg after having travelled from BAD DURKHEIM to LEONBERG.

The autobahn is a magnificent road which equals anything we have in the States, and the countryside surpasses in beauty anything we have in the States. Co F is located in barracks originally built for German military, which are on a hill overlooking LEONBERG. The picture of the town cannot be described by anything less than poetic expressions.

As we were approaching LEONBERG yesterday, we passed a 2 mile column of German prisoners marching to the rear.

**MONDAY, 30 April 1945, 0730 hours
LEONBERG, GERMANY**

Last notes were written 26 April.

I'm writing these notes hurriedly before I go out to the projects this morning.

Yesterday a French Medical officer, a French lieutenant and three French (female) Red Cross workers came to this site to look over the barracks which we had contemplated to use for Regt'1 Hqs. They want to use it as a transient bivouac for repatriated Frenchmen returning to France. I told them that if I could find another suitable site I would be willing to let them have it. Accordingly we went to the office of the military Govt who made arrangements for us to inspect other available sites in LEONBERG, none of which were very suitable; then we all had dinner at LEONBERG, a long drawn out French affair.

After lunch Dr. FASSIN, the French Lieutenant and I went to DITZINGEN to reconnoiter that place. DITZINGEN had been occupied only 8 days previously and very few troops had been there. As we entered the town, children would run and hide, and people watched us from behind partially drawn curtains.

We contacted the Burgermeister who showed us possible sites. It annoyed me to see the number of well equipped machine shops in this small community.

They apparently had been organized as part of the war industry. French, Polish, and Russian drafted labor did the work in these plants.

**FRIDAY, 4 May 1945
CASERNE HINDENBURG, KORNWESTHEIM, GERMANY**

Last notes were written 30 April.

This is, indeed, amazing!!

Headquarters and H/S Co are moving from SARREBOURG today. For a number of days Capt. Lee and I have been reconnoitering possible sites without too much success. Captain Lee located this Caserne but did not pay too much attention to it since he believed that this is French territory. We learned this morning, however, that the French are moving out, making this 7th Army area.

This caserne is quite new and in excellent shape. It contains 5 barracks (700 man capacity ea), 8 garages (300' x 30'), 1 repair shop (350' x 60'), 1 gymnasium (200' x 75'), drill field, paved (500' x 500'), Officer's mess to house 100 officers. In each of the barracks, except one, there is one family. These families originally lived here with their soldier husbands. We decided to occupy the barracks which has no family. The families are all concerned as to whether or not we plan to kick them out. They have all started to clean this barracks. Each barracks has two small apartments, complete with kitchen and bath. Apparently, the C.O. and perhaps his first sergeant occupied these apartments with their families.

We had one of the ladies, who claimed that she was a hired cook, prepare our noon meal. That perhaps was not wise, but it was good. (At present Capt. Dabbs, Sgt. Velasquez, Johnnie Shaw and Dan Brown and I are the only ones here waiting for troops to arrive.)

I'm writing these notes in one of the rooms of the apartment which I plan to use as my quarters.

Apparently, the German soldiers left in a hurry for some of their uniforms still remain in the wall lockers.

TUESDAY, 15 May 1945, 1600 hours

Saturday morning, while at CAS Hqs, I was informed that the unit was alerted for movement to Marseille Staging Area on call of CG, Delta Base Section.⁴¹ This means, undoubtedly, that we will be going to the Pacific Area.

Sunday morning, General Immell, CG, CAS, inspected the work we have done on the autobahn and gave on the spot awards to six officers and nine enlisted men for the excellent work we have accomplished.⁴²

There has been nothing but praise for our performance in connection with that work on the autobahn.

The entire regiment has been instructed to move into this area in order to prepare for the move. Co C has started and the entire Regiment should be here by the end of the week.

Once again the Regiment will be together, which is a rare thing.

**TUESDAY, 22 May 1945
SECKENHEIM, GERMANY**

I'm in the billet for transient officers at CAS Hqs, having reported to find out if any arrangements have been made yet for an interview with General Lee in connection with my promotion.⁴³

Last Sunday I was interviewed by the CG of CAS, General Immell, who sent the papers forwarded approved. CAS Hqs is trying to expedite action on this matter since the Regiment has started its movement to the Marseille Staging Area.

The 1st Bn Motor convoy departed yesterday, the 2nd Bn and H/S convoys departed this morning, and the personnel of the Regiment will depart tomorrow night by train.

Oh, yes, real important news!! Last night I received 2 V-Mails from Helen, V-Mail from her mother and a card from sister Dora announcing the birth of my son [Michael] 12:50 PM 5 May.⁴⁴ I am the father of an eight pound nine ounce boy.



⁴¹ CG is commanding general. Delta Base Section (DBS), established 1 October 1944, provided logistical support for the forces in the Marseille area. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support*, 2:40.

⁴² See notes 63 and 64 in the history section.

⁴³ Maj. Gen. John C. H. Lee, was commander of the Communications Zone, European Theater of Operations. The Communications Zone, an Army organization in the rear part of the theater of operations, provided logistical support (supply, communications, administration) for combat operations. Ruppenthal, *Logistical Support*, 1:198–206.

⁴⁴ V, or Victory mail, was a type of mail used during World War II to conserve shipping space. The sender wrote a letter on special letter-sheets, folded it into its own envelope, and mailed it. The correspondence was then reduced onto microfilm, which was shipped to a receiving station, where facsimiles were created and then delivered to the recipient. Christopher H. Sterling, ed., *Military Communications: From Ancient Times to the 21st Century* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 489.



Aldo Bagnulo's wife, Helen, and son Michael.

**SUNDAY, 27 May 1945, 1000 hours
CAS Hqs, Near MANNHEIM, GERMANY**

I've been waiting here at CAS Hqs since this past Tuesday for a call from Paris (COMX) advising me that arrangements have been made for an interview by General Lee on my promotion.⁴⁵

The regiment has already arrived at the Marseille Staging Area and I have been very uneasy being separated from it. If nothing comes through today I shall have to leave tomorrow to join the unit.

It has been interesting to watch the reactions of the personnel here at Hqs now that hostilities have ceased.⁴⁶ Everybody has had a terrific let down and everybody seems restless. Of course they all want to return home, and most seem to prefer transfer to the CBI rather than remain here.⁴⁷ Some have received word that they will remain as Army of occupation personnel and are not too happy at these prospects.



⁴⁵ "COMX" is possibly a typographical error, with "COMZ" being intended.

⁴⁶ On 7 May 1945 the German High Command surrendered all land, sea, and air forces to the Allies; on 8 May President Harry S. Truman proclaimed V-E Day, victory in Europe.

⁴⁷ CBI is China-Burma-India Theater.

MONDAY, 28 May 1945, 1400 hours
Airfield near FRANKFURT, GERMANY

This is better. Yesterday evening a message came through from COMZ, directing me to report to CG, COMZ, Tuesday morning for an interview.

I left the MANNHEIM airfield at 100[0] hours this morning and flew to this location where I am now waiting for a plane to Paris. SHAEF Hqs is at present in FRANKFURT and we had lunch there.⁴⁸ This Hq is in a huge building which was one of the main offices of I. G. FARBEN, owner of the largest chemical industry in the world. We had chicken, potatoes, beans and ice cream—the first time in eight months I have had ice cream. We set a small table with table cloth—clean, well organized. It was a treat. The building is a new structure built on modernistic lines. It is quite impressive.

THURSDAY, 31 May [1945]
Aboard Plane (C-47) en route to MARSEILLE

Last notes were written 28 May 1945.

We have just taken off from ORLY field (Paris). So far flying conditions are sufficiently smooth to permit my writing these notes without difficulty.

I arrived in Paris Monday afternoon and after signing in and arranging for billet, I had supper at the officers mess at the MAJESTIC Hotel. As I was leaving the dining room, I encountered Capt. MICKLE who, as a civilian, dug wells for me both at St Croix and Antigua. He accompanied me to my billet at the Hotel FREMTIER to visit with me for awhile. (This hotel is near the TROCADERO and the EIFFEL TOWER.)

The following morning I reported to the G-1 section of COMZ and was instructed to return at 1130 for the interview by the General. At 1130 General Lee saw approximately 10 of us Lieutenant Colonels who had been recommended for promotion to Colonel and 3 WAC Captains who had been recommended for promotion to Major.⁴⁹ We reported individually, but he spoke to us in a group. He spoke of the responsibility which we had and of the necessity of setting the example for military courtesy and in appearance.



⁴⁸ SHAEF is Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force.

⁴⁹ WAC is Women's Army Corps.

Before the interview, I called on Colonel CANAN, chief troops division, OCE, then visited with Col. DEMERY, Maj. BIRD and Capt. MICKLE, all of the pipeline service.⁵⁰

At lunch I met Maj. MALSTROM who accompanied Capt. MICKLE and me while arranging for transportation to MARSEILLE.⁵¹ I had supper with Colonel MATHIOS that evening (I had met him also that morning) and after supper we walked for miles thru the Paris streets, in the Vicinity of the EIFFEL TOWER. It was 1030 Tuesday night when I returned to the hotel.

Wednesday morning I met Lt. Col. H. TUMIN (an acquaintance of the FO course at Belvoir) with whom I had lunch.⁵² He was busy during the afternoon but made his car available which I used in transferring my billet from the FERMTIER⁵³ to the Hotel Du RHONE. TUMIN and I had a delicious steak dinner together, then he drove me through the city. We have nothing in the US which compares with Paris. We covered most of the city including the MONTMARTRE District, the park districts, the Opera House and finally we drove up to the SACRED HEART CHURCH which is atop the highest hill of Paris and which affords a breathtaking view of Paris. It remained light until approximately 1030. At 1130 I returned to the Du Rhone.

The girls of Paris are beautiful, not some of them, but all of them. They dress and make up more expertly than any I have seen. It would be difficult to remain faithful to one's family and principles if he stayed there any length of time, and very, very few of those who are stationed there can manage to remain untainted. Between the French girls, the English civilian girls who have been imported to work at Hqs, and the WACs, the temptations are more than the average man can withstand.

Now I'm on my way to Marseille. A new phase of my military career is unfolding.



⁵⁰ Howard V. Canan, USMA 1918, served as chief of the Troops Division of the Office of the Chief of Engineers (OCE) from 15 April 1943 to 3 May 1946. Branham, *Biographical Register*, 280. Major Bird is possibly Clayton A. Bird. *Official Army Register, Volume 1* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1946), 1:91. The Military Pipeline Service was under the control of Headquarters, Communication Zone. Alfred M. Beck, Abe Bortz, Charles W. Lynch, Lida Mayo, and Ralph F. Weld, *The Corps of Engineers: The War Against Germany* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 1988), 412.

⁵¹ Possibly Einar A. Malmstrom, an Air Corps officer. *Official Army Register*, 1:701.

⁵² The Field Officer course at Fort Belvoir, Va., trained captains and senior first lieutenants. Larry D. Roberts, Command Historian, U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., personal communication, 27 May 2008.

⁵³ Bagnulo spells the name of the hotel both "Fremtier" and "Fermtier," though possibly both are misspellings.

THURSDAY, 14 June 1945, 1900 hours
DBS Staging Area, NW of MARSEILLE

Last notes were written 31 May 1945.

I arrived at the MARSEILLE Airfield in time for the noon meal 31 May 1945. It took approximately 2 hours before transportation was arranged to the Staging Area. In the Staging Area, I found everything very much in a state of confusion. The Staging Area was not yet complete and the Staging Area personnel were inexperienced and were not properly organized. Dabbs had done a good job of accomplishing as much as he had under the circumstances, and now we are almost 100% ready as far as being re-equipped, packed and crated.

Tonight we will start transferring all of our equipment, except TAT, down to the pier where it will be loaded on a cargo vessel.⁵⁴ I would estimate that two weeks will lapse before the personnel is loaded.

This area and especially Marseille is completely different from any other part of France that I have seen. It is a semi desert country and resembles, to a certain extent, the hills of St Croix and Antigua. Marseille is a dirty, stinking port city. It has the reputation of being one of the world's most wicked cities and what I have seen of it confirms that reputation.

Venereal Disease among the soldiers is going to be a real problem and it is for that reason, primarily, I am anxious to leave here as quickly as possible. It is reported that the VD contracted here is more virulent than similar diseases any place in the world, and in a great many cases the normal method of treatments does not give satisfactory results. Already this month 15 cases of VD in this regiment have been reported to me.

The Staging Area at present is Staging, primarily, Engineers and I have been able to renew many old acquaintances. I have met the following:

Colonel Sorley, who was my Commanding Officer and who is now CO of 1325th Engineer Gen Serv Regiment; Lt. Col. Dunn, Commander of 1318th; Captain Autilio, S-3 of a construction Battalion; Lt. Col. Jiminez, whom I knew in P.R. and who is now commander of a Quartermaster Trucking Group; Lt. Colonel Angelopoulos, Executive Officer for the 375th Engineer Gen Serv Regiment; Captain Peterson, one of the Officers whom I knew in P.R. and who is now commanding



⁵⁴ TAT stood for "to accompany troops" and referred to specific equipment, tools, kits, etc. that went with the troops themselves as opposed to heavier equipment and vehicles that were shipped separately. Larry D. Roberts, personal communication, 28 May 2008.

1535th Engineer Dump Truck Company.⁵⁵ Maj. Ken Foster is assigned to the transportation section of DBS Headquarters and I have already had a number of meals with him. He has been very hospitable in his attempt to make my stay here a pleasant one but, of course, I am anxious to get going to tackle a new job which lies ahead.

Since writing the last notes, the following promotions in this regiment have come through: Dabbs, promoted to Major, Kellogg and Guess, to Captain.⁵⁶ My Eagles have come through.⁵⁷ The date of rank for all these promotions is 1 June, 1945.



Brass collar insignia for U.S. Army officers.

SUNDAY, 17 June 1945, 1730 hours

Last notes were written 14 June 1945.

All of our organizational equipment except TAT was hauled down to the pier during the last two days for loading on a Liberty Ship.⁵⁸ Lt. Horace C. Smith was appointed Ship's TQM and will accompany the cargo on the ship.⁵⁹

This morning I attended nine o'clock Mass and received communion. This afternoon, Captain Peterson and I went swimming; it was the first time for me in approximately a year. The Staging area



⁵⁵ Merrow E. Sorley, USMA 1924, assumed command of the 1325th Engineer General Service Regiment, an African American unit, on 2 June 1945. Branham, *Biographical Register*, 427. A. W. Dunn was commander of the 1318th Engineer General Service Regiment. The 1318th and the 375th were African American units. E. J. Peterson led the 1535th Engineer Dump Truck Company, also an African American unit.

⁵⁶ Ralph A. Guess, Houston, Tex., special service officer.

⁵⁷ Bagnulo's promotion to colonel was in the Army of the United States. He attained the rank of colonel in the Regular Army on 12 February 1962. *U.S. Army Register, Volume I, United States Army Active and Retired List, 1 January 1965* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), 24.

⁵⁸ Assembled with prefabricated parts, the mass-produced and slow-moving Liberty Ships accounted for half of the merchant vessels constructed in the United States during World War II.

⁵⁹ TQM is transport quartermaster.

beach is approximately nine miles from the Staging area and is quite a long beach which extends one mile or so.

It was crowded to capacity today with military personnel who wore little if anything as swimming suits. The temperature of the water was just right and I enjoyed the swim very much.

Last night I saw Mickey Rooney along with a number of other enlisted men in a GI show.⁶⁰ The show was held in the Amphitheater which is constructed in a huge ravine and accommodates approximately 10 to 15 thousand. This makes an ideal setting.

The Staging Area is located on a high plateau and is designed to accommodate 75 thousand to 80 thousand troops.

In this Staging Area there is still much construction to be done in the way of shower facilities, sewer and water lines, but sufficient water is already available so that it is not too uncomfortable. The chief objection, at present, is excessive amount of dust.

Rock is out cropping everywhere throughout the area and there is not a sprig of vegetation. The weather so far has been almost perfect. Days are quite warm but the evenings are delightfully cool and nights are cold.

SUNDAY, 23 June 1945⁶¹
DBS Staging Area, CALAS, France

Last notes were written 17 June, 1945.

Not much has transpired since last Sunday. The ship, SS WHITE SQUALL, has not left Marseille yet. All of our equipment, except TAT, has been loaded. A 4-ton and a 6-ton Prime Mover was lost in the Ordnance processing yards and they cannot be replaced.⁶² Lieutenant H. C. Smith will make the trip on the WHITE SQUALL as ship QM.

Friday, I accompanied Maj. Foster on an inspection trip of some of his vehicle assembly parks and TCPs.⁶³ On the return trip we stopped off at a large airfield to visit Lt. Col. Johnson, a friend of Foster, who commands the 837th Avn Engr Bn and who is in charge of

the construction work being done there.⁶⁴ The field is located on a huge natural plain that is approximately 12 miles long and 5 miles wide. It was constructed originally by the French; the Germans took it over later but demolished, quite thoroughly, all of the installations before leaving. Col. Johnson and his forces are putting it back in good shape.

Col. Johnson knew Bill McCrone, having served with him in Corsica.⁶⁵

I obtained Bill's address and wrote to him yesterday.

THURSDAY, 5 July 1945
DBS Staging Area, CALAS, France

Last notes were written 23 June, 1945.

We are still at the Staging Area without any definite news of when we can expect to be moving. All of us are restless and anxious to get going. Lieutenant Smith on the WHITE SQUALL set sail with our organizational equipment, 28 June 1945.

I have "stepped out" during the past week more than I have in a long time. I "lazier" around all day Sunday, became restless and proposed an expedition into town with Dabbs, Worley and Guthrie as the other expeditioniers. We went to the Engineers' Club. After arrival, Dabbs and Guthrie went to the 235th Gen[eral] Hospital, where approximately 2,000 nurses are being staged, and picked up an Elizabeth Josephson and Helen Jaeger. Worley and I left early with Colonel Sorley whom we met there.

Last night Dabbs and I went to the club again with Elizabeth (Joe) and Jerry Bell (a date arranged for me by Joe).

It is quite a circus at the Nurses Staging Area at the times when officers pick them up and bid them goodnight

Oh, yes, I met Maj. Rice at the Club, an officer who was on Thomason Act Duty with the 1st Engrs in 1938 or 1939.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Film star Mickey Rooney served in the 6817th Special Services Battalion and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. Alvin H. Marill, *Mickey Rooney: His Films, Television Appearances, Radio Work, Stage Shows, and Recordings* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2004), 34-37.

⁶¹ In 1945, 23 June was a Saturday and 24 June a Sunday. It is unclear which day Bagnulo wrote this entry.

⁶² A prime mover is a heavy cargo truck used for moving trailer-mounted equipment. U.S. War Department, *FM 5-5 Engineer Field Manual, Engineer Troops. 11 October 1943* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), 131.

⁶³ TCP is traffic control post.

⁶⁴ J. O. Johnson led the 837th Engineer Aviation Battalion, an African American unit that served in Bermuda, North Africa, Italy, and France. Shelby L. Stanton, *Order of Battle, U.S. Army, World War II* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1984), 583.

⁶⁵ Possibly Lt. Col. Willard P. McCrone, an engineer officer. *Official Army Register*, 1:736.

⁶⁶ The Thomason Act of 30 August 1935 authorized as many as 1,000 reserve officers to serve for up to one year on active duty as second lieutenants with the Regular Army. *U.S. Statutes at Large*, vol. 49, pt. 1, 1028. It is likely that Bagnulo himself went on active duty through the Thomason Act. The "1st Engrs" is the 1st Engineer Regiment, in which Bagnulo also served in the 1930s.

SATURDAY, 7 July 1945
DBS Staging Area, CALAS, France

Last notes were written 5 July 1945.

Yesterday at 1100 Ken Foster picked me up to accompany him on what was supposed to have been an inspection trip but actually turned out to be a tour of some of the historical sites in this section of France. Lt. Wilburn was invited to come along since room was available in the jeep.

We started at 1100, went north through SALON and stopped for lunch at a truck assembly park which is one of Foster's installations. After lunch we proceeded northwest to AVIGNON which is a walled city of considerable interest. A massive masonry wall surrounds the city, which in one section has very old buildings and narrow streets, and in another section has modern structures, wide streets, street lights, and so forth. It is a most fascinating spot. The chief item of interest is the Pope's Palace. Over a period of time five or six different Popes lived there. This was strange for I never realized that any of the Popes had lived anyplace other than Rome. Another thing that sounded strange to me, as explained by Foster, is that at one time there were three separate Popes, one in Italy, one in France and one in Spain.⁶⁷

Another point of interest is the Pont Saint-Benezet just east of the city across the Rhone River. The construction of the Bridge was begun in the year 1177 by Pastor Benezet, native of Vivarais, who presented himself to the Bishop of Avignon as sent by God to build a bridge over the Rhone River. The construction, which lasted eight years, was paid for by gifts and bequests. The Bridge is about 900 meters long and 4 meters wide and consisted of 19 slightly raised elliptical arches. Only four of these arches remain today, upon one of which stands the Chapel of Saint Nicholas (Patron Saint of Ferryboatmen). In this Chapel is found the Tomb of the Founder Saint Benezet.

We then proceeded beyond NIMES to see the PONT du GARD which is a huge aqueduct constructed approximately 2,000 years ago by the Romans. This is an arch structure approximately 1,000 feet long and 200 feet high at its highest point. This is the oldest structure I have seen. Construction required approximately 50 years. I purchased some souvenirs there.

We drove through the towns of NIMES, ARLES, and SALON on our return trip and in NIMES and ARLES saw coliseums and other items of interest constructed by the Romans.



67 During the Avignon Papacy (1305-76) seven popes, all French, reigned there. The papacy returned to Rome in 1377, but the new pope soon died. The French cardinals elected a pope, as did the cardinals in Rome. The Council of Pisa (1409) tried to end the controversy by electing its own candidate, resulting in three claimants, residing in Avignon, Rome, and Pisa. The Council of Constance (1412-15) settled the issue by approving the Roman line of popes.

At SALON we stopped off at the Red Cross for coffee and doughnuts (our supper) and arrived back at camp at 2100.

[Handwritten:] (The Pont St-Benezet is known also as a bridge on which the people used to dance. A song explaining this has been written.)⁶⁸

THURSDAY, 12 July 1945, 1930 [hours]
DBS Staging Area, CALAS, France

Last notes were written 7 July.

Not much has transpired since writing of last notes. Sunday afternoon I had a conference with Capt. Harris and Capt. Cooke, both colored officers, to discuss the colored situation and to foster better understanding.⁶⁹

They were interested in learning whether or not there were any limits on how high colored officers could rise in this Regiment. I assured them that performance was the chief prerequisite for promotion. They also indicated that they believed that a colored officer in the I and E position would prove to be more satisfactory.⁷⁰ I agreed. We touched many subjects, however, and talked for approximately three hours. The meeting appeared to be very, very satisfactory and I was asked to talk to the colored officers as a group since they felt that they could not convey all I had expressed.

Last night I spoke with all of the colored officers. I fear that I did not obtain the same satisfactory results as had been obtained Sunday. As some white people are definitely prejudiced on this problem and cannot be made to think rationally, so some of the colored officers are prejudiced only by the unfair practices and discriminations which exist without acknowledging any of the advancements. This situation is made even more difficult by the fact that some are really concerned only with personal, selfish interests and not the problem as pertains to the race as a whole. Some, however, especially Mr. Bailey, appear to be sincerely and genuinely interested in the problem as pertains to the EM.⁷¹ This is encouraging.

The Regiment will make the trip to the Pacific in two groups. Companies "A" and "B" and First Battalion Headquarters will load on the S.S. AINSWORTH tomorrow. It is expected that the rest of us will load in a week or so.

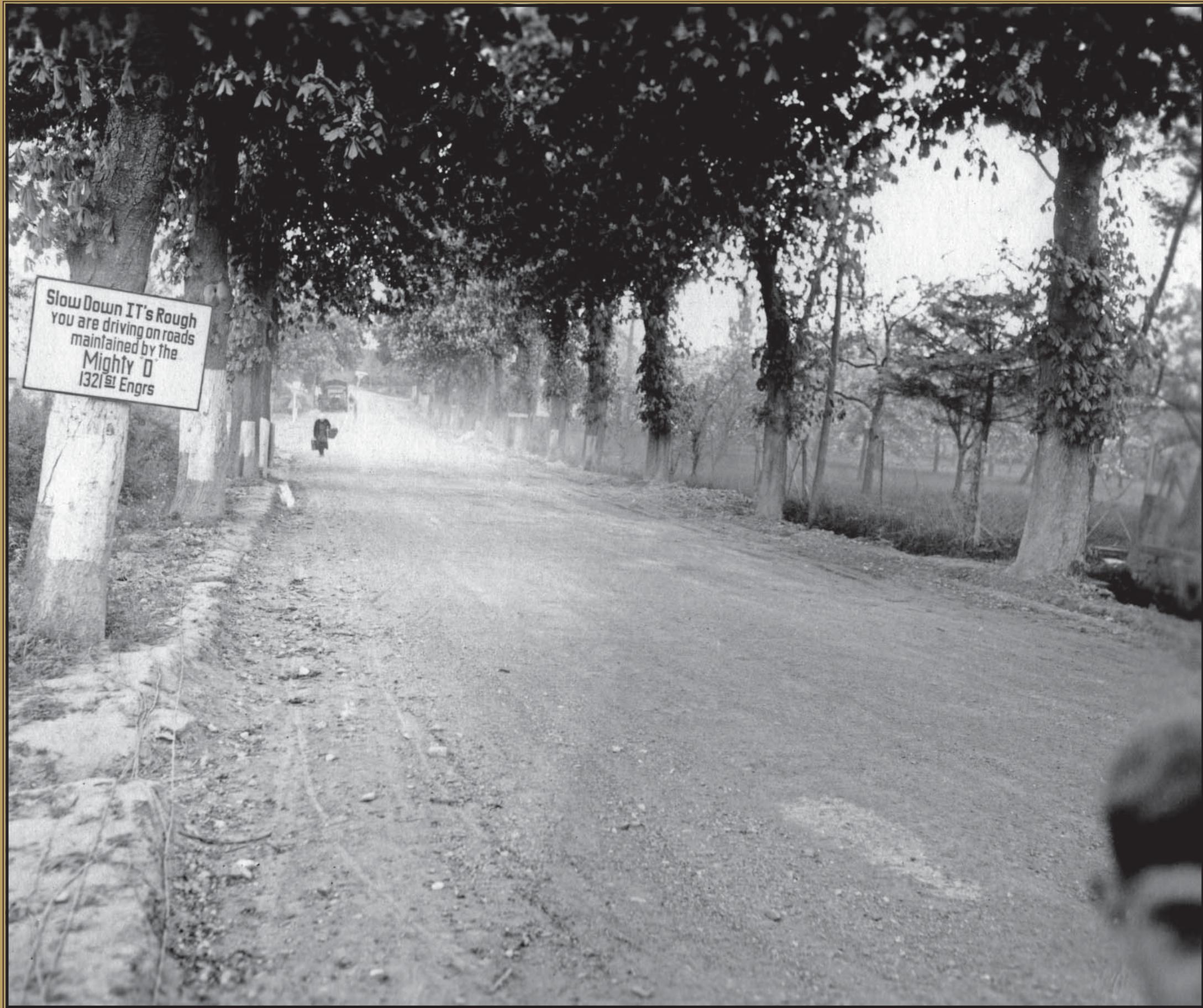


68 "Sur le Pont d'Avignon."

69 John A. Cooke, Akron, Ohio, commander of Company A.

70 I and E is information and education.

71 Edward C. Bailey, Savannah, Ga. The reference to "Mr." Bailey indicates that he was a warrant officer. EM is enlisted men.



Slow Down IT's Rough
you are driving on roads
maintained by The
Mighty D
1321st Engrs

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