

History  
of the

351st Engineer  
General Service  
Regiment

# History of 351st Engr. G. S. Regt.

## A. ORIGINAL UNIT

### (1) DESIGNATION:

351st ENGINEER GENERAL SERVICE REGIMENT (LESS BAND)

### (2) DATE OF ORGANIZATION:

August 20 1942

### (3) PLACE OF ORGANIZATION:

Camp White, Oregon:

### (4) AUTHORITY FOR ORGANIZATION:

General Order No. 48 Hq 1X Army Corps. Ft Lewis, Washington,  
30 July 1942.

### (5) SOURCES FROM WHICH PERSONNEL WERE OBTAINED:

Commanding; Col Roy W. Grower tfrd fr St. Louis Engineering Distr Per Par 3  
SO 194 Hq WD 21 July 1942.

## B. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION

### Authorized Strength at Activation:

Officers	53
Warrant Officers	2
Enlisted Men	1241

Authority T/O 5-21 1 April 1942 WD Cir 199, 22 June 1942

\*\*\*\*\*

## D. STATION (PERMANENT OR TEMP ) OF UNIT

(1) Camp White, Oregon (Permanent) From 20 Aug 42 to 10 May 43

(2) Fort Lewis, Washington (Temp) From 10 May 43 to 2 July 43

(3) Camp Kilmer, New Jersey ( Temp) From 7 July 43 to 17 July 43

(4) Watton, Norfolk, England (Perm) From 28 July 43 to 6 Jan 44

\*\*\*\*\*

(5) Teddington, Middlesex, England (Camp Grifies) Fr 5 Jan 44 to 1 April 44

(6) North Witham, Lincolnshire, England. (Perm Fr 17 Feb 44

Melchbourne Park, Bedfordshire, England

(7) Porthcawl, Clamorgan, Wales ( Temp) From 1 April 44 to 5 July 44.

Mamsbury, Wiltshire, England.

Fairford, Gloucestershire, England.

(8) Boscombe, Hampshire, England (Temp) From 5 July 44 to 13 Aug 44.

Freelands Lodge, Oxfordshire, England.

East Oxford & Hanley on Thames, Oxfordshire, England.

Honeybourne, Hampshire, England.

Hampshire England.

(9) Rennes, France (Temp) From 19 Aug 44 to 22 Sept 44

Redon France; La Brohiniere, France; Pace, France.

(10) Paris, France (Temp )From 22 Sept 44 to 22 Dec 44

Versailles, France; Harfleur, France; Compiègne, France; Creil, France; l'Isle Adam, France; Argenteuil, France; Guignes, France; Linas, France; Villeneuve St. Georges, France.

(11) Altlinster, Luxembourg; Weyer, Luxembourg; Koedange, Luxembourg; Colbet, Luxembourg; Mullerthal, Luxembourg; Breitweiler, Luxembourg.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### F. BATTLES

(1) Ardennes

(2) 16 Dec 44 to 24 Jan 45

(3) Repulse German Counter-Offensive

\*\*\*\*\*

#### I. LOSSES IN ACTION

(1) Engagement; Ardennes

(2) Names; Not appreciable

(3) Killed; Pfc Worley F. Duggar, 35347749, 25 Dec 1944

(4) Wounded; None

(5) Missing: None

(6) Taken Prisoner: None

#### K. IMPORTANT EVENTS;

##### 1. Presentation of Regimental Colors

A. Date: 13 February 1944

B. Presented by: Major General Cecil R. Moore, Chief Engr. ETOUSA

C. Accepted by; Col. William H. Bell, Jr., Commanding 351 Engr GS Reg

D. Retreat

##### 2. Presentation of Legion of Merit

A. Name; S/Sgt Franklin D. Stiffler, 35569807, CE; Co "D", 351 EGS Rgt

B. ACT; For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services as platoon commander in 351st Engr. GS Regt., a position normally held by a commissioned officer. Through his thorough knowledge of engineering and his resourcefulness, Staff Sergeant Stiffler was responsible for the training of his platoon to a high degree of efficiency, and for the successful accomplishment of construction projects assigned to his platoon. His exemplary service has contributed greatly to the construction progress of this theater. Entered military service from Indiana.

C. Presented by: Colonel William H. Bell, Jr., Commanding 351 Engr. GS Regt at Porthcawl, Wales.

D. Authority: General Order No 29, HQ ETOUSA, dtd 1 April 1944

3. Presentation of Soldier's Medal

A. Name: Sergeant Erling Berg, 37289085, CE, Co C, 351st Engr GS R

B. Act: For heroism near Watton, Norfolk, England on 15 Nov. 43.

L. NARRATIVE AND ENGINEER CONSTRUCTION:

The 351st Engr GS Regt disembarked in the European Theater of Operations at Liverpool, England on 27 July 1943. It was then assigned to Eastern Base Section and entrained for Watton, Norfolk the same date. Here the regiment was to expand the facilities of an existing RAF training field into an Advance Repair Depot for the US Army Air Force. Work began immediately after arrival at Watton. Existing facilities consisted mainly of three large hangars, a few technical sites, a small amount of living quarters, and a small perimeter track. As a result, the regiment was quartered in tents until a sufficient number of huts had been erected to accommodate all companies. Fortunately, this was by the middle of October and just in time to escape the heavy November and December rains.

The Regiment had been at Watton, Norfolk for slightly more than five months when the British Christmas holidays arrived. Work was continued by all US troops in the area, including all from Air Corps to Engineers. Work was slightly curtailed on Christmas Day and a special Christmas dinner was served in all companies. Several of the companies had British civilians as their guests and others had special parties for local children, at which the men shared their PX rations and gifts from home with the children. Each company mess hall had been decorated with fir Christmas trees, holly, and "all the trimmings" that were available on the scanty market.

To most of the men it was the second Christmas away from home and the Chaplain's Christmas service as heavily attended. The service was in a Romney hut that served as a combination theater, dance hall, and church. It too had been especially decorated for Christmas with fir boughs and paper mache and cotton and lighting effects. It was certainly not the finest church in England but as the men entered on that cold clear morning and stood in their muddy arctics and dirty clothes, it was a sincere place of worship.

Rumors ran wild on that Christmas day. "We are going to bomb Berlin." They have asked for an Armistice", "Europe is in revolt". There was no reason for them other than that it was a special day, hence special emphasis for the old rumors. And as always with rumors, the men laughed and scoffed, and hoped to God that they were true.

The work on the Advance Repair Depot continued in the bitter, damp cold and the slimy mud. Mud that came in spite of the fact that Colonel E. G. Plank had issued orders that there would be "no mud in EBS". The fields were mud when they were entered by human, animal or truck. There was mud on the roads, mud on the sidewalks, mud in the mess halls, mud in the barracks and mud on clothes, shoes and men. On the long, cold nights it would freeze but by mid-morning the crusted ice

would be worn away and the stuff would sing and splash as the trucks went through it. It was mud that cost many rear axles for 1 1/2 ton dumps, many pairs of arctics, shoes and tracks; mud that made rear wheel drive vehicles useless. An intensive anti-mud campaign was instituted in the regiment as in all Eastern Base Section. This campaign did help very much in licking partially this enemy that never fired a shot.

During the period spent at Watton, liaison and cooperation between the 830th Engineer Aviation Battalion, the 455th Anti-Aircraft Weapons Battalion, the 3rd Advance Repair Depot, USAAF, and this regiment was very satisfactory. The problems of transportation and supply were aided many times by cooperation between the four organizations. True, there were minor differences of opinion and policy, but the mutual problems overcame most difficulties.

Liaison between this organization and its higher headquarters was fairly good at this time, although it was difficult for some reasons; distance from the headquarters, added to the fact that this organization was new to the ETO and the operations of the SOS. Also, at this time liaison between the British Resident Engineer and this organization was poor. Cooperation was nil and assistance was almost entirely lacking in all the time spent in Watton. Revenge was wrecked upon the Resident Engineer on New Years Eve, he was invited to a party and filled to overflowing with black market gin. He left the party at 2000 hours 31 December 1943. From departure time to arrival time he had covered many miles of wet, British soil in the wet, British air, as he reached his wife and home a scant four miles away at 1500 hours 1 January 1944. Revenge was sweet!

On three January 1944 orders were telephoned alerting this organization to move to Teddington, Middlesex on 6 January. The job assignment was to construct "Ike's HQ". The fact that departure from Watton had finally been granted brought morale up instantly, the knowledge of the job assignment made morale unbeatable.

Watton, for this regiment, was an education and it was obtained the hard way. It was an unpleasant, "dirty", and absolutely thankless task that was wrangled and twisted by the Services of Supply, the US Air Corps, the British Air Ministry and other British Agencies too numerous to mention- and this regiment was in the middle of the wrangle!

\*\*\*\*\*

On 6 January 1944 the regiment moved to Bushy Park, Teddington, Middlesex to construct Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces Headquarters buildings. Upon arrival, the location was that of Headquarters 8th Air Force but during the month of January they were moved out. The job assignment called for expanding existing facilities, building living quarters, offices, air raid shelters, walks, and roads and other incidentals required by installations of that size.

The regiment moved from mud and backward section of the United Kingdom to paved streets, warm quarters and civilization almost as we had known it in the United States. Troops were quartered in pyramidal tents and for the first two weeks all officers were billeted in private homes. After that period officers were quartered in tents. But they were comfortable tents with concrete floors, electric lights and US stoves for heating. For the first time since arriving in the UK it was possible to be too hot, and a very fine feeling it was indeed.

The job, the "hottest" in the United Kingdom, was scheduled to be completed on 28 January 1944, work began on 7 January 1944. In the intervening three weeks more than 200% was added to the original job assignment. It was a hard job that required hours and almost impossible problems of construction supply. To aid in the supply problems, personnel from the British Air Ministry and Ministry of War were assigned to the regiment to render every possible aid. The 467th QM Dump Truck Company was attached for hauling material and the EBS Equipment Pool was put at the disposal of the regiment at one time or another, working directly under the regiment on the job. Cooperation on supply problems was excellent. Necessary engineering and design for SHAEF was done by the Engineer Section of EBS and the Engineering Section of the regiment. Personnel were detached from the EBS Engineer Section to SHAEF to work jointly with the Regimental Engineer Section.

The regiment was at the time under three different headquarters. For construction supervision the regiment was under Eastern Base Section, Service of Supply. For administration, Central Base Section, Service of Supply. For quarters and rations, USSAEF.

By early February, work at Widewing had progressed to the point that the regiment had an opportunity for a break, at least for a few hours. On 13 February 1944, at a formal ceremony, Brigadier General Cecil B. Moore, Chief Engineer, ETO, presented the Regimental Colors to Lieutenant Colonel William H. Bell, Jr., Commanding. Also present at the ceremony were Colonel Roy W. Grower, Commanding Officer of EBS and Colonel Neil B. Creighton, Post Commander of AAF 586. Prior to passing in review a letter of commendation for the regiment from SHAEF was read to the formation. Then to the music of the ETOUSA Band the regiment passed in review.

On 17 February the 1st Battalion, under the command of Major Clarence P. Hendricks moved from Teddington, Middlesex to North Witham, Lincolnshire where the construction mission was that of preparing an airport and living facilities for ATC. While the regiment less the 1st Battalion continued on the SHAEF mission, the 1st Battalion went again to mud, tents, snow, ice and rain.

During the period shortly after their arrival at North Witham there was no envy for the 2nd Battalion, for the "baby blitz" had begun on London. It was a minor affair; there were no losses of either equipment or personnel, but quite a number of buildings had to be repaired and there were small holes in some of the tents and large holes in the ground of the tent area. The experience of the men and officers was no different than those of the Londoners and all other troops in the area. All

would stay in their warm beds as long as possible after the alerts had sounded; the sirens could be heard far away! And then closer and closer until the Teddington or Hampton Hill siren would sound loudest of all in the moaning eerie night and the plop-plop of the anti-aircraft guns would punctuate the whole unbelievable teeming blackness. And the flares and faint and loud "plop-plopping" and somewhere in the distance a brilliant flame orange against the night and the mawing of planes up there and the swishing, nauseating sound of bombs falling and the s-s-s-cht-clunk of shrapnel, and the heaven filling rockets from Hyde Park that must have helped to fill Hell.

Suddenly silence, except for the sporadic rumpuses in the far distance, and the glow against the black velvet sky, and the searchlights searching aimlessly through the clouds and presently the all-clear signal and with teeth chattering from the cold black to warm beds and tents; the whole thing to be repeated again in the morning when the swing shift came over with their greetings.

It was a good set-up at Widewing, the advantages far out-weighed the disadvantages. The work was hard and subject to change every time another general officer walked into the grounds. "General Ike's garage should be here", said one general but another said, "No, it should be here". And with every new air-raid someone else needed a new bomb shelter. But the location was near to London for recreation and the surrounding suburbs permitted cinemas and inexpensive "pubbing". The natives were friendly and cooperative in their British manner. The assistance and collaboration from our varied higher headquarters was never better and an important and essential job was being finished.

\*\*\*\*\*

The 1st Battalion at North Witham, deep again in mud, rain, and occasionally snow, went forward with their job. The same old Watton story was repeated with gestures. Mainly the trouble was with supply and the British Resident Engineer. The 1st Battalion was under the Eastern Base Section for construction, administration and the Air Corps for quarters and rations, and Eastern Base Section for construction.

\*\*\*\*\*

On 1 April 1944 the Regimental Headquarters and Companies "A", "E", and "F" moved from Teddington to Porthcawl, the 1st Battalion Headquarters and Companies "B" and "C" arriving two days later from North Witham. The period there was scheduled for not less than six weeks of intensive training in V-trestle, Bailey bridging and basic subjects. The regiment was assigned unofficially to Base Section No. 1 for "Far Shore Operations" and training but only verbally. Actually the next higher headquarters was XIV District, Western Base Section.

By order, the regiment was attached to the 1053d Port Construction & Repair Group for training in Dock Construction. Regimental Headquarters, Headquarters & Service Company and the Medical Detachment were quartered in the Seabank Hotel with the Port Group. The remainder of the regiment, 2 line companies and battalion headquarters, were in pyramidal tents without floors or stoves, about seven blocks away.

The training with the usual difficulties of lack of training aids and no adequate space, plus the wrathful land-owners whose property had been trespassed upon were noticeable. In the same locale were troops of the 2nd Division, other Engineer GS troops and curious visiting British Subjects.

Combined training of the regiment and Group proceeded without too much friction. The Group believed the regiment to be tin-soldiers and the regiment believed the Group to be a crowd of civilians in uniforms, picked up somewhere, but all clashes of policy and opinion were minor and unimportant. And the 1053rd P. C. & R. was no different from any other Group that the regiment came in contact with at later dates.

It was the first time in over nine months that the regiment had Sundays off, free from duty. It was training with a definite day off, a definite starting time in the morning and a quitting time in the evening. Night problems were scheduled several days in advance, 50% of strength were allowed on off duty pass, and there were places to go on that pass. After a steady construction program, with its uncertainties and difficulties, the training at Porthcawl was for the most just garrison soldiering away from the United States.

All companies, through the assistance of the Special Services Section, had parties. Parties that had an orchestra, beer, ice cream, cake, and more girls than men. The problem was not to get civilians to attend, the problem was to keep them out. For the youngsters it was the music and the ice cream; for those a bit older it was the music and the ice cream and the beer-and the GI's. They were not unruly parties in the US manner of speaking, just a bit on the chaotic side. Most of the U. K. subjects attending seemed to enjoy themselves immensely, all but Inspector Matthews of the local police, who was often shocked and a bit horrified by the whole thing.

The original six weeks passed and instructions were received to continue training with this and that to be stressed. During the early part of May all combat men stationed in the area disappeared from our view and the speculation on D-Day grew in volumes. But the training program continued. The battalions, one at a time, went on week long 90 mile hikes, vehicles were prepared for water-proofing, equipment was brought into the best possible shape, personal property was mailed home or gotten rid of-----and the regiment waited.

On 6 June 1944 excitement was high; surely now the orders to move would come, but they didn't and the regiment waited. Clothing was checked, equipment was checked, preparations were made and checked --- and the regiment waited and waited, and attempted to continue training --- and waited. The month of June passed, alert orders came, clothing was checked and equipment was checked, the training program continued as did the waiting. Finally on 29 June 1944 the 2nd Battalion less Company "F" moved and the remainder of the regiment moved on 5 July 1944.

It was a relief to move but Porthcawl hadn't been bad, not at all. Many of the officers and men had made real friends there. The town's few bars had been jammed with Americans, the cinemas (both of them) had been crowded with Americans, the streets and sand dunes had been alive



with Americans, and the natives had been friendly all the way through. True, there were clashes and mistakes on both sides of the fence, but on the whole it had been pleasant. It must have seemed strange to have their town back, almost intact, after months of occupation by this and other US organizations.

It was at Porthcawl that the regiment awarded to two of its members a Legion of Merit and a Soldier's Medal. On 20 April at formal retreat ceremony the Legion of Merit was awarded to staff Sergeant Franklin D. Stiffler, Army Serial Number 35569807, Company "D", for "Exceptionally Meritorious Conduct". The 2nd Division Band played for the ceremony. And on 15 May the Soldier's Medal was awarded to Sergeant Erling Berg, Army Serial Number 37289085, Company "C", for "Heroism at Watton, Norfolk".

On 29 June 1944 Companies "D" & "E" and 2nd Battalion Headquarters departed by train for South Hampton. On 5 July 1944 at 1030 hours the trains carrying the balance of the regiment departed from Porthcawl. It was planned and executed with the utmost security but prior to train departure time there were several hundred persons, mostly female, who came to watch the departure. Marching through the streets from the tent camp and the hotel stirred the whole sleepy town and they trooped down for final good-byes. There were more than a hundred faces leaning over the fence laughing, waving, and some even crying.

The trains destination was South Hampton when the journey began, but when within thirty miles of the city the destination was suddenly changed to Bournemouth and there is where the regiment unloaded. No one was particularly surprised by the change there was only the RTO's word for it that any movement at all was to take place, never any written orders. Unloading from the train, the order was given to take a break and then with a British Billeting Officer and the local ETO a detail set out to line up quarters for the regiment less two companies.

The 1st Battalion en masse went into the Burlington Hotel, Company "F" went into the San Remo Towers (as exclusive as it sounded) and Headquarters and Service Company went into the Wiveton Hall Hotel. The two hotels were old dirty and dark; the San Remo Towers were new, clean and light, but all were better than the pup tents that had originally been planned.

The regiment was ordered to be ready to move on six hours notice. Loads on the trucks were checked and only essentials for daily living were unloaded. Loading lists were re-checked and the waiting began all over again. That was on the 5th of July. On 13 August, some six weeks later, the movement from the concentration area to the marshaling area was accomplished. In the intervening six weeks the regiment worked for Southern Base Section in the construction of POW hospital enclosures, hospital construction, depot construction, waterfront construction, etc. None of the jobs were large but all were important enough that the Chief Engineer of the ETO allowed SBS to use the regiment. The companies were spread from Southampton to north of Cheltenham while regimental headquarters and Headquarters and Service Company remained in Boscombe.

At the end of the first week in August the alert orders were made definite and the regiment prepared to move. The companies returned to Boscombe, excepting 2nd Battalion less Company "F" which remained in South Hampton, and the waiting began again. Finally, on Friday 11 August, the orders were definite and final preparations were made. K-rations were issued, protective clothing checked, personal equipment packed, quarters and buildings cleaned out, trucks, including an extra hundred 1 ½ ton dump Chevrolets to go to ADSEC Com Z, given final service and checked for a trip that was to be of an unknown length and duration. It was good to know that the waiting was almost finished, that all the WAC's and USO Shows and Red Cross personnel in Europe weren't the only ones going across to France.

At 0600 hours on Sunday 3 August 1944 the first convoy departed from Boscombe for transit area "D". The trip was made with the usual stops at the RCRP's where the sleepy and tired RTO's gave instructions. The staff of the Transit Camp repeated instructions that were old and stale to them; the mess hall turned out good food, the supply officer issued the items he had been issuing to troops since early June, and the movement officers gathered the necessary information and waiting began anew. But at least it was in a different place this time.

Sunday night passed and Monday morning was hot and the waiting continued. The Transit Area with patience derived from God knows where, kept us posted on all developments. The convoys were lined up by ship number, the men stood by, the officers paced the floor and everyone wondered "when?". It was a long day.

In the afternoon the movement to the "hards" began. One convoy left, then another and finally the last of the heavy equipment was gone. On the big open field that served as a motor park the long convoys sat in the sun and the dust and the men around them smoked endless cigarettes and played ball, and were silent or noisy in sporadic bursts that had no cause. It will always be thus, it has always been, as long as there are Armies there will be waiting, waiting and more waiting. And it will always be the bitch of "hurry up and wait" that is heard at such times. As inevitable as the IG, rifle inspection and C-rations is waiting; as inevitable and as cordially hated by all concerned.

The convoys did leave though, and all on Monday afternoon. They pulled into the long lines of trucks and vehicles at the Embarkation Areas. The loud speakers blared out into the cool quiet evening and the line of trucks would start their engines and an RTO jeep would race down to the lead truck and the P. A. System would blat something about no headlights and presently the line would pull out. The Red Cross served endless gallons of milked and sugared coffee, almost hot, and donuts by the truck-fuls. The men gravitated to the Red Cross hut, to their trucks, to someone else's truck, to the Red Cross tent. They watched the convoys pull out for their ships, they waved, whooped or were silent, or gave the razzberry as the case seemed to warrant. They played catch, tossed a football, stood in now silent, now noisy groups, but even the most animated of the conversations were detached, the eyes with which they looked at the tired and friendly Red Cross girls were more objective than speculative. And the loud speakers crackled and the trucks whined in and muttered

out and there would be thousands of men and then only hundreds and they all looked about the same and were probably thinking about the same and wondering about the same or at least comparable things.

The trip to the LST and the channel crossing was all made without serious incident; seasickness caused the only casualties and those were only temporary, though the rate was high.

The LST beached at Utah Beach on the afternoon of 16 August and unloading was begun as soon as the tide had receded. The Navy did again what they had been doing for weeks, the DUKW's plied the beach and the surf and the sea to the Liberty Ships, the LCI's the LST's and LTS's unloaded and sat sweating out the incoming tide, the orderly confusion of roaring trucks and cats and tanks and jeeps on the beach went on. It was the same with the regiment as with all others that landed there. The trucks rolled down the ramp, across the hard packed sand, up narrow, dusty roads where dusty MP's pointed out directions, into a hot dusty motor-park to a transit area that was just a field with hedge-rows around it, and the waiting started again.

This time the waiting lasted three days. The trucks were covered with camouflage nets, except for those that hauled water. The K-rations came out, and except for details the regiment flopped on the ground and wondered what now? K-rations, C-rations, D-rations and a few copies of Stars and Stripes, a Special Service radio hooked up to a trucks battery, dirty, grimy men. The regiment waited, the trucks were lined up anew for overland convoy, the trucks were serviced as much as possible and loads were re-checked; personnel re-distributed ---- and the waiting went on.

On Friday 18 August orders came to proceed to Rennes, Brittany the following morning. At 0600 hours the first elements pulled out of the Transit Area and rolled down the dusty roads. It was a warm, clean day and the war news was very good. The men knew that at last there would be no more waiting until the end of the ride, they were going through areas that had not long been cleaned of the enemy, morale was high!

In Rennes the regiment was presented with an apple orchard for a home. The regiment arrived in the afternoon and pitched pup tents, dug slit trenches, began unloading and ate some more K-rations. Friendly farmers came around and gave us tomatoes and even a few eggs appeared from somewhere, and the natives were showered with K-rations, cigarettes and lemonade and candy. There was even a man selling white wine for 150 Francs a bottle and he sold all he had. And of course it rained, but not very hard, and no one minded because it cleared up before too long.

Job assignments came immediately and were changed almost as quickly and canceled completely a short time afterwards. Supply was almost impossible in some items, abundant in others. Administration was as usual! The job assignment upon which the regiment had been trained for long months was slow in materializing yet higher Headquarters would not say that it had been

decided not to continue with it. Information was that jobs being assigned were temporary in nature, further instructions on the Auray Port would be forthcoming. So, though work continued, it was "waiting" again.

Within a week the regiment was again split wide apart with companies spread over the whole base of the Brittany Peninsula. The work was varied from building a Red Cross Club in Rennes to checking for booby traps and mines to railroad and bridge construction, to reconnaissance. Personnel slept in pup tents, but soon had enough lumber to make them livable, and the issue of German wooden beds brought them up to luxurious standards, almost! Food was plentiful and good and when supplemented by fresh frozen Veal and fresh frozen vegetables from the stock of the now departed Wermacht, the fresh eggs, tomatoes and onions from the French, was better than the rations in the U. K. the previous winter. The weather was decent and work progressed accordingly, but all assignments were small, though a few were important.

Toward the latter part of August it was finally brought out that the assignment for the port of Auray was canceled as being impractical and not now necessary since the need for supply in Brittany was not what had been anticipated. The regiment's mission was changed to be repair of the port of Brest, there were no cheers at that news! Enough had seen St. Malo to guess what Brest would be. But Brest was still in the hands of the Germans although a reconnaissance of the Brest area was made by Captain Greer of the S-3 Section, and until it was taken, bridge, roads and railroad repair continued as did construction of a 2000 bed hospital at Rennes. Much of the equipment and almost all of the materials used were from German stocks. Much of the labor used was of German POW's and some French civilians for technical jobs.

The German POWs were not requested by the regiment, the regiment was ordered to take them. It was the same with the French civilians. It was a matter of conjecture as to the worth of either in most cases, compared to the trouble of transporting, feeding, checking and guarding. And many of the German POWs were not German at all, but Dutch, Czech, Spanish and Russian Nationals that had not, as yet, been processed by the US Army, and some were sick. It was not a good situation but it did save some manpower, though there was question as to actual advantage.

In the latter part of August the supply situation became acute. There was a definite shortage of gasoline that required trips to the beach as well as trips for other QM supplies. Engineer supplies were also difficult to obtain because of lack of definite knowledge as to exactly what had been captured and used or stored or stolen. Many long trips were made on the assurance of some one that the material needed was at a certain point only to find out it was not. More often the supply section obtained what was needed by going out and finding it. As the larger immediate tasks were completed the regiment was spread out over more area on smaller jobs, some few platoon jobs, which caused the problems of supply to become more difficult. And made the transportation of the regiment do double duty and more.

On the 15th of September 1944 word was received that the regiment would move to the Paris area as soon as possible.

On 15 September 1944 the regiment was assigned to the Seine Base Section and ordered to Paris, France. During the next three months all kinds of Engineering work was done.

20 October found the 2nd Battalion living at the Petite Palais in the heart of Paris. The following kinds of work were being done: installation of sanitary facilities in living quarters, construction of quarters for troops, channel clearing and removal of mines. The 14th of November found the work still being continued on an extensive scale at a rapid rate. We were building bridges, constructing hospitals, POW enclosures, beautifying military cemeteries, clearing mine fields, laying a railroad line through France and Luxembourg and into Belgium, and renovating of public buildings for living quarters in Paris. Towns where this work was done are: Paris, Herfleur, Compiègne, Creil, La Pace, Choisy-La-Rai, Versailles, St. Cloud, and Le Havre. Work was done at the following hospitals: 1st, 217th, 298th, 62nd, 16th Station, 7th, 209th Station, 203rd General, 48th, 61st, 98th, 191st, 198th, & 202nd.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### STATIONS ( PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY) OF UNIT

- (1) Altilinster, Luxembourg (Temp) From 24 Dec 44 to 24 Jan 45 Weyer, Luxembourg.  
Koedange, Luxembourg; Mullerthal, Luxembourg; Christnack, Luxembourg; Nomern, Luxembourg; Oberglabach, Luxembourg; Cruchten, Luxembourg; Mederh Luxembourg; Carlshop, Luxembourg; Ettelbruck, Luxembourg; Birtrange, Luxembourg; Godbrange, Luxembourg; Radio, Luxembourg; Mersch, Luxembourg; Imbringen, Luxembourg; Angelsberg, Luxembourg; Glaberbach, Luxembourg;
- (2) St. Cloud, France (Permanent) From 24 Jan 45 to 7 May 45  
Villeneuve St. Georges, France; Arpajon, France; Argenteuil, France; Vincennes, France; Fontainebleau, France; Montmorency, France; Les Ecrennes, France; Montesson, France; Citroen Agence, Paris, France; Le Marais, France; St. Cloud, France; Etampes, France; Vitry-sur-Seine, France; Choisey Le Roi, France; Vulaines, France; Wissons, France; Andilly, France.
- (3) Reims France (Permanent) From 7 May 45 to 11 May 45 Guignicourt France.
- (4) Reithel, France ( Permanent) From 11 May 45 to 5 July 45 Wissons, France; Valmy, France; Suippes, France.
- (5) Prosnes ( Camp Cleveland) France (Temp) From 5 July 45 to 21 July 45
- (6) Harfleur (Cp Phillip Morris) France ( Temp) From 22 July 45 to 4 Aug 45
- (7) Camp Shanks, New York (Temp) From 12 Aug 45 to 13 Aug 45.
- (8) Fort Lewis, Washington ( Perm) From 9 Sept 45 to 20 Apr 46 (Tentative date for deactivation)

\*\*\*\*\*

# WOUNDED IN ACTION

Wounded: (9 January 1945)

Capt Robert T. Maloney, CE, 0-1102367

S/Sgt Franklin D. Stiffler, CE, ASN 35569807

Pfc Hobert C. Covey, CE, ASN 35641099

\*\*\*\*\*

New Years Day 1945 the 351st Engr Gen Serv Regiment was in the vicinity of the Saur River engaged in support operations for the 2nd Infantry Regt, 5th Div, attacking southward from Mullerthal.

Shortly after New Years Day the line quieted down considerably and it became possible to pull the men back into the farmhouses and barns and give them some rest. Later all had a chance to clean up at mobile shower points.

On 6 Jan 1945 the 1st Bn which had been alerted to be on call to the 80th Inf Div., then the 6th Armored Div, the 10th Armored Div. was again attached to the 5th Inf Div. 2nd Infantry Regiment, and moved from Weyer to Cruchten, with the mission of preparing and occupying, should the necessity arrive, a division reserve 7000 yards long, just south of the enemy observation and was frequently shelled.

On 7 Jan 45 the 2nd Bn was relieved of attachment to the 5th Inf Div and attached to the 80th Div. The Bn moved into positions on the high ground overlooking Ettlebruck, as reserve for the 318th Inf Regt. The 631st TD Bn was in support of and attached to the 2nd Bn. The reserve was not committed and remained in position watching the Infantry consolidate their positions with artillery support. The next few days were spent in attempting to improve positions on the hill exposed to the 88mm harassing fire. Co "D" moved from their position to the positions occupied by Co "B" 318th Inf Regt which had pushed on. It was while in this position the Co had two (2) EM and one (1) officer wounded by shrapnel. The enemy shelling began to cease by 15 Jan 45.

On 17 Jan 45 with Co "D" remaining in its exposed positions on the open ridge and Co "F" moved into Ettlebruck with the mission of holding the city against counter attack, Co "F" placed one platoon in position on the East side of the town holding two reserve platoons back and Co "E" was held in reserve maintaining hourly street patrols. Ettlebruck was even worse than the hill positions had been and was subject to intense and accurate artillery fire, usually at night. However the only casualty was an EM in Co "F", wounded while repairing communications lines.

On 16 Jan the 1st Bn was relieved of attachment to the 2nd Inf Regt and was moved back to Godbrange with Co "B" Co "C" moved back to Altinster, Co "A" to Imbringen. On 17 Jan the Bn was attached to the 1135th Engr Gp and given the mission of manning prepared defenses on the

corps reserve defensive line in the 5th and 80th sectors. Bn Hq and Co "C" moved to Mersch, (1st plat Co "C" to Colmarbrook) Co "A" to Ferne Miederblabach and Essingen, Co "B" to Anglesbure. The Bn Troops relieved the 133rd and 166th Engr (C) Bns of the 1138th Engr Gp.

On the 20th of Jan the Regiment received orders that it would be moved back to Seine Section, Paris. Regimental Headquarters maintained liaison with those Headquarters it was attached to, supply was handled through the 5th Div and X11 Corps, administration through the 5th Div until the Regiment was relieved of attachment. All Hq that this Regt was attached to were as cooperative as it was possible for them to be, red tape was cut to a minimum and assistance and prompt action were the rule, not the exception. The efficiency and simplicity of supply and administration assisted in accomplishing assigned missions.

On 22 Jan 45 Major Greer, Regimental Operations Officer, (S3), and Majors Smith and Randall, Commanding 1st and 2nd Bn's respectively left for Paris for purpose of reconnaissance of job assignments, living quarters, etc. Also on 22 Jan the Regt was ordered to turn in all its 2 ½ ton dumps, trailers, jeeps and weapons carriers for the purpose of equipping the four Engr (C) Bns which were relieving the regt, by 1700 hours. The order was complied with. The 1st Bn was still working under the 1135th Engr Gp building snow fences and graveling iced roads. The 2nd Bn remained attached to the 80th Inf Div and was doing some work on roads, and snow fences, but remaining close to Ettlebruck. On 24 Jan 45 Co "D" was ordered up to the line to relieve the 2nd Bn 318th Inf Regt at Burchied and the Co walked the nine miles as there were no available trucks.

About noon of 23 Jan 45 the trucks that had been taken away from the regt were ordered returned by TUSA, were to be picked up at Corps Ordinance Depot. They were scattered over parts of Luxemburg, France, and Germany in the 24 hours since they had been turned in but all but 11 were returned by the afternoon of the 24th in time for the 2nd Bn truck convoy which departed Ettlebruck at approximately 1700 hours on 24 Jan 45. Co "D" being relieved from the line a few hours before departure.

The 1st Bn was moved to Paris by train. They were convoyed into Luxemburg City in regimental trucks, were loaded at 1000 hours into boxcars and at 1310 hours the train departed and arrived in Paris at 0500 hours the following morning -- Paris that was almost as cold and snow bound as the place they had just left. 2nd Bn and H&S Co, returned by convoy, arrived in Paris at 0600 hours 25 Jan 45.

It had been a hard experience but a good one. The bitter weather had been harder on the men and had caused more casualties than the enemy. But out of the experience had come a better regiment and one that would have more self-confidence in the future. A regiment that had a better sense of values than it had early in December when Echternach was just a name on a map and a German soldier was nothing but a subdued, grimy character in a PW enclosure.

25 Jan 45: Regimental Headquarters was again established at the famous Hippodrome De Lonchamp Race Track in Bois De Boulogne, Paris. Companies immediately upon arrival in Paris,

were assigned to high priority construction jobs in the vicinity of Paris and extending to Fontainebleau.

16 Feb 45: Due to thawing snows and heavy rains the Seine River had risen to flood heights of approximately 21 feet. Regimental headquarters offices were under three feet of water, thus administrative operations were moved to and carried on in the second floor of the Longchamp grandstands. 22 Feb 45; Flood water has receded and all was normal again.

The outlook for the approaching season was reasonably bright. The weather had started to turn warmer. Our duties and tasks assigned varied greatly for the succeeding four months. The natural trend of interest was in the fine news of our ever advancing armies in Germany. Speculation, guesses, and rumors were too numerous to even imagine. With more good news coming every day, we knew V-E Day was close at hand.

On 8 May 45, the regiment was ordered to move to Reims, thereby terminating its projects in Seine Section. However, part of the 2nd Bn was to remain behind to complete some of the more important jobs and then to rejoin the regiment at a later date. The French barracks at Reims, was where Regimental Headquarters was installed after the 8 May move. To make room for another unit, Regimental Headquarters changed its location to the town of Rethel.

The area around Reims was rapidly being built into an assembly area to accommodate troops for redeployment both through the U. S. And direct to the Pacific, and the regiment was assigned various jobs to help in making ready as many of the facilities as quickly as possible. Among these was the construction of troop laundries, tent camps and other facilities.

The ever present talk at this time was "What are they going to do with us?" Relative, of course, to the redeployment status of the regiment, and then "it" happened. The regiment was alerted and ordered to turn over its various jobs to other units for completion and to assemble at Cp Cleveland for redeployment through the United States.

All the menial tasks and details that go with living in a tent camp that burns by day and thoroughly chills by night, and the ever present dust were endured most cheerfully since "Going Home" was the theme. Organized Athletics hit a peak at Cp Cleveland to help pass the time away. On 21 July the regiment moved by train from Cp Cleveland to Cp Phillip Morris at Le Harve.

The expected stay for 48 hours before boarding the ship was lengthened to 15 days. Then on the 4th of August 1945 we boarded the former Grace Line Cruiser, Santa Rosa, and had very interesting traveling companions. Among them were the famous Glenn Miller Band, who helped make our trip a most pleasant one.



The crossing was very smooth and there was a minimum of discomfort from seasickness. The crossing took six days and we docked in New York Harbor on the night of 11 August 1945. The warm reception and the fine welcome the regiment received in New York will long be fondly remembered. The Regiment then moved to Camp Shanks, N. Y. by train where it was divided into groups and in a few hours dispatched from Cp Shanks to the various post closest to their homes.

After all officers and men had returned to reception centers from the recuperative leaves the regiment was reformed at Ft. Lewis, Washington in Sept 1945. However, the re-deployment to the Pacific had been canceled due to the cessation of hostilities. The regiment received orders redesignating it as the 351st Engineer Construction Battalion effective 14 December 1945. The next four months were spent in usual organizational duties preparatory to receiving new replacements. But the replacements did not arrive and on 20 April the 351st Engineer Construction Battalion received notice that it was to be deactivated.