

DR. SHOTWELL'S INTERVIEW WITH COL. GARDES AND
COL. CHUBBUTH ON 9 DECEMBER 1950

- Dr. S. Col. Gardes, at the end of the last interview you and Col. Chubbuth had brought the 36th Engineers across North Africa, up to the first landing in Italy at Salerno and the mountain actions there, and back to preparations for Anzio. Would you continue on from there, sir?
- Col. G. We left the area in the mountains adjacent to Colle shortly after the first of January 1944, and moved back to Apricola near Naples in preparation of what turned out to be the landing at Anzio. The regiment landed in the assault at Anzio with Company H coming in as engineer support for the Rangers and landing in the town of Anzio. In addition to the engineer equipment they had drawn 57mm anti-tank guns, and several days after landing they moved up with the Rangers and furnished anti-tank support. The regiment, less H Company, landed on Yellow Beach which is to the south of Natuno and moved into Anzio at the earliest time. The first battalion arrived in Anzio in the afternoon of D-Day and initiated the clearance of the port which included the clearance of mines and booby-traps. This was quite a sizeable job in view of the bombing plus the fact that the port area was heavily mined. When the Germans evacuated the port of Anzio they detonated some of the mines but they were only partially successful, with the result that most of the buildings that were still standing contained the explosives that were all prepared for the demolitions. Also part of the regimental headquarters arrived in the afternoon and set up headquarters directly across from the railway station. That night the shelling became quite heavy and in the early

part of the evening a number of casualties occurred, including that of Col. Barabee who commanded the First Battalion. The Second and Third Battalions were engaged in engineering duties for the first several days after the landings and were committed as Infantry on the 30th of January, along the left flank adjacent to the Molletta River. After several days in the lines they were relieved and reverted to engineering duties. The First Battalion continued with the organization of the port and the clearing of the area, preparing it for additional capacity as far as unloading was concerned. They also prepared landing beaches for LCTs just south of the port and assembly areas, and other miscellaneous work in the vicinity. This continued until the 10th of February when the entire regiment was committed on very short notice. In fact, a matter of two or three hours as Infantry along the left flank. They moved in along the Molletta River relieving the First Guards Brigade and they were attached

Dr. S. Excuse me, sir. You are speaking of the First Guards Brigade - that's the First Guards Brigade, British Army.

Col. G. That's right. There were the Irish Guards, battalion from the Irish Guards Regiment, if that's the proper designation. There was one from the Welch Guards, as I recollect. I don't remember the Third Battalion but it was known as the Guards Brigade which was shifted over to the right along the main road going up to the factory area after we relieved them.

Dr. S. Were they a part of the Fifth Army at that time?

Col. G. Yes, they were a part - I think part of the Fifth Division that landed in the assault. There were two divisions. I've forgotten the sequence as to which was the first one to come in, and if the Fifth was the first one that landed it stayed in the lines until - maybe the end of February when they were very badly chewed up. They were pulled out and replaced by the 56th Division. The reason I mention this is that the 36th Engineers were attached to the British Division whose mission it was to hold the left flank along the Molletta River to the right, approximately to what was known as a fly-over, the main road leading from Anzio through the factory area to Rome. The 36th Engineers were committed on the left of the Division area from the sea. I think it was to the east, just behind the Molletta River. Initially we were committed with two battalions in the line and one in reserve as infantry. Several days after we were in position, I think it was about two, two or three, the Germans put on their big push and the Division to which we were attached was in a difficult position by midmorning the first day of the push so that we were requested by the Commanding General to commit our reserve battalion off to our right so as to extend our lines and cover the area of the British Division which had been exposed by the overrunning of their battalions. It was at the head of the wadies, extending from the head waters to the Molletta River so that from that time on we were committed with three battalions in the lines and with no reserves. The regiment stayed in that position for some 45 days through attachment to both the 5th and 56th Divisions.

Dr. S. The Fifth was British and the 56th was?

Col. G. The 56th was British. What had happened was that the first British Division had been so badly mauled that they left their transport and their guns in position and were relieved by their second division which came in practically with only small arms. They took over the guns and transport of the first division and took over the same area. While we were in the lines as infantry there was attached the 42nd Field Artillery, a regiment of 25 pounders who gave us direct support. A short time after that we moved into the lines. They also gave us support by way of tank and anti-tank units, as well as anti-aircraft units. The 45 days was a rather strenuous period for the regiment which had been trained after all as engineers rather than infantry. However, they maintained the positions that they had taken over and when they pulled out they had not lost any ground except the neck of the woods in front of A Company which was overrun in one of the German attacks. In fact, we think they had improved the position in several places. After being relieved along the Mollette, the regiment moved back into bivouac again adjacent to Anzio and they performed normal engineer duties; that is, road maintenance, field fortifications and other assigned tasks of that nature until May, about the first week in May when the regiment moved over to the right flank and relieved the 1st Special Service Force which was an organization composed of Canadian and American troops that had been holding the area from the sea inward to the Mussolini Canal for several miles.

Dr. S. That was the force that was trained up in the Rocky Mountains?

Col. G. That's right. They went into the Aleutians. They were picked men of both Canadian and American forces.

Dr. S. They were really mountain troops.

Col. G. They were mountain troops. They were the cream of the crop. They were extremely good particularly in scouting a patrol.

Dr. S. Do you remember who was in command?

Col. G. Gen. Frederick. In fact after we went over there we borrowed Non-Coms and Officers as teams in order to give our own people additional training in scouting and patrolling. We also sent a number of our men out with them on patrols. They were outstanding in that respect. We took over the area that they had, including the town of Borgo Sabotina which was a key to their position on the right, and opposition extended for maybe 2 or 2-1/2 miles inwardly. Again we had the whole regiment committed. We had nothing in reserve as I recollect. We were in a defensive position until just before the break-out. Then the latter part of May, I think it was the 24th, the First Battalion was given orders to attack to the south from Borgo Sabotina with the mission of seizing limited objectives to our immediate front. The attack was stalled almost at the time it took off. The Battalion was under very heavy fire all that afternoon. That evening it was pushed back into Borgo Sabotina. They reorganized and attacked again the next morning at about 0300. For the second attack B Company was on the right of the road, C was on the left, no - I think it was A on the right, C on the left with the objective to break-out to the immediate front and continue until they hit a drainage canal

which was the matter of about a mile and half beyond Borgo Sabotina. They were instructed to seize a bridgehead around a blown bridge. B Company was to follow through and continue to a road junction which was about a mile or more beyond the blown bridge site. The roads from that junction went to Littoria and also went to the south towards Naples. We were supported by an Artillery Battalion attached for the purpose, and the 91st Reconnaissance team from the First British Division. Their mission was that after we had captured the bridge site and secured the road junction and put a crossing over the bridge site, was to fan out and make contact with the troops coming up from the south. The attack went off very successfully. I think the Germans had probably pulled most of their people out the night before.

Dr. S. You speak of the First British Division, do you mean a one guard division?

Col. G. No - the First British Division - the Infantry Division.

Dr. S. Was it a Guards Division?

Col. G. I don't think so - not as far as I know.

Dr. S. I thought the First Division was the First Guards Division.

Col. G. It may be.

Dr. S. In which most of the personnel were guards and the GOC was a guards officer.

Col. G. I didn't know what their origin was. I just knew them as the First Division.

Dr. S. I understood from Col. Bowman, sir, that Gen. Clark had cancelled the orders for that break-out movement but that Col. Stanley had gone to

Col. Bowman, or then Gen. Bowman, to Gen. Clark and stated that Jerry was throwing all his ammunition in the area and acting as if he was going to withdraw and he persuaded Gen. Clark to authorize the break-out.

Col. G. I don't know. I have never heard that. Col. Chubbuth had been injured a few days before by an S mine and I was pinch hitting for him with the battalion. All I knew was that we had orders to hit them again the next morning, which we did. As I said, jumping off about 0300. We moved out without too much difficulty and picked up a few prisoners who were primarily stragglers, it's my guess. We moved down to our objective and Capt. Sousa, who had B Company and whose company was on the objective sent patrols out. One of the patrols was a patrol lead by Lt. Murdock from A Company who happened to be there at the time. That patrol proceeded a matter of a mile or more beyond the road junction where they made contact with an engineer unit coming up from the south. That was the first contact that was made by the beachhead forces and the forces coming up from the south.

Dr. S. Your speaking of a patrol - how large was that?

Col. G. It was a party of about ten men.

Dr. S. About 1/2 or 1/3 of a platoon?

Col. G. Yes. The contact was made at 0751. I can vouch for that, having been just behind the patrol and having come back and sent the message into Corps Headquarters by a jeep that was stopped back at the "blow" which was the initial objective of the battalion.

Dr. S. You have some of your old battalion records here, have you not, Colonel?

Col. G. That is correct. The Reconnaissance Company that was suppose to exploit our break-out but stalled at the blown bridge, unfortunately for them they were not able to make the first contact with the people coming up from the southern forces. After making that contact the regiment moved into Littoria and that day was given the mission of cleaning up the odds and ends of the German units that hadn't cleared the area. Shortly after that, I think it was the next day, we went back to general engineer duties and continued until the 31st of May when the regiment was again committed south of the town of Baletry. When I say again committed, I mean again committed as infantry, south of the town of Baletry. At that time a soft spot had been found in the German lines to the east of Baletry. There were two regiments of the 36th Division to the south of the town and the 36th Engineers were sent in to replace the two regiments that were committed so that they might be pulled out and the 36th Division attacked through the lightly defended area. Naturally an engineer regiment taking over from two infantry regiments were able to hold the front only lightly with the results the regiment had a very active several days holding their positions with the German patrols I believe as much behind our lines as we would liked to have gotten behind theirs. They even came back to a relative safe spot known as regimental headquarters and took a few shots at it. The regiment was given the mission during those days of patrolling aggressively to the front and as I recollect was given two attack missions on the night of 1 June and 2 June.

(Dr. Shotwell directs a question to Col. Chubbuth)

Dr. S. When did you come back to the regiment; that is, after your tangle with the S mine.

Col. C. Oh - I was back the morning of the successful attack of the beachhead. I got there after the shooting was over.

(Col. Gardes again speaks)

Col. G. I turned the battalion over with a certain degree of relief to Col. Chubbuth who came up at that time. But to come back to Baletry, on the second night and I think it was the night of 1 or 2 June, we were given the order to attack about dusk. That attack to my mind was of interest in one connection particularly. All of the companies were stalled almost from the time they jumped off, made no appreciable progress with the exception of C Company which was immediately to the right of the road going into Baletry. Capt. Nicholas, who commanded C Company had brought his wire out with the company to the extent that it would go a matter of possibly a mile. He left one walkie-talkie at the end of the wire and had the other with his company headquarters. I mention this because the company moved right up into the edge of the town of Baletry. They had reached the edge of the town by the early morning hours and was receiving very heavy fire from the front and both flanks. They got in touch with regimental headquarters and asked for further orders. We had been trying to get in touch with them because from the reports we were receiving it was quite apparent that this was the only company that was making any progress. From the reports of the companies on each of

his flanks, who were receiving heavy fire, it was quite apparent that his company was moving into a pocket. We had tried to get a hold of him earlier in the evening to countermand the orders to attack and to pull back into his position but our first contact was, as I said, in the early morning hours. He was successful in pulling his company out of that position and getting back into his jump-off position by daylight hours. Company A, which was on his right as I recollect, had reported that they were in difficulty during the early evening but no great damage was disclosed by daylight the next morning. The following day the 36th Division attacked the town of Balety from the east and the regiment again attacked that night and moved into the town by daylight the following morning. That afternoon I was relieved from the regiment and went back to the planning group of the 7th Army which was planning the invasion of southern France. So from then on my association with the regiment was that of an observer from Army Headquarters.

Dr. S. You didn't see the regiment again in action until D-Day for the Riviere Beaches?

Col. G. That is correct. I landed with the Second Battalion of the regiment on the properly owned beaches that morning, the morning of D-Day.

Dr. S. What was the regiment doing then?

Col. G. They were landing in support of the Third Division.

Dr. S. As the beach control group?

Col. G. As the beach group in support of the Third Division Task Force. As the beach group they were set up with supporting troops which paralleled

those of practically a general depot. They had attachments from all technical services. There were some eight or nine dock companies. I think there were about 11 or 12 stevedore companies or transportation companies who were assigned to the ships off shore to unload onto the docks so that they were furnished the engineers and the control for the bold logistical support of that task force landing.

Dr. S. There has been some discussion as to the use of engineers in amphibious landings, whether to use them as special brigades; as for instance, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th, or to use them as beach groups taking a combat regiment and putting that in charge of the beach and adding odds and such to it; such as, your dock companies, your ordnance companies and your quartermaster depot companies, which do you think is more feasible?

Col. G. I am probably prejudice but having observed the landings in southern France, as well as the other landings in Sicily, Salerno and Anzio where combat engineer regiments operated the beaches it would be my view that they are a very efficient and effective group and when once given the experience they can come in and operate the beach. They are qualified with having a large number or being composed almost entirely of younger and tougher men who are trained for combat duties and to endure hardships, that when they get through with the beach phase of the operation they are immediately able to move forward and take over the combat duties. During the early phase of the landing operation the luxury of

supporting or face troops is one that is just not available. You have only a few people who can be brought ashore and every man has to be able to double in brass. Having this group ashore who can handle the job, you can break them loose if your group is fortunately enough to go forward as we did in southern France. The combat engineers were kept on the beaches for a matter of about 25 days. However, by default we were detaching battalions of those engineers to move forward in support of the advance. We kept the regimental headquarters or a part of them as a control group. We used the engineers for the overall control of the operation. They were essential in the early phase of putting in beach roads, for clearing mine areas, for getting their bulldozers in and putting their roads into dump areas, for organizing the whole area. After the initial phase the engineers got the areas in which they were working under control. We were able to detach these trained units by battalions and move them up into the support of the combat troops and yet kept a nucleolus on the beach so that by D plus 25 we had had the beaches running very effectively and without any slack of efficient operation. Yet by D plus 25 we had been able to cut the control group from the engineers down to a headquarters group and approximately one battalion for each of the regimental task forces. For example, in the 36th the regiment less one battalion, as I recollect, is that correct, Jim, had moved up to Marseille to clear the port.

Col. Chubbuth: No, the regimental headquarters plus one battalion, the Second Battalion.

Col. G. Jim had had a provisional headquarters group on the beach and that plus the two battalions had operated those beaches. The 40th, as I recollect, had attached two battalions and moved them up in support of the advancing 7th Army. They had also split their headquarters, leaving one headquarters group to operate the beaches with the attached troops, with the other two battalions in the forward area. The same was true of the 540th.

Dr. S. I hate to break in, sir, but I believe you wanted to leave. I just want to ask one more question, sir., Col. Beasley said that, you were speaking of the 7th Army rather than the 36th, that once they passed the beaches they lived very much on the land from the engineer supplies rather than off the beaches after about D plus 5 or 6, what do you think about that statement?

Col. G. You mean when I said living off the land?

Dr. S. Scouring for engineer supplies.

Col. G. That was the experience I think of the 36th from the time they landed in Africa certainly for so long as I was with them.

(Interview with Col. Chubbuth begins)

Dr. S. Col. Chubbuth, will you repeat the remarks Col. Gardes gave just before he left for duty on that operation of the outpost of D Company where the Germans had decided to go from the offensive back to the defensive?

Col. C. Did he mention just where this was. I remember the instance quite well, but I can't remember just where this took place. D Company had a machine gun nest made up of a machine gunner and two riflemen. The riflemen, of course in a fox hole, dug in near the machine gun position. Up the

road one night came the German patrol. One of the riflemen threw a grenade. The patrol scattered and the man who had thrown the grenade proceeded to throw some more. He had just pulled the pin out of one and started to throw it when this German fell into his fox hole, knocking the grenade out of his hand, the pin already pulled. He managed to pick up the grenade just getting it over the edge of the fox hole when it went off, blowing in part of the side of the fox hole, not hurting either man. He then tackled the German and the German indicated that he was willing to surrender, at which time the hand to hand ceased for a minute apparently and then the German started to shout instructions to the members of his patrol in which case the GI took up the battle again. He started beating the German over the head with the grenade. This time the pin not yet pulled. With the German wearing a helmet he found this was not very effective so with one hand he pulled the German's helmet up over his head and beat him back of the ears with the grenade. At that time the German decided that he would surrender. He and the GI that had just subdued him talked the third man of the team out of shooting the German since the Allies, understandingly, preferred the prisoners alive rather than dead. The German was a Lieutenant of Engineers out on reconnaissance and carried in his pocket a complete set of Corps orders, map of the mine fields existing and contemplated, German wire and other information which at first glance tended to indicate that the Germans were going over from offensive to defensive operations. It was first thought that the Lieutenant was a plant and that the orders were a

fake, but further Intelligence work indicated that they were real so this was the first indication on the front at Anzio of the shift from offensive to defensive operations by the Germans.

Dr. S. I believe this rifleman was promoted from Private to Sergeant.

Col. C. Yes - that's right.

Dr. S. The orders said Sergeant, then Private.

Col. C. Yes - that was the story that was shuttled around various headquarters.

Dr. S. I understand that Gen. Templer, a British General, who was your Commanding General at the time was rather doubtful about the thing being a plant or rather incline to face that, I am just wondering if he was thinking of the famous Haversach Ruse that was pulled by the Egyptian Expeditionary Force at Gaza or Beersheba in 1918. He may have been a part to that. I don't know whether you have heard of that one.

Col. C. No - I'm not familiar with that one.

Dr. S. It was again reproduced by the British under Alexander at El Alamein. I will go over that later. Well now - Col. Gardes left the regiment after you took over the Second Battalion again at the break-out of Anzio. Will you carry on from there, please sir.

Col. C. Yes. From then on until we left the front of Italy to come back to prepare for southern France the operations were pretty much routine engineers. When Col. Gardes left the regiment I took over his job as regimental Executive Officer to Col. Stanley and we proceeded on north. The Germans after the fall of Baletry and the break-out of the beachhead were in pretty full retreat for sometime, well until

the time he left. When I left the regiment they were still moving back quite rapidly, conducting only rear guard exits. We went into Rome the day it was taken, the Germans having left it without any particular damage. Rome was not damaged. We moved on north of Rome without any delay. The Germans, of course, had blown some bridges but with that being pretty flat country up there, there weren't many and the routine engineer work proceeded without any remarkable difficulties.

Dr. S. You are speaking at this time of just being routine engineers?

Col. C. Corps of Engineers.

Dr. S. Corps of Engineers. I understood that you were also acting north of Anzio for quite sometime as infantry.

Col. C. Actually we were not. That was what Col. Gardes made tentatively.

Dr. S. No. That's what Col. Thomas was telling me.

Col. C. No. After the fall of Baletry we were not used as infantry again in Italy.

Dr. S. I thought you were being used again as infantry when Col. Stanley was killed.

Col. C. No. I can cover that. No, we were being used on engineer work at that time.

Dr. S. I know he was making a bridge reconnaissance or something.

Col. C. We had had so much damage to bridges from high waters in Italy that Col. Tyler, understandingly, became a little excited when the rain came, any rains regardless of where he was. This was the first week in June

in Italy and it had not rained for several weeks. We did get a rain one day. The stream went up - went up only a couple of inches. Col. Tyler called Col. Stanley late one night and asked him to go up with him to look at a culvert that the regiment had put in a day or two before. Col. Stanley didn't care to awaken his driver at that particular time of the night, about mid-night, and drove his jeep himself. On the way back from the culvert that they had looked at, about 3:00 PM in the morning, Col. Stanley missed a turn in driving in the blackout and was killed when the jeep rolled on him.

Dr. S. When you speak about leaving the 36th, didn't you go up into France with them?

Col. C. Yes - that was later. When Col. Stanley was killed I had the regiment for about ten days while Col. Boatner moved up from 5th Army Headquarters where he was in excess. I became his Exec. The regiment remained at the front in Italy for only a few days thereafter, leaving to return to Naples for preparation for the southern France landing sometime about the 1st of July. We were then in the neighborhood of Orbieto. We returned to Naples or rather Bagnoli just north of Naples for equipping and training for the southern France landings.

Dr. S. Did you embark at Naples for southern France?

Col. C. Yes.

Dr. S. Did you go to Corsica or Sardinia along the way?

Col. C. We stopped in the harbor at Sardinia for a few days on the way while the landing fleet was being assembled.

Dr. S. Then you landed whereabouts?

Col. C. We landed at the town of Cavailon just west of the French movie colony of St. Tropez.

Dr. S. Well, you landed west of St. Tropez and acted as the beach control group for the 36th Division.

Col. C. No, for the 3rd Division.

Dr. S. For the 3rd Division, I'm sorry.

Col. C. Beach group is perhaps better, I don't care - either beach group or beach controls.

Dr. S. Then you acted as boss personnel of the beach group for the 3rd Division?

Col. C. For the Third Division Task Forces. Later across the same beaches we had the French Corps.

Dr. S. Later you had the French Corps?

Col. C. The French Corps crossed our same beaches.

Dr. S. Then your Regimental Headquarters plus one battalion, the Second Battalion went into Marseille to help the rehabilitation of the port there while your other two battalions went north on the Rhone?

Col. C. No - the remainder of the regiment remained operating the beaches until about D plus 25 to D plus 30 when the Regimental Headquarters and the battalion in Marseille moved north. The following day, as I remember, the remainder of the regiment, we having received the orders, turned over the beaches to a group from 7th Army Headquarters. We also moved north by different roads, Marseille and Cavailon being about 60 miles

apart and the regiment was reassembled.

Dr. S. You went up the route Napoleon? I suppose the regiment went up route Napoleon and you went up the Rhone route.

Col. C. From the looks of the map we were way east of the Rhone and so was the remainder of the regiment. Neither of the outfits went up to the Rhone. I'm not familiar with the route Napoleon.

Dr. S. You went up through Grenoble?

Col. C. Yes, we went through Grenoble.

Dr. S. Did you and the regiment rejoin - at least the regiment and your party rejoin around Versailles?

Col. C. Just south of Versaille.

Dr. S. Which is north of the bend of the Rhone?

Col. C. North of the bend of the Rhone.

Dr. S. In the southwest corner of the voses?

Col. C. Yes

Dr. S. In that mountain region between France and Switzerland?

Col. C. Yes - due west of Basel. Also almost due west of Mulhouse, southwest of Strasbourg.

Dr. S. From then on what sort of operations did you do, Colonel?

Col. C. We performed engineer duties for a week or so. The Regimental Headquarters moved into a little town of Jarmanile or Pouxaux, the two are together, Pouxaux showing here on the map between Remiremont and Epinal. Then with the Germans becoming more active the regiment was moved into the line at

Rambervillers as infantry with the Regimental Headquarters remaining back on the Moselle River at Jarmanile. We were in the line there about one week with the Germans retreating. Then the regiment moved the headquarters on to Baccarat then east through St. Die and on up gradually, performing engineer work as we went with the advance of the Corps, then northeast through Haguenau to the very northeast corner of France; that is, the northern most point along the Rhine where the Rhine is still the border between France and Germany.

Dr. S. In the Alsace-Lorraine area?

Col. C. In the Alsace-Lorraine area, yes. The Regimental Headquarters remained there at the small town of Aachen through Christmas and New Years of that year, 1944. The regiment was placed in the line again as infantry north of Wissembourg, just immediately north of Wissembourg, and just between Wissembourg and the German border when the Battle of the Bulge occurred. A few days later just after New Years Day, we were incidentally alerted New Years Eve for a German attack which came. Regimental Headquarters was ordered to withdraw from that position. I was with the rear echelon of the regiment, the Regimental Transportation and Headquarters Service Company. We were ordered to take our approximately 200 vehicles and move back which amounted to a distance of almost 100 miles. I had set the time for movement of the Regimental Headquarters or the rear echelon at 11:00 in the morning. At 6:00 we could hear tanks firing to our front, to our north and east so departure time was changed from

11:00 to 8:00. As it turned out later the tank firing that we heard was actually from across the Rhine but at any event at 10:30 the Germans had the town of Aachen. The regiment moved out, back from the front about the same time that we had moved the vehicles back and the regiment then came back based upon the town where we had moved the transportation and proceeded to work on defensive positions in the Vosges mountains.

They also make preparations for further withdrawals if necessary. The withdraw at that time had come back to Haguenau. The Germans had retaken Haguenau and were just south of there with what was considered a good prospect of continuing their advance into the vosges.

Dr. S. I understand from Col. Basey that the 6th Corps or the 7th Army prepared three sets of engineers, the 240th, the 40th and yourselves, prepared three sets of defensive positions which were taken up in succession.

Col. C. Yes. It was not necessary to withdraw all of those but the preparation of those was performed - yes.

Dr. S. The regiment then still had headquarters, I believe the name of the town where they were was Wasselonne.

Col. C. They operated again as Corps of Engineers for sometime during the activities of the Colmar pocket with the German efforts to take Strasbourg by attacking from both the south and the north. They were still operating in that area when I left the regiment on 5 February 1945, and joined headquarters of the 15th Corps, also 7th Army at Fenitrau. This is the last direct contact I had with the 36th Engineers. The 36th regiment remained

in a different Corps, the 6th Corps and I went on with the 15th Corps.

Dr. S. You stayed with the 15th Corps throughout the rest of the operations of the 7th Army?

Col. C. I was with the 15th Corps (end of wire - continued on second spool)

Dr. S. We were speaking about your being with the 15th Corps. You were with the 15th Corps until when, Colonel?

Col. C. Until the end of the war and that's with the advance across Germany. We were in Strasbourg when the European war ended. I stayed with the Corps then only about

Dr. S. Did you take part in the drive down to the Brenner Pass?

Col. C. No.

Dr. S. Your Corps didn't go down that far?

Col. C. No. I believe that was mainly the 6th Corps and the French who were in the southern part of Germany. I left the 15th Corps and returned to the United States about the 20 of May 1945.

Dr. S. All right. Did you have anything to do with any of the forced crossing of the Rhine.

Col. C. Yes. I was involved with the 15th Corps. We had the crossing at Worms I was pretty actively involved in the planning at the Corps level for that. Of course, much preparation had been done at the Army level months before when the crossing of the Rhine was anticipated. That was a well planned, well executed movement, mainly because the opposition was not as much as had been expected.

Dr. S. I understand that Gen. Davidson and some of the rest of you in the 7th Army had prepared for a forced crossing of the Rhine in November of 1944 and that you had materials for several of the regiments or groups up in the south eastern vosges ready to advance to the Rhine - bridging materials - when orders came down from SHAEF canceling the idea of a crossing at that time. As a result crossing was not made until later but at the time of the Battle of the Bulge one combat group with all of their bridging material was flung up on a rush to the Rhine and held in a position where Jerry knew that all of that bridging material was right there at the Rhine front so that a couple of German Corps were held down in the southern line instead of going north to reinforce the Army group under Von Runsted.

Col. C. That may be true, I don't know. I was operating at the regimental level then.

Dr. S. It wasn't you that was involved?

Col. C. Everything of that sort was snafu.