

Authority 87354
 By CP NARA Date 12/10/08

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS
 540th Engineer Regiment
 APO 758, C/O Postmaster
 New York City, N.Y.

The S-2 Journal For August:

Preinvasion functions: During early August, as in July, the activities of the S-2 section revolved about the War Enclosure at the 36th Division CP, in Italy, where paper preparation for the Southern France landing was in progress. The S-2 Officer functioned as Security Officer for the entire 540th Regiment and the attached units which went to make up the 540th Beach Group. T/Sgt Carl L. Whitten, the section's Intelligence Sergeant was custodian of the War Tent for the Beach Group. There the authorized officers were given their all-important briefings on the France plan.

The section was responsible for the delivery to all units of the Beach Group their field orders, together with necessary maps, aerial photographs and dump overlay as the various units embarked.

Both the Intelligence Sergeant and T/4 Joel A. Minkeff the Section's draftsman worked in the making of numerous dump overlays which became a part of the plans.

D-day: Three members of the section, The S-2 Officer, the Intelligence Sergeant and PFC John H. Reynolds, the Photographer landed at Green Beach, in Southern France, at H plus 60 minutes on D-day, coming ashore under shellfire. Within 45 minutes of the landing the Intelligence Officer had taken charge of the first group of German prisoners of War, just then brought onto the beach. He performed preliminary interrogation of these men who later were questioned in further detail by interpreters and interrogation parties.

The section immediately undertook and accomplished a reconnaissance of roads and dump areas in the vicinity of Green beach, while some of these areas still were under mortar fire as well as artillery shelling.

The Section's photographer covered the beach operations with camera, photographing them at regular intervals to show the development and enlargement of the beach and the quantity of traffic it was able to bear. While many of the photographs were of the general beach scene, the series of pictures gave special attention to Engineer functions.

Engineer Intelligence: Upon the movement of Regimental Headquarters to St. Raphael, the Section was the first to arrive and set up its office in the new Port CP building overlooking St. Raphael harbor. There followed immediately a considerable amount of work connected with the location of mine fields, mined buildings and similar enemy installations. The S-2 Officer made several personal reconnaissances of buildings and areas in the port vicinity after civilians brought word these areas or buildings had been mined. The Port CP building itself was checked by the Intelligence sergeant for the possible location of time charges, mines and booby traps before other representatives of regimental headquarters occupied the structure. In the days that followed the move into St. Raphael on D plus One, the Section handled numerous overlays and reports on mine fields, flame projectors, underwater fortifications and similar enemy features of the area. Detailed photographs were

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taken on Teller Mines set in concrete for attachment to underwater obstacles and on Flame Projector Apparatus discovered on one of the keys which form the St. Raphael harbor. These photos were processed together with the field officer's report, for Higher Headquarters.

Map Depot Function: Because of the speed with which the Southern France operation moved, there was an immediate demand for maps, need for which had not been anticipated in the planning phases. The Section undertook a steady exploration of all possible sources to keep some kind of a supply on the beach. So acute was the need for maps that the Section even issued to some units enemy maps that had been confiscated from prisoners, and tourist maps located in St. Raphael. The S-2 officer traveled as far as Grenoble, 200 miles away, in a futile search for maps.

Situation Maps: By the use of both U.S. and enemy maps, the section was able to maintain probably the most detailed all-Europe situation maps yet used by the regiment. Blanketing one wall of its Pert CP office, these maps, plus Intelligence information, made briefing to authorized personnel unusually graphic.

The situation of Allied armies all over Europe was further presented by the issuance of the regimental newspaper, The EAGER BEAVER, as well as the S-2 Report, which was of a more detailed nature and pertained particularly to the Southern France operation and to the areas in which the Beach Group operated. An S-2 report in detail, was published and distributed on D plus 1. The Eager Beaver, publication of which was begun in Italy, began its French volume on D plus 2.

The acquisition of a radio gave the section full news coverage for its regimental newspaper and one wall section of the office was devoted to radio bulletin material. S/Sgt Samuel Katz monitors all news broadcasts.

Captured Film: Rolls of film, taken from prisoners, was processed by the Section's photographic facility, for intelligence reasons.

Locator: Beginning with D plus 1, S-2 became a clearing house of information relative to the actual or probable location of various fast-moving units, CPs and assembly areas. The office particularly accommodated innumerable returning glider troopers and paratroopers, and their officers in directing them to their units.

Press Relations: On D plus 2, with Beach operations in full swing, S-2's public relations sections released a story on the D-day operations of the Regiment to the 36th Division PRO. This has been followed with other stories including a story and picture on an American bomber crew, shot down over France last May. The crew reported to S-2 seeking information on where its members were to go. Other stories told of promotions within the Regiment.

Liaison: Throughout the Beach Operations, the S-2 Officer has maintained constant contact with Higher Headquarters, first with 36th Division and VI Corps, and subsequently with Seventh Army.

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Photo Series: The Section thus far has submitted a series of 75 photographs, all captioned, on the Beach Operation. The series is to be a continuing one which eventually will embrace the entire French Operation as it concerns the 540th Engineers.

Interrogation, Intelligence: With the assistance of S/Sgt Stanich of S-3, as well of T/5 Taylor of the same section, S-2 interrogated a number of civilians who came or were called to the office for information they were believed to have. On one occasion, the Section conducted an interrogation of a German noncommissioned officer, aboard a ship in the harbor. All information of value was turned over to Higher Headquarters or to French authorities if it pertained to their phase of intelligence. Suspected collaborationists, including some who claimed to be American citizens, were turned over to the CIC for further investigation.

A. D. GAVURA,
Capt., C.E.,
S-2 Officer.

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