

FOOTNOTES OF A WWII GI



by Edward M. Saraniero

FOOTNOTES
OF
A WORLD WAR II GI

BY
EDWARD M. SARANIERO

2010

Kindest Regards, E. S. , July 23, 2010

Dedicated To

Anna Marie Congdon Saraniero

My wife of 57 years

Who died peacefully in the Lord

February 21, 2008

and

To the Soldiers of

the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion

I am proud to call you my brothers.

Contents

Introduction	1
A Spiritual Journey	3
From A Wayside Brook	7
Measuring The Neckar River	9
German Beer	15
Germaine	16
Trial By Misfire	21
Extracts From German Diaries	24
The Southern France Invasion	31
The Bridge at St. Julien, France	42
Acknowledgements	49
About the Author	50

Introduction

The idea of writing my essays about World War II (WWII) came from my eldest daughter. She claimed that I, like many WWII veterans, hardly talked about their war years. She thought the stories could serve as good records for future generations. After several years of interruption, due to caring for my wife during her illness, I resumed writing as a way of helping me cope with her death.

While writing, reminiscing all the while about life during the war years, the word footnotes kept coming back, accompanying my thoughts. Thinking of the various activities of the soldiers, made the word become more vivid. The word footnotes seemed to take on the resemblance of the usually short notes at the bottom of book pages: so-called footnotes. Perhaps these thoughts harbored on my mind excessively because the quick notes I wrote on small pieces of scrap paper were also short notes. The short notes eventually found their way home with me; they were useful in writing the essays.

The word footnotes also made me think of the foot-soldier, the GI, the infantryman. Their feet walked in Europe from Africa to Germany.

Combat engineers, sometimes referred to as pick-and-shovel men, also served as infantry when needed and did their share of walking.

Such were my thoughts that gave birth to a home-made version of footnotes
for the title of the book.

Edward M. Saraniero

Columbus, Ohio

March 15, 2010

February 1999

A Spiritual Journey

The first time I saw a monastery was in the winter of 1944 as a soldier during World War II in Cassino, Italy. The monastery I saw in the distance was an archabbey of the Order of Saint Benedict. The abbey was founded by Benedict in 529 A.D. at about the time he wrote his famous Holy Rule. It was here that the Benedictine Order, a Catholic monastic religious order, came into being.

There it was, situated atop Monte Cassino, approximately 1,700 feet above the Liri Valley floor. We often referred to the mountain as Monastery Hill and to the monastery as the fortress-in-the-sky. The mountain had a character of its own, beholding a monastery that seemed to be rooted in its bowels. The mountain and the monastery together formed a stable landscape from the valley floor to the rugged rock-laden cap. The town of Cassino spreads out along the lower slopes of the mountain. The swift Rapido River, heavily mined on both sides by the enemy, flows through the town. Cassino is about halfway between Naples and Rome.

I was in Company A of the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion. We were bivouacked in a field near the base of Mt. Lungo. Mt. Lungo was one of the many typical hills and mountains, one after the other, that formed the terrifying landscape near the town of Mignano, not far from Cassino. Our daily field assignments often brought us within uncomfortable proximity of our forward infantry positions and those of the enemy, and within view of

the monastery. Enemy fire from artillery emplacements dug in rock on the slopes, and machine gun fire from positions at various lower levels, made our engineering tasks vulnerable. General Kesselring's forces looked down at us from well-entrenched positions in the mountain. Our heavily concentrated artillery pieces, often positioned hub-to-hub, together with enemy shells coming in at us, filled the air with overwhelming thunder. The enemy's 88mm shells were appropriately referred to as "screaming meemies" because of their classical celebratory sounds shrilling in concert as they approached us. Unfortunately, the abbey was ultimately demolished by heavy Allied air bombing on February 15 and March 15, 1944, in an effort to reduce the enemy's effectiveness. Prior to its crushing blows during World War II, the monastery experienced three other military destructions but was reconstructed and restored each time.

I saw the heavy air bombardment and destruction of the abbey from a lone foxhole. At the time, I was guarding unassembled Bailey Bridge equipment and material placed on the ground in a storage area a few yards from my foxhole. The storage area was near enough to the Rapido River to enable the 48th to promptly transport, assemble and launch the bridge across the river when the situation was right for an infantry river crossing.

Years went by and in 1954, still curious about the Benedictine Order, I began reading about the life of Benedict, his rule and his Order. While reading about the monks, I learned something about their lay members called Oblates. Oblates are men and women who affiliate themselves with a Benedictine monastery, offering themselves to God and promising to reform their lives according to the ideals proposed by the Holy Rule of St. Benedict.

By a formal "Act of Oblation," they become members of a monastic community and share the blessings obtained by the monks of the monastery. Their purpose is to seek God under the guidance of the Rule of St. Benedict.

In 1994 I made a solemn Act of Oblation, thus becoming an Oblate of St. Benedict. Reflecting back on this journey of many years, I feel that some of the monastic mentality rubbed off on me and gives me moments of special peace of mind. The monk Thomas Merton in his book, *The Silent Life*, says not all of us are called to be monks, but all of us need silence and solitude in our lives to enable the deep inner voice of our true selves to be heard.

Benedict is a man for all times and for all religious followings. Many people of various religious denominations have become Oblates without departing from their particular denomination of choice. One example is Kathleen Norris, a married Protestant writer and an Oblate who writes beautiful works of nonfiction such as "The Cloister Walk." Benedict's simple lifestyle gives us a holiness and happiness direct from God. He warns, however, that as Oblates our faithfulness to small things as changing diapers, repairing the gutters and cleaning the house, that is, performing the duties of our state in life must be fulfilled with the utmost fidelity. We must not neglect what is necessary in order to take upon ourselves extraordinary deeds.

Although I tried to follow my Christian faith as far back as I can recall, it was not until as late as 1944, in Italy, that I became conscious of God's presence and importance in my life. It seems as if the Hound, referred to in

the poem, *The Hound of Heaven* by Francis Thompson, prevailed. Then too, battlefields have caused many of us to become suddenly devoured by the hunger for a life whose joy was to come in finding God. For some of us, finding Him comes more clearly through a role model like Benedict. Since then Benedict has been comfortable for me as someone I could hang my hat on.

January 2001

From a Wayside Brook

Our 48th Engineer Combat Battalion Headquarters Company was located somewhere in southeastern Germany. One quiet day I hastily slipped away from our bivouac area to try some fishing in a nearby brook. The brook meandered through a meadow of tall grass. The grass was so tall, dense and dry like unmown winter rye, and the brook flowing quietly was so nestled into the landscape that it was hardly visible until one approached dangerously near its edge.

I used a tree limb for a rod and grasshoppers for bait. I brought along some string and a safety pin but forgot my knife. When I cast the safety pin the short distance into the water, the trout wasted little time in attacking the bait. It wasn't long, perhaps an hour or so, when I decided to stop fishing, having caught more trout than I expected. To continue would make me feel greedy and a sense of disregard for this environment, an area relatively undisturbed by the war.

To gather up the fish for handling and carrying, I pierced the underside of the mouth as I had seen in fishing magazines in the U.S., using sharp-ended limbs from brushwood; I didn't have a knife or other cutting implement with me. I used the same limbs for stringing the fish. Then I took the catch to our company kitchen and there, that night, the cooks prepared a very tasty meal that was enjoyed by fellow G.I.s.

The apparent success of this experience was quite likely due to the fact that the brook had not been fished for a long time and was thus well stocked. It certainly wasn't due to any expertise on my part, a city boy who had never fished before.

January 2001

Measuring the Neckar River

Headquarters Company of the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion was located in Eberbach, Germany on the Neckar River. The time was the spring of 1945.

One evening I was told by the Battalion Commander that we needed to get some idea of the distance across the Neckar River in the vicinity of Heidelberg. He said ascertaining this measurement would give us some idea of the amount of pontoon bridge equipment we would require if and when we were ordered to launch a bridge for the forthcoming river crossing.

At first I frankly didn't know how this could be accomplished under blackout conditions. A jeep driver and I drove to the river and chose a site along the shore. I took with me our surveying (transit) instrument and tripod, a plumb bob, a flashlight, a dark-colored, somewhat opaque cloth and two circular reflectors which I borrowed from the rear end of our Headquarters Intelligence and Operations mobile office trailers.

A fortunate thing happened at the site. On the other side of the river, among a row of buildings along what I presumed could be the typical river road, I could see a spire similar to that atop a church. The spire was neatly silhouetted against a clear moonlit sky.

The area around us was relatively quiet. The only activity going on sounded like intermittent burp-gun or machine-gun fire.

Briefly, to determine the distance across the river, we set the two reflectors firmly on the ground as far apart as my bespectacled vision would permit. Then I set up the transit tripod and plumb bob alternately over one reflector and then the other, each time sighting on the other reflector, then rotating the transit scope to sight on the spire (at each reflector position), each time reading and recording the angle turned (on the transit dial) of the triangle thus formed, all by the light of the moon. Using the approximate distance between the reflectors (which I got by pacing) and the angles turned, I calculated by geometry the length of the three legs of the triangle. The length of the leg crossing the river, the important leg, gave me some idea of the distance across the river; this distance would be considered on the plus (conservative) side because the triangle included the distance from the opposite shoreline to the spire located inland of the opposite shore. To see the reflectors through the transit scope, the jeep driver cautiously cast the flashlight beam closely upon the reflector with a prayer (by both of us) while covering as much of the light beam as possible with the cloth to maintain blackout conditions. I recorded the data obtained in my field notebook and we departed the sight promptly. Upon our arrival at Headquarters, I mounted the reflectors on the trailers from where they were borrowed. The method used to solve this problem turned out to be relatively easy. We were fortunate.

Last but not least: the jeep driver who assisted me was Pfc. L. Riney of Piper City, Missouri.

This story does not end as I had expected. Recently, in order to learn more about the story, I contacted an Army friend who, in 1945, was the Executive Officer; he was second in command of our battalion. It's good that I did. His generous response, attached hereto, provides the ending to this story. It's hard to imagine what a difference a decimal point can make. I don't know how this error occurred since, oddly enough I didn't remember how the story played out after I submitted my results to the C.O.

I never intended the story to be for self-exaltation. Now that I know about my error, I am proving the point. I'm really writing about it because I think it was a unique experience.

The consequences of my error were corrected by our Executive Officer. He certainly exemplified the motto of our battalion which was:
"Open The Way."

Letter from Bill Munson, received January 2, 2002:

"Dear Ed,

I enjoyed talking to you today and hope we have an opportunity to chat eyeball to eyeball in the not to distant future.

Let me start by saying I am pleased that you want to write about some of your experiences. It has been my joy the last two years to assemble facts that could interest some of my grandchildren. Even great-

grandchildren should someday want to read about what it was like for that old geezer who fought WWII and Korea. Among my many items of interest, of course, they will find factual heritage data. I have seven large three-inch folders full of stories. With luck and time allowing there should be at least two more large folders before I start to put on the final touch.

We talked about the bridge where you miscalculated the crossing distance. I remember the incident well. It definitely was at Heidelberg. I was the one who had to go back and get extra bridging material so we could finish the job. Tanks and armored vehicles were lined up for miles waiting to cross and there was lots of trouble getting the big bridge trucks past the waiting convoy. Lt. Finnegan, Company C, was the Officer in charge of the construction. As I remember it, Finnegan was commanding company C at that time. He had not been the commander very long. Since there was this lull in the construction, some men with nothing better to do found a large stash of hidden German liquor. The liquor found, as I remember it, was that which we eventually transported to Berchtesgaden for the Battalion to enjoy after the war was over.

You showed me your figures when we realized there was going to be a shortage of bridge material. As I remember it, you missed a decimal point in your figures and it caused the calculated distance to be short. Some of the men and Lt. Finnegan were feeling no pain before I got back with bridge material. Col. Foley became aware of the drinking and relieved Finnegan of his command on the spot. You may have been the cause for a delay in the final construction, but look at all the good times the drinkers enjoyed after the war. Company C would not have found that stash had there not been a lull in the construction. You, my very good friend was the unsung hero of the Battalion drunks.

The bridge at Heidelberg was about 425 feet. The other floating bridge of considerable length, under combat conditions, was across the Rhone River. It was over 500 feet and the current was very swift. It was built shortly after the invasion (3-5 September)* and just below a town called Amberieu. The purpose of the bridge across the Rhone was to open lateral movement for the Allied troops in the area. It was the bridge built alongside a small suspension bridge capable of

handling 3/4 ton traffic. The suspension bridge was where Col. Swift and I witnessed the killing of several Germans by the Free French. They brought them on the bridge five at the time and blew the tops of their heads off with rapid fire shoulder weapons. The dead were upended over the support cable into the river. My recollection of the number killed was twenty-five. Supposedly the French killed them because they had set one or two small towns on fire and as the children and women came out of their burning homes, the Germans threw the children back into the burning homes. I know first hand the why, because I asked several French witnessing the killing why the Germans were being killed. I did not get into all the details here, but maybe another day we can get "THE REST OF THE STORY."

You asked about Remiremont -- Remiremont was up in the Epinol Area. I gathered you thought Remiremont was near where the railroad bridge was constructed. Pardon me if I am wrong. The railroad bridge was built at St. Julien about two weeks after the invasion. Col. Swift had major Foley write a report on the construction and forward it to Seventh Army Headquarters. I was fortunate to find a copy of his report included herewith. Too bad the pictures that are a part of this report are so poor, because the originals were excellent. Foley's report should answer any questions you might have about the railroad bridge.

Once again, thanks for calling -- here is hoping you and yours have a wonderful holiday season. Double OO"

Additional piece provided by Bill Munson, January 2, 2002:

"In 1945 as the war was closing down on the Germans, the 48th Engineer "C" Battalion was required to build a 420 foot pontoon bridge across the Neckar River at Heidelberg, Germany. In conjunction with the bridge, the 48th operated and maintained a pontoon ferry. In 1992 Bill Munson returned to find Heidelberg had changed considerably. He found it was difficult to determine just where they had built their bridge. Finally, with only the old WW II

photo, he found just the right background." Photocopies of photos taken in 1992 and 1945 are on following page.

* Refers to the Southern France Invasion, Aug 15, 1944, along the Riviera (Fregus, St. Raphael, etc.)

January 2001

German Beer

Headquarters Company of the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion was billeted in vacated houses in Furstenfuldbruck, Germany, near the Dachau Concentration Camp. It was at about the time the infantry liberated the camp, which was April 28, 1945.

Shortly after our arrival I reconnoitered the general area on foot in the vicinity of our billets. Not far from our billets I came upon an opening in the face of a steep hillside; it was the entrance to a cave. The interior was large, dark and cool, roughly circular in shape and the roof was somewhat dome shaped. Much to my surprise, I saw wooden cases of beer stacked high all around the wall. The beer was very dark and appeared to be commercially brewed and bottled. A tractor driven low-boy trailer from our motorpool was used to transport the cases of beer to our headquarters location. The beer was shared among the men; I think it was a bottle per man per week. For those who enjoyed beer, it may have provided them with some pleasant moments and a degree of attitude adjustments, if required.

January 2002

Germaine

Our 48th Engineer Combat Battalion history book, "Open The Way," page 190, discusses our movements from Luxeill to Remiremont, France, in the fall of 1944. We were now in the Vosges Mountains. The town of Remiremont was a quaint place. I remember its main street architected with shops and sidewalks covered over with archways and columns giving the appearance of cloistered walks. I later learned the French called the cloistered walks: Les Arcades. The town was fortunate in that it was spared destruction.

What a difference day made. Within a day the enemy moved out of town and we moved in. The French citizenry were quite hospitable. I often had to remind myself that the conduct of a GI was not to have the character of undue fraternization with the native population. This conduct became difficult for me when I met Germaine.

She was a very special person. Her name: Germaine Briot-Antoine. I estimate she might have been about sixty years of age. Words that best describe her are: quiet, soft-spoken, gentle, kind, fragile, observative, respectable. She spoke no English, I spoke no French; eventually it made no difference. She lived alone in a large house situated on the town-street side of a walled-in family villa. Her brother, middle-aged, and his family resided on the same property; their house was located well within the interior of the villa. The villa comprised a large tract of open land, neatly landscaped and

picturesque, with fields of gently rolling hills and tall, intermittent tree stands.

I billeted in Germaine's house, along with two other fellow members of the Operations Section of Battalion Headquarters. I can't remember how this situation evolved but it proved to be a comfortable one considering wartime conditions. I slept in an upstairs bedroom. Although a comfortable bed was made available, the floor was better for my bones.

While billeting in her home, Germaine did many nice things for me which I let pass without due recognition; for this I was sorry later. For example, when I returned to her home at night after being out in inclement weather wearing a wet mackinaw and ready to hit the sack, without my awareness she would hang my mackinaw over the wood stove to dry. The next morning I would hurry off to Headquarters wearing a warm, dry mackinaw, without having expressed a word of appreciation.

When the time came to say goodbye, in October 1944, she gave me an unexpected hug and began to cry. Upon leaving she surprised me with a gift: a woolen scarf she had knitted for me to use during the coming winter. I still have it tucked away in storage with my Army uniform. Touching it helps to bring her back again if only in my mind. Perhaps our presence in Remiremont ignited the joy and strength she needed to endure her twilight years. Suddenly I felt sad to leave her. My feeling to show affection came too late. I wondered why I had not given her some attention and expression of thanks before this.

Soon after, at some bivouac location between Remiremont and St. Die, I thought about returning to Remiremont to see her. I didn't wait too long. Somehow I acquired a jeep and took off in the snow, travelling on roads through the Foret de Fossard of the Vosges Mountains leading to Remiremont. When I arrived unexpectedly at her home, the joy - hers and mind - made it so worthwhile. I brought her some food rations, gifts of candy and chocolate and issues of our GI newspaper, The Stars and Stripes, about all the things I could gather up. I could not remain with her very long. Before leaving I thanked her for her kindness and gave her a last big hug.

Hindsight tells me the return trip to Remiremont was a risky trip: I did not possess a driver's license, did not have authorization to use the jeep, and the weather was bad. In civilian life I never had a car until 1961, long after WW II. I didn't need a car. As a student, I couldn't afford one. During part of my working years, I walked or used buses and subways, the usual way then for many city people. And, as I reflect on the jeep trip, I realize I must have violated several Army regulations.

Today, 57 years later, I still can't believe I had such a strong determination to return to Remiremont, apparently without regard for Army rules and regulations. Now, at 79 years of age, I know how lonely old age can be at times, and I'm pleased that I did visit this wonderful elderly woman when I did.

I was discharged from the Army Corps of Engineers at Ft. Dix, N.J. on December 14, 1945. In early 1946 I received in the mail a beautiful religious card from Germaine. The card, 3 inches by 4-1/2 inches in size,

contains a spiritual message. On the front side is a picture of the Mother of Jesus, captioned, Notre Dame Du Tresor Priez Pour Nous (Our Lady of Treasures Pray for Us). On the rear side is a prayer also in French. The card is print-marked as having been made in St. Die on April 15, 1932. She wrote a message on the card: Souvenir a' notre ami Eddie de las ami Germaine. I translate this to say: To our friend Eddie from your friend Germaine. Since then I try almost daily, during my prayers, to look at the card and remember Germaine in a prayerful way. I have photocopied the card and included it at the end of the essay.

A few years later, Germaine mailed me two post-war French books bearing titles and relevant information shown on a following page.

Not long after receiving these gifts, a letter arrived notifying me of her death.

I started to write this essay part-time after being prompted by a May 2001 newspaper article I read in the Columbus Dispatch about a deceased WW II veteran. The article voices comments by his children. The son says his father never talked much about his war years while his children were growing up. The daughter says it was as if his life during the war was his alone, something he wasn't able to share with others. Perhaps, she continues, this was not rare among men of his generation nor did they want to draw attention to themselves. I hope I am not drawing attention to myself, although I read somewhere that old people tell their stories as a way to come to terms with changes in their lives. Young people observe this as a part of emotional healing. I think this could apply to me at times when coping with the lonely moments old people experience.

Book No. 1:

Re'my
Memoirs Dún Agent Secret
de la
France Libre

Juin 1940 - Juin 1942

CND



Raoul Solar
Editeur

Book No 2:

Visages de La
Champagne
Horizons de France
By
Maurice Catel
Germaine Maillet
Maurice Hollande
René Duraint
Jean-Paul Vaillant

Editions de
Horizons de France
Paris
MCMXLV (1965)

February 2002

Trial by Misfire

Our Headquarters Company of the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion was bivouacked somewhere in the Rhone Valley of Southern France when a near-death experience happened to me.

Our battalion was attached at this time to General Patton's armored division. We were encountering little resistance from enemy forces. Patton's tanks kept advancing rapidly in their effort to keep the enemy in retreat. We likewise moved along until the inevitable happened: we too depleted our gasoline reserve and had to stop and wait for service units to arrive and replenish our fuel supply. In the meantime we encamped in an area surrounded by a vast flat expanse of abandoned farmland. Around us the flat open areas of former cornfields were probably harvested sometime ago. Now, the fields were covered with the dried remains of crispy husks, stalks and stubble. I thought this would be good material to stuff into a mattress cover to help get a good night's rest.

It was late afternoon when I headed out into the field dragging my white mattress cover along the ground behind me. On my left, a couple of miles away, I could see the profile of a continuous formation of gentle rolling hills, paralleling the direction in which I was walking. Suddenly, much to my surprise, out of nowhere, an airplane came over the hills some distance to my rear and then, making a left turn, followed behind me. As the plane approached me, the pilot zoomed the plane lower and lower, and at the same

time fired his machine gun at me. The bullets missed me, hitting the ground in a line twelve to fifteen inches to my right side. I didn't think I should run back to the bivouac area, tempting him to come along; furthermore, the bivouac area seemed far away. So, I dropped the mattress cover and ran as fast as I could toward a distant structure I could see ahead of me. The structure turned out to be a circular booth about three feet in diameter inside and about seven or eight feet tall with a cupola as its roof. It probably served as a farmer's shelter for a break out of the hot sun. In the time it took me to reach the structure, the pilot repeated his cycle two more times, each time swooping down behind me and firing his machine gun. The bullets, hitting the ground so near me, gave me little elbow room.

When I got inside the structure I banged on the walls to determine if they were penetrable; fortunately, they consisted of concrete block. While waiting inside the structure I noticed my knees were shaking uncontrollably. I may have almost been in a state of shock. I layed on the ground and curved my body around the base of the wall until I felt composed enough to return to the bivouac area. The men who saw this from the bivouac area were horrified.

During the period of the war it seemed we were not confronted as much with the threat of enemy air power. Thus, seeing this aircraft, a propeller-driven biplane, swooping down at me was quite a surprise. I soon enough realized how easily the mattress cover might have become a body bag.

In 1968, I was in the Engineering Department of a major corporation. The Chief Engineer was a German airforce pilot during World War II. On one

occasion while discussing some of our war experiences, he told me he was shot down and taken to a prisoner of war camp in Canada. I discussed with him this strafing experience I had in France. I asked him if he thought the pilot was merely trying to frighten me, since it seems he could have easily hit me. He replied rather emphatically that all pilots were trained to hit the target. He said he thought the pilot may well have been very inexperienced in handling a biplane, swooping down at me, a small single target, and manning the machine gun, all at the same time.

I have frequently thought about this close call but never talked about it because it was a thoughtless thing to do. But, having survived this trial by misfire, hindsight tells me now, some 50 years later, that it could be a story with some human interest. It has been an unforgettable terrifying experience and I realize I am very fortunate to have survived it.

June 2002

Extracts from German Diaries

The following are exact copies of the translations made of extracts found from the diaries of two German officers. The original extracts were found by one of our men of the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion near Red Beach shortly after the invasion forces landed along the coast of Southern France on August 15, 1944. The beach, code-named Red Beach, was one of the beaches along the Riviera coast in the vicinity of St. Raphael and Frejus.

The following is from the diary of a German Lieutenant, leader of an engineer combat platoon in the 716th Infantry Division. The extracts cover the period from August 14 through September 19, 1944. The officer was stationed at Kraimmau, Bohemia, when he was alerted with a group on June 19, 1944. The group was split into small units. The officer took command of an engineer platoon and was assigned to 10 kilometers coastal sector in the Perpignan area. He was quartered in a hotel. The extracts follow:

14 August 1944: I am sitting on my balcony again. Five minutes ago I was still in my splendid bathroom. I caught a fish today and therefore done my day's work. I really needed the rest after last night. We sang and drank from 9 p.m. 'til 2 a.m.but it seems as if this life is going to end soon. Heavy bombing is going on in the Narbonne area. Are the Allies going to land?It is now 10:30 p.m. and I can see flares. We have been talking about the war. How much longer will this horrible slaughter last? Perhaps today is another invasion day.

15 August 1944: CO: 10 a.m. A few minutes ago we sector commanders were asked to report to the area commander. Message: "Invasion fleet steaming up from the north coast of Corsica." Then later: "Invasion fleet 10 kilometers NW of Corsica." We know that a new landing will be made. Orders are being whipped out in quick succession. We work 'til dawn. How much longer will this war last? The Americans broke through with a few tanks. Today they are pressing on our heels. We are destroying the silliest objects, often without rhyme or reason but orders are orders. Who is going to pay the bill for all this? If I only knew how things are at home. To be without mail for such a long time makes me sick..... It is evening. Much happened today. The Americans got to within 200 yds of us and two companies were taken prisoner. Tanks roll up and down the area all the time. An hour ago I had to construct a roadblock. Our new orders are to hold the position. We expect an attack in the morning. Now I am sitting in a farmhouse with a young couple at the table and a little baby who knows nothing about the war. Also, Roul, the dog, nibbles contentedly at his bone.

17 August 1944: Two days later: Many strong points have been given up. Is this the prelude to evacuation of the area?

18 August 1944: With the exception of a few men we are evacuating the sector.

19 August 1944: We are spending the night in the vicinity of Perpignan. We are withdrawing and are apparently in the process of being cut off. The general situation must be bad if we receive an order to take along only the

absolutely necessary materials and abandon the rest. Demolitions are going on. It is all crazy confusion. At the moment I am in charge of the Engineer Platoon and am very busy. The men are already tired.

20 August 1944: At 1200 hours we blew up the ammunition. The others left, but I stayed behind with four men. Then we started out via Perpignan. The entire area was enveloped in powder smoke. Hostile looks from the population everywhere. Shots at us in Perpignan. An hour later we received fire from sub-machine guns at a road curve near Narbonne. We dismounted and defended ourselves for half an hour before we received supporting fire from the 88mm gun. Only then could we continue... At dawn we reached OGDE. In an hour I will proceed with my men. Will we get out of this pocket? I don't know.....

6 September 1944: Many days have passed, one very much like the other. Terrorists and air attacks block our roads. We proceed at night. Until yesterday I had a nice little sedan. Yesterday they knocked the hell out of it. The day before yesterday _____ did not come back. Dead or captured.

7 September 1944: 2 a.m. We are leaving our positions and withdrawing 3 kms. At 6 a.m. the unit on our right will attack.

19 September 1944: There was no material change during the past days. At night we break contact and continue to withdraw and after a couple of days the Americans catch up with us again. We demolish and demolish. Yesterday we crossed the Moselle River. The country reminds me of home, of lower Austria. All in all, the war is not too bad around here, if nobody

had to die. Now I am at a farmhouse. The phonograph is playing the song of the faithful Husser. The world would be beautiful, if..... but I think that for us life has forever ceased to be beautiful. We must not think.....

Another Diary. The following is from the second diary, that of a German Captain in Company 308 Grenadiers of the 198th Infantry Division. The extracts cover the period from August 21 though September 11, 1944, as follows:

21 August 1944: On my way all night to get liquor and maps. I kept going with chocolate, sugar and coffee. Started again in the morning in my little car. Breakdown in Salon where the bullets were flying. Marine and Air Force were retreating for no reason at all. Partly in disorder. They spread wild rumors which are entirely incorrect. It is actually not as bad as they say. Two American prisoners.

23 August 1944: The big shots at Division weren't able to provide an officer with a motorcycle. Renate, my horse, can't run anymore. At noon I finally reached my company. Old friends. Everything perfect. If it would only stay that way.

24 August 1944: We reached Macon after a night march in incredibly dirty condition. My company was reserve company. But in the afternoon I was relieved of my command by Lt. Stroehle. I am now just a puppet. I don't feel like doing anything anymore. Regimental has no use for me anymore.

25 August 1944: During the night I went with the advance party to Espeluche, just south of Montellinar. On my feet all night. The regimental staff arrives in the morning. We were supposed to attack at 0900. By the time we got going it was 1100. Heavy artillery fire on the area of attack. We took St. Marcel and Sausset. Received six direct hits on Regimental

Command Post. New Command Post further to the rear. Bridge under concentrated fire. Cap't Klem seriously wounded. During the night I was attached to Major Teichert (II Battalion, 63 GAF) Training Regiment as Infantry Advisor.

26 August 1944: The GAF Battalion has shifted to St. Marcel. I arranged the sections from the left to the right: 10 Company, 9 Company, 7 Company in reserve. We must reconnoiter to our left to determine who the adjacent unit is. Our right neighbor is I Battalion, 308 Grenadiers.

4 September 1944: In the morning we marched about 15 kilometers along the Doubs River, up to the outskirts of Dole. Radiant blue sky, air attacks all the time. Still no German plane in sight.

7 September 1944: Bridges were blown up all night. Enemy in Villette. The population is waiting for the Americans. Canoes and sailboats were sailing on the canal. The Americans do not attack with as many planes as before.

8 September 1944: At dawn we moved into position in vicinity of Routelles, occupied by the Forward Replacement Battalion. Received concentrated artillery fire in Routelles, followed by attack with 20 tanks and about 2 battalions. Forward Replacement Battalion evacuated after having suffered heavy casualties. Tanks closed in on us. We first evacuated the ridge, then the woods. Six tanks pressed us. We could not do anything at all; we had no heavy weapons whatever. We were followed by the tanks all night, then we regrouped after a fashion.

9 September 1944: We moved by motor transport throughout the night and arrived in Breura and They-en-Sorans in the morning. We left at noon but it was too late. Tanks had penetrated into Neuville and attacked us from the flank when we tried to withdraw to Breuve. One dead, 4 wounded.

Strength of company: 1 officer, 2 non-commissioned officers, 9 men. We fought our way through terrific fire to Bault where we were picked up by buses, which took us first to Theyrissy, then to Vesoul. The battalion headquarters is missing. Are they captured?

10 September 1944: In the afternoon we traveled 16 kilometers by bus to Villersexel.... Enemy aircraft. Where on earth is the German airforce? We secured the road near Baslieves (Regimental Command Post). Our command Post is a frightful shack..... 3 Company is up to 1 officer, 5 non-commissioned officers, 20 men again. But the Battalion Commanding Officer, Executive Officer and Staff Officers did not come back. Dead or captured.

11 September 1944: Reconnoitered for tomorrow's position. These nights are horribly cold. First Lt. Schuler was shot through the head by partisans who were hidden in the woods behind us at projected Command Post. Captain Bergel is now Commanding Officer. The Americans have covered us by fire from the left and from the right. Big fiasco. The withdrawal was not orderly.

July 2002

The Southern France Invasion

The invasion of Southern France was launched on August 15, 1944, shortly after the Normandy Invasion on June 06, 1944. On D-Day, the Seventh Army was to assault the southern coast of France to seize the ports of Toulon and Marseilles. VI Corps and the Eighth Amphibious Force were to make a daylight assault on beaches from Cap Cavalaire to Agay employing three divisions abreast. The Provincial Airborne was to drop at 0430 hours to seize LeMuy. Gliders were to land at 0800 hours and at 1800 hours on D-Day.

The 48th Engineer Combat Battalion was to be shore engineers for the 142nd Infantry Regiment of the 36th Division.

By June 17, 1944, prior to the invasion, the 48th had advanced to Lake Bracciano just north of Rome. We bivouacked here and rested in a wooded grove. This came after the able fighting of the infantry, which broke the German hold on the Anzio beachhead along the Mediterranean side of Italy, and the aggressive reconnaissance and advance of the 48th in the Pontines along the Appian Way, which didn't give the enemy time to blow bridges and canals. We thereby were able to bypass Cassino where we had been long stalemated. The Poles would ultimately capture Cassino.

In June 1944 we were relieved from II Corps of the Fifth Army. The 48th Headquarters and Service Company Command Post and all its companies A,

B and C then started moving back to Naples, over familiar territory, to report for invasion training. We set up pup tents to stay for awhile in Battapaglia, about twenty miles south of Salerno, to practice for the invasion. Part of the battalion was bivouaced on a farm and part in a neighboring plum orchard. We had never been this far behind the fighting front. We ate lots of plums, cucumbers, tomatoes and fresh eggs. Some of us had to learn to swim, including me, in a nearby irrigation canal. Now we had to train for an amphibious landing and prepare the beach for the infantry and combat vehicles. Short intensive programs in specialized training began in skills such as acetylene welding, swimming, demolition of underwater obstacles, duck vehicles and water craft operation, mine sweeping, laying down special matting for tanks to travel across the shifting sand, and setting up defenses at the dune line with heavy weapons. Engineers with specialized tasks were to go in with each wave of infantry. Ultimately we had a dry run with the 36th and 45th Divisions of the Seventh Army.

In early August 1944, we departed from the ports of Naples, Salerno and Pauzzouli; all along the coastline was an impressive array of many ships.

During invasion training, it became reasonable to presume that we were not destined for the Pacific; at no time did new GI issues include mosquito nets or other tropical gear or clothes. Further, when we left the coast of the Italian mainland and sailed past Sardinia and Corsica, we got a more comfortable feeling of awareness that we were headed for the waters of Southern France. Reflecting for a moment on another time past, I remembered when, in December 1943, I was part of a troop movement heading for the port of embarkation to go overseas. First we were issued

tropical clothing and personal gear including mosquito nets. Then later, before boarding the ships, the tropical GI issues were exchanged for the standard issues for temperate zones. No mosquito nets. The voyage of this multi-ship convoy from Newport News, VA to Naples, Italy, was to be a long journey apparently extra-carefully planned. It took the convoy 28 days. We departed Newport News at 12 o'clock midnight on Christmas Eve 1943 and arrived in Naples at the end of January 1944. I was on a Liberty Ship, the Harriet Beecher Stowe, manned by the U.S. Merchant Marine. We were told the trip took so long because the ships followed a zigzag kind of route to avoid submarines and floating mines. Perhaps, thus the extra-careful planning. Standing on topside, I remember our ship passing floating mines within visible distance of 20 to 25 feet from the forward end of the ship. At times it was necessary to drop depth charges when submarine threats were anticipated. It was a welcome sight to see birds again and then the Rock of Gibraltar. We were almost there! When I think about it, while we were not on a sightseeing tour, the European Theatre of Operations was not as bad as the climate, terrain and the enemy in the Pacific Theatre of Operations.

Now, getting back to the Southern France invasion, I remember that shortly before D-Day, while anchored in the Mediterranean off the coast of France, two fellow members and myself of Headquarters Operations, together with the battalion Executive Officer, assembled in one of those lifeboats which hung from davits over the side of the ship. With a tarpaulin mounted over the top of the lifeboat for seclusion, the four of us held a short meeting. The Exec Officer instructed us to get through the beach area to the road paralleling the beach and there, in the hotel locale, find a good location to set up an initial temporary command post from which our Operation Section

could function. He gave us a map case and maps to assist us. It was either telephone or radio that kept us in contact with the Exec Officer. We probably had some forms of high tech communications, even fpr 1944.

I remember our outfit being aboard a huge Landing Ship Tank (LST), anchored some distance off the coast of Southern France. Oddly enough, there were no tanks aboard, just troops, many troops. The troops included infantry and service troops with special skills such as the Signal Corps, Medical Corps and Engineer Corps. A nearby LST carrying guns, ammunition and men of the 36th Division was hit by enemy aircraft. The sky flared as the ammunition began to explode. We heard later that the ship sank. Fortunately, the Germans just didn't have the planes or the time to prepare many strikes at the beach.

From our LST, three of us from Operations and others from various outfits disembarked down rope ladders to a smaller craft, a Landing Craft Infantry (LCI). Once loaded with GI's, the LCI headed for shore. As we approached the beach, a wooden ramp was lowered for us to disembark. Fortunately, the small craft was able to get in close to shore. The water was only about knee deep. This was a break for us.

The three of us, once on the beach, separated from the rest of troops and went northerly, making it across the beach to a railroad track, which appeared to run somewhat parallel to the beach. We followed the track westerly to a railroad station but with no luck. Then, at some point, we turned around and hastened in an easterly direction and found a suitable command post: a hotel basement. The building had recently been a

luxurious Riviera hotel but was now somewhat demolished. However, the basement was of structurally sound concrete construction and appeared spared from enemy shelling. I remember the three of us slumping to the floor to rest a little. Strangely enough, an electric light bulb, still lit, dangling from the ceiling in the darkness somewhere above provided some illumination. Always looking for spiritual signs, being the way I am, I looked upon the dim light of the bulb in the surrounding blackout as a candle prompting in me an inspirational thought that where there is light there is hope. Now we waited for the others of Operations to join up with us.

Once they arrived, we organized for the work we had to do. For me, one of my jobs was to draw hasty overlay sketches of specific areas. Such sketches were made from topographical maps as and when needed for planning purposes or perhaps to coordinate and manage tasks in various locations assigned to elements of the battalion. The first request I received came when we were at our next command post, which was an abandoned lobby office of another hotel. The request came as a telephone message from our battalion commander, Col. Swift. He wanted a detailed layout of a particular area, bounded by specific coordinates, showing topographic features such as roads, bridges, wooded areas and contour elevations. His reasons were many: potential sites for ammo dumps, assure that supply routes were open, bridges intact, etc. The sketch was rapidly delivered by a motorcycle messenger. ** One time, in Germany I gave out coordinate locations to one of the squads or platoons in a line company, telling them where they were to clear road shoulders of anti-personnel mines using mine detectors. A short time later I discovered the coordinates were in German-occupied territory. The same motorcycle messenger went out to catch up with the truck

transporting the fellows to give them the corrected coordinates. They were quite relieved. They said they were wondering when they were going to run into the first German MP.

Back to Red Beach. I haven't yet mentioned where Red Beach was. It was only one of the code-named beaches that were involved in the invasion. Red Beach was bounded by two Riviera towns on its shores: St. Raphael and Frejus. St. Raphael was to the East on the shores of a cove and Frejus was a neighboring town northeast of St. Raphael.

In general terms, our battalion orders were to operate Red Beach if so required or to open the coast highway into St. Raphael, depending on developments during the invasion. At the earliest possible time, we were to replace destroyed bridges, provide access to the small boat harbor at St. Raphael, delouse the port of mines, destroy pillboxes, initiate port reconstruction, provide traffic routes to and within Red Beach supply areas, knock out underwater obstacles and fight fires. Plans didn't work out entirely according to the colloquial Hoyle's rules and regulations because Red Beach of the 142nd became the one beach in the entire operation where plenty of enemy troops offered rugged resistance.

Most of the 48th engineers had gone in with the initial assault wave of the 142nd Infantry Regiment. The 48th landed on Red Beach at H-Hour (8 a.m.) on D-Day and with the infantry seized Agay, St. Raphael, Frejus and LeMay thereby making contact with crack U.S. airborne troops.

Toward the end of August 1944, we received field orders which relieved us from our beach operations as part of the 540 Engineer Combat Regiment and attached up to the VI Corps of the 7th Army. At that point, we headed through the mountains to the Durance River Plain. Our new assignment was to open the way for a main supply route through twisting mountain trails to be used to supply troops moving more than fifty miles with unexpected rapidity through the Alps northeasterly to Grenoble. The landscape through this area and along the Rhone River was absolutely beautiful. Many outfits became stalled for lack of gasoline. We were showing the effects of overstrained supply lines caused by the unexpected drive inland.

The only interruption in the rail supply route was a blown bridge at St. Julien. If the blown section could be reconstructed and new supports constructed, the railroad could well carry supplies to Grenoble. The railroad bridge was assigned to the 48th as a high priority job. Although railroad bridge work was not our forte, we reconstructed the blown portions by the end of August 1944. We did the work in good time. The French civilian engineers and we military engineers anxiously watched as a locomotive with a string of empty boxcars slowly approached the bridge to test it for structural integrity, safety and rail alignment. We held our breath as the train rolled over the new timber trestles supporting the bridge and the replaced portion of the destroyed steel span. We cheered as the train moved along the realigned track and opened the way from Sisteron to Grenoble, a distance of ninety-one miles. Although I had only a minor role in the restoration of this railroad bridge at St. Julien, it was a very exciting and challenging experience for me.

While advancing inland on foot beyond the beach sands, we came to the paved areas, streets, sidewalks, hotels and shops. One of the many shops destroyed by shelling was a graphics art shop or gallery. Scattered about on the sidewalk around the shop were many prints, photos, reproductions and associated art materials. While on the run, I was distracted by prints and reproductions with beautiful fantasy themes. I stopped in my tracks for a moment and picked up some of what I saw, at random: prints 8-1/2 x 11 - inches and 11 x 14 - inches. * I probably placed them quickly into my map case or combat pack. Within this assortment of prints I scooped up, I later discovered a copy of a well-known religious icon image captioned "Notre-Dame du Perpétuel Secours." The holy lady was originally venerated by the Eastern Christians but now for some time is also venerated by the Roman Catholic Church under the translated title of "Our Lady of Perpetual Help." The reproduction is 6 x 9 - inches, true-to-color and backed by a white ratty-edge cardboard frame.

I started this memoir in an attempt to briefly write about a few of my observations and experiences during the invasion. Instead, as I look back at what I've written, I find it to be a compilation of bits and pieces, lacking cohesion and continuity, all the way inland to the bridge of St. Julien. It seems, while reminiscing I inadvertently got carried away and drifted beyond the intended scope of the invasion experiences. And so, to bring closure to this story, I will abruptly stop here and write a separate, short treatise about the St. Julien Bridge as a sequel to this essay.

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- The following prints appear to demonstrate the figures of ladies and children modeling prevailing modes and styles of French fashions of many years ago. My unprofessional opinion suggests the prints were reproduced from etchings made by hand with black printing ink. Then, over the etchings, various colors of ink were hand-applied to produce a very detailed and beautiful work of art. What I find attractive are the contemporary settings and background activities surrounding the models, all in colors that seem to complement the colors of the fashions modeled. To me, the talent or creative power of the artist exceeds the message of style, mode or fashion intended to be conveyed.



NOTRE-DAME DU PERPÉTUEL SECOURS.

BOHAMY, Edr

3003

LA MADELEINE-LAS-LILLE (N)

May 2003

The Bridge at St. Julien, France

St. Julien is a village in the Provence of Drone, and is part of the beautiful, pristine and majestic rural landscape of the Rhone River Valley. Because of the rapidity at which the enemy retreated, St. Julien, like other small towns of little military significance, was spared destruction.

Soon after our landing on the French Mediterranean Coast, Army convoys started moving supplies through the twisting trail northerly from Sisteron and Monasque, near the Durance River, to Patton's fast moving divisions located above Grenoble, a distance of about ninety miles. Sisteron and Monasque are located in Southern France near the Mediterranean Coast. A portion of the supply route, from Aspres to Grenoble, through the Alps, was no place to make time; it rose and fell along the mountainsides, passed between extremely high cliffs and had many hairpin turns. From Aspres to Grenoble was about fifty miles. The attached maps may assist in translating my written description of geographical locations.

About a week or two after the Southern France invasion on August 15, 1944, headquarters of our outfit, the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion received a message from Corps Headquarters informing us that a blown railroad bridge was located about two miles south of St. Julien along the supply route. The repair of the bridge was assigned to our battalion as a high priority job. Once the bridge was repaired, the railroad could then be used to transport supplies for the ninety miles from Sisteron to Grenoble. Our outfit during

this period was attached to VI Corps of the Seventh Army under General George C. Patton, who was known for his stern leadership. We certainly did not want to disappoint the General and his troops.

The repair of the bridge was subsequently described in a report prepared by our Operations Section for submittal to Seventh Army Headquarters. The report described the material, equipment and the improvised construction methods used by the military. I was pleased to have a hand in writing the draft of the report. I prepared a hasty drawing showing the bridge site in plan and elevation views and the equipment and material used to raise the fallen bridge. The drawing accompanied the report. A copy of the report with a reduced size of the drawing and a list of definitions of the material, equipment and structures are included herein.

My particular job at the bridge site was to obtain profile elevations at significant points along the ground in the vicinity of the fallen bridge and up the side slopes to the level where the bridge abutments were located. With the assistance of a fellow G.I., measurements were taken of the displacements of the fallen bridge sections from their original positions to their displaced locations, as seen in plan views. Finally, the lengths of the various parts of the bridge sections to be raised were measured. To do this work and obtain the data needed, I used our typical surveying tools: the transit, measuring steel tape and stadia rod. From the data obtained, I was able to calculate the various heights and other dimensions needed to construct and erect the new timber trestle bents from the stream beds to the future level of the bridge sections after the bridge sections are raised to their final elevations. I was also able to calculate the horizontal length of the

space that would remain once the fallen sections are raised; this space would ultimately be filled in with new fabricated structural steel brought up from the rear and field-welded to the existing bridge parts. The data collected also gave me the information I needed to prepare the aforementioned drawing and report.

The river during this time of the year, August 1944, consisted of two streams, each flowing in its own channels. The stream depths were shallow, less than twelve inches; their widths were about twenty feet. The overall width of the channel waterway was about 102 feet and its depth about 20 feet. The waterway was named Buech Torrent River; I could not determine the origin or translation of the name. The status of the river, consisting of only two shallow streams, made our job easier.

What interested me about the bridge was that the side trusses were of the lattice type, not seen very often. The diagonal web members of the trusses were bars closely spaced which I considered an old design. I thought the bridge might have been a vintage type like bridges erected in years gone by. And although I am not sure, my memory suggests that the web members were fabricated from wrought iron rather than the rolled smooth finished bar stock produced in subsequent years as the steel manufacturing processes improved.

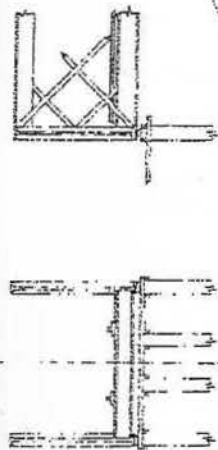
We worked around the clock. We bivouacked for about four nights at the bridge site, napping when we could. We layed on the ground which was blanketed with a cover of wild reedy grass, weeds, roots and some velvety

herbage mixed in, comfortable to rest on. I remember the vegetation smelled so good: like milk-fed baby's breath.

It was a comforting and rewarding experience for all of us to see a locomotive engine slowly pulling a string of empty cars on track rails realigned and set upon the repaired bridge deck supported by new timber trestles. This proved to be a successful test run.

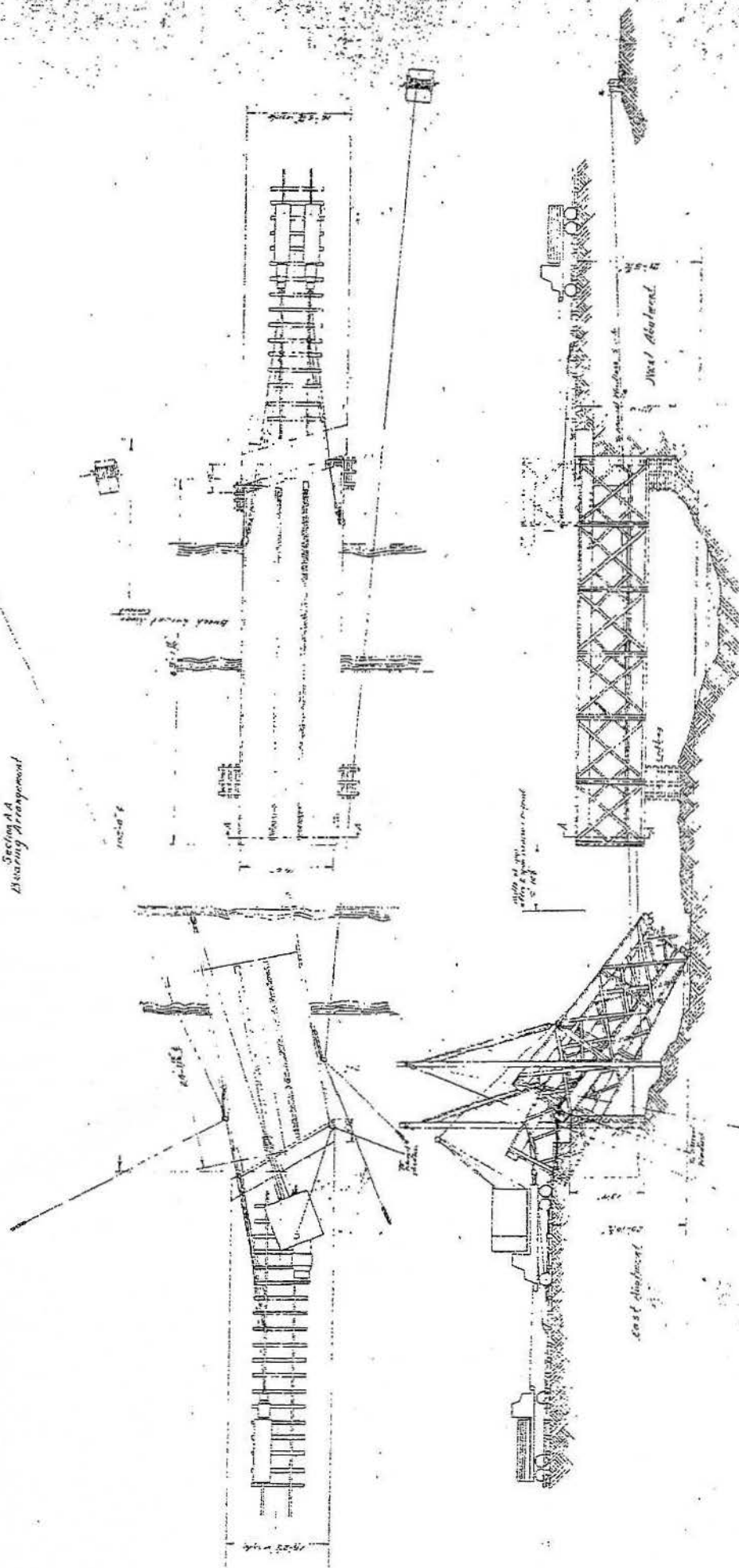
I felt satisfied about the whole thing; it was a challenge. Not until the repaired bridge successfully carried supplies to our troops up north did I sense the importance of this assignment. For me, I was fortunate to have been able to apply what I learned in the basic engineering courses I completed at Manhattan College before the Army. I didn't have much practical experience: some surveying work during my freshman year summer recess and while attending the Ft. Belvoir Engineer School. I was fortunate to have come through satisfactorily at the bridge site.

Memories could slip and get carried away, something one must be cautious of in writing about experiences more than fifty years later. Because of their awesomeness to me, I have recalled experiences of the past many times over in my mind, always trying to keep them vivid, authentic and unembellished. I remember from some reading I did recently that the more we gaze upon the things we did in our lifetime, the more we see with better vision that everything worthwhile in them came as a gift from a Higher Power, whom we apparently listened to. I probably wasn't aware of it at the time. Today, it seems fitting to assume that we did not glory in these things. Instead, we aimed for success while being careful of arrogance and pride.



Scale 1"=8'

Section A-A
Bearing Arrangement



Scale 1"=10'

48 ENGR. C BN

REPAIR OF BLOWN RAILROAD BRIDGE

Scale As Shown
Orig by E. L. S.

Date 1/25/19

Checked by J. M.

APPROVED BY J. M.

MAJOR J. E. FOLEY

Definitions, listed alphabetically, are furnished for convenience. Most of the definitions are taken out of the dictionary.

Abutment: a) the area or point of contact between the support and that which is being supported. b) that part of a support which carries the weight of a structure and resists its pressure. c) the supporting structure of either end of a bridge.

Dead Man: a heavy mass buried sufficiently underground to serve as an anchor in a system of mechanical components or parts rigged so as to move a heavy object vertically and/or horizontally. The parts of the system may include gin poles, cables, pulleys, winches and guy lines. The dead man can be made up of several heavy logs, timbers or structural steel tied together so as to act in unison. A dead man can also be made of precast or cast-in-place concrete. A dead man can be referred to as a holdfast, as noted on the drawing. Timbers are usually used in hasty military installations. The drawing shows all the parts rigged together to lift and move the fallen bridge sections. Note that the dead men in this case are primarily dump trucks and winches attached to the front end of the trucks; the cable pull developed in lifting the bridge is resisted by the trucks, their weight, their wheel brakes and the railroad tracks to which they are tied by the cable wrapped around the rotating truck winches. A combination like this of winches, cables, pulleys and other mechanical components, all linked together, provide calculable "mechanical advantages" that amplify the power not attainable solely by manpower. This is an example of military engineering improvisation.

F.F.I: the initials of the French name given to the secret, undercover, underground, nationwide movement organized in France to oppose or overthrow the enemy forces of occupation. We referred to them as the Free French Underground Resistance.

Gin Pole: a tall pole usually of wood of sizeable diameter, set on the ground, erected vertically and held in place by guy wires or cables. Pulleys are connected to the pole at its upper end. Cables are passed through the pulleys. The cables are connected to a single or a train of mechanical components or apparatus and are used to pull a load vertically and/or horizontally.

Guy Line: a rope, cable or chain attached to an object to steady or guide the object.

Jack: any of the various mechanical equipment used to lift, hoist or move something heavy a short distance. Examples of such equipment are hydraulically operated jacks or mechanically operated screw jacks.

Lattice: an open structure consisting of a network of interacting diagonal cross strips or bars of wood, metal, etc., used as a support.

Pulley: a) a small wheel, sometimes turning in a block, with a grooved rim in which a rope, chain or cable runs, so as to raise a weight attached at one end by pulling at the other end. b) a combination of such wheels, used to increase the applied power.

Scaffold: a temporary wooden or metal framework for supporting workmen and materials during the erecting, repairing or painting of a building, etc.

Trestle Bent: a transverse framework of vertical and/or slanting uprights and crosspieces supporting a bridge. The bents carry vertical and lateral dead and live loads, viz, static and dynamic loads.

Trestle: a bridge with trestle bent framework.

Winch: a) a crank with a handle for transmitting motion. b) an apparatus operated by hand or machine, for hoisting or hauling, consisting of a drum or cylinder around which is wound a rope or cable which is attached to the object to be lifted or moved.

Windlass: a simple kind of winch, worked by a hand crank, as for lifting a bucket in a well, an anchor, etc.

Acknowledgements

My personal thanks to those who helped me with the technical aspects of this book: to my friend in Vermont, Nancy Severance, who has done the typing for me since my first draft in 1998; and my friend in Ohio, Roger Benjamin, who produced the computer-generated picture of the author.

Thanks to my children who continue to share their interest and encouragement with me. It means so much

I wish to express my heartfelt affection for the many Ohio folks who have become my friends since we arrived at the New Albany Gardens and Care Center. Thank you for your visits and for the invitations to your homes.

I want to express my gratitude to the management and staff of the New Albany Gardens and Care Center, where I continue in residence in the same Assisted Living quarters. We entered here in December 2003, she as the patient and I as her (attempting-to-be) caregiver. I am very fond of all of you. I appreciate the countless ways you have shown your care and support.

Last, but not least, are my friends in Vermont, with whom I remain in touch by telephone, correspondence and when visiting. I care for you. I miss you.

I continue to look for His footsteps and now hers, too. Sometimes they seem discernable and other times they seem lost as if in drifting sand.

Edward M. Saraniero - Columbus, Ohio - March 15, 2010

About the Author

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Edward M. Saraniero enrolled in Manhattan College in September 1941 as a 19-year-old engineering student. He joined the inactive Enlisted Reserve Corps in October 1942 in order to complete two years of college training.

He completed his engineer basic training at Ft. Belvoir, VA, and was shipped to Naples, Italy, where he arrived in January 1944. Ed was assigned to the 48th Engineer Combat Battalion and served with them for the duration of the war as a buck Sergeant. He was discharged on December 14, 1945.

Following the war, Ed obtained his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering and spent the next 36 years working on various structural and environmental projects. He was married for 57 years and has 6 children and 7 grandchildren. After retirement, he and his wife moved to southern Vermont and later to Columbus, Ohio, where he lives currently.

This represents his first effort at sharing his experiences during WWII.