

PLATE 14
HEADQUARTERS —
COMMANDS — DEPARTMENTS



☐ ARMY GROUND FORCES



☒ ARMY SERVICE FORCES



☐ GHQ SOUTHEAST PACIFIC



☐ "SHAEP"



☐ AIRBORNE COMMAND



☐ ALASKA DEFENSE COMMAND



☐ ALASKA DEFENSE COMMAND (PROPOSED)



☐ ALASKAN DEPARTMENT



☐ ALEUTIAN ISLANDS



☐ ALLIED FORCE HQ



☐ ANTILLES DEPARTMENT



☐ ATLANTIC BASE COMMANDS



☐ BERMUDA BASE COMMAND



☐ CARIBBEAN DEFENSE COMMAND



☐ CHINA-BURMA-INDIA



☐ CHINESE TRAINING AND COMBAT COMMAND



☐ EASTERN DEFENSE COMMAND



☐ HQ, ETOUSA (First Design)



☒ HQ, ETOUSA COM Z (Second Design)



☐ HQ, ETOUSA

The Communications Zone, European Theater of Operations (COM Z ETOUSA) was organized after the redesignation of HQ, ETOUSA, and wore the second design insignia of this Command. The Services of Supply, ETOUSA, was established as a command in Europe on May 24th, 1942, with the mission of providing support for U.S. Army forces in the United Kingdom and of preparing a stockpile of supplies, equipment, transportation, and weapons for the invasion of France. Operation Bolero was the code name applied to this project which amassed over 2½ million tons of supplies in England (not counting unit loads) prior to Operation Overlord. In addition to supplies, COM Z had operational control and responsibility over all of the Technical and Administrative Branches and Services in the United Kingdom and the Theater of Operations. On June 6th, 1944 (D-Day), over 381,500 personnel were assigned to COM Z with the mission of supporting the Allied operations. Artificial harbors were constructed in absolute secrecy and transported to the Continent to provide ports to off-load the massive quantities of material needed by the combat troops. COM Z operations were so large and complex in scope that 20 special staff sections and 11 Base sections were required in the command structure. The Advance Section of COM Z was organized to provide close support to the field Armies, and elements of this section landed with First Army forces on D-Day and continued to provide support for the First and the Third Armies after the Normandy breakout. The 15th Army had its own support elements, and the Sixth Army Group (which included the Seventh Army) was supported by the Continental Advance Section (CONAD) and was under COM Z's Delta Base Section. After Ninth Army's activation, the Advance Section was assigned the close support mission for this Army also. In support of the initial assault on Omaha and Utah Beaches, men of the Advance Section unloaded 1,845 tons of supplies by midnight on D-Day. Personnel from each of the support branches were assigned to the Advance Section, and the bravery and contribution that these men made to the success of the Allied mission was extraordinary. One such group of men were the Corps of Chaplains who were responsible for serving the moral, religious, and spiritual needs of our servicemen. War did not stop these needs but added greatly to them, and the Corps of Chaplains responded. Nearly 2,800 Chaplains of all faiths were serving in the European Theater as the war came to a close, and 854 of these were assigned to the Service Forces. 90 of the 142 Chaplains who were killed or seriously wounded during WW II were serving in the European Theater. Combat and regular Military Police units were assigned to COM Z to guard POW's, maintain law and order, guard vital installations, assist in troop and traffic movements, and to fight as Infantry when they were needed. The multitude of tasks performed by COM Z personnel in support of combat operations is truly staggering. Over 60 different types of Engineer units constructed and operated ports, railways, pipelines, roads, airfields, and lumber yards. Special Engineer units built 62 bridges of all types across the Rhine River alone, and many of these were built under direct enemy fire. Engineer troops landed on the beaches on D-Day to clear obstacles and fight as Infantry. Signal Corps personnel landed with them to provide command communications. After the COM Z Headquarters was established in Paris, a Signal Center supporting the HQ handled a volume of messages second only to the War Department. COM Z Ordnance Corps personnel were responsible for the repair and maintenance of 80,000 combat vehicles including tanks, tank destroyers, half tracks, and armored cars. Ordnance troops also maintained and provided ammunition for over 50,000 artillery pieces and during heavy fighting supplied each of the field armies with 2,000 tons of ammunition daily. In one month of 1945, over 46,500 vehicles of all types were repaired in Ordnance maintenance shops. During the Battle of the Bulge, an Ordnance Supply Base in the path of the German advance outfitted a tank battalion, evacuated 7,000 tons of supplies, and joined forces with other units to hold a vital sector of the front for 36 hours until relieved by combat troops. Chemical units were also assigned to COM Z and landed with the assault troops on D-Day with a total of 16 Battalions serving in the ETO. Transporting the fuel, munitions, food, and supplies needed throughout the combat zone was also a COM Z responsibility, and the Transportation Corps was operating nearly 10,000 Quartermaster Truck Company vehicles by the end of 1944. Special Transportation Corps Railroad units were organized, and trains were making runs 35 days after the invasion as railroad crews worked 60 hour shifts to deliver vitally needed supplies to the front. As the Allied armies pushed further eastward, the supply lines became ever longer, and Transportation and Quartermaster Corps troops worked and died to insure that the combat forces had everything they needed. Of the 132,000 Medical Corps personnel who were in Europe on D-Day, over 72,000 that were assigned to COM Z, and this number grew larger as additional troops joined in the fighting. Medical personnel risked their lives to save wounded soldiers at the front and in field hospitals which were often under enemy fire. The following excerpt from a captured German document written by an enemy Division commander sums up the COM Z contribution to our victory. "I cannot understand these Americans. Each night we know that we have cut them to pieces, inflicted heavy battle casualties, mowed down their transport. We know in some cases we have decimated entire battalions. But — in the morning — we are suddenly faced with fresh battalions, with complete replacements of men, machines, food, tools, and weapons. If I did not see it with my own eyes, I would say it is impossible to give this kind of support to front line troops so far from their bases." The shoulder patch worn by communications Zone Personnel assigned to the European Theater of Operations was based on a design change of the HQ, ETOUSA insignia that was approved on February 25th, 1945, and redesignated for the Communications Zone on March 21st, 1945. The shoulder patch has the same meaning as the Service of Supply (Army Service Forces) and the HQ, European Theater of Operations patch, as it combined both designs. The COM Z was discontinued as a separate Command on February 28th, 1946.