



office **W.H.** *of the*
ENGINEER

HEADQUARTERS FIRST AIR FORCE

Copy No. 83

For _____





OFFICE OF THE
ENGINEER

*Being an historical
narration of the founding,
the struggles and vicissi-
tudes encountered, the per-
sons connected with, and
the accomplishments of the
Engineer Section, first of the
Northeast Air District and
later of the First Air Force.*

HEADQUARTERS FIRST AIR FORCE
MITCHEL FIELD, NEW YORK

* PREPARED, DESIGNED AND REPRODUCED BY THE



ENGINEER SECTION

* HQ. FIRST AIR FORCE * MITCHEL FIELD, N.Y. *

FOREWORD

AF FORM
10-58

HEADQUARTERS
FIRST AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER
MICHEL FIELD, N. Y.

15 January 1964

To All Concerned:

This collection of historical data, relating to the Engineer Section, Headquarters First Air Force, compiled in compliance with paragraph 1, Army Regulation 343-105, as amended by Change No. 3 thereto, dated 9 March 1963, is published for your information and interest.

The writing of an organization's history is a process which is continuous throughout its existence. The final chapter cannot be written in its lifetime. This much of the historical data of the Engineer Section is assembled now rather than later in order to incorporate first hand knowledge of early events from the memories of the few original personnel still present.

A novel and most valuable feature of this publication is the painstaking collection of drawings by Corporal Benjamin Harari. These drawings were largely sketched from life but some were made from photographs of individuals who were no longer at hand.

The written contents reflect the painstaking research and untiring efforts of 1st Lieutenant Henry B. Williams. Many histories unrecorded early incidents are included from the recollections of Mr. Edmund S. Fero, and Master Sergeant Walter S. Kotalow. To Technician 4th Grade George E. Bohling goes credit for cover design and the layout. The brush of the typing was borne by Mrs. Mary G. Webb, Private Herbert Frensky, and Mr. Fern. Captain J. D. McFarlan rendered helpful editorial assistance. In addition, mention is due Captain Robert H. Wilson, Lieutenants Robert F. Ertell, Robert L. Moore, and Ralph W. Maxwell, Technical Sergeant Louis James, Sergeant Nathan Werner, Corporal Robert Schott, Technician 4th Grade Robert Smith and Private Louis Ogilvie for other art work, photographic, procurement, and administrative assistance.

It is hoped that future members of the First Air Force Engineer's staff, in perusing these pages, will be inspired by the accomplishments of past heroic days, and that the yet unwritten chapters of the Section's history will continue to record that there are no tasks too big for Engineers.

R. E. Batts
R. E. BATTIS,
Lieutenant Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Engineer.

SECTION

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Assistant

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Chief Clerk

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SEPTEMBER 3, 1939



WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE

"...Oy Thewz," and let all the days of war..." Shakespeare,
Julius Caesar, 3:2.

In the 3rd of September, in the year of 1914, after many months and alarms, the continent of Europe exploded in the face of a continental war. There had been some wars, and rumors of wars adequate enough to warn the least wary, and yet the world waited and hoped for peace - a peace institute in fulfillment of the high hopes of 1904 and '06.

And what of America? In the 3rd of September she sat safe behind the legal barriers of a neutrality act designed to prevent the very thing which was exploding in her face. An administration, ignorant under law to alter this situation prevailed neutrally.

It was a new war in Europe and Asia - new yet old - the same paragraphs were raised, no age-old battle lines were they had repelled or had been crossed before - line out of mind. But this time a new weapon must challenge every side, for the weapon traditionally had no rival and the airplane reared over the fortification walls. The old weapons had not been tried, but time has passed over them. And so it was a new war.

Well, things were different in America. The country began to powder and take stock. It saw the British Channel Fleet in the shelter of a fleet. Thus, there was the Atlantic Ocean, a great expanse of blue salt water, 1,000 miles across. In memory of the last war, these lines the submarines already worked, the "U-boats" were rampant and the prospect of supply of any form proceeding to foreign shores and to America took shape. It was a divided America - those who said successful participation was impossible - and those who felt that there was no other way, that war was upon the world - indeed that it had been since the Russian Incident in '72 in Cuba.

Then came the 4th, after the initial outbreak, the war rumbled down in shakiness and the period of the Peace War began.

Then came the lightning strike - Norway and Denmark - followed closely by Belgium and Holland, but the Russian line still stood. Then came the piercing drive through the forest of Ardennes, impossible to the subtitled kings of Europe in centuries long past; the passing of the water under by Tigris and Euphrates, which had stood against forty-five attacks since 1214 - 1216. December - All Fall in the face of the German bombs.

And America, how did she take the news? America was in the midst of two World's Fairs, spaced with a continent between. Washington may have puzzled and worried, but the fairs went on. An order after notice was given, which followed at the Fairs - a symbol of the collapse of a civilization. But, beneath the carnival surface the war was very present in the minds of many Americans. Constitutional scrutiny about the war and issue of financing was constant and a strong hot wind was blowing in these fairs.

Into this tangled situation of a world wide encounter, Congress authorized the first "peacetime" draft, and though there was no hint of future combat service for those first recruits was, the spirit of war indeed heard by. It was this draft law, more than anything else, that drove men to the masses within the fact that war was near on the list. Another realistic fact which softened the public attitude toward this military innovation and made it palatable, was the standing and instantaneous violation of the law which would be made void by conscription. The former violation of neutrality, especially that of sending a declaration of war, was also void with such force and a star in the law were the approved without. Moreover, since the war reflected in battle procedure within use of the airplane for unrestricted warfare every where. The concept of the air was a total war was accepted, but this was extended further to non-military uses and heavily populated areas everywhere. This was war. My doubts in the last war was still less fair, but had recognized little about that temporary Absatz. That was airplane artillery on all fronts wars.

WHAT'S PAST IS PROLOGUE

Put the planes seed fields from which to set out and fields must be cultivated and protected and planes must be cared for. All these things England learned the hard, hard way - experimenting them through flame and fire and devastation which wracked her land.

How to learn, and yet in deep earnest love, the United States, already half-grown for the battle, recognized the need of similar preparation. The draft was the first step; arms and supplies, the second. The third was the building of these basic factors into a strategy which would be the harbinger of a freer world where men will no longer for a time could live and move unobscured by the ugliness of power and fanaticism. A world in which men could hold his head high, proud of his race, a race of men ennobled by the promise which, which did justly, loved mercy and walked humbly before God.

This then is the prologue, the prologue to a story which is not yet ended - and one which never ends. It is the tale of man against evil which is recurrent and has been since the race of man walked the earth. Our story from this point on will deal with one tiny segment of the great military empire of the United States of America. This story will deal with the great trans-oceanic Hercules started on the stage which we know as the Globe, the War seen through the eyes of one small unit, itself a portion of the larger whole; the contributions, failures and successes of this unit, the men, military and civilian, who added each his part, sometimes blindly and at times with burning clarity, not always seeing the great goal of a successful ending, working one with the other, all only too human at times in their relationships. For heroes, these, on a large canvas, but common men - Americans - he eat by mouth and spewed on by faith in the righteousness and generosity of the mind of their country. In this tale, the War is mirrored in their actions.



BIRTH

"O, come bless us, be it born with teeth." Shakespeare, III, Henry VI, 344.

The forces that bore down upon the army command and so altered the former peacetime pattern and organization are interesting and instructive. No war is ever won by a set plan - no lawyer ever secures a watertight case when another lawyer opposes his. In the same manner, a peacetime organization for the Air Corps would be totally inadequate for wartime in men, material and installations. A fluid pattern was adopted by the War Department which could be contracted or expanded as outside pressure influenced the progress of events.

It must be borne in mind that the United States was not a belligerent during the year of 1940 and for eleven months of the following year. The constitution and expansion of the Air Corps and the skilled men and services marks a definite break from the attrition-head-in-the-sand type of thinking that prevailed throughout the entire country during the 1920's and 30's. The first peacetime draft law was already in effect. In October the act between 21 and 30 registered and the first call came in November. Here was the growth of manpower - industry all over the country was changing from a peacetime to wartime basis, if not for the United States, then for other nations, under the new arrangements of the Lend-Lease act. The United States was gearing for war!

And yet even more potent than all of these, the metamorphosis was brought about by the hard, grim facts of war. Hitler, in July of 1940 had declared, not without some reason, "There are no more islands." France had fallen under the most humiliating conditions and only 20 miles of water separated England from the conquered air and ground forces of Hitler's Third Reich. On the 8th of August 1940 the Battle of Britain began. Hitler had said not long before, "A great Empire will be destroyed," adding sorrowfully, and with the attitude of this-must-be-so-when-it-does-you, "no Empire I had not intended to destroy or harm."

The ensuing "Battle of Britain" was characterized by the success of a small, efficient, and economically operated Air Force in holding off the world's mightiest air arm. This was to be the model for the U.S. Army Air Corps. The secret of economic operation lay in choosing

when and where to defend, and in dispersing planes over numerous airfields, "not to put all the eggs in one basket." And so, with the increase in personnel, of material, and with the example of tactical tactics firmly before the eyes the Army began to build, rearrange and adjust itself to meet new conditions.

The Air Corps in the Fall of 1940 had embarked on a tremendous pilot training program, but had, as yet, no definite organizational plans or at least nothing comparable to the one eventually adopted. With the crush of events and the pattern completed, the reorganization began in haste.

The General Headquarters Air Force divided the continental United States into four great Air Districts for purposes of decentralization, specifically to aid training and tactical control. These were the Northeast, the Southwest, the Southeast, and the Northwest Air Districts. Logically enough, Mitchell Field being in New York, fell into the domain of the Northeast Air District and was designated as the provisional headquarters pending movement to Hartford, Connecticut "when



COL. HARRY E. FINNAN

BIRTH

facilities there have been provided." This temporary status of the Mitchel Field Headquarters was to continue until late the following spring when the move was scheduled completely and the temporary at Mitchel Field was firmly established.

The Northeast Air District comprised some twenty-two and one-half states stretching from Maine westward to Wisconsin and Minnesota, south through Iowa and Missouri, east through Kentucky and Virginia, including the northern portion of North Carolina, and north up the eastern seaboard states.

The Northeast Air District was constituted by authority of the Secretary of War in a letter from the Adjutant General's office on 19 November 1940 and a staff headquarters was directed to be set up including general and special staffs. Topped in among the letter was the single word "Engineer." This order was changed on January 10 to include an additional member, an assistant to the Assistant Adjutant General with the parenthetical phrase "corps officer" following the title. Just what the War Department in Washington anticipated with regard to morale that would warrant this addition is not clear, but before this date the majority of the staff offices were filled. In the 28th of December 1940, the Northeast Air District received its Engineer:

"23. Each of the following named officers of the Corps of Engineers is relieved from assignment and duty as Air Base Engineer at the station shown after his name, is assigned to the Air District indicated, and will report to the Commanding General for assignment to duty with the Corps of Engineers:

Major Harry S. Fisher (D-1221),
Mitchel Field, Long Island, New York,
Headquarters Northeast Air District,
Mitchel Field, Long Island, New York.

(AD 320,2) (29 Nov '40)

By order of the Secretary of War

U. C. KERRALL
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

E. S. ADAMS
Major General
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

The preceding seemingly usual quotation from paragraph 23 of War Department Special Order No. 304, dated 28 December 1940, is the birth of the Engineer Section.

NORTHEAST
AIR DISTRICT



MAINE
NEW HAMPSHIRE
VERMONT
MASSACHUSETTS
RHODE ISLAND
CONNECTICUT
NEW YORK
NEW JERSEY
PENNSYLVANIA
DELAWARE
MARYLAND
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
VIRGINIA
WEST VIRGINIA
NORTH CAROLINA
KENTUCKY
OHIO
INDIANA
ILLINOIS
WISCONSIN
MISSOURI
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
IOWA

INFANCY

"Hiss, Hiss, this prostrate Engineer." George Farquhar,
The Scout Strategist.

A Staff Engineer's duties by established precedent traditionally were: to act as adviser to the Commanding General, prepare plans for troops, determine engineer equipment, supplies, and camouflage material requirements, plan and supervise training in wartime tasks of Engineers. Surveys, mapping, reproduction and distribution were included.

This completed the general responsibilities of the Engineer.

Major Fisher assumed his new duties as Engineer of the Northeast Air District alone. The primary task that he faced was to make an engineering survey of existing and potential airports in the Air District according to priorities established by the Air District Commander and to train Reserve officers for duty in the survey. This duty was a continuation of a task begun by him in his former capacity as Base Engineer.

The District Staff and the few typists and secretaries available were crisscrossed into an addition hall (see Ranger No. 1) at Maxwell Field. The swelling of papers on assuming a particular position with its absorbing, and for which there is no precedent, may be imagined. In this instance the problems that faced the Major were gargantuan. As Engineer for the new Air District his first duty was the Airfield Survey. The possibilities of the Section in construction projects and in troop training were only dimly realized at this time. Certainly the primary motive at the turn of the year was the organization of the office in order to proceed at once on the survey.

The problem that presented itself almost immediately was: What were the means available to explore the furthest limits of the duties and responsibilities of the Engineer? (These proved to be legion). And what assistance would be obtain in dealing with the problems posed by the Engineer mission?

Major Fisher attacked the situation by relying on his previous engineer staff experience. There were elements of stumbling in the dark, but generally the transposition of Engineer ground problems to Air Corps problems were obvious. The difficulty lay in the secure and exact of the jurisdiction and were dependent on the lack of coordinated information about these problems at hand.

For about a month Major Fisher worked along on organizational plans aided only by a stenographer borrowed from the Adjutant General's Department. The name of this ubiquitous individual was Briggs. Nothing more definite is known about him. Another enlisted man on loan slightly

later, was an Air Corps private, Philip W. Littenberger, also from the Adjutant General's Section who served as a stenographer. Littenberger's abilities might easily have gone the way of bridges - smoothed out and unused - except for the fact that he returned in 1943 from Air Corps Officer Candidate School to the A-1 Section, First Air Force, in charge of personnel. The infancy of this position with troops activities in the Engineer Section, brought his eyes more within the bounds of this account. For reasons beyond the scope of this story he had changed from Private Littenberger to Lieutenant Tracy. Major Fisher, always shary of overt compliments, stated that he was "an excellent typist, industrious and capable as a clerical assistant in office work. His personal habits and character while under my observations were excellent." Personnel was a major problem.

Writing informally to the Office of the Chief of Engineers early in January, the Major said: "The stenographer - typist problem is very acute - Our work is more extensive than that of other branches in the Air District; its vital importance and urgency is being strongly emphasized in my directives. If you can assist us in obtaining proper personnel assistance in grades, ratings and civil service, we can keep ahead of schedule; otherwise I'll be scavenging and begging assistance from local sources -". This is the opening gun in the battle for a Table of Organization



LT. COL. ROBERT H. BAYNE

INFANCY

for the Section. The obtaining of an office force was a major factor. By the end of March 1941, Fort Belvoir, Virginia was furnishing most of the requisite civilian personnel, but the labor was slow.

Major Fisher, harassed by office detail, and barely keeping his head above water, with a monthly inadequate office force, called every possible opening for obtaining personnel. No wire, no personal acquaintance was left untapped. Letters went out hourly begging for experienced men, and for suggestions of names of men who could "fill the bill". The standards were not too high. The Major himself a tireless worker, was known to the hearts of men and women of a certain type of man. Unlike Caesar, who wanted "a man who would lead men about his and men who sleep at night," Major Fisher demanded "highly skilled workers with a proclivity for hard work." The exact meaning and derivation of this highly descriptive term is a matter for the mathematicians to decide; suffice it to say that the Major gathered around him in the early years of the Section men who worked like horses, and fought against time to perform urgent engineer missions against the day of war.

There were four officers who entered the Section at the beginning of 1941 and who, as part of the Section personnel, were stationed in the Field, each covering a portion of the 30-1/2 state districts.

First, Captain Robert E. Sleep arrived on 27 January 1941, and was assigned to Bellville Field with Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Michigan and Minnesota for his field of endeavor. The following month Captain Robert E. Dutton reported in and was assigned the Southern Sector, which included Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia and the District of Columbia, working from Camp Lee Field. The remaining areas were covered by Captain E. E. Kitchum who had New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware with his home station at Maxwell Field, and finally Captain P. J. Hertzes was assigned to Westover Field to cover the New England States. Captain Kitchum reported on 25 February 1941 and Captain Hertzes came on 26 March 1941. The procedure pursued in this survey by these four officers sent to the four points of the compass is another chapter of this story.

In the meantime the Northwest Air District by General Order 12, OAG Air Force dated 26 March 1941, became the FIRST AFB FSOCA.



LT. COL. D. J. WOODS



LT. COL. ROBERT E. CLARK

MAJ. EDWARD H. WITMAN



Chapter 4

GROWTH

"...in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied..."
Acts, Ch. I.

Technical Sergeant Walter W. McElvey arrived at Mitchel Field on the 13th of February 1941. He had left Merrill Field in Florida on the 30th of January and had obtained a slight delay enroute - a very rare instance in the section, as time would prove. The Sergeant found most sections of the headquarters at skeleton strength and he himself was the skeleton in the Engineer Section. McElvey was instantly designated "Chief Clerk", a position which placed him directly in charge of whatever enlisted man happened to be on loan from the Adjutant General's Section at the moment. Some civilian assistance was forthcoming but it was hard to obtain and usually was gobbled up by the other General Staff Sections. Another highly unpleasant situation arose from the fact that Major Fisher was the lowest ranking member of a staff which besides himself carried nothing less than one full Colonel and seven Lieutenant Colonels. In the normal run of staff meetings the Major went to the bottom end of the table. Things would be different later, but for the present it was a case of: "live horse and you'll get hay". The Major had no intention of waiting long.

The enlisted men of the early days of the Section were drawn from the ranks of the Regular Army entirely. Indeed this was almost the only dependable source. The draft law had just begun to deliver manpower but the first groups were only just finishing their basic training. Staff Section duties would have been beyond even the best of the skeletons, who were just being initiated into the working of such cryptographic entities as TX, KF and GMA's. The National Guard component was still in its formative stage, having been called into Federal service only a few months before. Generally they were called as units and functioned as such until the historic and traditional State units gave way before the changing ways of warfare. There remained only the Regular Army as a source of trained personnel with enough experience to cope with the intricacies of staff work.

Following hard on McElvey's arrival came Mr. Ed Fure, a set-up-like civilian with long experience in court reporting and teaching stenog-

raphy. Fure, who was to be the "good right arm" of the Major in his later days in the Section, was a quiet worker who would give a false impression of utter irresponsibility when not under direct pressure. Added to this was an intense passion for baseball - preferably the Brooklyn Dodgers!

Also, soon after, the Section was enlarged by the arrival of Technical Sergeant William Roberts sent from Lieutenant Colonel Bestman's office at Langley Field as a draftsman. Roberts was forthright and an old line regular. Later, he was to receive a direct commission and serve within the First Air Force with the 708th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company and other units. At this time, however, he was the first non-overheadman officer brought into the Section as a draftsman. Roberts moved onto the field with his family and an automobile in tow, and set up shop immediately.



SGT. WALTER W. MCELVEY

GROWTH

The Engineer Section at this time made its first move. By official order at the end of March 1941, activities were transferred from the "barracks" in Hangar No. 3 to Building 3-120. This tenure lasted something over two months. Early in June they transferred to Building 120. This was to be the section base for the next six months. Just previous to this move the section received its first promotion order. Captain Mitchell moved up to Major on the 12th of Sep-

The next group of military personnel to arrive were an oddly assorted group of seven men from the 4th Engineer Battalion stationed at the time at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. They reported to the section in mid-July and were welcomed by the Major with enthusiasm. That lasted until he interviewed them; he detailed the trouble in an informal letter to Headquarters Air Force Control Command at Bolling Field, D.C.: "The seven men received from the 4th Engineer Battalion are an extremely poor lot insofar as clerical, drafting and office qualifications are concerned. One Sergeant has had 20 years service and is a good soldier, but all of his experience is as a flight sergeant, and as an outside field soldier. None of them are type except one - an assistant runway clerk--". The letter continued to outline the difficulties encountered with each one. Of these, the two who were singled out to be re-

trained pretty definitely were Staff Sergeant E.V. Parkhurst with 11 years service behind him and Sergeant Gordon Carlson. Sergeant McCubbin, Sergeant Clive, and Corporal Bell were transferred in mid-August to Westover Field - El Paso and Cassingham remained with the section for some time longer.

These seven men were, as time would prove, one of the most interesting groups to enter the section. Certainly no seven other men picked at random for a shipment would have more varied or romantic adventures than these. The future would hold tragedy and heroism for them.

In the case of the three, Bell, Clive and McCubbin, all of whom went to Westover Field, fate was working hard on a huge scale. Assigned to the 4th Engineers, Bell and Clive transferred out early and were lost to the Engineer Section records. McCubbin set sail with his unit for the Philippines and arrived there shortly before December 7, 1941. These men of the 4th, so three of them who survived, have lived through the most tragic days of this war. McCubbin is, when last heard from, a prisoner of war of Japan.

Pfc Edward Cassingham was notable in a different way. Almost from the start he stumbled into mystery. Not long after joining the Engineer Section he was visiting a public place near Belmont Base Track, occasionally and apparently named "The Turf Club." After suitable and sufficient refreshments had been taken aboard, Pfc Cassingham noticed that in one of the former booths a customer with a foreign accent was attempting to sell a set of blueprints to another gentleman. Cassingham wandered over and was struck with the fact that the blueprints were for a bomber. Affixed with patriotic zeal, Cassingham went in search of an M.P. It was a helluva hunt in the dark. The man was arrested as a spy and Cassingham received the section in the local press as the soldier who trapped a Nazi. The First Air Force also took due notice to the extent of raising the bars from Pfc to Staff Sergeant.

Cassingham was utilized within the section as a typist and a "runner," later he transferred to the Air Corps and went to Aerial Camera School, from where he was assigned to the 2nd Air Force in Britain. A recent letter from him is reproduced here to follow:

EDWARD B. PEAR



GROWTH

1/2gt. H. J. Cassingham 1700644
709th Bomb Sq.,
A.F.C. 83A,
c/o Postmaster, New York, N. Y.

WTH:FF Feb. 14, 1944

Dear Fern:

I got a newspaper from you today and was
devised glad to get it.

I noticed in it Sgt. Fox was reported killed
in action over here. I think I knew him at one
time. Didn't he used to be in the FAF at one
time? I believe he left about 4 months before I
did. Say, Fern, can you send me Col. Fisher's
address? I want to write him a letter and tell
him of some of my experiences over here. And I
can truthfully say that I've got some good stories
to tell when I get back.

One of my best friends was killed over here.
I haven't had it so very bad yet, but the flak is
pretty dangerous. I've been on 9 missions so far.
I got the Air Medal about three weeks ago. I've
only gotten a few shots at fighters so far. But
now I'm considered a veteran over here. But, re-
gardless of that I still get scared.

I think though that what I have seen over
here has done more to make a man out of me than
anything else ever could. I wouldn't trade a
million dollars for some of the things I've seen
over here. But, I wouldn't give a dime to do
them over again. I've even both money planes and
more go down several times. Someday when I get
back to N.Y. I'll tell you about them all. But
you probably know more about most of this than I
can tell you. But that gives you an idea of what
we are doing over here. And at the present most
of it is coming from the 8th A.F., which we are
in.

If you ever hear any tales about a plane
called "THE JUDGE," think of me.

Cass

P.S. - When are you going to get a service flag
for the ones that have left the Regt. Sec.
FAF. Also, how about some more poetry?



MAJOR HERBERT C. PERKINS

LT. COL. WYMAN WILKINS





WALTER ALLEN W. FORD

STAFF SGT. HOWARD J. CASSIDIAN



GROWTH

Sergeant Gordon Carlson and Corporal Joseph Elgund were retained within the Section. Only one of these men has thus far been neglected: Staff Sergeant Farnsworth. His role is linked to that of Sergeant Haberstein who enters the Section at this point along with Sergeants Lucas, Rowley and Oriskany. However, before these men are introduced, three officers have been added to the Dynamic Personnel.

Major Fisher had dealings with various outside agencies in regard to airport data. Among those was the New Hampshire Planning Commission. Working within that organization was a Quartermaster Reserve Lieutenant named Herbert G. Person. As the Major was office-bound at this time, he saw in Person an excellent man for the Section, who had experience and abilities ready made for the job. The correspondence began sometime in February and became hot and cold for a few weeks. On March 11, 1941, a letter left Mitchel Field for General Headquarters urging the immediate assignment of Lt. Person. On May 3rd no reply had been received. Lt. Person on his side was having his own troubles with physical exams and release from his civilian position. A waiver accomplished the first and insistent letters from Major Fisher to the New Hampshire Development and Planning Commission arranged the matter of his release.

2nd Lt. Person reported in on 2 June 1941 - the first officer besides Major Fisher to be assigned to the Section office. Lt. Person assumed the portfolio of supply and airport data compilation. At the end of July, Lt. Person became a 1st Lieutenant, A.C. The promotion had been pending before his entrance into the Section.

The inclusion of Captain Myron Weisberg in the Section was an entirely different problem. Weisberg was an Engineer officer stationed at Mitchel Field as Provost Marshal, and Police and Prison Officer for the Air Base. Here under Major Fisher's very nose was an Engineer going to waste. On the 30th of July, Captain Weisberg relinquished his penal duties and entered the Engineer Section as Executive Officer. Within two months Captain Weisberg was promoted on a certificate of competency by the Second Corps Area.

GROWTH

The third officer of this trio arrived some time later, but the correspondence to bring him to Mitchell Field began on August 1st. The name of Allen W. Fore first appears on Engineer Section correspondence from Captain Elmy, then at Selfridge Field, Michigan. Elmy had known Fore at Fort Belvoir. The letter detailed his experience including academic, civilian and military. Such leads as this were exactly what Major Fisher wanted, and negotiations were opened immediately for the transfer of Fore from Fort Belvoir, where he was serving variously as a Platoon Leader and accomplishing odd jobs on the Engineer Board. 1st Lieutenant Allen W. Fore had studied engineering at the University of Missouri and had later worked with government engineers for a short time. After an indefinite amount of flogging Lieutenant Fore presented himself at Mitchell Field and was stationed in Major Fisher's office. His entire stay at Mitchell was to be devoted variously to camouflage, personnel, and finally operations, but for the present he was assigned the job of easing the burden of correspondence for the Major. He was mentally alert and because of his previous experience in Engineer office functions was able to assimilate the job at hand quickly. He was here to stay for quite a while.

Sergeant Farhurst, one of the "unfortunate ones" was sent to a surveyor's course at Fort Belvoir by Major Fisher in an effort to absorb at least one of these men for retention in the office. While there he formed a friendship with another student, a National Guardsman from Pennsylvania named Deloge Sabersohn. Sabersohn, a Technical Sergeant, learning about the Engineer Section from Sergeant Farhurst asked the latter to discover whether it would be possible for him to apply for transfer into the Section. Receiving written permission to apply he discovered that to transfer would mean applying for discharge from the National Guard and re-enlisting in the Regular Army as a private, thereby losing his rating on the way. So he wrote to Lt. Fore on the 2nd of September 1941:

GEORGE W. SABERSOHN, Jr.
Sq. & Barr. Co. 103rd Engineers (Const.)
Dufftown Gap, Pennsylvania.

9-2-41

Lt. Fore,
Engineer Section,
First Air Force,
Mitchell Field, S. I.

Dear Sir:

Sergeant Farhurst informs me that he spoke to the Lieutenant in regard to my enlistment into the Engineer Section of the First Air Force.

I am desirous of information as to the procedure to follow in enlisting.

At present I am a Technical Sergeant in the 103rd Engineers, a National Guard Regiment. I understand that I cannot transfer from the National Guard to the Regular Army and that I must get a discharge to enlist. This, naturally, would mean enlisting as a private and my main purpose in writing is to find my chances for advancement.

My qualifications are:

I am 21 years of age. I enlisted in the 103rd Engineers in May 1936 and was placed in the Map Section of Headquarters and Service Company. Since that time I became very adept in Map Representation in its various forms and also in Survey-



MAJ. GEORGE W. SABERSOHN

GROWTH

ing. I am now attending the Engineer School at Fort Belvoir for a 3-month course in Surveying.

I have worked as Photographer long before my graduation from High School and have followed it ever since.

I worked as a draftsman for 2-1/2 years at the Enterprise Manufacturing Corp. of Penna. in Philadelphia.

At the present I have the highest average in the class of 40 men.

I graduated from High School in 1917 with a diploma for Honorable Arts.

I spent one year at Drexel Institute of Technology in Philadelphia in Civil Engineering but had to stop due to our induction on February 17, 1941.

I will be in school at Fort Belvoir until November 1st and if nothing favorable can be gotten for me I would secure my discharge then. Thanking you for the permission to write, I remain,

Technical Sergeant George Sabersham
Company No. 1, E.S.P. Co.
Fort Belvoir, Va.

Captain Reiberg replied for Col H.
Person on the 13th of September:

HEADQUARTERS FIRST AIR FORCE
Office of the Engineer (D-14)
Mitchel Field, New York

Sept. 11, 1941

Tech. Sgt. George K. Sabersham, Jr.,
Engineer School,
Company No. 1, E.S.P. Co.,
Fort Belvoir, Va.

Dear Sgt. Sabersham:

Your letter of September 2nd, 1941 to Lieutenant Person has been referred to me. Your information that you must first get a discharge and enlist in the Regular Army as a private is correct. I have inquired, and transfers from the National Guard to the Regular Army are not author-

ized. I do believe there are opportunities for you with your training in the Corps of Engineers. However, you of course understand that we can not guarantee advancement. If you are interested in working with the Engineer Section of the First Air Force I suggest that you inquire at Fort Belvoir stating that you would request a discharge from the National Guard in order to enlist in the Corps of Engineers, Regular Army, if you are assigned to this office.

For the Engineer:

Very truly yours,

/s/ E. WEINBERG,
Captain, A.E.,
Acting Engineer.

This was followed by a long series of letters and telegrams which indicated that Sabersham had applied for discharge and that it was granted; that he had enlisted as a Private in the Regular Army with the expressed intention of serving for 3 years. Finally the transfer to the Engineer Section was consummated. Private Sabersham reported in to the Engineer Section to be met by Major Fisher with the words: "Glad to see you SGT Sabersham!" The Major had just presented his-



WO1. RICHARD L. HUGHES

GROWTH

Technical Sergeant Richard L. Roemer arrived in July to serve as a draftsman. Roemer was more nearly the typical regular Army soldier. He was well grounded in basic military art and an excellent workman who attended the Camp Perry contests. He was also a remarkably fine drillmaster which everyone who came under his sway decided must spring from his precise Technic forebears.

Roemer came directly from Officer Candidate School, having resigned in the 19th week. An auto accident, in which his wife was severely injured, called him from Salvoir to her bedside. In applying for leave he was informed he could have it only by resigning from school. He resigned and the leave was granted. Soon after, he was assigned to the Engineer Section.

Technical Sergeant George Lucas came to the Section directly from Puerto Rico just as Sergeant Motalov was about to leave for Panama. Lucas was designated as Chief Clerk in his place.

Technical Sergeant Lyle S. Driskell was ripped from the bosom of the Engineers of the 9th Infantry Division in August.

The fourth officer promotion in the section was for Major Fisher. On 11 November he became Lieutenant Colonel, A.U.S.

Here, at last, some semblance of a working section was forming, and soon ten more either, as events would prove. The Major had four officers in the field and three officers besides himself in the Section - along with these an aggregate of enlisted personnel on which to build. There were also some six N.Y.A. girls who came specifically to work in the Section as typists and stenographers. This was not the happiest of all possible arrangements, but it would serve until a better situation could be evolved.

This was the Engineer Section of the First Air Force on the eve of December 6th, 1941.

DRG GEORGE LUCAS

W/SGT. LYLE S. DRISKELL



14



FIRST STEPS

"Lift up those eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward." Genesis, 1:10.

The airport survey program was the first all-expert function of the new Engineer Section. During the major portion of the first year it overshadowed every other duty and, in the final analysis, was the basis for the development of airfield facilities for the First Air Force in the days of great expansion which would come in 1942 and early 1943. Strangely, this survey program did not spring full blown out of the directives which constituted the Northwest Air District. It had its origin when Major Fisher arrived from maneuvers in Wisconsin, to assume the post of Air Base Engineer at Mitchell Field.

Throughout the autumn Major Fisher pushed the project by correspondence and personal contact, flying to state capitals to interview any and every person able to help in his research. Then suddenly, in December, 1940, the Major received word that another assignment was impending. With the job only recently under way he pleaded to remain, stating his happiness in and fitness for the work at hand. He also detailed his long experience with troops and his preference for an engineer duty with the Air Corps, urging further that his choice at West Point actually had been Air Corps before he was assigned to the Engineers. His contacts with state aviation officials would, if he were allowed, be jeopardized and the carefully built up liaison would collapse. He re-emphasized his "happiness and proficiency for this type of assignment." The Major's fears were quieted by a radiogram on the following day which stated: "It is my understanding that you are slated to become Air District Engineer of the Northwest Air District." The Major added that the news "was cheerful to me" and requested a Christmas leave from December 15th, 1940 to January 7, 1941.

With the formation of the Northwest Air District, the inclusion of the additional territory brought larger problems entirely beyond the original scope of one man's abilities. At this point Major Fisher began to look afield for As-

istant Engineers. Of these, the first was Captain Robert Eugene Kemp, C.E.

Captain Kemp was a Reserve Officer, originally commissioned in 1929. In December 1940, he was stationed at Fort Belvoir in the Engineer Replacement Training Center. When the assistant was requested to request the assignment to the Northwest Air District it was discovered that the Captain had two other commands angling for him - Fort Leonard Wood and the Office of the Under Secretary of War. The Office of the Chief Engineers decided in favor of R.E.S.D. A further complication arose from the fact that a Captain Williams was the first choice for the Selfridge Field assignment. This was countermanded by the Office of the Chief of Engineers in a letter dated 22 January 1941. After the administrative details of this swap were ironed out, Captain Kemp was ordered to Selfridge Field, Michigan, as of 27 January 1941. Captain Kemp's way was not particularly smooth at the start because of the lack of a clear directive outlining his duties. Not until the 7th of March would this difficulty be cleared. On that date Major Fisher wrote: "Inclosed herewith is a copy of letter from Captain Beite relative to my basic directive and its whereabouts. It is quite a relief to learn that they found the directive and are immediately sending it to Selfridge Field. This should clear your difficulties on that score." It was this directive which cleared the doors for unobstructed action. It definitely allied these Assistant Engineers with the First Air Force and restrained the bases from selling numerous base duties on them.

On the 10th of February Captain Beite, a graduate of The Virginia Military Institute and a former Cavalry Officer, was ordered to duty with the Corps of Engineers. In civil life he had been an Engineer. Captain Beite was the only assistant not personally selected by Major Fisher. He was chosen for the Langley Area by Lt. Col. Davison, who then delegated to Major Fisher authority to select the remaining three.

FIRST STEPS

took his car out on the runway to check its length. At the end of the runway was a steep cliff which dropped off for a considerable distance. Records similar to this were constantly crossing my

The survey officers divided their time between inspection trips and periods spent in their offices assembling and compiling their reports. Each report as completed was promptly forwarded to the Engineer, Lt. Fergen and Sgt. Smecker tabulated survey information for ultimate publication.

Of the many fields surveyed during this program, perhaps the one that was to be most intimately connected with the later history of the Engineer Section was the old Richard E. Byrd Airport at Richmond, Virginia. This was a civil airport listed on Captain Hatter's schedule. The survey report, completed after a personal inspection on the 21st of April 1941, described the field as a "graded and cleared level tract of 400 acres. The surrounding countryside is flat and mostly in brush and thinly grown young pines. The soil is sandy clay. The runways are paved gravel and each 150' wide in several landing strips 300 feet wide." Concerning its present capacity for military use the airbase was considered "suitable for landing medium bombardment aircraft of the B-24 class. It is well suited for peace time maneuvers." Expansion was recommended after acquisition of all or part of the adjoining property. The construction of paved runways for heavy bombardment aviation was advocated.

A Site Board was appointed by the Commanding General, First Air Force, to select from the fields surveyed suitable sites for development into bases. As need for an airfield in a given vicinity arose, the Board visited the one or two fields there for which the survey had indicated the greatest potentiality. The Board considered tactical and logistical aspects of the proposed air base and submitted findings. One such Board, composed of three Air Corps officers, two medical and one Engineer officer decided, on November 27th, 1941, that the site at Richmond, Virginia, is suitable and desirable as a group station

and that the said site may be obtained from the City of Richmond." The City of Richmond itself went on record as being "willing to cooperate in the National Defense to the limit."

In many ways Richmond is typical of the air fields surveyed. It is unique in that it became one of the major bases of the First Air Force and proved to be of particular interest to the Engineer Section by serving as one of the training grounds for Engineer Aviation troops. Many of the stations surveyed were used by the Air Force either as bases, sub-bases, or landing strips for dispersal. The vast majority of stations listed on the survey, however, were assigned to lines. The names of FAF bases in use throughout 1943 and early 1944 which were small civil installations in 1941 will be familiar to the entire command. Besides Richmond, Millville, New Jersey; Blacksburg, Virginia; Dayton, South Dakota, Wash.; and Baltimore, Md. among others, sprang directly from this project.

The project lasted for approximately a year and a half. It was started at the time of the terror bombing of England and continued throughout the stalemate that followed. An additional psychological impetus was furnished by the German attack on Russia in June 1941, along with the push through the Balkans to Crete. The Italian and Ethiopian Campaigns were also in full swing, and little by little the independent nations were falling before the Axis. The Japanese attack on the 7th of December, acting as a stunning blow directly to the middle of the survey, served to speed up the project.

By May 1942 all reports were in and the project completed. At the time of its inception, the object of the G-3 Engineering Survey was to gather vital information pertaining to airfields to be used if war should come. When war did come, the First Air Force was prepared to the extent that planning of its war-time airbase could be accomplished as a result of the survey. The object of the survey could now be realized. All told, 1515 air fields were surveyed. The present Bases and Stations of the First Air Force are to a great extent the result of this work.

WAR

"That day is a Day of Wrath, a Day of Trouble and Distress, a Day of Wastefulness and Devastation, a Day of Darkness and Misadventure, a Day of Clouds and Thick Darkness." September, 1911.

Sunny morning, December the 7th, 1941 was much like any preceding Sunday; the office of the Engineer in the north wing of Building 100 was open for anyone who had work to take up. There was no feeling of momentous events impending. Lt. Colonel Fisher was in for part of the morning and took the opportunity leisurely to read over the accumulated papers in the "In Basket" and departed for a late luncheon at his quarters on the post. Major Weinberg arrived to do some routine work and let Lt. Pearson dropped in to keep abreast of the morning reports piling up in his Airport Data Section. There was nothing unusual about the day. It was an ordinary Sunday at Hickam Field.

The first reports of the bombing at Pearl Harbor began to come over the radio approximately at 1430 hours. The nation was stunned by the news. Many sections of the country had long looked for attacks from Europe. The submarine warfare of Germany by threatening English supremacy on the seas had impaired the traditional security of our western shores. Moreover, the "over-age destroyer fleet" of fifteen months before was widely regarded as a possible provocation for a German attack. The unexpectedness of the blow from Japan was enhanced by the presence of Japanese peace plenipotentiaries in Washington on the very morning of the attack. The United States, in effect, was looking for trouble from the east and she received it from the west!

The attack virtually placed this country in a state of siege. Hitherto the side had won all the victories thru concerted action. It was only sensible, therefore, to suppose that the blow to the west would be quickly followed by another in the east. This was the natural assumption of everyone in the country after the first news flashes from Hawaii.

The afternoon of December 7th was pregnant with history, yet no hint of this later-coming condition was evident when Colonel Fisher returned from dinner. No radio professed that portion of Building 100 occupied by the Engineers, and consequently no suggestion of the airplane being started for use in the facility warned the Section that the country had even then passed from an armed peace to War!

Colonel Fisher was seated at his desk when the news finally came. The harbinger of this earthshaking event was Mrs. Fisher. She had been listening to the radio when the program was interrupted and an announcer in assumed accents dropped the dire news into America's lap. She telephoned "P.S."*

The after-noon, as the news reached town, officers and enlisted men began dropping into the office until by 1530 all were present. When Mr. Fenn arrived he discovered the personnel of the Section gathered in little groups, each trying to figure the next news of the War Department and all talking in odd tones about the blow that had fallen.

The War Department was not long in acting, an instant allocation of \$3,000,000 was made to the First Air Force for the construction of revetments, and a huge dispersal program for aircraft was set in motion. This was, in effect, evacuating the East Coast for any blow that might fall. The First Air Force was reporting the very worst. News, official news, came through from Washington giving the details and the full extent of the tragic day's happenings. Every officer on the staff was violently aware of the loss of a major portion of the Pacific naval power and, hitting each nearer home, the awful declaration of

[* "P.S." translated "Pennsylvania Dutch" is an affectionate nickname given Colonel Fisher during his quiet days at the United States Military Academy. The nickname has stuck throughout his entire military career.]

WAR

airpower on Kasaan Field. This impression would be heightened further within the next few days as reports from the Philippine Islands came in of planes being blown to bits on the ground like "sitting ducks".

It was with this certain knowledge of the height of the tragedy that Colonel Fisher began in the late afternoon to order the few Engineer Groups then available to bases of the First Air Force to construct such rudimentary defenses as could be accomplished with the utmost speed. In collaboration with Colonel W.L. Lepper, acting Chief of Staff for the First Air Force, Colonel Fisher set to work reviewing the material in the airport data files and laying plans for the dispersal of planes and facilities. This movement of forces and realignment of defenses of the First Air Force was a simple in miniature of the grand scale military movement that began on the 7th of December throughout the entire nation.

The Engineer Section, faced suddenly with War, established itself immediately on a wartime basis. The former semi-leisure of the peace was gone from the moment Mrs. Fisher's voice echoed over the telephone. Gone were "leaves and furloughs" until further notice. The motto was work, work, and more work. This attitude was reflected in a minor way by a rash of

signs which, posted in conspicuous places about the office, appealed to each of the section personnel: "Follow up and see that it's done"; "A sense of humor and perseverance will carry you far"; "Develop a Do-It psychology". Lt. Ferson favored "You can catch more flies with honey than you can with vinegar" - a sentiment which was at variance with the somewhat sour Scotch-New England countenance. Characteristically, Lt. Fure adopted a motto, the aptly involved and labyrinthine wording of which urged conscientiousness on everyone and proclaimed further that this attribute, above all others, would win through. Even nine wrong decisions, it stated, could be rectified by a single right one, and the point was driven home by the ringing phrase: "Conscientious is Fatal", a tenacious comment on the activity preceding Pearl Harbor.

The cataclysmic change, however, did not sever Colonel Fisher from continuing his original functions of training and Engineering, but rather intensified and added to them. The month of December would bring many changes and transmutations, and the tight organization of the prewar period would serve as a shock absorber for the section during the period of national uncertainty which followed the Japanese bombing. Infructuously the Section was unchanged but it had entered on a new phase of existence. The period of adolescence was over. It had a man's work to do now!



INCREASED STATURE

"This is the end of the Unregimented". . . . Volume 1c2

During the week of December 28th, the Congress of the United States formally declared war on The Axis Nations, and on both weeks long security precautions were put into effect at once. Every military installation and war plant adopted blackout regulations, street lamps were dimmed in blackout cities, and excitement prevailed everywhere at the novelty of the situation. The papers had already printed the news of Pearl Harbor on the indifference of the Congress to the warning to civilians and every officer was personally alert to identify any and every place that opened into the city. Routes, civil and military, were, as the words of the day, alert and tight, every of them over water. In this atmosphere an enemy attack, whether real or imaginary, was inevitable.

At 11:30 hours on the 28th of December First Air Force headquarters received a flash warning that enemy bombers were 120 hours from New York. Alarms and whistles screamed; military field units into action. Anti-aircraft units, formerly inactive, stood ready every available place now off to meet the attack. The sound of the day less than 120 hours to the ground, being sent with low hanging clouds through which everyone momentarily expected the appearance of the enemy. Schools closed, people were barred from the streets, and the streets called from 11:30 until 12:00 hours when the cause of the alarm was determined. The "enemy" bombers were some aircraft withdrawn hastily from maneuvers in Louisiana at the outbreak of war. They had been on Atlantic patrol when sighted and were still painted with white crosses (however insidious). There had not been time to paint them out. Alerts would not occur on such magnitude again. As time went on, alerts were practiced, lower systems maintained, and an efficient routine prevailed.

After the 28th of December, the Southern Section began its greatest expansion, little by little during the working year of 1943 it would grow, even off, and grow again.

1st. Col. Fisher, persisting in his quest of surrounding himself with excellent young Engineer officers, had long been agitating for the services of 1st Lt. Samuel J. Jeffery, a Reserve Engineer with an engineering faculty background and V.I.T. training. His orders were issued on the 2nd of December to report on the 28th. Lt. Jeffery was assigned to work on the regular staff jobs of

the Section, helping in the compilation of airport data from the survey reports, later assisting in the new construction subsection, and ultimately becoming Liaison Officer. He was the last officer to enter the section until June 1945.

Eighteen days later a most significant event took place. Private Joseph V. Martino, a topographic draftsman, reported for duty. Martino was the first selectee assigned to the Section. Although the staff was made up of professional soldiers and Reserve officers. All previous military personnel, with the single exception of George Hubersert, were professional soldiers. Indeed, Hubersert had had to resign from the National Guard and enlist as a regular before he could join the Section. Now, however, the right tight barriers were broken. The small group of professional Army men was physically incapable of handling the growing numbers of the Engineer. The Colonel, whose preference for the regular Army was intense, bowed finally to the inevitable. Surely in terms of relative number regular Army personnel were becoming invaluable. The curious fact is that the Colonel was able to withstand the onslaught as long as he did, for



COL. JOSEPH V. MARTINO

INCREASED STATURE.

the Draft Law had been in force sixteen months before Martine arrived. Consequently, with very few exceptions, all enlisted personnel would enter the Section through the Selective Service System or thru enlistment for "the duration plus six months". Officers would be obtained thru the Reserve or thru direct commissioning until October 1942 when the first product of Officers Candidate School entered.

As it happened, Martine was an excellent clerk and became almost immediately an essential member of the unit. He served as clerk and runner and created handy aids for IA. Here, this arrangement continued until his eventual request for reassignment.

Martine was followed quickly by Private Nathan Werner, formerly of the Pennsylvania National Guard, who arrived the 27th of December. Two days later, Privates James W. Cipolani and Salvatore F. Battaglia, selected from the Engineer Replacement Training Center, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, reported. Both men, stenographers, came under the friendly eagle of Mr. Fern. Both protested that their basic training had impaired their former ability in shorthand. The Colonel received this deplorable opinion by telling both men seated beside Mr. Fern as he took

two official stenographers in shorthand. Both men doubled away to keep pace with the rapid fire dictation. Cipolani recalls the Colonel's phenomenal ability to visualize each letter dictated by him. No aid of punctuation, or arrangement of words, secured his accurate writing of the dictated letters. Battaglia was assigned to general administrative stenography. Battaglia was detailed to work under Lt. Fernon. Battaglia and Cipolani remained in their positions.

The social position of these selections in the outfit was lower than low. The Regular Army youngsters, regarding them as outsiders, snubbers, or worse, maintained an aloof attitude toward the newcomers. The situation, however uncomfortable, was entirely natural. The peacetime Army attracts definite types of men, just as other types are attracted to law, medicine, or teaching. The esprit is here, built and maintained within the unit, is a professional attitude of small groups. A paragon speaks from the fact that none of America's wars from the Revolution on depended fully on the Regular Army. All were fought by civilian soldiers. Acceptance of conscription by Americans grew slowly. The Civil War draft laws were highly unpopular. Even as late as World War I, a draftee was considered just slightly above a convict. Only as the present war has the faltering of military service become gradually apparent. The morale of the Regular is that he is fertile and agile enough in a miraculously short time to run the gear and learn well the technique of warfare.

A full month elapsed before any further change took place. The three low selections were eventually taken into consideration under the strict eye of important times and the cohorts then sent arrived from the Adjutant General's office that two more stenographers were on the way. These men were listed as "George Smith and Thomas W. Wallace", both from Fort Belvoir. On the 27th of January 1943, when the men arrived, the office learned that "Smith" actually was Forrest and, to the infinite dismay of members, "Wallace" was Collins. A slight sensation arose whatsoever of these Belvoir trainees was calmed on reporting. The Regular Army group glances unceremoniously and shook their heads willy over the state of things at Fort Belvoir. Both men, however, proved excellent in their jobs and remained steadfastly within the Section until ordered otherwise. But this was not later.

A sort of giddy atmosphere pervaded the Section. From that time on, the members would now



1/SGT. AMBRO W. CIPOLOANI

INCREASED STATURE

In spreading the office and setting it in another spot. This drastic existence was forced on the Section by external events. The move from Building 202 to 104 resulted from the establishment in Building 104 of a Headquarters for the First Air Force Base Command, to which personnel of the Section were assigned. The move was made on 1 March 1942.

Private William V. Langridge, recommended to Colonel Fisher by an associate of the American Water Works and Electric Company whom he had been employed in the Engineering Department, had been contracting himself in a Medical Detachment at Fort Jackson when the necessary arrangements were consummated by his own request letter with only three days' notice. Yet all was not smooth. Langridge reported to the Base Quartermaster at Mitchell, in accordance with his orders, and was turned into the 30th Material Squadron where he was set to work for three weeks drafting a gasoline field gas range for his own officer. This was discovered March 7th; he had departed from Fort Jackson on February 28th. The 30th was now standing in a hole to it. Here he said: "This is an outrage...Fisher got Langridge into our Engineer Section without delay. His subordinate correspondence (official) is dated 11th P.M. by March 17th. Private First Class Langridge was a full-fledged member of the Engineer Section, assigned to construction.

During all the developments of the Langridge case, Private Albert T. Lewis quietly entered the Section on the 21st of February and departed at quietly one month later.

In April 1, 1942, a Table of Organization was given the Section authorizing four Master Sergeants, three Technical Sergeants, four Staff Sergeants, three Corporals, three Corporals, three Sergeants 1st Grade, three Sergeants 2nd Grade, and three Staff Privates. This gave Colonel Fisher authorization for twenty-nine men and his letters to McCord began again to pour in. Meanwhile, at Mitchell Field, reorganization was going on and the Section men were transferred from 1 Air Force Base Command upon the move to Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, First Air Force, on May 11. The number of enlisted men at this date was: Master Sergeant Roberts, Technical Sergeants Irwin, Hill, Lums, and Switzer, Staff Sergeants Carlson, Glick, and Putnam, Sergeant Tipton, Corporal Battaglia, Martine, and Warner, Private

First Class, Specialist 3rd Class Roberts, Private First Class, Specialist 4th Class Mellons, Private First Class Langridge, and Privates Allan V. Stone, Joseph Stonehill, and Ralph Battaglia.

The three men at the end of the roster 4-1-42 entered the Section through different channels. Joseph Stonehill, a commercial illustrator of New York City appointed by his Draft Board, was notified to find himself assigned to the 57th Engineers and Constructors in the Georgia Lowlands. After sufficient training he was transferred to an Air Corps unit at Mitchell Field. The latter organization, equally notified, made Stonehill a basic private in charge of certain janitorial duties around Squadron Headquarters. The irrefragable art of the man expressed itself in drawings of his barracks notes and it was one of these which caught the attention of Lt. Fure, who asked for his assignment to this Section. Stonehill entered on his new duties May 12, 1942. He was first utilized as a confidential runner along with Martine until the art department of Camp Page was organized. On the 15th of June, Stonehill was promoted to Technician 3rd Grade.

Private Allan V. Stone enlisted directly into the Section. He had worked in the



SGT & SALVATORE P. BATTAGLIA

INCREASED STATURE

New recruits Planning Commission with Lt. Person and his place within the Section was planned before he became a soldier. He had an Engineering Degree from the University of New Hampshire and his civilian work concerned itself primarily with airfields. Evans enlisted in New York City and was sent out to Mitchell Field in civilian clothes on the basis of a request letter from Colonel Fisher. The next day, May 15th, he was sent to the Air Base Squadron for basic training in the morning and assigned to the Engineer Section for duty in the afternoon. His work was with Lt. Person's Airport Section.

Ralph J. Battaglia, thru the intercessions of his brother Salvatore, enlisted directly into the Section. He appeared on May 26th and was assigned to clerical work in construction and remained there until late in 1943 when he left for Air Corps Officer Candidate School.

On May 15th, 1942, orders were issued by the Engineer School at Fort Belvoir transferring Sergeant George W. Klauer and Corporal William S. McIntyre to Headquarters First Air Force. These were of the very few selected assignments not directly managed by Colonel Fisher. The two men came into the Section almost out of the blue. Klauer remained a month and a half and was transferred to the 50th Engineer Topographic Company (AEC), Bradley Field, on the 1st of August. Corporal McIntyre remained as a valuable addition to the Section. He was a graduate Landscape Architect and had recently come from Fort Belvoir Officer Candidate School, as indeed had Klauer, largely because of a gentle smile he had not acquired up to that august institution's ideas of hardening, biting vocal accomplishments which were deemed most desirable in an Engineer officer. Colonel Fisher, however, felt that his worth was evident and on June 15th made him a Sergeant and on the 1st of September received him to Staff Sergeant.

On May 1st, negotiations were under way with the Belvoir Replacement Training Center for three more selections. Two were to be stenographers and one a Mechanical Engineer. One of the Engineer, never arrived, having been grabbed by another unit while his transfer was in process. The two stenographers were Privates Philip M. Furns and George H. Klauer. These two were requested by Colonel Fisher in an informal letter in which he described the work in the Section as a "line assignment for some worthy selection personnel. Our present urgent need is to obtain sufficient selections who will definitely have the



SGT. GEORGE WHITTETT

SGT. DONALD E. BULLOCK





TC 4 ALLEN EVANS

TC 5 QUINN BLAND



INCREASED STATURE

qualifications to fit in our work in order to eliminate the necessity for personnel on hand working until 7 P.M. daily without let-up." James arrived on the 27th of May and took up stenographic duties along with certain filing. On the 10th of June, James was promoted to Technical 3rd Class.

Throughout the first half of 1941, as these men entered, the Section itself was changing. Major Hyman Feldberg, the Executive Officer, went to Command and General Staff School. Lt. Fox, who had been handling in brass with the Executive and the Construction Division, filed his resignation on the 7th. Another shift in the office balance was made with the departure of Major Witham, who sailed for overseas under secret orders.

To compensate for these departures early in May, Colonel Fisher brought the three survey officers in from the field. He had, indeed, had this in mind for some time, reserving certain of the Section's multiplying duties for them. Captain Datta acquired the new Construction Section, a long left hand. Letters and requests for construction were flooding the office and a full time assistant on this phase of work was essential. Captain Hughes was placed in charge of the new Tracing Section which administered the new Engineer Station units recently acquired by the Bulwer. Captain Elms came in from Halfbridge to take over the post left vacant by Major Feldberg. At no time would the Section be stabilized completely, for modern warfare does not permit a fixed form, yet the Section now was settling down into a workable form with would be responsible for a long time to come. Very soon after arrival all three of these Captains were promoted to the grade of Major.

Captains Datta and Elms had, during their hours of duty in the field, acquired each a leg man with whose services he was loath to part. Accordingly, requests were made for Corporal George Stewart, transferred from Langley Field on the 20th of May, and Private Eliza McCallister from Halfbridge Field on the 24th of June. Both enlisted men were draftsmen. Stewart, a very personable individual, was Regular Army, and McCallister, a dark man whose capacity for work was phenomenal, was a selection. McCallister was to be with the Section as Chief Draftsman. This would come later, however. Stewart, with his field army background, would rise to a Staff Sergeant and, long-ly once here for the field, would be transferred to the 4888 Central Postal Directory Company.

INCREASED STATURE

The advent of 1st Lt. Nicholas Jerry Rickharoff on the scene on the 4th of June was the substitution of some of the most intense administrative red tape and administrative innovations that the Section was to see. Colonel Fisher came across Lt. Rickharoff in November 1941 and requested his assignment to active duty. Lt. Rickharoff, the son of an officer of the Imperial Russian Army back of the turn of the century, was a member of the Reserve. What was new to the point as far as the Colonel was concerned, he had excellent Airport construction knowledge and would therefore fit well into the new Construction Section which was accompanied with an already overwhelming list of responsibilities. Responsibilities went back and forth for months until Lt. Rickharoff finally reported in full winter uniform on the 4th of June, one of the hottest days of 1942. The arrangements had taken seven months. He was assigned on arrival to assist Major Batta in the Construction Section. Working unobtrusively and with fervor, he has remained in that Section, assuming charge when Major Batta (later Lt. Gilson) became the designer. On the 15th of August, Rickharoff was promoted to 1st Lt.

From late June to mid-July, a group of men entered the Section from a Roberts Village post across. Engineer units controlled by the Section itself. When Burtin requested his transfer, he was assigned to the 90th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company stationed on Mitchell Field. The regular sources of recruits were open to these units and, because of their specialized requirements, they retained enlisted personnel who were in many instances above the general level. Burtin was traded for two corporals from the 90th Engineers, both of whom were to stand as excellent examples of permissibility of choice. These two were Freddie J. Burghart and Joseph T. McWaters.

Burghart, a Philadelphian, subdued and shrewd, had a long-draw/tacon background and a liking for work that amounted to a passion. McWaters, a southerner with a transportation and railroading background was assigned as a night and eventually placed in charge of the Technical

Library. McWaters was to become, in 1944, the first man from the Section to complete Officer Candidate School, from which he returned to Mitchell Field as a 2nd Lieutenant, out of Engineer but in the Transportation Corps.

Three other privates from the 90th followed: Lawrence E. Graf on June 28th, and Frank Batta and John E. Coogrove on July 19th. Graf and Batta were draftsmen and worked with the Construction Section until their transfers to the newly formed 904th Engineers in February 1943. Private Coogrove was a big, strapping individual whose physique suggested more the field soldier than the administrative type. Coogrove, however, was an excellent member of the staff, careful, accurate, and quiet in manner. He was assigned to Lt. Farrow and worked in supply with Bartaglia.

The superintendence of workmen that entered the Section at this time was mostly makeshift. The first group of regulars who had been referred to the Section had turned out to be good soldiers but only passable staff personnel. The Colonel was slowly building the Section up, seeing out here and adding there, always striving for exact balance, according to the need of the moment.

On August 5th, 1942, a priority TW left First Air Force Headquarters for Washover Field which was a trust "Issue necessary orders relieving 1st Lt. John L. Wilson, CE, of present assignment and duty with the 62nd Engineer Battalion (you) your station and assign him to Engineer Section these headquarters." Wilson had a week before been returned from the Lovell General Hospital where he had been confined for diagnosis of a suspected aneurysm. The baffled rediro had released him but, ever cautious, placed him on limited service which they declared should be administrative. Jack Wilson was a graduate Engineer from S.I.T. and had been connected with projects of the Construction Quartermaster. He had been commissioned originally on the 20th of June, 1941, and was actually a captain at the time Colonel Fisher met him. The TW reproduced above, having told that was from the 19th of May, 1942.

* The plural phrase "these headquarters" in correspondence at this time reflects the various dual personalities of the organization which was not only First Air Force, but also the Air Force of the Eastern Defense Command, at first the Eastern Theater of Operations. This arrangement dates from 21 December 1941 when the War Department designated the Eastern Command, which it then considered an active war theater such as England or China, as the Eastern Theater of Operations. Three months later this same view, which in its own implicit implications forbade officers to appear publicly without side arms, was relaxed and on 20 March 1942 the Eastern Theater of Operations was redesignated the Eastern Defense Command. The First Air Force, therewith officially Headquarters Air Force, Eastern Defense Command and First Air Force, retained its dual character with its channels of command from Washington passing through the S.O.C. headquarters until 10 September 1943, when it was placed directly under Headquarters Army Air Force and redesignated simply Headquarters First Air Force. From that date the phrase "these headquarters" was "out the window" and thereafter the organization in its correspondence referred to itself as "this headquarters".

INCREASED STATURE

Captain Wilson was assigned to Troops and Operations for his entire stay in the Section which lasted for seven months. The last two of these seven months were spent at the Company Officers Course at Fort Ord, CA, as was not unusual for officers of the Section at this time. This usual assignment was made somewhat because Wilson had the admirable tendency to request a five day delay enroute on his return. This caused a minor scandal within the office. The Colonel wrote him a letter which must stand as a model of understatement. Certainly he was talking himself in at the time for the lines were covered with a silver glove, the leave was granted but the burst of words that followed contained a take-the-leave-if-you-dare message. "You should be mindful that we are at war", he wrote. "Your status is identical to that of any other Engineer officer in this Engineer Section, including myself -- You should prepare your leave affairs the same as other experienced officers are doing these days so as to travel light on short notice. Very sincerely, C." Despite this, Captain Wilson took the five days.

Some time later another Captain, whose name has not now come to us, reported and was welcomed by the Colonel. After the usual obligatory conversation speech, which invariably asked if the officer were accustomed to distating letters, the Captain turned to Colonel Fisher and asked three pertinent questions, "When do I get a promotion? When do I get a leave? And, do I get enroute off?" The Col. was unresponsive. Deputy stated later the officer was on his way to an assignment in parts unknown.

THE A. HILL MUSEUM

Wilson was followed by 1st Lieutenant Alexander McIlvaine. This officer was a personal ward of Colonel Fisher, who had assisted greatly in securing his commission. McIlvaine had been an architect in civil life and had among other things held a private pilot's license and the idea of modifying himself to military matters on an air base was not particularly pleasant. He requested and eventually was granted a transfer to the I Fighter Command for Photo Interpretation, by dates from 7 September to 4 November 1945.

Joining Major Hughes and Captain Wilson in the Troops and Operations Section early in September was 1st Lieutenant Hayward Addison. This officer was directly commissioned from the ranks. He had held a Reserve Commission early in the 1930's but this had lapsed and he had been drafted in 1941. He worked his way up through the enlisted grades to Sergeant, when an official ICG letter appeared with the subject: "Appointment of Former Officers in the Army of the United States." Late in April of 1942 he applied for his Reserve commission. He had an excellent background and was a graduate of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. His application was forwarded thru numerous offices and picked up some fifteen endorsements on the way and finally was submitted. Colonel Fisher having seen part of the correspondence decided he would use him. The 4 April 1941 unit line signed, the business signed on, passed only by some forward pro's in the right direction by the Colonel. His commission, dated the 15th of August, was received on the 21st, and

COL. FRANK J. BURGHART



INCREASED STATURE

A fire believer in "have picked" personnel, sought constantly to "fill spare jobs to spare holes" and in building his staff left little play for chance. McFarlan enjoyed the dubious distinction of being the only officer whose assignment to the Section was pure accident. Commissioned from civil life he reported to First Air Force headquarters from the Air Force Administrative School at Miami Beach. The personnel classification officer, faced with a somewhat scarcity of assignment openings, reviewed McFarlan's civilian background of engineering and suggested that he "drop around to the Engineer Section and see for a job". Colonel Fisher, not too impressed, non-committally suggested that he might be placed temporarily in construction. This was October 10th. On the 17th, 1st Lieut. William F. DeWatal, 2nd Lieut. Thomas W. Hood entered the Section. DeWatal, also a direct commission officer had served an apprenticeship with the Engineer Board at Fort Belvoir which Col. Fisher regarded at that time as the "head-and-tail of all Engineer activities and training". Lieutenant DeWatal was an established architect in Chicago during the 1920's with a background of the best in the accepted academic tradition, acquired at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in France and the best in modern architecture learned from Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin. He was assigned for a time to the Construction Section as a matter of routine - Col. Fisher had evolved a plan of leading order which officers were to rotate through the various subdivisions to absorb a complete picture of staff duties. This program was never adhered to completely because many of the officers were highly specialized. DeWatal's abilities, however, were versatile and the Colonel had another assignment in mind for him in the near future.

2nd Lieutenant Thomas W. Hood was the first officer to enter the Section from Officer Candidate School. From this time on most of the newer officers would come from the enlisted ranks having passed through the refining fire of O.C.S. Hood had joined his enlisted days in the 5th Engineers - The Motor Company Battalion. His stay with the Section was brief lasting from the 17th of October until the 20th of December when he was transferred to the 15th Engineer Company (Trk). On the 27th of November Col. Fisher put in his promotion to 1st Lieutenant but nothing happened. Hood was to be an excellent officer with the YMCA, and later with the 3rd Air Force Comptroller School at Walterboro, S.C.

The fourth officer, 2nd Lieut. Charles S. Hanson was also directly commissioned. He was a Maine product filtered and refined in the gentle

atmosphere of the Harvard Yard and the Harvard Architectural School. From this he had ventured into versatile transactions enough to join a construction firm in New Hampshire. In May 1941 his application for a 1st Lieutenant's commission was "in the mill". The correspondence which this caused was a drama on government paper stocks and for a time it seemed that the War Department was devoting its entire time to this lone New Englander. Col. Fisher's interest in his case grew directly from the fact that he had recently been working on airports throughout 13 New England areas. He was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant on the 7th of September and processed at once to Miami for his period of training. He reported to the Section on October 17th. Hanson was assigned to the Troops and Operations Section to assist Major Hughes. One of his duties was to supervise the Specialist Detachment program of selectees whose skills were of an engineering type. He had interdicted this program from Major Sleep, who by late Fall of 1942 had succeeded in obtaining a formidable list of men, many of whom eventually became integrated intimately in the Section.

Under this program, Private Walfrid S. Johnson was recruited from the Reception Center at Camp Upton, N.Y. and was transferred to the First Air Force by Special Orders on the 1st of October. Johnson was assigned immediately to work with Sergeant Driskill in "Troops and Operations." The growing files of this section



1ST LT. FERN W. HARVICK

INCREASED STATURE

would carry his from then on. Johnson was followed closely by Pvt. Max Rosenfeld who had been a civilian draftsman with the Army Air Corps. He was promoted early in October at the request of Major Klump. He reported on October 22nd and was assigned to the construction drafting section. Rosenfeld could remain in that section until ordered overseas approximately a year later. He was characterized in a letter to Col. Fisher from Major Wiley of Headquarters Army Air Forces: "an extremely able individual and well equipped to carry out his duties - - in this section". Colonel Fisher found him exactly that.

From the Construction Files of November the following extract is reproduced: "It is requested that the Post Engineer, Mitchell Field, be directed to install necessary fluorescent lighting in Building T-141 at Mitchell Field. The Engineer Section of these headquarters will occupy that building on and after November 17, 1942, and the installation of the requested lighting is essential to its operations." With this move, the Engineer Section found its final home.

In November 2nd Privates Frederick J. Smith, James E. Gathman and Joseph W. Babione were shipped from Camp Upton, N.Y. Smith remained only 2 months, working as a typist. Visual difficulties and severe eye strain led to his transfer to the TOVA Engineers and the kindly ministrations of Captain Arthur E. Stone (of glorious memory) on the 7th of January 1943.

Gathman, classified as a basic private, was chosen by Major Klump for the post of confidential runner. Gathman was dignified with a thorough investigation by the F.B.I. before being allowed to carry out this highly secretive mission. In his spare moments he acted as assistant to Corporal Babione on the Technical Library files and intelligence reports. It would be Private Gathman's pleasant duty to hand any officer who retained an intelligence document over the allotted 10 days.

Private Babione was assigned immediately to Sergeant Goochler and worked for a great while in the Supply Section. His background with a refining company in civil life where he acted as a general factotum on everything from straight filling to contour maps would be a great help to him in his new duties.

Private Albert Blamonte, the last of the specialist individuals for 1942 entered the scene on December 8th. His varied background included bookkeeping - typing and a short stretch in a defense plant. Blamonte had appeared in September at the office and was given a typing test by Sergeant Goochler. The latter, favorably impressed, gave the go-ahead signal and Major Klump requested his assignment to the Section. For months Blamonte was featured as a runner and spare typist and was transferred finally to the Comouflage Section when Evans and Turner left the Section for the 900th Engineers in the Spring of 1943.

The Table of Organization had long authorized 11 officers for the Section, more than sufficient for the general run of business. But aside from the Staff duties Col. Fisher viewed the thorough training of officers for staff positions as an equal obligation. With the rise of Army schools opportunities broadened considerably and many of the most essential men were given the additional advantage of attendance at one or more courses. Excellent as this practice was it crippled the section badly at times and to remedy this situation a tentative request for additional officers was forwarded to Washington. This proposal, first broached in August, would place 3 officers over and above the T/O allowance within the Section for the purpose of learning staff routine. Informally, the idea was either to give these men up within the section as calls came in for assignment of higher ranking officers or to send these student officers out after an inactivation period of training. The authorization came through on November 6, 1942. Lt. Col. Weaver, of the Directorate of Base Services, Washington, D.C., wrote on that date: "The purpose of this pool is to provide officers for Headquarters assignments with task forces or replacements for officers on present staffs who are released for task force assignments". Future section officers would enter under this arrangement.



COL. JOSEPH BABIONE

INCREASED STATURE

As the year rounded to its Fall, two officers from Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir were ordered into the Section. 2nd Lieut. Ralph W. Maxwell and 2nd Lieut. Robert A. Wilson had graduated to the 19th U.S.C. Course. They were assigned to Mitchell Field in October and spent a month with the 514th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company in the tactical tract. Here the work was not too oppressive as the unit under Lieut. Thorne was just assembling. On the 21st of November both officers were ordered into the Section. Maxwell soon after was sent to the supply school at Governors Island where, after two long weeks he managed to bully them into giving him a diploma; proud with this, he became Capt. Perrow's right hand man. Wilson on the other hand was stationed at the front desk opposite Major Kemp to ease the burdens of the executive and to replace Captain Fere who had been detailed to the Camouflage Course at Fort Belvoir. In his return he was to pick up the Camouflage Section which had been dropped hastily by Captain Joroff who departed for an overseas assignment in mid-October. Wilson remained as the assistant executive until the departure of Lieut. Raden. It was the success of Maxwell and Wilson which confirmed Col. Fisher in fullness of appreciation of U.S.C. On numerous occasions he expressed himself in full accord with the training and a large proportion of the future officers would come from this source.

The next and final arrival of 1941 was a Reserve Officer, 2nd Lieut. Stanley Van Greenway.

One of the Lowell, Mass. Van Greenways, he had a background of Engineering learned at M. I. T. He also had had troop experience with the 520th Provisional Airborne Engineer Regiment at Westover Field and had had four other assignments previous to being assigned to the Engineer Section on Dec. 22nd. The office was in one of its periods of reshuffling at this time and Van Greenway, much to his surprise, was ordered to the Camouflage Section and one month later sent to the Camouflage Course at Fort Belvoir. Then in February he went to the Supply School at Governors Island where he remained for four weeks - later he would be assigned to construction, where his confidant passed for collection of Engineer catalogues and impediments frequently confounded wall clocks with sudden instances of wall from all parts of the U.S.

The year of 1942 also brought with it the following promotions for the officer personnel. 1st Lt. Fere became a Captain MG/AC by a War Department Special Order of 2 May, with the promotion backdated to 1 March. On 11 May, 1st. Col. Fisher and Captain Kemp each was notified of his promotion to Colonel and Major respectively back dated to 1 February. 1st Lt. Perrow became Captain Ferman on 27 May. And, on Memorial Day, Captain Bette and Hughes were made Majors - these last promotions also were backdated to 1 February. The year of 1942 had been an expansive year for the First Air Force Engineers.



PVT. ALBERT A. SHAWMONT

CONSTRUCTING

"...bring wood and build the house and I will take pleasure in it",Bogge, 118.

In the beginning, the Office of the Engineer contained no Construction Section. The duties which would come to that section in time were not strictly in line with traditional Engineer functions. As a matter of fact, up until the great mobilization period at the onset of the war, construction other than fortifications was a province of the Quartermaster Corps, in which the Corps of Engineers itself had no concern. The administrative processing of requests for construction fell to the G-4 Section, which prepared a requisition for a new barrack or mess hall or hospital in much the same way as it would seek to obtain a tent or a cook-stove or a supply of toilet paper.

The major construction programs of the pre-war mobilization period were entirely planned and ordered by the higher echelons of the War Department. Construction ordered in that day was tailored to meet the existing needs of a growing Army, and the overall training picture was the basis of expansion. Emphasis fell most heavily on permanent construction to ease the growing Army. Characteristic buildings of that period were the so-called mobilization type, wood-framed and faced with wood siding. Each barracks building in that descriptive war was centrally heated and contained lavatory facilities sufficient for its occupants. Airport construction was not attempted on the scale that would come later. The number of mobile type airplanes available to the Army was pitifully small and by far the greater part of new production of aircraft was requested for foreign countries. Aircraft to fly from large numbers of airfields simply did not exist.

Of course, the Engineer of the First Air Force was monitoring a survey of potential airfield sites. To that extent, at least the need for airfields when war should come, was foreseen. Also a few new fields, such as Westover, were being constructed and developed under the normal long-range plans of the War Department, but the great period, when military airfields would break out on the face of the land like a rash of measles, was not yet in sight.

Thus, the picture on the 7th of December, 1941. The first reaction to the outbreak of war was the deadly fear of raids along the East coast by long-range German bombers which would presently take off from bases in Norway or from carriers. To meet this threat, the War Department ordered immediate construction of housing facilities at scattered East coast bases to ac-

commodate the interceptor squadrons, which it was hoped would destroy or turn back the expected raiders. Also decreed was the construction of revetments dispersed around airfields in the hope that losses might be minimized in those raids upon the airfields which would be the certain preliminary objectives of the expected bombing raids.

In this situation time did not permit the leisurely construction of mobilization type buildings. Speed of production and economy of effort to field as much as possible in a limited time were the primary concerns. Out of these needs greater of operations construction was born. This term covered a multitude of meanings. Initially it meant wood-frame, one-story structures with dirt floors and bar paper covering. It also included hastily transported steam-heated buildings inherited from the CCC program of the 30's. Some were the luxurious of central heating and lavatories in each barrack. Buildings from then on would be heated by pot-bellied stoves sitting in the middle of floors, and lavatory facilities for the occupants of a half-dozen or more barracks would be concentrated in single buildings, usually located as far as possible from the individual buildings they were designed to serve.



CAPT. NICHOLAS B. STELLAROFF

CONSTRUCTING

Construction had by this time become a function of the Corps of Engineers, but was still not a concern of the Engineer of the First Air Force. As a matter of fact, the First Air Force itself was not the instigator of these first emergency programs. Little evidence exists of any concern of the Engineer with construction at the beginning other than recommendations for selection of airfield sites capable of development. The entering wedge of the Engineer into administrative matters of construction appeared early in 1942, when the War Department, realizing that the oversight in the emergency defense construction program could be remedied efficiently only by local action, permitted the Eastern Defense Command to establish a post in the hands of the Division Engineers, which would be spent for emergency projects at the request of Air Force Commanders. Many requests, processed through the Headquarters as emergency projects, were concerned with the very technical matters pertaining to paving an airfield, extension of utilities and the like. The personnel of the A-4 Section who would normally process all papers in this matter were sent to the Foreign Seminary of Technical Engineering, Colonel Lane, the Assistant Chief of Staff, A-4, with leave in his eyes, pleased with his good friend Colonel Fisher, to prepare all papers that had to be written in this foreign tongue. This began the Construction Section. As this function grew, it became too involved to be handled in the Engineer's spare time. A small "general engineering" section appeared in the Engineers' Table of Organization, but the framers of the Table almost

surely did not contemplate that the team would cover the multifarious duties which would come to the Construction Section. However, "General Engineering" was to be the nucleus of the Construction Section. It took form with the arrival of Captain Sette in the Spring of 1942. Lieutnants Joroff and Fure divided their time between construction matters and other duties.

In the initial work of this group, one of the most curious aspects of the First Air Force Base Command appears. As has been previously mentioned, the Engineer of the First Air Force served also as the Engineer of the Headquarters First Air Force Base Command. Channels of communication in construction matters were from Base through the Base Command to the First Air Force. When any document arrived from a Base requesting construction of an enlarged guard house, Captain Sette and Lieutenant Joroff gave serious consideration to its merits and endorsed upon it the considered opinion of the Base Command in the matter. Then they put their hats on backwards, jumped to the other side of the desk and gave consideration to the same matter from the viewpoint of First Air Force and endorsed the official opinion of First Air Force on the paper, in turn. This cumbersome arrangement was of short duration. By May 1942, it had become apparent that the Base Command duplicated by too much the services adequately performed by headquarters itself. Some time in the month, the First Air Force Base Command was quietly abolished.

Construction matters in the First Air Force went on in this slow form until June of 1942, when the First Air Force became the instigator of construction projects on a large scale. At this time, the Command, having been charged with definite and specific missions of training and defense, was told in effect to write its own ticket for construction needed to carry out its mission. The first groups of projects it prepared were for the development of bases suitable to the divergent needs of an Air Support Command, a Fighter Command and a Bomber Command. All would require troop housing and technical facilities, tailored in all cases to the characteristic organizations of the respective Commands. Divergent facilities for aircraft were a common requirement. Bases of the Air Support Command required runways of unusual width to permit multiple take-offs of aircraft. Bomber Command bases, on the other hand, required runways of unusual length and bearing power to permit the take-off of heavily laden aircraft. An additional requirement for Bomber stations was the provision of safe storage of large quantities of bombs to be used against submarines.



1/SGT. WILLIAM T. LAWRENCE

CONSTRUCTING

Here the Construction Section played its first major role. It worked closely with the Site Boards of the several Commands in determination of the places to be developed. When the requirements of the using commands were set, the Engineer Section drew up the programs of construction.

Concurrently the Civil Economic Administration enjoyed huge appropriations from Congress for the development of civilian airports which might afford military usefulness. Much of the airfield construction needed by First Air Force could be accomplished within the CEA program, but at the same time many requirements were beyond the scope of its authority. The work often had to be accomplished by the United States Engineer Department, employing CEA funds, supplemented by War Department funds. The consequent complexities of analyzing and dividing programs were many and various. Coordination of these overlapping activities was the work of the Engineer. Colonel Fisher's long association with the Corps of Engineers provided many intimate personal contacts with the Division and District Engineers. This personal touch accomplished a measure of cooperation which will perhaps never fully be evaluated.

In the continuing rush to obtain as much construction as possible as quickly as possible, Site Boards asked the approval of building layouts to their site selection duties. The flying officer members of these Boards, unfamiliar with detailing detailed projects from layout plans, did not always obtain all their requirements. It therefore became a practice for an officer of the Construction Section to consult with each Site Board in order to improve the quality of the layouts. This became one of the first duties of Lieutenant Stallareff, who entered the section in June to relieve Captain Joroff of the last of his construction duties. After he became familiar with the individual requirements of the tactical commands, the lieutenant visited the District Engineer offices and gave on-the-spot layout approvals independently. On his first independent trip to a District Office, he was greeted by the District Engineer with a bitter complaint. "My name the Commanding General, First Air Force permit himself to be represented in the vital matter of layouts by a 'young lieutenant colonel'." and "Where is Harry Fisher?" asked the puzzled Engineer. Stallareff explained that Colonel Fisher's heavy pressing duties did not permit him to travel freely enough to give personal attention to these matters. He then showed the gentleman profoundly by informing him that the layout approval func-

tion had descended from the shoulders of the "young lieutenant colonel" to those of a second lieutenant. Thereafter layout approvals would remain the duty of the Engineer Section.

The work load became so heavy in the succeeding months that the Officers of the Section were entirely unable to cope with its volume. It was then that Colonel Fisher's policy of selecting and discharging and re-selecting to obtain superior enlisted personnel paid big dividends. Many of the papers emanating from the Section during the Summer of 1942, and thereafter, would be the work of the pens of Sergeants Langridge and McIntyre.

In the formative stages of the construction program, channels of communication were long and devious. Letters started in Headquarters, First Air Force, processed to Headquarters, Eastern Defense Command, for review, thence to Headquarters, Army Air Forces, for authorization, then to the Office, Chief of Engineers, for issuance of a directive, and down through the Division Engineers and the District Engineers to the Area Engineers, who finally accomplished the actual work. So much correspondence and review were entirely disproportionate to many of the minor subjects involved. This situation was not peculiar to the First Air Force, but was common to all Commands. In recognition of this condition, the



2/SGT. WILLIAM E. MCINTYRE

CONSTRUCTING

War Department determination on a policy of "centralization of construction authority", which resulted in the issuance in July of 1941 of O.E.O. Circular Letter No. 155, which permitted Air Force and Civilian Commissions to apply directly to Division Engineers for projects having an estimated cost not in excess of \$10,000. This letter would have profound effects on the operation of the Section. Not only did it simplify procedures, but it also multiplied leads number. Many matters properly the subject of well thought out single actions would be handled haphazardly in installations, afterwards would be piled on afterwards to produce a staggering volume of paperwork. Letter 155K, on the other hand, was to prove of tremendous value in the succeeding progress of the Summer and early Fall of 1942, when Training Centers would be built up throughout the First Air Force for troop units of the Army and Marines, notably Engineer and Signal. It would be useful, too, that Fall in constructing new buildings or in converting existing buildings on many bases to accommodate the newly acquired SACs. But... the biggest harvest from Letter 155K was yet to be reaped.

The Autumn of 1942 brought a distinct change in the character of First Air Force construction. The first football game came with the chilly days of late September. Fixing time of completion over the inadequacy of theater of operations type construction, to house personnel in the rigors of a northern winter were heard. Tactical Commanders were the first to raise their voices. Formal requests from Base Commanders and adverse reports from Medical Corps, Sanitary Corps and even Inspectors General followed. Letter 1569 noted mobile shift. Stimulated by success in obtaining improvements in buildings so readily, the more venturesome spirits among the Base Commanders soon sought other refinements. For one thing, that was unpopular. When open sides of roads and walks were sanded and gut. A curious aspect of the development noted it was the fact that the Air Force fly. Visits between the most widely separated bases were at least a matter of hours and now traveled with the wings of the nearest plane. A baseball diamond could not be constructed at Duxbury without the Commanding Officer at Trower sending a football stadium. As news of each improvement obtained by one base was heralded abroad, a rash of similar requests from other stations followed as a surety as day follows night. The age of "require building" was upon us.

Early in this "age", in October of '42 in a precise, the usual team of construction, Major Gatto and Lieutenant Shullerbill, witnessed Lieutenants Deane and McFarlan, two additional authorities, as the lead team.

Late Fall and early Winter were characterized by the afterthoughts of the big base construction progress of the Spring. The removal of hazards to flight in the approach zone to runway was a matter of concern in the very earliest War Department staffed directives, but in the rush to obtain beneficial use of windowless facilities, little actual work had been done in the interests of flying safety. Now the time had come for all construction progress to be reviewed. Flight hazards were carefully studied to see which should be removed and which would remain as the building to justify the cost of removal. Other matters made the subject of this on-site study were water supplies, which were often inadequate for fire protection of large concentrated concentrations; aircraft hangarings, which were frequently of insufficient size to accommodate heavy bombers; and shelter for fire fighting and crash equipment, which was becoming available in quantity.

On the 21st of November 1942, there broke into the Construction picture a letter from Headquarters Army Air Force addressed to all Air Force Commands, declaring that sufficient construction had now been authorized for all present and anticipated needs, and stating flatly "The programming of construction must now be brought to a conclusion". The letter declared that all Commands could be given until the first of December to submit, in consolidated form, a complete analysis of all of their construction require-



CAPT. J. S. MCFARLAN

CONSTRUCTING

ment. After January let all requests would be referred to review by the War Production Board. This review would not only cause delay, but might also result in complete disapproval. No better news of things the headquarters of the Base Commanders could have been devised than this letter. But it did to guide the other in employing his "final letter of request" as an instrument of empire building.

In this effort to end the program of construction, everyone acted with the best of motives, but the tide of world events was against anyone who attempted to stop new construction at that stage of the game. It was late in 1942 that reports of combat experience began to arrive in appreciable quantities. All pointed to a need for radical revisions in training programs and operating procedures. The paramount deficiency stressed was lack of individual proficiency in the employment of individual weapons. This criticism extended to all classes of personnel with one exception. The man who fired a rifle was no worse nor any better in this respect than the man who aimed the fleet gun mounted on a fighter plane, or the bombardier who computed with his weight the release path for a payload of bombs. Surveys were made at bases after bases in the crowded Eastern portion of the United States to find large areas of land where small arms could be fired at targets without endangering the closely packed civilian population. Similar need was

felt for bombing targets, and at the same time the Fighter Command Gunnery Schools were established. These were huge areas involving tracts of land each exceeding 1,000 acres adjoining the Air Base at Millville, N. J. and Westhampton Beach, N. Y. On these tracts were laid out formal scoring ranges for air-to-ground gunnery and simulators of all kinds of military ground installations to furnish practice in aerial strafing. New theories being developed placed huge emphasis on the employment of synthetic tracking devices. These were, in time, to become a major element in succeeding programs. In the period under consideration, it first became necessary to provide special buildings to house these devices.

A need was also felt at this time for familiarization of flighters with air-to-ground communications of the type employed in combat zones. This was an ambitious and far-reaching program, highly secretive in character. Two groups, a civilian architect-engineer agency and a military installation agency specially created under another Command, were working hard at cross purposes at plans for the project before a whisper of its existence reached the ears of the Engineer.

Because the project contemplated new construction at scores of sites, the resulting chaos was to become a matter of grave concern to the construction section. The technical installation agency, free from any restraints of command and wholly indifferent to plans for orderly procedure, pursued an utterly independent course. It made unauthorized promises and commitments to land owners. Its field representatives made far-reaching decisions without informing others. It changed its plans and policies daily. It even presumed to dictate instructions to the District Engineer offices. Confusion reigned. The District Engineers sincerely tried to cooperate, but received conflicting advice at every turn. Some districts sought approvals of layouts and acceptance of work from that agency, others through that agency, others through its higher echelons, and yet others through their own higher echelons. A couple few districts correctly sought these things of the First Air Force. Unwilling to let slip such a golden opportunity to bungle, all save one of the organizations, charged by law with the acquisition of real estate, contributed gloriously to the confusion. One of these obstructed and delayed the acquisition of such land parcels requested of it by forcing detailed consideration of totally unsuitable alternate sites of its own inspired selection. Another, utterly confused by its misunderstanding of the contemplated installations, hindered land acquisition for weeks, while it feebly and unsuccessfully sought approval of each site from an agency concerned only with



THE/AN MILITARY L. BATTAGLIA

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engine building had to be turned over and tactfully discouraged; those which were truly justified had to have the justification developed and presented to sponsoring agencies. In many cases, no policies existed which were applicable to the improvements requested and it became necessary to seek the formulation of policies. Approval of layout plans for all proposed construction had by this time become the sacred prerogative of the Engineer.

When new ranges were surrounding everywhere, it became apparent that in the hastily expanded Air Force's 1942/43 understanding of necessary safety provisions for firing of live ammunition had not been wholly disseminated. The layout of a desired rifle range would be submitted by a Base Commander to the headquarters. The liberal minded Ordnance officer would matter the most by pointing out that on this particular site near stray bullets could be expected to land in the exact center of U. S. Highway Number 120. Best to the Base were the correspondence. The best proposal for the aforementioned rifle range would pass the scrutiny of Ordnance only to stand as an imperishable barrier to real estate acquisition or to construction costs. A third or fourth submission was frequently required in those cases which were finally crowned with success. The process was entirely too long and a terrific burden to the acquisition of badly-needed facilities. In desperation Lieutenant Hallerhoff advocated himself in Ordnance safety requirements, and developed the practice of selecting safe firing locations in person in the field. Eventually most range facilities constructed in the first Air Force were products of Engineer Section design.

A Design Section within the Construction Section received its genesis development during 1943. Plans for standard facilities were developed there in connection with numerous authorities. These included dental laboratories developed for the Surgeon and housing for training aids devices developed for fighter and later for Bomber Commands, and development of designs for the integration of modified theater of operation barracks and lavatories into single structures.

Through the year 1943 the Construction Section profited much from Colonel Pomer's plan of personal rotation. Upon Lieutenant Dunstall's departure from Construction at the end of January 1943, that subsection received the first of an unbroken series of student officers, Lieutenant Stanley E. Freberg, who would remain about two months before passing to the Executive Section. He was followed in turn by Lieutenant Stanley E.

Van Deweeny, who held forth in Construction for three months until his departure in July to the Aviation Engineer Unit at Kirkwood. After him came Lieutenant William E. Demay, who remained during July, and Lieutenant James M. Johnson, who reached the Construction Section in mid-August, but held in a later study. Under Colonel Pomer's theory of officer training, each new officer to arrive in the Section was to spend a period of approximately 10 to 15 days in the Construction Section because of the opportunities for administrative training which arose from the great volume of formal correspondence carried on there. Whether that training was always 100% effective is a question which might be disputed at very great length, but certain it is that the productivity of the Section was greatly increased by the presence of these officers, who could and did carry so much of the burden of routine correspondence matters. Valuable contributions to the work of the Section were also obtained from the important related personnel, files, records, and tabulation and assembly of pertinent Engineer Intelligence were the fields of Sergeant Langridge, who was only assisted by the ever-diligent efforts of the well known book-trust, Sergeant Hugh Matthews, Corporal Hall and Pfc Grossman. Sergeant Matzke held forth in a field of his own, concerned largely with the development of maps and the maintenance of data on policies. The actual work in the Drafting and Design Section fell largely to Corporal Max Rosenfeld, who was only succeeded, upon his departure for overseas, by Private Joseph Shusterman.



LT. STANLEY E. VAN DEWEENY

CONSTRUCTING

The shifter steamtractor always carries the bulk of the loaded photographic bottles of the Destructive sub-section. This specific job fell to Miss Jean Beck until her departure in August 1943. Thereafter, Miss Frances Sorenson who has long been with the Engineers, working for all sections, would give exclusive attention to Destructive matters.

Early in May '43, Headquarters Army Air Force declared in a letter that the construction budget for fiscal year 1944, which would start July 1st, was to be sharply limited and that funds in the generous '43 budget would be applicable only to projects which could be placed definitely under contract before June 30th. May 1st was set as an absolute deadline for submitting projects which could hope to be under contract within that time and First Air Force supported all Bases to the end before the end of May complete unsolicited requests for all facilities needed to round out the stations. Actually this series of consolidated requests would mark the end of empire building. From then on, little would be heard of construction desires from Bases not affected by major operational changes.

However, this was by no means the end of construction. A series of major changes in the status of First Air Force was even then in the making. The Defense mission had declined and training was paramount. The Fighter Command had

long felt hampered in training activities by the prevailing bad flying weather of the northeastern portion of the United States, in which as many of its activities took place, because the bases, having been selected mainly for defense reasons, were located there. Near the end of summer, three events took place which opened the doors to new programs of construction. First was the formation of the Combined Air Defense Training Center for the training of anti-aircraft crews in conjunction with operational air force units. This involved major construction of test ranges for living under simulated field conditions in the vicinity of four air bases. Two other events occurred almost simultaneously; the end of the Antilles Detachment Command and its re-designation as I Bomber Command, assigned to the First Air Force, to conduct operational training of heavy bombardment units; and the final release of First Air Force from its defense mission and the severance of its relation as a subordinate unit of Eastern Defense Command. The first of these events revealed a need for the establishment of complete new bases, preferably in a climate most favorable for flying. The separation from DDC opened the way for the Fighter Command's long desired transfer from the bitter winter weather of the northeast. The new South was on. A mad scramble of horse-trading ensued. Bases in the South were wrested from the Air Service Command and the Third Air Force and northern bases were palmed off on Air Transport Command and the Navy, and even almost down to steady status under Air Service Command jurisdiction. Many of the bases acquired in this succession of deals were almost totally lacking in all kinds of needed facilities. Construction programs were initiated, contemplating the housing of thousands, and with it the provision of all kinds of recreational facilities. Even flying fields came in for major attention. The Commands engaged in training expressed horror at the thought of using fields where aircraft must be parked on dispersed hardstandings and huge areas of parking aprons were constructed. The bombardment CMC construction program was scarcely well under way when both Bomber and Fighter Commands shifted from operational training to replacement training. Consequently, there would be no further training of whole units. Training would confine itself entirely to individual air crews. This change radically altered the nature of training organizations on bases. Moreover, the new type of training was on a mass scale and the organizations were greatly enlarged. A second wave of intensive construction followed immediately on the heels of the first. The final factor contributing to new construction in 1943 was a shift at year's end of War Department policy governing maintenance sub-depots. They were no longer to be administered under a separate Com-



LT. JAMES W. JACKSON

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ment, but would become individual subordinate units under the Command for which they worked. Many new sub-Depots were formed under this policy and further construction ensued.

Right at the beginning of the final upsurge of construction in August of 1943, the First Air Force lost its original Engineer. Colonel Fisher was transferred to a higher headquarters and was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Asensio, recently returned from overseas. So well had Colonel Fisher organized his Section, that the transition occurred without the slightest interference with work. So change in the operations of the Construction Section was felt. Simultaneously with the departure of Colonel Fisher, the Construction Section received its last student officer of the year, Lieutenant James W. Jackson, who had been in the Section about six weeks working with the Executive. He was the one student officer destined to become an integral part of the Construction Section and to continue in it after his period of apprenticeship. As a matter of fact, his abilities were too greatly evident and in March of 1944 he was to follow Colonel Fisher to Washington.

In 1943, the bases newly acquired in the reorganizing of that period had to be the subject of complete survey and reconnaissance to determine what construction was needed before it could accomplish its mission. Definite plans for the development of the bases had to be made. These duties fell to the Engineer. The urgency with which new construction was required called for instant approvals made in the field immediately after work was authorized. These requirements entailed more field duty for the Construction officers than they had ever had before. Still other developments added to their duties. Theories of terminal training were constantly changing. New types of gunnery ranges, designed to teach specific theories of firing, had to be laid out and constructed. Experiments on synthetic training devices was greatly enlarged. The Design Section under Construction began anew to plan ranges and training device buildings.

This series of progress reached its culmination towards the end of 1943. 1944 was to open with a firm determination on the part of Army Air Forces to put an end to new construction authorizations. A rapid succession of communications was received from higher authority. Each communication set a new stereotyped phrase of certification which must be contained in every construction request that hoped for favorable

consideration. Each newly prescribed phrase was more stringent than the last, and further limited the classes of construction which might be approved. It soon developed that many worth while projects, desperately needed to promote flying safety or to put an end to wasteful practices, could not be made the subject of the rigidly prescribed certifications. Construction Section activities, therefore, could best be described as competition of double-talk. Lengthy explanations of why projects should be approved in the absence of required certifications became the order of the day. Servicing of projects in higher headquarters was multiplied and even the workings of Circular Letter 1840 were forestalled by processing, which carried all projects into Washington Headquarters for review. It became apparent before 1944 was very old that construction was really coming to an end.

The one activity which gave evidence of continuing was entirely new to the Section. It consisted of review of repair and utility projects, which never before had been within the province of the headquarters. Behind this development was a conviction on the part of the War Department that its policies were being circumvented by the application of repair and utility funds to projects properly classifiable as new construction. Since the beginning of the year 1944, the practice has grown on the part of the Service Commands of submitting a great many "R and U" projects to Air Force Headquarters for review. At the present moment, this practice is on the increase and gives signs of becoming shortly the principal duty of the Construction Section.

The end of the year 1943 brought changes in the personnel of Construction. With the departure of Colonel Asensio, Colonel Sells relinquished charge of the Construction Section and became the Engineer. His place heading Construction was taken by Captain Stollardoff, who was assisted by Captain McFarlan and Lieutenant Jackson. The beginning of the new year brought the assignment of two additional student officers to Construction, Lieutenants Joseph M. Fuld and Philip E. Sandingham. The departure of Lieutenant Jackson, in March, for Headquarters Army Air Forces, and of Lieutenant Fuld, in April, for an overseas assignment, left the Construction roster in the present day, Captain Stollardoff and McFarlan and Lieutenant Sandingham, Technical Sergeant Langridge, Staff Sergeant McQuay, Corporal Burghart, Pfc Schwabke, Pfc Selow and Miss Frances Tuxeda.



LT. JOSEPH H. FELD

PFC. JOSEPH SCHUBERT



MATURITY

"...But when I became a man, I put away childish things."

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With 1943 the Engineer Section came of age. During this year some twenty-eight members would be added to the roll and on the other side of the ledger there would be many departures. Significantly 1943 is the year in which all of the old guard of Regular Army men, with the exception of Sergeant McElvey, leave the Section for overseas destinations. It is in part the fulfillment of that portion of Colonel Fisher's mission which trained men for combat staff work. It is also the year of great change both in the outlook of the War itself and within the Section.

On the 4th of January, Private Sam (M1) Villiva reported and was assigned immediately to Captain Person and Lieutenant Maxwell for work in Supply. Villiva was a Texan who had done editorial work with the Texas Employment Commission in INGI and had previous experience in the Real Estate business. He was obtained by the Engineer from Capt Joseph T. Robinson in Arkansas. On the 12th of March, he was promoted to Private First Class. In May he became Corporal Villiva and on the 1st of September received his Sergeantcy. Seven days after Villiva, Private Fred S. Roberts, coming through the Special Induction Program, arrived and was assigned to the Camouflage Sub-Section because of his former occupation as layout and advertising artist. Roberts' versatility aided him in the rearrangement of the filing system which occupied much of his spare time. The remainder was discussed in collaboration with Sergeant Monahan.

A few days later, Major Robert Kimp departed from the office to serve with the Anti-Aircraft Command and Captain Fore transferred from the Camouflage Sub-Section to the Executive post which he would hold until the first of September when Major Daniel J. Hughes relieved him. At the same time, Fore was promoted from Captain to Major.

The last few officers to enter the Section had come almost entirely from Fort Belvoir, Virginia, wither from Officer Candidate School or from the Engineer Board. Delmatal, Hood, Maxwell and S.E. Wilson were representative of this group. On the 21st of January, three new officers from the Engineer Board reported to the Engineer Section on orders from the office of the Chief of Engineers. These were 2nd Lieutenants Stanley S. Freberg, Robert F. Kretell, and S. S. Williams. Freberg in civilian life had been a commercial artist and had had a thriving business in Chicago. Upon induction into the Armed Forces,

he was assigned to the Infantry and proceeded from there to Infantry Officer Candidate School, Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon graduation, he applied for Camouflage Training at Fort Belvoir in an unassigned status. Upon completion of this course he was assigned to the Engineer Board and worked on terrain models for shipment overseas. Freberg was assigned to the Construction Sub-Section upon arrival at Mitchel Field. On March 1st, he was detailed to temporary duty with the Army Air Forces Intelligence School, Harrisburg, Pa., for the six week course and upon his return was assigned to assist Major Fore. In line with his Harrisburg training he was transferred on July 9 to the 5th Photo Intelligence Detachment at Mitchel Field. He left there in the Fall for a 6 month overseas assignment.

Lieutenant Kretell was a commercial artist in civilian life from Buffalo, New York. Upon induction into the Armed Forces, he was assigned to an Engineer Coastal Battalion at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. He was detailed to Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, receiving his commission early in December, 1942. Lieutenant Williams, a home design teacher at Dartmouth College, upon induction was assigned to a General Service Engineer Regiment at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. From there he proceeded to Officer Candidate School the latter part of August.



LIEUT. STANLEY S. FREBERG

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receiving his commission late in November. Both officers were detailed to Camouflage School and the Design Section of the Engineer Board, and from there to the Engineer Section, Headquarters, First Air Force. Upon their arrival at Mitchell Field, Irwell was placed in the Operations Sub-Section in charge of special instruction and enlisted transfers with Lieutenant Scales; Williams became assistant in the Camouflage Sub-Section to First Lieutenant Myer Abel and retained that post later under Captain DeLuca.

The Camouflage Sub-Section was further augmented at this time by Private Jack Levine, one of the prominent young American artists. Levine was obtained for the Section through the special instruction program and at the personal request of Colonel Fisher. The Colonel had seen his work and after much correspondence with Levine's agent, Mrs. Kalperl, of the Downtown Galleries, requested the Adjutant General's Department to assign him immediately to this Section. Levine reported on the 25th of January.

During 1942 Colonel Fisher had proposed the name of Master Sergeant George Lucas for Warrant Officer. His appointment came through late in 1942 and Sergeant Lucas was relieved of the Chief Clerkship of the office, his place being taken over temporarily by Master Sergeant George Salernano. On the 30th of January, Salernano returned to the Airport Section yielding the post to the returning prodigal, Master Sergeant Walter S. Schelvey. For a year and a half, Ser-

geant Schelvey had been working in the Engineer Section of the First Air Force, which defended the Panama Canal Zone and the Caribbean Area.

Schelvey was followed, in mid-February by First Lieutenant Norman A. Soderstrom, a graduate Engineer from Purdue with eighteen years of excellent professional experience behind him. Soderstrom entered the Army initially reporting for active duty on July 2, 1912, at Campna Field, Macheson, Ill. He was ordered to Mitchell Field on the 24th of January 1943 and arrived here on the 27th of February. Lieutenant Soderstrom had hardly set foot in the Section before he was ordered to Fort Belvoir, Virginia, for the eight-week Field Officers' Course. Returning to the Section on April 26th, he was assigned to the Operations Sub-Section in charge of inspections and promotions. His duty in the following months would involve detailed inspections of Engineer units of the First Air Force and the writing of Technical Reports.

Nine days later Private Raymond A. Waspulski, a specialist instructor, reported. The letter requesting his assignment to the Section was written by Colonel Fisher himself. Sergeant Cipolano for sometime had been gathering together the nucleus for a stenographer's pool and it was to this that Waspulski was assigned.

Between the arrival of Waspulski on February 2 and the arrival of Saperl on May 1, there were two rather important departures. 1st Lieut. Myer Abel was transferred to the 399th Engineer Aviation Camouflage Battalion; Abel a factor almost a year with the 399th would be assigned to the Harrisburg Photo Intelligence School and transferred to the Air Corps for duties with an intelligence outfit overseas. Captain John A. Wilson was transferred to Headquarters IAF - Personnel; this assignment would be an extremely fortunate one for the Section as it provided direct contact with higher headquarters in the matter of transfer and assignment of Engineer Personnel of the First Air Force. Both of these officers had served the Section well during their stay here.

Mr. Lucas, who served the Section long and well as a distinguished interpreter of AF's and Army publications left the Section on the 30th of April 1943 for transfer to the Ground Forces. Lucas was an old Engineer soldier of the unconstructed type who never was able to reconcile his former Regular Army training with the more recent manners employed by the Air Force. He applied for and obtained an assignment to an Engineer Combat Battalion stationed at Camp Fickett, Va. The first communication received from him at the new



CPL. RAYMOND A. WASPULSKI

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assignment indicates that he had passed from doubt and uncertainty to unshakable happiness. Even the birds, a real one, warmed his heart, and he stated in effect that he was now able to curve a real bugler instead of a mere phonograph record. Early in March of 1944, Lunsford departed overseas with his battalion.

On the final day of April 1943, the Engineer Section received from the Reception Center at Camp Utter Private Edwin E. Peterson. Peterson came in the Section as a stenographer in the general pool; later he transferred to specialized stenography in the Supply Section. The duration of his stay within the Section was slightly less than six months. He departed on the 13th of October for Air Cadet training at Greensboro, N.C.

On the first of May, Private Samuel Barrett entered the Section from Fort Dix, N. J. for assignment to the 1st Department of the Camouflage Sub-section. Six days later, on May 7th, the Section was deluged with a contingent of 7 new class-stenographers direct from the Army Administration School at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La. The assignment of these men was one of the very few unopposed and unexplained additions to the personnel of the Section. About two weeks before this, First Air Force Personnel had notified the Colonel that these men were available for assignment; they were accepted with alacrity. Accordingly, PFC's John Julius Coskie, James S. Curry, Samuel A. Curry, Leonard G. DuFresne, Kenneth E. Scherer, and Theodore J. Scholtz arrived. Only the first and last named men made any impression upon the section. The remaining 4, the brothers Curry, DuFresne and Scherer were transferred 5 weeks later to Headquarters 1st Airborne Engineer Aviation Unit Training Center then at Westover Field. Scholtz remained with the Section as stenographer and clerk with the Operations Section until the 3rd of February 1944, when he was detailed to Officer Candidate School. The distinguishing thing about all of these men was their extreme youth. Of the two that remained, Scholtz was 19 and Coskie 21. For the most part all of them were serious and conscientious workers.

May was also a great month for departures. The 30th Engineer Aviation Regiment at Elizabeth drew from the Section three key men: Charles Hasler, who had worked ably in the Operations Section, was ordered to join the regimental headquarters in the 3-3 Section. He took with him Master Sergeant Driscoll who had served long in Operations and Sergeant Stenshill from Camouflage.

During the months of March and April, Sergeant John E. Conroy, who had served as the right hand of Captain Person in Supply, had been meeting out an application to Infantry Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga. Toward the



PFC. MELVIN L. PETERSON

CPL. THEODORE J. SCHOLTZ





SGT. SAM WILLIVA

CPL. HERBERT FRENKY



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end of April, the First Air Force labored and produced a quota, and on the 30th of May, still suitable ceremonies instituted among the enlisted personnel, was smothered with blessings. This was one of the first of the farewell parties given by the men for enlisted members of the Section being transferred out. It was to develop into something approaching a ritual as men left the Section on new assignments.

The formation of the 900th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company drew 4 men from the Section. Technician 4th Grade Evans, Staff Sergeant Warner (who took a voluntary cut to back sergeant for the opportunity to accomplish this transfer), Corporal Hulis and Technician 5th Grade Graf, draftsman and runner respectively, were the men sent. Major Kemp also, at this time, sent for Technician 4th Grade Elsie McCallan to work under him at the Headquarters AF Anti-Submarine Command in New York City.

On the 23th of June the atmosphere situation was further enhanced with the arrival of Private Herbert Frency from Camp Upton Reception Center. Frency was a studious, careful, intelligent worker who was assigned to the stenographic pool upon his arrival and remained until the 7th of April 1944 when he was detailed to Air Corps Officer Candidate School. Second Lieutenant James M. Jackson arrived on the 10th of the month from the 900th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company, Lt. Col. Hatto seeking to strengthen the Construction Section at this time inspected the Air Force Headquarters companies for possible officers. Jackson was picked out of a group of 27. He was a University of Maine graduate in civil engineering and had taken a one year post graduate course in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and had 5 years civilian engineering behind him when he reported to the Officer Training School at Camp Claiborne, La. in October 1942. He was ordered from there to the 900th Engineers and served with that unit for 7 months before entering the Engineer Section. Jackson was promoted to first lieutenant on 4 February 1944 and left the Section one month later for Headquarters Army Air Force.

On the 10th of July, Second Lieutenant Stanley M. Van Greeny departed for the 900th Engineer Aviation Regiment at Richmond, Va. The last few months of his stay in construction had been devoted to writing office memoranda on various subjects. His longing for field duty at last was to be gratified. In the letter which accompanied his transfer Major Fore stated: "It is believed that Lieut. Van Greeny can be profitably utilized in one of your organizations, and it is suggested that his efforts be scrutinized for suitability for promotion by comparing him with other officers with similar educational backgrounds." In September Van Greeny was detailed

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on a special assignment to the Arctic Regions and a recent letter from him to this office indicates that he is serving in the Aleutians.

Second Lieutenant William Robert Gentry was a Nebraska 1st born and bred. His background of Engineering was supplied by Texas A.M. from which he graduated in 1942 and along with numerous other Engineer students was sent to Officer Candidate School at Fort Belvoir. He graduated on the 25th of May 1943 and was assigned as supply officer for E & S Company of the 40th Engineer Aviation Regiment at Richmond, Va., and on July 9 was relieved of that duty, transferred to the Engineer Section and assigned to Construction for indoctrination. His work in this department was extremely brief and he soon moved to the Supply Section as assistant to Captain Perrow and Lieutenant Maxwell.

Private Joseph Schuchels was obtained through the voluntary induction program and was sent from the Reception Center to the 1st Airborne Engineer Aviation Unit Training Center at Westover Field, Mass. for his basic training. On the 26th of July, with the abrupt departure of Rosenfeld for overseas, the need for draftsmen within the Section became acute and Lieut. Erbelle wrote to the 1st Airborne Engineers, requesting that Schuchels be assigned to this office immediately. The 1st Indorsement which notified the office of Schuchels's transfer was dated 27 July. Schuchels arrived on the 28th, was assigned immediately to the Drafting Section. He was promoted to Pfc on the 21st of October.

For some months Headquarters Army Air Forces and the Office of the Air Engineer had been angling for the reassignment of Colonel Fisher. Five previous assignments had been suggested but the Colonel feeling that his work within the Section was incomplete had managed to by-pass them, but here at last in the Buildings and Grounds Section of Headquarters Army Air Forces was a job ready made for his abilities and the suspense was over! The deal had been hanging fire since June and the Colonel remained until a successor could be chosen. On August the 11th the successor arrived.

The Section from the very first had known no other Engineer. Colonel Fisher had brought the Section into being - it had been his "baby", and now he was to leave it to proceed farther along the military highway. The situation within the Section was analogous to Victorian England without Queen Victoria. He had always been here. Now he was leaving. It somehow seemed impossible that this could be, yet there it was.

The new Engineer was Colonel Samuel Jose Asencio. Colonel Asencio was a West Pointer and a graduate Engineer from the University of California. He had the additional background of having completed the Engineer School Officers' Course at Belvoir and the Command and General Staff School. In 1942 he had been the Engineer of the South Atlantic Wing on duty outside of continental United States and was awarded the Legion of Merit for this mission, and for ten months thereafter had served as Military Attaché at Bogota, Colombia. He left Bogota on the 23rd of July and arrived at Mitchell Field on August 11th to undertake Colonel Fisher's duties. Colonel Fisher took formal leave of the Section on the 18th of August and, after a 10-day delay enroute, reported to Headquarters Army Air Forces. With Colonel Fisher went Mrs. Fisher, a charming and gracious hostess and friend to the officers of the Section and their families. Her many kindnesses would not soon be forgotten.

The administrative change within the Section was more than a switch of two men, for it coincided with transition in the Army Air Forces from operational unit training to individual replacement training. Under the impact of this shift, the mission of the First Air Force changed radically. The activation of new units would cease and inactivation for units already in training would follow. Personnel of these inactivated Engineer units would be transferred to replacement pools for dispersal to other more ready branches of the service. Ultimately the training organizations themselves would go. This then was the program over which Colonel Asencio was invited to preside.



1ST LT. WILLIAM R. GENTRY

William R. Gentry

MATURITY

There is no possible basis of comparison between Colonel Fisher and Colonel Amadio. The men were radically different temperamentally and had most divergent backgrounds that even had the problems facing them been similar, each would have arrived at his solutions through different approaches. Under Colonel Fisher the Section had been run as a group of little sub-sections unrelated to each other, unified only by the Engineer himself. Colonel Fisher, in many instances of matters referred to his attention, personally handled the details from beginning to end. On the other hand, Colonel Amadio pursued the practice of referring all such matters to the responsible sub-section heads concerned. Colonel Fisher held a tight rein on all activities. Colonel Amadio acted softly at first, an early move was the shift of personnel among the sub-sections which achieved a blending of sub-section duties and thereby relieved tensions. Group activities and weapons training for the entire Section became almost daily events.

One instance which account the full plan of Colonel Amadio's administrative training to bear occurred early in September 1941, when Captain Demetel represented the Engineer at a conference. The officer who had convened the conference was piqued because Colonel Amadio had not attended in person, and in an ill-considered letter to Colonel Amadio stated:

"I am sorry that you could not attend the Command and Staff conference we had yesterday. - - It is important that Engineer Sections of various stations and commands know something about the way and means that are necessary to be employed to carry on the Engineer assignments assigned to the unit Engineers under Army Regulations 200-1. - - Your representative did not know enough about the operations of the First Air Force to be of any assistance to us. He had no idea of the Army Regulation duties of a (sic) unit Engineer and displayed practically no knowledge of the general mission and operations of the First Air Force components under the category of defense holding at the present time in this Command."

To this reproval, Colonel Amadio replied:

"I regret exceedingly that it was not possible to attend in person your recent Command and Staff conference and also that my representative, Captain Demetel, failed to make a better impression on you."

Our telephonic request to your office for justification of the purpose of the conference elicited the response that the meeting was 'general in scope and for the purposes of orientation', and consequently Captain Demetel was given no specific instructions as to subject matter. However, he had always demonstrated himself to be thoroughly conversant with the operations of the First Air Force, as well as a thoroughly grounded in his specialty of Camouflage - so much so, in fact, that I had not, nor would have, the slightest hesitation in selecting him as my representative."

This letter ended the incident.

The highly important fact concerning both Colonel Fisher and Colonel Amadio is that each, though poles apart in manner, disposition and approach, was highly successful in the duty of the Engineer.

The situation in stenographers was aggravated in early August by the transfer of Joan Bacon from the Engineer Section to the Signal Section, thus withdrawing a pillar from Construction. Frances Rogers who had been on call on the second floor for Supply, Camouflage, and Operations typing was rushed downstairs and into the gap. The second floor sections mourned this loss, and not-



COL. NICHOL J. AMADIO

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taken seemingly until on the 24th of August her face appeared at Frances Brown's former job desk. Mrs. Mary G. Webb was introduced throughout the Section by Sergeant Gipeleiro. Tactful, meticulous, careful, and alert, she became a valuable member of the Section immediately.

On the 23th of August, Sergeant Joseph Winkler left the Section for Transportation Officer Candidate School at New Orleans, La. His rail transportation background fitted him excellently for this assignment. Winkler was the first of the selected personnel of the Section detailed to Officer Candidate School to receive his commission. Upon graduation, Sergeant Winkler was reassigned to the First Air Force and visited Mitchell Field to receive his definite assignment as Transportation Officer at Selfridge Field.

By July, rumors of the world battle fronts sounded louder within the Section. Warning orders from Washington named three selected men for transfer to a combat theater. Specifically named were Master Sergeant Richard L. Becker, Technician 4th Grade George Hurvath and Corporal Max Rosenfeld. The orders came through early in August, and by the 10th they were on their way to the China-Burma-India Theater. In many subsequent cases, personnel of the Engineer Section were to be picked in small groups for that theater, where they would function much as they had during their tours of duty at Mitchell Field. A recent letter of Sergeant Becker from the Headquarters 11th Air Force states:

"All of us are well and getting along just fine - still plenty of work and glad of it . . . Had a very pleasant surprise the other day, being visited by some other than Staff Sergeant McClellan of the same office as Captain Dushrow. Expect Pete Battaglia over here too, one of these days. Dave could use him or Furse in the office. Had mail from George (Schubert) and Tommy (McClone) the other day. Both are fine and like their jobs very well . . . China is very nice - here we live in hostels run by the Chinese and there is nothing required of us to do, the house boys do everything.

A few days ago the yellow ones of Mitches paid us a visit here, and it wasn't any too pleasant, especially to us newcomers. All of us came out of it OK, but no longer virgins - let me tell you, it scared hell out of me. Strange as it may seem, you even get used to it, but who in the hell wants to get used to bombs? . . . While we are talking about promotions, let me announce a few - Staff Sergeant Hurvath and Sergeant Rosenfeld, both doing a good job, especially Max is

. . . four booklet on China was and still is a lot of help. I tried to speak to our houseboy, but either my Chinese is lousy or the dialect is wrong. It's a lot of fun anyway.

Best regards to everybody,

From the Mitchell Field
Forward School"

Private Herbert Frensky, hearing of the need within the Section for qualified stenographers, suggested to Lieutenant Brwell that his brother-in-law, who was facing demotion, would be an excellent addition to Gipeleiro's post. Accordingly, papers were exchanged between the candidate and the guardian of special selection, and on the 10th of August 1943, Private William Kaganow reported to the Section. Kaganow was assigned for a time to the stenographic pool and, upon the departure of Sergeant Winkler, an assistant to Gathman in the Technical library.

Technician 3rd Grade George E. Hiner, who, with Sergeant George Hurvath, had served the Camouflage and Operations Sections long and well in the capacity of stenographer, was transferred on the 10th of October to the Detachment Medical Department at Mitchell Field for discharge from the Army. For two months prior to his departure, Hiner had a sick in poor health and by order of the surgeon the section with reluctance was forced to leave him.



MRS. MARY G. WEBB

MATURITY

Another pillar of the Section was withdrawn 27 October with the departure of Captain Robert C. Perren, who had served for two years and more as the Supply and Aircraft Data Officer. Swettie in mid-October Colonel Fisher had written requesting his transfer to the Buildings and Grounds Division, Office of the Assistant CGAF of Air Staff, Washington, National and Distribution, Headquarters Army Air Forces. It was a request which could not be ignored and would mark a definite advancement for Captain Perren. His duties within the Engineer Section were assumed by Lieut. Maxwell.

The 40th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company, on the 27th of October, transferred Private Willie F. Gafford to serve as general and classified runner for the Engineer Section. Under Gafford, this position assumed the importance of an art and he managed to dispense the theory that southerners are by nature slow-moving and slow-speaking. Gafford was neither. His Alabama accent spared conspicuous 17th Century phrasings with the rapidity of a racing chariot. His dexterity in the delivery of both messages and papers saved and embarrassed his fellow southerner, Sergeant McLaughry. As Gafford had experience beyond the post of runner and held his time until in April of 1944 he applied and was accepted for Flexible Serial Company School, following in the footsteps of Sergeant Castellon.

Lieutenant the 40th Engineers came PFC Arnold Deise, reporting for duty with the Construction Section to take the place of Sergeant

Ralph Battaglia, who was leaving almost at the same time for Air Corps Administrative Officer Candidate School in Miami, Fla. Deise had a civil background of architectural drafting and was a former classmate of Sergeant Rosenfeld in the Architectural School at New York University. Deise was assigned to the Construction Section in charge of records and as a draftsman.

November 15th saw the departure of one of the more formidable of the old guard. For about two months, Major Fera had shown that his days within the Section were numbered. For about a month prior to his departure, his desk was littered with travel information on the Far East and before leaving he had practically become an authority on Indian customs, military, civil and social. He would be followed two days later by Sergeant Thomas E. McElroy, who was transferred to the Air Corps and sent to the China-Burma-India Theater as stenographer in the Air Inspector's office at New Delhi.

Two days later, as the 40th Headquarters Company approached disbandment, the Second Lieutenant Daniel E. Donahue was transferred to the Engineer Section for duty with Operations. Lieutenant Donahue had been an artist in civil life. He entered the Army in the early days of Selective Service and was assigned immediately to the Coast Artillery at Fort Monmouth, one of the Harbor Defenses of Boston. The glories of that post were lost to him. Donahue came under the wing of the Corps of Engineers through Officers Candidate School at Fort Belvoir, to which he was sent early in 1941. Commissioned, he was assigned to the Engineer Board. He came to Maxwell Field as one of the original cadre of the 40th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company.

Late in November came rumors that Lieutenant Colonel Samuel J. Jencks was to leave. By the first of December the rumors were confirmed. He was to replace Colonel Morris, commanding the 1st Airborne Engineer Aviation Unit Training Center at Westover Field, who was going overseas. Colonel Jencks, for two weeks prior to his departure on the 15th of December, had been on detached service in Washington, D. C. His tour of duty within the Headquarters had lasted approximately four months. Colonel Jencks then assumed the post of Air Force Engineer and was officially designated as such in a special order on December 28th. With this appointment the Engineer Section entered its third phase.

Colonel Jencks, stepping from Construction to his new post, brought with him about three solid years of military experience in Engineer matters and a wealth of understanding of the administrative problems involved. It would be Colonel Jencks's unpleasant duty to wind up the affairs of several existing Engineer units whose disbandment had been ordered. He and Lieutenant Colonel Hughes, his Executive, were the last of the old guard to remain in the Section.

LEUT. DANIEL E. DONAHUE



MATURITY

Before the year's end, two more of the key personnel were to depart for overseas assignments. Master Sergeant George W. Haberbern on the 27th of December 1943 left for the China-Burma-India Theater, to be followed two days later by Captain Norman J. Dustrum. On the 31st of March from "Somewhere in China", Captain Dustrum wrote:

"A note about this job - you will enjoy knowing that I have a new calling - Supply Officer. Finally that post has assumed some dignity. I wish that little fat boy (Maxwell) were here with me. I would continue his education. In the theater the supply problem is one of local progression and a damned interesting job it is. With it comes an appointment as purchasing and contracting officer. At least I will show why taxes are high for another 100 years. I will save the details for another letter".

Dustrum had served with the Engineer Section for ten full months.

Second Lieutenant Joseph K. Full, the last arrival of the year, was a graduate Civil Engineer from the University of Pennsylvania. Recently commissioned, he went to Officer Training School at Camp Claiborne, La. for six weeks. Upon graduation he was assigned to the 400th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company for duty with the Engineer Platoon. He would remain with the Engineer Section in Construction until April 1944, when he would be ordered overseas.

The Engineer Section, First Air Force, until the beginning of 1943 had seen many roadings and fee goings. As the war went on became more encouraging and as the Army of the United States, throughout the world, needed more and more trained men, the emphasis definitely was shifting to upward movement from the Section. 1944 would see even greater changes.

During 1943 there were eleven officer promotions. Majors Bette and Hughes both became Lieutenant Colonels. Captain Fere received his Majority. Lieutenants Dehatal, Stollhoff, McFarlan, and Dustrum were promoted to Captains. Of the shrewtail group, McFarlan, Reale, Wilson, and Maxwell pinned on a silver bar. Lieutenant Colonel Jensen received the full Colonelcy after his departure in December, but as the promotion had been initiated while he was in this office, it is noted here.



PVT. CLISE V. GIFFORD



CPL. JAMES S. GATMAN

CPL. JIM J. DODD



Regards
John P. Casanova
Artist

Chapter 10

WOMEN

Women of Afloat, we have to show That women educated to the best,
Can meet Man, face to face, on his own ground, and beat him there.

Princess Ida act III William Schwenck Gilbert

The fair days of August saw Doris 1943 held in their breasts the milk of revolution. Colonel Asensio had hardly settled himself firmly before the debacle took place. The "debacle" was, in concrete form, Third Officer Adrian Wood, Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, who entered the Engineer Section at this time.

Women have always had to do with wars. The old, rather sentimental, notion that women stayed home, tended the children, baked, cooked and sewed while their mates went forth to war, had been given the lie ever since Joan of Arc had outdone the Fortress of Orleans. The idea had been blasted from the American scene when Molly Pitcher fired that cannon during the Revolution. The one and startling fact was the incorporation, legally and without let or hindrance, of women into the organization of the Army of the United States. Theoretically there is nothing wrong with that, nor actually is there in practice. The fact remains, however, that it is strange and unusual and the personnel of the Army, as members of an oldish institution of long standing, which had hitherto been undoubtedly male in character, resented it. The resentment had sprung not so much from open hostility as from the fact that the male is genuinely self-conscious of his prerogatives and disapproves interference. This bordered on an inferiority complex.

The appearance of this carpet-topped lesson in the office in her neatly tailored uniform, with the visage of Pallas Athena in bright gold on the lapel, brought with it a mild wave of horror to the primitive wearers of the conventional castles. There was a feeling that tradition had creased about the ears of the Section.

The path that led Third Officer Wood to the Engineer of the First Air Force was somewhat involved. Major Fore, whose social tendencies led him to initiate associations with the new WAAC staff director, was prevailed upon to take one WAAC officer into the Section. When the issue was related to the Sub-Section heads, the reaction varied sharply from shocked, unbelieving amazement to complete disinterest. Third Officer Wood was assigned to the Airport Section where Master Sergeant Schwenck served as chief S.C.O. Schwenck had weathered all previous military contingencies and decided that this situation had at least the advantage of novelty and that he would be able to cope with it. This was the first WAAC installed within the Section walls, seated under the direct gaze of Captain Ferson. The Captain's feelings about this addition to his staff, though unrecorded, were tinged with uncertainty. The records of airmen were his prime project and the radical step of placing these sacred writings in untried hands was fraught with horrifying possibilities.



LIEUT. MOLLIE F. WOOD

WOMEN

The Auxiliary Corps was doomed from the start. It was a fumbling half-measure which was used merely to insure the public and the military in the line of a woman's army. Furthermore, many WAC were willing to take an overseas assignment, from which they were protected in their military status. In the last of September 1963, the WAC dropped the extra A and became the Women's Army Corps. Third Officer Wood, MAJ, was demoted to 2nd Lieutenant Wood, MAJ. This changeover was not without a certain amount of confusion. Many WAC officers assigned to staff sections in First Air Force headquarters felt that they could secure the insignia of the branch for which they worked and then lay aside Fabius Alchem. The new Lieutenant in the Engineer Section even went so far as to purchase a set of the coveted Engineer buttons for her blouse. It was evidence of a laudable determination to be an Engineer at all costs. Now, after the mid-transit all WAC officers were given to understand that they were members of the Women's Army Corps and no longer. Off goes the insignia.

Lieutenant Wood was a hard worker who shied from inactivity or delay. If a day seemed dull, she was not one to sit it out. Off she went to the executive to stir up some other work. Actually her previous civilian career had been jammed with all sorts of jobs from entrepreneur of a beauty shop to work with an Engineer office in airports in Texas. With such a background, staff duty would naturally come as a lull.

WAC. WANDERST WOLFMAN

along in Forester, Lieutenant Wood discovered an opening at Long Air Base, Selfridge Field, Michigan as assistant stenographer. One applicant for it and the transfer were commensurate with the blessings of the Engineer on the 20th of December. The duration of her tour of duty within the Section had been a few days short of four months.

Two weeks prior to Lieutenant Wood's departure, the first enlisted WAC reported for stenographic duty. Private Corbellia Gerow was a Texas product with a secretarial background in civil life. She was joined on the 15th of December by Private Margaret Rowland, originally from Minnesota, also assigned as a stenographer.

The reception of these two "strays" of the enlisted personnel of the WAC was cool to say the least. There had been current enlarging in the WAC objective of "replacing a man for the fighting front", and this looked very much like the vanguard of wholesale replacement. Each Engineer enlisted man inquired of private Gerow and Rowland if either knew which soldier she had been assigned to replace. This situation made the position of the WAC somewhat suspect. But as the month wore on and the Section directory was no further profaned, the girls were drawn closer to the Section and were accepted as equals. The only prerogative still denied them is participation in Sergeant Wustberg's pep talks which are held in a room entirely sacred to the male.

WAC. CORBELLIA GEROW



LEGERDEMAIN

When, to evade Destruction's hand, To hide they all proceeded,
No soldier in that gallant band Aid half as well as he did,
He lay concealed throughout the war, And so preserved his gait, O!

The Sneaklers, Act I
William Somerset Maugham

Camouflage was a branch of the Military Art which came more brought back the artists into war. The assignment of this division to the Corps of Engineers was eminently right. Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Cellini were all artist-engineers. Every medieval and renaissance prince employed artists on contract with the specification that each should devote a portion of his time to the invention of fortifications and methods of war. Leonardo's experiments with flight, in fact, are well known. Modern society has tended to classify artists and designers as a thing apart, considering them at times almost as parasites. The armies of the 19th Century had omitted the use of this group. Now, here was a phase of Military Art that could be undertaken by artists and in which their specialized training would be of tremendous value. Society being built on the idea of usefulness, the artist could render the main stream, conscious of essential contributions to the effort.

The First World War brought Camouflage in its wake. It was far and away the most publicized activity of the armed forces and the enthusiasm engendered by the press fell short only by a little of that afforded the Hollywood stars of the day. French specialists called from the subject groups on the left hand followed in exotic colors and glassed boats, guns and houses instead of camouflaged. The subject was treated as a sort of game between the warring armies - each pretended not to see anything which was decorated with queer stripes, cubes or swirls. The official terminology for this sort of thing was "mottle painting". It must not be conceived that this was not "playing for keeps" but rather that a kind of truce existed between the armies as each outdid the other's dangle. Toward the end of the war the bizarre effect was considerably diminished. Observation aircraft, newly used over enemy territory spotted these curious installations making them targets for long range guns. Camouflage changed overnight.

A leisurely research was carried out in the years between the two wars, but nothing definite was established except the indisputable fact that any camouflage should be inconspicuous. Strange as it may seem, this was a great point gained, but there would be longer and harder battles to come.

In 1918 a camouflage survey was conducted informally throughout the various army centers of Europe which yielded the fact that

Germany was interested in mobile camouflage, France in static camouflage, Italy was tremendously conscious of the need for camouflage and was studying it in an operative sort of way. Russia was non-committal and England very serious about it. England was not unprepared for the vicissitudes of the war in this respect - many of the later developments in this war were beyond the experimental stage in 1917. It was from these English experiments and findings, in the main, that much of the American Camouflage sprang.

The Air Forces were alert to the immense possibilities of camouflage and in 1917 without recourse to the Corps of Engineers set up their own camouflage school at the California Institute of Technology in Los Angeles. Faced at this slight, the Corps of Engineers did battle with the Air Corps to settle who should control this phase of training. Eventually the Corps of Engineers won the point and Fort Belvoir became the base of camouflage operations, conducting schools for officers and enlisted personnel tutored by the large experimental facilities of the Engineer Board. It was this shift that caught two future officers of the section enroute to California and recruited them from Jefferson Barracks to Belvoir. After their arduous camouflage became an unchallenged Engineer function.



CAPT. SAMUEL JOROFF

LEGERDEMAIN

In the early days of camouflage the first step of its services was salesmanship pure and simple. The early traditions of fair and square fighting made blinding, bleeding and bewitching seem unmanly. This attitude was particularly prevalent in the "old army". Old soldiers objected to having equipment cluttered up with nets and branches and tatty things. Even louder screams were heard when the new Delvoir tailored battle dress, like Joseph's coat of many colors, was instituted along with painting of faces and hands. As a sales measure, camouflage personnel were changed; every effort was made to de-emphasize and sever connections with art. Camouflage was everyone's duty and responsibility and was a practical measure to be employed by everyone. Technical and artistic aspects were confined to Delvoir and only the practical application was allowed to filter through to the field.

The Air Corps interest in Camouflage grew from a matter of factness - the awareness of the vulnerability of aircraft on the ground - the helplessness of a sprawling air strip - and the glaring anomaly of an aerial camera. The school at Fort Belvoir soon discovered that the Air Corps personnel were the aptest pupils. Other branches, in the main, were proceeding along unconcerned. Nervewrecking intelligence reports would alter this in time.

Late in 1941 Colonel Duffrey of General Headquarters Air Force in a memorandum to the Engineer Section Command stated that Camouflage was a highly important mission. At first the Engineer Section, First Air Force was not particularly concerned with this activity and until the growth of troops under the section, its major interest was for the single widely adopted practice of dispersal. In the summer of 1942, the addition of Lieutenant Hollister to the Construction Sub-Section released Captain Joroff to organize a new Camouflage Sub-Section. The new reproduction facilities of the 90th Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company stationed in Delvoir were reestablished to publicize the techniques and advantages of Camouflage. Throughout the fall of 1942 the process progressed unobtrusively and posters for a waiting First Air Force. Then Colonel Finzer decided that something should be done. The new special induction program was opened and this was used to suggest the camouflage and reproduction units. War, like politics, is a sea change battlefield and the leveling effect of the Draft law gradually leveled the art world. Letters of application for assignment to Engineer units arrived at the section from innumerable portals of culture hitherto opened only by imitation. Artists were brought into the battle from all over the country. These included Harold Sessler, Chris Kerridge, Mitchell Ripstein, Samuel Leventhal and George Delors and the Casher and Folios of the Posters; Louis Jones and George Rebling. The program was actually gathering together a list of men of art that read like Vasari's lives of the Artists. The Engineer Section had taken on the aspect of a Recycled patron.

During the summer, the sub-section, under the careful guidance of Captain Joroff and his assistant, Sergeant Matthew Verrier, was proceeding along nervously prepared lines. A liaison with Fort Belvoir was set up and the publications of the Engineer School and the Engineer Board were used as a basis for the first series of training literature produced by the Section. This was the file of Numbered Memoranda which dealt in a semi-facetious manner with camouflage training and spread itself over time model making and the allied subject of painting. It was during this period that Corporal Allen Evans was added to the sub-section on a part time basis from the Airport Sub-Section under Captain Ferson. In late summer Captain Weisner and Lieutenant Abel joined the sub-section. With the addition of these two officers First Air Force Camouflage began in earnest.

As Weisner's time was all too short to make any large impression on the Section yet he and Abel did take much of the material that was issued from Delvoir digest it and release it



MR. MATTHEW L. WERD, JR.

LEGERDEMAIN

In workable form for use by the Engineer units. Fuller use was made of the Engineer Air Force Headquarters Company in the matter of training and reproduction and First Lieutenant Abel maintained liaison in their work and in enlarging participation in Camouflage projects. It was also in the late fall that the idea of a Camouflage School for Noncommissioned Officers was conceived and born in the bosom of the 90th Engineers 1st Section. The credit for this must be shared equally among Colonel Fisher, Joroff, and Abel. Unfortunately Joroff never remained to see the fruition of this plan as he was called overseas before the school opened. Mialaner was detailed to the Company Officers' Course at Fort Belvoir and Captain Fare, after preliminary training at the Officers' Camouflage Course at Fort Belvoir, was placed in charge of the Section. First Lieutenant Abel in coordination with Lieutenants Hensley and Lauer of the 90th arranged the schedule of the course and Abel brooded over the school like a mother hen, watching every move, logging off part of the course here and adding pertinent material there, tracking down training files, pictures and training aids of all sorts. Abel also directed the development in the Headquarters Company of experimental projects in camouflage. Many of his early ideas, he would bring into wide use later within the 300th Engineer Aviation Camouflage Battalion.

A long continued project of producing a monthly camouflage training poster materialized in November. Corporal Stonehill, recently released from duty as a "classified runner" executed the art work on the poster under the direction of Abel. The poster was to bear a two-month calendar which would serve a two-fold purpose. Not only would expiration of work hours spur the production of a succeeding issue, but the presence of the calendar would lend an added quality of usefulness to the poster and assure its display in choice locations. Actual distribution of the first issue was 7 -- the number printed less than 50. The calendar-poster proved popular, its two month demand was for 500, later with national distribution directed by the Air Engineer, 2000 of each edition was produced.

Early in January Major Elmg transferred to the Anti-Submarine Command and Captain Fare, just as he was promoted to Major, succeeded him on the executive desk. For the following three months Major Fare was to retain charge of Camouflage in addition to his other duties. This was unfortunate for the sub-section, since his work as Executive during a very busy period required his full attention. 2nd Lieutenant Henry S. Williams, recently from the Engineer School was assigned in January to assist Lieutenant Abel. Soon after two well-wished arrivals joined the Camouflage ranks; Privates Frederick Roberts and Jack Levine. Roberts had formerly been with the



LIEUT. WEAH ABEL

1ST LT. JOSEPH G. STONHILL

