

25th Naval Construction Regiment

*Historical
Information*



“Construimus, Batuimus”
“We Build, We Fight”



ON BOARD

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>OFFICERS</u> | <u>MEN</u> | <u>AUTHORITY</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------|
| 1 Jul'44 | 13 | 33 | ROSTER and BNP 625 |
| 1 Aug'44 | 16 | 44 | R & BNP625 |
| 1 Sep'44 | 18 | 46 | BNP625 & R |
| 1 Oct'44 | 17 | 56 | BNP625 |
| 1 Nov'44 | 16 | 40 | MoR |

25th Construction Regiment (*INACTIVATED*)

25th REGIMENT

Location: United Kingdom (Plymouth)
Cherbourg

25th Reg.

81st, 111th, 146th & 28th CB
Det. 1006.

- 4-15-44 - Capt. Coryell assigned as OinC of 25th Reg. from Comnaven(Budocks ltr to Bupers dated 31 Mar'44).
- 4-15-44 - Comdr. Buhr assigned from Budocks as Exec(Budocks ltr to Bupers dated 31 Mar'44).
- 4-15-44 - Lt.Cmdr. Scheppers assigned from Budocks(Budocks ltr to Bupers dated 7 Apr'44).
- 4-15-44 - Ens. Burelbach, Hopkins, Kovich, Lynch, Robinson, Carp. Davies, Kersteen, Revelle, Roberts and Roll assigned from 28th CB(Budocks ltr to Bupers dated 1 Apr'44).
Leave
- 5-19-44 - Lt.(jg) Diehl assigned from 13th Reg(Comlan crab ltr P16-4/00 (049/Dn) over File No. 261362 to subj. officer dated 20 Apr'44).
- 5-19-44 - Lt.Comdr. Frorath assigned from 13th Reg(Comlan crab ltr P16-4/00 (049/Dn) over File No. 81019 to subj. officer dated 20 Apr'44).
- 5-19-44 - Lt. Jones,O-V, assigned from 13th Reg(Comlan crab ltr P16-3 (30/Fy) over Serial 2456 to subj. officer dated 11 Apr'44).
- 5-19-44 - Lt.(jg) Young assigned from 13th Reg(Comlan crab ltr P16-3 (30/Fy) over Serial 2455 to subj. officer dated 11 Apr'44).
- 5-19-44 - Lt. Braheny assigned from 13th Reg.(Comlan crab ltr P16-3 (30/Fy) over Serial 2459 to subj. officer dated 11 Apr'44).
- 5-19-44 - Comdr. Anderson, MC, given additional duty with 25th Reg. from the 81st(Comlan crab ltr P16-3 (049:pr) to subj. officer - no date).
- 6-3-44 - Officer roster checked with 1 May'44 report - Added Lt. Comdr. Roberts, Lt. Contello, Ens. Fox, CEO's, and Lt.(jg) Chalmers, SC.
- 6-9-44 - Ens. Hall assigned from 28th CB(28th CB ltr CB28/P16-4(8) over JHK;ld to subj. off. dtd 9 May'44).
- 6-9-44 - Lt.Comdr. Buxton, DG, assigned from 81st CB(81st CB ltr 81NCB/P16-4 over Ser. 1257 over 11;Lz to subj. off dtd 14 May'44).

- 6-9-44 - 25th CB headquarters is at Plymouth. (25th CR daily report dated 30 Apr'44).
- 6-20-44 - Ens. Tully assigned from Endicott(Budecks ltr to Bopers dtd 22 May'44).
- 7-6-44 - Officer roster checked with 1 Jun'44 report - Lt. Comdr. Scheppers not listed.
- 7-12-44 - Lt. Diehl detached to 13th Reg. (Comlancreb ltr 261362 over P16-4/00 (AJC/wp) over Ser. 4308 to subj. off. dtd 13 Jun'44).
- 7-12-44 - Lt. (jg) West assigned from 97th CB (Com Londonderry ltr (287660) over 2734 over HB106/- P-16-4/00 to subj. off. dtd 22 Jun'44).
- 7-12-44 - Comdr. Buhr ordered to B ach OMAHA as representative of OinC 25th Reg. (ComtaskForce 127 ltr P16-4/00 (AJC/gs) over 236974 Ser. 4303 to subj. officer dtd 12 Jun'44).
- 7-29-44 - Officer roster checked with 1 Jul'44 roster - Lt. Comdr. Scheppers not listed. Detached Lt. Comdr. Buxton, DC.
- 8-3-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 13th Reg. - On the 1st of Jun'44 the 13th Reg. took over all pontoon assembly work and the custody of all pontoon materials in the United Kingdom thus freeing the 25th Reg. for action in the invasion and operation and for movement to France. When 25th Reg. departed for far shore operations the 13th Reg. took charge of all 25th Reg. personnel remaining or returning on near shore.
- 8-4-44 - Ch. Carp. Hurt assignd from 29th CB (OinC 29th CB ltr P16-4/00cs 251915 dtd 23 Jul'44 to subj. officer).
- 8-15-44 - 25th Reg. maintains hdqtrs at WATSON, attached to ComUsBaseFrance and is responsible for construction and maintenance of Far Shore bases. Consists of 28th, 69th, 81st, 108th, 111th and 146th CB's (ComNavEu Secret memo to Adm. H. R. Stark dtd 25 Jul'44).
- 8-15-44 - 30th (Sp) 1st Sect expected to arrive in the U.K. about 5 Aug'44 for assignment at MALVERN under the 25th Reg. (ComNavEu Secret Memo to Adm. H. R. Stark dtd 25 Jul'44).
- 8-15-44 - The 114th CB is expected to arrive in the U.K. about 5 Aug'44 and to be assigned to the 25th Reg. (ComNavEu Secret Memo to Adm. H. R. Stark dtd 25 Jul'44).

25th Regiment

- 8-16-44 - 1 Jul'44 report of 25th Reg - 25th Reg. of this date consists of 28th, 69th, 81st, 108th, 111th, 146th and Det. 1006. Casualties of the 25th Reg. during the invasion of France were 8 killed, 3 missigg, 71 wounded.
- 9-2-44 - 25th Reg. report for 1 Aug'44 - The 25th Reg. established an Advance Hdqtrs at Omaha Beach on 16 Jun'44, with hdqtrs at Cherbourg on 2nd Jul, consolidating the two offices on 14 Jul'44. Revised casualty list for teh French Invasion is 10 killed, 2 missing, 60 wounded with a totalof 72.
- 9-25-44 - 1 Sep'44 report of 25th Reg. Consists of the following CB's: 28th, 69th, 81st, 108th 111th, 114th, 146th, Det. 1006. Summary of casualties of 1 Sep'44 supersedes report submitted 1 Aug - 10 killed, 3 missing, and 60 wounded. The 25th Reg. continued to perform the basic planning for the captured ports in Northern France as Task Group 125.6 and in this connection prepared the layouts for naval facilities for Cherbourg, Nantes and preliminary plans for the towns of Morlaix and Brest.
- 10-20-44 - 1 Oct'44 report of 25th Reg. - Covered activities of the following CB's: 28th, 69th, 81st, 111th, 114th, 146th. The 25th Reg. continued the preparation of layouts for Naval Facilities in Cherbourg, Nantes, and began preliminary plans for LeHavre. The work originally scheduled for Lorient and Brest was cancelled due to the condition of these ports after capture. Naval activities at LeHavre will include Naval Advance Base, and Seabee Material Depot and Transportation Pool, as well as facilities for COMUSBASFRANCE. Advance Hdqtrs. of 25th Reg. was established at LeHavre on 19 Sep'44.
- 10-24-44 - The 81st CB reported to the 13th Reg. 10 Oct'44. (13th Reg. 5th End. dtd 10 Oct'44 on COUSNAB 12 to OinC of 81st CB Ser. 1896, dtd 6 Oct'44).

25th Reg.

- 10-31-44 - 1st Sect. 30th (Sp) CB and the 69th CB are permanently attached to the 25th Reg. but while in England, are temporarily attached to the 13th Reg. 28th, 81st, 111th, 114th, and 146th CB's are permanently attached to the 35th Reg. (1 Oct'44 monthly report of the 13th Reg.)
- 11-15-44 -- Commander U.S. Ports and Bases in France by Sec. disp to CNO 101141A NCR 8732 dtd 11 Nov'44 requests that the 25th Reg. be inactivated 30 Nov'44. Personnel will be returned to ComNavEU for reassignment that date as only maintenance work is necessary.
- 11-15-44 -- CNO conf. disp to ComNavEU 111957 NCR 4374 dtd 12 Nov'44 approves disp. 101141 which requests that the 25th Reg. be disbanded 30 Nov'44. CNO requests that that any excess personnel of the 25th Reg. in that area be returned to Davisville.
- 11-27-44 -- 25th Reg. disbanded effective 30 Nov'44. CBMU 627 is at Cherbourg, CBMU 628 is at LeHavre and 629 at LeHavre FFT - set up from the 114th CB. These units go in effect when the 25th Reg. is dissolved. (CNO Sec. ltr Op30-2CK14-UOT over (SC)P16-5 over Ser. 01382530 to ComNavEU dtd 18 Nov'44). All excess personnel above needs of area to be returned to Davisville.
- 11-29-44 - 1 Nov'44 report of 25th Reg. - Hdqtrs were moved from Cherbourg to LeHavre on 11 Oct'44. Report covered activities of the following CB's: 28th, 69th, 81st, 111th, 114th, and 146th.
- 12-1-44 - 25th Reg. consists of the 28th, 69th, 114th CB's with hdqtrs at LeHavre. (OinC 25th Reg. Conf. ltr A9-10(GJF:pr)over Ser 0694 dtd 10 Nov'44 to Dirlantdocks)
- 12-29-44 - 25th Reg. excess personnel of 12 offs. and 18 men being returned to NCTC Davisville ETD 1 Jan'45. (ComUSNavFor in Europe Sec. ltr A3-1 over Ser. 002607 to CNO dtd 7 Dec'44).

INACTIVATED

DECLASSIFIED

25th Regiment

| Date | Organization | Location | Reference | Notes |
|---------|--------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| 6/19/44 | - | United Kingdom | C.B. report 1 June | 28th, 81st, 108th, 111th, 146th, Det. 1006 |
| 7/26 | - | ComNavEU see Cherbourg | detached previous duty - report this base July 10th. | |
| 9/18 | - | Cherbourg | C.B. report 1 September | 28th, 69th, 81st, 111th, 146th, 114th 30 Sp. / Section |
| 11/13 | - | " | Com US ports & Bases France sec disp. 10/14/44 Nov. | request be deactivated 30 Nov. Personnel will be returned ComNavEU for reassignment. |

REPORT
OF
ACTIVITIES OF
TWENTY-FIFTH U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

TWENTY-FIFTH U.S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

F. P. O., NEW YORK, N. Y.

30 NOVEMBER 1944

~~SECRET~~

ACTIVITIES OF
TWENTY-FIFTH U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

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ACTIVITIES OF

THIRTY-FIFTH U. S. NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

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FOREWORD

This report summarizes the principal activities of the 25th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment and its subordinate units.

Developments that preceded the activation of the 25th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment are enumerated in Chapters I and II since the operations connected therewith were participated in by subordinate units of the Regiment, and the activities were closely related to the tasks subsequently assigned to the Regiment.

Acknowledgment is made to the Commander, U. S. Ports and Bases, France for the effectiveness of the leadership that enabled the completion of the ambitious program assigned to the 25th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment. Tasks were expertly assigned; all of which influenced considerably the efficiency with which they were prosecuted. Personnel of all units were gainfully employed from the inception of the various projects, and immediately upon completion, units were detached from the Regiment, returned to the United Kingdom and made available for service in other theaters.

Victor W. Buhr

Victor W. Buhr
Commander, (CEC), U. S. Naval Reserve
Officer in Charge
25th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment

SE^{DE}CLASSIFIED

CHAPTER ILANDING OF CB's IN THE U. K., DATE, LOCATION AND WORK ACCOMPLISHED

On 30 November 1942, the first section of the 29th Naval Construction Battalion arrived at U. S. Naval Base II, Rosneath, Dumbartonshire, Scotland; the second section arriving in December 1942. This battalion, the first Seabee unit to arrive in Europe, was assigned the task of completing the construction of the Naval Bases in the United Kingdom, as follows:

November 1942: U. S. Naval Base II, Rosneath, Dumbartonshire, Scotland.

Completed projects which had previously been in progress under Contract NOY 4850, to include a marine railway, four work shops, 20 Nissen huts, BOQ, eight 10,000 barrel fuel tanks, two pumping stations and fuel lines, laundry, renovation of buildings for hospital, administration buildings, utilities and roads.

January 1943: U. S. Naval Operating Base I, Londonderry, No. Ireland.

Completed projects which had previously been in progress under Contract NOY 4850, to include 300,000 barrel tank farm, three pumping stations and fuel lines, three boiler houses, roads and services to dock, 150 foot dock, 50 Quonset huts, one recreation building, anti-aircraft placements, fencing.

September 1943: U. S. Naval Supply Depot, Exeter, Devonshire, England.

Provide storage buildings, offices, shops, open storage area, hut camp, mess hall and galley, recreation buildings, Red Cross building, chapel, utilities, roads, walks and fencing.

October 1943: U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Base, Plymouth, Devonshire, England.

Construction of hut camp, galley and messing facilities, dispensary, recreation buildings, roads, walks and utilities.

To supplement these Seabee forces, the 81st Naval Construction Battalion was ordered in two sections; the first arriving 26 August 1943 at Base II, Rosneath, and the second section on 22 September 1943, relieving the 29th Construction Battalion of maintenance and construction at Base II.

The 13th Naval Construction Regiment was formed on 24 September 1943 to supervise the administration and to provide logistical

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support for Naval Construction Battalion forces in the U. K. The first section of the 97th Construction Battalion arrived during September 1943 at Base I, Londonderry, No. Ireland, relieving the 29th Construction Battalion. The second section arrived during October 1943, relieving the 81st Battalion at Base II, Rosneath, Scotland. The 97th Construction Battalion completed the construction of these two facilities, and in addition completed U. S. Naval Hospital at Netley, Hants, England. The 81st Battalion was then made available for construction of naval facilities as follows:

October 1943

U. S. Naval Advanced Base and Hospital, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, Wales.

Provided hut camp housing for 900 men, storage buildings, offices, shops, chapel, Post Office, galley, utilities, waterfront facilities and 200-bed hospital.

U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Maintenance Sub-Base, Penarth, Glamorganshire, Wales.

Provided quarters for 561 officers and men, hut camp for 120 men, messing and galley facilities, shops, buildings, utilities, offices, Red Cross Club, waterfront facilities and a 50-bed hospital.

U. S. Naval Advanced Training Sub-Base, Fowey, Cornwall, England.

Provided 1000-man hut camp, 500-man hut camp, shops, laundry, mess halls and galleys, warehouses, utilities, roads and 150-bed hospital.

November 1943:

U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Base, Falmouth, Cornwall, England.

Provided two 750-man hut camps, mess halls and galleys, recreation building, renovated hospital, utilities, 1000-man tent camp, galleys and septic tanks.

U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Training Sub-Base, St. Mawes, Cornwall, England.

Provided 264-man hut camp, recreation building, armory, shops, storehouses, gun mounts, renovated 12 hotels, water supply and utilities.

Transmitter and Receiving Facilities, Bicester, Oxfordshire, England.

Provided steel masts, antenna, underground and poll line transmission.

January 1944:

U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Base, Salcombe, Devonshire, England.

Provided 120-man camp, galley and messing facilities, storage buildings, training building, shops, quai wall, hard for small boat repairs, mooring facilities for LCT's offices, garage, signal station, utilities, roads and walks.

U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Base, Sandridge Park, Dartmouth, Devonshire, England.

Provided 800-man hut camp, galley and messing facilities, hospital, hangar storehouse, storage buildings, gasoline storage, signal tower, renovation of hotels for quarters, and utilities.

March 1944:

U. S. Naval Construction Battalion Personnel Center, Heathfield, Devonshire, England.

Tent camp, one N1-C Unit, warehouses, garage, armory, utilities, roads and walks.

U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Base, Plymouth, Devonshire, England.

Relieved the 29th Construction Battalion and completed the construction of sixty 20 x 48 huts, two storage huts, one hangar, messing and galley facilities. Recreation building, ordnance shop, ammunition storage, compass shop and utilities.

April 1944:

U. S. Naval Dispensary, London, England.

Accomplished renovation and conversion of St. Catherine's School into Naval Dispensary.

The second section of the 10th Special USNCB arrived in the U. K. during September 1943, and was utilized for movement and storage of cargo and materials at U. S. Naval Supply Depot, Exeter, Devonshire, England.

On 12 February 1944 the 111th Construction Battalion reported for duty in the U. K. and was assigned the following tasks:

February 1944: U. S. Naval Advanced Base, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, England.

Construction of ways, Rhino Ferries and Rhino Tugs.

February 1944: U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Bases, Plymouth, Dartmouth and Falmouth, England.

Pontoon and Rhino Ferry construction program and training.

U. S. Naval Base II, Rosneath, Dumbartonshire, Scotland.

Camp maintenance and completion of camp construction until relieved by the 97th Construction Battalion.

March 1944: U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Base, Plymouth, Devonshire, England.

Training of 24 crews for Warping Tugs at Cattedown Quarry, Plymouth.

The 1006th U.S.N.C.B. Detachment, formerly operating in the Mediterranean area on causeways, etc., arrived in the U. K. during December 1943 and was assigned duty with the 25th Regiment. Their special assignment was training for and operation of the causeways for the invasion beaches.

The 146th Construction Battalion, a specialized P.O.L. unit, was formed outside the continental limits of the United States during February 1944. Their special task was planning and assembling P.O.L. material and equipment for requirements of captured ports in France. In addition, the 146th Construction Battalion completed the following assignments:

April 1944: Efford Camp, U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Base, Plymouth, Devonshire, England.

Provided two NL-C units, to include huts, galleys and messing facilities, recreation building, dispensary, transportation, utilities, roads and walks.

The 25th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment was established on 1 April 1944 for the purpose of training, organizing and planning for invasion operations, and established headquarters at Plymouth, England (Figure 1). Regimental subordinate units were the 61st, 108th, 111th, 146th U. S. Naval Construction Battalions, the 1006th USNCB Detachment; and subsequently the 28th, 114th, 69th Battalions and the 30th Special USNCB.

On 27 April 1944 the second section of the 97th Construction Battalion was detached and commissioned the 108th Naval Construction Battalion; moving to Selsey, Sussex, England. This battalion was assigned to providing crews and outfitting artificial harbor elements to be used in the invasion.

The 28th Construction Battalion arrived in the U. K. on 27 April 1944 and was assigned the duties of preparing preliminary plans for the camps for Omaha and Utah Beaches and listing materials and equipment required for the construction and operation of the Beach Camps. These plans and lists were turned over to the 81st and 111th Battalions assigned to operate beach camp facilities. Reserve crews for the Rhino Ferries operating on Omaha Beach, drydock crews operating on Utah Beach and first captured port, and float crews operating on Utah Beach were furnished by the 28th Battalion. In addition to the above, the 28th Battalion made the preliminary study in connection with outfitting of the construction parties for Drew One and Drew Two. While in the U. K. the 28th Battalion also accomplished the renovation and rehabilitation of quarters for naval personnel at Teignmouth, Devonshire, England.

The 69th Construction Battalion arrived in the U. K. on 30 June 1944 and reported for temporary duty with the 13th Construction Regiment, at Plymouth, Devonshire, England, reporting to the 25th Regiment by letter for duty. Principal assignment was construction pontoon wharves for Quiberon Bay project. Their accomplishments in the U. K. have consisted of the following.

July 1944: U. S. Naval Advanced Amphibious Base, Plymouth, Devonshire, England.

Constructed tent site at Edinburgh Camp, constructed 42 x 1875' causeway and 56 x 156' Liberty berth as well as assembling Chrysler Sea Mule units, fabricating 250 stevedoring hooks.

July 1944: U. S. Naval Air Station, Dunkeswell, England.

Constructed 120 x 240' structural steel hangar.

30th Special USNCB (one-half battalion) arrived in the U. K. on 7 August 1944 reporting for duty with the 25th Regiment, and was assigned temporary duty with the 13th Regiment at Plymouth, England. They were engaged in the handling of cargo and the loading of vessels in the Plymouth Area. Duty with the 25th Regiment was completed on 4 November, at which time the 30th Special USNCB reported to COMPHIBSUKAY for duty.

CHAPTER II

UTILIZATION OF NAVAL FACILITIES IN U. K. FOR ASSEMBLY AND OUTFITTING
OF EQUIPMENT FOR INSTALLATION ON INVASION BEACHES, AND SELECTION AND
TRAINING OF SEABEE CREWS FOR THE INVASION.

One of the principal assignments of the Construction Battalions in the United Kingdom was the assembly of 27 RHINO FERRIES for use in the invasion of France. On 15 November 1943 the first shipment of pontoons had arrived, and assembly of RHF #1 was commenced at Falmouth, Cornwall, England. The work was undertaken by the 81st Construction Battalion. This ferry was completed shortly after 1 December 1943. Work commenced immediately upon RHF #2.

About the middle of December, CBD 1006 arrived from the Mediterranean Theater. This Detachment, having assembled and operated pontoon causeways in the invasions of Sicily and Salerno, were well versed in many of the pontoon problems. With the collaboration of the 1006th CBD, the 81st CB, the 13th CR and COMLANCRAB11thPHIB, RHF #1 was subjected to trials and tests. Certain changes were made to the original design as developed at ABD-Davisville. The principal changes were (a) elimination of hinged vertical fairlead; (b) substitution of wood treadway ramps for the 60-ton tank ramps provided; (c) utilization of one 3x7 tug in place of the two 2x7 tugs and (d) mounting the outboard propulsion units on the two aft quarters of the Rhino.

The assembly yard at Falmouth was a side launching yard with a capacity of one 1x30 string. It had two major limitations. Pontoon cargo arriving from the States had to be unloaded through the yard and, secondly, the wharfside dried out at low tide. It became apparent that two more assembly yards would be required to meet the schedule. Accordingly, after a careful survey of all available sites, yards were established at Plymouth and Dartmouth. The Dartmouth yard had the same capacity and limitations of the Falmouth yard. The Plymouth yard could accommodate two 1x30 strings at the same time, and, although launching was not possible at low tide, it was not blocked by incoming cargo. All three yards were manned by details from the 81st, the 1006th CBD and the 111th CB; the latter having arrived from the States during February. Inasmuch as the same men were to be used to operate as well as assemble the Rhinos, these details were shifted frequently to meet the requirements of the training program.

The original commitment of the assembling of 27 Rhino Ferries was completed on April 15th, which happened to coincide with the date upon which the 25th Regiment took over the administration of the assembly yards from the 13th Regiment. During this period of initial assembly, the tests of the Rhino proved sufficiently successful that the program was extended, in late April, by ten Rhinos, bringing this total to thirty-seven. It was further extended to include fifty-six 2x30 causeways. The 1006th CBD established a proving ground at Fowey, Cornwall, England, and conducted extensive tests to determine the best method of installation and operation. The coincidence of a

high tidal range, strong littoral current, extremely flat beach gradient and the uncertain character of the tidal beach made this a difficult problem.

After a series of thorough trials it was decided to sink the causeways and provide them with unloading stages or blisters, to be sunk adjacent to the causeway and spaced intermittently along its entire length in such a manner that one of the stages would be available for unloading, irrespective of the tide level. Accordingly, the 57 causeway sections, 12 causeway tugs and 32 - 4x12 blisters were assembled, outfitted and prepared for towing prior to 1 June. This work was distributed proportionately among the three yards in accordance with the delivery of N. L. gear. During this same period, from April 15 to June 1, twelve warping tugs and ten camels were assembled. The camel is a 4x6 pontoon barge. The inshore end was rigged with a 60-ton landing ramp and the offshore end was rigged with knee bumpers, chocks and suitable tackle to enable an LST to tie up to it. The camel was used on hauls to facilitate the loading of LST's. Their use eliminated driving vehicles through salt water. It speeded up the loading by providing a better gradient over which to run the vehicles and it saved wear and tear by eliminating the beaching of the LST.

Prior to June 1st, five more Rhino Ferries and tugs and two Rhino Repair Barges were assembled. The latter were 6x24 barges equipped with crawler cranes, machine shop, Quonset hut, welding equipment, spare propulsion units, engine and pontoon parts, and a complete set of tools. With the exception of the camels and one Rhino Ferry and tug, which were given to the British, all of the units described above were duly alerted and towed to Normandy on D-Day. (See Appendix A for towing schedule.)

On June 1st the administration of the assembly yards reverted to the 13th Construction Regiment. By reason of the distribution of pontoon equipment and the destination of incoming shipments, the assembly yard at Dartmouth was shut down and restored to its original condition. The facilities at Plymouth were doubled by taking over Corporation Wharf and a temporary yard was established at Exeter. Five more Rhinos and tugs were assembled, outfitted and delivered to Normandy, thus completing the full Rhino commitment of thirty-seven. Twenty-five so-called Whale beetles were assembled. A beetle was a 3x11 pontoon structure designed by the 25th Regiment to replace the concrete floats for the Whale project. Two 5x12 barges and four 4x6 docks were assembled for Mulberry. One 250-ton dry dock and 100-ton dry dock were also assembled. (See Appendix F for construction schedule.)

With the arrival of the 69th Battalion in the U. K., work was immediately started on a wharfage project for the U. S. Army to be assembled east of the Quiberon Bay area in France. This involved 5880 pontoons. Upon completion, it was made up into suitable tows for transit. This was immediately followed by the assembly of a similar project for the Navy to be assembled in the Quiberon Bay area; this

involved 2166 pontoons. This completed the program and the yards at Falmouth, Plymouth and Exeter were shut down, restored to their original condition, and all surplus gear binned, catalogued and stored in suitable areas established at Plymouth, Falmouth and Exeter.

The total construction program described herein extended over a period of two months, and involved 22,806 pontoons - a dead weight tonnage of 35,218, and a displacement tonnage of 91,225. In addition to this, the 111th Battalion assembled three Rhino Ferries on the beach at Normandy. This was unique in that the strings were assembled at low tide on a flat sloping beach and launched as the tide came in.

During the period 1 January to 1 June 1944, the Royal Engineers in Southampton assembled 12,800 pontoons in the form of Rhinos and causeways. The Seabees provided the Royal Engineers with a liaison party of ten men and two CEC officers for the purpose of instructing the Royal Engineers and maintaining a uniform standard of assembly and operation. The Royal Marines assembled and operated four 475-ton dry docks which were later turned over to the U. S. Navy.

The various DREW units assembled an undisclosed number of pontoons, but from the size of their stock piles at Rosneath and Cherbourg, it is apparent that the quantity they have assembled is a small percentage of their component.

MULBERRY A.

Another Seabee assignment involved the installation of artificial harbors on the invasion beaches. The harbors, called MULBERRIES, consisted of an outer breakwater formed by sunken ships, referred to as GOOSEBERRIES, and concrete cellular caissons, called PHOENIXES. The WHALE element, consisting of six spud-type floating pierheads, connected to the shore by three floating bridges, was located inside the harbor.

PHOENIX units were designed by British Royal Engineers and constructed under British contract. These units were built of reinforced concrete, designed with dead weight of 1672 tons to 6044 tons and were built in six sizes, as follows:

| <u>Unit</u> | <u>Height</u> | <u>Length</u> | <u>Breadth at WL</u> | <u>Displacement Tons</u> | <u>Draft</u> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| A1 | 60' | 204' | 56'-3" | 6,044 | 20'-3" |
| A2 | 40' | 204' | 56'-3" | 4,773 | 16'-4" |
| B1 | 40' | 203'-6" | 44' | 3,275 | 14' |
| B2 | 35' | 203'-6" | 44' | 2,861 | 12'-5" |
| C1 | 30' | 203'-6" | 32' | 2,420 | 14'-3" |
| D1 | 25' | 174'-3" | 27'-9" | 1,672 | 13' |

Each unit was provided with towing gear, bollards, anchors, life saving apparatus, a 40-mm anti-aircraft battery and bilge pumps. Crews quarters were provided for personnel during the towing operation.

These units were built to be towed to the beachhead and sunk in place by opening the seacock on each unit; the time of sinking varying from 11 to 32 minutes, depending on the size of the unit. (See Appendix E-1 for sinking positions of these units.)

WHALE Installation:

The floating bridge equipment consisted of a series of 80-foot spans connected end to end and supported at each joint by a steel or concrete bridge float. Each bridge span was steel decked, with a heavy duty roadway 10 feet in width. Two types of spans were used, designed for a tank or vehicle loading of 25-ton (Mark I) or 40-ton (Mark II), respectively. Two Mark I and one Mark II bridges were constructed and connected to six floating pierheads, as shown on Appendix E-1. The pierhead assemblies were provided with electrically operated spuds on each corner to anchor the pierhead, and compensate for the tide variation.

The 108th Naval Construction Battalion was assigned the task of manning, outfitting, riding under tow and operating the units, and therefore began accepting the WHALE and PHOENIX units from the British Royal Engineers in April. The 108th Battalion established camps at Selsey Bill, Richborough and the Isle of Wight, and began the assignment and training of crews. Each unit was outfitted for towing to and operation when installed on a French beachhead.

TRAINING PROGRAM.

A vigorous training program was entered into and classes were held for all personnel as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Seamanship | 2½ days |
| Rhino Operation | 5 days |
| Small Arms | 3 hours |
| Bombs and Incendiaries | 2 hours |
| Chemical Defense | 3 hours (three times) |
| First Aid | 1 hour (five times) |
| Fire Fighting | 1 day |
| Swimming and Abandon Ship | ½ hour (three times) |
| Signaling | 4 weeks continuous |
| Aircraft Recognition | 2 hours (nine times) |
| Bomb Disposal | 2 hours |

Three thousand three hundred and seventy-three (3373) officers and enlisted men completed the above program, as follows:

| | | | Construction Battalion | | |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|------------------------|------|------|
| | 28 | 81 | 108 | 111 | 1006 |
| <u>FERRY SERVICE</u> | | | | | |
| 37 Rhino Ferries and Tugs | 225 | 700 | | 925 | |
| 8 Causeway Tugs | | 64 | | 64 | |
| 12 Warping Tugs | | 64 | | 128 | |
| 2 Repair Barges | | 80 | | 80 | |
| <u>CAUSEWAY</u> | | | | | |
| | | | | | 318 |
| <u>MULBERRY</u> | | | | | |
| Survey Party | | 10 | | | |
| Phoenix | | | 354 | | |
| Pierheads | | | 139 | | |
| Bridging | | | 222 | | |
| Total | 225 | 918 | 715 | 1197 | 318 |

Open beaches having a low gradient, extreme tide conditions and tidal currents closely resembling Omaha and Utah Beaches were selected for training purposes. All training was pointed to the efficient operation of each type of unit while in the training area.

Training areas for the various elements were located as follows:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| RHINOS | - Fowey, Falmouth, Dartmouth, Torquay, Plymouth. |
| CAUSEWAYS | - Par Sandis and Fowey. |
| PHOENIXES | - Bramble Bank at Selsey and Dungeness. |
| WHALE ELEMENTS | - Southampton and Peel Bank on Isle of Wight. |

Training, simulating conditions expected on the beaches of France, was concluded with exercises and drills against time. All units were then made ready for tow to the assembling areas.

CHAPTER IIIALERTING FOR INVASION DUTY - 31 MAY 1944

In the early part of May, emphasis was placed on the outfitting of personnel and equipment. All personnel were equipped with infantry and gas defense gear. Rigorous refresher courses were instituted in seamanship, small arms marksmanship, chemical warfare and decontamination, first aid, swimming, abandon ship drill, aircraft recognition, signaling, fire and damage control, diving, demolition and recognition of and defense against booby traps.

Subsequently efforts were concentrated on unit training of personnel assigned to Rhino Ferries, tugs, causeways, sinking teams, riding teams, towing teams and camp duties. By 20 May all personnel were in condition readiness, and the Rhino tows, causeways, tugs, Phoenixes, bridge trains and pierheads were arranged for tows to the marshalling areas. These rendezvous were located on the southern coast of England; at Dartmouth, Salcombe, Falmouth, Portland, Fowey, Weymouth, Helford, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and Selsey Bill.

On 31 May, at 1800, all construction remaining under the 25th Construction Regiment was turned over to the 13th Regiment in accordance with a previously determined schedule. The 81st, the 108th, the 111th, a detail of the 146th, a detachment of the 28th Naval Construction Battalion and the 1006th Detachment were alerted for invasion duty. During the brief period that followed, final inspection of all personnel and equipment, and the outfitting of all floating equipment was made by the Officers in Charge of the subordinate units. All officers in charge of units were called in by Commanders of Task Force U and O for briefing - during which time the final plans were laid. (See Appendix A).

A last minute arrangement was perfected with U. S. Army forces for the spotting of ranges on the beaches for the purpose of locating the causeways and Rhino unloading areas. The units of the 25th Regiment were ready for the start of the largest amphibious landing of the war. (Figure 2).

CHAPTER IVINVASION PERIOD - 6 TO 25 JUNE 1944

Ships and invasion barges departed from the U. K. on 5 June, moving towards the east shore of the Normandy Peninsula, which was then under heavy aerial attack. Allied Naval batteries began shelling the beachheads and installations lying immediately in the rear. All pontoon units were under tow by LST's and departed from Portland, Fowey, Falmouth and Weymouth for OMAHA, and from Dartmouth, Salcombe, Falmouth, Weymouth and Helford for UTAH. (Appendix A). MULBERRY units were towed by the British craft from Selsey Bill and the Isle of Wight. The landings on the beaches were made simultaneously at OMAHA and UTAH by U. S. Forces and at three beachheads to the east by British and Canadian units. Both of the American beaches were well defended and were provided with a network of beach obstacles, tetrahedrons, mines and demolition tanks.

OMAHA

The first LST's towing five Rhinos, operated by the 111th Construction Battalion, arrived off the beach at 0530 on 6 June and the Rhinos were cast off - each Rhino proceeded to marry the designated LST's, which was accomplished under difficulty, as the seas were rough, with wave crests of about six feet. The Rhinos, after loading, proceeded to beach, but were ordered to stand off until such time as the beach obstructions were removed. Rhino #10, however, landed between two beach obstacles six hours after the landing had begun. Other Rhinos arriving were held off until 1130 on 7 June - at which time a Rhino unloading area was designated. During the first two days the Rhinos were damaged by mine explosions, hit submerged vehicles and other objects at high water, and at all times during the initial stage were subjected to enemy fire from shore installations.

The Rhino Repair Barge arrived on 7 June. On the second day of the landing, and during the critical hours when the Army was expanding the beachhead, an urgent request for heavy guns was filled when the Rhinos delivered the required armament to the beach. Twenty Rhino units were employed on OMAHA Beach, of which nineteen remained in service until the beginning of the storm. During the period 8 to 16 June Rhino Ferries delivered 14,749 vehicles and 33,091 tons of bulk cargo to the beach.

The Causeways were delivered off OMAHA Beach on 7 June, and the installation was held off until 9 June, awaiting decision from the Army General Staff and the Naval Officer in Charge as to its final position. The first structure was placed by the 1006th Construction Battalion Detachment on 9 June. Causeway No. 1 was constructed four wide (28' x 1456') with blisters spaced at approximately 300'. Causeway No. 2 was begun on 13 June, four wide (28' x 1050'),

with three blisters on either side. Each causeway took approximately three days to construct and were in full operation on 13 and 16 June, respectively.

From 11 to 17 June, Causeway No. 1 operated 110 hours, unloading 12 LCT's, 14 RHF and 95 miscellaneous craft, which included LCM's, LCVP's and British small craft. The number of vehicles unloaded during this period totaled 746, with bulk cargo tonnage 3,500, and 8,695 personnel.

Causeway No. 2, in operation on 16 and 17 June, for a total of 32 hours, unloaded 49 LCT's, 139 smaller craft, discharging a total of 4,700 personnel.

MULBERRY units began to arrive off OMAHA and the blockships (GOOSEBERRIES) were moved into position on the two fathom line previously designated. The HMS "Centurion" was sunk as the key ship for the harbor entrance - with the location of the first PHOENIX unit approximately 700 yards in a north-easterly direction. The GOOSEBERRIES were located and sunk by the British Naval forces. A Seabee hydrographic crew was utilized by these forces in making soundings, taking sights for the purpose of spotting and placing the GOOSEBERRIES and PHOENIX units. BOMBARDONS, steel hulls which were cross-shaped in sections, were placed outside of the line of PHOENIXES and GOOSEBERRIES, for the purpose of breaking wave action. The work of sinking the PHOENIXES was carried on in an expeditious manner by the 108th Construction Battalion. Bridge trains and pierheads began to arrive on schedule and were anchored - one bridge train being damaged by seas about ten miles off the Normandy Coast due to failure of the concrete beetles. The bridges over the damaged beetles were cut away to save the remaining part of the string.

On 11 June the shore ramp of the Mark I bridge unit was installed, and on 14 June two Pierheads were moved in place - completing the 25-ton bridge and pier installations. Work was then concentrated on the Mark II Bridge unit, which was completed on 18 June. During the 16, 17 and 18 June, 15 LCT's and 22 LST's were unloaded - delivering, 1,168 vehicles to the beach over this installation.

On 18 June a north-easterly wind arose, commencing with a velocity of ten knots, which increased to 25 knots the following day, necessitating the abandonment of all unloading operations on the beach. As the intensity of the storm increased, small craft were thrown upon the beach, and in some cases directly on the causeways. Landing craft of all types collided with the bridging units, causing extensive damage thereto. Many of the PHOENIXES, forming the outer harbor, began to crack up and crumble, thereby removing protection from the MULBERRY unit. Several GOOSEBERRIES' backs were broken by the wave action and the erosion of the bottom that occurred fore and aft of the blockships. Two pierheads broke spud cables and became unmanageable - the crews being removed. The Rhinos were thrown high on the beach as the velocity of the wind increased to 30 knots, with

with wave action of eight to ten feet on the exposed portion of the beach, and six to eight feet in the sheltered harbor. The storm continued through 21 June - the wind reaching a maximum velocity of 35 knots. The weather cleared on 22 June and the seas subsided to such an extent that it was possible to commence limited unloading of cargo. None of the Rhino Ferries were operative, but repairs were immediately affected.

After the storm the beach was cluttered with ships and boats of all descriptions that had broken their moorings, had been damaged and forced adrift, and those that sought shelter by beaching. The beach was strewn with debris. Working parties were organized to inventory the damage, to clean up the beach and to salvage operative units.

A total of 286 craft was counted on the beach, as follows:

| <u>CRAFT</u> | <u>NO.</u> | <u>CRAFT</u> | <u>NO.</u> |
|------------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| LST | 2 | LCVP | 34 |
| LCT | 43 | LCVP Br. | 5 |
| LCI | 4 | Liberty | 3 |
| LCT Br. | 35 | LEV Br. | 17 |
| LCI Br. | 4 | BVD Br. | 6 |
| LCF | 1 | SG | 2 |
| LCM | 82 | Control Ship | 1 |
| LCM Br. | 1 | Rep. Barge Br. | 2 |
| RHINOS | 19 | Petrol Barge Br. | 1 |
| RHINO Tugs | 22 | Food Barge Br. | 1 |
| RHINO Rep. Barge | 1 | | |
| | | TOTAL: | 286 |

Sand bard had been built up by tide action at three places along the causeways. The majority of the BOMBARDONS were broken loose during the storm and in drifting shoreward, collided with the PHOENIXES subjecting the walls thereof to excessive punching stresses that contributed greatly to the failure of the PHOENIX units. In addition, the drifting BOMBARDONS caused damage to vessels and considerable structural damage to midsection of Causeway No. 1, over which several BOMBARDONS broached. The blockships (GOOSEBERRIES) were thrown out of alignment by wave action. The damage done to the WHALE installation was so extensive that only sufficient bridging and beetles remained to reconstruct one Bridge Unit. Of the 35 PHOENIX units, 27 had been damaged beyond repair.

A camp construction party of the 111th Naval Construction Battalion arrived on 9 June and immediately began installation of a temporary pup tent and fox hole camp. This camp was poorly located as it was in a direct line of fire from the anti-aircraft batteries of the ships and was also subject to strafing as well as bombing. Land mines were encountered and accounted for some casualties. Subsequently the camp was transferred to three more desirable areas offering dispersion. During the storm period the initial camp provided

food and housing for 2,000 Allied causals, principally from small boats stranded, sunk or wrecked by the storm or combat activity. Medical facilities were provided by Seabees for all personnel on the beach.

By 22 June the beach was cleared sufficiently and LST's were dried out on the beach and unloaded directly. Ammunition was moved by DUKW's from coasters. Seven Rhinos were in service, with the remainder awaiting arrival of replacement engines from the United Kingdom.

Causeway No. 2 (westerly one) was repaired and placed in service on 23 June, and began unloading of troops and cargo from LCM's and LCT's. Work was begun on the retrieving of sufficient bridging and pierheads to reconstruct one bridge span.

P.O.L. A 146th Construction Battalion Detachment arrived on 9 June and began the unloading of construction materials and supplies and proceeded to construct POL facilities. This included one 6-inch Diesel line, one 4-inch gasoline line and one 4-inch water line, which were completed on 19 June. The sea connections were, unfortunately, located in an exposed area, not protected by the GOOSEBERRIES. A 4 x 12 pontoon barge floating station was outfitted and provided service for the smaller craft. This service was later discontinued due to the wrecking of the barge during the storm of June 19-21.

A 475-ton drydock was installed within the harbor, and during the storm the drydock was critically damaged and rendered unfit for use.

UTAH

The first LST's towing Rhinos arrived on 6 June, in a rough sea. Four Rhinos completed the marriages to LST's and proceeded to the beach, approximately ten miles distant, and proceeded to unload cargo. Six additional Rhinos arrived on the early morning of 7 June and were pressed into operation. Between 8 and 16 June 4,307 vehicles and 31,580 tons of bulk cargo was delivered to the beach by Rhino Ferries.

The artificial harbor was formed by the installation of the blockships (GOOSEBERRIES), which were placed and sunk by British Naval units, utilizing a Seabee hydrographic crew for making soundings and taking sights for the placing of each GOOSEBERRY on a predetermined line. No PHOENIXES or WHALE elements were included in this installation.

The 1006th Causeway-Pontoon Detachment arrived on 7 June and began the assembling of Causeway No. 1, which was completed on 9 June. Causeway No. 2 was completed on 15 June. Both causeways were two pontoons wide and 2,250 feet in length - No. 1 having eight blisters, and No. 2 having five. As early as 8 June, personnel and vehicles from LCM's, LCT's, LCI's and Rhinos were off-loading infantry, vehicles and supplies on the two causeways. Between 6 and 13 June, 85% of all vehicles and cargo was brought ashore over Rhinos or causeways.

It was found that the Rhino tugs were not required to retract from the beach and were therefore used to handle cargo that was too

heavy or unwieldly for DUKWs. During the initial invasion period, the Rhinos handled 33% of all vehicles unloaded on the beach. The Rhinos Repair Barge arrived on 7 June and began servicing of Rhinos and other types of craft. During the invasion phase the Repair Barge maintained the Rhinos at 80% efficiency, with 8 to 9 of the 11 units being operative at all times.

During the initial stage, all Rhino Ferries were subjected to enemy fire from the beachhead. In one instance, a Rhino tug was sunk by enemy dive bombing attack, with 12 Seabee casualties resulting.

On 18 June the storm, described previously, began to effect the operations on this beach. Up until this time eleven Rhino Ferries had made 175 trips to the beach, bringing ashore 50,000 tons of cargo. As the storm increased to an intensity of about 35 knots, all operations were secured. Soon after the storm subsided crews from the 1006th began salvage work on the beach. An inventory taken on 22 June, of the craft up on the beach, is as follows:

| <u>CRAFT</u> | <u>NO.</u> | <u>CRAFT</u> | <u>NO.</u> |
|--------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
| LCI | 1 | LCVP Br. | 10 |
| LCT | 33 | RHINO Ferries | 10 |
| LCT Br. | 12 | RHINO tugs | 11 |
| LGP | 3 | Brit. Petrol Barge | 1 |
| LGM | 64 | Liberties | 5 |
| LEV Br. | 25 | Br. Repair S. | 2 |
| LCVP | 35 | | |
| | | TOTAL: | 212 |

On 23 June three Rhinos were in operation unloading Liberty ships. One causeway was damaged by ships broaching, and Causeway No. 1 was canted severely. Both causeways were widened to four-wide and refloated and relocated after preparing new sites with bulldozers.

The camp construction detail of the 81st Naval Construction Battalion arrived on 9 June and constructed a pup tent and fox hole camp, dispersed over several areas, sufficient to accommodate 1,500 men and 70 officers. These facilities included six galleys, nine hospital tents, Quonset or headquarters hut, radio and visual communications and an equipment repair shop. Subsequently the temporary camp was relocated in three areas. Over 1,600 Allied survivors from ships and small craft damaged by the storm and enemy action were housed and fed in the Seabee camp.

CHAPTER V

FOLLOW UP - THE SUPPORT PERIOD AT OMAHA AND UTAH BEACHES.

Following the initial invasion period, Seabee activities on Omaha and Utah Beaches consisted primarily of the operation and maintenance of Rhino Ferries, causeways and the beach camps. Such operations were conducted around-the-clock with Rhino crews standing watches of 48 hours on and 48 hours off. Small crews' accommodations were constructed on each Rhino for this purpose. Beach Ferry Control offices were established on each beach, which contributed materially to the effective use of the Rhinos. Storm conditions of lesser intensity than those described in the previous chapter, were experienced on 22 July, 26 August, 7 October and 21 October.

The peak periods, while not reaching the totals achieved during the first ten days of operation on the beaches, were considered creditable. During the period 8 to 15 July at Omaha Beach, while operating 20 Rhinos, 4500 vehicles and 20,000 tons of bulk cargo were handled. The peak at Utah was reached between 22 and 29 July when 3500 vehicles were brought ashore by eleven Rhinos. (Figures 3, 4 and 5). Personnel were unloaded continuously over the causeways on both beaches, but unfortunately no records were maintained.

The 1006th CB Detachment operating causeways were relieved of the operation and maintenance of these units on 10 July and returned to the U. K. for transportation to the United States. The Army took over the operation and maintenance of the causeways with such assistance as was required by the 111th Battalion, at Omaha, and the 81st at Utah Beach.

The original plan called for the operation of the beaches for approximately ninety days after D-Day, or through the middle of September, and therefore pup tent facilities only were provided. As logistic support demanded the operation of the beaches beyond the originally specified period, a limited winterizing program was approved, and pyramidal tents, Quonset hut showers and latrine buildings, laundries and a recreation building were authorized for each beach. These facilities were completed in late September.

The first section of the 111th Battalion departed Omaha Beach on 8 October for return to the U. K. and transportation to the United States. The second section departed from Omaha Beach on 18 October when relieved by the 69th Battalion, who took over the operation and maintenance of Rhinos, causeways and beach camp facilities.

The 81st Construction Battalion continued the operation of Rhinos and beach camp facilities until relieved by the 114th Construction Battalion. The first section of the 81st Battalion departed Utah Beach on 6 October and the second section on 18 October for return to the U. K. and transportation to the United States.

The MULBERRY installation on Omaha Beach was discontinued on about 25 July, at which time the remaining pierheads and bridge trains were salvaged and sent to MULBERRY B, at Arromanches, France. Several damaged pierheads were towed to Southampton, England for repair and further use. The artificial harbor elements, reinforced by the addition of PHOENIXES and GOOSEBERRIES at Omaha, the GOOSEBERRIES at Utah, continued to give service throughout the remainder of the operations on the beach; However, suffering damage during each storm.

The 69th Battalion continued to operate the Rhino Ferries until it was determined that due to increasing number of storms and their intensity, with the resultant inoperative days on the beaches, that the Rhinos could well be used at other locations. Consequently, six Rhino Ferries were towed to Cherbourg and placed in operation by the 114th Battalion, and 21 Rhino Ferries were towed to LeHavre. Of these, eleven were made available for use, and ten, inoperative, were utilized as floats in the harbor development program.

Utah Beach was decommissioned on 31 October 1944. All material and equipment was shipped to U. S. Naval Advanced Base, Cherbourg. Omaha Beach was decommissioned on 19 November 1944, and all materials and equipment were shipped to U. S. Naval Advanced Bases at LeHavre and Cherbourg. At the request of U. S. Army authorities, the beach camps and other materials and supplies, surplus to the Navy at both locations, were turned over to the U. S. Army.

CHAPTER VIDEVELOPMENT OF CAPTURED PORTS

Planning for the first three captured ports, with code names, Watson, Drummond and Chatsworth, was accomplished by COMLANCRAB 11th PHIB carrying out the directives of COMNAVFEU. This was organized under DREW units, with functional component planning system as follows:

| | |
|----------|-----------------------|
| DREW One | Watson (Cherbourg) |
| DREW Two | Drummond (Granville) |
| DREW Two | Chatsworth (St. Malo) |

DREW One and DREW Two were formed from personnel available in the United Kingdom, supplemented by a minimum of personnel sent over from the United States. Drew Units One and Two were assembled at United States Naval Base No. II, Rosneath, Scotland, and made preparations for the movement to France. One company of Seabees from the 28th Construction Battalion was assigned to each Drew Unit. No Drew Unit was assigned to captured Port No. 3, as this designation was later given to the beach at Omaha.

Drew Units Four, Five and Six were formed in the United States and were assigned one-half of the 69th Construction Battalion, the 114th Construction Battalion and one-half of the 30th Special Battalion. For these Drew Units, equipment and materials required in functional component planning were shipped from the United States with, or soon after the departure of the Drew organisations and Construction Battalion forces. Drew Units were assigned as follows:

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| DREW Four | Malvern (Brest) |
| DREW Five | Durley (Lorient) |
| DREW Six | Chastity (Quiberon Bay) |

A schedule was established merely for planning purposes, for the movement of materials, the making available of personnel and the arranging for cargo space in connection with the entry into captured ports as follows:

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------|
| 1. Watson | (Cherbourg) | D plus 11. |
| 2. Drummond | (Granville) | D plus 30. |
| 2b. Chatsworth | (St. Malo) | D plus 30. |
| 3. Omaha | | D-Day |
| 4. Malvern | { Brest } | D plus 55. |
| 5. Durley | { Lorient } | D plus 55. |
| 6. Chastity | (Quiberon Bay) | D plus 47. |

After the consolidation of forces at Omaha and Utah Beaches, Army forces moved to close off the Normandy Peninsula between Isigny and Havre de St. Germain, after the completion of which the advance on Cherbourg, Captured Port No. 1, was begun.

CHERBOURG

A. U. S. Naval reconnaissance party, made up from personnel of DREW One, and the 146th Battalion, consisting of 9 officers and 16 enlisted men, moved forward with the Army units and entered Cherbourg on 26 June, 1944, the date of capture of that port. The reconnaissance party quickly completed its work in reconnoitering the town and investigating the possible locations for naval establishments. An advanced construction party consisting of 7 officers and 165 men of the 28th Battalion arrived in Cherbourg on 5 July 1944 and one additional group consisting of 8 officers and 150 men of the 146th Battalion arrived. The 146th Battalion had previously been assigned the planning and construction of P.O.L. facilities in all captured ports. Work was begun immediately on facilities for 200 officers and 800 enlisted men, COMUSBASFRANCE and other naval activities required for the operation of the Port of Cherbourg. A complete list of all projects is shown in Appendix B-3.

The office of the 25th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment was moved from Plymouth, Devonshire, England to Cherbourg on 12 July 1944; with the advanced Regimental Headquarters proceeding from Omaha Beach and joining headquarters on 14 July. The remainder of the 28th Battalion arrived on 14 July. The maintenance of Public Works was assigned the 114th Battalion upon its arrival in Cherbourg on 11 August; thus making available the 28th Battalion for development work in other captured ports.

GRANVILLE

Reconnaissance parties were formed from personnel of DREW Two, the 28th Battalion and the 25th Regiment for Granville and St. Malo.

The Granville party departed Cherbourg on 31 July to effect naval reconnaissance of the city and to select structures and sites for the location of naval facilities within that town, arriving Granville the same day.

The City of Granville, with a normal population of 10,000, lies on the west side of the Cotentin Peninsula, on the south side of the Point de Roc. The city proper had been left practically intact by the enemy, but the port facilities had been heavily damaged by demolition. The local gas and electrical systems were in operating condition, but the source of electric power was beyond enemy lines and the transmission lines had been destroyed. The two 10-inch water mains feeding the city had been cut in one place by demolition. No other damage to the water system was evident. The reconnaissance was completed on 2 August. The advance work party, consisting of one officer and 31 men of the 28th Battalion began construction of facilities on 8 August 1944, completed them on 31 August 1944. A list of facilities provided is shown in Appendix B-4.

On 2 August the advance section of the Granville party departed for the purpose of accomplishing reconnaissance of St. Malo.

This advance section included members of Drew Two and the 28th Battalion. About seven miles west of Pontersson the party unexpectedly encountered the enemy. In the engagement that resulted casualties were sustained and the party withdrew with the aid of the Sixth U. S. Armored Division. No Seabee casualties were suffered. The Granville reconnaissance party, having completed its work on 3 August, returned to Cherbourg.

ST. MALO

The St. Malo reconnaissance party was formed from personnel of Drew Two, 28th Battalion and the 25th Regiment and proceeded to the vicinity of Vergancy, where the party remained until 12 August at which time it moved on to Concale. As the Army anticipated the use of Concale as a minor port of operations, Naval facilities were selected for necessary Naval personnel, consisting of 11 officers and 45 men. The reconnaissance party then proceeded, on 14 August, to St. Malo which was still under fire from enemy batteries located on the islands offshore.

In general, the town of St. Malo suffered extensive damage, with the basins, quais, locks and gates having been largely demolished throughout the harbor. Buildings in the harbor areas were generally demolished. The water and power systems were substantially intact, with a minimum number of lines requiring replacement; the water and power plant were capable of being operated with a minimum of repair. No naval facilities were selected as the Army had advised that the Port of St. Malo had been abandoned for use by the U. S. Army, who were now considering Morlaix.

BREST, LORIENT, ST. NAZaire, QUIBERON BAY:

Reconnaissance parties were formed from the 25th Regimental Staff, Drew Four and the 28th Battalion to proceed to Brest. Similar parties were formed from Drew Five, the 114th Battalion and the 25th Regiment for St. Nazaire and Lorient; personnel from Drew Six, the 69th Battalion and the 25th Regiment for Quiberon Bay.

The reconnaissance parties for St. Nazaire, Quiberon Bay, Brest and Lorient departed Cherbourg and remained in the field as shown below; returning to Cherbourg, without completing the reconnaissance, when it was determined that the facilities planned would not be required:

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| St. Nazaire | From 16 August to 9 September 1944. |
| Quiberon Bay | From 19 August to 1 September 1944. |
| Brest | From 5 August to 5 September 1944. |
| Lorient | From 7 August to 12 September 1944. |

NANTES

The Nantes reconnaissance party, consisting of ten officers and 42 men, proceeded to Nantes on 16 August, arriving the following day. The city of Nantes, with a normal population of 400,000, lies

on the north side of the Loire River. The city had been left intact except for the area lying along the river and the island - the former had been heavily damaged by Allied aircraft and the latter by German artillery and demolition. The local gas and electric distribution systems were in operating condition. No coal was available for the operation of the gas generating plant, and the water plant had been wrecked during the Allied bombing. Adequate quarters for all contemplated naval personnel, 50 officers and 400 men, were available in existing buildings. Reconnaissance was completed on 22 August - the party being dissolved at that time. A construction party, consisting of 6 officers and 255 men of the 114th Battalion was ordered and completed all work required.

List of facilities provided at Nantes is shown in Appendix B-5.

MORLAIX

The St. Malo reconnaissance party then proceeded to survey the town of Morlaix to locate facilities for Naval activities. Morlaix, a town of about 10,000 population, was in excellent condition; there being very little evidence of German demolition or other enemy damage. The town lies at the inshore end of a long narrow bay. Although the bay dries out at low tide, at high tide LCT's and coasters can proceed up to the city where a set of locks is located. Naval requirements included only a warehouse and offices at the port and such facilities were to be located at Carentic, at the mouth of the bay, about eight miles from Morlaix. One officer and thirty men of the 28th Construction Battalion arrived Carentic on the 21 August, completing work on 15 September.

LE HAVRE

On 6 September 1944, a reconnaissance party consisting of 20 officers and 70 men from Drew One, 28th Battalion and the 25th Regiment, proceeded to Le Havre for the purpose of making a reconnaissance of the city and selecting facilities within the town to be used as a Naval Advanced Base, Naval Supply facility and headquarters for COMUSBASFRANCE.

The city of Le Havre has a normal population of 170,000, with about 40,000 living in the town at this time. In general, the entire port was badly damaged, with a majority of the quai walls collapsed by bombing or demolition, and all locks rendered inoperative. The commercial section of the town lying immediately beyond the port was badly damaged by Allied bombing. The water systems remained intact, except for local damage to mains. The power system was placed in operation and the electricity was supplied from an auxiliary station within seven days after occupancy of the port. Adequate billets, offices and storage facilities were made available in the area. Reconnaissance was completed on 16 September. The advance construction party consisting of seven officers and 400 men of the 28th Battalion arrived in Le Havre on 17 September 1944 and was later reinforced by the remainder of the Battalion and began construction of the facilities required.

In order to develop the cargo handling capacity of the port as quickly as possible, a floating pontoon wharf 1700 feet long was constructed, to provide berths for five Liberty ships. Two Bailey Bridges were used for the shore connection, and pile clusters were driven to provide breast moorings for ships, and in addition to hold the wharf in place. To provide berths for seven additional Liberty ships, pontoon floats were constructed and installed in two of the larger basins of the port, for which gates had been repaired, and provided with a shore connection consisting of one 2 x 12 pontoon section for each lane of traffic.

The 114th Battalion relieved the 28th Battalion of maintenance of Public Works on 23 October and of all construction on 22 November.

A list of facilities provided is shown in Appendix B-6.

CALAIS

A reconnaissance party, consisting of 5 officers and 14 enlisted men was formed from personnel from U. S. Naval Advanced Base, Le Havre, the 28th Battalion and the 25th Regiment and proceeded to Calais. The city of Calais was found to have suffered considerable damage from bombings, shelling and street fighting. The northern area of the city had been entirely leveled, with the waterfront suffering considerable damage. No usable buildings were available on the waterfront. Water and power systems had been badly damaged, but could be made operative within ten days. Reconnaissance was completed and the personnel returned on 8 October and work was immediately begun by a party of three officers and 73 men from the 28th Battalion, Le Havre, constructing facilities for 35 officers and 100 enlisted men. These facilities were completed and were later abandoned due to change of plans regarding use of the port facilities.

A list of facilities provided is shown on Appendix B-7.

ROUEN

To meet the requirements of the operation of the Port of Rouen, limited housing facilities were provided during October 1944 for officers and enlisted personnel.

PERSONNEL SUMMARY

Accommodations were provided for U. S. Naval personnel in France as follows:

| | <u>COMUSBASFRANCE</u> | | <u>BASE</u> | | <u>TOTAL</u> | |
|-----------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | <u>Off.</u> | <u>Men</u> | <u>Off.</u> | <u>Men</u> | <u>Off.</u> | <u>Men</u> |
| Cherbourg | 200 | 800 | 300 | 2000 | 500 | 2500 |
| Granville | | | 15 | 50 | 15 | 50 |
| Nantes | | | 70 | 500 | 70 | 500 |
| Morlaix | | | 50 | 200 | 50 | 200 |
| Le Havre | 150 | 300 | 200 | 2000 | 350 | 2300 |
| Calais | | | 25 | 150 | 25 | 150 |
| Rouen | | | | | 15 | 50 |
| * Paris | | | | | 80 | 200 |
| | Total Officers | | | | 1105 | |
| | Total Enlisted Personnel | | | | | 5950 |

* Facilities provided for COMNAVFORFRANCE which included renovation of administrative buildings and quarters.

PUBLIC WORKS MAINTENANCE

On 17 November three Naval Construction Battalion Maintenance Units were formed and assigned as follows, relieving the 114th Construction Battalion of maintenance duties:

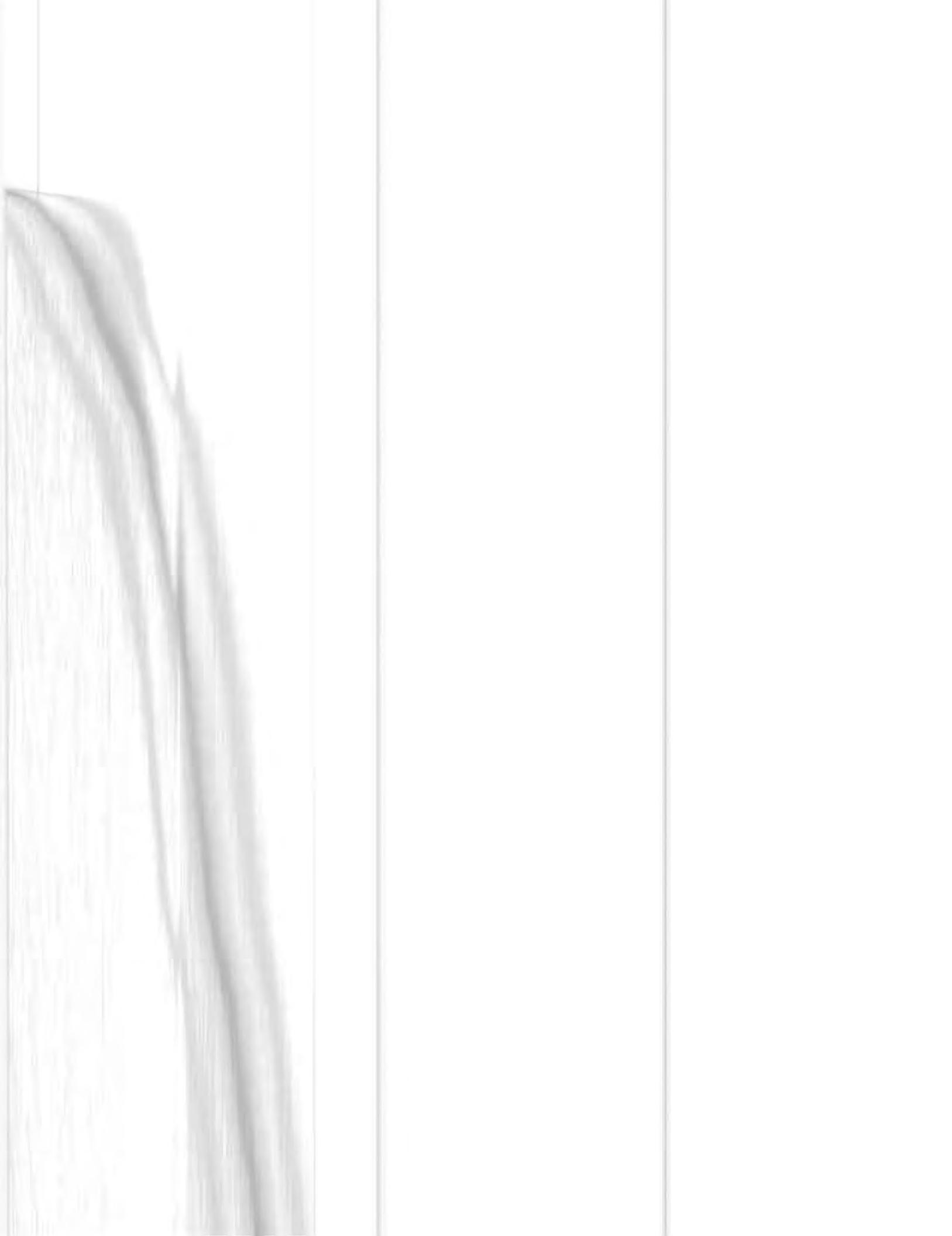
| | <u>Strength</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|----------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| CEMU 627 | 5 Officers 250 Men | Cherbourg |
| CEMU 628 | 10 Officers 350 Men | Le Havre |
| CEMU 629 | 5 Officers 200 Men | Le Havre (Temp. duty) |

The principal activities of these units consists of the following:

- (a) Maintenance and operation of Public Works, utilities and distribution systems, etc.
 - (b) Necessary construction and rehabilitation of naval facilities.
 - (c) Operation, maintenance and repair of Rhino Ferries, pontoon floats and wharves.
 - (d) Operation of a Seabee Construction and Materials Depot.
 - (e) Operation of a Transportation Pool and repair facility to service and repair vehicles and construction equipment.
 - (f) Telephonic communication and maintenance crew. *
- * For Le Havre only.

PONTOON TRAINING CREWS ON TEMPORARY DUTY WITH U. S. ARMY

On 17 November 1944 four pontoon training crews were formed from the 114th Naval Construction Battalion and ordered for duty with CEMU 629 for further assignment to U. S. Navy LCVP task units assigned to the 12th Army for the purpose of assisting the Army in making crossings of the Rhine and other rivers in enemy territory. Each detachment was made up of one officer and six enlisted men and were assigned as follows:



| | <u>Assigned to</u> | <u>For service with</u> |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Detachment No. 1 | CTU 125.20.1 | First Army |
| " No. 2 | CTU 125.20.2 | Seventh Army |
| " No. 3 | CTU 125.20.3 | Ninth Army |
| " No. 4 | (Reserved for further assignment) | |

The detachments were outfitted, provided transportation, equipment and tools, and departed from Le Havre on 26 November.

CHAPTER VIISUMMARY

As is evident from a review of the foregoing, the principal activities of the 25th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment consisted of the following:

1. Construction and training program in the United Kingdom.
2. Rhino Ferry and Causeway operations and maintenance in France.
3. Construction and maintenance of Naval beach facilities on Omaha and Utah, France.
4. Installation of MULBERRY on Omaha Beach, France.
5. Rehabilitation of existing structures and new construction to accommodate naval operating facilities at Cherbourg, Nantes, Calais and LeHavre. (Minor installations were provided at Granville, Morlaix and Paris).
6. Maintenance and operation of all naval shore facilities in France, and installation and operation of all U.S.Navy P.O.L. appurtenances.

An abstract of the data submitted herein reveals the following statistical information, given in brief form to establish the score, as it were, for the 25th U. S. Naval Construction Regiment in France, ending with its deactivation on 30 November 1944 by COMUSBASFRANCE Secret Despatch 101141 November, as approved by CNO Secret Dispatch 111957 November, and COMNAVEU Secret Dispatch 151246 November.

CARGO - Handled by Rhino Ferries over Omaha and Utah Beaches.

| | <u>Vehicles</u> | <u>Bulk Cargo</u> |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|
| 6 June to 21 October | 94,495 | 422,195 tons |
| Peak day during Invasion Period | 2,382 | 8,084 tons |
| Peak day during Follow-Up Period | 1,144 | 2,857 tons |
| Average per day for period operation of beaches (136 days) | 695 | 3,100 tons |

RHINOS - Thirty-eight Rhinos were in operation for from six to eight months, and were ultimately disposed of as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Operative, to LeHavre and Cherbourg | 11 Rhinos |
| Converted to floats | 16 Rhinos |
| Surveyed, foundered or lost at sea | 11 Rhinos |

During the period of operations on the beaches these Rhinos were successfully operated in five to six foot seas and were maintained with a remarkably low maintenance for about the first sixty days. Ultimately, however, tie rod yokes deformed and slipped; consequently crushing the sides of the pontoons. Alternate stresses of the sea contributed to crystallization and failure of the Rhino angles, and the sides and bottoms of the pontoons developed rust holes. The outboard units performed successfully except in the heavy seas, when, due to their exposed position, they were drowned out.

In the construction of the pontoon equipment, including Rhinos, causeways, tugs, camels, barges and pontoon floats, 22,806 pontoons were used.

PERSONNEL

Throughout the entire preparation for and participation in the invasion, and in the development of captured ports that followed, subordinate commands of the 25th USN Construction Regiment included the 81st, 108th, 111th Battalions, 1000th CB Detachment, 28th, 69th, 114th, 146th Battalion, 30th Special USNCB and CRMU's 627, 628 and 629, and the strength of the Regiment reached totals as follows: Figure (6).

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 3800 required for assembly and operation | April |
| 5800 required for Invasion and Support | June |
| 5600 required for development of Captured Ports | Aug-Sept. |
| 2700 required for Completion of Ports | November |
| 790 required for Maintenance of Ports of France | December |

In the training period that preceded the invasion, 33% officers and men of the 3800 assigned were trained in the duties each was to perform in the invasion.

HOUSING AND FACILITIES:

In the period from 6 June to 30 November housing and other facilities were provided for 1105 officers and 5950 enlisted personnel, or a total of 7055 in the ports developed in France; 5400 naval personnel and 3600 storm and battle casualties, or a total of 9000 on Omaha and Utah Beaches; or housing facilities were provided for a total of 16,055 naval personnel in France.

CASUALTIES:

In reviewing the recapitulation of casualties (Figure 7), only 21 known dead were reported, 3 missing and 61 wounded. This low record may be largely attributed to the fact that Rhinos provided poor targets for gun fire due to low freeboard, absence of superstructure and shallow draft. Another factor contributing to the low casualty

rate was the indoctrination of personnel prior to embarking for the invasion.

COMMENDATIONS AND AWARDS:

Figure 8 is recapitulation of commendations and awards that were made to personnel of the 25th Naval Construction Regiment.

