We're in the Aviation Engineers, so maybe I had better start there. Everybody has heard of the Infantry and Artillery. But who are the Aviation Engineers? The Aviation Engineers are just a bunch of little guys on a lot of big equipment that's behind, or rather in front, of the Air Corps. In this war they came out and showed the world that they could throw a "Sunday Punch" with the best of them and that an efficient Air Corps was indispensable to a victorious army. But even the best Air Corps in the world has its wings clipped if it can't get off the ground - and that's where we come in. It's an important job and big enough for the Air Corps to rate Engineers of their own; outfits of Engineers trained and equipped for a special job in any kind of terrain. Well, that's us. Not much glory, Purple Hearts are few and Silver Stars are rare. We're the Seabees of the army but lack their publicity agents.
The battalion staff:
Standing: Lt. Richard A. Busch, Capt. Richard S. Duane,
Seated: Major Calvin O. Schofield, Lt. Col. Tracy C. Coleman
Major Abram E. Lytle.

Lieutenant Colonel Tracy C. Coleman was the devoted and inspi-

rational leader of the battalion from January 1944 to Nov-

ember 1945. He guided us thru the training period at Geiger

Field, Washington and the campaigns on Guam and Okinawa. He is

held in the highest esteem by the men and officers who had the good for-
tune to be assigned to work under him. Having been discharged under

Readjustment Regulations, he now makes his home at 1203 Linden lane,

Silver Springs, Maryland.
Front row
Chaplain Leonard Nelson
Lt. Col. Tracy C. Coleman
Major Albert E. Lytle
Capt. James J. Quinn

Second row
1st Lt. Carol J. Heyne Jr.
Capt. Edward Sarkissian
Capt. Edwin McTureaus
Capt. Roller R. Bryan
1st Lt. Paul J. Stoll

Third row
Capt. Dale E. Lloyd
1st Lt. Donald G. Mathews
1st Lt. Thomas L. Amis
1st Lt. George D. McClelland
1st Lt. Preston F. Jones
1st Lt. Gordon W. Brown
1st Lt. Norman A. Bartolotti

Fourth - Back - Row
1st Lt. Richard A. Busch
1st Lt. Francis J. Brennan
1st Lt. Charles W. Thomson
1st Lt. James A. Space Jr.
1st Lt. Horace H. Rosemire Jr.
1st Lt. Ralph W. Nelson
2nd Lt. Edward H. Hanson
1st Lt. Marvin R. Geiger
2nd Lt. Wilton E. Goss
H/S company
Capt. Frederick M. Smith
Lt. Preston F. Jones
Capt. Edmund W. McTureous
Lt. Charles W. Thompson
Lt. Edward H. Hanson

"A" company
Lt. George D. McChlland
Lt. Norman A. Bertolotti
Lt. Marvin R. Geisn
Lt. Paul J. Stoll

"B" company
Lt. Donald G. Matthews
Lt. Carol J. Heyme Jr.
Capt. Roger R. Bryan
Lt. Thomas L. Amic
Lt. Gordon W. Brown

"C" company
Capt. Dale F. Lloyd
Capt. Edward Sankissian
Lt. James A. Spatz Jr.
Lt. Ralph W. Nielsen
Lt. Herbert H. Roseward Jr.
A company
men of the headquarters platoon are divided amongst the other platoons
Front row
C. S. Trent
P. Robbins
C. Berth
G. J. Traemere
E. E. Gass
S. Chiffer
F. C. Leach

2nd row
P. Stark
P. D. Newby
J. A. Walton
K. E. Pearson
H. E. Mc laughley
A. Cartillon
C. P. Lewis
E. M. Hatterson
W. W. Elliott
W. A. Wolke
R. S. Goodman

First Platoon
Lt. R. A. Nielsen

Front row
A. L. Salomons
C. T. Deal
G. T. Powell
C. J. Ahn
E. M. Fernandez
E. F. Warming
E. B. McMillen
J. E. Orr

2nd row
C. C. Heering
O. F. Hamblin
F. J. Ruppert
L. S. Jashek
H. E. Beethoven
W. P. Lewis
K. E. Pearson

3rd row
E. M. Hatterson
E. C. Asthans
C. E. Bush
J. R. Sentor
W. W. Elliott
A. J. Lahr
W. I. Brindley
Second platoon
Lt. J. A. Space Jr.
Front row
W. E. Miller
D. F. Cassano
D. W. Whaley
J. G. Domatoni
H. Fleischman
G. M. Luna
G. E. Thibeau
2nd row
C. L. Heaselle
G. E. Tysen
A. J. Memboga
J. Augustine
P. E. Foustough
C. J. McCoy
H. A. Hafy
3rd row
M. R. Loper
C. F. Abrenathy
W. D. Massey
R. T. Rodman
J. R. Meek
W. K. Reed
J. Gassman

Third platoon
Lt. H. H. Rosenfeld Jr.
Front row
E. J. Betti
F. A. Kramick
P. P. Marciniakowski
M. Ellis
C. W. Huggins
W. D. Laskiew
J. Rufo
D. Scorsella
N. E. McQuillan
2nd row
J. Webster
B. T. Hankins
C. W. Scott
E. A. Tomaszikiwicz
J. L. McCreery
H. T. White
E. M. Cheek
O. L. Traveltread
A. Wadlington
3rd row
R. H. Sellers
G. Prelet
F. Houck
D. Gage
J. J. Kelly
D. S. Hatch
W. H. Brown
G. M. Hotchkins
E. E. Wright
battalion headquarters
Lt. Richard A. Busch, Lt. Colonel Tracy C. Coleman.


S-4 section
Kneeling: Clifford G. Sharp Jr., Victor V. Ortiz.
communications section
Captain Smith

medical section
Captain James J. Quinny

utilities section
Lt Edward Hansen
THE BATTALION BOOK STAFF

When the reproduction section of the 938th ceased operations we thought we were lost as far as having our book printed was concerned. However, we were not yet ready to say uncle and the entire island was combed for reproduction units which might do the job for us. No soap! Still we would not quit! We decided to do it ourselves. At this point the 1969 made its appearance. They were also putting out a battalion book, so we combined forces—scrapped our respective battalions for men who could help.

To our original staff were added three pressmen and one more layout man. These were Dudley, Neal, Haggins and McIntrye, respectively.

Thus, working a double shift, and with men of varied experience in lithographic reproduction, we became publishers and printed our own book.
march field
Putting the finishing touches on the grasse rock.

Bridge constructed by "C" Company, Ontario Air Base.
qeiqer field
The move to Guge Field started a new area for the battalion. Upon arrival a rigorous training program was started. The training included hikes, classes on combat principles, messes and specialists schools. In the middle of May the battalion went into Bemidji in the Haydon Creek Area, Croix D'Arène National Forest, Idaho, where we obtained some practical knowledge on building timber bridges and protective camouflage. Later in the summer more work was done at Port Hueneme, California and at Horse Heaven, Idaho.

Except for a few work projects, the training drew to a close in the middle of August. The men were given the advantage of going to Williams Lake where they could fish, swim, and relax for several days; also three day passes were given as frequently as possible.

On September 13th the battalion boarded the train to the mainstay of the Guge Field Band, and headed toward the Port of Embarkation at Fort Lawton.

On the 19th of the same month we stumbled down the docks of Seattle and up our first gangplank. Our transport was the USS General James H. McCrea on her maiden voyage. Eight days later we docked at Hawaii.
horse heaven
The borrow pit.
Grading and compacting.
The final phase of "The Miracle of Horse Heaven" symbolized by the landing of the Ford Tri-Motor USFS, July 15, 1944.
Our stay on Oahu was pleasant as well as useful. The battalion unloaded all equipment and several work projects were undertaken. These projects also served as an opportunity which enabled us to thoroughly break in and become acquainted with our new equipment. Several grading and coral jobs were carried out satisfactorily. This was our first experience with the backbones of all Pacific Island earth moving jobs. We were soon to find out that coral, as hard as it is to blast, haul, and lay into finishing
grade was almost the only reliable material available. Among the numerous jobs com-
pleted were a runway extension at John Rodgers Field, sixteen semi-tropical barracks and
subgrading hardstands; both at Hickam Field. By the last of October these jobs were com-
pleted and the processing of the equipment was started. All equipment was put into good
working order and again processed for overseas shipment. On November 19, 1944, the USAT
Perch was docked at Honolulu and once more we shouldered our duffel bags and strolled aboard.
On the 13th of December the battalion disembarked from the Florida. The trip had been trying and but slightly better than our previous voyage aboard the General McRae. We were anxious to feel solid land beneath our feet again. But the "solid land" turned out to be nothing more than coral and mud; the roads were hardly better than wagon trails, thick jungle pressed in all about us... We were on a lonely tropical rock in the Pacific. Our last connecting link with civilization lay out in the harbour and was soon gone. We were overseas!
Possibly the most famous spot in the Pacific.

The village of Dwayne at the southern end of the island.
Our area was reputedly the most attractive on that part of the island.
N.W. Field
Our primary mission, North West field, was started on January 15, 1945, although the survey crew had already been operating since December. The job looked almost impossible. The location of the future runway was dense jungle, undergrowth, and hills of soil. Clearing of the jungle was begun immediately with a guard for each day's operator in case any strange Japs showed up. A few were encountered that did no harm to our men. As soon as a large enough space had been cleared, work was started on earth moving. Most of the earth being coral, it was necessary that we blast before the shovels could operate. Consequently, it was necessary to have jackhammers working twenty-four hours a day until the runway was finished. The question came after the blasting. The men worked diligently from January until May 10, after which time the paving was started. It took ten days to pave the runway and on June 1st a formal ceremony was held. The program consisted of an initial dedicating of a B-29 and addresses by such noted military personnel as Lieutenant General Garey, Admiral Nimitz, Major General Lewis, Brigadier General Ainsworth, and Colonel Washburn. During the ceremony, the dedication received high praise and commendations for the successful completion of a difficult and seemingly impossible task.
halt in operations on the 25 of January, but it was resumed the following month. Preparations for earth movement were begun.

500 holes dug with well rigs and wagon drills were loaded with 8 1/2 tons of 70% and 40% dynamite. The charge was set off on 16 Feb 1945.
Wagon drills and shovels, like all available equipment, were running 24 hours a day.
Looking E from Sta. 53+00

Plans were made to replace the 40% dynamite by the more effective 60%.

5 April to 30 March

Well rigs  The carryall pit
By 30 April there were 4 well drills, 14 wagon drills and approximately 14 jack hammers on the job.

These two views below show the cut, looking W from Sls. 53000 and from Sls. 79000.
This was to be the last month of work, before the strip would be ready for minimum operational facilities. . . . . . . The work ceased in seven pilots in anticipation of the formal dedication which would open the runway on 1 June 1945.
"State Line Grader."

8,500 feet of paving, 200 feet wide – Graded for 2 miles, 1,000 feet wide.

On the left is the remains of the 1/2 million cu. yd. coral hill.

"Jake the Snake" and "State Line."
Prefabrication of the control tower.
A closer view of the "coral mountain." (left), subject of much blasting.

A depth of approximately 80 ft. was cut 1000 ft. long by 1000 ft. wide.

26 May to 1 June.
143 days after.

Fine grading base course. Connecting warm-up apron at the E. end of the North and South runways.
tank farm
Three complete batteries and a pump station
27 Feb. to 3 March

Bots, Sami, and De Tomo at work.

Installation Pump
Three tanks of a battery complete and laying the bottom to the fourth.
No 1 Farm, Northwest Field, showing grading, distribution of materials, tools, equipment, and parts for tanks.

27 March to 26 May.
The Tank Farms were another tedious task. The tanks were constructed for the storage of gasoline for the B-29’s. The farms consisted of forty-eight thousand-gallon tanks with thirty-six miles of six-inch pipe line running to the strips. Placed along the lines to keep the fuel flowing were eight pumps. Again much difficulty was encountered with coral. However, with effort and much hard work the job was completed. Northwest Field Farm in March and Northwest Field Farm in June.
painted the seams

dispensing stand and pump house No.2 farm, North Field.

dispenser stand, No.1 farm
The largest building project by the 1886th was the construction of ninety-five warehouses at Depot Field. In all there were forty-five warehouses 30' x 100' and fifty warehouses 60' x 100'. Because of the lack of man power, details were borrowed and were supervised by the men of our battalion. Work progressed slowly at first until materials could be secured from the states.

Loading wall sections after prefabrication at the mill.

Erection of wall panels by means of the quickway crane.

The quickway setting the gable ends in place.

Initial roof sheathing.
Assembling the window frames. The foundation of one of the buildings ready for the erection of walls and floors.
XXI Bomber Command Installations.

250 men mess hall.

500 man quonset mess hall and tanks.

Photo Supply Laboratory and two ordnary rooms.
The Shop, Bunk House, Depot, etc.

Bath Plant
16th Bomb Group: 1500 man mess. Latrines and showers
The Butler Warehouses were used as maintenance shops of precision instruments and therefore had to be built as dust-proof as possible. Begun 2 Jan. '45.
Every man had been kept busy while on Guam and during our stay of seven months we saw many unbelievable changes. As the LST's pulled out of the harbour everyone settled down to enjoy the two week voyage.
A Christian Church at Shuri.

Aafter a life of comparative luxury abroad the LST's, Okinawa did not have much appeal, especially since we were greeted by the weather on this island. Attacked by almost continuous rains and working in mud comparable only to that found in basic training, we began construction of our battalion area: a project which was never to be completed. It was evident that our toughest struggle would be against the elements.

Work began almost immediately and great emphasis was placed upon what seemed to be a sizeable mission: the development and completion of Tera Airfield. But with the Japanese acceptance of the Potsdam Peace Offer, it was cancelled.

But the Aviation Engineers were busy and there was always work. With the same urgency we followed then with the other Work Orders.
Tomes pictured here and on the opposite page below. Besides being an object for camera fixes, the raged humlet was used as a source of salvage for our camp construction. It now is more off-limits.
rock crusher & asphalt plant
**Rock Crusher**
Alberto Guerrero
John White Cotton
John Herring
George Hopkins
Arthur Kenyon
Lt. Thomas Amis
Robert Sherman
Harold Holden
Tony Canija
James Stevens
Marvin Braun
Lloyd Watley
Winston Williams
Eugene Warner
Capt. Roller Bryan

**Asphalt Plant**
William Francis
Clayton Rushleigh
Eugene Warner
Joseph Tannous
Lester Terrell
Gordon Partridge
Edward Schmitz
Emmett Parada
Lt. Thomas Amis
William Swanson
Lothar Hunter
Card Johnson
Nicholas Warshall
Walter George Hopkins
Lassiter
The Asphalt Plant and Rock Crusher constructed on the rocky island of Senaga Shima was used primarily for asphalt production.
Senaga Shima was selected as the site of the Asphalt Plant and Quarry because of its proximity to Naha Airfield and the other projects requiring asphalt and crushed rock. It was thought that it had a sufficient concentrated quantity of coral of the type required for asphaltic concrete. Besides the erection and operation of the Asphalt Plant and Rock Gusher we were assigned the task of building a causeway from Okinawa to Ely Senaga Shima, pictured on the extreme end of opposite page.
Although the war is over, life on Okinawa is still considered abnormally dangerous. There are many Japs who have not heard of the armistice and continue to exist in caves. Mines have been removed, but there are some that have been overlooked. We have had several accidents by bulldozers running over these mines, but to date we have had only one tragedy.

As part of our mission on Okinawa, we maintained and reconstructed a portion of the main roads and the interior roads at Naha Field. Included in this program was the maintenance of Route No. 7, which runs from the Port of Naha down from the center to the southern tip of the island. We had the portion between Naha and the intersection of Routes 7 and 13 east of Naha. This section was originally a one-lane Japanese road and to maintain it properly we had to practically rebuild it from one end to the other although our work only called for maintenance.

Route No. 11, from Route 7 to Route 44, was rebuilt along a better alignment and a "Bridge" bridge built over a tributary of the Kokuba River. Other roads built and maintained were the interior roads to Air Corps housing areas at Naha Field.

The 21st Base Port Office, started on Sept. 10, 1948, was originally the construction of ten quonset huts for offices and mail sorting rooms. Since typhoons, however, we have built quonsets for a mess hall and also a dormitory. A large warehouse will also be built to store unsorted mail as it comes from the ships in the harbor.
Operations at the Tetu Water Point were started on August 8, 1945. The system of filtration and purification required filter tanks, chemical filtration units, and clear water storage tanks. With these units, 20,000 gallons of water can be purified in a day. Strict inspections by regimental and island command inspectors are held weekly to insure pure water.

W.O. 86-5

Prior to American Occupation, the spring had been used by the Japanese as a public bathing place. Before using the water for U.S. Army personnel, the spring was cleaned and a stone and concrete reservoir was built around it.

Enlisted men of the Water Purification section have their own mess hall, drawn from the battalion, and are quartered there. They have not raised any objections to this arrangement.
Construction of the Okinawa Air Depot Headquarters, Naha, began in late August, and was originally assigned to "A" Company. However, "C" Company was soon to take over the entire job.
The prefabricated barracks, three of which were 19' x 47', and one 19' x 54', were built as office space for a headquarters staff under the command of the General of the Okinawa Air Depot. The shell of the building was finished inside with extensive painting and finish work.
Since the prefabricated units were built of an extremely hard Australian gum wood, stripped in a very green condition, the painting operations assumed a very difficult aspect and everything was done whenever possible. Exterior dirt work, access roads, drainage and curb, placement characteristics the initial phase.
The remaining consisted of concrete and company work, designed to facilitate maximum efficiency in production and utilization of personnel.
The overall picture of the W.O. 19-7 might be described as "The Losing Battle of the Storms", for during the process of construction, hurricanes and typhoons blew down or badly damaged all buildings three distinct times. More time was used re-erecting than the total time required for original construction.
At the time of this writing, approximately three months since the
Okinawa Air Depot Headquarters job was begun, the commanding general's office building has been replaced by a quonset hut, another quonset hut is in the process of construction and one of the three larger 19' x 47' office buildings stands unrepaired as mute testimony of the October 9th tempest. The latter building will be repaired within the next three weeks.
The first two chapels we had on Okinawa were, like most of our area, erected by the typhoon. For the third we do not intend such a fate. Located in the shelter of a small wood beside our camp area, it was constructed of sturdy prefabricated gum wood. Men of almost every denomination assisted in its construction and we boast a “stained glass” window — probably the only one on the island.

Chaplain Leonard Nelson became our battalion chaplain shortly before we left Guam and has been with us ever since giving generously of his help and guidance. Before coming to our battalion, Chaplain Nelson had been with the 598th Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion and Stateside with the 2nd Training Regiment, AWUTC, Drew Field, Florida. Besides having attended the University of Wisconsin and the General Theological Seminary in New York, he has also attended England’s Oxford University. In civilian life he was Associate National Secretary for College Work, Episcopal Province of the Midwest, and in Brookings, South Dakota he was the Vicar of St Paul’s Church. Chaplain Nelson is a native of Madison, Wisconsin.

Near the perimeter of the camp area where the thick Guam jungle gave way to coral and tanks, we located the site of our chapel. Most of the work was done on our off-hours and in the end we had what was probably the most beautiful chapel on the island. On Sunday, February 4, Chaplain Clyde E. Jackson conducted his first service in our new chapel.

A graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Chaplain Jackson also attended the Southwestern Seminary at Fort Worth, Texas where he received his Diploma of Theology. Later he became Pastor Evangelist in Texas and in 1943 entered the Army with the commission of 1st Lieutenant. Before coming to the 86th on the 2nd of April 1944, he had been with the 2nd and 4th Air Force. He remained as battalion chaplain until the latter part of April.

Father J. Hanrahan of the 56th Air Depot conducted Mass for the Catholic men and frequently the native minister, Reverend Joseph Sueltem of Agena, held Protestant Worship. Attendance at the Reverend’s first sermon was so great that the benches collapsed.
A regimental review was held at Naha Airfield 19 September 1943 when the battalion was awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque for superior performance of duty in the execution of exceptionally difficult tasks from 15 March 1945 to 15 May 1945 on Guam, Mariannas Island.
On October 9 the island was struck by a devastating typhoon. The entire southern end of the island including our own battalion area was flooded by torrential rains and smacked by high winds. The official wind velocity gauge was destroyed after registering 192 m.p.h. Unofficial sources later stated the wind blew as high as 150 m.p.h.

All buildings and tents in our battalion were badly damaged and many completely destroyed by the devastating wind. During the storm men and officers sought shelter in the numerous caves and buried ruins nearby.

The following day reconstructions started immediately. Emergency crews were rushed to hospital areas to rebuild the damaged quonset huts and to erect temporary shelters. In the meantime, some of the larger caves were our area were enlarged and prepared for emergency use in the future.

The feeding, clothing and sheltering of thousands of Army and Navy personnel was a critical problem for a short time during which emergency supplies were flown in from the Philippines, the Marianas and the States.
HISTORY
OF THE
1886th