

Maneuvers were held from October 23 to November 11, 1943. All we remember about that was the dirt and the sand, and the long blackout drives across the desert. We never did find out whether our side had won or lost. We got back to Camp Pilot Knob, and the men who hadn't had one finally got their furlough.

From November 11 and all through the month of December we had showdown inspections. That was a chore. We displayed our belongings and equipment so many times that we eventually did it automatically daily before breakfast. Finally, the carpenters began making wooden boxes, and they labelled them "Boston POE". We were pretty certain then that we were headed east. We were happy about that. None of us relished the idea of fighting in the Pacific.



After 200 showdown inspections we were ready to go. On 3 January, 1944, we departed the Desert, and a week later, travelling in Pullman Coaches this time, we found ourselves in Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts. New England's snows never looked more beautiful, but a lot of us caught colds. Many managed to get a brief visit home during our stay at Standish; then there were more showdown inspections, followed by the inevitable "dry-runs" when we loaded everything on our backs, stood in line for an hour, and then went back to the barracks. We received the last items of equipment, gasmasks and so forth. On 14 January, the telephones out of camp were disconnected. On 17 January we boarded the trains for the Boston Port of Embarkation. The public address system at the station blared, "There's a Great Day Coming, Manana." It made us smile.

At the docks there were Red Cross girls (bless 'em) with doughnuts and coffee, and a great big loud military band. With hands full of doughnuts and coffee cups, our ears full of the din of martial music, we didn't talk too much. Our hearts beat a little faster, though.....it was the Big Moment. And so we mounted the gangplank into the Liberty Ship "Excelsior III", en route, we figured, to England.



of Louisiana and the Desert, and we shuddered. When we got to Tidworth, however, we found stone barracks, and beds! This, we felt, was heaven, and we blessed the British.

We landed in Glasgow, Scotland, on 29 January 1944. There were the Red Cross girls again with their doughnuts and coffee at two o'clock in the morning. It was good to see them. Within an hour we were on the train heading south through England to Tidworth, Hampshire. When the boat docked at Glasgow, an English Lieutenant General welcomed us, told us how crowded things were in England, and that accommodations for us would not be as good as they were in the States. We thought back to the tents

The one thing that everybody remembers about that trip was that conditions were quite crowded. Bunks were so close together that when a man wanted to turn over while sleeping, he had to get out of the bunk and get back in reverse. The medical officers lived in the "Insane Ward" of the boat. Chow was fairly good though. After the 'operational rations' we forced down our gullets in the desert, the chow on shipboard was almost bearable. There were three or