

four movies shown, each about twenty times. It seemed that everytime we would walk through the mess hall between meals, Bing Crosby would be on the screen singing "White Christmas" from the movie "Holiday Inn". We had to take turns walking around the deck; there wasn't room enough for everyone to be up there together. The huge convoy with its escort vessels, destroyers, air-craft carriers, and speedy corvettes darting about between the boats, made an impressive sight. Some men stood by the rail for hours on end.....but didn't notice the convoy; they were too occupied with internal problems!

We stayed in England for six months. We admired the beauty of the countryside, and we saw what the Nazis had done to the cities. We learned to drive on the left side of the road, and we learned to drink English beer (although we never did learn to enjoy it). We made dates with the English girls - WAAFS and ATS, and we had dances and learned the English dance steps. We liked England. Some of us found the girl of our dreams and got married. Most of us decided we would wait until we got home, though.

Then we began to prepare for "D-Day", the long awaited "Second Front." In April we moved into the field near a small sleepy village called Hindon, in Wiltshire. We were there with our sister units, the 82nd Engineer Combat Battalion, and the 234th Engineer Combat Battalion, all under the 115th Engineer Group Headquarters. In the center of the bivouac area there was a black pyramidal tent surrounded by barbed wire, and guards were always mounted around it. In that tent were plans.....our work and our time for landing on the Continent. It held our destinies.

The sixth of June, 1944....."D-Day"....found us with ears glued to radios listening to first reports of the landings in Northern France. We were still in Hindon. Then we really started to prepare. "Dry-runs" all over again, loading the trucks ready for embarkation, practising descending ropeladders. We were eager to get going.

The Big Moment did come at last; actually there were lots of big moments. The battalion was divided up into three serials, and each serial was on two or more boats. The first wave started from Hindon a little after midnight on 13 June. There was battalion headquarters, parts of each line company, and the medical detachment. They reached the marshalling area in Winchester at 0830 that morning. Before dawn two days later, half of them were awakened and sent on their way to the Southampton POE. The other half was awakened a few hours later and they too reached another set of docks at that port. They all sweated out a day and a night, sleeping on the quayside, before they got on the boats. The first half, after moving into the Channel, had to return to port because their ship's anti-mine apparatus was not working. The second half joined their convoy, stayed the night off the Isle of Wight, and then started off for France. They saw the coast at about noon on 18 June. They surveyed the coast defenses, and the wreckage, and the boats sunk near the shore. It all looked very grim. That night the skyline glowed with the glare of fires and bursting shells, and they were still on the boats in the Channel. Then came the air-raids. Every ship and every ack-ack battery in the neighborhood opened up; tracer-bullets streamed across the sky, the 90 mm. guns on the ship felt like 10 inches to those in the ships' holds. Barrage balloons caught fire and fluttered to the earth or the sea; bombs seemed to drop all around. We suffered no casualties.

Next morning we started to unload the boats. What a job that was. The vehicles lifted overside by the ships' hoists careened back and forth almost uncontrolled; the smaller boats bobbed up and down; men hanging on to the guy ropes were swung all

