

CENTRAL GERMANY
CAMPAIGN

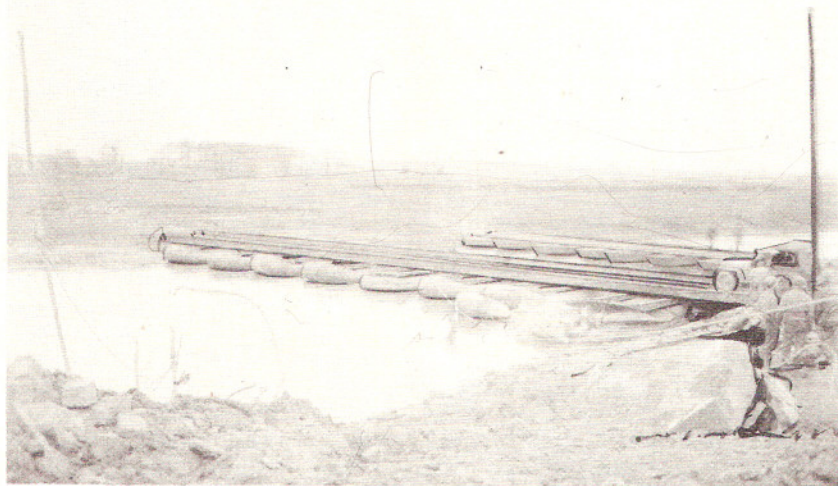
We began to pass through villages untouched by the physical impact of the war. There were no Swastikas or black-crossed flags flying; instead, there were white flags made of handkerchiefs, towels, sheets - the symbols of the Reich's abject defeat. The armor once again went wild, and we followed closely behind. We stopped at Bedburdyk while the pockets at Cologne and Neuss were cleaned up; then, when everything west of the Rhine was ours, we moved to Evinghoven.

At Evinghoven we were again attached to the 113th Cavalry Group. Companies "A" and "B" supplied the engineer boat crews that took reconnaissance patrols across the Rhine River. The boats were often fired upon. We lost one man. We helped keep the krauts off balance until Montgomery's armies struck north of the Ruhr. "B" Company's first platoon acted as motor boat operators to ferry the doughboys across during the assault crossing of the Rhine. The rest of us just listened to the stories after the boys came back. We would have liked to have built a bridge across the Rhine, but we were kinda glad we weren't so much in on the assault crossing. It wasn't easy, and it was certainly spectacular.

We crossed the Rhine on the 29th of March in support of the 83rd Division. We were on the move again; convoys through the days and nights, and "C" Rations. But we felt that the end of the war was near. The only fighting we did then was for billets in which to spend the night when we were not on the move.

On the 4th of April 1945, we were temporarily assigned to the 95th Division, which was then going to make an assault crossing of the Lippe Canal into the Ruhr Valley, while the rest of the Ninth and First Armies moved towards Berlin.

The plan called for the battalion to put in three bridges. One was to be a Treadway, one a Bailey, and the last involved the conversion of an existing railroad bridge for vehicular traffic. "B" Company was assigned to construct the Bailey and Treadway, and "A" was to do the conversion job on the railroad bridge.



TREADWAY BRIDGE CONSTRUCTED BY "B" COMPANY ACROSS THE LIPPE RIVER, NEAR LIPPBOURG, GERMANY. APRIL 1945

HEADQUARTERS
125th Cav Rcn Sq, Mecz
APO 339

1 April 1945

201.22

SUBJECT: Letter of Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 295th Engineer (C) Battalion,
APO 339, U.S. Army.

1. It is a genuine pleasure to submit the following commendation for the service rendered this unit by the following members of Company "B", your organization.

Sgt Ambrose A. Powers	31303188
Tec/5 Lewis L. Shattuck	31261066
Pfc Frederick C. Dapp	31329462
Pfc Robert C. Garvin	31286703

2. On the night of 20 March 1945 in the vicinity of Macher-sched, Germany, the above named men accompanied and assisted our reconnaissance patrol in a crossing of the Rhine River. The continuous and strenuous efforts of these men were of immeasurable assistance in expediting a valuable reconnaissance of the eastern bank of the Rhine River under very dangerous conditions.

3. I highly commend these men for their dauntless courage, unflinching devotion to duty, and exceptional spirit of cooperation, and subject to your approval, suggest they be recommended for appropriate awards.

/s/ Anthony F Kleitz
/t/ ANTHONY F. KLEITZ
Lt Col, Cavalry
Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
149th ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION
APO 339, U.S. Army

22 April 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : CO, 295th Engineer Combat Battalion, APO 339, U.S. Army.

I wish to commend

S/Sgt Roy J. Young	6827298
Sgt Edward R. Lamb	33439347
Sgt Manuel J. Lopez	33439887
Sgt Milton W. McGuire	31291339
Sgt Henry E. Morgan	33439549
Sgt William Stephenson	33431127
Tec/4 Joseph F. Hackett	31261006
Tec/4 Warren G. Perry	33439502
Tec/4 Andrew Pniowski	32021661
Cpl Charles L. Hanson	31301962
Cpl Sylvester P. Kwiecinski	33439993
Cpl Arthur Souza	31303130
Tec/5 Edward P. Drzal	31303205
Tec/5 Thomas E. Martin	31261110
Tec/5 John B. Morrow	33439528
Tec/5 Paul K. Thomas	31286648
Pfc Richard J. Bolduc	31216270
Pfc Ivon F. Caouette	31261107
Pfc Alfred J. Compton	33560974
Pfc Reese M. Hassinger	33439360
Pfc Joseph A. Hockenberry	33430915
Pfc Walter F. Horne	33439394
Pfc William F. McCarthy	31369513
Pfc William D. Runion	33561749
Pfc Clarence H. Smith, Jr.	31320348
Pfc Donald E. Stewart	31317733
Pfc Victor C. Yarusawych	31286434
Pvt Arthur L. Harradon, Jr.	31320243
Pvt Dana I. McGarvey	33758795

of your organization for the parts they played in assisting this battalion in the initial assault crossing of the Rhine River.

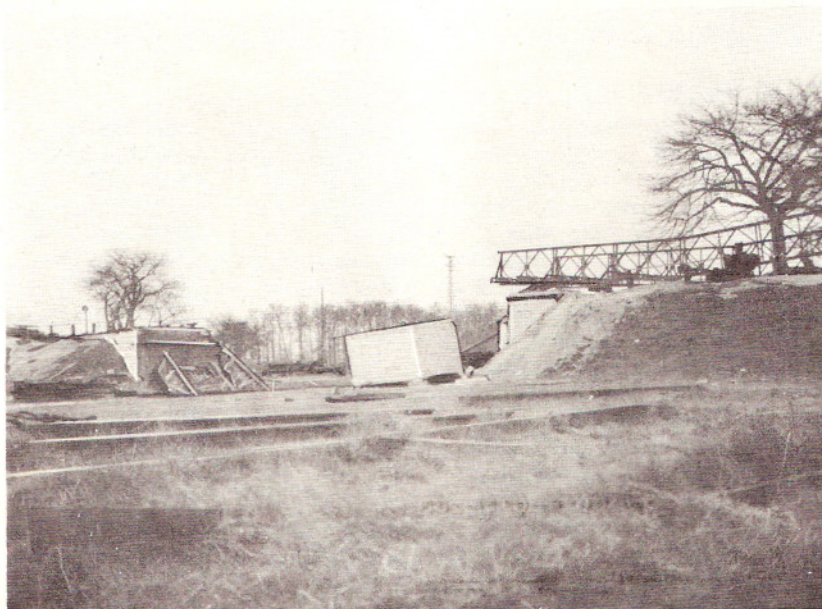
Part of a heterogeneous mixture of soldiers from all branches and all services, they pitched in whole heartedly and gave their full efforts and energies towards making a success of a difficult and dangerous mission.

It was a pleasure to have these men of yours and I am grateful for the cooperation which they gave me.

Of Sgt Manuel J. Lopez, who became a casualty during the operation, I can only say that he gave unstintingly for us and those back home. I regret that I couldn't return all your men.

/s/ Richard D. DeKruyff
/t/ RICHARD D. DeKRUYFF
Lt. Col., C.E.
Commanding

At 0830 on the morning of 5 April, one hour after the assault crossing at Lippburg, "B" Company started constructing their Treadway. Lt. Honderich's first platoon had the job done by 1430. But the krauts had the bridge under direct observation, and their artillery made some direct hits, knocking out five floats. None of our men were hurt, but the Infantry did not fare so well. The floats were immediately replaced, so that by 1615, traffic was passing back and forth.



"B" COMPANY CONSTRUCTING A BAILEY BRIDGE OVER THE LIPPE RIVER IN THE VICINITY OF DOLBERG, GERMANY, APRIL 5, 1945

Downstream, near Hamm, the crossing was meeting stiffer resistance. Lt. Morris, after making a reconnaissance of the site for the Bailey Bridge, turned over the preparation of the site to Sgt Hinson and his squad. This work was completed before the krauts had been pushed back from the far shore. The assault crossing was made at 0430, and the platoon immediately started to work without even starlight to help them. They had to feel their way across the river and build the bridge by touch, but by 0830 that morning, it was finished and open for traffic.

Company "A" started to convert the railroad bridge immediately after the initial assault had been made. Lt. Bogart's platoon placed planking along the ties so that traffic could roll. By working fast, and improvising as they went, they had traffic passing over the bridge all during the night.

"C" Company then took over maintenance of all the bridges and road approaches, and after 48 hours, were relieved. The battalion reassembled and one again went in support of the 83rd Division.

The glare of publicity is an unpredictable thing. We'd accomplished some spectacular projects in our travels across the continent, but with barely a mention in the press of the army or of the States. Our bridge across the Elbe, and the name of the 295th, hit the front pages of the "Stars and Stripes" and other papers in the U.S.A. A picture of the bridge got a quarter of a page in the formidable "New York Times". We believe it was all because the 83rd Division Public Relations Officer decided to call it the "Truman Bridge", for our new president.

HEADQUARTERS XVI CORPS
APO 197
c/o POSTMASTER, NEW YORK, N.Y.

24 April 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding General, 95th Infantry Division,
APO 95, U.S. Army.

1. Upon the completion of tactical operations by your Task Force in the Ruhr Valley, I wish to extend to you, and through you, to the officers and men of the organizations composing that Task Force, my appreciation and commendation of the part they played in the reduction of the Ruhr Pocket.

2. The mission assigned you was one that could have involved your limited forces in extremely difficult operations, against superior forces, had the enemy chosen the gap existing between your force and the remainder of the XVI Corps as an escape route. While he did not so choose, he did put up a stiff delaying action by strong forces in an attempt to assist the escape of the enemy forces south of the Ruhr, resulting in extremely hard and difficult fighting for your troops in the accomplishment of your mission. The constant pressure exerted by your Task Force, and the fine fighting qualities demonstrated by them, succeeded in forcing the enemy south of the Ruhr River in a much shorter period of time than reasonably could have been expected.

3. It has been a pleasure to have you and your splendid Division, as well as the other units of your Task Force, under my command.

/s/ John B. Anderson
/t/ JOHN B. ANDERSON
Major General, U.S. Army,
Commanding.

A 201.22 1st Ind.
(24 April 1945)
Headquarters 95th Infantry Division, APO 95, U.S. Army, 25 April 1945.
TO : See Distribution.

1. It is a great pleasure to transmit to you the comments of the Corps Commander upon your valiant performance in the battle for the Ruhr.

2. In seven days, functioning as a unit for the first time, you defeated and drove back a bitterly resisting enemy, giving him no time to get set, destroying him when he stood, and taking prisoner many thousands of his troops.

3. The spirit of cooperation and fighting ability manifested by every unit made the accomplishment of our mission possible. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to every officer and man engaged in this campaign, now so successfully concluded.

/s/ Harry L. Twaddle
/t/ HARRY L. TWADDLE,
Major General, U. S. A.,
Commanding.

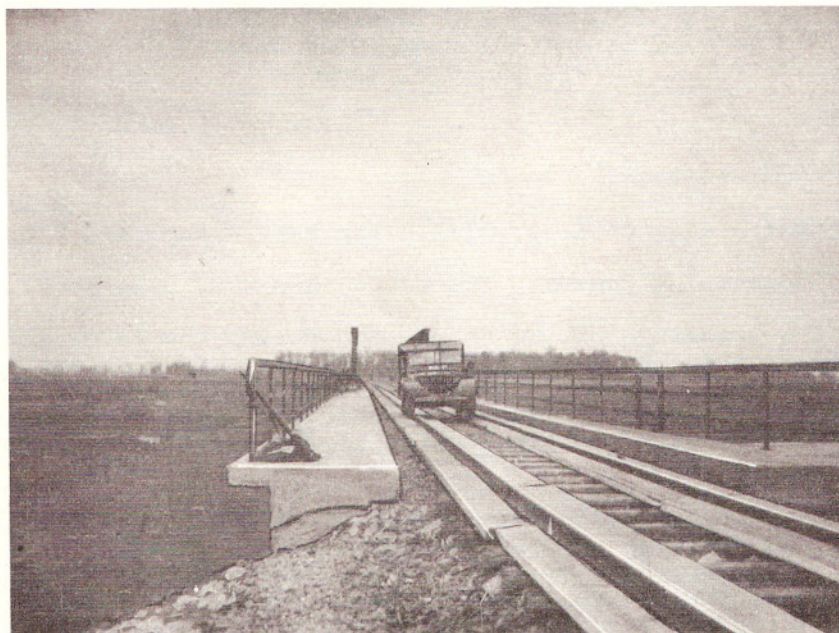
2nd Ind.

Hq 1115th Engr C Gp, APO 339, U.S. Army, 29 April 1945.

TO: C.O., 295th Engr C Bn, APO 339, U.S. Army.

I wish to add my commendation to that of the above for the superior manner in which you supported the 95th Infantry Division in the battle for the Ruhr.

/s/ G.H. Hodges, Jr.,
/t/ G.H. HODGES, JR.,
Colonel, C.E.,
Commanding.



"A" COMPANY'S RAILROAD BRIDGE ACROSS THE LIPPE RIVER NEAR DOLBERG, CONVERTED TO TAKE VEHICULAR TRAFFIC. APRIL 1945

This was the way our most famous bridge was built. After almost continuous moving to the east, often leaving large enemy pockets on both our right and left, we progressed through Egeln and Atzendorf, with the evidence of the 8th and 9th Air Forces' handiwork all around us. After once becoming lost from the 83rd Division, we made contact with them at their headquarters near Calbe.

By noon of 13 April we learned that the 329th Infantry was taking Barby, and that they planned to assault the Elbe River at 1330 hours. We were to build the bridge together with the 992nd Engineer Treadway Bridge Company. "A" and "C" Companies posted guards all along the route to the proposed bridge site and the equipment rolled in.

Lt. Morris' second platoon of "B" Company supported the 83rd's 308th Engineers in their building of a treadway raft used to ferry the first TD's across the river. These TD's knocked out two tanks which were firing on the proposed bridge site, where Lt. Sanders' men were beginning to work. "B" Company started at 1700 and constructed every section available. "A" Company assembled the bridge. Darkness and the lack of power boats hampered the operation, but by 0730 on 14 April, the bridge was finished and open for traffic.

While the bridge construction was progressing, "C" Company was building an anti-mine boom upstream. They ran into difficulty because of the swift current. "B" relieved "C" in the evening, and they completed the boom the night the bridge was finished.

The days and nights that followed became a nightmare of changing floats, shooting floating mines, catching the rubber suited swimmers that the desperate krauts sent downstream to destroy the bridge. The river rose and fell at an alarming rate, but the traffic flowed across in a never ending stream. The bridgehead, the one and only bridgehead across the Elbe, was secure.

HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION
Office of the Commanding General
APO 83. U.S. Army

30 April 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 1115th Engineer Group, APO 270, U.S. Army.

THRU : Commanding General, XIX Corps, APO 270, U.S. Army.

1. The crossings of the Rhine, the Weser, the Leine and the Elbe Rivers within the short space of sixteen days mark the high point in the history of the 83d Infantry Division on the Continent. The major contribution of the 1115th Engineer Group toward this achievement provides me with the opportunity of expressing my appreciation for your performance.

2. The impetus of the drive from the Rhine to the Elbe River was sustained in large measure by the skill and rapidity with which you troops constructed a Treadway Bridge over the Elbe River on the night of 13-14 April. The immediate need for this bridge was apparent. The enemy had begun a series of counterattacks which lasted throughout the night. By morning the bridge was completed, and artillery and armor crossed it to support the Infantry in repulsing the enemy's effort to dislodge us from our positions.

3. During the night 15-16 April 1945 your Group began construction of another Treadway Bridge, this time spanning the Saale River. The bridge was completed the following afternoon, thus permitting Infantry and Cavalry to cross the Saale and clear remaining enemy forces from the Division Zone.

4. Later additional bridges were built across both the Elbe and Saale Rivers and defended against 11 enemy attempts to destroy them.

5. The rapid and skillful construction of these bridges was of vital importance to the 83d Division's operations and directly responsible for enabling the Division to hold its bridgehead.

6. Please extend to every officer and man of your command my sincere appreciation and thanks for their courageous and untiring efforts.

/s/ Robt. C. Macon
/t/ ROBT. C. MACON
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding.

330.13 (A)

1st Ind.

HQ XIX CORPS, APO 270, U.S. Army, 4 May 1945.

TO: CO, 1115th Engr C Gp, APO 339, U.S. Army.

I am pleased to note and forward the above commendation.

/s/ Raymond S. McLain
/t/ RAYMOND S. McLAIN
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding.

2nd Ind.

Hq 1115th Engr C Gp, APO 339, U.S. Army, 12 May 1945.

TO: C.O., 295th Engr C Bn, APO 339, U.S. Army.

I should like to add my commendation to that of the above for the outstanding work of your Battalion while operating in close support of the 83rd Infantry Division during the advance from the Roer to the Elbe River.

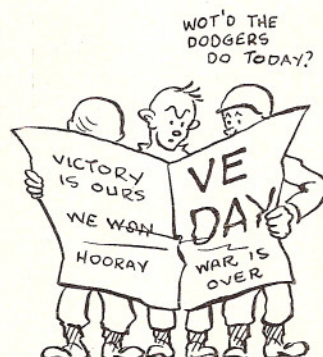
/s/ G.H. Hodges, Jr.
/t/ G.H. HODGES, JR.,
Colonel, C.E.
Commanding



ONE OF THE FLOATING MINES SENT AGAINST THE TRUMAN BRIDGE OVER THE ELBE RIVER, NEAR BARBY, GERMANY. APRIL 16, 1945

Every General in the Ninth Army had his picture taken beside the famous "Truman Bridge". And then the link-up with the Russians finally came, and more pictures were taken. The fame of the bridge was now international. Every time a shutter snapped, there would be the sign, "The Truman Bridge, Constructed by the 295th Engineer Combat Battalion, and the 992nd Engineer Treadway Company."

We feel that the Truman Bridge was the straw that broke the back of the Wehrmacht. The German Army then proceeded to disintegrate, and it was all over. One mass surrender followed another, and on 8 May, 1945, V-E Day was officially announced.



We didn't do much celebrating on V-E Day. It was not as though the shooting had gone on, and then suddenly stopped; for us, the war had ceased some weeks before, when the Elbe Bridgehead was secure, and the link-up with the Russians was made. So, on V-E Day we played ball, wrote letters, and listened to the noise of the celebration of other people, coming over the radio. We began to wonder then what would happen to the 295th, and to each and every man left in the outfit.

Of those that had landed on the beaches of Normandy, one out of seventeen was dead, one out of seven dead or wounded.

On the 13th of May we moved from Barby and the Elbe to towns near Giessen. By that time, all of us were counting our individual points. Those with over 85 began to sweat out discharges, but that only involved the cadre and a few of the replacements. Those of us who were rookies back in March 1943 only had around 65 points, more or less, depending on the medals we had received.



CAPT OLIN H. DAVIS, C.O. OF "A" COMPANY, STANDING ON THE WEST BANK OF THE ELBE RIVER NEAR THE TRUMAN BRIDGE



ACROSS THE TRUMAN BRIDGE
Lt. Bogart, S/Sgt Rocklin, S/Sgt Pysh, Capt Davis, and T/Sgt Aidt greet Russian Soldiers



Lt. Col Carter, Lt. Sanders, S/Sgt Sarb, and Tec/5 Mango receive the
SILVER STAR AWARD from Col. Miller, XIX Corps



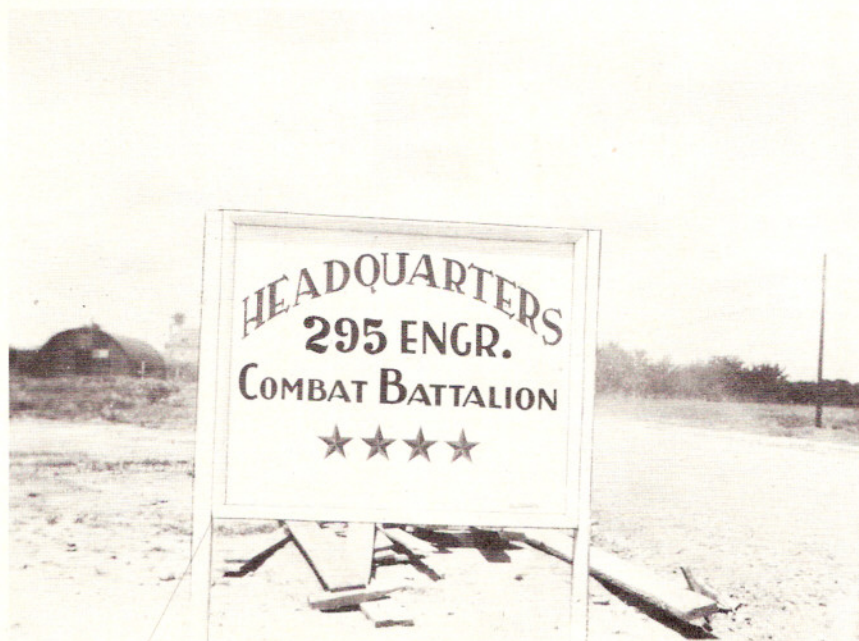
On 4 June we came to LeHavre, France, where we found we were to build Camp Phillip Morris, a redeployment center for troops going to the USA. A few days later we were told that the 295th Engineer Combat Battalion had been placed in Category IV, which meant that the outfit was not going to the Pacific, but would ultimately be demobilized.

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Well, that was that. For more than two years our lives had been tied up with the 295th Engineer Combat Battalion, and then a War Department order says that the outfit just isn't any more. Its job was done.

We did a lot of talking after we got that news. We talked about the C.O. and we talked about the company commanders, the platoon leaders, the squad leaders, the fellows, past and present. We talked about what we had done, what we had seen, what we thought. Men don't get sentimental in wartime, except when they think of home, or friends they have lost. Yet there was not a single man in the outfit that didn't feel that....

as much as us guys cursed the 295th, man, that was a real good outfit, and I'm proud to have been in it. So are the rest of the guys. Show me the guy who isn't proud of his old outfit and I'll call him a liar. Sort of first love. I wish to God they'd left us alone. The 295th was a damn good outfit - what do you think?



HEADQUARTERS XIX CORPS
Office of the Engineer
APO 270

21 May 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : 295th Engineer Combat Battalion.

1. I wish to highly commend the 295th Engineer Combat Battalion for the overall excellence of your performance in eleven months of continual combat. This covers operations in four countries: France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, and an advance from the Normandy Coast to the Elbe River.

2. You have performed every type of combat engineer mission with outstanding efficiency. You have crossed a large number of rivers, breached the Siegfried Line, laid mine fields and removed them, maintained roads, supplied water, fought as Infantry both defensively and offensively, cleared the way through bomb destroyed cities, and performed innumerable other missions. You have been commended often in writing and verbally. You have supported some of the Army's most famous Divisions and earned their unlimited respect and praise. You have taken your full share of casualties, earned many decorations, and have been recommended for a Presidential Citation.

3. Now, upon the total defeat of Germany, I commend you, not for one mission, but for your long sustained superior overall performance. This record is based on sound principles, your ready, aggressive spirit, your 'can-do' attitude and your whole-hearted cooperation with other units. I have never seen a better team spirit than you have developed with the supported divisions and other Corps units. This is based on mutual respect and has played a large part in the success of the XIX Corps. You have fought the European war to a finish in a unit of which you can always be proud. That is the greatest personal satisfaction a combat soldier has.

/s/ H. S. Miller
/t/ H. S. MILLER
Colonel, C.E.
Engineer

HEADQUARTERS
1115th ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP
APO 339, U.S. ARMY

1 June 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Commanding Officer, 295th Engineer Combat Battalion.

1. Now that your unit's attachment to this Headquarters has been terminated, I wish to commend you on your constant willing cooperation and efficient performance of duty on all missions assigned to your organization while under this Group, from Normandy until the final defeat of the enemy.

2. The 295th Engineer Combat Battalion tackled the difficult mission of clearing St. Lo under enemy fire and thus started the long drive from Normandy to Belgium and Holland. The work of your organization in bridging the rivers and clearing roads of mines and barricades contributed immeasurably to the success and speed of this drive. The unit also operated successfully as Infantry in holding a portion of the front lines although subject to heavy enemy fire. Your organization again faced heavy enemy fire and numerous other obstacles in successfully bridging the flooded Roer River. After the rapid advance through Germany, the unit aided materially in bringing about the final defeat of the enemy by constructing the first bridge across the Elbe River.

3. The exemplary courage, heroism, skill, and devotion to duty displayed by the officers and enlisted men of your organization on all missions, in spite of adverse conditions and enemy fire, reflects great credit on the 295th Engineer Combat Battalion. I am proud to have had your organization under my command.

/s/ G.H.Hodges Jr.
/t/ G.H.HODGES, JR.,
Colonel, C.E.
Commanding