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"THE CARPATHIANS"

TENTH ENGINEERS (FORESTRY)
A. E. F.—1917-1919

Roster and Historical Sketch



PREPARED BY
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FOREST HISTORY SOCIETY

For my good friend
Ralph S. Hasmer
Jno. S. Sullivan

Note

The reader may note with surprise the words "The Carpathians" as the title on the cover. This is an informal name for the group of former 10th Engineers who meet in Washington each year for dinner on Armistice Day. It was selected to make clear that the group was the 10th and not 20th Engineers. We have a precedent for this as General Pershing and his original Staff (as well as some Non-Coms. and Privates) meet for dinner at the Army and Navy Club, Washington, each year on May 28, the anniversary of their sailing on the "Baltic" from New York. This group is informally known as "The Baltic Society."

So, the 10th Engineers may well be called "The Carpathians!"

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THE TENTH ENGINEERS (FORESTRY)—A. E. F.

SOME HISTORY

The 10th Engineers had its origin in a request made by Major General G. T. M. Bridges, a member of the Balfour Mission of April, 1917, on our War Department for American forestry troops for service in France. This occurred a few days after April 6, 1917, the day the United States declared war. Back of that were of course the Canadian Forestry Troops already in France, and the New England Sawmill Units (organized early in 1917) which sailed for England and Scotland in May, 1917, and which had been organized prior to the Balfour Mission. Our War Department agreed to General Bridges' request and immediately plans were begun in May on the formation of the Regiment. The U. S. Forest Service was soon called on and in a nationwide effort really recruited the Regiment and helped the Army organize it with the assistance of State Foresters, American lumbermen, and lumber associations. The organization plans for the 10th Engineers were pretty well worked out by May 1, 1917, and officer material was selected soon thereafter. General Pershing in his book, "My Experiences in the World War," leaves a wholly wrong impression about the Forestry Engineers, the implication being that the idea of forestry troops or a Forestry Regiment did not arise until some time in July, 1917, after his arrival in France, when he cabled the War Department about the need for forestry troops. This should not be allowed to become another of the warped legends of the World War, like General Pershing's reputed remark, in English,—“Lafayette, we are here” at Lafayette's tomb in Picpus Cemetery. Such a remark was actually made; however, it was “Lafayette, nous voila,” and it was really made by Colonel Stanton, an officer on General Pershing's Staff.

Most of the 10th officers had been commissioned before July 1, 1917. My commission was dated June 26, 1917. Major James A. Woodruff, Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, had been selected as Regimental Commander, Capt. Beverly C. Dunn and later Capt. Arthur C. Ringland as Regimental Adjutant, and the other necessary regimental, battalion, and company officers had been picked. Major Henry S. Graves and Capt. Barrington Moore had reached France on June 20, 1917, for the specific purpose of making advance arrangements with the French for forests to be cut by the Forestry Regiment. Some of the forester-officers had already attended Fort Myer and other Officers Training Camps; most of the others reported to Camp American University, Washington, D. C., in July for a short period of intensive training. Major W. B. Greeley with 2 officers and 9 civilians (all later commissioned) arrived in France on August 21 as an advance cadre. The camp at American University was being built and by August 1, 1917, the 10th Engineers was an organization of 6 companies of 164 men each, and 26 men each on the Regimental and two Battalion staffs, with the full complement of officers. Then young foresters, forest rangers, engineers, and big husky lumberjacks

began to pour into camp, from every state in the Union,—some of them so big that no Army uniforms nor shoes would fit them! Non-commissioned officers were picked, companies were organized, and the Regiment whipped into shape—and on September 9, 1917, the Regiment marched out from camp, through Georgetown across the Chain Bridge, to entrain at Rossllyn, Virginia. On the early morning of September 10, it landed at Hoboken, N. J., and was ferried across to the Cunard piers at West 14th St., New York, and there lay the British boat "Carpathia" to carry the Regiment overseas. (A German sub got the old "Carpathia" later in the war.) By 6 P. M., the 10th was all aboard, followed by the 2nd Engineers, fresh from the Mexican Border (who had preceded us from Camp American University). About sunset on September 10 we pulled out of New York Harbor for Halifax, Nova Scotia. Reaching there on September 13, the "Carpathia" joined other troop ships at anchor in the inner harbor, waiting for the complete convoy of Australians and New Zealanders. The Regiment remained in Halifax Harbor until the convoy of 13 ships was complete, then sailing for the open sea on the late afternoon of September 21. This convoy included the "Mongolia," "Kroonland," "Carmania" and "Victoria," with many "Aussies" and "Anzacs" aboard. That night there was buried at sea the first casualty of the Regiment—Private James C. Turpin, Co. C, of Clayton, Georgia, his death due to spinal meningitis.

After traveling well north and around the north of Ireland, after an unmolested trip, the "Carpathia" entered the Clyde River, Scotland, on October 2, being welcomed vociferously by the Scots, tying up at Glasgow piers about 10 A. M. We were the first Yanks to land in this historic city, and a royal welcome was planned, but the 2nd Engineers took both the salute and the "whuskey." Our Regiment debarked about 6 P. M. and entrained immediately thereafter for Southampton, England. After a night's run through Carlisle, Manchester, Birmingham, and Cheltenham, we detrained at Southampton on the morning of October 3 and marched through the city to the "rest camp," once used to house the Hessian Troops hired by George III to fight the American Colonists back in 1776-80.

On account of the outbreak of spinal meningitis on the "Carpathia" en route, we left several soldiers at Glasgow and upon reaching Southampton, some 150 of the Regiment were immediately placed in quarantine, including 1st Lt. John G. Kelly of Co. C. Here also the Regiment's collection of dogs was impounded, but not Co. B's Mexican goat! At Southampton also we had our first experience with the "blackout."

The Regiment remained in Southampton until October 6, making a night crossing of the Channel (about 7 hours) on "La Marguerite," landing at Le Havre, France, at 5 A. M. on October 7. The 10th Engineers were among the first fifty thousand Americans to land in France. At Le Havre we spent a day in another "rest camp," this time open sheds with cobblestone floors. After a heavy downpour in the afternoon, the Regiment entrained about 10 P. M. on the famous "40 and 8's" for some unknown destination later known

to be Nevers, Department of Nievre, almost in the center of France.

Reaching Nevers at an early hour on October 9, we detrained, had breakfast in a railroad yard and marched to a French stone caserne or barracks. Billets were assigned the companies, straw made available for bed sacks, and the men were assigned quarters, when suddenly orders came to move out at once to an open field on the edge of the city. This was done and soon a city of squad and pup tents sprang out, to be the home of the Regiment for about a week. Here the men celebrated their first A. E. F. Pay Day and first came in contact with the French people, French ways, and the notorious French mud!

Here it was learned that the Regiment was to be split up, the 1st Battalion (Major R. E. Benedict, C. O.) with Companies A (in part), B and C to go to the Province of Landes, in southwest France. Regimental Headquarters and the 2nd Battalion (Major C. S. Chapman) with Companies D and F were to go to eastern France, to Levier, Province of Doubs; Company E split and to go to Gien and Vanvey, and the remainder of Company A to Brittany, under Capt. Millar, forming a 3rd Battalion under Major Coert du Bois. Regimental property and supplies were divided accordingly and after some two weeks, on October 22, the Regiment divided up, never to be again reunited. The Battalions came back on different ships, in January and February, 1919, Companies E, D and F, 2nd Battalion, and a part of A of the 1st Battalion sailing from Brest on the "North Carolina" on January 27, 1919, landing on February 9 at New York. The rest of the Regiment—Companies B, C, and the 3rd Detachment Co. A, 1st Battalion, sailed from Brest on January 15 on the "New Jersey," landing at Newport News on February 1, 1919.

Thereafter the Regiment functioned largely on a three-Battalion basis. The life of the 10th Engineers lasted slightly over one year, from July, 1917, to October, 1918. By September, 1918, plans were made for the merging of all forestry troops into the 20th Engineers (Forestry), and this was done by G. O. 47, S. O. S., of October 18, 1918. The 10th Engineers thereby entirely lost its identity, its Companies becoming merely numbers, as follows:

Company A, 32nd Company, Company B, 33rd Company, Company C, 34th Company—11th Battalion.

Company D, 35th Company, Company E, 36th Company, Company F, 37th Company—12th Battalion.

The 10th Engineers (Forestry) was a unique unit; it was one of the pioneer units in the New U. S. Army of 1917-18. It was the first time that foresters as such had ever figured in an American military unit. The Regiment was largely recruited and organized by the U. S. Forest Service assisted by State forestry departments. It went overseas a 100 per cent volunteer regiment. Being volunteers, the quality of the men was unusually high, both mentally and physically. The ranks of the privates were full of first-class commissioned officer material, a relatively small percentage of whom ever received shoulder bars. The Regiment had an unusually fine esprit de corps.

As a part of the 20th Engineers (Forestry), Colonel William A. Mitchell, C. O., which had been later recruited, it became the largest regiment ever to be organized by the War Department, having on November 11, 1918, an approximate strength of 30,145 men and 514 officers, with 14 A. E. F. battalions, 49 companies, 28 Engineer service companies, and 2 attached Engineer service battalions; 15 additional battalions with 96 forestry companies remained to be organized in the United States.

Below are given some past history with some accomplishment figures as of Armistice Day, 1918:

1. General Pershing sailed from New York on May 28, 1917, on the "Baltic," spent 2 days in Halifax Harbor for convoy, arriving in England on June 7, 1917.
2. The 10th Engineers arrived at Nevers on October 9, 1917.
3. All units of the 10th had reached their assignments by November 1, 1917.
4. The Forestry Section was established as a part of the Engineer Supply Office on September 25, 1917, prior to that it was a part of the Office of Chief Engineer, A. E. F. (General Taylor).
5. The first mill to be operated by Americans was a French mill which began sawing on November 25, 1917, at Levier (Doubs), quickly followed by a leased French mill at Pontenx (Landes).
6. First American sawmill to operate was near Gien (Loiret) on the Mortumier operation.
7. 1st Battalion of the 20th arrived November 28, 1917.
8. Washington's Birthday, 1918. Co. C's Baseball Team beat the 1st Battalion, 20th Engineers, at Dax, and C Co.'s Band played "The End of a Perfect Day."
9. On October 31, 1918, 81 mills were in operation, and 84 going operations.
10. Total forestry and attached troops in France on October 31, 1918 (20th Engineers and Service Companies), was 514 officers and 30,145 men.
11. On November 11, 1918, there were 14 District Forestry Headquarters.
12. On November 11, 1918, the Forestry troops were producing 2 million feet of lumber and round products per day.
13. Up to December 31, 1918, the Forestry Troops had produced a total of 218,211,000 feet B. M. of lumber, 3,051,137 standard-gauge railroad ties, 954,667 small ties, 39,095 pieces of piling, 340,000 cords of fuelwood, and 1,926,603 pieces of miscellaneous round products.
14. The 10th Engineers sailed for home in January, 1919.

Organization of 20th Engineers (Forestry)
(Nov. 11, 1918)

Brig. Gen. Edgar Jadwin
Director of Construction and Forestry

Col. James A. Woodruff
C. O., 20th Engs. and
Dept. Dir. C & F.

Central Headquarters

Lt. Col. W. B. Greeley
Chief, Forestry Section.

Under him were these divisions:

Acquisition of Timber; Technical Equipment and Operation Supplies;
Product and Shipment; Firewood Project Advance Section; Military

Administration Personnel; Welfare, and 2 Sections Forestry Officers and Staffs, each having 4 Districts. There were 14 Battalion and District Commanders.

WHAT THE COLONEL THOUGHT OF US

The following letter from Colonel Woodruff may have been read before by members of the old 10th, but it is worth rereading these days, and it belongs in this record. It happened to go to Major Frank R. Barns of the 20th who on January 10, 1919, was at Brest as temporary C. O. of the 11th and 12th Battalions (1st and 2nd Battalions, 10th Engineers, to you).

Headquarters 20th Engineers (Forest)

U. S. M. P. O. No. 717, France, Jan. 10, 1919.

From: Commanding officer, 20th Engineers (Forest).

To: Maj. F. R. Barns, C. O., 11th and 12th Battalions, 20th Engineers.
(Forest), Base Section No. 5.

Subject: Commendation of services of 11th and 12th Battalions, 20th Engineers.

1. I wish to extend to you as commanding officer of the 11th and 12th Battalions, 20th Engineers, and thru you to the officers and soldiers comprising these battalions my sincere thanks and appreciation of the admirable service which you have all rendered in France. The 11th and 12th Battalions, as the 10th Engineers, were the pioneer forestry troops in France and encountered the most trying and exceptional difficulties in getting the production of lumber started at our forestry operations. By their loyalty, enthusiasm under adverse conditions, and their readiness to perform any severe labor demanded, these troops made a record for their regiment for efficiency and service which will never be forgotten. They saved the day in the matter of supplying the American Expeditionary Force with lumber at the time when it was most critically needed.

2. On the eve of the departure of these troops from France I wish that you would extend to them my congratulation on their record in the American Expeditionary Force; and my best wishes for their success as they return to civil life.

J. A. WOODRUFF,
Colonel, Engineers, Commanding.

WHAT THE SECRETARY OF WAR THOUGHT

Secretary of War Newton D. Baker wrote on July 29, 1918, to Julius Rosenwald, asking him to go to France, saying in part:

"It is not unlikely that your chief opportunities will be among the men of the so-called Services of Supply, of whom there are great numbers, who are deprived of the opportunity for service at the front to render valuable service in the lines of communication, upon which the safety and efficiency of the Army at the Front depends.

"You will find them filled with the spirit of service and sacrifice; you will find our boys enthusiastic, intelligent, and brave."

JNO. D. GUTHRIE.