

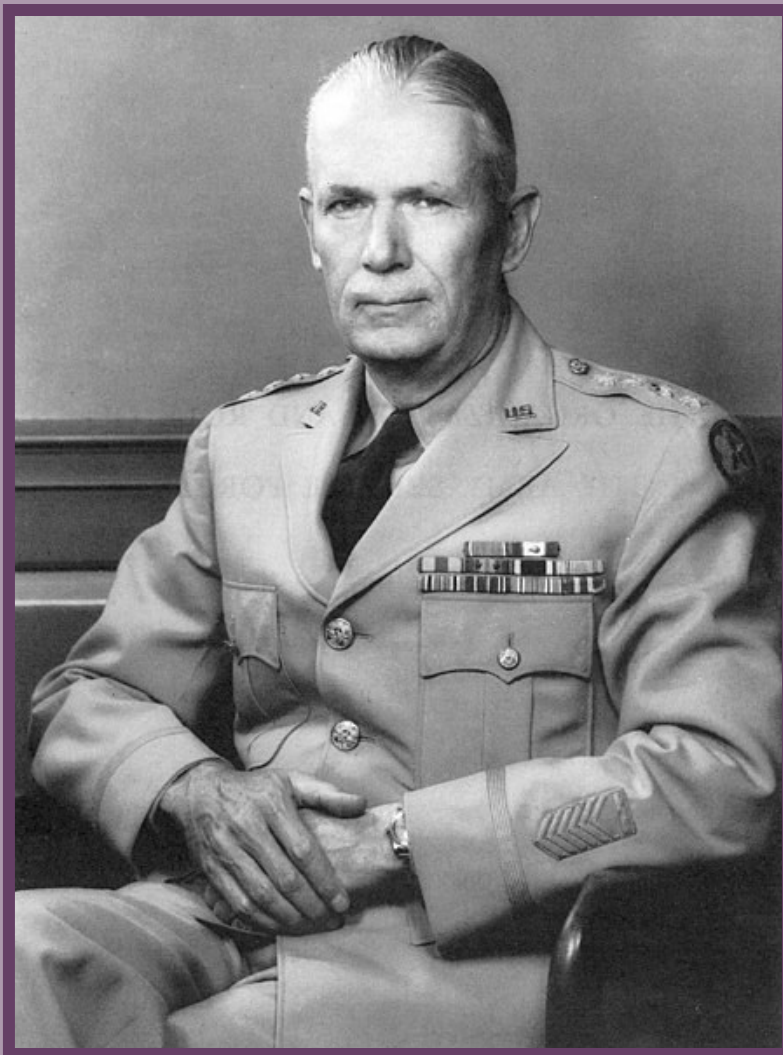
Arkansas Military History Journal

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General Brehon B. Somervell

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Message from the Editor

We think this is an interesting issue of the *Arkansas Military History Journal*. During the spring the 206th Coast Artillery colors were returned to the Arkansas National Guard Museum after being conserved. The flag flew over Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians when the Japanese attacked in June 1942. Conserved by Textile Preservation Association, Inc., in Ranson, WV, the flag has a prominent place in the Museum's new 206th and 153rd exhibit. The 153rd Infantry was also in Alaska's Aleutian Islands during the War. We have included an early Journal article from the 1990s that covers the unit's time in the North. Our first article is written by LTC (Ret) Brian Mason, who covers the visit to Camp Robinson during the Second World War by General Brehon Burke Somervell. The article, entitled "War's Most Influential Logistician Visits Camp Robinson," provides a plethora of interesting information. Finally, included are advertisements and articles of the sale of items at Camp Pike during the early 1920s after Arkansas took over the post from the federal government.

Please enjoy these articles!

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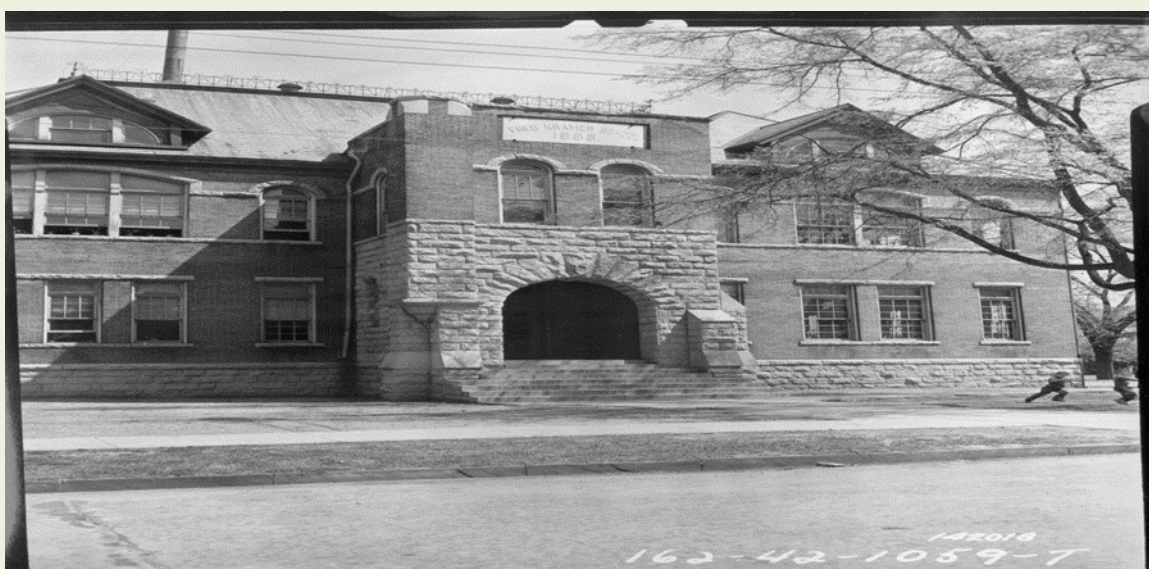
www.arngmuseum.com

War's Most Influential Logistician Visits Camp Robinson

Written by: Lt. Col. (Retired) Brian L. Mason

While the details of his visit in 1943 remain unknown, the fact remains that the Second World War's most prominent quartermaster visited Camp Robinson at the height of several key transitions for both the installation and the war. General Brehon Burke Somervell (1892-1955) was a critical and key factor in American military success during World War II, responsible for the U.S. Army's logistics, and commanding the U.S. Army's Service Forces. Equally notable is the fact that Gen. Somervell was the designer and planner for the construction of the Pentagon building which began construction in September 1941 and completed in January 1943.

Brehon Somervell was born in Little Rock on May 9th, 1892, as the only child of Dr. William Taylor Somervell and teacher Mary S. Burke. Somervell attended the Fred Kramer School in Little Rock. In 1910, Representative Charles C. Reid of Arkansas recommended Somervell to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and in 1914, he graduated 6th of 107. He commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.²



SC 142018
Entrance of the Fred Kramer School in Little Rock, Ark., where Lt. Gen. Brehon Somervell first attended school. Little Rock, Ark. 4/14/42.
Signal Corps Photo #162-42-1059. (Musteen)
Original negative received from 162nd Signal Photo Co., Camp Robinson, Ark. July 1942.
1425 orig. neg. (afs)

Photo and captioning of Fred Kramer School where Somervell attended school. (162nd Photo Company, Camp Robinson, 1942)

2LT Somervell was serving as a volunteer military attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, France when World War I started in 1914. He was on leave in Europe when the war began, and he felt the need to assist U.S. citizens attempting to flee the situation there and return home. In February 1915, he was promoted to 1LT and returned to Washington D.C. to an Engineer Battalion assignment. Somervell participated in the Punitive Expedition into Mexico, chasing the infamous Poncho Villa and his raiders, a pursuit led by then Maj. Gen. John J. Pershing.¹⁴

Somervell was assigned to the Fifth Engineers while deployed to Europe in 1917 during World War I when he was promoted to captain and awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. He also served as an assistant chief of staff for the 89th Division commander, led a reconnaissance patrol into enemy lines and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He remained in Germany until 1920 as part of the Army of Occupation.⁸

After returning to the states, Somervell, a Lt. Col. by now, served with the Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C., Florida, New York, and Tennessee. He graduated in the top 15 in his class at the General Staff College and attended Army War College. During the Great Depression, he was head of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) for New York City, where he directed the LaGuardia Airport project, among many other key engineering projects. During the interwar years, and after his work with the WPA, he returned to military service and became head of the Construction Division of the Office of the Quartermaster.

As World War II approached, Somervell was involved in some of the most significant projects of his distinguished career. In 1940, he was appointed to the head of the Construction Division of the Quartermaster Department, where he was responsible for the development of the many training bases required to prepare U.S. troops for the war. Once promoted to Brigadier General in early 1941, he set out to convince legislators and military decision-makers the need to placing the administrative functions of the high command in a central location, which resulted in what is now known as the Pentagon. After construction was complete, Somervell added an Oak Leaf Cluster to his Distinguished Service Medal. Somervell realized that going to war on a global scale (again) would require a more robust and comprehensive Army supply program.⁷

In 1941, Alaska, which was accessible only by sea and air, began to take on an important role in America's strategic posture. As the G-4, while a highway was being built, General Somervell was responsible for supplying both Alaska and military units along the route. The full impact of the construction of the Alcan highway continues to be felt with the economies of the cities established along the highway, as it opened up Alaska, northwest Canada, and the Yukon to tourists and travelers providing better transportation and communication.⁵

In early 1942, he was promoted to the temporary rank of major general and assigned as the assistant chief of staff to the War Department G4. In that position, Somervell was essentially the head of the Services of Supply (changed to Army Services Forces in 1943); charged with organizing the supply of U.S. military forces on all fronts. While the Manhattan project had been kept quite secret from most, Somervell was briefed on the project in 1942. At that point, Somervell helped with the formation of the Military Policy Committee and appointed General Leslie Groves, who was his assistant on the Pentagon project, to lead the Manhattan project.⁸

Not long after, he was promoted to lieutenant general for his work. Presidential advisor Bernard Baruch described Somervell as "one of the few Americans who really understands total war."³

General Somervell's work as the army's chief logistician during WW2 was marked by a consistent ability to get things done. Drawing upon the managerial skills that he developed before the war, surrounding himself with skilled subordinates, infusing his organization with his own driving

personality, and recognizing that logistics was a major key to victory, he spared no effort to ensure that the American soldier had everything needed to win the war.⁷



General Brehon Somervell on the covers of *Life* (8 March 1943), *Time* (15 June 1942), and *Life* (13 April 1942) magazines (Time.com/vault and Oldlifemagazines.com)

In the two years prior to Somervell's visit to Camp Robinson, the base had been quite busy, having undergone renovations from its WWI missions, Camp Robinson was reclaimed by the U.S. Army in 1940 and by September of that year, construction began that included a total of over 6700 buildings and more than 5400 tented huts. By December 1940 the 35th Division was activated and training at the camp, spending nearly 9 months there, minus a two-month excursion south as part of 2nd Army's "Red Force" in the Great Louisiana Maneuvers in late 1941. After the 35th moved out to the west coast in preparation for their eventual involvement in the European theater, Camp Robinson was the site of both the Branch Immaterial Replacement Training Center (BIRTC) and the Medical Replacement Training Center (MRTC), both centers training capacity of nearly 30,000 soldiers.¹⁰



Members of the 35th Division training in Louisiana during the Louisiana Maneuvers (Army Archives)

In the later months of 1943, a decision was made to include Infantry training at Camp Robinson, and by 1944 both the BIRTC and MRTC were replaced by the Infantry Replacement Training Center, whose training capacity was over 21 thousand. It is likely that this transition may have been the impetus for then Lt. Gen. Somervell's visit to Camp Robinson. Additionally, some 3000-4000 German POWs were imprisoned at Camp Robinson in 1944, most of whom were captured in the North Africa campaign, which took place from June 1940-May 1943.^{1, 10}

While the details of Lt. Gen. Somervell's Camp Robinson visit remain elusive to historians, Somervell had a unique and particular interest in training to win this war. In his address in a conference of the National Institute on Education and the War, August 28th, 1942, he states as he talks to the National Association of School Principals, "The job of the armed forces is to win this total war on the battlefield. The job of industry is to furnish the weapons and supplies needed by the armed forces to carry on total war. The job of the schools in this total war is to educate the nation's manpower for war and the peace that follows. We can lose this total war on the battlefield as a direct result of losing it on the industrial front, on the home front, or on the educational front."¹²

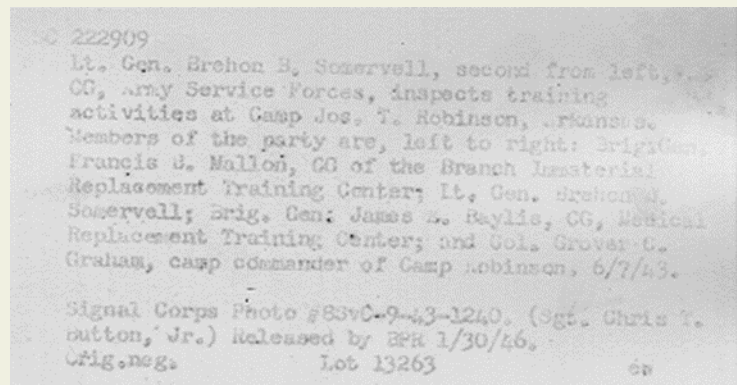
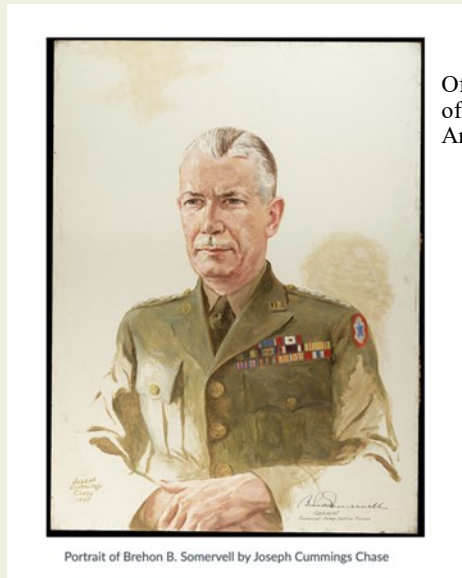


Photo and caption of Brig. Gen. Francis Mallon, Lt. Gen. Brehon Somervell, Brig. Gen. James Baylis, and COL Grover Graham during the Camp Robinson visit June 7th, 1943 (Col. Graham Camp Robinson photo scrapbook)

Accompanying Lt. Gen. Somervell in the photo of his visit to Camp Robinson was the Commander of the camp, Col. Grover C. Graham, an Infantry officer who served in both WWI and WWII, Brig. Gen. Francis B. Mallon, commanding general of the Branch Immaterial Replacement Center, and Brig. Gen. James L. Baylis, commanding general of the Medical Replacement Training Center. Mallon previously commanded the 30th Infantry Regiment and would later be promoted to Maj. Gen. and command Army Ground Forces at Depot 1 & 4. Baylis commanded Medical Replacement Centers at Camp Grant and Fort Lewis after his command at Camp Robinson. He later served as Chief Surgeon for US Burma-India theater and 7th Army.

Somervell retired from the military on April 30, 1946. In 1948, he was promoted to the permanent rank of four-star general on the retired list. After retirement, he served as president of Koppers Company, a producer of industrial machinery and industrial by-products based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. With Somervell at the head, the company experienced significant postwar success. Somervell's postwar health required a couple of surgeries and setbacks. By 1955, Somervell, who considered himself, "just a country boy from Arkansas", resigned from Koppers and moved to his Ocala, Florida home where he died after a series of heart attacks.⁶ He is buried in Virginia's Arlington Cemetery. The USAT General Brehon B. Somervell, a Frank S. Besson-class U.S. Army Reserve support vessel, was named in his honor.⁸

The United States Army Combined Armed Support Command (CASCOM) established the General Brehon B. Somervell medal, a decorative honorary medal, to recognize military and civilian personnel who have made significant contributions in sustainment, with specific emphasis on multi-functional logistics.⁴



Official Military Portrait and Headstone of Somervell and wife Anna (Purcell) at Arlington National Cemetery 9




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CAMP PIKE SALE

In 1917, Camp Pike (now Camp Robinson) was one of 32 new posts built in the United States to train soldiers for the World War. By 1922, the War had been over for more than three years and was no longer needed by the Army. Camp Pike was given to the State and the Arkansas National Guard. In the transition, several large sales were conducted to get rid of excess property. These are newspaper articles and advertisements for the Camp Pike sale.



**All remaining surplus and salvage property at
CAMP PIKE, ARKANSAS
Offered for Sale by Sealed Bids
Closing 10 A.M., March 31, 1922**

TERMS OF SALE

ONLY BIDS FOR THE ENTIRE LOT OF PROPERTY WILL BE ACCEPTED

In this sale of Camp Pike, all surplus property and all salvage property will be offered for sale. Bids will be received in the office of the Director of Sales, Washington, D. C., until 10 a.m., March 31, 1922, at which time they will be opened.

Inventories of all property to be sold may be inspected in the office of the Director of Sales, or in the office of the Quartermaster Supply Officer, Camp Pike, Little Rock, Arkansas.

No bid will be considered unless accompanied by certified check or banker's acceptance for \$100,000.00. The purchaser will be required to furnish cash, certified check or certified banker's acceptance, or letter of credit, in the full amount of the purchase price, upon signing of the contract. All property must be removed within six months of date of acceptance of bid.

The government reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

For full information and for complete terms of sale, write for SEALED PROPOSAL NO. 1. Address

**THE DIRECTOR OF SALES
ROOM 234
MUNITIONS BUILDING
Washington, D. C.
Housefurnishings**

Some of the Property Included in the Camp Pike Sale

QUARTERMASTER CORPS
Dry Goods, Notions, Tape, Buttons, Thread, Etc.

Hardware
Screens, lanterns, rope, hand axes, saws, stencil outfits, pipe, wire, stoves and stove pipe, tools and equipment for electricians, carpenters, plumbers, blacksmiths and machinists.

Kitchen Ware
Dishes, kitchen utensils, field ranges, water coolers.

Baskets, chairs, curtains, pianos, desks, tables, cots, blankets, mattresses, felt pads, pillows, window shades, lamps.

Office Equipment
Desks, wire desk baskets, chairs, typewriter tables, box files, folding chairs, water coolers, stapling machines, ink wells, paper weights, pen racks, etc.

Cloth and Textiles
Felt, canvas, O. D. shirting.

Clothing
Breeches, cotton and wool; coats, cotton and wool; underwear, light and heavy; hats, service; leggings, canvas; mackinaws, rain coats and slickers; shirts, cotton and wool; shoes; Red

Cross, stockings and sweaters; drawers, fleece lined; wool blankets.

Animal-drawn Wagons, Etc.
Wagons, spare parts and accessories; escort, mountain or spring wagons; lumber wagons, hay wagons, carts, ambulances, saddles, saddle parts and saddler's tools. Complete line of harness, spare parts, accessories and horse and stable equipment. Pack animal outfits.

Tents
Tents, shelter and hospital; tent pins; tent poles.

SIGNAL CORPS
Batteries, canvas folding buckets, flashlights and bulbs, candle lanterns, signal flags, headsets, insulators, message books, electrician's tools, electrical instruments, line wire, telephones, megaphones.

ORDNANCE
Ammunition and machine-gun carts; wagons, caissons, limbers and accessories; oils and camouflage paint; small arms, target and machine-gun material; steel helmets; sub-caliber ammunition; signal lights; ammunition boxes.

MEDICAL CORPS
Complete line of veterinary appliances and veterinary hospital supplies.

ENGINEER CORPS
Axes and ax handles, crowbars, iron bar stock, box and watch compasses.

WAR DEPARTMENT

**MUCH STOCK SOLD
AT CAMP AUCTION**

Little Rock, Feb. 11.—A total of 229 horses and mules were sold yesterday at the second of the three public auction sales at Camp Pike. The sale was continued this morning. Only one more public auction will be held at Camp Pike in February, that on the 19th when 500 mules and horses are to be sold.

ATTENDED CAMP PIKE SALE

W. A. Kannally Returns from the Sale at Arkansas Cantonment

W. A. Kannally, who for the past year has made his home in this city, returned this week from Camp Pike, Ark., where he attended the sale of the big army camp.

The buildings at the camp had deteriorated greatly, and there were many bidders on hand for the sale. The buildings and steam heating, and the greater part of the salvage was sold to the firm of King, Goldberg & Craig, who were the largest buyers when Camp Funston was sold a year ago. The firm will employ an army of men in wrecking the Arkansas camp, and the lumber will be shipped away as quickly as the buildings are wrecked.

The lumber sold at about \$2 per thousand feet, and the radiation at about 7 cents.

LIKE SELLING SMALL CITY IS CAMP PIKE SALE

Hundreds of buildings and their contents which are part of the great army cantonment at Camp Pike, are to be sold at auction on Tuesday, August 1, at the direction of the war department, by Charles S. Gerth, of New Orleans and New York. The sale will mark the passing of one of the largest camps of its kind in the country. The material to be offered would provide complete homes for thousands of families.

Included in the sale are more than twenty-five million feet of lumber, over a million feet of electric wire, enormous quantities of plumbing materials, electrical equipment, galvanized pipe, boilers and tanks, forty thousand sash, close to ten thousand doors, miles of screening and a vast amount of other material and supplies such as barrack heaters and army ranges.

The sale should prove of more than passing interest to home builders in the south and those engaged in business enterprises using material such as are to be sold. In this con-

nection it will be especially gratifying to the war department if the property passes into the hands of people living in the vicinity of the camp, or residents of near by states, rather than into the hands of speculators and dealers from distant points.

Among the buildings to be sold are barracks, officers' quarters, mess halls, administration buildings, lavatories, guard houses, infirmary, wards, shops, stables, storehouses and post exchanges.

BRIEFLY TOLD

Kennett Mo.—Southwestern Missouri is harvesting 3,000 carloads of watermelons this year.

St. Louis.—Meredith Nicholson, Indiana novelist, while here said people had about stopped reading, owing to movies, amos and radio. Too busy.

Oklahoma City, Okla.—Oklahoma state treasury boasts a surplus of \$3,500,000.

San Francisco.—In 1921, over 2,500,000 people were carried by the Northwestern Pacific over San Francisco bay without an accident.

Quebec, Quebec.—Notwithstanding subscriptions to universities, increased grants to expeditions and the redeeming of \$1,000,000 of the provincial debt—surplus revenue for the fiscal year 1921-22 in the province will amount to over \$5,500,000.

Charles Dickens wrote a Life of Christ for his children, and left definite instructions that it should never be published.

HUGE AUCTION IS A FINANCIAL SUCCESS

State to Clear \$100,000 to
\$150,000 From Camp
Pike Sale.

GOOD PRICES REALIZED

Supplies Find Ready Bidders, and
Huge Amounts of War Stores
Are Moved.

That the acquisition by the state of the government surplus supplies at Camp Pike was one of the soundest financial transactions Arkansas ever has entered into became apparent yesterday, when the first day of the public auction at the camp closed.

While no check-up on the sales will be made until the close of the auction, probably today, officials and business men yesterday estimated that from \$100,000 to \$150,000 will be cleared. This money will be used by the Camp Pike Honorary Commission in the improvement and beautifying of Camp Pike, with special regard for the needs of the Arkansas National Guard.

Although the benefits of the sale accrue directly to the state, the state has assumed no responsibility for losses. The plan to sell the surplus supplies for the benefit of the state guard was evolved by Governor McRae and a group of Little Rock business men, and the governor, accompanied by Lloyd England, Albert D. Cohn and W. S. Mitchell, went to Washington, D. C., several weeks ago, where they obtained the approval of the secretary of war.

The goods were transferred by the government for \$140,000 and arrangements were effected under which payment was made by a New York bank. The governor appointed the Camp Pike Honorary Commission, which has general supervision over the sales and is responsible to the bank. Members of the board serve without pay, and assumed their obligations as a patriotic duty.

is "No Dumping." When the sales opened yesterday it was apparent that the goods were being marketed, and not dumped. Several buyers said that some commodity lots were being sold at considerably more profit to the state than to the purchasers.

Two hundred buyers were listed, and most of them were from Arkansas. Practically every town in the state of 4,000 population or more was represented. In addition, there were buyers from New York, New Jersey, Colorado, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Missouri, Tennessee and elsewhere.

The sales were in charge of Max Katter of the New York Surplus Trading Company, a veteran of the auction block. When the state as represented by the Honorary Commission acquired the stores, it decided, in the interest of efficiency and economy, to turn over the actual sales to some organization experienced in bulk merchandising, and the Surplus company, itself a large buyer of army stores, was selected.

Of the 600 and more lots listed in the catalogue, all, with one exception, are being sold for the benefit of the Arkansas National Guard. The exception was a lot of 15,000 Class B, or used, blankets, the property of Mr. Katter's company, which were sold yesterday in lots of 5,000.

Inspection Allowed. The auction is being held in one of the big quartermaster depots, which is arranged as a sample room. Buyers have been given an opportunity for several days to visit the warehouses and make actual inspection of the goods, and samples now are on display in the auction room as an added convenience. Samples of each lot are displayed as the lot is put up, and bidders are recognized by their numbers.

Numbered cards were sold the buyers at \$200 each, the money to apply on the purchase price or to be returned if nothing is bought. This plan was adopted to eliminate irresponsible buyers, and a further precaution a deposit of 10 per cent of the sale price is required of buyers as the sales progress.

The sales progressed rapidly and quietly yesterday, and there was spirited competition. All the buyers are experienced men, apparently, and have come to the sale with their minds made up as to what they intend buying and what they intend paying.

The heaviest competition yesterday morning was over a lot of 10,524 pick up trucks, when the bidding ran up by quarter and half cents from five to 18 cents. It was said that the purchases were being made by building and road contractors and their agents. Another contest occurred in the afternoon over the sale of several tents, most of them shelter halves. The sellers sold low, but the big hospital and ward tents ran up from \$5 each to \$25 and \$40 before they were knocked down.

State a Buyer. Van B. Sims, state comptroller, representing the state, bid in 500 canvas leggings at 14 cents each, and 228 mattress covers at 25 cents each. The material will be used for the boys' industrial school, Mr. Sims said.

Among the larger purchases yesterday morning were: 25,000 pairs of canvas leggings at 14 cents a pair by Anderson Bros., of Denver, Col., 5,000 blankets, used, and damaged, at 81 cents each by the Geller Iron and Metal Company of El Paso, Tex.; 1,500 railcoats at \$125 each. Among local buyers were Garland Parrior and Wayne Jackson of Parrior's Army store, and W. H. Hamm.

Not a lot was named yesterday, and apparently there will be a purchaser for every item offered. A lot of 328 wooden muskets with padded points, used for fencing, was sold for 10 cents each. Eventually they probably will find their way to some military college. Even if not resold as fencing muskets they are, as Auctioneer Katter told the buyer, "worth a dime each as kindling wood."

In addition to the buyers, the auction room was thronged with spectators, and it is probable that 500 heard the opening bids. Many Little Rock business men, including members of the Disposal Board, were present, and a corps of clerks was kept busy checking up on the sales.

Col. Fredrick Present. One of the most interested spectators was Col. John R. Fordson of Hot Springs. Colonel Fordson, the builder of the camp, is now watching the break.

(Continued on Page 7, 2d Col.)

STATE BUYS MORE PROPERTY AT CAMP

Now Owns Practically All Material Sold at Government Auction.

The Camp Pike Honorary Sales Commission, created by Governor McRae, has bought out the Camp Pike Sales Company, it became known yesterday, and now is owner of all the building material sold by the government at the August 1 auction except about \$5,000 worth that had been sold to private purchasers.

The material is to be sold for the benefit of Camp Pike, now the property of the state, and the Arkansas National Guard, just as the quartermaster supplies were disposed of several months ago. The purchase includes all the building materials, the steam radiation and the plumbing, for which the commission paid about \$80,000.

Lloyd England, chairman of the commission, yesterday said that Har-

ris Bros. Co. of Chicago, one of the largest wrecking concerns in the world, now is acting as the commission's agent in disposing of the material. The Harris company had charge of wrecking the Chicago Exposition and the St. Louis World's Fair, and was the principal purchaser of surplus material in Panama when the Panama canal was completed.

Mr. England said that the material will be disposed of largely by mail. No auctions are contemplated at present. The Harris Company is now preparing a catalog of the material which will be sent out to a mailing list of several thousands. However, sales of material are now being made daily, and any person has the privilege of buying in any quantity at the camp where company headquarters are maintained.

When the material was sold by the government at public auction at Camp Pike the first of the month, the Harris Company, acting as agent for the Arkansas commission, purchased \$30,000 worth. After the sale, four other large companies which had purchased the bulk of the material consolidated, forming the Camp Pike Sales Company. After about two weeks of operation the Camp Pike Sales Company was bought out by the state commission, the transfer being completed 10 days ago, and the Harris Company was retained as agent for the commission.

City Engineer Allen Has Thirty
Thousand Dollars Worth of Good
Materials and Supplies in Barn

Article previously published in the 1993 Spring Edition of the Arkansas Military Journal.



Company A, with 1st Sgt. Denman Wylie up front, poses for its last photo in Anchorage on the way home via Mississippi in 1944.

Life in Alaska 'Not so Foreign'

*From a History of the 153D
by the Hempstead County
Historical Society*

"Being a territory of the United States, Alaska is not as 'foreign' as one would imagine. In Alaska are fine airports, up-to-date mercantile houses, picture shows, and every convenience of an American home. But one has to remember that only about 65,000 inhabitants are scattered over an area of 590,884 square miles, a stretch of land one-third greater than that of the Atlantic states to Florida. And the population in that vast amount of space does not even equal that of Little Rock alone.

"The population of "Seward's Ice Box," as Alaska is commonly called, is widely scattered over a total of about 800 towns and settlements, the city of Seward ranking about eighth. About half the population are whites with the other half made up of Eskimos and native Indians, with a mingling of Japanese.

(Terrell Hutson said he learned while in Nome that the Japanese had married Eskimos and were living up and down the coastline and knew all about the channels and their depth. "They were ready for us.")

"Fort Raymond, where the Arkansas band is sta-

tioned is situated about two miles north of Seward. No sooner did soldiers begin arriving than the band struck up lively marches, doing its best as a morale unit."

The article further listed the clothing that had been issued the soldiers, "from ski goggles to sheep-line over coats, and the soldier's big problem now is just what to wear for various occasions."

Commenting on their cold-weather clothing, Wylie said if you had a hole in your glove and went to Nome on Saturday night, when you got back you had frostbite on your fingers. It was just like sticking your hand on a red hot stove.

"We were issued muskrat coats but they didn't hold up. The skin was tender and would tear. We'd have it sewn up and it would tear again. We liked our alpaca parkas.. the alpaca is a fur-bearing animal you know. They had a hood with drawstring and only your eyes and mouth stuck out."

He said they also wore the native "muckluk" boots. "They were made of wolf skin and flat soles like the hand with no heel and you had to be particular or your feet would get out from under you."

Bugle Boys of Company A

Roy B. Lewis was a member of the band of Camp Raymond in Seward. He had joined Company A before he was "of age" so that he could be the bugler as requested by Captain Mac Duffie. (Edwin Dossett was Company A bugler in Nome) Lewis enjoyed his band buddies in Seward, but when he returned to Arkansas to his Dad's bedside in April 1944, he was not sent back to Alaska when his furlough ended. Instead he was sent to play in the band at the Army War College in Washington, D. C.

"We had nothing to do after we practiced every morning, and with a free pass I toured the city, but I

missed the Seward gang," Roy told his twin sister Ruth Lewis recently. He said several big-named band members were in that band in D.C., including one from Horace Heidt's Band. He advanced to 4th chair which he said was really good. He was discharged at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Major Duffie was also assigned to Camp Raymond in Seward where he spent about two years before being sent to the European theater of war. He was captured by the Germans and freed by the French. "He as shot up and never again had full use of one arm," Opal Duffie, his widow said recently.

The band was an all-Arkansas unit with the exception of its Warrant Officer, Wayne E. Tyree, and up to December 23, 1940 was part of the Arkansas National Guard with the home station at North Little Rock. Its members came from all occupations, some college and high school students, others business men, even professional musicians.

After six months of training at Camp Robinson, they first saw "action" in the Tennessee war games. Upon arrival at Fort Raymond they found their chief job was that of morale building through music. This included concerts for soldiers and

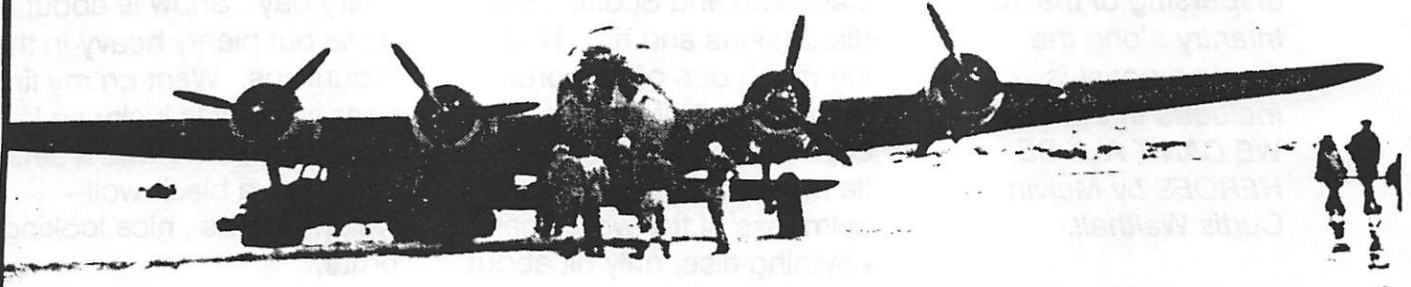
townspeople, peppy marches and retreat ceremonies. Also the band was the "bugler" of the camp, playing the "Old Gray Mare" early each morning for reveille.

Warrant Officer Tyree of Glasgow, KY was assigned to the band at Camp Robinson. When he arrived the band had moved to Camp Murray and by the time he got there they were in Alaska.

The roster is as follows: T/Sgt Paul R. Cooper, S/Sgt Wally Simmons; Sgts. Gene R. Fair, Ed Henley, J. O. Powell, Cloe C. Yarbrough, Cpls. Clayton C. Bennett, J.L. Adams, Ben Sperry; PFCs Blake Browning, Richard B. Cash, Chester A. Creech, Bert Danham, Warren Funston, Lloyd A. Gathright, Buel M. Moyer, Wendel Pedigo, Gerald Johnston, Larry Thomas, Harold Armstrong, Franklin Young, Arman Stringfellow, Charles Pearce, Claude Pearce, James Stanley, Lamar Smith, George Siebert, James Walters, and Roy Lewis.

"The Nome school let the men use their gym for roller skating before we got down to business that first winter, when everything was iced over. I taught most of the 153rd how to skate - ~~talk~~ about a job! It was ~~pretty~~ nice of the town and hard on

COMPANY A



B-29 - either for protection or on the Lend-Lease to Russia.

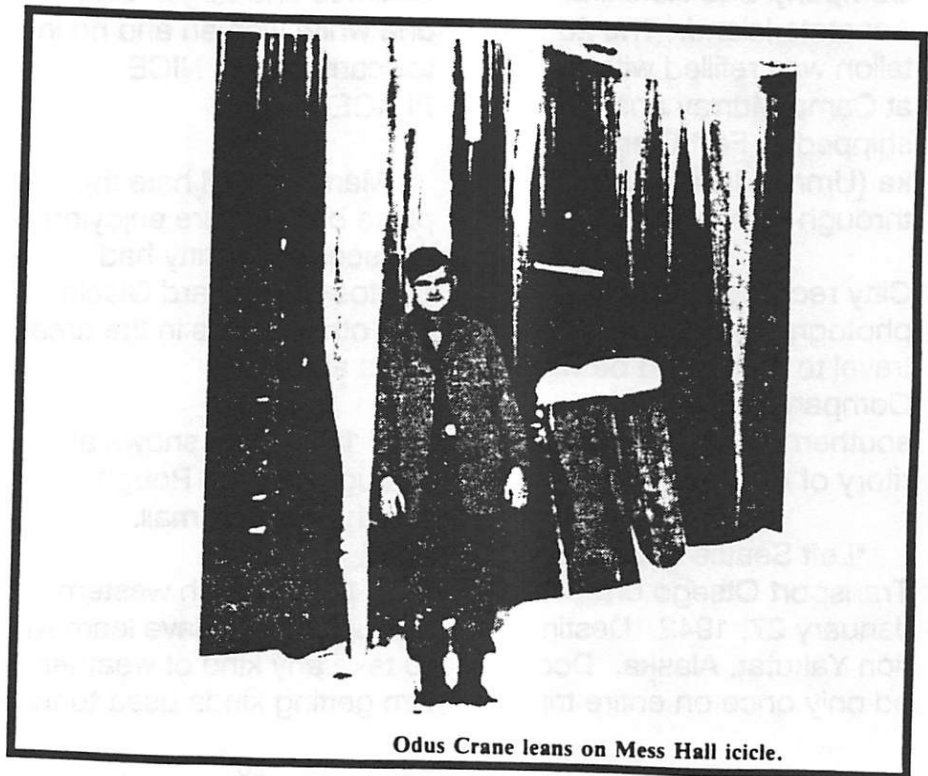
the gym floor. I never learned to ski but many of the men did," McIver added.

During the summer of 1942 several men were sent to St. Lawrence Island 40 miles across from Siberia which you can see on a clear day- but there were only two or three clear days that summer. They were stationed at one of the two villages, Gambell. Some of the men were Dean Parsons, Claude Byrd, A.D. Mitchell, Buck Dickerson, Wallace McIver, and John Wilson. They were to report sighting of enemy planes which occasionally passed over the island. Wylie says that it was just a "vacation," a "pud" for the men.

An agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs was

stationed there and was able to assist the men and tell them about the island people. The men bartered for ivory carvings and reindeer and fish. They saw whales, walrus, seal, ook-

ruk, and millions of sea birds. "Contact with the mainland was by radio, and we used a seven-year old, the son of the agent who spoke Eskimo fluently, to interpret the code which was in



Odus Crane leans on Mess Hall icicle.

'Eskimo'. Their alphabet has only a few letters and he could read it better than his dad," explained McIver.

A summary of the dispersing of the 153d Infantry along the Alaskan coast is included in the book WE CAN'T ALL BE HEROES by Melvin Curtis Walthall.

"The 1st and 3d Battalions were reorganized with fillers from the 2nd Battalion and departed Camp Murray September 1, 1941 for Alaska. The 3d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Ivy W. Crawford, guarded Seward and the rail line to Anchorage. Company A was dispatched to Nome, Company D to "Yakutat and Company C to Ketchikan on Annetate Island. The 2d Battalion was refilled with men at Camp Murray and shipped to Fort Glenn, Alaska (Umnak Island) January through March 1942."

Citty recorded in his photograph-diary album his travel to Yakutat to be with Company D in the southernmost part of the Territory of Alaska.

"Left Seattle aboard U.S. Transport Otsego on January 27, 1942. Destination Yakutat, Alaska. Docked only once on entire trip.

That once at Prince Rupert B.C. (Canada). The soldiers really took the place over. Beer was 8 percent and whiskey per usual-anyway most of the boys succeeded in getting plastered. Ran around with a bunch of Canadian and Scottish soldiers (skirts and all). Nothing much out of the ordinary the rest of the way except the scenery. Was a little more surprised at the calmness of the water than anything else; only hit about eight hours rough stuff the entire trip. Only a few got sick on the trip.

Docked at Yahutat February 6, 12 a.m. Were greeted by a bunch of B and H: company boys who had been here about six months. Talk about a desolate Place--this is it. Population of town is 198 counting Indians and Eskimos and dogs. Only one white woman and no intoxicants at all. NICE PLACE!?

March 1--Still hate the place but am sure enjoying the scenery. (Citty had photos of Hubbard Glacier and other places in the area in his album).

April 1--Had big snows all through March. Rough weather and no mail.

May 1--Still rough western through April. Have learned to take any kind of weather. Am getting kinda used to the

place but also get homesick for some kind of civilization. Boy, would a hamburger help. Had snow ice cream and was made staff sergeant today.

June 1--Same old thing every day. Snow is about all gone but plenty heavy in the mountains. Went on my first bear hunt. Was lucky so I didn't care if he was a small one. Got a black wolf--weight 115lbs., nice looking brute.

July 1--With bombing going on close by we have field and layout inspections. A helluva way to win a war. When the Japs do come, we'll have to take time out for inspections."

The bombing to which he referred concerned the Japanese landing on Kiska, Agattu, and Attu, the three outer islands of the Aleutian chain, which started on June 3, 1942, the day that the great sea battle at Midway began. They were diversionary moves to distract the United States. The Japanese used a comparatively small number of warships, strafed Dutch Harbor and killed twenty-five men at the army barracks at Fort Mears on Unalaska Island. Over nearby Umnak Island, where the Army engineers had secretly labored for five months to build an airfield, they were surprised by a squadron of P-40's and

several of the enemy planes were knocked down. The next day 40 Japanese planes continued their raids on Dutch Harbor while their ships slipped westward under cover of a heavy fog. A worried radio message flashed from Kiska: 'Unidentified ships entering harbor.' The silence that followed made it clear that Kiska was in enemy hands. The Japanese had lost most of their planes but they had occupied territory in North America."

Wallace McIver told of an incident related to Dutch Harbor bombing told him by one of the men of the 153d stationed there. "The Japs came from the Aleutians where they had established a base at Kiska and Attu and were probably off a carrier. They struck at high noon and our troops were at mess. Several bombs hit the mess hall and several men were killed.

"The Alaska Steamship Line's 'Northwestern,' a large passenger ship used before the war, was grounded at Dutch Harbor, and the troops and the town were using the generator of the ship for their electricity. The Japs bombed the ship thinking it was either a supply ship or a troop carrier, but it had been there for several years.

"On the way back they ran into a group of our fighters coming from the west. This really confused them and some Zeros were shot down. One ran out of gas and landed intact on the beach. This plane was taken to Seattle and dismantled and copied, for our planes were not as fast as the Zeros.

"Lt. Gen. Simon Buckner was in command of the Alaskan troops at the time and had foreseen that the attack was imminent, so he had planes, fighters, dismantled and shipped in the holds of fishing vessels to another Island, probably Adak, along with heavy mesh wire for laying a runway on the strip of land along the beaches. Also under cover of secrecy after that the victory of the Navy at Midway, there's no way they could beat us in Alaska."

Move to Nome

Back to the movement of Company A to Nome, the northernmost part of the sprawling iceland. A single officer, Major Floyd M. Hayes, QMC was the first to arrive at the garrison on September 1, 1942. Two days later Capt. Garnett W. Martin, commanding officer of Company A accompanied by five enlisted men, arrived to make preliminary arrange-

ments and to meet the incoming troops.

The five enlisted men were Terrell Hutson, Denman Wylie, George Delaney, Ruel Petae Oliver and Frederaic Taylor. From Seattle they took the inward passage to Seward, Then the Alaskan Railway to Anchorage, then the Alaskan Railway to Anchorage, then flew to Nome in a bomber.

Hutson says he thinks he and Fred Taylor rode in the cabin with the pilots. It was an exciting experience to them since they had never flown before. Nome was still getting ready for the troops and there was not too much the five men could do. They took a job unloading boats at \$1 an hour and stayed in the old mining camp.

Wylie said they unloaded supplies for the stores in Nome, and if you dropped a case it was insured and would be paid for in full. "We dropped quite a few!" They ate at the Polar Bar and Grill and had hotcakes for breakfast. They refused to pay the \$2.50 for a haircut-it had only cost 35 cents in Emmet-and he gapped George Delaney's hair with scissors provided in the Army Kit.

When Delaney finally looked at himself in a mirror he was aghast, "Wylie, you ruint me!"

The remainder of Company A came through the Aleutians and that experience was recorded in a letter written by Joe Booker to his mother and printed in the ARKANSAS GAZETTE and the WASHINGTON TELEGRAPH.

Sgt. Booker's Account

Sgt. Joe Booker, son of Dr. and Mrs. J. L. Booker of Washington has sent his mother the following description of his trip to Alaska with the 153d Infantry, National Guard, and subsequent reflections of life in America's northern outpost:

This is a little history of my trip as taken from the diary I am keeping: At 4 o'clock Monday morning, September 22, I with 165 other men, all of Company A, 153d Infantry, ate breakfast for the last time on the soil of the good old U.S.A.--that is for some time--at 7 o'clock we loaded into an 18-truck convoy to be brought from Camp Murr(a)y, Washington, to the harbor at Seattle, Washington. As we approached the main entrance gate at the camp the remainder of our regiment which we were leaving behind were in formation waiting to bid us farewell. As we came too within a few yards of them they all came to attention and

rendered the hand salute, holding it until we were out of sight. To a person in civilian life this would probably have meant nothing, but to us soldiers it meant a lot. It meant more to us than all the handshakes that could have been given. It made cold chills run up and down our backs. We knew that we were parting, a parting of friends who had been closely associated. They were also saddened by our departure, since it meant that our regiment which had been together so long, was now being broken up, part to be sent to one place -part to another. We, the men in those trucks, knew what they were saying in their minds--Goodbye Company A and good luck. They as well as we, knew there was a job to be done and we had been chosen to do it.

At 8:30 a.m. we went aboard the David W. Branch, the ship I am now on as I write this enroute to Nome, Alaska. The Branch is a German-built ship, taken in the first World War. We did not sail until the following day at 3:30 p.m. As we left the dock at Seattle and moved away up the sound to the Pacific, every one was standing on the dock watching the big ship leave. I cannot express the feeling that I had as I stood there and watched Mount Rainer in the background gradually fade from sight. We were

like children bidding mother goodbye to see the United States mainland fade away into the dusk.

A Long Voyage

That was our last sight of land for some time as the following morning we awoke to find ourselves many miles away on the ocean. By this time the waves had gotten much larger and this caused the ship to reel and rock. By noon of the following day over half of our men were deathly sea sick. Fortunately, I have not been sick and hope that I am not boasting too soon as we have several days of travel yet.

As I write this it is 6 p.m. September 28, and our sixth consecutive day at sea. There is no land in sight and hasn't been since our first day out. So far we have been lucky and have not run into any storms, but that could happen at any time now as we have taken several detours to miss them and almost ran into one today at 2 o'clock. We missed it by a few minutes and the effects of it rocked our ship.

On September 29 we awoke and were all thrilled at the sight of land many miles away which proved to be Dutch Harbor, which is near the Aleutian Islands. This was to be our first stop since leaving Seattle. At

3:30 p.m. we anchored a few hundred yards from the harbor. We were compelled to wait here six hours for another ship to unload its cargo and move out of the harbor so that we could move in. At 9:30 we docked, but were not allowed to go ashore. We talked to some of the soldiers who were on the dock to see us come in. We learned from them that before the soldiers came the population was only 16 persons and that there was no town there. Now there is a Naval air base and also troops of soldiers. After letting off some nurses, soldiers and civilians, our fun was over for the night.

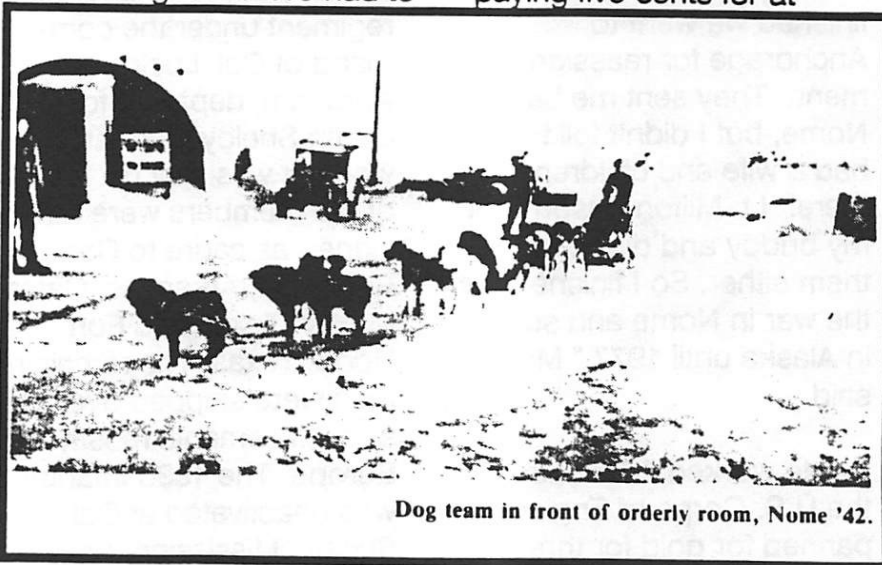
We awoke the following morning to find our ship moving away from the harbor and up the Bering Sea toward Alaska. It would be hard for me to describe the beauty of the mountains before and after we left Dutch Harbor. They were covered with moss and were so high that the clouds hung over them like great veils. Then we moved along up the sea, occasionally seeing fish of various kinds. About noon we began to see a whale now and then and by 2 o'clock we could stand at one place on the deck and see 20 or more at one time. They were huge monsters and would come well up out of the water which enabled us to get a good look at

them. We also saw a few seals, but they were not as plentiful as the whales.

Until 2:15 p.m. on October 2 we were unable to see anything but water, but at this time we came into the waters near Nome, Alaska, our destination. We were unable to dock here for there is no dock at Nome and we had to anchor about a mile from shore. Barges were brought out to unload us and the equipment. Only four barges had been unloaded when the water began to get rough and they were forced to quit unloading. We had a storm and at times it seemed the ship was turning over. We had to

were so sick that they threatened to swim ashore. We remained there for two days and nights and then moved back near Nome and had to wait another day for the water to get calm enough to start unloading again.

On October 6 we started unloading again and on October 7 we came ashore at Nome, which is now our home for a while. We have not learned much about the place except that the population is about 1,500 and Coca-Colas are 25 cents, hamburgers 25 cents and most of the other items we are accustomed to paying five cents for at



Dog team in front of orderly room, Nome '42.

move about 10 miles to an island to find protection from the wind. This helped some but the ship still reeled and rocked and waves were so large that some of the windows in the ship were broken by them. This caused some of the men to get sick again and some

home are 25 cents, so you see a soldier cannot do much going.

It really looks funny to see the Eskimo women carrying their babies on their backs. I will write more when I learn more about the place.

Closing Days of Campaign

"When the troops began to pull out - that is when the 153d left Nome and scattered to different war zones about the fall of 1943, some of us, including Fred Taylor, were chosen to be cadre of Co. B 761st Military Police Battalion. We spent about a year at Juneau checking boats and planes and giving passes for legitimate business - travel control. Then we were shipped to Kodiak Island and that is where I left the company.

"I was dropped at Seward with 26 men to close the camp. When we finished we went to Anchorage for reassignment. They sent me back to Nome, but I didn't tell them I had a wife and children there. Lt. Milton Eason was my buddy and didn't tell them either. So I finished out the war in Nome and stayed in Alaska until 1977," McIver said.

He worked 18 months for the U.S. Corps of Engineers, panned for gold for three years, worked in the Nome hospital he helped to construct for 14 years and 5,000 hours on the big pipeline before retiring to Federal Way just south of Seattle.

Wylie stayed with Company A from its entry into Alaska

until it was deactivated at Hattiesburg, Mississippi - Camp Shelby - on June 30, 1944, as did Robert Mitchell. Wylie said that after Captain Martin was moved out, Captain Koening was his replacement. Finally, Capt. J. James Vannoy came in to stay until June 30, 1944. He had been an all-state basketball player for Ouachita College, Arkadelphia, and Anchorage teams in Alaska.

The 2d Battalion moved to Adak in February 1943 and Companies E, F, and G were a part of the invasion force at Kiska in August 1943. The 138th Infantry relieved the 153d on January 25, 1944 and the regiment under the command of Col. Lucious Abraham, departed for Camp Shelby, Mississippi where it was split up. Most of the members were assigned as cadre to Camp Robinson, Arkansas, Camp Maxey, Texas and Fort Hood, Texas. The remaining men were shipped overseas as replacements mostly to Europe. The 153d Infantry was deactivated at Camp Shelby, Mississippi on June 30, 1944."

Wylie was shipped back to Camp Robinson to be a part of the cadre in charge of rookies for the Infantry Reserve Training Center (IRTC) until the war ended.

Wylie received a letter from his Nome host family Ma and Pa Yenney dated December 12, 1943 as follows:

Dear Tuff: We were sure glad to hear from you and sorry that you are gone from Nome. We shall miss you, the good times we used to have and the big laughs in the kitchen especially when you got to wash dishes. We had a big time Thanksgiving. Ten of the old boys were home but there was nothing like having them all. Had a big drink of grape juice and Dad gave a toast and, of course, you know me, I had to shed a few tears.

We had a letter from Ollen and he is back in school... Hope that Huck doesn't feel unnecessary through Christmas. Is Dean and all of the boys there? Claud and Keith?... Had a letter from Captain Vannoy... I had a letter from Sonny and he sure hates it where he is at and wishes he was back in Nome. .. Day says that the M.P.'s are nothing like the old ones. They are new boys that took the old boys place. They opened an NCO club at the post and I have made drapes for it for twenty-five windows... We had a big letter from Sammy (Smith) and of course you know he is a Lieutenant now. He is in Florida. Merry Christmas to all of you and tell them all so.

Charles B. Huckabee drove his jeep into Nome one day where he met Mayor Venney. "How are you, Huck? the Mayor asked. " I feel so unnecessary!" Huck replied, and forever after he had to live with that reply.

A complete story of the men of Hempstead County in Alaska will never be compiled, but perhaps those interviewed for this history represent some of them. Theirs was a war of waiting and watching, nerve wracking and miserable cold. But, being young, they made the best of it and their memories are filled with thoughts of their friends.

Perhaps Thomas C. Franks, always good-natured as a youth, said it best of all: "In Nome you always had eight or ten you knew to go talk to or borrow some money from. We had a good time and knew what a rough time others were having."

John L. Wilson came out of Alaska in 1943 to enter OTS but was rejected because of an old football injury. He was discharged and early in 1944 he was the second person in Arkansas to use the G.I. Bill. He enrolled at the University of Arkansas to complete his degree and also to earn his law degree.



Hempstead County men: Sgt. H. B. Citty, Sgt. J. L. Cook; top (unknown) and Sgt. Edward Bader in Yakutat, Alaska.



Men "fall out" in Nome.

FEATURED DISPLAY

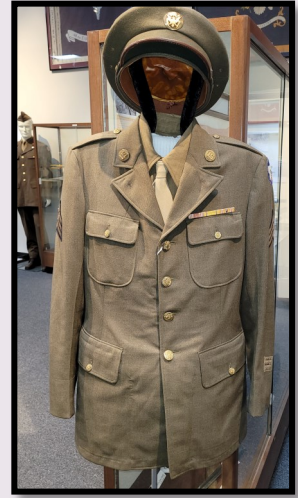
ARNG in Alaska WWII 153rd & 206th



Top: Box of letters sent to Cpl Harold Newton while at Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

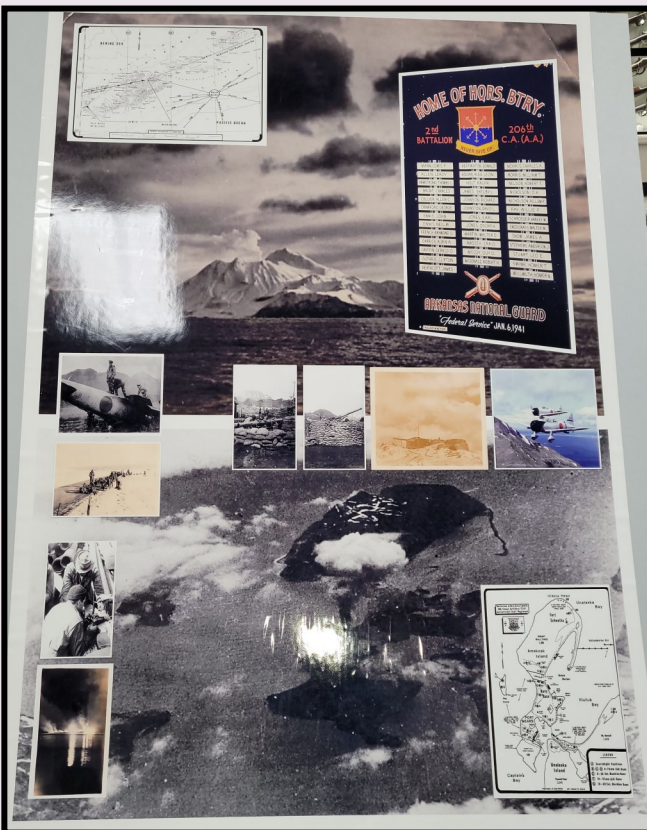
Right: Display case with the 206th and 153rd Guidons from WWII.

Bottom: Back panel for display case with scenic views of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, maps and a poster showing those of the 2nd Battalion of the 206th who lost their lives during service at Dutch Harbor, Alaska.



Top: Uniform worn by soldiers stationed at Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

Below: This is the 206th Flag that was flown at Dutch Harbor, Alaska. Currently, on display after its conservation.



Right: WWII Footlocker of PFC Donald Bearden of the 153rd located at Ft. Glen, Alaska.



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