

HISTORY  
OF  
COMPANY "C" 153RD INFANTRY  
FROM  
AUGUST 1940 TO APRIL 1944  
ANNEX ----- "C"

This first chapter of the story of Company "C" and the second platoon of Company "D", the heavy weapons platoon, of the 153rd Infantry begins at Camp Murray in the state of Washington. The time was 28 August 1941, pre-Pearl Harbor, when the Japanese were still thought of as those funny little buck-toothed yellow men who ate rice and who didn't amount to much as military opposition.

Sailing orders finally came through after some three weeks of waiting. Then things really hummed. With the usual processing out of the way and the thousand and one other details having been taken care of, the six officers, 170 enlisted men, and the impedimenta of this Arkansas National Guard were transported by GI trucks to the Alaska Steamship Company docks on South Alaska Way at that now familiar port known as SPOE, the short way of saying Seattle Port of Embarkation. However, the first platoon of Company "C" did not accompany the main body to the docks. It was left behind at Camp Murray to "clean house."

The embarkation was very much like the beginning of a pleasure cruise to those individuals who could smother their consciousness of all the Giness in an overwhelming urge for adventure. The ship which was to serve as the medium of transportation, the swank liner S. S. Columbia, had yet to don her coat of gray war paint, and those who boarded her, both service men and civilians alike, had yet to be shocked into that grinness of heart and mind which we Americans acquired so suddenly some three months later. Among the passengers were a number of light-heared Alaskan residents who were returning from what was probably their annual visit "Outside" to that land of theirs which has gained the title of "America's Last Frontier."

The good ship Columbia left her pier on the morning of 28 August 1941. The quiet waters were followed by stretches of that shifting substance of nature whose turbulence has the tendency to make mortals aware of their stomachs and which makes the rail bordering the deck of the ship a favorite rendezvous. Fortunately, however, the Inside Passage was not too rough and very few graced the rail to their own discomfort and to the benefit of marine life. The trip provided nothing to remind these Arkansas boys of their native State in the way of scenery, but they came to learn, possibly for the first time in many cases, that some other parts of the world were just as attractive as the cotton-country in which they were born. They soon learned something about the behavior of ships in such waters as distinguish Dixon Entrance--that stretch of sea where the Inside Passage suddenly became The Outside and where the great waves of the Pacific all gang up for their one big crack at a ship going up the picturesque channel.

About two and a half days out of Seattle, at 4:30 P.M., 30 August 1941, The Columbia anchored in the outer waters of Tangas Harbor, a sheltered harbor on the southwest side of Annette Island, an island situated some 700 miles north of Seattle.

Annette Island! It was the first time that most of the men had ever heard of it. So this was to be their "Home"! This certainly was undeveloped country. "It didn't favor nothin." Here was nature in the raw. Thoughts were now directed to speculations on the life to follow.

Disembarkation soon was in progress and the personnel were loaded on to barges and were towed in to the main dock by a tugboat. The Columbia, being too large to be brought up the harbor to the dock (now the old Post dock), remained anchored in the bay. The 300 odd tons of impedimenta which Company "C" brought with them, including a three

months' PX stock, had to be lightered in from the vessel's position in the bay. This equipment was then loaded on trucks and was hauled up to the tent area in base camp which was to be the Company's quarters for the next twenty months. Old Mother Earth felt good again now that it was under foot once more, and the legs that were sometimes unsteady on board ship were exercised almost immediately upon their being placed upon terra firma. The men were marched up to the tent area, and after preliminary instructions, were led over to the mess hall of the 302d Engineers where they put on their "food bags" for their first chow on the Island.

After lusty appetites were satisfied, Company "C" was marched back down to the dock area to be initiated into the mysteries of handling boat freight. Yes, the Company had to unload its own equipment. During the months to follow the men were to unload many more ships.

At the time of its arrival, the Company found that the Landing Field, which was to be the main reason for the Post's existence, was still in its fledgling stages, a scant 100 feet wide and some 2500 feet long. In the Base Camp, which constituted the main sphere of activity of the Post, the men's curious eyes soon found a PX and a theater. Subsequent ailments experienced in and out of the line of duty resulted in an early realization that the Post also maintained a hospital.

Company "C"'s home in the tent area consisted of about 40 tents, a large frame latrine building equipped with showers, and the mess hall,

\*For simplification purposes, when this designation is used it will be meant to include the second platoon of Company "D", unless an exception is stated.

referred to above. Other units located nearby were the famed 302d Engineers (who did all of the preliminary work of creating an Army Post out of the wilderness and Quartermaster, Ordnance, and Medics Detachments. Two CCC Companies were located at the Post as well. At the time, there were no out-lying camps.

The first platoon consisting of one officer and 42 enlisted men, caught up with the rest of the Company on 26 December 1941, arriving on the U.S. Army Transport, Eli D. Hoyle. The men speedily fell into their accustomed places.

As the dogfaces became oriented, they became conscious of the existence of the small town of Metlakatla, located about eight miles away to the north. The inhabitants of the village were, and still are, almost entirely members of the Tsimshian Tribe of Indians who were brought to Annette Island by a Missionary, Father Duncan. Here he built a magnificent church for them, and continued to lead them until his death. The Indians make their living generally by fishing and operate a first-class modern salmon cannery. The village is conducted as a sort of co-operative enterprise. The Island, as a whole, is an Indian reservation and the part that is known as Annette Island Landing Field is under U. S. Government lease.

The men were soon hearing stories from the veterans on the Island about the hospitable Alaskan city of Ketchikan, located about forty miles away by the water route. Known to Alaskans as the "First City" of the Territory, it is really Alaska's door to the outer world. The Ketchikan Alaska Chronicle displays ostentatiously across its front page this striking advertisement: "More Salmon Is Packed In Ketchikan Than In Any Other City In The World." It is, indeed, the "Fishermen's Capitol." The townspeople are mostly engaged in the fishing pursuits and the lumber business. However, there is the usual representation of merchants engaged in various commercial businesses. The city has, among other developments, a radio station, a well-stocked library, several churches, a Catholic Hospital, and a U.S.O.

At first, passes were given so as to permit a visit to Ketchikan each week-end, but later this privilege was extended only once each month. The men took advantage of the opportunity for a 48 hour period of elbow-rubbing with civilization, and, perhaps, even a abit of elbow-bending. As some men always need female companionship and some females are always promiscuous with their affections, it was enevitable that the problem of venereal disease should arise. Through cooperation of the E.P.'s and the local authorities of Ketchikan, however, disease of this nature was restricted to a minimum. The very fact that cases of venereal disease were few and far between speaks well for the discipline and morals of Company "C".

In the way of orientation, the Arkansas men soon came to know intimately the topographical peculiarities of the Island itself, for instance, Moss Point, Deer Point, Point Davison, Yellow Hill, Yellow Lake, Mule Rock, Gray point, and Purple Mountain.

They came to know, also, Annette's swampy, treacherous terrain, called "muskeg" when one is being polite about it, and by various unprintable names when one is being honest about it. This muskeg is a matted mass of vegetation, moss, and fallen timber. One unfortunate EM who chanced to step into a moist portion of it aptly described its consistency by saying that stepping into muskeg was like stepping into a bottomless bowl of oatmeal. When the company first arrived, the old timers among the Engineers told the boys that if they saw a hat on the ground, they should not kick it as it was very likely that a head was under it.

They soon realized that a fellow's best friends of the inanimate variety were his flashlight and his raincoat. The roads throughout the base camp were lighted by no such incandescent illumination as may be found on Markham Street or Broadway in Little Rock, Arkansas. It got unbelievably dark in Alaska. There was no doubt present in anybody's mind about the abundance of Annette's liquid sunshine. It had rained the day the men had left the Columbia. In fact, it seemed to rain almost perpetually. They soon learned that Annette has a mean annual precipitation of something like 15 feet.

It seemed as if that big ball of fire, Old Sol, was too busy beautifying and warming the rest of the world to spend much time around Annette. The truth was, however, that the clouds that made the Island their headquarters all banded about him and seldom gave him a chance to send his rays through. For instance, take January, 1942, when in 258 possible hours of sunshine, the place was cloaked with a wet blanket of heavy clouds for 221 hours. The obscuring masses of vapor in the heavens took a "time out" for only 37 hours, but during this period the sun really did its best to make up for lost time.

Yes, there were times when the cold and forbidding grayness was dissipated by the sun's rays and the surrounding territory was transformed into a brilliant spectacle of grandeur. The great dome of heaven became an expanse of iridescent calamine blue. The sunshine's magic play across the neighboring mountains and over the placid waters of the bay brought out such an exquisite array of hues that one just stood and stared at the panorama with his mouth open. Nature displayed her incomparable artistry by arranging her lavish assortment of colors in ever-changing compositions. In painting Alaskan dawns, Nature fairly outdoes herself.

Purple is a color that these Arkansas boys will always associate with Annette Island. Few had appreciated the beauty that is peculiar to purple. That color's arresting loveliness became apparent to them, though, when they witnessed Purple Mountain bedecked in a gorgeous robe of it.

Most of the men had expected to encounter such ice and snow in this little understood Territory of Alaska, but they found that this section of Uncle Sam's Attie was not subject to those extremely low temperatures that Alaskans know farther north, and was blanketed with surprisingly little snow--when it did snow, however, the scenery around the Post took on the semblance of a veritable winter wonderland.

They did experience, nevertheless, the practically constant, bone-chilled feeling that resulted from exposure from the rain and nasty winds--winds which shook the buildings alarmingly and which rattled the windows in an ominous fashion.

There is no object of denying that many of the men were disillusioned somewhat. Some, indeed, were not happy in the service. They found little of the glamour and excitement that they had expected to find. Here on the island the Infantry was employed doing work details and guard duty. The work details often involved labor that was heavy and dirty. The guard duty meant long hours of vigilance during which nothing ever happened of moment.

Company "C" will leave lasting marks upon the island. Among the construction projects which the Infantry Company helped develop were the laying of quite a number of miles of road across the abominable muskeg, the filling in of the area in front of the new Post Headquarters building, the erection of most of the Island's many quonset huts, the placing and replacing of gun positions as the camp grew and the tactical situation changed, the clearing of sites for some of the newer outpost camps, the laying of water mains for the Post's water supply, and the building of the gymnasium.

Out on Deer Point, an outpost position on Annette where guns were trained on the harbor entrance, the men build a sturdy little log cabin from material begged, borrowed, and scrounged wherever possible. It was designed to house several men, boasting eight bunks, a small but satisfactory kitchenette, and a large living room with a huge fireplace--a mighty inviting spot on a winter evening when the wind seemed bent on blowing its way through the stout log walls and howled in dismay at being rebuffed. Its latrine was of the Chic Sale variety, but being located in such a strategic spot as to sit squarely astride a small but vigorous stream, it sported quite an advantage, with its running water, over the standard pattern. Fitting dedication ceremonies were held upon the completion of this last-mentioned little outhouse.

As mentioned heretofore, the members of Company "C" were detailed almost extensively in the loading and unloading of boats. During the early months, four or five boats came in each week and each one was good for 24 to 48 hours of arduous work. Those who were detailed to this sort of work were soon conscious of the fact that the boats almost never came in at a decent time of the day. It was not uncommon for a boat to smuggle in at about 3 O'clock in the morning, usually a morning colder than a dead Eskimo, when it was raining in torrents and the wind stood up on its haunches and howled with glee. The skipper of such a boat was not disconcerted by the lateness of the hour, though, for he knew from experience that Post Headquarters or the Army Transport Service would howl loud and long for Company "C". A boat would blow its whistle out in the bay and Company "C's" telephone would ring by a kind of reflex action.

Guard duty during the early days on the island was considerably more of a drain on manpower than it was later when the guard posts were decreased in number. In the beginning, there were thirteen guard posts, requiring some 54 guards who were on duty for a week at a time.

That memorable day, 7 December 1941, for a while was just another Sunday on the island--as it was at Pearl Harbor and back in the States. About half of the men of the Company had gone to Ketchikan on pass. Then that fateful radio message came.

No time was lost in getting the men back from town. All of the men on Special Duty (and there was quite an aggregation of them) were called in to the Company from points all over the Post. Thus, all of the members of the Company, including the men who had been farmed out as boiler operators, truck drivers, firemen, P. men, librarians, etc., were congregated in one assemblage for the first time in weeks.

At last, after months of uncertainty, we were in the war! Ammunition was issued the Company and it was placed on a Class 1 Alert. Guards were stationed at Moss Point and at Point Davison for the first time. Guard duty now took on a new significance. The regularly posted guards knew that they must be on their toes at all times.

When it became apparent in the days that followed the outbreak of war with Japan that no blitz on Annette was imminent, the alert was relaxed somewhat and the special duty men were returned to their various jobs. The accustomed routine was resumed, but was conducted in a more intensified way because of the changed status of the war.

In January of 1942, the Company assumed guard duties at two outpost stations on Prince of Wales Island, a large island lying just west of Annette. One post was at 12 Mile Arm and the other was at Trocadero Bay. The 202d Engineers were relieved from these posts. Nine men were required for the detail and their tour of duty was for two months at a stretch for a while. Supplies were taken out to them once each month by the Quartermaster harbor boats. At first, the guards were stationed aboard a rented houseboat. Two months later, however, shacks were put up at the 12 Mile Arm post. The men at the Trocadero Bay post were quartered in tents until the Prince of Wales Island outpost was abandoned on 15 June 1943.

Southeastern Alaska is to sport fisherman as near an approach to paradise as a mortal disciple of Izaak Walton will find. For those who like trout fishing, the region provides such varieties of these fighters as Rainbow, Cutthroat, Steelhead, Eastern Brook and Dolly Varden, which may be caught with light tackle. The appropriately named King Salmon, noted for its smashing strike and reel-stripping runs, is to be found in abundance. His reputation as a warrior is unexcelled and he is respected up and down the Pacific Coast from California to the Bering Sea. It was only natural that a number of the 153rd men should capitalize on this wonderful opportunity for fishing sport. Much of the fishing was done on Prince of Wales Island.

A day that Alaskans remember almost as vividly as they remember Pearl Harbor is 3 June 1942, the day the Japs bombed Dutch Harbor.

The Company was once more placed on a Class 1 Alert, but it was of short duration, and was relaxed when it was ascertained that the bombing of Dutch Harbor was only a sneak-punch not likely to be repeated. As a matter of fact, the whole Post had been alerted on May 20 when G-2 radios from the Alaska Defense Command Headquarters advised that an attack somewhere on Alaska proper could be expected very soon. For a period of several months all men on the Post were ordered to carry their helmets, rifles, and gas masks to the Chapel, to the Theater, to the mess hall, and to work.

Still, in spite of these periods of alertness, there were few incidents which relieved the monotony in the life at Annette. On several occasions it was thought that enemy action might be close, but such alarms were always proven to be comic anti-climaxes. The time may be recalled, for instance, when one of the Privates on guard was willing to swear on a stack of Bibles that he saw a submarine surfaced off Smuggler's Cove, and succeeded in getting the whole Island into a minor uproar--until the story was proved false. There was the time, too, when

one of the men reported an unidentified vessel lying way back in the harbor, causing Captain Marion E. Johnson, Company "C"'s Commanding Officer, and a picked group of others a long and arduous trapeze up the beach for about six and a half hours. Again, the danger was just a figment of a soldier's imagination.

Company "C" was quartered in the tent area of the base camp until February, 1943, when it moved out to Moss point. Under Lt. Col. CHESTER A. CLARK'S plan of dispersion for the various units of the Island, the Company helped construct this camp some three and a half miles from base camp. There they were quartered in quonset huts and enjoyed such equipment and conveniences as to be almost self-sustaining. The unit did not remain there long, however, for in June, 1943, Battery "C" of the 244th Coast Artillery moved out of their camp at Point Davison and the Infantry unit moved in.

The men were somewhat disappointed with Point Davison at first for it was felt by them that it was inferior to the camp at Moss Point. In the course of the succeeding months, however, many innovations were introduced and the camp became a much more pleasant place in which to live. The camp consists of about 35 quonset huts, a power house, a garage, a gym, two pool rooms, a combined barber shop and PX, and a Day-Room. The buildings are cleverly dispersed and the whole lay-out is an ingenious job of camouflage. The unit has been equipped with a fleet of about fourteen trucks, this number fluctuating at times for various reasons. Point Davison is located six and a half miles from base camp.

Throughout 1942 and for the first half of 1943, the men of Company "C" worked like proverbial beavers whipping the Post into shape, first in helping with much of the original construction work and later in tearing down parts of the main camp and in rebuilding them in dispersed areas in accordance with the more recently developed plans for the island. During this time, the boat details did not abate, and there were still the various other details and special services to be attended to by the Company.

But the 153rd men plugged away, doing their various jobs steadily, efficiently, and with only the normal amount of griping. The long hours of work were sometimes spent in weather you would not think of putting the family pooch out in--back in the States. Yes, conditions were often far from ideal. Annette certainly was no Shangri La. During the early months, it took two or three weeks for the mail to arrive from home. Furloughs were things that you read about in letters from friends back in the "Old Country." In spite of these conditions, however, the fellows from Arkansas retained their own rich brand of salty, down-to-earth, native humor. They were an outfit any CO could feel justly proud of--this 153rd Infantry gang.

By the spring of 1943, however, the work began to ease off a bit. The post's period of expansion was at an end, as was its period of dispersion growth. The boats were not coming in as often as in the first few months. Four guard posts were deemed to be sufficient--those at the Guard House and at the Post Dock, and those on the Metlakatla Road and on the C.A.A. Road.

By the summer of 1943, life had become more enjoyable on the Island. The old ten-hour days and seven-day weeks under the previous schedule were no longer demanded. The men had a bit more time for soft-ball games on the parade grounds in front of Post Headquarters during the evenings, and for basketball games on the outdoor court and, later, in the new gymnasium built on the same site. Then, too, regulations against having

beer on the island were relaxed and a small beer hall was opened in a quonset hut. Several dances were held in the gymnasium which, with the benefit of a bit of brass and a piano, doubled for a dance hall. The required complement of femininity was brought over from Ketchikan.

From the time of their arrival, the village of Metlakatla was "off-limits" to military personnel and the Provost Regulations were rigorously enforced. Nevertheless, there were times when, through the invitations of the Metlakatlans and under the control of officers, the men visited the village to attend and play basketball games, to attend dances, to make tours through the cannery, and to attend services at the Presbyterian Church and the Church Father Duncan had built for the community. The men always found the Indians refreshingly hospitable and their generosity was so pronounced and so spontaneous as to win the soldiers' lasting respect and gratitude.

Company "C" has always been able to pride itself on maintaining one of the best messes on the island. Even when the transition was made from garrison to field rations back in October, 1942, the Company took it in stride. Seven men have gone forth to attend the Alaskan Department's Branch School for Bakers and Cooks, formerly at Fort Ray, and now at Anchorage. These men have returned to enhance the already enviable reputation of the Company's mess.

For instance, quoting in part from the Post Food Service Supervisor's Report of 15 October 1943: "Considered generally, this Mess (Company "C"s) was in excellent condition. Examination of messing equipment revealed that all dishes for serving food were clean and free from dirt, grease, and other foreign matter; all condiment bottles were clean and showed evidence of having been kept that way from day to day; food is prepared in a tasty manner and in accordance with the accepted standards; individual initiative, by both the mess sergeant and cooks, is evinced in the preparation of all food dishes. Examination of all garbage cans revealed that food waste is held to a minimum. The mess sergeant of this organization has, of his own initiative obtained from the outside sources various valuable booklets, pamphlets, etc., of the preparation of food, the care and prevention of perishable meats, and care of equipment. He has received sufficient quantities of these to give one set to each mess on the post and will make this distribution."

Of course, there were such times as New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas when the menus provided the Company culinary artisans with such a variety and quality of meats, green vegetables, fruits, etc. that they were able to turn out supereminent preparations of food that slipped down the gullet to the supreme enjoyment of sundry dogfaces. For example, at Christmas Dinner in 1942, the menu supplied, in the way of meats, turkey, baked ham, and spareribs, an assortment to appease the most finicky eaters. It may be interesting to mention in passing that the men on the outposts received the same special dinners--served hot--that the others consumed.

While Annetting, the Company held three Christmas parties and two Anniversary parties. These were made possible by the substantial Company Fund. These festive occasions were made more pleasurable by the generous provision of beer, sandwiches, salads, pickles, olives, etc.

In July of 1942, nine men of Company "C", headed by 1st Sgt. William J. Vick, were transferred in grade to the 761st MP Bn, Ketchikan, Alaska, and reported to Captain ARVOR M. LEDBETTER, The Company's first CO at Annette, who had preceded them in going over to the neighboring city for duty by several weeks. During the ensuing months, a few other men followed the original group as replacements, etc.



In June of 1943, the 153rd Infantry outfit sent 29 non-coms, headed by 1st Sgts. Sidney L. Avery and Jacy E. Hasley, to Ft. Lewis, Washington, for permanent change of station as standard Infantry Cadre personnel. Three of the men to leave were members of Company "D", the heavy weapons platoon. This transfer, of course, brought revolutionary changes throughout the company, and was responsible for the many promotions that were made. It was at this time that the present 1st Sergeant, Hancel M. Sewell, was made top-kick.

Those enlisted men who remained at Annette and who kept "on the ball" in most cases were properly rewarded with advancements in grade. On 27 December, 1943, a bit late for Christmas but still welcome, promotions were made in a wholesale manner in pursuance of the authorization by the War Department T/O for Infantry Companies. The 37 boosts ranged from grades of Private First Class to Technical Sergeant.

Military training, such as field problems and close order drill, was certainly not intensive on the island. There were times when such training was given for short periods, though, and at such times, the men were jarred to the realization that they were fighting men after all -- and not WPA workers, as their duties would lead them to believe.

For a two months' period around the last of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, calisthenics, close order drill, and bayonet drill were given in the mornings. In November, 1943, one day each week was devoted to field problems. At about the same time, too, the non-coms were limbered up with a bit of calisthenics and close order drill each morning. Most of the other men were receiving their exercise on the work details. Three times a month, on the average, guard instruction was given for one-hour periods.

Furlough fortunes of Company "C" rose and fell with those of most of the Alaskan personnel. Since September, 1942, only three of the men availed themselves of the seven-day Alaskan Furloughs, and these are mentioned here only incidentally. The much more desirable 15-day furloughs seemed to be controlled by a sort of off-again, on-again policy. Transportation played a big part in shaping this policy. For instance, 25 men went back to the States on furlough in August, 1942. Because of lack of transportation facilities, many of these men did not return until December. A few of the furloughees traveled south by military air transportation. All personnel returned by boat, sooner or later.

Nevertheless, practically all of the men of the 153rd Infantry with more than one year of Alaskan Service to boast (or complain) about to later generations, received furloughs, even though a few had to wait as long as 26 months for the privilege of returning home.

About the middle of 1942, an epidemic of "yellow jaundice" hit the island. Quite a few of the men were stricken with it and the facilities of the Station Hospital were sorely taxed when the place became overcrowded. It was thought that this sickness was caused by injections of the yellow fever serum. During this epidemic, Company "C" suffered the only death to occur within its ranks. Corporal Elvin Hunter passed away on 19 September 1942, a victim of acute hepatitis, according to the diagnosis. Cpl Hunter was buried in Bay View Cemetery, Ketchikan, Alaska.

The only other time that the company suffered extensive casualties from sickness was in December, 1943, when the infectious disease of influenza hit the island concurrently with playing havoc throughout various parts of Alaska and taking a toll back in the States. Many men were confined to the hospital, but cures were effected rapidly.

It was only natural that some accidents should occur involving injuries to some of the doughboys, but it may be said that Company "C" had no more than normal number of them. There were, however, a few unusual ones. In July, 1942, Pvt. George M. Burnett, 36047442, who was on guard at one of the beach posts, leaned on his rifle, business end up, and somehow discharged it. The charge nearly blew his arm off. An amputation had to be performed at the Station Hospital. Three months later, a fire occurred out on the C.A.A. road. A guard detail which had been posted around the fire, was returning to camp and had hooked a ride aboard a water tank trailer. Along the way, the trailer began to sway, and its snake-like whipping about resulted in the injury of a couple of the men. One man, Pvt. Baldemar Valdez, 38061929, was injured seriously. According to the testimony of a witness, Valdez was thrown up in the air and landed face down on a sharp rock.

After being given treatment at the Station Hospital, it was found that he would sustain partial permanent disability. He was transferred to Barnes General Hospital, Vancouver Barracks, Washington, for further treatment.

Religion always constituted an integral part of the life on Annette. Sunday and weekday services were held in the Post Chapel and in the Post Theater. Both Protestant and Catholic services were sponsored. Jewish services were also held with the assistance of an enlisted man with experience as a cantor and with the Chaplain offering the prayer. There were no foxholes and slit trenches on Annette to awe soldiers into a consciousness of God. Nevertheless, the natural inclination of many of the men toward things spiritual led them to go to the divine services regularly.

The four protestant chaplains to serve at the Post were 1st Lt. William H. Myers (Presbyterian), 1st Lt. Eric I. Eastman (Episcopalian), 1st Lt. (later Capt.) James T. Mashburn (Baptist) and 1st Lt. (later Capt.) Raymond H. Firth (Methodist).

Two chaplains of the Catholic faith served at the Post. The first, 1st Lt. Francis M. Sulaman, officiated in that capacity only two days. The second, 1st Lt. Thomas F. Reilly, was assigned to Annette Island Landing Field on 5 February 1944. In the interim, when no U.S. Army Chaplains were available to hold Catholic services, they were held under the direction of Canadian chaplains and various priests from Ketchikan. The priest who served most frequently, and who won the sincere gratitude of the men thereby, was Rev. E. A. McManara, SJ, of Ketchikan.

There was one gentleman of the cloth, and not a member of the military during the present conflict, whose personality and faithful ministry endeared him to Christian, agnostic, and atheist alike, if any of the latter were present on Annette. This Christian gentleman (and this term is used in its fullest significance), was Rev. George J. Beck of Ketchikan. His sacrificial service and his friendly spirit won the lasting respect and admiration of the entire Post. He served in various ministerial capacities on the Island and sometimes performed full duties of the chaplain when this office was vacant, as it was, for instance, when Chaplain Firth was transferred to another station in early 1944.

It goes without saying that there were certain individuals in Company "C", as there are in every group of men forming a cross-section of humanity, who had "bad boy" tendencies. A proportionate number of the unit were brought up before the various military tribunals and were punished for their misdemeanors. Most of the cases were disposed of under A. W. 104, or before Summary Courts, as the offenses, as a general rule, were minor ones. There were a number of Special Courts-Martials, too, but relatively few General Courts-Martials.

Shortly after the present Post Commander, Major DON M. B. ADLER Infantry, took over, a small fire occurred in a drying room in the Company area at Point Davison, which was promptly put out by the resourcefulness and quick thinking of the men. Their speedy action in averting what might have been a disaster elicited a public commendation from Major Adler in the Post Daily Bulletin.

The 153rd Infantry soldiers purchased more U.S. War Bonds than any other group on the Island. No exact figures were kept for the first and second war loan drives, but during them, the company purchased the bonds generously. The company purchased \$2,575. (maturity value) in bonds during the third war loan drive, and the total of \$6,550. during the fourth war loan drive.

During Company "C"'s stay on Annette, the men served under seven Post Commanders. They were: Lt. Col. GEORGE J. NOLD (now Brig. Gen.), CE, who was in command when they arrived and who remained until 8 October 1941; Major FISHER S. BLINN (Now Colonel), CE, who was in command from 8 October 1941 until 12 February 1942; Lt. Col. ELLIS G. CHRISTENSEN, Inf., who was in command from 12 February 1942 until 31 January 1943; Col. CHESTER A. CLARK, Cav., who was in command from 31 January 1943; until 20 July 1943; Lt. Col. SAMUEL H. GIBSON, Inf., who was in command from 20 July 1943 until 15 December 1943; Lt. Col. ORAL G. LAYMAN, Inf., who was in command from 15 December 1943 until 7 January 1944; and Major DON M. B. ADLER, Inf., who assumed command on 7 January 1944.

It is only meet that at least a thumbnail sketch be included herein of each of the officer personnel of Company "C". The duties outlined below as having been performed by the officers individually are by no means exhaustive. Many offices were filled by these leaders in administrative and operations fields about which no mention can be made in this record. Then, too, many services were performed of an advisory nature of which the enlisted men were the beneficiaries which, by reason of their personal nature, never came to public notice. What appears below embraces only the briefest reference to the arrival, principal duties, promotions, and the departure of each officer.

As has been mentioned heretofore, Capt. ARVOR M. LEDBETTER was the Commanding Officer of the 153rd Infantry unit upon its arrival on Annette on 30 August 1941. He was appointed a member of the Post Commander's staff on 8 September 1941; was relieved as CO and placed on Special Duty with Post Headquarters on 28 February 1942; and was named Commanding Officer of Company "A", 761st MP Bn (ZI), Ketchikan, Alaska, on 20 April 1942.

1st Lt. JOHN P. ROBINSON arrived with the unit on the Columbia on 30 August 1941; was appointed Commanding Officer vice Capt. LEDBETTER ON 28 February 1942; was appointed Captain on 21 August 1942; and was transferred to Post Headquarters Detachment, Excursion Inlet, on 5 March 1943.

1st Lt. CHARLES E. DOYLE arrived on the Columbia on 30 August 1941; served as Commanding Officer vice Capt. ROBINSON from 5 February 1943 to 1 April 1943; was detailed as Claims Officer on the Post on 17 August 1943; was placed on Special Duty with Post Headquarters as S-4 on 21 December 1943; and was transferred to Company "C", 138th Infantry, Annette Island Landing Field, Alaska, on 2 February 1944.

2nd Lt. MARION E. JOHNSON arrived on the Columbia on 30 August 1941; was detailed as Post Adjutant on 28 March 1942; was promoted to 1st Lt. on 23 July 1942; was detailed as Commanding Officer of Headquarters Detachment on 22 August 1942; was relieved from assignment and duty with Company "C" and assigned to Post Headquarters as Adjutant on 29 August 1942;

was promoted to Captain on 17 March 1943; was relieved from assignment with Headquarters Detachment and as Post Adjutant and reassigned to Company "C" on 31 March 1943; assumed duties of Commanding Officer of Company "C" on April 1943; and was detailed as Executive Officer at Post Headquarters (in addition to his other duties) on 4 February 1944.

1st Lt. PETER J. ASHMEBRENNER arrived on the Columbia on 30 August 1941; was detailed as Theater Officer on 17 September 1941; was detailed as Post Athletic and Recreation Officer on 29 October 1941; was appointed Post Exchange Officer on 16 January 1942; was appointed Red Cross Representative on 6 February 1942; was relieved of the above duties and was transferred to Anchorage, Alaska, for assignment with the Finance Officer.

2nd Lt. GROVER J. BUTLER arrived on the Columbia on 30 August 1941; placed on Special Duty with Post Headquarters on 9 April 1943; relieved from assignment with Company "C" and assigned to Post Headquarters on 16 April 1943; was detailed as Postal Officer, Post Censor and Commanding Officer of Headquarters Detachment on 16 April 1943; relieved as CO 23 September 1943; relieved from assignment with Post Headquarters as Postal Officer and Post Censor on 20 October 1943; detailed as Theater Officer on 25 November 1943; relieved of Special Duties with Post Headquarters and of other duties set out above and returned to Company "C" on 31 January 1944.

1st Lt. JOSEPH H. ARNETTE arrived with the First Platoon, which consisted of himself and 42 enlisted men, on 26 December 1941; was appointed Custodian of Enemy Aliens in April 1942; was relieved from assignment with Company "C" and assigned to Post Headquarters as 3-2 on 27 January 1943.

2nd Lt. KINARD L. LUNA arrived at Annette on 13 July 1942; he was detailed as Post Library Officer on 5 March 1943; was promoted to 1st Lt. on 17 March 1943; was relieved from assignment with Company "C" on 20 October 1943 and assigned to Post Headquarters where he was appointed Post Adjutant on 29 October 1943.

1st Lt. GORDON H. EASTMAN arrived at Annette on 13 July 1942; was detailed as Post Claims Officer on 31 March 1943; was placed on Special Duty with Headquarters Company as Post Motor Officer; and was relieved from said SD on 17 August 1943, as well as from his duties as Claims Officer.

2nd Lt. ROBERT L. PAGE, Jr., arrived at Annette on 30 August 1942; was placed on Special Duty at Post Headquarters on 29 November 1942; was detailed as Provost Marshal on 4 January 1943; was relieved from assignment with Company "C" and assigned to Post Headquarters as Post Censor and Postal Officer on 6 February 1943; was appointed Commanding Officer of Headquarters Company on 31 March 1943; was relieved of all Headquarters duties and transferred to Company "C" on 9 April 1943; was placed on Special Duty with Headquarters as Provost Marshal on 16 November 1943, as Assistant Fire Marshal on 17 November 1943, as Special Service Officer on 25 November 1943, and as Athletic Officer and Mess Officer on 22 December 1943; was relieved from Special Duty with Post Headquarters and of Headquarters duties on 14 January 1944.

2nd Lt. KENNETH H. TOWNE arrived at Annette on 30 August 1942; was detailed as Assistant Superintendent ATS on 19 May 1943; was relieved of above duty on 21 July 1943 and was detailed as Post Ordnance Officer on 21 July 1943; and was transferred to Santa Ana, Cal. for Pilot Training in Officer grade on 16 December 1943.

2nd Lt. IRVIN J. WOLFEAN arrived at Annette on 22 April 1943; was

placed on Special Duty with Post Headquarters as Assistant S-3; was relieved on 25 October 1943; was placed on Special Duty at Post Headquarters as Provost Marshal, Police and Prison Officer, and Mess Officer on 14 January 1944; and was detailed as S-4 on 31 January 1944. 2nd Lt. Woltzman was transferred to Co. "G", 138th Infantry on 21 February 1944.

2nd Lt. ALFRED N. JACKSON, arrived at Annette on 29 November 1942; was detailed as Personnel Adjutant on 31 March 1943; was relieved from assignment with Company "G" and assigned to Post Headquarters on 16 April 1943; was appointed 1st Lt. on 23 July 1943; was detailed as Post Censor on 5 August 1943, as Commanding Officer of Headquarters Detachment on 23 September 1943, as Athletic Officer on 29 October 1943; and was assigned to Company "H", 138th Infantry on 23 December 1943.

2nd Lt. JOSEPH V. COLLINS arrived at Annette on 20 July 1943; was placed on Special Duty with Post Headquarters as Postal Officer, Theater Officer, and Post Censor on 31 January 1944; detailed as Commanding Officer of Headquarters Detachment on 8 February 1944; relieved as Commanding Officer on 11 February 1944.

While Officer Candidate School was open, nine men ventured out of the ranks of Company "C" to return south and attend the Infantry branch. Four men left for Aviation Cadet Training to successfully win their commissions.

Four First Sergeants have graced the Company "C" orderly room with their persons and have contributed much in shaping the history of the unit. These first sergeants were Andy C. Lucas, who was a member of the original group who arrived on the Columbia; William J. Vick, who was promoted to top kick on 7 November 1941; Sidney L. Avery, who succeeded to the office on 1 July 1942; and Hancel M. Sewell, who is currently (March 1944) performing the first sergeant's duties in a very capable manner.

On 6 February 1944, in conformity with the plan to reduce Annette Island Landing Field to as near a caretaking status as the continued operation of the air field would allow, Company "C" and the Second Platoon of Company "D" were placed on a Class "C" alert. A shipment number was assigned with designated suffixes whereby the 153rd outfit was to be relieved from duty within the Alaskan Department and transferred to permanent station in the States via Prince Rupert, B.C.

Special duty men were relieved from their sundry details, equipment was packed, barrack bags were stenciled, and the multifarious other essentials were attended to as promptly as possible.

As the radio putting Company "C" on the Class "C" alert called for the shipment of seven officers and 213 enlisted men, it was necessary to transfer 14 enlisted men from the 138th Infantry unit which arrived at the Post on 3 November 1943.

After we were put on the "C" alert there was a few more jobs that we had to do, they included building the NP's a camp in the city of Ketchikan, approximately forty men were sent over to accomplish this under the supervision of Lt Klien, (Post Utilities) and Lt Butler. The men did a grand job on this project and completed it in just half the time that it was thought it would take. While this was going on Capt Johnson had a detail building a hospital to be used by the Air Corps after we had gone. Then a few days before we were to leave we had to lay 1000 ft of water line, this was lain over the area covered by water from the spill way from Yellow Lake 400 ft of this was over water ten to fifteen ft deep and had a light covering of ice, the men had to use waders swimmers and every thing that

could be found to complete this but as usual it was well done and it was our last construction job on the Island.

"D" day was really here as far as the men were concerned, we had been looking for this day for a long time and at last it was here. Every man was up before the crack of dawn on the 25th of March 1944. By Ten AM our camp was cleared of every thing and the company was waiting for the good ship Eli D Hoyle to come steaming into the harbor, we waited until 10 AM 27th of March and finally she came after us and by 1 PM we were headed for Prince Rupert, our first stop on the way back to the old country.

We arrived in Prince Rupert around midnight and stayed on the boat till 8:30 the next day and then we went out to Port Edward and stayed there till the third of April. Most the time was spent turning in Alaskan equipment and drawing the latest fashions in OD that was being worn in the States this season.

We entrained at Port Edward at 1 PM 3rd of April and started our long journey across Canada and most of the U.S. Every one was very happy to be headed this way and every one enjoyed the scenery all the way across Canada, All the men were deep in slumber when we crossed the border at 2:30 AM on the 6th of April.

After five days on the train and several short stops for exercising. we arrived at Camp Shelby Mississippi and joined our Bn, this was the 8th of April 1944.