

Part 5

INTERVIEW WITH COLONEL GARDES & LT. COLONEL CHUBBUCK
4 NOV 1980 AT COLONEL GARDES' QUARTERS IN ARLINGTON •
USING MAPS AND PERSONAL NOTES.

Col. Shotwell: Well Col. [Chub.] you had command of one battalion of the 36th I believe?

Col. Chubouch: Yes the 2nd.

Col. Shot: And first of all you went over to England.

Col. Chub: We didn't go to England at all we were in Northern Ireland for two or three weeks and then we went to Scotland for the last two or three days of preparation.

Col. Shot: Were you always part of the 36th or were you a separate battalion and joined them.

Col. Chub: No, my battalion was one of the original two but all three were integral parts of the regiment we were never called separate battalions.

Col. Shotwell: We went to Northern Ireland. You arrived there in Sept 42.

Col. Chub: No - we sailed from Staten Island the 26th of September we arrived there about the 10th or 12th of October.

Col. Shot: So you were just a couple of weeks in the British Isles before sailing for North Africa.

Col. Chub: Yes

Col. Shot: So - Really you don't know anything about the Engineer operations in the British Isles?

Col. Chub: No.

Col. Shot: Purely local affairs as far as you were concerned.

Col. Chub: Yes, we did no Engineer work in the British Isles.

Col. Shot: What sort of camps did you stay in?

Col. Chub: We stayed in some Nissen huts that had to be put up for us in Scotland.

Col. Shot: About these Nissens there have been in the reports and records of USAFBI & ETOUSA that there were great arguments of the various American authorities and the British on the quarters or the space allotment to American Troops. Apparently as far as I can see there was about the same space allotted to a given unit but the British sub-allotted them differently than we did and an awful lot of trouble was raised over this. Did you see anything of this?

Col. Chub: All I remember was that our men were crowded I didn't leave in a Nissen myself. The officers lived in the, what used to be the manor, practically a castle, of the estate.

*Not true
Born in Ireland*

Col. Shot: But your men felt that they were there temporarily and that they were there in Britain on their way to a Theater.-

Col. Chub: Yes, They complained quite bitterly about the food. The food was monotonous and not up to its usual standards. They were crowded and cold. The quarters were not well heated. The Nissen

Col. Shot: But as far as space they just took it

Col. Chub: Sure, they knew it was temporary.

Col. Shotwell: It wasn't as if they were going into barracks in this country for three or four years.

Col. Chub: No.

Col. Shot: Well then from Britain you went down and landed near Algiers.

Col. Chub: Yes, just outside the Bay of Algiers.

Col. Shot: What did you do there.

Col. Chub: The usual ~~hard~~ work of the Engineers, prepared the exit roadways, got our bull-dozers & equipment in and improved the ~~bank~~ ^{beach} heads, helped to unload landing craft. Incidentally a comment on Engineer operations there. Two of our officers tried to use bull dozers to push off beached landing craft, with the result that they completely drowned two bull dozers

and we never got them going again. It was a mistake to run them into the water trying to help those ^{boats} birds off. Commenting on Engineer supplies. We tried to use the netting for road construction and it was inadequate it was improved later - several of the things we thought would be good turned out later to be not so good.

Col. Shot: In other words you used the Summerfeld netting?

Col. Chub: Yes the Summerfeld.

Col. Shot: You would have preferred the P.S.P.

Col. Chub: Yes, but we never did get it.

Col. Shot: Oh, I thought you had it at Selerno or Anzio

Col. Chub: No! I may be off on that but I don't remember it, Col. Gardes will tell you better.

Col. Shot: Well now you speak about using your bull dozers at D or D plus I at Algiers. Where did you get your bulldozers? Did you bring them with you from the States.

Col. Chub: Yes, our bulldozers were R-4s they were shipped in from the states with us.

Col. Shot: What did you do after the beaches and after the armistice.

Col. Chub: We moved our Headquarters into the little town of Fort de l'EAU? that's near the south eastern part of the Bay of Algiers. I've forgotten the exact distance - We stayed there and did road work and other construction around the Maison Blanche Airport - later we moved east started work on a new airfield 3 or 4 or 5 east of our landing beaches and it was at that time Col. Colonna started agitating or started action to take this battalion of mine which had been separated from the regiment for quite a while and make an AVN battalion out of it. That didn't work. We did the normal engineer work. In February we went from Algiers up into Tunisia up near Constantine there we did mostly road work the patching of macadam roads.

Col. Shot: Were you with the regiment when they plugged the Kasserin Pass, or was it the 36th.

Col. Chub: That was not ours, we saw no action after the landings - we got into no action.

Col. Shot: Did you act simply as a shore ^{battalion} ~~regiment~~ - or did you act as div Engineer for 9 ~~Divisions~~.

Col. Chub: We acted as a shore regiment not as Division Engineer because the division had no fighting in the neighborhood of Algiers after the first day and there was no necessity for extending our Engineer work.

Col. Shot: So all you did was the creation of exits from the beach, clearing of paths through the beach and preparation of depots or dumps on the beach.

Col. Chub: Yes - Yes that's right.

Col. Shot: Then after Constantine you joined the regiment?

Col. Chub: Yes ~~after~~ we left Constantine about the 10th of May and joined the regiment about the 12th of May-

Col. Shot: What did you do in preparation for Sicily.

Col. Chub: ~~We originally moved~~, the other two battalions had done some preparation which Col. Gardes can tell you about we moved from Oran up to Bizarte. We did the expected kinds of training we had some beach work. We had one or two rehearsals operations with landing craft. We did considerable planning there was the loading of our equipment on landing craft we had one or two landing craft.

Col. Shotwell: The landing craft were changed about that time weren't they?

Col. Chub: Yes. For the Sicilian operation we had LCT's ^r ~~and~~ ^S LST's that we had not had in North Africa.

Col. Shot: What did you have in North Africa - the Higgins boats mainly?[?]

Col. Chub: Yes - LCV. Ps LCMs Higgins boats LCPs Personnel
boats with Personnel ramps.

Col. Shot: What did you do ashore in Sicily?

Col. Chub: Well again? We did shore work we were a shore regiment.
we operated the dumps, we assisted vehicles across the
beaches and there we continued to operate the dumps, we
did not do combat Engineer work in Sicily.

Col. Shot: It was all practically all SOS work that you did in
Sicily?

Col. Chub: Yes.

Col. Shot: Then lets leave Italy until Col. Gardes comes back and
jump to the beaches on to Southern France and
up the Rhone to the Rhine. I believe Col. Gardes had
left the regiment at that time but went into Southern
France with you.

Col. Chub: I don't remember when he left us. Yes we had parted
company by that time. He was with Headquarters
Army and I went on with the regiment.

Col. Shotwell: He told me that he went ashore with you on the beaches
in France but as an Headquarters officer for old times
sake.

Col. Chub: Yes that's right.

Col. Shot: Well lets go ahead from there what did you do on the beaches in Southern France.

Col. Chub: Well our regiment was a pretty capable outfit with the whole beach group, about 9,000 or 10,000, we had attached to us and under the command of the regiment commander of the 36th we had a Quartermaster *DURW* Battalion Ordnance ~~Company~~ *Company* Co. Signal Company *and many others* we had complete operation of the dumps. When Marseilles was cleared the Regiment Headquarters and one Battalion (Col. Gardes can check me on this His memory for details is better than mine), went into Marseilles and helped clear that port area. Approximately a month after the landings the two parts of the regiment went north and were joined in France going up in France. I don't remember the date.

Col. Shot: About Dijon.

Col. Chub: I could show you if i had a map of France, but it was, we didn't go into Dijon. I believe it was as I remember it was south of Dijon.

Col. Shot: What sort of work did you do as you went up the valley?

Col. Chub: Well, all we did going up was just get up there.

Col. Shotwell: Just get up there

Col. Chub: Just get up there, because we had stayed behind while task force Butler and other combat outfits had dashed as fast as they could.

Col. Shot: Well, then somewhere up at the bend of the Rhone, the two parts of the regiment joined together and you went on from there

Col. Chub: Went on from there as corps engineer troops.

Col. Shot: And what sort of work did you do there in the northern part of the Rhone, the southern of the Rhine?

Col. Chub: We did the usual corps of engineers duties.

Col. Shotwell: Which corps were you with?

Col. Chub: 6th Corps

Col. Shotwell: That was Colonel Thomas?

Col. Chub: Colonel Thomas's corps

Col. Shot: On that fall-back, retirement of 7th army in the Vosges, did you go into infantry work?

Col. Chub: We were in the line as infantry *at north of Kogenau*

Col. Gardes: Do you want to start off at the landing in *7/11 - 1918*

Col. Shotwell: Well, yes, we - the regiment as I understand it, was organized in Plattsburg under Colonel Thomas and then

brought down to Bragg for the Carolina maneuvers and then after that you got assigned to the job of engineers for the task force?

Col. Gardes: Yes, after the Carolina maneuvers, we returned to Plattsburg on the afternoon of the day on which Pearl Harbor was being bombed. The regiment spent the next three months at Plattsburg. However, part of the regiment was sent down to New England to assist in the coast defense. Then in March the regiment was transferred to Bragg where they were attached to the 9th Division and participated in the amphibious training with the 9th Division. In August a third battalion was sent down from Camp Edwards to join the regiment and became a part of the regiment from there on (the 3d Battalion).

Col. Shotwell: Was it one of amphibious reg. battalions, or was it especially created to be your 3d Battalion?

Col. Gardes: Well, it was made up from the people available at Edwards. It was given a designation that already existed there, but it was mostly thrown together so that when it arrived at Bragg it was going through a shake-down process. After its arrival it joined in the amphibious training with the

9th Division. Very shortly after that the one battalion of the regiment, the 2d Battalion, left with a combat team from the 9th Division to go to England. Col. Chubbuck told you that story. The regiment, less the 2d Battalion, then moved up to Camp Pickett, where it participated in a landing operation with the 3d Division in what turned out to be the final trial run prior to the invasion of Africa.

Col. Shotwell: You had quite a little bit of training on unloading ships and beach operations on that Chesapeake Bay trial runs.

Col. Gardes: Yes, I would say we had almost six months of continuous training. During that six months period, the regiment as a whole was not training continuously, but we had companies and battalions who were away training with units of the 9th Division so that they had quite a considerable amount of training. I would like to mention one thing. Our training was primarily in the beach operations, rather than in ship unloading. We did have some people in what were called ship platoons who were left aboard the ship to assist in its unloading.

Col. Shotwell: Well, when you got over to North Africa you went ashore in and around Fedala.

Col. Gardes: That's right.

Col. Shotwell: And there you acted as the beach parties.

Col. Gardes: That's correct. We landed with the 3d Battalion on the left in the area adjacent Wadi Nefifik. The 1st Battalion was on the right toward the town of Fedela itself. They were working in an area varying from 1 to 3 miles north of the town along the beaches. The companies of the 1st Battalion, particularly those on the right, were under considerable fire from a French battery, which was located in the area of the oil tanks at Fedela. Those batteries were active until the afternoon of the day of the landing and kept the beaches under rather heavy fire, so much so that there was one DSC and 4 silver stars earned for that day's work on the beach, in addition to a number of purple hearts.

Col. Shotwell: Was, I don't remember exactly, but did the 36th take part in neutralizing of that battery?

Col. Gardes: No, except to the extent of contacting the infantry and calling for fire on the battery which assisted in knocking out the battery. The 36th itself did not get in on that.

Col. Shotwell: There was one of those batteries on the point that was taken out by a party in the engineers where members of it took an actual assault on the battery.

Col. Gardes: It was, well, I'm not sure whether it was the 36th or whether it was the 10th engineers who also came ashore with the 3d Division.

Col. Shotwell: I don't remember anything about that?

Col. Gardes: There was one thing about the landing operation. It was different in every respect from what our training had led us to expect. We had trained in the Chesapeake where there are practically no tides and the sea is relatively calm. As you probably noted from your reading of the Casablanca landing the heavy seas nearly caused the landing to be called off. Also, there was a tide of around 14 feet. The result of that was that the landing craft coming in, if they hit the beach on a falling tide and weren't unloaded immediately, would be grounded, and once a landing craft was grounded it was gone from there on. At the end of the first day's operation, approximately half of the landing craft had been wrecked along the coast.

Another obstacle was presented by the soft sand on the beach. We landed with only light bulldozers. Our D1's were taken away at Norfolk and we came in light Allis-Chalmers tractors that just could not operate in the soft sand. The tractors could hardly move themselves across the beach with the result that when the vehicles would come in on the landing craft and bog down in the

sand it was a question of getting the manpower to push them across the beach. Another problem was presented by the high dunes back of the beach and while we dozed several roads over the dunes it was a terrific job getting vehicles over the dune lines and into the adjacent field from which they could move to existing roads. The problems we faced on the landing were beyond anything anticipated in our training in the States. On the afternoon of the day of the landing and on the second day the seas became very heavy, so much so that at least one boat overturned as it approached the beach with resulting losses. The weather became so bad the second day that the beaches were shut down and the operations moved into the little port of Fedala.

The port did not lend itself to unloading operations. No means of transportation existed except a railroad spur which had been rendered useless by demolition. There was only one deep spot in the harbor and that was a hole near the tank farm that was dug for a tanker to float in as the tides rose and fell. Landing craft had to come alongside a fish pier or a small pier near the oil docks. It was very difficult unloading those craft because they were

12 or 14 feet below the surface of the dock, so that everything that was in the landing craft had to be secured to a rope and be hand pulled up to the level of the dock. Our troubles really started after we unloaded the supplies onto the dock. All of our transportation was taken away from us at Norfolk in favor of tactical transportation for the troops with the result that we had no means of moving the supplies that we unloaded on the beaches or the docks away from the waterside. The natural thing happened in that the unloading area was soon clogged with supplies. Our reconnaissance parties discovered several old trucks and trailers in Fedala which were put to work hauling supplies away from the unloading area. Because of the lack of transportation it was several days before we could clear the unloading area and operate on anything even approaching an efficient basis.

The lesson we learned at Fedala became very valuable later on because it caused us in our future invasion plans always to make provisions for transportation to move the supplies away from the water's edge as they were landed in assault landings, and never let ourselves get bogged down on the beaches the way we did there.

Col. Shotwell: How did that thinking get into our logistical planning, or lack of planning, taking away all transportation from the engineers and all heavy equipment?

Col. Gardes: That was because of the greater weight that had been given to the tactical angle of the landing.

Col. Shotwell: I'm not thinking only of there but of the general slip that we made at that time. After all, we had the experience or should have had the experience of that landing at Dieppe.

Col. Gardes: I think the answer to that goes back to the concept of the training we had in the States which was based on the Marine approach. That was that as landing craft are beached a gang of men would unload it by passing boxes and supplies from the boat to the water's edge and pile them on the beach. During the training in the States the concept of transportation to haul supplies away from the water's edge was never thought of seriously. The first conception of mobility on the beaches was something I saw down at Solomon's Island, Maryland, the summer before the landing in Morocco when "C" Company was operating the beach. Several of the GI's who were thoroughly worn out carrying boxes and supplies across the beach gathered together some driftwood and made up a sled resembling the stone boats used in New England. They hooked the sled to a bulldozer and started moving the sled down to the water's edge

where they would pile ammunition boxes on the sled and haul them inland.

Another thing that reflects the viewpoint of the summer before the landing was the development of various colored beach panels to mark beach areas for classes of supplies, such as POL, Ordnance, etc., the idea being that a boat loaded with a particular type of supplies, such as POL, would land as close as possible to the POL marker, and that the supplies from the boat would be hauled across the beach, a matter of a hundred or so feet and stacked at the panel carrying that marking.

Obviously, an approach of that type contemplated the movement of only a limited amount of supplies, that is, that amount that could be hand-moved by the engineers available on the beach. The landing at Casablanca emphasized the necessity for mechanical aids such as trucks and cranes to move the necessary tonnage of supplies across a beach and into dumps to support the operation of a task force of 40 to 50,000 men.

Col. Shotwell: Well, you know that raises a point, and it is rather interesting because Tom Stanley and Frank Cox and I went

into the question of the necessity of vehicles and one thing and another right early to get the stuff across.

Col. Gardes: We in the regiment had been cognizant of the needs of mechanical aids for beach operations and when it came time for loading for the invasion we urged most strongly that we be given sufficient boat space to carry our bulldozers and a limited number of cargo trucks so that we could use them for the movement of supplies across the beach. However, in view of the scarcity of cargo space available, it was decided to give those cargo spaces to the tactical troops. A bulldozer takes the same space as a tank so the tanks were loaded and the bulldozers left behind. Such vehicles as were loaded were given to the infantry with the result that on the Moroccan landing we were devoid of transport. We just had no transportation whatever to assist us during the assault phase.

Col. Shotwell: Did you have the same trouble?

Col. Chubbuck: Yes, we had the same trouble. We were allowed one jeep per company, as I recall, in the initial stages with, I believe, only one or two trucks per company coming in on a later list.

Col. Shotwell: How much of that do you think was Patton's or Muller's doing and how much the Port of New York, or did you load out of Norfolk?

Col. Gardes: We loaded out of Norfolk.

Col. Shotwell: You loaded out of Norfolk so you didn't have any headaches from the Port of New York.

Col. Gardes: No, the control of our convoy was entirely down at Norfolk as far as I know. I might jump ahead at this time to say that the rather bitter experience that we had on the beaches on Morocco and that Jim had up in Algiers reflected itself in the planning for Sicily, where Jim was with the planning group and very ably, by being extremely cantankerous, I think, managed to get sufficient boat space so that we landed with an ample number of bulldozers, DUKWs, which made their first appearance at that time, and cargo trucks. We didn't have our full complement of trucks but we did have sufficient so that we could keep the supplies off the beaches and move them into the dumps.

Col. Shotwell: I notice this afternoon in speaking of Col. Colonna that somehow he got one lot of 40, I think it was, 6 by 6's allotted to him in the cargo space in going into Oran and

he said that they were a gift from God to everybody. He lost a lot of them pronto, but that the fact that he'd got them were good trucks for everybody to use to get stuff in there, and I didn't realize that the rest of you had lost yours.

Col. Gardes: We had lost ours entirely. Our first motor assistance at Fedala was not forthcoming until three or four days after the landing.

Col. Shotwell: If I remember correctly, actually Tom Stanley's, Frank Oxx's and my first convoy we could plan for was the D plus 6 convoy, so that D convoy was completely Muller's baby. I say Muller, he being G-4 Taskforce Headquarters - there were other people mixed up in the loading plan. Of course, on that Sicily operation, you had Gar Davidson who had gone through the headache with you on the Moroccan landing.

Col. Gardes: Yes, Gar's influence was undoubtedly felt. Our planning, though, was again with the 3d Division. We worked with the 3d Division on all the landing operations, and by that time both organizations were some months older and we had gone through the earlier experience so that I think we were somewhat wiser. As a result the allowances of boat space for the Sicilian invasion provided for the necessary transportation for the engineers which did not exist in the Casablanca one.

Col. Shotwell: Of course, you also had the fact that the poor infantry had discovered that if they didn't allow you to have some transportation they darned well didn't get their supplies when they got inland.

Col. Gardes: Well, yes, and we had more lift available for Sicily than we did for the African landing.

Col. Chubbuck: There was no resemblance in the operation between the number of craft available . . .

Col. Shotwell: No, but I was also thinking that you didn't have the same sales resistance.

Col. Gardes: No, we had a different viewpoint, because by that time we had worked with each other, we knew each other, and there was more team work. I know as far as going into Morocco, when we first teamed up with the 3d Division at Pickett, we hadn't really had time to get to know each other so the planning was much more difficult than it was later on after we had operated with the division.

Col. Shotwell: Let's go back a little bit. We have got to Sicily but let's go back a little bit. After you had got ashore and had gone inland from Fedala and they had captured Casablanca and the armistice had occurred, what did the regimental headquarters and the 1st and 3d Battalions do?

Col. Gardes: They operated the port of Fedala until the port at Casablanca could be opened up. One cargo ship was docked there at all times so that the regiment unloaded the supplies off the ship and moved them inland to the dumps. In addition, the regiment carried on miscellaneous engineer tasks. For example, they put in roads in an area between Fedala and Casablanca that was to be made into a reception center for the troops coming over in later convoys. We also had a company at Port Lyautey repairing a bridge over the Sabu River. The French in the fighting at Port Lyautey had blown a couple of spans and after the landing some concern was felt about the possibility of an attack coming down from Spanish Morocco. Thus, there was some urgency about getting that bridge repaired, which was quite a substantial job.

Col. Shotwell: What was the matter with the 21st?

Col. Gardes: The 21st were out on the edge of the town, rehabilitating the airport. The 540th was in the port itself doing other tasks. C Company of the 36th repaired the bridge. In addition to that we were conducting engineer reconnaissance of all the roads and trails north, up to the Spanish border.

Col. Shotwell: Who did the rehabilitation of the docks at Casablanca?

Col. Gardes: I think that was probably the 20th engineers and the other people who were available to the 1st Armored Corps. We didn't do any work on the docks at Casablanca. Ours was engineer work in the area north of Casablanca.

Col. Shotwell: Well, then after your road reconnaissance and things were settled down in western Morocco, what did you do then?

Col. Gardes: We moved shortly after the first of the year to the Cork forrest near Rabat, where we formed part of the reserve that was available in the event of an attack from Spanish Morocco. While there we trained and performed miscellaneous engineer tasks including road maintenance. Among our engineer tasks was the moving of the bridge north of Rabat which included the erection of wire around all the piers and booby-trapping the wire so that the saboteurs couldn't get close to the piers. The principal effect of our booby-traps was to kill a few cows which the Gooms who were guarding the bridge found that they could put to good use. The regiment stayed in the Cork forrest between Rabat and Fez until the latter part of February when the 3d Battalion moved up to the beaches near Arzew and started amphibious training. Several weeks after they moved,

the regimental headquarters and the 1st Battalion came up to join them. Again we trained with the 3d Infantry Division. A short time after we arrived at Arzew the 2d Battalion came back from Tunisia and joined us so that we had the regiment together for the first time since landing in Africa. We trained on the beaches in the Arzew-Mostaganem area until May when we moved up to the plains south of Bizerte where we assembled and picked up some equipment such as D-8's and cranes for the landing in Sicily. We also made one final practice landing operation just prior to embarking. It seems to me that we left Bizerte about the fifth of July. It may have been the 6th.

Col. Chubbuck: We were on the water about two days, I think; that would have made it actually about the 7th or 8th.

Col. Shotwell: I think D-Day was the 10th.

Col. Cardes: It was probably the 6th and 7th we loaded. One of the things about the trip to Sicily that was outstanding was the severe storm the day before the landing which thoroughly scattered the convoy. I went over on the USS Biscayne, which was the command ship. From the reports that we were receiving during the storm it appeared that we would be lucky if 60 per cent of the fleet were

reassembled and gotten into position for the landing. However, the weather calmed down that night and the convoy reassembled and was in position by the next morning. On the landing we operated again with the 3d Division Task Force, which landed at Licata. The 1st Battalion of the 36th landed on the west side of the town on Red Beach at the foot of cliffs with very difficult exits. We were fully aware before the landing that that would be a terribly difficult beach, and it was. The beach was under fire for some hours after the battalion landed. Even after the fire lifted they had great difficulty in preparing exit roads to the fields above the cliffs and thence for a mile across cultivated fields to an existing road. Needless to say, the movement of supplies off the beach during the early stages of the landing was very arduous and difficult. The beach was useful only as a support beach for the assault and could not be used as a supply beach.

The 3d Battalion of the 36th landed on Yellow Beach which was a mile and a half or two miles to the east of the town (Licata), and the 2d Battalion landed still further east on Blue Beach which was another mile and a half or two miles east of Yellow Beach. Yellow Beach

turned out to be an ideal beach. The sand was firm, there was an adequate amount of room for the landing craft and the water was deep enough for the craft to come in reasonably near to the water's edge. An existing road was only a matter of several hundred yards back of the beach and the ground between the beach and road was firm so that we were able to put in adequate exit roads from the beach to the highway in a short time. We moved a great amount of supplies across Yellow Beach during our operations. Blue Beach was a much less satisfactory beach.

The landing in Sicily was a marked improvement over the African landing and the improvement was due in no small degree to the fact that we were able to bring in transportation which enabled us to move supplies across the beach to dumps. Our transportation consisted of a limited number of both DUKWs and trucks. Also, for the first time we used cargo nets as a means of packaging our cargo in its movement ashore. In operation two nets of cargo would be placed in a DUKW by a ship's winch. The DUKW would then take off for the shore and move directly into the appropriate dump where the netted cargo would be

unloaded at the spot it was to be stored. We used cranes and the DUKWs with A frames which had been used to bring the 105s to shore in the assault to lift the loaded nets from the DUKWs in the dump. Thus, we saved the manual labor of unloading supplies from a boat and piling it on the beach and later reloading it for the move to the dump. Also, we saved unloading at the dump. We had procured the cargo nets on the basis of six per DUKW which we anticipated using as follows: 2 on board ship being loaded, 2 on the DUKW enroute to or from the dump and 2 in the dump being unloaded. The plan proved highly successful but experience showed that we should provide for losses. Our trucks were used to unload the limited amount of loose supplies which came to the beaches in landing craft and for unloading directly from LCTs and LSTs which came into the small harbor after the town was captured. By using our transportation around the clock we were able to keep the beaches clear and to move a far greater amount of supplies than we at that time thought possible.

While I doubt that at Fedala we were successful in landing more than 100 tons a day, which I think is a very

generous estimate, in the landing at Sicily with our transportation we moved on the average over 2,000 tons a day over the beaches. You can see the tremendous difference. As a result of our increased capability, we were able to support the 3d Division Task Force, which was a matter of some 50 or 60,000 soldiers with all their transportation and equipment not only in their landing but also in the subsequent operations inland. In addition to that we had more leeway with our people in that we were not tied down with the tremendous amount of manual labor on the beaches which previously had been required to manually handle supplies.

In other words our work capacity, our flexibility and maneuverability was tremendously increased. This enabled us to use part of the regiment for other missions. We sent C Company up to Caltanissetta to set up and operate a supply dump there. Later on we sent another detachment to Nera and operated a supply there. Also, about a week after the landing the 3d Battalion opened up the port of Empedocle, which was about 30 miles west of Licata and assisted in the supply of the 82d Airborne Division which was attacking west along the coast, and the 1st Armored Division which was attacking north from Agregento to capture Palermo.

Another lesson learned in Fedala and applied in Sicily was the fact that engineer soldiers, while good at engineer tasks, are not qualified as ordnance supply experts or signal supply experts. For the landing in Sicily we had attached to us for the landings some 6,000 service troops. Among others we had an ordnance ammunition company, an engineer supply detachment, a signal company and we even had several anti-aircraft companies with 50 caliber machine guns for defense along the beach. Thus, we had the service troops to operate what really amounted to a base depot. When these troops landed they moved directly to those supply areas which had been picked out beforehand and they received the supplies as they came in, segregated them and knew where they were when needed. I've heard Gar Davidson and others say that the beaches at Licata were the only places you could go to and really know what was available by way of supplies. That was due not so much to us as to our attached people who operated the dumps and the supplies. Col. Chubbuck set up a special staff that did a very excellent job of coordinating the operations of all those attached people.

Am I talking too much, doctor?

Col. Shotwell: No. Now, I think I recall you went through Sicily as the

beach party and the supply effort and then you attached to the 3d Division as combat engineers.

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Col. Shotwell: Well,
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replacements who arrived so late that we put them in a
follow-up convoy. About ten days later we reloaded for
what turned out to be the invasion of Italy at Salerno.

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On the Salerno operation we constituted the infantry reserve for the assault. Two or three companies from the regiment went ashore on the morning of the landing and that night they outposted the armor that we had ashore along the Sele River. About dusk I received orders from the 36th Division to have the rest of the regiment brought ashore as quickly as possible and to assemble in the vicinity of Paestum. The rest of the regiment unloaded during that night and by noon the next day we were pretty well assembled. On D-plus-1 and D-plus-2 we performed a number of small engineering tasks, as for example, repairing the bridge over the Sele River, and assisting on the beaches. I think it was the night of D-plus-2 that we were ordered to send a battalion up the road toward Battapaglia to seize some high ground about two miles beyond the Sele River. This was in the area between the British and American beaches and was still under German control. The 3d Battalion (less H Company) with D Company and one battery attached were astride the road at daybreak. After a heavy fire fight that day they reached their objective by late afternoon.

However, by night-fall half the battalion was cut off. Contact was reestablished between elements of the battalion that night. About day-break the following morning a battalion of the 36th Division came up. Adjustment of the lines took place which placed the 3d Battalion of the 36th Engineers on the left of the road and the infantry battalion on the right. The 3d Battalion held this position against repeated German attacks notwithstanding being partially over-run by German tanks during one of the attacks. (Mention is made of this incident in the Historical Division's booklet on Salerno.) ^{The 3rd Battalion} ~~It~~ took part in the breakout about five days later and then returned to engineer duties.