

NUMBER OF NEGROES IN ETO RISE DURING YEAR

(Continued from page 1)

European Theater.

CHEMICAL WAREFARE

Chemical Warfare Service headquarters in the European Theatre of Operations has disclosed that of the 9500 Chemical Warfare Service troops in the theater on V-E Day, 2,442 of these were Negro enlisted men and officers. Other Negro Chemical Warfare Service units were the three Chemical Decontamination Companies, the 25th, 32nd, and 34th.

ORDNANCE

Of the 6,000,000 tons of ammunition handled by Ordnance Ammunition Companies on the continent between D-Day and V-E Day, more than 4,500,000 tons passed through the hands of Negro ordnancemen, Major General Henry B. Saylor, Chief Ordnance Officer of the ETO, said recently.

In releasing the figures on the amount of ammunition made available for use by U. S. fighting men, General Saylor paid high tribute to the 14,323 Negro enlisted men who accounted for 11 per cent of the total Ordnance personnel on the continent.

MEDICAL CORPS

Negro personnel formed 2.2 per cent of the total ETO Medical Service strength or 5,482, a statement released by the Office of the Chief Surgeon of the European Theater of Operations disclosed.

Negro officers were distributed as follows: Medical officers, 51, Dental Corps, 28, Medical Administration Corps, 17, and Nurse Corps, 67. Sixty-five of the Negro nurses are attached to the 168th Station Hospital in England.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS

Of the 259,173 Negro troops in the European Theater of Operations as of May 15, a little more than one in every five was an engineer soldier, according to information released by the Office of the Chief Engineer of the ETO.

On May 31 there were 54,600 Negro engineer enlisted men, 320 officers and 54 warrant officers of a total of 337,000 in the theater's Engineer Command. This total includes personnel of general service regiments, engineer dump truck companies, engineer fire fighting units, aviation engineer battalions and separate battalions. There were 165 engineer units of all types.

A survey of Negro engineer units showed that Negro engineers participated in all of the main operations by U. S. Forces on the continent which required engineering, from D-Day landings and beachhead operations of June, 1944, to the conquest of the Rhineland.

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DUMP TRUCKSTERS

One unit, the 582nd Engineer Dump Truck Company, landed on Omaha Beach shortly after H-Hour on June 6 and worked continuously up until and after the crossing and bridging of the Rhine.

The 582nd was one of 58 Negro engineer dump truck units in the ETO on May 31. This outfit came ashore on D-Day with the 1106 Engineer Combat Group, performing its "primary mission"—hauling bridging equipment and explosives. Almost immediately these dump trucksters were conscripted to taxi combat personnel of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and the 4th Infantry Division to forward areas.

GENERAL SERVICE REGIMENTS

According to paragraph 318 of FM 5-5, which is the Engineer Field Manual, the mission of an engineer general service regiment is defined: The engineer performs general engineer work—particularly that requiring most skilled labor—throughout the army service area and communications zone of the theater of operations. A general service regiment . . . is capable of executing extensive and permanent work."

This general phrasing of a general service regiment's function provided sufficient latitude for Negro service units to perform a wide variety of tasks on the continent, from erecting tent camps and welding to repairing damaged rail lines and all purpose excavations.

TRANSPORTATION CORPS

Negro troops made an impressive contribution to the operations of the Transportation Corps from D-Day to V-E Day, a survey compiled from information obtained from ETO Transportation Corps headquarters showed.

The mission of the Army's Transportation Corps is to transport men and supplies. Statistics released by the office of Major General Frank S. Rose, chief of Transportation in the European Theater, indicate the magnitude of its achievements as well as the extent of Negro participation in the operations of the Corps.

PORT BATTALIONS

When the first U. S. elements reached the French coast in June, Transportation Corps units were among them and the Battle of the Beaches merged with the vital and hard fought Battle of Supply.

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Negro Troops of the Transportation Corps were in the initial waves on D-Day, came ashore with the engineer brigades and helped start what eventually became the greatest supply operation in military history.

The Normandy supply battle was won by units like the 490th Port Battalion, which came in with the second tide on D-Day and unload crucial supplies of ammunition, food and equipment to be used by the assault troops.

AMPHIBIAN TRUCK COMPANIES

Six Negro DUKW companies, the 467th, 468th, 469th, 470th, 819th, and 821st Amphibian Truck Companies, had been attached to the 11th Port for "Plan Neptune," the invasion operation. The first of these, the 468th, arrived on D plus 10. Others followed shortly after and helped importantly in the solution of the critical supply problem.

During this period an 11th Port Officer estimated that these DUKW units hauled ashore 94 per cent of all cargo unloaded at Omaha Beach.

On May 30, there were 16 amphibian truck companies in the ETO, ten of them Negro units with a total personnel of 1,730. They are still operating at Cherbourg and Le Havre. One Negro unit, the 469th, ferried supplies and personnel across the Rhine River during the attack that placed American forces on the east bank of the river.

TRUCK COMPANIES

As of May 30, 1944, 69 per cent of all truck drivers in Transportation Corps' motor transport branch in the ETO were Negro. This average has remained much

the same since the beachhead phase of the Battle of Europe.

Some of these units have operated continuously since D-Day. Negro cargo truck units landed vehicles and personnel on Omaha Beach on June 6. The 3683rd Quartermaster Truck Company had vehicles ashore on D-Day. The 370th Quartermaster Truck Company, a transportation unit, was scheduled to land 55 vehicles and 115 men on the beach on D plus 1. Instead, it got 24 men and 12 trucks ashore as early as the morning of D-Day.

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