

Pioneers' Triumph Over Adversity Revealed in Camp's Early History

This week, Camp Abbot's first anniversary is being observed. But the story of this military station begins almost two years ago—August 14, 1942. For on that day Col. Richard Park, district engineer from the Portland area, arrived in Bend in search of an appropriate site or a new engineer training camp.

In his preliminary routine work, the colonel met Robert W. Sawyer, publisher of the Bend Bulletin, who suggested the site of the present camp, then known locally as the Shonquest ranch. The publisher also suggested the name in honor of Brig. Gen. Henry Larcom Abbot, the distinguished engineer general of the last century. On September 2, 1855, Abbot, then a Second Lieutenant in command of a party engaged in one of the projects of the Pacific Railway Survey, camped on the spot we now occupy.

About eighteen months ago, other army engineers arrived from the Portland district, and soon afterward construction began on what was soon to become a modern military installation, fully equipped with tactical areas, floating bridge and river crossing training sites, anti-tank demolition facilities, fixed bridge locations, demolition ranges, fortification obstacles, bayonet courts, weapon and grenade ranges, obstacle courses, a large review field, and many other training facilities.

It was on March 6, 1943 that General Order number 30, Headquarters, Ninth Service Command, directed that a Service Command Unit be activated. Original post headquarters was located at 910 Wall street in Bend, the building now occupied by the U.S.O. While awaiting the arrival of office furniture and equipment, local merchants loaned the army necessary office fixtures. The first contingent of enlisted men—a master sergeant and three privates—arrived March 15. The camp opened and began operation May 1 last year.

Skeleton units arrived first. Buildings were still in the process of construction; there were no paved streets, no sidewalks. There was no water, except that hauled in. When soldiers moved into barracks, sawdust and scrap lumber had to be cleared out to make room for bunks. There were no mattresses, no pillows.

Mess sergeants and cooks were hard pressed to prepare meals. In addition to the water shortage, there was a lack of equipment. There was no PX; no theater; no Service Club; no Guest House. There were no latrines. Most of them had been completed but their pipes contained only dust.

It was cold in those early spring days. Snow covered the ground almost constantly. And when the snow did disappear,

dust began to blow. The rough lanes, now smoothly paved streets, were thick with vehicles scurrying here and there on urgent missions. Dump trucks were everywhere, unloading ton after ton of lava rock as a base for what were to become streets.

Wild creatures were reluctant to abandon their habitat in favor of man. Deer could be seen most frequently, and chipmunks were all over the place. At night, when all was quiet, strange sounds floated in on the nocturnal breeze. There were tales of cougar and timber wolves, of bobcats "big as dogs."

One of the first units to assume active duty was the Military Police Section, under command of Lt. T. E. Pennington, who is still company commander. Seriously handicapped by an acute manpower shortage, MPs nevertheless were faced with the responsibility of guarding the new camp. This resulted in long, almost unending tours of duty, and other hardships.

Everyone worked hard in those early days. The Quartermasters, in command of Maj. Emil L. Mosheim (then a captain) were faced with the tremendous task of unloading mountains of equipment and supplies from freight cars.

Capt. John C. Burgeson, present salvage officer, was Camp Abbot's first postal officer. Post-office personnel fashioned equipment from scrap lumber. Although facilities were not available immediately for handling money orders, Capt. Burgeson and postal employees obtained stamps from personal funds and made them available to soldiers. The captain also made arrangements to receive and send registered mail. Enlisted men assigned to the post office were Sgt. Ed Purcell, Cpl. R. Whatford and Pfc. Sidney Resnich.

In the midst of this preparatory period, the WAC company arrived, and operated under similar pioneer conditions in the area now occupied by Casual Company until the present quarters were completed.

Col. Frank S. Besson assumed

his present command as Post Commander on May 12, 1943, after having served as ERTC Commander at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Col. Besson's original staff included Major Paul L. Diedeker, adjutant; Lt. Col. M. A. Pimental, chief, supply and service and Lt. Col. Russell D. Turrill (then a major), director of personnel.

The original SCU staff included Capt. J. C. Burgerson, postal officer (now salvage officer); Capt. Marvin P. Cooper, intelligence officer; Maj. William H. Andrew, post chaplain and Capt. T. B. Fulkerson, supply officer. Lt. H. L. Hansen, now athletic officer, was SCU director of personnel.

Camp Abbot, originally designated an Engineer Replacement Training Center, but now known officially as an Army Service Forces Training Center, was formally dedicated at a colorful ceremony on September 2, 1943. The event was attended by United States Senator Rufus C. Holman, Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Patch Jr., Maj. Gen. Thomas M. Robbins, Brig. Gen. Warren T. Hannum, Robert W. Sawyer, and a host of other distinguished guests.

New York (CNS)—Eleazor Morrison, Venezuelan Consul General, arrived at a hotel where he was scheduled to address a dinner given by the Commerce and Industry Association. He told the head waiter his name was Morrison and was escorted to a table where he ate, drank, cleared his throat and peeked at his notes. But nobody asked him to speak. Inquiry disclosed that he was attending the wrong dinner. He finally arrived at the right one in time for a second dessert and his speech.

New Haven, Conn. (CNS)—Two roistering fellows paid a social call to a friend in the New Haven jug. Denied admission, they battered down the poky doors. Once inside, they stayed there—locked up on charges of drunkenness, breach of the peace and damaging public property.



A bit of Gotham in the Oregon woods north of Camp Abbot. Corps of Engineers trainees of 51st battalion, utilizing local plant life, designed garden spot and named it "Central Park," as sign at right of man emerging from foxhole shows. —Photo by Signal Corps Photo Lab.

Nice Work—and Do They Get It

BY BERTON BRALEY

"The Engineers
Have hairy ears"
—and hairy, harried faces;
Robust and tough
They do their stuff
In all the toughest places.

For they're the babes who take the raps,
The boobs who probe for the booby-traps,
The scouts ahead of the scouting lines
Cutting the wire and hunting mines.
And they are the playboys, gay and bright,
Who crack pillboxes with dynamite,
And they are the fellers who fell the trees,
While the bullets hum like a hive of bees.

The Engineers!
They grease the gears
That Army transport runs on,
And foot by foot
Build roads they put
The trucks and tanks and guns on.

They are the bucks who buck away
Through stubborn granite and sticky clay.
With pick and shovel they break their backs
After (and under) the bomb attacks.
They drill for water through desert dunes
And over the rivers they toss ontoons.
They sla down runways in fields of mud
(And some of the ooze is the ooze of blood).

The Engineers
Are cavaliers
Who joust with logs and boulders
A task that's done
With half a ton
Of junk upon their shoulders.

For they are the lugs who lug the most
Of loads that land on a hostile coast,
And they are the guys, when equipment fails,
Who scratch out a ditch with their finger nails.
You find them up in the mountain crags
And down in the jungle clearing snags
Where the moccasins coil and the snipers lurk
—Engineers, doing the dirty work!

Pass The ENGINEER To Another Abbotman—He'll Appreciate It.

MORE ABOUT "Let Us Try"

(Continued from Page 5)

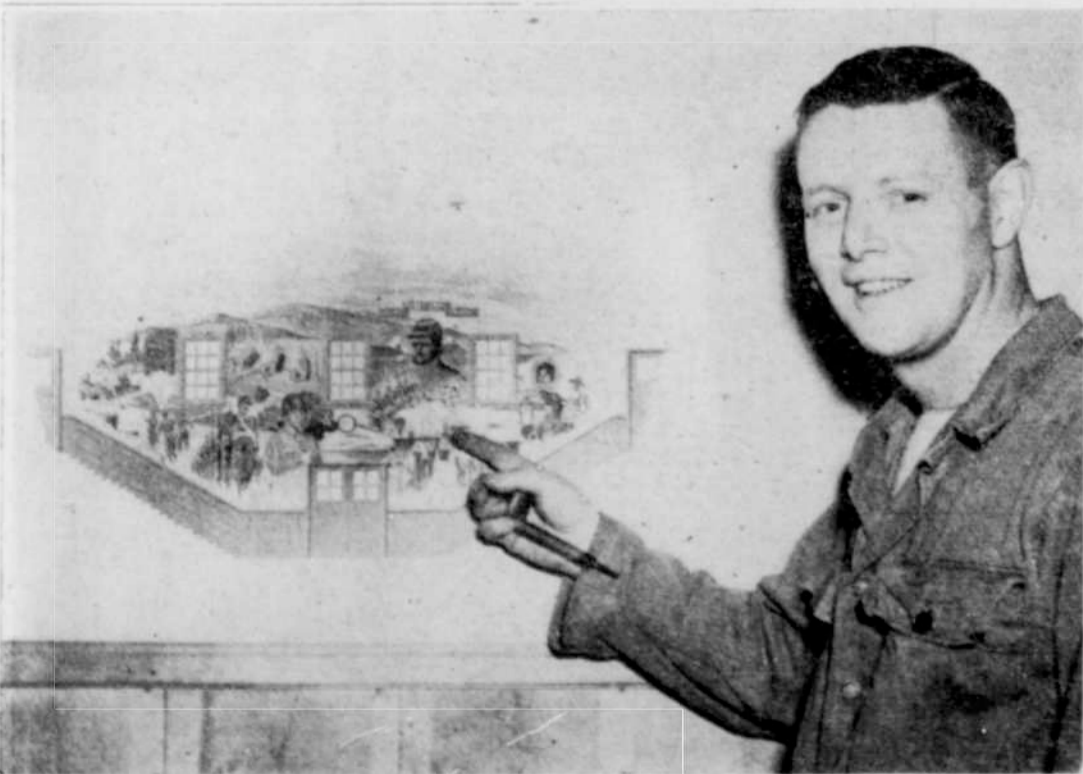
religious service. As hundreds of men, still in field clothes, and with gun holsters well secured about their waists, sang such time-honored favorites as "The Old Rugged Cross." Col. F. S. Beeson, commanding officer of Camp Abbot, and Mrs. Beeson, Col. Charles S. Baish, commander of the 11th Group, and Mrs. Baish; Major and Mrs. Lilburn P. Stamon, and several other members of the commanding officer's party arrived for a visit and joined in the service. At the same time Captain Elliot was receiving a message from the Commanding General of the IV Corps that his troops were planning an attack on the enemy and that the 51st Battalion would assist in the preparations by constructing floating bridges at certain sites along the river.

Following the church service the men invited the commanding officer and his party to community singing in the bivouac area. The church organ again was set up and men identified by names printed on their helmets as Privates Behmer, Gill, Hautala, and SLoenecker, brought forth musical instruments, and with Private Brayer at the organ, swung into such sentimental songs as "Sweet-heart of the Mountain," and "Road to Mandalay," with a large group of soldiers and guests joining in.

Monday morning the 51st Battalion broke camp for a ten-mile march south along the Deschutes. Arriving at its destination at 2:30 in the afternoon, it began construction of foot bridges, an infantry support raft, and a ponton bridge. These operations were interrupted by enemy air activity. This operation was abandoned, equipment was recovered, and the battalion withdrew to bivouac in the nearby woods.

The following day the battalion was successful in establishing a river crossing ten miles south of Camp Abbot, over which supplies and troops then moved toward the front. Upon completion of this assignment, the battalion was ordered to return to the Post.

Toledo, O. (CNS)—Arthur Fleisher put over a canny deal the other day. He swapped his 1941 Ford station wagon even up for a 1924 Model T touring car. Reason for the trade: The Model T has four good tires. The station wagon has none.



Pvt. Charles S. Freeman of Company C, 52nd battalion, points out a detail in his design for a Service Club mural. Private Freeman, Pvt. Willard F. Sheker, also of C-52, and Pvt. Frank A. Lackner of Company A, 54th battalion, will execute the work depicting the history of the Camp Abbot site on the wall over the entrance to the lounge and adjacent to the stairway.