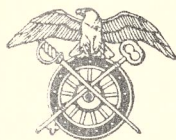


***QUARTERMASTER***  
***GRAVES REGISTRATION***  
***WORLD WAR II***



Office of The Quartermaster General  
15 January 1948

UNITERM

215



26 Jan 45



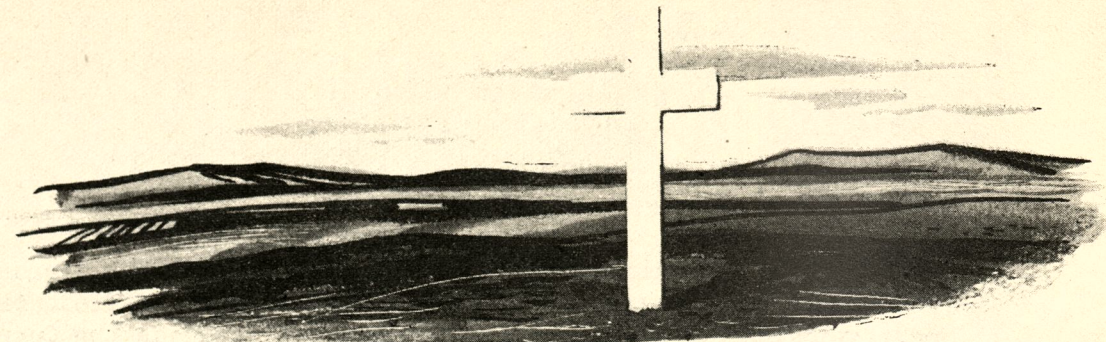
**COVER** shows Pvt. ALFANTON ORTEGA, member of a QM graves registration company, painting the crosses for use in an American military cemetery somewhere in France.

## PREFACE

The material comprising this publication was gleaned from the many hundreds of letters submitted from the field of operations during World War II, and was published in the Quartermaster Training Service Journal. The Journal, an authorized War Department publication of the Quartermaster Corps, was printed and distributed from October 1942 to October 1945.

This pamphlet has no connection with TM 10-285, Deceased Personnel, which prescribes procedures for the handling and disposition of deceased military personnel, but is published to indicate what was accomplished by Quartermaster Graves Registration Units in the recovery, identification and care of the deceased on the far flung battlefields of World War II, and as a guide for future operations.





# Tending the Dead in ETO

10 Aug 45

**GRS is completing the mission**

**T**HE COST of winning the war in Europe is spelled out in crosses and Stars of David stuck in the soil of 54 U. S. military cemeteries in ETO.

There are two in England, one in Northern Ireland, thirty in France, one in Luxembourg, four in Belgium, four in Holland, and twelve in Germany (some of which are already being removed to Belgium and France).

Recent tabulations show that the QM Graves Registration Service has buried in these cemeteries 125,670 Americans, 3,463 Allies, and 77,773 enemy dead.

Unidentified U. S. dead number only approximately 2% of the total buried. It was more than twice this percentage at the end of a comparable period after World War I. GRS personnel are working to reduce present unknowns to an even smaller figure.

At the end of the war there were an estimated 18,000 isolated burials throughout the theater—men who were buried where they fell, instead of being transported to established cemeteries. The top priority post V-E job for GRS men in ETO is finding these graves, as well as unburied remains, and interring the dead in one of the military cemeteries.

Another high priority job is evacuating the 8,000 American dead who were buried in Germany. They will be re-interred in liberated countries.

**Where And Who?** To locate iso-

lated burials, GRS men use methods ranging from searching battle areas (indicated by day-to-day situation maps), to interviewing civilians in likely areas. Identifying the man who was buried in some isolated spot may not be simple, for sometimes identi-

fication tags are missing. Investigations may involve more interviews with civilians who were near the scene of death, probing for data in the man's unit, in Missing Air Crew or Battle Casualty reports, and careful examination of the remains.

**GRS MAN registers casualties at collecting point**



**HELMET SERVES** as temporary headstone for the resting place of two 36th Division GI's killed in action in Germany.

Unknowns—both in isolated graves and in established cemeteries—often can be identified through a careful check of physical characteristics: finger prints, body scars, tooth charts, and so forth. Also aiding in identification are pay books, drivers' licenses, letters, laundry marks, and equipment serial numbers. Some of this information may be registered on burial or KIA and MIA reports.

All these aids to identification are cross-checked painstakingly, and no case is closed until the deceased has either been identified or every possible source of information has been exhausted. When a case is closed, papers concerning it are forwarded to the Office of The Quartermaster General for

review and further investigation.

Although regular GRS practice is to wrap bodies in clean white shrouds before burial, that wasn't always possible in fast-moving warfare. Many casualties were simply buried in the clothes they were wearing when they were killed, or wrapped in blankets or shelter halves.

If there wasn't time for a burial service, chaplains returned to the grave as soon as they could and read the service over it. If he didn't know the religious preference of the dead man, the chaplain read a combined Protestant-Catholic-Jewish service.

**The Markers.** Markers were erected over all known graves as soon as possible. Often they were only simple

stakes, with one of the man's identification tags nailed to it. But as soon as possible, or when the area passed under Com Zone control, crosses and Stars of David were erected.

The name, rank, and serial number of the dead were stenciled on their grave markers, too.

**Personal Effects.** The system of safeguarding personal effects of the deceased was worked out in detail to insure their eventual return to the next-of-kin. As soon as a man was killed, it became his CO's responsibility to collect the dead man's personal belongings, including money, inventory them, and begin their evacuation through echelons to the rear.

Two effects depots served as intermediate collecting points. They were located at Liverpool, England, for the UK base, and at Folembay, France, for continental forces. They forwarded effects to the Army Effects Bureau in Kansas City, Mo., where trained personnel sort the man's belongings and prepare them for shipment home. There, blood-stained clothing is cleaned and pressed, items that might cause embarrassment to relatives are set aside, and documents that might prove of military value (such as diaries) are diverted for study by Intelligence. (The two overseas depots are scheduled to go out of operation, all effects going directly to Kansas City.)

**Beautification.** When the cemeteries in Germany are cleared out, about 40 will remain in the UK and the liberated countries of Europe. These plots are being landscaped in keeping with the War Department policy for military cemeteries. The objective is to make each a scene of simple beauty in harmony with the surrounding area.

One such cemetery, now the largest in ETO of World War II, is the one at Henri-Chapelle, 18 miles from Liege, Belgium. More than 17,000 men lie there.

This cemetery was established and cared for by the 607TH QM GR COMPANY, whose men scrambled ashore on Omaha Beach on D-Day. Three pla-



# QUARTERMASTER JOURNAL

## Training Service . . . . .

toons were each attached to Engineer Special Brigades, under the First Army.

In the confusion of those early days on the beaches, under enemy artillery and small arms fire, men of the 607th gathered bodies from the beaches, in the water, and inland. In ducks, second platoon men searched the off-shore waters and recovered many bodies (some of which they had to cut from wrecked landing craft submerged in the shallow water), and carried them ashore.

**Beaches Clear.** By the end of D-plus-2, the third platoon alone had buried 457 American dead. By working day and night, the three platoons together were able to clear the beaches of all dead. Later, bodies were re-buried in permanent cemeteries at St. Laurent sur Mer, St. Mere Eglise, and

Orglandes.

The cemetery at St. Laurent sur Mer was the first to be established on European soil. First burials there were made on D-plus-3 by the second and third platoons of the 607th, which operated it until the St. Lo break-through. By that time, 4,000 Americans, 50 Allied soldiers, and 1,200 Germans were buried there.

On 19 June the fourth platoon opened the Orglandes cemetery, which became the major burial site for enemy dead in the Cherbourg peninsula. In all, the 607th operated five cemeteries in Normandy.

After the St. Lo break-through, the company opened five more cemeteries in France in the wake of the advancing forces; then two in Belgium, and three in Germany.

**Counter-Attack.** The company was

in danger of encirclement during the German counter-attack in December 1944. The bivouac area at Henri-Chapelle was bombed, German planes strafed workers in the cemetery, and paratroops landed in the vicinity.

With 118 men and four officers, the unit buried one of the largest groups of fatalities it had yet handled in one month. From 17 December to 16 January, it buried 3,159 Americans and 1,745 Germans.

Besides running the Henri-Chapelle cemetery at that time, the company furnished personnel for the XVIII Corps and in addition sent 15 men and an officer to set up collecting points for the 82d Airborne and 30th Infantry Divisions.

In its first 11 months of operation in ETO, the 607th buried 37,700 U. S., Allied, and enemy personnel. The com-

WITH BOWED HEADS, soldiers on Okinawa hold services for comrades who died in the invasion.



OVERSEAS VET, half of his left leg missing, visits Arlington National Cemetery, Va., final resting place of many soldiers killed overseas.

pany headquarters was able to send on its reports and personal effects of the U. S. dead within 24 hours after burial.

The company stayed at the Henri-Chapelle cemetery for five months before moving on into Germany where it handled casualties from the Ruhr pocket fighting. One GRS detachment (two platoons and a service company) opened a cemetery at Breuna, while the remainder of the company, also with attached service troops, operated one at Ittenbach. From there, a small detachment went forward to operate an Army clearing point.

Later, the company closed the two and took over a Third Army cemetery

at Isenach. Four days later, two detachments again went forward to set up more Army collecting points deeper in enemy territory. The company was still in Germany when V-E day came.

**Its Awards.** The 607th holds the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque, and three of its men have been awarded the Bronze Star. Three others have the Croix de Guerre, 19 wear the Presidential Unit Citation for their D-Day work, and 17 have Purple Hearts. All but one of the latter were awarded posthumously to 15 men and one officer who were killed in an enemy attack during pre-invasion maneuvers in the English Channel on 28 April 1944.

## Return of Dead Awaits V-J Day



**AMERICAN DEAD** will remain in overseas cemeteries, tended by GRS personnel and civilian laborers under their supervision, until after victory has been won in the Pacific.

At the conclusion of hostilities, disposition of bodies will be determined, under War Department policy which presupposes Congressional action for such determination, in the following ways:

1) When next of kin desires, the body will be returned to the U. S. and buried wherever relatives request.

2) When requests are made for return of more than 70% of the bodies in one theater, all will be returned, and those bodies for which no request has been made will be buried in a national cemetery.

3) When requests are made for return of less than 70% of the bodies in one theater, those bodies not requested will remain in the theater and be moved to an American military cemetery established there.

4) In cases where dead are buried in local or communal cemeteries abroad and request is made by next of kin that remains not be disturbed, the government will relinquish responsibility for subsequent care and maintenance of their graves to the next of kin.



3 Apr 43

**GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE.**--"With the aid of four enlisted morticians, a graves registration service was established which developed and laid out an American cemetery. Sections have been set aside for the army, the navy, the marine corps, and the New Zealand forces, with a separate section for enemy dead. This unit, through the ingenuity of one of the enlisted morticians, took over an old shed which was completely filled with a vile smelling fertilizer. With the aid of only two or three Javanese laborers, they removed the fertilizer, completely renovated the interior of the shed, installed modern plumbing, a concrete floor, a well-equipped office, operating room and store room, built their own mortuary slabs of reinforced concrete, painted the exterior of the building, and landscaped and fenced the surrounding plot.

"In addition, this group of four enlisted morticians embalmed and prepared for burial all bodies located in the American cemetery, with the exception of a few navy battle casualties for whom these services were performed aboard a hospital ship. In addition, these same individuals prepared required statistical information with reference to the manner of death and care of the bodies, assembled, packed, and shipped to the proper agency effects of the deceased, and supervised all religious services at the cemetery, as well as the maintenance of the cemetery itself.

## Casualties

WD CIRCULAR 24/45, Section II, states that if, in the present war, *two or more* sons have already been killed, have died from wounds, accident, or disease, are missing in action, or are prisoners of war, the policy of the War Department is to retain in or return to the United States a *sole* remaining son who is engaged in hazardous duty. Each case not covered by this policy, in which extreme hardship has resulted or may result to the family concerned, will be considered individually and on its merits.

All requests based on this War Department policy should be forwarded directly to the Adjutant General for appropriate action and accompanied by all available pertinent information, including identification data, total number of sons in family, and current status of each.

4 May 45

7 Aug 43

**19. ACCURACY, SYMPATHY, THOROUGHNESS CHARACTERIZE CASUALTY REPORTS.--**  
The Army's Casualty Branch, by a sympathetic and thorough handling of war casualty records helps comfort the wounded soldier and his folks back home.

Casualties are first reported from the field by company commanders and by Graves Registration Units to sector headquarters. As far as the military situation permits, these records are carefully checked. When verified, the records are sent to the War Department in Washington where they are relayed by messenger to the Casualty Branch.

Here the information is transcribed on special forms and routed to different departments for cross-verification. If everything is in order, a telegram signed by General Ullo, The Adjutant General, is sent to the emergency addressee and to the next-of-kin (if they are not the same person). A personal letter follows the telegram. If the soldier has been killed in action, all available facts about the death not dangerous to military security are given in the letter. Also enclosed is information concerning insurance, pensions, gratuities, and pay arrears.

If the soldier has been wounded, the letter contains a form on which the recipient can send a five-word message to the wounded man. In addition, if military conditions permit, a progress report of the soldier's condition is mailed every 15 days.

Provision has been made by the Casualty Branch to take care of special problems: a. A department of "detectives" traces down any errors that can't be handled through regular channels. b. Another department checks undelivered mail to stop return of this mail before the soldier's death is actually reported. c. A third division traces relatives and friends who can't be reached by ordinary means.

Final responsibility of the Casualty Branch is the forwarding of ten copies of the death report to the proper agencies for action: a. One goes to the QMC whose Graves Registration Service arranges for the burial, erection of the grave marker, and the recording of the location of the grave. b. Another goes to the Army Effects Bureau of the QMC whose function is to gather and return the personal effects of the soldier to his people. c. The remaining eight forms are sent to the following: (1) The Army Finance Officer, for six months pay gratuity to the soldier's beneficiary.

- (2) The Army Chief of Finance, to start action on settlement of the soldier's final account.
- (3) The Veterans Administration, for settlement of insurance.
- (4) The Army's General Accounting Office, for use when a final settlement of pay is made.
- (5) The Surgeon General's Office, for statistical purposes.
- (6) The Social Security Board, for liquidation of the soldier's account there if he has one.
- (7) The Federal Bureau of Investigation, for closing of his fingerprint record.
- (8) A record copy for the Casualty Branch itself.

The handling of records is almost fool-proof. When the rare error is discovered, every person and agency is immediately informed.

(Condensed from an AP feature article)



8. BURIAL OF RUSSIAN DEAD.--No attempt is made to directly identify Russian dead. The bodies, in their frozen, grotesque expressions, are stripped down to their underclothes, and buried in long, shallow trenches or in shell craters. The pockets of garments are emptied of personal effects. Indirectly, this is the only means of identification. Personal effects are turned over to an intelligence activity, which goes through them. This is done with more care and exactness with enemy dead than with Russian dead. Sometimes the sites of the mass burials were marked as such, but with no identification of the dead.

Inquiries into methods of notifying the next-of-kin evoked vague and evasive replies. The impression was created that the nearest relative becomes aware of the death of a Red Army man in either of two ways:

a. When a man's personal effects appear among those taken from dead soldiers who have been buried, it is assumed that he is dead and the next-of-kin is notified.

b. When a man's relatives fail to hear from him for an indefinite period, it must be assumed that he is either dead, captured or missing. (*Intelligence Report from Assistant U.S. Naval Attache, Kuibyshev, USSR, 27 Jan 43, Index Guide 602-2100*)

9. GRAVES REGISTRATION IN THE JUNGLE--Interesting details of how a graves registration unit operates in New Guinea are told in a recent news report by George Weller, war correspondent:

"...The war has passed this point six months ago. These men [of the GRS] have rifles outside their tents and take them with them whenever they leave their small, isolated camp. But the rifles are never used. Even the last Jap stragglers perished long ago in this jungle...

"The oil lamp is already lit in one of their two tents and they are at home here. In the background stand their two broken-down jeeps, with spades and brush-cutting tools still sticking out. Someone lights a cigarette over the hissing, bright gasoline lamp and these young men unhurriedly gather around the table. Twenty-four-year-old Sergeant Walter G. McGrane... slowly unrolls a map. It's a map of battle. Yet no thud of mortar or keening message of shell can be heard. For this is a map of a battle now ended. And these quiet young men are those who care for our dead.

"When the War Department informs his parents that an infantryman is missing, that does not mean that hope of finding him has been lost. That means that he is still being searched for. The first hope of the searchers is to find him alive. But when weeks pass and the man still has not been found, new parties set forth after him. And the Army's determination to find his body, if he is dead, is no less than its first effort to find him alive. That is the work of these quiet young men. The writer has been living near them. He has been bathing with them and witnessing their work. It is impossible to know them without being impressed with the extraordinary conscience and resolution that these little-appreciated soldiers bring to duties which few would like to undertake.

"After such fighting as that which has occurred in Northern Papua, the jungle is one great conglomeration of marked and unmarked graves. Most are marked. Individual graves are near where the fighting was. Clumps of twos and threes are found near aid stations or machine gun posts. Then, farther back, are small graveyards--often near portable hospitals--where lie those men who survived the battle against the enemy, but nevertheless yielded their lives, eventually, to their wounds.

"All around stands the mammoth Kunai grass, 6 to 10 feet high, and behind that jungle and more jungle. The tiny temporary crosses are dwarfed and hidden in the long green spines. Where are the bodies? Only the maps of battle can tell that...

"The jungle is not like the desert where every fallen soldier can be seen. Here, it is almost as important to mark the bodies of the killed as it is the wounded. But the battle line in the jungle is not a line at all. It is actually composed of many branched stems like coral placed beside each other, with patrols constantly coming forth from each notch, and brook and turning. It is impossible for these young men to follow every party since many patrols take place simultaneously. When patrols are ambushed, they sometimes cannot return for hours to claim the bodies. Often they get lost trying to find the way back to their starting place. That is what sometimes lies behind the word 'missing' so far as an infantryman is concerned.

"When men fall, fighting in the jungle, a graves' registration soldier attempts to creep forward, often under fire. He tries to reach the body and get one of the two 'dog tags' around the neck. Using a short-handled shovel, he labors to get his comrade under ground in a shallow temporary grave, which means protection against the Jap looters, roving the glades by night. Just as medical aidemen frequently lose their lives, crawling into fire in order to help the wounded, so the graves' registration man must often choose between exposing himself and protecting his fallen comrade's body from desecration.

"Many staff sergeants like McGrane, who works under tall Lieutenant Roy F. Salzbacher, of San Francisco, and square-set, energetic Lieutenant James McConaughy, of Seattle, have known what it is to try to dig a grave beside a body while trying to lie in the shelter of the body itself, with bullets stinging the air all around and the effort of digging while prone almost impossible. Yet, they have managed to do their job."

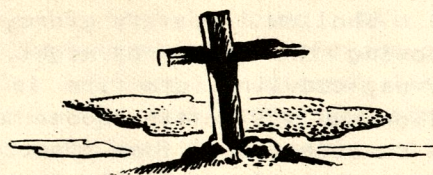
(Condensed from Richmond, Va., News Leader, 16 Jul 43)



# How Graves Registration works in Action

30 June 44

ED. NOTE: During the battles of Tunisia and Sicily, a chaplain served as Graves Registration Officer for the 9th Infantry Division. For his efficient handling of Allied and enemy dead, he has been awarded a Legion of Merit, and his methods have been incorporated into the Division's SOP. The following article, which gives a system of carrying out graves registration activities on the battlefield, is based on information obtained from the chaplain.



THE GRS PLATOON should be attached to a Division at least two weeks in advance of anticipated action in order that proper instructions, coordination, and arrangements for equipment can be made. The units are usually attached too late, a couple of days before or even a few days after the beginning of action. G-3 must keep on informing the Division GRO of the relative location of a new action or difficult fighting so that preparations can be made to handle the situation.

Some system of communication must be available direct to the GRO of the Division for reports and checkups to higher headquarters and from the field of combat. Lack

of direct communication causes much delay and possible loss of location of bodies.

## ONE CENTRAL CEMETERY

One cemetery per Corps or similar unit established previous to operations seems more advisable than one per Division. Evacuation of all bodies to such a central location would avoid unnecessary reburials and possibility of lost identification. Establish cemeteries near Prisoner of War inclosures in order that sufficient labor may be available. There are no service troops available for digging graves. Civilian labor is often difficult to obtain or is unreliable. The GRO Platoon is not large enough for either supplying guards or digging-labor.

Collecting points for bodies should be located four to six miles behind the front of each regimental combat unit. The unit officer in charge is responsible for evacuation of dead to this point, which should be at some convenient spot. Sufficient transportation should be available to units for evacuation of dead.

## ISOLATED BURIALS

All personnel should be instructed to make an immediate report to the Division GRO of any isolated grave discovered (American, Allied, or Enemy). Coordinates of location and any other known information should be submitted. No isolated burials--American or Allied--should be made on the battlefield unless evacuation is impossible or morale demands it. Bodies should not be exposed for more than 43 hours, or more than 25 hours in exceedingly hot weather. If battlefield burial becomes necessary, the

immediate officer or non-commissioned officer shall:

1. See that the Emergency Medical Tag (Form 52b) is on the body, and if not, to arrange for same. Before burial, remove and forward this tag to the Division GRO or Surgeon.

2. Locate graves near a trail or roadway so they can easily be identified.

3. Dig grave at least three feet deep.

## WRAP THE BODY

4. Wrap the body in blanket or shelter half. (Mattress covers were used in Italy.)

5. Remove one identification tag. Leave one on body. In the event that no tags are found on body, make a written record of identification, location, and inclose this paper in a sealed case. (Two .50 caliber shells sealed with tape in the center can be used.) Bury the case at the head of the body, six inches below the ground. Forward a copy of the information to the Division GRO.

6. Place a ring of stones or other material around the outline of the grave. Erect a marker at the head, and fasten to it the identification tag previously removed.

## MAKE A SKETCH

7. Make a sketch of the grave's location, giving coordinates and map number and indicating the outstanding landmarks. Forward this to Division GRO.

8. Remove and inventory all personal possessions on body and wrap securely in a handkerchief or other available item, making certain that one bundle contains effects of one man only. Forward this bundle as soon as possible to Division GRO.

9. Remove any military equipment such as compass, pistol, cartridge belt, etc. and forward to unit supply officer.

## FORWARD RECORD

10. Forward record on deceased to Division GRO with the following information: Name, rank, ASN, unit, beneficiary, location of grave, date of KIA, place of KIA, type of wound, time and date of burial, and



color. Accuracy is of paramount importance. Sign the record submitted.

11. These same instructions apply to enemy dead except the grave marker is marked ED. Also, you break the enemy identification tag at the perforation and bury one-half with the body, the other half with personal possessions which are forwarded to Division GRO for disposition. Prior to burial, copy the information, which is on the tag, onto the marker in pencil, or on a piece of paper which is buried in a sealed container at the head of the grave, six inches under the ground.

## EVACUATION

In all cases except dire emergency, bodies will be evacuated to GRS collecting points or cemetery. In the case of American or Allied dead:



30 June 44

1. Leave all identification tags on body.
2. Leave Emergency Medical Tag on body.
3. Leave all personal possessions including money, on body.
4. Leave all Government equipment on body unless it is needed for immediate use in battle.
5. Transport bodies to collecting point in any available transportation.
6. To collecting point, send necessary information as to unit, rank, place and time of death, or if unknown, any information that may help in identification. Immediate information may make all the difference between known and unknown soldiers.

## DISPOSITION

The disposition of possessions not found on body proceeds according to War Department Memo W600-61-43, paragraph 3a, b, c, d, and e, except that U.S. Treasury checks for moneys of the deceased will be obtained from the local finance officer through Division GRO, and not as listed in paragraph 3c.

The check will be forwarded by Division GRO direct via air mail to Effects Quartermaster. Receipt and necessary information will be supplied unit for correct marking

of Form 54. Be certain entry is not made on Form 54 until receipt has been obtained from Division GRO.

## MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Prior to entering combat zone, each organization commander will personally check to verify that each man of his command is wearing identification tags and that leggings are marked for identification. Periodic inspection will be made at unannounced times. Hand sets for making tags in Battalions should be furnished.

During lulls in battle, search will be made for any possible dead. The lives of soldiers will not be endangered by entering known mine-fields to remove dead, until engineers have made it relatively safe.

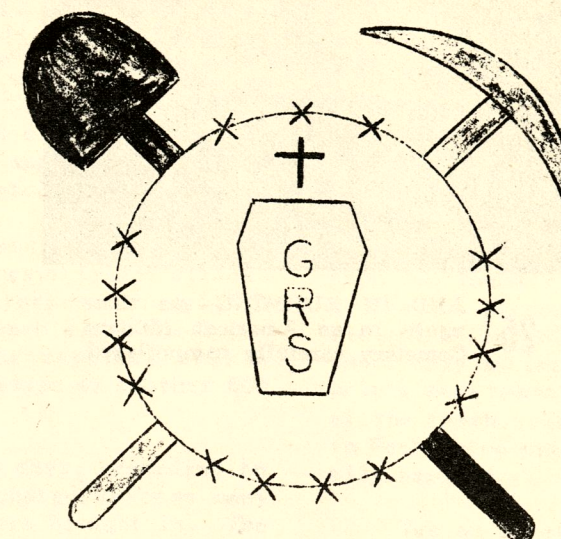
No soldier will be reported KIA unless there is absolute certainty. In all other cases, a soldier is MIA. There is no such thing as guessing. Report to Division GRO all temporary burials and all unburied bodies. Civilian dead are not the responsibility of combat troops, but should be reported to proper local authorities.

Each unit down to and including a company will have an officer (executive officer) designated as GR officer, who shall be responsible for supervision of temporary burial of dead or evacuation of GRS collection point. These officers shall be directly responsible to the Division GRO.

## GRAVES REGISTRATION

36. DECEASED PERSONNEL, SHIPMENT OF REMAINS.--Remains may be returned to the continental U.S. from points on the North American continent by commercial carrier other than air or ocean or coastwise vessels, provided that sanitary and shipping requirements of the several countries are observed and provided that such transportation is available therefor and is not required for movement of troops or supplies. Shipment of remains from other foreign stations will not be permitted. No commercial transportation is available at present from Alaska to the U.S. proper. (AG Memo. W55-16-43)

22 May 43



## GRAVES REGISTRATION

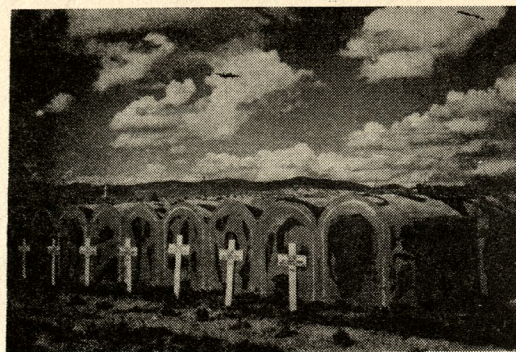
47. ESPRIT DE CORPSE! - "GRS contributes, to no small degree, toward the morale of troops....Theirs is a sacred task which ranks in importance with that of the Chaplain's Corps in morale matters, and is an exacting task which compares with the AGD in administrative matters." This quotation from PE No. 1 of the special officers' course in GRS indicates the spirit with which the course is being taught. Indicative of the high morale of the 15 officers in the first class (which ends this week) is the proposed insignia above for GRS, "conceived and executed by 'The First Fifteen'", as the class members call themselves. Explanation of the significance of the insignia is as follows: the 15 "X's" are for the "First Fifteen"; GRS is superimposed on a black coffin and above which is a christian cross; the spade and pick are used for obvious reasons: the officers say the harder they dig, the better they like the course. Their motto is "There Shall Be No Nameless Grave".

11 Jan 43

43. DISPOSITION OF EFFECTS.--To clarify the steps to be taken in disposing of the property of personnel, including civilians under military law, who are "missing" or "missing in action" outside the continental United States, the War Department has ordered the immediate commanding officer to secure the effects of any person declared missing and to make an inventory in triplicate of them. The property will be packed, the original of the inventory being enclosed, and will be sent to the Effects Quartermaster, Kansas City Quartermaster Depot, Kansas City, Mo. The duplicate of the inventory will be sent to the Effects Quartermaster. The triplicate will be retained by the commander. (Army and Navy Journal, Feb. 20/43)

6 Mar 43





25

AND IN KUNMING are these vaults in an American Military Cemetery carefully camouflaged.

### GR Men Tend Saipan Cemetery

MEMBERS OF the 604TH QM GRAVES REGISTRATION Co. have served in almost every major Pacific campaign, reports the CO, 1ST LT. JOHN C. GREIDER. Two platoons of the company are now caring for two cemeteries on Saipan—one for casualties of the 27TH DIVISION and the island garrison, and the other for the 4TH MARINE DIVISION. Elements of the company have participated in landings in the Gilberts, Marshalls, Marianas, at Iwo Jima, and Okinawa.

They hit Blue Beach at Saipan on D-plus-1, when the fighting was still fierce 50 yards inland at Charan Kanoa. The Japs counter-attacked that night, and pushed the Yanks back to the beach, but the lost ground was retaken by morning.

The company kept its percentage of unknowns down by carefully recording peculiar physical characteristics of unidentified casualties. In one case, an unknown soldier was found to have "Good Luck" tattooed on his hands. After the fighting was over, several Infantrymen called at the GRS office and positively identified their buddy as the man with the tattooed hands, Lt. Greider reports.

The 604th also handles GR records for an entire Western Pacific area.

### Filipinos Report "Death March" Graves

HIDDEN GRAVES of American soldiers who died at the roadside during the "death march" on Bataan three years ago are being reported to GRS personnel by Filipino natives, according to Robert St. John, National Broadcasting Company news commentator.

The Japanese abandoned the dead and dying during the march, he reports, but patriotic Filipinos recovered many of the bodies at night and gave them a decent (and secret) burial. GRS men, guided by the natives, are now recovering the bodies and sending them to Manila for re-burial with full military honors in a cemetery there.

QM's in the Philippines are also scouring the jungles for the bodies of men killed during isolated patrol actions.

The military cemetery in Manila is "one of the finest in the world," St. John reports.

13 July 45



## Crosses in Normandy

ED. NOTE: This story is based on an article which appeared in the "London Sunday Dispatch," 2 Jul 44.

A CEMETERY was established by the Americans behind the lines of troops attacking Cherbourg. The cemetery contained 1,800 Americans and 1,000 Germans with a few British, chiefly RAF. The cemetery will be completed with the addition of another 600 Americans.

For the first ten days, according to the master sergeant in charge, twice as many Americans as Germans were brought in. The situation was so much reversed at the end of that period that the Americans had to start a separate German cemetery some distance away. It was found impossible to dig the graves fast enough to keep up with German casualties. The men had done a good job on the neat rows of graves in a large field.

In two large tents at the end of the

cemetery, identification of bodies collected from all over the battle area was carried out. A great deal of trouble was taken to identify the bodies. Only 20 men could not be readily identified from tags or papers. When two laundry marks are found, each on a different garment, it was considered sufficient to establish identity. In one case where only one laundry mark was found, finger prints were taken and a dentist's chart made of the teeth. These records will be sent to Washington and identification is practically assured.

Two or three padres of the Anglican, Catholic, and Jewish faiths come into the cemetery at 5:30 P. M. and hold their services. The Jewish padres go with the others to hold their service over German graves. Hundreds of American graves had fresh flowers on them. "It is the women of the village," the sergeant said, "they bring them along every evening. Starting with just a few, now they seem to come from all over the neighborhood."

25 Aug 44

### GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE

17 July 43

#### 19. QUESTIONS-ANSWERS ON GRS IN NORTH AFRICA.--

Q. Is the division QM still responsible for burial and salvage when Army does not provide for them?

A. Divisions appoint GRS officers, but they are not necessarily QM officers. The graves registration officer calls on the division QM for service troops to bury the dead, or hires local labor in this theater (NATOUSA). In the Tunisian operations graves registration platoons were assigned to divisions.

Q. What division officer is responsible for the selection of the division cemetery?

A. Graves registration officer. Normally, the attachment of graves registration platoons, with its trained personnel, materially assists in reaching this decision.

Q. What considerations are paramount in the selection of the cemetery?

A. Possible use as a permanent cemetery; reduction of hauling from front to rear; availability to all sections of the area served; and hidden from view of troops going into, or later to go into, combat.



## GRAVES REGISTRATION

15 May 43

10. WHAT IS THE ARMY EFFECTS BUREAU?--It is a branch of the Kansas City, Mo., QM Depot and is in immediate charge of the Effects Quartermaster. In a lecture at the QM School, Lt. Col. John R. Murphy, of the Effects Bureau, revealed the basic information on the operation of this bureau and its importance to every member of the Army. Among these facts are:

- a. *There is but one Army Effects Bureau.*--Reason for this is that all communications and transactions having to do with disposition of effects are centralized at one place and under one administrative head. Lt. Col. Murphy stresses this point by saying that "all you have to do is to ship the property to Kansas City...Do not ship to anybody except the Effects Bureau..."

Centralization of this function eliminates the possibility of correspondence from bereaved relatives being indorsed from one bureau to another and delaying final action on disposition of the effects of deceased or missing personnel.

- b. *Why was Kansas City chosen as a location?*--During the first World War there was one effects bureau located at Hoboken, N.J. Its location was controlled by the fact that ports of embarkation were on the East coast. In this global war, embarkation points are found all along the coastal perimeter of the nation. A look at the map will indicate that Kansas City is both centrally located and an important rail junction.

- c. *What are the sources of effects handled by the Bureau?*--The five sources are:

- (1) Effects of deceased officers, enlisted men, and civilian personnel serving beyond the continental limits of the U.S.

- (2) Effects of officers, enlisted men, and civilian personnel serving beyond the continental limits of the U.S. who have been determined as "missing" or "missing in action."

- (3) Lost baggage received from overseas forces.

- (4) Personal property, other than household effects, left at camps and stations by military personnel upon departure for overseas.

- (5) Property, government or personal, left on railroad trains or other common carriers in transit within the continental U.S.

- d. *Importance of the functions of the Bureau.*--Lt. Col. Murphy puts it in these words, "To us come thousands of letters from bereaved

## GRAVES REGISTRATION (continued)

15 May 43

wives, mothers, fathers, and children of our men who have died in this war...

"Upon the Army Effects Bureau and upon the QM Corps is cast the obligation of answering these letters...of giving hope that something will reach home, and of sending home what few worldly possessions the soldier had with him when he met his death..."

"Unless the soldier in the field, unless the transportation officer, unless the port authority, all know our objective and problems and cooperate fully, we at the Army Effects Bureau can do little to comply with the requests contained in these letters..."

- e. *Standing operating procedure (SOP) for disposition of effects.*--Basic regulation for disposition of effects of personnel is the 112th Article of War and AR 600-550. It is the responsibility of the commanding officer of the place or unit to assure collection, inventory, and shipment of all effects, other than government issue, to the Effects Bureau. Lt. Col. Murphy emphasizes, "Do not ship GI property."

The graves registration officer and/or the chaplain collect effects found on the body of the soldier. These are placed in the *effects bag*, furnished for that purpose, and with all other effects found will be turned over to the transportation officer for shipment to the U.S. The port transportation officer, at the port of embarkation, will ship on a government bill of lading these effects to the Effects Bureau.

All cash found by the graves registration officer, or other officers, will be turned in to the finance officer and converted into a check. This check will be forwarded by direct mail to the Effects Bureau. (Lt. Col. Murphy states, "If the situation does not permit doing this, then ship the money direct with the balance of the effects...")

If a summary court officer is appointed, he performs the same functions as the graves registration officer, except that he may collect or pay *undisputed* local debts to the extent of cash available, but he cannot under any circumstances sell any property to raise cash in order to pay local debts. A report of these actions is mailed to The Adjutant General and the Effects Bureau.

Figure 1, page 9, gives a diagrammatic picture of the SOP for disposing of effects of military and civilian personnel who die or are killed overseas. Figure 2, page 10, gives the SOP for those "missing in action", or "missing".



EFFECTS OF DECEASED OFFICERS, ENLISTED MEN AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL SERVING BEYOND THE CONTINENTAL LIMITS OF THE UNITED STATES

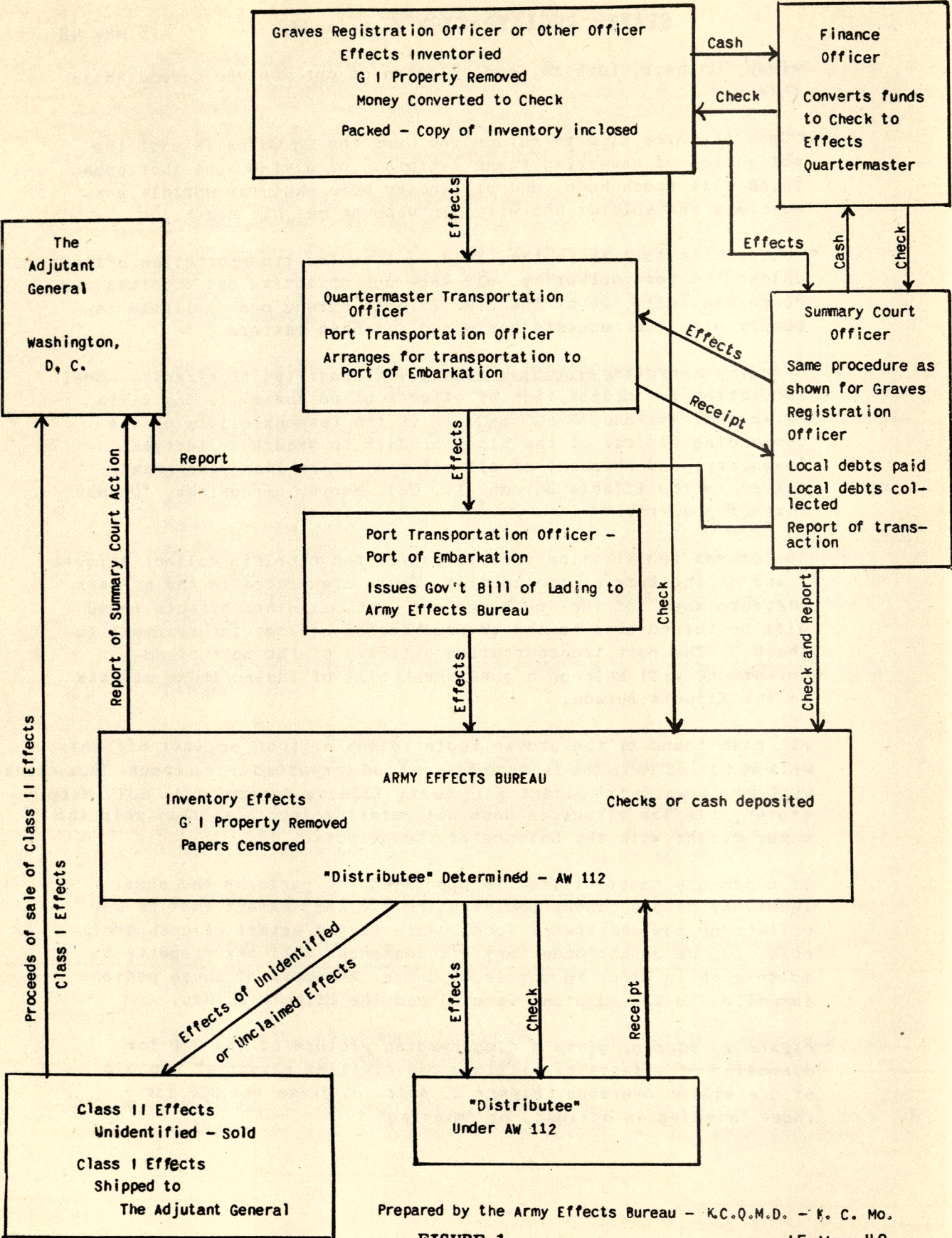
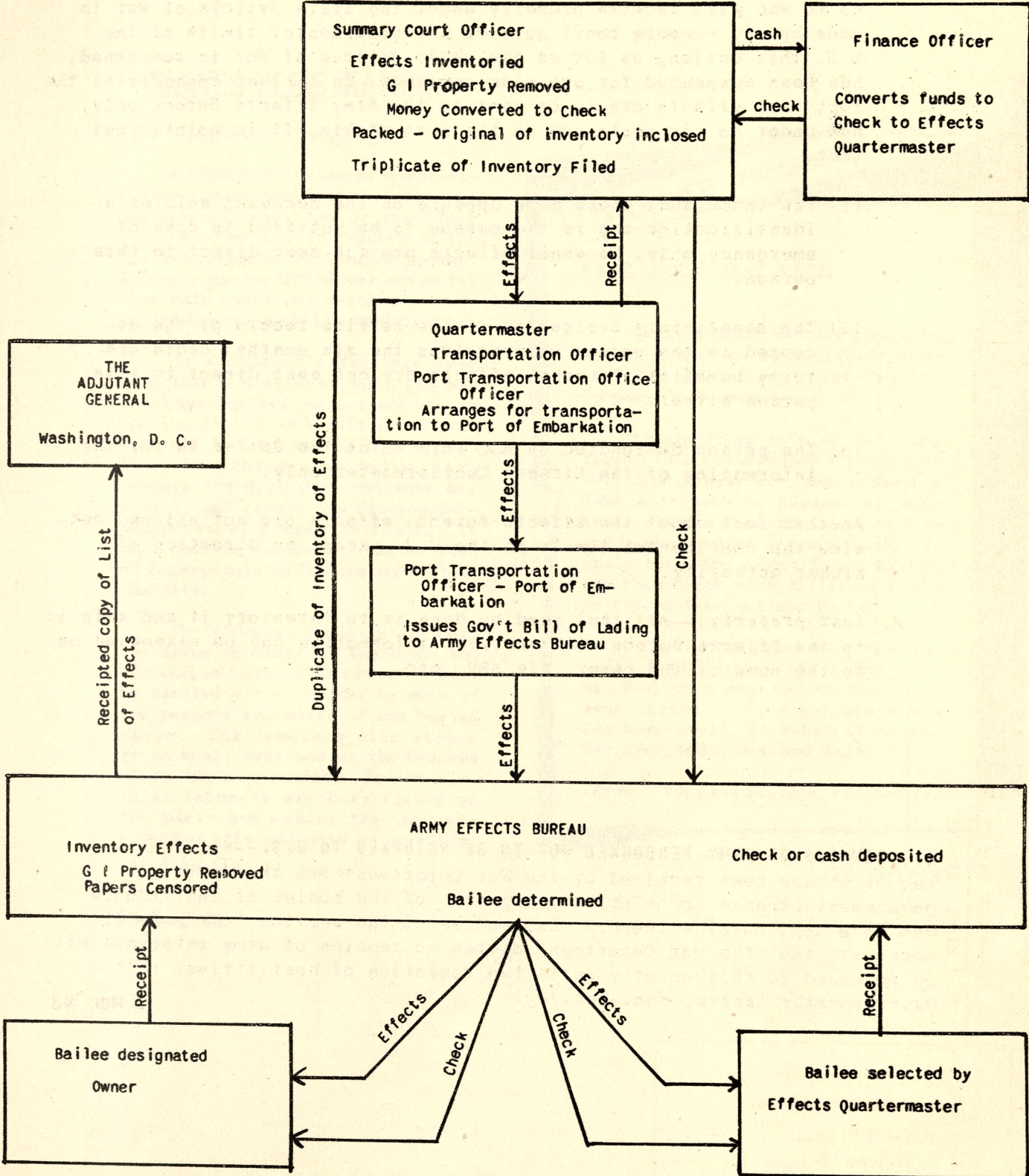


FIGURE 1  
Prepared by the Army Effects Bureau - K.C.Q.M.D. - K. C. Mo.  
15 May 43

EFFECTS OF OFFICERS, ENLISTED MEN AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL SERVING BEYOND THE CONTINENTAL LIMITS OF THE UNITED STATES WHO HAVE BEEN DETERMINED AS BEING "MISSING" OR "MISSING IN ACTION"



Prepared by Army Effects Bureau - KCQMD - K. C. Mo.

FIGURE 2



15 May 43

f. *Miscellaneous facts about disposition of effects.*--No determination as to who will receive property under the 112th Article of War is made by any summary court outside the continental limits of the U.S. This action, as far as the 112th Article of War is concerned, has been suspended for overseas commands. In further emphasizing the fact that effects are to be sent to the Army Effects Bureau only, and under no circumstances to the next of kin, it is pointed out that:

- (1) The individual whose name appears on the deceased soldier's identification tag is the person to be notified in case of emergency only. Personal effects are *not* sent direct to this person.
- (2) The beneficiary designated in the service record of the deceased is the person who receives the six months' death gratuity benefits. Personal effects are *not* sent direct to this person either.
- (3) The person designated on AGO Form 43 as the *bailee* is for the information of the Effects Quartermaster only.

Another fact about the Effects Bureau: effects are not shipped outside the continental limits of the U.S. except on direction of higher authority.

g. *Lost property.*--All that need be done is to inventory it and ship it to the Effects Bureau with whatever information can be assembled as to the name of the owner, his ASN, etc.

42. REMAINS OF ARMY PERSONNEL NOT TO BE RETURNED TO U.S.--Numerous requests have been received by the War Department for the return, at government expense or at private expense, of the bodies of individuals who have died outside the U.S. Exigencies of the service have made it necessary that the War Department decree no remains of army personnel will be returned to this country until the cessation of hostilities. (*The Quartermaster Review*, Jan.-Feb. 43)

6 Mar 43

## GRAVES REGISTRATION

### FEW UNKNOWN SOLDIERS

A COMPLETE system of identification checks has kept the number of unknown soldiers low at the first American cemetery in France, at the little village of St. Laurent Sur Mer. A Quartermaster GRS officer estimates that only about one percent of those killed in action will be unidentified.

If a soldier's dog tags have been lost or destroyed, burial squads check fingerprints, make tooth charts showing dental work, sift all papers, list all laundry marks in clothing. When everything else fails, they measure the dead man, estimate his weight, and record any distinguishing physical characteristics. In most doubtful cases, the master file of fingerprints in Washington settles identity.

The QM Graves Registration Unit has drawn up plans to landscape the approaches to the cemetery which will be visited after the war by many of the parents and wives of men buried there. The cemetery lies atop a green knoll overlooking the beaches where the men landed. French civilian laborers are busy fixing up the plots and making the cemetery appear as trim and neat as possible.

(AP dispatch, 21 Jul 44)

18 Aug 44

## GRAVES REGISTRATION

### WEAR YOUR DOG TAGS

THIS MESSAGE was sent back to troops in England by a sergeant serving with a QM Graves Registration Company in Normandy:

"Remind them to wear their dog tags. This paratrooper I'm burying here didn't wear his, and he doesn't have a paybook or license or anything else to identify him. So I've got to fingerprint him and check his whole body for identifying marks, and then check with different units to try to find out who he is.

"Tell the guys it's for the folks back home. After the last war they came over to look for their sons' graves. If a guy wears his dog tags--well, it makes it easier for everybody, now and later."

(From "Stars and Stripes," 22 Jun 44)

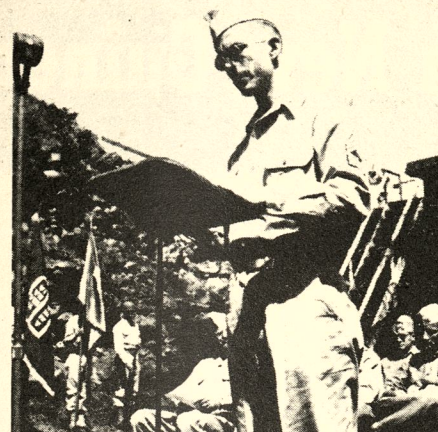
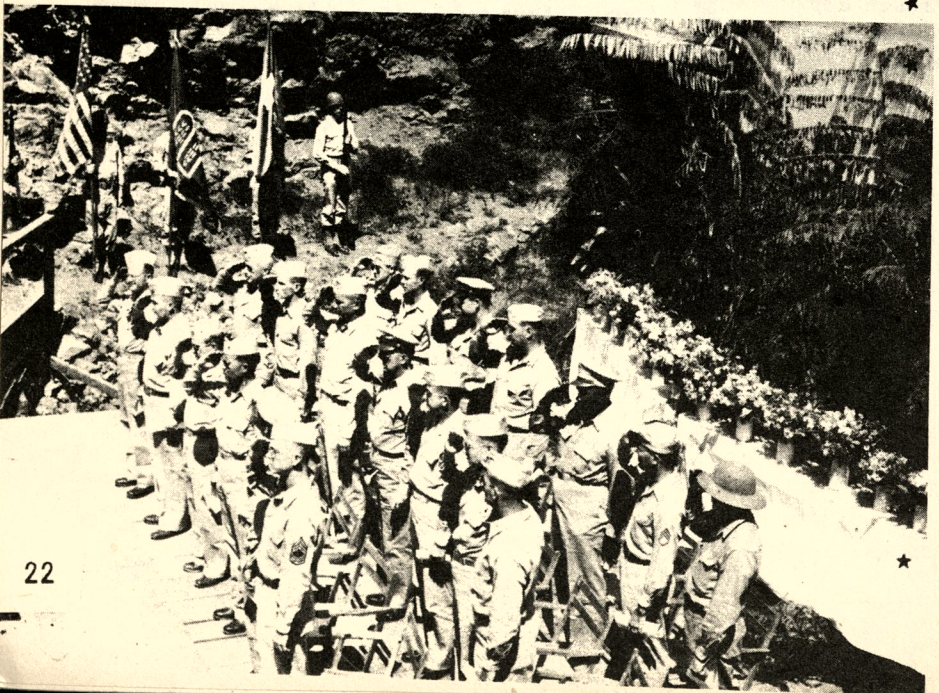
28 July 44





**FIRING SQUAD** of the 42nd QM Bn. presents arms after the services.

**SPEAKERS AND OFFICERS** on the platform of the Frederick C. Wright Amphitheater at the services. Color Guard is seen in the rear.



# Memorial Services held in New Caledonia for 14 Quartermaster Heroes

9 Mar 45

*The 14 Men of the  
523rd Group who have died  
in their country's service*

3344TH QM TRUCK CO.

Cpl. Russell McDowell  
Cpl. Clarence H. Houghton

3346TH QM TRUCK CO.

**Sgt. Virgil M. Scott**

3347TH QM TRUCK CO.

Pvt. Eric H. Swanson

3348TH QM TRUCK CO.

Pfc. Ralph J. Weddle  
Pvt. Frederick C. Wright

4077TH QM SERVICE CO.

Pfc. Thomas Coleman  
Pfc. Booket Fleming  
Pfc. Hilliard Harris  
Pvt. David J. Howze  
Pfc. Parker Pugh  
Pvt. Charlie L. Turner  
Pvt. Sidney Williams

790TH RAILWAY OPERATING CO  
Pvt. Edward J. Waters

**THE DAY DAWNED** hot and dusty in New Caledonia on 1 November 1943. It was a typical dry-season day. The newly cemented dock at Finger Pier in Noumea rang with the sound of men at work. Vehicles moved back and forth from the huge piles of shells and ammunition. It seemed to be a morning like any other.

Suddenly, at about 1300 o'clock a roar resounded over the pier, followed by another of greater intensity. A wave of flames swept toward the ships at their berths. The air was filled with smoke and debris and pieces of falling shrapnel, cement, and human flesh.

The toll of casualties among soldiers, sailors, and marines was high. Only prompt action on the part of men and officers of the Army and Navy made it possible to save as many lives as they did.

**Memorial Service.** One year later, on the anniversary of the tragedy, soldiers of a Quartermaster unit gathered together at a memorial service in honor of five truck-drivers who died at their posts that day. The ceremony was held at the Frederick G. Wright Theater—named in honor of the first man of the 42nd QM Bn. to die. Honored at the services also were those other men of the 523rd QM Group who have died, those lost on board a ship that struck

a mine field, and those who were killed while on duty with their trucks.

Those officers and enlisted men not on required military duty filed into the amphitheater, joined by those of other organizations who had come to participate in the services.

**Prayer Offered.** The ceremony opened with the call "To The Colors", and the lowering of the flag to half-mast. CHAPLAIN MORRIS B. CHAPMAN of the Island Command offered a prayer.

The Sergeant Major of the 42nd Battalion, M/SGT. MADISON BRATTON, paid tribute to the dead. He said in part, "All of these men died at their posts of duty in direct support of operational activity against the enemy. It is sincerely hoped that their friends, families, and loved ones at home can receive some measure of comfort in the knowledge that these soldiers died in a just and righteous cause and that their deaths contributed in definite measure to the final defeat of the enemies of our country."

**Taps Sounded.** His tribute was followed by an address from the Commander of the 523rd QM Group, COL. (then Lt. Col.) JULIUS KLEIN. After a brief speech in which he praised the courage of his men, he read excerpts from letters written by the families of the men who had died in the disaster.

The adjutant of the Group, CWO DON M. HAMMONS, then read the order announcing the presentation of the Bronze Star (Posthumous) for each of the five dead truck-drivers. The citation read, "For heroic service in an effort to save valuable government equipment, so vital to the furtherance of the war effort, during a disastrous explosion at a South Pacific base on 1 November 1943. Facing certain death, he nevertheless remained at his post surrounded by exploding ammunition and continued to perform his duties, thereby upholding the highest traditions of the United States Army. His bravery, which cost him his life, played an important role in the final control of the blazing inferno."

After the memorial address and benediction, a firing party gave a military salute for the dead. "Taps" was sounded and the flag was returned to full mast at 1430 o'clock.

The program was followed by services at the American cemetery. A party consisting of the commanding officer and one non-commissioned officer from each company which had lost a man gathered together at 1500 o'clock. When the command Present Arms was given, each of the 14 soldiers placed a wreath at the base of his comrade's cross.



# Safari in New Guinea

## GRS QM's Recover Fliers' Bodies

29 June 45

**T**HE 48TH QM GRS CO. was activated 19 January 1943 and was composed of the GR personnel then on duty in all Advanced Sub Bases, 41st and 32nd Divisions, and the 6th Army. It participated in the campaigns at Buna, Gona, Milne Bay, Finschhafen, and many other places. Its main functions were, of course, the consolidation of all battlefield burials and the establishment and upkeep of cemeteries, but it also made numerous expeditions into both the midlands of New Guinea and the surrounding islands, to recover the remains of airmen and soldiers lost in observational and operational flights. One of these expeditions—to bring back the bodies of 21 Air Corps personnel crashed in the Kunimaipa Valley—is the subject of this report.

Making this trip were LT. ALGER G. JOHNSON, the 48th's CO; Sgt. Colson; T/4 BENJAMIN H. JOHNS; PFC. CLIFFORD A. BAUR; PFC. COMER PERDUE; and LT. MELVIN M. MAURY, 22nd QM Bn., Amph. (Trk), who accompanied the party as observer. At Yule Island, this group was joined by the Angau Kunimaipa (Government Police) Patrol, which consisted of two officers, CAPT. O'MALLEY and W. O. JACKA; a medical officer, THEODORE BURCHETT; and native police boys.

The following passages are from Sgt. Colson's diary:

### January 4 (1944) Tuesday

Left Port Moresby for Yule Island by Catalina Flying Boat. When we landed at Yule Island, we were met by four lakatois (native boats made of hardwood trees) full of native girls dressed in their best grass skirts. We are staying at the District Officer's house. . .

### January 10 Monday

Left for Paipa. We walked seven miles in mud today. Most of our carriers are na-

tive women of all sizes, shapes and forms. They carry 50 pounds of rice on their heads. Most have tattoos all over their bodies and jabber like all women. . . When a native has a pain he will slash himself where the pain is; this is supposed to relieve him. . .

### January 13 Thursday

Our march was 15 miles today, and the trail was mud above our ankles. Maipa is on the Akifu river which gave us the chance to take a bath and clean up a little. Of course, it always helps to have all of the village turn out to watch you getting clean. . . We may run out of rations if trouble starts and it is starting now. Our women carriers refuse to go farther because of the mountain people. The rice mill carriers refuse to go along too. It seems these mountain people are a wild bunch. Word was also sent down by natives that a certain tribe had machine guns set and waiting for us. . .

### January 15 Saturday

Left for Dea . . . walked six hours and went 10 miles. Before we crossed the Akifu river the mountain boys and the cook boys got into a battle royal. They used knives, axes, clubs, and rocks; finally the police boys straightened everything out. Two men were very badly beaten up. . . So far we have walked 56 miles and are usually wet all day long.

### January 17 Monday

Left for Uariza. The country is getting more rugged and harder going every day. . . Thirty carriers ran off today dumping their loads in the bush; this made a double load for the rest of the carriers. . . The women in this country wear very little; in fact, they wear only a G-string.

### January 18 Tuesday

We are still at Uariza. . . The natives here are very primitive. At night the women, children, and pigs are all locked up in a separate room as the mountain people raid each other's villages. . . When a woman has a baby here she goes out into the bush and has it; she will rest around an hour, clean the baby up and then continue on with her work. Also when a woman loses a child she will cut off her finger at the first joint. One woman came into camp today with eight of her fingers cut off.

### January 20 Thursday

Left for village of Gerebe. Today's walk took us 25 miles and up 4,360 feet. All of us had more than our share of slips and falls.

*ED. NOTE: Decent burial of the dead, an aim of the U. S. Army, is a responsibility of Quartermaster Corps Graves Registration Personnel. The story which follows tells how this aim was accomplished in one particular, and unusual, case. It describes a safari into New Guinea jungle (where, reportedly, no American had previously set foot) to recover the bodies of men killed in an airplane crash. It is told mainly through excerpts from the diary of SGT. LLOYD S. COLSON, one of the five QM's of the 1ST PLATOON, 48TH QM GRS Co., who were sent on the mission.*

### January 23 Sunday

Still at Gerebe. The natives chanted and yelled all last night. They sang to any village within hearing distance "The government is here, so be good." Capt. O'Malley (one of the patrol officers) told us that we were the first Americans up in this place and the fourteenth white party ever to come here.

### January 25 Tuesday

Left for Ivarapu. We marched 15 miles . . . up and down mountains all day. We are 5,000 feet up and plenty cold.

### January 26 Wednesday

We are still at Ivarapu and plenty glad for the rest. Jim (Pfc. Comer Perdue) came down with malaria and is a plenty sick boy. . . The native women are bringing us in some food; their payment is a spoonful of salt, or if it is a big load they get two spoons of salt. In some of the villages the Captain gives them red and yellow paint to put on their faces. . . Golapui (a native chieftain) just brought us two pigs. They are tied on a pole and covered with leaves and ferns; according to the natives this keeps the sun light off and thus the pig doesn't lose all his fat.

### February 2 Wednesday

We left for Guarilalava. We had to cross the Kunimaipa river which was so high and rough you couldn't wade across it. The natives made us a bridge and it is something I wouldn't believe unless I had seen it. They got long bamboo poles and lashed them to-

gether with vines and bark, building a suspension bridge about 60 feet long and 10 feet wide. A big rock on each side of the river was used to anchor the bamboo base.

### February 3 Thursday

We left Guarilalava for the plane. We are about 9,000 feet high and sure cold. Our camp is just a hole cut out of the jungle.

### February 4 Friday

We have been gone a month today and it has been quite a month. We are still at the plane. This place is called Evasika. We have gotten all 10 of the bodies and will leave tomorrow for Guarilalava. Our clothes and bodies smell like hell and the natives won't get near us, that is, the McKees. The mountain natives cut the plane up for us and helped us get the bodies out. They will also carry the bodies for a stick of tobacco. . .

### February 6 Sunday

We are still at Guarilalava. A woman came in with food for us today and she had her dead husband's two feet and two hands around her neck. A widow always wears some part of her husband around her neck. After a certain length of time she discards most of the bones but will keep a finger or a toe around her neck in a woven bag.

### February 7 Monday

Still at Guarilalava. We were supposed to get some rations by bomber but it didn't show up.

### February 12 Saturday

We left for Medila. . . Here the natives cut the tails off of lizards, smoke them dry, paint them yellow and put them in their ears. Some of the women have so many in their ears that the lobe is almost split in half.

### February 14 Monday

Today we went to the second plane crash. . . The plane was blown apart and we found no bodies. The natives said the men had all floated down to the ground in big white things. (The crew, it was discovered later, had landed safely, made its way to an emergency air strip, and had been flown out the month before.)

### February 18 Friday

Still at Vizo. Today some more of the carriers said they were going back to their village and wanted to get paid, so now we have a handful of carriers left. It is a very ticklish business because if we would argue with them they are very likely to start a lot of trouble. . .

### February 19 Saturday

Left Vizo and walked 12 miles crossing the Owen Stanley range into New Guinea. The track isn't too bad and we were able to climb steadily all day. We are now 10,500 feet high and it is damn cold. All along the trail today you could look up in the trees and see red and yellow flowers growing on the limbs. It was sure a pretty sight to see. . . We have very little food left and some of that we had to leave at Vizo for lack of carriers.

### February 20 Sunday

We are still on the Owen Stanley range. This is a very different country than we have been walking through. You suddenly come out of the mountainous jungle into grassy country. The trees here are weird looking things and make the whole country look spooky. These trees are very watery and easily knocked over. If you cut into one, it will gush out like a fountain. The natives are afraid of this place as they say bush dogs run loose at night. I found this is called the Land of the Nigger Head.

### February 22 Tuesday

Still in the Land of the Nigger Head. Our food supply is almost gone now, and the rest of the cargo isn't here so we can't go on. A police boy brought in a message saying the Air Force tried to find the air strip at Garaina, so we will have to go back to Yule Island. Our little rations won't be enough. We have eaten all of ours and most of the Captain's. However, something may turn up.

### February 23 Wednesday

Still in the Land of the Nigger Head. Capt. O'Malley has malaria so we don't know how long we will be here. Last night the native boys got so cold they kicked their fire out and stood in the red hot coals just like something you read about in books. . . A few minutes ago 129 carriers came in, some of them are women. We can shove off tomorrow. (Capt. O'Malley also came down with pneumonia and had to be carried.)

### February 25 Friday

We are now at Sini for which I am very glad. It will seem very good to rest another day. This village is only 4,000 feet so it is much warmer. . . Received a radiogram from Major Blair saying that we have 10 days' rations waiting for us at Garaina. However, our food situation is now very bad and we haven't enough to feed the natives. . .

### February 26 Saturday

We left for Timanagosa where an Aussie corporal met us and gave us a package of cigarettes. Did they go good! Today we walked six and one-half hours and went 25 miles.

### February 27 Sunday

We left for Garaina. The trail was very good; in fact, the best trail of them all. I have such bad blisters on my feet that it was a darn hard day. We have been gone 57 days and have walked 238 miles. Here we found our 10 days' rations and mail. All of us read mail for four hours and you couldn't get a word out of us. . .

### March 2 Thursday

Still at Garaina. Sent a radiogram to Major Blair for more food and supplies. I cut my beard off today and it was a 60-day growth. It sure feels good to get it cut off. . .

### March 5 Sunday

Still at Garaina. We received a radiogram which stated more or less why the hell don't you start for Morobe. It would be great going

as we haven't any food and no carriers left. That is the brass hats for you.

### March 6 Monday

Still at Garaina. Everyone is trying not to get on each other's nerves but it can't be helped. The idea of no food, no cigarettes, being so close for so long, and many small things make it hard to get along together.

### March 7 Tuesday

Still at Garaina. An Aussie plane landed here today so we all mailed letters. We sent another radiogram to Major Blair and hope he gets on the ball and gets us some food. Something has to happen soon.

### March 8 Wednesday

Still at Garaina. A C-47 dropped us rations this morning and I was hit by a bag of rice. Boy, it sure did knock me on the ground. We all got jungle rations. Lt. Maury got a ride out in an Aussie plane today so maybe we will get a little action and get out of here.

### March 10 Friday

Still at Garaina. We received a radiogram from Col. Patterson saying he is trying to get a plane here to get us out. Also not to try and make other arrangements. My low-fever malaria is still with me and I wish it would go away. Atabrine seems to help lots.

### March 11 Saturday

An Aussie plane landed today. So Lt. Johnson, Perdue and myself are going on it. Ben and Pete will come in on the second plane with the bodies. I sure hated to say goodbye to everyone. It was quite a mad-house getting our things packed. Well, diary, this is goodbye to the land of the Spirits.

Upon arrival at the 48th's base, it was discovered that engine trouble had prevented the second plane from going to Garaina. On 12 March this plane took off for that field and left it at approximately 1100 hours with the two GR men and the bodies of the Air Corps personnel. The plane crashed 14 minutes later into the mountainous jungle of the Bubu Valley. Pfc. Baur and T/4 Johns were injured. Baur died while being carried back to Garaina by friendly natives. Johns' leg was placed in a cast at the field by the Angau medical officer who had been on the Kunimaipa expedition.

T/4 Johns was flown to the 48th's base 14 March; Baur's body 15 March, being interred the next day. The remains of the airmen were flown in and interred in the base's American cemetery 27 March.

The mission was complete.

29 Jun 45





# C/O EFFECTS QUARTERMASTER

AMONG THE PERSONAL belongings of a soldier killed in the South Pacific, \$6,000 in American currency turned up... A corporal who got excited about going overseas left his baggage on a Hoboken pier... A captain who was shipped suddenly in the direction of Tokyo lost some baggage containing five quarts of Scotch... An officer departing hastily for overseas had to leave behind the furniture in his New Orleans apartment.

All of these personal effects found their way to the Army Effects Bureau, the general clearing house for such property, in the Kansas City Quartermaster Depot. The Bureau inventoried, censored and packed these effects. It shipped them either to the owner or to some person designated by the owner.

## BUREAU OF MISSING PROPERTY

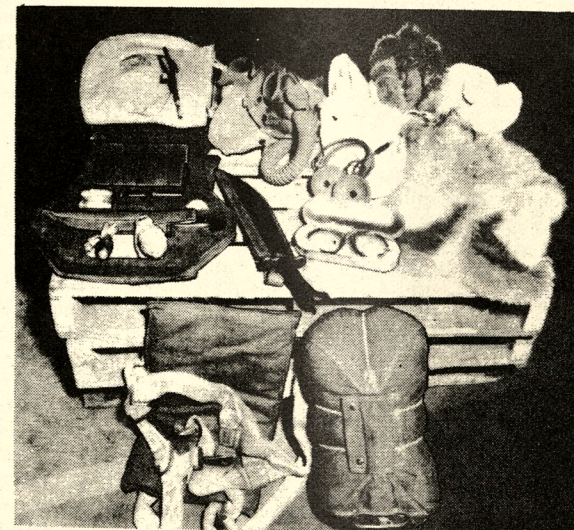
Handling lost and abandoned property, and personal effects of men killed overseas, is the Army Effects Bureau's job. Its work is to determine who receives the thousands of bags and boxes of effects which pass through its hands, as well as to inventory, pack, and ship them.

A little more than two years old, the Bureau originated in the Office of The Quartermaster General. It's directed by an Effects Quartermaster and an assistant. Under them serve four QM officers. The Effects Quartermaster is a major contact with the Adjutant General, overseas commanders, and other War Department agencies.

## PRIVATE JONES ABANDONS HIS BAGGAGE

Suppose Private Jones abandons or otherwise gets separated from his baggage. After efforts are made to restore it to him directly, an available Quartermaster Officer inventories the baggage, removes the government issue property, and arranges through the transportation officer for the effects to be sent to the Army Effects Bureau.

The inventory is prepared in triplicate, one copy accompanying the effects, the second being sent to the Effects Quartermaster in Kansas City, and the third being



THESE EFFECTS should not have been sent to the Effects QM. They include GI items.

Shown on Tally as \_\_\_\_\_ CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
TALLY IN NO. 2207 INVENTORY DATE 10/18/43  
EFFECTS OF \_\_\_\_\_ RANK 1st Sgt  
ARMY SERIAL NO. 22019000 ORG. Co. B, 38th Inf.  
Consignor T. C. Phila. Fort Agency, Philadelphia, Pa.  
Delivering Carrier \_\_\_\_\_ G. B/L No. \_\_\_\_\_ B/L Date \_\_\_\_\_

Package No.	Article Description	Remarks
#1	1 Fountain pen, Wasp	Nearest relative: Lillie Schmitt
PACKAGE	1 Collar pin	100 E. E. Ave.
	1 Tobacco pouch, leather, w/tobacco	Brooklyn, N. Y.
	7 Snapshots	RELATIONSHIP UNKNOWN
	1 M.O. receipt #17 11/2.42 \$100.00	
	1 Cigarette case w/cigarettes	***For bullet hole examination
	3 Personal letters	NO OTHER ASH INDICATED
	1 Greeting card	
	4 3 cent U.S. stamps	PAPERS CENSORED
	9 1 cent U.S. stamps	
	7 6 cent U.S. airmail stamps	ALL ADDRESSES SHOWN
	1 Receipt for pay reservation	
	1 Charm	G. I. CHECKED
	1 Key	
	1 Social Security card	Attached:
	4 Souvenir coins	1 OR bag label
	1 Wallet w/misc. cards & papers	
	REMOVED TO LOCKED STORAGE:	
	1 Ring w/stone setting	
	Returned to effects 11/13/43	Frank
	1 Package 2	

Warehouse Space 1513

Locked Storage Space Office Safe

Eff. QM Form 11 (Revised 4/28/43)

Inventoried By Porter

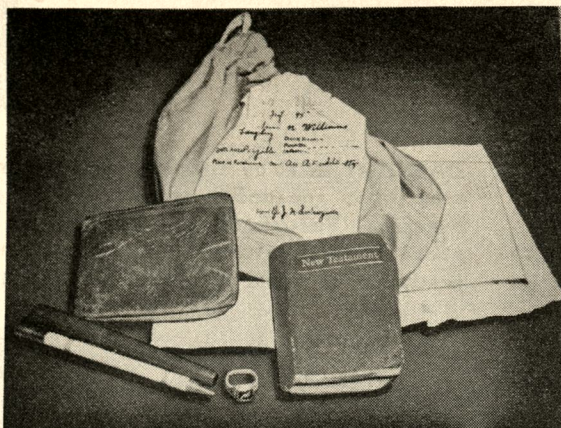
Packed by Rogers

10/22/43 JV

INVENTORY MADE by Effects Quartermaster is complete, including such items as postage stamps. Valuables are removed to locked storage, then returned to package when it's ready to be mailed to nearest relative.

22 Sep 44



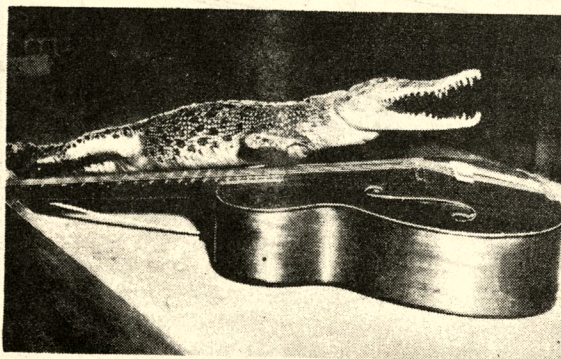


THIS PICTURE shows the effects normally found on a soldier's body. They consist of pen, pencil, wallet, bible, and letters.

retained by the organization preparing it. The inventory lists the name, serial number, grade, and organization of the owner, along with information that may be helpful in disposing the property. At the port of embarkation, the effects go through the hands of the port transportation officer. He issues a government bill of lading to the Bureau.

#### CARE OF MONEY

The finance officer issues a check for any money found in the effects. The check is sent to the Effects Quartermaster. If for some reason a check cannot be issued, the money is securely packed and is forwarded to the Effects QM by registered mail. A check is made out for all foreign currency, except souvenir money less than twenty dollars in value. Money found with the effects of men who have lost their baggage or who are missing in action may be used to pay local debts.



UNUSUAL EFFECTS found among belongings.

Circular 267, WD, 43, urges theater commanders to take every precaution to prevent pilferage of personal effects. A receipt listing each individual container, with a statement showing the condition of the container, is required at all points of shipment. If there is any evidence of pilferage, an officer who receives the shipment at any point will instigate an investigation. He makes a report of his findings to the Effects Quartermaster.

#### PRIVATE JONES MISSING IN ACTION

If Private Jones is "missing in action, interned, captured, or beleaguered or besieged by the enemy," his commanding officer secures the missing man's personal effects, collects the money owed him locally, and removes all Army property from his belongings. An inventory is prepared in triplicate. This inventory is identical to that prepared for the lost and abandoned effects.

Money found in the effects is converted to a check which is sent to the Effects Quartermaster. This transaction is entered on the inventory and its copies. If the missing person shows up and goes back into active service, he can demand and receive the money from the Effects Quartermaster when military conditions permit. Under no circumstances is any property of the missing person sold.

#### PRIVATE JONES KILLED IN ACTION

If Private Jones is killed or dies overseas, the job of handling the effects found on his body falls to the Graves Registration Service, while those effects left at his camp or station are looked after by officers of his unit. Just before Jones' burial, the GRS personnel remove his belongings from his body, place them in a small pouch, and make a detailed inventory of them. No prescribed form is provided for use in the combat zone and so the inventory is an informal one. Any article which would bring discredit to the man or his friends is omitted from the inventory and destroyed. This policy is continued throughout the handling of Private Jones' effects.

At GRS headquarters and company headquarters, the effects are now prepared for shipment. A list of them is forwarded to the Quartermaster General on the regular inter-

#### C/O EFFECTS QUARTERMASTER

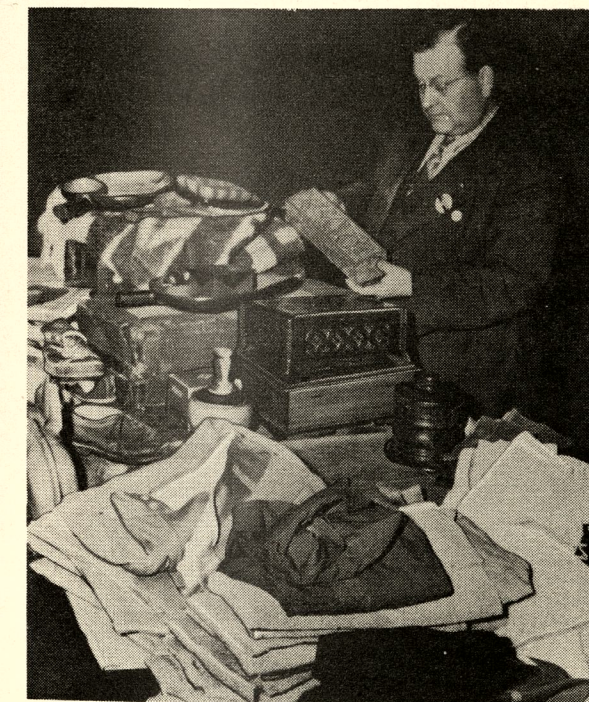
ment report. An accurate inventory is made, all government property is removed, and any money, except souvenir money, is turned over to the Summary Court officer. A copy of the inventory is sent with the effects to the Army Effects Bureau. Transportation is arranged according to the procedure with lost or abandoned effects.

The Summary Court Officer sends the check for Private Jones' money to the Effects Quartermaster and reports the transaction to the Adjutant General in Washington. He also collects any local debts owed Private Jones and pays off his debts if the money is available. He's not permitted to sell the soldier's possessions to pay his debts.

An identical procedure is followed in sending his effects, other than those removed from his body, to the Army Effects Bureau. However, no report of these effects is made to the Quartermaster General.

#### EXCEPTIONS TO REGULAR PROCEDURE

If the effects are to be sent to Private Jones' wife, who lives in Australia.



INVENTORY is a careful process. Effects are sorted and discreetly censored. Every effort is made to get property back home.

they will not be shipped there via Kansas City. Cir. 266, WD, 44, says that under certain military conditions such effects will be sent directly to the owner's beneficiary. The effects of non-citizens serving in the United States may be sent directly to their beneficiaries in foreign countries.

The effects of those who die after they are taken to hospitals are handled by the Medical Department. The effects of men who die on transports at sea are inventoried in triplicate aboard the vessel and delivered by the transportation officer to the port transportation officer at a port in the United States. The port transportation officer sends them to the Effects Bureau.

#### DESTINATION KNOWN

It's a sure bet that Private Jones' property will get back to him or his family with a little cooperation from officers and men. All he has to do is fill out his two "fortune telling" cards, WD AGO Forms 41 and 43. One of these cards is the *Emergency Addressee and Personal Property Card*, the other is entitled *Designation Or Change Of Relative To Be Paid Six Months' Gratuity In Case of Death*. Both are filed in the office of the Adjutant General. It's the responsibility of unit commanders to see that military personnel complete these forms.

#### GENERAL RULES

A few simple rules make the job of officers caring for personal effects easier.

1. All government issue property should be turned in overseas and not sent to the Effects Bureau for salvage and distribution.

2. Under no circumstances should property be sent directly to families. Some of it doesn't belong to the family, and some of it must be censored for reasons of security and personal happiness before it is distributed.

3. Never should identification tags be sent home or given to a man's friends. The finding of an identification tag leads the finder to assume its owner is dead when he may only be wounded or missing.

The sole aim of the Army Effects Bureau is a humane one--to get Private Jones' personal belongings back to him or his family.



# Conscience, Reverence Mark Stern Task of Carrying Out Burials of Servicemen Overseas

By GEORGE WEILER  
Special Cable to The News Leader  
WITH FIFTEENTH AIR  
FORCE SOMEWHERE IN  
ITALY, 19.—With the same  
conscience and reverence char-  
acterizing their work in the  
Pacific jungles, the little-known  
and less-publicized detachment  
called the Graves Registration  
Service is carrying out its stern  
task on the Adriatic side of the  
Italian theater. The outfit, most-  
ly made up of licensed undertak-  
ers, headed by tall Captain Rich-  
ard Coombs, of Newtonville, Mass.,  
is burying with full rites, Ameri-  
cans who fall in the struggle for  
the Balkans.

Here, because the natural dif-  
ficulties are less than with the  
Fifth Army struggling through  
the mud toward Bologna, it is  
possible to lay our heroes to rest  
in wooden caskets. Many are  
flyers who have made their last  
takeoff.

When Invasion Day for South-  
ern France dawned, it was dirty,  
with thick fog overhanging our  
airfields in Southern Italy. Several  
Liberators, loaded with high con-  
cussion bombs, got off badly in the  
mist which was obscuring the  
runways from end to end. These  
Fifteenth Air Force men rest  
where Coombs' men have laid  
them, in a graveled graveyard  
marked with crosses and occasion-  
al stars of Judah.

## Burial of Comrades in Pacific Wins Medal for Lee Officer

CAMP LEE, Oct. 19 — Recog-  
nition of a solemn job that cer-  
tainly has no glamor nor glory—  
finding and burying the bodies of  
dead comrades—came here today  
with presentation of the army's  
bronze star medal to First Lieu-  
tenant Chester E. Goodwin.

"For the performance of merit-  
orious service as Graves Registra-  
tion officer" at Guadalcanal and  
Munda, the citation read. "He was  
painsstaking in ascertaining all  
identification, keeping proper and  
complete records, and observing  
that all burials were conducted  
with dignity and ceremony."

From Nov. 12, 1942, to April  
5, 1944, Lieutenant Goodwin "un-  
dertook and successfully com-  
pleted the construction of the  
First Marine Division Cemetery  
at Guadalcanal and later super-  
vised the creation of the Guadal-  
canal Army, Navy and Marine  
Corps cemetery and its chapel"—  
in the words of the citation.

17 Nov 44

### OTHER GRAVEYARDS

Smaller American graveyards  
exist where the American and  
British Commandos have been  
fighting together in Yugoslavia, on  
such islands as Brac, near the en-  
trance to Split.

The first sergeant of this little  
recognized outfit is Harry T.  
Cook, of Chicago. The hardest task  
was after an American transport  
was sunk by the Nazis last year  
with a loss officially estimated at  
1,100 lives. Coombs' outfit re-  
covered more than 300 bodies,  
washed ashore. They identified  
them, and buried them after suit-  
able services.

Big Private Bernard Coyne, of  
Chicago, who has charge of gather-  
ing the personal effects, told the  
writer: "Photographs, apparently,  
are the most precious things to  
our men. We find 80 per cent  
of the dead carrying them as se-  
curely as any soldier can. They  
average four to five photographs  
each. Nothing else is so common,  
except Arab wallets, owned by  
nine out of 10."

An idea of what difficulties face  
the men of Grave's Registration  
is conveyed by the effort of Ser-  
geant Edwin Shotland, of New  
York City, a naturalized Ameri-  
can, graduate of Heidelberg Uni-  
versity and a doctor of physics  
and mathematics, to identify two  
men.

### GRAVES REGISTRATION

CLIPPED  
COMMENTS  
ON  
QM's

17 NOV 44

### Organizes Registration Units

He organized graves registration  
units and worked with them at  
Munda, Rendova, and other is-  
lands north of Guadalcanal. When  
graves registration platoons ar-  
rived from the United States, it  
was Lieutenant Goodwin who in-  
structed them before they began  
work in the Solomons, Colonel  
Walker pointed out.

"Many times he and his men  
went into the front lines for the  
wounded or dead. They made it  
their responsibility that every  
body be brought back from the  
front lines to a cemetery before  
the man's unit had left the area."

Hard pressed as they were Lieu-  
tenant Goodwin and his men saw  
to it that every American who  
died at Guadalcanal was given a  
military funeral. Careful identi-  
fication of each man was made  
and Lieutenant Goodwin even  
wrote a personal letter to the  
family of each soldier or marine  
who was killed.

24 NOV 44

## Pacific GRS plans three large cemeteries

SMALL BURIAL grounds scatter-  
ed along the trail of the island-hop-  
ping campaigns in the Pacific are be-  
ing consolidated into at least three  
large cemeteries, according to CAPT.  
PAUL J. TONN, Acting Chief of Graves  
Registration for AFWESPAC (Army  
Forces, Western Pacific).

The three will be located south of  
the Equator at Finschhafen, New  
Guinea, and Brisbane and Sydney in  
Australia. The number of cemeteries  
to be established north of the Equator  
has not been announced.

"The plan calls for the disinterment  
of bodies, recasketing when necessary,  
and movement to new areas," Capt.  
Tonn says. "Work on the project has  
been going forward for some time—  
in fact, as rapidly as shipping is made  
available to handle the job."

**Advantages.** These are the advan-  
tages claimed for the consolidation  
program: (1) it will reduce the num-  
ber of men needed to handle the pres-  
ent large number of small burial  
grounds; (2) it will provide better lo-  
cations and records; (3) it offers an  
opportunity for a thorough re-check-  
ing of all GRS records in the Pacific.

The last phase has demonstrated that  
records have been kept with remark-  
able accuracy throughout the war in  
the Pacific, even from the early shoe-  
string days when some relaxation of  
record discipline might have been ex-  
pected, Capt. Tonn says.

**Not In Basic.** When the GRS man,  
fresh from Stateside training, landed  
somewhere in the Pacific and went to  
work, he soon discovered a lot of  
angles not covered in the book. For  
example, although GR men used to be  
considered rear-echelon, plenty of them  
landed with the early waves of Infan-  
try on beaches from New Guinea to  
Okinawa. That was necessary to in-  
sure proper identification, records,  
and burial of troops KIA.

On Luzon, GR clearing points were

established to cut down the number of  
men having to work in scattered areas  
in the front lines.

Jungle warfare, a nightmare for the  
combat soldier, presented peculiar  
problems to the graves registration  
man, too. It made the recovery of  
bodies a difficult and dangerous under-  
taking, especially when plane crashes  
in isolated locations were involved.

QM search parties travelled on foot  
through hundreds of miles of dense  
jungle to find the bodies. When native  
carriers were available, GR men had  
to learn enough of their lingo in ad-  
vance to give directions. That's one  
that the MTP's don't cover. (For an-  
other story on this sort of operation,  
see "Safari in New Guinea," JOURNAL,  
29 June 1945, pp. 10, 11.)

**Made Maps.** When a crash was re-  
ported, a sketch was made of the area,  
indicating the probable location of the  
plane. Then aerial photographs were  
taken and with this evidence to work  
from, a GRS topographic section drew  
a scale map specifying the location.

Similar maps were made for iso-  
lated burials. Although the dead were  
buried in cemeteries whenever pos-  
sible, some men were killed on patrol  
behind the Jap lines, on secret recon-  
naissance landings, or were lost in the  
jungle. As soon as possible, GR parties  
sought out the hidden bodies and re-  
moved them to established burial plots.

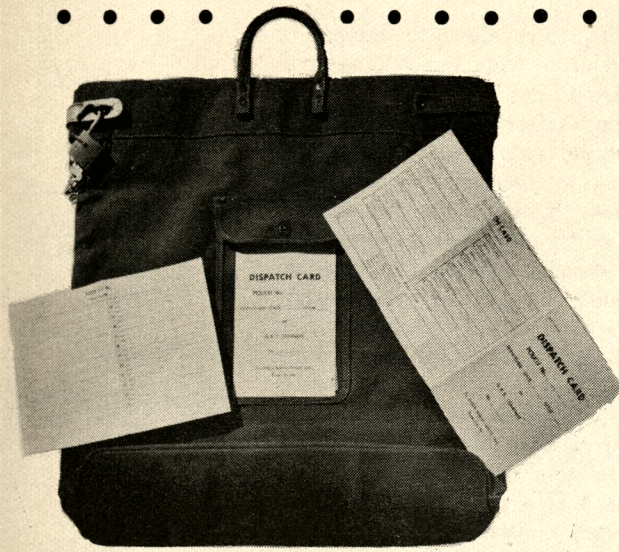
**Japs To Ashes.** When they had  
time, the Japs often cremated their  
dead and dumped the ashes in 3"-  
square wooden boxes. They covered  
the boxes with silk on which was writ-  
ten in Japanese characters the name,  
rank, date, and so forth. These were to  
be sent back to Japan for the home-  
folks, but occasionally our forces  
moved in before that could be accom-  
plished. The boxes left behind now are  
buried in the enemy section at the  
Finschhafen cemetery. There is a  
marker over every box.

5 Oct 45



## NEW ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT

### GRS to use New Pouch for Personal Effects



THIS HEAVY CANVAS pouch is used for shipping personal effects of deceased military personnel to Effects QM. The Dispatch Card goes into the pocket beneath the handle, along with the Pouch List (at left) which shows names of men who owned the effects.

REAR VIEW of the pouch shows its individual serial number, which identifies the pouch, and the web tape, threaded through steel loops, used to seal the top. A sealed lock is used to safeguard contents. The bag may be opened for inspection and re-sealed.



2 Mar 45

**TO SPEED THE SAFE DELIVERY** of personal effects recovered from soldiers killed in action, two new shipping containers have been designed by the QMC. They are the War Department Registered Personal Effects Pouch, and the Individual Personal Effects Bag.

They will be used by oversea Graves Registration companies for shipping to the Effects QM at Kansas City, Mo.

The Pouch (*see photographs*) is made of heavy waterproof OD canvas and is 24" long, 22½" wide, and has a reinforced bottom 4½" wide. A flap cover, with eyelets which fit over steel loops, closes the top, and a triple-reinforced handle is provided for carrying. A 1" wide web tape slips through the steel loops, and a padlock

is inserted in a leather hasp fastener on the tape.

**In The Pocket.** QMC Form 1032, Dispatch Card, showing address of the Effects QM depot and the pouch's serial number, goes in a pocket on the side. The date, time dispatched, signature of the receiving and dispatching officers, and the organization originating the shipment are also entered on the card. QMC Form 1031, listing the deceased personnel to whom the effects belong, goes in the pocket, too.

The Individual Personal Effects Bag, made of water-resistant OD canvas with a set-in bottom, is 10½" wide and 8¾" deep. Stitched on the outside of the bag is a form completely identifying the soldier to whom the items belonged, and listing nearest relative, ad-

dress and other information, for use of Effects QM.

About one-hundred of these bags closed by a drawstring and sealed with lead seals, go into a Personal Effects Pouch. A pouch is shipped whenever filled, or on the first of each month. Lead seals for the pouch are also provided, because the locks used can be opened by any other pouch key. Seals for the pouch are fixed on a wire loop which slips through a hole in the lock.

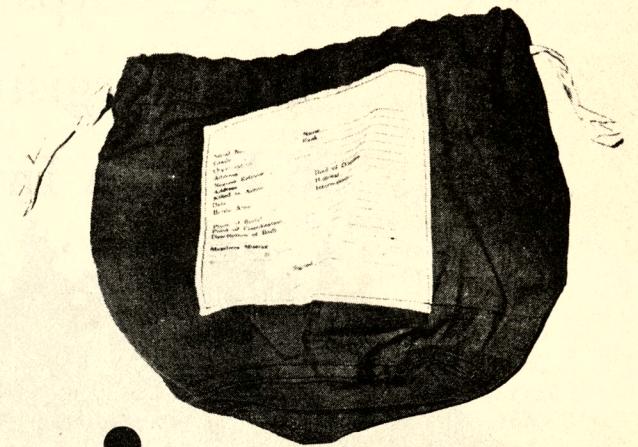
**Hand Delivery.** Whenever a pouch shows signs of tampering, the seal is broken and the pouch opened for examination. Then it's re-sealed. Pouches are delivered by hand, so responsibility can be fixed at all times.

A list of pouch serial numbers in any one shipment is turned in at the base

section by the person who delivers the pouches from a forward area.

The NCO in charge of the burial or searching party in the GR company is responsible for checking and identifying personal effects and for sending them to his CO. The officer, in turn, makes out duplicate lists of each group of items, one of which goes into the personal effects bag. In transit, the pouches containing the bags are handled only by GRS officers or others especially designated by the Theater Quartermaster.

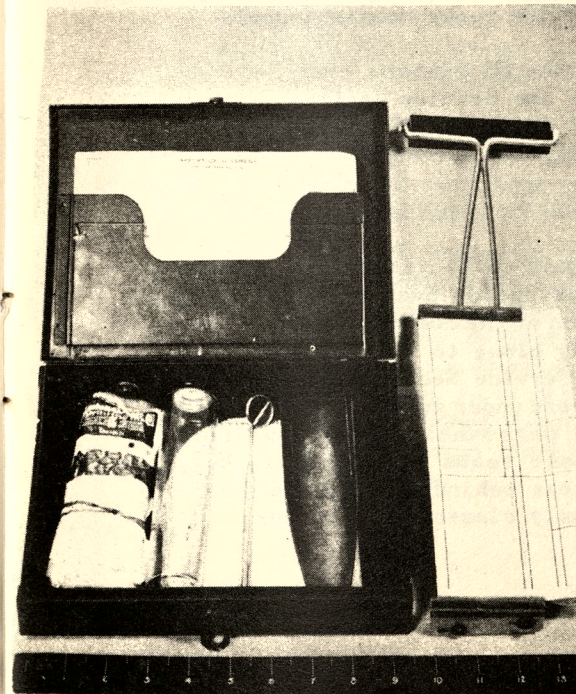
All GI property is salvaged from personal effects before they are packed for shipment. All letters, diaries, photographs, and other documents which might contain classified information are censored at the base section before being sent on to the U. S.



**INDIVIDUAL EFFECTS BAG** contains the personal items. Whenever about 100 of these are ready for shipment, or on the first of each month, they are dispatched in a Personal Effects Pouch. The stitched-on card is used to identify the deceased soldier.

2 Mar 45

## ● Kit, Fingerprinting, for GRS Outfits



**A NEW AND COMPACT** fingerprint-taking kit, easy to carry and workable in all theaters and climates, has been developed by the Office of The Quartermaster General. This item is now authorized for use by GRS companies working under the new T/O and E 10-298.

**NEW FINGERPRINT-taking kit,** developed by the Quartermaster Corps, contains all necessary materials, plus special holder for facilitating fingerprinting of deceased soldiers. Steel case is easy to carry, and is usable in all climates.

Model for the outfit is the type now in use by GRS in the Pacific.

The steel case is 6⅞" by 9⅝" in size. A steel pocket in the lid holds the necessary forms. The case contains ink and inking slabs, rubber roller, desk and shovel-type card holders, dental mirror, and non-breakable container for gasoline or other cleansing solvents.

A special problem in fingerprinting for GRS is the difficulty of rolling the subject's finger. Use of the shovel-type card holder gives the appearance of a rolled print.

20 Apr 45





## How **V** Corps handled graves registration in French Invasion



*THE METHOD of using Quartermaster Graves Registration and Service troops described in this article is not claimed to be original, or practical in every type of operation. It's presented because it was a solution to GRS problems in the invasion of France. It was submitted by Lt. Colonel M. C. Rhodes, QMC, Headquarters, V Corps.*

FOR THE INVASION of France, V Corps handled the problem of the dead by using Service troops with Graves Registration personnel. The Corps Quartermaster furnished the Quartermaster of each attached division with a team consisting of the following:

- 1 Graves Registration platoon (1 officer and 23 EM).
- 1 Provisional Medical Detachment (3 EM from Medical Detachment of GR Company).

- 1 Service Section (1 officer and 49 EM).
- 3 trucks, 3/4-ton W. C. (from GR Co.)
- 3 trailers, 1-ton, cargo (loaned by truck company).

These teams were each divided into three sub-teams. Two of these were regimental collecting teams consisting of:

- 3 EM of the GR platoon
- 12 EM of the Service Section
- 1 truck, 3/4-ton W. C.
- 1 trailer, 1-ton cargo

### ONE TEAM PER REGIMENT

One of these collecting teams operated a Graves Registration collecting point in the rear of each of the committed combat regiments, usually close to the regimental aid station. The Service Section men were used as litter bearers under supervision of Graves Registration personnel. Almost without exception these teams were able to keep regimental areas behind battalion aid stations completely cleared of the dead.

The third sub-team, composed of the remainder of the personnel, was used to operate a division morgue and processing point. All dead were prepared for burial at this point. Preparations for burial included:

#### Identification.

Execution of GRS forms (except for grave, row, and plot numbers).

Collection and inventory of personal effects.

Placing of body in mattress cover.

### GRS PLATOON AT CEMETERY

The dead were moved to the cemetery ready for burial by the team transportation. Where additional transportation was required in exceptional cases, a 2½-ton truck with trailer was furnished by the Division Quartermaster. The headquarters and one platoon of the Graves Registration Company, assisted by one Service Section, operated the cemetery established by the Corps Quartermaster, until it was taken over by Army.

When the cemetery platoon was relieved by the Army Quartermaster Service, or when an extra platoon was available, the Corps area was thoroughly searched for dead. This was accomplished by the daily assignment of an area which was "policed" by a combination Graves Registration and Salvage Collection Team.

### SALVAGE COLLECTED

This combined collection team consisted of:

- 1 Graves Registration platoon
- 1 Service Section
- 2 trucks, 2½-ton cargo
- 2 trailers, 1-ton cargo

This organization worked to keep the Corps area cleared of dead. All areas except those occupied were kept well cleared of military salvage.

This method of employing Graves Registration troops proved very efficient from a functional standpoint. The use of Service troops with Graves Registration troops was indorsed by Division Quartermasters and front-line Commanders as a definite boost to morale because combat troops were relieved of the unpleasant duty of handling their fallen comrades.

## ★ "Silent Eloquence" of American Cemeteries

ONE GOAL of Graves Registration Service is burial amid decent, peaceful surroundings. How this aim was achieved in Normandy is told in the excerpts that follow. They're taken from an account of American cemeteries in Normandy by Col. M. H. Zwicker, QMC; Capt. W. D. Melton, QMC; and Cpl. Jay Stillely.

"...One of the most impressive things to be seen at these cemeteries is the abundance of flowers and memorial wreaths placed there in grateful remembrance by the inhabitants of the countryside. Men, women, and children come out from beneath the rubble of their demolished homes to place their grateful offerings on the graves of the *Soldats Americaine*...."

### BOY TENDS GRAVES

"A ten-year-old French lad asked that he might be permitted to assist in caring for ten graves, one for each of his years. Being given that privilege, he came daily to the cemetery with fresh cut flowers and after placing a few on each grave, he knelt beside them to say his evening prayers.

"At the La Cambe cemetery on 14 July, Bastille Day...the Mayor... presented to the forces of the United States...a marble plaque commemorating the liberation of that town and recognizing the sacrifice made by the men....At other cemeteries, the French have presented bronze palm leaves... in...homage to our soldiers.

"With silent eloquence, the American Military Cemeteries in Normandy record the valor, courage, and devotion of the American soldier to the cause of free people. Their sacrifice of life 'in line of duty'... in those precarious hours of D-Day is now history. So little can be done, and yet, to see the quiet resting places where they now lie sleeping, fills one with a sense of pride in the care and devotion accorded these honored dead."



# GRAVES REGISTRATION IN ITALY

7 Apr 44

GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE units with the Fifth Army in Italy are going about the business of supervising details concerning burial of the dead, marking graves, identifying dead, maintaining all pertinent records, and taking care of personal effects.

The specific way in which these general missions are accomplished is told in observers' reports from the Italian theater. Information contained in this article was compiled from such reports.

Cemeteries were established off the main roads, using logical locations which were usually recommended by the Division chaplains. These cemeteries were kept up first by Division details, later by civilians (usually Italian ex-soldiers) hired by Army.

## CEMETERIES WELL KEPT

The placing of standard hardwood white crosses was proceeding rapidly. Divisions preferred such crosses to bear the Division insignia in color at the top of the cross. Sections of the established cemeteries were assigned for American, British, Ital-

ian, and German dead, rather than establish new ones in many cases. Great care was taken in lining up the graves and markers, and each grave was mounded. The cemeteries were well kept and were being released to the Base Section for maintenance when out of the Army area.

One officer said, "This job (GR) was found to be very troublesome during the early days of the Division's combat experience. It has been found necessary to divert both personnel and vehicles from combat units in order to correctly handle the dead. At present, each infantry regiment and Division Artillery has set up personnel and vehicles under an officer to evacuate bodies to a previously designated collecting point where they are turned over to the attached QM GRS-unit for removal to a cemetery and burial.

"Each regiment furnishes a 2½-ton truck and a 1-ton trailer for this purpose. Recently the system has worked smoothly and has accomplished the work promptly, but only with the use of equipment and personnel unauthorized by T/O and E's. Very few cases of isolated burials have been necessary. Three cemeteries have been established since the landings on Salerno beach."

## NO SCATTERED U.S. GRAVES

Another Division's spokesman explained that the GR platoon was split four ways with a section with each regiment and the platoon headquarters at the Division cemetery. In addition, each regiment detailed ten additional men in each battalion to this duty.

"They evacuated to regimental collecting points where the GR sec-

## GRAVES REGISTRATION IN ITALY

tion took over and evacuated to the Division cemetery. Every attempt was made to collect all dead as soon as possible and bury them in a central place. No scattered American graves were seen; however, some British and German graves were seen in the hills and along roads.

"Both civilians and prisoners of war were used as grave-digging details.

## BURIAL BY UNITS 'IMPOSSIBLE'

"In one division I noticed a Division Cemetery located at the Clearing Station. Burial by units is impossible. The GR platoon is not sufficient to do the job of burial and evacuation alone. (ED. NOTE: It is not planned that the GR platoon should do the complete job alone. Labor is supposed to be supplied by Army.)

A spokesman of the 45th Division said, "The GR personnel did not join us until too late. The Division was obliged to take care of all such functions for itself. As a result of lack of training and supplies, the Division had a great deal of trouble. Now, however, the GRS platoon is with the Division, and the system is operating smoothly. Within each regiment and the Division Artillery, one officer and 30 men (the band) acted as a GRS platoon. Each such officer had a ¼-ton vehicle permanently assigned to him. The platoon had one 2½-ton truck and trailer.

## BODIES COLLECTED EARLY

"Each platoon worked directly behind the combat battalions. As soon as comparatively safe from machine gun fire, the GRS would collect bodies and carry them out to a road where the trailer could pick them up.

7 Apr 44

"When the trailer was full (eight bodies), the truck returned to the regimental collecting point, where the full trailer was given to the QM GRS platoon and an empty trailer furnished in return. The QM GRS platoon had four men and one 3/4-ton truck with a trailer at each regimental collecting point and 11 men at the cemetery.

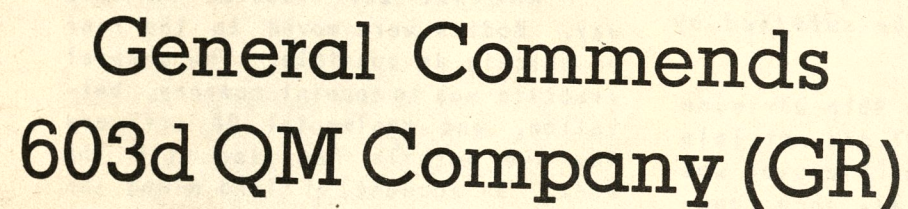
"The cemetery group handled records, hired civilians, or used prisoners to dig graves. The Division GRS Officer was assigned to the G-1 section. The G-1 is of the opinion that the GRS platoon should be permanently assigned to the Division."

## WORK CAN BE HAZARDOUS

Another unit handled GR this way. Bodies were moved to the rear as quickly as possible. The general practice was to appoint company, battalion, and regimental GR officers who had details familiar with the area. On account of land mines and booby traps, the work was hazardous. Some Divisions process the bodies at the regimental collecting point, while others do this at the QM Company area or at the cemetery. The Division GR officer assists the GR platoon commander with additional labor, military or civilian, and necessary transportation. No isolated graves have been reported in this area.

(ED. NOTE: TB-10-630-1 was published on 15 Feb 44. This is the first technical bulletin to contain changes or additions to Technical Manual 10-630, "Graves Registration." The TB consists of 27 questions and answers on GR operations. See also The Military Review, a publication of the Command and General Staff School, Mar 44, page 27.)





In a letter to CAPT. CHANNING B. RENNIE, JR., CO, Gen. Lawton said: "The Cherbourg campaign, which ended recently with the capture of the city of Cherbourg by the VII Corps, was an especially difficult operation, involving as it did a landing on a hostile shore, the establishment of a bridgehead, the break-through of the enemy position guarding the peninsula, and the exploitation of that

"I wish to convey to you and to each member of your command my deep appreciation for this fine work you have given me during the cam-

The captain says: "Graves Registration, on the large scale that we have operated, is a large task and many problems and details have arisen that could not be foreseen."

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equipment is not used. We use a total of 11 typewriters, an additional wall tent per platoon, additional litters, several hand-operated addressograph machines, Model 70, and much other non-T/O & E equipment."





20 July 45

## GRAVES REGISTRATION COMPANIES

47th QM Graves Registration Company—Italy

—1 January to 29 February 1944.



THE SUPERIOR technical skill of the . . . company has been repeatedly demonstrated in many phases of the varied operations of this organization, often under tactical conditions. Personnel of the . . . company displayed outstanding devotion to duty in the evacuation, identification, and burial of our honored dead."

Italy—1 March to 31 August 1944.

"The 47th Quartermaster Graves Registration Company is awarded a Star to the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque for outstanding devotion to duty. . . . This organization displayed superior technical skill and fortitude in the evacuation, identification, and burial of our honored dead. Working towards the goal that there shall be no American 'unknown soldiers' left on the battlefields of Italy, personnel of this unit have evacuated the remains of American soldiers from seemingly inaccessible peaks and crevices and have been persevering in their efforts to identify decomposed remains. . . ."



601st QM Graves Registration Co.  
Pacific—22 April to 10 September 1944.

ELEMENTS of this company participated in every Sixth Army operation, landing in the assault waves with the combat troops. The men of this unit worked tirelessly, without relief, often in close contact with the enemy and at times behind enemy lines to recover the bodies of soldiers killed in action. They performed the depressing duties of recovering and burying soldiers from the front lines, established and developed cemeteries, and prepared and processed reports of interment. Despite the extremely difficult and hazardous conditions, shortage of personnel, and long working hours, the company accomplished all missions in such a commendable manner as to earn the respect and admiration of every task force commander with whom it served. Disregarding all danger, despite their many casualties, the officers and men of this company have demonstrated remarkable efficiency, initiative, and outstanding devotion to duty, and by their determination, ingenuity, and professional skill have rendered an outstanding service to the United States Government.

One platoon (less one section) of the 601st operated with the 6th Division QM Co. at Sansapor, Dutch East Indies, and Luzon. See JOURNAL, 24 August 1945 pp. 26, 27.

31 Aug 45

## GRAVES REGISTRATION

10 Apr 43

24. IDENTIFICATION OF DECEASED PERSONNEL.--Instructions for identification and burial procedures, as published in Sec. IV, WD Cir. 79/43, are:

- a. To facilitate identification, a complete set of thumbprints and fingerprints from both hands will be made on reports of interment. This is necessary, since AGO and FBI files are based on mathematical formulae which require a complete set of prints. When the prints of only one hand are given, millions of records must be searched. Identification when the prints of both hands are given is possible by a perusal of only 200 individual files.
- b. When identification tags are missing and it is impossible to obtain a print from both hands, a tooth chart and a notation of anatomical characteristics should be made on the report of interment submitted to The Quartermaster General.
- c. The principle of one identification tag buried with the remains and the other tag fastened to the grave marker will be followed in all interments.
  - (1) If one tag is missing, the remaining tag will be buried with the body and the grave marker will be marked with the name, grade, and ASN in such a manner as to withstand the weather.
  - (2) If both tags are missing, an effort will be made to ascertain identity or, failing this, fingerprints or a tooth chart will be taken. In either event, a duplicate copy of the report of interment will be sealed within a bottle and buried with the remains. The grave marker will be marked in as permanent and durable manner as possible.
- d. Because of the difficulty of obtaining bottles, those who supervise burials will exercise every ingenuity to improvise means with the materials at hand to carry out the principle of the two identification tags. The method used will be noted on the interment report.

## QUESTIONS--ANSWERS 17 Mar 44 ON GRAVES REGISTRATION

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION to Technical Manual 10-630, "Graves Registration", is contained in a WD technical bulletin published on 15 Feb 44. This bulletin, TB 10-630-1, is the first supplement to the technical manual. It gives 27 questions and answers on the latest methods of operating the QM Graves Registration Company.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### DOG TAGS WITH CLOTHES ON

WILL YOUR dog tags make you a target for a Jap or Boche by jingling or reflecting the sun when you're on patrol?

Is that why you don't wear 'em?

Brigadier General Joseph P. Sullivan, Quartermaster, Fifth Army, has this to say:

"We were concerned with the number of dead, especially at the beachhead, who did not have identification tags . . . It was decided reason was in part due to bell-like jangle uncovered tags might make on patrols where noise was fatal, or that the cold tags shifting about on men's chests, especially when trying to sleep, were a nuisance to many. . . . To meet problems a close-fitting cloth was developed, one to be worn on each tag . . . Those in use have proven satisfactory."

Similar suggestion for quieting dog tags comes from Private Edward A. Rosenbaum, Company C, 4th Battalion, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. His design was submitted to his Post Committee on Suggestions.

Pvt. Rosenbaum advises that you make a cloth cover, sewn to fit. Put a hole in the top coinciding with the hole in the tag so the chain can be drawn through. This will hold the cover in place. The bottom stays open to permit inspection.

Make yourself a couple of pair. If you keep a set of clean ones on they'll do away with skin irritations and discomfort, eliminate reflections and jingling.

Keep 'em covered--keep 'em on!

(For a way to put rubber "tires" on your tags, see the Journal, 25 Aug 44, page 21)

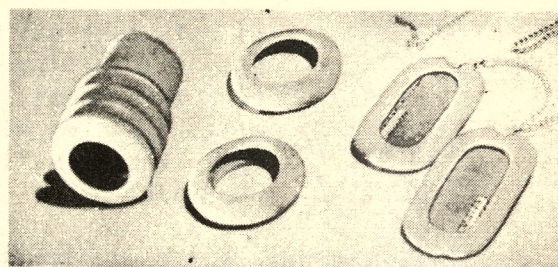
24 Nov 44

## Silent dog tags

IF YOUR DOG TAGS give you the jingle-jangle jitters, you'll be glad to learn of a simple method for eliminating that tell-tale tinkle which warns anyone of your approach. The idea comes from Sergeant James A. Martin of the Quartermaster School, Camp Lee, Va.

Slice two rubber rings from a junked or salvaged gas mask hose with a razor blade or knife, stretch them over the dog tags, attach your chain, and you'll have tags guaranteed not to rattle against each other or clang against the chain. You can get a smoother job by trimming or sanding the rubber edges.

Not only are these rubber-bumper dog tags noiseless, but they'll also be welcome to those soldiers who dislike, or can't



stand, the constant feel of metal against their bodies.

Many gas mask hoses should be available for this improvisation with old type gas masks being scrapped and a normal number of the new type being salvaged. Each gas mask hose has 70 rings, or links, enough for 35 sets of balloon-tired dog tags.

Army policy, according to TM 38-505, is to sell salvaged equipment for junk only when it cannot be used for any worthwhile purpose. The boys overseas can testify to the vital value of getting rid of all sources of jingle-jangle.

25 Aug 44

## QM ON NEW GEORGIA

14 Apr 44

QM OPERATIONS on New Georgia Island were as rugged as the fighting, according to a report from that front.

GRAVES REGISTRATION.--The handling of American dead and enemy dead was more satisfactory in New Georgia than on Guadalcanal. Furthermore, the Japanese had more opportunity to bury their own dead during this campaign. Of their 2,000 dead, approximately 75 per cent were buried promptly.

A QM Graves Registration Unit buried other enemy dead. Partial incineration of the enemy dead was accomplished by the use of flame throwers in the destruction of strong points. There was comparatively little human litter on the battlefield and by the end of the campaign the whole area had been cleaned up.

Cemeteries were established early and there was a minimum of field burials. Due to early decomposition in tropical climates, removal of bodies from temporary graves to permanent cemeteries was possible as soon as two months after initial burial, with practically all reburials being made within three months.

## COMBAT REPORT ITALIAN FRONT

"MOUNTAIN OPERATIONS involve supply and all its ramifications more than any other single factor," says the report of an observer of mountain warfare in Italy. This statement was emphatically made by supply commanders of every rank, both American and French, the report continues.

The following account is based on the observer's findings:

Division staffs can't be expected to plan specifically for mountain operations until a few weeks before they are engaged. Hence, it is imperative that special items such as mules, packboards, sleeping bags, warm footwear, rope, and one-burner gas stoves be within reasonable supply distance to equip divisions designated to operate in the mountains.

TRANSPORTATION.--It is now accepted as axiomatic by all echelons of command in Italy that mules are essential for transportation in mountains. The great difficulty so far has been insufficient mules and insufficient forage for the available mules.

BURIAL AND GRAVES REGISTRATION.--Body recovery in the mountains necessarily takes more time and effort, and may never be complete. Although no American or French bodies were encountered in the high mountains, two German bodies were seen on a trail where there had not been any fighting for several weeks. Later, on the same trail a quartermaster officer in charge of a pack train said there were many German bodies nearby and a few American bodies, but that his first job was to recover mortar ammunition.

Camouflage discipline is so poor in all command posts and installations that it is remarkable we do not have more casualties.

ORGANIZATIONS.--Mountain infantry battalions must be absolutely capable of independent action. This means they must be decentralized in organization as well as operations.

Normally, mountain battalions operate at a great distance from regimental headquarters and service installations.

23 June 44

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