



~~A LETTER FROM THE REGIMENT TO THE MEN OF THE REGIMENT FROM THE REGIMENTAL HISTORIAN~~

CHAPLAIN GARLENTER

Today,  is another milestone in the history of our Regiment. One year ago today the first elements of our Regiment, the Second Battalion, sailed from America for overseas service. The rest of the Regiment followed seven days later. Today is "birthday one" on foreign soil. Naturally, we must have our birthday cake. The cake with its single candle that appears at the top of this communication holds for all of us a special significance as we reflect today on the events of this, our first year in foreign service. ~~We notice that this cake is composed of three layers. Each layer has a name~~ which represents our contribution to the various phases of the war effort of our country.

The Second Battalion began to mix the ingredients for our first layer on the beaches of Fedala, French Morocco, in the early morning light of a November day of last year. This was the Regiment's first baptism of fire. The rapid deterioration of local resistance in this campaign limited our battle experience. This, however, was off-set by the herculean task of the reopening of the docks at Casablanca which had to receive all the supplies for future operations in this section of Africa. The Regiment worked day and night until ~~the docks were in operation. In this way our engineers became longshoremen~~ and worked so well that we almost lost our "Combat" status. The Regiment was selected to play a considerable part in the safety of the Casablanca Conference, and for this and the soldierly way in which the Regiment had performed its assignments, both General Marshall and General Patton gave us their highest commendations.

While the first layer of our cake was "cooling", we began to prepare the flour for our second layer, in the hills of Tunisia. The foot prints of

the 20th across the hills and sands of Tunisia are well marked by the sweat, toil, and blood of our men. We used different ingredients for this layer, and instead of dock repairing, unloading of ships, and guarding dignitaries, we mixed minefield removal, road construction under the bursting shells of the enemy, and infantry tactics to help clear the Germans from Bizerte.

We are now putting the icing on the third layer of our cake. This layer has its beginning on the sandy beaches near Licata, Sicily. Although our part in this campaign has not been as spectacular as in the Tunisian one, we have no reason to offer any apologies for the way we have carried out our assigned missions. In Tunisia we showed we were soldiers; in Sicily we demonstrated that we were engineers. Today the "red castle" of the 20th Engineers acts as bridge guides to all that travel from Palermo to Messina, and planes now touch down with more safety on some major air fields in Sicily because the men of the 20th have passed that way. When we make our departure from this island, we will leave the graves of our fallen comrades to stand guard over the spirit of our Regiment.

~~We have no way of knowing how many more layers will be added to our~~  
cake by the time the man with the large scythe makes another annual visit to our Regiment. We cannot project ourselves with any degree of certainty into the darkness of tomorrow, but from the after-glow of our yesterdays, we can all face it with calmness and confidence born in the courage and devotion to duty displayed by officers and men of the Regiment.