

HOW THE AMERICAN ARMY GOT ITS WOOD

BY PERCIVAL SHELDON RIDSDALE

EDITOR OF AMERICAN FORESTRY MAGAZINE

"YOUR part in winning the war has been as important as that of any other troops in the American Expeditionary Forces."

This was the high commendation given right after the signing of the armistice to the foresters and lumbermen who had gone to France to get out the lumber needed by the American Army. It was contained in a general order issued by Col. J. A. Woodruff, "To the Officers and Soldiers of the 20th Engineers and Attached Service Troops." Colonel Woodruff was placed in command of the 10th Engineers (Forestry) when that regiment was organized shortly after the United States entered the war; and later of the combined Tenth and Twentieth, Foresters and Lumbermen, when they were united into what constituted the largest regiment the world has ever seen. Its total strength just before hostilities ceased was 360 officers and 18,183 enlisted men, an aggregate of 18,543 men engaged in the production of lumber for the American Army.

General Pershing had scarcely landed in France before he realized that great quantities of lumber were necessary for the army which was preparing to follow. The shortage of shipping at that time due to the submarine campaign made it impossible to ship the lumber from this country. Fortunately, France had the timber, although she did not have the men who could cut it for any forces other than her own. Accordingly, General Pershing sent an urgent cable to the War Department calling for lumberjacks and foresters to constitute a force of trained men who could get out an immense monthly supply. He said in effect that it would be useless to send fighting men unless they could be supplied with lumber and that forestry troops should be sent first. Docks, warehouses and railroads had to be built, and wood was needed for a hundred other purposes.

The War Department, therefore requested the Forest Service to assist in the formation of a forest regiment. This was the beginning of the 10th Engineers, composed

of two battalions of three companies each, which it was thought at first would be sufficient for the purpose. Plans for the organization of this regiment began in the early summer of 1917, shortly after the United States entered the war. Trained foresters and lumbermen were gathered from all parts of the country. Through its district representatives, the Forest Service was able to reach the operators and the lumber companies, the sawmill owners and the loggers, who had men skilled in all branches of the profession. Graduates and students of the forestry schools enlisted. These men came to the American University Camp

which was established at Washington, District of Columbia, in the midsummer of 1917; and in the beginning of September were on their way to the other side. They arrived in France in the early days of October, and were all at their assignments by the first of November.

In the meantime plans for sending over a much larger army than had been anticipated and for shipping the troops with the greatest possible speed, necessitated the formation of another forest regiment. This was the 20th Engineers, the first two battalions of which were ready to proceed to France early in November, while the others kept following as fast as they were organized until March, 1918. Another regiment was being formed

at the time Germany quit. The 20th Engineers was commanded by Col. W. A. Mitchell, like Colonel Woodruff, a regular army officer and a West Point graduate, whose previous services fitted him admirably for this work. Colonel Mitchell later was transferred to the 2d Engineers, known at the front as the "Fighting Engineers," and was cited for bravery. When the 10th Engineers and the 20th Engineers were combined into one regiment, Colonel Woodruff took command of the united force.

The American foresters and lumbermen knew that they had their work cut out for them when they arrived in France, but they were impatient to get on the job. Originally it was figured that they would have to get



LIEUT. COL. GRAVES IN FRANCE

The Chief Forester of the United States went abroad shortly after this country entered the war to organize the work the American foresters were to do in helping to get out the timber needed for war purposes.

out about 25,000,000 feet of material a month; but these figures kept mounting until in September, 1918, they turned out 42,000,000 board feet, while for the six months ending with March, 1919, in preparation for the big spring drive which would have started then if the war had not ended when it did, the schedule called for a stupendous total of 450,000,000 feet of lumber for the American Army.

When the 10th Engineers was formed it was the first time a United States army had organized and equipped troops for systematic forest engineering. Immediately after the need became known, Henry S. Graves, Chief Forester of the United States, with the rank of major in the Reserve Engineer Corps, went to France to prepare for the forestry work there and to make arrangements for the acquisition of cutting rights in the French forests. Later Major Graves was commissioned a lieutenant colonel. With him went Capt. (later Major) Barrington Moore. They landed in France in June, 1917; and before Colonel Graves left France in January, 1918, the 10th Regiment and a considerable

portion of the 20th Regiment also had arrived and were producing wood and lumber for the American Army.

Two months after Colonel Graves reached France he was followed by Wm. B. Greeley, Assistant Forester, United States Forest Service, who had been commissioned a major on the regimental staff of the 10th Engineers in this country, but who was needed to take charge of organization work in France. Later he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and made chief of the entire forestry section under Colonel Woodruff, and in April, 1919, was decorated by the French with the Legion of Honor. Colonel Greeley was accompanied by two officers, First Lieutenants Stanley L. Wolfe and Clarence E. Dunston, and nine civilians, all of whom later were commissioned. These men were Theodore S. Woolsey, Jr., Donald Bruce, Swift Berry, R. Clifford Hall, Ralph C. Staebner, Fred B. Agee, William H. Gibbons, Joseph Kittredge and W. H. Gallagher.

Major Woolsey, who was in April, 1919, made a lieutenant colonel, became a member of the executive com-



COL. W. A. MITCHELL, U. S. A.

First Commander of the 20th Engineers, who, upon his arrival in France, was transferred to the 2nd Engineers.



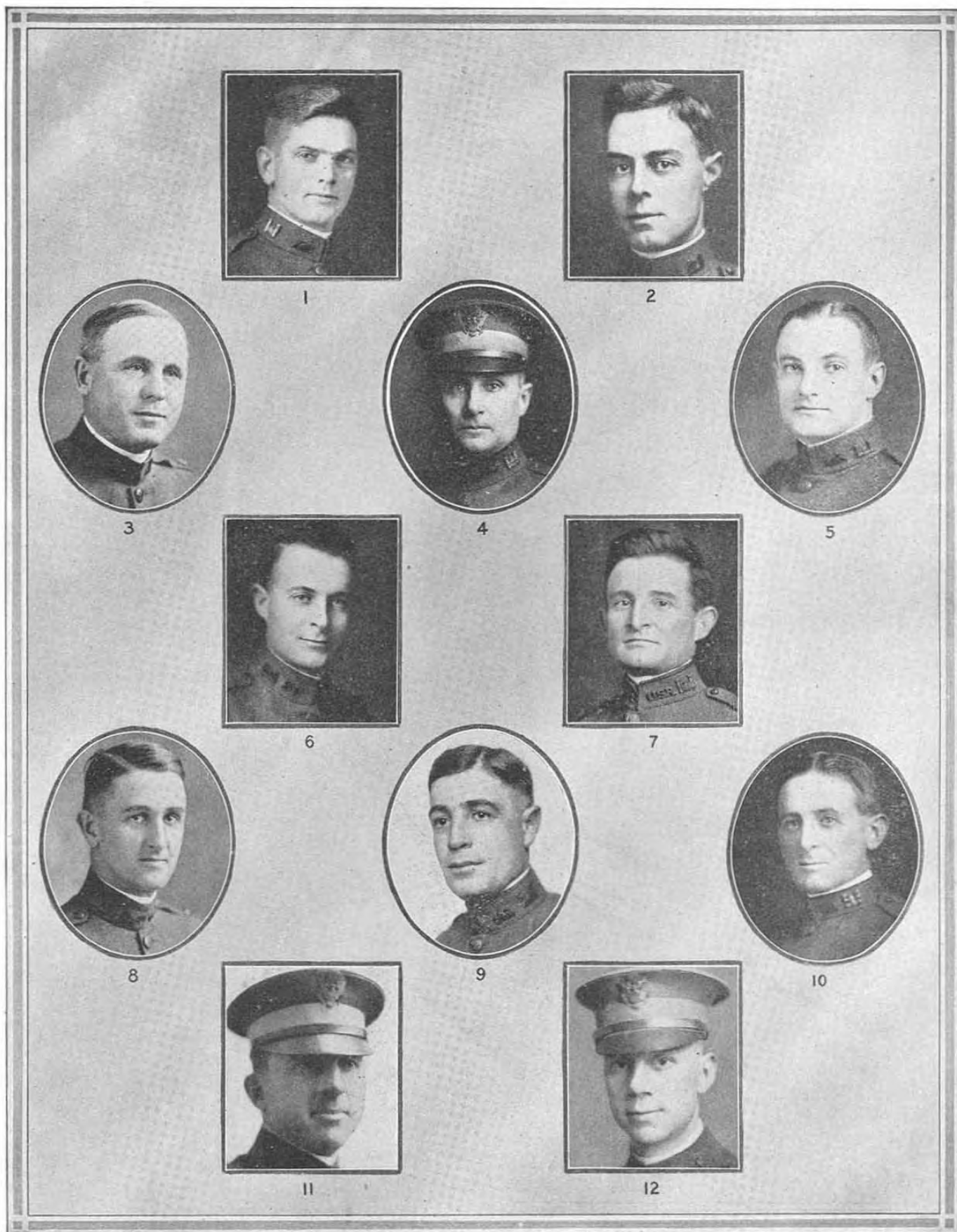
MAJOR S. O. JOHNSON
20th Engineers



MAJOR JAMES E. LONG
20th Engineers



THE LATE MAJOR E. E. HARTWICK
20th Engineers



Photograph by Harris and Ewing

AMERICAN FORESTRY'S PORTRAIT GALLERY OF OFFICERS OF THE TWENTIETH ENGINEERS (FORESTRY)

1. 1st Lt. Paul D. Mackie. 2. 1st Lt. Lester W. Jacobs. 3. Major Collin E. Clark. 4. Capt. F. R. Barnes. 5. Capt. Ralph H. Faulkner. 6. Capt. George G. Steel. 7. 1st Lt. Milton Pittman. 8. 2nd Lt. Harry G. Miller. 9. 1st Lt. Frederick B. Judge. 10. 1st Lt. Gilbert C. Eastman. 11. 2nd Lt. Fred A. Roemer. 12. 2nd Lt. Julius A. Herbott.

mittee of the Comite Interallie de Bois de Guerre, which was organized before Colonel Graves returned from France to avoid competition among the British, French and American armies in the purchase of timberland. Captain Bruce and Captain Kittredge served under Lieutenant Colonel Peck in the fuelwood project in the advance section. Capt. R. Clifford Hall served under



MAJOR P. E. HINKLEY
Commanding 10th Battalion, 20th Engineers

Major Woolsey, and the other men named also held important posts. It was not necessary to give the men of the 10th and 20th Regiments any special training in forestry or lumbering methods before they left the United States, for they were picked men, chosen because of their proficiency in their special work, while the clerical force was selected because of their actual knowledge of keeping lumber accounts and similar information. So during their stay at American University Camp the men were given what military drill was required for administrative and disciplinary purposes. Colonel Graves reports one of the men to have remarked after they got to the other side: "We're not much on drill, but we're hell on cutting down trees." After they landed in France a large part of their actual military equipment was left behind at the various supply stations. As a rule they took with them to their camps about one-tenth of their guns.

The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 20th Engineers, under command of Major Hartwick, of Detroit, and Major S. O. Johnson, of California, sailed in December, 1917; the 3d and 4th, under command of Major R. A. Johnson, California, and Major George H. Kelly, Oregon, sailed the first week in January, 1918; and the other battalions followed at approximately three-week intervals, with Major Frederick Kellogg, New York, in command of the 5th; Major Benjamin F. Wade, of New Jersey, the 6th; Major C. E. Clark, of North Carolina, the 7th; Major George W. Weisel, of Montana, the 8th; Major

F. R. Barnes, of Missouri, the 9th; and Major P. E. Hinkley, of Maine, the 10th.

"We are here, and mighty darned glad that we are; we are busy as beavers, and are going to do our bit and then some in this war." This is what Capt. John D. Guthrie, of the 20th Regiment, Engineers, wrote home shortly after his arrival in France.

That was the spirit which pervaded the entire regiment of foresters and lumbermen. Their only complaint was that they could not get into the actual fighting. Every one of the more than 18,000 who were in the regiment at the time the armistice was signed had been anxious to get to the front. Any one of them would have jumped at the chance any time it had been offered. Some of them came very near getting there shortly after the big spring drive of the Germans began in 1918. Plans were on foot to mobilize every available man in the Service of Supply for service at the front, but the crisis passed without making this action necessary.

The fact, however, that they did not get into the active military end of the game does not detract in the least from the invaluable service they rendered. In the highest sense it was of the greatest military importance, for the army could not have moved forward or maintained



MAJOR F. M. BARTELME
Commanding 14th Battalion, 20th Engineers

itself without the endless streams of lumber which were turned out. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the value of wood supplies as a factor in military operations.

In the general order which he issued after the signing of the armistice, Col. Woodruff, after declaring that the army at that time was "well supplied with lumber," added:

"When ties were called for in large quantities to support the advances of our troops at St. Mihiel and in the Argonne, they were ready. At practically every dock project, deliveries of piling and lumber were well ahead



COL. H. L. BOWLBY
Former Regimental Adjutant, 20th Engineers

of the construction. In other words, the Forestry Troops have made good on the work for which they were brought to France."

When these men left for France their friends knew they would make good. With what a vengeance they would fulfill these expectations and what remarkable records they would make in spite of countless and constant handicaps, could hardly have been dreamed of in advance. But these stalwart sons of America, hardy woodsmen and sturdy sawmill operators, went into the fight with the same grim determination that inspired their fellows at Belleau Wood and Chateau Thierry, at St. Mihiel and in the Argonne. They wanted to go to the front but could not. But they failed in no task that was assigned to them; in fact, they did more than was asked of them and smashed record after record in their keen rivalry to help crush armed autocracy. They put up a winning fight which will stand among the brilliant achievements of the war on the pages of history.

Both with the French mills, old-fashioned and man-driven, which they were compelled to operate when they first arrived, and to some extent even up to the end, and with the modern American mills which arrived later, the lumbermen began from the day of their first cutting to hang up one record after another with patriotic regularity. Mills which were rated at 10,000-foot capacity in a ten-hour day were sent throbbing ahead full speed and made to turn out 25,000 and 30,000 feet a day, with shifts working night and day in most instances. One 20,000-foot mill made the



MAJOR E. H. MARKS

that the men of the 20th showed their prowess, their ability to surmount almost insuperable difficulties and to work under conditions which were entirely new to them.

The incident—if such it should be called—might be related of how on one occasion a 10,000-foot mill was moved a distance of twenty-five miles and in forty-seven hours from the time it stopped buzzing in its original



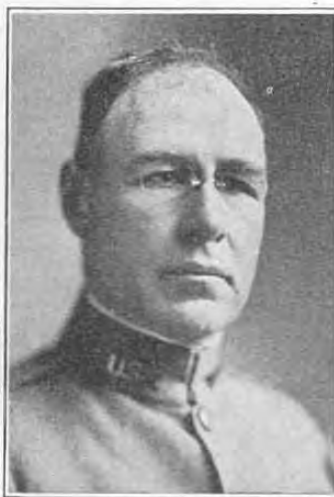
MAJOR A. W. CORKINS

high-water mark of the war when the 27th Company in 23 hours and 35 minutes cut 177,486 feet of lumber.

It was not only in production but in many other ways

location was sawing logs in the new section of woodland. Five days had been allowed as a reasonable time for moving this mill. Such feats were not rare occurrences, and similar ingenuity and ability to meet emergencies were shown by the forest regiment many times during its stay in France.

These men had gone over to France for a purpose and they were not to be stopped by difficulties and obstacles. If they did not find the facilities which they needed at hand, they turned in and manufactured them from whatever material was available. In the early days particularly they had to



MAJOR B. F. WADE

and they were not going to allow their "buddies" in the infantry and artillery to suffer for lack of barracks and warehouses and hospitals, if there was any way under God's heaven to prevent it. And so American ingenuity was put to the test, and it came out on top. If horses had not yet arrived, the men formed themselves into teams and dragged out the logs by man-power. If the horses arrived before their harness, pieces of burlap and bagging, rope and nails were "composed" into some of the most picturesque harness the world had ever seen. It is probable that the horses themselves had many a chuckle over some of the ludicrous outfits to which they were fitted. Of course, they were too polite to do this before the men, but when they were in their stalls for the night they must have laughed heartily, and probably have carried on a conversation which would have given Kipling fine material for a new animal story.

The officers and men of the forest troops had to improvise in many ways, even to language. Here is what Sergeant Oliver M. Porter, Yale Forest School '15, who was out buying cordwood supplies for the A. E. F., wrote back to the States on that subject. He says: "I hardly know my mother tongue. Speech with me has become an unrecognizable mixture of English, French and Span-



LT. COL. C. S. CHAPMAN

resort to all sorts of ingenious expedients. There was urgent need of supplies for the American army, which was beginning to pour over rapidly. The men of the forest regiment knew this,

ish, since I have to deal with American soldiers, French civilians and Spanish contract labor. Also I am learning how to talk with my hands, arms, shoulders and feet. Actions speak louder than words, especially where you don't know the words."

Another handicap which the Americans had to overcome was that, being the last on the ground, they had the longest hauls to make. The English forest regiments operated in a comparatively small semi-circle up in the northern part of France; the French in a somewhat wider arc back of this, with Paris as the center; but the Americans had to swing around on a much longer circumference, reaching from the ports of Brest, St. Nazaire and Bordeaux on over through the central southern part of France and up into the Vosges and Argonne section. This called for the building of many miles of railroad, at the Eclaron plant alone, for instance, eight miles of standard gauge and twenty-five miles of two-foot gauge railroad being constructed. The wood cutting did not cease with the signing of the armistice; and up to February 1, 1919, the forest regiment had to its credit 205,000,000 feet of sawed lumber; 2,998,000 standard gauge and 941,000 narrow gauge ties; 1,746,378 pieces of round products; 39,595 pieces of piling and 319,057 cords of fuelwood.

Some of the mills were close to the front, others hundreds of miles away. The mill at Ancemont, to mention one of a number, was operating at the time that town was bombarded; and this mill, which was four or five miles back from the line, was moved to Ippécourt, in the Argonne section. Among other mills close to the front were those at Menil and at La Tour.

One month after the first forestry troops had reached their assignments in France they had three mills in operation, two of them French and one American. This was on December 1, 1917. The first American mill had begun operations on November 27 at Mortumier, near

Gien. By the first of January the Americans had ten mills in operation; a month later, twenty-one; by March 1, thirty-four; and so on in increasing numbers until at the time of the signing of the armistice there were eighty-one mills buzzing away in various parts of France, with a dozen more in process of completion. If the war had continued, it would have been necessary for

the American foresters and lumbermen to have gone into some of the rougher mountain territory, where more difficult lumbering operations would have met them, including construction of railroads over steep grades and rocky passes. The engineers were preparing to meet these problems.

France was divided into districts to facilitate the handling of the forestry work, the number of districts being increased from time to time until there were eventually fourteen, one for each battalion, with headquarters at the following places: Dax, Major Brookings commanding; Epinal, Major S. O. Johnson; Dijon, Major Sanborn; Mimizan, Captain Phipps; Gien, Captain Lynch; Lapit, Major Kellogg; Chateauroux, Captain Maas; Bauge, Captain Vail; Bourg, Major Barnes; Bourges, Major Hinkley; Pontenx, Major

Lafon; Besancon, Major Kelley; Eclaron, Major Spencer, and Le Puy (the birthplace of Lafayette), Major Bartelme.

No finer body of men ever went from America than the foresters and lumbermen of the 20th Engineers. The highest tribute that can be paid to them is this: They did all that was expected of them—and more. The work which they did, the toil and the struggle in rain and mud, through long hours of the day and night, to get the timber out of the forests and through the mill; with no opportunity for decoration or military reward for service gallantly performed; fighting against obstacles which tried men's souls and made them "turn gray"—all this makes the members of America's great forest and lumber regiment worthy of a glowing page in the history of the world war for



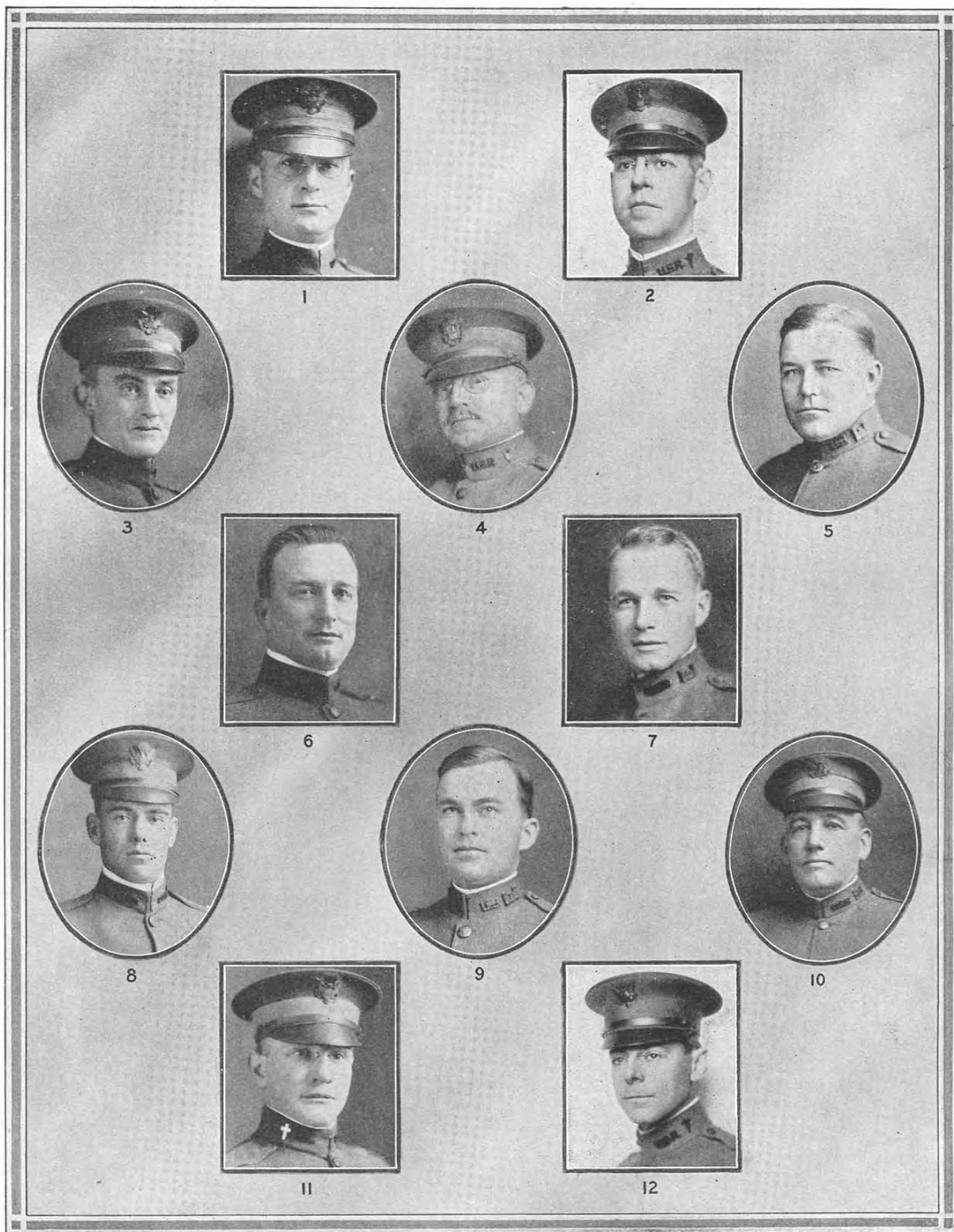
CAPTAIN HOWARD Y. WILLIAMS

Chaplain of the 20th Engineers (Forestry) and doing yeoman work for God and country in France.



CAPT. H. R. CONDON

Headquarters, 11th Battalion, 20th Engineers



Photograph by Harris and Ewing

AMERICAN FORESTRY'S PORTRAIT GALLERY OF OFFICERS OF THE TWENTIETH ENGINEERS (FORESTRY)

1. 1st Lt. W. G. Conklin. 2. Capt. Frederick C. Moore. 3. 1st Lt. Frank Mizell. 4. 1st Lt. R. H. Rowdybush. 5. 2nd Lt. Luther B. McDaniel. 6. Capt. F. R. Weisel. 7. Capt. J. H. Price. 8. 1st Lt. Alfred D. Kettenbach. 9. 2nd Lt. Charles J. Davis. 10. Major George H. Kelly. 11. 1st Lt. Cornelius W. Smith, former Chaplain, 20th Regt. 12. Major William C. Moore.



CAPT. JOHN B. WOODS

civilization. All but a few of the men who enlisted in the various forest battalions reached France. Among those who were destined never to arrive were 91 who went down on the ill-fated *Tuscania* when she was torpedoed off the Irish coast by a German submarine. Aboard this vessel was the 6th Battalion. Excellent discipline prevailed, however; prompt assistance came and most of the men were saved.

In describing this disaster, Thomas P. Reid, Yale Forest School, '13, wrote: "I had just finished supper and was back on deck, life belt on and all prepared, when the crash came. A tearing and a heavy thud, followed by a tremendous fall of water, left no doubt as to what had happened. An instant of silence, darkness and a great shouting as the fellows ran to their boat stations. Boats were lowered, some in good order, others in bad shape, and as one end fell faster than the other or went down with a crash, capsized and spilled all the men who were in it." After telling how eleven men got into a broken boat by jumping from the deck above, a good thirty feet, he adds:

"One of our fellows became chilled. We were all pretty wet, but not too cold to whistle, or chew tobacco, and even smoke cigarettes. We rubbed the chilled one, pounded, stood him on his feet, and 'cussed' him to make him 'hot,' and succeeded, for when a trawler finally picked us up about midnight, he was in pretty fair shape.

"Six hours later we were landed, 500 of us, somewhere in Ireland, where nothing was too good for us. Seemed like the whole town just spread themselves; tobacco, clothes, food, candy, money was almost forced upon us all. There were entertainments by the Naval Base Red Cross, and so forth. There will always be the warmest of spots in our hearts for the people there. Withal it was really wonderful how so many were taken from the ship in almost perfect order."

Major Wade, in command of the 6th Battalion, was the last soldier to leave the sinking *Tuscania*.

While none of the other members of the forest regiment were compelled to go through an experience as gruelling as that which befell those aboard the *Tuscania*, nevertheless there was excitement and adventure aplenty almost from the moment the various battalions entrained at American University Camp, ready for the long journey, right through to the end. There were new experiences to satisfy the most venturesome. The story of the trip across of the two battalions composing the 10th Regiment, the first to sail, may be taken as typical of similar experiences by those who followed. Here is the interesting account of that journey as related by Major David T. Mason, professor of forestry in the University of California, who hepled to organize this first forest regiment and went with it to France. They sailed from New York on the Cunard liner, *Carpathia*, leaving there September 10. Major Mason continues:

"There were the usual scenes at the port of embarkation; a ferry boat carried the regiment from the Pennsylvania terminal to the pier where the *Carpathia* lay. For many of the men this was the first glimpse of New



SECOND LT. JOHN W. SELTZER



FIRST LT. RISDEN T. ALLEN



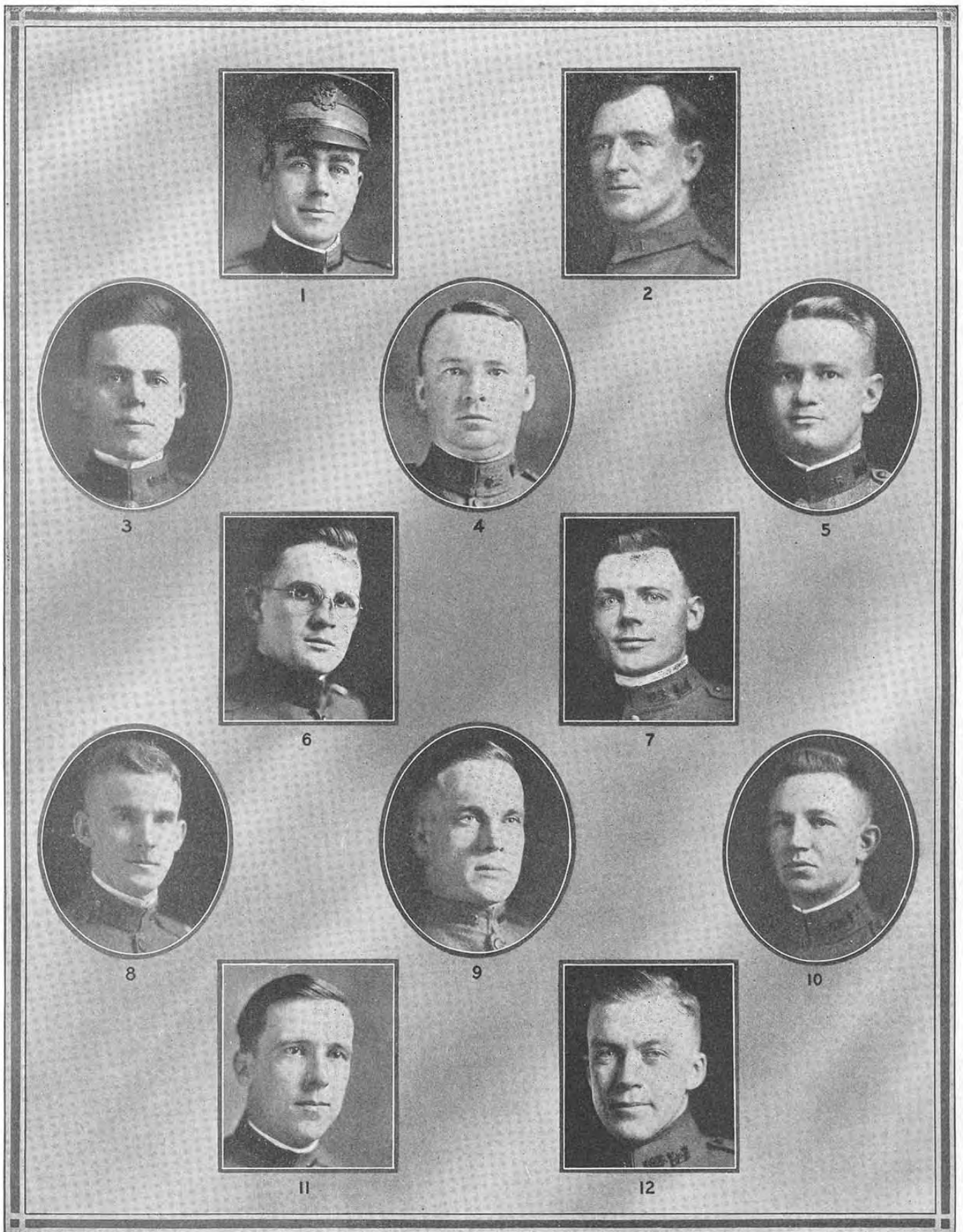
CAPTAIN DORR SKEELS



FIRST LT. ROBERT L. DEERING



2nd LT. STANLEY H. HODGMAN



Photograph by Harris and Ewing

AMERICAN FORESTRY'S PORTRAIT GALLERY OF OFFICERS OF THE TWENTIETH ENGINEERS (FORESTRY)

1. 1st Lt. William A. Foster. 2. 1st Lt. Clement C. Abbott. 3. 1st Lt. E. B. Hamilton. 4. Capt. Earle P. Dudley. 5. 1st Lt. Fayette L. Thompson.
 6. 1st Lt. Leroy A. Schall. 7. 1st Lt. Fred A. Stone. 8. 1st Lt. Robert B. Hill. 9. Capt. John Summerset. 10. 1st Lt. R. N. Benjamin.
 11. 1st Lt. Charles P. Hatrick. 12. 1st Lt. Albert L. Shellworth.

York, and it was a brief one, for sentries at the head of the pier prevented any visiting ashore. Less than a half dozen friends of members of the regiment were on hand to wave "goodbye." The decks had been alive with men all day, but as the ship backed out into the stream, everyone was ordered out of sight, and she steamed down the harbor apparently an ordinary freighter. Farewells were waved to the Statue of Liberty outlined against the last glow of the sunset sky.

"A two-day run brought the Carpathia into the beautiful land-locked harbor of Halifax, where there was a nine-day wait for the assembling of the convoy. These were impatient days, for all wanted to be on the way. Although the men were not allowed shore leave, it was permitted to lower the ship's boats and to row around the inner harbor; the principal interest of these days was in the boat races organized between the companies of the 10th and with the boats from other ships. Finally the convoy was ready, and on September 21, thirteen merchant ships, some of them transporting American, Australian and Canadian troops, wound slowly through the narrows and down the outer harbor past ships of the British Navy. There was no hiding below this time; all were on deck to send back cheers in return for the fine music and cheers from the navy. At dusk the convoy passed in single file through

the submarine net guarding the harbor. As night came on the regular convoy formation in three columns was taken. We found ourselves under the escort of a cruiser so fantastically camouflaged that she was promptly nicknamed the 'scrambled egg.'

"There was a certain grimness in the arrangements on the Carpathia which gave a not wholly unpleasant indication of the possibility of adventures ahead. Small boats were swung out over the side ready to be hastily launched. Piles of life rafts encumbered the decks. Life preservers were much in evidence, especially after the danger zone was reached. The ship followed a zigzag of courses, changed every few minutes. Everything was dark at night; even smoking on deck was prohibited. There were the frequent station drills, when at the warn-

ing from the siren, every one in his life preserver moved quietly but rapidly to his station for abandoning ship; at first it took twelve to fifteen minutes from the time the alarm was given for all to reach their stations, but later careful training reduced this time to about five minutes. There was a thrill one thick, stormy night when the alarm sounded; in the fog, the 'scrambled egg' had nearly rammed the Carpathia. A small storm which

lasted for two days sent a good many to their bunks; later in censoring letters, those of us who had the censoring to do were amazed to find some such remarks as this in almost every letter: 'It was a great storm; everybody was sick but me. Ha! ha!' The decks were filled nearly all day with the different companies up in turn for their physical drill. One afternoon everyone was delighted when the group of ten specks that climbed 'over the hill' to the southeast drew nearer and turned out to be our destroyer escort to take us through the 'danger zone.' The destroyers spread out in a ring around the convoy and darted back and forth in a very businesslike manner. We realized then that there had been a little tension and that it was good to have the destroyers for company.

"After two days in the danger zone the convoy divided. Part went into Liverpool; the Carpathia, with several other ships,



MAJ. DAVID T. MASON

headed for Glasgow. In the early morning of October 2 the hills of Scotland were first sighted. The destroyers turned back as the mine fields at the mouth of the Firth of Clyde were entered. A little later the convoy passed through the gate in the submarine nets at Greenock, and there waited for the tide before going on up the river. The sail up the Clyde is a vivid memory. There were glimpses of "tank"-manufacturing plants, of famous German submarines captured and brought to port. The river, lined for miles on both sides with ship-building plants, is so narrow that the new ships have to be launched at an angle to prevent their striking the opposite bank. Steaming slowly up the river, we were heartily cheered by the thousands of shipworkers along the shores. They were near enough to see the expres-

sions on their faces; they were evidently delighted to see the first American troops to arrive in Scotland, and we were at least equally glad to see the Scotch. It was especially interesting to note the great number of buxom Scotch girls in smocks, breeches and puttees working on ship construction.

"After a few hours of well-ordered hustle in getting off the troops and baggage, the regiment entrained for a destination to us unknown. Fifteen hours on the train brought us to Southampton, England, where a few days were spent in a so-called "rest camp" awaiting transportation across the channel. No one seemed to know just why the word "rest" was used in connection with such a camp, for it was anything but restful. The line of march from the city out to this camp was along a splendid avenue beneath an arch of magnificent elms. The avenue, strange to say, had been constructed in other days by other soldiers waiting to take ship from Southampton—British soldiers waiting to embark for the Atlantic voyage in the days of the American Revolution. Few of us had ever been in Europe before, so that there was keen interest in investigating the old parts of the city—the remains of the old walls, the old inns like pages from Thackeray, the monument on the waterfront to commemorate the sailing of the Mayflower in 1620. A brief glance at beautiful England, and we crowded aboard a shallow draught side-wheel boat to be whisked across the English Channel to La Havre during the night."

While the various battalions and even some of the companies were broken up when they reached France and scattered in widely different parts of the country, from the rich maritime pine section of the southwest up through the central part and on to the Vosges and Argonne regions, their experiences in many respects were similar. Some of the incidents which befell the 10th Regiment along the way are picturesquely described by Major Mason, who says:

"France was reached on October 7, but there were still days of travel and waiting ahead before timber operations could begin. Fortunately, only a day was spent in the rest camp at La Havre, sheltered from the pelting rain in sheds paved with cobbles. Once more the regi-



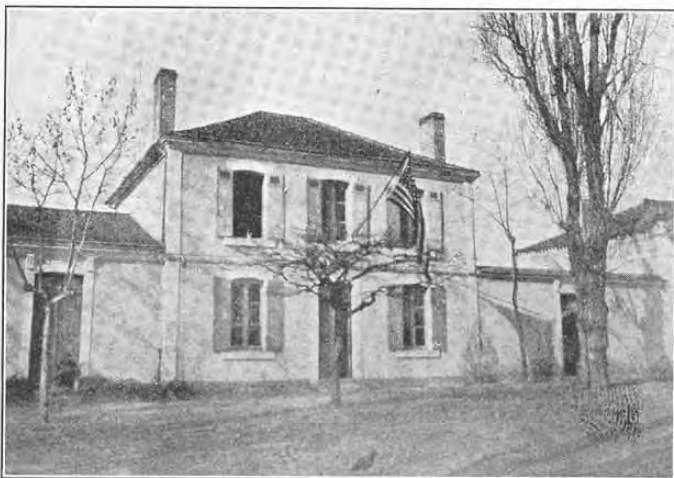
CAPT. JOHN D. GUTHRIE

ment entrained with the destination unknown to us. The French troop train, now so well known to millions of Americans, was a curiosity to us. There were the usual "eighty-four" cars—little box cars plainly marked "eight horses lengthwise or forty men." It was hard to see how forty husky Americans, each carrying his full equipment, could crowd into one of the little cars, but it was done. There were rough benches in the cars, but no toilet facilities whatever. Thirty-six hours of slow running, which carried us around the outskirts of Paris and gave a glimpse of the palace at Versailles, finally brought us to Nevers, a small city in almost the exact center of France.

A tent camp was pitched in a well turfed field in the outskirts of Nevers. A few days of rain and the tramping of twelve

hundred odd pairs of feet soon stirred up a large mud pie bearing little resemblance to the original field. Here the regiment waited for two weeks for the arrival of motor and other equipment brought on the Carpathia. Looking back it now seems remarkable that so much of the equipment succeeded in crossing England, the Channel and half of France so quickly. In Nevers, we had our first experience in the French lumber business; about two thousand feet of lumber was needed for crating material, so a motor truck and a detail of men went out to find it; after the biggest local stock of lumber had been found, there was a long parley through an interpreter with the woman who managed the place; finally some green, rough white fir, grading about number two common, was found in three-fourths inch and one inch thicknesses; we paid at the rate of one hundred dollars per thousand feet board measure for the thinner stock and one hundred twenty dollars for the thicker.

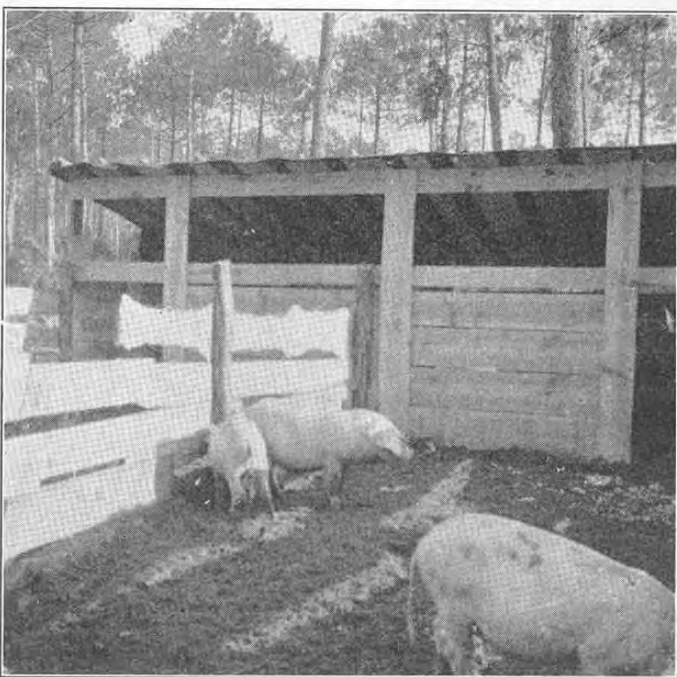
"To meet the most pressing timber needs of the American Army, the regiment was split into five parts for work in different parts of France. Two and one-half companies were ordered to the pine forests along the coast in the southwest; two companies were to go into the fir forests of the Vosges Mountains in Eastern France; and a half company was to cut pine in Brittany near the coast in the northwest; and two other companies were to work in different parts of Central France.



HEADQUARTERS OF THE AMERICAN OPERATIONS IN THE VICINITY OF PONTENX, IN ONE OF THE GROUP OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS ON THE PONTENX VILLAGE GREEN, LANDES, FRANCE

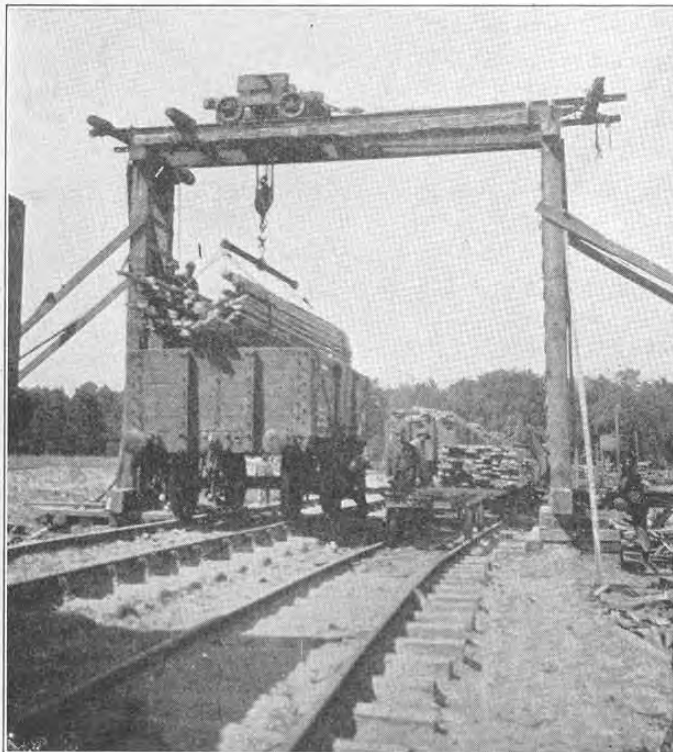
As fast as equipment arrived it was divided between the different units; as soon as there was sufficient equipment on hand to permit work to begin, the units proceeded to their stations, which were reached just before November 1. Only a comparatively small part of the logging equipment and no complete sawmill units had accompanied the regiment on the Carpathia, so the first work was necessarily to be limited to that preparatory to sawmill operation and to that of producing timber in the round.

"The writer was assigned to the work of taking the motor train of the First Battalion across country from Nevers to Pontenx, a small village about sixty miles southwest of Bordeaux. The three days allowed gave just time enough to make the three hundred sixty mile run, for the heavy trucks could do only about twelve miles per hour, and lack of lights limited the running



20th REGIMENT TROOPS AT THE BELLEVUE CAMP IN FRANCE USED KITCHEN REFUSE TO FEED HOGS, RAISED THE HOGS AND AUGMENTED THEIR COMPANY FUNDS BY SELLING THEM

time from six in the morning to five at night. It was a beautiful trip over finer roads than any of us had ever traveled before. The first two days of the trip led through a decidedly hilly country, with fine hardwood forests scattered about here and there. Most of the route followed the French national highways, which usually have a hard surface of water bound macadam about eighteen feet wide, on each side of which is smooth turf about ten feet wide for columns of marching men when need arises. The roads are almost everywhere lined by splendid trees which are made to swell the incomes of the communes which own them; chestnut, cherry and other



THESE LOADING CRANES WERE USED FOR TRANSFERRING THE LUMBER FROM NARROW GAUGE TO BROAD GAUGE CARS IN MANY OF THE SHIPPING YARDS OF THE 20th REGIMENT

fruit trees yield their annual crops, and finally their timber; in Southern France, cork oak trees furnish crops of bark every eight or ten years; Lombardy poplars, locust, sycamores and others are valuable mainly for their timber; all add greatly to the beauty of the highways. Along much of the route the French had seen no Americans before, and our welcome was the more hearty for that reason. The motor train reached Pontenx just before the arrival of the train loaded with troops, supplies and equipment."

A picture of the men in their camps, of the way in which preparations were made for their living and for the lumber operations which they were anxious to start as promptly as possible, is given by Major Mason, who says:

"The first day in the 'Landes,' as the pine forested region of Southwestern France is known, was an especially busy one. The railway cars had to be unloaded and released immediately and camp established in the pine forest four miles away. Fortunately, a bright,



A LOAD OF PILING APPROXIMATELY 70 FEET LONG ON MOTOR TRUCK AND TRAILER GOING AROUND SHARP TURN IN THE ROAD IN A FRENCH SPRUCE FOREST. OPERATIONS OF 20th ENGINEERS

sunny day among a long series of rainy ones made it possible to get under cover without wetting men and supplies. The underbrush was cleared from the camp site, and trees felled to make room for the pyramidal tents. Kitchens were soon ready to serve hot meals to the long lines of hungry men. Bed sacks were filled with straw and for the first few nights were placed direct on the wet sand; water oozed up through that sand for days. As soon as possible lumber was obtained from nearby French mills to be used in flooring the tents and in building bunks. Sibley stoves installed in the tents improved conditions and men no longer had to go to bed right after supper to keep warm. Although there was plenty of wood handy on the camp site, it was all sappy and wet, and dried out very slowly during the winter. For fully two months it was necessary to buy dry wood for the kitchens. At this time dry pine wood was selling in Bordeaux at twenty-two dollars per cord; it was less expensive, of course, in the forest near Pontenx. Wells were dug through two or more layers of hard pan to get away from the surface water, and even the water so obtained was chlorinated before it was put in the lister bags, or 'Carrie Nation cows' as they were familiarly known, for the men to drink. Kitchen refuse was partly

burned in incinerators and partly fed to hogs. The hogs turned out to be an important source of profit to the company funds; young pigs weighing twenty to twenty-five pounds were bought from the natives for about twenty dollars per head, and after a few months' feeding until they had reached a weight of about two hundred pounds they were sold in the French markets at about seventy dollars per head.

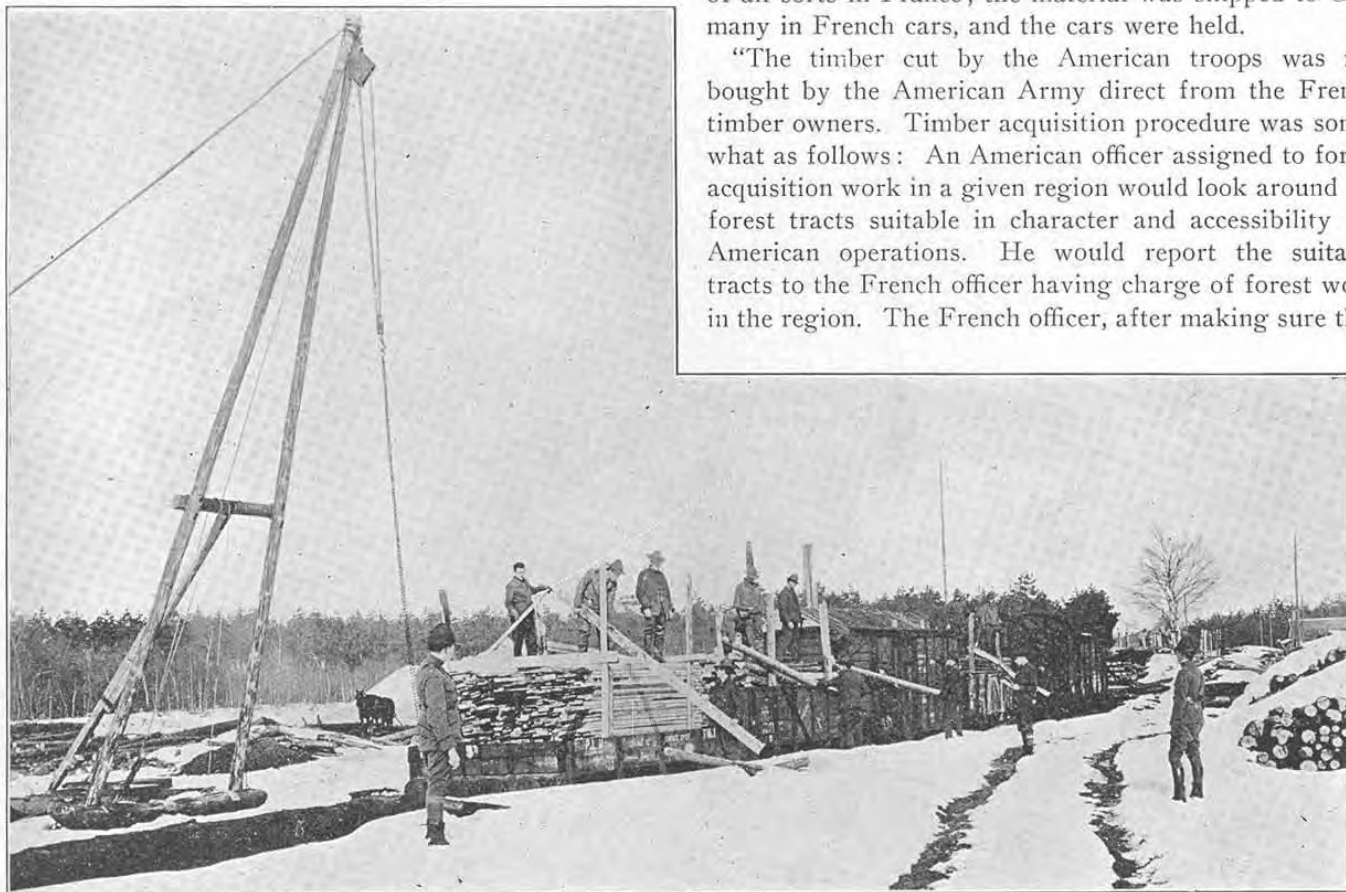
"This camp at which American forestry operations began in the Landes was in a section of the country quite typical of the two and three-tenths million acres of pine forest which border the Atlantic and at places extend sixty miles or more inland in Southwestern France. Originally a worthless, sandy, marshy waste, it has been reclaimed by drainage and the planting of forests of maritime pine until now it is one of the richest portions of France. The region is now about eighty per cent forested with even-aged stands of trees of different ages up to sixty years in the different stands. The unforested area consists of small lakes and highly cultivated little farms scattered through the forest; the farmers work both on their farms and in the adjoining forests, thus furnishing a stable supply of labor for the forest work.

"Timber operations were started immediately by small crews, while other crews continued the work of settling camp. The first work was that of getting out piling, greatly needed for the construction of American docks



THE LUMBERJACKS AND FORESTERS HELPED TO BUILD TELEPHONE SYSTEM PLATFORMS IN FRANCE WHICH WERE LIKE FIRE LOOKOUT STATIONS IN OUR OWN FORESTS.

at the port of Bassens, near Bordeaux. There were sufficient tools to fell the trees, but only makeshift logging equipment to get the piling to the edge of the hard road. No horses had yet arrived. It was quite amusing to see a forty-foot piling, suspended beneath the axle connecting a pair of dump cart wheels, dragged through the woods by ten men on a rope ahead while ten more men with cant hooks helped along the sides. A drenching



THE SPEED WITH WHICH THE 20th ENGINEERS LOADED LUMBER TRAINS AMAZED THE FRENCH, AS DID MOST OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE REGIMENT

rain was falling, but the men paid little attention, for at last they were getting out timber. To move the piling to the railroad escort wagon, running gears were rigged up to carry the small ends while the butt ends were carried on F. W. D. motor trucks; three pieces were taken in each load. It was almost impossible to run the trucks slowly enough to be safe for the escort wagons, so when the horses arrived a few days later, a four-horse team and another escort wagon were substituted for the truck.

"Foundations were constructed so that the sawmills might be set up as quickly as possible when they arrived from America. Large quantities of logs were cut and decked ready for the mills. Telephone lines were built. Work was started on the installation of railway switches and spurs. This preliminary work was all very necessary, but the men were impatient to smell new pine boards and sawdust. So to get some lumber production started, even though small in amount, the night shift of a French sawmill was leased; this mill could produce only about three thousand feet of lumber each night, but

it was a beginning. The production of fuel wood from limbs and tops and of barbed wire stakes from small trees was under way. At this stage of the operations, especially, it was difficult to secure railway cars in which to make shipments. Throughout the war, France was struggling with a car shortage partly caused by pre-war planning by the Germans, as immediately before August, 1914, Germans bought great quantities of raw materials of all sorts in France; the material was shipped to Germany in French cars, and the cars were held.

"The timber cut by the American troops was not bought by the American Army direct from the French timber owners. Timber acquisition procedure was somewhat as follows: An American officer assigned to forest acquisition work in a given region would look around for forest tracts suitable in character and accessibility for American operations. He would report the suitable tracts to the French officer having charge of forest work in the region. The French officer, after making sure that

there was no sufficient reason why the Americans should not have the timber in question, would estimate the amount, appraise the value and mark the timber for cutting. If the owner was satisfied to sell the timber at a reasonable price, his figure would be accepted, but if the owner asked an exorbitant price, the French officer would fix a reasonable price at which the timber would be requisitioned. The French government purchased the timber and resold it to the American Army at cost. Rights of way were obtained in much the same fashion. This system undoubtedly protected the United States from the serious overcharges which would have been possible through our lack of knowledge of French timber values. The value of timber was astonishing to Americans, used to prices of from two to eight dollars per thousand feet on the stump for pine timber in most parts of America; it was found that the pine timber of the Landes was costing from twenty to forty dollars per thousand feet, depending upon quality and location; hardwood of similar quality in central France was even

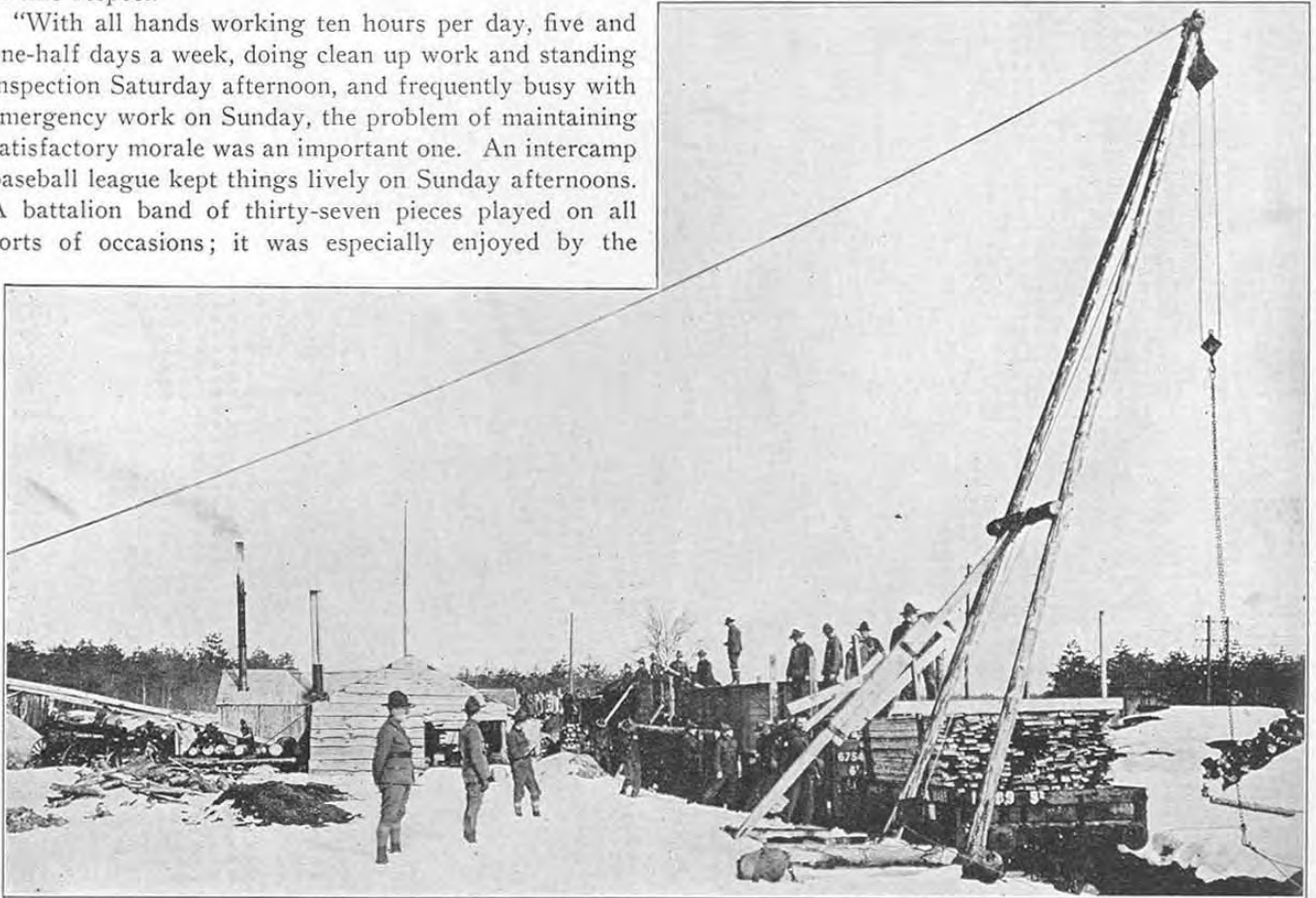
more costly. With these values in view, it is easier to understand the very close utilization of all classes of material in the French forests.

"The question of amusement and of keeping the men in first-class physical condition, properly disciplined and in good spirits, was an important one and was well looked after. The Y. M. C. A. and the chaplains who were assigned to the regiment performed worthy service in this respect.

"With all hands working ten hours per day, five and one-half days a week, doing clean up work and standing inspection Saturday afternoon, and frequently busy with emergency work on Sunday, the problem of maintaining satisfactory morale was an important one. An intercamp baseball league kept things lively on Sunday afternoons. A battalion band of thirty-seven pieces played on all sorts of occasions; it was especially enjoyed by the

tuted; this resulted in a marked improvement in morale. In the spring, especially with the news of the successful German drives, many of the men became restless and there were many applications for transfer to combatant organizations; if these applications had been acted upon favorably, few would have been left to run the sawmills.

"The men were cordially received by nearly all of the French people. Most of the Americans made at least

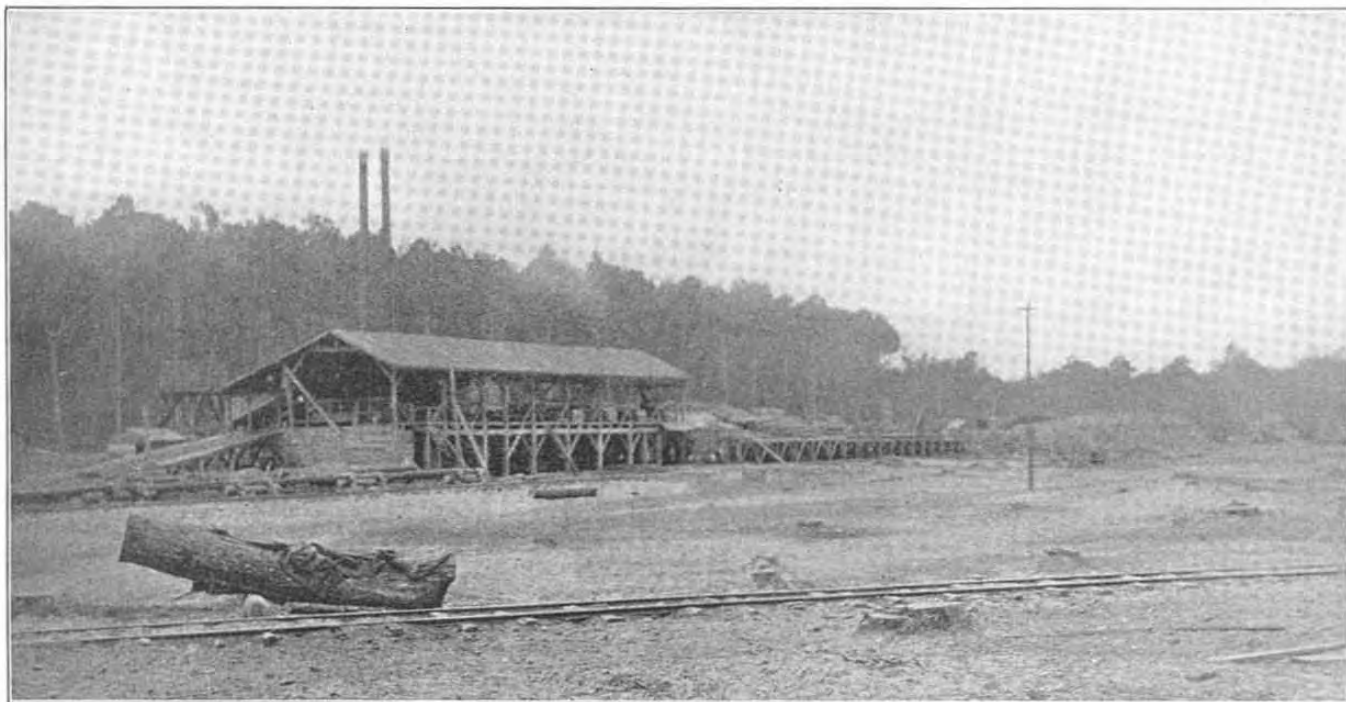


LARGE CREW OF AMERICAN ENGINEERS MAKING QUICK WORK OF LOADING LUMBER AND TIES ON FRENCH RAILWAY CARS

French civilians, who had been without music since the beginning of the war. The Y. M. C. A. installed a hut in each camp where such features as reading matter, writing materials, phonographs, billiard tables, pianos, moving pictures, et cetera, were much enjoyed; one of the most appreciated features was the 'Y. M. C. A. lady.' When the fine weather came, men were sent by motor truck each week from some camps to nearby places for a two-day week end holiday. On Sundays some men toured the nearby country on bicycles, and from Pontenx for instance men hiked over the dunes to the ocean for a few hours on the beach. The seashore was especially popular after a torpedoed Portuguese ship was beached, for it had in its cargo three thousand barrels of wine—'pas de vin ordinaire, mais de l'ambrosie.' Military drill had been abandoned during the short days and pressing work of the winter; there was evident a falling off in spirit and discipline; in the spring, short periods of drill on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning were insti-

a few goods friends among the French. Their efforts to learn the language were earnest and, no doubt, often amusing to the French. The medical officers with the forestry and lumber troops did a great deal for the French civilians. The abbe of the church at Pontenx arranged a special Easter service in English for our men. There were many such exchanges of courtesy, which made for hearty friendship between the French and Americans.

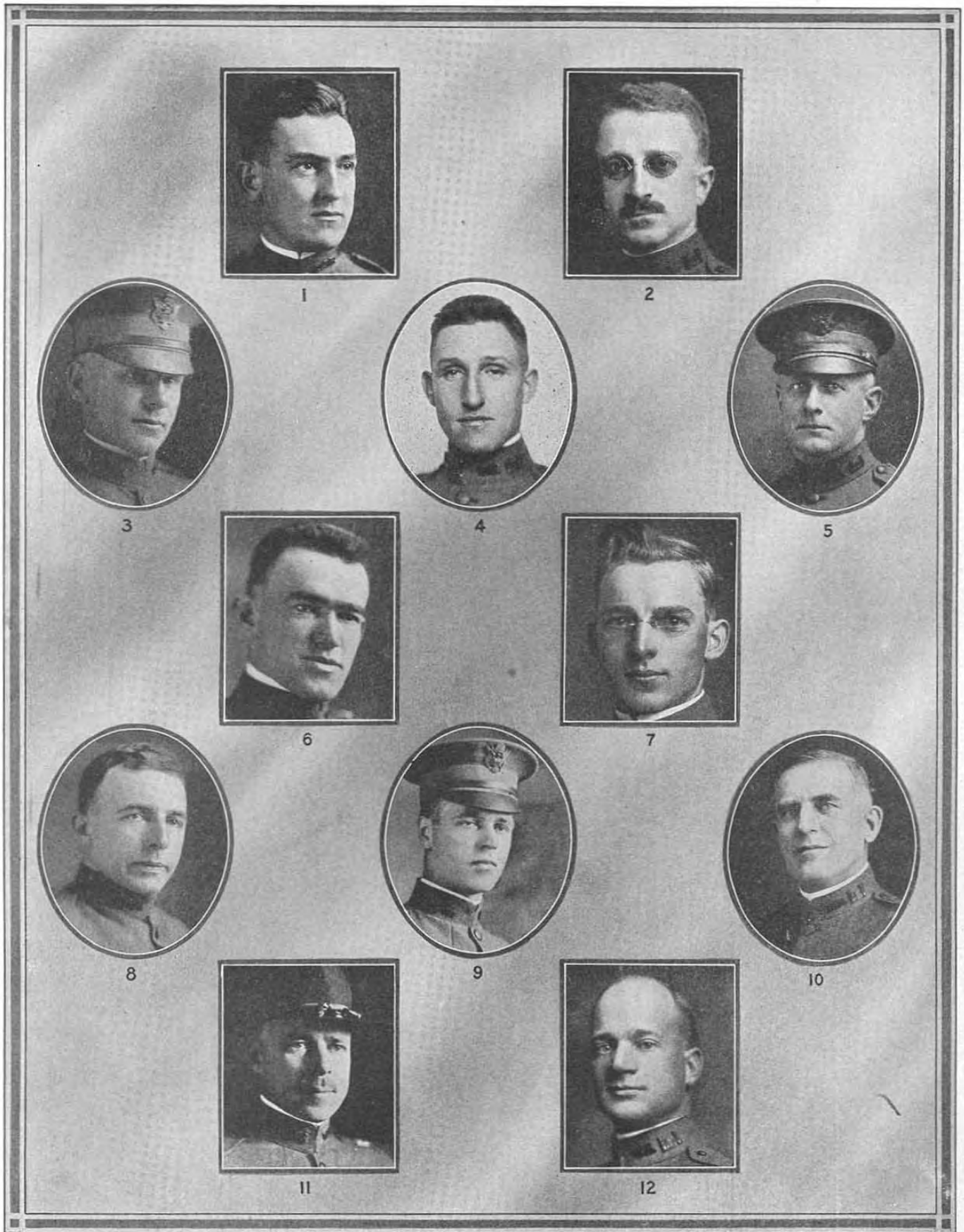
"Unfortunately, the attitude of a few of the peasants in the pine forest districts was not so friendly at first. They said among themselves, 'Look at those strapping big American soldiers. Why do they come here? They are bigger and stronger than our men ever were. While our men, who have been away for over three years, and are still at the front fighting, these Americans come to hide in the forest and to do the work our men should be here doing; they cut the trees that we want to save for our turpentine industry. Why don't they go to the



VIEW OF THE MILL YARD OF THE BOURICOS 20-M AMERICAN MILL NEAR PONTENX, LANDES. A LOG TRAIN HAS JUST BROUGHT THE LOGS OVER THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY SYSTEM FROM THE FOREST TO THE POINT WHERE THE LOGS WILL BE UNLOADED ON TO THE SKIDS IN THE FOREGROUND, OVER WHICH THE LOGS WILL BE ROLLED TO THE CARTS AT THE LEFT, UPON WHICH THEY WILL BE PULLED UP THE INCLINE INTO THE SAWMILL. THE GREAT HEAP OF SLABS AND EDGINGS AT THE RIGHT OF THE LOG TRAIN ARE DESTINED TO BE MADE INTO CHARCOAL FOR USE IN A NEARBY MUNITIONS PLANT



A 20-M AMERICAN SAWMILL IN THE SAND DUNES NEAR THE ATLANTIC COAST OF FRANCE. MARITIME PINE FOREST IN THE BACKGROUND



Photographs by Harris & Ewing

AMERICAN FORESTRY'S PORTRAIT GALLERY OF OFFICERS OF THE TWENTIETH REGIMENT (FORESTRY)

1. Capt. Harold T. Antrim. 2. 1st Lt. Alexander H. Ellison. 3. 1st Lt. Charles M. Jenkins. 4. 1st Lt. Henry E. Power. 5. Capt. Edwin C. Wemple. 6. 1st Lt. Morton Van Meter. 7. 1st Lt. Marion Nine. 8. Capt. Oliver J. Todd. 9. 1st Lt. Earl B. Birmingham. 10. Capt. W. D. Starbird. 11. Capt. Andrew J. Fisk. 12. 1st Lt. Herbert L. Holderman.

front and fight and let our men come home?' The men even heard the opinion was current among some of the peasants that, if the Allies won the war England would take Northern France and the United States would seize Southern France. Evidently German propaganda was at work. However, the ignorant peasant was not to be blamed too much for his feeling, for he could not see clearly why it was essential that American engineers precede the main American Army in France to get out timber and to use the timber in building docks, warehouses, railroads, hospitals, barracks, et cetera, for the fighting forces coming later on. The intelligent French arranged a series of discussions and took other steps which stilled the complaints of the peasants until the fighting troops appeared at the front in force in the late spring of 1918, when the attitude of all of the French became extremely cordial, where before in some quarters it had been merely polite.

"The impression which the forestry and lumber troops made on the French is perhaps best indicated in a series of compositions written by the school children of a small town. The children were asked by their teacher to write their observations on the Americans; the children had no idea that Americans would ever see what they wrote. [The compositions, published in 'The Independent,' indicate that the children found the Americans cleanly about their persons, polite, good natured, generous, quite free in spending their money and in some cases strongly

inclined to the use of liquor. (It may be said here that, although the American lumberjack in his native habitat is well known as a user of strong drink, there was a remarkably little trouble from this source in France.)]. One of the compositions, written by Renee Dourthe, daughter of the schoolmaster, is quoted herewith: 'The work of the Americans is certainly a curious one. I saw them raise huge logs with large pliers, as easily as they would have moved a straw. Their furnaces for their kitchens are half in the ground, in order not to waste any heat. What struck me especially about the American soldiers is their cleanliness. All of them are tall, healthy and strong, owing to their hygiene. Their teeth are very white; and not to soil their hands, they put on gloves, even at work.

"'Another thing I admired also is their politeness. France had the fame of being the most polite nation in the world. We have often heard and read about the French courtesy. Is France going to lose her rank among the well-bred nations?

"'I like the American soldiers who came to help France. I like the Americans who came here to defend justice and right. I admire the Americans who remembered France, and who came to her in spite of the many dangers. Long live the United States of America!'"

[Owing to the fact that the rosters of several companies failed to arrive from France as this issue goes to press, it is impossible to be certain that the titles of some of the officers mentioned in the article are correct.—EDITOR.]

**WE WANT TO RECORD YOUR MEMORIAL TREE PLANTING. PLEASE ADVISE
THE AMERICAN FORESTRY ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON, D. C.**



LONG MARTIME PILING LOADED ON AMERICAN NARROW GAUGE CARS READY FOR TRANSPORTATION FROM THE FOREST TO THE MAIN LINE RAILWAY SHIPPING POINT NEAR PONTENX, LANDES, FRANCE