

HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL DETACHMENT

398 Infantry

From date of activation 15 Oct. 1942

to

31 December 1944



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HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL DETACHMENT  
398 Infantry

FROM DATE OF ACTIVATION 15 OCT. 1942  
TO  
31 December 1944

The Medical Detachment of the 398 Infantry was activated at Ft. Jackson, S.C. on 15 October 1942. A large area in the main section of Ft. Jackson, surrounded by two theaters, a Service Club, two Post Exchanges and other modern installations was the location for the birth of the 398 Inf. Medical Detachment.

A Cadre of ten Enlisted Men were sent from Ft. Meade, Md. and one Medical Officer stationed at Ft. Jackson, to Ft. Jackson, S.C. for the responsible job of training the men who were to arrive shortly. Six of these original cadre-men are still with the Medical Detachment and the original Medical Officer is now Detachment Commander, Regimental Surgeon for the 398 Infantry.

The first fillers for the Medical Detachment consisting of six men arrived 15 November, 1942. For the next month and a half, fillers arrived, were equipped and assigned to barracks in their new home. By 28 December 1942, the last fillers were received and the new Medical Detachment was of T.O. strength.

Basic training for the Medical Detachment officially began 28 December 1942.

The thirteen week training period consisted of both Medical and basic Military Training. Four weeks of Military training and nine weeks of Medical Training and instruction.

During the first week of Basic training an epidemic of Meningitis began and continued through the second week of February 1943. The Regimental Surgeon immediately initiated action to control this epidemic. A strict quarantine was rigidly enforced. Head to foot sleeping in barracks was enforced. Shelter halves were placed about the head of each bed to protect others from the coughs of the



occupant. A daily physical inspection in the respective barracks was held by the Medical Detachment Officers and when necessary, men were promptly evacuated to the Hospital.

Although the Medical Detachment training followed an established plan, it was unique in many respects, and unusually thorough. Our Detachment Commander and other Medical Officers held daily classes on a wide variety of Medical subjects. There were frequent demonstrations of Medical technique in which all men of the Medical Detachment were participants.

The correct technique of giving hypodermic injections was demonstrated with the use of an orange and an actual hypodermic syringe. Applications of arm and leg splints, bandages, pressure points, etc. were all practiced by each man until a satisfactory degree of skill was acquired. Frequent oral, written and practical examinations were held, which all men were required to pass. In order to sustain interest and enthusiasm, the Medical Detachment had contests between sections in setting up outdoor Medical installations.

Each man in the Medical Detachment was issued a Medical Department Handbook from the WEMA fund, through the efforts of the Detachment Commander. The Medical Detachment developed a high degree of physical stamina through hikes, calisthenics and various exercises such as running with a patient on a litter.

Early in training, men with the proper ability were assigned to various companies as Company Aid Men on hikes and field problems.

Perhaps the most important feature of practical training was the following system used to train promising men as future surgical and medical technicians.

Each Battalion had it's own sick call at Battalion Aid Stations which were complete Dispensaries in themselves with a Medical Officer in charge. This system enabled



the Detachment to train more technicians by practical experience, under supervision of Medical Officers. The Battalion Aid Stations also learned early the value and "know-how" of operating more-or-less on their own, in preparation for combat.

A complete record chart on each man was kept up-to-date by the First Sergeant as to grades on oral, written and practical examinations and other information which enabled him to recommend deserving men to become Non Commissioned Officers.

The Regimental Dispensary served the fourth Battalion of the 398 Regiment which consisted of Anti-Tank, Service, Cannon and Regimental Headquarters Companies. In addition to these, the Regimental Dispensary served various special troops such as Quartermaster, Ordinance, Signal Company and others located near by.

During the month of February 1943, the Medical Detachment had it's first full-field Corp inspection by Major General Simpson. That day Pvt. Portin of Boston, Mass. was commended by General Simpson upon his soldierly apperance and was promoted to PFC.

Throughout the course of training the Medical Detachment gave Typhoid, Tetanus immunizations and Smallpox vaccinations to all members of the Regiment. Although many thousand hypodermic injections were given, there was not a single case of infection due to the excellent sterile technique practiced.

President Roosevelt Made a tour of Southern Army Camps during the month of March 1943, and the Medical Detachment travelled by motor convoy to Charleston, S.C., to furnish Medical Aid for the 398 Regiment which assisted in guarding the tracks, roads, and bridges over which the President travelled. The Regimental Aid Station was set up in the bivouac area and all Medical Detachment personel were prepared to give prompt Medical Service.

During the course of training, numerous field problems were held in the vicinity of



Ft. Jackson, S.C. Starting with simple bivouac exercises and progressing into difficult tactical problems, the Medical Detachment played an important part in each of these. Through the use of simulated casualties, everyone from Company Aid men to the Regimental Aid Station learned, by practice, the mechanics of rapid evacuation.

November 9, 1943, the Medical Detachment left Ft. Jackson and travelled by motor convoy to participate in 2nd Army maneuvers held in the vicinity of Nashville, Tenn.

The 1943 Winter maneuvers was one of the most difficult ever held in Tenn. due to the sub-zero weather, combined with mud, rain, snow, terrain, and the length of the maneuvers. During the two months duration of maneuvers the Medical Detachment received a taste of combat conditions. Rapid movements, many at night and the valuable training of improvising when conditions demanded, such as setting up an emergency dressing station on the back of a two and one-half ton truck during brief, indefinite stops taught all personnel the value of resourcefulness and created a feeling of confidence with each accomplishment. Numerous minor operations and Medical service performed under difficult field conditions proved the Medical Detachment to be well trained and Organized. An increased feeling of confidence toward Company Aid Men who hiked, worked and lived with their Companies, developed throughout maneuvers. Important also was the knowledge that the Company Aid Man was always near by to render any necessary Emergency Medical treatment or supervise evacuation if necessary.

Because of this rapid Medical Service given by the Detachment, not a single death occurred from accident during the maneuver period.

All latrines and kitchens were selected according to good field sanitation principles. Company Aid men supervised the construction of latrines, garbage pits, and assisted in selecting appropriate locations for kitchens. There were regular inspections by the Regimental and Battalion Surgeons as to general field sanitation.



During the last half of Tenn. maneuvers the Medical Detachment Commander was promoted to the rank of Major.

An unusually good health record for winter maneuvers was made during this period.

The Medical Detachment received a share of the commendations from ranking Army Officers for this excellent record. Due to the fact that the Detachment was obliged to leave all records behind at the time of shipment overseas, exact statistical data cannot be given.

After 10 weeks of maneuvers, the Medical Detachment left the maneuver area and travelled by motor convoy to Ft. Bragg, N.C.

After the difficult two months spent on maneuvers, the Medical Detachment welcomed garrison life once more. After a few days of adjustment, training was again started in earnest. A thorough review of Medical and Surgical techniques as well as Military training, exercises, etc., was immediately resumed. However the most outstanding development in the training was advanced instruction on Medical and Military subjects. Special classes on Anatomy, Emergency Medical treatment and practical Pharmacy were held regularly with the aim of giving all technicians a deeper and broader insight into the theory and practical applications of basic principles. That this plan succeeded, is demonstrated by the fact that a dozen or so Medical and Surgical technicians initiated evening classes on their own time, and their sincere interest was rewarded by various Medical Officers devoting a period of their time also to lectures, explanations and general assistance at these classes. Regular daily class instruction was conducted by each Battalion Aid Station to members of their section under the guidance of a Medical Officer.

Military training at this period consisted of regular marches, field problems, and practical map reading exercises conducted in the vicinity of Ft. Bragg.

Three months after the Medical Detachment began their advanced training at Ft. Bragg



a Division test for all Surgical, Medical and other technicians was held. These tests consisted of an oral examination on a wide variety of subjects relative to the technician's particular field. Also a practical test in which three or more techniques had to be demonstrated and were graded as to sterile technique, proper continuity of the operations and general understanding of the principles and practical ability. At the conclusion of these tests, the Medical Detachment received an excellent commendation from the examiner.

While at Ft. Bragg, N.C. the Medical Detachment was fortunate in receiving a new man, a trained podiatrist with ten years civilian experience as a podiatrist. He established a small office in the Regimental Dispensary and began work on the feet of the Regiment. A complete foot survey was made of every Company in the Regiment, and each man was treated for corns, warts, in-grown toe nails, athletes feet, flat feet, etc. Any man needing orthopedic supports such as arch supports, had a prescription made by the podiatrist which was filled by the Post Orthopedic brace shop. Sgt. Gallup, the Regimental podiatrist reduced foot complaints within the Regiment over 75%.

During the training period at Ft. Bragg, over 25 Enlisted men from the Detachment were selected and sent to Surgical and Medical Technicians schools. These courses lasted from two to three months and were invaluable in preparation for combat.

The Medical Detachment was busy at other work besides study. Each man coming into or leaving the Regiment was given a thorough physical examination. During the eight months, well over 3000 Enlisted Men and Officers were examined prior to coming into or leaving the Regiment. At regular intervals all men in the Regiment were given dental surveys and eye tests. Long before the Medical Detachment left Ft. Bragg, most men were in class IV as to teeth, and men wearing glasses had two pair of the latest prescription. Over 800 pair of gas mask glasses were also issued to men of this Regiment before leaving Ft. Bragg.



The Medical Detachment held lectures for the respective Companies on venereal prophylaxis. Not only was the need and value of venereal prophylaxis explained but various simple techniques valuable prior to coming to the station was fully covered. Questions were invited from the men relative to proper protection and venereal prophylaxis and Medical Officers explained thoroughly all points until the Regiment was venereal conscious and aware of the Medical Detachment's facilities for giving venereal prophylaxis day or night.

The Medical Detachment was among the first Detachment's to receive training in the use of Unit Medical Equipment packs. Several problems and exercises on the use of these packs were held. Among the most interesting of these problems was an actual river crossing demonstration given by men of this Detachment.

Early in September 1944, an exhaustive inspection of Medical Aid Kits, Dental Chests, and Medical Chests was held by the Regimental Surgeon and Assistant Regimental Surgeon. All shortages were carefully noted and requisitioned. A final inspection was made 15 September 1944 and all Medical equipment was found to be complete.

On 25 September 1944 at 2145 the Medical Detachment left Ft. Bragg, N.C. and travelled by rail to Camp Kilmer, N.J. arriving 26 September 1944, after having travelled approximately 510 miles. During the trip Company Aid men travelled with their respective Companies and gave Medical Aid for minor indispositions.

During the ten days spent at Camp Kilmer, N.J. the Medical Detachment received initial issue on shoe packs, being one of the first units ever to be issued these prior to shipment overseas. Various other items of clothing, etc. such as protective socks, and combat gas masks were issued. Member of the Detachment when not engaged in work participated in outdoor games and exercises. The Medical Detachment gave the Regiment their Typhus inoculations and the podiatrist made final adjustments on Orthopedic supports, etc. Needless to say, men going on 12 hour pass to New York City and nearby cities were issued venereal prophylaxis kits.



Sick call was held daily at the Regimental Dispensary and morale was high when the Detachment left Camp Kilmer 5 October 1944. The Medical Detachment travelled by rail and ferry to N.Y. POE and boarded US Naval Transport NY 433. On the morning of 6 October 1944 at 01030 the Medical Detachment left the United States for an unknown destination.

Sickness was negligible during the trip overseas with the exception of the usual sea sickness. Medical Detachment personnel were on duty at the Aid Station and ship's sick Bay 24 hours daily. Daily sick call was held and large quantities of lemons and crackers were given to men suffering from sea sickness. The ship was single loaded and men spent their leisure time attending the all day movies, reading, writing, and resting on deck. Morale was high despite the rocking ship and when land was first sighted the word spread over the ship in record time. The decks were crowded as almost to a man the Regiment rushed on deck to see their first land after many days aboard ship. There was a mutual feeling of pleasure as we neared land, similar to one seeing an old acquaintance after a long absence.

The Medical Detachment arrived at Marseille, France 20 October 1944 at 1730 and proceeded by foot to NATOUSA, DBS-Staging Area No. I, covering a distance of nearly ten miles.

The period of 21 to 31 October 1944 was used in preparation to move to the combat area. Each Battalion Aid Station was immediately set up and the Regimental Aid Station also had dental equipment ready for emergency dental service. Daily sick call was held at Battalion and Regimental Aid Stations.

The Medical Detachment left staging Area No. I by train and motor convoy 30 and 31 October 1944 respectively and arrived in the vicinity of St. Gorgon ETO USA France 2 November 1944, motor convoy at 1700 and train at 1200.



## CONSERVATION OF MANPOWER

### Regimental Rest Camp

Early in combat the 398 Regimental Surgeon established a flexible, mobile rest center for the Regiment. 1st.Lt. Irving Friedman, D.C. later promoted to the Rank of Captain was placed in charge of the Rest Center. The initial staff of technicians assigned to operate the new rest center consisted in addition to the Regimental Dentist in charge, the Regimental podiatrist and one Dental technician. Later when the Rest Center began to expand to accommodate an increasing number of men, the staff was slightly increased in order to efficiently operate the Center. Men were sent to the Rest Center on the basis of need and not merely rotation as was the rule of the Division Rest Center. In this way men having minor ailments; early trench foot, or simple fatigue were given rest, treatment, and returned to duty in a few days, thus vitally conserving manpower which would undoubtedly have been hospitalized in a few weeks with much longer period of absence. Since the Rest Center was not operated upon a plan of rotation, each man was able to remain at the Center until his condition was sufficiently improved to enable him to return to duty. Patients at the Rest Center received the following services; complete dental service(with the exception of dentures done at Division Rest), a complete change of clothing, showers, toilet articles, cigarettes and PX rations, Movies, opportunity for reading, writing and a bunk in order to completely relax. Each man entering the Rest Center was given a Dental survey and all defects remedied before the man returned to duty. In cases where dentures were necessary, the man was either taken to Division Rest Center if location permitted, or a note was forwarded to his C.O. advising him that the man's necessary Dental work could be completed at Division Rest. In this way men needing dentures were included on rotation passes to the Division Rest Center where Capt. Herman, D.C. also from the Medical Detachment performed the necessary work. A captured German generator was used to produce light for the men's reading room and a



spot light in the office in order that the Regimental Dentist could perform Dental work at night.

The Regimental podiatrist conducted a foot survey on all patients in the Rest Center. He was able to give complete, expert foot service on all foot conditions.

Medical service at the Rest Center was unusually thorough. While the Rest Center was not a hospital, it was necessary to have necessary medications and equipment for treating common ailments such as Nasopharyngitis, Gastro Enteritis, sprains, etc. The Assistant Rgtl. Surgeon or Rgtl. Surgeon visited the Rest Center daily and in doubtful cases decided the disposition; duty or evacuation. Men with indefinite or other complaints were also examined and the findings often saved future loss of time from duty. The Rest Center was attached to Regimental Service Company for meals and transportation.

Sick call was held each evening and every man in the Center regardless of his complaint or reason for being there was questioned, examined and treated. A complete record was kept as to medications given, amount and time of administration. This simple, complete record system used enabled one to see at a glance the name, rank, serial number, Company, date of arrival, diagnosis, (temperature if appropriate), bed assigned to, medications recommended on E.M.T. and administered at the Rest Center as well as time and dosage of all medications.

Each morning a voluntary sick call was held for ailing men. In addition all men receiving medications were checked at their bunks, given their medications and their temperature taken if necessary. A continuous record of this type was kept on each man for the duration of his stay at the Center.

Venereal prophylaxis was also available day or night at the Regimental Rest Center.

An average of 250 men pass through the Rest Center each month.



## CARE OF FEET

### In The Fox-hole

When men are living in fox-holes, day and night with damp, cold feet there is a probability that either immersion foot or trench foot may develop. These are most difficult conditions to combat and only impressive instruction can be of assistance in it's prevention, since unlike battle wounds each man must "help himself", rather than depend upon the Company Aid Man to prevent or cure this condition. Posters displayed in Battalion and Regimental Aid Stations, leaflets distributed in mess-lines, or through their companies, instruction by Officers and NCO's are methods used by this Medical Detachment to make the men "feet-conscious". Men in fox-holes are told to keep their feet moving, to change socks once daily and if conditions permit to remove their shoes and socks as often as possible, dry and massage their feet. This assists circulation of blood in the feet and greatly reduces immersion and trench foot. Men are instructed to carry an extra pair of dry, clean socks in their helmet liner.

### In Aid Stations

Men sent to Aid Stations with trench foot or suspected trench foot are carefully examined and if open blisters are present these are treated. This Detachment evacuates all cases of mild trench foot to the Regimental Rest Camp where proper care and supervision is provided. Severe cases are immediately evacuated through Medical channels to Clearing Company.

### Rest Camp

Trench foot patients arriving at the 398 Rest Center are first given complete verbal instructions as to the care of their feet and in addition are given a leaflet containing the same information which they are requested to read carefully. Men next



are given a damp cloth with which to clean their feet. After the feet are clean and thoroughly dry, foot powder is liberally applied over the entire feet. Any foot defects such as corns, warts, in-grown toe nails, etc. are treated at this time.

Each man is given clean, dry socks and is assigned to a bunk in order that he can massage, elevate, and rest his feet. Strict supervision is kept over all trench foot patients and almost without exception they return to duty in a few days with well healed feet.



## HOUSING

Battalion and Regimental Aid Stations of this Detachment use suitable buildings when practical. After the building or rooms are declared safe as to booby-traps etc., the room is thoroughly cleaned, and made as sanitary as possible.

Rooms that are capable of being heated to the proper temperature, that possess sufficient light and necessary space are chosen for treatment and dressing rooms.

Immediately after a location is selected and staff is present the Aid Station is plainly marked on the road so as to be readily seen by vehicles and foot soldiers.

A suitable shock litter with sufficient blankets and treatment litter is kept ready for use at all times. The issue gasoline stoves are used to supply the proper heat for the station.

It is a rule in this Detachment that unnecessary personnel stay out of the treatment room when patients are present so as not to hinder the Surgeon and Technicians in their work.

Through the efforts of the Division Surgeon the Three Battalion Stations were each supplied with a 120 Volt generator which was used with excellent results.



## VENEREAL CONTROL

When in combat, venereal control is as important and in some respects such as loss of valuable manpower, more important than in garrison. This Detachment has always provided adequate prophylactic facilities and extensive instructions as to the value of these protective measures. Since this Detachment has been in combat the following measures have been continually in operation.

Each man is given mechanical prophylactics. Company Aid men with the various Companies carry an extra supply and readily give men additional prophylactics as needed.

All Battalion and Regimental Aid Stations have facilities for giving chemical venereal prophylaxis, day or night. The Regimental Rest Center also gives the same venereal prophylactic service as the Aid Stations.

All men are instructed through posters, circulars, and personal instruction from Medical and Infantry Officers and NCO's the facilities of the Detachment for giving venereal prophylaxis as well as the need and value of these measures.

Known houses of prostitution which could be instrumental in infecting soldiers are placed "off limits" to all personnel.



## IMPROVISATIONS OF TECHNIQUE AND EQUIPMENT

Difficult conditions often stimulate variations in technique to meet the ever changing conditions and problems which has confronted the Medical Detachment.

Alert technicians and the skillful surgeons, always "on the alert" for more efficient technical applications of needed improvised methods and techniques have produced the following improvisations. Some may be original and others already in use by other units but all techniques explained below are discoveries by the Medical Detachment.

1. Litters have been equipped with a set of ski's. This was found to be useful in the evacuation of wounded during a moderately deep snow in France. One man can pull a litter containing a patient for a considerable distance without undue fatigue. Of course the ski attachment did not in any way interfere with the regular method of litter carry.

2. It was found that plasma when given to patients during cold weather did not flow well. Now the Aid Stations of this Detachment keep the jar of sterile, distilled water used to mix with the plasma powder, in a bucket of warm water. The plasma mixes quickly, runs easily and is body temperature when it is administered. This simple improvisation has probably saved many lives.

3. In order to quickly evacuate more litter patients than was formerly possible with a jeep, the Detachment technicians fashioned litter supports which were bolted and welded on to the jeep. Now each section can evacuate 4 litter patients and one sitting patient at one time by using a jeep with this attachment.

4. Each plasma set comes complete with rubber tubing, needles, etc., and after it has been used it had been discarded as worthless. The Medical Detachment technicians thought that some useful purpose could be found for these yards of small, flexible tubing. Now they use discarded plasma tubing to feed litter patients hot liquids in shock treatment.



5. Some unidentified Company Aid Man saw the inefficiency and inconvenience of washing mess kits with the usual G.I. brush. So he sawed the brush into several small sections which were nailed to the end of sticks or suitable boards for handles. In this way one G.I. brush makes several (about three) excellent brushes for washing mess kits. They are especially efficient for cleaning the mess kit cup and washing the smaller parts of the mess kit appliances. In addition practically the entire brush is used instead of merely the ends as previously was found to be the case when a full size brush was used.
6. The Regimental Rest Camp Podiatrist discovered that extra felt inner soles designed for shoe pacs could be used for temporary arch supports by cutting these to fit the size of the arch and taping two thicknesses together for the correct height. This support is in turn taped securely to the shoe pac inner-sole and this flexible, comfortable, temporary substitute for arch supports has been successful. The podiatrist also used cardboard cut to proper size for additional soles for shoe pacs when present ones became wet.
7. Faucets from salvage lister bags are removed and welded to fit a hole drilled near the bottom of a G.I. water can. This can is used in the Aid Stations where it has been found that such a can is not only convenient for pouring drinking water but that it also conserves the amount of water used by diminishing spilled water on the floor.
8. A captured German generator was converted into a portable power plant by the Detachment First Sergeant. This generator supplied necessary light for the Regimental Aid Station. The generator was mounted on the rear of a jeep trailer so it was not necessary to load or unload it during Detachment movements. It has been very satisfactory and more dependable than gasoline lanterns.



## MEDICAL TREATMENT AND NURSING

Company Aid men and Medical Officers of this Detachment have proved themselves well trained, efficient and high in physical stamina. Throughout two months in combat an unmistakeable feeling of confidence and respect for all Medical Detachment personnel has become increasingly evident. The faithful Company Aid man, always on the job during any emergency; Battalion Aid station technicians and Medical Officers have made their presence felt and each man in this Regiment knows that the Detachment Medical Personnel are always by his side, supporting his successful battle for complete victory.



## AWARDS

From the period of 6 November 1944 to 31 December 1944, the following awards were made to Medical Detachment personnel.

Silver Star	-----	3
Bronze Star	-----	14
Purple Heart	-----	6



REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DETACHMENT

398 INFANTRY

from 1 January 1945 to 25 June 1945



REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DETACHMENT 398 INFANTRY  
FROM 1 JANUARY 1945 to JUNE 1945

January 1, 1945 found our Regiment in defensive positions. The Battalion Aid Stations attached to the respective Battalions of this Regiment were at the following locations. The First Battalion was at Petit Rederching, France; Second Battalion at Holbach, France; and the Third Battalion was located in Etting, France. We had few Casualties New Years day, however one Company Aid Man was hit by shell fragments while attempting to reach three wounded men in his Company. Most of the enemy fire consisted of Artillery, Rocket, and Motar with very little small arms fire.

The First Battalion Aid Station moved and set up in Etting, France 6 January 1945 where Companies of the First Battalion were holding several pill-boxes on the Maginot Line. The Second Battalion Aid Station moved to Lambach and set up in a large school house near the outskirts of town. During the night enemy patrols infiltrated and stopped at a Church directly across the road from the Aid Station. Two wounded Germans from this patrol came across the road to the Aid Station for medical treatment. The Third Battalion Aid Station moved to Rohrbach. A forward dressing station consisting of a litter team and Technicians advanced to Gresing. Due to the Terrain it was impossible for troops to move during the day except in emergencies. Therefore sick call was held during darkness.

On 9 January 1945 the First Battalion attacked German held hills southwest of Rimling, France. During the day casualties were high



in the Battalion. Five Company Aid Men and two Litter Bearers from this section were wounded. P.F.C. Zagha voluntarily made three trips in a jeep evacuating casualties over a road which was under constant 88 mm and Mortar fire. Several men were thus given rapid treatment who might have spent hours on that bare hill upon which the Battalion had dug in.

From 20 January 1945 to 15 March 1945 the Regiment was mainly in defensive positions. During this five week period of defensive combat the First Battalion Aid Station was located at St. Louis, France; the Second Battalion Aid Station at Meisenthal and the Third moved into Limberg. The Regimental Aid Station moved into Montbronn. Casualties were few and mainly from mines and artillery.

It was during this defensive period that the first cases of Jaundice appeared. Despite all efforts of the Medical Detachment personell many men contracted this disease and it was almost six weeks before Jaundice was reduced to a negligible amount. An accurate record was kept of the relative occurrence of Jaundice in various Companies, in an attempt to discover reasons for the almost epidemic numbers.

On March 15, 1945 the Second Battalion established an Aid Station at Camp Freudenberg on the evening before the troops arrived. The large cellar of one of the barracks served as a suitable evacuation point and a fairly safe place to treat the wounded. A forward Aid Station was set up in a pill-box near the spear-head of the attack. The German artillery was plentiful and



casualties started coming in. One Aid Man was hospitalized because of a fragment wound in the leg. The First Battalion Aid Station was set up in a French Army Barracks at Legeret Farms. The Battalion attacked at 0500 with comparatively few casualties. The First Battalion Aid Station entered the fortress City of Bitsche 16 March 1945. The Second Battalion also immediately entered Bitsche before the city was completely cleared of snipers. Several wounded Germans were treated soon after the Second Battalion arrived in Bitsche. The first building occupied by this Battalion Aid Station was a former Hitler Jugend building in which they stayed for several days.

After the brilliant capture of Bitsche, the Regiment was held in defensive positions while awaiting the attack upon the Siegfried Line. Because of the crowded condition of Bitsche the second Battalion Aid Station moved to Eglelsheim, which was then a ghost town. They remained there for four days and then moved forward for the awaited attack upon the Siegfried Line.

March 21, 1945 the Third Battalion was alerted at 1900 for a move against the Siegfried Line. The forward Aid Station group followed two troop transports and the main Aid Station personell moved with Battalion Headquarters motors. After travelling all night the Third Battalion Aid Station reached Oggersheim, Germany where the first Aid Station on German soil was set up. No opposition was encountered through the Siegfried Line and so there were almost no casualties. After three days of short moves, the Third Battalion



was given orders for a secret mission in the vicinity of Frankenthal, Germany. The Battalion was during this time under the control of SHAEF, guarding valuable documents and plant equipment of the largest Chemical factory in Germany. The Aid Station was set up in the caretakers house on a cemetery. The forward Aid Station was set up in the sub-cellar of a gas-proof building. Shelling from across the river caused no casualties to the Third Battalion and they remained in such position for ten days. The Second Battalion Aid Station crossed the Siegfried Line 22 March, 1945 and travelled to Delfeld where they established their Aid Station. The next stop was in a suburb of Ludwigshaven, on the Rhine. The next day they moved to Dannstadt, Germany where they would be out of artillery range until it was time to cross the Rhine.

On April 1, 1945 the Second Battalion Aid Station crossed the Rhine at Ludwigshaven, Germany and set up their first Aid Station on that side of the river in a little village of Oftersheim, Germany. There seemed to be no end to the continual moving. The Battalion casualties were few and not too serious. Congested convoys and sudden change of orders became routine until they relieved the 63 Infantry Division at Hohenstadt, Germany on the Neckar River. Upon leaving Frankenthal, Germany the Third Battalion crossed the Rhine River south of Mannheim, by motor, went through the city of Mannheim and continued on to Schwetzingen, Germany. No opposition was encountered. There were few casualties but there were many new cases of Hepatitis.



While still on this side of the Neckar River one of our Company Aid men was killed by a German sniper. He had gone into an open field to treat a Sergeant that had been wounded, probably by the same sniper.

The crossing of the Neckar River was costly operation for we suffered some of the heaviest casualties of the War on our Front. A Regiment of the 17th S.S. Panzer Division faced us during the crossing.

On April 5, 1945 orders and plans for the crossing of the Neckar River reached the Second Battalion. Early the next morning a quarding party left for Offenau, Germany. Soon after, the main Aid Station followed with their 3/4 ton truck and their newly liberated German truck. That night at Offenau, plans and preparations for the river crossing at Jagstfeld were made. The same evening the Aid Station moved to Duttendorf, Germany which was only a few hundred yards from the German lines. Artillery, mortar and sopradic sniper fire continued most of the next day. Evacuation of casualties from the river bank and field was almost impossible and it became necessary to wade the river because the current would often carry the assault boats down stream. The use of plasma was necessary in many cases and this added to the difficulties. From the Aid Station to Collecting Company 325th Medical Battalion, the wounded had to be floated across another river. Snipers continued to use river barges for concealment. It was during this period that S/3gt. Cahoon received a Commission as Second Lieutenant.

The Third Battalion Aid Station set up in the town of Neckargartach, Germany; two blocks from the Neckar River, just south of the crossing.



The attack began 0300 April 4, 1945. Litter bearers were attached to the various Companies and ordered to cross the river in assault boats with the Companies. The forward Aid Station followed the troops and set up in a powder plant 100 yards on the other side of the river. Snipers were cleaned out of the plant and surrounding buildings but small-arms fire and artillery were continuously harrassing troops, Aid Men and Litter bearers. At dawn of 4 April 1945 a counter attack by the Germans almost succeeded in pushing us back to the River. During the attack by S.S. Troops one platoon of K Company and one Aid Man was captured. Another Aid Man was killed that day and several severely wounded. Aid Station personell worked without pause for 20 hours. All of the casualties had to be carried on litters from the forward Aid Station over several river flood banks, down to the river which was two hundred yards and put in assault boats. They were floated about 100 yards down stream to our Jeep. In less than a twenty four hour period fifty four casualties were treated and evacuated. The Battalion withstood three successive mornings of counter attacks.

On 12 April, 1945 orders were given to cross the Kocher River on or before midnight. A Baily bridge would be laid across the river as soon as a beachhead was made. The landing was successful and the Battalions moved forward and still further until they were ordered to occupy Schalbach, Brutalied, Bitzfeld, Adolzford and Reppach. During these hasty movements, contact with all of the Companies was impossible on many occasions. During this time, as always, the Company Aid men did a wonderful job taking care of the wounded.



From 15 April to 20 April we continued the attack in coordination with the 10th Armored Division. Contact with the Companies could be kept only by radio or runner. The Aid Stations moved through Sheppach, Verrenberg, Bubenorbes and Hutten. Some of the men were slightly wounded but were not evacuated. The troops had fought and pushed forward a great distance and with such speed that they could not give their feet proper attention. Since they had walked a greater part of the way, many of them could walk only with difficulty.

On 1 May, 1945 the Third Battalion Aid Station was in Waiblingen and the first, Second and Regimental Aid Stations were at Schorndorf.

V-E Day 9 May, 1945 found the Battalions in approximately the above mentioned locations. Some of the men celebrated but the majority spent the day quietly and started thinking seriously of Japan.



REPORT OF THE MEDICAL DETACHMENT 398 INFANTRY FROM 1 JANUARY  
1945 to 25 JUNE 1945

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Part I

Combat

Part II

After Combat

1. Housing, water supply, bathing facilities, laundry.
2. Dental Service
3. Venereal disease control.
4. Food, messing, sewage, waste disposal, insect control.
5. Training and activities.
6. Awards



PART I

COMBAT



PART II

AFTER COMBAT



## HOUSING, WATER SUPPLY, BATHING FACILITIES, LAUNDRY

This Detachment has been fortunate in obtaining excellent living quarters and locations for it's Battalion Aid Stations. Houses are selected which are easily available to troops, of the desired sizes, and have sufficient light and venelation. The rooms are made as clean, fresh and attractive as possible. All troops in this Regiment have access to Insectide powder and are instructed by their Company Aid men as to the proper use of it on blankets, bed-rolls, etc.

The use of local water by troops for drinking purposes is prohibited. Only water secured from Engineer water points is approved by the Regimental Surgeon.

Companies have their own laundry system consisting of hand operated machines to large commercial size machines.

Approved swimming locations are used extensively by men of this Regiment. Expert swimmers, and men with experience as Life Savers are grequently assigned to the swimming locations during hours being used by troops.



## DENTAL SERVICE

Since V-E Day the Regimental Dentist has been located at the Regimental Aid Station. During combat, the Dentist was situated at the Regimental Rest Center and each man admitted to the Center was given a survey and placed in Class IV before leaving if possible. In cases where dentures were required, the men were taken to the Division Rest Center and properly fitted. Immediately after combat, a Dental survey was made of the entire Regiment and the Regimental Dentist at present treats 12 to 16 patients daily by appointment upon the basis of the survey. Men with emergency conditions are of course, treated in addition to the full schedule of routine Dental work.



## VENEREAL DISEASE CONTROL

The 398 Infantry Medical Detachment Regimental and Battalion Aid Stations have always given prophylactic treatment to troops. However with the increase of Venereal rate in the ETO, further precautions were taken. Because of the reluctance of some men to report to an Aid Station for prophylactic treatment, either because of inconvenience of location after curfew hours or from fear of being charged with fraternization, many men undoubtedly neglected to protect themselves properly with regard to a complete chemical prophylactic. Therefore each Company Aid man was issued complete prophylactic equipment and troops were informed of the informality of prophylactic treatment and assured that receiving a prophylactic, either from a Company Aid man or from an Aid Station would under no circumstances be used as evidence against them with regard to fraternization. The Assistant Regimental Surgeon gave at least ten per cent of the men in each Company a thorough lecture on the giving of prophylactic treatments. Large quantities of rubber prophylactic and individual prophylactic kits were also made available to all troops.

Men who have become infected are found early by means of regular physical inspections. Such men are promptly evacuated for immediate treatment.



FOOD and MESSING, SEWAGE and WASTE DISPOSAL, INSECT CONTROL

All kitchens and personell are regularly inspected by the Regimental and Battalion Surgeons. Garbage pits are used for disposal of waste food. Each kitchen has fly traps made from mesh wire or fly strips which so far have been effective in combating excessive amounts of flies. In addition to kitchens, each house being occupied by troops and all latrines have fly strips hung from the ceiling.

Whenever possible indoor toilets are used by troops since it is believed that they are more sanitary than outdoor latrines. Disinfectants are issued to assist in keeping them clean and of course only those indoor toilets which are in perfect plumbing condition are used by troops.



## TRAINING AND ACTIVITIES

Since V-E Day to the present date, 25 June 1945 the Regiment has followed a well balanced training program. Many men of the Medical Detachment were presented with awards. A complete list of these awards is given in this report. Helmets and helmet liners were painted and all troops were issued their well earned ETO ribbon and battle star. An increasing amount of interest has been shown toward all forms of athletics; particularly softball. Close order drill, orientation, formal retreat formations and care of clothing and equipment occupy the troops time. The Company Aid men now hold weekly foot inspections in order that unnecessary Athletes feet may be prevented. The Regimental Aid Station as well as Battalion Stations personell have given all troops their required inoculations and shots. Movies are held several times weekly and all troops have the opportunity to attend these shows as well as performances given by displaced persons and USO shows.

On 23 June, 1945 two of our Medical Officers left for Hospitals in Paris and Vittol, France for a two month course.



## AWARDS

From the period 1 January 1945 to 25 June 1945 the following awards were made to Medical Detachment personell.

Bronze Star----- 41

Silver Star----- 6

Purple Heart----- 16



HISTORY OF THE 398 INFANTRY MEDICAL DETACHMENT

For the Period

30 JUNE 1945 to 23 AUGUST 1945



## C O N T E N T S

Venereal Control

Recreation and Education

Training and Activities

Preparation for Movement

Awards and Decorations



## VENEREAL CONTROL

Soon after the end of hostilities in Germany this Regiment noted a definite increase in its Venereal Disease rate. Whereas the V.D. rate while in France was by comparison almost negligible, the reasons for this unpleasant increase was not easy to discover. The most probable answer, although undoubtedly this is not completely correct is that many men who had previously exercised great caution with French prostitutes, relaxed their guard upon contact with some apparently "clean" German women. Although tracing the source of infection in V.D. is difficult due to the undependability of answers given by some men, it has been established as fairly certain that the greater majority of Venereal Disease contacts are from within Germany.

An intensive program of Venereal Disease education and control was immediately initiated within the Regiment. Among the hundreds of measures used, the following are perhaps the most outstanding and it is believed have been largely responsible for the partial success of this program.

Patients from civilian hospitals who were suffering from advanced Venereal Disease were brought before troops in order that they could see for themselves the actual proof of the result of Venereal Disease. In connection with this method of education, a large exhibit of wax moulages secured by Division and loaned to this Regiment was used to illustrate a greater variety of diseases resulting from Venereal Disease in an almost life like manner.

Movies were also shown and this Regiment wrote and produced an original one act play which was presented to all troops. In this play the results of V.D. as well as the simple method of prevention were presented as educational entertainment.

Lectures by the Regimental Surgeon to each Company stressed the methods of preventing Venereal Disease. In order to fully impress the value of prophylaxis a complete prophylaxis kit was used for a demonstration and the reason for using each technique fully explained. It was stressed that in addition to the Aid Stations, each Company had its own Pro. station conveniently located and that no one would be charged with fraternization because he took a Pro.

All known female contacts were rounded up and tested for V.D. Lists of suspicious women were obtained from the Bourgmasters



and these women were also given tests for V.D. In the above cases all women who were found to be infected were hospitalized and treated.

Numerous proclamations were posted through the AMG and local curfew Governments, listing 3 years imprisonment to anyone proved having given Venereal Disease to another.

A limerick and essay contest was also initiated with prizes to the winners.

Each Company C.P. had a sign painted showing the comparative rate of V.D. of the various Companies within its Battalion.

Frequent inspections were also held in the hope that some early cases could be discovered and more promptly checked.

Exact statistics on Venereal Disease were carefully kept and the results of this program are most encouraging. After two months (July and August) of intensified education and Venereal Disease control this Regiment has reduced its V.D. rate by at least 43% and all indications are that this may be further reduced by at least 10% within the following month.



## RECREATION and ENTERTAINMENT

The Medical Detachment 398 Infantry is proud of the high standard of morale among its men. Since the Detachment is attached to the various Battalions it is often impractical for the Detachment to have its recreational facilities centered as do other Companies within the Regiment. Therefore each Battalion Aid Station must supply more or less its own recreation center for the men within its section.

During off duty hours men are occupied with various recreational activities which include athletics, movies, reading, and photography. With regard to the last item, photography, it has proved to be a most interesting and educational recreation. The Detachment has its own film laboratory complete with darkroom, etc., where the Detachments negatives are developed and printed.

Two Enlisted Men and one Medical Officer are attending schools in France and England. The Medical Officer is attending a Medical School in Paris. One Enlisted Man is taking a Science course in England., and another is attending a Fine Arts School in England. Several men of the Medical Detachment are enrolled for USAFI and correspondence courses.



## TRAINING and ACTIVITIES

The Medical Detachments greatest energy has been used to control Venereal Disease. This is discussed in detail under the heading of "Venereal Control".

Normal Medical activities have continued in all Battalions and the Regimental Aid Station.

There was a noted increase in morning sick call for a period of about three weeks. The Regimental Dentist was also busy during this time treating an unusual number of trench mouth cases.

Company Aid men with their Companies continued their splendid record and experience gained in combat through into garrison life with invaluable aid to their Companies in the treatment of minor ailments.

Physical training of the Detachment has for the most part consisted in participation in their respective Battalion and Company training. This has included hikes, close order drill, Calisthenics and Athletics.



## PREPARATION for MOVEMENT

During the month of August the Medical Detachment began its preparation for movement to the States. While it continued its normal activities with regard to Medical service, the entire Detachment and especially the Supply section felt the problems of supply and movement.

All excess clothing and equipment were turned in to the Regimental Supply Office. Many other items of equipment, Medical as well as Organizational and personal were also turned in according to orders which left the Detachment with only MEE equipment. While it was not known exactly what Medical facilities would be provided at the Port, our Detachment was prepared to set up one complete Dispensary unit if necessary.

All Company Aid men were well stocked with supplies before the Medical equipment was turned in, in order that they could be of the greatest service to their respective Companies while on route.



## AWARDS and DECORATIONS

During the period from 30 June 1945 to and including 23 August the following awards have been made to members of the 398 Infantry Medical Detachment.

Distinguished Service Cross  
PFC Marco Zagha voluntarily drove a jeep several trips along a road which was under heavy fire evacuating wounded men.

Silver Star----- 1

Bronze Star----- 6

Purple Heart----- 4



REPORT OF THE 398th INFANTRY MEDICAL DETACHMENT

For the Period

1 July 1945

To

31 October 1945



CONTENTS

Housing and Billets

Mess Sanitation

Venereal Control

Activities, Medical

Recreation

Decorations and Awards



## HOUSING and BILLETS

Every effort has been made to assure comfortable, healthy quarters for men of this Command. Billets with sufficient light, venelation, facilities for proper heating, and with attractive uncrowded rooms are selected for permanent housing.

It is especially important that Aid Stations be situtated in attractive houses with proper heat and light. For this reason the dressing rooms are selected which have running water, an electric outlet for sterilizers and electric lights. The rooms must be large enough and have excellent venelation to accomodate numbers of men reporting for sick call. Billets and particularly Aid Stations are washed and cleaned daily. An unusually high degree of cleanliness is maintained with the assistance of a Civilian employee.



## MESS SANITATION

The Medical Detachment has no separate kitchen and its men are attached for rations to various Companies of the Regiment. The kitchens of this Regiment could serve as a model for any Division due to the extraordinary amount of effort and thought exerted toward this end. Many kitchens have especially decorated mess halls, with good ventilation. The tables are attractively set with table cloths or oil cloths, silver ware, plates and cups. All Civilians employed in kitchens are carefully inspected for contagious diseases and cleanliness.

Boiling water is used for cleaning purposes and all garbage is disposed of in properly dug garbage pits. Kitchen and mess hall floors are scrubbed after each meal by Civilian help and all meals are served hot and in an appetizing manner.

Regular inspections of all kitchens are conducted by the Regimental Surgeon.



## VENEREAL CONTROL

The Regimental Surgeon with the cooperation of all Officers and Enlisted Men of this Regiment have been highly successful in lowering the once comparatively high Venereal rate to an almost minimum.

During the past two months Venereal disease in this Regiment has decreased over 150%. At present the average of all Companies is less than two new cases of Venereal Disease per month.

Each Company has its own Pro Station under the direction of the Company Aid Man. It is made prominent at night by using a green electric light and it is open 24 hours daily.

Frequent unannounced inspections are held by the Regimental and Battalion Surgeons and all contacts are checked and given immediate treatment.



## MEDICAL ACTIVITIES

Dental service, regular Medical service for men of the Regiment, physical inspections, Venereal control, comprise the bulk of the Detachment's Medical activities.

Company Aid Men are assigned to each Company as during combat and have been most successful in maintaining high morale, and assisting in Venereal control.

Sick call is held regularly in each Battalion and at the Regimental Dispensary. Ambulances make routine daily trips to each Aid Station to evacuate patients. In addition, for emergencies, ambulances are obtainable at any time.



## RECREATION

Movies and USO shows are the most popular form of entertainment with men of this Company. Movies are shown daily in a modern theater with good seats and a capacity of about five hundred. USO shows are held in a much larger building with about 1500 capacity.

Another favorite recreation at this time is football games which have large crowds of spectators at each game.

A large beautiful Red Cross Club is also open 12 hours daily. It has ample facilities for dancing, snack bars, ping-pong, reading and letter writing as well as an assortment of parlor games.

Most Companies have their own bar with soft drinks, as well as a variety of alcoholic beverages.

This Regiment also boasts a traveling library with a large variety of over 1500 books.



## DECORATIONS

The following decorations and awards were made  
to men of the 398th Infantry Medical Detachment  
for the period 25 August 1945 to 31 October 1945.

(Posthumous)

Distinguished Service Cross ----- 1

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Silver Star ----- 3

Bronze Star ----- 12

Purple Heart ----- 3



REPORT OF THE 398TH INFANTRY MEDICAL DETACHMENT

For the Period

1 November 1945

To

15 December 1945



CONTENTS

Venereal Control

Scabies Control

Preparation for Movement

Medical Activities



## VENERAL CONTROL

With the departure of the division scheduled in the near future the control of venereal diseases assumed increasing importance. It was found that a false idea of the effectiveness of the penicillan treatment had gained considerable currency especially among the men who had recently joined the division. To counteract this, short talks were given to the men explaining the facts of the treatment showing that it was more than ~~average~~ going back for three days and returning completely cured. Statistics were presented on the number of recurrences, the period of restriction was explained and it was pointed out that a man could seriously endanger his chances of leaving with the division by contracting a VD at this date. Every group of men coming into the regiment were given a talk ~~of this nature~~ of this nature by the regimental surgeon.

In line with the increasing emphasis on prevention the system of instruction on VD was continued, and the company PRO stations were frequently inspected. In order to insure early treatment surprise short arms were frequently conducted in the morning.

It was found that the incidence of VD contracted locally was materially reduced by insisting that the contacts be picked up before a man was evacuated with VD, rather than waiting until a man was in the hospital and then attempting to find the



## VENERAL CONTROL (cont)

contact on the vague information usually furnished.

During this period the third section was able to do its own smears using gram stain, helping in a small way to relieve the pressure on the clearing company lab, and insuring quicker and more complete follow ups than could be furnished using the clearing company lab. Also the early diagnosis of doubtful cases of GC was facilitated.



## SCABIES CONTROL

While there had always been occasional cases of scabies in the regiment, their control had presented no problem. However, with the tremendous influx of new personnel the situation rapidly changed. An alarming proportion were found to have scabies, and it was realized that the control of this condition would have to be granted a priority as high as that given to VD.

The men were given instruction in the nature of scabies and its extreme contagiousness, the individuals part in preventing the spread of the disease, and the importance of personal hygiene was explained. Company commanders were advised as to the steps they must take such as airing the bedding of the entire company and quarantining those men who are undergoing treatment.

During this period the first section operated a hospital for scabies patients and found that under close supervision many cases which had resisted treatment cleared up. One of the most troubling difficulties was caused by the method of treatment. Sulphur ointment was the medicament available for large scale treatment. The amount of benzyl benzoate obtained was sufficient only to treat certain selected cases. However, sulphur ointment is effective only when carefully and conscientiously applied. It was soon found that the method



## SCABIES CONTROL (cont)

of using and the reasons for must be clearly explained individually to every man receiving the treatment. For those not sufficiently interested to conscientiously apply the treatment hospitalization in the unit hospital provided the answer.



## PREPARATION FOR MOVEMENT

During this period the detachment underwent a great change in personnel. Many key men left for other organizations, and new men were brought in. Places were soon found for the new men, and the work of readying the regiment for departure continued with only a few minor errors. At this time Captain Bradbury left the detachment, and Captain Charles F Goll LV joined the unit and became regimental surgeon with the responsibility of seeing the unit home, and its eventual deactivation.

The supply sergeant was especially busy during this period of preparation. Forms were checked, any shortages corrected, and all excess equipment was turned in, and complete aid kits were issued to all men. All other organizational equipment was turned in.

Service records and allied forms were gone over individually ~~and necessary corrections made.~~  
and necessary corrections made.



## MEDICAL ACTIVITIES

One of the most important duties of the detachment at this time was the examination and processing of approximately 1,900 men. Check teams were formed which efficiently processed the maximum number of men in the shortest time compatible with thorough examination. Dog tags were checked, and if the form 81 needed to be brought up to date, the shots were given on the spot. Cases of VD or scabies that were discovered were directed to report to the dispensary for treatment on the following morning. Men with a past history of VD were also made to report to insure adequate follow ups. The dental officer surveyed each man, and treatment was begun as early as possible on all men with caries or Vincents disease. It is of interest to point out that our former high rate of Vincents has been substantially reduced, and almost all cases treated during this period were from men who came into the regiment with this condition already existing.

All men in the regiment who had not previously received influenza shots were given them. As our influenza rate has been very low due perhaps to insistence on proper housing and ventilation, we have been unable to draw any conclusions as to the effectiveness of these shots.