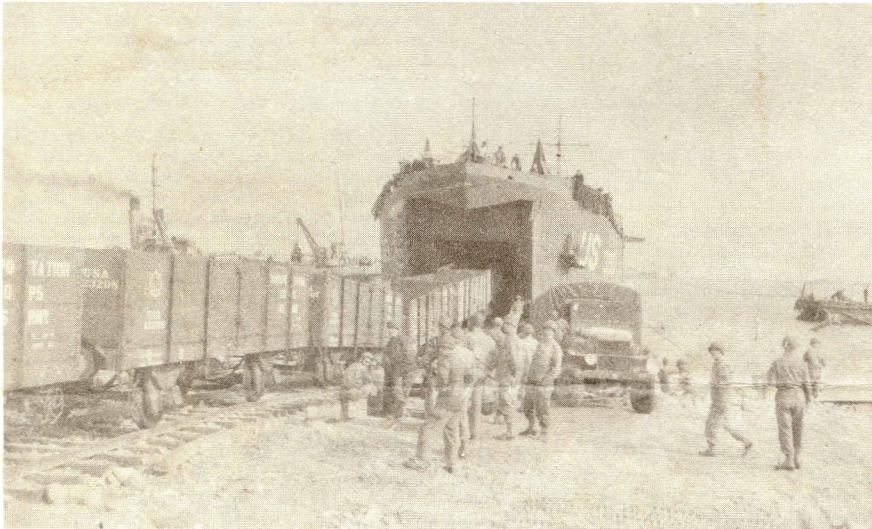
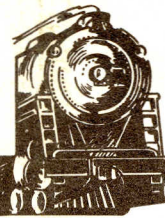




The Yankee BOOMER



How cars were unloaded from LST's onto Normandy beachhead.

SOUTHERN RY'S 707TH HAD BIG INVASION JOB

For the 707th Railway Grand Division, sponsored by the Southern Railway, overseas operations began with their landing in Scotland, on December 19th, 1943. From then on there hasn't been an idle moment, not even after VE-Day, for this MRS unit commanded by Lt. Col. William W. Greiner, 1002 Mississippi Ave., Chattanooga, Tenn.

On arrival in the U. K., the 707th went immediately to Thatcham, Berkshire, England, where they spent their first overseas Christmas. Then detachments began to go out — some to other MRS units, and some to the Office of Chief of Transportation to assist with preparations for D-Day and subsequent operations on the continent.

Studied Tides For Invasion

One group, which went to OCOT in London, began a study of the ebb and flow of tides along that part of France under consideration for invasion, made maps of continental railways, and set up plans for IST "ship to beach" delivery of rail road rolling stock, an arrangement which was later to prove extremely valuable. This detachment included Lt. Col. William C. Morris, Selma, Ala. (Southern), now CO of the 716th; Capt. William H. Hoar, Kensington, Md. (Southern); Capt. Don H. Districh, Lafayette, Ind. (Monon RR); M/Sgt Earl E. Fellin, Hazelton, Pa. T/Sgt Darrell J. Rothwell, Beaumont, Texas; Tec. Raymond K. Reffler, Bronx, N.Y.; T/Sgt. Fred A. Mau, San Bernardino Cal. (AT&SF); and Pvt. Adrian L. Burson, Pueblo, Colo. (D&RGW).

Also on DS with OCOT was Capt. Roy A. Massengill, Longview, Texas (RI), who assisted in the coordination between Army and civilian railways for freight movements from ports to depots, and depot to depot, throughout the U.K.

Thirty-eight enlisted men, led by Capt. William B. Johnson, Texarkana, Texas (KCS-I&A), Capt. James C. Lindsey,

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78,362 YEARS OF RAILROADING

The extent of the contribution of American railroads and railroaders to the war effort springs into sharp relief with the discovery that Military Railway Service personnel in the ETO have a total of 78,362 years of civilian railroad experience.

In a study compiled at GHQ, MRS, much light was shed upon the background of the soldier railroaders, and upon the qualities underlying the success of MRS operations in eight countries of Europe and Africa. It was found that the overall average, including officers and EM, is 3.06 years. This figure, of course, includes those men who had no civilian railroad experience at all. Average years per officer total 11.98. For EM, 2.64 years.

The different MRS units show considerable variation, conditioned by type of outfit, the extent to which railroad experience is essential in the unit, and the time of activation. Topping all outfits for average years of railroading is the 706th Ry Grand Division, with 9.25 years. In total number of years for the unit, the 713th Ry Operating Bn leads with 4085.

The tabulation showed 342 officers and 169 EM with records of over 20 years in civilian railroading. A partial check, covering 14 units, showed 55 officers and EM with from 25 to 41 years.

AND IT WAS JUST AN AVERAGE DAY IN MRS

One thousand, two hundred and nineteen trains — 529,274 net tons of military freight moved — that was on June 7th, 1945, an average day in the Military Railway Service.

There were 47,614 railroad cars on the move under MRS supervision during the 24-hour period from 0001 hours to 2359 hours on June 7th, handling 22,053 tons per hour.

These statistics are taken from the train sheets of the railway operating battalions. They do not include civilian trains, either freight or passenger, and they do not include any civilian trains on which military freight might be moving. They are only the symbolized trains handled by the MRS and the SNCF in all phases of operation.

718th Tops 'Em All

The operating battalion which handled the most tons on this average day was the 718th, which has its headquarters at Mainz, and is commanded by Lt. Col. Robert A. Wright, Johnstown, Pa. (PRR).

The 718th operates between Gau Algeheim and Hanau, over the Mainz bridge. On June 7th the unit had an astonishing record of 122 trains moved — 71 eastbound and 51 westbound — with a net tonnage of 60,329. In carrying out this remarkable achievement the 718th handled over the Mainz river single track bridge during the 24-hour period ending at 1800 hours on the 7th, a total of 47 trains consisting of 1,770 loaded cars with a net tonnage of 21,544, and 238 empties. And that wasn't the maximum either. On June 25th, 61 trains moved across the Mainz bridge.

The Ry Grand Division credited with handling the most tonnage was the 710th, with Hq. at Brussels, and operating in the general Belgium area out of the great port of Antwerp. Operating battalions under 710th jurisdiction are the 734th, 740th, 741st, 744th and 752nd.

How 1st And 2nd MRS Compared

It is also interesting to note the division between the 1st and 2nd MRS. The first handled 537 trains; 21,832 cars and 207,174 net tons. Figures for 2nd are: 682 trains; 25,782 cars; 322,100 net tons.

Loading reported for June 7th indicate that 1,805 cars were loaded at the main ports, and 5,143 at depots and dumps. The highest number of trains run in any one day from the ports was on March 29th when 123 trains containing 4,176 cars with 57,470 net tons were moved toward the front.

When the Military Railway Service was planned, General Gray points out, it was anticipated that each operating battalion would handle up to a maximum of 150 miles, and run a maximum of 24 trains in

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