

In short, the S.O.S. was an army in itself, whose officers and rank and file accepted responsibility and discipline the same as those at the front lines. Many of its officers displayed this motto in their shops and stores (All the fighting is not done at the front), which truly applied to overcoming of difficulties.

Their numbers constituted an Army. By Armistice Day the S.O.S. of the A.E.F. included 386,000 service men, plus 31,000 German prisoners and 23,772 civilian laborers. Attached personnel brought the total to 668,312, which was a sizable portion of the 2,073,877 total strength at the American Expeditionary Forces.

Seaport facilities necessitated the construction of harbors, railroads and buildings. For all practical purposes the base of the U.S. Army was the American continent. Each of our combat Divisions required the equivalent of 25 French railroad carloads or supplies each day, delivered at a point within reach of motor or horse-drawn transportation. Upon their return these facilities were loaded with wounded from the battle zones and material for salvage when conditions permitted.

Seaport facilities were enlarged to receive four million troops for front line combat duty during 1919, in expectation that the war would last for several years.

Engineer Corps undertook extensive and varied activities in building construction and repair work. Convalescent and base hospitals involved 700 buildings, provided with all city utilities such as roads, water, sewage, heat and light. Such construction required units previously unknown to the American Army. There were forestry and woodworking regiments which used mostly American wood-working machinery, which produced some 200 million board feet of lumber, 4 million railroad ties, 300 thousand cords of wood for fuel, great quantities of pile supports and miscellaneous products. There were regiments which quarried stones for buildings, roads, cement and power stations. Engineers operated searchlights and important advance stations for the S.O.S. at the front in addition to their other duties.

An American Army Transport Department was formed to move men and supplies to appointed areas as an entirely new and separate organization.

March 15, 1918, a Chemical Warfare Service was organized and shortly before the Armistice, it was increased to 1,315 officers and 17,205 enlisted men who had charge of training in the gas schools all regimental and battalion gas officers who were selected from the front lines.

The United States Medical Department, had never before been so important to the life, health and effective strength of the U.S. Army, which necessitated organization of personnel and equipment in order to provide the best of care and attention to the needs of the individual soldier. In spite of shortage of medical supplies and equipment, the Medical Corps provided excellent care for the Combat Troops.

Authorities reported that there were 193,026 patients in hospitals, in France on November 12, 1918, and altogether 214,467 were evacuated from the war zone, including 11,281 who were placed on trains to base ports for transfer to the United States via transport ships.

It may be said here that the American Expeditionary Force never had enough trucks. They were on the docks in American ports, but the cargo space was never available to ship a full supply.

During May to October 1918, there were drafted into the Army two million men and on Armistice Day, November 11, 1918, there were over 1,663,000 in the U.S. Camps.

Building construction and repair work, undertaken by the Engineer Troops was as extensive and varied. There were hospital buildings, convalescent camps and a base hospital, involved 700 buildings and provided with the usual utilities of a city such as roads, water, sewerage and lighting. For such constructions there were some units previously unknown in the American Army. There were forestry and woodworking regiments using to a large extent American woodworking machinery, which produced some 200 million feet of lumber, four million railroad ties, 300,000 cords of fuel, piling and other miscellaneous products. There were quarrying regiments to secure stone for building and to use on the roads, cement mills and several power stations.

The Engineers Troops also operated searchlight service for the front and important advance stations of the S.O.S. in addition to their other duties. A transport Department was organized, as the American Army to transport men and supplies to the appointed areas. This was a new undertaking as the U.S. Army never had a transportation corps as a separate organization and there was no special branch qualified to be expanded for such functions.