

725th Railway Operating Battalion

by Dave Kaufman
Copyright 1995

The U.S. Army Transportation Corps has the task of moving personnel, equipment, and supplies. Members of the corps perform the task by a variety of means. Utilizing rail service is one of the means, and during World War II, was a little-publicized successful aspect of the war.

Some of the success was due to the foresight and planning of the War Department. Railroad units were transferred to the Transportation Corps from the Quartermaster Corps, where they operated during World War I. The strength of America's railroad system lay in its management, corporate direction, personnel, and equipment. In the 1930s and 1940s (and post war too), America shipped everything by rail. Since railroads are the most efficient means of transport and the only form that maintains its own rights-of-way, communications, construction, and complete repair facilities. With the early success of German military forces, it is difficult to understand how the monumental mission of the railroads in WW II could have been conceived. Coupled with the increase in civilian traffic (due to restrictions on gasoline, rubber for tires, etc.) and the German U-boat menace which substantially reduced maritime shipping of natural resources, the response of the railroads was nothing less than remarkable. (1)

The flexibility and historic readiness to expand railroad operations provided a substantial benefit to the U.S. economy emerging from the Depression. That was the fact that American manufacturers went into overdrive producing literally thousands of anticipated locomotives and freight cars. U.S. forces were expected to run recaptured railroads, supply U.S. combat forces, and improve Allied rail capabilities.

More than 351,000 railroad personnel served in all branches of the armed forces in WWII (and many of their civilian jobs were taken by women). (2) The Army recognized that railroad operations was a skill that could not be taught in basic training. In many instances, individual railroads had employees drafted (or enlisted) together and who served together.

Railway Operating Battalions (ROBs) were the smallest active units of the U.S.



725th Railway Operating Battalion DI

While in the ZI, the battalion wore the old Services of Supply SSI, and was authorized the CBI SSI while in theater. They did wear an unauthorized SSI and DI that are rare to find. The DI is shield shaped silver, white poled semaphore (signal arm) with green, yellow, and red lights with a red and yellow arm. There is a purple ring with three equidistant pale green points and a yellow inner background. A pair of dice forms the number "7", a red number "2", and a blue Roman numeral V forms the "5", and all depict the unit designation. A blue banner with silver lettering spelling out "Railway" on the banner.

Army Military Railway Service (MRS) in WWII. These 800-man outfits were organized beginning in 1941, and were soon filled with men who had been railroad employees in civilian life. Some ROB cadres were comprised of men from only one railroad. ROBS were sent to all theaters. Each ROB, with a TO & E of four companies, was considered a self-sustaining "division", and operated on the same principles as a civilian railroad. Company A, consisting of two track platoons and one bridge platoon, handled construction. Two of the three platoons of Company B were responsible for keeping the equipment in running shape, utilizing their own separate

roundhouse; the third shopped the rolling stock. Company C was the largest company, because it supplied the train crews. H & S Company supplied dispatchers, telegraphers, and other support personnel. Four to five separate ROBs, and usually one or two Railway Shop Battalions (RSB), were directed by a Railway Grand Division (RGD), which was an administrative unit consisting of approximately 100 personnel. (3)

The 725th ROB was activated at New Orleans, LA, on February 17, 1943. The Commanding Officer was Lt. Col. George Branch. The officers and enlisted cadre came from the 715th ROB, and all were former employees of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad (RR). The battalion was subsequently comprised of former members of 18 different railroads. The processing center for railroad draftees and enlistees destined for ROBs was Camp Harrahan, (New Orleans) LA.

T-5 John Daoutis worked for the Southern-Pacific RR as a crew dispatcher out of Bakersfield, California, before the war. He recalled "I was drafted in 1943, and joined the 725th in July or August. I was surprised to end up in a ROB. I found out about ROBs at recruiting center, so I volunteered, hoping to avoid the infantry. I went from Monterey to Camp Harrahan and then to Camp Claiborne, LA. I was selected to go to 725th ROB while at Camp Harrahan. I was surprised to meet John Bayse, who I worked with at the S-P RR. Bayse was the only one I knew. Many men in 725th ROB were considerably older than most soldiers. There were several in their 30s, 40s, 50s, and I think even a few in their 60s. These older men were promised direct commissions, because they were taken off of railroads." (4)

Pvt John (Jack) Bayse recalled that "Before the war, I was a fireman for the S-P RR in Bakersfield, CA. I enlisted in November 1942, wanting to go in the Army Air Corps and be a waist gunner in either a B-17 or a B-24 because of my 'hunter instinct'. I honed my shooting skills while hunting over several years. I let a lieutenant talk me into a ROB because he told me 'I can almost guarantee you a T-4 rating

within a month—and we need engineers.' I obtained my T-4 as promised within 6 weeks. The T-4 rating was for engineers and conductors were buck sergeants. I joined the 725th ROB when it was activated at Camp Harrahan in 1943." (5)

At Camp Claiborne, the 725th and other ROB's operated on what was officially known as the 'Claiborne and Polk' RR, so named because it ran 50 miles to Fort Polk. The railroaders derisively referred to it as the old 'Crime and Punishment' RR for a number of reasons. Originally built by the 711th ROB and Army engineers as a training railroad, it was a railroader's nightmare. The railroad bed itself consisted of every substance imaginable—Louisiana gumbo (dirt), logs, and swamp muck. The engines were 40 years old, and the freight cars, if they were U.S. manufactured, were new two generations previous. European freight cars, featuring only four wheels, had an aversion to curves. Because of the uncertain construction of the railroad beds, derailments became the rule rather than the exception. The poor roadbed, coupled with civilian livestock (and nature's livestock, i.e. alligators) affected railroad operations in more ways than one. At one time, the speed limit was 2 MPH (eventually bumped up to 5 MPH). Often, the wrecker car, which followed closely, itself derailed. More than once, the rails simply disappeared under the swamp, and to the casual observer, it appeared as if there was no railroad. More than one engineer reported seeing the rails swaying and vibrating for some time after the train had passed.

On December 10, 1943, the 725th ROB left Los Angeles (San Pedro) California POE en route to the CBI. On board were the 725th ROB, four other ROB's, one RSB, and the 705th RGD. All arrived safely January 11, 1944. Daoutis recalled that "We sailed on a single troopship with other ROB's, and not in a convoy. There were approximately 4500 men on board. The ship zig-zagged every few minutes. We spent a total of 32 days at sea, making only one stop in Hobart, Tasmania. We had one big guy in the outfit who weighed about 300 pounds before we left. He got so seasick that he remained in sickbay the entire trip, and lost more than 50 pounds. When we arrived in Calcutta, we didn't recognize him—he was white as a sheet, and he couldn't eat because of seasickness." (6)

The 725th had their operations in Lalmanirhat, Bengal Province, India. There were only 3 companies of the 725th ROB in India—H & S, B, and C. Company A was left in Zone of the Interior upon departure. Company B was the shop company and did all of the repairs. There were no problems getting parts. Company C was the operating company, providing engineers, conductors, and operations personnel. H & S Company ran the dispatch office and provided MPs, etc.

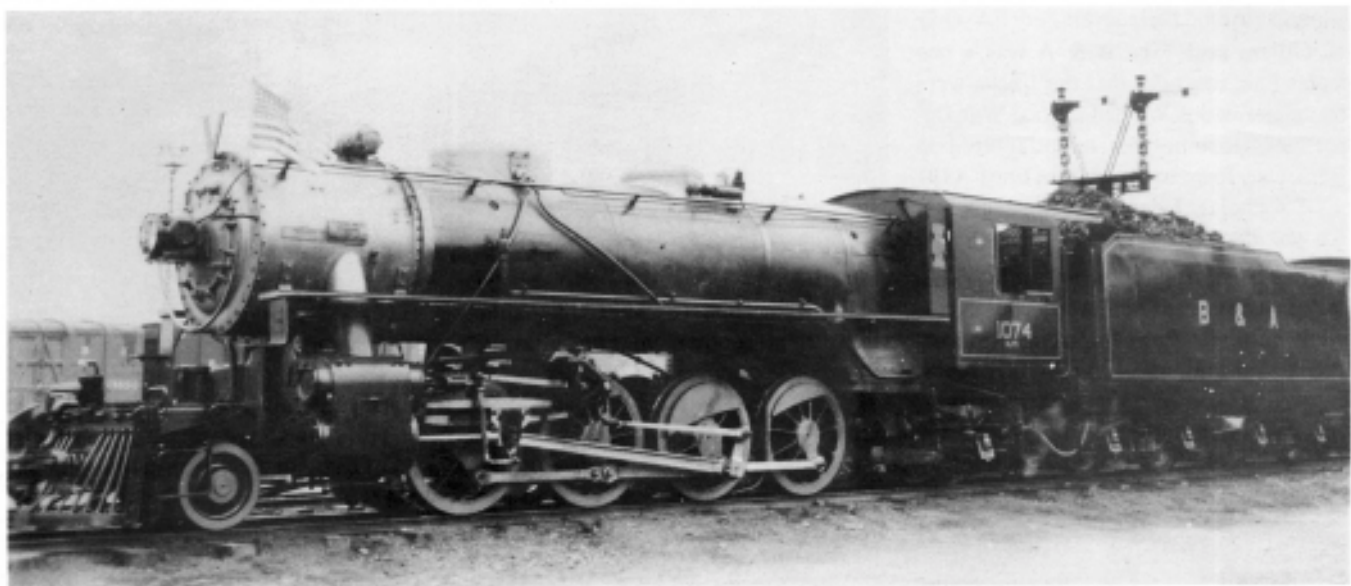
Daoutis said that "When we first arrived in India, we lived in tents for 6 months. Then, concrete slabs were poured and bamboo barracks, called bashas, were built by Indian contractors. Building sides were woven bamboo, and the tops were thatched

bamboo. The bashas had electricity, but no fans or water. The bashas looked like typical army barracks, which slept about 18, with cots and footlockers lined up in rows. Since the buildings were constructed of bamboo, the structures were susceptible to fire. There was no firefighting equipment available in camp. For bathing and sanitation, showers and latrines were constructed in separate buildings.

During the monsoons, the cement would turn green, as did our leather gear. We couldn't get this green growth off, and had to throw our leather gear away. The army hired Indians to cook and do laundry for us. The officers of the B & A Railroad lived in fine brick houses just outside camp boundaries. The camp was surrounded by a fence, with an open gate guarded by a GI.

All types of jungle diseases were prevalent, especially malaria and elephantiasis. One B Co 725th member (one of the biggest, healthiest-looking GIs) died of Blackwater fever in only 2 days. We had to bury him immediately because of heat bloating and contagion. To combat malaria, the men took atabrine pills in chow line. This policy was enforced by officers and was the first stop in line. The atabrine turned your skin yellow. When sleeping, the men had to drop mosquito netting and tuck it underneath their mattresses, ensuring there were no open spaces. A lot of guys still caught malaria.

The men were also warned about poisonous snakes. We were taught they could survive a cobra bite, but two other snakes were incredibly deadly. Unfortunately, we



Standard British locomotive used by 725th ROB - Courtesy of John Daoutis

were not told what these two snakes looked like. There were a lot of cobras in towns used by the street musicians, who always kept a mongoose at hand, too. The Mongooses killed cobras by biting them on the back of their heads. There was a cobra warning once time—the officers cleared out the camp looking for it. We were warned that if we should ever wake up with a cobra in our cot next to us, they were probably just looking for your body warmth, so don't move and just quietly call for help. Even though jungle was close to camp, there were no problems with tigers. A few were shot by GIs assigned to the unit." (7)

Aubrey Gillem, who was a fireman with the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis RR prior to the war, recalled "It was rough living in those tents for six months. Then, they poured the slabs and built brick walls three feet high around the sides. We had a big fire one time that burned down a few bashas." (8)

The battalion operated on existing tracks owned by the Bengal & Assam RR. The former use was transporting tea, with perhaps 3 trains daily. The battalion transported weapons carriers, 4x4s, ambulances, and 250-lb bombs (with no detonators attached). They also hauled Ghurkas to front lines, and returned them for R & R. Basye also recalled "Hauling 3-4 loads of Merrill's Marauders. The Marauders were always shooting from flatcars into jungle, and I had to carefully request them not to on one occasion. They were always good about trading 'bamboo juice' (a liquor made from rice) for ammunition, though. These guys always had boxes and bandoliers full of ammo." (9)

Gillem said "The B & A was a one meter line, meaning that the tracks were one meter wide. We had special War Department locomotives manufactured in Bessemer, Iowa to run on that line." (10)

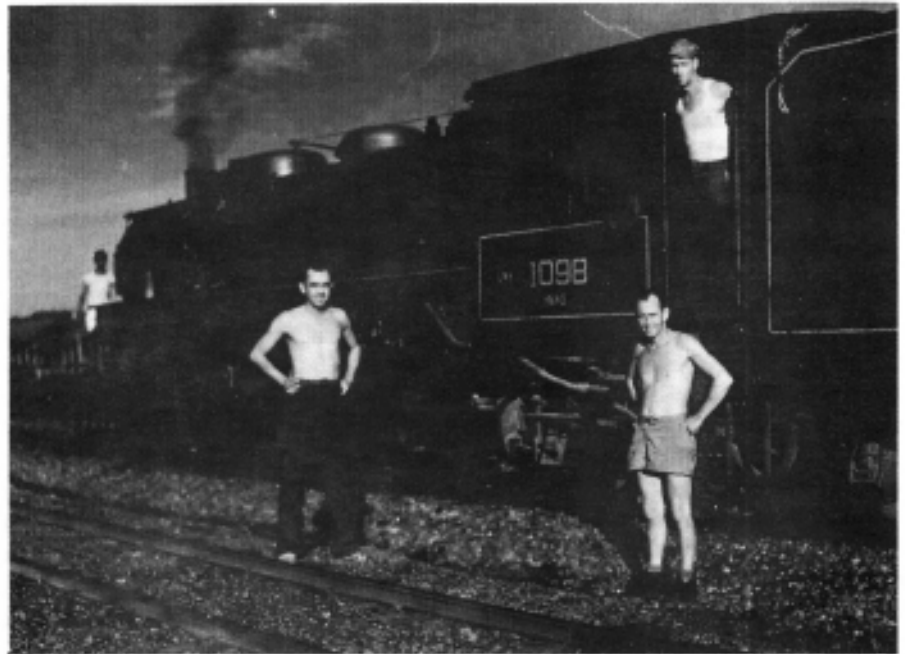
T-4 Phelan Tyler, a pre-war engineer for the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac RR (now CSX), was an engineer for the 725th ROB. He recalled that "We had 75 U.S. locomotives and 25 British. At 176 miles, ours was the longest railroad division in CBI. The railroad division below the 725th was only 40 miles long. The 725th worked on the Neal Token system. Trains usually ran 35 MPH, and would slow to 15 MPH in stations, which were 5-10 miles apart. Tokens were handed to engineers as they drove through stations. During rest stops, we could pay

coolies a couple of rupees to pull a rope and turn a fan in lobby for relief against the sweltering heat." (11)

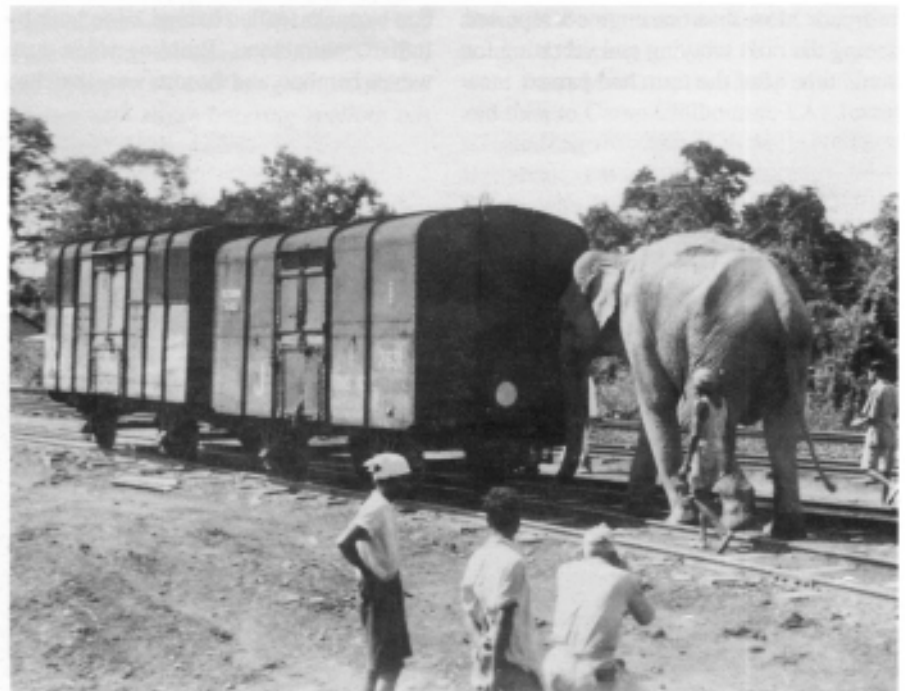
Basye recalled that "The climate in India provided my worst memories. It totally exhausted me and the other engineers. I was never as physically exhausted as I was in India because of the almost unbearable heat—highs of 120 degrees and 95% humidity. Even if I was given a

couple of days off by the battalion medical doctor, it was tough to sleep because of everyday noise, other GIs coming and going in our basha, etc. If I was fatigued while working for the SP, I was off for a couple of days in a quiet location, and could catch up on my sleep.

The severe weather conditions did not affect the operations or mechanics of the locomotives or boxcars. About the only



U.S. War Department locomotive No. 1098 - Frank Buck in cab, Frank Stickney in front of cab, and unknown first name, last of Antoline - Courtesy of Phelan Tyler



Elephant "switcher", jokingly called "coalless locomotive" - Courtesy of John Daoutis

affect I could recall was that some of the nuts were cracked. The U.S.—made locomotives were uncomfortable because they had only a wood seat with no seat back. For seat support, there was a leg which fit into hole in floor of cab. Several engineers obtained seat cushions from tanks being shipped on the railroad. The locomotives, featuring a 2-8-2 combination, weighed 75-80,000 pounds. The weight was measured over the driver ("8") wheels, not the truck ("2") wheels. I operated British locomotives, which had no seat, and forced the engineers to stand the entire trip.

The U.S. locomotives in India were coal fired. There were no problems with coal thefts by Indians, as often we swapped coal for fresh eggs. Fresh eggs were preferred instead of Army powdered eggs. The coal came in large lumps, usually 18" around. There were two Indian firemen on each engine, called the #1 fireman and #2 fireman. The #2 fireman shoveled coal from the tender into the gangway and broke it up and the #1 fireman shoveled the coal chunks into the firebox. Firemen from different religions carried their religious differences onto the trains. Often, the Indians wouldn't eat together. Each train had four crew members—an engineer, two fireman, and either a GI conductor or Indian conductor.

Twenty four hours was my usual time on the rail line due to crowded conditions on the tracks. The other ROB's were transporting materials and personnel, too. I had to wait on side tracks, sometimes for as long as 4-5 hours. I usually pulled 100 freight cars—called "wagons" in India—at one time. Each wagon was about half as

long as U.S. freight cars and had only four wheels. We engineers were lucky if as many as 10 wagons had brakes—and that was on one side. The wagons had only crude vacuum brakes, activated by steam, not air brakes. Engineers had to allow for that shortcoming when preparing to stop—low speeds were not a problem because of rail traffic. Engineers usually used only one locomotive, but occasionally paired them on the head end—both pulling. The materials and equipment were already on freight cars, so the engineers just picked up and dropped off the freight cars. The battalion did not load/unload any cars. One time, I hauled Japanese POWs, who were fearfully being guarded by Gurkhas." (12)

Basye described the track route as "A single track, well maintained. The scenery was heavy jungle for first 30 miles from the camp to Golakganj, then it opened up as entered Assam province. It was mostly rolling terrain, and I could see as far as 2-3 miles. Usually, there was a minimum of a 50 foot clearance through forested areas, and sometimes I saw a tree full of monkeys. There were no tunnels. Rail traffic was one train allowed between stations in either direction. The engineers obtained a token at each station, which was engineer's authority to be on that section of track between stations. It was foolproof. You could not see any other trains ahead of you at any time out of the yard.

The track length of the B & A was 175 miles from Lalmanirhat through Bengal and Assam provinces to the layover camp at the Brahmaputra River. The Brahmaputra River ("Father of all Brah-

mans") flowed out of the Himalayas and was as much as 170 feet deep during spring runoff. I remember seeing porpoises swimming up the river from the Bay of Bengal, approximately 100 miles away.

The line tracks stopped on the west side of the Brahmaputra River at Amingaon, and that was the end of our division. There was no bridge over the river there. Passengers got off the trains and used the ferry. The railroad cars used a "Ghat" (ferry) which looked like large raft with rails. The ghats carried up to three loaded boxcars/flatcars at one time, and then hooked up to locomotives waiting on other side of river. The locomotives were not ferried. In spring, with winter runoff, the current ran 15-20 MPH, which might take half an hour for the ferries/ghats to cross, angling because of current." (13)

Gillem recalled that "We were assigned the division line because the ROB that we replaced lost 5-6 locomotives at Amingaon, driving them off the bridge. I worked in the switch house in the main yard. My job was manning the switch levers. I either pulled levers down to close switches or pushed up to open them. Some were very difficult to pull. The levers pulled on a series of cables that actually opened and closed the switches in the yard. The closest switches were 50 yards from the switch house. The switches then lengthened in distance from the switchhouse in approximate 10 yard increments to 100 yards. Passenger trains ran on inside track, freight on outside. There were a total of 7 tracks running through the yard. The switch cables were greased by an Indian, a Hindu called 'Ragana Mystery.'" (14) All the vets recalled both Hindus and



Ghat (ferry) at Amingaon - Courtesy of A.D. Gillem

Muslims worked for B & A, in various support functions, and had problems working in harmony with each other. To make Gillem's (and other GIs') job easier, 4-5 elephants, contracted to the B & A, worked as "switch locomotives" in the yard, moving freight cars back and forth, supplementing the small steam locomotives owned by the B & A. Indians furnished manpower to construct roadbeds and make repairs and Indians had equipment, including huge cranes, called "The Hook," to right overturned locomotives and freight cars.

Sgt. Harold Forgey, who worked for the Union Pacific RR before the war, was assigned to Company C as a yardmaster. He said "We ran about 35 trains a day through the yard. I worked in the 'up yard'. We also had a 'down yard' and they both handled freight cars. The third location was the 'house yard' which handled the passenger cars. My responsibility was ensuring the freight cars ended up on the right track. A locomotive would bring cars from the 'down yard' to the 'up yard' and vice versa. We had a turntable there that was manually operated by the Indians.

Probably the most unusual operation we had there was our hot showers. We had three of them set up, two for enlisted men and one for the officers. They were built like water towers, and just fired them up

with coal. Not that we took that many hot showers in India, but it was nice to know they were there if wanted." (15)

Gillem added, "We built a hot water shower out of a stationary boiler. Fired it up, and it was heated by steam. It wasn't as nice as the one the Air Corps had nearby, but it worked fine for us." (16)

Daoutis worked in operations, working as a crew dispatcher, "Just like my civilian job. I working 8-10 hour days, with no days off. Occasionally, I could get a day off by having someone cover for me, or by swapping shifts, as the operations center worked 24 hours a day. Crew dispatching in the 725th was nearly same as the SP. When an engineer arrived after completion of a trip, his name would go at bottom of list on a board. For a current assignment, engineers' names were pulled beginning at the top of the list. One of my duties was notifying each engineer what time he had to be at the roundhouse. Usually they were resting in their bashas, just a couple of blocks away. Operations had no communications with the engineers on tracks out on the line, just with dispatchers in train yard. The 725th ran trains even during monsoons—the weather did not affect scheduling." (17)

Personnel from the battalion cut a diversion channel from the Beki River to the

neighboring Bulkadhoba River to carry away flood waters. Tyler recalled that "The 725th was able to operate year-round because the engineers vastly improved the drainage during the monsoon season. Even if the tracks were flooded, the engineers would have someone walking alongside the rails to let them know the rails were still there and not washed out. Irish bridges helped. The locomotives could go through water a couple of feet deep, as long as it did not reach the firebox. I recall one bridge was approximately 3/4 mile long, and in dry season, a person could practically walk shore to shore, barely getting wet. In the monsoon season, water rose 20-25 feet deep, almost to the rails." (18)

Basye recalled that "Monsoons did not affect driving the trains, but I couldn't stick my head out window to look ahead—I would have drowned! It rained so hard sometimes I couldn't see the front of the locomotive. Tracks often flooded, so I slowed to a crawl. Irish bridges (none of the engineers knew how the name was obtained), where the road bed was made of and lined with stones alongside of dirt roadbeds to keep them from washing away." (19)

There were no combat losses in the 725th ROB. The battalion lost men to accidents. Basye recalled that "One fell off



Basye's sabotaged-caused train wreck - Courtesy of John Daoutis

bridge into the Brahmaputra River at flood stage, and witnesses couldn't even try to rescue him. An inexperienced engineer, while standing on top of a moving locomotive, inexplicably checking his water gauge, struck and was killed by a low bridge. A GI was crushed to death between two boxcars in the yard. Another GI killed himself in his tent." (20)

The railroad division was approximately 20 miles from what could be termed the front lines. There were no Japanese attempts to cut the division, and no aerial bombing, due to Allied air superiority. Forgy remembered that "The Japanese cut one of the tracks up north. We were on alert for about four hours, but nothing came of it for us." (21)

There was some disagreement among the veterans as to whether they were always armed or not. One believed that after an incident with a GI shooting a sacred cow from a train, orders came down that the GIs were no longer to be armed on the trains. Basye was the GI involved in the incident. He said "The GI conductor and I were armed with .45 semi-automatics. There was no armor on the locomotives. I was never sniped at on rails, and never found any bullet holes in my locomotives." (22) Basye, somewhat embarrassed, recalled that "I was making a "caboose hop"—just a locomotive and caboose—up to Amingaon and had a GI conductor. The conductor convinced me to stop at a clump of trees between stations, and he returned with "bamboo juice". We made 3-4 stops, drinking the juice before the termination of our hop. The stationmaster directed us to another train. There were many sacred

cows wandering around the station, and I took my .45 and shot two cows, killing them. Panic-stricken Indians jumped out of the station windows and fled screaming and hollering into the jungle. I cleared out the station in about 30 seconds. An MP lieutenant approached and calmly ordered me to turn over my still-smoking .45, telling me, 'Now, sergeant, sergeant, don't get excited, just turn over your .45.' I did, eventually lost my T-4 rate and was reduced to Pvt." (23) Daoutissaid that "Basye made history by shooting those two cows. We got word down at Lalmanirhat right after it happened. We were all upset and concerned, wondering what was going to happen. It was really troublesome for us when Basye was brought back under armed MP guards on a special train. We thought he was going to jail." (24) T-4 Louis Knotek, who worked for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy RR (now Burlington Northern) before the war, recalled the aftermath of Basye's shooting incident. "I passed the hat around and we collected a lot of money - he was a real popular guy. We paid some officials off and that kept Basye out of jail." (25)

There were a number of train wrecks in battalion operations. Most of them were due to the ease with which the four-wheel Indian freight cars derailed, due to a lack of pivoting wheel trucks, and the lack of bridges spanning low places. For some curious reason, the B & A lines usually followed the topographic features. If there was a gully, the rail lines dipped down into them. The result was the spring draw bars (connecting couplers) often were stretched by slack action similar to a Slinky toy. The

head end gained speed going downhill, then slowed going uphill, and then derailed because the rear of the train was gaining speed. The Irish bridges had boards with Nos. 10-20-30 painted, referring to speed limits. The engineers found this amusing because the trains usually couldn't travel that fast, except, of course, going downhill.

Near Galakjang Junction, there was a curve with an uphill grade, which also had a signal arm. Engineers had to pay close attention to the signal. Trains had to have enough speed to make the grade, but not too much speed because of the possibility of a red signal. That usually indicated a derailment ahead and the trains had to stop. If the trains were speeding, there was no way the train was going to stop in time to avoid a train crash; the other option was derailing into the river.

There were other causes for derailments. Basye recalled that "Train signals were all manually operated, and not electronic like in the U.S. One day, I was going through a side track and was given a clear signal. I knew that I wouldn't have to stop. An Indian pointsman (switchman) was supposed to align the switch out to the mainline. Instead, he deliberately threw the switch right in front of me, and we both knew that I had no time to stop. This act of sabotage directed me to a spur which dead-ended at the river. I knew we was going to crash, and told my GI fireman to jump, which we safely did. I shot at the fleeing saboteur with my .45, but missed. The engine ran off the end of the track and stopped about one foot from the water. Freight cars stacked up everywhere and it took work crews three days to clear and



1943 Christmas card (all purple and gray parts are brown) - Courtesy of Walt Forgy

rebuild the spur. I faced a board of inquiry afterwards, but there were no charges held against me. Other acts of sabotage usually consisted of wood being placed across the track, but the pilot (cowcatcher) picked it up." (26)

Basye recalled that "One of the railroad units operated converted jeeps at Myitkyina. The railroaders pulled tires off and replaced them with train wheels. Each jeep could pull one box car, but could only stop with the jeeps' brakes. I tried to volunteer for this duty, but wasn't allowed to by my 1st Sgt." (27)

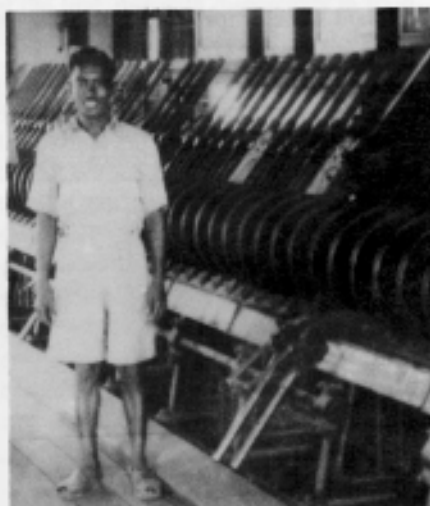
Designated as the 61st Transportation Corps Composite Company at Myitkyina, the 160 members (drawn from all the theater ROBs) began operation of the captured portion of the railway. The company set up its shops, mounted armed jeeps, and began moving supplies and personnel, principally in support of the British 36th Division. Operating on 38 miles of track, and despite Japanese raids, over 1,500 personnel and 1,880 tons were carried. (28)

In April 1945, Lt. Col. Branch was transferred to China and was replaced by Lt. Col. Ralph Foster. The battalion was running more and more trains through by this critical time in the CBI. In April, over 178,000 freight cars were transported over the division tracks, and in late May, set a unit record by moving over 7700 cars in one day. (29)

British Field Marshal Sir William Slim was highly complementary of the effort put forth by all the U.S. ROBs in the CBI. Prior to the war, the rail lines' daily capacity was only 600 tons. By the time the British 14th Army had been formed, the capacity had increased to 2,800 tons, but even that increase proved inadequate to supply the British and the Chinese at Ledo. With the arrival of the U.S. ROBs, the daily tonnage increased to 7,300 tons. Slim cited

the more powerful U.S. locomotives, as well as the drive and energy of the fully trained railroadmen. The rolling stock and personnel were assets the British simply could not offer. The increase in shipping helped alleviate the dangerous task of moving supplies over The Hump to China, and eventually surpassed the air tonnage totals. (30)

The end of the war in the CBI saw the ROBs rapidly demobilized, with remaining ROBs in theater maintaining larger portions of track until relieved by Bengal and Assam personnel. The 725th ROB was demobilized beginning October 1, 1945, and they returned home aboard the U.S.S. General Hugh L. Scott, departing in Calcutta. Basye said "It took five days to get from Calcutta on the Hoogli River to the Bay of Bengal because of tides. Daoutis and I were deactivated in San Francisco while the rest of the battalion continued eastbound on trains." (31) The 725th ROB was formally inactivated at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, on October 29, 1945.



Switchhouse - Courtesy of A.D. Gillem

Bibliography

- Bykofsky, Joseph and Larson, Harold *The U.S. Army in World War II - The Technical Services; Operations Overseas* Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 1957
- Florence, Chauncey F. 1st Lieutenant, Transportation Corps, Correspondence to 725th ROB Yardmaster, dated June 7, 1945.
- Fowler, Bertram B. "The Worst Railroad on Earth", *Saturday Evening Post*, January 15, 1944
- Slim, Sir William, Field Marshal *Defeat Into Victory* Cassell & Co. Ltd, London, England 1956
- Ziel, Ronald *Steel Rails to Victory* Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, New York 1970

Footnotes

1. Ziel, Ronald "Steel Rails to Victory" Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, New York 1970 pg 76
2. Ziel, Ronald "Steel Rails to Victory" Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, New York 1970 pg 80
3. Ziel, Ronald "Steel Rails to Victory" Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, New York 1970 pg 77
- 4-27. Interview with author
28. Bykofsky, Joseph and Larson, Harold *The U.S. Army in World War II—The Technical Services; Operations Overseas* Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 1957 page 578 (Note: I could find no surviving engineers from the 725th who were involved in this operation)
29. Florence, Chauncey F. 1st Lieutenant, Transportation Corps, Correspondence to 725th ROB Yardmaster, dated June 7, 1945.
30. Slim, Sir William, Field Marshal *Defeat Into Victory* Cassell & Co. Ltd, London, England 1956 pages 170-171
31. Interview with author

UP Trains between LALMANIRHAT JUNCTION and AMINGAON

Class	Miles from SARG via PBT	Miles from CA via BNAIP	Inter	Train No.	LA-13	LB-21	LA-15	3	Code
				Class of trains	M. Special	M. Special	M. Special	Assam Mail	
				Loads of trains	
				Running speed	30	30	30	35	
B	154½	280	6	Lalmanirhat Jn.	19 50	21 15	22 30	23 5	LMH
B	160½	286	2	WCE III					
B	162½	288	4½	Mogahat DKF I	20 15	21 40	22 55	23 10	MGH
				Gitaldaha Jn. Kst II	20 22	21 47	22 2	23 51	GTG

CBI Timetables for 725th ROB - Courtesy of Walt Forgey