

# 68 AIR SERVICE GROUP

## MISSION

## LINEAGE

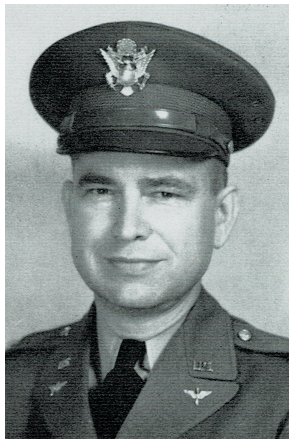
68 Air Base Group (Special) constituted and activated, 1 Sep 1940  
Redesignated 68 Service Group  
Redesignated 68 Air Service Group, Feb 1945

## STATIONS

Stockton Field, CA  
Gowen Field, Boise, ID  
Thermal AAB, CA  
San Bernardino AAF, CA  
Camp Anza, Arlington  
Bombay, India  
Kanchrapara, India  
Kunming, China  
Chengkung, China

## ASSIGNMENTS

## COMMANDERS



Maj Harvey Flynn Dyer (USAAC photo)

Maj Harvey Flynn Dyer

## **HONORS**

**Service Streamers**

**Campaign Streamers**

**Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

**Decorations**

**EMBLEM**

**MOTTO**

**NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

On the first day of February 1944, the five units of the 68th Service Group were stationed at A.P.O. 465 Kanchrapara, India. These five units were the Hq & Hq Sq., the 12th Service Sq., the 1151st Quartermaster Co., the 1088th Signal Co., and the 1803d Ordnance Co. By orders transmitted on the 26th day of December 1943, at Bombay, India, the 377th Service Sq., the 2050th and 2051st Quartermaster Trucking Companies, and the 1819th Ordnance Co. were relieved of duties with the 68th Service Group, and assigned for duty with other Service Groups previously stationed in India. Answering roll at Kanchrapara Staging Area, then, were some 513 men and 49 officers of the over-a-thousand-strong who had set sail from Wilmington, California, exactly twenty-five years after the eve of the Armistice Day of the First World War.

The 68th Service Group had been stationed at the Kanchrapara Staging Area since the second day of January 1944. The Staging Area had been in operation barely a week at the time of the arrival of the 68th Service Group, and it fell to our lot to transform pasture land into a modern camp of functional means and sanitary ways. We were called upon for many details by Major McGlene, Commanding the Staging Area, but the morale of the men was discernibly high, this being the result of the conditions for messing and sleeping which were immensely superior to the conditions experienced aboard transport to Bombay and train from Bombay to Kanchrapara. Each man was able to visit Calcutta at least once. The Kanchrapara Valley Softball League was enthusiastically supported, and several rations of beer were liquidated - these being minor buttresses in the good morale which leaned primarily on good living quarters, good food, and a reasonably steady influx of mail.

Such was the situation on 3 February 1944, when the movement of the 68th Service Group from Kanchrapara to Chabua began. This movement was undertaken in three sections. The first convoy, with Captain T. F. Hartnett of the 12th Service Squadron as Convoy Commander, consisted basically of the men and officers of the Hq & Hq Sq. and the 12 Service Sq. The second convoy,

commanded by 1st Lt W. W. Genting of the 1088th Signal Co., consisted of the men and officers of that company, plus a group of the men and officers of the 1151st Quartermaster Co. The remainder of the men of the 1151st Quartermaster Co, were joined to the men and officers of the 1803d Ordnance Co. to comprise the third convoy, commanded by 1st LT J. E. Bounds of the 1803d Ordnance Co.

Preceding the convoys to Chabua - there to check with Liaison Officer, 1st Lt M. L. Rudnick, and to proceed to Kunming, China - was the advance party of staff section heads under Lt Col George S. Kent, Commanding Officer of the 68th Service Group.

The first convoy, commanded by Captain Hartnett, arrived at A.P.O. 629, Chabua, at 2400 on the night of February 10th, after an eight-day trip by rail and Brahmaputra river boat. Lt. Gentino's convoy, composed of twenty-five vehicles, departed from Kanchrapara in the mid-afternoon of February the 4th and arrived at Chabua on February the 12th at 1700, after a trip that was described by Lt. Gentino as "rugged but damn enjoyable". The twenty-five vehicles had been driven to Barrackpore, loaded on flat cars for railway movement to Parbaripur, reloaded on flat cars on a narrow gauge rail at Parbaripur for movement to Bongaregon, from which junction the vehicles were driven to Chabua. This itinerary was also applicable to the third convoy, Lt. Bounds' vehicles leaving Kanchrapara on the morning of February the 5th, and arriving at Chabua on the afternoon of February the 13th.

It was coincidental but unplanned - yet indicative of the tempo of the days in transit to permanent change of station at Kunming, China - that the day which brought the arrival of Lt. Bounds' convoy to the intermediated station, Chabua, saw the departure of the first movement of men and officers from that intermediate station to Kunming. This party, composed of 1st Lt E. A. Behrens, Finance Officer, and ten enlisted men of the Finance Section, was in turn followed by the departure from Chabua to Kunming via Air Transport Command of key staff officers. On the 18th of February the major movement of the 68th Service Group from Chabua to Kunming began, and on a scale remarkable by any criterion, be it the acknowledged remarkable criterion of the ATC in flying men and equipment "over the hump".

But a word about the week at Chabua. The principal work was the packing and checking of the equipment to accompany the troops to their permanent station. Recreation stemmed largely from the exceptional courtesy and hospitality of the 2051st Quartermaster Trucking Co. commanded by Lt C. A. Ring. Now assigned to the 51st Service Squadron at A.P.O. 629, this former unit of the 68th Service Group turned up as our "next door neighbor", and the evening movies and hot showers and renewals of old friendships they made available rendered our stay at Chabua and entirely pleasant one. There was also the opportunity for men and officers to renew their friendships with the familiar faces of the 377th Service Sq. who, also assigned to the 51st Service Group, were encamped three miles down what was euphuistically termed "the road".

There were as many surmises about the date of transport from Chabua to Kunming as there were individuals. Some men prophesied that it would take at least two months before the men and equipment of the five units could be transported to China. Less conservative folks saw the

movement beginning around the end of February and finishing in mid-March. All were beautifully wrong.

On February the 18th the men and officers of Hq & Hq Sq were loaded on the C-46's and C-47's of the ATC and flown across the peaky bend of the Himalayas and Jap-held upper flange of Burma to Kunming. On the tail-fin of Hq & Hq Sq were the men and officers of the 12 Service Sq. and the 1088th Signal Co., followed by the men and officers of the 1151st QM Co. and the 1803d Ordnance Co. On the evening of February the 20th, the entire 68th Service Group (with the exception of Lt Rudnicj, remaining on at APO 629 to check on OEL equipment) were off their anna and contemplating the execution of the Group's primary mission.

For Hq & Hq Sq, the 12th Service Sq., and the 1088th Signal Co., APO 627, was the end of the journey (for the while, anyway) which had begun some 100 days earlier in the neon-encircled port of Wilmington. For the 1803d Ordnance Co. and the 1151st QM Co. it was the penultimate stop. The new air base at Hsing Ching would be the scene of their work, temporarily, at least, and on the morning of February the 22nd, 1st Lt L. Bloom, Commanding the 1151st, and 1st Lt J. E. Bounds, Commanding the 1803d, departed from Kunming for Hsing Ching, to be followed by their units. At Hsing Ching, Ordnance and QM are well in hand.

On 26 February 1944 the 54th Service Squadron, and the 1760th Ordnance Co., both organizations veteran to China, were attached for duty, administration and discipline to the 68th Service Group, Headquarters for the Group were temporarily established in Building G of Hostel 7. Men and officers gradually were moved to Hostel 10, which will be our permanent quarters while at A.P.O. 627.

Morale runs high, and understandably, for morale for a soldier is first cousin to the satisfaction of doing his job. The men in the various organizations of the 68th Service Group, long anxious to begin operating at their respective skills, are now happy in the face of the hard job to be done today, the hard job to be done on many tomorrows. We like China. The seriousness with which the Commands here prosecute the war as a war, and not as a bother, is a bolstering discovery, though it was anticipated, to be sure, after the enigmatic attitude pervading parts of India where we were stationed.

On 1 March 1944 the 68th Air Service Group, Lt. Col. GERORGE S. KENT, Commanding, was pursuing with vigor its primary mission in China. Stationed at Kunming were the men and officers of Hq & Hq Sq, the 12th Service Sq., the 54th Service Sq., the 1088th Signal Co., and the 1760th Ordnance Co., the overall totals being 1051 men and 86 officers. On 1 March 1944, of the above-named units the 54th Service Sq. and the 1760th Ordnance Co. held the status of being attached to the 68th Air Service Group for duty, administration, and discipline.

As the month began, operating further to the north in China at Hsing Ching Airfield in the Chengtu area were two units assigned to the 68th Air Service Group temporarily on duty at the huge new airfields under construction in Szechwan province. The 1803d Ordnance Co. not only handled ordnance supplies for the new base at Hsing Ching but occupied itself with diverse problems of

assembly of tools and vehicles unrelated to basic ordnance work. The 1151st QM Co. converted itself overnight into an Air Freight Company, and handled all incoming and outgoing movements of supplies and equipment at the new base.

With the exception of the 1760th Ordnance Company, whose quarters in Hostel #3 are adjacent to their working compounds, the units of the 68th Air Service Group at Kunming were quartered at Hostel #10. The hostel's proximity to the city has the good feature of convenience, and the dangerous feature of encouraging men of the Air Service Command to frequent the city with excessive regularity. Entertainment was provided at the Recreation Hall every night, four evenings devoted to movies, two to quizzes, and one to squadron entertainment. A snack bar was put into operation, and operating on the four nights when feature movies are not showing, has proved itself popular and financially sound. The profits from the Snack Bar will be used to furnish and decorate the Recreation Hall, while the refurbishing of the temporary building space for an Officers' Club will be carried on by contribution.

By General Order #3, China-Burma-India Air Service Command, dated 29 February 1944, the 54th Service Sq., the 1760th Ordnance Co., and the 1989th QM Co Trk were relieved of previous assignments and were assigned to the 68th Service Group. The 54th Service Sq., previously assigned to the 51st Service Group, had been more or less on its own during the lengthy period in China. It can be stated that since joining the 68th Air Service Group, the 54th Service Sq. has had its integration improved by a full re-classification program carried on by Lt. CLARK, Group Statistical Officer, and its morale improved by its consolidation with Group personnel. Also previously assigned to the 51st Service Group, the 1989th QM Co Trk has the bulk of its men and officers stationed through out Free China. The 19 men and 1 officer of this company stationed at Kunming are performing air freight work and not conventional trucking duties. The 1760th Ordnance Co. was previously assigned to the 52nd Service Group.

On 4 March 1944 by General Order #1, Headquarters China-Burma-India Air Service Command, A.P.O. 885, the 8th Medical Supply Platoon was relieved from assignment to the 28th Air Depot Group, and assigned to the 5308th Air Service Area Command, and attached to the 68th Air Service Group. 1st Lt ERNEST L. McCLYMONDS of this outfit arrived in Kunming with one officer and 18 men on 13 March 1944, and immediately at their work of receiving and distributing medical supplies and equipment.

The primary mission of the 68th Air Service Group is to keep our planes in combat readiness. In accomplishing this mission each unit and each section has its definite role, yet it is sage to say that the work of the two Service Squadrons is closest to the core of the mission. To fulfill more swiftly and efficiently the functions of a Service Center, the men of the 54th Service Sq. working in the Air Corps Supply Section and the Engineering Section were integrated with the men from the 12 Service Sq. working in those two sections headed by Capt. HAWKES and Capt. BAFUS, and later Major GARROLD, respectively. The men on the line carried on their 3d echelon work with commendable drive, the work put in by W/O jg Bernard Feierabend and his men meriting letters of commendation from General HOOD, Commanding the 5308th Air Service Area Command (Prov), and from Lt. Col. KENT. The functioning of a complete Service Center called for the shifting

of line personnel from the two Service Squadrons to fill maintenance requisites in other fields in our area and men were detached to fill the breaches at Chengkung, Yangkai and Tauyung.

Of the two Ordnance companies in the Group, the 1760th continued its long hours and excellent results at Kunming, and the 1803d, as stated previously, operated in the Chengtu area. The 1803d in the middle of the month was assembling some trucks and jeeps trans-shipped to Hsing Ching from Indian bases, and was handling the ammunition problems of the Chengtu Command, but a good portion of its attentions were given to assembling tractors and stone crushers and the other machines necessary to the erection of the new air field, and these intricate operations were performed with hand tools alone, a very creditable achievement. In Kunming the mechanics of the Automotive Section of the 1760th Ordnance Co. completed 271 jobs of the 280 sent in to that section during the month, and that section also issued parts on 300 store slips within that period. The Ammunitions Section was primarily concerned with shipping bombs and ammunition up the line.

On 24 March 1944 an ammunition dump consisting of three buildings of small arms and small arms ammunition, operated by the Armament Section of the 1760th Ordnance Co., was ravaged by fire and an explosion both costly and tragic. T/Sgt Cox, the Section Chief, was killed by an explosion while trying to remove ammunition from the imperiled compound.

Stationed temporarily at Hsing Ching, and performing the full duties of an Air Freight company, the 1151st QM Co probably worked as many hours during the month as any company of comparable numerical composition in this theatre. Withal the morale of Lt. BLOOM's men ran high, this being due to their intense satisfaction in being in on the ground floor of what will be the largest Air Base in Asia.

The crack 1088th Signal Co. had a full month. Under 1st Lt. WALKER a Radio Repair Shop was set up in the Factory #10 area on a two-shift schedule. 1st Lt. KOCH revamped the Signal Supply Warehouse completely and well. The wire crews under S/Sgt Mylonas and Sgt Bell Worked on the Area Telephone System, S/Sgt Elsey's Message Center crews were in full operation by the end of the month, as was the Teletype Section under S/Sgt Yetter. The Radio Operation Section practiced on the radio net with T/Sgt Heller the first man to be called on for active duty in the net.

The weeks do not pass swiftly in China. It takes considerable time for one Sunday to follow its preceeder. And yet, seemingly contradictorily, the days are over before they have begun.

The hard work is salutary, perhaps all of a blessing, for China is no oriental California with ample opportunities for relaxation and diversion on every hand. The satisfactory of being in there pitching day after day is the basis of the good morale existent among the 1162 men and 103 officers of the 68th Air Service Group.

The various units of the 68th Service Group, were in April discernibly on their way to attain their primary aim - to be the finest Air Service Command outfit in the Far East. During the month each unit and each section enlarged the scope, both physical and administration, of its work, and each

unit and section prepared for further expansion in its part of our primary mission of keeping American planes in combat readiness.

The 68th Service Group likes to believe that it is composed of superior men, and this month's commendations - for the 1803d Supply & Maintenance Co (Avn), the 1151st Quartermaster Co Serv Gp, and the 1088th Signal Co Serv Gp - would appear to be continuing corroboration of this belief. The 68th Service Group is determined to make for itself a record in Air Service Command operations comparable to the record in this theater of its senior partner, the 14th Air Force.

Remaining on temporary duty at Hsing Ching during the month of April, the 1151st QM Co, 1st Lt LOUIS BLOOM Commanding, and the 1803d Ordnance Co, 1st Lt JOHN E. BOUNDS Commanding, proceeded to enlarge their sphere of activities in that maturing Air Force region northwest of Chungking. At Pengshan, Kwanghan, Fungwangshang, and Shwanglu, bases in the Chengtu sector, men from both these units were on detached service, the Ordnance men rolling runways and taxi strips, and towing airplanes, the Quartermaster men handling the air freight at these growing installations. If such work is not essentially that of Ordnance or Quartermaster, it serves to underline the extreme versatility of these units, whose efficiency at performing many tasks alien to their principal training earned a strong letter of commendation from Major R. D. CARR, Commanding Officer at Hsing Ching.

Expansion was also the key-note to the work of the two Service Squadrons, the 54th and the 12th. Heretofore the technicians of these outfits had ranged to such comparatively adjacent fields as Yangkai and Chengkung, but in the latter part of the month a considerable cadre of technicians, men from the Air Corps Supply and Engineering Sections on the majority, were sent to Yunnanyi to intensify and extend third echelon repair at that station. To survey a crashed aircraft, a group of technicians under Captain THOMAS F. HARTNERR, Assistant Engineering Officer journeyed to Lucheng, close by the French Indo-Chinese border.

The 1088th Signal Co. accomplished many diverse jobs, from installing the signal equipment in General CHENNAULT's new plane to working all shifts in the 14th Air Force radio net. The Storage and Issue Section under Lt KOCH trans-shipped many tons of equipment to advance bases and anxiously watched the construction of two new warehouses, sorely needed to accommodate the many tons of material and equipment coming over the Hump to this distributing focus. For its part in the installation of the base telephone system, the Wire Crew was the recipient of a letter of commendation from Major MATTHEW C. MAUTZ, Area Signal Officer.

May proved to be a full month charged with the grave and the humorous, the momentary and the significant, the local and the expanding for the 68th Service Group.

The monsoons advanced, perhaps two weeks ahead of schedule, and the intermittent squalls fell on roofs in Hostel #1- That had been re-tarred fairly efficiently two days previous. Accidents have an inexorable adherence to sequence, and within the same week in late May two installations operated by the Group were the scenes of accidents. On 26 May 1944 an explosion occurred in an ordnance revetment, instantaneously killing three men from the Group on duty at that storage

point. No loss of life was incurred in the considerable fire at the fuel supply dump on 30 May 1944. Electrical power was finally made available to Hostel #10 in May, its installation encouraging the amount of mail written to families and friends in the States and also coinciding with a large, keenly-felt drop in the amount of mail flown in - Placing the picayune and the important side by side may somewhat convey the pace and the air in which the Group finds itself carrying out its primary mission. That is how it happens. One minute the completion of a crushed-stone parking lot does seem important - it happened that minute. An hour later the news of the Japanese advance on Changsha brings a necessary re-evaluation. And each day brings its re-apportioning of values.

During the months of May each of the units of the 68th Service Group - there are 8 units assigned, 1 attached - augmented its sphere of duties.

Some units did it colorfully. The men of the 1151st QM Co., were further dispersed from their original focus at Hsing Ching until the satellite fields of Pengchan, Kwangan, Punchacheng, Shwanglu, and Funwangshang were no longer curious Chinese names but the fields at which sections of the Unit performed the duties of an Air Freight Company. The men of the 1803d Ordnance Co., was relieved of its duties in the Chengtu area and returned via air to Kunming where the unit assumed the responsibilities for ordnance supply. The responsibility for the ordnance maintenance in the immediate service center was allocated to the other ordnance company, the hard-working 1760th Ordnance Co., as of 1 May 1944. To LT BLAUSER fell the considerable problem of re-establishing the originally high morale of this company which has twice suffered loss of life through explosion.

Some units did it almost imperceptibly. For the 12th Service Squadron the month meant additional repair and salvage specialists supplementing the cadres at Yunnanyi, Kwangan, Chengkung; at this last station the 3d echelon specialists on DS from the 12th Service Squadron numbered 19. The men at Yunnanyi supported activities of 68th Composite Wing. The 1088th Signal Co., -- in which outfit, it is not irrelevant to add, the spirit of the men is outstanding-- increased its operations in the Storage and Issue Section, Message Center Section, and Line Crew Section, and anticipated the word that would follow on the acceptance of very high frequency in China. The 1088th awaited the completion of more commodious warehousing facilities, as did the 8th Medical Supply Platoon and the Kunming detachment of the 1989th QM Trucking Company engaged in operating Intra-China Freight. The men of the 54th Service Squadron working in the Engineering and Air Corps section responded to the brisk leadership in these sections, but were undoubtedly of a mind with their Squadron buddies engaged in other work that they were ready to go home and that New Delhi had been overly neglectful.

Above and beyond the expansion he supervised as Commanding Officer of the 68th Service Group, Lt Col GEORGE S. KENT was faced with re-organization of Section #1 when on 18 May 1944 he was appointed to the Command of this extensive area. Included was the Command of the Air Base, Kunming. Colonel KENT has begun the re-organization of the bases and their functions to gain a superior tactical efficiency.



As adumbrated earlier, the Special Service stars of the month were the roofs which finally repelled water and the lights which finally illuminated. They were supported by movies shown four times a week, a maturing Chinese-American Forum, softball games on non-rainy Sundays, and particularly by a dance for the enlisted men on the Group on 13 May 1944 which was mark by the largest turn out of girls to such a dance in this area. The overall morale of the men could be best described as 'only average'.

June was the fifth month of operation in China for the 68th Service Group. The activities of the month confirmed trends in the Group's functions adumbrated by its activities in the preceding months.

In the first instance, the various units and sections of the Group continued their expansion in tracking the ramified problems of a Service Center. One-fourth of the personnel of the 12th Service Sq., to cite one example, were on Detached Service from the squadron's permanent station at Kunming. Of this number on Detached Service the largest segment was stationed at Chengkung, 29 enlisted men and W/O J/G Bernard W. Feierabend handling the engineering duties at that enlarging base.

There was the adaptation to emergency. June 1944 marked the start of the drive to Berlin on the European continent, but it also marked the acceleration of the Japanese drive in the vital Changsha region in China. To keep as many as possible of the fighter-planes of the 14th Air Force in combat readiness, factory 10 augmented its work with a considerable night crew --- a leading example of the many alterations the situation decreed in the sections of the group.

The month underlined the coming and going of personnel. The destination of some of the veterans of the 54th Service Sq., later assigned to the 12th Service Sq., was the United States. Rotation finally had established itself as more than a theory and as something of a working system. The destination for Lt. Louis (NMI) Bloom and the enlisted men from the 1151st QM Co. was Paoshan, a tactical base near the Burma border. Earlier in the month a third of the men of the 1151st had returned to Kunming from their temporary duty in the Chengtu area where 4 officers and 53 men from the company are continuing their handling of air freight at the seven fields in that maturing area.

Local adjustments continued. The 1803d Ordnance Co., at full strength at one station for the first time since its arrival in China, meshed with the 1760th Ordnance Co. to perform the duties of ordnance as one company.

The rains continued. One section distinctly aware of the monsoons was the telephone line crews of the 1088th Sig. Co. engaged in stringing wire connections between the Base and Hostel #1. The weather made constant testing of connections an imperative, and Cpl. Howard, primarily a radar man, devised a radio method for voltage checks which Sgts. Fox and Bell, the wire crew chiefs, accepted exuberantly. In mid-month the 1157th Sig. Co., attached to Sector #1, speeded the completion of the project when their wire crews were joined to those of the 1088th.

Buildings went up. The new Ordnance compound on the taxi strip neared completion. The fine new Quartermaster compound was ready for occupation. The Signal Supply warehouse received a coat of combat gray.

When the invasion front was opened on 6 June, it served as a remarkable stimulant to the morale of the men of the group. The first pasting of Japan proper by China-based B-29's also did not impair the spirit of the troops, to say the minimum.

As the reading of the July histories of the various units of the 68th Service Group will bear out in detail, July was a month in which expansion of Service Center operations reached a point where numerous new assignments and transfers of personnel were imperative to insure efficient handling of the continually enlarging sphere of work. The 68th Service Group, Colonel GERORGE S. KENT Commanding, is, to be certain, identified with the functions of the Sector #1, China Air Service Command, and yet in strictly Group operations readjustments during July affected personnel situated as far north as Chengtu, as far East as Hengyang, as far West as Paoshan, as far South as Szemao.

Tactically July meant Hengyang. Men from the 1989th QM Trucking Co. participated first-hand in the efforts to stem the Jap drive southward from Changsha. But Hengyang was felt far behind the lines. Figures can only give a partial account of the acceleration of the activities in all sections decreed by tactical necessity, but some idea of the acceleration can be gained from these tabulations: Air Corps Supply received over 650,000 lbs. of supplies and shipped 521,000 lbs. to outlying bases; the Ammunition Section of Group Ordnance shipped a daily average of 66  $\frac{2}{3}$  tons; 55 planes were in the process of Salvage; the Aviation Gasoline Section surpassed all previous record handlings, a night crew becoming a permanent fixture.

Moreover, in purely local expansion there was no let-up. The 1088th Signal Company for illustration, did work of battalion extensiveness, completing, among its various projects, the telephone line connecting the base and Hostel #1, the initial check on the strip lights and beacons for the base, preliminary survey in advanced radar work for the 14th Air Force, and the erection of the 14th Air Force Message Center. This month's commendations for the crack signal outfit came from 1st Lt. John S. Iversen Jr., Message Center Officer, and from Major R. G. Barbaras, 835th Signal Service Bn., who supervises the Area Signal Net. Speaking of commendations, the 1151st QM Co. was the recipient of an unusually lofty good word, Brig. Gen. Wolfe of the Twentieth Bomber Command commending the exceptional work put in by the members of that company stationed in the Chengtu area.

With all units and all sections working well and hard, it was important that recreation facilities be dependable and continuous. Happily the run of July movies was above the previous quality, the one exception being a Nelson Eddy special that drove even the hostel manager from the hall. With the release of some workers from Major Garrold's department, the contemplated improvements in Recreation Hall decoration became an actuality. Stateside bar, complete with charged-water machine, is finished, the fireplace in the reading room is going down the stretch, and a lot of the barn has been taken out of the main hall. There has been a planned and duly

executed entertainment every night, but the high spots were the dances given on July 9th by the two Ordnance Companies and on July 25th by the 128th AACW. The 1157th held a very successful dance in Kunming on July 22nd. And the 54th Service Squadron stopped thinking of the vagaries of Rotation long enough to plan strenuously for their dance on August 5th.

The continuance of good news from the Pacific and European fronts has been the bulwark of an adequate morale. However, it is quite apparent that incurable over-optimism is not a trait exclusive to American civilians.

Kunming is about 50 miles directly west of Kweilin, but the shift in the tactical situation following the reverses at Changsha and Hengyang affected Kunming almost as fully as they affected the hub of Sector #3. In August the increasing responsibilities of Sector #1 called Col. George S. Kent away from his position as Commanding Officer of the 68th Service Group in order to concentrate on sector problems, and to the Command came Lt. Col. Herbert W. Taylor, formerly the Group S-3 Officer. Since no Sector T/O was on hand, the officers of the Group were called on, in some instances, to double in Group and Sector undertakings. The Sections and the units met the heavier demands of the tactical situation with commendable drive.

The Air Corps Supply Section during the month of August received 661,732 lbs. of equipment and shipped 421,438 lbs. of equipment to advance bases. The Group Engineering Section handled 46 acceptance checks, 3 visual checks, 6 engine changes, 15 major repair jobs, and received 12 aircraft for salvage. In these two sections the men of the 12th and 54th Service Squadrons were working together. After nine months overseas the men of the 12th were considering themselves rather as veterans, but were still newcomers in the eyes of the 54th the majority of whom have been overseas for 24 months. In August rotation became something of reality for the men of the 54th when 4 enlisted men and 1 warrant officer, all with 31 months overseas service, headed back for that legendary land called the United States.

The 1151st QM Co., at comparatively full strength in Kunming for the first time, poured seventy per cent of its personnel into the Quartermaster Section to accelerate the work in Rations, Clothing, Salvage, and Motor Vehicle gasoline. 14% of the company's personnel were assigned to the aviation gasoline unit which was working around the clock to keep up with the tactical demands. 5% more working at Air Corps Supply, 10% more on D.S. at sector bases doing Quartermaster Work.

The Two Signal Companies, the 1157th and 1088th, both contributed personnel to a special VHF project directed by the 14th Air Force. The part to be played by the American-Born Chinese soldiers of the 1157th was particularly interesting. These men were to translate the official Signal Corps manual on VHF into Mandarin for use by Chinese troops. In addition, personnel of the 1157th moved two radio stations (from Kunming and from Kweiyang) to Chengking. The 1088th stationed field illumination crews at Nanning and Chengking air bases, dispatched the radar section to Chengking for two weeks, lent four (4) men from this radar section to the 14th Air Force Transport Section and sent its experienced message center men to Chengking to lay the foundation for a message center at that base.

In ordnance, preparations were made for the 1760th Ordnance Company to move to Luliang Air Base and for the 1803d to take over the responsibilities in Kunming that had, during the previous three months, been shared by both outfits. The Armament Section completed 16 anti-aircraft gun mounts for 50 caliber machine guns, while the Automotive Section completed 417 jobs out of the 425 received. The Ammunition section received 50 tons during the month. The 8th Medical Supply moved into a new supply warehouse in the Base Motor Pool Compound.

In the first week of September the Japanese, turning their attention away from the Hankow-Canton railway which had prompted their drive south from Changsha, moved westward. Japanese shipping had been harried to an increasing extent by the operations of the 14th Air Force from its Eastern bases - which, of course, was the prime reason for the drive to link up southern and northern Japanese holdings - and the Japs decided to move in on these Eastern bases from which the bombers and fighters took off on their missions. Face-saving may have had something to do with the drive, if the commentators can be believed. Knocked down and back on every other field of combat in the Far East and Pacific, the Japanese needed a field of battle to supply them with bolstering news for a civilian front wobbling from Saipan, Guam, Halamahera, Palau.

The unsuccessful efforts of the Chinese armies to stop the advance on Kweilin, key to our Eastern organization, made it necessary to evacuate the large majority of the personnel from this area in September and to destroy the more Western bases. At the same time Luichow and other eastern bases were continuing to operate, not only at normal speed but at great acceleration due to the pressure of events. Accordingly, a double problem was presented to the 68th Service Group, starting supplies to all of China from its hub in Kunming: the evacuees from Kweilin fell into the orbit of Sector #1 and so more directly into the orbit of Kunming; the rushing of supplies, equipment, and aircraft to improve the tactical position of Luichow and other bases began at Kunming and was carried on without the coordinating hub of Kweilin.

The situation resulted in the tripling of activity in the Aviation Gas unit. One new element to be gassed were the troop carrying planes aiding in the evacuation. The Engineering section was busy, to say the minimum. The listing of 46 major repairs, 31 engine changes, 18 acceptance checks, 152 visual checks - all purely local - does not tell the story, merely suggests the continual load carried by the men in this section. From India, Air Corps Supply received 722,470 pounds of equipment and issued 460,676 pounds. The Message Center of the Signal Company was pushed to a new record for messages received in this area. The Intra-China Freight section, operated largely by the personnel of the 1989th Quartermaster Trucking Company, shipped more freight in the second week of September than in the entire month of August. And so it went.

Apart from the acceleration caused by the situation in the East, the sections and units of the 68 were faced with other considerable tasks. The Signal Supply Warehouse would have been over-taxed on many stretches without the additional load of evacuated equipment. The new Radio Shop in the Factory #10 area was opened, and Sgt. Livingston and his men set to work on the accumulated jogs. The 1157th Signal Company sent Lt. Frank Lew and two enlisted men to check its station at Annan and to retrieve the company property stored at Kweiyang for safer keeping at

Chanyi. The men from this outfit who had worked (under 14th Air Force direction) translating the basic VHF manual into Mandarin for use by Chinese troops were the recipients of a fine commendation from Col. Ernest C. Wood, acting Signal Officer of the 14th Air Force.

On the 3d of September the first section of the 1760th Ordnance Company started over the hills to Luliang where that company was to take over base ordnance. On the 8th of September the movement was completed. At Kunming the 1803d Ordnance Company assumed responsibility for all ordnance supply and maintenance. Twenty-five (25) men were added to the company's roster. During the hectic month the Ammunition Section under Lt. Truman K. Schafer handled 6,200,00 pounds of munitions, a night crew being a necessary addition during the mid-month stretch. Supply and Armament Section under Lt. Paul E. Benson moved into a new Ordnance Service Center Supply Depot Warehouse, and the Automotive Section under Lt. William Boyd, adopting a night shift, assembled 164 vehicles, and in so doing, discovered several new tricks and improvised many new gadgets.

32 enlisted men and 3 officers returned to the States via the rotation plan - all had been overseas 32 months.

The Recreation Hall and athletic fields were busy during the month. On 2 September the 1088th Signal Co. and 1151st Quartermaster Co. joined hands for an unusually pleasant dance, and Headquarters Squadron was host at another fine affair on 21 September. The 54th Service Squadron got together on the 14th to honor its retiring C.O., Capt. Whatley. The 1157th Signal Company was the guest of the Bank of China at a suave affair at the Bank's rural villa on September 30. The Group's softball team played very good ball except on the Sunday that meant the most to them. Against the pitching of Gen. Chennault they fell victim by an 11 - 2 score. It showed, anyhow, a laudable respect for the leader.

In October the 68th Service Group, Col. George S., Kent Commanding, continued in the fulfillment of its primary mission, keeping the aircraft locally based in combat readiness. Ninety-seven (97) aircraft were accepted by the 68th Service Group. The Group performed repair on forty-five (45) aircraft, and salvaged thirteen (13).

If the Engineering section was quite busy, for some units of the 68th October was a slack month. The shipping and receiving figures of Air Corps Supply offer a just criterion for measurement. In October the decline in Hump tonnage curtailed to 252,041 pounds the equipment received by Air Corps Supply, while the distribution figure reached 420,427 pounds. Of this tonnage the greater part was made up of spare parts swiftly trans-shipped after receipt from India to the Luichow area, imperiled by the westward advance of the Japs. The reduction in Hump tonnage affected, quite naturally, the two Ordnance companies, the 1803d and 1760th, and indirectly the 1989th QM Trucking Co.. The 1803d Ordnance Co. stationed at Kunming handled only 1000 tons of munitions and 25,000 pounds of vehicle parts, a drop of 50% over the average monthly handling in both departments. The 1760th Ordnance Company stationed at Luliang Air Base, was also low in munitions activity, due not only to Hump tonnage decline but to the drop in the number of missions flown from the base because of the persistence of bad weather. But the continuing

automotive problems at Luliang kept the 1760th sternly occupied, and their record of completing 163 out of 170 repair jobs is a mere glossing of their solution of the problem.

Other units did not feel the slackening as acutely. Lt. Koch at the Signal Supply warehouse received very limited poundage, but his stocks now had mounted to Depot proportions. The 1088th Signal Co., upon the departure of the 1157th Signal Co., for northern areas, was augmented by additional personnel, some of whom staffed the Radar warehouse, others the new Radio Repair shop equipped with testing equipment the finest in China. The 8th Medical Supply Platoon was well entrenched in its new warehouse located in the motor pool compound. The 54th Service Sq. had the pleasure of bidding good speed to the twenty-nine (29) more men who had put in well over two-years of service overseas and were rotating back to the States. The 1151st QM Co. shuttled personnel to various sector bases to carry the shifting loads, to Yunnanyi Air Base, for example, where activity had mounted following Allied seizure of Myitkyina.

The morale of the men of the 68th as they neared their first year overseas was definitely good. Regular evening entertainment was abetted by Sunday suppers for ten (10) men at Miss Fitzgeralds' cottage, by the touch football league highlighted by the nine Old Men or Officers Team, a chatty weekly call the "Hostile Tension", and much above all other reasons, by the institution of the system whereby forty (40) men from the Group rest each week at Tsuyung Air Base and return from the healthy change of pace and atmosphere, physically, nervously, and mentally sharper.

1st Lt. Robert J. Reidy, with the 68th Group Engineering Section in Chengkung, was awarded the Air Medal for flights over "the Hump" during the past year.

Rotation - the main topic of interest in China - slowed down considerably during the month of November. Only 2 enlisted men and 1 Officer returned to the United States.

Towards the end of November, the quiet and serenity of Kunming Air Base was slightly interrupted by threats of enemy bombings. Four one-ball and two-ball alerts occurred in the last week of November, but no enemy aircraft appeared. However, the nearby air base at Chengkung was hit by enemy aircraft and two enlisted men, Kenneth D. Canfield and Jesus Velasco of the 68th Service Group, were awarded the Purple Heart for injuries received during the raid.

As a result of these alerts, a great deal of interest suddenly developed in the condition of slit-trenches, fire fighting equipment and warning systems that had been unused and almost forgotten for the past year.

During the month of December 1944 the 68th Service Group, Col. Richard H. Wise Commanding, operated with headquarters at Kunming and the majority of its personnel at this station but with some of its personnel and the indirect products of its operations manifested throughout the China Theatre.

In the early weeks of December the considerable Japanese threat to American operations in this

theatre was efficiently countered. The Japanese advance northwest from Luichow, which had carried to the environs of the key city of Kweiyang, was turned back by Chinese troops and the Japanese columns driven back to Kwangsi province. The repulsion of the Japanese threat coincides with many major changes in Chungking where the Chinese National government is moving, with the cooperation of the United States, to fortify its military strength and its war industries production. December found the Japanese giving direct aerial attention to the Kunming area. During the Christmas-New Year span the men and officers spent a good portion of the holiday season in the slit trenches.

Perhaps the best over-all view of the operations of the 68th Service Group can be gained through reviewing the major concerns of the nine (9) units of the Group. The Engineering Section, staffed by personnel from the 12th Service Sq. and the 54th Service Sq., handled 1372 work orders of major and minor repairs, visual checks on 105 airplanes, and 16 aircraft salvaged. Men from the two service squadrons working in Air Corps Supply Section received 924,261 pounds of equipment and issued 992,705 pounds of equipment. The Automotive Section of the 1803d Ordnance Co. received 64,000 pounds of automotive parts and issued 34,500 pounds of parts while the Armament Section received 17,000 pounds and issued 3,500 pounds. The 1760th Ordnance Co., stationed at Luliang, completed 156 out of the 150 vehicle repair jobs received during the month, and proceeded in the conversion of vehicles for using alcogas. Men from this Ordnance Co. also serviced the 373d Bomb Sq. (H) in ammunition needs, trans-shipped to other bases in China munitions received from India, and salvaged several .50 caliber machine guns.

From the 1088th Signal Co. four (4) men and one (1) officer were formed into a radar reporting team, and ten (10) men were attached to the 1712th Sig. Battalion for work in frequency modulation. Under the direction of Lt. Barclay C. Walker, appointed Base Wire Officer after being relieved by Lt. Cashbaugh as Operations Officer, work was completed on the open wire circuit from the base switchboard to Hostel #1. The main responsibility of the 1989th QM Trucking Co. continued to be convoying material throughout the sector bases. The 8th Med. Supply Pl., in addition to routine duties, issued lend-lease medical supplies the Chinese Air Force.

During December the flow of men from the various units of the Group to outlying bases continued. For example, 29 men from Hq. Sq. went out on detached service or temporary duty.

The enjoyment of the holiday season was aided by the arrival of packages in large numbers, a Post Exchange ration with four (4) cans of beer for each man, and excellent entertainment in the colorfully decorated rec. hall. The morale of the men of the 68th Service Group is definitely good.

Previous to the 31st of December an order was published restricting large gatherings of men anywhere at the Kunming Army Air Base. Because of this Order, the Recreation Hall in Hostel 10 had canceled its planned program of the 31st. Chapel Services were held as usual and what began to look like a very quiet New Years Eve in China was disrupted at about mid-night with a "three ball alert". The few men in the Recreation Hall, the officers in the Officer's Lounge and the men in their barracks and tents thought they were in for "another one of those nights" such as they had experienced during the past week.

But the alert did not prove to be a serious one as had the ones in the past. Still it was another "Jing-bao night". That was late on the 31st of December 1944.

But the alerts couldn't and didn't stop the 68th from carrying on its work as it always had. Significantly, they took on more work, even, than they had in the past. The Headquarters & Headquarters Squadron, 54th Service Squadron, 12th Service Squadron, 1803d Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company, 1989th Quartermaster Company (Trk) Avn., 1151st Quartermaster Company, 1088th Signal Company Air Service Group, continued in their triple role as a Group servicing many Base functions in the Kunming area, working as a Service Group, and answering their calls for help from the outlying Bases. The men were not all at Kunming where their Headquarters was located. They were sent in small detachments to such centers as Chengkung, Yunnanyi, Paoshan, Tsuyung, Mangshih, Chaotung, Chikiang, etc. to work out problems in engineering, supply, motor pool operations, convoy, Quartermaster supply and subsistence, armament, automotive and others.

As to the type work done, the 12th Service Squadron, for example, handled 25 accepted major engineering repairs, releasing 10; accepted 10 minor repairs, releasing 5; completely salvaged 12 airplanes and picked up 25; accepted 2 more engine changes and released 10; performed 95 visual checks and accepted 110; they completed 1,639 work orders, changed 134 batteries, gassed 423 airplanes, used 161,685 gallons of gasoline doing it as well as 1,424 gallons of oil on 116 planes.

The Air Corps Supply Section of this same Squadron received during the month, 3,174,000 pounds of equipment consisting of aircraft spare and repair parts, engines, etc., and shipped 6432 tons of equipment to bases in Sectors I and II. But, as with the other units, so with this one, it was not all work and no play. They planned and staged their first party on the 26th of the month and entered their second round of basketball play in a Hostel 10 League of nine teams, with a fair season represented in the first round, behind them.

The 54th Service Squadron, doing like amount of work, were made most happy by the rotation of some 36 enlisted men back to the States, giving the entire Squadron a tremendous morale uplift. Rumors hit the 54th Service Squadron fast and furiously concerning the possible coming of a Depot Group making one and all believe that he was either scheduled for a quick trip home or for a compensating promotion. Captain Morrison, Commanding Officer of the Squadron, sensing the error in this rumor continuing, called a special formation of the men to explain the situation as he saw it and quelling the unfounded optimism of the Squadron. In view of the immediate future, as we look back, this talk proved to be a most judicious move.

The 1151st Quartermaster Company, undaunted by the nuisance alerts during the month, kept sending men and supplies to outlying bases, Luliang, Paoshan, Tsuyung, etc., as well as carrying on their normal functions on the base. Promotions were announced during the middle and at the end of the month bolstering the morale of many men in that Company. The shortage of adequate personnel kept the men and officers of the 1151st humming throughout the month.



The 1803d Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company, spurred on by what looked like a champion basketball team, went after their routine duties with the same zest. In their supply section alone, a total of 154,000 automobile parts were received and they issued something like 65,000 in return. Approximately 11,550 pounds of Armament parts were received and 14,000 pounds issued while vehicle issues amounted to a total of 398. A simple breakdown of their automotive sections gives an excellent picture of the type of work produced here: They assembled and serviced during the month 233 vehicles and 141 trailers. They completed 242 maintenance jobs, 18 stationary units and 107 welding jobs exclusive of vehicle welding. On top of this, 172 machine jobs were completed for a grand total of 913 shop jobs.

The Headquarters & Headquarters Squadron, 1088th Signal Company Air Service Group and the 1989th Quartermaster Company (Trk) Avn. In their routine work paralleled the records made by the units already mentioned.

The complete picture of the Group's personnel looked something like this during the month: On the first of January, the total strength of Enlisted men was 1,064, of which 776 were present for duty, 10 were in the hospital, and the remainder on detached service or temporary duty. There was a total of 68 officers, including 2 Warrant Officers and one Naval Ensign, of which 49 were present for duty and the remainder on DS or Temporary Duty. By the end of the month there was a total strength of 941 enlisted men of which 707 were present for duty, 13 were in the hospital and the remainder on DS or temporary Duty. There was also a total strength by this time of 73 officers, including the 2 Warrant Officers and 1 Naval Ensign with 52 present for duty and the remainder either on DS or Temporary Duty. The end of the month found 13 men in the hospital, and during the month there were 29 men of which 3 were officers, in the hospital. There was 1 AWOL case during the month.

During the month a total of 16 officers and 58 enlisted men were gained; at the same time, 6 officers and 62 men were lost to the Group.

On the whole the morale of the Group was very good. The Hostel 10 Recreation Hall which they had built was now going "great guns. The Snack Bar serving sweets and coffee was running four nights a week. Movies were being shown on the three regularly scheduled evenings, and Combat films and GI Movies shows after Chapel Services on Sundays. The library, employing four Chinese women proved very popular in its excellent setting for on the spot reading, a tremendous turnover in books taken out and a somewhat less report on books turned back in. The Basketball League of the Hostel, sponsored by the Group, was going well and the first round ended of the two round series with the 1803d Ordnance Company nosing out the rest of the league (a big nose) with the Headquarters Squadron and the 1088th Signal runners up.

One of the main concerns of the men and officers during the month was the changing policy towards rotation and the most-times unsuccessful attempts at fathoming the intricacies of their peculiar status. The Group, nearing its mass approach to rotation was deeply interested in this particular problem. And closely allied to this phase of their living was their unusual enthusiasm

shown for the latest up-to-date news. Radios in every barrack and in many rooms, news at the Recreation Hall, and news sheets from various sources were not enough to satisfy their curiosity. This pang for news and its meaning was interpreted to be an excellent signal of good morale and alert minds. The War Department, bent on having the best informed army in the world, would be deeply gratified to know the status of these men and officers regarding this particular phase of orientation.

The month of January closed quietly with high morale among the troops and officers alike. Visually, one could see the Group was getting its job done well with little or no obstacles that it could not or did not overcome. The Group knew it was good, yet alert to do better always, for it knew that it was on the ball and fiercely intended to champion its reputation already well established in China. The 68th, a good Group, continued to be a good Group striving to be an even better one.

The 68th Service Group met the month of February with several important changes in its status and much speculation among the troops as to its role in the near future. On February 16, Colonel Richard H. Wise was transferred from the 68th Service Group, its new Commanding Officer, Colonel George F Hartman. Upon his assignment to the Group, Colonel Hartman immediately called a meeting of his officers expressing his opinions as to the present and possible future role of the 68th, the important news, no longer rumor, that the 68th was moving out of the Kunming area to Chengkung, as soon as the transfer could be effected.

The troops had sensed a move for some time and received the news of the prospective transfer with more calm than might be expected. Yet there was much excitement physically. The 68th Service Group had been one of the first of such Groups in China, and from the first, at Kunming. It was one year to the month that the Group had been in the Kunming area. They had built their hostel area, their Recreation Hall, their Officer's Club, their playing fields. They had entrenched themselves so much into the life of the Base itself, that when the transfer was discussed it was necessary for the Group to leave almost three-fourths of its personnel behind at their jobs. It was little wonder then that even though they had expected the move to be made, the troops were beginning to show anxiety. But they weren't moving yet. The move wasn't to come until March. In the meantime, there was work to be done.

The 54th Service Squadron, now the 54th Air Service Squadron, initiated a "Mobile Unit" of ten men and one officer dispatched to Yangkai, China. The 54th was now carrying on its mission at Kunming, Chengkung, Yunnanyi, Paoshan, Tsuyung, Mangshih, Chaotung, Yangkai, and Mengtze. The 12th Service Squadron, now the 12th Air Service Squadron, sent eight more men to Yangkai to perform Group functions, and an additional three men to Mengtze for Base activities.

The 1989th Quartermaster Company (Trk) Avn., with all drivers and mechanics working at the Base Motor Pool, supplied transportation to the Base. Several convoys were made to Chikiang to haul badly needed supplies and to evacuate non-essential supplies. One convoy was gone from the home Base for more than thirty days, making several trips between Kweiyang and Chikiang and Tushun. Supplies were hauled to Luo-wang Ping, Tushun and other new Bases. During this

period, one convoy hauled troops and equipment of a bomb squadron to the Chengtu area. T/4 Canfield received a letter of commendation from the CO of the bomb squadron for his cooperation and the manner in which he maintained the trucks during the convoy.

The 1803d Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company Avn. continued its extensive work with approximately the same output in all sections except the armament, which greatly extended its operations. Approximately 445 tons of munitions were received this month. 364 tons were shipped to Sector I and 71 tons to Sector II. A simple breakdown of this one section will give a fairly good picture of the type work being produced: During the month, 228 Carbines, 25 rifles, U.S. Caliber 30 M1, 20 Rifles, Caliber 30 M1903, 38 Sub Machine Guns, Caliber 45, 196 Pistols Automatic, Caliber 45, 62 Pistol, Pyro. M6, 7 Pistol Pyro. M2, 7 Shotguns, S&W M720 and M97, 3 Guns Machine, Caliber 30, M2, 174 Gun Machine Caliber 45 M2 ground type and 3 guns, Automatic, 20MM were checked for a total of 764 check jobs. Of these 152 were repaired and 387 cleaned and cosmoline'd for storage.

The Group worked hard during the month and looked forward to its play with an equal amount of zest. The Recreation Hall continued to be the center of all enlisted activities on the Base. The library had been rearranged to resemble large systems so that men might return the books as easily as they were now able to find them. The Snack Bar continued to operate four nights weekly, increasing its offerings of sweets and coffee now to include sandwiches as well. On several occasions all foods were distributed free to personnel. As an adjunct to the hall and an added service to all Hostel 10 personnel, a cleaning establishment was begun and of the more than thousand items of clothing handled, but two were lost and were either replaced or paid for. Regularly scheduled movies were shown three times weekly, one complete showing at 1330 for night workers and two showings at 1815 and 2030 for those who were free in the evening. The movie which stirred the most excitement among the men for the month was the screen teaming of Bogart and Beccall in "To Have and Have Not". However, "Hollywood Canteen" proved to be the most popular screening while "None But the Lonely Heart" proved to be the biggest disappointment to the average moviegoer. Several outside shows were brought in early in the month, notable ATC Unit No. 2 which the men claimed to be the finest 'live' show they had seen in China up to that time. On Valentine Eve, the Hostel was privileged to present Lily Pons and Andre Kostelanetz and Company playing to a packed house. So grateful was the company for their excellent handling here that Miss Pons was pleased to sing more songs for this gathering than she had for any other place in China. Captain Bailey of the Fourteenth Air Force was also a guest of the Hostel and was wildly applauded by enthusiastic GIs for his informal entertainments at the piano. Colonel Lieu of the Chinese Fifth Army was invited to speak at a Forum with particular emphasis to the then special problem of Chinese American Troops of the Fourteenth Service Group. A publicity contest was held in the Hostel to determine what wife, sweetheart or sister was the best looking of the lot. Pfc. Valentine T. Lash won the distinction with a photograph of his wife. Publicity shots were taken and subsequently printed in the Los Angeles Herald and Express newspaper, in California. The basketball league drew to a close with the 1803d winning the second round as they did the first to become undisputed champions of the Hostel. A big gala Championship dinner immediately went into planning. On the more serious side, sixteen new applicants for Correspondence courses through the Armed Forces Institute were initiated. A talk

was delivered to all men who wished to be present on the GI Bill of Rights And You, by Lt. Friedman, Special Services Officer.

With the new landings on the Philippines, the tremendous Russian Offensive in the East and the Offensive in the West, all personnel of the Group became even more acutely curious over news events of the world. Their curiosity was alleviated somewhat by news analyses before each movie showing, and the bulletins, news digests, war-maps, etc. placed in the Recreation Hall and the Hostel. The month closed with the Group working hard, craning necks into the future trying to fathom what their new status might be and with some comprehension over the move in the offing. The morale, which is always high, was given a new lift by the talk of Colonel Hartman to his officers and thus to his troops with promises of more good things to come. All in all, the Group was in excellent shape with sharp eyes on a bright future.

The rumors which had meant the Group's moving from the Kunming area became a certain truth with the advent of this month. Somehow, as always, the rank and file of the men had known it all along. And they were happy over the prospects of the future. They had completed a full year's service in the Kunming area during the month of February and were satisfied with their good fortune of remaining in one area for such a long period of time and especially in such a fine area. The men were cheerful in their barracks as they began their preparations for the move and they were equally as cheerful in finishing up the last bits of work at Kunming. Of course there was the inevitable usual amount of confusion among the men concerning their jobs in the Kunming area particularly since about three-fourths of the enlisted personnel were being left behind. The Group as a whole had been so deeply rooted in the life process of the Kunming Army Air Base that it was not possible at the time to pull out all the personnel needed for this movement. However, as the time drew nearer for the move, these problems were solved and by the end of the first week of the month, the Group was on its way to Chengkung.

Hostel 10 where the 68th had lived for their year in the Kunming area was closely packed with troops. All facilities were nearby; their Recreation Hall, their library, their movies, their officer's club, their orderly rooms, their living quarters, latrines, etc. were all within the confines of the fenced in Hostel area. When the troops first came to Chengkung they saw a wide open area, their living quarters up on a hill with more space between the first and last barracks than there was in the entire Hostel 10 area.

The Recreation Hall was across the field on the other side of the runway, and so the movies and their library. The barracks were subdivided into rooms, a luxury none had counted on. The Group Headquarters building, which in the Kunming area had been approximately a mile and a half from their living area, was now located within easy walking distance of any barrack. The congestion, dust, modernization of the Kunming area was not here at Chengkung. But the clean air, the spaciousness of living quarters, the attractiveness of the field, and the promise of re-building from the ground up under pleasant conditions fulfilled the potential to which the troops had looked when the move was made.

The acceptance of the men and officers of a new area at first may not seem of much import

related to their mission in the army. But at this writing, it has become evident, that the favorable conditions, and particularly the natural cleanliness of the Base, has contributed greatly to the morale of the troops and has correspondingly affected their attitudes towards their jobs.

The Mess Hall divided into two sections, the smaller for the officers and the larger for enlisted personnel was repainted, and a P.A. system with recording machine and sound boxes installed. Music has been present with the noon and evening meals as well as news summaries twice during the evening meals. In each of the barracks, many men had their own radios, but to make the coverage complete, the men installed speakers where needed and these were hooked up to the orderly room radio. All in all the general appearance of this locale on the Base was notably improved.

When the Group moved it left behind Captain Bloom of the 1151st Quartermaster Company, and attached all personnel not going to Chengkung, to this organization. The Service Squadrons carrying a load for the past months broke into the middle of March with a light amount of work. The 12th Air Service Squadron, for example, from the fourteenth day of March, received 65 airplanes, made 7 major repairs, 3 minor repairs, 36 visual checks, 6 acceptance checks, received 17 airplanes for salvage, salvaged 10 of them and packed a total of 926 parachutes. Within the body of the Twelfth's Unit History is the revealing statement: "Morale during this month was the highest, since arriving overseas".

The Group as a whole now took on greater official responsibilities. It had now become a Service Center responsible for the services to Yangkai, Yunnanyi, Paoshan, Szemao, Chengkung, Mengtze, Tsuyung, Mangshih, Chaotung, and Mengsa. Various liaison trips were made to most of these outlying Bases by those sections of the Group most concerned with their welfare.

The 68th Service Group looked back on an active month: a new role as Service Center, a new locale, and a job of moving behind them. The morale of both the Officers and men was excellent indicating a favorable outlook towards the work ahead. The month ended with the unanimous feeling that the lot of the Group was greatly improved.

As the month of May approached the 68th Service Group, activity had once more begun to resemble the routine accomplished at its former Base of Kunming. True, the Group was no longer responsible for the same heavy loads as it carried there where it had all but established and maintained the Base, but it looked now with growing responsibility to its enlarging family of Bases as the mother of a flock.

Names which blazed the headlines in the States became even closer to us for we were a part of them; they were of our flock. Loping, Nanning, Chikiang, Liuchow, Mentgztu, Chanyi, Luliang, Chengking, Poseh, Szemao et al were among us directly or indirectly. Loping, Nanning and Liuchow, in line with more recent developments in the Theater became part of our daily living. At first, the Group thought that it was to serve the newly won prize, Liuchow, and dispatched a convoy, the 54th Service Squadron, headed by Captain James Morrison, as advance personnel for the Base. This did not work out, however, in this changing Theater, and the unit was brought back

to Chengkung. The Fourteenth Air Force, moving its Headquarters in keeping with the new pace of the Theater, called on this Group, and particularly the 2082nd QM Truck Company to help transport both equipment and personnel North to their new Site. As the men saw their friends leaving, talked to the pilots narrowly escaping land mines at Nanning and Liuchow they became more aware that their every-day tasks here were more and more a part of the history of this war.

Still, this history making episode in the life of most of us here in China escapes the individual unnoticed under the weight of what the former great Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once so ably expressed: "War in an organized bore." Adding to this inertia of the men at the opening of the month was the shocking report bearing news of the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, our Commander in Chief. I believe we all remember that day very vividly. On the Company Streets early that morning there was an unexpected calm. There was no excitement, no running of troops, no shouting as the men slowly walked to their daily routines. Stillness casting doubt. As the day wore on, excitement grew. The men became more restless in their search towards security out of this new confusion. Who might we lean on? If he were to live throughout the war. What of the pacts he had made personally? Who would be the new Vice President. I don't know Truman. Stettinius is a good man. News summaries given from the microphone located in the mess Hall kept a running summary of events daily. Words home to their families showed how deeply the President's death had effected all, whether they voted for him or not, or at all.

It was not long, however, before the news of Hitler's defeat inspired the troops to soar their morale to new heights. Now there was wild talk about getting home, talk about leaving the theater to younger men with less points and to new men from India who still had Coca Cola in them. The enthusiasm, like the fire in your waste-basket, glowed for but a moment, then burned itself out. A few men did get to leave and they lost no time. The number of men leaving was pitifully small; still, it was felt, this is the beginning. The most notable departure at this time was that of our Group Commander, Colonel George Hartman who chose to leave on forty-five days temporary duty in the States taking his chances on not being sent back here again. With a gleam in his eye he pronounced the desire that he might not be sent back after all. No one in the Group would deny his joy in returning, nor his desire to stay home, for every pin up fan, (that is, every man) knew that Colonel Hartman was the lucky husband of lovely screen starlet Elaine Sheppard. And thinking on this a second time, all expressed the hope that he need not leave her for China again. Points or no points. Later news bore out the good wishes of the Group for Colonel Hartman has nor yet returned to the Group, nor does it look as though he will. Up from Executive Officer and into the shoes of Commanding Officer, stepped Lt. Colonel Taylor who had been with the Group since 1 August 1942, having previously held positions of Squadron Commander, Group Adjutant, and S-3 Officer. Lt. Colonel Taylor knew the Group like an old shoe and returned their respect and admiration with his winning smile. Chaplain Muir, who had been with the Group during its entire period overseas, was sent to the Station Hospital and later to the General Hospital in India with a bad leg condition. At latest reports, the good Chaplain, respected and beloved by all member of the Group, had arrived in the States.

The inspiring news of Europe's despotic end also brought poor consequences to the morale of the men and officers alike. It was soon learned that rumors to the contrary, troops were not rushing

home en masse. The film, Two Down and One To Go, excellent in purpose, yet far behind the hidden sources of information at the disposal of the men, did nothing to alleviate their fears or confusion.

The troops felt as a whole that no definite program was ready for them which would concisely and in clear cut terms tell them just who was eligible and who was not. The confusion has not been eased through the month of July, the men feeling, still that the War Department has let them down without a clear cut policy. Letters home have been tragic in attempts to explain this situation to families at home. The 1989th QM Truck Company, with two years overseas service under their belt, daily listened to the radio, perused circulars, bulletins and home town papers, even, for an indication recognizing their length of service overseas. No soap. Slowly, yet not surely, the men became resigned to the evident, that they were not now returning and probably would remain here in China, with but few exceptions until the Japanese had had enough.

In the meantime, the Group continued its job, servicing its many Bases. With the acquisition of each new Base, Loping, Nanning, et al., personnel had to be found to man the Base, the Commanding Officers, Executive Officers, Adjutants, freight personnel, clothing, food, tents, etc. Personnel and supplies were frown to the Bases and sent by six by six trucks as well, laden with bare necessities for their daily living. The Group soon acquired a pattern for this work. On the first of June, Colonel Jackson was assigned to the group as Commanding Officer, relieving Lt. Colonel Taylor who was slated to head a new Service Group Special, working out of Liuchow. Colonel Jackson immediately initiated his weekly staff meetings with his officers to coordinate fully the functions of each with the other. There was no excuse to be offered. The impossible was ruled out of the vocabulary. The word "can't" was sacrilegious. It must be done. It was done. As fast as the events happened the Group kept pace with them, transferring properties from dropped Bases, such as Paoshan, to the newly acquired Bases, such as Loping, Nanning, et al. There would be no delay. Almost daily, the Group planes soared into the skies in good weather and bad, bringing officers to the Bases to coordinate activities. Staff officers ganged up on planes and trucks and jeeps, much like the "share your cab" policy in the States. Other Units here at Chengkung helped us out, the 1st Air Cargo, the Twenty-Seventh Troop Carrier and ATC. All Units helped each other on this Base to meet the growing needs of the theater. Still, in the midst of this latest upheaval, the Group was calm, doing their work with the assurance of veterans in their respective lines. And they found time for play in their own backyard.

The Group Dispensary personnel began work on a small plot of ground outside their dispensary planting flowers against the building and extending and cultivating the land outside. Large rocks, whitewashed, surrounded the area. Daily, going to Group Headquarters, men would stop to watch the medical personnel plant seeds from the States in the Chinese soil. What with the monsoon season at our heels, and the sun shining brilliantly though rarely, the garden has flourished and is now a show spot of the Group. In addition to this small plot coolies have been hired by the hundreds to drain our ditches, spread oil over the stagnant waters, cut down the weeds, clear our grounds of trash and police our areas in general. The general areas of the 68th have by now taken on a neat appearance, and the roads, through continual care have been made to resemble roads. The POL section, formerly something of a sore spot what with thieving, looting, etc., has been

barricaded by a fence of high oil and gas drums, the entire area has been rearranged, and all functions are now running smoothly there.

In line with morale activities, a park area was planned for the men adjacent to the already functioning softball diamond. The volleyball court was put back into shape, horse-shoe pits were built and leveled out, a croquet court was leveled out of the weeds, the tennis courts were reshaped and kept in good condition. These tennis courts proved a great boon to the men and officers alike with perhaps more than fifty members of this Group alone applying themselves to that sport. Two Badminton courts were also leveled out and lined. Archery has been planned, and Captain Sherman, our golfing Dentist, saw to it that a green was begun for his chip shots. All of these activities were located on one area, but the rains nullified most activities despite men's dreams. The Group Headquarters moved out of its mammoth building turning it over to the Special Service Section for Recreation. Movies were immediately begun and showed to all members of the Group and others on this side of the field twice nightly, three times a week. Work was begun to furnish out the two small wings on either side of the great hall for snack bar and library. Bingo games were initiated on Tuesday evenings with a jackpot of \$50.00 offered as prize plus assorted prizes of cash for each game. For three successive weeks coca cola was offered the men with carbonated water, this latter made possible through an ingenious invention devised by Corporal Harry H. Capello of the Special Service Section. The Cokes were free and proved quite a boon. U.S.A.F.I. applications went down noticeably with the end of hostilities in Europe, though advantages of this offer were plugged in the new weekly Special Service Bulletin.

All in all, the Group rounded out a full three month period of hard work and much play. The rains of course put a dint into much of the outdoor activity, though men continued to go Kunming in buses provided for them, to the Lake on good days and not infrequently to the Rest Camp for a day's outing. The morale of the men was not too high due chiefly to the uncertainty of their status under what they considered the War Department's confused policy towards returning men home. The officers boosted their morale no end by staging an excellent party in their intimate club-room with entertainment, good food and drinks aplenty. Another is being planned for sometime in August. The chief topic on the mind of all men here at present is "when do I go home?" The 68th, renowned for its excellent and long service in this Theater, is justly entitled to this query.

August was an eventful month for the 68th Service Group as it must have been for all Army Units, for it was during this month that Japan's unexpected and immediate surrender became evident. Though the final agreement was several weeks away, news of the Atomic Bomb Blast, the reported surrender through slow official channels, and the expectancy now of going home, soared the spirits of one and all in the Group to a new high. Few had been released during the month for their homeward trip, but all rosters were immediately shifted, high point men were alerted and each member felt his day was now fast approaching.

On the eve that the Kunming Radio Station XNEW announced Japan's offer to accept the Potsdam Peace Conditions, the movie was interrupted for the announcement and the entire Hall went wild forgetting the show. In the Officer's Club, the evening was highlighted by Captain Ames, Commanding Officer of the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, who showed up in the



Club dressed from head to foot in civilian clothes, a light blue wool, single breasted suit, with white shirt, civilian shoes, and wine-colored tie with matching handkerchief. No one would believe that the Japanese offer was groundless and the gaiety of the men and the officers in their Club that evening was without foundation. Small enmities and minor bitter feelings which might have been felt at another time, vanished in the general feeling of good fellowship. Everyone was happy.

Looking back on the picture, the 68th Service Group was a happy member of the Fourteenth Air Force knowing it had contributed well to its excellent record, in the War of the World. Magic names loomed large in the news headlines at home, and the 68th as a family member of the Fourteenth Air Force knew first hand of the constant offensive under arduous conditions of terrain and supply that the planes of the famed Flying Tigers beat the Japs to the ground. The trucks of the 2082nd Quartermaster Truck Company alone in six months hauled over 30,000 tons of supplies over 500,000 miles of China Terrain. The 68th Service Group was a proud partner in this contribution of the Fourteenth Air Force towards victory, and by our combined efforts we know we have earned the everlasting friendship of our allies, the Chinese People. We have at the same time assumed the responsibility for maintaining our position, of course, in the future. Our morale has been high, and through it and our behavior we have maintained the respect of our allies here in Asia towards accomplishing our final objective.

The final settlement of the Japanese surrender terms came, of course, with the President's announcement on September 2, 1945. Men and Officers were now re-classified into proper "going home" categories, immediately, and this month, many began their first step towards home. Men and Officers were now being called in from our outlying Bases to rejoin our Group proper, leaving skeleton crews sufficiently large to complete the tasks at each Base. Old, familiar faces, long absent were now returning cheerfully, rechecking their barrack bags, turning in excess equipment and holding on their paychecks for the long voyage home.

Activities in the Group did not cease by any means with the end of formal hostilities. Liaison trips to the outlying Bases were continued by a majority of the staff personnel. All equipment and supplies were keyed up to "Christmas Store" levels that the 68th would continue its good name in China. Here, at Chengkung, the 68th was allowed recreation periods for a half day in the afternoons, on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, to play ball and have themselves a time on their park grounds. The park was now complete with softball diamond, volleyball court, horseshoe court, basketball court, croquet court, and two tennis courts. A big Field Meet was being planned on these premises in conjunction with the Mess Personnel for October 4, but the date was moved back to the 10th with the hope of getting sufficient beer for everyone to make a real day out of it.

As it turned out, it was a real day. And then some. A special Barbecue was planned for the men and officers out of doors, with roast pig, barbecued over an especially constructed pit, huge ears of almost stateside corn, peach pie, cake, coffee and beer. The entire meal went off without a hitch. Thanks to a Special Service allotment which came through just in the nick of time, prizes of war bonds were offered for single field events, and a case of beer to teams of two or more men

winning an event. The festivities of the day began at 0930 in the morning after a late breakfast, with the doubles matches in tennis, horseshoes both singles and doubled, basketball potshots and basketball free throws, ping pong singles tournament, and the first of a elimination softball tournament between the 1803d Ordnance team and the 1989th Quartermaster team. A special PA system was rigged up and music was played during the morning before the game, and between innings. The games themselves were broadcast over the field just as a regular radio broadcast which lent a great deal of interest to the games. A box of Whitman's Chocolates was awarded to each homerun hitter and a box was given to each man participating in the Field Day events.

A special ten page mimeographed news paper, the 68th Short Sheet, was published and distributed on the morning of the Field Day describing all events and names of participants as a souvenir for the men. This was a big day for the 68th, and acted as a focus for the pent up feelings which had been harboring in the men since the first days of the war's end. Morale in the 68th was high and has continued to be high.

Men and Officers have not left the Group during the month of October as they had during the month of September. Still, with the many new replacements coming in, the Group has begun to change its appearance a bit. One is not always certain whether or not the men in the mess hall now are really ours, or just sneaking in for an additional snack. Though the faces are no longer always familiar the embedded spirit of this excellent Group has remained much the same, strong, sure and resolute. News, late in the month of October, foretelling of the Group's possible classification of surplus sometime during the month of November has once again given new hope to one and all. Our outlying Bases are being cleared up neatly and preparations are being made at this writing to turn over well kept Bases to the 301st Air Depot Group sometime in the near future as one of our final steps. When this has been completed the mission of the 68th Service Group in China will have drawn close to its end, and the good name of the 68th in China will return to the states where it was first conceived.

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