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U.S. ARMY: UNIT RECORDS,
Sixth Engineer Special Brigade, 1944-1945

1,600 pages (approximate)
Boxes 554-555b

The 6th Engineer Special Brigade (ESB) was activated on January 20, 1944, and assigned to the U.S. 1st Army. Throughout the first half of that year the Brigade received reinforcements of men and additional support units. Until the invasion of Normandy, the reconstituted Brigade was involved in training operations in England. There were three Engineer Combat Battalions assigned to the 6th ESB: the 147th, 149th, and 203rd. Along with some supporting units, these battalions landed on Omaha Beach as part of the First Army on June 6, 1944. The remainder of the Brigade landed in follow-up waves throughout that month. After the initial assault on Normandy, the Brigade assisted in the expansion of the beachhead. Most duties for the three Combat Battalions consisted of scouting out and clearing minefields, while the supporting units for the Brigade were involved with the processing of prisoners, transportation of supplies and personnel, and other rear area functions.

Records for the 6th ESB are scattered from January 1944 to May 1945, with a number of months being completely absent. Most of the documentation is concentrated between the months of June 1944 and November 1944. Because it was an Engineer unit the 6th ESB was frequently broken up, with its subordinate battalions and companies being detached to various units during and after the Normandy landings. The records are therefore made up mostly of these detached units, so they will not appear as part of an overall Brigade history. There are periodic reports filed in the unit records, but by far the most consistent and thorough of the records are transportation and supply reports. These document the number of personnel and amount of equipment being passed through the rear areas of the Brigade, on their way from England to France.

The material has been arranged into six subseries according to the classification scheme of the Departmental Records Branch. The S-1 file consists of periodic reports from December 1944 through June 1945, covering the location, strength, and casualties of the Brigade detachments. There are also Personnel Debarkation Rosters from June 11, 1944 to August 1, 1944. These rosters record personnel crossing the beach during this time period, listing the unit and number of men per load. The S-2 file contains a large number of periodic intelligence reports, separated into daily, weekly, and "semi-monthly" reports from June 8, 1944 to April 28, 1945. Also included are some intelligence memoranda and an occasional map or overlay diagram of enemy equipment captured.

The majority of the S-3 file, nearly 800 pages, contains ship reports, pre-loaded LCT reports, and records of cargo handled from May to October 1944. The ship reports themselves have been arranged according to unit, as the dates listed on them do not include the month. Because of this, a coherent timeline for the ship reports is difficult to ascertain. There is a hand-drawn chart of

tonnage unloaded by each Brigade unit, from June to September 1944, which is more precise. The remainder of the S-3 file is made up of weekly and monthly periodic reports from June to November 1944. The beginning of the file contains an operations report that has a concise history of the Brigade.

Records for the S-4 section consist of requests for ferry craft in September and October 1944, plans for transportation across the Channel on and after D-Day, and daily periodic reports for June and July 1944. There is also a special report dated June 16, 1945, describing the economic output of German coalmines in 1944. A few maps are included showing locations and production for the region. The Staff Section for the 6th ESB is made up of periodic reports for the Brigade's subordinate units. The three Engineer Combat Battalions (147th, 149th, 203rd) have reports filed from June to November 1944, with the 149th Battalion having the greatest amount. There are also fragmented reports from Ordnance Battalions (15th, 74th, 261st, 350th, 618th), Quartermaster Battalions (280th, 567th), the 60th Medical Battalion, and the 517th Port Battalion. There is no consistent dating for these last units, as their reports range from September to November 1944.

Most of the records for the 6th ESB are related to transportation and supply, but there are some areas in the S-2 and S-3 files that describe a variety of other operations. Because the 5th and 6th ESB's were both attached to the First Army for the Normandy landings, they filed some reports in conjunction with each other. For a thorough review of 6th Brigade operations, it would be advisable to consult the files for the 5th Engineer Special Brigade as well.

CHRONOLOGY

- January 20, 1944 The Brigade is activated and assigned to the First Army.
- January-June 1944 The Brigade spends its time in England training for the upcoming Normandy invasion.
- June 6, 1944 The first detachments from the Brigade land with the assault waves on Omaha Beach as part of the First Army. The remainder of the Brigade lands in follow-up waves.
- June 6-November 30, 1944 As part of the First Army, the 6th ESB participates in operations to expand the beachhead around Normandy.
- November 30, 1944 Stripped of all but its three Engineer Combat Battalions, the Brigade is assigned to the defense of the West Coast of the Cotentin Peninsula.
- January 6, 1945 The Brigade is assigned to Advance Section Communications Zone.
- January 6-May 8, 1945 The Brigade participated in construction and coal mining duties in the Advance Section Communications Zone.

DESCRIPTION OF SUBSERIES

<u>Box Nos.</u>	<u>Subseries</u>
554	<p>I. S-1 REPORTS. 1944-1945. 2 folders.</p> <p>Location, strength, and casualties for units. Personnel debarkation rosters. Arranged according to the DRB classification scheme and in reverse chronological order.</p>
554-555a	<p>II. S-2 REPORTS. 1944-1945. 7 folders.</p> <p>Daily, weekly, and semi-monthly periodic reports. Intelligence memoranda on situations and captured enemy equipment. Arranged according to the DRB classification scheme and in reverse chronological order.</p>
555a-555b	<p>III. S-3 REPORTS. 1944-1945. 20 folders.</p> <p>Operations report with Brigade history. Weekly and monthly periodic reports. Ship reports, pre-loaded LCT reports, cargo handled, and tonnage unloaded. Arranged according to the DRB classification scheme and in reverse chronological order.</p>
555b	<p>IV. S-4 REPORTS. 1944-1945. 4 folders.</p> <p>Ferry craft requests, planning for transportation across the Channel. Daily periodic reports, June-July 1944. Special report on German coal mine production, dated June 16, 1945. Arranged according to the DRB classification scheme and in reverse chronological order.</p>
555b	<p>V. STAFF SECTION REPORTS. 1944. 3 folders.</p> <p>Periodic reports and intelligence reports for various subordinate units of the 6th ESB. Arranged according to the DRB classification scheme and in reverse chronological order.</p>

CONTAINER LIST

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Contents</u>
554	<p>SUBSERIES I: S-1 REPORTS</p> <p>Periodic Reports, Debarkation Rosters; July 1944- June 1945</p> <p>Debarkation Rosters; June- July 1944</p> <p>SUBSERIES II: S-2 REPORTS</p> <p>Daily Periodic Reports; September 1944</p> <p>Daily Periodic Reports; August 1944</p> <p>Daily Periodic Reports; July 1944</p>
555a	<p>Daily Periodic Reports; June 1944</p> <p>Weekly Periodic Reports; November 1944- April 1945</p> <p>Weekly Periodic Reports; July- September 1944</p> <p>Intelligence Memoranda, Semi-Monthly Periodic Reports; June- November 1944</p> <p>SUBSERIES III: S-3 REPORTS</p> <p>Operations Report with Brigade History, Cargo Handled; September 15, 1944- May 19, 1945</p> <p>Cargo Handled; September 10-14, 1944</p> <p>Cargo Handled; August 23-31, 1944</p> <p>Cargo Handled; August 17-23, 1944</p> <p>Cargo Handled; August 10-17, 1944.</p> <p>Cargo Handled; July 31- August 10, 1944</p> <p>Cargo Handled; July 21-31, 1944</p> <p>Cargo Handled; July 1-21, 1944</p>

Cargo Handled; May 31- July 1, 1944

555a-555b Ship Reports (1)-(4); 1944

555b Weekly Periodic Reports; July- November, 1944

Monthly Periodic Reports; June- November, 1944

LCT Cargo Reports; Sept. 18- Oct. 28, 1944

LCT Cargo Reports; Aug. 13- Sept. 18, 1944

LCT Cargo Reports; July 24- August 13, 1944

LCT Cargo Reports; July 5-24, 1944

Tonnage Unloaded; June- September, 1944

SUBSERIES IV: S-4 REPORTS

Special Report; June 16, 1945

Periodic Reports; June 1944

Planning; February 1943- May 1944

Requisitions, Ferry Craft Requests; September 2- October 23, 1944

SUBSERIES V: STAFF SECTION REPORTS

Staff Periodic Reports (1)-(3); June 8- December 1, 1944

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