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A UNIT HISTORY

THE 130TH CHEMICAL PROCESSING COMPANY

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SECTION I

By direction of the President and in accordance with War Department policies 130th Chemical Impregnating Company was activated on 24 April 1943. During the period 24 April 1943 to 9 May 1943 the cadre and officers were assigned. The cadre and commanding officer, Captain Ernest D. Smith, were drawn from the 113th Chemical Impregnating Company. For complete details of personnel changes see Appendix A.

On 9 May 1943 a formal activation ceremony was held in the Camp Sibert, open air theater in the Fourth Provisional Regiment. Each man was presented with a rifle in accordance with established customs, by Lt. Col Maul of the Unit Training Center Staff. Basic training was started in the afternoon following the activation ceremony. Although the majority of enlisted men had completed at least eight weeks of basic training and knew the fundamentals of soldiering there were thirty seven (37) enlisted men who had not had any training whatsoever. In army parlance they were rockies. Therefore it was necessary for the entire unit to be given basic training again. This was necessary so that the unit could be made into a unit in which the men worked as a team and not as individuabs. This was accomplished by long hours of infantry drill and classes in Military Courtesy and Discipline.

After the first four weeks of the fundamentals of basic training, the company started on it's technical training. This consisted of lectures and demonstrations on the theory of

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impregnating and the method of impregnating. These lectures and demonstrations were followed by practical work in both the M-1 and M-2 process. A number of expert technicians had been assigned to the company from the Reception Station. These men, after familiarizing themselves with the machinery of the impregnating plants, made excellent teachers together with the cadre. These men taught the other men of the company who were not as familiar with machinery as themselves.

Coupled with the technical training was also advanced training in 'How to Be a Soldier as Well as a Technician'. This included training with the rifle. As in all basic training a great deal of time was spent on handling of the basic weapon. Many of the men had never fired or even seen a rifle of any higher caliber than the ordinary 'shooting gallery' .22. However when the results of the record firing were in and tabulated it showed that 98% of the unit had qualified with the rifle M-1, 1903. This was due to the excellent coaching of the cadre and men who had had some instruction in the basic weapon.

The unit went on one overnight bivouaceduring the first basic training. It was done under simulated conditions. The plan was as follows:

The enemy was reported to be closing in on the plants being operated in the company. After a Simulated demolition of the plant, the company marched to the area just outside of Camp Sibert. It was a march of about 20 miles. Upon arrival the usual routine of setting up an overnight camp was started. A security guard was set out. The kitchen was set-up and the

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kitchen personnel started preparing a hot meal, although the temperature was well over 100 degrees. The men pitched tents and dug slit trenches. After an uneventful hight the unit started back to the billet area in camp.

Upon completion of basic training furloughs were given out during the first week of August 1944. After the first group of men left on furlough the company went on an extended bivouac. The schedule called for a thirteen week bivouac. The bivouac area selected was a site within the bounds of Camp Sibert off the Atalla Highway and along Big Wills Greek. The Impregnating plants assigned to the company were set up. The installation of the plant was accomplished in record time. The bivouac area was set up about three quarters of a mile from the plant on the side of a hill. It was an ideal lowation. This period was to have been an advanced training period and although it helped to train the members of the company who were eventually to go overseas as high ranking non-commissioned officers that is almost the only purpose it accomplished.

Two weeks after the company had installed the plant and set up the bivouac area, members of the company were transferred to other processing companies who were scheduled to go overseas prior to the time of the 130th. The men were transferred to the 113th, 114th, 111th, 112th, 115th, and 120th Chemical Processing Companies. This brought the strength of the company so low that it had to be recalled from the bivouac area and returned to camp. The strength of the company went down to 5 officers and 52

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enlisted men. These men were to form the cadre for training a new 130th Chemical Processing Company.

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SECTION II

After a period of indecision by the staff of Camp Sibert, it was decided to reform the 130th and start a new basic. This basic was to be started not as the 130th Chemical Impregnating Company but as the 130th Chemical Processing Company. On 3 September 1944 the company was redesignated as the 130th Chemical Processing Company.

For a period of four weeks the company was brought up to and eventually overstrength by replacements from all over the Fourth Service Command. These men came from Camp Tyson, Fort Jackson, Fort Moultrie, Fort Bragg and other Fourth Service Command installations. These men were 'veterans' of the army, having been in anywhere from one year to four years. Most of them had taken at least two basic training and of course were reluctant to undergo another. However the men were made to feel that they would act as an informal cadre for the training of the men who were to come from the First Service Command Reception Station. Upon the arrival of the men, basic training was started. This was actually the third basic for the cadre and the second for the men who took their first basic with the old 130th. For others it was the fourth or even the fifth.

The men of the company who had been through the first basic training with the company served as an auxiliary cadre. The assigned cadre of course conducted the classes. These men were competent instructors, due to the fact that they had conducted the first basic training in conjunction with the officer personnel. The basic went smoothly with only the ordinary mishaps of

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a basic training. During this basic greater emphasis was placed on plant work, as the unit was preparing for overseas duty. It was not official, of course, but the general feeling was that the unit would go overseas upon completion of the basic training.

The basic was completed and the unit went on Bivouac for seven days to Huntsville Arsenal. The purpose of this bivouac was to give the company training in depot work. This included loading and handling of chemical supplies, and the method of stacking supplies. The company bivouaced in an area just outside the arsenal. It was interesting work and the men went at it with zeal and industriousness. They did such an excellent job that the Depot Commander gave the Company Commander a letter of commendation for the work performed by the 130th.

Upon completion of the bivouac at Huntsville Arsenal the unit returned to Camp Sibert to prepare for overseas movement. The orders came while the unit was on bivouac. Preparations for moving were started immediately upon return to camp. Only three weeks were available for this preparation. During the week equipment was crated, men were given their final shots, clothing and equipment were checked and the men were prepared for overseas movement.

On 16 April 1944 the company was awakened at 0500 and started for the train station at 0830 hours. The company arrived at the station at approximately 0900 hours and waited for the train which was late. While waiting for the train the men gave a display of morale that had not at that time been equaled at Camp

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Sibert. For two hours the men sang and did a snake dance. The Camp Sibert Band was on hand to play and the men took advantage. The Commanding General of the Unit Training Center Camp Sibert said that he had never seen such a display and commended the company. At 1100 hours the train pulled out of Camp Sibert. After the train trip was underway the men were informed of their destination. It was Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. The train route was via Washington, D. C. and took two days. Authority NND 735017 By AZNARA Date 7/26/10

SECTION III

At 1600 hours 17 April 1944 the company arrived in Camp Kilmer', New Jersey. This was the staging area at which the company was to receive it's final processing for overseas movement. Again the men were given 'shots' and clothing and equipment were checked. Several new items of clothing were issued. Passes were issued on Thursday 20 April 1944 to half the company. The rest of the company were to receive passes the next day. At reveille on the following day, the men were informed that the company was alerted and no more passes could be issued. Thus only half the company were allowed out. On Sunday, 23 April 1944, the company left Camp Kilmer by train for the Bush Terminal in Jersey City, New Jersey. From here they boarded a ferry boat and left the Terminal. The first stop was at the Brooklyn Port of Embarkation. The company boarded the S. S. Exceller which was to take them to Europe. The Exceller was a converted cargo ship of the Export Lines. She was 422 feet in length with a beam of 60 feet.

On Monday the 24 April at 1015 hours the ship set sail. It was a fog shrouded harbor that the men left from. A perfect day (according to the crew). The ship sailed out of New York Harbor on it's way to the convoy formation spot. The convoy was formed and we set sail for our destination. The complete convoy contained 19 tankers, 12 cargo vessels, 1 aircraft carrier and 6 destroyer escort ships. The Esceller carried slightly over 500 men. This included the 130th and Medical Corps and Quartermaster personnel.

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On Tuesday 2 May (eight day out) the first patrol plane was sighted. On Friday 5 May 1944 at 0630 hours Ireland was sighted. On the same day at 1700 hours Scotland was sighted. at 2130 hours the same date the convoy was split up. Five ships remained with the S. S. Exceller. On 6 May at 0615 hours the Exceller arrived Glasgow, Scotland. In the afternoon the company boarded the train for London, it's final destination. On Suday 7 May 1944 at 0330 hours the unit arrived at it's billets in London. It was quite an experience for the company. The blackout presented an interesting study for the men. A number of the men expresses wonderment at the amount of damage done by the air raids. The billets were located at No. 4, 6, and 8 Sloane Court S. E. This was in a former residential neighborhood of London. The billets were apart of the Casual Section of Central Base Section, which was the immediate higher headquarters of the unit after it was assigned. The next week was spent in bringing the quarters up to the standard set by the Commanding General Gentral Base Section. At the end of the week it has been decided that the company should set up it's plants and operate a laundry for the Military Police Battalion that operated in the London Area, The site chosen was a warehouse at No. 4 Crinan Street, King's Cross, London, S. W. 1. The next concern of the company was receiving, repairing, and installing the two M-2 plants that they had been assigned. The plant was set up in normal time, but difficulty was encountered in securing the stack extensions for the boilers. On 16 June the company experienced it's first air raid. It was

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a V-1 or Rocket Bomb raid. The men were not as cautious at the first raid as they might have been, but after they waw the results the next day each man took greater care in an air raid. The men were curious about the behavior of the 'Doodlebug' and some men purchased binoculars to get a better view of the bomb.

During the time in London the company helped to evacuate civilians from their homes that had been bombed. They also helped the British Rescue Squads in their work after a Doodlebug had landed.

The men were prepared for this type of work by demonstrations that they put on with the English. The men were taught how to move debris to look for wounded persons, and other details of rescup work.

On the 1 and 2 of July the entire unit with the exceptions of a Charge of Quarters were out on this type. They worked all day Saturday and Sunday. On Monday the procedure was to be repeated. The men had an early breakfast and at 0730 hours were ready to leave for their work. They were to be dispatched in trucks. The first group was being loaded in front of the billet (No. 6 Sloane Court)/ Without warning a robot bomb came out of the haze. It was headed straight for the billets in which the men were and in frent of which they were standing. The company commander and several of the men gave warning. (This warning is credited with saving a number of lives). The men on the sidewalk ran into the buildings to the cellar, other ran around the corner to escape the blast. The men in the truck did not have time to get off. All this took place within a matter

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of seconds. The men who ran around the building were much safer than those who ran to the cellar. The blast completely destroyed No. 6 Billet and almost completely destroyed No? 4 & 8. The buildings had collapsed all the men in the buildings had blasted the truck into the side of the buildings. It is doubtful that any man on the truck came out alive. Immediately after the bomb struck rescue squads were at the scene helping the men out of the wreckage. Some men walked out of the building amidst smoke and flame. A fire started which added to the hazards of the men who were trapped beneath the debris. Some of these men in the debris were severely burned. They were in such a position that they couldn't more and could do nothing about the flames. Most of the men were trapped for a number of hours. One man was trapped for four days. He was in a shelter that was formed by falling timber. (For official report see inclosure No. 1 to Section 111)

This was the greatest single disaster of United States Army and Personnel in the London area. (See inclosure No. 2 to Section 111)

Immediately prior to the incident the unit was scheduled to leave London, for the continent. After the incident this was of necessity postponed. The company was moved to Little Heath Camp in Essex, just outside of London. This was intended as resting up place for the men of the company who were left. It was not decided whether or not to call off the schedule move to the continent to leave the unit to reform in England. At first it was decided to reform the company with replacements, but this was later changed. The change was due to the claiber of replacements

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which were available to the company. The men could not absorb the technical knowledge which had to be learned. It was decided to send nother Chemical Processing Company in place of the 130th. In the meantime the unit proceeded to dis-assemble the plant which they had set up in London, so that it could be sent to France for the unit which was to take it's place. The plant was shipped to a Chemical depot by the men of the 130th who were left in the company. In the meantime the rocket bombs continued to be sent over the area in which the company was located. This area was a far worse spot than the center of London. Several bombs landed so close that the buildings were rattled. On 3 August 1944 another rocket bomb struck about 50 yards from the camp occupied by the unit. It struck in the roadway opposite the camp. Several billets were torn open and a number of windows smashed but only several men were injured. This greatly upset the nerves of the men and some had to go to the hospital because of it.

The unit remained at the site just outside of London until 23 August 1944, when it moved to Chemical Warfare Plant 950, 10cated at Cresswell Staffordshire.

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SECTION IV

Here in the heart of England everything was quiet and peaceful compared to the activity experienced in the London area by the company. It was located in a country section of the midlands. The nearest town was Blythe Bridge. CWS Plant 950 was engaged at the time of the unit's arrival in laundering salvage clothes from the battle fields of France. This was accomplished with the machinery of a Zone of Interior Processing. During it's period at CWS Plant 950 the 130th performed the usual work of a laundry unit. It was numerous bundles of clothes from England, France and even from a far distant place called Russia. Also during the stay at Cresswell the company sent a number of men on temporary duty to other Chemical Plants in England. This was to help load and store supplies which were to be shipped to France. Valuable work was performed by the unit in loading chemical supplies which were destined to be used in the Battle of the Bulge and later for the crossing of the Rhine. A letter of commendation was forwarded the Commanding Officer of CWS Plant 950 for the work performed by the men from his camp. This was indorsed over to the 130th by the Commanding Officer. For copy of letter of commendation see inclosure No. 1 to Section 1.

In December of 1944 the unit was preparing to celebrate it's first Christmas overseas. During the period to Christmas men who had been wounded in the incident had been released from the hospital and rejoined the unit. Christmas was to be a reunion.

A party for the children of the nearby towns was given by

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the members of the post. It was quite a large party with several hundred children attending. Cookies, candy and small presents donated by members of the post were given to the children. A large Christmas dinner and party was planned for the men on the post. All this went nought however. About 0300 hours Christmas Day a rocket bomb came over the camp. This was the first time that the section of England in which the company was located had an air raid in over a year. This spoiled all the plans for the men of the 130th. The men felt that they were no longer safe from the bombs even in the Midlands.

After Christmas things went back to normal and there were no more air raids. The men continued to operat the Zone of Interior Plant as usual. It was about this time (the last week of December) that the company was called upon to furnish men for conversion training. This was a hard choice for the company commander to make. However the men were chosen with a view as to who would make the best infantrymen. The men were sent to the 12th Reinforcement Depot where they took their training. After this the men were sent to France, where all but two of them engaged in combat. Two were killed in action and several of the others were wounded.

During February rumors were rife as to the chances of the 130th going to the Continent. The rumors became a reality the first week in March and the unit started to realize that they

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were going to finally get to the continent. Most of the men were glad of the opportunity. On 17 March 1945 the unit left their station at GWS Plant 950 and started for the Staging Area at Southampton. On the same day the unit arrived at the staging area. The company stayed here for four days. On the fourth day the unit moved from the staging area and arrived at the plens at Southamptonfor embarkation. They boarded the S. S. Cuba. It was a converted liner that compared to the ship that the unit crossed the Atlantic in. The ship stayed at the harbor that night and sailed the next day.

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SECTION V

After two days of sailing the company arrived at the french port of Le Havre. They unloaded from the ship on to a ferry boat and came ashore to the ruins of Le Havre. The men for the first time realized the extensive damage that had been done in France. They realized the great amount of courage that it took for our combat troops to invade the Fortress of Europe. After arriving at the steel pier, constructed by the Army Engineers, the men boarded semi-trailers for their destination which was the staging area Camp Twenty Grand. It was quite a long ride and most of the men had to stand up all the way. At the end of the ride there was a six mile hike to take to the camp itself. This reminded the men of their basic training. Upon arriving at the camp (about Midnight) the men had to set up their cots in the tents. The nights at Twenty Grand were cold compared to the nights the men had previously. This was also the first night that the company spent in tents.

After five days at this camp the company boarded the traditional "40 & 8" box cars and started for their final destination which was Nancy, France. It was supposed to take 48 hours for the unit to get to Nancy. After being issued rations the men left the station. For the first two days it was quite an experience for the men, but after the fourth day it got just the least little bit monotonous. The train was pushed around from one part of the yard to another. The company was 36 hours in

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the railroad yard at Faris. Finally after five days the train pulled into the station at Nancy. From there the men went to their billets which were located within the city limits at Rue St. Charles. The company was billeted in a chemical depot that was in the process of moving. After the depot company moved the men lived in the billets formerly occupied by them. It consisted of three brick buildings. The men were again billeted in buildings similar to those in which they lived in London. The immediate task of the company was to bring the billets up to the standard in which they were accustomed to living. In the meantime the company was assigned to the Continental Advance Section, APO 667, which was the immediate supporting supply arm for the American Seventh Army and the French First Army. A detachment of men went to work loading supplies which were to be sent to the Seventh Army. Another detachment was sent to the city of Metz to guard a warehouse of quartermaster supplies from being stolen by German Prisoners in the depot or by civilians also working in the depot.

In the meantime the main body of the company remained in Nancy to prepare the plant site for installation of the M-2 Processing Plants which were to assigned to the company and were on their way to Nancy via rail transportation. Several crates of the plants arrived and were set up by the members of the company. As each crate arrived it was installed in place. After the arrival of the tenth crate the unit received orders cease all plant operations and prepare to leave for the staging area at Marseille. This was a shock to all the members of the company as

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they thought that after experiencing the incident in London that they would stay in the European Theater. However all high point men were screened from the unit and on June 12 1945, the unit left Mancy and boarded the train for Marseille. Again the unit travelled aboard the traditional "40 & 8" box cars. This time it took only three days on the train. Upon arrival the company was taken to the St. Victoret Staging Area just outside of Marseille. This was part of the Delta Base.

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SECTION VI

Life at the staging area was not an easy one as the heat was so intense that no one had the ambition to do much. The men were told that they might be there for as many as sixty to ninety days. This was not a pleasant bit of news for the men felt that if they had to leave, the quicker the better. This trip to the Pacific was to be the longest troop movement in history. The work at Victoret consisted mostly of Supply and Administration which kept those departments pretty busy. Records had to be in tip top shape, and men were being transferred in and out. The task for supply was a still greater one as all company property and equipment had to be brought up to full T/E and special orders. This meant reordering all equipment not on hand and getting the men all the necessary clothing for the movement. Men of the supply department had to work night and day in order to get their records up to date. After all equipment was brought up to strength. each branch such as Engineer, Quartermaster, Signal and such required that the company turn over to them all respective equipment of their service, except necessary TAT, and they would pack and preserve the equipment for the unit and give them a shipping ticket for all they turned over to each respective service. Most of this equipment was never seen again by the unit as the Charles Godkin, the ship that carried this equipment, docked at Okinawa and the unit landed at Manila on a troop transport. All men of the unit were not necessarily busy and many went to see the wonder city of Marseille. It proved to be equally as exciting to most of the men as was always heard about it. Others spent many enjoyable hours at DBS Beach which was only a short distance wayfrom camp. Movies

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and stage plays were presented at the staging area, but the distance was so far that a good many men did not care to go after a hard day in the intense heat of Southern France. To obtain Coke or beer the men had to wait in lines for at least an hour or more. This was quite disgusting as the men were low in morale just thinking about the idea of making the long trip to the Pacific after serving so much time in the ETO. Thirty days passed and the rumors grew stronger and stronger. Finally, we were told that we would be shipping out on the morning of the 23d of July. Most of the men were glad to leave as life at Victoret was not an easy one. While at the staging area three new officers were obtained in the unit.

The unit was awakened at five AM that morning as there was still a great deal to do before moving. The trucks arrived and the men boarded them at 1:10 PM and arrived at the docks in Marseille at 2:30 PM. After waiting in the hot sun for over two hours, the men finally boarded the Admiral E. W. Eberle. After boarding the ship the men became very curious as to what kind of a ship it was. They were not disappointed for long before the voyage was over, everyone agreed that it was the best ship any troops could have been fortunate enough to make the crossing on. It had all the luxuries facilities of a well planned troopship. Since this unit was the advance party, they were assigned permanent jobs on the ship throughout the voyage. A good majority of the men were on guard duty. This was an important job for the security reasons. Other men worked with Special Service and arranged entertainment and news for all personnel abcard. Others helped out in the many offices aboard the ship. Upon reaching

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their destination all men of the unit were congratulated and thanked by the commander of the ship for their excellent behavior throughout the voyage.

The experience of going through the world famous Panama Canal was one that all members of the company will always remember. Upon reaching the Pacific end of the Canal, the men were allowed to get off the ship at Balboa and were taken to a regular army camp at Fort Amador where a very enjoyable time was had by all. Men were able to obtain many valuable articles at the Fort PX which is the best ever seen by any Army man. They were able to get things that were unobtainable in the States. For the first time in as much as two years, the men enjoyed their first taste of ice cream and hot dogs. Everyone disliked the thought of parting but it was necessary, and in a few short hours the ship was on its way to the distant Pacific Island.

From Balboa on, rumers of peace were very strong and most men stayed awake nights with their ears next to the radio, waiting for an announcement that would tell the world that the war was over. When the good news finally came there was much rejoicing. A wonderful V-J Day dinner was enjoyed by all aboard ship. Immediately the men started to talk about discharges and the possibility of the ship turning around and heading for Frisco. They were in for a great disappointment for the ship continued on a _______ steady course. A stop was made at the island of Ulithies where final orders were received by the ship's Captain. We first droped anchor at Batangas where some of the troops disembarded. Our next stop was Manila Bay. The men left the ship and boarded LCI boats and were taken ashore. From the LCI, the men were able to realize the size of the ship which had brought them safely to

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the Facific. The complete voyage took thirty seven days. Everyone agreed that they would like to make their return trip home with the Eberle.

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SECTION VII

The LCI's landed on the beach where RR cars were waiting for the men. They weren't exactly the traditional 40 & 8 cars, but something new. The ride in these was the same old story as it had been in France and other places where they were used. After spending twenty-two hours aboard the cars, the men finally landed at San Fernando, La Union, Luzon. From here we were taken in trailers to the 3rd Provisional Staging Area at San Juan. The men did not do much here for equipment and orders were not on hand. Most of the time was spent swimming at the beach. Supply and Administration were temporarily set up and working under handicaped conditions. All weapons were in a terrible stage of rust and there was no equipment available at the camp for cleaning them. The job was immediately tackled as soon as such equipment was gotten.

After two weeks at the staging area the unit again moved. This time it was to be the permanent location in San Fernando. The location wasn't much to look at as it was a thick jungle on top of a hill overlooking the Bay. After months of hard and laborious hours, week after week, the mentionally had an area that was envied by all. A recreational hall was built so that the men could have their beer and cokes when they wished.

Orders were finally received by the unit to start building for operation of a laundry. At first it started out on a small scale, but later it developed into the largest on the island. When the laundry was finally in operation it was doing the work for hospitals, EM and Officers of Headquarters, Base M, and other units located in Base M. The laundry was supervised by men of this unit and the work of washing and running the machines was done by Philipino laborers. The unit obtained electric -23 - DECLI SSIFIED Authority NND 735017 By AZ NARA Date 7/26/10

irons in a large quantity. Filipino women were hired to do the pressing so that all personnel laundry could be returned in a finished bundle with all Khaki's starched and neatly pressed. This facility was enjoyed by all in the Base.

It wasn't long before the point system once again started to affect the unit. Men were begining to return to the States every week. A number of low point replacements from the States were received, but they weren't much help as half of them reenlisted under the benefits of the 'Red Apple'. With the few men that were left the unit managed to carry on quite successfuly.

While stationed in San Fernando many of the men enjoyed leaves at the famed city of Baguio. Transportation was made available for daily trips to other points of interest on the island.

The month of November 1945 saw the end of the personnel for the 130th. Only one officer and one enlisted man were left to prepare for inactivation proceedings. Orders for inactivation finally arrived for 25 January 1946. On this day the 130th Chemical Processing Company of the Chemical Warfare Service officially ended.

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