

FLOOD DUTY---March 18th. to 25th.1936

" Captain McCleary, Company "G" on flood duty in Cumberland needs assistance. Mobilize Company "B" at once and proceed to Cumberland, reporting to Major Flock. Some of the roads are flooded, you will have to select any route that is open. Take no unnecessary risks"

That order from Major General Reckord by telephone at 11.50 A.M. March 18th. launched the first mobilization for duty of Company "B" since re-organization after the World War.

In spite of the fact that mobilization plans to meet such emergency calls are kept up to-date at all times, Captain McCleary found many obstacles in the way when he endeavored to start the execution of that plan. In notifying the Officers he was unable to contact Lieut. McKee, who, enroute to his home by trolley car, was marooned when power was turned off account high waters at Williamsport and knew nothing of the call until he finally arrived at home at 1.20 P.M. First Sgt. Minnebraker, delayed by the halted trolley service, knew nothing of the call until about 1.30 P.M. In endeavoring to use the radio facilities, Captain McCleary found that W.J.E.J.'s announcer and broadcasting unit was in Williamsport giving first hand information covering conditions there, and was unable to contact them and, have the call issued until about 12.30 P.M. A number of the members of the Company were in Williamsport also and could not be contacted by radio or telephone.

In spite of these obstacles, three Officers and fifty one men of the Company were equipped and ready to move before the buses, requested of the Blue Ridge Transportation Co. were available. This company was delayed in furnishing transportation because they had been required to substitute buses for halted trolleys.

The bus drivers reported that Route 40 was closed by high waters in Hancock. They also advised that they understood Penna. State Highway Patrol was not allowing any vehicles to cross the bridge near Bedford, Pa. and therefore that route was closed. This could not be confirmed as there were no telephone lines open to Bedford. Headquarters of the State Highway Patrol in Harrisburg was contacted but they knew nothing of the condition at Bedford account no communications; they suggested that we start that way and if possible they would get us through.

Accordingly, at 4.07 P.M., the Company in two buses started via Greencastle--Merchersburg--McConnellsburg--Everett--Bedford route. As we traveled over this Penna. Highway through a continual rain, through stretches of road that were completely under water, and through a rather heavy fog on McConnellsburg Mountain, it was to many of us, as if we were in some strange land and we wondered what was around the next curve or over the next hill.

At 5.45 P.M. we arrived in McConnellsburg and sandwiches, coffee and apples were purchased for our first meal. While there, numerous motorists asked us what route we were going to follow as they had been turned back at Everett and wanted to get through. Although this information indicated that we would be unable to get through, our orders were to proceed to Cumberland and at 6.05 P.M. we resumed our journey depending on the help of Penna. State Highway Patrol to find us a route that would be open.

At Breezewood, Pa. we were stopped at 6.40 P.M. by a member of the Penna. State Highway Patrol who advised that his Lieutenant has gone forward to determine whether we could get through and that we should wait there as there was a congestion of trucks, buses and cars at Everett. While waiting Captain McCleary endeavored to learn something about Route 40 by telephone but all lines were out of commission. An attempt was then made to learn something by radio but the local light^{flash} caused a disturbance which prevented clear reception from the Cumberland Broadcasting Station. At 7.45 P.M. word was received from the Lieutenant of Penna. State Highway Patrol and also from Messrs Hyssong and Winebrenner of the Blue Ridge Transportation Co. who had made a survey of the road ahead, that it would be impossible to get through to Bedford as roads were completely washed out.

At 7.47 P.M. the Company left Breezewood for Hancock, Md. arriving at that place at 9.55 P.M. Here the buses were unable to enter the town because of the high waters. Captain McCleary, Lieut. McKee, Sergts. Conrad, Smith, Schlotterbeck, and Farrie and cook Crum waded through mud via back yards of higher homes into the town to determine what could be done.