

#### D. REHABILITATION OF ORDNANCE ITEMS

Gradually during the winter lull Fifth Army began to build up its stock of equipment, both in quantity and quality. Emphasis was placed on the rehabilitation of the Army's motor transport, and the severe shortage of trucks of almost all types began to be alleviated. Renovation of trucks was a major goal during the winter. Acute shortages of certain parts and major assemblies resulted in many vehicles being deadlined for lack of such items. Principal shortages included front axle assemblies, front springs and spring bolts, forward rear axle assemblies, batteries, engines, shock absorbers, copper tubing, brass fittings, welding rods, and flat stock. Receipt of large quantities of tires in February relieved a severe shortage of this item. The static situation on the front allowed truck companies to devote more time to maintenance and repair of their vehicles once the supply dumps had been restored to the desired higher levels. By February it became possible to withdraw simultaneously the equivalent of two truck battalions for complete overhaul of their equipment, designed to put it in first-class condition for future extensive operations. Receipt of new vehicles in quantity for the first time in months also improved the situation, although the flow of new equipment was not high enough to warrant any decrease in the emphasis on rehabilitation and repair.

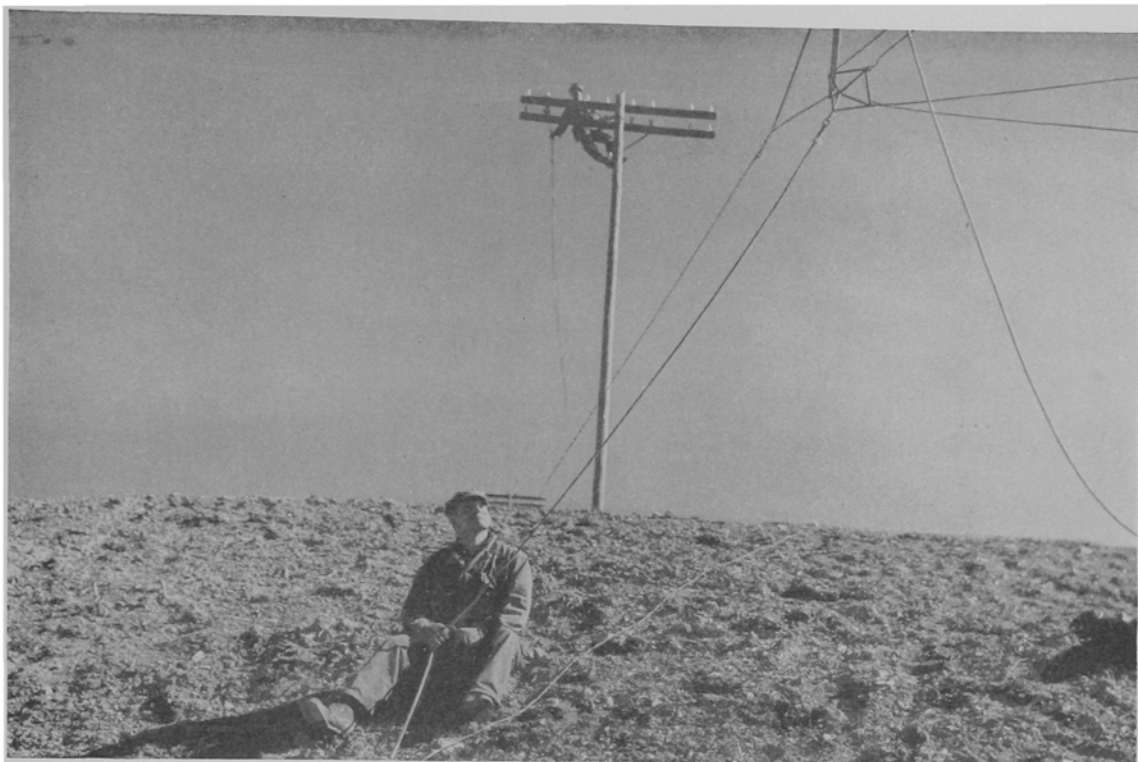
At the beginning of the new year the number of engineer dump trucks was so low and the demand so great that ordnance units converted 45 standard 2½-ton cargo trucks into dump trucks by altering the bodies and strengthening the beds. This necessary measure further highlighted the seriousness of the truck situation as a whole since many of the cargo trucks in the supply services as well as in the various combat divisions were already below authorized strength and were being operated far beyond their normal economical life. The arrival of 228 trucks with dump type bodies, however, ended the need for further conversions, and on 15 January a replacement program for old trucks was started. Five hundred new trucks were exchanged for 500 "war weary" vehicles during the next month. This was followed by a second 500-vehicle trade a month later. The base section either rehabilitated the old vehicles or broke them up for salvage. By the end of February the shortage of 1½-ton trucks and dump trucks had been completely eliminated. The rehabilitation program was then concentrated on extensive work on larger trucks, with 4 tons or more capacity. It was necessary to overhaul and retain almost all winch-equipped vehicles since few new trucks of these types were received. The first shipments of heavy 10-ton semitrailer cargo trucks designed ultimately to replace the 2½-tonners in Army transportation battalions were received at the beginning of February. By the end of March 240 of these trucks were in use. All

vehicles manufactured in 1941 or earlier were replaced throughout the Army, and fourth-echelon repair units concentrated on rehabilitation of armored vehicles beginning in mid-March.

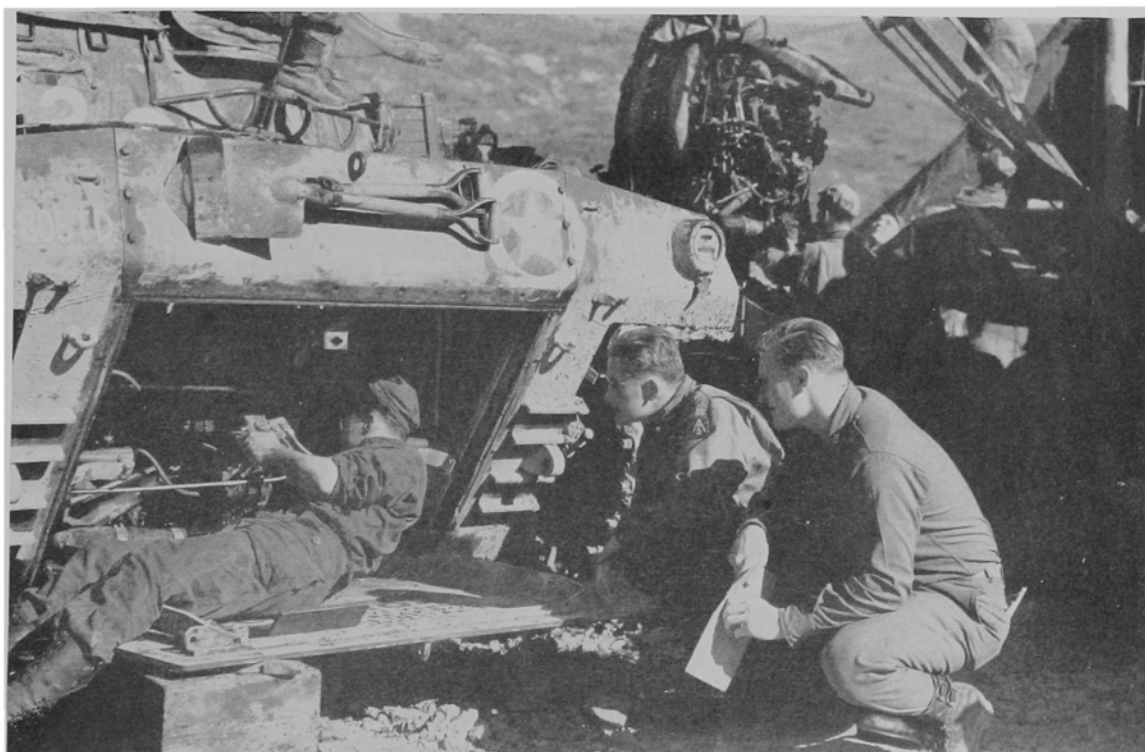
The most severe and continuing shortage faced by Fifth Army was in light general-purpose vehicles of  $\frac{1}{4}$ - and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton styles. The former particularly were needed; at the start of the year the Army was short 997  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton and 539  $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton weapons carriers. Insufficient replacements of these types were received, the number varying from 25 to 40 percent of requirements. In February the 86th Ordnance Heavy Maintenance Company was reorganized to enable it to do fifth-echelon repair work on these light cars, and plans were made to rebuild, from the frame up if necessary, all those which had been worn out and salvaged. It was decided to continue this program until all Fifth Army units had been brought up to tables of equipment authorization. Repairs and new allocations eliminated practically all shortages by the end of March.

The critical vehicular situation in the winter stemmed from the low priority rates under which the Mediterranean Theater worked compared to other theaters and the fact that many shipments actually consigned to Italy were sent to France, particularly during and immediately after the German counteroffensive there in December. In addition to many general-purpose vehicles, the first of the new M-24 light tanks, mounting 75-mm guns, and 75 medium tanks equipped with 76-mm guns were diverted to the European Theater. Sixty-two medium tanks of this type were received by Fifth Army late in February, and an additional 121 76-mm mediums and 29 105-mm howitzer-equipped mediums arrived in late March. These 150 vehicles were manufactured with horizontal volute type suspension systems and were fitted with new center-guide 23-inch wide tracks, designed to provide better floatation and eliminate track throwing. Two hundred modification kits to enable installation of extended tracks and connectors on M-5 light tanks resulted in improved floatation for vehicles thus equipped. Fifty-nine M-24 light tanks were finally received in March and issued to tank battalions in exchange for M-5 light tanks armed with 37-mm guns. These vehicles enabled the 752d Tank Battalion to become the first battalion in Fifth Army history to be completely equipped with the latest model tanks.

Severely restricted artillery programs along the front enabled the build-up of ammunition reserves, which were lacking early in the winter. Army dumps were filled; large stocks were built up by II Corps in forward areas; and all depots around Pistoia and Leghorn, operated by PBS, also were crammed full. By the first of March it became possible to increase the daily normal allotment per gun to these figures: 105-mm howitzer 15 (increased from 11); 155-mm howitzer 12 (8); 155-mm gun 12 (9); 75-mm howitzer 15 (11); 4.2-inch mortar 5 (4). Ammunition for



*A signal construction crew erects a new open-wire telephone line*



*The winter overhaul of equipment—field repairs on an M-18 tank destroyer*



*A forward ammunition dump in the snow and mud of the Apennine Mountains*



*An MP controls traffic on the muddy roads in the 34th Division sector*

British guns also was increased in that month. The daily allocation per gun for 25-pounders was raised from 6 to 10, for 4.5-inch guns from 6 to 12, and for 155-mm guns from 2 to 8. In February it was necessary to store 20,000 tons of ammunition near Naples due to lack of sufficient suitable space in the immediate Army area and in the Leghorn vicinity. This stock could be moved north by rail as it was needed. Supplies of ammunition in the theater reached the 60-day normal supply allotted by the War Department, and every effort was made to retain it at that level.

Experiments showed that Italian 81-mm mortar ammunition functioned satisfactorily in American mortars, and approximately 54,000 rounds of this ammunition were added to our stores although some difficulty was encountered in segregating toxic from nontoxic rounds. As of 30 March the ammunition on hand in Army depots compared to the total available at the end of the fall offensive included the following:

Type of ammunition	Army depots 26 October	Army depots 30 March	Available in Italy 30 March
37-mm gun . . . . .	11,900	93,167	(1)
57-mm gun . . . . .	15,437	24,971	(1)
75-mm gun . . . . .	75,200	97,876	427,123
75-mm howitzer . . . . .	33,324	80,324	358,248
76-mm gun . . . . .	28,614	40,861	436,246
3-inch gun . . . . .	81,794	67,014	344,910
90-mm gun . . . . .	28,751	49,570	413,673
105-mm howitzer M2 . . . . .	152,636	402,118	1,869,681
105-mm howitzer M3 . . . . .	24,806	96,638	257,491
155-mm gun . . . . .	15,846	40,170	64,664
155-mm howitzer M17-18 . . . . .	14,360	26,957	128,393
155-mm howitzer M1 . . . . .	40,706	96,361	360,883
8-inch gun . . . . .	0	259	259
8-inch howitzer . . . . .	0	5,681	10,783
240-mm howitzer . . . . .	0	140	140
60-mm mortar . . . . .	58,075	114,239	(1)
81-mm mortar . . . . .	124,523	142,965	410,213
4.2-inch mortar . . . . .	(1)	74,192	264,015
2.36-inch rocket . . . . .	22,520	8,146	(1)
4.5-inch rocket . . . . .	0	1,771	(1)
7.2-inch rocket . . . . .	0	1,300	(1)
.30 caliber (all types) . . . . .	6,447,248	7,674,910	(1)
.45 caliber . . . . .	1,065,800	854,328	(1)
.50 caliber (all types) . . . . .	1,025,705	1,780,610	(1)

(1) Figure unavailable.

Practically all shortages of major ordnance items other than vehicles also were filled, although the supply of automatic rifles and grenade launchers remained critical until March. By 5 February receipt of new mortars and an additional number of mortar tubes eliminated the deficiency in these items and enabled the newly activated 473d Infantry to be almost completely equipped. Arrival of the 10th Mountain Division without all its mountain equipment and animals necessitated some changes in that division's ordnance. It was given towed 105-mm howitzers in place of some of its organic 75-mm pack howitzers, leaving each of the light artillery battalions organized into one four-gun 105-mm battery and two six-gun 75-mm batteries. Mules for the division were scheduled to arrive from the United States at the rate of 2,584 in March, 960 in April, and 2,356 in May. Approximately 700 horses were obtained in southern France.

The salvage collection and repair program continued unabated all winter, not only for vehicles but for every other article of equipment. Large numbers of Italian civilians were recruited to aid in the collection. Although mountain snows at times greatly hindered the work, gangs of soldiers and civilians swept their way through most of the old Gothic Line positions and bivouacs to recover any articles left behind. February collections from all sources, including old material turned in by Army organizations, at times reached as high as 30 truckloads a day. Weekly collections averaged between 140,000 and 200,000 items. Most of this salvage was sent to Florence, where 1,400 civilians were employed in sorting and repairing tentage, clothing, mess equipment, and any other light items which could be put back into condition for further use. Heavier articles were evacuated to PBS. By 10 March approximately 1,000 truckloads of reclaimable material had piled up in ordnance yards alone. In early spring many of the civilians thus employed were replaced by Italian military personnel. Special Italian companies were organized to recover abandoned field wire. Soldiers replaced many nonmilitary personnel employed by the Army except in some forward areas where no other type of employment was available for civilians.

## E. CLASS I AND III SUPPLIES

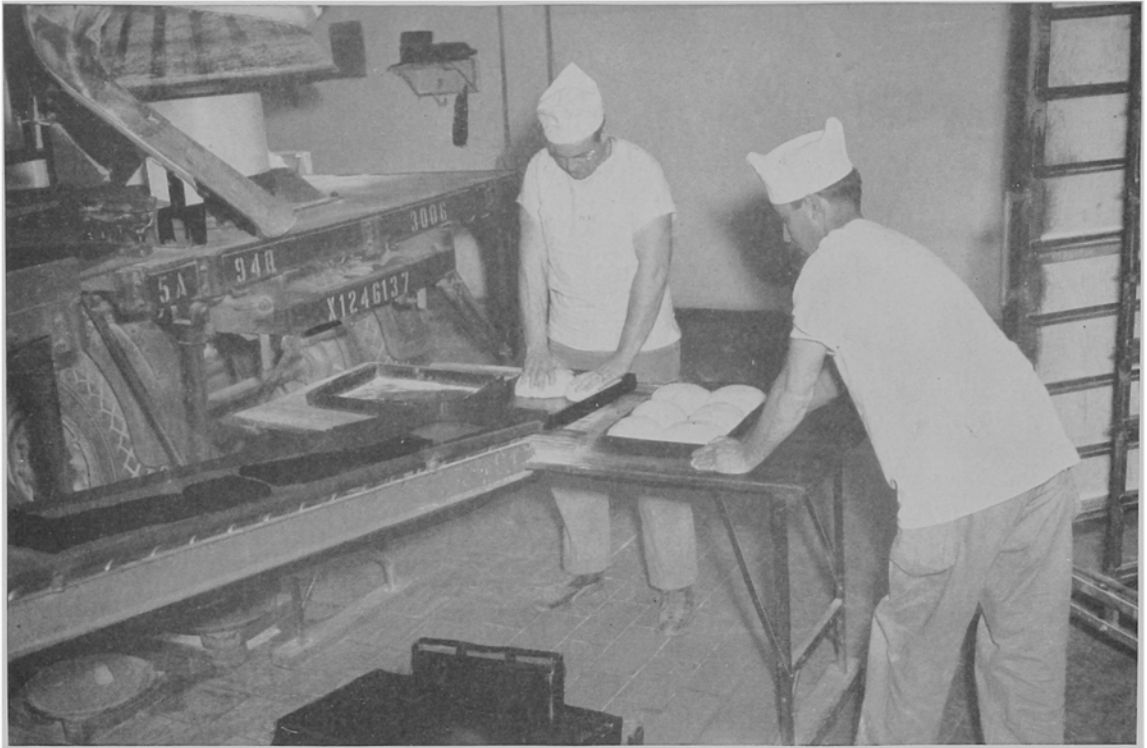
Fifth Army as a whole ate well during the period of stalemate; except in rare instances at least one warm meal daily was furnished to the most forward elements. Nearly three-quarters of the issue consisted of B rations, supplemented in the early spring by fresh vegetables procured locally. The first issue of local vegetables was made on 5 March, consisting of cauliflower, spinach, and turnips. Variety was



*Italian soldiers pile up scrap metal in a salvage collection dump*



*Sorting and loading salvage clothing at a quartermaster railhead company*



*The Army's bread, always fresh, came from mobile bakeries such as this*



*Unit trucks draw their rations at a forward ration dump hidden in a pine grove*



stressed as much as possible in the menu. In February, for example, there were 28 issues of butter, 9 of fresh eggs, 7 of fresh fruit, 2 of fresh vegetables, 20 of fresh beef, 6 of fresh chicken, and 2 of fresh pork. A daily average of 65 tons of meat and other perishables was moved by refrigerated trucks to issue points. Each quartermaster bakery supporting the Army was capable of turning out 56,000 pounds of bread each day, and the average consumption per week ran to slightly over 900,000 pounds.

Issue of certain staple foods varied throughout the winter, the fluctuations resulting almost entirely from changes in shipments received from the United States. On 5 February the issue of coffee was increased to 100 pounds per 100 men every 10 days; on 24 March it became necessary to reduce this figure to 88 pounds, due to the scarcity of coffee in stockage at home. Flour was issued on 11 February at the rate of 100 pounds per 100 men for 10 days. Stockage of food in the ration dumps was maintained at a 15-day level throughout the early part of the winter, being reduced to a 10-day supply after the first of the year. This supply was held at 7 days B ration, 1½ days C ration, ¾ day 10-in-1 ration, ½ day K ration, and ¼ day D ration. At the end of March a total of 935,000 rations was stocked in reserve depots on upper Highway 65.

Consumption of gasoline was relatively high during the winter when in many instances it was used for heating stoves due to lack of any other fuel. The average daily issued to the Army for all purposes amounted to 352,407 gallons for the entire winter. Rapid construction of pipelines made it possible to transport large quantities of gasoline to forward areas in this manner. A pipehead just north of Radicosa Pass on Highway 65 was functioning by 23 November. On 5 March another pipehead was opened at Pistoia, easing the transportation situation on that section of the Army front. Gasoline storage at the truckhead dump was maintained at 800,000 gallons.