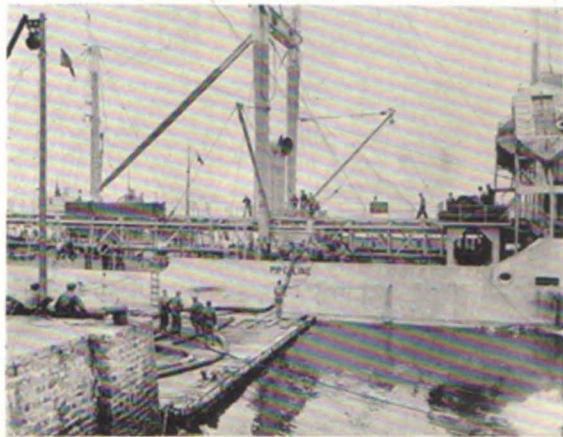


## Pipe Lines Were Life Lines

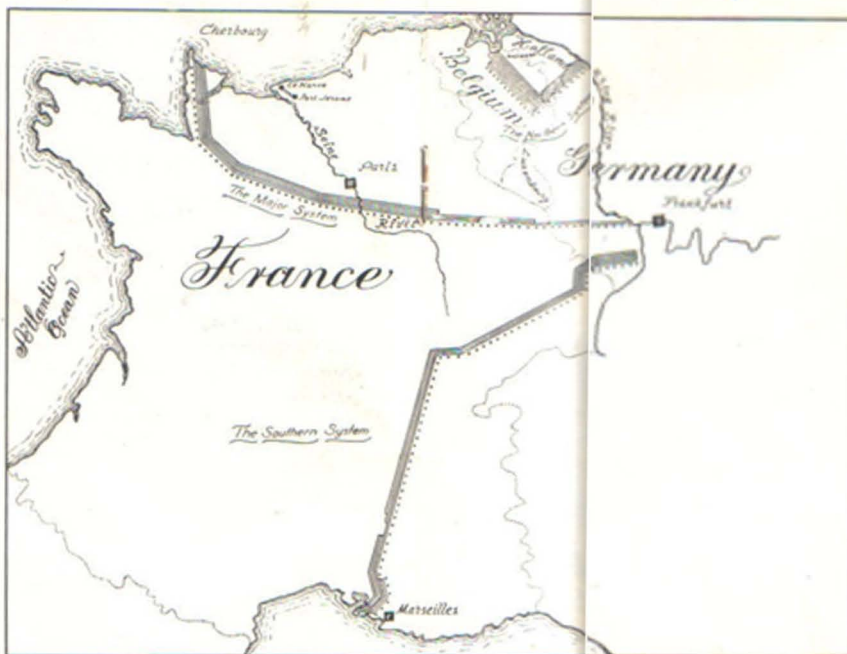


The major part of the gasoline for the fronts came from the United States via tanker. Here a direct connection is made to discharge its cargo into the pipeline connection at Cherbourg, France.

May 8th was VE Day! 1949's observance was solemn and quiet, a far contrast from the wild, tumultuous celebrations throughout the world in 1945. Over 176 men from Shell Pipe Line were members of the Armed Forces scattered to the far corners of the earth.

Petroleum was one of the major factors that swung the tide in favor of the allies. Everyone connected with supplying this precious fluid has been lauded for their efforts—civilians and military personnel alike. Tremendous efforts were made in the transportation phase of the war—the Bayou System and the "Big Inch" were constructed here at home while pipelines became lifelines for the fighting fronts overseas.

Some of Shell Pipe Line's employees were members of these Pipeline outfits. This is the story of their efforts—in particular, that of the 1374th Engineer Petroleum Distribution Company. Three of the Company's employees belonged to this outfit: Sam R. Evans, Assistant Valuation Engineer in Houston; Lonnie F. Kent, Tank Farm Gauger at Baytown; and John B. Yoder, Dispatcher at Colorado City. Captain Evans was Commanding Officer of the unit; S/Sgt. Kent was Chief of Dispatchers; and Sgt. Yoder handled pumping and dispensing operations.



There were three major pipeline systems in France in World War II.



Sam R. Evans



Lonnie F. Kent



John B. Yoder



There were 72 portable pumping stations on the Northern Pipe Line System from Cherbourg to the Rhine River.

The 1374th was formed at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana on November 6, 1943 as Training Company A, but it became the 1374th on December 15, 1943. With Infantry basic over, next came Engineering basic followed with specialty schools on pipe line construction. Before leaving for overseas, the men bivouaced, practicing their skills. The Company sailed from New York, May 1, 1944 for England where they underwent further training, which was preparing them for D-Day plus 3. However change of plans held the men in England until July 12, 1944 when they left for France. Their immediate job was to construct pipelines and set-up pumping stations to furnish gasoline for the fighting front in the Normandy campaign. The men met their first test under fire, and proved their training and background, by carrying out their project. The following year, the outfit operated portions of the Major System that ran from Cherbourg, France, on the coast through inland France southeast of Paris to Mainz, Germany, on the Rhine. There were 72 pumping stations in the Major System. One 1374th platoon operated a small rail-unloading and dispensing system across the Rhine River near Remagen, Germany.

There were three other pipeline systems in France during the war. A line, called the South-

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## PIPELINES WERE LIFELINES —

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Rivers had to be crossed in record time. Here the Main River bridge near Mainz, Germany is used to get the line across the swollen stream.

ern System, ran from Marseilles, France, on the Mediterranean, northeasterly up to Frankentahl, Germany on the Rhine. The Northern System ran from Antwerp, Belgium, to Wesel, Germany. A small system, known as the Seine River System, ran from Le Havre, France to Port Jerome where it was loaded into barges and shipped down the River to Paris.

The story of "Operation Pluto"—the pipeline joining England with France via the English Channel—has now been told. Before the War, such a pipeline would have been scoffed at; however Allied ingenuity paid-off by laying a 3-inch steel pipe line on the bottom of the Channel. This "windable pipe" was wound onto drums in 70 mile lengths and laid off six floating docks. The other lines were laid later from two American-built Liberty ships, each carrying 100 miles of cable pipeline. This effort furnished gasoline from the reserve stocks in England.

However the majority of gasoline came directly from tankers which tied into the pipelines at Normandy. From here it was pumped through three 6-inch surface lines laid and operated by our G.I.s. These lines were built of lightweight pipe that could be snaked around trees, readily curved, and pushed ahead to the fighting fronts. Their success was accomplished through the couplings that were invented in World War I. These couplings were clamped together with two bolts and consisted of two halves of a metal ring with a rubber gasket on the inner surface. The rubber gasket gave the line a flexibility to the sections of pipe enabling them to be draped easily over any

type of terrain or strung across rivers. Under bombing, the line jumped and bounced like a rubber hose, but it rarely broke. Such couplings made it possible for Engineering crews to lay surface lines at the rate of 30 miles a day.

Sidney Smith, Manager of the Shell Oil Products Line, developed and "sold" the military authorities on using a rigid lightweight pipe with iron couplings. Two men carried a joint of pipe while a third fastened the coupling. These lines were used all over the world by American forces.

VE-Day and VJ-Day are history now! But pipelining in World War II helped make possible the victories on both fronts. Indeed, pipelines became lifelines.

## The Lighter Side —

"My wife went through my pockets last night."

"What did she get?"

"About the same as any explorer—enough material for a lecture."

The Southwestern Telephone News.



A U.S. Army gasoline convoy lines-up at a dispensing unit at Petit Couronne. Notice the Shell identification on the depot's smoke stack.