Introduction

In terms of both its immediate and long-term impacts on the lives of Americans and on the nation's role in the world, World War II stands out as one of the most significant events in our history. It was the most devastating war in American history, it brought about major transformations in culture and society, and it saw great technological advances resulting from military research. The end of the war actually marked the beginning of a long "Cold" War in which America and its democratic institutions obtained vastly enhanced influence in the evolution of international affairs—ultimately leading to the collapse of communism.

World War II also formed a significant chapter in the long and proud history of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In the fall of 1940, as Hitler's armies continued their march across Europe, the Corps was engaged in a growing mobilization effort to counter the German threat. A year later, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and the United States was at war.

The conflict that followed tested the engineers' mettle from North Africa and Europe to New Guinea and Burma. Outside the United States, engineers built roads, bridges, airfields, and pipelines; cleared mines; dredged harbors and repaired ports; completed the Alaska Highway and Ledo Road; and often fought as infantry.

At home, the Corps conducted the planning, land acquisition, design, contracting, and construction associated with a $15.3 billion mobilization program that included training camps, depots, hospitals, and ammunition plants. The Corps' Manhattan District constructed facilities to support development, testing, and deployment of the atomic bomb. After the Corps took over responsibility for military construction from the Quartermaster Corps in December 1941, the ongoing Pentagon construction project was one of the Corps of Engineers' largest endeavors.

To commemorate these accomplishments, the Office of History has prepared this book of essays. This volume is not

comprehensive, but rather seeks to present a representative sampling of the engineers' activities in the war. Hence, many individuals, units, and actions are not included; but their contributions to the greatest Army engineer effort in American history were no less significant.

We hope that the story which is told in these pages will educate and inspire all who read it, as well as recognize and honor the deeds of the men and women of the Corps who served as builders and fighters in World War II.

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