

## Know Your Key

# Berlin Command NCOs

"It's not the most spectacular assignment in the Army, but as far as individual enjoyment and satisfaction goes, working with trainees rates tops with me," says Sergeant Major Lester Edgar, newly-arrived head NCO of the 2nd Battle Group.

Sergeant Major Edgar, who was with training units at Fort Belvoir and Fort Leonard Wood from November, 1951, until his assignment to Berlin Command, feels the position of field first sergeant in a training company is the best place to work with recruits.

"There's a great deal of pride in being connected with a man's transition from civilian to soldier. I believe that a man's future in the Army is quite dependent on the training he receives during his first eight weeks."

Pointing out several ways in which the Army's basic training program is being constantly geared to provide a sound background for every new soldier, no matter what field he may go into after basic, Sergeant Major Edgar especially emphasized the values of "Trainfire" and bayonet courses.

"Trainfire is a great improvement over Known Distance instruction," he commented. "It is a much more realistic approach to combat problems. Just as combat conditions are constantly changing, the three weeks of "Trainfire" provide new situations every day and prepare the soldier for the vagueries of modern warfare.

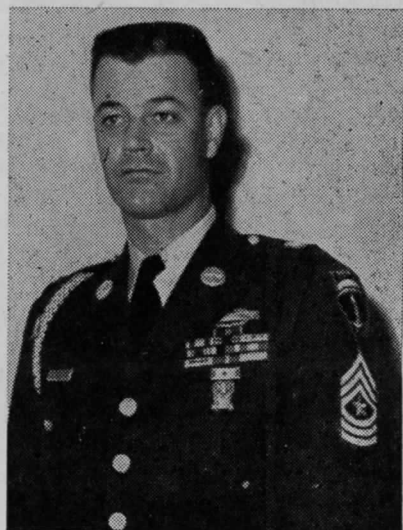
"The re-institution of bayonet instruction is a great help," he went on. "It not only serves as a splendid means of physical conditioning, but

also it is important in helping every soldier learn the life-saving tricks of self-preservation."

And Sergeant Major Edgar knows what he is talking about, having seen action in both the Second World War and the Korean Conflict.

He served with the 103rd Regiment of the 43rd Infantry Division during the rugged campaigns in Luzon, New Guinea, and the Philippine Islands.

His part in the Korean Conflict was played with the 2nd Engineer



**Sergeant Major Edgar**

Special Brigade, including the amphibious landing at Inchon.

Sergeant Major Edgar had been with the 2nd ESB during the intervening years between the two conflicts. In that time, the 2nd ESB took part in three important operations in the Pacific.

The first came in November, 1947, at Eniwetok atoll, when, in connection with the Sandstone Project, Sergeant Major Edgar witnessed an atomic blast.

"It was quite an experience—I never saw anything to compare with it, and I hope no one will ever have to use an atomic blast against mankind."

Beginning in November, 1951, Sergeant Major Edgar began eight years of extremely varied assignments with training battalions. Sent to Fort Belvoir, he spent three months as an instructor on an M1 KD range, one month as a training company platoon sergeant, seven months as a field first, and then a year as a first sergeant.

In September, 1953, Fort Belvoir's basic training facilities were deactivated, and Sergeant Major Edgar was transferred to Fort Leonard Wood, where he again served as first sergeant until October, 1954. At that time he was promoted to battalion sergeant-major, and during the next five years his battalion served first as a training unit for advanced engineers and later as a basic training battalion.