

SEABEE NEWS SERVICE

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Note to Editors: The following is an over-all summary of what the Seabees are doing overseas, based on reports received this week by the Seabee News Service. A similar column will be printed in each issue, which henceforth will be printed weekly.

ISLANDS X REPORT

During the last few weeks, our forces have delivered "one-two" punches at the Japs at both ends of the tightening pincers on Truk. The Navy and the amphibious forces landed the first wallop with their successful assaults, and the Seabees are now delivering the number two punch by consolidating these attacks with airfields, roads, supply bases, and all the other necessary installations.

It hasn't been easy going. On the Admiralty Islands, southwest of Truk and northwest of Rabaul, air strip construction has been undertaken to the tune of snipers' bullets and bombardment by mortars. International News Service reports that 19-year-old Seabee Edward O'Brien killed 16 Japs single-handed, then with the aid of Chief "Scotty" McKeon and eight others successfully defended a gun emplacement. The next morning they counted 320 Japs they had killed.

At Bougainville, Seabee battalions had put three airstrips into operation with the opposition principally from rain, heat and jungle. Then, when it appeared a next to impossible job to chase the remaining Japs off the island, the enemy solved the problem by coming out of the jungle to attack. First reports are that the Seabees got a bloody taste of "defending what they build." The Torokina field in particular is reported to have taken a shellacking from Jap mortars, but the Japs haven't yet been able to blast a hole the boys can't fill up. And in the meantime, the holes the defenders have been putting in the Japs are there to stay.

Marine Corps combat correspondents have been loudest in their praise of Seabee construction on the Green Islands. Their reports tell how dynamite crews building roads and other installations ignored Jap snipers and bombers. One wrote: "The work had to be done; it was done. No arbitrary selecting of men was necessary. Seabees don't quibble." They also reported that an inspection party headed by Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., Commander-in-Chief of South Pacific Forces, was highly pleased with the speed with which the airfield was being constructed. Scores of miles of new built roads have been connected with a 50-foot

wide highway just completed. And all this despite the fact that Jap bombers gave the boys scarcely an hour's sleep during the nights.

The stench of dead Japs still hangs over the bomb and shell blasted islands of the Kwajalein atoll, but the Seabees aren't letting it bother them as they continue with the work of reconstructing a base. The Jap fields there were unsuitable for our heavy planes even before the attack. Afterwards they weren't good for nuthin'. So, it has been pretty much a start from scratch construction job.

* The same holds true for the Gilberts to the south and east.

Commendations continue to pour in concerning the speed with which the "Specials" are unloading ships. Mostly, it has been just plain tough work, but one of the outfits got a taste of action at Bougainville, a good taste, in fact, because they were well within range of Jap artillery and mortar fire.

Up in the Aleutians, days are growing longer, and the battalions and maintenance units are glad to see evidence of their winter's work when bombers take off from fields they built to strike at the Jap held Kurile islands. The jobs they have completed aren't the headline variety, but it will be a long time before the Japs get around to making another attack on the Aleutians.

On the other side of the world, the Seabees aren't as much in the news now as they are going to be. They're hard at work at a job that will be of extreme importance when the curtain rises on the big show -- the invasion of the continent.

SEABEE SLAUGHTERS 16 JAPS

The story of how a 19-year-old Seabee, Edward O'Brien, CM 3c, of Melrose, Mass., killed 16 Japs single-handedly and then, at the height of the battle, organized a ten-man Seabee patrol which held the line for five hours and accounted for 320 Nipponese soldiers was revealed recently by Lee Van Atta, INS correspondent on Los Negros in the Admiralty Islands.

O'Brien and his best friend were assigned to stand guard over secondary positions on the edge of the Momote airstrip, Van Atta said.

"But, jeez, that was no place for us." the correspondent quoted the Seabee. "So Bill Driskell (CM 3c) of San Jose, California, and I pulled stakes and so did my friend. Driskell and I got back but the kid didn't. It was about 2:30 in the morning when the Japs started coming in. They were yelling, 'don't shoot, we're Americans', and because we knew the cavalry boys up ahead were having plenty of trouble we believed 'em.

"Then one got in the dugout we'd taken over ---- and from then on we knew it was nobody but our little Nip friends.

"The kid and I started firing. We told Driskell to try to get back and tell the rest what was going on.

I never knew there were so many damned Japs in the world -- they just started coming and never stopped -- I just kept firing as fast as I could.

"We kept weaving our fire back and forth. You could hear those Nips screaming.

"Then they got the kid -- right through the heart. My '30' blew up in my hands.

"I got hold of the fixed '50' and kept firing -- I think I was more mad than scared."

Driskell interrupted, "I got back to the secondary position in the meantime and found 'Scotty' McKeon (CCM of Spokane, Washington), in one of our cocoanut dugouts. I told him what happened and the Chief stood right up.

Hey you guys," he yelled. "We're in a mess. Let's get up with O'Brien and blow the brains out of every --- --- --- on the rock!"

When dawn came, concluded the INS reporter, 320 dead Japanese lay in the line of fire of the ten-man defending force -- and one Seabee was dead by the gun he had manned.

SEABEES AND ENGINEERS TRANSFORM BOUGAINVILLE BEACHHEAD INTO STRONGHOLD

Navy Seabees and Army engineers have transformed the "dismal jungle and swamp area" of Bougainville into a huge and impressive air force stronghold in less than three months since Marine combat troops swarmed ashore on November 1, 1943, according to a delayed dispatch from Tech. Sgt. Theodore C. Link, a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent.

"When this correspondent left the island a few days after Christmas," Link wrote, "a number of pursuit planes already were operating out of one fighter strip and a few bombers had made emergency landings on the bomber airdrome runway, which ran through a cocoanut grove.

"On this correspondent's return the changes were amazing. Hundreds of airplanes of all types dotted the airfield areas. The Piva bomber strip and its dispersal areas, which one could walk around in a short time only a month previously, had become so extensive a jeep was needed even to get around to parts of it."

Link noted that physical changes in the topography of the beachhead were so many and varied that he had difficulty locating landmarks.

"Seabees and Army engineers found an underlying layer of grey sand, excavated it, and spread it on roads, camp areas, and all low places, thus virtually lifting the beachhead out of the mud by its own bootstraps."

Seabees complained to the sergeant, he wrote, that they had worked themselves out of jobs and were hoping eagerly for relief and another job.

Link said that the changes were so impressive he quickly cast a glance

at towering Mt. Bagana, an active volcano, "to assure himself that the Seabees hadn't changed it in some way".

MAN ALIVE!

When his shaken comrades sprinted to the rescue of Eugene H. Marshall, CM2c, after a Jap bomb had exploded 35 feet from the Seabee, they picked up his steel helmet with a jagged hole through it; the remnants of his jungle hammock with 17 holes in it, 10 where Marshall's head would have been; a blanket with 12 holes; a gas mask also drilled by shrapnel; a bucket with two punctures; and Marshall's rain jacket which had eight jagged tears.

The Seabee himself, a veteran of World War I, looked up at his mates quizzically, Marine Corps combat correspondent, Sgt. Benjamin Goldberg, reported. Other than a slight shoulder wound, Marshall was uninjured.

"BULLDOZER--QUEEN OF THE ATOLLS"

"The bulldozer has replaced the infantry as the queen of the atolls", wrote Newsweek's correspondent William Hipple, in a recent dispatch from Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

"Wherever you get out of a plane or come ashore in a boat you see one sticking its curved steel shovel into the erstwhile Japanese dugouts, into mounds of dirt and debris tossed up by our shelling and bombing, and against sagging coconut trees," Hipple's article read.

Describing Eniwetok and Kwajalein as resembling "Western gold-rush boom towns, only worse", Hipple said Seabees and Army engineers were working twelve-hour shifts day and night to rush new bases and airfields to completion.

The Newsweek correspondent quoted one Seabee as proudly saying that "we've done more in three days than the Japs did here in 30 years" and according to Hipple. "he was about right from the looks of things."

"The smell of Jap bodies has made all this work disagreeable enough so far, but the flies, the dust and the heat have been nearly as bad. It is the dream of these hard-driving Seabees and engineers to go into a nice unbombed tropical isle and start building from scratch and you can't blame them," Hipple concluded.

MEMBERS OF THE SAME TEAM

If you don't like the Seabees, don't tell it to the Marine.

A Marine Raider, a veteran of the tough Bougainville campaign, recently

wrote to a Seabee, "Any man in our outfit will fight if anyone tries to run one of you fellows down."

The letter, addressed to B. E. Dietz, S1c, continued, "We were practically adopted by the Seabees on Bougainville. I don't know who thought the most of the other's outfit -- the Seabees or the Marines.

"I slept at the Seabees' camp one night," wrote the Marine, "and it was almost impossible to realize that the roads and bridges had been put up so quickly. We had to push through mud and swamps and when we came back the Seabees had already put a road through.

"They had as much as four feet of timber down before they could get the dirt to stand in the swamps. We would go out and stay a short time, come in for rest, and there would be a new fighter strip.

"It made you feel as if you had been asleep for several months."

SEABEE "CAN-CHEW"

Natives of newly-occupied Green Island have received their biggest thrill not from planes, guns, or bulldozers, but from the false teeth of a Seabee, according to Marine Corps Combat Correspondent Ray Fitzpatrick.

In a recent dispatch from the island, Fitzpatrick related how the Seabee was invited by villagers to partake of a meal of roast pig.

"When a piece of meat was handed to him, he casually pulled out his upper plate and began chewing. The natives gathered around, gesticulating excitedly, and the Seabee had to put the plate back in and remove it several times.

"The natives looked on in awe," Fitzpatrick's article continued. "When the Seabee left one of them followed him back to camp. Later a delegation called at his tent, bearing baskets of fruit as gifts.

"Today the natives invited him to another feast, telling him in pidgin English that they had invited other islanders, so as to let them see this amazing white man with the removable teeth."

U.S.S. TOJO JOINS SEABEE NAVY

Bombed and sunk by American planes during the fight for Finschafen, a Japanese landing barge has been salvaged and refloated by a battalion of Seabees who have named their new "ship" the U.S.S. Tojo. The Seabees say requisitions for spare parts will be sent to Tokyo via "official channels", i.e., American bombers.

TIM-BERRRR!!!!!!

Forty thousand coconut trees had to be felled and cleared before the 16th Battalion could complete an "Island X" airfield.

EX-MARINE, NOW SEABEE, SAVES BOTH IN JAP ATTACK

It might have been the autumn of 1918 at St. Mihiel, Aisne-Marne, or in the Meuse-Argonne show.

True, the background was different -- palms instead of deciduous hardwoods --, and the enemy were Japs instead of Huns, but the mortars were pounding just as hard and the man was the same man. And he was still fighting with the Marines as he had more than 25 years before.

Seabee CCM Joseph R. Bumgarner, 46, of Whittier, N.C. has been commended by Major General Allen H. Turnage of the Marines for risking his life to evacuate Marine and Seabee casualties from a Jap mortar barrage during the Bougainville invasion.

According to Marine Combat Correspondent Maurice E. Moran, Bumgarner was in charge of a detail building bridges in advance of the front lines, when the Japs attacked another Seabee road-cutting detail and their Marine security guard, killing seven and wounding 20. Chief Bumgarner went to their rescue and had the injured men brought to safety.

The trail which the Seabees were cutting later proved a vital supply route in a Marine drive which took an important objective.

IT HAD TO HAPPEN SOMETIME

Inspired by the example of Seabee accomplishments in the face of odds, one of the boys in the South Pacific, who quite obviously prefers to remain nameless, built a washing machine from a gasoline drum, using tank lugs for the agitator.

Commenting on this ingenuity, N. R. Nelson, Jr., CM3c, said. "It took three seagoing Seabees to untie the knots in the clothes!"

ARMY HONORS MARINE-WELCOMER

The Seabee lieutenant who welcomed Marine raiders as they stormed ashore at Segi, New Georgia, with the now famous comment of "Colonel, the Seabees are always happy to greet the Marines", has been awarded the Legion of Merit by the U. S. Army.

Robert L. (Bob) Ryan, CEC, USNR, now Lt. Cmdr., and executive officer of the 47th Battalion, received the medal on his 50th birthday from Captain Eugene T. Oates, USN, Commander of a Naval Base.

Full text of the citation read:

"For exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services at New Georgia, Solomon Islands, from June 14 to October 28, 1943. Lieut. Ryan was a member of the original reconnaissance group which landed at Segi while Japanese ground forces were still in control of the New Georgia group. Lieut. Ryan's share in reconnaissance and co-ordination of engineering activities in the building of the airfield was noteworthy. Despite frequent enemy bombing and strafing attacks, the ever-present danger from Japanese ground forces, incessant rain and lack of coral for grading, work on the Segi Strip progressed so fast that the field was in operation as a fighter base by July 15. Lieut. Ryan's superior professional skill, tireless energy and enthusiasm were largely responsible for the construction so necessary to the United States Armed Forces in their drive on the enemy."

Ryan also received a commendation from Admiral William F. Halsey for the same action.

THE CAMERA REALLY CLICKED

A Seabee photographer's understanding of native Samoan psychology is credited with saving the American government considerable money, and getting a job done in a hurry.

The Second Seabee Battalion moved into one of the Samoan islands to build roads, docks, a tank farm, air fields, and other installations essential to strengthening our offensive bases in the South Pacific. But when Warrant Officer Duncan Malloch of San Francisco and Francis E. Murphy, CSK, of Los Angeles, attempted to recruit Polynesian laborers to put native thatched roofs on Seabee barracks, they ran into a snag.

All hiring had to be done through King Mata Afa, ruler of about one-third of the islands, to whom many tribal chieftains owed allegiance. King Mata Afa demanded a price far in excess of the naval allotment for the job. He was a shrewd, well-educated man, and the Seabees were finding him a hard bargainer. It looked like a stalemate.

At this phase A. B. Roth, CPhoM, of New York City, took a hand. He knew that King Mata Afa was subject to one of the natives' greatest weaknesses --an excessive eagerness to be photographed.

So Roth ostentatiously began setting up his camera; he maneuvered about, adjusting for different angles and distances. The King quickly lost interest in the business deal, fastening his attention upon the camera. At length he asked Roth why no pictures were being taken.

"I told him," says Roth, "that the picture was to be taken of the actual signing of the contract, and in this way the great moment would be preserved for all time."

King Mata Afa hurriedly came down in his price, the agreement was signed--and the picture-taking proceeded!

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED.

In 1917 an adventure-seeking young bachelor tried to enlist in the Army but was rejected. For twenty-five years he silently nursed his grievance. . . . then, the day after Pearl Harbor, resolved that this time he was going to take an active part in the fight.

That's how John J. Toner, CEM, happened to enlist in the Naval Reserve in 1942, although he was married and the father of twelve children. "I finally made it," he grinned happily when he was accepted for service with the Seabees.

The oldest of the Chief's brood is 21; the youngest, 2. "My wife has a 24-hour-a-day job taking care of that gang," Toner told Marine Corps Correspondent Keith Topping in the Green Islands. "What I'm doing out here," the Seabee continued, "isn't much compared with her task. She's the real patriot."

SEABEES MANNED GUNS AT GREEN ISLAND

Seabees at Green Island besides building miles of roads, setting up water-making plants, constructing landings and numerous other installations, and working on an airfield, stood guard at night and manned guns set up by the New Zealand-American occupying forces, according to Marine Corps Combat Correspondent, Sgt. Ray Fitzpatrick.

"The "Can Do" boys, the American Seabees, are performing more miracles of construction." Fitzpatrick's dispatch said. "Though some Jap snipers remain on the island and take occasional shots at Americans and New Zealanders, the Seabees are pushing their jobs ahead on schedule. With tommy guns or carbines slung over their shoulders--operators of bulldozers and tractors are cutting roads deeper into the jungle, now and then halting to drive off a sniper."

(Eighteen days after the Seabees, working around the clock despite the threat from enemy bombers, began clearing jungle for the airstrip, Allied Headquarters in the Southwest Pacific announced that the runway was completed and in use. Completion of the field provides an Allied land base for planes within one hour's flying time from Rabaul.)

"LAND-LUBBER" SEABEES DO ALL RIGHT AT SEA

Instances of Seabees proving their mettle aboard ship are becoming increasingly common. The latest example is the work of CBMU 538 aboard the transport carrying the boys to "Island X".

Newly converted from a cargo ship and on its first voyage as a troop carrier, the ship developed many mechanical faults. The Seabees were pressed into service as refrigeration engineers, lathe operators, acetylene burners, and condenser men.

Finally, when the ship was caught in a hurricane, the condensers went bad, leaving the disabled vessel wallowing in a heavy sea. After members of the

crew had failed, four 538 'ers -- J. C. Brickhouse, MM1c; H. Babock, SF2c; J. B. Scott, WT2c; and T. Staniec, SF3c -- improvised repairs within twelve hours, enabling the transport to proceed.

"EIGHT BALL BATTALION" STILL ON THE BALL

For rendering assistance to the Army which "contributed greatly to the spirit of joint effort and mutual respect the admiration between the services", the First Section of the Eighth Special Battalion had been commended by Brigadier General L. A. Daugherty, U. S. Army, Lieutenant General S. B. Buckner, Jr., U. S. Army, and Rear Admiral F. E. M. Whiting, USN.

TOJO ASSISTS IN CHAPLAIN'S WORK

When the Japs were driven off the 73rd Battalion's "Island X", they left several trucks behind which enabled Chaplain Freegard to solve an office and transportation problem. A truck of the old covered wagon type was equipped with a library and recreational games, and when Seabees were too busy to come to the Chaplain, the Chaplain went to the Seabees.

BREECHES BUOY HELPS 45th RESCUE FIFTY

Carrying a thousand feet of steel cable through heavy seas to a net tender which had piled up on the rocks off shore, 45th Battalion Seabees set up a breeches buoy by which they were able to rescue the ship's fifty-man crew.

A commendation from Cmdr. Charles M. Noble, CEC, USNR, OinC of the Sixth Naval Construction Regiment, said in part, "This operation was carried out under extremely hazardous conditions, and it was made possible by outstanding leadership, courage, and seamanship. . . . It involved courage of a high order, long hours under adverse weather conditions, and severe exposure, inasmuch as the men were often immersed in icy waters for long periods of time".

NEW "SECRET WEAPON?"

Isa, an island-hopping billy goat who is a veteran of many bombing raids and shellings, has shoved off with his "keeper", Robert Caddell, CBM, to make another South Pacific landing with the Seabees.

The goat marched up the gangway in his usual place, just behind the leader of his platoon, said Marine Corps Combat Correspondent Sgt. William B. Allen, Jr. The mascot wore his navy blue blouse emblazoned with the Seabee insignia.

Isa has had more luck in the face of enemy and "friendly" fire than several other goats who served with the Seabees. Sometimes Marine and Army snipers in quest of fresh meat aren't too particular where they find it.

SAFER THAN IT IS QUIET

"Bombings are so commonplace they are seldom mentioned."

This comment by the OinC of a unit of the Sixth Special Battalion dispels any notions that the life of the cargo handling Seabees is a quiet one.

Continuing, Lt. H. B. Peyton, CEC, USNR, says: "The men have withstood artillery fire many times and on one occasion, an artillery barrage of 12 hours."

Lt. Peyton reported that while Section Two of the 6th Special had been in extreme combat areas since October 1, 1943, only two men had to be evacuated notwithstanding the fact that both officers and men have lived in foxholes without tents, "and under much the same conditions as strictly first line combat troops."

Section Two now has 108 men serving with an LST flotilla, assisting in loading and discharging operations. Many of these detachments have already received commendations from their respective commanding officers. Aside from amphibious operations, it is pointed out that these men comprise the first unit in Seabee history to serve at sea on a strict duty status.

Assisting in a recent landing at an important island, the battalion's second section was able to discharge ships completely before leaving the beach, saving as much as six hours in their unloading on occasions.

THE UNIVERSAL TONGUE

Driven by curiosity to learn what an aged Aleut native was shouting at him every time he approached the old man's home, John Hunter, MM1c, of the 12th Battalion, undertook the study of Russian. He rightly suspected a knowledge of this language would enable him to understand the old man's dialect, which was a mixture of Aleut and Russian tracing back to the days when the island belonged to Czarist Russia.

Long weeks of study during his spare hours rewarded the Seabee. At last he could understand the old Aleut's urgent message. Time honored and universal, it was simply: "Keep away from my daughter, you young scoundrel".

SPOTLIGHT ON THE 33rd

Some months ago, the Seabee News Service learned about the Seabee-sponsored "Yankee Bee Country Club" and requested a membership card.

We received one the other day from Cmdr. Alan L. Slaton, CEC, USNR, of the 33rd Battalion, which built the South Seas' most famous nine-hole golf course. While we're thanking Cmdr. Slaton and the 33rd, we'd like to call attention to the fact that we unwittingly slighted these Seabees in our issue of November 1. On page 5 of that issue we gave sole credit for the construction of an airfield to the 35th Battalion. Actually, three battalions-the 33rd, 34th, and 35th participated. The 33rd, in fact, did the greater part of the work in the construction of the bomber strip.

For this excellent performance the 33rd won commendations from Commodore W. M. Quigley, USN, Commander Naval Bases, Solomon Islands; Rear Admiral R. K. Turner, USN; and Cmdr. J. G. Johnson, USN, Commanding Advanced Naval Air Base, Russell Islands.

DREAM COME TRUE

Many a Seabee has secretly nursed a desire to own a fancy foreign-make car. For members of a maintenance unit stationed overseas, the dream has come true.

"As a result of the hurried departure of Germans and Italians from this territory," the Seabees report, "much foreign automotive equipment is now in use and maintained by our mechanics. Among the more popular models are the German jeep, and Citroen and Geudgeot cars."

Starting with nothing but old wrenches, the Seabee mechanics now have a complete set of socket and end wrenches to fit the odd parts of these vehicles. The wrenches were constructed on a conventional blacksmith forge.

WHAT NEXT!

Seabees have been using empty Coca-Cola bottles as insulators on many an "Island X", but Detachment 1007 is the only one that can claim using them for drinking tumblers.

When a shortage of glasses threatened the mess halls, Chief A. L. Gibbs devised a method of using a hot wire around the top of the bottles to break off the necks and then had the rough edges ground down on grinders. About 20 tumblers per hour were turned out by the Seabee machinists.

JUST A WASTE OF BOMBS

Something about R. L. Reynolds, CMM, fascinates Jap bombers.

His baptism came four days after the 61st battalion arrived at "Island X"

when the ship on which he had been detailed to remain aboard was bracketed by bombs. That was just the beginning.

In the days that followed, the outfit was bombed so frequently the Chief sought the quiet of the beach. He'd no sooner got there than the Japs opened up a bombing and strafing attack that killed several men around him.

During the next raid, the Chief high-tailed it for the battalion's saw-mill along the river. Once again, he was bracketed by bombs.

A lull followed and Chief Reynolds paid a visit to an area occupied by the Marines. His arrival was featured by a mad dash for foxholes as the bombs rained down.

When our fighter planes gained control of the air, it appeared the Chief's fascination for bombs had waned. But no, --- they found him again when he was a guest of friends in a different section of the island.

Finally, moving time came for his battalion, but at the new location, the Japs once more found their favorite target and showered him with anti-personnel bombs which barely missed him.

His seventh bombing ends this story. No, they didn't get the Chief. They just don't come around any more.

ALERT SEABEES PREVENT DAMAGE

Alert Seabees of the 55th Battalion recently prevented the destruction of buildings and materials at an adjacent camp when a plane out of control crashed and exploded, spraying the area with blazing gasoline.

Seabees dropped work at their own camp to rush to the scene of the accident, taking with them a portable fire-pump and quickly extinguished the flames which had enveloped the plane and spread to two nearby barracks.

Back at the Seabee camp, other Seabees manned fire-barrels and prevented the flying sparks from igniting their own tents and supplies.

Onlookers noted that although the plane was out of control, the gallant pilot who died in the flaming wreckage had successfully fought the jammed controls to prevent the diving craft from smashing into barracks filled with sleeping men to crash into an open area.

SEABEE TOYMEN

Steward E. Clark, CCM, and Byron D. Merryman, CCM, both of the 513th CBMU, have set up a model carpenter shop for the unit. In their spare time just prior to a recent holiday the Seabees turned out 2,000 wooden models of "Mickey Mouse" for distribution to needy and orphan children in the area. The toys were cut on a band saw at the rate of 250 an hour.

DEPARTMENT OF UNDERSTATEMENT

During their first six weeks on the island, the 37th had exactly five 24-hour periods during which no rain fell. On all other days there was at least one inch of rainfall. The 37th, understating it, says that, as a result, construction conditions were not too favorable.

MAJOR LAUDS SEABEES FOR COOPERATION

Maj. William J. Ellison, Jr., U.S. Army, Commanding an Engineer Aviation Battalion, has commended the 60th Battalion for their "excellent cooperation and devotion to duty" during the construction of an airfield "which was so urgently needed."

"The joint prosecution of work on this air strip is an outstanding example of the united effort of Army and Navy Engineers. . . It is hoped that our two units may again meet on some future project further up the line", Maj. Ellison said.

The major paid particular tribute to the Chief Petty Officers who directed grading operations at one end of the strip.

". . . Men of less skill ... could have easily gotten into trouble in solving the difficult drainage problem which existed ..", the commendation noted.

GULFPORT "SEADUST" MAKES BOW

A new serviceman's news-magazine made its debut when "Seadust", a "GI publication published with a smile" rolled from the shiny-new multilith at ABD and Armed Guard School, Gulfport.

A 24-page streamlined news-sheet, dressed up with cartoons, pin-up girls, photos, camp and national news, features and humor, "Seadust" is an outgrowth of the "News", a mimeographed edition founded at the station nine months ago. The editors report the new publication is both "censured and censored".

SECOND SPECIAL'S RECORD

"Following the completion of my tour of duty as Officer-in-Charge of the Second Special Battalion, I would like to call attention .. to the splendid record made by .. this unit," wrote Cmdr. F. F. McCarthy.

From March 21, 1943 to January 1, 1944, the Second worked on 386 ships of all types. They handled a total of 667,458 weight tons of freight and 1,668,645 measurement tons.

SHORT SPORTS SHOTS

BASEBALL: . .Magnates insist big league baseball will continue despite the war. . standards will be low but no one will know difference due to lack of competition. . tip-off is 41-year-old Clyde Sukeforth signed to catch for Dodgers. .Bill Dickey, regarded as one of greatest catchers of all time, inducted into Navy. .Yankees bought Joe Glenn, 1938 cast-off, to plug gap. .week later Glenn called by Navy, too. .Joe Gordon accepted for military service will probably be ferry pilot in Army Air Transport. .Shortstop Frankie Crosetti, Pitcher Ernie Bonham, First Baseman Nick Etten, Outfielders Roy Weatherly and Johnny Lindell, all waiting call. . St. Louis Cardinals also hard hit. .Marty Marion, shortstop, Stan Musial, 1943 major league batting champ, and Johnny Hopp, reclassified 1-A. .Entire Cardinal squad of 30 order inoculated after coach stricken with diphtheria. .Chicago Cubs losing Stan Hack, one of NL's greatest third baseman, and Claude Passeau, star pitcher, both requesting voluntary retirement. .Lon Warneke, called for induction. .Giant's Manager Mel Ott notified to report for reclassification. .if drafted will probably be replaced by duration co-managers. .Whit Wyatt and Ed Head, Dodger pitchers, headed for the army. .Lloyd Waner, Dodgers; Pete Coscarat, Pirates, to remain on defense jobs. .Freddy Fitzsimmons, Bluejays (Phillies) manager, to attempt pitching comeback. .Glenn Stewart, Jays shortstop, 4-F. .Buddy Lewis, Senators third baseman, ferry pilot in Burma. .Great Lakes has scheduled 9 of 16 major league teams. .Camp Endicott nine will play Giants exhibition. .

BOXING: . .Hammerin' Hank Armstrong ran up eighth consecutive win. .reclassified 1-A. .Sal Bartolo won world's featherweight crown from Phil Terranova in 15 rounder. .Beau Jack, recently dethroned lightweight champ (NY version) gave Al (Bummy) Davis, 10 round shellacking. .Davis recently scored one round ko over Bob Montgomery, just prior to latter's victory over Jack. .Beau 1-A. .Jimmy Bivens, unofficial "duration" heavyweight champ, inducted in Army. .

TRACK: . .Gil Dodds, the galloping parson, set new indoor mile record, running 4:06.4 at Chicago Relays. .broke own 4:07.3 record set week previously. .fastest indoor mile was Glenn Cunningham's 4:04.4 in paced event at Dartmouth. .lack of competition made it no-record. .Cunningham now in Navy. .

BASKETBALL: . .St. John's won National Invitation Tournament, beating DePaul, 47-39. .Dartmouth won East title in NCAA tourney. .will play Utah for national championship. .

FOOTBALL: . .Pete Cawthon signed four year coach contract with Dodgers. .Redskins signed Dud DeGroot to five-year coach contract. .

GOLF: . .Sgt. Dutch Harrison, wearing GIs, won \$10,000 Charlotte, N.C. open. . beat Jug McSpaden, Byron Nelson, Craig Wood and Sammy Byrd among others. .

SWIMMING: . .Navy won first Ivy League swim title, taking 4 meets, losing none. .

RACING: . .Pukka Gin, winterbook Kentucky Derby favorite. .

HOCKEY: . .Stanley Cup play-offs in semi-finals with Montreal vs Toronto and Chicago vs Detroit. .winners will meet in 4 out of 7 series for championship.

THIS MAKES IT OFFICIAL

Determined not to let talent bury its head in the sand, the 140th Battalion has organized a Liars' Club. Members will choose a Champion Liar each week and eventually the Battalion Champion may be pitted against all comers. The 140th "Seabeever" asks members to "submit your lies in writing each week to the Welfare and Recreation Office."