

SEABEE NEWS SERVICE

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SEABEES DROVE JAPS BACK THREE TIMES AT LOS NEGROS

Defending Los Negros airfield in hand-to-hand combat, a hundred fighting Seabees repeatedly threw back Jap assaults upon their front-line positions inflicting heavy losses, it was officially revealed today. The defenders, who, for two successive nights, manned their no-man's-land posts side by side with Army assault troops, stopped three Jap attacks cold, suffering only minor casualties themselves.

(This was the action, reported in last week's News Service, in which 19-year-old Edward O'Brien, CM3c, killed 16 Japs single-handedly and then, at the height of the battle, organized a ten-man Seabee patrol which held a portion of the line for five hours and slaughtered 320 fanatically-charging Nipponese.)

"The sailors don't seem to care," a wounded cavalryman told "Yank" combat correspondent Cpl. Bill Alcine, "They see a Jap, they have a grenade, and they run after him like they were kids playing at war."

Act Like Commandos

An awe-stricken G.I. was next to bring the "Yank" reporter tidings of the Seabees. "Gee," he said, "those Navy guys are nuts. They are up there with tommy guns and grenades acting like commandos!"

The Seabees were part of a 400-man detachment which landed under fire on March 2nd, two days after the key Admiralty Islands airfield had been seized by a reconnaissance party of the First Cavalry Division.

Field Ready in Six Days

Although many of them had been on front-line duty their first night ashore, the Seabees began rebuilding the airfield the next morning, March 3rd. Working under extreme combat conditions, they estimated they would have the Los Negros strip ready for light aircraft by March 10th. A "New York Times" correspondent reported the field actually in use on March 8th, cutting two days off the Navy construction men's original eight-day pledge.

Four of their six working days on the strip, the Seabees were the targets of continuous sniper fire. At regular intervals they had to pull some of their bulldozers off the job to bury both American and enemy dead.

The field itself was in poor condition. More than 14,000 cubic yards of material had to be filled and graded before landing mats could be laid.

When the Seabees, all of whom had previously seen service on New Guinea

and some of whom had helped build the Finschafen airfield, stormed ashore, dismounted American cavalrymen held only Los Negros airfield proper and the southern and southwestern shore lines. The Japs were in force on the south, west, and north of the cleared area of the strip, setting up the major counter-attacks which were repulsed by the Seabees and the First Cavalry the next two nights.

Worked by Day - Fought by Night

"In addition to doing actual combat duty at night," reported Commander Alexander J. Gray, Jr., USN (Ret.), Commanding Officer of the Naval Advanced Unit, "the Seabees) worked continuously on the airstrip, built roads and LST ramps, sank a well, set up messing facilities to give the men hot food -- all under constant enemy fire and periodic attacks.

"...The Commander of Naval Base from direct personal observation wishes to commend the (Seabee) units present, as a whole, for outstanding courage and endurance under very severe conditions," he continued, "and considers that the officers and men concerned acted in accordance with the very highest traditions of the Naval Service.

"...Too much credit cannot be given to the officers and men of the.... Construction Battalions under the leadership of Commander Irvin S. Rasmusson, CEC, USNR." (Commander Rasmusson is Officer-in-Charge of one of the battalions participating in the Admiralty Islands operation and was the senior Civil Engineer Corps officer present during the rebuilding of Los Negros field.)

Gray did not cite individual instances of heroism, explaining, "It is not considered suitable at this time to commend individuals, that being left to the recommendations of the Civil Engineer Corps Officer-in-Charge." (These commendations will be published in the News Service as they are announced.)

Malaria Control Men Took Worst Beating

Seabee casualties were one officer and nine enlisted men killed, one officer and 44 enlisted men wounded. The heaviest losses were suffered by a malaria control unit made up of two Civil Engineer Corps officers and four Seabees. One of the officers was killed in action, and all of the remaining members of the party were wounded.

THEY CALL 'EM THE MARRYING 64TH"

When the 64th Battalion returned to Camp Endicott recently after an extended leave, 42 enlisted men and 3 officers reported themselves newly-weds.

SEABEES TO LEAVE PEARY; CAMP TURNED OVER TO GENERAL SERVICE

Camp Peary, is about to follow Camp Allen and Camp Bradford into Seabee limbo. The Commandant of the Fifth Naval District has announced the Seabee boot station has become a training camp for general service men. It is expected all Seabees will be out of the Virginia base by midsummer.

When the Naval Construction Battalions approached their authorized strength early this year and induction of new men was halted, Peary's activities were sharply curtailed. 'Boots' were conspicuous by their absence. Until personnel was temporarily frozen, Peary's population gradually fell off as Seabees moved from the station to new assignments. With most Seabees now serving in the Pacific area and operating out of Camp Rousseau, Port Hueneme, California, the situation was even more sharply outlined.

Camp Peary was opened in November, 1942. The first battalion to take its boot training at the new Virginia base was the 61st, which came in on December 5, 1942. Since then well over a hundred thousand 'boots' have received their first introduction to Seabee life at Williamsburg.

New assignments for personnel now stationed at Camp Peary have not been announced.

ANZIO SEABEES IN HOTBED OF ACTION

As the Allies made their daring landing at Anzio beach, a hundred Seabees were in the fore of the invading troops. They operated the pontoon causeways over which crack assault forces and tanks raced ashore from heavily-laden LST's.

Several of the Seabee platoons remained on Anzio beach after the initial attack, salvaging broached pontoon causeways. At the time of their most recent report these men had been under enemy gun and shell fire for 38 days.

SIMPLIFIES JAP CENSUS PROBLEM

States-side friends of Melvin B. Rock, SF1c, hadn't heard from him in over a month. Then a message finally came through. "We've been busy depleting the Jap population," the Seabee explained.

One of the original Bobcats, Rock was a member of a Seabee detachment attached to the Marine regiment which took Eniwetok in the Marshalls.

"The Japs shot at me," the veteran said, recalling his personal experiences, "and I shot Japs.....I've chalked up one for everybody in the Rock-family."

The Seabee, who had been waiting for his opportunity for two years, got a triple dose of invasion when the time finally came. Along with the Marines, his detachment stormed three Pacific atolls in rapid succession.

"The first island we hit wasn't so bad," Rock said. "but the second one was touch and go. When that landing boat dropped its ramp, there were more bullets and mortar shells flying around than enough. Believe me. when that boat hits the beach, there's a feeling in your stomach like you've been going down fast on an elevator.

"We came back aboard that night and headed for another island," the Seabee continued, "...I took some ammunition up to the front on a 'cat'. Coming back a sniper opened up. I dove into a shell hole occupied by a son of heaven who had gone there, til the demolition squad dropped some TNT into the sniper's dugout.

"...At dark we dug a foxhole for the night and I don't recommend it for sleep. Don't smoke -- don't talk -- don't snore -- and for heaven's sake don't stick your head out!

"On the first island," the Seabee related, "the Japs sneaked around with bayonets on long bamboo poles. They had been taught to say, 'Is that you, marine?' When and if you said 'yes', you got the bayonet. Nice people.

JUNGLE JIVE

The trombonist's "mute" is a pork sausage can studded with automobile head gaskets and the drummer bolsters his "skins" with adhesive tape, but a ten-piece Seabee orchestra still manages to hold daily jam sessions that are the hit of Green Island "night life".

Instrument repair difficulties and other handicaps would long ago have discouraged a less enterprising group, according to Pfc. Keith Topping, Marine Corps Combat Correspondent. Lack of parts, inadequate cleaning equipment, and the metal-corroding jungle climate all had to be overcome in one way or another. So far, inventive Seabee machinists have met every challenge.

Nine of the ten swingsters have played together under the leadership of E. D. Post, M2c, since the Seabees went overseas twelve months ago.

SEABEE TIME TABLE

Here's what a picked group of Seabees from several battalions did during the invasion of New Georgia below Munda Airfield:

In a few hours landed two steam shovels, 20 trucks loaded with supplies, eight big "cats", five carryalls and ten tons of dynamite, besides all their own gear, food, and equipment.

Started building a fighter strip that same day; within 24 hours had one-quarter of the field cleared; within ten days had a squadron of fighters operating off it; within 14 days had it completed--in spite of eight days of continual rain.

Found a crashed Jap Zero on the beach, and started ripping off souvenirs.

"Within 24 hours," says J. E. Alvord, CCM, "that entire Jap Zero had completely disappeared into the bags of those souvenir-mad Seabees. Only the motors were left--and they had to post a guard around them!"

MAYBE HE SHOULD HAVE ADDED "SIR"

A congressman recently returned from a tour of Aleutian bases was particularly impressed by the unconventional attire of United States officers and men and reported that they "dress in all sorts of get-ups, so that sometime you can't tell an admiral from a Seabee."

He then related the following incident to prove his point:

One day, he went for a stroll on the beach with Vice-Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, Chief of the Northwestern sea frontier, who was wearing a parka and an old sweater.

Suddenly a tough old Seabee drove up with a truck-load of garbage and yelled at the Admiral "Hey, you -- where the heck can I dump this stuff?"

"Suit yourself," replied the Admiral.

"Well, I got a whole load to get rid of," said the Seabee. "I figured you were the manager around here."

"No," replied Admiral Fletcher, "I run another department -- not the dumping division."

The Seabee still unimpressed unloaded his cargo on the spot and then drove off whistling.

FAMILY SEEKS VENGEANCE

Thirteen months ago, Horace L. Taylor, MM1c of the 83rd Battalion, 48-year-old operator of a thriving garage business at Fort Worth, Texas, enlisted in the Seabees to avenge a sailor son, Cecil, missing in action since the battle for Java on March 14, 1942.

A second son, Clayton, GM3c, also joined the Navy.

Recently, the senior Taylor's wife, a gray-haired grandmother, added a fourth star to the family's service flag when she joined the WACS.

ANZACS AMAZED AT SEABEES

"New Zealand troops at Green Island, watching in amazement as the Seabees build anything and everything say: 'Give those chaps a yard and they'll ask if you want a road or landing field'," wrote Sgt. Ray Fitzpatrick, Marine Corps

Combat Correspondent on the island.

The Seabees, hard at work readying the airfield, didn't take time off to build a fire when they wanted to heat coffee or other field rations, the Marine correspondent said.

"They simply place their canteen cups over an acetelyne torch for a moment or two, and their coffee is hot."

ARCHEOLOGY --- 1944

Serving with a Seabee battalion in the Aleutians, Peter B. Becker, CM1c, became interested in archeology and unearthed many interesting household utensils, tools, and arrowheads made by the ancient Aleuts.

Although engrossed in the study of the ancient civilization, Becker never let his enthusiasm dull his awareness of the current blessings of our own civilization.

"I dug all my excavations in the shape of foxholes," he recalled. "That way I was always ready for an air raid."

COMMENDED FOR RESOURCEFULNESS

Bernard Hallowisky, QM1c, has been cited for designing, constructing and supervising the painting of a "highly accurate" magnetic ship-situation board. The device, used by the base in plotting ship movements, "materially contributed to the success of the convoy and routing of ships.

The commendation also noted that "under the pressure of eleventh hour preparation for the Italian invasion", the Seabee drew and blueprinted navigation charts for a British LST group which received "special praise" from the Group Commander on his return.

AT LONG LAST

In a recent issue of the News Service, we related how, aboard an inbound transport, John Davis, Sr., CM1c of the 94th Battalion watched the submarine carrying his 21-year-old son, Torpedoman John Jr. head out to sea. Father and son had not seen each other since December, 1941.

This is one story that has a happy ending. John Jr. since has returned to "Island X" and the Davises, Senior and Junior, have had a grand reunion.

HANDLED GENTLY

Carrying 75-lb. bombs on their shoulders, a party of Seabees from the Eighth Special Battalion wallowed through a mile of snow, in places six feet deep, to deposit the eggs on waiting trucks.

The bombs, required immediately for a bombing mission, had appeared inaccessible because of high snow drifts on the magazine roads. The Seabees struck off across the snow-covered ground on foot, shovelled out the magazine entrance, and then carried the bombs, one per man, back across the area to the closest point the trucks could approach.

The detail received an official commendation from C. H. Schmidt, Magazine Officer of the Naval Air Station.

SOUTH SEA PROBLEMS NOS. 247 AND 248

What should a Seabee do when a native South Sea Island chieftain offers him a dusky wife -- and will probably be insulted if the marital gift is refused?

Jack T. Marshall, PhoM1c, attached to a Seabee battalion then stationed in the Samoan Islands, extricated himself from this predicament by informing the chief -- truthfully -- that he was already married. "Fortunately," Marshall says, "the Polynesians don't believe in polygamy -- or I might have been carried to the altar!"

The incident occurred while Marshall was on a five day photo reconnaissance expedition on the island of Savaii, where most of the inhabitants had never before seen a white man. "That," explains Marshall, "probably accounts for the Chief's generosity."

Nights on the island were spent in the villages of the friendly Polynesians, who treated the Seabees in real Hollywood fashion, inviting them to Siva Sivas (native dances), and lavishing them with gifts and bizarre foods. Oranges, papaya, bananas (cooked green), taro (a root baked or boiled and eaten hot or cold), fish (cooked or raw), octopus, pork, beef (for weddings and celebrations) and small, eel-like worms (washed up on the beaches once a year and considered a great delicacy) were the staples of the islander's diet; and Kava, a beverage brewed from roots and having a mild narcotic effect, was the drink offered to the Seabees.

"Those Polynesians must have cast-iron innards!" said Marshall. "My mouth was numb for three days after we left the island."

MARINES SAY THANKS

Seabees of the 77th Battalion have received two "Certificates of Merit" from the officers and men of V.M.F.-218, a section of U.S. Marine Aviation Group 44, as tokens of appreciation for their cooperation during construction work

directly connected with the latter's activities.

Lt. Cmdr. C. T. Wende, CEC, USNR, OinC of the 77th, in a forwarding letter, noted that the certificates were further proof of the mutual esteem existing between the Seabees and the Marines.

EXPLOSION VICTIMS RESCUED

Twelve Seabees of the Third Construction Battalion who narrowly escaped death when exploding fuel drums set off an ammunition dump near a pier where Seabees and other personnel were unloading cargo, braved flying shrapnel and debris, and blazing gasoline to rescue many stranded and helpless servicemen from the pier and the adjacent waters. All were commended by Cmdr. P. L. A. Keiser, CEC USNR, OinC of the Second Construction Regiment for "meritorious conduct" which saved the lives of "many who might otherwise have perished."

When the blast occurred, several of the men were aboard the freighter moored to the pier and the others were operating a giant 75-ton floating crane, tied up at the bow of the ship, and a jeep lighter alongside the crane barge.

The explosion blew Herbert McHardie, QM1c, and Lt. (jg) Harry L. Myers, CEC-V(S) USNR, off the lighter into the bay; threw Freeman E. Funston, BM1c, and Robert R. Dietz, QM2c, from the barge into the lighter; and demolished the crane operations shack in which Daniel P. Sheehan, SF3c, was working.

Others aboard the crane barge and lighter, although stunned by the concussion, leaped overboard to avoid the shrapnel and gasoline, sprayed over a wide area by the explosion.

CBM Oliver O. Odette and Howard V. Bergsma, BM2c, then boarded the lighter; the former pulling McHardie aboard and the latter rescuing another injured Seabee who had been blown over the lighter, from the barge into the bay. Odette called to Lawrence J. Dempsey, CM3c, Sheehan and Dietz to rescue Lt. Myers' unconscious body which was floating face down about twenty feet away.

Disregarding his own condition, McHardie took over the operation of the lighter while Odette helped Dempsey, Sheehan and Dietz bring the lieutenant's body aboard. While Odette applied artificial respiration to the officer, McHardie piloted the lighter about the area, despite intermittent explosions, and Allan G. Peterson, Cox; Funston, and the others aboard the lighter hauled at least 15 men out of the bay and threw life preservers and other floatation gear to many others.

However Odette's efforts to resuscitate Lt. Myers failed and when the barge had been filled with survivors, Odette ordered McHardie to proceed to a nearby dock where Lt. Myers' body and the wounded were landed.

Accompanied by Bergsma, Dempsey, Dietz and Peterson, Odette piloted the lighter back to the scene and despite the continued explosions, secured the floating crane which had been set adrift when its mooring lines parted.

Immediately after the initial blast, the Seabees working aboard the freighter; Thomas F. Bird, MM1c; William C. Mouhot, SF1c; James W. Spicer, SF3c; and Walter W. Wicklund, SF1c; made their way to the dock and a nearby pontoon barge where they pulled many men out of the water and assisted wounded and injured into boats before seeking safety themselves.

(Cmdr. Francis M. McCarthy, CEC USNR, OinC of the 23rd Construction Regiment, and 19 Seabees previously received commendations from Admiral William F. Halsey, USN, and Major General Rush B. Lincoln, U. S. Army, for rescuing injured servicemen and helping to extinguish fires caused by the explosions.)

Besides Lt. Myers, at least nine Seabees were fatalities and more than 78 officers and men were injured.

CLAIMS HORSE AS DEPENDENT

His horse kept Edward M. Sheridan, 28, of Hollywood, California, out of the Army for two years because his draft board thought she was two-legged, instead of four.

"I didn't say she was my daughter," Sheridan explained before a federal grand jury, "I wrote that she was a female dependent born Sept. 12, 1941. Is it my fault the Government doesn't know how to print up these questionnaires?"

HUGE ANNIVERSARY CAKE FOR 39TH WEIGHS 350 LBS;

Continuing to do things in a big way, the 39th Battalion celebrated its first anniversary with a birthday cake large enough so that every man in the battalion could have a piece and still leave enough for "seconds". The cake weighed 350 lbs; required 275 lbs. of dough, 50 lbs. of sugar, 45 dozen eggs, 50 lbs. of butter, and assorted spices. It measured four feet long and a little over three feet high.

JAP SANDMAN HAD PIPE-DREAMS

How do American servicemen react to Jap propaganda? Seabee Martin L. King, Flc, has an answer to that.

King was with the 14th Battalion when it landed on Guadalcanal close behind Colonel Carlson's famed Marine Raiders. Recreational facilities were scarce during those early days on the island, and the Seabees listened to the Jap radio for diversion. The programs offered American popular and classical music recordings, and an assortment of Japanese propaganda.

"The biggest laugh we ever got out of it," said King, "was the night the music ended and the Jap announcer -- in perfect English -- talked about our outfit. He told about how the Americans on Guadalcanal were without supplies

and were starving to death. The fellows were laughing so loudly I had to switch the set off.

"You see, we had just finished a big steak dinner!"

ARMATURES REWOUND WITH LINEN AND LACQUER

When electric draft blowers were short-circuited through dampness, CBMU 513's oil burners shut down and the Seabees, who like their comforts when they can get them, were left without hot water.

Standard repair material for rewinding armatures, varnish cambric, was unavailable. CMM Crosby K. Coltrane came to the rescue with linen from the dispensary. After he wound the armatures with the linen, Coltrane applied a coating of lacquer.

CBMU 513 again has its hot water.

BACHELOR SERVICE DE-LUXE

Pride and joy of a Seabee unit, stationed somewhere in the South Pacific, is their laundry and dry cleaning plant, writes Sgt. Bill Allen, Marine Corps Combat Correspondent.

Operated by a special crew, the laundry has a complete assortment of equipment that would do any stateside establishment proud and is not the usual run-of-the-mine type found in the Pacific, Allen said.

"Aside from several washing machines, the plant boasts a rotary-type iron, special cleaning tanks, a steam presser and a special contraption, built by the Seabees, for larger items such as blankets and sheets.

"Bad weather does not hamper the drying of clothes since the Seabees have also constructed a long canvas covered shed equipped with a blower."

Most popular feature of the service, Allen wrote, is that all work is done free.

SEABEES MAKE USE OF JAP EQUIPMENT

The 73rd Battalion believes its tin shop is now among the best in the Pacific.

Tools were scarce when the battalion first arrived at its advanced base, but the metalsmiths soon had constructed a vise, using the pointing assembly of a Jap field gun; made a bending machine from two inch threaded rods and scraps of angle iron; made various other jigs and tools from wrecked Jap trucks and gun mounts; used discarded metal containers to make several hundred bread pans; and assembled a "brake" from an English railroad track and parts from a Jap gun and truck.

PROBABLY THE FIRST IN NEW GUINEA

In addition to the regular Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services, a Seabee battalion in New Guinea has a weekly meeting for men of the Mormon faith.

COAST GUARDSMEN PRAISE SEABEES

The crew of the Coast Guard U.S.S. Murzim paid tribute to the Seabees in a recent issue of their publication, "The Seafarer", as "an outfit of which any American can rightfully feel proud."

In an editorial entitled "Recognition", the Coast Guardsmen praised the Fighter-Builders as "veterans of a hundred-odd industrial trades that would net them top-flight salaries in civilian life (who) volunteered...and have proved their worth time and time again, under conditions, (that) are too often unpleasant. No matter where you go, behind the lines or the battle front, they're there; no matter who you ask, there's only praise for the job they're doing..and to know them is to acquire envy for their esprit de corps."

Such praise from men of the Coast Guard, whose operations of landing craft has made possible so many successful invasions of enemy-held territory, is gratefully received by all Seabees.

SHUNS BEAR-HUG WELCOME

A Seabee will take on a Nazi or a Jap anytime -- but a Kodiak bear? That's a different story!

H. B. Whipple, MM1c, was helping to build an Aleutian base when he met up with this largest of all carnivorous animals.

"I was driving a jeep one evening about dusk," Whipple recalled. "I skidded around a curve and there in the middle of the road was a big rock that had slid down off the ridge.

"Cussin' to myself, I hopped out of the jeep to see if there was any way to get around it. I couldn't see very good, as the sun had already slid down behind the hills.

"All at once that 'rock' stood up and looked me straight in the eye. Yep, you guessed it, I was in spittin' distance of the biggest doggone animal I've ever seen.

"I ran right over that jeep on the way out and I didn't stop until I hit camp and was safe in my bunk."

Whipple was asked why he didn't use the jeep.

"The jeep?" repeated Whipple disdainfully. "Hell, man, I was in a hurry!"

SEA GOING SEABEES

Welders of the 85th Battalion have been kept busy repairing crippled merchant ships. Usually the ships have been able to limp into port so that the Seabees could go to work, but recently, when one vessel was so badly damaged it probably would have foundered, the 85 ers put out to sea to meet her and made temporary repairs so that she could be brought into port.

SHORT SPORT SHOTS

BASKETBALL.....University of Utah won mythical National Collegiate Basketball title by defeating St. John's of NY 43-36. Mormons won right to play for championship by nosing out great Dartmouth team 42-40 in overtime game to achieve biggest upset in seven year history of NCAA tournament. Utah, defeated by Kentucky in first round of National Invitation Tourney, was invited to NCAA as sub for Arkansas, which withdrew following auto accident to team in which one member was killed, another lost leg. won three Western eliminations, came East to upset Dartmouth and St. John's. NCAA basketball committee announced changes in rules governing court play next season. most important one will handicap giant goal tenders as defensive players will be prohibited from touching ball on its downward flight toward basket...if ball is interfered with, field goal will be automatic.

BASEBALL..Teams in spring training exhibition stage..Selective Service demands still draining clubs..John Humphries, White Sox pitching ace; Pitcher Jim Tobin, Braves, Luis Olmo, Dodger outfielder, reclassified 1-A..Chicago Cubs outfielder Harry Lowrey inducted into Army..Arkie Vaughan notified Dodgers he would remain on ranch. Al Simmons may return to active list with Athletics..Gene Moore, all around utility outfielder and pinch hitter extraordinary sent to Browns to complete deal which brought catcher Rick Ferrell to Senators..Angelo Giuliani originally traded in deal refused to report to Browns.

BOXING..Beau Jack whipped Juan Zurita, NBA lightweight champion in 10 round non-title bout..Sammy Angott, who lost title to Zurita, won split decision over up-and-coming Aaron Perry. Motion pictures of Joe Louis-Buddy Baer fight show Louis koed Buddy after bell rang ending round..movies show Louis and Baer's seconds advancing in mid ring when blow was struck..Nazi controlled Rome radio broadcast purported interview with Max Schmeling..Max denied reports Primo Carnera had been shot by Germans.

FOOTBALL..New eight team major professional football league, which may be expanded to 12 team coast to coast circuit before it begins operating in 1945, organized with certificates of operation issued to representatives of eight cities.

RACING.. "Big Red," Man of War celebrated 27th birthday..Sun Beau, third highest money winning thoroughbred of all time, died, age 19..Jockey Porter Roberts fined and suspended for remainder of Tropical Park meeting for rough riding.

GOLF..Bryon Nelson captured \$6,666 War Bond Tournament at Nashville.

HOCKEY..In Stanley Cup play-offs, Montreal eliminated Toronto 4 games to 1; Chicago did likewise to Detroit..Winners to meet for title.

TRACK..Gil Dodds unanimously voted "Man of Year" in track by Track Writers Ass'ns.