

A10-2 File

SEABEE NEWS SERVICE

PREPARED BY THE BUREAU OF YARDS AND DOCKS FOR BATTALION NEWSPAPERS AND BULLETIN BOARDS

ISSUE NO. 20

16 MAY 1944

SEABEES HELPED CRUSH JAPS IN EVERY SOUTH PACIFIC CAMPAIGN ---- ADMIRAL HALSEY

The Seabees and other service organizations who "bulldozed bases out of the jungle and brought up the beans and bullets and supplies" must be accorded "a great measure of the credit for the sky-blazing, sea-sweeping, jungle-smashing of the combat forces," said Admiral William F. Halsey, USN, Commander South Pacific Area and South Pacific Force, in a dispatch to his officers and men. "No greater fighting team has ever been put together," he emphasized.

"From the desperate days of Guadalcanal to the smooth steam-rolling of Bougainville and the easy seizure of Green and Emirau, all United States and Allied services put aside every consideration but the one goal of wiping out Japs," Admiral Halsey continued.

"As you progressed," he said, "your techniques and teamwork improved until, at the last, ground, amphibious, sea, and air forces were working as one beautiful piece of precision machinery that crushed and baffled our hated enemy in every encounter.

"Your resourcefulness, tireless ingenuity, cooperation, and indomitable fighting spirit form a battle pattern that will everywhere be an inspiration.

"You never stopped moving forward," Admiral Halsey concluded, "and the Jap never could get set to launch a sustained counter attack. You beat them wherever you found them and you never stopped looking for them and tearing into them.

"Well done."

SEABEES. JAPS. SLUG IT OUT IN MARSHALLS

Two unarmed Seabees and a homicidal Japanese Marine played a grim game of jack-in-the-box before the Jap crumpled for good before a smoking tommy gun in the hands of one of the Navy mens' comrades, a delayed report from the Marshall Islands has revealed.

The third day of the invasion, B. J. Blackburn, MM1c, and I. G. Phillips, MM2c, teamed up on a bulldozer to clear away rubble. Shoving aside a pile of broken concrete, they found themselves staring at a Japanese marine sergeant, flushed out of his hiding place by the bulldozer.

Brandishing a pistol, the Jap fired point-blank at Phillips, but missed.

Without pausing to see the result of his shot, he sprang onto the bulldozer, with Blackburn his next target. Luckily his gun misfired.

Swinging hard, the Seabee knocked him off. The Jap clambered on again. Blackburn pushed him to the ground. Three times more the fanatical Jap picked himself off the ground and leapt at the operator. Each time the Seabee beat him off. Then Seabee T. E. Williams, S1c, who had been running to the scene, riddled his foe with a submachine gun.

Combat reports published in earlier issues of the News Service already have described the Seabees' and Marines' initial assault landings in the Marshalls. Accounts of additional incidents are still coming through.

Landing with one of the first waves on D-Day, John Persche, CM1c, out-flanked a sniper and finished him off with a hand grenade. George Hager, MM1c, used a machine gun to blast three snipers out of coconut trees. Jake Viator, SF3c, and George Harrison, MM2c, added a Jap prisoner to the Seabee score.

Other Fighter-Builders, hauling ammunition to the front line, were attacked by an enemy soldier who rushed out of a building and attempted to throw a hand grenade at them. Cut down just as he pulled the pin, he fell on his own grenade and was blasted to ribbons.

All of the Navy construction men helped unload water, rations, ammunition, and high explosives the first day, under heavy fire. General H. Schmidt, USMC, Commanding General, testified personally to their exploits.

The Seabees, he said, "performed their duties with credit under trying conditions throughout the operation."

SWEAT BUILDS VICTORY

The request had a familiar ring: "Build us an airfield - fast!" And the 15th Battalion responded in the familiar Seabee way. The field was ready ten days ahead of time.

A memorandum from Cmdr. C. A. Whyte, USNR, CEC, O-in-C of the 22nd Construction Regiment, to Lt. Cmdr. T. H. Butler, CEC, USNR, O-in-C of the 15th Battalion, said in part:

"Due to the concerted efforts, hard work and long hours during the past twenty days, the fighter strip has been able to open for full operation ten days ahead of schedule. This in addition to many other items with which you are all familiar and in spite of adverse weather conditions with its attendant additional work."

Added Admiral William F. Halsey, "...Rousing congratulations! Well done."

WINNING HAND

Ever hear of a time-table poker game? Here's how CBMU 513 plays it:

The original deal was to have a 12,000 cu. ft , double-walled refrigeration plant ready when a transport arrived three weeks later with a shipment of meat. Estimated time of completion -- three weeks.

The game grew interesting when the Seabees discovered that the native tile they had expected to use was not available in sufficient quantities. The builders got around this by running the outside wall first; then, when the tile was on hand, the inside wall.

The construction bosses, Carpenter Gordon S. Nagel, CEC, USNR, and Victor S. Taines, CCM, were almost ready to throw in the hand, however, when with the storage plant built, the Seabees found that all the refrigerating machines they were supposed to use were rusted candidates for a scrap pile. Machinists headed by Harold E. Elsensohn, MM1c, working twenty-four hour shifts, succeeded in repairing and installing the reclaimed junk. Still, all in all, the three-week estimate shaped up as mighty optimistic.

The showdown came when the transport docked six days ahead of schedule.

But the Seabees took the pot: they'd completed the refrigeration plant exactly twenty-four hours earlier.

MARRIED THE RIGHT GAL

E. C. Scarborough, SC1c, twisted as he lay in his Bougainville foxhole and reached for another package of gun clips. As he tore away the wrappings, his eyes darted to a small printed enclosure. Incredulously, he focused on the words, "Inspected by Mrs. Bernice Scarborough" his wife.

SKILL COURAGE AND RESOURCEFULNESS

Seabees who participated in the Cape Gloucester (New Britain) campaign were among the servicemen to whom the Commanding General of the Sixth Army sent this congratulatory telegram:

"I extend my heartiest congratulations and personal appreciation to you and all ranks for your part in the destruction of the enemy from Cape Gloucester to Talasea. The Marines and their supporting Army and Navy units have again demonstrated skill, courage and resourcefulness of the highest degree."

/s/ Krueger

By Command of Major General Rupertus

MASS PRODUCTION BUILDERS

The Third Regiment will always think of March, 1944, as the month of the

"construction marathon".

The assignment which started the Seabees off on their 31 days of high-speed building was the construction of new housing and messing facilities for a battalion expected in six days. The Third Regiment ers hastily assembled materials and supplies; cleared and graded the new camp site; and erected a battalion tent camp complete with gang showers and pit latrines. They also provided materials and supplies for a quonset hut camp which the newcomers were expected to build themselves.

Everything worked out according to plan -- but the plan, as it turned out, was only the beginning.

As soon as the new battalion partially completed its quonset village, it moved into the camp and vacated the tent area for a second newly-arrived battalion. The second battalion immediately started work on its own permanent quonset camp. Then came a third battalion. And a fourth battalion. A large detachment. And another partial battalion.

At last report, (March 31st), the Third Regiment had three new and practically complete quonset hut battalion camps and the grading finished for still another area.

In its spare moments during the month, the Regiment maintained its own camp, which includes both tents and quonsets, operated a galley and mess hall, a ship's service store, and a laundry which served 5,000 Seabees.

NOT EXPERIENCE -- JUST APTITUDE

Called upon to open a jammed safe, E. W. Earl, BM1c, of CBMU 521, disdained the use of the customary "blasting" technique. The Seabee found a second safe, identical with the first, studied the lock a few moments, made two measurements, and proclaimed himself satisfied. Returning to the jammed safe, he drilled a single hole, tapped the tumbler gently, and the door swung open.

Asked the unit's disbursing officer timidly, "That guy didn't crack those things for a living, did he?"

NAVY ESTABLISHES PERSONAL CASH REMITTANCE SERVICE

The Navy has established a personal cash remittance service which will permit members of the Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Army personnel assigned to predominantly Naval areas, and authorized civilians operating with the armed services outside the continental United States, to transfer cash accumulations back to designated payees in the United States or to buy War Saving Bonds of Series "E", "F", and "G".

The new service supplements the individual allotment system whereby Naval personnel can designate that certain sums of money may be withheld from their pay monthly and turned over to dependents, savings accounts, insurance or war bond purchases.

There are no restrictions upon the designation of payee within the United States, provided the exact address is given. Alternate payees may be named also.

Under the program, the individual gives any disbursing officer the money (\$10 is the minimum amount and larger sums must be in multiples of \$5, except that the exact purchase price must be remitted for war bonds) and fills out a simple form. The disbursing officer forwards the form to the Field Branch, Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Cleveland, Ohio, where a check is dispatched to the designated payee. Bonds are sent to a designated person or held for safekeeping at the Federal Reserve Bank in Cleveland.

Once the transaction is made with the disbursing officer, the remitter cannot recall the funds or change the payee.

If the payee or alternate cannot be located, the check will be sent to the remitter; if the remitter cannot be located, the check will be returned to the General Accounting Office, Washington, D.C., for safekeeping and lawful disposition.

FIFTH LAUDED FOR STAGING PACIFIC OFFENSIVE

Arriving "at a time when there was liability of attack by enemy forces," the work done by the Fifth Battalion "in forward areas under enemy observation has been a major factor in transforming the situation of our armed forces in this theatre from defensive operations to offense and support of task forces carrying the war deep into enemy territory," said Captain C. W. Porter, CEC, USN, O-in-C, Second Brigade, highly praising the veteran Seabees as they prepared to leave for a new station.

"The Fifth Battalion is a credit to the Naval service of this Nation and has set a standard of fidelity and effective service which is an inspiration to the corps of Seabees," Captain Porter continued. "It is with very sincere regret that I am separated from the officers and men of so fine an organization ... to each, I extend a most earnest wish for success and happiness in the future, and a hearty "Well Done" in tribute to the history which you have made."

Lt. (j.g.) Ernest J. Underwood, CEC, USNR, Operations Officer of the battalion which replaced the Fifth at the old station, added, "While in this area, the Fifth Naval Construction Battalion did an indefatigable job of construction. It left behind a commendable record of engineering, efficient and well planned construction, excellent progress (even in forward areas under adverse conditions), and good will among all naval units with whom it came in contact. In short, it was a job "well done", and their loss will be keenly felt by all.

TOP ADMIRALS MEET FOR PACIFIC POW WOW

Admiral Ernest J. King, USN, Commander in Chief of the United States Fleet, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, USN, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, and Admiral William F. Halsey, USN, South Pacific Commander, have met in conference in San Francisco on the occasion of the awarding of a second Distinguished Service Medal to Admiral Nimitz.

While a Navy announcement of the meeting made no mention of the subjects under discussion, military commentators believe the primary topic was intensification of the war in the Pacific.

120th SCORES AGAIN

"For your devotion to duty and outstanding record of performance, you are hereby commended."

The words of Captain Leonard Doughty, Jr., USN, Commandant of a Naval Operating Base, were directed to the officers and men of a detachment of the 120th Battalion as the Seabees, having completed their assignment, prepared to move to another base.

"With conscientiousness and with high professional skill," Captain Doughty's letter continued, "you have fought our fires, maintained and operated our transportation, power plants and cranes, installed and operated our telephone system, restored our bomb-damaged buildings, charted our harbor, organized our passive air defense system, and have undertaken with enthusiasm and intelligence the many and varied tasks necessary in an advanced base.

"All hands at the base are indebted to you for your many contributions to our standard of living, including improvements in quarters, sanitary arrangements, and recreational facilities. ...We view your departure with regret

CAN DO --- HE HOPES!

This telegram, word for word, was received by the O-in-C of one of the NCTC's:

TULSA, OKLAHOMA

-----, CALIF.

PLEASE GRANT FIFTEEN DAY EXTENSION X

HAVING TROUBLE GETTING FAMILY STARTED X

NEED MORE TIME X

-----, --lc

FOXHOLE DEPARTMENT

This week's "Special" is a combination grease-pit, all-purpose foxhole publicized by Water E. Weiss, MM1c, a veteran of countless Jap raids in the South Pacific.

Weiss' wonder-hole came into being when the Seabee was one of eight men making up his battalion's heavy equipment lubrication detail.

The job called for a greasing pit so Weiss got one of the cat-skinners to scoop out a hole with his dozer. Next the Seabees cut the sides of the pit back until the opening above was a lot smaller than the hole itself. Using coconut logs, they shored and walled the sides, and built a greasing runway over the opening.

When the air raid alarm sounded, the Seabees would simply stop work, pull a large piece of steel air strip matting over the pit, and relax in their underground cavern until the raid was over.

Weiss rubbed it in by even finding a use for the projectiles the Japs fired at the detail. When he needed a spray gun, he picked up an empty Jap shell casing, added a piece of pipe for the air hose and another short length for the spray section, and found that it "worked fine".

"I never had time to thank 'em properly," Weiss grinned, "I was too busy greasing and dodging!"

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

Admiral Soemu Toyoda, newly-named Chief of the Napanese Fleet, formerly was Director of the Japanese Naval Construction Department. Toyoda probably figures his new job can't be any tougher than trying to outbuild the Seabees.

OLD TIMER WELCOMED BACK

The ranks of the Seabees have been closed for months, but when Chief Ship Fitter Kellar R. Dukes asked for a transfer to the Construction Battalions from general service, his request was quickly approved.

Back in January, 1942, Dukes, then 36, gave up a \$22.50-a-day job to join the Bobcats, the First Naval Construction Detachment. His assignment was "to go anywhere and do anything." "I didn't mind giving up the job," he declared. "I knew if we didn't win the war, I'd never be earning that much again, and besides if a man doesn't think enough of his country to fight for it, he ought to have his head chopped off."

Landing on Bora Bora, Dukes' first job was to weld pipe to oil tanks his mates were blasting out of rock. The pipe had to be ready in six weeks when the first tankers would arrive.

"We didn't have any welders' masks," Dukes explained, "so we made our own out of plywood with the eye glass made by putting exposed X-ray film behind a protective piece of glass we cut out of automobile windshields. The spray of

sparks kept frosting the glass, so we kept looking for new sources of clear glass. We finally stole the windows out of the huts, and when that was gone we begged pieces of glass from visiting ships. And, at the last, when it was all gone, I used my hands for protection.

That was only part of the difficulty. The pipe had to be laid from the top of a precipice down to the beach, with both pipe and welder suspended from ropes. Even then, rain did not halt the work. Hot sparks showered down with the rest of the deluge. The last week, Dukes worked for 36 hours at a stretch to have the line ready.

Nine months later, the battle front had moved far to the west. Only then, the Chief revealed that the gruelling work seemed to be affecting his eyes.

The doctors sent him home for treatment. Then, after his discharge from the hospital, he had a tour of duty aboard a carrier. But Dukes never forgot the Seabees. He wanted to get back, and today he's on the way.

SEABEE IN SOUTH PACIFIC WINS COLLEGE AWARD

Wolfgang Rosenberg, 21-year-old Seabee, serving in the Pacific and son of a former member of the German Reichstag, has been named the first recipient of the Monroe D. Franklin Medal at the College of the City of New York.

The medal is awarded annually to the senior of the college's School of Business and Civic Administration who has excelled in scholarship and the personal qualities of integrity and leadership.

TROPICAL DISEASES BEING OVERCOME

"The danger of tropical diseases for our armed forces has been overcome to a large extent," said Rear Admiral Luther Sheldon, Jr., USN, Assistant Chief of the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, in an address delivered this week in New York City. Navy medical officers, he continued, felt they "had the problem licked."

Admiral Sheldon said he was not at liberty to give details on the conquest of the tropical diseases, but to the medical men present in his audience, the statement meant the equivalent of a major victory on the battlefield.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

"The 'South Seas Light & Power Company' was staffed by the Seabees but supplied by the Japs," says Chief Electrician's Mate William J. Evans, who was one of the Guadalcanal utility's "executives".

All the electrical equipment, including two 135-horsepower generators, twenty miles of underground cable, five miles of over-head wires, and transformers, was a "gift" from the Japanese, the Chief explained.

"The Japs lost more than face when the Marines and Seabees landed on Guadalcanal," he chuckled.

Even the repair truck, which proudly carried the name of the new utility corporation, was taken from the enemy. It got hard usage in the jungle; on one day the cable line alone received seven direct bomb hits, necessitating fourteen splices.

The captured power plant supplied electricity for lights, telephone system, refrigeration lockers, and other Seabee projects on Guadalcanal. Although the boys were grateful to the Japs for having brought in the electrical apparatus, Evans said there was one great difficulty after the Seabees took over the system.

"The Japs knew the exact location of all the equipment and power lines," he ruefully remarked, "and I don't think they ever missed!"

PITY THE POOR SAVAGE

The "ignorance" of the natives of Guadalcanal turned out to be an expensive proposition for the Seabees, says Jack H. Bullen, Y1c, who saw many months' service in the South Pacific.

Notorious souvenir collectors, the Seabees began a brisk trade in curios with the natives. They paid in silver coins, and soon small change had practically disappeared from the Seabee camp, while the natives had hoards of silver cached back in the hills -- some as large as three or four hundred dollars.

The Seabees were forced to pay for grass skirts, war clubs, and necklaces with paper money. No amount of argument could induce the cautious natives -- unlettered in the matter of rates of exchange -- to trade small coins for bills.

"They never could understand," recalls Bullen, "why they should return two or three bright, shiny little pieces of silver as change for one dirty old piece of paper!"

FACE IS FAMILIAR

Thumbing idly through "Life" magazine, Mrs. Virginia Ciochetto, of Trinidad, Col., came upon a series of pictures depicting the rebuilding of Tarawa by the Seabees.

A CEC officer who appeared in one of the pictures looked familiar to Mrs. Ciochetto and he should have. He was her husband, Ensign Frank Ciochetto.

NO COOPERATION

"Downing Jap planes was almost like shooting quail back home," declared Marcus Beavers, a Seabee veteran of the South Pacific. "The trouble was," he added, "they shot back."

Beavers said he was sure he had helped down at least one of the enemy raiders. In a letter written in a jungle chow hall, the Seabee pictured South Pacific pioneering.

"I had just gotten a tent and cot set up," Beavers said, telling about his first night in any sort of real bed after weeks in a jungle hammock, "when a kid comes in and tells me it has fallen down.

"Seems like I have a lot of trouble sleeping. One night recently, I got up during an alert and tore all the mosquito netting out of my hammock. Then when I got back in to lay down, the tree I had it tied to broke and I nearly busted it.

"I was so mad then that I crawled into a foxhole and slept there the rest of the night.

"It rained before morning, as usual, and I was soaked.

"Such," Beavers lamented, "is the life of a Seabee."

HEIGHT OF OPTIMISM

Frying pans have been added to the fishing equipment available at the 117th Battalion's "Island X" Rec Hut.

WOULDN'T QUIT SHIP

Two Seabees who refused to abandon a grounded LST during the invasion of Sicily have been commended for heroism by the O-in-C of their battalion. The Seabees, Leo P. Schwanwde, SF1c, and Charles V. Conser, CM1c, remained aboard, carried ammunition to the anti-aircraft guns, and helped pull a line aboard with which the ship was rescued.

"You conducted yourself bravely," the letter of commendation read in part, "and were a credit to the battalion."

PAY RATES

Christopher Columbus received \$270 for the trip during which he discovered America. Captains of his two other ships were paid \$150 each. The pay of a sailor at that time was about \$2 a month and re-rates weren't worth the trouble.

BUSY LINES

Seabees are "no slouches" in getting ashore on the beaches of enemy-held islands right behind the first wave of assault troops and, in some instances, have started to work even before the shooting stopped, writes Captain Robert J. Allen, U. S. Marine Corps Reserve, in an article entitled "The Flying Boxcars of the Pacific."

"...it is rumored," the captain wrote, "the Marines have complained that their efforts to clean out lingering pockets of Jap resistance were interfered with by Seabees stringing telephone wires and putting in foundations for power plants."

Captain Allen said that it was a fact that the Seabees were doing "one of the great jobs" in the Pacific, and that the Marines knew and appreciated it.

"...if there is one branch of the service besides his own which your average Marine swears by, it is the Seabees."

SEABEES HELPED RAISE SHIPS SUNK AT PEARL

The active part played by Seabee divers in salvaging vessels damaged at Pearl Harbor during the sneak attack of December 7, 1941, has been partially revealed by the publication of letters of commendation from Rear Admiral William R. Furlong, USN, Commandant, Navy Yard, Pearl Harbor, to five of the men who participated.

Addressed to William D. Stafford, SF2c; Julius E. Pongowski, MM2c; Warren A. Selinsky, SF2c; Joseph E. Nagy, SF3c; and Robert Shaw, SF3c, the identical letters said, in part:

"During the course of ... operations, you made numerous dives inside and alongside damaged and submerged vessels under difficult and hazardous conditions, and by sustained individual effort, requiring skill and courage, you contributed in a large measure to the success of the diving phase of this important work."

TEN OTHERS

"What is your fifth general order?" a j.g. quizzed a 'boot' sentry at Camp Peary.

The rookie didn't bat an eye. "Thou shalt not kill," he answered.

GUTS

Retired as over age in grade, ex-Major William D. Darnell, 51, appeared at Fort Dix, N. J., and re-enlisted as a Master Sergeant.

SHORT SPORT SHOTS

BASEBALL: .. Charley Grimm, fired by Cubs in '38, rehired as manager to replace Jimmy Wilson, canned after losing 10 straight..Cubs dropped 3 more before snapping losing streak..Grimm, part owner and manager of Milwaukee, hired Casey Stengel to run Brewers..WPB considering release of essential materials to permit night baseball at two Boston parks, Detroit and Wrigley Field..Senators schedule lists 43 home night games..Only day-time home games will be played on Sundays and holidays..Cuban players with Senators granted non-resident status by draft officials..Mel Harder, veteran Cleveland pitcher, chalked up 200th victory of his major league career..Kenny Keltner, Indians third baseman, accepted by Navy..Harry Gumbert and George Munger, Cardinal pitchers, pass pre-induction physical..Gene Moore, outfielder and Ray Campbell, pitcher, of Browns, rejected..Major leagues extended squad limit deadline..Oakland of PCL purchased Manny Salvo from Indianapolis..Giants have hit into 31 double plays in 19 games.. "Schoolboy" Rowe blasted home run as Great Lakes Naval upset Phillies, 3-1.

RACING: .. Jockey Conn McCreary given credit for Pensive's entry in Derby..Persuaded Owner Warren Wright to ship colt to Kentucky and gave up mount on Sun Again, favored in Dixie Cap at Pimlico, for shot at Derby..Sun Again's win in Dixie Cap and Pensive's Derby victory netted \$95,675 for Wright..Pensive, son of 1933 English Derby winner, Hyperion..First derby winner for McCreary, second for Wright, and third for trainer Ben Jones..Devil Diver won Tobaggan Handicap at Belmont for second straight year..Jockey Johnny Longden booted in both halves of \$384 daily double..Twilight Tear, 3-year-old filly, chalked up fifth consecutive win, taking Pimlico Oaks..High Resolve, 3-year old gelding, blinded in eye by flying rock year ago, fitted with glasses, wins first race. Thoroughbred Club of America mailing "turf letter" news report to horse owners, trainers, jockeys, etc. in armed services at foreign stations..no charge for letter which will include form charts on leading races and other details not available through radio or news accounts.

BOXING: .. Sal Bartolo, AS, USMS, got leave, successfully defended NBA feather title against Phil Terranova in 15 rounds at Boston.

ROWING: .. First Eastern collegiate rowing regatta called off after choppy waters swamped Navy, Columbia JV shells.

TRACK: .. Sweden's star milers, Gunder Hagg and Arne Anderson may visit US to shoot at four-minute mile record.

FOOTBALL: .. Princeton drops intercollegiate football for duration..Brooklyn Football Dodgers renamed "Tigers" ..Larry Weldon, quarterback, signed by Redskins.

SIDELINES: .. James E. Forrestal, newly-appointed Secretary of Navy, expert amateur boxer during college days at Princeton..broke Gene Tunney's nose in work-out..Notre Dame's 1943 baseball captain, Harold Smullen, now SP(A)2c at Camp Lee-Stephenson..Fourth Batt's Rocky LaRocca, former pro welterweight..fought 136 bouts in nine years.