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FOUR OF A KIND

Four of a kind is always a good hand. When the four are commendations from Generals and all are received during the same thirty-day period, they're good enough to win in practically any competition.

So the 82nd Battalion today is feeling mighty proud about the words of praise it has received from Major Generals St. Clair Streett, O. W. Griswold, and Raymond G. Lehman and Brigadier General E. W. Barnes.

In thanking the Seabees for their assistance, General Barnes said, "The cooperation and services exhibited by the 82nd C. B.s has been invaluable, to the end of obtaining supplies and equipment immediately needed at times when regular supply channels would have retarded the tactical situation's demands. The 82nd has loaned its men, its trucks, and equipment, provided messing and quarters arrangements, and in every way has given aid beyond any reasonable expectation, all with a result that it is highly respected and admired by every member of the ----- Fighter Command.

General Streett added: "It is with genuine gratification that I forward this commendation to you ... for the cooperation afforded units of my command at a time when the need was great. I wish to add my personal appreciation for the 82nd Naval Construction Battalion's praiseworthy efforts, which further demonstrates the effective cooperation between the services that is bringing about the decisive defeat of the enemy."

"I have had occasion to observe Commander Fowler and the work of his battalion," wrote General Lehman. "Not only have they performed in a splendid manner the primary duties for which the battalion was sent to this island, but have rendered to my headquarters a splendid and sincerely appreciated service in the construction work necessary to the establishment of the headquarters. (They) have achieved a fine result."

General Griswold, in forwarding the commendation, termed it "well deserved and hard earned."

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BATTALION'S D-DAY ROLE REVEALED

Proving their hitherto untried-in-combat Rhino ferries and barges "an outstanding amphibious weapon," officers and men of a Seabee battalion triumphed over a D-Day storm to unload tanks, armament, vehicles, personnel, and ammunition in France, accomplishing their mission through mine infested waters and despite intense enemy fire.

A report by Captain C. W. Coryell, CEC, USNR, OinC of a Construction Regiment, has revealed how the Seabees succeeded in their D-Day objective although the condition of the sea and wave action previously had been considered too rough for operation of the pontoon equipment.

During the critical ten-day period following D-Day, Captain Coryell's report continued, the battalion went on to unload 16,000 vehicles, 25,000 tons of ammunition and supplies, and 32,000 troops, a total of approximately 138,000 tons, all urgently needed on the expanding beachhead.

The Rhino crews, many of whom remained on duty for as long as 90 hours without relief, also distinguished themselves by rescuing wounded and drowning soldiers at great risk to themselves.

The open decks of the Rhinos were constantly exposed to enemy shell fire and flak splinters. "The danger to the crews," Captain Coryell declared, "was great at all times. A number were wounded as the result of mine explosions, and some deaths resulted.

"All Rhino ferries," he said, "were navigated to successful beach landings with skill and fearlessness, and despite much damage to the units due to the shell fire and mines, the crews worked continuously at their stations through long hours, contributing immeasurably to the success of the invasion"

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BIG BLOW

A bulldozer at a South Pacific island was recently stalled, its tracks spinning wildly, relates the Second Regiment's 'The Beachcomber.

"Again and again the operator tried to move forward -- without success.

"Backing up and getting off to discover what the dozer's tracks wouldn't bite into, he found it to be an unexploded 500-pound bomb -- cap up and scarred from the dozer's efforts.

"That zephyr you may have felt through the palms at about that time," 'Beachcomber' advises its readers, "was the operator's long, drawn-out sigh."

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77TH TERMED ONE OF FINEST ¹²¹⁹

Termed by its last regimental commander "one of the finest Seabee battalions in the Navy," the Seventy-seventh is now taking over an assignment at a new base.

Upon their detachment from their old regiment, the regimental O-in-C, Cmdr. W.W. Studdert, USNR, commended the men of the 77th for their "excellent performance."

"You ... contributed greatly to the most successful completion of one of the finest air and naval bases in the South Pacific area," he said.

"The officers and men of the 77th U.S. Naval Construction Battalion," Cmdr. Studdert continued in his citation, "through their diligence and ability to perform, have won the respect and admiration of all the services stationed at this base."

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SPEEDY REPAIR JOB ¹²¹⁹

To prevent the Americans from making use of port facilities at an E-boat base in France, retreating Nazi demolitioners did what they thought was a thorough job of wrecking all installations, assuming that it would require months to repair the damage.

But they reckoned without the Seabees.

Moving in soon after the port's capture, a highly specialized detachment of a battalion now stationed in France pitched into the task of reconstruction.

A "short time later," speedy PT boats, protecting shipping in the English Channel, were putting in to refuel at the newly constructed and rebuilt port.

The detachment was under the direction of Ensign J.T. Barber, CEC, USNR, assisted by CSF J.C. Volk.

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WORTH FIVE BATTLESHIPS

Biggest morale-builder in the South Pacific is the recreation center in the New Hebrides, built largely by Seabees and described by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as "worth five battleships", said Lt. Cmdr. Roland Logan, USNR, recently returned to the United States after 13 months of duty as chief of the establishment.

Interviewed by Bob Considine, nationally-known sports columnist, Lt. Cmdr. Logan, who was trainer of the Boston Red Sox, and the West Point, Pittsburgh and George Washington University grid teams, as well as personal trainer for Glenn Cunningham, disclosed that "battle-scarred warships, filled with war-weary and restless men, have been ordered in at the place -- to give the boys a breather; let them play at some games, drink some beer, eat ice cream, or just lie on the lawns and look up at the sky.

"More jangled nerves were straightened out at the center, more cases of "battle anxiety" were cured and more homesickness evaporated there (and still does) than any spot in the ocean they call Pacific", Considine wrote.

"We couldn't have done it without the Seabees, God bless them," Lt. Cmdr. Logan told Considine. "They built just about everything, though some of the fields were laid out by hard working boys in other branches. But the Seabees are tops. in my book. One day about seven months ago two admirals came by and said they wished we had a golf course. That's all. Three weeks later the Seabees finished a swell 9-holer.

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SEABEE'S SQUEEZE SAVES MATE'S LIFE 1221

When a piece of shrapnel severely wounded a buddy, Richard A. Darnell, CM1c, rushed to the stricken man's aid and stopped the heavy flow of blood by pinching the severed ends of a vein with his fingers. He shut off the stream of blood in this manner until proper medical aid was administered.

In commending Darnell, Vice Admiral J.H. Newton, USN, said, "By his prompt action, quick thinking, and thorough knowledge of first aid, he was directly responsible for the saving of a life."

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GUARANTEED

Comedian Bob Hope, now making a tour of bases in the Pacific, sought out a few souvenirs when he stopped at a Navy camp in the Admiralties recently.

"I got an enemy flag," reported Bob. "The Seabees have been making up Jap flags from a piece of bedsheet with some mercurochrome to sell to the suckers like us, but I think I have a real one."

MINOR DISTURBANCE

For Lloyd E. Herman of the 36th Battalion we propose
a new rate: MU Master of Understatement.

Writing of his experiences overseas, Herman said, "Jap
shell fire demolished two tents while I was in them. This I
found a bit exciting."

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OPPORTUNITY 1223

The chance every seaman dreams of -- to take command -- came to George A. Taiol, S1c, of the 11th Battalion, during a recent combat operation.

The Rhino of which he was a crew member was attempting to complete a "marriage" with an LST while operating in a heavy sea. The officer-in-charge went out of action with a broken leg and a CPO took over. Heavy waves snapped several cables. One cable struck the CPO, knocking him out.

Taiol, S1c, then took charge and successfully completed the "marriage".

"His cool and decisive action saved the Rhino and the crew," said an official report of the incident, "and was in keeping with the highest tradition of the U.S. Naval Service."

TEAMWORK

Seabees ashore on the Normandy beaches during the first weeks of the invasion used even their own free time to help speed the movement of ships and supplies. Typical of this after-hours effort is the work of a party of Navy construction men in freeing a Coast Guard vessel which had been beached by the storm which devastated the beachhead late in June.

"During the six-day period this vessel was beached, in an apparently hopeless situation, these men worked unceasingly to dig channels and clear obstructions, until she finally floated with the help of your warping tug and an LCM," wrote Lt.(jg) V.B. Meyer, USCGR, to a Battalion O-in-C. "Much of this work was performed during the men's free time, and such a spirit of cooperation and unselfishness is indeed praiseworthy.

"At the present time," he continued, "this vessel is undergoing repairs to prepare her again for sea. This might not have been possible if not for the untiring efforts shown by these men."

AWARDED NAVY AND MARINE CORPS MEDAL

For rescuing a drowning pilot, Robert E. Cochran, WT3c, has been awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal by Admiral William F. Halsey, USN.

Disregarding his personal safety when a fighter plane crashed into the sea nearby, Cochran swam through extremely rough surf for approximately 100 yards. Although thrown against a reef and forced back once by the heavy breakers, he succeeded in reaching the pilot and bringing him safely to the beach.

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TWO SPECIALTIES ¹²²⁶

If Gunner's Mate First Class E.E. Vielmetti ever tells his battalion cook "I can do better myself," he probably won't be fooling.

Vielmetti, who did a hitch in the Army before enlisting in the Seabees, holds two expert's ratings -- as a machine gunner ... and as a cook. While in the Army, he put in four months at Cooks and Bakers School, one month at Mess Sergeants School, received a First Cook's diploma, a Mess Sergeant's diploma, ran an Army officers' mess, and also a mess for enlisted men and civilians.

How come he's a gunner's mate? Vielmetti explains that when he joined up he figured the Navy needed expert gunners most. But now, he says, he'd like a change. He wants to run a battalion mess.

TOUCHY BUSINESS

No place for a man with an overly-vivid imagination was the spot Roger M. Williams, SF2c, found himself in on the night of June 6th.

The Rhino ferry on which the Seabee had crossed the English Channel on D-Day had grounded about fifty feet off a Normandy beach. The first bulldozer to leave the ferry's ramp had struck a mine and blocked the way ashore.

The ferry's cargo of tanks, ammunition, and equipment had to be landed quickly, but before that could be done, someone had to pick his way through the blackness of the night and the mines hidden in the sand to clear the disabled tractor from the ramps.

Despite the obvious peril, the Seabee waded ashore, located another bulldozer, and cleared the wrecked machine. Then he continued to tow ashore the equipment on the Rhino.

"His initiative and courage," reported the Officer-in-Charge of the battalion, "was in keeping with the highest tradition of the Naval Service."

LIFE SAVERS

Seabees working on the beaches during the Normandy invasion were credited with saving a number of servicemen from drowning during the landing operations.

When an infantry-laden LCI beached and soldiers attempting to struggle ashore with heavy packs looked as if they would not be able to make it, Nicholas A. Renzetti, CM3c, Harold E. Smith Jr., S2c, and Lloyd W. Spencer, S1c, left their Rhino ferry to go to the rescue. The Seabees aided all of the men to the beach and successfully applied artificial respiration to an officer who had lost consciousness.

Two other men attached to the same battalion, Robert G. Dare, MM3c, and Thomas Newman, CM3c, swam approximately 200 feet through mine infested waters to rescue the lone survivor of a DUKW which had just been destroyed by one of the mines.

Charles C. Dorsey, S2c, left a Rhino ferry to rescue a soldier who had been attempting to make shore but was being carried under by the weight of his pack.

Still another member of the same outfit, Laroy W. Bishop, CM2c, went over the side of his ferry to rescue a wounded soldier who had fallen between an LCI, a LCVP, and the Rhino, and was in immediate danger of being crushed between the craft. Bishop pulled the injured man clear and guided him past the mines to safety.

EARN SOLDIER'S MEDALS FOR RESCUE

Three Seabees of the 71st Battalion, formerly stationed at Bougainville, have been awarded Soldier's Medals for saving the life of a pilot who, entangled in his water-soaked parachute, was in danger of drowning in heavy seas.

The Seabees, V.C. Hoerbelt, C.W. Lizzoli, and A.J. Ryan, all S1c, towed an inflated rubber float through the pounding seas to effect the rescue after the flyer's plane had sunk.

"Tough?" said the veteran Chief, "I wasn't born --- I was quarried!"

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WRONG ONES ¹²³⁰

The guy, who dusted this one off for publication in the 43rd Battalion's 'The Duster' is hiding in the brush or ought to be.

Several days ago, he says, while constructing the mess hall a Seabee carpenter was intently examining each nail and then tossing them away. Observing this, the chief in charge of the crew asked the reason for the display of wastefulness.

The carpenter retorted: "The d--- things have the head on the wrong end!"

With that, the chief exploded: "Why you old fool, those are for the other wall!"

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BIG TOWN 1231

Marking the end of their second year of overseas duty, the 11th Construction Battalion estimates that it has completed enough work to furnish housing, factories, warehouses, power, light, sewers, water, telephone, airfields, and water front facilities, including lighterage and garbage barges, for a city of 11,000.

QUONSET CENTIPEDE

Scores of Seabees stared open-mouthed in amazement as they watched a quonset hut "walk" down the street in the 29th Special's bivouac area at Hueneme.

The startling scene of the many-legged hut was occasioned by the desire of the battalion's officers to relocate their recreation hut.

Scorning the use of heavy equipment -- or even rollers, WO Mitchell Fidanze called upon 90 of his husky cargo-handlers, placed them inside the hut after first removing the flooring and, at a given signal, every man heaved and walked -- and the hut moved down the street.

The straining stevedores rested only twice, and within 30 minutes the building was resting on its new foundations, having been maneuvered around three corners on its 1000-foot trip.

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SAME THOUGHT 1233

During recent military training manuevers a group of inspecting officers toured the 129th Battalion's positions and expressed themselves as well satisfied with the deployment of men.

A Marine officer, however, looking at a mound next to him, remarked: "This would have been a good place for a machine gun nest."

"Hardly were the words out of his mouth," said the battalion's newspaper, the 'Beacon', "when there was a crackling of brush at his elbow as Seabee machine gunners Norman Jones and Erwin McOmber stood up to reveal themselves."

FROM MOM

A mother's written plea to President Roosevelt that her son, a Seabee in the Southwest Pacific, celebrate his birthday with a cake "from Mom", was answered in a most satisfactory manner when George W. Hepple, MM1c, was presented the cake by his battalion's OinC, Lt. Cmdr. L.R. Quayle, CEC, USNR.

In a letter to the President, "Mom", Mrs. A.J. Hepple, of Connecticut, said, in part:

"I am taking the liberty to write to you and ask a favor. My only son ... has been in the Southwest Pacific since the first part of April, 1943. We saw him about 3 days since he went in November 1942, he is a Seabee ... his birthday is July 4, I do wish he could have a birthday cake, and I know that if I send him one he probably would never get it, so if possible would you see that he gets one from his Mom, it would be a little happiness for him, but mostly for me ... you will find \$5.00, also my son's address..

Mrs. Hepple's letter was rushed from Washington to Lt. Cmdr. Quayle with the request that everything possible be done. At the same time, the \$5.00 was returned to Mrs. Hepple.

Lt. Cmdr. Quayle, receiving the letter, learned that Hepple was in sick bay but assigned CCS W. Van Seters the task of baking the cake.

The Chief had no eggs, so he "procured" two dozen; he had no powdered sugar, so he powdered his own; the ovens were too small for the cake he planned, so he had them enlarged.

Hepple received his cake. Inscribed in heavy icing were the words, "July 4, Happy Birthday from Mom."

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SPEEDSTERS 1235

Given three weeks to make repairs on a wrecked wharf, the dock crew of the 85th Battalion, working two shifts of ten hours each, completed the job in nine days.

The same crew recently was commended for its assistance to Army personnel during work at another dock.

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CONVINCED

Being lost for nine hours in fog-blanketed Aleutian waters finally convinced Thomas Kellett, EM1c, and four mates of the 32nd Battalion, that a 3-inch compass was much more reliable than their 5900-foot marker.

Kellett, pilot of a motor launch making regular runs between two Aleutian islands, had disdained the use of a compass. He preferred to rely upon a 5900-foot mountain as a direction-finder.

This simple system of navigation worked well until the day a dense fog suddenly enveloped the launch, mountain, and everything else.

With no compass aboard, Kellett attempted to plot his course by using wind and tides as his guides. As the winds constantly changed direction, he soon had to discard this method.

Realizing he was lost and facing the prospect of winding up in the open sea without fuel, Kellett reduced speed and decided to wait out the weather. "It was a question as to which would run out first--gas or fog," the Seabee explained.

As the launch cruised aimlessly about, the men sighted two rock-bound islands, but these proved too dangerous to attempt landings.

Only an hour's fuel remained when the fog abruptly lifted and the Seabees enjoyed the most welcome sight of their lives--the setting sun.

When Kellett walked over to his boat the next morning his hands were full. He was carrying a mass of charts and a compass.

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TEXAS AGAIN

In traditional Texas manner, bakers of the 99th (Lone Star) Battalion fashioned a mammoth star-shaped cake in commemoration of their battalion's first anniversary of their adoption by the state of Texas. Covered by an inch-thick red, white, and blue icing, the cake measured six feet across and 40 inches thick.

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KEEP HOOK MOVING

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"The handling of approximately 5,000 tons of cargo in a 24-hour period indicates the proper enthusiasm and a very definite expression of their determination to help win the war," wrote the commander of a Naval base in the South Pacific to Lt. Cmdr. Marion B. Orr, CEC, USNR, OinC of the 22nd Special, in commendation of the battalion.

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PERPETUAL MOTION?

"Throw out that old-fangled electric washing machine," the 129th Battalion's 'Beacon' advises stateside householders.

"Jack Oliver and Wayne Oliver have just released their new A-4, 1944, wind operated, hand fed model," the 'Beacon' continues.

The Goldbergian contraption, complete with endless pulleys, straps, paddles, wires, and a six blade propeller for a windmill was assembled from the parts procured from a B-24 junk pile. It is so constructed that it can easily be dismantled and packed for shipment to areas where no electric power is available.

A moderate wind supplies enough power to work the machine. It is estimated, reports 'Beacon', "that two Seabees, shooting the breeze nearby are sufficient to provide enough power for a week's washing."

TROPHIES 1240

Seabee souvenir hunters will envy their mates on Guam who searched Jap officers' quarters and found an official souvenir program of the Chicago World's Fair of 1933 ... a pamphlet on the "Dragonflies of China" ... also a home movie projection machine which still had film in it. It was an old silent picture made in the United States ... the title was "Barney Google".

PLAIN AND FANCY VICTUALS

Cooking for a battalion of hungry Seabees has its interesting moments, says Richard E. Steinheim, SC2c, whose two years' overseas experience dishing it out for the 19th Battalion should make him an authority.

When the mates yelled for "something different," Steinheim always did his best to oblige. Sometimes it meant going on crocodile hunts so that the next day's special could be "crocodile tail and palm tip salad"; on other occasions, he would be an energetic participant in wild pig chases; and for several months the Seabee cook actually found himself on duty at a South Pacific cattle ranch. His job there was to kill, dress, and cook beef for the servicemen — and that, says Steinheim was a full time job!

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RECOGNIZED BY EMPIRE STATE

Seabees of the 70th Battalion, veterans of the North African campaign, and many of whom are New Yorkers and New Englanders, have been presented with an official New York State banner by Commissioner Charles H. Sells of the New York State Department of Public Works.

ISLAND THEATRE HAS PROFESSIONAL TOUCHES

"Scuttlebutt Junction", a canvas-roofed, open-air theatre seating 1800 persons, is the joint contribution of CBMUs 572 and 573 to the entertainment of servicemen on their "Island X".

Equipped for stage presentations as well as movies, the theatre boasts a stage approximately 25 x 36 feet. The lighting system features homemade footlights which can be folded down into the floorboards, upper lights, and tin can spotlights trained from both wings. Floodlights also have been mounted toward the rear of the theatre, illuminating the spectator section.

The nemesis of many an island theatre is flooding in rainy weather, but the Seabees have provided for that contingency by ringing the entire "Junction" area with a system of drainage gutters covered with scrap steel matting.

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FIRE FIGHTERS HOT

Two members of the 117th Battalion's fire-fighting squad, Donald Jacobs, SF3c, and Henry L. Gagne, SF3c, have won commendations from Naval officials for their part in extinguishing a fire at an "Island X" quarry.

A letter from the quarry owner said that "\$60,000 worth of equipment was saved through good fire-fighting technique and very little damage was caused by the use of excessive water."

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COOK PROVIDES OWN FISH

To Bob Lamm, SC1c, fishing with a sling-propelled spear has meant relief from boredom on "Island X", but to his mates the Seabee's tosses have spelled relief from Spam.

Being a cook, Lamm has been able to put his catch to good use, particularly when he comes up with something exotic - like octopus. He's speared at least thirty of these and his mates agree that after he's prepared them in accordance with the recipe given him by natives and residents of the island, French-fried octopus makes mighty good eating.

The gadget Lamm used for his fishing is a spear four and a half feet long, with a hinged barb which holds it in its target harpoon fashion. The spear is propelled by a loop of inner tube fastened at one end of a bamboo tube, through which the shaft passes when released.

The weapon is powerful enough to penetrate completely a four-inch thick fish at a distance of 12 feet.

SHORT SPORT SHOTS

BASEBALL: Overseas servicemen will be the first to view official World Series films. Lew Fonseca, AL promotional director, will have 19-man crew shooting thousands of feet of film to capture pictorially series games. On completion of series, hundreds of prints of a two-reel sound movie will be distributed to the armed forces throughout the world. Dick Wakefield, Tiger's hard-hitting star outfielder, discharged from Navy last July, notified he passed Army physical and subject to immediate call. Cardinals temporarily lost services of Stan Musial and Whitey Kurowski. Musial hospitalized after colliding with another player; Whitey undergoing treatments for ulcer on right eyeball. Pirates won both ends of two doubleheaders to run up string of nine consecutive wins over Cards this season. Mort Cooper became first NL pitcher to win 21 games this season while Bill Voiselle became first Giant pitcher in 7 years to win 20 games in single season. Reds' Ray Mueller cracked 35-year NL record by catching his 134th consecutive game of season. Baltimore Orioles won closest International League race in 61-year history, nosing out Newark by .0007. Nashville won Southern League flag on last day of season.

FOOTBALL: Biggest news of week was Lt. Glenn Dodds, USAAF, former football star of Tulsa U., signing two year contract with New York eleven of newly-formed All-American Football Conference. Dodds, voted most valuable All-Star in game, against Chicago Bears last month, was "drafted" in 1943 by National Pro League's Chicago Cardinals but did not sign contract. In Pro exhibitions, Redskins trounced Bears, 21-7; Philly Eagles beat merged Pittsburgh Steelers and Cardinals, 22-0; Green Bay Packers shut out Boston Yanks, 28-0; Ft. Warren nosed out Brooklyn Tigers, 21-20; NY Giants bowled over Sampson NTS 13-0. Yanks purchased Center Dale Carmody and Halfback Courtney Driscoll from Tigers. Like Navy, Army adopted NCAA 4-year ruling. Eastern Collegiate AA coaches dropped revised rule which would have permitted forward passing from any point behind line of scrimmage.

SIDELINES: Chalky Wright, former world featherweight champ, indefinitely suspended by D C. boxing commission for failure to appear for bout with Jackie Wilson. 13 thoroughbreds, valued at \$200,000, destroyed in Belmont Park fire. Byron Nelson spread-eagled field to win Texas Victory Open Golf. Gunder Hagg ordered to cancel all running dates when physical examination showed him suffering from "over-exertion". Army-Notre Dame football game at Yankee Stadium November 11, sold out 9 weeks before.

SERVICEMEN'S SPORTS: Rose Bowl received first reservations for '45 New Year's Day game from 6 U.S. flyers now POW in Germany. Passed by German officials, signed regulation prison postcard dated June 8, asked for block of 12 seats, saying, "Due to the heartening news of the last week, we, the undersigned Californians, feel extremely confident that this New Year's Eve will find us at home". 129th Batt's "Redmen" won Seabee Baseball championship of Central Pacific by beating 16th Batt's "Shellbacks" in three out of five series. Camp Parks Seabees beat Treasure Island Armed Guard to win 12th Naval District's title. Camp Endicott line has record of 40 wins, 18 losses and one tie. Hueneme's "Bees" closed season with 43 wins against 17 losses. CSp(A) Gus Sonnenburg, former football star and pro wrestler, died of leukemia at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Pro Golf champ, Sam Snead received medical discharge from Navy. Lt. John J. Daly, jr., captain of 37 Manhattan College eleven, killed in Normandy.