

# SEABEE NEWS SERVICE

PREPARED BY THE BUREAU OF YARDS AND DOCKS FOR BATTALION NEWSPAPERS AND BULLETIN BOARDS  
NAVDOCKS P-117

ISSUE NO 60

20 FEBRUARY 1945

## CAUSEWAYS SPEEDED LINGAYEN GULF LANDING

Members of a Seabee pontoon battalion in the forefront of the Lingayen Gulf landing in the Philippines had the satisfaction of watching an estimated 90 per cent of the invasion materiel come ashore over their temporary pontoon piers.

The veteran battalion boasted a campaign record few other Seabee units could equal: Kwajalien, Roi-Namur, Majuro, Guam, Saipan, Tinian, and the Leyte and Luzon landings in the Philippines. The long list of Purple Hearts awarded to men in the outfit has been testimony to the hazards of their occupation. "Yet," said Lt. Comdr. William E. Dallas, (CEC), USNR, the battalion's OinC, "they don't consider themselves heroes. They merely think of themselves as Seabees doing a tough job damn well.

Typical of the conditions under which the battalion has operated was the experience of CMM Michael E. Lane of Wichita, Kansas, who was in charge of a pontoon barge during the Lingayen Gulf operation.

The barge was bracketed by shell fire and the Chief ordered his crew to swim to safety. He elected to stay aboard the barge. Two of his men, Lane E. Allen, S1c, of Blacksburg, Virginia, and Hubert E. Gossage, Cox., of Dalton, Georgia, decided to stick it out with him. The three ducked into a tool compartment that had been cut out of one of the pontoon sections. Throughout the night they huddled in the doubtful security of their improvised foxhole and listened to pieces of shrapnel rake across the top of the causeway. That they came through the barrage uninjured, they said later, was pure good luck.

Another member of the battalion, L. B. Edinger of Marshfield, Oregon, recalled the night of D-Day on Tinian, where the pontoon specialists were pinned down for several hours by a hail of mortar fire. "We were pretty shaky when morning came," he said, "but we had troops and material going ashore over our pontoons in less than three hours."

At Leyte, the Seabees were working on a pontoon causeway when a flaming bomber crashed into the beach less than 25 yards away. One oil-splattered veteran, wiping out his eyes with grimy hands, shook his fist at the burning plane. "Happy landings, Tojo," he shouted, "this Seabee airfield isn't ready for use yet!"

To a man, they are proud of the records they have made. "But," Frank Lewen, MM1c, of Gary, Indiana, made one reservation, "there is one beachhead where they won't need causeways--when we hit the Golden Gate we'll swim ashore."

## SEABEES FIGHT FIRE ON LST

"They were strictly 4.0"

This is the opinion two Navy officers on an ill-fated LST formed of their 100 Seabee passengers when the ship was fired by a direct bomb hit recently off the coast of Mindoro.

"They were construction specialists, but when the cards were down, they did a magnificent job aboard ship," said the officers, Lt. (jg) Robert C. Krulish, Exec of the LST, and Lt. (jg) Charles A. Holschuh, both USNR.

Five Seabees were killed and 10 wounded in the action. The others joined with the ship's crew in fighting flames, carrying ammunition, and caring for the wounded. The Seabees were under charge of Lt. H. C. Phillips, CEC, USNR.

Despite the efforts of the men to save the ship, including the braving of flames to dump 400 pounds of dynamite overboard, it was necessary to transfer the crew and officers to another ship, and sink the blazing LST with gunfire.

## CONTROLS FIRE WITH BULLDOZER

Quick thinking by Rosaire Hardy, MM3c, kept a fire at his Philippines base from spreading to a valuable waterfront Regimental Dump. A Filipino thatched-roof hut had caught fire and the flames appeared likely to spread. Hardy sprang onto a bulldozer, smashed down the burning hut, and limited the blaze to the immediate area.

## IT'S THEIR FUNERAL

Some Japanese pilots drop their funeral trappings before their bombs, just in case. Others wear their burial robes in combat.

This was the report of Alfred Marchev, president of Republic Aviation Corporation, who has just returned from a 25,000-mile tour of Pacific island fronts.

Marchev said the Japanese pilots were so skeptical of their chances over Saipan, that 20 minutes before they attacked, a Jap plane flew over the island and dropped traditional funeral banners.

"It was a good idea," he added. "All 17 attacking planes were shot down."

## PAY OFF ON RESULTS

Two days after a Seabee battalion landed on Saipan, its electrical crew was

making power available to the battalion's carpenter shop. In four days, there was light in every tent, and refrigeration units were in operation. At the end of seven days, despite enemy air raids, over 65,000 feet of electric wiring had been strung.

The need for working with materials and supplies on hand has resulted in some unusual makeshifts. "Take our assortment of odd parts," said Helon H. Hubalek, EM2c. "You'll find a fancy bathroom lighting fixture next to something fixed up out of an old tin can, and beside that an electrical part we got from a wrecked Jap tank. We use what we can, and make the rest."

A switchboard was put together almost entirely from the mechanism of a captured Jap field piece. Another time, when a **starting switch** for an electric motor was needed, the Seabees devised a substitute from a discarded holding coil.

The bombed ruins of a Japanese sugar mill also have been a fruitful source of electrical supplies. Odd-sized, thin-walled Jap conduit pipe was salvaged for one project. When American-made fittings turned out to be sized wrong, a second trip to the enemy dump-heap provided Jap condulets, service heads, lock-nuts and bushings.

"It was good equipment," added Glenn W. Tripp, EM2c, "but we had one helluva time trying to find enough pieces big enough to use that weren't shot full of holes!"

The six portable generators in the camp area -- now replaced by a central power house -- originally came equipped with ten-gallon gasoline tanks. Every time the tanks emptied the generators had to be turned off for refueling. So the Seabees mounted fifty-gallon gasoline drums on standards besides the generators, installed reclaimed Jap piping and fittings from drums to carburetors, refueled without stopping the motors.

The electricians also converted a standard two-phase electric control panel board into a three-phase, four-wire board. Swaps with a ship in the harbor provided the necessary extra materials. A simplified, centralized power control panel was installed in one-fourth the time required for the regular two-phase panel. Saving in material totaled fifty per cent, and the base is now able to cut off lights during air raids while operation of other electrical units continues.

## HAPPY LANDINGS

"There'll never be another beachhead like that one!"

Seabee William E. Minter, Jr., CM2c, was describing the welcome Seabees who landed with early assault waves at Lingayen Gulf received from joyful Filipinos.

"One time," said Minter, "I walked back to the canvas covered foxhole I was calling home at the moment and found a white-haired old man in front, just sitting there and grinning.

"The old boy uncovered the basket he was carrying and I peeped inside. You can't guess what was looking up at me. A real fried chicken -- southern style!"

The old man explained why he had come down to the beach. He had a son,

he said, who had died on Bataan. Now he was overjoyed to see the Americans back on Luzon.

"I told him," Minter concluded, "that I knew of one Seabee that was overjoyed at being there -- and I was him!"

Another happy recipient of Filipino hospitality told of having his dirty GI uniforms laundered. "They came back to me," he said, "with the collars starched. I felt like a civilian again!"

Seabees on one section of the beach, who had landed near a fair-sized city, set up housekeeping in a pretentious frame residence. One of the mates rigged up a shower by tapping an artesian well in the rear of the building. Startled servicemen passing by would look up to see GI Seabees taking their ease in comfortable rocking chairs, feet propped up on the porch railing, and with a pinch-me-to-see-if-I'm-dreaming look in their eyes.

### PYGMY GOLF HITS THE ISLANDS

The stateside friend who sent Ray Bergbreiter of a Seabee Special a dozen golf balls unwittingly has started a new Central Pacific fad. As soon as he received the balls, Bergbreiter and a few other golf addicts in the battalion built a miniature nine-hole course. They made cups of C-ration tin cans and pennants to mark the holes of old canvas. And they make the round with homemade wooden clubs.

### JAP INDUSTRY FLEES WRATH OF SUPERFORTS

Seabees who helped build American airfields in the Marianas will get particular satisfaction from the news that Superfort raids over Japan already have struck what the enemy concedes is a damaging blow to the heart of Japan's war industry. Conceding that steps would have to be taken "to make up for a decrease in production," the Japanese have announced that airplane factories and other vital plants will be moved to Manchuria.

In Washington, military and naval spokesman agreed the Japanese probably were too late in their efforts to transport their aircraft manufacturing industry "underground."

Brig. Gen. Lauris Norstad, Chief of Staff of the Twentieth Air Force, which is conducting the bombings, pointed out that the Japanese began their efforts at dismantling and dispersing their large aircraft factories at a later stage of the game than the Germans.

A Navy spokesman expressed the opinion that "it now is too late for the Japanese to attempt to go underground." He was confident that Japanese aircraft production would be knocked out even if they pursued their dispersal efforts.

## CUPID IN THE MARIANAS

Seabees worked as Cupid's right-hand man when Ben Tryu Capisos, St3c, took a native Marianas girl as his bride. The construction men built the altar in a lean-to shelter next to the home of the bride and were invited to the wedding feast. Capisos joined the Seabees from Hollywood, California.

## FOUR BROTHERS IN CEC

The Civil Engineer Corps has had quite an influence on the Flynn family of Troy, New York, or perhaps it was Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Four brothers attended the Institute and later became officers in the CEC, to set a new record for family service to the corps. Now on active duty are Lt. Comdr. George W. Flynn, assigned to the New York Navy Yard; Lt. Comdr. John K. Flynn, in the public works office at Cherry Point, N. C.; and Lt. (jg) William S. Flynn, on duty with the 66th Battalion of Seabees. The fourth brother, Lt. (jg) Henry P. Flynn, was recently retired due to disabilities accruing from duty with the 26th Battalion.

## HOT SEAT

It was the Seabee's first air raid -- and it looked to him as if it also would be his last. So when Ervin R. Rish, MoMM1c, of Cayce, South Carolina, couldn't find any shelter on Saipan, he decided to "sit it out and enjoy the show, anyway."

Rish fumbled in the dark, found a box, dragged it to a good position and sat down to watch.

He didn't have long to wait. Two Jap planes made their bombing run. One dropped a string close by. "Stuff was jarred loose all around me," Rish said.

"Finally the all-clear sounded and the lights went on," the Seabee continued. "I glanced at the box I'd been sitting on. It was marked 'Atlas Powder Company.' So I opened it and looked inside. My knees got weak and I couldn't hold the lid open. I'd been sitting on 100 pounds of dynamite all through that air raid!"

## A HELPING HAND

Jesus Castros Salias, 16-year-old Chamorro boy, goes about now with an artificial aluminum hand, made, ironically enough, from a melted-down Japanese propeller.

The boy, victim of shelling in the assault stages of the Marianas fighting, was about to be discharged from a civilian hospital when two Seabees learned of his plight. Robert V. McDaniel, SF1c and Arthur E. Redinger, SF1c, conferred with the Navy, surgeon in charge of the boy's case, obtained a plaster cast of a hand from the boy's brother, who is almost identical in size, melted down the propeller and obtained a perfect cast. They spent hours finishing the hand, but produced one, complete even to fingernails.

### UNSULLIED WELCOME MAT

A Marianas battalion considered it a personal affront to their hospitality when Jap snipers used their welcome mat for bait and wounded two Marines at the very gates of the Seabee camp.

When Commander G. Wood Smith asked for 100 volunteers to hunt down the Japs, the response was so enthusiastic that one Seabee showed up, steel helmet and carbine -- but without his pants. "I was afraid," he explained, "that I'd be left behind if I stopped for my pants."

Patrols led by Lieutenant Kenneth A. Frost, Lieutenant (jg) Thomas J. Sette and Ensign George H. Siems set out for the hills. Commander Smith took charge.

Irvin Wadel, CM3c, drilled one Jap through the throat. Stanley G. Grobowski, EM2c, probed a cave and dispatched three more. A fifth fell to combined fire of another group and a sixth, wounded, crawled away.

As darkness approached, Commander Smith asked the bugler to sound recall on the jeep-carried amplifier. Intermittent firing still continued in the hills.

"Sound chow call," grinned the Commander, "that'll get those Seabees out of there."

### IMPROVISED ISLAND

A Tokyo spokesman, belittling Allied island-grabbing, scoffed that it made little difference to Japan, because "we have lots of islands."

He can add one more to the list of those islands he doesn't care if the Americans grab--and this'll slay 'im!

A Marianas-based battalion, searching around for a quick, accessible place to store supplies and equipment, created their own real estate by leveling off a coral head and enlarging it from one acre to 3.5 acres.

As soon as the battalion began moving supplies ashore, one of the clamshell dredges came in and began casting coral and sand out of the access channel near the "storage" island. This material was dumped along the edges of the coral head. As it piled up, a bulldozer pushed the fill out all along the edges. As the channel deepened, the island grew.

## **WAR IS HELL DEPARTMENT**

A group of Seabee bakers visited their foxholes in a hurry when the air raid alarm sounded. They got back to the galley in time to discover that at least a few Seabees had been more hungry than scared. Of 800 doughnuts which had been resting on a table, exactly 200 remained!

## **PONTOON SPECIALIST LUCKY**

Close-calls seemed to be commonplace for CMM Philip J. Dalton of Haddon Heights, New Jersey, during the Philippines invasion.

He was bringing his ammunition-laden pontoon barge in toward shore, the Seabee recalled, when a Jap plane tried unsuccessfully to strafe him. Soon after, trying to catch a few minutes' sleep on the barge, he was blasted from his impromptu bed by a shell that whizzed over his head and scored a direct hit on another barge close by.

Dalton was unshaken, but some of his mates were not as fortunate. One Seabee was killed and three others seriously wounded. "Those men were heroes," said the chief. "One of the boys, even though badly hurt, had to be persuaded to leave the barge."

## **SLICK AS GREASE**

It's no overstatement to describe construction coordination on Guam as "well-oiled clockwork." Proper lubrication of equipment was one of the most important factors in maintaining top yardage output on one project--so important that officers never viewed servicing stops as a delay in production.

To prove the point, four Seabees swarmed over an International TD-18 tractor and did the following in 12 minutes:

Greased track rollers, greased all track fittings, greased clutch and main drive bearings, checked transmission and final drive; refueled and checked oil level in hydraulic reservoir!

A portable service unit has been mounted on a GMC stake body truck to service field equipment. It carries an air compressor, battery charger, floodlights and pressure grease tanks. Leading out from the rear on hose reels are air, chassis lube, gear lube, 20, 30, and 40 motor oil.

## **TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT**

When a B-29 went up in smoke only a hundred yards from his Saipan fox hole, Cyrus Thurston, MM3c, decided things were getting a little too hot and lit out

for the water truck he had been driving when the raid siren had sounded.

"My first idea was to drive that truck out of there as fast as I could," the Seabee said, "but the fellows handling the fire fighting equipment on the field needed water, so I hustled my truck out there. The flames lighted up everything on the field. It was really a beautiful bombers' target. And there I was running my truck back and forth from the water storage tanks to the middle of the runway!"

Four trips were enough to keep the equipment going until the fire was extinguished. Then Thurston returned to the water storage area, loaded his truck once more, and drove back to the Seabee camp.

"Those guys will never know how scared I was," he admitted. "I'll bet that last load of water was three-fourths Thurston's perspiration!"

### ONE FALL TO A FINISH

As a diver attached to a Seabee unit in a forward area, CBM Louis E. Dann has had some pretty rocky moments. But his outstanding recollection as a Navy diver? "Well," says Dann, "it was the time one of our divers caught a large devil crab which hung on to his whiskers. Watching that Seabee try to pry the crab loose, I nearly split a rib laughing as we tried to figure out who'd caught who!"

### POSTMEN LEND AN EAR

For some time now, Seabee postal clerks attached to a battalion on Saipan privately have been calling themselves "Junior Chaplains". Their battalion post office apparently has supplanted the home-town barber shop as a clearing house for their mates' perplexities. Family difficulties, health problems, financial worries, and other troubles are brought into the post office by Seabees who discuss them frankly and thoroughly with the clerks and then leave, obviously somewhat unburdened and relieved.

"We don't know what started it," the puzzled mail crew say, "but we're willing to listen to anybody's troubles. As far as we're concerned, it's part of the regular service....."

### JAPS "CAUGHT ON VINE" NOT WITHERING

Exclusive of the large bodies of enemy troops still remaining in the Philippines and of the garrisons holding the Netherlands East Indies, an additional quarter of a million Japanese are isolated on by-passed islands of the South Pacific and Southwest Pacific, according to Navy estimates.

A Navy spokesman, who estimated the exact figure was somewhere between 244,000 and 266,000 officers and men, said that in many cases there has been little evidence that the stranded troops are "withering on the vine."



The Navy estimate does not include thousands of stragglers still hiding in the hills and jungles of islands we have officially won.

The remaining Jap garrisons in the Carolines total roughly 83,000. Also, 13,000 are in the Marshalls; 5,000 in the Marianas; 100,000 to 200,000 in the Solomons and the New Guinea areas; 4,000 on Ocean and Nauru Islands; and 10,000 more cut off on Marcus and Wake Islands.

### **NEED NEW TEETH?**

Mobile Dental Prosthetic Laboratories are now being set up and one will be attached to each Seabee regiment. The laboratories will build or repair dentures for officers and enlisted men.

### **TINIAN STREETS GET NEW YORK NAMES**

A former New Yorker, now in charge of construction on Tinian, has simplified the traffic situation on the island, according to the Associated Press.

The officer noted the island was shaped like Manhattan Island. So now Tinian has a Battery, Wall Street, Park Row, Broadway, Central Park, Harlem, Bronx, and Riverside Drive.

He found it worked quite well.

### **HOMESICK MEDICINE**

A Seabee battalion in the Pacific will be among the first to dispute that telephone books and mail order catalogues are not interesting reading just because they change the subject so often.

Carpenter J. A. Sherman, battalion recreation officer, has opened a "library" of telephone books and mail order catalogues from principal cities in the States and it's proving a popular move. "Men are in to check them out every day," the officer says. "Maybe they want to check on the address of that girl they met at some stateside USO or merely to see if an old friend is still in town, but they use 'em. As for the catalogues, they might sit around and picture home after the war, but some of the mensend money home, suggesting articles which appeared in the catalogues."

### **ANYBODY HERE SEEN 'KELLY?'**

Eighteen months ago, an unidentified rescuer grabbed Carl Arthur Marchetti, CM3c, of the 16th Battalion, right out of the flaming hold of a burning transport-- and Marchetti is still looking for him.

The Cranston, Rhode Island, Seabee was in a detail which volunteered to fight the fire after the ship's crew had been overcome by smoke and fumes. As he leaned over the open hatch to play water on the flame, Marchetti was overcome by smoke and started to topple.

A mate grabbed at his thin, cotton shirt, which ripped from collar to belt-line, but the belt held and Marchetti was pulled to safety. But by the time Marchetti "came to" his rescuer had disappeared.

"The guy owes me a shirt," Marchetti grins.

### **REST CURE**

Work until you're exhausted -- that's one way to keep from worrying about air raids, testifies Carlton L. Dwyer, Ptr2c, of Baltimore, Maryland.

When Dwyer's battalion first landed on Saipan, the men worked 14 hours out of 24, sometimes longer. One night the Seabee was so exhausted when he got back to camp he pulled off his clothes, dropped on his cot, and remembered nothing until reveille blew the next morning.

At breakfast, someone mentioned "last night's air raid."

"Air raid?" Dwyer replied, "That's impossible. Why didn't we go to our shelters?"

"We did! Where were you?"

Slowly the truth dawned on the Seabee. He had slept through a two-hour Jap raid, siren, shouts, bombs, and all.

### **WHAT! NO TENTS??**

The sailmaker's job in a Seabee battalion might sound comparable to that of a mattress-tester or a whiskey-taster, but Early N. Fleming, BM1c, who is a sailmaker, can tell you it isn't true what they say about a life of ease.

Fleming helped his battalion's sailors by fashioning sails for their pleasure boats out of bed linen, produced ball diamond bases and boxing ring mats, repaired upholstering of trucks where the springs protruded so badly they had to unscrew the driver after a long ride. In addition, Fleming has fashioned a well-upholstered chair from an oil drum.

### **PERSISTENT DRILLER**

"When our dental officer started working on a Seabee's teeth the other day he wouldn't stop grinding even for Jap bombs!" said Eddie J. Swanson, Slc, of Minneapolis, Minn., dental assistant in a battalion on Saipan.

Soon after Swanson's outfit landed, Superforts took off on their first bombing attack against Tokyo. A few days later the Japs retaliated with a daylight air

raid. At the first hoot of the air raid siren, Seabees began running for cover in all directions.

"We had a patient in the chair," said Swanson, "and it would have been a bad moment to leave him.. The lieutenant said, 'Swanny, get the tin hats.' So I reached up and took down the steel helmets. We put them on, and he kept working away all through the raid.

"The dental office is located in a Quonset hut, on a high bluff overlooking the ships anchored in the lagoon," Swanson said, "It was like a box seat at a baseball game.

"You know," he chuckled, "we hadn't had time to dig foxholes yet. But even so, I've always claimed that Doc can be a very stubborn man!"

### ODDS AND ENDS

A Marianas island, "once a bloody stepping stone to Manila," says the United Press, may be used as a rest camp for battle-weary troops.....due credit is given the Seabees for their work in making the island a proper place for a rest camp.....the fall of Cavite's naval base to American assaults is hailed as "the most valuable prize of the Pacific war to date..

Britain's battleship Nelson, after a six-months' overhaul in the Philadelphia yards, is ready for action again...the reason for high death rates among Japanese admirals is due to the Japs' custom of elevating their officers to high rank after death.....

More than 900,000 German prisoners have been taken by Allies since the beginning of the war...and in the other side of the balance, the War Department has announced that American losses equal 50 divisions.....

GI's are so well acquainted with the sound of their own and the enemy's guns, they wouldn't dare use a captured gun; "we'd draw fire from every GI on the front," said one...overcast bombing, developed to a fine point because of consistency of bad weather over Europe, is said to be 75 percent as effective as visual sighting.....

Atrocities department: The Germans abandoned zoo animals at Koenigsberg and the advancing Reds had to feed 'em.....An Elyria, Ohio soldier, on duty in the Pacific, has asked his wife for a divorce so he can marry a native queen and become a "king." .....

## SHORT SPORT SHOTS

NATIONAL SPORTS tottered on the brink of War and Navy Department ruling, the Navy holding that sports are "unessential to the national health, safety and interest" and setting up a board to rule on discharges of athletes. The Army indicated it would "not counsel" against continuance of baseball. As though to prove a point: The Phillies' first baseman, Ulysses (Tony) Lupien headed for khaki, Ray Mueller, Reds' catcher was inducted, Dominic Dallessandro, Cob outfielder was called up for a draft physical, Bill Conroy of the Red Sox was inducted, and Frankie Sinkwich, Detroit Lions' backfield ace, passed his military physical....speculation was rife on whether a Kentucky Derby.....

THE SILVER LINING DEPARTMENT... Jimmy Foxx is considering taking Lupien's place with the Phils, the Athletics have signed Joe Cicero, former Holy Spirit Catholic High (Atlantic City) heavy hitter, Pete Gray, a one-armed outfielder recently acquired by the Browns is hailed as the first player with such a handicap to make the major leagues...a four-man committee has been named to pick the man to take the late Judge Landis' place as baseball czar, indicating that organized baseball considers there'll be work for him to do.....

MONEY BUSINESS-Brooklyn college isn't being mercenary about this, but the fact that its three Madison Square Garden basketball games brought in \$3,463.82 compared to \$506.35 received at nine home games is being given some thought...Bobby McDermott, high scoring guard of the world champion Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons, has been named the greatest basketball player of all time--and the judges thought about Dutch Dehnert and Nat Holman too.....

FARM SECTION--Bronko Nagurski is giving up football for the farm..... Bob Quinn, 75, president of the Boston Braves is going "farming" too, giving up the presidency to devote his time to development of a farm system for the National League.....Byron Nelson won \$1,333.33 by beating Jug McSpaden in the New Orleans open golf championship.

THE SUNNY SIDE--Eleven Boston prisoners of war have asked for reserved seats for the Stanley Cup hockey playoff games scheduled for March.. "we have," wrote John J. Barrio, now a prisoner of war in Germany, "implicit faith in the United States Forces and the Bruins....."

Earl Springer, former pitcher for the Baltimore Orioles, was killed in action in Germany and Emmett Mueller, Phillies infielder, was wounded.....

Columbia downed Fordham, 75-58 in an experimental basketball game where two and three-point field goals and one and two-point free throws were allowed, based on distance from which the shots were made.....

Pennsylvania's Inter-State League will remain a six-club circuit this season despite efforts of Harrisburg, Bethlehem and Hazleton to get in....